

The Influence Mechanism of Curriculum Ideology Politics on College Students' National Identity: The Role of Cultural Confidence and School Climate

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Abstract: Based on a questionnaire survey of 560 college students, this paper examined the relationship between the curriculum ideology politics function and college students' national identity, as well as the mediating and moderating effects of cultural confidence and school climate. The results showed that there was a significant positive correlation between the curriculum ideology politics function and the national identity of college students, and that cultural confidence could significantly mediate the relationship between the curriculum ideology politics function and the national identity of college students, that is, the curriculum ideology politics could enhance college students' cultural confidence, thereby enhancing college students' national identity; This mediating path was moderated by school climate, that is, the curriculum ideology politics mainly played an indirect effect through cultural confidence, especially when the perceived school climate was low. These results showed that cultural confidence was an important intermediary process of the curriculum ideology politics affecting college students' national identity, and the high school climate was conducive to promoting the ideological and political function of the curriculum.

Keywords: Curriculum Ideology Politics; National Identity; Cultural Confidence; School Climate.

1. Introduction

The world is currently experiencing a major change that has not been seen in a century. The rapid development and wide application of Internet technology have made multiculturalism a common cultural phenomenon in the world. The ever-emerging ideological hotspots have brought about value oppositions and conflicts, profoundly affecting the ideals and beliefs of young college students as well as their political outlook and value orientation, and have become the biggest variable in the ideological and political work of colleges and universities. Therefore, giving full play to the powerful nurturing function of curriculum ideology politics and politics not only meets the current needs of the times for the development of ideological and political education in China's colleges and universities, but also is an important measure to enhance the sense of national identity of college students. The so-called ideology and politics of the curriculum means giving full play to the consciousness and responsibility of the main body of educating people, exploring the elements of ideology and politics of educating people in each professional course, and integrating the elements of ideology and politics of educating people, such as theoretical knowledge, value concepts and spiritual pursuits, into each professional course by means of traditional and modern resources and rich carriers, so as to have a positive influence on the ideological knowledge, values and behavior of the students by touching things without sound and subtlety [1].

Research has shown that curriculum ideology politics is crucial to improving students' national identity, but there is a lack of empirical evidence on the mechanism by which curriculum ideology politics influences national identity. Therefore, it is necessary to explore the mediating and moderating mechanism of curriculum ideology politics on college students' national identity, in order to provide theoretical basis and empirical support for improving college

students' national identity.

2. Curriculum Ideology Politics and National Identity

National identity refers to the citizens' identification with the historical and cultural traditions, moral values, ideals and beliefs, and national sovereignty of their homeland [2]. In order to promote the strategy of developing the country by science and education and strengthening the country by talents, and to enhance national cohesion, it is necessary to cultivate college student talents with a high sense of national identity. Research results show that common values and consciousness have far-reaching effects on the identity of national community, and the core of identity crisis lies in the crisis in value identity [3]. As an important strategy of ideological and political education, one of the goals of curriculum ideology politics and politics is to cultivate contemporary college students with firm political literacy, and national identity is an important content of political literacy. By infiltrating the correct national view education and political view education into classroom teaching and promoting the national identity and political identity of college students through curriculum ideology politics and politics, we can realize the improvement of the ideological and political literacy of college students and the quality of talent cultivation in China. Based on the above analysis, the first hypothesis of this study is proposed:

Hypothesis 1: The curriculum ideology politics significantly and positively predicts college students' national identity.

3. Cultural Confidence as a Mediator

Cultural confidence is the full affirmation of a country, a nation or a political party of its own cultural traditions and intrinsic values, as well as the firm belief in the development process and vitality of its own culture [4]. To promote Chinese

culture and enhance the cultural confidence of college students is an important goal and historical responsibility of ideological and political education for college students [5]. Studies have shown that combining professional content with Chinese culture in college professional courses can help enhance students' cultural confidence and strengthen their national identity and state identity [6]. In addition, the integration of party history into the Civic and Political Science class is conducive to enhancing students' political identity and cultural confidence [7]. The above theories and studies show that cultural confidence is an important intermediary "bridge" that connects the national identity of college students with the function of political thinking in the course. In view of this, this study proposes the second hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: Cultural confidence significantly mediates the effect of the curriculum ideology politics on the national identity of college students.

