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Application of new media in college ideological and political education in MicroAge

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ABSTRACT

With the fast development of the multi-media technology and network information technology, people have stepped into an age called "MicroAge" with things like microblog, micro film, micro novel, WeChat (micro letter) and many other micro productions. These productions, as tools in new media on the Internet, have had huge and far-reaching impact on the young. The advent of new media provides us a brand new way of the application of college ideological and political education. Under the influence of new media, college ideological and political education faculty has gradually changed their traditional concepts of education, and begins to build a new educational base for college students as well as to create a healthy, civilized and fast campus culture with the education and guidance function of new media. In this paper, we analyze the functions, problems and challenges that new media has in respect of its application in college ideological and political education, and bring up some effective suggestions to its existing problems as well.

KEYWORDS

MicroAge; New media; Ideological and political education; Function; Problem; Suggestion.



INTRODUCTION

MicroAge refers to the medium represented by microblog, whose shortness, conciseness, rapidity and convenience are the characteristics of this communication method. Microblog, WeChat (micro letter), micro novel, micro film and other micro productions are all its representatives. College students are most sensitive to the emergence of these new media, and their behavior and way of thinking are also influenced most by them. As a result, while it brings convenience to the work of ideological and political education in college, it also poses a challenge to the work. So now we have some focal problems concerning its application: How to take advantages of the new media and in the meanwhile avoid its disadvantages under the circumstance of MicroAge to let it serve for ideological and political education of colleges and universities? And how to promote college ideological and political education to make it more adapted to the development of the society and to fit more into the needs of modern college students?

STATUS QUO OF COLLEGE IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN MICROAGE

Colleges and universities are the places where we can see the highest density of the young people, and it is doubtless that students in colleges are the main force of the spread of MicroAge. Modern college students consist of a large proportion of Internet users, and this group of people tend to accept new media easily and readily and become the main force of its promotion. Microblog, WeChat (micro letter), QQ and other new media are very likely what they use most frequently in their daily life. With new media, they stay in contact with each other, organize new activities, and get the update of the locations of their expressages. It has become a major method of students' activities.

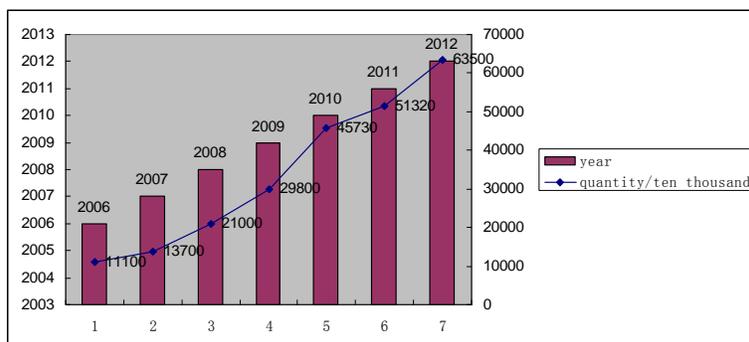


Figure 1 : Statistics issued by CNNIC on the number of micro bloggers in each year

Among all the micro bloggers, 39.8% are young people, which is the evidence that these new media has become an inseparable part of the students' study and daily life. Its influence on them grows with each passing day and becomes more obvious than before.

THE APPLICATION OF NEW MEDIA IN COLLEGE IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION

Guidance function of new media in theories of ideological and political thoughts in college

We believe that new media has certain impact on college student, and will have some guidance effect on their political cognition. There are three types of guidance effect: the guidance of ideas, objectivities, and behavior. New media is a significant communication tool of modern public opinions and thoughts. It helps spread the heat questions and other difficult points or key points of the development of the society in various ways, and provide new materials and information for ideological and political education of college students, which reflects its characteristics of rapidity in information getting and sharing. When combined to public opinions, it will raise public concerns and encourage

college students to think more about politics and society. Meanwhile, new media is also a great platform for them to form a positive political attitude.

Educational function of new media in college ideological and political education

First of all, with its information sharing and spreading function, new media is a great platform of ideological and political education for college students. Those who are responsible for college ideological and political education can make good use of the information provided by new media. Since it proves to be a good source of information, enjoys a high the propagation speed, and is free of the limitation of time and space, it makes up the deficiencies of the traditional educational mode, and provides a more convenient platform for college ideological and political education to pave way for further progress. It will indeed lead to the completion of the aims of ideological and political education.

