

Optimization and Innovation of the Ideological and Political Education Paradigm in Adult Colleges

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Abstract

This paper first analyzed the necessity of optimizing and innovating the paradigm of ideological and political in adult colleges, and then elaborated the connotations of the paradigm and the ideological and political education paradigm in adult colleges. Moreover, existing problems of the ideological and political education paradigm in adult colleges were analyzed. On this basis, five paths were proposed to construct the paradigm of Integrate Organism for ideological and political education in adult colleges.

Key words: Adult colleges; Ideological and political education; Paradigm; Optimization and innovation

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General Secretary of CPC, Xi Jinping stressed that the ideological and political work in colleges is essential for the fundamental problems of a college cultivating what kind of talents, how to cultivate talents and cultivating talents to whom, at the 2016 National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges. Hence, strengthening moral education while cultivating people should be upheld as a central part in colleges. In other words, the ideological and political work should be run through the process of education and education. By doing so, educating people in the whole process and in all aspects can be achieved, contributing to opening up a new horizon in the development of China's higher education. To accomplish the college's mission of strengthening

moral education while cultivating people, we must define existing problems, scientifically clarify the causes of those problems, and make an effort to address those problems through seriously reviewing the existing paradigm of ideological and political work in colleges, so that the ideological and political work in colleges can witness a quality leap and advancement.

1. NECESSITY OF OPTIMIZING AND INNOVATING PARADIGM OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN ADULT COLLEGES

To begin with, it is crucial for ideological and political education in adult colleges to respond to external challenges. Owing to the reason known to all, mainstream Western ideologies have significantly penetrated the ideology of adult colleges in China recently by means of scholar exchanges, fund subsidies, and illegal radio stations, greatly challenging the ideological and political education in adult colleges. Also, since the world now is in the Internet information age, the Internet has remarkably dispersed moral education, such as changes in the field of ideological and political education, student's psychological conflicts and behavioral alienation. What's more, it has aggravated the miscellaneous and difficulty of ideological and political work in adult colleges. Moreover, serious materialization and alienation, such as changes in consumption patterns and the orientation of material-based value have been increasingly witnessed in modern social relations, which have posed tough challenges to the ideological and political work in adult colleges.

Secondly, it is essential for eliminating the crisis of subjectivity of college students. A crisis of subjectivity can be found among some college students, which incorporates lack of morality (referring to decline in social recognition, confused moral choice, and lack of

respect, etc.), spiritual loss (referring to blurred belief, dislocation of value, and low core attainment, etc.), and acts of misconduct (referring to ignorance of social norms, parasitic dependence, and low cognitive competence). To eliminate such a subjectivity crisis, the present ideological and political education paradigm in adult colleges must be optimized and innovated.

Thirdly, it is essential for facing up to difficulties and solving difficulties in ideological and political education of adult colleges. Because of several reasons, the ideological and political education in adult colleges in recent years has also existing some problem. More precisely, the learning content and teaching methods of ideological and political education have seriously lagged behind with a gap between situational changes and students' needs; also, the ideological work in adult colleges is weakened to a certain extent due to the tendency of socialism; high-quality ideological and political education resources fail to be effectively applied and promoted for the lack of an integrated sharing mechanism; the course disciplinary development of ideological and political education is no much amounted of ; and there is circumscribed social adaptation to ideological and political education in adult colleges. Therefore, the present ideological and political education paradigm in adult colleges must be optimized and innovated in order to completely get rid of the above-mentioned dilemmas of ideological and political education in adult colleges.

Finally, it is essential for realizing the great Chinese dream. It is worth noting that well-educating successors are the precondition for realizing the great Chinese dream of modern socialist country. Colleges as the main front of ideology assume a fundamental mission of strengthening moral education and fostering all-round development up to stangard socialist builders and successors. so, our country has always attached very importance to the ideological and political education in colleges. And we must unceasing reform and innovate the ideological and political education in adult colleges according to the unified deployment of the Party Central Committee and the spirit at the national college ideological and political education work conference.

2. CONNOTATION, FUNCTION AND OPTIMIZING AND INNOVATION CONDITION OF PARADIGM

Paradigm was first seen in the Southern and Northern Dynasties in China in a book named "Wen Xin Diao Long". "Regulation set in accordance with books is a paradigm for later generations". The paradigm here refers to a model, a rule, an example, and imitating. The word paradigm in English originated from the Later Greek Latin "Paradigm", meaning examples, styles, rules for lexical variation, and theoretical frameworks of schools, etc.

