

# Integrating Ideological and Political Education Across Educational Levels: A Social Integration Approach

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**Abstract:** Existing mechanisms are no longer adequate to meet contemporary demands for “collaborative education” combining ideological and political education. Contemporary social theory provides a scientific basis for understanding and guiding social change. This paper explores a collaborative mechanism for integrated ideological and political education in primary, secondary, and higher education from the perspective of social integration theory with the goal of unifying educational goals and achieving continuity in the educational process. The collaborative mechanism requires action at three levels—macro-level policy support, meso-level management collaboration, and micro-level innovation—to promote effective cooperation and resource sharing among educational stakeholders. Continuously improving the collaborative mechanism for ideological and political education will facilitate social development and instill young people with a sense of social responsibility, innovative spirit, and practical ability.

**Keywords:** ideological and political education; social integration; collaborative mechanism; integration

## 1. Introduction

In an era of globalization and information diversification, the ideological and political education of young people presents unprecedented challenges and opportunities. The emergence of the Internet and the associated fast-paced information dissemination have profoundly influenced the social identities and values of students [1]. Meanwhile, national policy has evolved from the early exploration of network literacy education, to the publication of “Opinions on Deepening the Reform of the Education System and Mechanism”, which proposes an integrated system of moral education for primary, secondary, and higher education, to the “Great Ideological and Political Course”, and finally to an emphasis on integrated ideological and political education at the 20th National Congress. This evolution reflects a gradual increase in the importance of value education for young people.

The transition from ideological and political courses to ideological and political education signifies a deepening and expansion of educational philosophy. This transition represents a shift from merely imparting knowledge to fostering the comprehensive development of desirably qualities among students. The effects of this transition extend beyond the classroom, affecting the entire school and social environments. Educators are now required to focus not only on the design and delivery of courses but also on creating an educational environment that is conducive to student development [2]. This includes organizing educational activities and

integrating learning with the ideological realities of students. Additionally, the establishment of an environment suitable for ideological and political education involves policy guidance, administrative support, and the influence of the cultural system on values [3]. It is important to define the role and mechanisms through which the cultural system provides direction on values to ensure the clarity and effectiveness of ideological and political education.

## **2. Social Integration Theory and the Integration of Ideological and Political Education in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education**

### *2.1. Social Integration Theory*

Social integration theory, which originates from structural functionalism, explains how different parts of society can be integrated into a coordinated and unified system. In the early stages of the development of social integration theory, Durkheim elaborated on the importance of social solidarity and cohesion, with shared moral, emotional, and cultural values being key to strengthening social connections, reducing conflict, and promoting social stability and harmony [4]. The systems theory of Parsons further posits that social integration is a result of the balanced functioning of multiple subsystems, including political, economic, cultural, and legal subsystems; in this systems theory, social integration is an interactive process of involving dynamic adaptation, system integration, pattern maintenance, and goal achievement [5]. Tönnies, in his theory of community and society, discusses the group forms based on kinship and territorial relations, and expands the concept of community to include spiritual unions bound by shared beliefs and values [6]. In the domestic academic field, social integration theory is also introduced and applied in practice as a result of international academic research findings [7].

### *2.2. The Use of Social Integration Theory to Couple Ideological and Political Education*

In the Chinese academic community, social integration theory is widely applied in social governance and in the operation of government organizations [8, 9]. Chinese scholars have combined international academic achievements with local cultural and social practices to deepen the concepts of “Chinese national community consciousness” and “community of shared future for mankind”, demonstrating the potential for innovation by combining theory and practice [7,10]. The value of applying social integration theory to ideological and political education can be summarized in the following three aspects.

#### *2.2.1. Consistency of Value Subject and Objective*

Both ideological and political education and social integration theory stress the importance of recognizing every member of society as a bearer of value, underscoring the integral link between personal development and societal progress. The significance of this connection mandates the cultivation of robust, positive interactions between educators and students [10, 11]. Within the educational sphere, those engaged in ideological and political education hold a pivotal role; they are tasked with honoring the individuality of each learner, acknowledging their capacity to seek personalized educational outcomes, and fostering an egalitarian and cohesive relationship among all participants in the educational exchange.

#### *2.2.2. In-Depth Fit of Value Attributes and Functions*

The ideological nature of ideological and political education is consistent with the goals of social integration theory. Both emphasize the core role of ideology in shaping the thoughts and behaviors of society members and in promoting social integration. Ideological and political education is not limited to theoretical propaganda and ideological guidance; it also includes building consensus, shaping values, and shaping the spiritual world [8].

