

Exploration and Practice of the Education Function of Micro-Circle Culture in Colleges and Universities

Taking Beijing Institute of Technology, Zhuhai as an Example*

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Abstract—Education is the eternal theme of colleges and universities, and the whole process of education and all-round education is the main track to achieve the basic task of moral education. As the main "online" battlefield of the modern ideological and political education of college students, network ideological and political education should make full use of the network media carrier, take the initiative to integrate and sink into the network culture circle of students to do ideological education and guidance for students, which is an important link of college students' ideological education. With the students' micro-circle as the breakthrough, it is necessary to establish the network thought guidance to realize network education, give play to the function of lighthouse guidance, cultivate the fellow growth culture, develop the power of example, and achieve education through moral composition and setting examples.

Keywords: *micro-circle culture, network education, online ideological, political education*

I. INTRODUCTION

On December 7 and 8, 2016, President Xi Jinping delivered an important speech at the national conference on ideological and political work in colleges and universities held in Beijing. He stressed that new media and new technologies should be used to make the work livelier, and the traditional advantages of ideological and political work should be highly integrated with information technology to enhance the sense and appeal of the times. In the book "Circle Culture in Online Virtual Communities" [1], Yan Cuiping and Cai Qi discuss the formation, identification, participation and popularity of the circle culture in the network virtual community. Being immersed in the era of mobile Internet, contemporary college students face a variety of information. In a different network culture environment, students are subtly influenced by a variety of cultures and ideas. Each student is immersed in different "micro-circle" culture and takes delight in talking about various "circle"

culture, from which they absorb the sunlight and rain for growth and dig the spiritual food of thought. It can be seen from this that the growth of contemporary university students in the Internet environment and in a variety of micro-circles, have a complex impact on their growth. Under the guidance of ideological and political network, it is an important part of the work of ideological and political workers today to make good ideological guidance for college students through the micro-circle culture they live in, plant the seeds of truth, goodness and beauty for their life growth, and build rich spiritual food for them.

II. OVERVIEW OF NETWORK MEDIA

In "Circle Culture and Social Network Communication in China" [2], Yang Xinmin discussed issues such as Chinese circle culture, communication relationship of social network sites and how to generate connections.

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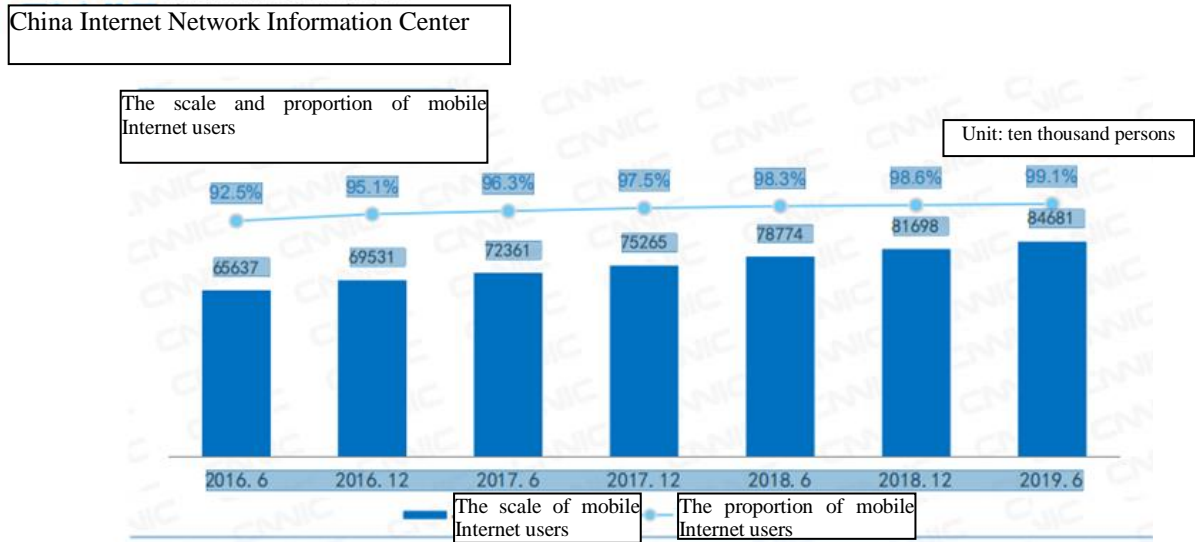


Fig. 1. The scale and proportion of mobile Internet users.

