

Value Connotation · Realistic Dilemma · Practical Dimension: An Exploration of Patriotism Education for Young People in the New Era

Haixu Ma

School of Marxism, Yili Normal University, Yining 835000, Xinjiang, China

Copyright: © 2025 Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (CC BY 4.0), permitting distribution and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is cited.

Abstract: In the new era, youth patriotism education faces severe challenges and complex circumstances. The objectives, tasks, values, and methodologies of patriotic education for young people have undergone significant transformations, which has increased the difficulty of conducting such education to some extent. How to strengthen youth patriotism education amidst the intense clash of diverse social ideologies stands as a crucial challenge that must be addressed in the context of national rejuvenation and the construction of a strong nation.

Keywords: New era; Youth; Patriotism education

Online publication: June 26, 2025

1. The value implication of patriotism education for young people in the new era

1.1. It is conducive to the requirements of the times for coordinating the “two major situations”

Patriotic education serves as a robust ideological shield against negative ideologies, empowering young people to resist adverse influences in our era of profound global transformation. By guiding youth to study China’s modern history and the transformative changes brought about by reform and opening-up, they gain a deeper appreciation for the nation’s remarkable journey. Through this education, young people come to fully understand the strengths of the socialist system with Chinese characteristics, thereby cultivating strong confidence in our institutional framework.

Strengthening patriotic education for the youth in the new era is essential to fulfill the historic mission of national rejuvenation. Given the arduous tasks of domestic reform and development, enhancing patriotic education for the youth has become a practical imperative for this mission. As China stands at a critical juncture in its grand rejuvenation, the closer we get to achieving our goals, the more risks and challenges emerge. This makes it crucial to reinforce patriotic education among the youth to unify thinking and build consensus. Practice has proven conclusively that only through strengthening patriotic education can the Party and the nation thrive; otherwise, they risk suffering severe setbacks.

1.2. It is conducive to the implementation of the main tasks of ideological and political education for young people

Patriotic education plays a vital role in shaping young people's ideological development. As the cornerstone of political education, it serves to strengthen their political orientation and cultivate patriotic values. The core of youth patriotic education lies in fostering love for the Party, the motherland, and socialism. Only by adhering to the Party's leadership, following its guidance, and walking its path can young people stay on course while advancing socialism with Chinese characteristics. This ideological cultivation not only deepens their patriotic spirit but also strengthens their sense of identity and pride in China's socialist development path.

Patriotic education plays a vital role in shaping the core values of young people. History and reality demonstrate that the socialist core values, with their strong appeal and guiding power, help maintain social harmony, stability, and long-term national security^[1]. As young people's values are in the critical "critical growth" phase, their choices will shape future societal values. Therefore, in the new era, we must closely integrate "cultivating the right values" with "developing the right people," continuously enhancing young people's political, ideological, theoretical, and emotional alignment with socialist core values^[2]. These core socialist values represent the fundamental orientation of contemporary Chinese society, embodying China's spirit, values, and strength. They serve as a spiritual bond that unites all citizens in their collective endeavors.

2. The practical dilemma of patriotism education for young people in the new era

2.1. The disconnect between education and youth needs

The first issue is prioritizing form over substance. When conducting patriotic education for youth, educational institutions often focus excessively on ceremonial aspects while neglecting substantive content design and deeper understanding of the program's core message. This approach demonstrates a general failure to grasp the characteristics of young audiences or conduct thorough research into their actual needs. Many patriotic education programs emphasize procedural arrangements over substantive impact, rarely employing subtle yet impactful methods that "silently nourish like rain." As a result, these events appear grand and enthusiastic on the surface but lack meaningful ideological depth. Consequently, young people often fail to gain emotional resonance or value alignment from superficial activities, leading to significantly diminished educational outcomes.

The second issue is prioritizing theory over practice. In the new era, youth patriotism education in schools, families, and society tends to emphasize theoretical indoctrination. Schools focus on textbook knowledge through lectures about patriotic concepts, making it difficult for young people to internalize these values as personal principles. Families often deliver "grand theories" about patriotism without guiding practical expressions of devotion, failing to bridge abstract ideas with real-world actions. Social initiatives like commemorative displays and photo exhibitions lack interactive elements and hands-on engagement, resulting in superficial emotional impressions rather than lasting impact.