#### *2.2.3. Joint Development of Practical Paths and Efficacy*

The value of combining social integration theory with ideological and political education is realized through the joint development of practical paths and efficacy, which is crucial for cultivating young people with a global

perspective, a sense of social responsibility, and an innovative spirit. Social integration theory emphasizes that political education should enable students to apply theoretical knowledge in real life and deepen their understanding of the core values of socialism. Embedding social integration theory within ideological and political education promotes innovation and enhances educational value. Ideological and political education establishes a solid foundation of both ideology and values for students. At the same time, through in-depth study of scientific theories and cultural traditions, it stimulates active exploration and learning of the core values of society and cultural identity among students. Ideological and political education provides a practical foundation and a source of momentum for social integration while laying a solid ideological and talent foundation for realizing the Chinese Dream for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

### *2.3. Connection between the Connotational Requirements of Ideological and Political Education and Social Integration Theory*

In the process of achieving the educational goals of ideological and political education, the intrinsic connection between social integration theory and ideological and political education primarily manifests in three aspects: consistency between the goals, integration of values and institutions, and unity of organizational structure and function. These elements collectively facilitate the balanced development of ideological and political education from primary school to higher education, meeting the inherent developmental needs of students. Moreover, these elements work synergistically to promote the comprehensive development of students and the enhancement of social cohesion [8, 12]. Adhering to the principle of goal congruence, the primary educational goal of ideological and political education is to cultivate and actualize the core values of socialism. The purpose of this educational framework is to develop individuals who can make significant contributions to society and to nurture leaders who will be equipped to sustain social progress in the future; together, these individuals and leaders will work together toward the realization of China's great rejuvenation. Goal congruence ensures the alignment of educational objectives with societal structures and guarantees that students are instilled with a common set of worldviews, life perspectives, and value systems. Subsequently, the integration of values and institutions reinforces societal unity through the non-contractual ties inherent to culture and education; it also cultivates law-abiding, socially responsible citizens through the assimilation of legal norms and regulations. Ultimately, group social activities instill in students a sense of collective consciousness and social responsibility, ensuring the continuity and coordination of the various educational phases. The A-G-I-L model (proposed by Parsons, is a sociological framework that analyzes the stability and functionality of social systems through four dimensions: Adaptation, Goal-attainment, Integration, and Latency, emphasizing the complexity of social structures and interdependence among their parts) proposed by Talcott Parsons is a sociological framework for analyzing stability and functionality within a social system. The acronym A-G-I-L represents the following four key functional prerequisites:

Adaptation (A): the capacity for a social system to interact with its environment and secure the necessary resources for its survival and growth.

Goal Attainment (G): the process by which a social system sets and achieves its goals, providing direction and purpose.

Integration (I): The coordination of various parts of the system working harmoniously to maintain unity and coordination.

Latency (L): The potential for future development and maintenance of relationships that are not currently active but are essential for the long-term stability of the system.

Parsons believed these prerequisites to be essential for a social system to maintain its stability and adapt to its environment. This model can be applied to enhance the functionality of different social subsystems within a stable system, thereby complementing educational activities to collectively support the comprehensive development of students. This model also emphasizes the key role of education in developing a unified society.

Social integration theory not only provides a scaffolding for integrating ideological and moral education, it also emphasizes the pivotal role of education in developing a unified society.

### 3. Mechanism for Integrating Ideological and Political Education in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education

Social integration theory is integrated into ideological and political education throughout the stages of education from primary to secondary and higher education. The integration process focuses on the following measures:

**Interaction Structure:** establishing effective interactions between internal elements of the educational system such as students, teachers, curriculum content, and teaching methods to form a coordinated and unified educational system.

**Function Achievement:** ensuring that the educational system can fulfill its core functions, such as imparting knowledge, cultivating skills, and shaping values.

