

# The Hotspots and Trends of Ideological and Political Research in China from the Perspective of Bibliometrics

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## ABSTRACT

China's ideological and political teachings have been rapidly expanding under the guidance of Chinese national policy. This study used CiteSpace to download 2141 papers from the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and the Chinese Social Sciences Citation Index (CSSCI), classify them into Chinese core periodicals, and analyze them by bibliometrics. The goal was to reflect the research time, space structure, hotspot, and evolutionary trends in Chinese ideological and political courses. The conclusion indicates that there is a general upward tendency in the study of China's ideological and political teachings, particularly after 2019. Because the School of Marxism is recognized as the primary research front in domestic institutions, the collaborative relationship between research institutes and scholars should be developed to some level. Basic theory, ideological and political teachers, and teaching are the three core research subjects. The present research hotspot is Xi Jinping's Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

**Keywords:** Ideological and political lessons, Citespace, Knowledge Graph.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

At a symposium of teachers of ideological and political theory courses in schools on March 18, 2019, General Secretary Xi Jinping underlined that ideological and political theory courses are the main courses for implementing the fundamental job of nurturing people. The most basic job in running successful ideological and political theory courses is to completely execute the party's educational strategy and answer the fundamental dilemma of who to train, how to teach, and for whom to train [1]. The study of these topics is crucial in promoting the study and development of ideological and political courses in China. This paper uses the Chinese core journals and CSSCI source journals included in the CNKI database as data sources, and CiteSpace visualization software for bibliometrics, to systematically review and summarize the research results of ideological and political courses in China. The relevant research literature from 2005 to 2020 is sorted out to define the basic backdrop, research hotspots, and development trends in the field of ideological and political courses, to give a theoretical foundation for future research on these subjects.

## 2. DATA SOURCES AND RESEARCH METHODS

### 2.1 Data Sources

The CNKI database is used as the paper's data source to acquire more full and accurate results. The journal source type is Chinese core journals and CSSCI source journals, and the subject is "ideological and political course." The acquired results are manually verified and filtered for ideological and political connotation, and irrelevant content is removed, sorted, and de-duplicated. Finally, we found 2141 genuine basic sample papers that were published between 2005 and 2020.

### 2.2 Research Methods

In this paper, the bibliometric analysis method is employed to extract the domestic published research literature data of ideological and political courses, and the CiteSpace is employed to analyze the scientific knowledge map in the field of ideological and political courses, including cooperation network analysis and keyword co-occurrence network analysis. The period is

2005-2020, the time slice is set to 1 year, and the threshold selects the top 50 nodes in each time slice (Top N=50).

2.2.1 Cooperation Network Analysis

Author collaboration networks, institutional cooperation networks, and national and regional cooperation networks can all be mapped using CiteSpace. This paper only examined the first two and set the node types to institution and author and created the research institution and author co-occurrence graphs, respectively. The cooperative interaction between different institutions and individuals in the sphere of ideological and political study may be learned by interpreting the graph.

2.2.2 Keyword Co-occurrence Network Analysis.

The primary theme of the literature content is summarized in keywords. The research hotspots in this topic can be located by combing and analyzing relevant literature terms. The distribution and evolution process of research hotspots in the sphere of ideological and political courses can be better displayed from the time dimension by evaluating the co-occurrence of keywords from the perspective of time zone (Timeline). Keyword burst (Burst) denotes a considerable increase in the frequency of a specific keyword over time, reflecting fresh perspectives of researchers in the ideological and political study during that time, and might symbolize the academic frontier and development trend in that time.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL COURSES RESEARCH LITERATURE

3.1 Time Distribution Characteristics of Ideological and Political Courses Research

Statistics on the number of articles published each year might indicate the research field's temporal distribution features and are an important foundation for understanding the ideological and political research field's evolution trend. Figure 1 shows an annual distribution map of ideological and political research literature. It exhibited that the number of ideological and political study literature displayed a slow-growing tendency from 2005 to 2009 and a fluctuating growth trend from 2010 to 2018. It demonstrates a significant increase in research between 2010 and 2017. After 2019, ideological and political courses became a research hotspot, with a huge increase in the number of papers published. In the last two years, 863 publications have been published, accounting for around 40% of the total number of papers published.

