

# Ideological and Political Education as a Mechanism of Cultural Identity Formation: A Systematic Review of Contemporary Chinese Higher Education.

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## ABSTRACT

Through a systematic review approach, this study explores the mechanism and role of ideological and political education in the formation of cultural identity among Chinese college students. Through a comprehensive analysis of relevant academic literature published between 2014 and 2024, this study reveals how ideological and political education systematically shapes the cultural identity of college students through multidimensional mechanisms such as institutionalized structure, curriculum integration, cultural practice and values cultivation. The study finds that ideological and political education in contemporary Chinese higher education has developed into a comprehensive institutional system that promotes students' deep internalization of Chinese culture, socialist core values and national identity through a variety of channels, including formal teaching, extracurricular activities, campus culture construction and digital platforms. This study identifies key challenges in the implementation of ideological and political education, including the tendency of formalism, insufficient student participation, and the disconnection between theory and practice, and proposes strategies to enhance the effectiveness of education. The study is of great theoretical significance in understanding the unique path of cultural identity formation in Chinese higher education, and provides a reference perspective for identity education in other multicultural education contexts.

**Keywords:** ideological and political education; cultural identity; higher education; systematic review; Chinese university students.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the contemporary world where globalization and cultural pluralism coexist, the formation of cultural identity has become one of the core issues in the field of higher education. Cultural identity is not only related to the individual's understanding and recognition of his/her own cultural affiliation, but also has a profound impact on the social cohesion, cultural inheritance and value continuity of a country. In China's higher education system, ideological and political education, as a unique education mode, has the important mission of shaping the cultural identity of college students, cultivating socialist core values, and enhancing national identity. As a multidimensional concept, cultural identity involves the individual's sense of belonging to a specific cultural group, recognition of values, and participation in cultural practices, and Koehne (2006) points out that cultural identity is a dynamic process, not a static state, in which individuals continue to negotiate and reconfigure their identities in different social and educational contexts.

In the context of higher education, college students are in a critical period of identity development, and their cultural identity formation is influenced by multiple factors, including the formal curriculum, campus culture, peer interactions, and the broader socio-political environment (Marginson, 2014). Ideological and political education in

China has deep historical roots and unique institutional characteristics. Since the early 1990s, when the Chinese government systematically promoted patriotic education campaigns, ideological and political education has gradually developed into an institutionalized system in the higher education system (Zhao, 1998). Liu, Zhao, and Starkey's (2021) study reveals that ideological and political education has formed a comprehensive system in Chinese universities consisting of party-led structures, formal teaching, and diversified activities aimed at integrating patriotism into higher education (Marginson, 2014). comprehensive system designed to internalize patriotism as an appropriate ideological perspective for students. This model of education not only teaches Marxist theory and socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics through specialized ideological and political theory courses, but also permeates the curricula of various disciplines, campus culture and all aspects of students' daily lives.

In recent years, under the guidance of Xi Jinping's thought of socialism with Chinese characteristics in the new era, ideological and political education has been emphasized and strengthened as never before, and the 2016 National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges and Universities explicitly proposed that ideological and political work should be carried out throughout the whole process of education and teaching, so as to realize the full training of all staff members, the whole process of teaching

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and learning, and the all-around education of all people(Xi, 2016)." The concept of "Curriculum Civics and Politics" requires that elements of ideological and political education be integrated into all curricula, so that all kinds of courses and ideological and political theory courses can form a synergistic effect. This all-round educational reform has not only changed the teaching content and methods, but also profoundly affected the formation mechanism of college students' cultural identity. However, there is still insufficient research on the mechanism of how ideological and political education contributes to the formation of students' cultural identity. Most of the existing studies focus on the policy analysis, implementation strategy or effect evaluation of ideological and political education, but seldom systematically examine its operation mechanism from the theoretical perspective of cultural identity formation.

The significance of this study lies in the following aspects: firstly, integrating the existing literature through a systematic review method to construct a theoretical framework of ideological and political education as a mechanism of cultural identity formation, and filling the theoretical gaps in related research; secondly, identifying effective strategies and practical challenges in the implementation of ideological and political education, and providing evidence-based basis for the improvement of educational practice; thirdly, providing Chinese case studies for the understanding of the identity education in different cultures from a comparative perspective; thirdly, providing Chinese case studies for the understanding of the identity education in different cultures from a comparative perspective; thirdly, providing Chinese case studies for the understanding of the identity education in different cultures from a comparative perspective. Thirdly, from the perspective of comparative education, the study provides Chinese cases for understanding identity education in different cultural contexts, and promotes dialog and mutual learning in cross-cultural education research. Through a systematic review, this study aims to explore the operation of ideological and political education as a mechanism of cultural identity formation in contemporary Chinese higher education. The study focuses on the following core questions: What are the specific mechanisms through which ideological and political education influences the formation of cultural identity among Chinese university students? How do existing studies theorize the relationship between ideological and political education and cultural identity? What are the main challenges faced by ideological and political education in promoting cultural identity formation? What teaching strategies and practice paths have been proven to be effective in enhancing the role of ideological and political education in the cultivation of cultural identity?