China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) released the 44th "China Statistical Report on Internet Development" on August 30, 2019 [6], which shows that by June 2019, the scale of Internet users in China had reached 854 million, and the scale of mobile Internet users in China has reached 847 million, and the proportion of Internet users

^a. Source: "China Statistical Report on Internet Development" of CNNIC.

using mobile Internet has reached 99.1% (see "Fig. 1"); the age structure of Internet users: as of June 2019, Internet users aged 10-39 account for 65.1% of the total Internet users, among which those aged 20-29 account for the highest proportion, 24.6%, and middle school students are the largest group of netizens, accounting for 26.0% [6] (see "Fig. 2").

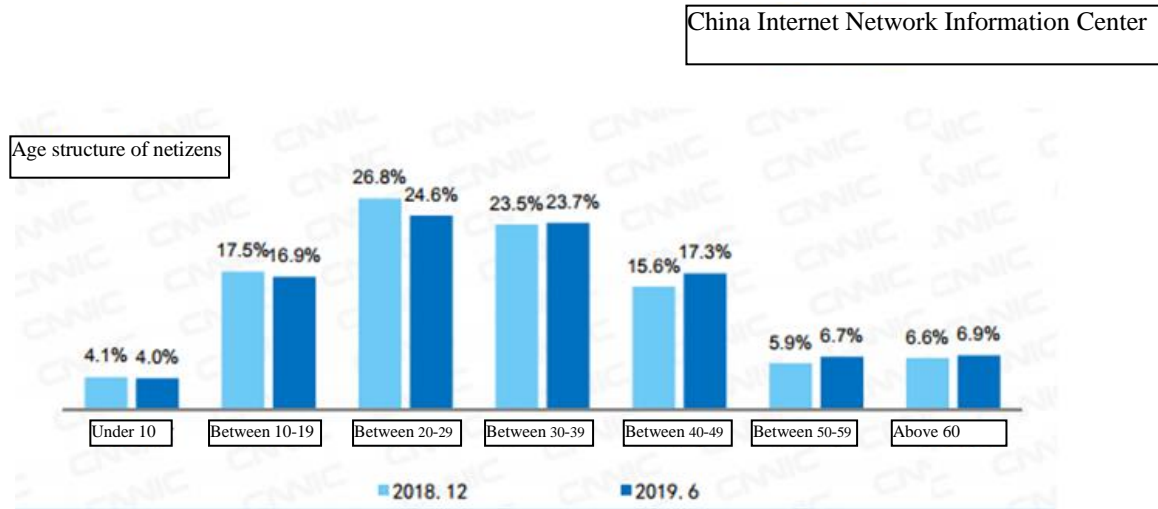


Fig. 2. Age structure of netizens.

^a. Source: "China Statistical Report on Internet Development" of CNNIC.

