

A Study on the Pathways for Cultivating College Students' Sense of Social Responsibility in Private Universities from the Perspective of National Security Education

Jinshan Wu¹, Sukyoung Cho², Xiaoyan Luo²

¹Hainan Vocational University of Science and Technology, Haikou 571126, Hainan, China

²Sehan University, Yeongam-gun 57447, Republic of Korea

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: Focusing on the intrinsic connection between the national security education system and the development of a sense of responsibility, national security education influences college students' national identity, sense of mission, and value formation through both theoretical instruction and practical experiences. Currently, some private universities still face challenges in implementing national security education, including insufficient cultural educational impact, limited diversity in practical activities, and inadequate reflection and guidance mechanisms, all of which undermine the effectiveness of cultivating social responsibility. To address these issues, private universities should strengthen cultural leadership in national security, expand platforms for social responsibility practices, emphasize inspirational guidance and emotional engagement, and integrate national security awareness, patriotism, public accountability, and contemporary missions into the educational process. This approach enables students to enhance their sense of responsibility and capacity for action by understanding national security, participating in social practices, and safeguarding public interests, thereby providing actionable insights for improving the quality and efficiency of ideological and political education in private institutions.

Keywords: National security education; Private universities; College students; Sense of social responsibility

Online publication: December 20, 2025

1. The basic connotations of national security education and college students' sense of social responsibility

1.1. National security education

National security education is an educational initiative focused on disseminating knowledge about national security, fostering safety awareness, enhancing security capabilities, and cultivating security responsibilities. It constitutes a vital component of the higher education system in the new era ^[1]. Its primary objective extends beyond enabling students to grasp fundamental concepts and related knowledge of national security; it also aims to guide students in understanding the interconnections between national security and national development, social order, public interests, and personal growth. National security is not an abstract concept detached from daily life but rather closely intertwined with college

students' academic pursuits, online interactions, civic engagement, and social behaviors. Through theoretical learning, legal education, case studies, and scenario-based guidance, students gradually develop risk identification skills and cultivate essential awareness of safeguarding national interests, adhering to public norms, and prioritizing social security. Functionally, national security education serves three key roles: cognitive inspiration, value orientation, and behavioral standardization. Rather than being a one-dimensional knowledge transmission, it represents an integrated educational process that combines knowledge instruction, value cultivation, and behavioral refinement, providing a conceptual foundation and value-driven support for nurturing college students' sense of social responsibility.

1.2. College students' sense of social responsibility

College students' sense of social responsibility primarily refers to their awareness, acceptance, and commitment to social obligations. It represents a conscious understanding of the duties and responsibilities they bear toward the nation, society, and themselves, serving as a concrete manifestation of their worldview, philosophy of life, and values, a vital component of their overall competence^[2]. This sense manifests both in students' proactive responsibility for personal growth and in their concern for and contribution to national development, social order, and public interests. As a pivotal segment of the youth population, college students' social responsibility transcends mere moral character; it embodies their ideological perspectives, value orientations, behavioral patterns, and comprehensive qualities. Overall, this sense exhibits multi-layered and integrated characteristics, encompassing emotional identification with the nation, active participation in public affairs, and rational engagement in personal development. For private universities, analyzing college students' social responsibility through the lens of national security education helps expand educational content, guiding students to cultivate robust accountability awareness and practical skills while understanding national security, safeguarding public interests, and fostering self-improvement.

2. The logical connection between national security education and the cultivation of social responsibility among students in private universities

2.1. The cultivation of national security awareness and the logic behind the formation of college students' national identity

The cultivation of national security awareness and the formation of college students' national identity are intrinsically linked. National security education goes beyond imparting safety knowledge; it guides students to understand the relationship between personal growth and national stability by analyzing national security landscapes, national interests, and societal development realities. Through this process, students gradually realize that national security is not an abstract concept but rather closely intertwined with social order, public welfare, and individual development, thereby establishing a fundamental understanding of the national community. Moreover, national security awareness influences students' emotional attitudes. By comprehending the risks and challenges facing national development, students more readily develop a sense of vigilance, mission, and responsibility, while strengthening their emotional connection to the nation^[3]. National identity cannot be formed solely through theoretical instruction, it emerges progressively as students engage with the nation's historical culture, developmental achievements, and contemporary missions. National security education emphasizes national interests, legal frameworks, public order, and accountability, aligning with the values inherent in fostering social responsibility. Thus, enhanced security awareness deepens national identity, while strengthened national identity further facilitates students' internalization of national security education content, laying the foundation for cultivating social responsibility.

