
Research on the Path of Integrating Red Culture into Ideological and Political Education in Universities in the New Era

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Abstract: Culture possesses a distinctive cohesive framework. Red culture, as an invaluable spiritual asset stemming from the revolutionary, construction, and reform periods of the Communist Party of China, exhibits a cohesive structure that intertwines individuals with collectives and history with modernity through shared resources, contexts, and spiritual connections. This structure elicits emotional resonance and value identification, thereby fortifying the national spiritual community. Consequently, delving deeply into red resources, meticulously crafting red contexts, and actively embodying the red spirit constitute crucial avenues for integrating red culture into ideological and political education in universities.

Keywords: Red culture; Ideological and political education; Universities

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1. Introduction

Culture possesses a cohesive structure that is pivotal at both the social and temporal dimensions ^[1]. At the social level, it fosters connections among individuals and groups through the establishment of a “symbolic meaning system,” thereby constructing an abstract realm composed of mutual experiences, expectations, and behaviors. At the temporal level, cohesive structures bridge the past, present, and future by imbuing historical events and scenes with contemporary relevance, enabling individuals to perceive the continuity of history in the present. Red culture, a valuable spiritual asset forged by the Communist Party of China during the periods of revolution, construction, and reform, leverages shared resources, circumstances, and spiritual bonds to forge close ties between the individual and the collective, the past and the present. It fosters emotional resonance and value identification, thereby further consolidating the national spiritual community. Red culture serves not only as the bearer of the great spirit and

historical memory of the Chinese nation but also as a precious resource for ideological and political education in universities in the new era. In the surge of the new era, the profound integration of red culture into ideological and political education in universities plays a crucial role in nurturing students' sense of social responsibility and historical mission. It guides them to align their personal ideals with the broader context of national development, contributing to the realization of the Chinese dream of national rejuvenation and fostering a new generation imbued with a sense of responsibility.

As articulated by Thompson, cultural analysis is delineated as “the examination of symbolic forms—encompassing meaningful actions, objects, and representations—within the context of specific historical and socially structural frameworks and processes” [2]. Drawing upon this framework, through the three dimensions of in-depth excavation of red resources, meticulous creation of red contexts, and proactive embodiment of the red spirit, the exploration of an effective pathway to integrate red culture into ideological and political education in colleges and universities not only possesses profound theoretical value for exploration but also demonstrates pressing and substantial practical significance.

2. Excavating the red resources: Constructing a red cultural symbol system

Red resources, serving as both the material cornerstone and historical testament of red culture, provide a robust foundation for the formation and perpetuation of this cultural heritage. As Jan Assmann has elucidated, social groups preserve past memories by conferring uniqueness and permanence upon objects [1]. Red resources, characterized by their profound historical context, noble values, and vibrant cultural symbols, embody the distinctive allure of red culture. Furthermore, they underscore the enduring vitality of red culture through the transmission of historical memory, the augmentation of practical significance, and the fulfillment of educational roles. Therefore, it is crucial to fully appreciate the significant value of red resources in terms of their uniqueness and permanence, and to endeavor diligently to conserve, manage, and utilize these resources effectively [3].

Firstly, it is crucial to rely on textual, imagery, and other media carriers to uncover the profound connotations of red culture. Words serve as the repository for ephemeral data [4], while images provide an invaluable guide to the visual representation of past cultures [5]. On the one hand, red literature should be transformed into educational and instructional resources. Universities can comprehensively gather, categorize, compile, and organize important documents, declarations, communiques, laws and regulations, and publications from the Party's history, thereby forming literature compilations, academic works, biographies, stories, legends, and other resources that can be directly utilized in higher education. On the other hand, the influence of red film and television should be fully leveraged. Recent years have witnessed the popularity of red dramas such as *The Age of Awakening* (2021), which reflects the pursuit of truth by a group of revolutionary youth; *Shangganling* (2024), which depicts the reversal of the situation during the Korean War; and *Northwest Years* (2024), which showcases revolutionary history from various perspectives and attracts a vast audience of young people. These dramas enable a more comprehensive, systematic, and profound understanding of Chinese revolutionary history. Universities should select high-quality red film and

television works, edit and interpret them in conjunction with course content, and transform them into intuitive and vivid teaching aids. By organizing movie viewing activities and conducting film review discussions, students can be guided to deeply comprehend the revolutionary history and spiritual connotations embedded within these films and television works.