In order to ensure the focus and feasibility of the study, this study focuses on the literature from 2014 to 2024, and the target population focuses on full-time undergraduate and postgraduate students in general institutions of higher education in mainland China. In this study, ideological and political education includes not only specialized ideological and political theory courses, but also "curriculum ideology and politics" elements integrated into the specialized

courses of various disciplines, as well as broader ideological and political work carried out through campus culture, club activities, social practice and other channels. Cultural identity adopts a multi-dimensional concept, including cognitive, emotional, behavioral and value dimensions. This paper is divided into five chapters: Chapter 1 is the introduction, Chapter 2 introduces the research methodology, Chapter 3 presents the core findings, Chapter 4 provides an in-depth discussion, and Chapter 5 summarizes the research contributions and future directions.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Systematic review methodology**

This study adopted the Systematic Review methodology, which follows the standard process of the PRISMA framework (Moher et al., 2009). As an evidence-based research methodology, systematic review systematically identifies, evaluates, and synthesizes relevant research evidence through a well-defined and replicable process, and is able to provide more comprehensive and objective conclusions than a single study (Grant & Booth, 2009). The rationale for choosing the systematic review approach is based on the following considerations: first, research on ideological and political education and cultural identity is scattered across a variety of disciplines such as pedagogy, political science, sociology, etc., and needs to be systematically integrated; second, there are a large number of studies in this field but their quality is uneven, and there is a need for clear quality assessment criteria; third, the theoretical frameworks and research methodologies adopted by existing studies are varied, and there is a need to synthesize findings from different perspectives in order to construct a complete picture of the research findings. Third, the existing studies have adopted various theoretical frameworks and research methods, and there is a need to synthesize the findings from different perspectives to build a complete picture. The systematic review process of this study includes: formulating a clear research question and inclusion criteria; conducting a comprehensive and systematic search of relevant literature; screening the literature according to the preset criteria; assessing the quality of the included literature; extracting and synthesizing the data; and presenting and interpreting the findings.

### **2.2 Literature search and screening**

To ensure the comprehensiveness and representativeness of the literature search, this study selected several authoritative academic databases for systematic search, including Web of Science Core Collection, Scopus, ERIC, ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global, Google Scholar, China Knowledge Network (CNKI), Wanfang Database and Wipro Chinese Journal Database. Based on the research questions and core concepts, this study constructed a systematic combination of search terms, including "ideological and political education", "cultural identity", "university students", "China" and their Chinese equivalents, and supplementary search terms including "patriotic education", "cultural identity", "university students", "China" and their Chinese equivalents. The

additional search terms include “patriotic education”, “socialist core values”, “curriculum ideology” and so on. The search strategy was based on Boolean logic and adjusted according to the characteristics of different databases. In addition to the database system search, this study also used complementary strategies such as reference tracing, citation forward tracking, gray literature search and expert consultation to ensure the completeness of the literature search.

Literature inclusion criteria required that the study explicitly focus on the relationship between ideological and political education and college students' cultural identity, that the target population be students of general colleges and universities in mainland China, that the literature be published during the period of 2014-2024, that the literature be written in either Chinese or English, and that it include empirical studies, theoretical studies, policy analyses, and high-quality literature reviews. The exclusion criteria included irrelevant topics, incompatible research subjects, quality problems, duplicated publications and unavailable full text. Literature screening was carried out in three stages: an initial screening stage in which two researchers independently read the titles and abstracts; a full-text assessment stage in which the full text of the retained literature was obtained for detailed assessment; and a quality assessment stage in which the quality of the screened literature was assessed using an adapted version of the CASP tool. Data were extracted using a standardized form to systematically record the basic information, study characteristics, core content and quality indicators of each included literature, which was independently completed and cross-checked by two researchers.

### 2.3 Data analysis

In this study, the extracted data were analyzed using the Thematic Synthesis method (Thomas & Harden, 2008). This approach is particularly well suited to synthesizing findings from qualitative and mixed-methods research, allowing for conceptual integration across studies while maintaining the richness of the original research. The analysis process consists of three steps: firstly, line-by-line coding of relevant findings from each piece of literature to generate an initial code; then comparing and organizing the initial codes to identify recurring patterns to form descriptive themes; and finally, higher-level conceptual integration and theorization based on the descriptive themes to generate analytical themes. To ensure the rigor of the analysis, this study adopted several quality control measures: independent coding by multiple researchers and regular discussions to reach consensus; use of NVivo software to assist in managing and analyzing the data; maintenance of detailed analysis logs; and continuous backtracking to the primary literature during the analysis to ensure the accuracy of the interpretations.

## 3. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter presents the core findings of the systematic review. Based on the in-depth analysis of the included literature, the four main dimensions of this study are the mechanisms through which ideological and political education influences cultural identity, the supporting

theoretical frameworks, the effective teaching and learning strategies, and the challenges in the implementation process. After a systematic search, a total of 4,287 articles were retrieved in this study. After de-duplication, the remaining 3,156 articles were screened for titles and abstracts. In the first stage of screening, 2,834 articles were excluded, and 322 articles were retained for full text evaluation. In the full text assessment stage, 186 papers were further excluded. In the end, 136 papers passed the quality assessment and were included in this systematic review, including 58 papers in English and 78 papers in Chinese. In terms of the types of studies, 43% are empirical quantitative studies, 31% are qualitative studies, 15% are mixed-method studies, and 11% are theoretical studies and policy analysis. In terms of time distribution, there is a clear growing trend, reflecting the continuous heating up of the research in this field in recent years.