4. School Climate as a Moderator

The school that college students attend, especially the school climate, has a different degree of influence on both curriculum ideology politics and cultural confidence. School climate refers to the relatively lasting and stable environmental characteristics perceived by members of a school and having an important influence on their psychology and behavior, and it is the overall atmosphere formed by the learning environment, cultural atmosphere, rules and regulations, interpersonal relationships, values and other factors [8]. The landing of the course of political thinking requires schools to provide a sound management system for the construction of the course of political thinking and perfect operational mechanisms and other environmental and conditional safeguards [1]. Changes in the school learning environment will affect students' learning behavior and direction, and influence the expected effect of curriculum Civics teaching [9]. In addition, as an educational activity, curriculum ideology politics is composed of various cultural symbols, and is deeply influenced and constrained by cultural factors. In order to promote the effective implementation of the construction of curriculum ideology politics, it is necessary to combine explicit and implicit education, fully consider the important value of campus culture to the implementation of curriculum ideology politics and the reception and internalization of information by the educated, give full play to the infectious power, influence and radiation power of culture, and create a cultural atmosphere of curriculum ideology politics [10], so as to prompt the educated to experience and practice curriculum ideology politics, to cultivate and practice socialist core values, and to deepen the understanding and recognition of cultural traditions, cultivate talents with strong cultural confidence, and promote the construction of curriculum ideology politics in colleges and universities to take root. Therefore, the school climate is an important moderating variable of the function of curriculum ideology politics and cultural confidence affecting college students' national identity. Consequently, this study proposes the third research hypothesis:

Hypothesis 2: School climate can significantly moderate the relationship between curriculum ideology politics and college students' cultural confidence.

In summary, this study intends to examine the mediating and moderating roles of cultural confidence and school climate in the promotion of college students' national identity

by the function of curriculum ideology politics with college students as the research object. The following three questions were examined: first, whether the curriculum ideology politics has a significant positive predictive effect on college students' national identity; second, whether cultural confidence has a mediating effect on the relationship between curriculum ideology politics and national identity; and third, whether this mediating effect is moderated by school climate. The specific research hypothesis model is shown in Figure 1.

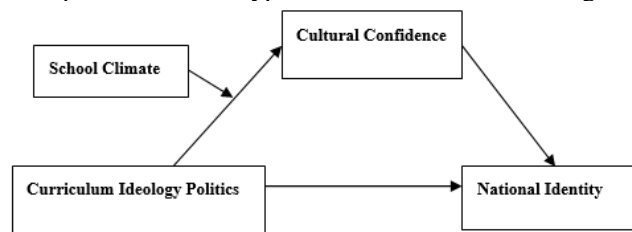


Figure 1. Theoretical Model of Curriculum Civics Functions Influencing College Students' National Identity

5. Methods

5.1. Participants

Convenient sampling was used to select 560 college students from two undergraduate universities in Sichuan Province and Guangdong Province as the study subjects. Among them, 284 were male and 276 were female; 358 were in the first year, 92 in the second year, 88 in the third year, and 22 in the fourth year; 161 were mass, 387 were members of the Communist Youth League, and 12 were members of the Communist Party of China (CPC); and the mean age of the subjects was 19.58 years old, with a standard deviation of 1.53, and the age ranged from 17 to 27 years old.

5.2. Measures

Curriculum Ideology Politics Functions Questionnaire

The curriculum ideology politics functions questionnaire developed by Li (2020) was used to assess college students' perceptions of the implementation of curriculum ideology politics in the school curriculum, including five dimensions of ideology politics courses, professional courses, liberal arts courses, practical courses, and campus culture [11]. A 5-point Likert scale was used (from "1" to "5", which means "very inconsistent" to "very consistent" respectively). The higher the score, the more positive the college students' evaluation of the school curriculum. In this study, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the total scale is 0.97.

Cultural Confidence Scale

In this study, the Cultural Confidence Questionnaire developed by Zhou et al. (2020) was used to assess the cultural confidence level of college students [12]. The scale assesses the level of cultural confidence of college students by measuring the dimensions of cultural praise and cultural pride from the perspectives of cultural confidence emotion and competence, respectively. A 7-point Likert-type scale was adopted, ranging from "1" ("strongly disagree") to "7" ("strongly agree"), with the higher the score, the higher the level of cultural confidence among college students. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale in this study was 0.96.

National Identity Scale

The National Identity Scale for College Students used in Li (2021) study was adopted [13]. The scale consisted of eight items and measured three dimensions containing national

identity perceptions, pride, and behavioral intentions. Subjects were asked to report on the extent of their perceived national identity. The questionnaire was scored on a seven-point scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 7 strongly agree. Higher scores represent higher levels of national identity among college students. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale in this study was 0.95.

