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The Study of Ideological Education of College Students in Minority Areas of China

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Abstract

The ideological education of college students in minority areas of China plays an important role in the nation's educational strategy. The contents, management, methods, features, and carriers of ideological education constitute the main parts of it. Teachers should recognize the unique features of ideological education, enrich the contents of it, consolidate the relevant management, and utilize the carriers of it appropriately. Moreover, some problems which exist in ideological education must draw people's attention. It is necessary for college leaders and teachers to take some coping strategies on the basis of analyzing these problems.

Key words: Ideological education; College students; Main problems; Coping strategies

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INTRODUCTION

China always puts a high value on the ideological education of college students in minority areas and deems the ideological education in these areas as the basis of the country's governance. This kind of situation makes the ideological education prevailing in these colleges and teachers in these colleges pay high attention to this sort of education.

1. THE HOT ISSUES OF CURRENT RESEARCH

A series of hot issues which are related to ideological education of college students in minority areas have drawn many scholars' attention, and these issues mainly involve in the following facets:

1.1 The Contents of Ideological Education

Some scholars argue that the contents of ideological education of college students in minority areas should consist of five parts. Firstly, the fostering of ethnic notion. Secondly, the education of Marxist theory. Thirdly, the cultivating and training of starting a business. Fourthly, the education of information technology. Fifthly, the education of mental health (Huang, 2006). Other people claim that this kind of ideological education should contain the education of ethnic unity (Li, 2010). Generally speaking, these scholars have already touched the main contents of ideological education and they are capable of formulating the contents in a systematical way. Huang's study was better because he formulated the majority of the contents and laid the foundation for the following research. However, the contents which are demonstrated by them are short of innovation. To some extent, this situation will barricade the process of ideological education.

1.2 Management of Ideological Education

Some scholars illuminate the management of ideological education from the perspective of psychological adaptation. They claim that the psychological adaptation of college students will boost the managerial process of ideological education and the ideological problems often derive from the psychological maladjustment of students (Ha & He, 2008). Moreover, some scholars analyze the managerial problems of ideological education from the perspective of psychological quality. For example, Zhang (2006) reckoned that the managing effect of ideological

education will depend on the psychological maladjustment of teachers and students, and the optimization of psychological maladjustment will benefit the management of ideological education greatly.

The study of management of ideological education has widened the horizon of investigation in this field. These scholars explore a new way to formulate the managing problems in this realm and put forward the countermeasures from the perspective of psychology. Ha and He's study was better because they connected the psychological adaptation with the management of ideological education and blazed a trail for the following study. However, the researching perspective should be broadened so that the managing practices in this realm are capable of going a step further. The managerial problems of ideological education of college students in minority areas should be investigated from the diversified perspectives, instead of researching these problems from the single perspective.

1.3 Methods of Ideological Education

Some researchers reckon that some methods must be used in this educating process. These methods involve in the combination between the theory and the practice, the method of demonstration, discussion and so on (Jin & Zha, 1991). Other scholars agree that the persuasive method and guiding method will be more effective than these traditional methods (Tu, 2011). With the innovation of ideological education methods, scholars are aware that the effect of recessive method is more prominent, and the psychological inversion of students can be alleviated by using this method (Xu & Yang, 2014).

The study of methods of ideological education of college students in minority areas provides some educating tools and erects the methodological framework for us. In these studies, Xu and Yang's work was outstanding because they put the emphasis on the recessive method and this method is more suitable for the current situation. Notwithstanding the methodological framework is provided for us, it is not impeccable because some effective and advanced methods, such as big data analysis and diversified goals analysis, are not utilized in the process. Therefore, the methods of ideological education of college students in minority areas should be consummated unceasingly.

The main issue surrounding the problem is what factors (the content, management, campus culture or anything else) exert the great influence on the ideological education of college students in minority areas and how to optimize these factors. The studies what have mentioned above will provide the basis for the current theories and controversies. The studies which were about the contents of ideological education will lay the foundation for the consummation of content, and the studies which were about the management and relevant methods will set the basis for the investigation in this realm as well.

The significant gaps in previous research can be summarized as follows: Firstly, the previous research do not unveil the unique feature of the ideological education of college students in minority areas. Secondly, the previous research do not discuss the carriers of ideological education in the areas of minority. Whereas this study will identify the features of the ideological education, discuss the carriers of it. The contents, methods, and other factors which have already discussed by other scholars will be taken into account as well.