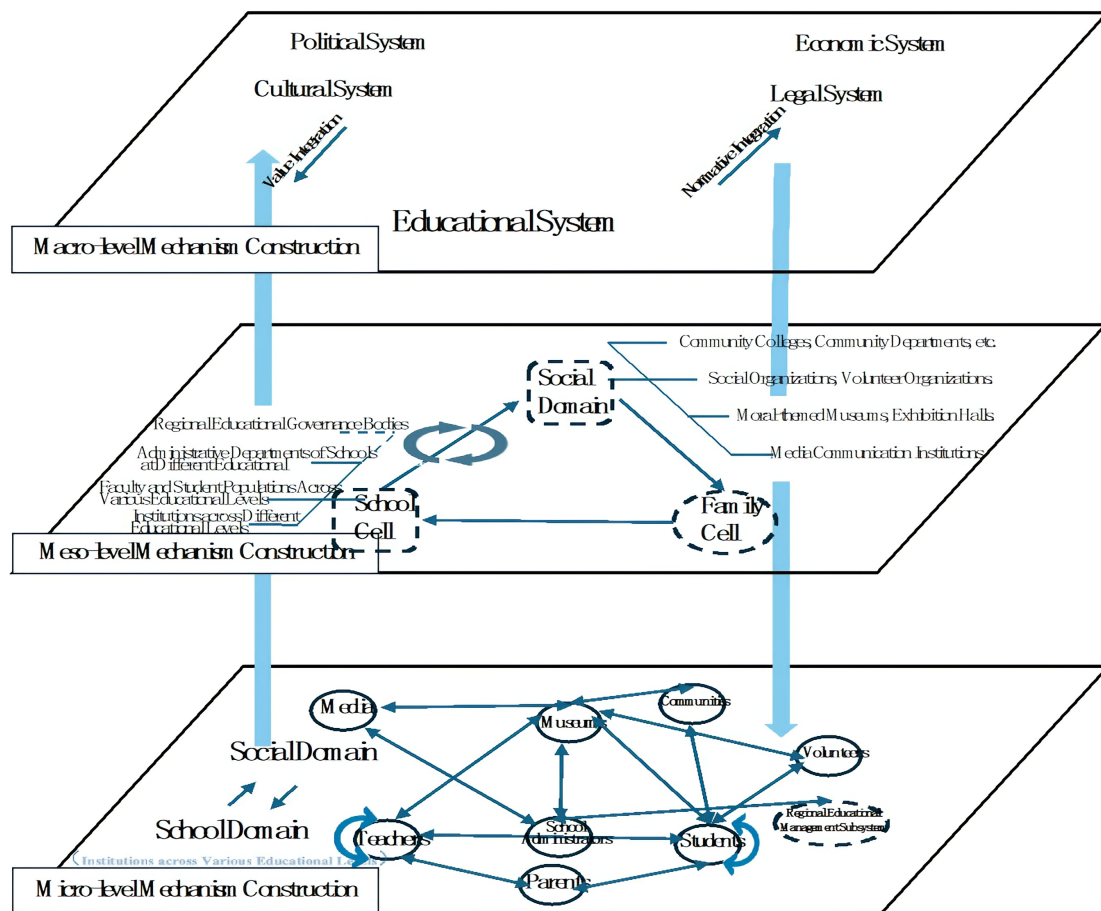
**Dynamic Adaptation:** enabling the educational system to flexibly adapt to changes in the social environment and aspects such as technology, economy, and culture.

**Goal Achievement:** achieving the academic achievements, personal development, and socialization goals set by the educational system.

**Pattern Maintenance:** maintaining stable patterns within the educational system, including teaching methods, assessment standards, and student behavioral norms.

Through these measures, ideological and political education can be coordinated to achieve the comprehensive development of students and continuity among educational stages, supporting smooth transitions and student growth at different educational stages.

The process involves three levels from the macro level to the micro level (Table 1); together, these three levels construct a model for integrating ideological and political education in primary, secondary, and higher education based on social integration theory (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Mechanism for the Integration of Ideological and Political Education Across Educational Levels.

**Table 1.** Multi-level Model Construction and Function.

Level	Related Subjects	Model Construction	Model Type and Function
<b>Macro</b>	Economic system, political system, cultural system, legal system, and education system	Ensure the consistency of educational policy with national strategy	Policy guidance, resource allocation, policy communication and coordination
<b>Meso</b>	Social field: Museums and exhibition halls with ideological and political themes, community colleges, community party branches, social organizations, volunteer groups, etc.; School field: Primary, middle, and high schools, regional education management departments, media communication institutions, family units	Achieve internal collaboration within the education system	The content of ideological and political education in primary, junior and senior high schools, and universities is connected; integration of resources related to ideological and political education, family-school cooperation, educational environment construction
<b>Micro</b>	Teachers, students, volunteers, managers, staff, etc. at primary, middle, and high schools	Enhance individual interaction and the educational functions of various educational entities	Cultivate social responsibility, team spirit, and innovative interactive modes; ensure effective communication and collaboration between teachers, students, and parents in different education stages; achieve social integration of individual students; promote the integration of social and educational resources

At the macro level, the focus is to ensure consistency between educational policies and national strategies, resulting in a solid foundation for ideological and political education with appropriate policy support and resource allocation. At the meso level, the focus is on creating a collaborative educational system with coordination and resource sharing between the various educational stages. At the micro level, the focus is on optimizing individual interactions within schools, families, and social settings and employing innovative models (e.g., participatory and inquiry-based learning) to cultivate students' sense of social responsibility. The construction of a model for subject linkage, content integration, and evaluation connection is key to integrating ideological and political education [12] with the goal of cultivating young people with a sense of social responsibility and historical mission. Under the guidance of social integration theory, these three levels work in concert to ensure the coordination and effectiveness of educational activities, thus guaranteeing talent for promoting social progress (Table 1).

### 3.1. Macro Level

At the macro level, the functionality of the educational system is supported and guided by the economy, politics, value concepts, and institutional frameworks, which collectively shape the formulation and implementation of ideological and moral education policies. These elements provide a normative framework for ideological and political education, establishing behavioral standards and requirements. This ensures that educational activities not only promote the comprehensive growth of students but also align with societal expectations and development goals. The government plays a crucial role in ensuring the sufficiency and equity of educational resources and in establishing norms and evaluation systems for education through legislation and policy measures, ensuring consistency between education with societal needs. At this level, the focus is on providing policy support and establishing institutional norms to lay a solid foundation for ideological and political education.

