

# *Research on the innovation path of breaking the cocoon effect of ideological and political education information in colleges and universities in the new media era*

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**Keywords:** Innovation; new media literacy; critical thinking; information ability

**Abstract:** This study analyzes in depth the multiple problems faced by higher education institutions in ideological and political education in the era of new media, which include cognitive misunderstanding triggered by the information cocoon, lack of homogeneity and innovation in educational content, insufficient literacy of educators in the new media environment, and insufficient ability of students in information screening and judgment. It also analyzes that the main factors affecting the improvement of the teaching quality of Civics courses in colleges and universities are the lack of relevance of the teaching content, the single teaching method, the irrational assessment method and the unsound teaching evaluation system. In order to solve the above problems, this paper proposes a series of improvement strategies, which include establishing a diversified information transmission and reception system, innovating the content and methods of Civic and Political Education, strengthening the educators' literacy training on new media, and cultivating the students' critical thinking and information processing ability.

## **1. Introduction**

Accompanied by the rapid progress of new media technology, higher education institutions are facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges in ideological and political education. In the face of changes in the network environment, ideological and political educators must actively deal with the impact and influence of the new media era on the ideological and political courses in colleges and universities. The wide dissemination of new media not only completely changed the way of students' access to information and thinking mode, but also put forward more strict standards for the traditional ideological and political education. At present, the traditional teaching mode is still used in the teaching of ideological and political education in colleges and universities, which can no longer meet the development needs of contemporary college students and is not conducive to the cultivation of all-round talents.

## **2. The characteristics of ideological and political education in colleges and universities in the new media era**

### **2.1. The diversification and high speed of information dissemination**

In this era of new media, the methods and tools of information transmission have shown an unprecedented diversity. The rapid development of network technology has led to the emergence of all kinds of new media. From microblogging, WeChat to short video platforms, a variety of new media tools provide a convenient way for the wide dissemination of information, and this diversity is not only reflected in the diversity of dissemination paths, but also in the richness of the information content and the diversity of viewpoints. As an emerging media form, new media influences contemporary college students with its unique communication methods, and has a great and far-reaching impact on them. The rise of new media greatly promotes the free dissemination of various ideas and opinions, which enables college students to have access to more information resources<sup>[1]</sup>. At the same time, due to its own characteristics and advantages, new media has become one of the most important sources of information and knowledge for college students. In the era of new media, the rapid dissemination of information has become a prominent feature, and a piece of information can spread rapidly in a very short period of time, attracting a lot of attention and discussion.

### **2.2. Fragmentation and immediacy of educational content**

In the current new media context, there is a trend towards fragmentation of educational content. Although short videos, microblogs and public articles provide students with learning opportunities anytime and anywhere, they also lead to fragmentation and incompleteness of knowledge structure. With the development of information technology, information dissemination has become more and more convenient, while fragmented ideological and political education resources have caused a great impact on the lives of college students. This fragmentation of knowledge not only prevents students from fully grasping the knowledge system, but also leads to distraction and makes it difficult for them to think deeply. At the same time, with the development of Internet technology, a variety of self-media platforms have emerged, providing a broad space for the teaching of ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities. The instant content update brought by new media has brought considerable challenges to ideological and political education.

### **2.3. The individuation and selectivity of students receiving information**

The emergence of new media has created a never-before-seen information screening platform for students, allowing them to receive and screen information in a personalized way according to their own interests and needs. With the continuous development of Internet technology and the popularization of mobile communication networks, smartphones have become one of the most important tools for college students to access all kinds of information. Numerous intelligent recommendation systems and social media platforms have begun to use specific algorithms to accurately push content that matches users' preferences, which greatly satisfies students' needs for personalized information. In such a context, personalized services carried out by university libraries have gradually become a mainstream trend. However, in such a highly personalized information context, students are often constrained by their own cognitive, emotional, and life habits when selecting information, which leads to the display of obvious preferences. For example, students are more likely to tend to select information that matches their own views or to pay too much attention to the content of some specific areas.

