

The Practice Path of Integrating the Association Education into the Ideological and Political Education of College Students——Take the student club of reading as an example

Rui Wu^{1*}, Yali Bai², Yu Cong¹

¹Shenyang City Construction University, Shenyang 110167, Liaoning, China

²Beijing Normal University Shenyang Affiliated School, Shenyang 110167, Liaoning, China

*Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.

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Abstract: Ideological and political education for college students is a pivotal component in fulfilling the fundamental mission of moral cultivation and talent development in the new era. Student associations in higher education institutions, characterized by autonomy, practical engagement, and interactivity, have become crucial platforms for ideological education and an important vehicle for implementing the “Three-Aspect Holistic Education” philosophy. Taking reading clubs as a case study, this paper examines their practical value, current status, and challenges in ideological education. By establishing a three-pronged approach—content development, methodological innovation, and effectiveness enhancement—the study aims to integrate club-based education more deeply into ideological education programs. This integration seeks to achieve a harmonious balance between value guidance and knowledge cultivation, ultimately providing innovative strategies to enhance the quality and effectiveness of ideological education in universities.

Keywords: Ideological and political education; Society education; Reading student community; Practice path

Online publication: October 26, 2025

1. Introduction

Ideological and political education for college students serves as the cornerstone of fulfilling the fundamental mission of cultivating virtue and nurturing talents in the new era, while also acting as a pivotal measure to foster a new generation capable of shouldering the great task of national rejuvenation. Student clubs, as vital platforms for campus culture development, play a central role in expanding ideological education frontiers and implementing the “Three-Aspect Education” philosophy. Their inherent strengths—autonomy, practicality, and interactivity—effectively address the inherent limitations of traditional ideological education models. Reading-focused student clubs, which use books as communication tools and prioritize intellectual exchange, inherently align with the value orientation and objectives of ideological education through their dual attributes of knowledge dissemination and ideological cultivation. By deeply integrating club-based education into the ideological education system and leveraging reading clubs as bridges for practical

ideological education, we can not only enrich the forms and substance of ideological education but also fully stimulate students' initiative. This approach achieves an organic integration of value guidance and knowledge enrichment, providing innovative pathways to enhance the practical effectiveness of ideological education in higher education institutions.

2. The practical value of reading student association in integrating the ideological and political education of college students

2.1. Consensus on ideological guidance and the consolidation of values

University student clubs are self-organized communities where members from diverse academic disciplines and academic years collaborate. Their unique strength lies in transcending disciplinary boundaries and grade divisions, creating a dynamic platform for intellectual exchange. The self-governance model empowers members to co-create event plans, coordinate activities, and address issues collectively. Through these processes, members develop teamwork skills, strengthen accountability, and cultivate rational discourse and shared values. For instance, during book-sharing sessions, academic reading workshops, and literary appreciation events, members engage in in-depth discussions around shared ideological themes, analyzing multiple perspectives. This approach not only deepens theoretical understanding but also fosters consensus through reasoned debate, highlighting value-driven orientations that align with educational objectives.

2.2. The implicit infiltration mechanism of value guidance

The integration of student clubs into ideological and political education in higher education institutions represents explicit educational approaches. Leveraging their systematic and authoritative nature, these clubs shoulder the crucial mission of transmitting core knowledge and instilling mainstream values. However, the conventional "lecturing" and "cramming" methods of explicit education often provoke resistance among some students. Reading-focused student clubs, which use books as communication tools and prioritize ideological exchange, possess dual attributes of knowledge dissemination and ideological cultivation. Their activity formats and educational models effectively address the shortcomings of explicit education, facilitating a shift from "passive acceptance" to "active recognition" in ideological education, thereby establishing a new paradigm of subtle yet profound moral cultivation. Through activities like book-sharing sessions, themed reading clubs, and classic recitation events, these clubs typically begin with students' favorite books, deeply integrating the core content of ideological education with the narratives, viewpoints, and spiritual essence within the texts. This value transmission through reading transcends rigid educational approaches, allowing mainstream values to be subtly embedded in students' cognition through reading experiences. This organic unity between "reading quality books" and "cultivating well-rounded individuals" achieves a harmonious integration of educational goals and personal growth.

