

Research on Empowering High School Ideological and Political Education through Current Affairs WeChat Public Accounts

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Abstract: Integrating political WeChat official accounts focused on current affairs into high school ideological and political education classrooms is of significant importance in enriching teaching content, bridging the gap between knowledge and life, achieving the transformation of students' "knowledge-belief-action" triad, and ultimately achieving high-quality core literacy. To grasp the current application status of WeChat public accounts in high school ideological and political education, and to better realize their empowerment in this context, this study adopts an empirical research approach. It focuses on three stages: pre-class preparation, in-class implementation, and post-class practice, to explore existing issues in utilizing WeChat public accounts for high school ideological and political education. Effective measures are proposed to address these issues.

Keywords: Current Affairs; Wechat Public Account; High School Ideological and Political Education; Teaching.

1. Introduction

On May 11, 2024, General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized at the Symposium on Advancing Ideological and Political Education in Schools in the New Era, "In the new era and on a new journey, ideological and political education faces new situations and tasks, requiring new vigor and achievements." [1] The platform of WeChat public accounts on current affairs is characterized by vast information, strong timeliness, and profound influence. Utilizing it in high school ideological and political education can greatly enhance the effectiveness of integrating current affairs into teaching. However, due to the complex nature of WeChat public accounts on current affairs, it also increases the difficulty of incorporating their content into classroom teaching to some extent. Therefore, to better study and analyze how WeChat public accounts on current affairs can empower high school ideological and political education, revitalizing and enhancing the contemporary relevance and attractiveness of ideological and political education in high schools has become an imperative proposition for the construction of ideological and political education in the new era.

2. The Practical Value of Empowering High School Ideological and Political Education through Current Affairs WeChat Public Accounts

WeChat public account platforms boast a vast user base and diverse posting subjects. Leveraging the advantages of WeChat public accounts, especially those focused on current affairs, in classroom teaching empowers high school ideological and political education. To better utilize resources from current affairs WeChat public accounts, the practical value of integrating these resources into high school ideological and political education is explored. We selected accounts with an average view count of ten thousand, including People's Daily, Xinhua News Agency, CCTV News, Global Times, People's Network, China News Network, and

the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League. These accounts are crucial sources of current affairs resources for high school ideological and political education. Matching the content of these public accounts with the four compulsory modules of high school ideological and political education, we pinpoint where the integration of current affairs WeChat public account resources aligns with the curriculum. For example, in Module One, Lesson One on the theory and practice of scientific socialism, and Lesson Two on the victory of the new democratic revolution, important commentaries from People's Daily and stories narrated by General Secretary Xi Jinping about the "half a quilt" illustrate the practical applications and innovations of scientific socialism in China. They also evoke an understanding of the poignant journey of the Chinese Communist Party leading the people united as one to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

Unity of Political and Theoretical Rigor-"Increasing Knowledge". WeChat, as the largest social platform in China, has launched the WeChat public platform, utilizing the high user stickiness of WeChat to attract numerous self-media. Many mainstream news media have settled on the WeChat public platform, presenting a matrix-style development pattern and providing precise information services to users through hierarchical divisions, enhancing the practical effectiveness of user consultation. Ideological and political education must adhere to the unity of "political nature and theoretical rigor", with political nature being its fundamental attribute. Integrating the political content of official media WeChat public accounts such as CCTV News, People's Daily, and the Central Committee of the Communist Youth League into ideological and political education in high schools enriches the political content of classrooms. Teaching political nature in high school ideological and political education does not mean ignoring theoretical rigor or using ideological and political education as a simple political propaganda tool. High school ideological and political education integrates political nature and theoretical rigor, using current affairs content to assist classroom teaching. Ideological and political education "must respond to students

with thorough theoretical analysis, persuade students with thorough ideological theory, and guide students with the powerful force of truth" [2] The integration of current affairs WeChat public accounts allows students to arm themselves with theory in the classroom, analyze current affairs content, form their own viewpoints, and enhance their ability to analyze problems. This helps students understand the latest theories and policies of the Party, strengthen their confidence in the Party's governance, and consciously support the Party's leadership.