2.2. The interference of network media on the patriotism concept of young people

The first issue stems from misinformation and misleading public opinion. The internet's extreme openness allows diverse information to coexist, particularly with its rapid update mechanism. Amidst the overwhelming digital landscape, young people discern and evaluate information through analysis, gradually forming their own political judgments and value orientations. However, when unverified content bypasses educators' filtering mechanisms and floods youth with indiscriminate exposure, their limited social experience and low vigilance make them susceptible to information distortion. This often leads to improper attribution or misinterpretation of such content as established facts.

Secondly, the trend of trivialization is eroding serious patriotic themes. Entertainment has become a cultural phenomenon in online media development. Major platforms prioritize traffic, click rates, and attention by packaging patriotic content through trivialized formats. While these entertainment-driven presentations may appear as "new cultural

creations,” they actually exert profound and complex impacts on youth patriotic education. Patriotism remains one of the core values among many. Once trivialized, young people may develop skepticism toward patriotism and other values. As the essence of national spirit, patriotic themes, when trivialized, hinder the inheritance and promotion of national ethos. When youth lack a positive and serious attitude toward patriotism, cracks may emerge in the chain of national spirit transmission.

The practical dimension of patriotism education for young people in the new era

3.1. Innovate education methods that meet the needs of young people

First, we can convey patriotic spirit through compelling stories. Patriotism is the deepest and most enduring emotion of the Chinese nation. By drawing inspiration from heroic deeds during China’s revolutionary, construction, and reform periods, we can create a series of story collections. When telling these stories, it’s not just about recounting heroic deeds—we must also reveal the inner journeys of these heroes and the historical context behind them through detailed narratives, resonating with young minds. Presented in formats favored by youth like comics, animations, short videos, and AI-generated content, these stories can engage young audiences through interactive features like comment sections and bullet chats. This approach allows teenagers to be captivated by the narratives in a relaxed atmosphere, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of patriotism’s essence.

The second initiative focuses on creating immersive patriotic experiences. By utilizing cutting-edge technologies like VR and AR, we develop “immersive” historical settings that allow young people to experience the warmth of history firsthand and cultivate patriotic sentiments. For instance, recreating the challenging checkpoints along the Long March route enables participants to traverse rugged mountain paths and harsh natural environments, facing obstacles similar to those encountered by Red Army soldiers during the revolution. This hands-on experience vividly demonstrates the Red Army’s unwavering commitment to revolutionary ideals and their boundless loyalty to national liberation. Local authorities can also develop region-specific patriotic cultural experiences based on unique historical contexts. Coastal areas could establish maritime defense-themed patriotic education programs, while border regions might create in-depth red tourism routes that highlight revolutionary heritage.

3.2. Give full play to the role of ideological and political courses as the main channel

Patriotic education must be grounded in rigorous theoretical instruction. Through such education, we can guide young people to develop a rational understanding of patriotism and consciously fulfill their aspirations to serve the nation^[3]. By thoroughly explaining the fundamental theories, perspectives, and methodologies of Marxism, students can establish correct values, comprehend the inevitability of historical development and the regularity of social transformation, thereby strengthening their patriotic consciousness. Secondly, academic rigor constitutes the intellectual substance of ideological and political education courses. These courses not only impart values but also disseminate theories, not only build faith but also preserve truth. Reasonable discourse means emphasizing rationality and ideological clarity, elucidating the logical framework of patriotic education for youth. Ideological and political education courses are supported by specific academic disciplines, characterized by systematicness, scientific rigor, and rational orientation. They encapsulate the high-level generalization and abstraction of practical experience and historical laws.

Ideological and political education courses must embody both “warmth” and “depth”. To achieve this “warmth”, educators should actively incorporate emotional elements into teaching, transforming dry lectures into engaging instruction that brings the curriculum to life. By using vivid stories of historical figures and events, students can appreciate the dedication and patriotism of our predecessors. This approach helps build political, ideological, and theoretical recognition while deepening their emotional connection to the Party’s innovative theories, ultimately fostering genuine affection for the Party, the nation, socialism, the people, and collectives.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Zheng J, Li Y, 2021, Challenges and Countermeasures of Patriotism Education for Young People in the New Era. School Party Building and Ideological Education, 2021(01):32-34.
- [2] Yang X, 2024, Cultivating New Generation with Socialist Core Values. Red Flag Manuscript, 2024(09):4-8+1.
- [3] Lu Y, Duan X, 2020, Patriotism Education and Its Practice for Young People in the New Era. Contemporary Youth Studies, 2020(05):24-29.

Publisher's note

Whioce Publishing remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.