On the Basic Optimization Ways of Ideological and Political Education Environment

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Abstract - Through analysis of the challenges in current universities' ideological and political work——the international ideological discourse power is in disadvantageous position; the informational society is in formation and the top-level design is still missing in universities' ideological and political work, the author concludes the basic methods for optimizing the environment of universities' ideological and political work, which are: strengthening the research of ideological and political theories, enhancing the top-level designing and integrated planning of ideological and political work, coordinating the methods with the environment for ideological and political education. Some related measures are recommended.

Index Terms - universities, ideological and political education, environmental optimization

1. Introduction

The world has stepped into the era of globalization and information technology, and the increasingly intense collision of different ideology-oriented social cultures has brought sustained and significant challenges for the ideological and political education in our country.

Ideological and political education has special meaning in China. The so-called "ideology" refers to the social mainstream value and shaping and dissemination of its system; the so-called ideological and political work means to shape the social members in line with the requirements of the social mainstream values in their thoughts and behavior through the publicity and education of ideology.

The ideological and political work has been the "lifeline" of the historical experience of the international communist movement[1] and it played an important role in promoting the ideological, spiritual and intellectual development in the new period of socialist construction. Therefore, how to optimize the environment of universities' ideological and political work in the new situation, to ensure the effectiveness of the ideological and political education and make the outstanding young students qualified successors to the socialist cause has become an important issue currently.

2. The Major Challenges Brought by the Current Time Reform in Ideological and Political Work

Nowadays, the unfolding technological revolution, the deepening of economic globalization and the deep adjustment of orient and occident superpower have brought great challenges for the universities' ideological and political work, shown as follows:

A. In the Competition of International Ideological Discourse Power, China is still in a Weak Position and over Defensive State

The so-called international ideological discourse power means to grasp the main international communications tools, communication channels, and determine the communication contents, propagation mode and communication agenda. Their own dominance and communication strategy can be used to create the mainstream value system of international community and context. The core of ideology in western countries lies in the individualism-oriented economic, political and social values, which promotes "democracy, liberty, equality, fraternity" and forms a discourse system with the cohesive concepts, collaborative logical relation and coordinate functions. With the "universal values" as a cover, it could achieve the strong output to the developing countries. Especially after the end of the Cold War, the western mainstream ideology becomes the strongest power and is in an offensive posture of the extensive Third World countries including China. Even after the global financial crisis in 2008, the basic pattern of "attack in western countries and defense in eastern countries" in the competition of international ideological discourse has not changed. For college students, due to their unique characteristics in the growth stage, they are particularly prone to accepting the new thoughts and concepts of individual values and rights, coupled with the lack of understanding of the complexity of reality, which, therefore, determines the overall defensive state of the ideological and political education in colleges and universities in China faced with the spread of western discourse.

B. Information Technology Advancement and Dissemination of Multi-Values Cause More Difficulties of Ideological and Political Education Work

The rapid development of the internet and mobile communications technologies will enhance the access to information of various countries in the world. In China, the new media based on web TV, microblog, Wechat, etc. has stepped into people's lives, which lead and shape the lifestyles, thinking mode and values of college students.[2] At the same time, due to the reform and opening up, China has achieved the modernization construction, coupled with the disorder of core values and the rapid spread of alien pluralistic values. In addition, Western countries did not give up the strategy of "peaceful evolution", which has played an important role in influencing and shaping the thoughts and

mental outlook of Chinese people, especially youth groups, thus making China accept the transformation of western civilization and integrate in the community system led by it. The color revolution in the Middle East area is a case in point. America tends to transform China from bottom to top by adopting the freedom of speech and centering on the rights protection lawyers, underground religion, dissidents, network leaders, disadvantaged groups, etc.[3] While China's ignorance of the ideological and political education in quite a long time undoubtedly cause more difficulties for the ideological and political work in colleges and universities in the new era.

C. The Ideological and Political Education Lacks Top-Level Design, while the Educational Environment Lacks the Interrelated Supporting Facility

Since the reform and opening up, colleges and universities in China have kept the theatrical and practical exploration in the ideological and political education work, and made advances, but overall still cannot fully meet the requirements of many challenges in the new era. Perceived from a profound level, it is because the basic theoretical research of the ideology and the socialist core values in the new era fail to complete the overall construction and major breakthrough. Perceived from a practical level, various social fields including colleges and universities focus on the profitable value creation but ignore the ideological and political education and other long-term work. This may lead to the lack of national, long-term and stable top-level design and overall planning in the ideological and political education, which could unify the thoughts, build consensus and guide action. On the whole, the ideological and political education environment is not compatible and mutually inconsistent, and the values reflected by the family, school, network, society, etc. lack the organic links and support, which often leads to mutual conflicts, consumption, and damage. The good news is that the current ideological and political education is increasingly attracting nationwide attention and being gradually put on the agenda.