2.3. The value of creating an atmosphere of cultural immersion

Campus culture construction is an important measure to comprehensively improve the ideological and political qualities and comprehensive abilities of college students. Reading student clubs are the main force in creating a scholarly campus culture, and their regular reading activities can effectively establish correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. It is necessary to spread excellent culture through regular reading activities, create a scholarly atmosphere, and consolidate the foundation of cultural confidence. For example, conducting the "Chinese Classics Recitation" activity can guide students to absorb traditional virtues and wisdom through the study of "The Analects" and "Mencius"; enhancing institutional confidence through the study of works such as "What Can the China Path Contribute to the World?" This immersive model of cultural and literary education provides profound and lasting cultural support for ideological and political education, achieving resonance and mutual enhancement between cultural education and ideological and political education.

3. Current situation and difficulties of integrating reading student associations into college students' ideological and political education

3.1. the “discreteness” of content

Currently, university student organizations and ideological and political education remain poorly integrated. Reading-focused clubs often lack systematic content design, failing to align with contemporary trends among modern students. This results in superficial engagement with reading materials, hindering the deep penetration of value guidance and even leading to misguided “pure interest reading.” Ideological and political books are frequently treated as “task-oriented reading materials,” lacking initiative in exploration. Furthermore, the disconnect between student organizations and the primary classroom—where the former emphasizes practical activities while the latter focuses on theoretical instruction—weakens the coherence of ideological education and deprives student organizations of their core mission in ideological guidance.

3.2. The “tradition” of methodology

Currently, university student clubs fail to align their activities with the characteristics of contemporary college students, resulting in insufficient appeal. They lack integration with current social hotspots and demonstrate inadequate oversight of ideological-political guidance and activity design. For reading-focused student clubs, professional ideological-political resources participate minimally, specialized ideological-political integration guidance is scarce, and venue reservations are prioritized less than academic events. Reading activities are confined to “book check-ins” and “simple sharing,” becoming formalized and entertainment-oriented with rigid formats and limited interactivity. This fails to stimulate students' curiosity for interdisciplinary communication and scientific research practices, undermining the systematic and effective nature of educational efforts. Such shortcomings fall short of the goal of cultivating applied talents in modern universities.

3.3. The “ambiguity” of effect level

Currently, universities generally lack systematic evaluation mechanisms for assessing the educational effectiveness of student organizations. Existing evaluations predominantly focus on superficial metrics like event frequency and participation numbers, failing to deeply consider core educational objectives such as enhancing ideological awareness, cultivating innovative thinking, and strengthening teamwork capabilities. This approach makes it difficult to accurately capture the long-term impact of activities on student development. The evaluation criteria remain vague and undifferentiated, failing to reflect the unique educational characteristics and core values of various organizations. Typically dominated by university administrative departments, these evaluations lack sufficient participation from multiple stakeholders including students, instructors, and social partners, significantly compromising the objectivity and comprehensiveness of results. This fragmented and superficial evaluation system not only fails to scientifically measure the educational effectiveness of club activities but also creates insufficient motivation for continuous improvement. Consequently, some club activities fall into the trap of “form over substance,” hindering the full realization of their educational potential.