Secondly, the advent of new media also makes the daily life of college students much more colorful. It spreads information in a fast and convenient way, which enriches the content of college ideological and political education. In MicroAge, with the advantages of flexibility and rapidity, mobile network, short messages, blogs, as well as Baidu Post Bar together construct an information high way. By the form of video, pictures, words or short recordings, the content of our education can be received by students anywhere and anytime almost instantly. Students can choose by themselves the most appropriate time and the place to receive their lessons.

Besides, the new media might be fairly attractive a tool concerning ideological and political education. It will certainly motivate students to learn independently, and the result of this kind of study should be better. With new media, college students can choose things they like with ease: to read their favorite news, or to decorate their homepage, etc. Its influence is two way: on the one hand, it encourages them to do self-directed learnings, participate in more activities, academic exchanges, and the construction of the college; on the other hand, it helps in ensuring the success of ideological and political education, making sure it will have the best result.

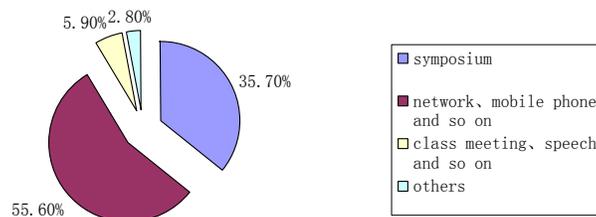


Figure 2 : The results of one research question: What do you think is the best way of having ideological and political education in college?

Colleges should have their ideological and political education in a way that will attract more students. In our research, we found that more than half of the students regard ideological and political education with the method of new media is the best option among the all.

Last but not the least, the fast speed of information communication largely increases the effectiveness of the ideological and political education. New media is free of many limitations and forms a large virtual space where students can voice their opinions for politics, social problems; hot campus issues, or provides their personal suggestions on the management and construction of the college. Meanwhile, teachers who are responsible for ideological and political education in colleges can also learn about problems in students' daily and study life generally and timely, and give a hand to those in need to solve the problems. It is indeed a much more effective tool in respect of ideological and political education.

Interactive function of new media in college ideological and political education

Interactive function is a special function of new media. With new media, college students can have access to the content they have interests in, and participate in class using the way they are most

familiar with. It will lead to more enthusiasm for study. In this process, college students are cultivating their critical thinking, instead of just receiving knowledge passively. Ideological and political education can integrate information from multiple sources and control the information with the help of new media. It also makes it easy for students to get the first-hand information. Apart from that, college students can have their study material base. They can use new media to mark what they have already learned, and get to learn some new ones at the same time. The knowledge they get with new media will be internalized and become their own knowledge, and may be presented in their personal work. It is an open educational mode, and definitely an innovational one for ideological and political education in college.

PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES OF NEW MEDIA IN IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION

There is no barrier in the spread of information in new media, which increases the difficulty of guidance of public opinion concerning ideological and political education

Due to few limitation of the spread of information in new media, the information in these media is usually disseminated freely and instantly. The post of the message online sometimes has the characteristics of randomness and irresponsibility. As it is known by all, network is a double-edged sword. While it brings fun and convenience to the public, in the meantime, it is full of unhealthy information. College students who are still immature in nature can easily become victims of it. So in other words, it will add to the difficulties of ideological and political education in college.

The psychological crisis of college students triggered by the virtuality of new media

Since new media has its characteristic of virtuality, quantities of college students become addicted to it, and as a result ignore the true society around them. That might be the main cause of a couple of psychological problems shared by college students. These students usually have trust issues concerning real contacts with other people offline. The virtuality of communication in new media will lead to emotional misunderstandings between students or between students and professors. It will do no good in our ideological and political education. Some students who suffer from this problem might begin to spread the rumor, and may experience severe problems such as psychological crisis and personality disorder.