2. THE FEATURES OF IDEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The features of ideological education of college students in minority areas of China can be summarized as follows:

2.1 Popularity

The ideological education is popular in the colleges which located in minority areas. These colleges will provide the curriculum of political theories to the students every week so that the students can be familiar with the theories and policies which play a dominant role in China. Moreover, the teachers and leaders in these colleges will hold the ideological conference and the spirits of policies and documents which come from the government will be delivered to the students. In these colleges, some courses, such as the Marxist theory and the theory of Maoism, are required by the colleges and every student there must choose these courses. Otherwise, they are not capable of obtaining the degree.

2.2 Sociability

Only through the social life and social intercourse, can the ideological education become the real education. That is to say, the ideological education should keep the intimate relationship with the students, with their daily life and learning. In the past decades, the activities which are related to the ideological education are carried out by the colleges in minority areas, these activities aim at cultivating the students' political awareness, enhancing the cultural and political identity, and boosting the national cohesion. Furthermore, the teachers will divide students into different categories according to the students' age and capacity and choose different teaching methods to teach these students in the process of educating so that the thought quality of these students can be promoted effectively.

2.3 Interactivity

The material and spiritual life have been becoming more abundant since the 1980s and the mass media began to develop more rapidly in this process. The coverage of internet has been becoming more wide and people can obtain all kinds of information in a more convenient manner. All these factors exert the great influence on the college students of minority areas and transform the

ideological education from one dimensional activity to a kind of reciprocal activity (interactivity). Teachers in minority areas should change their educating notion and regard the ideological education as an interactive process. They need to guide the students to a correct direction, encourage them to express their ideas in a rational manner, and stimulate them to innovate on the basis of inheriting the achievements of predecessors. Teachers should recognize that they must play the leading role and the students must occupy the dominated position in the educating procedure. Teachers and students ought to teach each other, help each other, and learn from each other. Only by doing this, can the educating procedure reflect the interactive feature.

2.4 Concrete

The ideological education, which put the emphasis on the college students in minority areas, is a sort of concrete activity. The content, subject, object, and form of the activity are all concrete. The content of ideological education involves in the mainstream political theories and the policies which were made by government. Moreover, the moral education and technological education are reckoned as the educating contents as well. The subject of ideological education is teacher. The teachers mentioned here are not the teachers of specialized courses. These teachers specialized in the ideological education, and the interpretation of policies and theories is their mission. The object of ideological education is college student. These students come from every region of China and spent four years or even more time to learn knowledge in minority areas. They have different knowledge structure, different cultural background, and different domestic condition. These differences make the ideological education more difficult because it is impossible to ensure that the unified contents can be understood by these unique students. The form of ideological education is diverse and different teacher will select different form. Generally speaking, classroom teaching is the main form and teachers often infuse many political theories into the students brain by utilizing this kind of form. Moreover, the ideological meeting and special reports are often used as the supplementary forms, and students are capable of understanding the connotation of policies and theories through these meetings and reports.

3. THE CARRIERS OF IDEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

The carriers of ideological education can fall into many categories, and we will discuss two of them here:

3.1 Investigating Carrier

The investigating carrier refers to a medium which can be utilized to investigate the social problems by students so that their researching ability and moral sphere can be enhanced. The investigation can fall into three parts,

namely, the investigation of social issues, the survey of national conditions, and celebrity visiting. The investigation of social issues put the emphasis on the problems which are capable of drawing people's attention and this sort of investigation aims at familiarizing the students with the concrete situation of society, and helping them to adapt to the society. The survey of national conditions aims at encouraging the students to research the economic structure, the regime, the culture and so on, whereas the celebrity visiting is meant to build up a bridge between the students and the celebrities so that these students can communicate with successful or famous people and gain the experience from these people.

The main function of investigating carrier is that it is capable of enriching the students' knowledge and experience. Meanwhile, this carrier can integrate students into the society and accelerate their psychological growth. The investigating activity of student is not only a process in which the student can apply their knowledge to the practice, but also a process in which the moral notion will transform from the immaturity to the maturity. When the students decide to use the investigating carrier, they should follow some tips. Firstly, the students should establish the investigating target, and the target will aid these students to avoid the blind research so that their investigating efficiency can be maximized. Secondly, the investigating materials must be diverse for ease of reacting the comprehensive and real situation. For example, in order to obtain the comprehensive information about the educating situation of the nation, the students should collect the data from different region, different educating institute, and different people. The data stem from different object will reflect the comprehensive situation of the nation's education more clearly. Thirdly, the negative precedents can be reckoned as the researching object as well, because these precedents are educational and enlightening. Sometimes, the negative precedents are more persuasive than the positive ones.

