

Analysis of the Integrated Education of Innovation and Entrepreneurship Education and Ideological and Political Education in Colleges and Universities

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Abstract: This paper studies the path and strategy of the integrated education of innovation and entrepreneurship education and ideological and political education in colleges and universities. Given the problems such as lack of integration opportunity, lack of pertinency and imperfect system guarantee, this paper puts forward the integration strategy with professional accomplishment as the guide, mass creation projects as the carrier and system optimization as the starting point, builds the education model of “value leading — ability training — quality improvement”, and creates the practice platform of “project guidance — school-enterprise collaboration — teachers and students co-creation.” The research shows that this model can effectively improve students’ innovative spirit, practical ability, and social responsibility and provide theoretical and practical support for college education reform and high-quality personnel training.

Keywords: Innovation and entrepreneurship education; Ideological and political education; Integrated education; Double innovation project

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1. The significance of integrating education of innovation and entrepreneurship education with ideological and political education in colleges and universities

1.1. It is conducive to cultivating innovative talents with both morality and ability

The integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education with ideological and political education is an important practice for higher education in the new era to “foster virtue and cultivate talents.” Innovation and entrepreneurship education focuses on cultivating students’ innovative thinking, entrepreneurial ability, and practical skills. Based on the basic principles of Marxism and the theoretical system of socialism with

Chinese characteristics, ideological and political education focuses on shaping students' political attainment, moral quality, and social responsibility ^[1]. The organic combination of the two forms a three-in-one education model of knowledge imparting, ability training, and value shaping, which effectively promotes the all-around development of students ^[2].

1.2. Promoting the modernization and transformation of the higher education system

In the era of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the swift advancement of the digital economy, higher education is encountering an immediate demand for paradigmatic change. The conventional educational framework typically emphasizes knowledge transmission while overlooking the development of students' innovative capabilities and ideological-political literacy, thereby restricting students' potential for holistic growth to some extent ^[3]. On one side, by incorporating ideological-political education into innovation and entrepreneurship training, students can develop a stronger sense of social responsibility and purpose, encouraging them to prioritize societal values and public welfare during their innovation and entrepreneurial endeavors. Conversely, the hands-on nature and inventive aspects of innovation and entrepreneurship education offer a fresh medium and stage for ideological-political education, rendering it more engaging, concrete, and readily embraced and assimilated by students ^[4]. This multi-faceted integration and innovation not only enhances educational efficacy but also drives the modernization and evolution of educational methodologies.

1.3. Serving national strategies and the needs of social development

The combination of innovation and entrepreneurship education with ideological and political education represents a crucial step in implementing the innovation-driven development strategy and the talent-strengthening strategy for China. As the primary platform for nurturing talent, universities play a vital role in cultivating innovative and versatile individuals for the nation ^[5]. The Implementation Outline of Patriotic Education in the New Era emphasizes that patriotic education should permeate all stages of education. This integrated approach significantly enhances students' overall capabilities, enabling them to better meet societal demands. In practical terms, this fusion manifests in several key areas. First, by incorporating ideological and political components, such as patriotism and social responsibility, into the project guidance of innovation and entrepreneurship platforms (e.g., makerspaces and incubators); second, by establishing a dedicated "Red Dream" track in competitions like "Internet Plus," encouraging students to focus on national strategies; and third, by leveraging university-enterprise collaboration to integrate major national strategic needs into innovation and entrepreneurship education, thereby strengthening students' comprehensive abilities and providing robust support for aligning with national objectives ^[6].

