

A Study on University Students' Participation in College Ideological and Political Education from the Perspective of the "Big Ideological and Political Course"

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Abstract

Based on the "Big Ideological and Political Course" concept, this paper explores the theoretical foundation, current situation, and challenges of university students' participation in college ideological and political education, and constructs a conceptual model of the student participation mechanism through literature review and theoretical analysis. The paper first reviews the background and connotations of the "Big Ideological and Political Course" concept, comparing the differences between traditional ideological and political education and the curriculum reform under the new concept. It then analyzes the current state and shortcomings of university students' participation in teaching. By exploring paths such as policy innovation, curriculum design reform, teacher-student interaction mechanisms, and the application of information technology, this paper proposes concrete strategies and theoretical innovations to promote deep participation of university students in college ideological and political education, providing new perspectives and practical insights for the reform of college ideological and political education.

Keywords: Big Ideological and Political Course, University Students' Participation, college ideological and political education, conceptual model, educational reform

1. Introduction

In the context of the new era, ideological and political education in higher education institutions is facing unprecedented opportunities and challenges. Traditional ideological and political education, with its limitations in curriculum content, teaching methods, and evaluation mechanisms, can no longer meet the diversified and individualized learning needs of contemporary university students. With the proposal and promotion of the "Big Ideological and Political Course" concept, constructing a new teaching model that is student-centered and emphasizes interactive co-construction has become an important direction for the reform of college ideological and political education. This paper aims to explore the possibilities and paths for university students' participation in college ideological and political education from the perspective of the "Big Ideological and Political Course," investigating the transformation of the role of university students in ideological and political teaching and its profound impact through theoretical analysis and literature review. Initially, the paper outlines the connotations and developmental background of the "Big Ideological and Political Course" concept, and compares the differences between traditional ideological and political education and the new curriculum reforms under this concept in terms of teaching philosophy, curriculum design, and evaluation methods. By deeply analyzing the current state of college ideological and political education, it reveals the practical issues and deficiencies in university students' participation both inside and outside the classroom. This not only reflects the urgency for transforming the teaching model but also provides a research foundation for exploring optimization paths. The paper then focuses on the unique role of university students as active participants in teaching, analyzing the significance of their participation mechanism for the reform of college ideological and political education. University students are not only knowledge recipients but also a crucial force in classroom interaction and knowledge construction. How to stimulate their subjectivity and enhance their awareness of participation becomes

key to promoting innovation in college ideological and political education. Based on this insight, the paper aims to construct a conceptual model of the university student participation mechanism centered on the "Big Ideological and Political Course" concept, providing theoretical support and practical guidance for the reform of college ideological and political education. Finally, to ensure the rigor and systematic nature of the study, the paper employs a combination of literature review and theoretical analysis. Through a systematic review and evaluation of relevant domestic and international research, a theoretical framework is constructed, upon which paths to promote the deep participation of university students in college ideological and political education are proposed. It is hoped that through theoretical innovation and practical exploration, new perspectives and strategies will be provided for the reform of college ideological and political education, thereby better fulfilling the fundamental task of moral and ideological cultivation[1].

2. Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

2.1 *The Theoretical Connotations in the Context of the "Big Ideological and Political Course"*

