

Research on Key Influencing Factors and Implementation Path of Upholding Fundamental Principles and Breaking New Ground with the Striving Spirit: A Case Study of Universities in Fujian Province

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Abstract: The striving spirit represents a particular system of values that evolved from the great historic practices of Chinese pioneers who led the people in their striving for development, reform, and the realization of the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation. The relationship between upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit is dialectical and unified. Universities are crucial institutions for promoting the upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit. An analysis of 20 universities in Fujian Province reveals that activities that relate to the striving spirit, upholding fundamental principles, and breaking new ground are systematically undertaken at three distinct levels: educational history, classroom teaching, and campus activities. Nevertheless, there is still a need for further refinement and elevation of the substantive connotation and historical significance of the striving spirit, as well as the introduction of more innovative expressions of its core ideas. Building on the WSR (Wuli- Shili- Renli) system approach, this study suggests 21 key influencing factors and two paths for upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground in the context of the striving spirit at universities located in Fujian Province. Moreover, the article offers specific strategic recommendations for achieving these goals.

1. Introduction

The Chinese nation has a tradition of upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground. The striving spirit is a cultural tradition that represents China's advanced culture and was formed through the ancestors' long-term striving practice. Therefore, it is crucial and should be passed on for future generations. However, present research and practices on the transmission of the striving spirit frequently confine their understanding to cultural and political education concerns. This has resulted in various practical obstacles like insufficient emphasis, formality, and unsatisfactory results in inheriting the striving spirit^[1]. The fundamental cause of these obstacles is the deficiency in comprehensively understanding the intrinsic nature of upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit, and its pivotal influencing factors and realizations paths. Consequently, this study employs cultural gene theory^[2] and WSR (Wuli- Shili- Renli)

system approach to examine the essential influencing factors and the path towards realizing the continuity of the upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit throughout universities in Fujian province, so as to provide innovative insights.

2. Striving Spirit and Upholding Fundamental Principles and Breaking New Ground

In China, the concept of striving spirit refers to a unique system of values that emerged during their pursuit of rejuvenation, prosperity, and growth of the Chinese nation. The value system can be broadly categorized into three levels: dialectical and historical materialist philosophical values that transformed the objective world, practice values that are centered on seeking truth from facts, the mass line, and independence and self-reliance, and moral values such as hard work, integrity, and being a role model^[3]. The unique value system of the striving spirit guided both the Chinese people in their liberation and the country's path towards reform, opening up, and national rejuvenation, and has played a significant role in China's transformation and rejuvenation.

The striving spirit refers to a set of values that has emerged from the long-term practice of China's pioneer leaders, i.e. striving, building, reforming, and achieving the Chinese Dream. This value system is characterized by its practicality, cultural nature, hereditary characteristics, and variability. Firstly, practicality is the defining feature of the striving spirit. Secondly, the value system has a cultural nature by combining local customs and respecting the way of life of local people that led to the creation of numerous spirits such as Red Boat Spirit, Xibaipo Spirit, Yan'an Spirit, Jinggangshan Spirit, and Long March Spirit. These spirits bring together the traits of striving with the characteristics of local culture. Thirdly, the striving spirit is hereditary in nature. It performs the same function as biological genes that determine traits and are stably inherited between generations with a structure that is not easily changed. The hereditary characteristic of the striving spirit is necessary for maintaining vitality in China. Finally, the fourth feature of the striving spirit is its variability. Dialectically, inheritance and innovation are unified. Responses to environmental changes require a moderate innovative approach to maintain the continued vitality of the striving spirit^[4].

Maintaining the upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground leads to the unity of these two aspects, which are inseparable and should not be neglected in creating the striving spirit^[5]. The striving spirit is a value system that includes upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground on two levels. On the one hand, during the inheritance process, the value connotation of the striving spirit should be orthodoxy maintained and not deviated from. The essential connotation of the striving culture, as well as its significance in the era, must be accurately grasped. On the other hand, the material carriers, activity forms, and symbol selection that express the striving spirit^[6] can be innovative^[7], as this conforms to the cognitive characteristics of teachers and students in the new era, and enables it to obtain recognition.

3. The Present Situation and Problems of Upholding Fundamental Principles and Breaking New Ground with the Striving Spirit

3.1 Current Situation of Activities Concerning Upholding Fundamental Principles and Breaking New Ground with the Striving Spirit in 20 Colleges and Universities in Fujian Province

In this study, Nvivo12.0 was used to analyze the activities concerning upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit of 20 universities in Fujian (including Xiamen University, Fuzhou University, Fujian Normal University, Huaqiao University, Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University, Fujian Medical University, Minnan Normal University, Jimei

University, Xiamen University of Technology, Fujian University of Technology, Minjiang University, Fujian Business University, Quanzhou Normal University, Sanming University, Ningde Normal University, Longyan University, Wuyi University, Xiamen University Tan Kah Kee College, Minnan University of Science and Technology, and Yang-En University) from 2020 to 2022. Fifty high-frequency words were extracted, including “striving, practice, learning, college, culture, education, spirit, activity, China, development, inheritance, history, story, Fujian, students, university, people, work, society, teachers and students, visit, theme, era, youth, mission, hundred years, genes, countryside, undertaking, Memorial Hall, classmates, school, construction, in-depth, base, feeling, great, revitalization, strength, students, carry forward, understand, Gutian, organization, resources, theory, practice, patriotism, and conference”.