**Table 1: Literature screening process and result statistics table**

Screening Stage	Number of Studies	Exclusion Criteria Applied	Studies Excluded	Studies Retained
Initial Search	4,287	N/A	N/A	4,287
After Deduplication	3,156	Duplicate records	1,131	3,156
Title & Abstract Screening	3,156	Irrelevant topic, wrong population, wrong publication type	2,834	322
Full-Text Assessment	322	Topic not fully relevant (78), Wrong study population (43), Quality issues (35), Full text unavailable (30)	186	136
Quality Assessment	136	Studies passing quality criteria	0	136
Final Inclusion	136	N/A	N/A	136

### 3.1 The core mechanism of ideological and political education influencing cultural identity

Based on the comprehensive analysis of the literature, this study identifies five core mechanisms through which ideological and political education influences the formation of cultural identity among college students: institutionalized structural mechanism, curricular infiltration mechanism, cultural infiltration mechanism, internalization of values and practical transformation mechanism. These mechanisms are interrelated and synergistic, together constituting a systematic education

system. Liu, Zhao and Starkey's (2021) in-depth interview study reveals that ideological and political education in Chinese higher education has developed into a highly institutionalized system with a party-led organizational structure, specialized faculty and a systematic curricular system. Chinese colleges and universities have generally established a three-tiered ideological and political work system: at the university level, there are specialized institutions such as the party propaganda department and the student work department; at the faculty level, there are full-time counselors and party workers; and at the classroom level, there are student party branches and league branches. This vertical and horizontal organizational network ensures the full coverage of ideological and political education.

The core function of the institutionalized structure is to provide a stable organizational guarantee and resource support for cultural identity education. Lu's (2017) comparative study points out that compared with western universities, where values education is mainly carried out through curricula and students' self-selected club activities, the institutionalized structure of Chinese universities allows for a more systematic and sustained ideological and political education. However, several studies (Ouyang et al., 2024; Li & Wang, 2020) have also pointed out that excessive institutionalization may lead to formalism and dogmatism. Curriculum is the most direct and systematic implementation channel of ideological and political education. Traditionally, specialized ideological and political theory courses undertake the task of systematically teaching Marxist theory and socialist ideology with Chinese characteristics, and are the main ground for cultural identity education. However, the most important development in recent years has been the introduction and practice of the concept of "ideology and politics in the curriculum", which marks a major shift in ideological and political education from specialized courses to full-curriculum penetration. Guo and Luo's (2021) analysis of the competition for the teaching of ideology and politics in national colleges and universities' foreign language courses shows that teachers of specialized courses in various disciplines are paying more and more attention to integrating ideological and political elements into the content of their teaching.

The mechanism of cultural infiltration emphasizes the creation of a strong cultural atmosphere, so that students can receive cultural inculcation and form a cultural identity in their daily campus life by subconsciously accepting culture. This mechanism mainly works through the three dimensions of campus cultural construction, cultural activities and cultural space. Zhang, Ning and Lin (2022) showed that displaying slogans of socialist core values in the main buildings, roads and squares of the campus, building cultural landscapes and red cultural education bases, so that the students will constantly come into contact with and perceive these values and concepts in their daily activities. Cultural activities are an important carrier of cultural infiltration, and colorful campus cultural activities such as cultural and art festivals for college students, traditional festival celebrations and patriotic education theme activities provide a platform for students to

participate in cultural practices and experience cultural values.

The internalization of values is the core link in the formation of cultural identity, which refers to the process of transforming external values into internal beliefs and conscious behaviors. Yu (2021), based on the research framework of the "four self-confidence", explains the three levels of internalization of values: cognitive identity, emotional identity and behavioral identity. Cognitive identity is the basic level, which refers to students' understanding of the basic meaning and significance of socialist core values and Chinese traditional culture through learning. Affective identity involves students' emotional commitment and psychological belonging to cultural values, and Li, Leong and Wong's (2024) comparative study of college students in Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macao showed that Mainland students who had experienced systematic patriotism education scored significantly higher than their counterparts in other regions on the affective dimension of national identity. Behavioral identity is the highest level of internalization of values, which is manifested in students' consciously practicing socialist core values in real life and transforming cultural identity into concrete actions.

The mechanism of practical transformation emphasizes the "unity of knowledge and action", and organizes students to participate in various kinds of social practice activities to deepen their understanding and enhance their identity in practice. There are various forms of social practice activities, including red education practice, social research practice, volunteer service practice and professional internship practice, and Wang, Zhang and Hassan's (2024) tracking study of students from five universities showed that students who had participated in in-depth social practice had significantly higher levels of national identity and cultural confidence than those who had not participated in the practice. The study further found that the effectiveness of practice was related to the depth of practice, the quality of instruction, and the depth of reflection. The unique value of the transformative mechanism of practice lies in its experiential and authentic nature. Compared with the abstract nature of classroom teaching, practical activities allow students to experience and participate in them, and the cognition they gained is more concrete, the emotions are more genuine, and the identity is more profound.

**Table 2: Comparison table of the characteristics, functions and implementation strategies of the five core mechanisms**