Unity of Constructiveness and Criticism-"Cultivating Trust". High school ideological and political education adheres to the unity of constructiveness and criticism, inheriting and developing the critical spirit of Marxism, embodying rich Marxist dialectical thinking. High school ideological and political education must adhere to the guiding ideological position of Marxism, arm students' minds with Marxist theory, and adhere to studying and implementing Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era. Only by teaching students with "thorough theory" and guiding their thinking under the banner of socialism can the ultimate goal of "persuasion" be achieved. "Criticality" requires teachers to face social reality issues directly during the teaching process, "guiding students to use Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era as a guide, employing Marxist theoretical criticism tools, identifying and criticizing various social erroneous trends and contradictions, and firmly taking a stand" [3]"In any period, any society will face various problems" [4]Teachers of high school ideological and political education must develop the genuine ability to "not fear questioning", "be afraid not to question", and "be pleased when questioned" [4]. By introducing content from current affairs WeChat public accounts into teaching, teachers select social hot issues that students are interested in, guiding students to understand, think, and analyze problems in a dialectical way. Through the process of debating and thinking, deepen students' identification with the core socialist values, and strengthen their determination to follow the path of socialism with Chinese characteristics.

Combining Theoretical Rigor with Practical Application—"Implementation". Marxism holds that "theory divorced from practice is hollow, and practice without theoretical guidance is blind" [5] Marxism itself is formed and continually developed through practice. High school ideological and political education inevitably integrates both theoretical rigor and practical application. In high school ideological and political education, theoretical rigor involves teaching fundamental concepts, important issues, and major viewpoints to help students understand the world. In the classroom, teachers must impart the basic principles of Marxist theory and the theoretical achievements of Marxism adapted to the Chinese context and contemporary times. By thoroughly explaining Marxist theory and its localization in contemporary China, educators deeply engage in promoting education on socialist core values, thereby fostering a strong cognitive level among students. Emphasizing practical application in high school ideological and political education means "concretizing the Marxist view of practice in the teaching process and addressing real-world demands" [6] High school ideological and political education must uphold practicality; without it, teaching becomes rootless and theoretical preaching becomes empty. Emphasizing practicality in high school ideological and political education

involves integrating theoretical teaching with practical activities. Practical teaching in ideological and political education goes beyond changing the teaching environment; it focuses on aligning social content with theoretical explanations.

3. Issues with Empowering High School Ideological and Political Education through Current Affairs WeChat Public Accounts

To understand the current issues with utilizing current affairs WeChat public accounts in high school ideological and political education, a survey was conducted among classes of all three grades in high school. A total of 650 questionnaires were distributed, with 630 valid responses. Among the respondents, there were 324 female students and 306 male students, distributed across 213 freshmen, 204 sophomores, and 213 seniors.

Using SPSS, the collected data underwent chi-square tests to analyze the significance of differences in student interest in public accounts, differences in teachers' use of current affairs WeChat public accounts, and the existence of issues in integrating these accounts into teaching (such as difficulty in understanding content).

Table 1. Chi-square Test for Differences in Public Account Engagement and Issues with Integrating Current Affairs WeChat Public Accounts into Tea

	Value	df	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	8.322a	3	.040
Likelihood Ratio	8.704	3	.033
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.938	1	.164
N (Valid cases)	630		

Based on Table 1, it is evident that differences in student engagement with WeChat public accounts have statistical significance regarding issues in integrating Current Affairs WeChat public accounts into high school ideological and political education (specifically, difficulties in understanding content).

Table 2. Chi-square Test for Differences in Teachers' Use of Current Affairs WeChat Public Accounts and Issues with Integrating These Accounts int

	Value	df	Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-square	7.007a	2	.030
Likelihood Ratio	8.704	2	.031
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.938	1	.846
N (Valid cases)	630		

Based on Table 2, it is evident that differences in how teachers utilize Current Affairs WeChat public accounts have statistical significance regarding issues in integrating these accounts into teaching (specifically, difficulties in understanding content).