At this level, the mechanism must ensure consistency between educational policies and national development strategies through policy guidance and resource allocation, thereby laying the foundation for

ideological and political education. The core tasks at this level include formulating and implementing educational policies that match national strategies, strengthening policy communication and coordination, and ensuring consensus among all levels of government, educational institutions, and society on educational goals. Macro-level mechanisms such as subject linkage mechanisms aim to establish a cross-departmental and cross-domain framework of cooperation to optimize the integration and utilization of educational resources.

### 3.2. *Meso Level*

At the meso level, internal collaboration within the educational system is key. Through cross-stage education and the effective integration of school and social resources, the interactions between family units and schools are strengthened, resulting in an educational alliance of mutual assistance and resource sharing. This collaborative model should expand the learning horizons of students, promoting cultural identity, and establishing positive and healthy values. This mechanism ensures consistency between educational content and goals, prevents disconnection between educational stages, enables the educational system to adapt more effectively to social changes, meets the personalized learning needs of students, and lays a solid foundation for social integration and comprehensive development.

At the meso level, integration should focus on ensuring educational coherence, combining resources, encouraging close cooperation between families and schools, and establishing a robust social support network. These activities all form the foundation for guiding and shaping the cultural identity values of students. Most importantly, the integration of educational content is crucial at this level because it ensures the continuity of educational content across different stages and helps students establish a consistent and sustained sense of shared cultural identity values as they grow. At the same time, efforts at this level must also focus on building an ecosystem that includes schools, families, communities, and media to promote the balanced development of students in different environments.

### 3.3. *Micro Level*

The micro-level mechanism focuses on enhancing the quality of individual interactions and structural functions within schools, families, and social environment to improve educational efficacy. In the education process, educators and students transform into subjects that actively participate in and shape the educational environment (rather than being objects passively influenced by the environment) [13]. The educators and students follow normative elements and actively use available resources to improve the educational environment and achieve educational goals. The micro-level mechanism is committed to cultivating students' social responsibility, teamwork, and sense of historical mission through specific interactions and practical activities. The evaluation connection mechanism is particularly important at this level because it establishes a scientific assessment system, collects feedback, and facilitates the continuous optimization of educational quality.

The micro-level mechanism also emphasizes innovative educational interaction models that effectively enhance initiative and innovation among students through participatory and inquiry-based learning. The implementation of these mechanisms can achieve a more open, inclusive, and vibrant ideological and political educational environment, allowing for the comprehensive development of students.

A holistic strategy is essential to seamlessly integrate social practice into the educational system. A successful strategy must cater to the individual educational needs of students and consider their psychological well-being. Social practice, encompassing activities like employment, learning, volunteer work, and community engagement, serves as a bridge linking theoretical knowledge with practical application. Engaging in these activities equips students with valuable experience and knowledge crucial for personal development and social progress.

Integrating social practice in education entails synthesizing diverse educational elements into a cohesive system. This involves aligning academic study with real-world activities, allowing students to deepen their comprehension of concepts through direct social engagement. Integrating varied social practices can enhance efficiency, amplify impact, and make progress toward shared societal goals. Additionally, incorporating insights and needs from social practice into policy-making ensures that policies are grounded in reality and effectively address issues.

The concept of integrating social practice into education underscores the significance of merging theoretical



learning with practical experience and considering the psychological health of students to foster their holistic growth.

#### **4. Mechanism Implementation: Promoting the Integration of Ideological and Political Education in Primary, Secondary, and Higher Education**

Under the guidance of social integration theory, the integration of ideological and political education in primary, secondary, and higher education can be facilitated by the following strategies and practical suggestions.

##### *4.1. Macro-Level Policy Support*

At the macro level, a comprehensive system for ideological and political education should encompass a variety of interrelated elements and components, including educational policies, curriculum design, teaching methods, students, teachers, and school environments [8]. This macro-level ecosystem considers the interactions among these components along with the broader societal factors such as culture, law, economy, and political systems, which collectively influence the formation of national cultural identity and associated policy. As demonstrated by this ecosystem, ideological and political education does not occur in isolation; rather, it reflects the complex interplay among multiple factors and considers factors of the external environment (e.g., socio-cultural, economic, and political factors) that affect the educational process. The goal of this ecosystem is to cultivate citizens with a profound sense of social responsibility and historical mission. The following macro-level strategies are proposed to achieve this objective.

##### *4.1.1. Joint Promotion of Ideological and Political Education in the Political and Economic Subsystems*

The political subsystem formulates and implements relevant policies to ensure consistency between ideological and political education, national development goals, and socialist core values. The coherence and foresight of these policies reflect the top-level design and strategic planning of education, providing a clear direction and solid institutional foundation for ideological and political education. The economic subsystem provides the necessary material basis and conditions for implementing ideological and political education (e.g., financial investment, resource allocation, and policy incentives). This includes the construction of infrastructure for ideological and political education and teacher training, the development of ideological and political education, and the use of tax incentives to attract social capital, increase educational supply, and promote educational equity. Both subsystems recognize the potential of educational technology in enhancing educational effectiveness.