3.2 Festival Carrier

Festival carrier is another medium which can be used to carry out the ideological education. Teachers are able to narrate the heroic deeds of predecessors to students on the background of important festivals and anniversaries. The narration will aid students to know the past and learn the history. Meanwhile, it will stimulate the college students to inherit the spirits of predecessors and make more contribution to the society. The predecessors laid the foundation for the development of society and left a large amount of educating resources to the descendants. Therefore, we have reason to utilize these resources to educate the college students and motivate them to study and work harder. The festival carrier consists of four factors, namely, the background, the theme, the organization, and the communication of the festival. Each of the factors will exert the great influence on the usage of

festival carrier. Therefore, teachers should pay attention to these factors and utilize them appropriately.

4. THE MAIN PROBLEM OF IDEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

Currently, the ideological education of college students in minority areas of China have made great achievements in the past several decades and most of teachers in the colleges and universities have realized the importance of ideological education and are capable of integrating it into the daily teaching activities. However, some defects and problems still exist in the ideological education, and these problems not only decrease the efficiency of ideological education, but also obstruct the building process of ideological project in minority areas of China. Concretely speaking, these main problems include:

4.1 The lag of notion, content and method

The traditional notion about ideological education argues that the mission of ideological education in minority areas is to help college students to understand the mainstream political theory and shape the correct view about life. On the basis of this notion, these people point out that the activities of ideological education should be undertaken by teachers who give lectures on political theory and it is unnecessary for other teachers to take responsible for this sort of education. The lag of notion not only impede the innovation of ideological education, but also exert the detrimental influence on the improvement of ideological education's quality because many of teachers do not participate in the teaching activities of ideological education and the resultant force of education can not form under these circumstances. Moreover, the content of ideological education are not capable of adapting to the requirement of era as well. Notwithstanding the political theory, information technology and some other knowledge are regarded as the teaching content, some of them are still not able to fit the special circumstance of minority areas. College students in these areas are belong to different ethnic groups and this difference will set up more barriers for the ideological education because students with different cultural background will perceive the same problem from different stances and the cognitive results of them are vast different as well. If the content of ideological education is rigid and monotonous, college students will be unadapted and reckon that the lesson about ideological education is sterile and can not be accepted. Furthermore, the method of ideological education in minority areas mainly include classroom instruction, lectures on special topics and teachers' mobilization, and these methods are so traditional that students are not fond of selecting these lectures and learning these courses that are relevant to the ideological education. Under this circumstances, college leaders and teachers should attempt to take some measures so that these problems can be tackled effectively.

4.2 The Neglect to the Students' Diversity.

Different cultural background, different cognition and psychological status result in the students' diversity and particularity. This situation requires that college teachers should teach students in accordance with their aptitude and particularity in teaching activities and treat students according to their custom and tradition in daily life. However, some teachers are not willing to research the students' particularity and they always teach students in the same pattern, and neglect the different background and requirement of these students. These teachers' behavior are not able to improve the teaching efficiency because students come from different ethnic group will not adapt to the same teaching framework, same teaching pattern, even the same language. In these students' daily life, different kind of students will form several *little group* in which students who have the same cultural background will communicate with each other and act in a certain pattern. Students who come from different *little group* will hold different viewpoints and stances. If college teachers neglect this *difference* and treat these students in the same way, part of students will generate cheated sentiment and reject the ideological education.

4.3 The shortage of Professional Teachers

The enrolling number of universities and colleges in minority areas of China is increasing in recent years, this new trend in enrollment policy expands the scale of undergraduates within a short period of time. However, the number of professional teachers do not increase with the expansion of undergraduates' scale. In some colleges, the number of professional teachers who are liable for teaching the ideological courses is rare because the available teaching resources are limited and leaders in these colleges are not willing to invest the rare resources (including teachers) into the ideological education. Under this circumstances, the professional teachers of ideological education can not undertake the heavily teaching burden because the number of them is too low but the scale of students is too large. Moreover, some of the existing professional teachers' quality can not meet the requirement of ideological education, and these teachers do not know how to teach students and how to help these students to shape the correct thinking mode. The appearance of this situation will also bring some troubles to ideological education. Therefore, it is urgent for colleges in minority areas to recruit some qualified professional teachers to complete the mission of ideological education and undertake the responsibility of fostering the talents so that the constructing project of college students' ideology can be rapidly pushed.