## **2.4. The interaction between the educator and the educated is strengthened**

New media technologies have largely enhanced the interactivity between educators and educated people. Through a variety of channels, such as online platforms and social media, both parties can exchange information and feedback in real time, which not only increases the frequency of interaction, but also deepens the depth of interaction. In this environment, it has become easier for teachers and students to communicate "face-to-face" with each other. Students have the right to ask questions and share ideas at any time, and educators can respond quickly with advice. To a certain extent, this two-way interaction has alleviated the lack of communication, redundancy of information and inefficiency between teachers and students in traditional classroom teaching, facilitated teachers' teaching decision-making and management, and promoted the improvement of teaching quality<sup>[2]</sup>.

## **3. The problems of ideological and political education in colleges and universities in the new media era**

### **3.1. Cognitive bias caused by information cocoon**

In the context of the era of new media, the phenomenon of the information cocoon has become more and more obvious, which leads students to contact and trust only the information that matches their own viewpoints, and to turn a blind eye to or exclude different voices. As college students are in the stage of worldview formation, they are easily influenced and constrained by the external environment. Such limitations lead to students' cognitive misconceptions, thus making their perception of the world narrower and less comprehensive. Cognitive bias is determined by the limited cognitive ability of individuals, social environment and other factors. Taking Civic Education as an example, due to the existence of information cocoon, students have difficulties in understanding the diversity and complexity of national policies and tend to interpret them only from their own point of view, which may lead to misunderstanding and bias towards them<sup>[3]</sup>. The information cocoon creates the problem of "knowledge explosion", which prevents college students from effectively mastering the skills and methods they need, and is one of the reasons for the inefficiency or even failure of the teaching of ideology and politics in colleges and universities.

### **3.2. The homogeneity of educational content and the lack of innovation**

At present, the content of ideological and political education in institutions of higher education is homogenized to a certain extent, and there is a lack of programs designed differently according to different groups of students and the background of the times, and this "one-size-fits-all" approach to education ignores the personalized needs of students, thus making the content of the education lose its attractiveness and relevance. With the arrival of the Internet era, college students accept new media technology more and more frequently, which brings challenges to the ideological education. Due to the lack of sufficient innovativeness, the progress of Civic and Political Education has been limited, resulting in its teaching content being out of sync with the actual needs of the society and the thinking mode of students. Information cocoon refers to the psychological state in which college students are unable to effectively recognize the authenticity and superiority of a new thing when accepting it, thus creating distrust, rejection or even aversion to the thing. The lack of homogeneity and innovation not only reduces the effectiveness of Civic Education, but also interacts with the phenomenon of information cocoon.

### **3.3. Lack of new media literacy among educators**

In the context of the new media era, the ideological and political educators of some higher education institutions still have obvious shortcomings in the application of new media, such as unskilled mastery of new media technology and in-depth understanding of new media communication modes<sup>[4]</sup>. At the same time, some colleges and universities have also neglected the issue of value orientation embedded in the ideological and political education work of college students, resulting in their failure to pay full attention to the cultivation of college students' values and to use the new media as the main carrier to carry out teaching activities. These shortcomings directly hinder the efficient operation of the educational process and the achievement of educational results, such as educators can not fully utilize the new media tools to effectively interact with students, or can not accurately grasp the information receiving habits and needs of students in the new media environment. This has also led to the emergence of a special psychological state of "information cocoon" among college students, i.e., due to the mixed quality of information on the Internet, it is difficult for college students to form correct value judgments. Lack of new media literacy not only prevents educators from improving their teaching skills, but also exacerbates the problem of information cocoon by failing to effectively guide students. Therefore, improving educators' competence in new media literacy plays a crucial role in solving this information cocoon problem.

### **3.4. The student information sieving and the judgment ability insufficiency**

In this era of prevalent new media, students have to deal with the challenge of massive information on a daily basis, but not every student possesses excellent information screening and judgment skills. In this context, many colleges and universities have begun to try to use big data technology to personalize push services for college students, with a view to helping them improve their learning efficiency. Some students rely too much on recommendation algorithms or social media buzz, which leads to students receiving information that is too one-sided or misleading. In such an environment, most students have an incomplete view of things. As a result of this limited capacity, students are more susceptible to the distractions of the information cocoon, which means that students are only exposed to information that matches their own views or interests, while ignoring the opposing or diverse voices that may exist. The phenomenon of information cocoon is an undesirable psychological state prevalent in current education, which seriously restricts the improvement of college students' comprehensive quality and the cultivation of innovative spirit.