##### *4.1.2. The Cultural System Aids in the Dissemination of Core Values*

Ideological and political education reinforces the intrinsic motivation for aligning individual needs with societal needs. Compared to general education activities that focus on imparting a broad range of knowledge and skills across disciplines, ideological and political education places special emphasis on ideological logic and the spiritual needs of individuals [14]. Unlike general education, which focuses on cultivating interdisciplinary knowledge and skills, ideological and political education is more focused on shaping an individual's values and worldview. It aims to help individuals better understand and serve the overall interests of society through in-depth theoretical study and rich practical experience. The cultural system can adopt the following comprehensive strategies to promote the widespread dissemination of socialist core values throughout society. First, disseminating values through media and public art forums can ensure that these values are internalized to form a broad social consensus. Second, the close integration of ideological and political education with culture through literature and historical narratives can help cultivate values among students. Concurrently, community engagement through lectures and cultural festivals is encouraged to enhance value identification among adolescents and promote community cohesion. Additional channels such as film, television, the Internet, and cultural educational institutions should be utilized to strengthen the popularity of core socialist values. Lastly, the joint participation of schools, families, and society in value education can synergistically promote value internalization among students. Together, a system of value education involving all of society is constructed, providing a solid foundation for cultivating responsible and ethical citizens.

#### 4.1.3. The Legal System Regulates and Political Education Goals

The fundamental purpose of ideological and political education is to facilitate the transformation of individuals from “natural persons” to “socialized individuals [11]”. Toward this end, educational practices need to identify and adjust to individual needs. Meanwhile, the legal system should establish and improve educational regulations and standards to clarify the norms of educational behavior and the system for evaluating the quality of ideological and political education. At the same time, educational supervision should be strengthened to ensure that all educational activities are conducted within the standardized legal framework. Furthermore, institutional incentives and restraint mechanisms should be established to promote the professional development and ethical self-discipline of educators. The combined effect of these measures will guarantee the ability to cultivate qualified socialist citizens and leaders.

#### 4.2. Meso-Level Coordination and Management

At the meso-level, the mechanism focuses on the interactions among various behavioral entities, particularly how the three core educational domains—school, society, and family—collaborate to jointly promote the integration of ideological and political education across primary, secondary, and higher education. By establishing a supportive educational network that shares resources, the synergistic relationships between the subsystems of the educational ecosystem can be strengthened, thereby facilitating the ideological and political education and development of students. Specifically, the interactions at the meso-level should leverage the different roles of the three core educational domains, as described below.

**The Central Role of the School Domain:** As the core venue for educational implementation, schools are responsible for designing and executing ideological and political education curricula, implementing macro-level policies at the meso level, ensuring that educational content is consistent with national educational guidelines, and achieving harmony between social values and family educational philosophies.

**The Supplementary Role of the Social Domain:** Marxist theory emphasizes that an individual’s practical needs do not arise in isolation; rather, they are shaped through social activities and relationships with others. Thus, rather than being formed independently by the individual, personal needs are a product of social interactions and connections [11]. Individual needs are at the center of social practice. Social institutions and organizations, by providing a variety of practical opportunities, diversify the learning domain and provide a platform for students to integrate theoretical knowledge with social practice, thereby enhancing the social practice capabilities and value identification of students. Social integration theory emphasizes the process of how individuals or groups are integrated into the social structure. Within this theoretical framework, the social domain is crucial for shaping scientific values and nurturing individual sociality by enhancing interactions between individuals and society. Thus, the social domain essentially represents the internalization of social consciousness, where individuals assimilate and integrate shared beliefs, values, and behavioral norms of the society or group, making them part of their own actions and thoughts. At present, ideological and political education follows principles such as demand–supply matching and structural optimization to meet individual needs [11]. Through a supplementary role in ideological and political education, the social domain can help individuals integrate personal needs with social development to promote positive social practice and achieve the harmonious development of individuals and society.

**The Fundamental Role of the Family Unit:** As the basic unit for value transmission, the family unit has a decisive influence on ideological and political education from primary school to higher education. Through daily interactions and family educational activities, the role of the family differs in different educational stages. During primary and secondary education, the family plays a decisive role in shaping children’s values through the family ethos and moral education in daily life. Close interactions between family, school, and society reinforce the role of the family in transmitting positive values. For example, the “Inheriting the Good Family Tradition” program in Shangcheng District, Hangzhou, combines online and offline methods. In the higher education stage, although the direct influence of the family may be diminished, the family remains an important support system for students and helps to solidify the ideological and political ideologies of students.