3.2 Spatial Distribution Characteristics of Research on Ideological and Political Courses

Figure 2 shows a co-occurrence map of domestic ideological and political-related research institutions. The research institutions of ideological and political courses are mostly Marxist colleges in universities, and the cooperation network between institutions is rather scattered. The most active institution is Tsinghua University school of Marxism. There are 1187 network nodes in Figure 2, with 360 connections between them, and the network density is barely 0.0005. Some of them, including Tsinghua University and Peking University in Beijing, Shanghai University, Shanghai Jiaotong University, and Fudan University in Shanghai, have close regional cooperation with surrounding universities. Some institutions, such as Shanghai University and China Renmin University have carried out cross-provincial cooperation; however, most institutions, such as Wuhan University School of Marxism and Jilin University School of Marxism, lack cooperative research; despite publishing a large number of papers, they are all published independently. The School of Marxism of Jilin University and the Academy of Social Sciences of

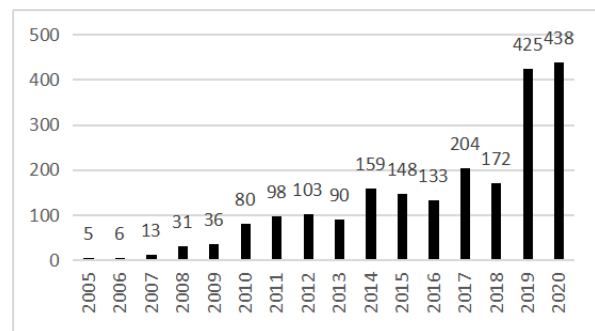
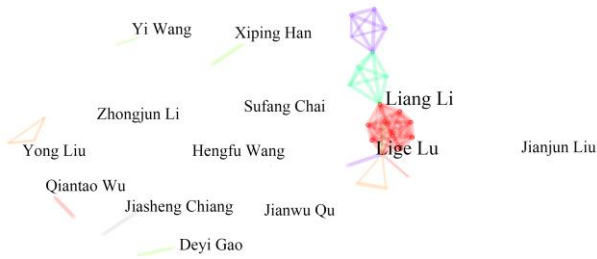


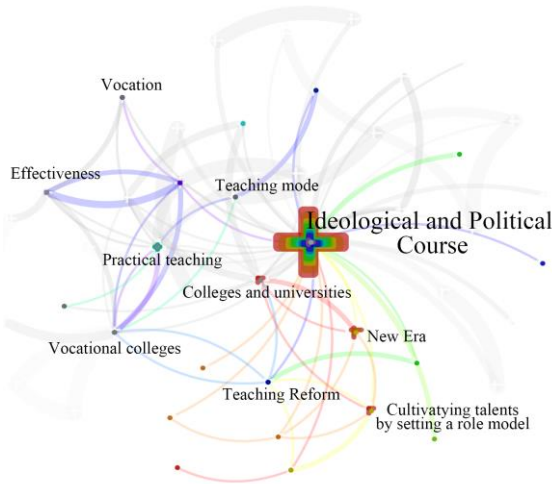
Figure 1 Annual distribution of literature publications of ideological and political courses from 2005 to 2020.



Figure 2 Institutional collaboration network for ideological and political studies from 2005 to 2020.



**Figure 3** Author collaborative network of ideological and political studies 2005 to 2020.



**Figure 4** Keywords co-occurrence knowledge atlas in ideological and political course.

Shanghai University have also achieved great results in the field of ideological and political research.