3. Basic Ways to Optimize the Construction of Ideological and Political Education Environment

"Ideology", as the research object of ideological and political education, is the historical source of the practice and the starting point of logical research.[4] Ideological and political education environment refers to the total of the external conditions people are directly exposed to and it may influence the ideological and political education.[5] It can be divided into family environment, school environment, social environment; the burgeoning of new media, coupled with the "network environment", especially the environment corresponding to the virtual space communication, constitutes the ideological and political education environment system.[6]

The ideological and political education environment could influence the ideology by its endogenous mechanism. People are the only kind of animals that can pursue meaning"[7], referring to the endogenous mechanism of ideological education that can achieve positive results in ideological education based on the external conscious development and construction. It requires the ideological and political education construction to be with the external construction and ideological exchange and other factors, and the educational environment construction should be the source of the endogenous mechanism.[8] Therefore, ideological and political education environment optimization would affect the ideological construction, exchange and updates of college students, and promote their endogenous mechanism towards the setting direction.

Based on the above analysis, the basic ways to optimize the ideological and political education environment in colleges and universities in China are shown as follows:

A. Strengthen Theoretical Researches of Ideological and Political Work in China

The fundamental basis of the optimization of ideological and political education environment lies in the complete and attractive ideological system. Only the basic political, economic, social and cultural development ideas and core values of socialism modernization construction with Chinese characteristics could solve those significant and deep-seated problems in the process of China's long-term development and endow China with the attraction as powerful as Western discourse system. Thus, the optimization of ideological and political education of colleges and universities could change the pattern of passive defense in the root. After the end of ideological history in the Cold War and undergoing 20 years of development, structural problems occurred to the western discourse system, while it is high time to construct the development path and discourse system with Chinese characteristics. Therefore, China must seize the favorable opportunity to speed up the absorption of all the fine achievements of human society and accelerate the researches on the basic problems, concepts and theories of the ideological field, aiming to provide the most fundamental theories, ideals and spiritual resources for the optimization of ideological and political education environment.

B. Strengthen Top-Level Design and Overall Planning in the Field of Ideological and Political Education

Through 30 years of practice, China has made some progress and undergone external challenges in the construction of ideological and political education environment, from the stage of "crossing the river by feeling for the stones" to the stage of "top-level design guidance". In this process, many important factors beyond the scope of the capability of administrators in universities are involved, such as the purification of public opinion environment, which need the overall consideration and coordination of a higher-level authority. Therefore, the party committees and governments should encourage all the relevant departments to put forward the top-level design and overall planning of ideological and political education based on the existing legal system, and give full play to the collaborative optimization, thus guiding the construction of ideological and political education environment.

C. Shape and Match the Means and Environment of the Integrated Ideological and Political Education

The ideological and political education environment can be divided into family environment, school environment, social environment and network environment, which are interconnected and restricted, or positive synergistic, or have negative friction. It plays an important role in the ideological and political education of college students. Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the overall match of each sub-environment to promote the positive synergy and weaken the negative friction, thus encouraging college students to construct and update their thoughts.

① Purify the social and cultural environment. On the one hand, it is necessary to strengthen the management of the cultural market, screen and reorganize the production and diffusion of works that are inconsistent with the socialist core values, and strengthen the dissemination of works with mainstream values. On the other hand, it is necessary to strengthen the cultural development of the community as well as the friendly combination of universities and the socio-economic and public organizations, thus attracting more social resources to contribute to the construction of universities' ideological and political education environment and achieving the win-win cooperation.

② Optimize the family environment. Universities should strengthen their contacts with the parents, and help them change their education concepts and enhance their social responsibility, thus achieving the extension of ideological and political education chain. The whole society should strengthen propaganda and guidance, so that parents could recognize the irreplaceable function of family education, and actively participate in the education and guidance of young college students. Parents should become the firm allies of ideological and political education.

③ Optimize the ideological and political education environment in schools. Put an emphasis on the ideological and political education classes as well as the construction of teaching staff, full-time and part-time teachers. Strengthen the material and moral incentives, coupled with professional training, aiming to encourage outstanding teachers to participate in the ideological and political education for young students. Innovate the ideological and political education methods, emphasize the dominant position of students in education, and improve the quality of teaching material. Exert the moral education function of specialized courses on the ideological and political education, and promote the construction material and cultural facilities, as well as the educational and cultural activities on campus. Disseminate the university culture and collegial spirit, thus creating the scientific and humanistic spiritual atmosphere. This kind of environment like "spiritual lighthouse" and "living home" is conducive to promoting students' growth and success.

④Purify the network environment. The colorful and complex network environment is a double-edged sword for ideological and political education. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a network platform, on which the school network and BBS, etc. can be used to strengthen the bond and interaction with students. It also involves the supervision and guidance of students' online opinions, in particular, improving the method. Instead of suppressing their activities harshly, patient and sincere communicating is more frequently used; accelerate the training of teams with healthy ideology and political view in order to improve the accuracy and efficiency of the education work. The network environment will thus have a positive impact on the ideological and political education of students.

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