In 1962, Thomas Kuhn, a distinguished scientist and philosopher, published a book titled "Structure of Scientific Revolution", in which, the law of scientific revolution was discussed using the concept of "paradigm" for the first time, exerting a significant influence on the society. Such a paradigm theory is known as "a milestone in the history of wisdom". Since then, the paradigm theory has become a universal methodology of philosophy, humanities, and social sciences. Nowadays, paradigm is normally regarded as a common criterion that is recognized by people in a certain academic field, which is to demonstrate consistent worldviews or viewpoints to lead the research direction. At last, they evolved into espoused values and consistent standards for members in the same field.

Kuhn's paradigm with recognition at a certain range, is composed of laws, theories, and applications, which is a guiding principle that provides successful precedents that can be imitated for scientific research.

The main part of the paradigm is a scientific community. And members of the community working on in scientific activities with common standpoint, common cognitive schema, or method logic. Paradigm is a "common language" in the scientific community and a sign for distinguishing different scientist communities or sub-communities since it is the widely recognized unit or the greatest common divisor in a certain scientific field.

The essence of paradigm is a common belief of the community. Paradigm is a set of beliefs, tacit assumptions and connotative knowledge hidden behind the scientific community, forming a belief shared by scientists psychologically. It is a kind of commitment and convention as well as the basis and forerunner of discipline research. Paradigm playing an "underlying and supreme function", is a "Da Vinci Code" for interpreting the traditional scientific research.

Paradigm-shifting is the concentrated performance of paradigm. Kuhn found that the law of scientific development can also lead to structural mutations, or scientific revolutions, apart from the accumulation of linear development. And paradigm shifting plays a pivotal role in transforming scientific development from normal science to scientific revolution. But old and new paradigms are incommensurable. Paradigm shifting is a key to understanding paradigms. Also, paradigm plays the most apparent and typical role in the alternative process of new and old paradigms.

Philosophy is the highest level in the paradigm system. Without it, the paradigm cannot be formed. Hence, philosophy as the deep structure of the paradigm exerts an essential and leading effect. In general, the paradigm at the philosophical level is not owned by a certain discipline, instead, it is the world view and value shared by a community, out of the boundary of disciplines.

Scientific level is the second level in the paradigm

system Basic laws and theories of a specific field. Provide common basic theories, basic views and basic methods for scientific community activities within a certain period of time, as well as models or examples of how the community to study and solve problems, which are important signs of the community and its academic research characteristics, laying the direction for the development of a certain discipline.

Practical operation is the third level in the paradigm system. It is an intermediary for applying basic laws, theorems, and hypotheses to researches through providing behavioral norms, models, methods and techniques for scientific research or experiment operations. Practical operation is a research method and a research paradigm, such as experiment research, action research, and design-based research, which is typically out of the boundary of disciplines.

Concreteness is the most essential characteristic of the paradigm. As a realistic science custom and scientific tradition, the paradigm is a foundation for further research and expansion apart from a united and collaborative bond for jointly and unitedly exploration in a scientific community. It also determines future development of any discipline on the basis of endowing the characteristics of any discipline. The paradigm is a practical model and framework that can address the problem of shifting from general philosophical theory to actual scientific theory through searching for an intermediary from the abstract to the concrete. Thus, paradigm is an object created artificially for problem settlement.

3. CONNOTATION, LEVELS AND FEATURES OF THE PARADIGM OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN ADULT COLLEGES

The problem of paradigm has always been a hot topic in China's ideological and political education. Although related theoretical achievements can be found, the paradigm of ideological and political education has not been defined in a unified manner. Wan Meimei, a famous researcher engaging in ideological and political education, divides the paradigm of ideological and political education into a theoretical construction paradigm and an experience summary paradigm in his book titled "Research on the Development of Ideological and Political education Methods". More precisely, the former is the discipline community criteria for theoretical research experts in the ideological and political education, while the latter is the common experience that the workers of the ideological and political education management department have explored, created, and summarized in practice.

The paradigm of ideological and political education is an integrate of theories, models, methods, and experiences

that have been progressively formed in the ideological and political education, which is composed of some common beliefs or views on the recognized problems and theoretical essence in ideological and political education. Therefore, an independent paradigm of ideological and political education can be formed through scientifically generalizing the ideological and political education experience in an abstracting and structured manner.

Based on the main connotation of the Kuhn paradigm, the paradigm of the ideological and political education is principally comprised of three levels. First, it is the worldview level that mainly refers to the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics on account of Marxism. Second, it is the methodological level that mainly refers to the methodological principle of ideological and political education, instead of a specific method. Third, it is the level of specific methods which mainly refers to the specific methods applied in the ideological and political education.