The "Big Ideological and Political Course" is an important concept in contemporary ideological and political education in Chinese higher education institutions. It emphasizes integrating ideological and political education into all courses and educational processes, aiming to create an education system that is comprehensive in terms of participants, process, and coverage. Unlike the traditional single and limited approach of ideological and political education, the "Big Ideological and Political Course" advocates an interdisciplinary, cross-sectoral, and fully participatory educational model. This concept is proposed in response to new societal demands in the new era—especially when facing an increasingly complex social environment, cultural conflicts, and diverse values—by using multidimensional teaching methods to better achieve the objectives of ideological and political education. The theoretical connotations of the "Big Ideological and Political Course" include several aspects. First, it emphasizes the universality and full coverage of ideological content. Traditional ideological and political courses are usually confined to a single classroom setting and lack effective extension beyond the classroom. In contrast, the "Big Ideological and Political Course" promotes extending ideological content across all disciplines, incorporating the core socialist values, national development strategies, and other related content into various courses so that students receive ideological and political education within different knowledge systems[2]. This comprehensive coverage is not only about the transmission of knowledge but also the internalization and permeation of ideologies and value judgments. Second, the "Big Ideological and Political Course" stresses diversified teaching methods and techniques. Traditional courses often rely on a one-way lecture mode, whereas the "Big Ideological and Political Course" advocates interactive communication between teachers and students, encouraging methods such as case analysis, discussion-based teaching, and experiential learning to stimulate students' active thinking and participation, thereby helping them better understand and embrace the core socialist values. This shift reflects the transition from a teacher-centered to a student-centered educational philosophy. Third, the "Big Ideological and Political Course" focuses on student subjectivity and personalized development. Under its framework, students are not only recipients of knowledge but also active participants and constructors of ideas and values. This teaching model emphasizes the cultivation of individual values and ideologies through independent thinking and discussion, thereby fostering critical thinking and social responsibility. In this process, students can actively engage in various aspects of ideological and political teaching, gaining a better understanding of the country's social development direction, value orientation, and historical mission. Finally, the "Big Ideological and Political Course" underscores the effective integration of practical teaching[3]. The effectiveness of ideological and political education depends not only on classroom learning but also on practice activities that consolidate and deepen understanding. Within this framework, practical components are integrated throughout the educational process, including social research, volunteer service, and activities organized by political organizations. These practical activities not only help students better understand and perceive society but also closely connect ideological education with real life, making it more meaningful and actionable. In summary, the theoretical connotations of the "Big Ideological and Political Course" reflect the transition from traditional ideological education to a new era educational philosophy. It emphasizes not only the comprehensive and diverse nature of ideological and political education but also the importance of student participation and subjectivity throughout the educational process, aiming to cultivate students' overall competence and social responsibility within a multifaceted educational system[4].

2.2 *A Review of Domestic and International Research on College Ideological and Political Education*

Domestic scholars have primarily focused on curriculum content, teaching methods, and evaluation mechanisms in the context of college ideological and political education, striving to develop an education model that is both targeted and innovative in the new era. Numerous studies point out that traditional ideological courses suffer from one-way instruction and low student participation. As a result, researchers have proposed new teaching models

centered on active student participation and interactive engagement. For instance, some scholars have explored how to stimulate students' active participation and critical thinking by integrating case studies, discussion-based teaching, and practical components[5]. They have also conducted in-depth analyses of curriculum integration and interdisciplinary cooperation. Moreover, many studies combine modern educational theories—such as constructivism and social learning theory—to provide strong theoretical support for the reform of college ideological and political education. Overall, while domestic research focuses on both teaching outcomes and theoretical innovation, there is also an ongoing effort to refine the evaluation mechanisms to better fulfill the fundamental goal of moral and ideological cultivation. Internationally, although research directly corresponding to college ideological and political courses is relatively scarce, numerous studies on civic education, moral education, and the cultivation of social responsibility offer valuable insights[6]. Foreign research generally emphasizes the diversity and participatory nature of education, valuing student autonomy and the development of critical thinking, while also stressing the integration of classroom and practical experiences. In many higher education institutions in Europe and America, interdisciplinary teaching models and interactive methods have been widely adopted, providing external inspiration for the reform of college ideological and political education in China. Despite differences in background and theoretical frameworks, the exploration of innovative teaching methods and practical design in foreign studies still holds considerable reference value for domestic reforms[7].

2.3 The Theoretical Foundation of University Students' Participation

The theoretical foundation for university student participation mainly derives from theories of subjectivity, constructivist learning, and social learning. Subjectivity theory emphasizes that students, as active constructors of knowledge, play an indispensable role in the educational process, thus providing theoretical support for deep participation in the classroom. Constructivist learning theory posits that learning is an active process of knowledge construction. Through interactions with teachers and peers, discussion of problems, and sharing of experiences, students gradually build and internalize their understanding of knowledge, restructuring their cognitive framework. Social learning theory further emphasizes that students can acquire effective learning experiences and social norms by observing, imitating, and interacting within a group. This theory supports the use of discussion, case analysis, and group activities in promoting student participation in college ideological and political education. Together, these theories form the theoretical foundation for university student participation in college ideological and political teaching, providing robust support for exploring student-centered and deeply engaging teaching models[8].