China Internet Network Information Center

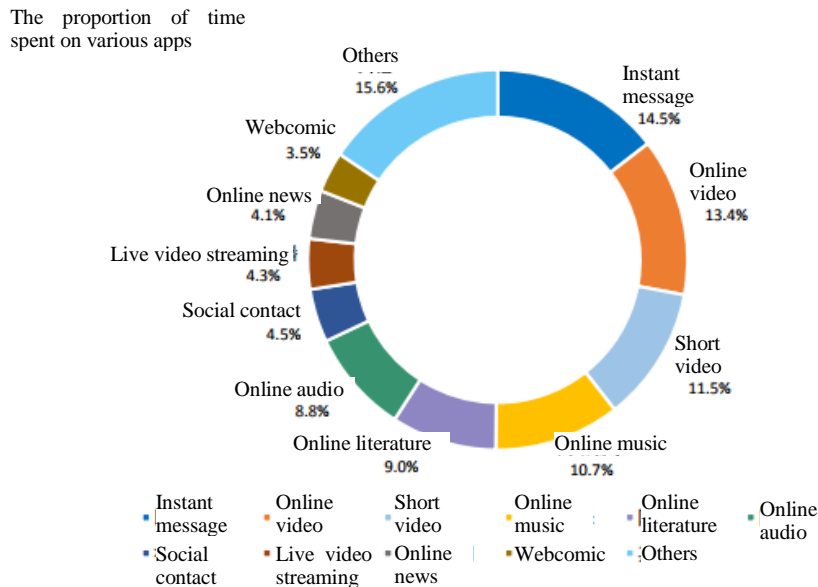


Fig. 3. The proportion of time spent on various apps.

From the 44th "China Statistical Report on Internet Development" in "Fig. 3", the average time spent online per person per week can be seen. The proportion of time spent on various apps: in the first half of 2019, among the apps frequently used by mobile Internet users, instant messaging apps were used for the longest time, accounting for 14.5%; the time span of online video, short video, online music, online literature and online audio applications ranked two to six places, respectively 13.4%, 11.5%, 10.7%, 9.0% and 8.8% [6].

From this data, it can be seen that contemporary college students are basically "Internet citizens". College students are increasingly dependent on and trust the Internet, which has become an important part of their daily life [5]. As the masters of ideological and political education, students have been transferred to another network virtual "circle" society by such a "social migration". Such "migration", whether from the time, space, or from the strength, depth, put forward very high educational requirements for ideological and political educators in colleges and universities. However, the strength of ideological and political education workers in colleges and universities is after all limited, so the difficulty is conceivable to cover all the students in the school and pay attention to all students.

III. STRENGTHENING IDEOLOGICAL GUIDANCE AND THE INTEGRATION OF "SURFACE, LINE AND POINT" THROUGH THE "CARRIER OF MICRO-CIRCLE"

The formation of "circle culture" is based on the needs of the audience and various psychological factors of the communication individual. It is characterized by emotional interaction, value sharing, convergence of views and "self-purification", as well as the shortages of closure in

organizational form, homogeneity of members and highly emotional interaction [3]. At present, network new media has brought new opportunities and challenges to ideological and political education in colleges and universities, which is an indisputable fact. It has become an important realistic subject for colleges and universities in the new era to guide the situation, teach students according to their aptitude, make full use of the new media and do well in the ideological and political education of the Internet in the new era.

A. Covering the "surface" of micro-circle

In the current situation, the new media platforms of propaganda and ideological work in colleges and universities are various. Propaganda department, organization department, party building, student affairs office, youth corps committee, the department of education, physical education department and other functional departments, secondary units, and some teachers have their own new media platforms, such as campus network, official accounts, micro video, QQ, and WeChat groups, etc. These platforms play an active role in information dissemination and thought guidance [5]. But on the whole, the effect is not ideal with scattered force, insufficient pertinence and weak influence. At present, publicity windows in colleges and universities are many, yet are not well integrated. The intensity of publicity is not enough, and the innovation resources and material for guiding students' thoughts need to be further integrated. In order to give full play to the role of these new media resources and power in ideological and political education, it is necessary for colleges and universities to integrate effective resources and establish a leading group related to the ideological and political work of new media. This group can be led by the university leadership, with members covering all the function department and secondary

units. A functional organization can be attached to the student affairs office or the propaganda department of the party committee. After the establishment of the leadership and functional department, it is necessary to focus on the three aspects of "integration, guidance and innovation".