4.4 The Defects in Campus Cultural Construction

The campus culture provide a platform and medium for ideological education and the positive campus cultural atmosphere will lay the foundation for the functioning of

ideological education. However, it is not difficult to find that some defects still exist in the campus culture and these defects have been exerting the bad influence on the ideological education. Some colleges in minority areas put the emphasis on the construction of *campus material culture* and hold a disparaging attitude to the construction of *spiritual and institutional culture* in the campus. Under this circumstance, college students will be addicted to the material enjoyment and neglect the development of spiritual area. This situation will set up more barriers for ideological education because no matter how the teachers reiterate the importance of spiritual world, the students do not trust these teachers and they still believe that the material enjoyment is more important than spiritual enjoyment. In some colleges, the orientations of utilitarianism and entertainment in campus culture is prominent. Notwithstanding these orientations are capable of bringing the transient happiness to college students, the excessive entertainment and unreasonable utilitarian behavior will degrade students' personality. When this situation occurs, the ideological education will suffer from more challenges because students will be skeptical to the content and meaning of ideological education, then much difficulty will be brought to college teachers who are responsible for students' ideological education.

5. THE COPING STRATEGY

In this part, we will attempt to explore some coping strategies so that the problems what have mentioned above can be dealt with.

5.1 Innovate the Notion, Content and Method of Ideological Education

In order to get rid of the laggard notion in the process of conducting the ideological education, we must focus on the future and strive to shape a sort of educational notion which is able to conform to the era's requirement. *Social education* and *family education* should be combined with the colleges' education so that the influence of ideological education can be effectively exerted. Moreover, college teachers should realize that the mission of ideological education is not only to deliver some knowledge to students, but also to deliver some techniques to students, such as, how to think, how to do and how to be a rational person. Teachers must realize that the delivery of these techniques constitute the core function of ideological education and it must be regarded as the focusing point in the process of transforming the educational notion. In addition, the content of ideological education should be enriched as well. Public policy and other scientific knowledge should be included in the educational content so that these students are capable of understanding and analyzing their surroundings correctly. In terms of method, a series of methods, such as students interviewing, persuasion, context designing and so on,

can be utilized by professional teachers. Meanwhile, these teachers must attempt to explore some new methods so that the ideological education can be transformed into a more skillful and efficient procedure.

5.2 Respect the Particularity and Diversity of Students

College teachers should respect the particularity and diversity of students and take different strategies according to the students' difference. In teaching activities, teachers ought to make the reasonable teaching plan and ensure that students from different ethnic group can accept the course schedule and easily obtain the knowledge. Moreover, teachers must respect college students' religious belief, traditional custom, life style, and they must equally treat these students who have different cultural background. In daily life, teachers should care and instruct these students and help the impoverished students as possible as they can so that these students are capable of adapting to the college life. Meanwhile, college teachers must boycott the local national chauvinism because this orientation will overemphasize the benefit of one ethnic group and repel other ethnic groups' benefits. If this orientation can not be stopped in time, the ideological education will not sufficiently exert its influence.

5.3 Recruit and Train the Professional Teachers

Generally speaking, professional teachers are regarded as the dominant power in the structure of ideological education and the shortage of professional teachers will restrict the activities of ideological education because students can not receive the sufficient instruction from teachers under this circumstance. In order to cope with this dilemma, colleges in minority areas should recruit more professional teachers to undertake the task of ideological education and provide the protection for students' growth. Moreover, the relevant departments in colleges should design some training plans and arrange some training courses for professional teachers so that these teachers' quality and competence can be conspicuously enhanced. Colleges' leaders can arrange the professional teachers to other areas or other countries and this kind of arrangement will help these teachers to communicate with teachers and scholars in those areas and nations. In this process, teachers from minority areas are capable of learning the experience and skill about ideological education from those experts and scholars, and obtaining some new information about this field.

5.4 Construct the Harmonious Campus Culture

The campus culture can exert the great influence on the activities of ideological education and the harmonious campus culture will provide the advantageous premise for this sort of education. In order to construct the harmonious campus culture, college leaders and teachers must strive to cultivate these students' cultural literacy and guide students' behavior to a correct direction.

Moreover, the online behavior of students should be guided and realigned as well. Colleges in minority areas must supervise and manage the campus network and make sure that the cyberspace in colleges is *clean* and *health*. Furthermore, college leaders should emphasize the construction of spiritual and institutional culture, and instruct these students to resist the orientations of utilitarianism and entertainment in campus culture. These efforts will promote the construction of harmonious campus culture and create the ideal atmosphere for colleges' ideological education.

CONCLUSION

The ideological education of college students in minority areas of China is a systematic project which is composed of many factors. The construction of this project needs people's effort, especially needs the effort of teachers, leaders and students. The features, carriers, contents, management, and other elements of the ideological education need to be identified further. Moreover, main problems and its coping strategy in this field also need to be explored and researched. "The road ahead will be long, and our climb will be steep".

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