Mechanism	Key Features	Primary Functions	Implementation Strategies	Theoretical Foundation	Effectiveness Factors
<b>Institutionalized Structure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three-tier organizational system</li> <li>• Party-led governance</li> <li>• Dedicated personnel</li> <li>• Systematic curriculum</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide organizational guarantee</li> <li>• Ensure resource allocation</li> <li>• Maintain consistency</li> <li>• Enable full coverage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish specialized IPE departments</li> <li>• Deploy full-time counselors</li> <li>• Create student party branches</li> <li>• Develop comprehensive policies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social reproduction theory</li> <li>• Political socialization theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational capacity</li> <li>• Resource adequacy</li> <li>• Policy coherence</li> <li>• Avoiding excessive formalism</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum Penetration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dedicated IPE courses</li> <li>• Curriculum ideology integration</li> <li>• Interdisciplinary approach</li> <li>• Systematic knowledge delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transmit core values systematically</li> <li>• Integrate ideology across subjects</li> <li>• Provide theoretical foundation</li> <li>• Bridge theory and practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory IPE theory courses</li> <li>• Embed ideology in all disciplines</li> <li>• Design integrated teaching activities</li> <li>• Develop teaching resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curriculum theory</li> <li>• Hidden curriculum theory</li> <li>• Constructivism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher competence</li> <li>• Integration authenticity</li> <li>• Content relevance</li> <li>• Pedagogical innovation</li> </ul>
<b>Cultural Immersion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campus culture construction</li> <li>• Cultural activities</li> <li>• Cultural spaces</li> <li>• Ambient learning environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create cultural atmosphere</li> <li>• Enable tacit learning</li> <li>• Reinforce formal education</li> <li>• Foster emotional connection</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Display socialist core values</li> <li>• Organize cultural festivals</li> <li>• Build red education bases</li> <li>• Develop campus media platforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultural reproduction theory</li> <li>• Experiential learning theory</li> <li>• Implicit learning theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environmental design</li> <li>• Activity quality</li> <li>• Student participation</li> <li>• Cultural authenticity</li> </ul>
<b>Value Internalization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cognitive understanding</li> <li>• Emotional identification</li> <li>• Behavioral commitment</li> <li>• Three-level progression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transform external values into beliefs</li> <li>• Develop emotional attachment</li> <li>• Guide behavioral practices</li> <li>• Achieve deep identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Systematic theoretical education</li> <li>• Emotional engagement activities</li> <li>• Role model demonstrations</li> <li>• Reflective practices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Value theory</li> <li>• Moral development theory</li> <li>• Self-determination theory</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cognitive clarity</li> <li>• Emotional resonance</li> <li>• Voluntary acceptance</li> <li>• Behavioral consistency</li> </ul>
<b>Practice Transformation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Red education practice</li> <li>• Social investigation</li> <li>• Volunteer service</li> <li>• Professional internship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connect theory with reality</li> <li>• Deepen understanding through experience</li> <li>• Verify and consolidate learning</li> <li>• Develop practical skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organize site visits to revolutionary sites</li> <li>• Conduct field research</li> <li>• Facilitate community service</li> <li>• Integrate professional practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marxist practice philosophy</li> <li>• Experiential learning theory</li> <li>• Kolb's learning cycle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice depth</li> <li>• Guidance quality</li> <li>• Reflection depth</li> <li>• Authenticity of experience</li> </ul>

**3.2 Theoretical Framework and Conceptualization Path**

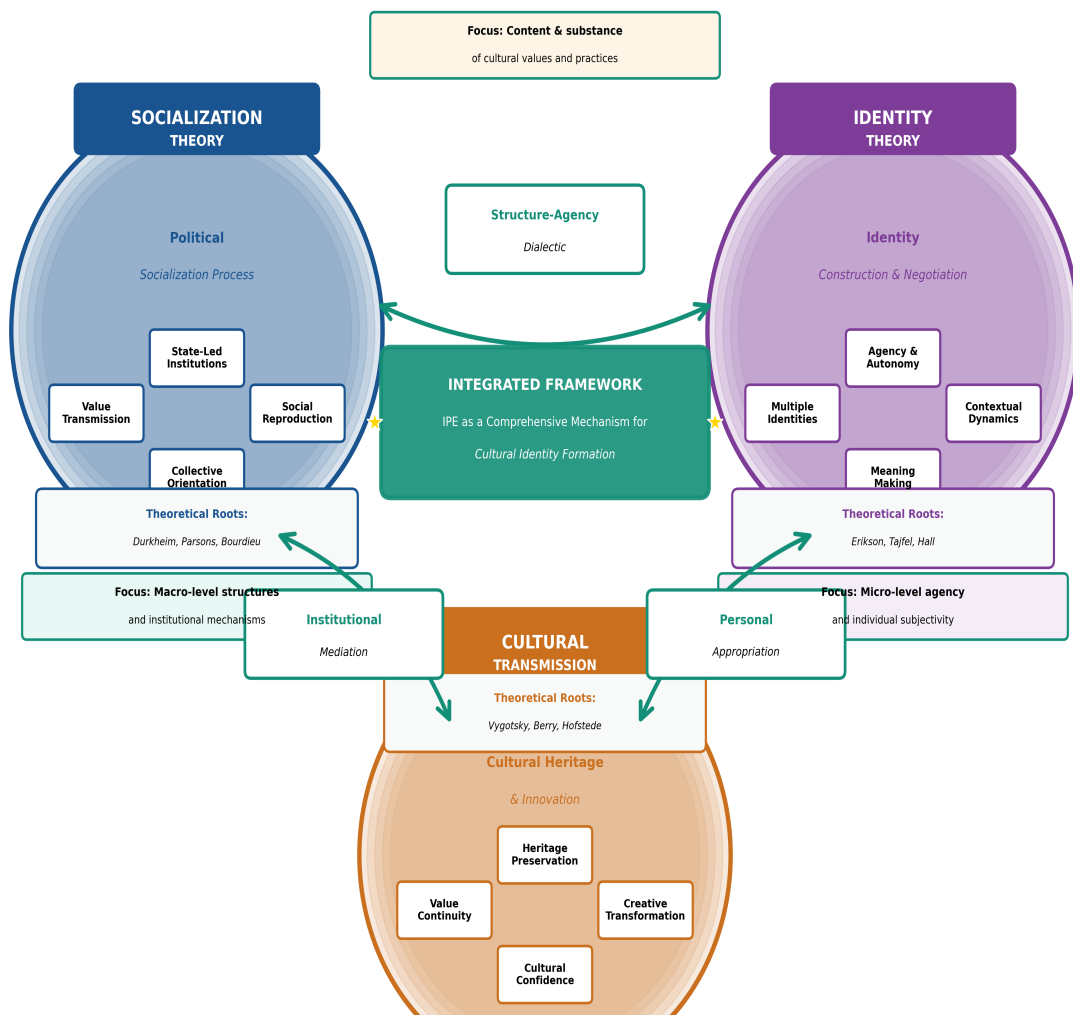
The studies included in this review have adopted a variety of theoretical frameworks to understand and explain the relationship between ideological and political education and cultural identity. Through a systematic analysis of these theoretical perspectives, this study identifies three major conceptualization paths: the socialization theory perspective, the identity theory perspective, and the cultural heritage perspective. Socialization theory views ideological and political education as a process of political socialization, focusing on how individuals acquire the political values, attitudes, and behavioral patterns of a