B. Connecting the micro-circle through "lines"

At present, many secondary departments of colleges and universities have also set up new media publicity platforms and windows, but since they lack professional management, and release contents with strong comprehensiveness yet weak guidance, the interactivity is poor. The biggest feature of new media is its communication function. Some platforms play an insignificant role in ideological education, but a noticeable one in information dissemination [5]. It is necessary to make effective integration, reasonable editing, targeted publicity, scientific guidance of resource information of various new media platforms so as to give the publicity an orientation and the guidance a goal. Through the integration of resources, the ideological and political workers can not only supervise the educational orientation of all platforms, but also guide the efficient and professional operation of the platforms. It is also convenient for students to participate in and obtain information, and students' daily problems can be solved online in a one-stop manner.

C. Making breakthrough through "points" of the micro-circle

In the "The Circle Structure and Mimicry Communication of WeChat Under the Logic of Internet", Zhao Hongxun mentioned that, "Under the Internet environment, the communication culture represented by WeChat forms a 'social circle' and 'cultural circle' with super functions". By understanding the circle culture of college students, taking the "micro-circles" of college students as the platform or carrier, the ideological and political workers link themselves to students and bridge the gap between them through the network new media, and be the thought guide and guiding light for students through better integrating into the life and study of contemporary college students online and offline, so as to give full play to their role as the "lighthouse".

Common problems and special problems in college students' education nowadays:

- To solve problems — some students are blind in learning and have no learning target, motivation and are lazy in learning and some are addicted to online games and can't take the initiative to learn
- To guide the ideological growth of college students and help them to establish correct values
- To better guide students to take the initiative to learn and stimulate students' interest in learning through the circle culture
- To classify students' learning groups in a more targeted way, which is of more guiding significance

to student education, through the guidance and diversion of "circle" culture

- To integrate into the "micro-circle" culture of students by taking the initiative, so as to effectively reduce the tendency of Internet violence and soft violence among students, and give positive guidance timely

With Beijing Institute of Technology, Zhuhai as an example, taking the freshmen of class 2019 of school of design and art as the object of investigation, this paper investigates the freshmen's use of WeChat and other new media when entering the university through questionnaires. Through the investigation on the use of network new media among the freshmen of Beijing Institute of Technology, Zhuhai (hereinafter referred to as "Beijing Institute of Technology"), some data are obtained.

Through questionnaires and interviews, the "circle" categories, levels and numbers represented by WeChat, weibo, QQ, community and public accounts were investigated to understand the stickiness of contemporary college students to mobile Internet.

Through the investigation and analysis of the freshmen born after 2000 in 2019, 99.3% of the students are using WeChat, and 92.96% of the students must use WeChat every day. Most students use WeChat to communicate with friends, Moments, study group and follow the official accounts. 84.5% of the students follow over 6 official accounts after their enrollment, with 74% following them for the sake of learning professional knowledge and developing interests. In terms of the usage rate of WeChat, QQ, weibo and community, the usage rate of WeChat accounts for the highest. Among the students who participated in the survey, 94.37% expressed their willingness to join the WeChat group (for friends, interests, learning discussion and learning competition), and 76.76% had more than 10 WeChat groups. However, as new comers, the proportion of students participating in relevant competition activities through WeChat channel or participating in the competition channels released by teachers through WeChat channel is not too high. These data show:

- Students are loafing around mobile circles like the WeChat in large number and spending much time, highly dependent on network circles with strong stickiness and high concentration.
- For the construction of micro-circle culture, there is a large space for the development of network ideological and political education and students can be actively guided by the space and platform of micro-circle.

Through investigation and research, ideological and political workers can try to integrate into the circles attracting students and actively guide them in a targeted manner, so as to lead the ideological education and guidance of college students with micro-circle as the carrier.

IV. PLAYING THE ROLE OF LIGHTHOUSES GUIDANCE, BY SETTING UP A PLATFORM FOR FELLOW TRAVELERS

Taking WeChat as an example, interest-based groups were established in practice in Beijing Institute of Technology, Zhuhai. For example, cultural and art competition group, major innovation project group, innovation group, "To be a model", innovation research group on culture and arts, and social practice group were established to carry out special activities. By means of activity competition, with thought guidance as the key, the honor drive is given play to build the peer group with consistent goal direction.