School Climate Scale

The revised Adolescent Perceived School Climate Questionnaire by Zheng et al. (2015) was used to assess students' perceived school climate in terms of the three dimensions of teacher support, peer support, and opportunities for autonomy [14]. A 4-point Likert-type scale was used, ranging from 1 for "never" to 4 for "always", and mean scores were calculated for all items, with higher scores indicating a more positive perceived school climate. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the scale in this study was 0.91.

5.3. Procedure and Data Analysis

On the basis of informed consent, an online questionnaire was distributed through WJX, which was organized and instructed to be filled out by student counselors, with a response time of approximately 10 minutes. SPSS 23.0 was used in this study for initial data analysis and mediation effect, moderated mediation effect tests.

6. Results

6.1. Preliminary Analyses

The mean, standard deviation and correlation of each variable were tested, and the results are shown in Table 1. Consistent with our hypotheses, there was a significant positive correlation between the two of curriculum ideology politics, national identity, cultural confidence, and school climate. All these correlations indicate that further tests with moderated mediation effects are feasible.

Table 1. Means, standard deviations and correlation analysis coefficients for each variable

variables	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5
1. Gender	-	-	-				
2. Age	19.56	1.47	0.10*	-			
3. NI	6.70	0.64	0.06	-0.04	-		
4. CIP	4.49	0.50	0.04	-0.11*	0.63**	-	
5. CC	6.64	0.67	0.03	-0.05	0.71**	0.69**	-
6. SC	4.16	0.57	0.08	-0.14**	0.42**	0.73**	0.54**

Note: NI= national Identity, CIP= curriculum ideology politics, CC= cultural confidence, SC= school climate, *p<0.05, **p<0.01.

6.2. Analysis of the Mediating Role of Cultural Confidence

Table 2. Test of mediating role of cultural confidence

Independent Variable	Dependent Variables	R	R ²	F(df)	β	SE	t
NI		0.63	0.40	121.79***(3)			
	gender				0.05	0.04	1.09
	age				0.01	0.01	0.61
CC	CIP				0.80	0.04	18.97***
	gender				0.01	0.04	0.17
	age				0.01	0.01	0.79
NI	CIP				0.91	0.04	22.16***
	gender	0.74	0.55	166.31***(4)			
	age				0.04	0.04	1.16
NI	age				0.00	0.01	0.25
	CIP				0.34	0.05	6.68***
	CC				0.51	0.04	13.47***

Note: NI= national identity, CIP= curriculum ideology politics, CC= cultural confidence, SC= school climate, ***p<0.001.

The Harman one-factor common method bias test showed that there was no serious common method bias in this study. Further, Model 4 (Simple Mediation Model) of SPSS Process was used to test the mediating effect of cultural confidence in the relationship between curriculum ideology politics and national identity, controlling for gender and age. The results (see Tables 2 and 3) showed that the predictive effect of

curriculum ideology politics on national identity was significant ($\beta=0.80$, $t=18.97$, $p<0.001$) and when the mediating variable was put in, the direct predictive effect of curriculum ideology politics on national identity remained significant ($\beta=0.34$, $t=6.68$, $p<0.001$). The positive predictive effect of curriculum ideological and political function on cultural confidence was significant ($\beta= 0.91$, $t =22.16$,

$p < 0.001$), and the positive predictive effect of cultural confidence on college students' national identity was also significant ($\beta = 0.51, t = 13.47, p < 0.001$). In addition, the upper and lower limits of the bootstrap 95% confidence intervals for the direct effect of the influence of curriculum ideology politics on national identity and the mediating effect of

cultural confidence do not contain 0 (see Table 3), indicating that curriculum ideology politics not only directly predicts national identity, but also predicts national identity through the mediating effect of cultural confidence. The direct effect (0.34) and mediating effect (0.46) accounted for 42.50% and 57.50% of the total effect (0.80) respectively.