particular society. Sinkkonen's (2013) survey study of Chinese college students distinguished between the concepts of nationalism and patriotism and found that members of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and students from rural backgrounds showed a stronger tendency toward nationalism. Zhou and Wang (2017) further found that among the multiple socialization channels influencing students' political inclinations, the role of the family is relatively weak, while mass media and schooling have a stronger influence. Identity theory provides another important perspective for understanding the formation of cultural identity, emphasizing the multidimensional, contextual, and

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dynamic nature of identity, and Erikson's classical theory of identity development has been used in many studies to analyze the process of identity development among college students. Social identity theory is also widely used, which emphasizes the social dimension of individual identity, i.e., individuals define themselves by belonging to certain social groups. Li et al. (2024) found that students who had participated in patriotic education activities had significantly stronger in-group identity than the control group. Multidimensional models of cultural identity have also received attention. Although Berry's theory of acculturation was initially targeted at immigrant groups, his two-dimensional model of cultural identity is also instructive for understanding the cultural identity of Chinese university students in the context of globalization. How to form a stable cultural identity in a multicultural environment, maintaining identification with Chinese culture while possessing a global perspective and intercultural competence, has become a new issue facing ideological and political education (Wong & Lee, 2019). The cultural inheritance perspective focuses on the role of ideological and political education in inheriting Chinese

traditional culture and enhancing cultural self-confidence. As one of the “four confidence”, cultural confidence is regarded as a more basic, broader and deeper confidence. A number of studies have explored how to cultivate college students' cultural self-confidence through ideological and political education, and Tian et al.'s (2024) analysis of the language curriculum standards reveals how to combine socialist core values with cultural education at the level of curriculum policy. The cultural heritage perspective also focuses on the contemporary transformation of culture, as the excellent traditional Chinese culture is not a rigid historical heritage, but requires creative transformation and innovative development. This kind of education approach, which integrates the past and the present, keeps traditional culture education from being detached from contemporary reality and enhances the relevance of cultural identity (Zhang, Tong & Li, 2022). Each of the three theoretical perspectives has its own focus and complements the other, and by integrating these perspectives, we can have a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between ideological and political education and cultural identity.



**Figure 1: Mapping of the three theoretical perspectives in terms of correlation and complementarity**

## 3.3 Effective Teaching Strategies

Based on the analysis of teaching practices and intervention studies reported in the included literature, this study

synthesizes and distills teaching strategies that have been proven effective or widely recommended. Narrative teaching conveys values and cultural connotations through vivid storytelling, which is easier to arouse students' emotional resonance and understanding than abstract theoretical explanations. Typical forms of narrative teaching include telling stories about revolutionary martyrs and heroes, sharing real stories about the development of the country and the improvement of people's lives since the reform and opening up, and telling inspirational stories about contemporary college students' self-improvement and dedication to the motherland. Dialogical teaching emphasizes equal dialogue and communication between teachers and students and between students and students, which is different from the traditional one-way indoctrination teaching. Experiential teaching emphasizes learning through hands-on experience, including situation simulation, role-playing, field trips, etc. A quasi-experimental study by Wang et al. (2024) found that students who participated in a semester-long experiential cultural identity course were significantly more likely than the control group to have a higher measure of cultural identity at the end of the course. The digital teaching strategy utilizes online platforms, multimedia resources, and virtual reality technology to carry out ideological and political education, which is in line with the characteristics of contemporary college students as “digital natives”. The interdisciplinary integration strategy embodies the concept of “curriculum ideology and politics”, emphasizing the integration of ideological and political education elements into the professional courses of various disciplines, and realizing the synergy effect between the

ideological and political courses and curriculum ideology and politics. Different disciplines have different ways of integrating ideological and political education elements: science and engineering courses can incorporate China's scientific and technological achievements, the spirit of scientists and engineering ethics; humanities and social sciences courses can explain China's outstanding traditional culture, revolutionary culture and advanced socialist culture; art courses can cultivate aesthetic interest and cultural identity through the analysis of classical works; Hu (2022), taking the linguistics course as an example, shows how to incorporate the elements of ideological and political education into the teaching of linguistics theory, and how to integrate the elements of ideological and political education into the teaching of linguistics theory. Hu (2022) takes a linguistics course as an example to show how to integrate the discussion of language and cultural identity into the teaching of linguistic theory. The practice-oriented strategy emphasizes the unity of knowledge and action, and organizes students to participate in various kinds of practical activities to deepen their understanding, test their theories, and cultivate their abilities in practice. The types of practical activities include social investigation, volunteer service, innovation and entrepreneurship practice, and cultural communication practice, and Ren's (2023) study emphasizes the importance of reflection on practice, and that structured reflection activities can significantly enhance the effectiveness of practical education.