Setting the node type to "author" in the CiteSpace program to create a co-occurrence map of writers of domestic ideological and political courses (see Figure 3). Although there are a huge number of domestic researchers involved in ideological and political study, the collaboration network between writers is relatively dispersed. The author's collaboration network graph, for example, has 2581 nodes and 1204 connections, a network density of only 0.0004, and most researchers do not cooperate. Liang Li of Shanghai University's Academy of Social Sciences holds the record for most articles published [2-3]. Lige Lu, from Xi'an Jiaotong University's School of Marxism, is ranked second. He has written eight publications, primarily on the design of ideological and political courses using Marxist theory [4], and he works closely with Liang Li [5]. Jianjun Liu and Yi Wang of the Renmin University of China School

of Marxism have also produced greater results, publishing 7 papers each. Figure 3 depicts a small yet densely packed collection of authors. It is an academic group led by the top two authors, Liang Li and Lige Lu that resembles modern research driven by a few leaders. Within the group, a close network of cooperation has developed.

#### 4. DISTRIBUTION AND DEVELOPMENT TREND OF RESEARCH HOTSPOTS IN IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL COURSES

##### 4.1 Network Characteristics of Co-occurrence of Keywords in Ideological and Political Courses

Set the node type to "keyword" and use the CiteSpace program to construct a knowledge map of the co-occurrence of domestic ideological and political research keywords (see Figure 4). The size of each node in the map corresponds to the positive correlation between the keyword's frequency and its frequency. With a total of 966 occurrences in the co-occurrence network map of ideological and political courses research keywords, ideological and political courses have the highest frequency of keyword occurrences. The remaining top ten high-frequency keywords that represent the focus of the literature are colleges and universities, practical teaching, vocational colleges, new era, cultivating talents by setting a role model, teaching reform, teaching mode, effectiveness, and vocation.

##### 4.2 Hot Topics in Ideological and Political Research

The keywords were clustered to gain a better understanding of the hot topics in ideological and political research. Based on the scale of the clusters, seven main clustering groups were identified (see Figure 5), representing the seven research directions of ideological and political courses: #0 ideological and political Course, #1 Ideological and Political Course Teacher, #2 Teaching Reform, #3 Practical Teaching, # Effectiveness, #5 Colleges and universities, #6 Vocational Colleges. Three important hotspots of ideological and political research are summarized: core theory of ideological and political courses, ideological and political course teachers, and ideological and political course teaching.

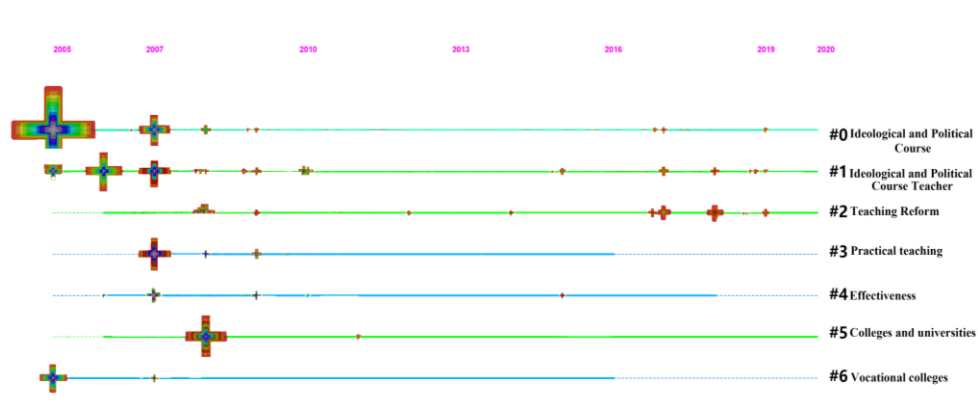


Figure 5 Ideological and Political Course Keyword Clustering Timeline Perspective Map.