## **4. The optimization countermeasures of ideological and political education in colleges and universities in the new media era**

### **4.1. To build a diversified mechanism of information transmission and reception**

Facing the challenge of information cocoon brought by the new media era, the Civic and Political Education of higher education institutions needs to construct a diversified information transmission and reception system<sup>[5]</sup>. Starting from the perspective of communication science and taking into account the characteristics of college students, the article puts forward countermeasures and suggestions for constructing a diversified information dissemination system, creating an "Internet+" Civic and Political Classroom, and strengthening the management of online public opinion. The first task is to construct diversified information dissemination channels. Higher education institutions can provide colorful ideological and political education contents by integrating various resources inside and outside the university and using diversified platforms such

as official websites, WeChat public numbers and APPs. The second task is to pay attention to the construction of college students' ideological and political work team, improve the professional quality of counselors, and enhance their ability to judge online public opinion.

#### **4.2. Innovating the content and form of ideological and political education**

In higher education institutions, innovation is regarded as the core of ideological and political education, especially in the context of new media, the dual innovation of content and form has become particularly critical. The current trend of college students in China's colleges and universities is young, which also brings challenges to ideological and political education. When designing the content of civic education, it should adhere to the principles of keeping abreast of the times, being close to the reality and being forward-looking. Combined with the overall development trend of the country and the ideological needs of students, the educational content needs to be constantly updated and improved. For example, the latest theoretical research, social focus issues, and employment and entrepreneurship topics that students care about can be incorporated into the teaching content to improve the relevance and practical effect of civic education. Civic education can be carried out in a variety of ways, such as the "three-in" working method and thematic counseling method, in order to improve the effectiveness of the teaching of civic education.

#### **4.3. Strengthen new media literacy training for educators**

In the context of the new media era, it is especially crucial to strengthen the training of educators in new media literacy. Therefore, a set of comprehensive training programs can be constructed, covering the application of new media technology, the basic laws of information dissemination, and the psychological and behavioral analysis of students and other aspects, through the organic combination of theory and practice, to assist educators to improve the new media literacy in an all-round way<sup>[6]</sup>. From the current point of view, the new media education carried out in China's colleges and universities still has certain problems, which need to be studied and solved by educators. With the continuous improvement of educators' literacy in new media, it is expected that the education process will be significantly optimized, and teachers will be able to make more skillful use of new media tools for lectures, thus enhancing the interactivity and attractiveness of the classroom.

#### **4.4. Cultivate students' ability of critical thinking and information**

In the context of new media, it is particularly crucial to cultivate students' critical thinking and information processing skills, and higher education institutions can adopt different strategies and means to achieve this goal. Among them, integrating critical thinking skills into information quality education is a feasible path. First of all, through the establishment of courses specifically for critical thinking, students can be instructed on how to analyze and evaluate information rationally, and be motivated to question and challenge existing views, so as to cultivate the habit of independent thinking. It is also necessary to help students develop good reading habits and improve their speed in acquiring information<sup>[7]</sup>. Next, information literacy is taught through new media platforms, and students are instructed on how to effectively find, filter and evaluate the authenticity and value of information, so as to enhance their ability to process information.

### **5. Conclusion**

In the context of new media, higher education institutions are facing unprecedented challenges

and opportunities in ideological and political education. In the face of a series of problems, such as information storerooms, too much similarity in educational content, insufficient educators' literacy in new media, and students' deficiencies in screening and judging information, colleges and universities should proactively implement diversified information dissemination strategies, innovate educational content and forms, and strengthen the professional training of educators, as well as cultivate students' critical thinking skills. At the same time, they should also emphasize the use of Internet technology to build "online" classrooms, establish campus network culture positions, create campus culture brands and pay attention to the construction of mobile learning platforms and other measures to improve the quality of ideological and political education for college students.

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