Table 3. Decomposition of total, direct and mediating effects

	Value	Boot SE	Boot C.I. Lower	Boot C.I. UP	Relative effect value
Total effect	0.80	0.04	0.72	0.88	
Direct effect	0.34	0.05	0.24	0.43	42.50%
Mediate effect	0.46	0.09	0.31	0.64	57.50%

6.3. Moderated Mediation Effects Tests

Model 7 in SPSS Process was used to test the moderating role of school climate in the mediating pathway: curriculum ideology politics → cultural confidence → national identity, controlling for gender and age. The results (see Table 4) show that after putting school climate into the model, both curriculum ideology politics ($\beta = 0.49, t = 7.21, p < 0.001$) and school climate ($\beta = 0.23, t = 4.48, p < 0.001$) can significantly and positively predict the cultural confidence, and the interaction term of the two ($\beta = -0.54, t = -8.91, p < 0.001$) can significantly and positively predict the cultural confidence. Meanwhile, cultural confidence ($\beta = 0.51, t = 13.47, p < 0.001$) and curriculum ideology politics ($\beta = 0.34, t = 6.68, p < 0.001$) were able to significantly and positively predict college students' national identity.

Further, the simple slope test was used to visualize the interaction effect of curriculum ideology politics and school climate on college students' cultural confidence, i.e., the effect of curriculum ideology politics on college students' cultural

confidence when the value of the school climate was one standard deviation above and below the mean (Ms SD). It was found that the predictive effect of curriculum ideology politics on cultural confidence was significantly stronger in the low school climate condition ($\beta_{\text{simple}} = 0.80, SE = 0.06, t = 14.20, p < 0.001$) than in the high school climate condition ($\beta_{\text{simple}} = 0.18, SE = 0.09, t = 1.97, p < 0.05$). The bias-corrected confidence interval method was used to test the significance of the mediating effect of cultural confidence across school climate conditions. It was found that the indirect effect of curriculum ideology politics function to enhance college students' national identity through cultural confidence was significant in the low school climate condition (effect value -0.57, SE of 0.07, 95% CI of [0.26, 0.55]) but not in the high school climate condition (effect value 0.09, SE of 0.06, 95% CI of [-0.02, 0.22]).

In summary, the influence of curriculum ideology politics on college students' national identity through the mediating role of cultural confidence is moderated by the school climate.

Table 4. Moderated mediation effects test

Independent Variable	Dependent Variables	R	R ²	F(df)	β	SE	t
CC		0.73	0.54	130.09***(5)			
	gender				-0.02	0.04	-0.61
	age				0.01	0.01	0.45
	CIP				0.49	0.07	7.21***
	SC				0.23	0.05	4.48***
	CIP x SC					-0.54	0.06
NI		0.74	0.55	166.31***(4)			
	gender				0.04	0.04	1.16
	age				0.00	0.01	0.25
	CIP				0.34	0.05	6.68***
	CC				0.51	0.04	13.47***

Note: NI= national identity, CIP= curriculum ideology politics, CC= cultural confidence, SC= school climate, *** $p < 0.001$.

7. Discussion

This study used a questionnaire survey method to reveal the influence of curriculum ideology politics on college students' national identity and its mechanism of action. On the one hand, it clarified how curriculum ideology politics works, i.e., it influences national identity through the mediating role of cultural confidence; on the other hand, it examined when the influence is more significant, i.e., this mediating process is moderated by the school climate. On the other hand, it

examines when the effect is more significant, i.e., this mediation process is moderated by the school climate, and the mediating role of cultural confidence between curriculum ideology politics and national identity is stronger for individuals who perceive a low school climate, which is an important reference for the implementation of curriculum ideology politics and students' national identity enhancement educational interventions in schools.

The mediating role of cultural confidence

Consistent with research hypothesis 2, the analysis of the mediating effect results showed that the mediating effect of

cultural confidence between the curriculum ideology politics and college students' national identity was significant. That is to say, under the function of curriculum ideology politics, college students can actually feel the charm of socialist culture with Chinese characteristics, and then give full affirmation to the excellent Chinese culture and generate positive emotional experiences. Positive emotional components such as pride and satisfaction contained in cultural confidence are also typical emotions of college students' group belonging and identity (e.g., in-group identity, social identity, national identity, etc.), which will inspire college students to actively and sincerely pay attention to the social progress and national outlook, and ultimately to form a strong sense of national pride and national identity, releasing a strong spiritual motivation to dedicate themselves to the country and the people. At the same time, they will also demonstrate the behavior of advancing and retreating together with the country and the nation. They will realize the change from "knowing" to "acting" and practice the existing value consciousness in their daily life. The results of this study empirically prove that the intrinsic values based on cultural confidence contribute to the generation of national identity among college students. This suggests that during the critical period of the formation of young college students' worldview, life view and values, it is necessary to use curriculum ideology politics as a carrier to guide their values by cultivating strong cultural beliefs, thus enhancing the level of college students' national identity.