By setting up "micro-circle" groups represented by art, culture, sports, hobbies and specialties, ideological and political workers collect information about the competition regularly, organize and guide students to participate in the relevant competitions. In this way, they actively guide students to set up the right values, promote positive energy, increase students' learning enthusiasm, initiative and enhance students' self-confidence and learning achievement so as to improve students' comprehensive ability. Teachers actively play the role of a lighthouse to guide students, instruct students timely in practice, set examples of positive guidance among peers, so as to influence the growth of more "fellow students".

V. CONDUCTING RESULTS-ORIENTED ETHICAL EDUCATION

It is important to make full use of the opportunity of new students' entrance education to guide and recommend

students to join relevant "micro-circles", such as learning related groups and WeChat official accounts, and to guide students to actively participate in the mobile terminal online learning and interaction. In combination with the networked and virtualized characteristics and commonalities of "micro-circle", it is necessary to actively build an education circle combining online and offline channels, so as to improve students' participation and interactivity through online and offline joint interaction.

In terms of establishing "micro-circle" groups, taking Beijing Institute of Technology, Zhuhai as an example, the project was trialed in Grade 2015, practiced in Grade 2017 and carried out in Grade 2019. A Part of the students are guided tragedy to join the "micro-circles for learning" which are mainly WeChat platforms, and are led to play an active part in competitions by teachers through collecting competition information. Through participating in competitions and winning prizes, students have enhanced confidence and learning motive, and increased sense of honor and cohesion. At the same time, teachers take the result as the orientation, give play to the guiding role of prize winners in the competitions, to lead them to influence and attract more fellow students to participate in the activities. Through such a process they continue to inspire students, strengthen moral education and cultivate people in a subtle way. Through the process of micro-circle cultural practice, some achievements have been made, and the role of role model has been actively played. Taking "Beijing Institute of Technology, Zhuhai" as an example, some achievements have been made through micro-circles (see "Table I")

TABLE I. ACHIEVEMENTS OF EDUCATING STUDENTS THROUGH MICRO-CIRCLE PRACTICE

Name	Quantity	Level	Notes
Undergraduate innovation and entrepreneurship program	4	University-level	2017 (2 concluded programs) / 2019
Internet +	3	University-level	Application for project approval
Summer social practice	7	School-level University-level Province-level	6 (school-level) (Grade 2017) 1 (school-level) 1 (Provincial key team) team
New Era, New Action — Aspire, Cultivating Morality, Learning Widely, Serving the Country Theme Education Activities of the Guangdong Province Office of Education	1	Province-level	Excellence team (Grade 2018)
Secure University of the Zhuhai High-tech Zone	2	City-level	(Grade 2017)
National Scholarship	2	National-level	
Everbright Scholarship	3	University-level	
The 12355 Youth Anti-drug Rule of Law and Mental Health Original Works Competition of Guangdong Province	1	Province-level	Excellence award of Grade 2017 (Grade 2017)
10 Figures on the List	3	University-level	
Academy Award of Advertising Festival of Chinese College Students	1	Province-level	Honourable Mention
The second competition of college students WeChat work creation for safety prevention in Zhuhai High-tech Zone	1	City-level	Third prize team (Grade 2017)
The Fourth National Network Culture Festival	5	National-level	Results to be appraised (Grade 2019)
The 8th college student culture and arts festival works — "tracing light and color" photography competition	2	University-level	Excellence Award (Grade 2019)

VI. CONCLUSION AND ENLIGHTENMENT

A. *Conducting researches to learn more about the "millennials"*

First of all, as a member of the ideological and political education team in colleges and universities, one should pay attention to objective facts in daily work, pay attention to the mainstream of modern college students, and actively understand the rule and trend of the development of students' group ideology and network culture. Secondly, modern college students, as digital natives, have a very frequent understanding and use of the network mobile new media. In their lives, there have been very obvious characteristics, such as the constant switch between social citizenship and network citizenship and between real society and network virtual "circle". Therefore, as the leaders of their ideas, ideological and political workers need to understand and integrate with them. It is important to set up a beacon high in the ocean of the Internet, and kindle the shining guiding light on the channel of training qualified builders and successors of socialism.