Secondly, the remembrance of red history is facilitated through material carriers such as ruins and relics. Red sites and relics constitute a significant form of “spatialization of memory” in red culture, serving not only as venues for various exchanges among group members but also as symbols of their identity and clues to their collective memories [1]. “Revolutionary museums, memorials, Party history halls, and martyrs’ cemeteries represent the red gene banks of both the Party and the nation” [6]. To honor red history, universities should fully exploit these material carriers and engage in diversified teaching activities. On the one hand, on-site teaching can be implemented. By organizing visits to red ruins and relics, college students can witness the profound transformations in revolutionary history. Utilizing virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technology at these sites allows students to immerse themselves in red cultural scenes, thereby enhancing their sense of belonging. On the other hand, “cloud” visit learning can be promoted. Online exhibition halls and other digital platforms should be leveraged to fully exploit the capabilities of online explanations, virtual tours, interactive Q&A sessions, and other functionalities. Encouraging students to meticulously observe the architectural style of the sites, cultural relic displays, historical photographs, and other details will facilitate their comprehensive understanding of the historical and cultural significance of red sites, thereby enhancing the appeal of red culture. Furthermore, generative artificial intelligence video models can be employed to produce highly realistic three-dimensional short films that reconstruct revolutionary scenes, further amplifying students’ immersion and emotional resonance.

Furthermore, the dissemination of “red genes” is facilitated through activities associated with anniversaries and festivals. Given the temporal continuity of memories, which is attributed to the emphasis placed on original or significant events, combined with their inherent periodicity and rhythm [1], universities should fully exploit revolutionary anniversaries, victory celebrations, the birthdays of proletarian revolutionaries, the days commemorating the demise of heroes, and the dates of the release of significant party documents. These events should be meticulously planned and executed as a series of “red-themed” activities. On crucial revolutionary anniversaries, such as the “May Fourth” Movement, the “July 1st” Party Founding Day, the “August 1st” Army Founding Day, and National Day, universities should have college students participate in silent tributes, collective oaths, revolutionary poetry recitations, and other solemn ceremonies. Additionally, themed speech contests, cultural performances, and knowledge competitions should be arranged to immerse students in the profound atmosphere of revolutionary history through their active engagement. Concurrently, college students are encouraged to explore the historical backgrounds of these anniversaries through diverse avenues. By utilizing platforms such as “red education” lectures and seminars, universities can invite experts, scholars, and veteran party members to narrate revolutionary stories and share “red memories” in person. Such endeavors aim to ignite college students’ patriotic sentiments and inspire them to emulate the unwavering struggle spirit of their predecessors.

3. Creating the red situation: Establishing a robust core of red culture

Situational cognition theory emphasizes the intimate connection between knowledge and context, asserting that knowledge is acquired through individual engagement and experience within a specific situational framework. The re-contextualization of red culture allows for the recreation of historical images, sequences, and events, thereby rendering the narrative of red history flexible and contextually rich through adjustments to positioning, sequencing, and pacing. By utilizing symbols, rituals, and narratives, the red situation fosters an immersive environment that transforms red culture from an abstract concept into a vivid, tangible experience, enabling individuals to more intuitively grasp its charm and underlying meanings. Within this immersive red situation, individuals can internalize the red spirit through active participation and direct experience, integrating it into their personal value systems and behavioral codes. Consequently, the essence of red culture is perpetuated and evolved within contemporary society, serving as a significant spiritual impetus for national cohesion and societal advancement.