The moderating role of school climate

The results of the moderating effect analysis indicate that school climate significantly moderates the relationship between curriculum ideology politics and college students' cultural confidence, and research hypothesis 3 was supported. In addition, the results of the mediation test with moderation of cultural confidence showed that the mediation effect of cultural confidence between curriculum ideology politics and national identity was significant only under the condition of low school climate. This suggests that when students perceive a lower school climate, the curriculum ideology politics plays a great efficacy, which may be due to the fact that the school climate is also able to play the same role as the curriculum ideology politics, and when the school climate is strong, college students are subject to two isotropic forces and are less sensitive to the curriculum ideology politics, but when the school climate is weak, the curriculum ideology politics is able to play the role of a snowball in the sky, and through the cultural confidence to promote the path of college students' national identity level will be significantly enhanced.

8. Implications

Social cognitive theory emphasizes that individual cognitive behavior is the result of the interaction between individual psychological characteristics and the environment. Therefore, in the implementation of curriculum ideology politics and the educational practice of fostering college students' national identity, educators should consider the role of the interaction between individual and environmental factors in the construction of college students' national identity.

From the perspective of individual factors, the establishment of correct values is the key to the formation of correct cognitive behavior. Social cognitive theory attaches importance to the intentionality of people, emphasizing that their behaviors are governed and guided by their own beliefs,

intentions, self-concepts and other cognitive factors, and thus should pay attention to the internal psychological construction of college students' subjects. Firstly, in the process of implementation of curriculum ideology politics, we should pay attention to the role of cultivating and guiding college students' firm cultural beliefs, combining the characteristics of the development of contemporary college students and the actual development of the society, and constantly innovating the form of curriculum ideology politics, so as to create a new cultural space for the integration of the socialist culture of Chinese characteristics, and then laying a foundation of the cultural quality of the university in shaping the correct cultural outlook. Secondly, we should emphasize the cultivation of the historical, national and state views of university students in the new era, continuously promote patriotic feelings, and promote the sense of national identity and belonging with the value belief of the community of human destiny.

In addition, the formation of college students' cultural view and national view cannot be separated from the construction process of interaction between individuals and external environmental factors, so the construction of a good interactive environment is an important way to influence the construction of college students' subjective values and national identity, and to promote the transformation of "knowledge" to "action". Therefore, the construction of a favorable interactive environment is an important way to influence the construction of college students' subjective values and national identity and to promote the transformation from "knowing" to "acting". We should pay attention to the creation of campus culture atmosphere in colleges and universities, give full play to the implicit value-oriented function of campus culture, use socialist core values to lead the social trend of thought, stimulate social consensus, and cultivate the correct historical, political, and cultural outlook of college students in the new era. Curriculum ideology politics is an important carrier for shaping the correct values of college students. Therefore, in the process of cultivating the national identity of college students, we must first consider the value of the spiritual adult of curriculum ideology politics. Teachers, as the implementers of curriculum ideology politics, should combine their own professions and social life practices to create a learning atmosphere of culture and humanism, and realize the fit between knowledge transmission and value guidance. As the coordinating department for the construction of curriculum ideology politics in the curriculum, it needs to establish a sound management system and operation mechanism, so as to provide a good interactive environment for the implementation of curriculum ideology politics in the curriculum and the enhancement of the national identity of college students. In conclusion, in order to realize the establishment of correct values for college students to adapt to the national identity in the era of cultural diversification and the development of ideological and political education in colleges and universities, it is necessary to effectively condense the nurturing values of Chinese excellent culture by using curriculum ideology politics as a carrier, and internalize them into the ideological consciousness of college students, so as to harmonize the relationship between the personal development of college students and the culture and politics of the country.

9. Limitations

The present study has the following limitations. First, the data for this study were collected by self-report through an online questionnaire, although Harman's one-factor test confirmed that there was no serious common method bias in our data. However, in order to strengthen and validate the findings, future studies need to employ more data collection methods such as interviews and others' reported data. Second, because the function of curriculum ideology politics is important for individuals' values as well as their future development, longitudinal analyses should be conducted to link individuals' value changes in schooling with their future career practices and achievements in order to examine the various effects of curriculum ideology politics throughout individuals' learning processes and working careers. Third, the relationship between the curriculum ideology politics and college students' national identity remained significant after the introduction of cultural confidence as a mediating variable, but this only partially explains this effect, and future research may focus on other variables, such as parental national identity, individual values, and other variables, to promote further understanding of the relationship between curriculum ideology politics and national identity by linking situational factors to individual factors.

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