#### 4.2.1 The Basic Theory of Ideological and Political Courses

The party's basic position and value trend are encapsulated in the ideological and political path, which is inextricably linked to the core dilemma of what sort of people to teach, how to train people, and for whom [6]. Ideological and political courses begin with Marxist theory, follow the ideological logic of "theory-ideology-politics," and use the teaching mechanism in ideological and political courses that are rich in ideology, theory, and affinity. As a result, teaching key theories in a political science course is crucial. According to Leisheng Zhang, among the theoretical materials accessible for ideological and political courses are Marxism's fundamental theory, its development history, the history of the party and the country, and Xi Jinping's new age of socialism with Chinese characteristics. as well as on-the-ground research on important theoretical and practical challenges [7].

#### 4.2.2 Ideological and Political Teachers

Looking back over the past 70 years since the formation of the People's Republic of China, ideological and political teacher team building has largely followed a spiral pattern [8]. Since the Communist Party of China's 18th National Congress, the party and the country have placed a premium on the education of intellectual and political instructors. The cultivation and improvement of ideological and political teachers' overall quality [9] and the formation of the teaching team [10] are all research hotspots for ideological and political teachers. The development of ideological and political courses in the new period has posed new challenges for educators: Simultaneously, teachers of ideological and political courses must develop their scientific research abilities, which play an essential role in increasing the teaching efficacy of ideological and political theory courses and spreading Marxist theory in college students' minds [11].

#### 4.2.3 Ideological and Political Teaching

Through keyword clustering analysis, it is found that the teaching-research of ideological and political courses mainly includes teaching content, practical teaching, and teaching reform. Since the reform and opening up, the domestic ideological and political curriculum system has undergone three major adjustments in the 85 Program, 98 Program, and 05 Program, and gradually formed the curriculum system of ideological and political courses with the main contents of the Basic Principles of Marxism, Ideological and Moral Cultivation and Legal Basis, Mao Zedong Thought and Theoretical System of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, Outline of Modern History and Situation and Policy [12]. In August 2019, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council issued "Several Opinions on Deepening the Reform and Innovation of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Schools in the New Era", further adjusted and innovated the curriculum system construction system of ideological and political courses in the new era, and gradually opened Xi Jinping Course on Introduction to Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. While further improving the construction of the existing discipline system, the research on the curriculum system of ideological and political courses focuses on solving new problems in practical exploration.

Yizhong He and others put forward that "the practical teaching of ideological and political courses should take the rich and colorful social life as the stage, rely on material production labor, and focus on enriching perceptual knowledge and testing rational knowledge, to help students establish a correct world outlook, outlook on life, and values. Teaching activities to guide students to strengthen their Marxist beliefs, practice the lofty ideals of communism and the common ideal of socialism with Chinese characteristics" [13] Ying Shang et al believed that the practical teaching of ideological and political courses should closely focus on the content and requirements of the curriculum theory [14].

With the rapid development of modern technology, ideological and political courses actively apply modern science and technology to promote the innovation of teaching forms and deepen the reform of teaching models. The combination of ideological and political teaching with MOOCs flipped classrooms, and new media has achieved fruitful research results.

### 4.3 Hot Topics in Ideological and Political Research

In the time zone perspective map of ideological and political research keywords (see Figure 6), the hot keywords of ideological and political courses showed two outbreaks and multi-stage development trends from 2005 to 2020. After the rise of research on ideological and political theory courses in 2005, the first research climax (2005-2007) emerged. 2007-2017 is the most continuous period of research inheritance which mainly continue the previous research, pays attention to the teaching quality of ideological and political courses, integrates socialist core values, and begins to use information technology such as MOOCs to integrate into the teaching of ideological and political courses. 2018 has been the second climax of research, and the new era has become the focus of attention. The innovation of research in this period has been enhanced, and a large number of new research themes and topics have evolved.