4. Practical path of integrating reading student associations into college students' ideological and political education

4.1. Content system coupling, consolidating the foundation of education

4.1.1. Constructing the “ideological and political education +” theme content system

In content design, we should implement a “Ideological Education+” thematic framework. Student reading clubs must effectively integrate with the primary classroom, collaborate with faculty members, and synergize with Party organizations and secondary college branches. Through a model combining “intensive reading of original works + thematic discussions + practical extensions,” ideological education should permeate the entire reading process, allowing it to naturally flourish

in an environment imbued with scholarly culture. Focus on reciting classics, thoroughly studying core sections of texts, and reflecting on original aspirations through the interplay of words. Collaborate with various units to organize recitation sessions, book-sharing events, campus cultural initiatives, community reading programs, and reading months. Themes should align with social hotspots and significant dates, guiding students to deepen their understanding of national development and ethnic rejuvenation through reading exchanges while drawing spiritual strength. The “Ideological Education+” thematic system retains the original core attributes of clubs while endowing them with contemporary value guidance. This approach enables students to strengthen their ideals through immersive reading and refine moral character through intellectual exchanges, achieving true resonance between “reading extensively” and “cultivating noble virtues.”

4.1.2. Create a series of thematic reading modules with “layered and classified”

Student reading clubs should focus on the priorities of ideological and political education, and plan a series of regular reading activities tailored to different academic backgrounds and grade levels. They should collaborate with the School of Marxism to develop stratified reading lists, ensuring comprehensive coverage of the core areas of ideological and political education, thereby forming a complete educational chain. The foundational reading list focuses on Marxist classics and the Party’s innovative theoretical works, complemented by knowledge competitions and themed essay contests to deepen theoretical understanding. The intermediate-level reading list includes red revolutionary classics and biographies of “Role Models of the Era,” accompanied by red classic recitation sessions and revolutionary history reading clubs. It also partners with the Working Committee on Caring for the Next Generation to invite “Five Elders” to share insights in student clubs, enhancing the appeal of education. The extended reading list covers excellent traditional Chinese cultural classics and contemporary China development records, supported by practical discussions on topics such as rural revitalization and building a strong country through science and technology. Additionally, relevant books should be updated in a timely manner to align with major anniversaries, national policies, and current hot topics, ensuring the timeliness and relevance of ideological and political education, and guiding students to clarify their responsibilities in the era through reading and reflection.

4.2. Empowerment of position construction and innovation of educational vitality

4.2.1. Creating a new reading atmosphere in the “one-stop” student community

Leveraging the “one-stop” student community spaces in universities, we prioritize creating immersive reading environments. By establishing themed reading corners, corridors, and pavilions, and utilizing VR/AR technologies, we craft multidimensional, immersive red-themed reading scenarios to cultivate students’ passion for quality literature. Regular activities—including book-sharing sessions, discussions on scientific and humanistic values, and peer reviews—are organized across these spaces. This approach deepens students’ understanding through physical engagement and profound reading, seamlessly integrating scenario-based education with ideological and political education.

4.2.2. Relying on “network ideological and political education” to stimulate new vitality of reading

Leveraging new media platforms including universities, student organizations, and Yiban, along with online resources such as the Yiban APP, Xuexi Qiangguo (Study for National Strength), and Xuexi Tong (Study Hub), we have developed an online ideological and political education module. This module regularly shares curated reading lists, facilitates reading reflections, and hosts cloud-based check-in activities. By analyzing big data to identify students’ reading preferences and ideological trends, we deliver targeted content recommendations. Furthermore, we organize cross-university online thematic study initiatives to broaden the scope of educational outreach.

4.2.3. Strengthening a new model of reading in the construction of “big ideological and political course”

The “Comprehensive Ideological and Political Education” initiative emphasizes that ideological and political education should permeate all aspects of teaching and learning, engaging all educational stakeholders and scenarios. As vital

platforms for student development, university student organizations should be integrated into this educational framework. Reading-focused student groups should collaborate with the primary classroom system, aligning with the practical teaching components of ideological and political courses. By establishing coordinated mechanisms, these groups can transform classroom ideological content into core topics for book-sharing sessions and thematic workshops. Through course papers and classroom presentations, they can further enrich classroom instruction, fostering a mutually beneficial dynamic between teachers and students.