**Table 3: Summary of Characteristics, Applicable Contexts and Implementation Points of the Six Types of Teaching Strategies**

Strategy Type	Core Characteristics	Application Contexts	Implementation Methods	Psychological Mechanisms	Best Practices	Potential Limitations
<b>Narrative Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Story-based delivery</li> <li>• Emotional engagement</li> <li>• Concrete examples</li> <li>• Relatable content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hero stories</li> <li>• National achievements</li> <li>• Personal testimonies</li> <li>• Historical events</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select authentic stories</li> <li>• Emphasize emotional elements</li> <li>• Connect to student experiences</li> <li>• Use multimedia presentations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emotional contagion</li> <li>• Narrative transportation</li> <li>• Vicarious learning</li> <li>• Memory enhancement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure story authenticity</li> <li>• Balance emotion and rationality</li> <li>• Avoid excessive sentimentality</li> <li>• Provide diverse examples</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of over-simplification</li> <li>• May lack critical depth</li> <li>• Dependent on storyteller skill</li> </ul>

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Strategy Type	Core Characteristics	Application Contexts	Implementation Methods	Psychological Mechanisms	Best Practices	Potential Limitations
<b>Dialogic Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal communication</li> <li>• Student voice</li> <li>• Critical thinking</li> <li>• Co-construction of knowledge</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Classroom discussions</li> <li>• Controversial topics</li> <li>• Value clarification</li> <li>• Debate activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create safe discussion space</li> <li>• Pose open-ended questions</li> <li>• Facilitate peer dialogue</li> <li>• Synthesize diverse views</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Active processing</li> <li>• Cognitive dissonance</li> <li>• Social learning</li> <li>• Constructivist learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain respectful atmosphere</li> <li>• Guide without dominating</li> <li>• Embrace diverse perspectives</li> <li>• Balance guidance and freedom</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Time-consuming</li> <li>• Requires skilled facilitation</li> <li>• Unpredictable outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Experiential Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct experience</li> <li>• Hands-on activities</li> <li>• Sensory engagement</li> <li>• Situated learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site visits</li> <li>• Cultural practices</li> <li>• Role-playing</li> <li>• Service learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan meaningful experiences</li> <li>• Provide adequate preparation</li> <li>• Facilitate guided reflection</li> <li>• Connect to learning objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embodied cognition</li> <li>• Experiential processing</li> <li>• Emotional memory</li> <li>• Authentic engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure experience depth</li> <li>• Structure reflection activities</li> <li>• Link experience to theory</li> <li>• Assess long-term impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Logistical challenges</li> <li>• Resource intensive</li> <li>• Individual variation in experience</li> </ul>
<b>Digital Teaching</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technology-mediated</li> <li>• Multimedia resources</li> <li>• Interactive platforms</li> <li>• Accessible content</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online courses</li> <li>• Mobile learning</li> <li>• Virtual reality</li> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop quality digital content</li> <li>• Use interactive features</li> <li>• Leverage student familiarity</li> <li>• Integrate multiple platforms</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multimedia learning</li> <li>• Interactivity effects</li> <li>• Personalization</li> <li>• Engagement through gamification</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design user-friendly interfaces</li> <li>• Ensure content quality</li> <li>• Protect student privacy</li> <li>• Blend with face-to-face teaching</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Digital divide concerns</li> <li>• Risk of superficiality</li> <li>• Technology dependency</li> </ul>
<b>Interdisciplinary Integration</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-subject approach</li> <li>• Organic embedding</li> <li>• Discipline-specific methods</li> <li>• Holistic education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional courses</li> <li>• Liberal arts classes</li> <li>• STEM education</li> <li>• Arts curricula</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify integration points</li> <li>• Train disciplinary faculty</li> <li>• Develop integrated materials</li> <li>• Assess integration quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Transfer of learning</li> <li>• Deep processing</li> <li>• Relevance enhancement</li> <li>• Cognitive integration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find authentic connections</li> <li>• Avoid forced insertion</li> <li>• Respect disciplinary integrity</li> <li>• Collaborate across departments</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires faculty training</li> <li>• Risk of "two skins" problem</li> <li>• Assessment challenges</li> </ul>

Strategy Type	Core Characteristics	Application Contexts	Implementation Methods	Psychological Mechanisms	Best Practices	Potential Limitations
Practice-Oriented	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Action-based learning</li> <li>Real-world application</li> <li>Reflection integration</li> <li>Theory-practice unity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social surveys</li> <li>Community service</li> <li>Project-based learning</li> <li>Civic engagement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Design structured activities</li> <li>Provide mentorship</li> <li>Facilitate systematic reflection</li> <li>Document learning processes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Learning by doing</li> <li>Reflective practice</li> <li>Identity formation through action</li> <li>Transfer to authentic contexts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balance structure and flexibility</li> <li>Emphasize reflection</li> <li>Connect to course content</li> <li>Assess process and product</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time and resource demands</li> <li>Uneven participation</li> <li>Difficulty in standardization</li> </ul>