3. Analysis of the Current Situation of University Students' Participation in College Ideological and Political Education

3.1 Participants and Existing Models

In current practice, university students are the main participants in college ideological and political education. Their forms and levels of participation vary significantly. Overall, students engage in classroom teaching, extracurricular activities, and involvement in campus organizations and forums. However, the depth and modes of participation differ considerably. Classroom teaching is still primarily dominated by traditional lecture methods; although some institutions have introduced group discussions, case analyses, and interactive Q&A sessions, students typically remain passive recipients, limiting their ability to engage in independent thought and innovation. In addition to students, other participants include teachers, counselors, and various student organizations and clubs. In the classroom, teachers act not only as knowledge transmitters but also as guides and motivators. However, constrained by traditional teaching methods and evaluation systems, their attempts to stimulate student participation often fall short. Counselors and student organizations serve as bridges in extracurricular activities and social practices, organizing seminars, social research, and volunteer services to provide platforms for learning beyond the classroom. Yet, these activities frequently suffer from superficiality and short-term impact, lacking continuity and systematization, and thus fail to form a coherent learning cycle. Furthermore, the application of information technology is another facet of the current participation model[9]. Some universities have introduced online discussion forums and virtual classrooms through digital platforms and new media, attempting to overcome time and space constraints to foster interaction between teachers and students. However, due to insufficient guidance and management, these platforms often struggle to attract proactive participation, resulting in low engagement and variable discussion quality, thereby failing to fully leverage the advantages of digital teaching. Overall, the existing participation models are characterized by limited scope, shallow engagement, and insufficient depth. Although there are attempts at autonomous discussion and interaction, these are mostly confined to superficial knowledge acquisition and simple information exchange. The lack of effective connection and feedback mechanisms between teachers and students, as well as between classroom and extracurricular activities, hinders the full expression of student subjectivity and innovative capability. Therefore,

there is an urgent need for deep reforms in teaching philosophy, methods, curriculum design, and evaluation mechanisms to build a more open, interactive, and comprehensive system for college ideological and political education, thereby better achieving the fundamental goal of moral and ideological cultivation[10].

3.2 Main Problems and Challenges

In the process of university students participating in college ideological and political education, several urgent problems and challenges have emerged, mainly manifested in insufficient participation awareness, a singular teaching model, a disconnect between curriculum content and practical activities, and an incomplete evaluation mechanism. Firstly, the lack of participation awareness among university students is a fundamental issue affecting the depth of engagement. Although some institutions emphasize student subjectivity through the “Big Ideological and Political Course” reform, many students still do not fully recognize the importance of ideological courses and often adopt a superficial, “going through the motions” approach. Because these courses are traditionally viewed as compulsory rather than interest-driven, students tend to participate passively, with limited classroom interaction and discussion. This results in a lack of genuine reflection and internalization of course content, directly impacting the depth of classroom participation and course identification. Secondly, the singularity of the teaching model is another significant challenge. Although some universities have attempted to introduce interactive methods such as case studies, discussion-based teaching, and project-based learning, traditional lecture-based instruction still predominates. Students are largely confined to passively receiving knowledge, with limited opportunities for independent exploration and interactive discussion. The scarcity of interactive elements fails to fully motivate students and develop their critical thinking and sense of responsibility. Thirdly, the disconnect between curriculum content and practical activities is a prominent issue. While some universities have gradually introduced extracurricular activities like social practice and volunteer services, these are often superficial and short-term, lacking systematic feedback mechanisms. Consequently, the link between theoretical learning and practical application is weak, and students’ understanding of ideological content remains superficial, limiting the overall effectiveness of ideological and political education. Additionally, the inadequacy of the evaluation mechanism poses a significant challenge. Current evaluation systems tend to focus primarily on final exam scores while neglecting ongoing participation, classroom interaction, and practical achievements. This single-mode evaluation encourages a focus on exam performance rather than a holistic understanding and proactive learning of ideological content. The lack of a multidimensional evaluation system also causes teachers to concentrate more on knowledge transmission rather than on guiding students’ thinking, critical analysis, and innovative education. In summary, university students face multiple challenges in participating in college ideological and political education, including insufficient participation awareness, a singular teaching model, a disconnect between theory and practice, and an inadequate evaluation system. Addressing these issues through reforms in teaching methods, stimulating student subjectivity, integrating theory with practice, and improving evaluation mechanisms is crucial for enhancing teaching effectiveness and fostering comprehensive student development.