4.2.4. Constructing a new path of reading by integrating social practice

Through specialized course instruction, relevant social practice activities are organized. The program follows a “reading and learning—field research—creation of outcomes” model, where subject teachers provide theoretical guidance and enhance academic discussion standards, while club advisors or ideological and political educators ensure the political orientation and presentation of results. Topics are selected through preliminary theoretical study and thematic discussions, followed by mid-term field research to bridge theory and practice. Learning outcomes are ultimately presented through research reports, academic papers, and scenario plays, enabling students to develop their ideological and political literacy through both “reading extensively” and “traveling widely.”

4.3. Constructing the effectiveness evaluation system to broaden the depth of education

4.3.1. Effect transformation and forming a closed-loop education mode of “reading-practice-feedback”

Student organizations across universities should prioritize translating academic achievements into real-world impact. For reading-focused clubs, establishing a closed-loop educational model of ‘reading-practice-feedback’ is essential to ensure effective application of learning outcomes. By leveraging practical platforms like red heritage site visits, historical reenactments, and campus reading salons, these initiatives bridge theoretical knowledge with practical skills. This approach not only solidifies reading outcomes but also enhances the relevance and effectiveness of club activities. Through reading, writing, and hands-on learning, students strengthen their convictions, develop comprehensive competencies, and ultimately demonstrate the ideological guidance and educational value of reading-focused student organizations.

4.3.2. Multi-party collaboration to establish a three-dimensional evaluation mechanism of “self-evaluation by associations + mutual evaluation by students + teacher comments”

Student organizations in higher education institutions should prioritize establishing evaluation mechanisms. For reading-focused student associations, a three-dimensional assessment framework combining “self-evaluation by the organization, peer review among students, and faculty feedback” should be implemented to consolidate collaborative educational efforts. The organizations themselves should conduct self-assessments based on activity outcomes and organizational management, identifying strengths and areas for improvement while setting objectives for the next phase. By utilizing survey questionnaires and other methods, they should establish peer review platforms to track changes in students’ theoretical understanding, ideological trends, and practical engagement, thereby strengthening their sense of responsibility. Inviting department heads, student affairs staff, ideological and political educators, and subject teachers as evaluators can provide professional guidance on ideological orientation and knowledge delivery effectiveness, ensuring educational alignment. Each semester, a systematic analysis of the organizations’ educational impact should be conducted. Identified weaknesses should be promptly addressed through optimized activity designs and mentoring strategies to enhance educational quality. This approach will transform reading-focused student associations into vital platforms for cultivating students’ ideological character and improving their comprehensive competencies.

5. Conclusion

By leveraging student reading clubs, universities can effectively integrate club-based education with ideological

and political education for college students. This innovative approach to the “Three-Aspect Education” mechanism demonstrates how institutions fulfill their fundamental mission of cultivating virtue through education. Through establishing systematic content frameworks, collaborative engagement models, professional guidance systems, multi-dimensional communication platforms, and scientific evaluation mechanisms, reading clubs can fully leverage their unique educational potential. This transformation shifts ideological education from a “single-domain” approach to a “multi-dimensional” framework, from “theoretical instruction” to “integration of knowledge and practice,” and from “one-way indoctrination” to “two-way interaction.” Looking ahead, universities must adapt to evolving trends and student needs, continuously explore new formats and methods for club-based education in the digital era, optimize practical implementation pathways, and enhance the appeal, impact, and effectiveness of ideological education. These efforts will lay a solid ideological foundation for nurturing the new generation capable of shouldering the great mission of national rejuvenation.

Author Profile

Wu Rui, male, born in March 2001, is a Manchu ethnic scholar from Jinzhou City, Liaoning Province. He holds a bachelor’s degree and works as an assistant professor. His research focuses on ideological and political education. He is affiliated with Shenyang City Construction University (Postal Code: 110167).

Exemplary Project

The exemplary project of Shenyang Urban Construction University’s student association, titled “The Practical Path of Integrating Educational Values into College Students’ Ideological and Political Education: A Case Study of Reading Clubs”.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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