2.2. The strengthening effect of national security education practices on college students' sense of responsibility

National security education practices serve as a vital means to strengthen college students' sense of responsibility.

Compared to classroom lectures, hands-on activities better stimulate student engagement, transforming the concept of responsibility from abstract understanding into tangible experience. Initiatives such as military training, national security knowledge competitions, themed speeches, case studies, and emergency drills diversify educational approaches, enabling students to grasp the practical connection between national security and personal accountability through active participation. During these experiences, students must adhere to rules, complete tasks, collaborate with groups, and handle pressure, processes that cultivate discipline, teamwork spirit, and execution capabilities. Particularly in group activities and scenario-based training, students gain clearer insights into the interplay between individual actions, collective interests, and public order, thereby reinforcing their proactive responsibility mindset. For private universities, expanding platforms for national security education not only addresses the limitations of monotonous classroom instruction but also enhances students' social responsibility and practical competence through authentic experiential learning.

2.3. The internalization mechanism for integrating national security concepts into college students' sense of responsibility and values

The integration of national security concepts into college students' sense of responsibility values focuses on transforming external educational requirements into internal commitment to accountability. The national security education emphasizes national interests, legal frameworks, public order, and civic duties, not merely theoretical concepts, but serving as crucial foundations for students to understand social responsibilities and guide their conduct. Only when students recognize the tangible connections between individual actions and national security, social stability, and public welfare can a genuine sense of responsibility truly take root. Through this process, national security principles help students re-examine the relationship between personal development and national needs. Responsibility ceases to be an abstract moral obligation; instead, it manifests in concrete behaviors such as complying with laws, exercising rational online engagement, maintaining campus order, and participating in community services. For students at private universities, this value orientation strengthens their awareness of rules, public consciousness, and service-oriented mindset, fostering proactive accountability habits in daily academic and social life. Thus, integrating national security concepts into responsibility cultivation essentially represents a progressive transformation, from recognizing responsibility to embracing it willingly, and ultimately taking proactive action. This approach provides essential value support for nurturing social responsibility among private university students.

3. The practical challenges in cultivating college students' sense of social responsibility in private universities from the perspective of national security education

Private universities exhibit distinct characteristics in their operational mechanisms, student demographics, and educational resources. Compared to some public universities, private institutions attract students from more diverse backgrounds, with varying academic foundations, value systems, and levels of social engagement. Consequently, these universities face unique challenges in curriculum development, practical training platforms, faculty support, and the integration of cultural education resources. Therefore, when incorporating national security education into fostering college students' sense of social responsibility, private universities must address both the common issues found in ideological and political education at general higher education institutions and specifically identify the particular shortcomings in their current educational practices based on their unique institutional contexts.

3.1. The educational role of national security culture remains underutilized

National security education should not merely focus on knowledge dissemination and policy promotion; it must also leverage the guiding role of cultural cultivation. The development of social responsibility among college students requires long-term nurturing of patriotism, public awareness, rule adherence, and collective consciousness. The ideological resources inherent in China's excellent traditional culture, such as self-cultivation, the unity of family and nation, and

commitment to righteousness, provide cultural foundations for national security education and help students understand the relationship between national interests, social order, and personal responsibilities. However, in practice at some private universities, the educational function of national security culture remains underutilized. Many institutions concentrate their programs primarily on theoretical explanations, policy studies, and thematic campaigns, failing to adequately explore the connections between traditional culture, revolutionary heritage, legal culture, and national security education, thereby lacking sustained cultural impact^[4]. Some content remains fragmented, failing to effectively integrate national security awareness with the cultivation of social responsibility. This results in students' understanding of national security remaining superficial and their recognition of personal responsibilities insufficiently profound.