When integrating ideological and political education across primary, secondary, and higher education, the coordination of management among different educational domains is crucial. The participating entities at the meso level mainly include school management, community leaders, and family education organizers. Along with other educational entities, these managers jointly establish an efficient collaborative mechanism to ensure that the opinions and needs of all parties are coordinated. Through close cooperation across domains, a “collaborative management platform, resource sharing platform, and comprehensive ideological and political education network” are constructed. The following are strategies to achieve effective education through collaboration.

#### 4.2.1. A Coordination Management Platform for Clarifying Roles and Responsibilities

A coordination management platform is critical for effectively integrating ideological and political education across various social systems. A coordinating organization comprising school leaders, teachers, parents, community members, and educational experts can ensure that all voices and needs are considered in the decision-making and implementation processes of ideological and political education. The roles and responsibilities of each participant should be clearly defined. Schools are responsible for curriculum planning and education implementation, families provide moral support and value guidance, and communities offer practical opportunities and cultural experiences. Through this clear division of labor and collaboration, coordination between schools, families, communities, and governments can be strengthened to jointly promote the ideological and political education of students and cultivate students into socially responsible people.

#### 4.2.2. A Resource Sharing System for Integrated Education Planning

Social integration theory emphasizes the importance of resource sharing and complementary strengths in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of social systems. For ideological and political education, a resource-sharing system is needed to enable schools, families, communities, and other entities to leverage their resources and strengths to collaboratively provide comprehensive ideological and political education. For instance, schools can use community resources for practical activities, families can participate in moral education projects, and governments can provide financial and policy support.

Ensuring the coherence of educational content and objectives is also crucial for achieving social integration. Top-level design is needed to establish a unified educational syllabus and evaluation standards that ensure the educational content is consistent and continuous across primary, secondary, and higher education. This coherence strengthens student identification with social values and ensures that students receive orderly, mutually supportive ideological and political education at different educational stages. In this way, students can develop stable values and cultivate a sense of social responsibility.

#### 4.2.3. A Network for Practice, Supervision, and Innovation in Ideological and Political Education

Practical opportunities for learning are crucial for ideological and political education. By leveraging resources within the social domain (e. g., museums, exhibition halls, and community colleges) to create experiential learning opportunities at various educational stages, students’ understanding and acceptance of societal values can be deepened. Enhancing cooperation between families and schools along with interactions in the social domain are also critical, especially during the primary and secondary school phases. Participation in community service and cultural exchange activities can also bolster students’ sense of identification with societal values, thereby reinforcing social ties and cohesion.

Continuous supervision and evaluation are necessary to ensure the effectiveness of ideological and political education. Regular monitoring and evaluation of educational outcomes should be maintained to align educational activities with established goals and adjust educational strategies in a timely manner according to changes in social development and student needs. Additionally, educational workers should be encouraged to engage in educational innovation and research (e. g., by exploring and developing new effective educational methods) to adapt to the ever-changing educational environment.

Finally, policy support and incentives can stimulate the active participation of all entities involved in

ideological and political education. A supportive and resource-sharing educational network forms is part of an effective meso-level ecosystem that promotes the integration of ideological and political education and lays a solid foundation for the comprehensive development of students and harmonious societal progress.

#### 4.3. *Micro-Level Practical Innovation*

Social integration theory considers the interaction patterns of relevant stakeholders at the micro level, highlighting the value of creating an all-encompassing integrated teaching field. Such an integrated teaching field would encompass the micro-ecological systems of primary, secondary, and higher education to facilitate the exploration and integration of resources for ideological and political education. Specific practical recommendations for strengthening interactions among schools, families, and social organizations are discussed below.

##### 4.3.1. Interactions within Schools

Teachers employ interactive teaching methods (e. g., discussions, debates, and role-playing) to promote active student participation and in-depth understanding during ideological and political education. Encouraging students to engage in collaborative learning projects can cultivate their sense of teamwork and spirit. To enhance social participation and collective honor among students, schools should regularly organize class- and school-wide activities such as ideological and political knowledge contests and instruction in the fine tradition of the Chinese nation, including patriotism, collectivism, hard work, thrift, respect for elders, honesty, and other moral values and behavioral norms. Additionally, schools should emphasize the revolutionary tradition, highlighting the revolutionary spirit and heroic deeds formed during the revolutionary struggles, such as firm belief, selfless dedication, hard struggle, and courage to innovate. These activities help students to develop a sense of national pride and social responsibility, and to form a correct outlook on life, values, and worldview, promoting their comprehensive development.