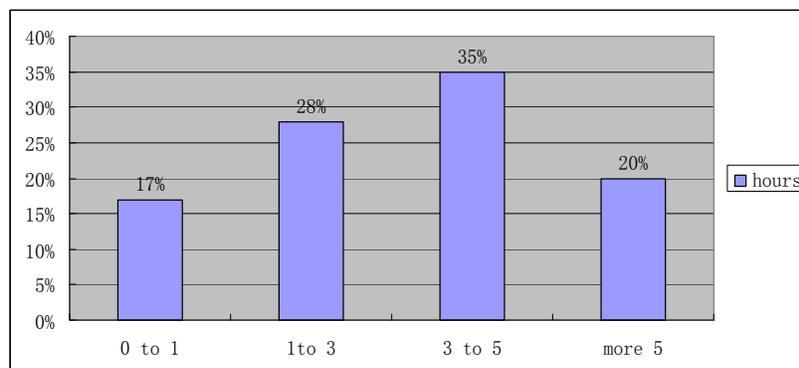


Figure 3 : The results of one research question

The reliance on media can weaken students' ability to think and research independently

From Figure 3, we can indicate that most of students tend to spend a long time on media every day. It seems to have become an inseparable part of students' life, and they just rely too much on new media. The overwhelming coverage and editorials on new media will have huge impacts on them, depriving them of the ability to think for themselves. Some college students even finish their assignments with the help of the Internet, or complete their papers using only "copy and paste". They were abetted in becoming lazier with new media. It certainly does harm to their formation of the ability of doing independent thinking and research.

THE SUGGESTIONS OF THE APPLICATIONS OF NEW MEDIA IN IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL EDUCATION IN COLLEGE

Making analysis on the characteristics of new media and changing the idea of ideological and political education

With the rapid development of new media, it is almost inevitable that college ideological and political education should be changed. College teachers should understand the characteristics of new media, and do some research into the new educational forms by themselves. As we have stated above, new media can be used in class education, theme activities, and social practice. Teachers have to renew their teaching mode and content to fit into the different needs of students concerning ideological and political education. It will be better if the lesson is received by students that enjoy an equal status as their teachers and is done while they are having interactive exchanges of thoughts in class.

Using the guidance function of new media to expand the base of ideological and political education

New media is a rather significant channel for college students to get together with each other. It is also an important work base for talent cultivation as well as ideological and political education. The ideological and political education in college should not be separated from new media. Using platforms such as QQ, Baidu Post Bar, microblog, WeChat (micro letter), we can build new educational base where we have new educational mode to use new media to our benefits, and let it serve the work of college ideological and political education and the cultivation of students. Many colleges and universities have already got their official microblog, WeChat (micro letter) accounts to do their ideological and political education better, and to provide a platform for teachers to answer their students' questions and for both of them to communicate with each other.

Strengthening the construction of the faculty concerning ideological and political education in college

The fast development of new media raises new requirements for ideological and political education workers, including the use of new media, the changes of their way of thinking, the revolutions of their educational ideas, and the innovations of their teaching mode. They are also supposed to know what is new in new media, and have firsthand information about the psychological state of their students. They ought to be able to talk to their students through new media and guide public opinions too. These should not be done without the help of traditional ideological and political education. Only if we combine our research achievements with new media in time can we get the best results out of the education.

Strengthening the positive education and guidance in college

College students grow up with the company of new media. They usually have an open mind, always desire to learn more, and have demonstrated their ability to receive new things with ease. However, they lack experience and are still immature to some extent. Thus it is quite understandable if they have poor judgment, and have their outlooks of the world, the life, and the value changed with the complexity of new media. So teachers taking care of ideological and political education are burdened with the responsibility to guide the students to use new media in a wise way, and to teach them how to get the information that is good for their physical and mental development out of all the information. In this way, new media will become a beneficial tool for students, which encourages them to live and think positively.

Strengthening network supervision

The healthy development of new media can never be parted from the network supervision. Colleges can organize student groups, which may consist of members of Student Union and class leaders to guide public opinions. These groups can supervise and also guide the use of new media among college students, promoting the formation of a healthy campus online. In the meantime, colleges should

build powerful firewall to learn the information on the Internet, and get rid of the unhealthy information in time, making sure the media that students use is free of unhealthy messages.

Ideological and political education is not only the responsibility of teachers, but also the liability of government, the society, and families. Colleges should view the impact brought about by new media in a correct way, while integrating the resources and strengthening the faculty. We should now change our educational ideas, taking advantages of new media to broaden the base of ideological and political education. It is vital for colleges to create harmonious and healthy culture on campus, as well as to strengthen the construction of teachers who are responsible for ideological and political education. With network supervision conducted by colleges, students will be guided to use new media in a scientific way. We believe, all the methods stated above will be of great help in completing the work of ideological and political education in college.

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