2. The practical dilemma of integrating education of innovation and entrepreneurship education with ideological and political education in colleges and universities

2.1. The integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education and ideological and political education lacks endogenous impetus

Currently, the integration of innovation and entrepreneurship education with ideological and political education in universities faces a contradiction characterized by "formal integration" but "substantive separation." From the perspective of systems theory, this challenge arises due to the absence of an effective coupling mechanism

between the two educational subsystems. At the value level, there is a failure to achieve an organic alignment of educational objectives, while at the practical level, there is a lack of effective integration platforms and operational mechanisms. The incorporation of ideological and political education into mass innovation education predominantly remains at the value level, insufficiently advancing the cultivation of entrepreneurial knowledge and skills ^[7]. According to the theory of educational ecology, the root cause of this dilemma lies in the fact that the two have not yet identified integration opportunities at the “core of education” level. Specific manifestations include: first, educational stakeholders exhibit cognitive biases, perceiving integration merely as curriculum overlap while neglecting the deeper fusion of underlying concepts. Second, the evaluation system demonstrates directional bias, overly emphasizing tangible outcomes of mass innovation education (e.g., the number of entrepreneurial projects, competition awards) while undervaluing the intangible contributions of ideological and political education (e.g., value formation, social responsibility development). This results in a utilitarian approach to educational practice, diminishing the intrinsic motivation for meaningful integration ^[8].

2.2. The lack of precision of ideological and political education in the integration of mass entrepreneurship education

In the process of integrating innovation and entrepreneurship education with ideological and political education in higher education institutions, a major challenge arises from the insufficient alignment of ideological and political education with mass innovation initiatives ^[9]. Firstly, there is a lack of targeted content delivery. Ideological and political education tends to remain at the macro level of value orientation, offering little specific guidance tailored to particular entrepreneurial contexts. Secondly, the employed methodologies are not sufficiently adaptable. Traditional theory-based indoctrination approaches struggle to align with the practical nature of mass entrepreneurship education. Lastly, there exists an imbalance in the skill sets of educators. Teachers specializing in innovation and entrepreneurship often lack expertise in ideological and political education, whereas those focused on ideological and political education find it challenging to grasp the specialized aspects of innovation and entrepreneurship. Consequently, the “one-size-fits-all” teaching approach fails to address the diverse needs of students effectively ^[10]. This dual deficiency in competencies hinders the overall effectiveness of integrated educational efforts.

2.3. The institutional guarantee system of integrated education has not yet been perfected

Currently, the integration of “ideology and politics + mass innovation” in higher education institutions faces challenges related to inadequate institutional support. Firstly, the absence of strategic planning and systematic implementation frameworks in most universities results in a lack of continuity in practical efforts and exploratory initiatives ^[11]. Secondly, inter-departmental coordination mechanisms remain underdeveloped, with instances of “silo governance”, hindering the formation of cohesive educational synergy. Thirdly, the evaluation framework is skewed, overemphasizing quantitative outcomes while neglecting process-oriented and value-added assessments of integrated education. This imbalance also manifests in insufficient motivational measures for faculty members. Lastly, the incentive structure is flawed, making it difficult to measure the contributions of ideological and political educators in mass innovation programs. Consequently, this leads to diminished teacher engagement and a prevailing inclination toward prioritizing research over teaching.

3. The practice path of integrating education of innovation and entrepreneurship education with ideological and political education in colleges and universities

3.1. Build a professional quality oriented integrated education model

Entrepreneurship, innovation courses, professional subjects, along with the spirit of industries and humanistic thinking within professions, serve as crucial resources for nurturing students' professional competence. Institutions of higher education should establish an integrated educational framework that combines "value guidance, capability development, and quality enhancement" to strengthen students' identification with and pride in their majors^[12]. Firstly, regarding the restructuring of the curriculum system, a blended course module integrating "major studies + ideological and political education + mass innovation" should be developed. Ideological and political components, such as professional ethics, should be incorporated into both major-specific courses and mass innovation courses, thereby forming a modularized curriculum structure. For instance, engineering programs could offer a course titled "Engineering Ethics and Innovation Entrepreneurship", while science programs might provide a course called "Science, Humanities, and Innovative Practice." Simultaneously, it is essential to construct a mapping connection between ideological and political courses and mass innovation education. This involves defining the specific mapping points of ideological and political education tailored to each major. For instance, "Network Security and National Sovereignty" can be emphasized for computer science majors, while "Corporate Social Responsibility" can be highlighted for economics and management students. Furthermore, innovative teaching approaches should be implemented. Experiential teaching techniques, such as situational simulation and role-playing, can be utilized to design scenarios like "entrepreneurial decision-making simulations" and "innovative thinking training." These activities allow students to appreciate the significance of professional ethics and social responsibility through simulated experiences^[13]. Additionally, problem-based learning practices should be integrated into the curriculum. Problem scenarios, such as "ethical challenges in technological innovation" and "legal risks during the entrepreneurial process", can be designed to encourage inquiry-based learning among students. Ultimately, the evaluation framework must be refined by establishing a comprehensive assessment system that encompasses knowledge acquisition, skill development, and value recognition. A value-added evaluation approach can be introduced to measure improvements in students' professional competence and innovation capabilities by comparing pre- and post-testing results. Moreover, a combined evaluation model incorporating process evaluation (60%, including classroom participation and project involvement) and outcome evaluation (40%, including final assessments and project outcomes) should be implemented.