The ideological and political education paradigm is different from other discipline paradigms, and its main features are as follows:

Firstly, it is manifested as social constraints of peculiarity. Under the dual influence of the government and academia, especially the government, ideological and political education is guided by a national management structure and management system, rather than merely an "understanding and activity" in the academia. It is always under the control of "the country". The country is always in charge of the ideological and political education. Hence, activities of ideological and political education cannot be completely spontaneous without any control.

Secondly, it is expressed as intensive intervention. Ideological and political education is not simply to study facts or truths, which is always bound up with the intervention or penetration of power and desires, interests and positions, values and meanings, or entangled by personnel and matters, values and facts, positions and theories as well as understanding and explanations.

Thirdly, it is presented as the prominent value. We can pursue value self-reliance and independence, rather than "value neutrality". It is the pursuit of its instrumental rationality. Value rationality and responsibility ethics are more penetrated in the presence of its pursuit of instrumental rationality.

4. REFLECTION ON THE EXISTING PARADIGM OF IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN ADULT COLLEGES

After more than 30 years of development, the ideological and political education in China is equipped with its

own stable academic team, main disciplines and branch disciplines, in conjunction with deepened understanding of basic categories and laws of ideological and political education. On the whole, some peculiar paradigms, such as the social standard paradigm, have been formed in ideological and political education in adult colleges based on the experience. According to the connotation of the above-mentioned paradigm of ideological and political education, the author suggests to review the paradigm of ideological and political education in adult colleges from the following three aspects:

(i) The following problems can be found at the level of core worldview. The first is lack of priority in ideology, including unreasonable curriculum setting, insufficient funding, weak teacher training, and inadequate education in core value education. The second is lack of political determination, incorporating desperate lack of ideological and political education in demonstrating the reality, the insufficient effect of “social cement”, and the weakening role of the ideological banner. The third is lack of theoretical innovation, containing lack of theoretical innovation in socialism with Chinese characteristics and insufficient development and innovation of Marxist philosophy.

(ii) Various deficiencies in the current methodology principle must be changed at the level of basic methodology. Firstly, the principle of ideological and political curriculum leads to the dilemma of “lonely island” of ideological and political education in adult colleges. Secondly, the principle of classroom indoctrination leads to the mechanical constraints and boring features of ideological and political education in adult colleges. Thirdly, the principle of social values is solely emphasized, leading to the ignorance of personal value. Fourthly, the principle of single discipline results in ignoring the intersection and synthesis of ideological and political disciplines and other disciplines. Fifthly, the principle of knowledge assessment cause that the performance and application of reality are less emphasized. Sixthly, the closure principle results in lack of openness in ideological and political education.

(iii) The following problems can be observed at the level of specific education. The first is the unitary education method without integrated methods.

The second is the education method of “all in a pot” with the lack of individual education. The third is the domination of positive education, lacking the comparative education. The fourth is the compulsory cramming method, lowering student’s active participation. The fifth is the formal learning method, lacks cross-border education method. The sixth is the education method emphasizing politics with lack of cognitive education method.

5. PATHS FOR CONSTRUCTING THE PARADIGM OF ORGANIC WHOLISM

The reform of ideological and political education in adult colleges is to optimize and extend the paradigm, instead of revolving and reconstructing the paradigm. Extensive grasp and application of the formation and development laws of people’s ideological and political character and the law of ideological and political education are the prerequisites for optimizing and innovating the paradigm of ideological and political education in adult colleges. In that case, creating new methods on the basis of maintaining righteousness must be upheld, rather than loss of roots and foundation in a hopeless situation. The paradigm of ideological and political education in adult colleges should be advanced towards the directions of optimizing the scientific community, enhancing discipline beliefs, improving theories and frameworks, clarifying discipline methods, and optimizing systems.

Based on this, it is suggested that the paradigm of ideological and political education in adult colleges should be optimized and innovated towards the holistically integrated direction.

According to holism, the world is organically connected and interactive holism with various parts interacting with each other. The whole is contained in various parts, and parts are unfolded into the whole. The holistic function is greater than the sum of all parts. Also, new functions different from the functions of various part are emerged. Without the whole, it is impossible to get a complete understanding of its components.

According to the theory of organism, nature, society and thinking are living organisms with their inner experience and feelings, and the present contains the past and influences the future. Thus, the future is interacted with the past and the present. All primeval individuals are organisms, with causes of little purposes. All things are subjects with intrinsic connections. All living things with their own interests are essential for life, which have equal intrinsic values.