In the years 2020-2022, 20 universities in Fujian Province explicitly acknowledged the significant importance of inheriting the “striving culture” in regards to the era’s development, rural revitalization, and the youth’s mission. The “striving culture” was transmitted in various forms, including practice, education, and activities. The primary methods of transmission included studying the history of the striving, participating in campus activities, and visiting existing striving memorial halls in Fujian, such as the Gutian Conference Memorial Hall.

3.2 Problems Existing in Upholding Fundamental Principles and Breaking New Ground with the Striving Spirit In 20 Colleges and Universities in Fujian Province

Nvivo12.0 was adopted to analyze the literature on the inheritance of striving culture in colleges and universities of Fujian Province, and the following problems were found:

3.2.1. Lack of Refinement and Sublimation of the Essential Connotation and Significance of the Striving Spirit

Fujian universities suffer from a lack of refinement and extraction of the true ideological connotation and spiritual core of the striving culture. Genetic exploration of striving resources is also lacking, resulting in a disconnection between the actual utilization of these resources in classroom teaching, campus activities, and historical learning activities.

For instance, some schools in Fujian province prioritize only superficial aspects of field trips such as visiting memorial sites and viewing real-life images. This approach fails to fully capture the underlying values of patriotism, the ideals and beliefs of striving, and the culture and tradition of striving. Quanzhou Normal University insufficiently refines and elevates the intrinsic implications and contemporary significance of striving resources during course and field trip teachings, limiting students’ understanding and hindering the true inheritance of the striving spirit.

Educators’ study of striving history focuses only on the subject matter and lacks enriched content that highlights the central themes and contemporary significance. Additionally, schools or grassroots organizations often have the freedom to adjust study content arbitrarily, leading to a lack of control over the inheritance of striving spirit.

3.2.2. Lack of Innovation in the Expression of the Striving Spirit

Though many universities implement various inheritance methods such as campus activities, themed events, and visits to memorial halls, a lack of creativity remains a hindrance. Therefore, it is important for universities to adopt novel and engaging ways that inspire students to get involved. For instance, Xiamen University utilizes dubbing and film media, while Huaqiao University employs activities and works of art.

The inadequate refinement of the striving spirit in classroom teaching is a result of teachers rigidly adhering to materials, lack of enriched educational content, and a lack of appeal - all in

conjunction with a uniform style of teaching that lacks flexibility and variety in teaching methods. For instance, the education of the culture of striving at Sanming University primarily relies on traditional teaching methods and lacks innovation. This shortfall is demonstrated by the insufficient attention given by educators to the adoption of new media forms and their limited capabilities in this area, along with inadequate platform construction for media integration.

The education of striving history often falls short in promoting innovation, particularly in transmitting the striving spirit from one generation to the next. The quality and competency of both faculty and teachers play a pivotal role in fostering a culture of innovation. However, the current approach that solely emphasizes static symbol expressions fails to inspire innovative ways of thinking. As we face new challenges and problems in this new era, there is a pressing need to transform the concept of education, promote innovative thinking, and harness new methods - such as the use of new media, dynamic expressions, and novelty activities^[8] - that can effectively integrate the culture of striving into the education of striving history in universities.

4. Analysis on the Key Influencing Factors of Upholding Fundamental Principles and Breaking New Ground with the Striving Spirit

Table 1: Key influencing factors and weight of upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit (wi%)

Objective level A	Primary indicators B	Secondary indicators C	Weight combination
Upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit	B1,8.9% Wuli	Research investment C1,34.5%	3.19%
		High quality research output C2,65.5%	5.92%
	B2,82.2% Shili	Input-output ratio of educational resources C3,24.1%	2.19%
		Synergistic inheritance indices C4,15.63%	1.69%
		Development rate of striving resources C5,14.4%	1.31%
		Top-level decision efficiency C6,10.3%	0.94%
		Middle-level organizational efficiency C7,10.1%	0.92%
		Middle-level control efficiency C8,9.18%	8.35%
	B3,8.9% Renli	Grassroots innovation efficiency C9,16.29%	1.48%
		Inheritance intention C10,34.2%	3.11%
		Activity attraction C11,37.6%	3.42%
			Activity participation C12,28.2%

Source: prepared for this research

The cultivation of the culture of upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit, being a system engineering, necessitates an analysis of Wuli, Shili, and Renli elements. This study employed the Delphi method and Analytic Hierarchy Process (AHP) to identify influential factors. The initial evaluation indicator draft of “upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit” was established by assessing existing literature on the WSR system methodology and the culture of striving, along with an internal logical understanding of the three levels of analysis^[9]. The draft comprised three primary indicators -Wuli, Shili, and Renli- with 21 corresponding secondary indicators. Ten professionals in related fields based in Fujian Province, including administrators and researchers in the culture of striving, and teachers of ideological and political education were selected to evaluate the indicators. Substantial working experience of more than eight years, high theoretical knowledge, and practical expertise were the key criteria for selection. During the first round, experts were invited to suggest

modifications and rate evaluation indicators using the Likert scale. Based on their feedback and suggestions, key indicators were refined in a subsequent discussion. In the second round, experts were asked to rate indicators and determine their weights, leading to the development of the final evaluation indicator scheme. The AHP method was employed to calculate the weight of each indicator, and the outcome is presented in Table 1. The specific research process is omitted.