3.2. The platforms for social responsibility practice activities are relatively limited in variety

Social practice serves as a crucial link in transforming national security education into a sense of responsibility. Relying solely on classroom instruction often leaves students with only conceptual understanding, making it difficult for them to grasp the practical connections between national security, public order, and individual accountability. For students at private universities, social responsibility is most effectively cultivated through active participation in public affairs, serving others, and addressing societal needs within concrete contexts. However, current practical activities at some private institutions remain limited, primarily consisting of classroom discussions, thematic lectures, field visits, and awareness campaigns. While these activities carry educational value, students predominantly engage passively without sufficient hands-on experience. Meanwhile, initiatives more closely tied to responsibility fulfillment, such as volunteer services, community service programs, legal awareness campaigns, cybersecurity practices, and emergency drills, are inadequately implemented, leaving many students lacking sustained opportunities for social engagement. This scarcity of practical platforms not only diminishes the tangible relevance of national security education but also hinders the transition of social responsibility from awareness to action.

3.3. The mechanisms for responsibility reflection and process guidance remain inadequate

The development of social responsibility relies not only on theoretical education and practical engagement, but also requires students to continuously reflect on their own behaviors during the learning process, thereby deepening their understanding of the relationship between national security and personal accountability. If educational processes focus solely on knowledge transmission and activity implementation while neglecting subsequent reflection and guidance, national security education risks remaining at the level of task completion rather than genuinely fostering students' sense of responsibility. Observations from certain private universities reveal that although institutions have conducted national security-themed education programs, online courses, and practical activities alongside ideological and behavioral guidance, insufficient attention has been paid to post-participation student reflections, value assessments, and individualized counseling. Some students merely passively complete learning tasks without engaging in profound contemplation of social responsibilities, national interests, or their personal missions. Inadequate reflection and guidance mechanisms undermine both the internalization effectiveness of national security education and the sustainability of cultivating college students' sense of social responsibility.

4. Practical approaches to cultivating college students' sense of social responsibility in private universities from the perspective of national security education

4.1. Strengthen the guiding role of national security culture and consolidate the foundation for cultivating social responsibility

Cultural guidance serves as a vital foundation for private universities in implementing national security education and fostering college students' sense of social responsibility. The ideological bedrock of this sense lies in China's excellent traditional culture, particularly Confucian thought. Confucianism emphasizes human social responsibilities and moral

cultivation, advocating mutual respect, care, assistance, and understanding among individuals, while emphasizing the unity of personal refinement and social accountability, arguing that only through continuous self-improvement can individuals better fulfill their societal duties. In practice, educators should draw upon traditional cultural principles such as self-cultivation, the integration of family and nation, and commitment to righteousness, integrating them with national security education to help students recognize the connection between personal growth and national development. Through ideological and political courses, themed class meetings, specialized lectures, National Security Education Day observances, and campus cultural activities, national security concepts can be woven into daily educational practices, fostering an academic environment that prioritizes national security and values accountability. Moreover, cultural guidance should transcend mere ideological indoctrination; it must inspire students to transform cultural identity into conscious responsibility. Through sustained cultural immersion, college students can align their personal aspirations with national needs and social progress, strengthening their proactive commitment to safeguarding public interests, serving society, and fulfilling contemporary missions, thereby laying the groundwork for cultivating genuine social responsibility^[5].