##### 4.3.2. Interactions between Schools at Different Levels

(1) Cross-educational stage ideological and political education research teams. Educators and administrators from various educational stages collaborate on research in ideological and political education with the goal of achieving continuity in content across educational phases. Throughout this process, teachers of different grades jointly discuss and share theories and pedagogical methods for ideological and political education. Concurrently, administrators from all educational phases leverage the strengths of their respective schools, learn from each other, and compensate for their shortcomings to enhance ideological and political education. Optimization strategies for ideological and political education management in colleges under the background of the new media era. *Journalism Research Guide*, 15(05), 206–208. For example, in July 2019, Hangzhou First Normal School Affiliated Primary School leveraged its unique red educational resources and collaborated with ideological and political educators from primary, secondary, and higher education institutions in Hangzhou to establish the first research institute in China focused on moral education. The institute provides a platform for exchange and collaboration across different educational stages, promoting the integration of ideological and political education across primary, secondary, and higher education. Participants at each stage contribute their strengths to complement each other. First, universities lead academically. Universities can leverage their strengths in academic research and theoretical innovation to form moral education research teams to study the needs of moral education across different educational stages and formulate integrated teaching syllabi and plans. Second, junior and senior high schools provide practical feedback based on the actual experiences of students, helping the research teams better understand the moral education needs of middle school students. Finally, elementary educators can share their experiences and achievements in cultivating political awareness and a sense of social responsibility among young students, providing support for early intervention in moral education.

(2) Collective lesson preparation and resource sharing. Through regular collective lesson preparation activities, teachers from different educational stages can jointly discuss teaching content and methods, ensuring coherent and progressive moral education content. The creation of a library of shared resources for moral

education, including teaching cases, multimedia materials, and practical activity plans, can help optimize resource allocation.

(3) Collaboration between schools. First, school administrators are responsible for coordinating among schools at different educational stages. This includes formulating cooperation plans, supervising the implementation process, and evaluating the effectiveness of cooperation. Second, teacher exchanges and training should be organized across the educational stages to enhance the moral education capabilities of teachers, promoting mutual learning, and integrate teaching methods across educational stages. Finally, mechanisms should be created for student participation and feedback. Students should be encouraged to participate in the planning and implementation of moral education activities, thereby playing a primary role in improving the effectiveness of moral education. Effective feedback mechanisms are also needed to allow students to offer suggestions and opinions on the content and form of moral education, promoting continuous optimization of educational content and methods.

#### 4.3.3. Interactions within the Family Unit

As the basic unit of society, the family plays a unique and crucial role in the ideological and political education of children at different educational stages. Parents should establish open communication channels with their children to convey family values and instill a sense of social responsibility through daily conversations [15]. At the micro level, parent–child interactions within the family differ at different educational stages. In the elementary school stage, the family has a foundational role and a decisive influence in forming children’s values and morals [16]. Parents can pass on positive family values and a sense of social responsibility by participating in their children’s learning and daily life (e.g., jointly participating in school and community activities). Regular family communication times such as weekly family dinners or family meetings are key to shaping children’s thoughts and promoting value development. The synergistic role of family, school, and community in education is exemplified by the Hangzhou Shangcheng District family education publicity week, which provides a platform for parents to learn and communicate, strengthening the role of the family in ideological and political education. During middle and high school, the family continues to be an important component of ideological and political education, and parental support is crucial for the academic and psychological health of children [17]. Family interactions should promote the independence and critical thinking abilities of children, encouraging them to participate in family decision-making to instill a sense of responsibility. In the university stage, although students live away from home, the family remains an important support system, especially when college students face challenges. The family’s values are important in consolidating students’ ideological and political education in this stage. In fact, parents can continue to pay attention to and guide the growth of young adults through remote communication.

The family’s influence is long term and far reaching. Regardless of the educational stage the learner, the family acts as a guardian during crises or challenges and as the last line of defense to help students overcome difficulties and solidify their ideological and political concepts.

#### 4.3.4. Social Interactions between Individuals and Groups

Social integration theory focuses on how individuals or groups integrate into the social structure [8]. In this study, the term “social field” encompasses a variety of settings where individuals engage in social interactions and activities. These settings not only form the environment for implementing ideological and political education, they also serve as hubs of social resources that can be mobilized for patriotic education [11]. These hubs, which include community centers, museums, and online social platforms, are places that allow individuals to communicate, collaborate, and build social connections. These social resources for interaction and collaboration foster the development of individual sociality to achieve the objectives of ideological and political education. The social field plays a key role in social integration by promoting the cultivation of individual sociality through bidirectional interactions and facilitating the internalization of social consciousness [18]. In the current era, ideological and political education should follow the principles of demand–supply matching, structural optimization, and putting people first [11]. As social educational resources, community colleges and

museums can shape interactions among individual and group learners and develop educational projects suitable for different ages. For example, elementary school students can participate in social education projects such as red-themed lectures, exhibitions, and commemorative activities to cultivate an understanding of social responsibility and historical mission in practice. This not only strengthens students' understanding of the country's history and culture but also stimulates their national pride and sense of social responsibility.

## 5. Research Conclusions and Prospects

### 5.1. Research Conclusions

From the perspective of social integration theory, this study presents a theoretical coupling analysis and explores the mechanism for integrating ideological and political education across primary, secondary, and higher education.