3.2. Build a platform for practical education based on mass entrepreneurship and innovation projects

In the context of integrating innovation and entrepreneurship education with ideological and political education in higher education institutions, mass entrepreneurship initiatives serve as crucial platforms for enhancing students' practical skills and facilitating educational convergence. Grounded in the theory of communities of practice, a practical education framework — "project-led, school-enterprise cooperation, teacher-student co-creation" — is established. This approach seamlessly merges the value-oriented guidance of ideological and political education with the hands-on focus of mass innovation and entrepreneurship education. As a result, students deepen their comprehension of innovation and entrepreneurship through real-world experiences while developing social responsibility and professional integrity, ultimately achieving an all-around enhancement in knowledge, skills, and values.

3.2.1. Identify entrepreneurial projects and strengthen school-enterprise cooperation

The selection of entrepreneurial projects should align with students' interests, specialties, professional backgrounds, and market demands. Higher education institutions should proactively foster deep collaborations with businesses to offer students an authentic entrepreneurial environment and practical platform. By engaging in school-enterprise partnerships, students can gain a comprehensive understanding of business operation models, market regulations, and industry standards, enabling them to apply their knowledge effectively to entrepreneurial initiatives ^[14]. Universities can collaborate with leading companies in the industry to establish “innovation and entrepreneurship practice hubs”, integrating real-world enterprise projects into classroom settings. This allows students to enhance their comprehension of core socialist values while addressing practical challenges.

3.2.2. Strengthen the analysis of the learning situation and implement collective lesson preparation

Educators should thoroughly grasp students' interests, abilities, and requirements by conducting systematic evaluations of learning contexts, enabling them to design more focused instructional plans. Collaborative lesson preparation involves input from both ideological and political educators as well as instructors in mass innovation and entrepreneurship. Through detailed discussions and interactions, they can establish a cohesive educational objective and methodology. In this collaborative process, ideological and political educators contribute value orientation and relevant content, while dual-innovation teachers offer specific advice and hands-on experience for entrepreneurial initiatives. By engaging in collective lesson planning, educators can better identify teaching priorities and challenges, ensuring that the curriculum remains both scientifically grounded and practically applicable. Additionally, this collaborative approach facilitates resource sharing and knowledge exchange among teachers, thereby enhancing overall teaching quality. For instance, a teaching group combining “mass innovation and entrepreneurship + ideology and politics” could be formed to conduct routine teaching workshops, fostering a deeper integration between these two educator categories.

3.2.3. Optimize the teaching content and innovate the teaching mode

Upon selecting the entrepreneurial project, ideological and political teachers, along with dual-innovation instructors, should adopt project-based teaching as a foundation. They should restructure and redesign the teaching content to ensure that the teaching model, methodology, and system are closely aligned with the entrepreneurial project. At the level of ideological and political education, instructors should update the teaching material by focusing on the legal frameworks, entrepreneurial policies, value systems, and ethical considerations associated with entrepreneurial ventures, thereby enhancing the relevance and effectiveness of education. For instance, by linking specific entrepreneurial projects, teachers can elucidate laws such as the Company Law and Intellectual Property Law, guiding students to develop a proper understanding of the rule of law. Teachers can also assist students in comprehending policy support mechanisms by examining national innovation and entrepreneurship policies. Furthermore, by exploring entrepreneurial values, educators can foster students' appropriate value orientations and ethical standards. Additionally, the case study method could be incorporated to strengthen students' ability to make value judgments by analyzing ethical challenges and social responsibility issues within notable entrepreneurial scenarios.