### 3.4 Implementation Challenges

Although ideological and political education plays an important role in promoting the formation of college students' cultural identity, it also faces many challenges in the process of implementation. A number of studies have pointed out that ideological and political education in some colleges and universities has a tendency to be formalistic, focusing on formal integrity but neglecting the actual effects, and Ouyang et al.'s (2024) thematic review identifies formalism as the primary challenge facing current ideological and political education. Specific manifestations include outdated and rigid teaching content, single teaching method, activities in formality, and assessment mechanisms that emphasize process over effect. The reasons for formalism are manifold: the top-down assessment system focuses on quantifiable indexes, some teachers' own theoretical quality and teaching ability are insufficient, and students are only passive to cope with the education content when it is detached from students' reality and interest. Overcoming formalism requires reforming the evaluation mechanism, upgrading the quality of teachers, improving teaching methods and perfecting the feedback mechanism. Students' active participation and acceptance are the prerequisites for the effectiveness of education, but in reality, students often face the problem of low participation and low acceptance. The reasons for the lack of student participation include the disconnection between educational content and students' real-life concerns, the lack of attractiveness of teaching methods, the tension between students' diversified values and monolithic educational content, and the decline in the acceptance of official educational content due to the diversified channels of access to information in the Internet era. Students and students who were members of the Communist Party showed higher value identification, while students from urban areas showed more critical and pluralistic tendencies. The key to improving students' participation and acceptance lies in enhancing the relevance of educational content, improving teaching methods, respecting students' subjectivity and utilizing new media technology. The disconnect between theory and practice is a long-standing problem in ideological and political education. It is manifested in the gap between the theories taught in the classroom and the social reality, the values emphasized in

education are difficult to be practiced in real life, and the students lack the ability to apply the theories learned in analyzing and solving practical problems. To cope with the disconnection between theory and practice, it is necessary to enhance the realism of education, not to avoid social problems and contradictions, to strengthen practical teaching, to improve the theoretical skills and practical experience of teachers, and to cultivate students' ability to analyze real-life problems by applying theories. In the context of globalization, Chinese university students are exposed to multiple cultures and values through various ways, which poses a new challenge to traditional cultural identity education. Wong and Lee's (2019) comparative study of university students in Hong Kong, Macao and mainland China reveals the complexity of this challenge. Strategies to cope with the challenges of globalization include cultivating students' critical thinking and discernment, enhancing education on cultural self-confidence, advocating open and tolerant cultural attitudes, and strengthening international comparative education. Teachers are the key to education, and the effectiveness of ideological and political education depends to a large extent on the quality and ability of the teaching staff. However, in reality, teachers are facing multiple challenges: insufficient number, uneven quality, difficulties in career development, and insufficient ideological and political education among teachers of specialized courses in the promotion of "curriculum ideology and politics".

### 4.0 Discussion

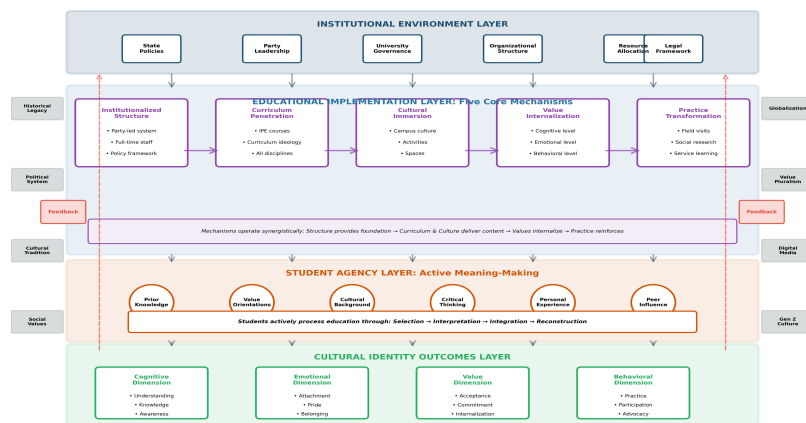
Based on the findings of the previous studies, this chapter discusses the theoretical integration, practical implications and future directions. Based on the findings of the systematic review, this study proposes an integrated theoretical model to explain how ideological and political education operates as a mechanism for cultural identity formation in contemporary Chinese higher education. The model consists of four main levels: the institutional environment level provides the legitimacy, resource support and organizational guarantee for ideological and political education; the education implementation level includes various specific educational practices, such as curricular teaching, cultural activities, and social practices; the student body level emphasizes that students are the active constructors of meaning who enter the education process

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with their existing cognitive foundations, value tendencies, and personal experiences; and the result level includes cognition, emotion, value, and behavior; the outcome level includes cognition, emotion, value, and behavior. Includes four dimensions of cultural identity: cognitive, emotional, value and behavioral. The five core mechanisms do not operate in isolation, but are interrelated and synergistic: the institutionalized structural mechanism provides the basic guarantee for the other mechanisms, the curriculum infiltration mechanism and the cultural immersion mechanism are the main implementation channels, the internalization of values mechanism is the core link, and the practical transformation mechanism is the testing and consolidation link.

Each of the three theoretical perspectives focuses on and complements the other: the socialization theory perspective emphasizes the social function and institutional dimension of ideological and political education; the identity theory perspective shifts the focus to the subjectivity of individual students and pays attention to the process of constructing

identity; and the cultural inheritance perspective highlights the historical depth and value connotation of culture. Integrating these three perspectives, we can understand the relationship between ideological and political education and cultural identity more comprehensively: it is not only an institutionalized socialization process, but also the process of students' active construction of identity, and even more so the process of cultural heritage and innovation. Effective education needs to seek a balance between institutional guarantee, respect for students' subjectivity and richness of cultural content. China's ideological and political education system is characterized by its unique political system, cultural tradition and historical development path. At the same time, the Chinese experience also contains some elements of universal significance that can serve as references for identity education in other countries and regions, including the importance of system design, the combination of theory and practice, the role of cultural immersion, respect for the subjectivity of students, and the key role of teachers.