B. *Applying the trinity taking the micro-circle as the carrier, competitions and activities as the means, and the moral composition and example setting led by thought as the goal to the whole process of online ideological education*

In the process of network ideological education, teachers should use students' immersive micro-circle as a carrier to fully integrate into students' network cultural life. Taking positive guidance as the traction, through organizing and releasing student-centered professional competitions, cultural and art competitions, student activities, study groups in the micro-circle and other means, teachers persist in the fine and stimulating guidance, to make students in the network culture always full of positive and optimistic attitude and self-confidence. Through the accumulation of results by means of the competition, the teachers can set prize-winners as examples among the students so as to enhance students' confidence in learning and competition, and achieve the goal of educating students by morality composition and setting examples.

C. *Grasping the opportunity to do a good job of micro-circle work education layout*

In the practice of micro-circle cultural education, teachers should grasp the opportunity, take the initiative to actively use the strong plasticity of students at the beginning of enrollment, and pay attention to the characteristics of students at different grades. According to students' learning accumulation, there will be changes in their attention to the relevant micro-circle culture. With their accumulation, they will conduct self-selection and eventually form their own relatively stable and solid micro-circle culture.

The practice of micro-circle education can be extended to class construction management and community guidance management to promote the learning and ideological

education growth of classmates. It is necessary to make full use of the "magnetic" attraction effect of mobile Internet on college students. Through studying the characteristics of college students' stickiness in mobile Internet, teachers can better understand contemporary college students, better integrate with them, and better lead the role of network ideology and politics.

D. *Integrating the five aspects related to micro-culture to do a good job in micro-circle education*

1) *Building micro-consciousness*

Micro-consciousness should be implanted in microsphere culture, and cultural growth should be actively guided through clear-cut political thoughts and theories. At the same time, teachers should be objective and impartial, utter critical voice, and actively set up the correct "micro-consciousness" with scientific and correct theory as the guide.

2) *Guiding micro-thoughts*

Under the guidance of ideological and political network, through the micro-circle culture in which college students live, it is necessary to guide them in thinking, so as to plant the seeds of truth, goodness and beauty for their growth and build rich spiritual food for them.

3) *Paying attention to micro-discourse*

With the formation of micro-circle culture, varieties of networked, personalized and symbolic network language expressions emerge one after another and iterate rapidly. As college teachers and ideological and political teachers, they should constantly pay attention to the network language among students, timely guide and objectively criticize the bad network atmosphere through school media. It is also necessary for them to timely grasp new changes, strive to adapt to the changes of the network era, and strive to fit the network language, shorten the distance with students, and prevent network violence and hidden dangers.

4) *Developing micro-habits*

Through the micro-circle, teachers should actively guide students to establish good micro-habits, and lead by example and practice by often sharing some knowledge, learning experience, learning methods in the micro-circle. They can also organize students to participate in some core values to promote Chinese culture and other activities and competitions by carrying out some discussions on learning topics and micro-videos in the micro-circle. With interest as a guide, they can exert positive influence on students to form a study interest group. Through exerting positive influence on some students who are blind in learning and have no learning objectives in micro-circle, teachers can help these students who have no learning motivation and are lazy in learning, addicted to video games and unable to take the initiative in learning to change their learning attitude timely, cultivate their micro-habits.

5) *Leading the micro-life*

Through the micro-circle literacy, teacher can positively affect the students' micro-circle behavior. Through micro-circle learning, especially network public opinion thinking,

life perception and learning experience sharing, teachers can positively influence students' micro-circle topics and atmosphere, improve students' ability of discrimination and reflection in network culture, and lead their micro-circle cultural life.

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