3.3 Analysis of Influencing Factors

The depth and effectiveness of university students’ participation in college ideological and political education are affected by multiple factors, ranging from individual awareness to external teaching environments, curriculum design, and evaluation systems. To better understand these influencing factors, this paper categorizes and analyzes them in detail. First, student participation awareness is the fundamental factor affecting engagement. Research shows that many students lack a proper recognition of the importance of ideological courses, exhibiting a perfunctory attitude and formalistic approach. Under such conditions, students often lack the motivation for active participation and deep thinking, resulting in low classroom engagement. Especially in traditional teaching models, where students are mostly passive recipients, there is little opportunity for active thinking or interactive communication, which diminishes their interest and commitment. Second, the singularity of the teaching model is a key limiting factor. Although some universities have introduced interactive methods such as case studies and discussion-based teaching, overall, the dominant lecture-based approach renders students passive recipients of knowledge. The limited opportunities for interaction make it difficult to stimulate student enthusiasm and engagement. Furthermore, innovative and flexible teaching methods are still lacking, as many ideological courses do not align with students’ actual needs or interests, thereby dampening their enthusiasm. Another critical factor is the disconnect between curriculum content and practical activities. Although some universities have introduced extracurricular activities like social practice and volunteer services, these initiatives often suffer from superficiality and short-term effects, lacking long-term, systematic integration. As a result, students may participate in extracurricular activities merely to fulfill requirements or earn credits, rather than engaging in deep intellectual exchanges and value development. This disconnect leaves their understanding of ideological content superficial, hindering the practical application of classroom knowledge. The inadequacy of the evaluation mechanism also

significantly impacts student participation. Many universities still rely on final exam scores, neglecting comprehensive assessments of classroom participation, ongoing performance, and practical achievements. This single-mode evaluation drives students to focus on exam performance rather than a holistic understanding of ideological education, thus stifling autonomous learning and critical thinking. The evaluation system's limitations also cause teachers to prioritize knowledge transmission over guiding students' thinking and fostering innovation. Moreover, teachers' instructional abilities and methods are important factors. Some instructors continue to use traditional teaching methods that lack innovation and interaction, which fails to effectively engage students. In ideological courses, teachers are not only knowledge transmitters but also guides who inspire students' thinking. Without flexible teaching methods and attention to individual differences, it is difficult to achieve full student participation. Finally, the support and resources available within the institution are also influential. Although many universities recognize the importance of reform in ideological teaching and have introduced relevant policies, some still face challenges in resource allocation and platform development, lacking systematic support mechanisms for deep student engagement. Additionally, the diversity of societal values can impact students' perception of ideological courses, as conflicts among various external values may reduce the attractiveness and resonance of the course content. The following table 1 summarizes the main factors influencing university students' participation in college ideological and political education along with their descriptions:

Table 1. Main factors influencing university students' participation

Influencing Factor	Description
Student Participation Awareness	Students often lack proper recognition of the importance of ideological courses, exhibiting a formalistic approach and low initiative.
Singular Teaching Model	Traditional lecture-based teaching dominates, with insufficient interaction, exploration, and critical thinking, limiting active engagement.
Disconnect between Curriculum and Practice	There is a weak link between classroom learning and extracurricular activities, with few long-term, systematic practical opportunities to apply theoretical knowledge.
Inadequate Evaluation Mechanism	Current evaluation systems focus on final exams, neglecting comprehensive assessments of classroom participation and practical achievements, thus reducing motivation for deep learning.
Teachers' Instructional Ability and Methods	Some teachers continue using traditional methods that lack innovation and flexibility, failing to effectively stimulate student interest and participation.
Institutional Support and Resources	Insufficient teaching resources, platforms, and policy support limit the depth and breadth of student engagement in ideological courses.
Societal Environment Factors	The diversity and conflict of external values can reduce students' identification with course content, as the ideological material may seem disconnected from real life.

