

The Function and Application of Positive Psychology in University

Ideological and Political Education

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Abstract: Positive psychology is a new subject oriented towards developing people's positive quality. It is internally corresponding and mutually promotive with the aim of university ideological and political education. From the perspective of positive psychology, this thesis tries to analyze the dilemma of university ideological education in modern times. And by applying the ideas and methods of positive psychology, this thesis also deeply reflects on and studies university ideological and political education, making some beneficial explorations for the improvement of its innovation and its effectiveness.

The main ideas of positive psychology

Positive psychology is a newly-emerged research field in the American psychological circle. It researches the positive aspects of human like human power and virtues by employing some relatively complete and effective research methods and measuring means in psychology. [1] To sum up, the ideas positive psychology advocates are mainly in three aspects.

1. Realizing the balance of value in psychology. Positive psychology believes that negative psychology can't present all the values of psychology. The reasons are: on one hand, what negative psychology is interested in is not human or society, but their problems. It is natural to form a negative mentality when only problems in society are concerned; on the other hand, the theory of negative psychology can create a negative society culture, making people feel unconfident and insecure. If you pay too much attention to the shortcomings of people nearby, you will only find more and more shortcomings of him to the extent that you can't bear them anymore. It is wrong to put aside the function born in psychology to make people grow and live happily and have negative thoughts in place to sabotage our happy life.

2. Emphasizing the research of positive power of individuals. Positive psychology tells us that happiness has rules to follow. Sympathy, understanding, tolerance, altruism, optimism, persistence and hope are the common characteristics of happiness and the positive power everyone has. Only when a person has these qualities can he become a happy, positive and lively person. [2] In light of this, positive psychology advocates treating everyone with open and appreciative eyes. It is mainly in two aspects: first, the research and experience of positive emotions in subjective level. Positive emotions can be manifested as satisfaction, pride, sense of achievement, happiness, hope and confidence. [3] Second, the research of positive society environment in collective level. Positive psychology also emphasizes the exploration of the society environment like family, school and society. It puts forward that the establishment of these systems should be beneficial to the nurturing and development of people's positive power and quality and should put people's happiness as starting point and end-result.

3. Advocating positive explanations for problems. Positive psychology advocates making

positive explanations for problems in individuals and society, and getting positive influence from them.[4] When problem emerges, it depends on you whether to see the good side of the problem or its bad side. Different choice will get us different experience in life.[5]

The main dilemma of university ideological and political education from the perspective of positive psychology

1. Focusing too much on problems while ignoring strengths. The main task of university ideological and political education is to carry out comprehensive quality-oriented education which puts the all-round development of university students as its core goal. However, the reason why university ideological and political education is launched is that university students have problems in political thoughts and mentality in varying degrees. For example, they are lack of political belief, clear goals, right outlook on life, sense of responsibility, cooperative spirits and strong will, etc. This kind of diagnostic ideological education pays too much attention to the problems in students while ignoring their creativity. Ideological education which emphasizes on diagnosis and treatment is undoubtedly hard to interest students and greatly lowers its effectiveness. To change this dilemma, ideological and political education teachers should change their way. They should move their eyes from students' problems to their strengths, help nurturing their positive thinking and shaping their positive personality.

2. Focusing too much on sermon while ignoring environment. Impacted by market economy, students would generate some twisted outlooks like individualism, money worship, hedonism and egoism which could lead to degenerated thinking habits and distorted behaviors.[4] Accordingly, some students spend much of their time on feasting, pleasure-seeking and dating. They often come to school late, leave early, skip class and even play truant. In face of these problems, universities focus too much on sermon while ignoring the need to change the environment students are in, which is a common problem prevailing among universities in China. They ignore the facts that beautiful campus can nurture people, good social modes can guide people and warm family atmosphere can shape people.

The functional advantages of ideological and political education under the guidance of positive psychology

1. The "people-oriented" concept helps university students to realize the values and objectives of ideological and political education. Positive psychology focuses on the development and research of people's positive psychological traits. It also lays emphasis on the study of virtues and values of the people and arouse people's inner vigor as well as potential, which presents us a positive "people-oriented" concept. Universities should fully exploit the huge potential of students during the ideological and political education by applying the theories and methods to practice. Based on this, the potential and creativity of university students can be developed. What's more, in order to achieve the objectives and tasks of ideological and political education, universities should also pay much attention on satisfying students' reasonable needs and ideas, stimulating the positive psychological needs as much as possible and guiding them in setting lifelong goals, viewpoint of values and world outlooks in right direction. All these efforts can help the university students be healthy physically and psychologically and improve their overall quality.