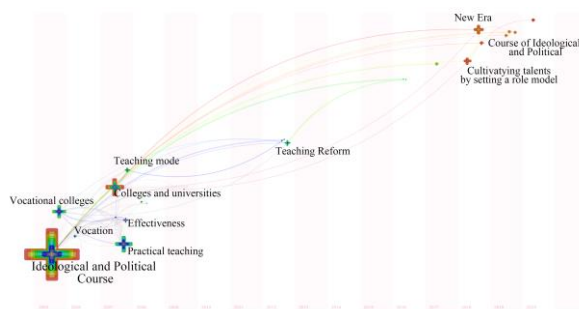


Figure 6 Keywords Time zone perspective atlas.

### 4.4 the Development Trend of Ideological and Political Research

The emergence of a keyword describes the surge in frequency or a significant dynamic change of a certain keyword over a period of time, which can reflect the development trend of the research field and discover cutting-edge directions. The top 10 keywords are aggregated by ordering according to the size of emergence (see Table 1). From the perspective of the emergence of the keywords of ideological and political courses, "new era" is the keyword with the highest emergence, followed by "curriculum ideology and politics" and "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. Judging from the time node of the emergence of emergent keywords, the earliest keyword is "effectiveness" (2007), followed by "higher vocational" (2010), and the latest keyword is "new era", " Course Ideology and Politics" and "Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era" (both in 2018) have been hotspots in recent years. The emergent keywords of ideological and political research appeared after 2016, and the top 4 emergent keywords have continued to this day. Judging from the content of the prominent keywords, the research on ideological and political courses is highly consistent with the spirit of national policies and has a firm and correct political orientation. The reform and innovation of ideological and political courses in the new era, the modernized teaching system, and curriculum ideological and political courses are the development trend of the research on ideological and political courses.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

With the help of CiteSpace software, this paper selects the Chinese core and CSSCI source journal documents in the CNKI database and conducts a visual analysis of the structural characteristics, hotspot distribution, and evolution trend of domestic ideological

Table 1. Emergent keywords of ideological and political research from 2005 to 2020.

Keyword	Emergence	Start	End	2005 to 2020
New era	21.33	2018	2020	-----■
Curriculum politics	10.22	2018	2020	-----■
Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era	7.83	2018	2020	-----■

Ideological and political courses	6.7	2018	2020	
Socialist core values	6.44	2015	2017	
Teaching mode	6.33	2015	2016	
Flipping classroom	6.15	2016	2018	
higher vocational	5.5	2010	2016	
MOOCs	5.43	2015	2018	
Marxist Academy	5.25	2015	2018	

and political research literature from 2005 to 2020, and finally draws the following conclusions.

First, from the perspective of the time distribution of literature publication, thanks to the convening of the National Ideological and Political Work Conference in Colleges and Universities and the Symposium for teachers of Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Schools and the spiritual guidance of the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, great breakthroughs have been made in the research of ideological and political courses in my country, and more opportunities and challenges will be ushered in.

Second, from the perspective of the characteristics of the literature structure, the research on ideological and political courses is mainly concentrated in the Marxist colleges of universities. The Marxist College of Tsinghua University, the Marxist College of the Wuhan University of Technology, and the Marxist College of the Renmin University of China are the most active research institutions. Some scholars have shown strong scientific research ability and academic influence. Liang Li and Lige Lu have published the most papers, and they cooperate closely with each other, forming a relatively concentrated academic group, but the cooperation relationship between the other authors is not close.

Third, from the perspective of hotspot distribution and evolution trend, the research on ideological and political courses has formed the basis of ideological and political course teachers, ideological and political courses in colleges and universities, ideological and political course teaching, practical teaching, colleges and universities, higher vocational colleges, political theory courses, and teaching reform. The research network with such keywords as the mainline can be divided into three research hot topics: basic theory of ideological and political courses, teachers of ideological and political

courses, and teaching of ideological and political courses. In recent years, emerging high-frequency keywords include new era, curriculum ideology and politics, and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era.

## AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Tao Wu contributed to the conception of the study and wrote the manuscript; Mingjing Li helped perform the analysis and manuscript preparation.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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