Firstly, the shaping of cultural symbols through red symbols is pivotal. Cultural identity, as a form of “shared identity,” is underpinned by a sense of unity and solidarity embedded within cultural logic. Consequently, cultural symbols serve as a prevalent means of constructing cultural identity. By tapping into the shared cultural symbol resources and forms within a national collective, one can uncover the underlying meanings behind these symbols and construct a universal identity discourse, thereby fostering a sense of unity and solidarity among individuals. In essence, utilizing symbols represents an efficacious discourse and practice for establishing national cultural identity. Hence, it is imperative to refine red symbols within red resources. Abstract prototypes must be anchored to more concrete images to readily capture the audience’s attention and elicit associations. The function of an “image” is to “convey meaning,” enabling the grasp of “meaning” through the lens of “image” [1]. For instance, the symbols of footprints, the Great Wall, ants, and white doves in the TV series *The Age of Awakening* not only stimulate the public’s imagination regarding red culture but also foster a shared cultural identity through this imaginative engagement. In this context, the diverse symbols depicted in the film are not precisely analogous to the symbols with which we are accustomed. Rather, they embody a specific meaning, prompting us to refer to them as symbols only in a specialized and derivative sense [7].

Secondly, the red ceremony serves to enhance emotional resonance. Presented through a series of limited yet vivid images that evoke the “presence of the founding past” [1], the ceremony focuses the audience’s attention on its characteristics [8], thereby triggering emotional resonance and reinforcing the ceremony’s conveyed meaning and concept. As David Kozer notes, “The emotional atmosphere that ritual can create is itself a potent forge of beliefs and ideas” [9]. Having college students view red ceremonies, such as national honor award ceremonies, situates heroes within the cultural context of national rituals, guiding symbols towards specific political symbolism. This can foster positive online public opinion, strengthen social norms, generate social cohesion, and enhance the national identity of ordinary citizens. Additionally, encouraging college students to participate in red ceremonies, such as visiting revolutionary memorial halls and martyrs’ cemeteries, allows them to personally experience the heroic deeds of their revolutionary predecessors, evoking respect and emotional depth. During the ceremony, elements such as oaths,

flower tributes, and moments of silence create a solemn atmosphere, guiding students in emotionally resonating with the revolutionary ancestors. Combining red-themed art performances, speech competitions, and other activities vividly further enhances the emotional experience of college students.

Furthermore, the discourse system is constructed through red narratives. Historical facts, devoid of meaning and memory, remain empty abstractions, while cultural memory is continually reconstructed, with the past reorganized within the present frame of reference. Red narrative serves as a communicative bridge, interlinking individuals with collectives and history with reality through the medium of storytelling. On the one hand, stories should be told with authenticity and feeling. To effectively tell red stories with emotion, one must uphold the people's perspective, exploring fresh narratives that resonate spiritually and inspire the spirit and will derived from the vivid practices of the Party and the people supporting and fighting together for their ideals, thereby unifying people through more layered and expressive storytelling. On the other hand, storytelling serves to raise awareness of the problem. As the adage goes, "A persuasive theory can command the masses, while a thorough theory can convince them" [10]. China's developmental journey is fraught with various risks and challenges. Therefore, it is imperative that we adeptly address the doubts and concerns of college students through storytelling and by providing answers to their pertinent questions. Failure to do so would render stories superficial and mere formalities, unable to fulfill their potential role in permeating people's hearts.