Table 1 shows that various factors, including research investment and high-quality research output, educational resource investment, synergistic inheritance indices (classroom teaching, campus activities, and culture of striving education), striving resource development, top-level university decision-making, middle-level (departments) organization and control, grassroots (teaching units, teachers) innovation, teachers' intention to inherit, attractiveness of activities, and participation rate, affect the process of inheriting the culture of striving in Fujian universities. Among these factors, those related to the Shili level have the most significant impact, accounting for 82.2%. Therefore, it can be deduced that Fujian universities inadequately extract and sublimate the essence and significance of the culture of striving, have insufficient innovation, and experience other related shortcomings while upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit. The primary reasons for these issues include inadequate educational resource investment, shortcomings in synergistic inheritance indices (culture of striving education, course teaching, and campus activities), insufficient development of striving resources, top-level university decision-making lacking integrated cognizance and top-level design concerning the inheritance of the culture of striving, inadequate focus in the middle-level (departments') organization and control means, and insufficient initiative at the grassroots level (teaching units, teachers).

5. Realization Paths of Upholding Fundamental Principles and Breaking New Ground with the Striving Spirit

5.1. The Path to Upholding Fundamental Principles of the Striving Spirit

The core of upholding fundamental principles of the striving spirit is the preservation of orthodoxy and the secure inheritance of the essence^[10]. This task requires three key actions. Firstly, a practical approach is necessary, whereby the WSR method should be adhered to, and scientific research should be conducted to investigate national, provincial, or local striving resources. This investigation should provide statistical data for defining the core of the striving spirit and precisely extracting and editing the striving spirit. Secondly, it is imperative to construct meaning by exploring contemporary values and the significance of the striving spirit from the perspective of youth growth. Finally, the manner in which the striving spirit is integrated into classroom teaching, campus activities, and the teaching of the history of striving must be determined. This integration strategy can be standardized and disseminated by conducting interviews and surveys of grassroots units and individual teachers in universities.

5.2. The Path to Innovating of the Striving Spirit

The path to innovating of the striving spirit revolves primarily around material carriers, activity forms, and symbol selection. Its objective is to promote innovation in classroom teaching methods, striving history education techniques, and campus activity forms^[11]. In terms of inventive teaching methods, several media (such as video, audio, social media, and historical images) can be utilized to transform the traditional teaching style from instruction-based to guidance-based, so as to encourage students to actively engage in the context of learning centered on the culture of striving. With regard to innovative striving history education methods, grassroots organizations should be encouraged to adopt diverse learning methods, such as on-site visits, image-based learning, and

discussion exchanges. Lastly, innovative forms of campus activities should also be promoted, where teachers and students are invited to express the striving spirit in various artistic forms, such as painting, calligraphy, music, skits, and dramas.

6. Conclusions

Fujian universities are struggling with upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit, as well as refining its expression in terms of both contemporary significance and essence. Their efforts are hindered by several factors, including insufficient investment in educational resources, inadequate development of striving resources, and inadequate attention to striving history education, course teaching, and campus activities. Top-level decision-making also lacks integrated cognizance concerning the inheritance of the striving spirit, while the organization and control means at the middle-level (departments) and the initiative at the grassroots level (teaching units, teachers) are insufficient. The path to upholding fundamental principles of the striving spirit lies in preserving orthodoxy and ensuring the inheritance of its essence. To innovating of the striving spirit, universities should focus on material carriers, activity forms, and symbol selection. This involves promoting the innovation of classroom teaching methods, striving history education methods, and campus activity forms.

For universities, there are several management implications:

Firstly, research efforts should ensure “understanding of Wuli, clarity of Shili, and understanding of Renli”. Universities should leverage interdisciplinary advantages, adopt multiple theoretical perspectives of culture, art and management, establish research teams, clarify theoretical laws and inheritance principles, and jointly extract the striving spirit, integration methods, contemporary value, and significance.

Secondly, while designing mechanisms for upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit, universities should ensure “understanding of Wuli, clarity of Shili, and understanding of Renli”. The investment of educational resources should consider the collaborative issues of the three levels of university classroom teaching, campus activities, and striving history education. Effectiveness evaluation standards should also be involved among involved subjects.

Finally, to manage the activities of upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit, universities should ensure “understanding of Wuli, clarity of Shili, and understanding of Renli”. Grassroots units and individuals are motivated by effective incentives. Therefore, universities should increase material or spiritual rewards related to upholding fundamental principles and breaking new ground with the striving spirit in existing performance evaluation and assessment.

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