2. The experiential teaching provides new methods for ideological and political education. The positive psychology, with human happiness and comprehensive development of individuals as its aim, mainly discusses three aspects including positive emotional experience of subjective

individuals, positive personality traits deep inside our hearts as well as the generation of positive environmental system around individuals, which fully analyzes and explores how the individuals live happily. [6] All these researches provide new ideas and methods for educational work of universities in new periods. The ideological and political educations in universities used to lay too much stress on infusion education, which ignore the initiative, emotional feelings of individuals and overlook the elaborate design of positive educational environments. However, the ideas and directions of the researches of positive psychology offer universities ideological and political education new methods and channels.

the effective application of positive psychology in universities ideological and political education

1. Building positive psychological concepts of education, giving full respect to the dominant role of students. Optimistic attitudes help university students acquire satisfaction, gain confidence and maintain lasting initiative spirits. Furthermore, positive psychology advocates developing optimistic traits of students on a basis of reasonable thoughts and personal experience in order to make them develop rational judgments and positive cognition of social affairs and their values. [7] Nowadays, the post-90s generation are characterized by cognition bias and weak motivation for action. At the same time, university students frequently undergo setbacks, which can be mainly attributed to the lack of positive personal traits and learned optimism. As a result, universities should discard the work mode of remedy and transformation during the ideological and political education.

In the practice of ideological and political education in universities, university students should not only be the passive side, but also play a positive role in the work. Universities should build developmental and positive mode of ideological and political education, fully respect and appreciate students in mind and behaviors, treat them positively from the point of development, and discover the good side of their practical or potential personalities. Only in this way can university students form positive traits of their personalities. In the process of conducting ideological and political education, the feelings, thoughts and emotional experience should be fully respected, understood and accepted, the expectations of positive developments must be complied with, and the active way of act and behavioral intentions must be guided in the right direction. Furthermore, universities should also help students improve the ability of self-management. All these can make university students achieve self-education, self-management, and self-development in an equal, free and positive atmosphere of education.

2. Adopting experience-based teaching as the principal method, arousing students' positive psychological experience. Positive psychology thinks that the positive and negative powers in mind are in coexisting relationship, which means that one aspect wanes, the other waxes. Once the positive or negative force waxes, the function and energy of the other will be suppressed. [8] Nowadays, several university students have no pursuit and faith in politics, lack ambitions as well as goals in their life and can not well cooperate with others in team work. In their daily life, they are always indecisive and sloppy. All these situations present us a fact that some negative forces such as greed, depression, sadness, self-abasement, selfishness as well as laziness have dominated the major part of their minds. Therefore, in order to encourage the self-improvement and innovation of university students, cultivate their consciousness for starting their own business and improve their quality for overall development, we should adopt diversified approaches for education with positive experience as the principal method. We also should pay more attention to the positive psychological experience of university students such as satisfaction, optimism and hopefulness during the ideological and political education. [9] Furthermore, universities are supposed to concentrate on

developing the positive sides of students' good quality, exploiting positive traits of them, and building their strong awareness for self-discipline, persistence and responsibility, which can highlight their initiative and optimism and help them achieve free and overall development of quality.

3. Creating active environments for teaching, making use of the environments for education. Universities should build a fine and positive cultural environment in campus and enhance the formation and improvement of the positive traits of their students. During the process of ideological and political education, positive and good culture in campus has the function of guiding students' thoughts, behaviors, impetus, and ambitions in the right direction, which can exploit, arouse and cultivate the positive qualities of the students in a subtle way. Active environment for education can encourage students play a dominant role from the point of themselves in course of education. In such a relaxing and equal atmosphere for education, students can positively and voluntarily achieve self-study, self-education and self-management. Only in this way can universities realize the goal of ideological and political education for their students.

Universities should absorb the "positive environment" concept in positive psychology to create beautiful campus environments, equal and active atmosphere for education, harmonious and civilized social ethos around school and warm family environments for students. That is to say, the universities are supposed to make full use of the function of environments for education. Therefore, it requires universities take initiatives to coordinate the relationship among schools, society, family and the students themselves to realize favorable interaction of their ideas and thoughts. What's more, all the four sides should unite as one and create positive environments for education to contribute the growth and success of the students.

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【Introduction】

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