4. Embodying the red spirit: Condensing cultural and political identity

The red spirit serves as the essence of red culture and encapsulates the fundamental aspirations and mandates of the Chinese Communist Party. Various manifestations of this spirit, such as the spirit of party building, the red ship spirit, the spirit of resistance against war, the Dabie Mountain spirit, the spirit of resisting the United States and aiding Korea, the spirit of developing nuclear weapons and satellites, the Beidou spirit, the aerospace spirit, the poverty alleviation spirit, and the spirit of the great epidemic fight, represent invaluable assets forged through the blood and dedication of the Chinese Communist Party over its century-long struggle. These spirits embody communist ideals, collective sentiments, and socialist beliefs. It is imperative to inherit and propagate these noble spirits, transforming them into a potent force driving the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. In doing so, the red gene will continue to shine in the new era, infusing endless momentum into national development.

Learning from party history is crucial to inheriting the spirit of hard work and struggle. The history of the Communist Party encapsulates its perseverance, self-improvement, and struggle spirit throughout various periods of revolution, construction, and reform. Firstly, it is imperative to grasp the grand narrative within party history. Students should be guided to systematically study the significant events, pivotal moments, and remarkable achievements of the Party across different historical periods, with a particular emphasis on how the Party upheld its ideals amidst adversity and persevered until victory. This understanding aids students in recognizing that hard work is a pivotal factor in the Party's illustrious accomplishments. Secondly, attention should be focused on the nuanced narratives within party history. This involves delving into specific individuals and incidents, recounting the heroic

deeds of revolutionary martyrs, the testimony of revolutionary sites, and the quiet dedication of ordinary party members. Such narratives enable students to profoundly comprehend the essence and power of the spirit of hard work and struggle. Lastly, it is necessary to guide students in resolutely opposing false ideologies such as historical nihilism and pan-entertainmentism. They must firmly reject any distortion of party history and cultivate a sense of historical responsibility and mission. This ensures that they accurately evaluate party history while contributing to the Party's cause.

The principle of putting people first should be perpetuated through policy learning. Policy serves as the basis for action formulated by the CPC to realize its line and tasks during a specific historical period. Studying policy aids college students in deeply understanding the problem-oriented and people-first principles in national governance. Firstly, abstract policies should be integrated with concrete cases. Policies such as scientific and technological innovation, poverty alleviation, employment of key groups, and the improvement of major epidemic prevention and treatment systems, as well as the public health system, should guide college students in understanding the economic, political, and social logic behind these policies, thereby appreciating the people-centered development ideology they embody. Secondly, students should be encouraged to participate in simulated policy formulation and evaluation activities. Through role-playing, group discussions, and other forms, students can personally experience the policy decision-making process. From the perspective of policy evaluation, they should consider how to balance the interests of all parties to ensure the maximization of people's interests, thereby further deepening their understanding and recognition of the people-first principle. Thirdly, it is necessary to smooth the channels for expressing college students' demands and leverage the multimedia matrix to conduct thematic discussions and publicity activities on national development, social issues, and student needs, allowing students to personally experience the benefits of the people-first principle.

The socialist realm should be opened up through practice and hard work. As the builders and successors of the socialist cause, the practical abilities of college students are directly related to the realization process and depth of the socialist ideal. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance college students' practical abilities through various means. Firstly, field visits and research activities should be organized to lead college students to the forefront of scientific and technological innovation, the vast fields of rural revitalization, the vivid practices of green development, and the front lines of social services and community governance. These activities will enable students to experience the current social situation and deepen their understanding of national conditions and people's lives. This process not only allows them to intuitively perceive the complexity and challenges of the modernization process but also encourages them to deepen their understanding and identification with the party's basic theory, line, and strategy, thereby stimulating patriotic feelings and collective consciousness. Secondly, college students should be encouraged to actively participate in social practices such as public opinion collection, volunteer service, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Through practice, they can explore solutions and exercise their problem-solving abilities. Thirdly, exchanges and cooperation with the international community should be strengthened to broaden college students' horizons and expose them to the modernization processes of different countries. By learning valuable experiences from these processes, students can examine the challenges faced by Chinese-style modernization from a more

objective and rational perspective, thereby contributing more wisdom and strength to the development of the socialist cause.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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