#### 5.1.1. Macro-Level Policy Support

The government formulates forward-looking policies and provides economic support to lay a solid foundation for developing integrated ideological and political education. By integrating key social systems such as the political, economic, cultural, and legal systems, cohesive norms and values can be achieved, creating a social environment that is conducive to ideological and political education.

#### 5.1.2. Meso-Level Management

Collaboration among management levels strengthens the interactions and integration among the core domains of ideological and political education: schools, families, and society. An ecosystem of moral education that supports all domains and facilitates resource sharing can ensure students' comprehensive and balanced development of ideological and political qualities [19]. The coordination mechanism includes the following steps: (1) establishing a coordination management platform to clarify the roles and responsibilities of participants such as schools, families, and communities and to ensure coordination among educational policies and activities; (2) establishing a resource-sharing system that allows integrated educational planning and ensures coherence in educational content while avoid repetition or disconnection; and (3) creating an ideological and political education network that enhances students' value identification and sense of social responsibility through social practice activities and family-school-community interactions. At the same time, continuous supervision and evaluation are important to ensure that educational activities are consistent with goals and encourage educational innovation. Finally, the government provides policy support and incentives to promote the active participation of all entities in a supportive educational ecosystem that shares resources, providing a solid foundation for the comprehensive development of students and the cultivation of socialist core values. Through the above strategies, the synergistic relationships between various subsystems in the educational ecosystem can be strengthened to effectively promote students' ideological and political education and development.

#### 5.1.3. Micro-Level Innovation

The innovative practice of the coordination mechanism highlights the importance of "individual-to-individual and individual-to-group" interactions and integration among different teaching fields. The role of the coordination mechanism varies with the educational stage. Schools can use interactive teaching and group cooperation projects to enhance students' social participation and team spirit. Cooperation across the different educational stages can be facilitated by establishing research teams and sharing resources. The family unit plays a foundational role in conveying values and social responsibility, especially during primary school, when the family has a decisive influence on the formation of children's ideological and political concepts [18]. The social field provides rich practical opportunities for students to deepen their connection to social values by participating in community service and cultural activities. Close cooperation between families, schools, and communities provides a comprehensive support system that fosters the holistic development of students in terms of their ideological and political identities. This collaboration reflects the core principles of social integration theory, which emphasizes the conveyance of societal core values and the holistic development of individuals

through balanced and interactive systemic functions. The construction of a support system that maintains equilibrium and adapts flexibly to change is of paramount importance for the cultivation of holistically developed individuals [20]. Such a system must provide resources to facilitate the growth of students in their ideological and political identities while maintaining stability amidst societal shifts. It should be capable of agile adjustment in response to external changes, ensuring that students acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to adapt to future societal demands. This system fosters the multifaceted development of students, enabling them to successfully integrate into society and contribute meaningfully, thereby reflecting the significance of collaboration among families, schools, and communities.

## 5.2. Research Prospects

### 5.2.1. Deepen Theoretical Research

Future research should deepen the application of social integration theory in the field of moral education and explore more effective, coherent, comprehensive, and three-dimensional educational strategies.

### 5.2.2. Expand the Scope of Research

Future research should consider the differences among regions and types of schools when integrating ideological and political education to identify targeted suggestions for improvement.

### 5.2.3. Applying Interdisciplinary Approaches

Existing research in the field of ideological and political education, particularly in patriotism and moral education, has laid a solid foundation for future studies focused on educational science, Marxist theory, and interdisciplinary collaboration with disciplines such as psychology and sociology to comprehensively understand and address issues in moral education. Existing research has provided an established knowledgebase along with theories and methods that offer a starting point for future research.

Current research has exposed gaps in knowledge, including issues related to the ideological and political education of specific groups, which point the way for future research. Researchers can explore more effective teaching and assessment strategies for these groups. The methodologies established by existing research can inspire future innovations (e.g., the introduction of quantitative methods or mixed methods) to provide a more comprehensive perspective.

The integration of various fields through interdisciplinary research is an important direction for future research. By combining theories and methods from psychology and sociology, future studies can gain a deeper understanding of the implementation of moral education in different social contexts. Moreover, the findings from existing research have significant effects on policy-making and practical applications. Future research should focus on how to translate research findings into specific educational policies and practices to promote the implementation and improvement of moral education.

In summary, existing research provides various insights for future work in the area of ideological and political education. Existing work has deepened the research foundation, explored gaps in knowledge, developed innovative methodologies, leveraged interdisciplinary approaches, and applied research findings in policy and practice. These insights will lead to progress in the field of moral education.

### 5.2.4. Continuous Tracking and Evaluation

The effective integration of ideological and political education throughout primary, secondary, and higher education requires special attention to the dynamic process of “dynamic adaptation—system integration—pattern maintenance—goal achievement”. The long-term effects should be tracked and evaluated to ensure the continuous optimization and improvement of educational policies.

Research in the above directions is expected to promote the integration of ideological and political education throughout primary, secondary, and higher education to provide a theoretical basis and practical direction, break down barriers, and further enhance the effectiveness of ideological and political education.

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