Current Situation Analysis: Currently, students show a high level of interest in WeChat public accounts. In a survey asking

"Which types of public accounts do you prefer to browse," educational and current affairs accounts are notably high at 34.29% and 18.28%, respectively. However, integrating current affairs WeChat public accounts into high school ideological and political education faces certain challenges that hinder further improvement in teaching effectiveness.

Lack of relevance and difficulty in comprehension. According to Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development" theory, teaching should operate just above students' current level of understanding and within their zone of proximal development. Some ideological and political education teachers, when selecting resources from current affairs WeChat public accounts, overly prioritize comprehensive information resources, neglecting students' actual comprehension levels. This makes it difficult to effectively connect current affairs resources with theoretical knowledge from textbooks. Students often encounter opaque political jargon and specialized economic terms, which fail to stimulate their interest in exploring issues, thereby diminishing the practical utility of current affairs WeChat public account resources.

Low integration and deviating from teaching objectives. Generally speaking, WeChat public accounts are operated by two main types of entities: official and personal operations. Among them, official operations include "media official public accounts, various departmental public accounts operated by media, and public accounts operated by small teams or interest groups within media." [7] In the diverse and content-rich landscape of current affairs WeChat public accounts, there are also many personally operated public accounts focusing on current affairs. This requires teachers to carefully select content from current affairs public accounts that aligns with teaching objectives. Some teachers lack thorough analysis and handling of current affairs resources when integrating them into teaching, simply "transferring" these resources into the classroom. This results in a low level of integration between current affairs resources and theoretical knowledge from textbooks, thereby weakening the practical utility of applying current affairs resources in classroom teaching.

Overemphasis on elements and decreased teaching effectiveness "Dialectics point out that the authenticity and comprehensiveness of current affairs resources add advantages to their application but also impose corresponding burdens on teaching." [8] Current affairs WeChat public accounts exhibit complexity in terms of operation entities, content, and methods. Faced with the diverse and complex nature of current affairs WeChat public account resources, teachers need to invest more effort in selecting and analyzing resources suitable for various teaching modules. As materials intended to enhance classroom interest and activity, the proportion of elements in current affairs WeChat public accounts should be reasonably balanced. However, in reality, some ideological and political education teachers integrate current affairs public accounts into classroom teaching without optimizing and integrating these resources, resulting in excessive time spent "presenting" current affairs public account resources during a single class session, which adversely affects the completion of teaching objectives.

4. Optimization Strategies for the Application of Current Affairs WeChat Official Accounts in High School Ideological and Political Education

"The teaching of ideological and political courses involves Marxist philosophy, political economy, scientific socialism, and covers economic, political, cultural, social, ecological civilization, and party building, as well as reform, development, stability, domestic and foreign affairs, and defense, governance of the Party, country, and military" [9] The complexity, theoretical nature, and practical orientation of these subjects determine that high school ideological and political courses must keep pace with the times, interpreting the latest changes in global, national, and public sentiment. According to empirical research results, differences in how teachers and students use and follow WeChat official accounts affect the effectiveness of integrating current affairs WeChat official accounts into high school ideological and political education. Therefore, to better empower high school ideological and political education through current affairs WeChat official accounts, effective measures should be explored in three key phases: pre-class preparation, classroom implementation, and post-class practice.

4.1. Before-class Resource Collection to Enhance the Realistic Interpretation of Ideological and Political Education

Marx proposed "to descend from the world of thought to the real world" [10], criticizing the idealism of Hegel and the Young Hegelians, thus laying an important foundation for establishing a materialist view of history. High school ideological and political education, as part of human practice, should not only be taught in the classroom but also in the broader social context, bringing the classroom back from the realm of theory to practical life. High school ideological and political education should effectively link theoretical knowledge with practical application by making good use of social resources, expanding the theoretical breadth of classroom teaching, and enhancing the realistic interpretation of ideological and political theories.

Current affairs WeChat official accounts fill the gaps left by traditional political vertical propaganda, enabling audiences to timely access diverse political information. Readers not only enhance their understanding of current political news but also increase their trust in government work. Integrating resources from current affairs WeChat official accounts as supplementary materials in classroom teaching aims to enrich educational content and present abstract course materials in a concrete manner. Therefore, teachers need to identify points of alignment between current affairs resources and course objectives to better serve ideological and political education.