According to the organic holism, constructive post-modern philosophers put forward assumptions of human nature. To be specific, “everyone is intrinsically constituted by the relationship between herself/ himself and other people as well as the reflections made by him/her (Griffin, 2005, p.223)”;

“human beings are specialized species born to adapt and be confined to a certain mode of survival (Whitehead, 2002)”;

and “life is essentially periodic, including daily cycle, seasonal cycle, and annual cycle, etc.” (Whitehead, 2018).

Assumptions of human nature in the constructive postmodern philosophy can be specifically summarized as creativity, relationship, phase, periodicity, acceptance, achievement, dedication, restriction, conditionality, and specialty. Correctly mastering these assumptions of

human nature is essential for optimizing the paradigm of ideological and political education in adult colleges.

Methodological paths for constructing the paradigm of the organic wholism of ideological and political education in adult colleges are presented as follows:

(I) At the level of the core worldview, it is a must to attach great importance to the role of ideological and political education and truly implement it, to emphasize more on the ideological nature of ideological and political education, to strengthen detailed researches on the two laws in ideological and political education, to closely integrate theoretical innovation with changing times, to truly fuse the ideological and political education into the whole education process, as well as to conduct ideological and political education using the thinking mode of organic wholism.

(II) At the level of basic methodology, the following methodology principles must be upheld. The first is the principle of organic wholism, that is, all aspects of the ideological and political education in adult colleges should be considered from the perspective of organic wholism. The second is the principle of ideological and political curriculum, namely, it shall cultivate students in the whole process and in an all-round manner. The third is the principle of interactive dialogue, which, the principle of touching people with love and persuading people by reasoning. The fourth is the principle of comprehensive development, placing an equal emphasis on the society and the individual. The fifth is the principle of multiplicity and multi-directions, focusing on interdisciplinary and integration. The last one is the principle of multiple evaluations, that is, knowledge, process, and reality should be evaluated from multiple aspects.

(III) Regarding specific educating methods, the traditional method paradigm should first be shifted to the modern method paradigm. To be concrete, (i) the one-way theoretical cramming method should be shifted to the subject discussion method based on interactive dialogue; (ii) the traditional boring education method should be shifted to the We-media and self-directed education method; (iii) the explicit education method should be shifted to the implicit education method based on contextual penetration; and (iv) the closure education method should be shifted to the open education method without a set pattern. Also, the unitary subject method should be shifted to the multi-dimensional leading subject method, including (i) learning from the methods of post-modern psychology; (ii) learning from the methods of complexity science; (iii) learning from the methods of other disciplines; (iv) learning from foreign methods of ideological and political education. Advanced methods of ideological and political education in Western countries can be used for reference, such as infiltration and sheltered education methods, the

education al carrier method based on practice activities, environmental education methods focusing on campus culture, discipline coordinative infiltration methods with the respect of commonality, and Kohlberg's theory of moral stages, psychological counseling method with the respect of student development, "seven combinations" and "six sequences" education methods applying in Singapore.

(IV) The theoretical construction method should be shifted to the action research method. The theoretical construction method has limitations. The action research method paradigm is superior over the ideological and political education in adult colleges. The action research method means that teachers deal with education al problems comprehensively using a variety of research methods in the natural education environment. The action research method is an outcome combining characteristics of humanities and the characteristics of natural science experiments, which elevates education al experience to a theoretical level through guiding one's own education al practice with the help of education al theories, methods, and techniques.

(V) The unitary social value orientation should be shifted to the multiple individual value orientation. The unitary social value orientation is neither conducive to the ideological and political education in adult colleges, nor in conformity with the actual development needs of people. Hence, the ideological and political education in adult colleges shall conform to the multi-dimensional individual value orientation.

To sum up, ideological and political education is a complicated and sincere science with ethics, emotion, and charm. The reason is not the only scientific character, and not only data and experiments can prove the truth. As a matter of fact, narrative, story, image, action, description, and metaphor can also be used for verifying the truth. Moreover, sensibility, emotion, intuition, and purpose are also essential ingredients of ideological and political science. In the new paradigm of ideological and political education, we must highly concern its uncertain changes on the premise of looking for the certainty of ideological education, pay attention to the diversity of student development apart from noticing the unity of adult college students as education al objects, highly concern students' individual developments on the basis of upholding general standards, attach great importance to the value and purpose of education penetrating in addition to highlighting the education process and experience, emphasize the quality of proper education on the precondition of paying attention to the quality of ideological and political education, as well as underline the goodness and aesthetics of ideological and political education in the pursuit of the truth lying in ideological and political education.

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