3.3. Improving the collaborative education system guaranteed by institutional innovation

3.3.1. Optimize the top-level design and improve the institutional guarantee

Educational institutions should tailor the internal connection between innovation and entrepreneurship education and ideological and political education based on their developmental status, students' cognitive patterns, and economic requirements. More specifically, schools can incorporate the fundamental principles of ideological and political education into innovation and entrepreneurship curricula by restructuring courses. This allows students to gain a profound understanding of socialist core values and social responsibility while acquiring knowledge in innovation and entrepreneurship. Additionally, schools may introduce courses such as Innovation, Entrepreneurship, and Social Service to encourage students to focus on societal challenges during their innovative and entrepreneurial endeavors, actively engage in charitable activities, and foster a sense of social duty and purpose. Furthermore, an integrated educational strategy should be developed to define objectives and responsibilities, outline execution methods, and establish supportive measures, ensuring the regulation and institutionalization of this combined educational approach.

3.3.2. Build an incentive mechanism to stimulate teachers' enthusiasm

Developing a scientific and reasonable incentive mechanism serves as a crucial guarantee for promoting the deep integration of ideological and political education with innovation and entrepreneurship education. Educational institutions can establish dedicated funds to motivate ideological and political educators to conduct relevant research and identify effective approaches for integrated teaching. Furthermore, the outcomes of integrated education should be integrated into the teacher evaluation system, with preferential policies provided in areas such as excellence assessments and professional title advancements, thereby encouraging faculty members to actively engage in related activities. For instance, an "Award for Excellence in Integrated Education" could be established to recognize outstanding teams and individuals annually, offering them commendations and rewards. Additionally, schools should organize regular training sessions for teachers and invite experts in innovation and entrepreneurship to provide specialized training for ideological and political educators. This will assist them in staying updated on the latest trends in innovation and entrepreneurship and mastering advanced teaching techniques, thus enhancing their guidance capabilities.

3.3.3. Strengthen process management and improve the evaluation system

Educational institutions ought to develop a quality control framework covering the entire process, establish "Quality Standards for Integrated Education", and construct a three-tiered quality assurance structure encompassing "institution-department-specialization." By leveraging a dynamic adjustment mechanism, the implementation strategy should be refined in a timely manner based on annual assessment outcomes. Concurrently, the evaluation framework should be enhanced by creating a diversified index system that incorporates three key dimensions: student development, teacher advancement, and societal influence. Each dimension should include 5–7 specific metrics for comprehensive analysis. A categorized evaluation approach will be implemented, tailoring distinct criteria according to specialization attributes and project categories. For instance, a value-added evaluation model could be utilized for students, assessing the enhancement of their overall competencies through pre- and post-testing comparisons. Regarding educators, a combination of process-oriented and outcome-based evaluations can be employed to holistically gauge their teaching efficacy and educational contributions.

4. Conclusion

The combination of innovation and entrepreneurship education with ideological and political education plays a crucial role in nurturing morally competent and innovative talents, advancing the modernization and transformation of higher education, and supporting national strategies. Given challenges such as insufficient integration opportunities, lack of educational relevance, and incomplete systemic support, this study proposes an integrated educational approach guided by professional competence, utilizing mass innovation projects as a platform, and initiating system optimization as a starting point. This provides both theoretical and practical foundations for reforming higher education. Moving forward, it is essential to deepen theoretical research and practical exploration through multi-party collaboration, establish a comprehensive curriculum system, develop practice-oriented platforms, and improve institutional guarantee mechanisms. These efforts will facilitate the deeper integration of the two educational domains, offering robust support for cultivating high-quality talents in the new era and serving the nation's innovation-driven development strategy.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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