For example, when teaching the first lesson of Compulsory Course 3 - Various Political Forces Before the Establishment of the Communist Party of China, teachers can use a survey conducted by the Global Times to "see the world" from the perspective of Chinese people with more confidence! This can prompt students to think: Why emphasize "seeing the world on equal terms"? Teachers can guide students to review the efforts made by Chinese intellectuals a century ago to save the nation from peril, and to reflect on why the salvation

movements of various political forces before the party's establishment all ended in failure. It becomes clear that only the Communist Party of China could save China! Through this approach, students can deeply understand that the confidence of young Chinese in the contemporary world is rooted in a more confident institutional foundation, thereby enhancing their political identification with the Communist Party of China.

4.2. Transforming Resources in Class to Enhance the Content Support for Practical Achievements

General Secretary Xi Jinping's important instructions on the construction of ideological and political education in schools in the new era emphasized "using the remarkable achievements of socialism with Chinese characteristics as the content support." High school ideological and political teachers should learn to bring ideological and political education to life by narrating the history of the Chinese nation, the history of the Party, the history of New China, the history of reform and opening up, and the history of socialist development in a storytelling manner. They should employ heuristic teaching methods effectively, guiding students to comprehend the practical power of the Party's innovative theories through speculative thinking and deeply understand the historical significance of the Party's century-long struggle.

Mainstream WeChat official accounts focus more on deep historical exploration, and their diverse operating models enrich content with a variety of interpretative perspectives, thereby making the content more inspiring and thought-provoking. Teachers should utilize the vibrant materials and valuable resources from current affairs WeChat official accounts to transform them into theoretical teaching content in the classroom. They can dissect theoretical key points with concrete examples, deeply analyze the internal mechanisms of social development, and enhance students' identification with socialism with Chinese characteristics.

For example, when teaching the fourth lesson of Compulsory Course 1 - New Era of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics, teachers can use the short film "Extraordinary China, Extraordinary Decade" as an introduction to motivate students in class. This short film showcases the ten years from 2012 to 2022, during which the Chinese people, under the leadership of the Party, embarked on a new journey towards the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, and wrote an immortal chapter. It helps students understand that the new era is characterized by its height, depth, breadth, and warmth, and is an era where the Communist Party of China and the Chinese people continue to strive for great victories in socialism with Chinese characteristics.

4.3. Post-Class Practice Assignments to Strengthen Self-Identification with Theoretical Knowledge

Post-class practice assignments in high school ideological and political education to some extent gauge students' grasp of theoretical knowledge and assess their development in political literacy and scientific spirit. Therefore, these assignments should exhibit characteristics such as "consistency, gradation, and openness"[11]. Practice assignments should not merely bring all social resources into the classroom or pursue lively social activities but should align with educational objectives, teaching tasks, current

teaching norms, and students' growth patterns, transforming social resources into post-class practice assignments.

WeChat public accounts on current affairs broaden students' channels for information acquisition, reduce information acquisition costs, and utilize platforms like comment sections to provide students with more opportunities to participate in political life and express reasonable demands. Therefore, in the assignment of practice activities during high school ideological and political education, teachers can utilize the public comment boards of WeChat platforms. This enables students to exercise their rights through new media channels, thereby enhancing their political participation awareness.

For example, in teaching the eighth lesson of Compulsory Module Three-The Rule of Law Government, which closely relates to students' daily lives, teachers can assign practice tasks that guide students to research current local social issues of concern to residents or express their views on issues they personally care about. Through platforms such as "Government Open Day Activities" and "Mayor's Mailbox" on the local government's WeChat public account, students can present their viewpoints in writing, enhancing their ability to express themselves and strengthening their awareness of participating in public life.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Associate Professor Peng Junguo for his careful guidance, which enabled the smooth completion of this thesis. I also appreciate all the classmates and journal websites that have provided assistance in the writing of this paper.

"Supported by The Innovation Fund of Postgraduate, Sichuan University of Science & Engineering.

Project number:Y2023173.

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