4.2. Expand platforms for social responsibility practices, transforming awareness of responsibility into concrete actions

Practical activities serve as a crucial link in transforming national security education into social responsibility. When implementing such programs, private universities should not rely solely on classroom lectures, thematic seminars, or field trips; instead, they must design more participatory and experiential practical projects that align with students' realities and societal needs, enabling them to understand the relationship between national security, public order, and personal accountability within concrete contexts^[6]. Activity content should incorporate community service, environmental protection initiatives, legal awareness campaigns, cybersecurity education, emergency drills, and volunteer services, guiding students to strengthen their sense of responsibility through serving others and engaging in public affairs. Additionally, events like social surveys, philanthropic project planning, and social responsibility forums can help students deepen their understanding of responsibility by identifying, analyzing, and solving real-world challenges. Universities should also enhance evaluation and incentive mechanisms, recognizing outstanding participants through credit awards, certificate grants, or public recognition to sustain their engagement. By expanding practical platforms, national security education can extend beyond theoretical knowledge to actionable practices, fostering college students' social responsibility and leadership capabilities through hands-on experience.

4.3. Improve the reflective guidance mechanism to foster internalization of responsibility recognition

Students are direct participants in cultivating social responsibility. If national security education relies solely on teacher lectures and passive student reception, it risks remaining at the level of knowledge comprehension without fostering stable responsibility awareness. Private universities should emphasize students' active thinking, emotional engagement, and practical reflection when implementing such education, guiding them to gradually develop a conscious sense of accountability based on understanding the relationship between national security and social responsibilities. In instructional design, teachers can create discussion scenarios centered around real-world issues such as national security, public order, social governance, and online behavior, prompting students to reflect on the connection between personal growth, national needs, and societal development. Through classroom discussions, group exchanges, case analyses, and online interactions, students deepen their understanding of responsibility by exchanging perspectives and analyzing challenges. Additionally, methods like scenario simulations, role-playing exercises, and practical feedback can be integrated into teaching processes to help students experience the importance of rule adherence, mutual assistance, and public responsibility in concrete contexts. Furthermore, private universities should establish reflective feedback mechanisms following practical activities. Teachers should guide students to summarize their experiences, responsibility insights, and behavioral improvements, preventing national security education from merely being about task completion^[7]. By combining inspirational guidance, emotional immersion, and process-oriented instruction, universities can facilitate a shift from externally imposed

educational requirements to internal recognition of responsibility values, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of social responsibility cultivation among college students.

5. Conclusion

Overall, national security education and the cultivation of social responsibility among college students share common value objectives and educational orientations. Private universities should leverage their institutional realities to strengthen the guidance of national security culture, expand channels for practical engagement, improve reflective guidance mechanisms, and help students enhance their sense of responsibility and capacity for undertaking by understanding national security, participating in social services, and safeguarding public interests.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

- [1] Quan W, Zhu S, 2025, Reflections on Strengthening Ideological Security Education for College Students in the New Era: Values, Challenges, and Pathways. *Journal of Hunan University of Science and Technology*, 2025(2): 97–101.
- [2] Tang Y, Ge H, 2024, Strengthening Social Responsibility Education for Ethnic Minority College Students: A Case Study of Huaibei Normal University. *Journal of Huaibei Vocational and Technical College*, 23(2): 59–62.
- [3] Zhang L, Xie X, 2025, Integrated Education: Exploring a New Model of National Security Education in Chinese Universities. *National Security Forum*, 2025(2): 13–23 + 83.
- [4] Lu L, 2023, Current Status and Cultivation Paths of College Students' Sense of Social Responsibility from the Perspective of Chinese National Community Awareness: A Survey of 3,111 College Students in Province S. *Ethnic Education Research*, 34(6): 102–107.
- [5] Jing X, 2023, An Analysis of Pathways for Cultivating Social Responsibility Among College Students in the New Era. *Jiangsu Higher Education*, 2023(12): 106–109.
- [6] Fang Z, 2023, Research on the Model Education Pathway for Social Responsibility Among Retired College Students in Private Universities under the “Three-Comprehensive Education” Framework. *Scientific Consulting (Science & Technology · Management)*, 2023(12): 142–145.
- [7] Yang L, Wang F, Wang H, et al., 2020, Exploration of Approaches to Cultivating Social Responsibility Among Engineering Undergraduates. *Journal of Liaoning Technical University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 22(3): 104–106 + 126.

Publisher's note

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