The analysis shows that university students' participation in college ideological and political education is influenced by a range of factors—from internal awareness to external teaching environment, curriculum content, and evaluation mechanisms. Addressing these influencing factors through improved teaching methods, enhanced student initiative, better integration of theory with practice, and refined evaluation systems is essential for boosting teaching effectiveness and strengthening both student subjectivity and the overall impact of ideological and political education.

4. Exploring the Pathways for University Students' Participation in College Ideological and Political Education from the Perspective of the "Big Ideological and Political Course"

4.1 Policy and Institutional Innovation

In the context of the "Big Ideological and Political Course," policy and institutional innovation provide solid support for stimulating student participation. By establishing incentive mechanisms, a credit reward system, and a comprehensive evaluation framework, universities have achieved remarkable results in teaching reform. According to data from one university before and after the reform, classroom participation rates, participation in social practice, and students' awareness and satisfaction with the reward mechanisms have all increased significantly. The specific data are as shown in Figure 1.

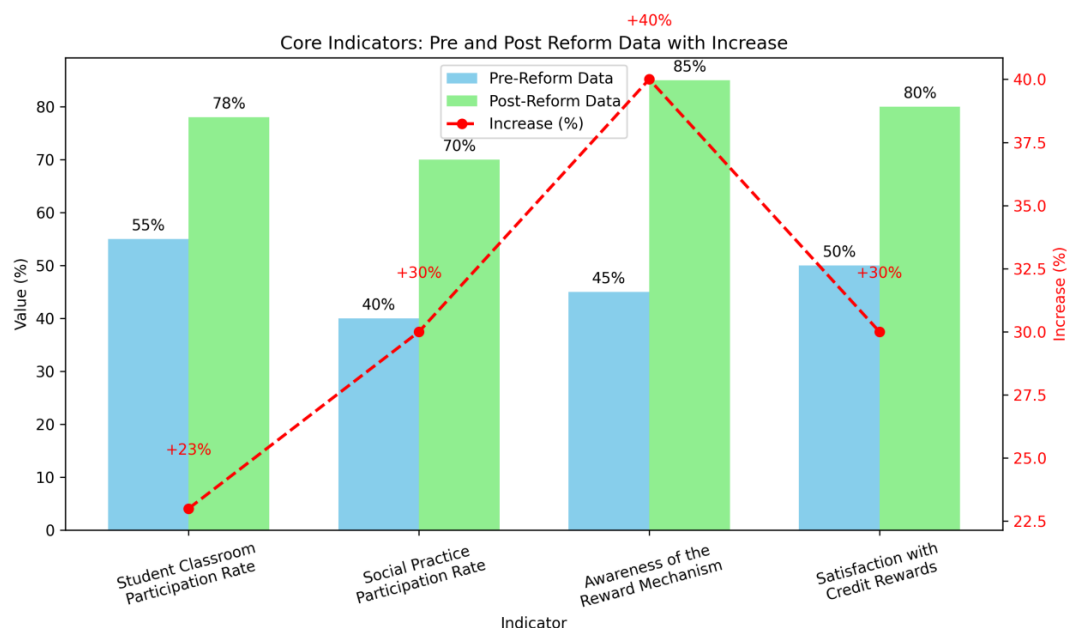


Figure 1. Policy and Institutional Innovation

These data indicate that policy and institutional innovation have significantly enhanced students' participation in ideological and political education, providing both data support and theoretical justification for reform in college ideological and political education.