**Figure 2: Comprehensive theoretical model of ideological and political education as a mechanism of cultural identity formation**

Based on the previous analysis, this study proposes practical insights and policy recommendations for the improvement of ideological and political education. Ideological and political education needs to innovate the contents, methods and forms while adhering to the correct political direction. Adherence means maintaining the fundamental position and value orientation of education, while innovation means advancing with the times. We should recognize the heterogeneity of the contemporary college student population and, under the premise of uniform requirements, allow and encourage classified guidance and differentiated education. For students of different majors, the way of integrating the ideology of the curriculum should be different. The key to enhancing attractiveness lies in responding to students' concerns, and education should not avoid real-life conflicts and students' confusion. Practical teaching should be further strengthened to make practice an integral part of ideological and political education, which requires institutional guarantee, careful design, in-depth reflection and diversified forms. Teachers are the key to education, and it is necessary to make great efforts to build a team of teachers of ideological and

political education who are politically strong, emotionally deep, new in thinking, broad in outlook, strict in self-discipline, and upright in personality. This requires quantitative guarantee, quality improvement, incentive mechanism, teacher moral construction and collaborative cultivation.

In the digital era, making full use of information technology can significantly enhance the coverage and attractiveness of ideological and political education, including building high-quality digital resources, creating online education platforms, strengthening online public opinion guidance, exploring the application of intelligent technology and preventing negative online influences. Although this study strives to be systematic and comprehensive, there are still limitations: the restriction of literature inclusion may lead to omissions, the methodology is limited by the quality of the original research, the specificity of the context restricts cross-cultural diffusion, and the challenge of dynamism implies the timeliness of the research findings. Based on these limitations, it is recommended that future research conduct longitudinal tracking studies, intervention experimental studies, in-depth qualitative studies, and

comparative studies to gain a deeper understanding of the relationship between ideological and political education and cultural identity formation.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study comprehensively analyzed the research on ideological and political education and college students' cultural identity during the period of 2014-2024 through a systematic review method. The study identifies five core mechanisms through which ideological and political education influences cultural identity: institutionalized structural mechanism, curricular infiltration mechanism, cultural infiltration mechanism, internalization of values and practical transformation mechanism. These mechanisms are interrelated and synergistic, and together constitute a systematic education system. The study integrates three theoretical perspectives, namely socialization theory, identity theory and cultural inheritance, and constructs a comprehensive theoretical model of ideological and political education as a mechanism of cultural identity formation. The model reveals the complex relationship between the institutional environment, education implementation, student body and the outcome of cultural identity, and provides a theoretical framework for understanding the unique path of cultural identity formation in Chinese higher education.

Six effective teaching strategies, namely, narrative teaching, dialogic teaching, experiential teaching, digital teaching, interdisciplinary integration and practice-oriented teaching, were synthesized, and the characteristics, contexts and implementation points of each strategy were analyzed. These strategies provide an evidence-based basis for improving the practice of ideological and political education. Meanwhile, the study identifies five major challenges in the implementation of ideological and political education: formalism and lack of effectiveness, student participation and acceptance, disconnection between theory and practice, globalization and cultural diversity, and teacher development. In response to these challenges, the study proposes specific strategies and policy recommendations. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in the construction of an integrated theoretical model, which systematically explains the logic of ideological and political education as a mechanism of cultural identity formation. The practical contribution of this study is that it provides an evidence-based foundation for educational improvement, identifies effective strategies and practical challenges, and puts forward actionable recommendations. However, there are limitations to this study. The literature search, while attempting to be comprehensive, may have missed some studies, especially those published from non-mainstream sources. The methodology is limited by the quality and type of original research, and some important issues are not supported by high-quality empirical studies. Cross-cultural generalization of research findings needs to be cautious because of the specific political and cultural context of ideological and political education in China. In addition, the policy and practice of ideological and political education are in a state of flux, and this study presents the situation as of 2024. Based on these limitations, it is

recommended that future research be conducted in the following directions: long-term longitudinal tracking studies to observe the dynamic process of students' cultural identity formation; rigorous experimental intervention studies to systematically compare the actual effects of different teaching methods; in-depth qualitative studies to understand how students perceive and respond to ideological-political education from their perspectives; cross-regional and cross-national comparative studies to understand the similarities and differences of cultural identity education in different contexts; and cross-regional and cross-national comparative studies to understand the differences and similarities of cultural identity education in different contexts. We will strengthen cross-regional and cross-national comparative studies to understand the differences and similarities of cultural identity education in different contexts, and explore the innovative application of digital technology in ideological and political education and its effects.

In conclusion, ideological and political education has developed into a systematic mechanism of cultural identity formation in Chinese higher education, which influences the cultural identity of university students through multi-dimensional and multi-level operation. Under the background of globalization and cultural pluralism, how to enhance the attractiveness and effectiveness of education while adhering to the core values, how to seek a balance between institutional safeguards and students' subjectivity, and how to find a point of convergence between the inheritance of traditional culture and the response to changes in the times are still important issues that deserve to be explored continuously. This study provides systematic documentary evidence and theoretical framework for this exploration, and is expected to provide reference for the theoretical development and practical improvement of ideological and political education

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