4.2 Curriculum Design and Teaching Model Reform

Under the perspective of the "Big Ideological and Political Course," reforms in curriculum design and teaching models have played a significant role in enhancing student participation. In recent years, some universities have actively explored new teaching methods that meet the demands of the new era by introducing project-based learning, flipped classrooms, and case discussions in ideological and political courses. According to a survey from one university, after the reform, classroom participation, student satisfaction, and teacher satisfaction have all increased noticeably, indicating that the new models are more effective at stimulating proactive student engagement and enhancing course appeal. The following Figure 2 compares the teaching outcomes at one university before and after the reform.

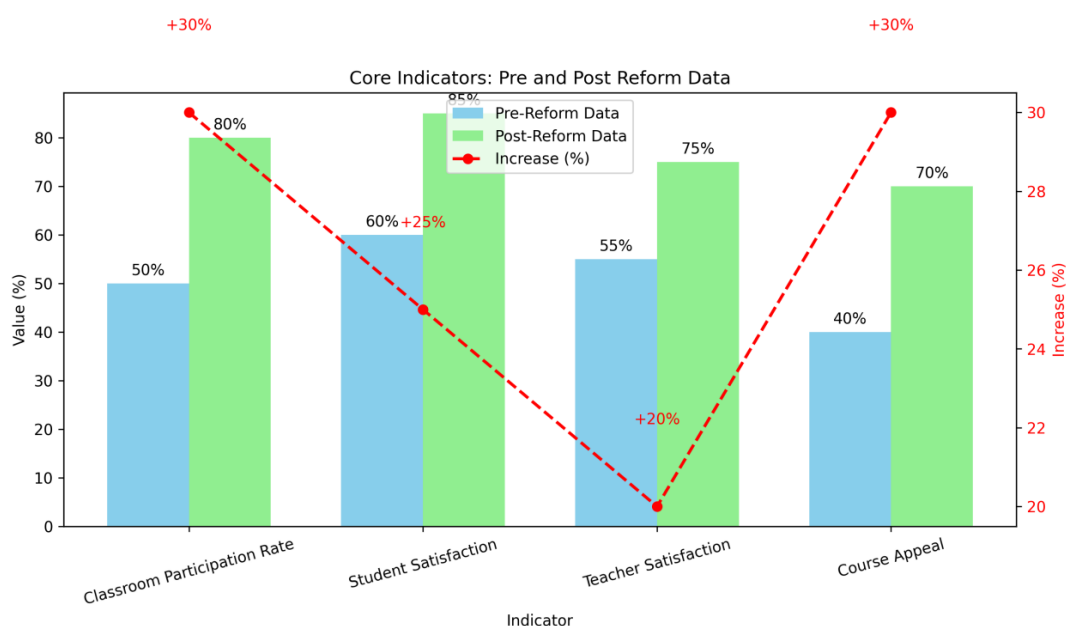


Figure 2. Curriculum Design and Teaching Model Reform Data

These data clearly show that through curriculum design and teaching model reforms, the classroom participation rate increased by 30%, student and teacher satisfaction rose by 25% and 20% respectively, and course appeal improved by 30%. This evidence demonstrates that the reform not only improves the teaching environment but also enhances teaching effectiveness, providing robust support for the further development of college ideological and political education.

4.3 Construction of Teacher-Student Interaction Mechanisms

In constructing teacher-student interaction mechanisms, universities have introduced measures such as regular discussions, online interaction platforms, and group collaborations to facilitate more frequent and in-depth communication between teachers and students. According to data from one university, after a series of reforms in interaction mechanisms, the frequency of teacher-student interactions, as well as teacher and student satisfaction and the quality of interaction, have all significantly improved. The following Figure 3 compares the teacher-student interaction outcomes before and after the reform at that university:

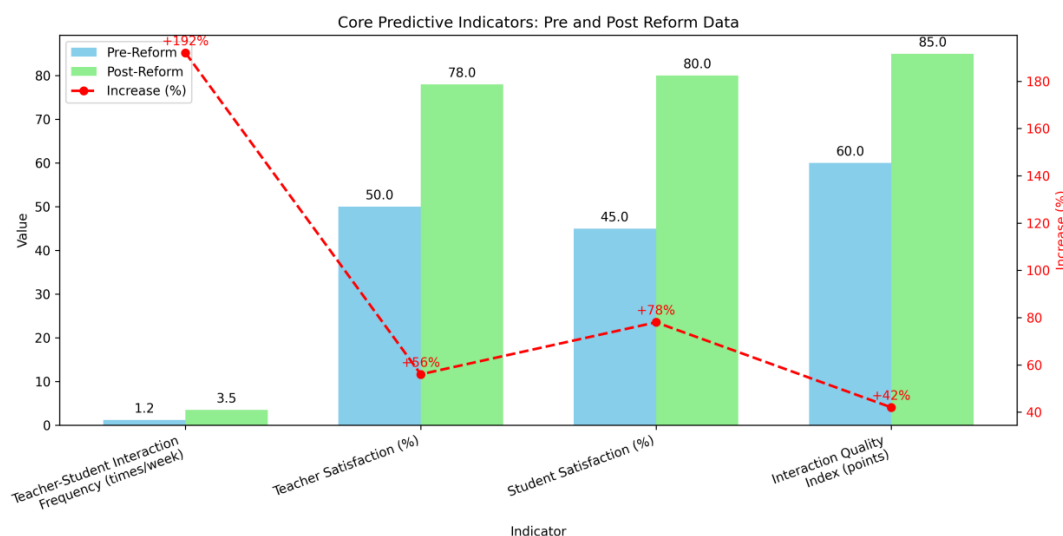


Figure 3. Construction of Teacher-Student Interaction Mechanisms Data

The data indicate that by optimizing interaction mechanisms, the frequency of teacher-student communication increased nearly threefold, with teacher satisfaction and student satisfaction rising by 56% and 78% respectively, and the interaction quality index also significantly improved. These results show that optimizing teacher-student interaction mechanisms can effectively enhance the classroom atmosphere and improve the effectiveness of ideological and political education.

5. Construction of a Conceptual Model and Theoretical Innovation

Based on the analysis of factors such as policy support, curriculum design, teaching models, teacher-student interaction, and practical resources, this paper has constructed a conceptual model reflecting university students' participation in college ideological and political education. The model is centered on "student-centered participation" and integrates four key components: policy incentives, interdisciplinary curriculum integration, interactive teaching, and practical resource integration. This integrated model effectively combines theory and practice, thereby promoting innovation in ideological and political education. Preliminary research data indicate that each component of the model has achieved satisfactory results in promoting student participation and enhancing teaching effectiveness. The Table 2 below presents the core elements, theoretical innovations, and indicator scores (out of 100) for each component based on the research:

Table 2. Core elements, Theoretical innovations, and Indicator scores

Model Component	Core Elements	Theoretical Innovation	Indicator Score (out of 100)
Policy Support and Incentives	Credit rewards, incentive mechanisms,	Stimulating proactive participation and creating	85

	comprehensive evaluation	a positive incentive system	
Interdisciplinary Curriculum Integration	Integration of ideological and professional courses, cross-disciplinary collaboration among teachers	Enriching the content of ideological education and enhancing course appeal	80
Interactive Teaching Model	Flipped classrooms, group discussions, case analyses	Enhancing classroom interactivity and fostering critical thinking	78
Practical Resource Integration	Social practice, volunteer service, university-industry collaboration	Strengthening the integration of theory and practice, and enhancing social responsibility	75

This conceptual model not only systematically outlines the key factors influencing university students' participation in ideological and political education but also provides theoretical and practical guidance for teaching reform in higher education. With an overall average score of about 80, the model demonstrates considerable innovative value and potential for improvement, supporting the comprehensive upgrade and deepening reform of college ideological and political education.

6. Conclusion

This paper has explored the pathways for university students' participation in college ideological and political education from the perspective of the "Big Ideological and Political Course." Through the analysis and data verification of policy and institutional innovation, curriculum design, and teacher-student interaction, a conceptual model centered on student participation was constructed. The study indicates that optimizing incentive mechanisms, promoting interdisciplinary integration, and developing a diversified evaluation system can significantly enhance student engagement and teaching effectiveness, thereby driving the comprehensive upgrade of ideological and political education in colleges. Overall, this model provides both theoretical support and practical guidance for educational reform and holds high potential for widespread adoption.

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