

Analysis of Behavior Characteristics and Work Approach of Generation Z College Students

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Abstract: General Secretary Xi Jinping stated that “the future belongs to the young people”^[1] at the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China . Young people are the future of our country and have an important mission to achieve the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. As the main body of young college students, the author aims to analyze Generation Z college students’ behavioral characteristics, understand the reasons behind their behavior, achieve personalized education in the process of teaching, better guide their growth and development, implement the fundamental task of cultivating virtues and talents, and truly achieve comprehensive education.

Keywords: Generation Z; College students; Behavioral analysis; College student education

1. Background Analysis

2021 is destined to be an extraordinary year. In the post-epidemic era, under the strong leadership of the Party Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core, we have achieved the first centennial goal. In this year, the youngest Generation Z children who were born have turned 17. Generation Z usually refers to those born between 1995 and 2005. They have experienced the same major social events, technological changes, and cultural developments in their growth, forming largely similar values. Now, this group of people is the main force of college students. They grew up in a new China with a fairly sufficient material foundation. Their material needs are basically met and they are the apple of their family’s eye.

2. Characteristics of Generation Z College Students

Due to the similar growth backgrounds of Generation Z college students, they have similar life outlooks, worldviews, and values. Analyzing the three perspectives of Generation Z college students and analyzing the motivation behind their external behavior can help understand their behavioral characteristics and thought process, and guide their ideological and political education scientifically and effectively. It can also help them adjust their existing values, have a correct understanding of reality, face reality squarely, strengthen their sense of responsibility, and better adapt to social development.

2.1 Assertive and Self-Development-Oriented

One of the common attributes among the youth of the new era is their assertive personality and desire for a sense of belonging^[2]. The majority of Generation Z college students were born after 1995 and are only children. They are doted on and pay attention to the realization of their own value while developing their own personalities. They grew up in the internet era and are increasingly only willing to spend time on things they are interested in. Different interests form different cultural circles, and they live in islands that seem rich in diversity. This leads to highly varied personalities while material affluence is abundant, but they also pay attention to the growth of their inner worlds. Thanks to the development of the internet, there are various channels for obtaining information, and the “experience says” of the older generation are no longer applicable to Generation Z college students. With the help of “WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin”, they can quickly obtain information of interest, and can also express their opinions. On these three platforms, we can see Generation Z college students with millions of followers and record-breaking levels of likes and comments. On the one hand, this reflects their willingness to share as anchors, and on the other hand, their recognition of the culture they love as fans. In a group, they always desire attention, recognition and value of themselves in the group, and seek recognition.

However, while developing their personalities, Generation Z college students need to strengthen their collective consciousness

and teamwork skills. Growing up as an only child, they have strong self-awareness and a sense of superiority, forming a self-centered self-awareness and way of dealing with things, often considering problems from their own perspective and ignoring others' feelings. Meanwhile, communication skills are lacking, and such students find it difficult to integrate into collective life on campus, making it difficult to make friends, and dormitory conflicts can easily arise.

2.2 Cultural Confidence and Ideological Identity

One significant difference between Generation Z college students and previous students is that they grew up in a strong and prosperous country with relatively abundant material wealth. Their attention to foreign products has significantly decreased, and their cultural confidence is relatively strong because the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation is actually occurring around them. Along with experiencing countless events, such as flood relief, combating SARS, earthquake relief, the 2008 Beijing Olympics, the maiden flight of domestically produced large aircraft, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the PRC, the global pandemic, the first-to-recover economy post COVID-19 pandemic, the US-China confrontation, and the global economic downturn, young people in Generation Z have grown up along with the strength and prosperity of their country. "Growing up under the red flag and living in the spring breeze" is the best explanation for them. This brings about a high degree of confidence in Chinese culture and systems. The popularity of the "national tide" also reflects the fact that Generation Z college students pay more attention to domestic original products, showing cultural confidence and identity.

Generation Z college students are influenced by various value trends and have formed a more complex value system, but Chinese culture, which is based on the socialist core values, flows in their blood. They have been deeply influenced by excellent traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture. Growing up in a family background and social environment that nurtured them, they have developed a strong patriotic sentiment, and are quite recognized by their country and nation. In the face of complex international environments, they place national interests first.

However, the proliferation of diverse values and the fragmentation of online information have also brought about a serious problem - students' ideological and moral beliefs being weakened. Due to their lack of independent thinking and inability to distinguish information, students can be easily misled or even exploited by online trash information.

2.3 Hardworking and Aspiring to Success

Generation Z college students have a strong sense of competitiveness, a desire to progress, and a strong desire to win, and they love various challenges. This is due to many reasons. The first is that they grew up during a period of rapid economic development in China, which had an important impact on college students who grew up during this period, with the intensification of domestic market competition and the fluctuations in the international economic situation. Second is family and school education. From a young age, they have heard phrases such as "can't lose at the starting line" and "other people's children," which strongly stimulates their competitive consciousness. The rise of various academic competitions has further strengthened this consciousness. Third, Generation Z college students have their own demands for themselves; they strive to be the best and not fall behind, which is a true reflection of every student who has gone through the gauntlet of the college entrance examination.

They genuinely feel the intensification of social competition and must have a strong core competitiveness to succeed in society. However, at the same time, they should also be aware of the problems. Due to growing up in a wealthy environment with favorable learning and living conditions, usually protected by their parents, they rarely encounter major setbacks. They overestimate their own abilities and lack an understanding of difficulties. This leads to difficulties in resolving problems independently, while their ability to withstand psychological pressure needs to be strengthened. When faced with failure, they become easily discouraged and lack the courage to face difficulties.

3. Actions to do well in the work of Generation Z university students

Generation Z university students are the main group in today's universities and the hope and future of national development. The previous analysis of the characteristics of Generation Z university students provides a feasible way for universities to further do well in student work, especially ideological and political work.

3.1 Transforming educational concepts and turning passivity into initiative

In the background of the new era, the traditional teacher-student relationship is no longer applicable. To further do well in the ideological and political education of Generation Z university students, it is necessary to change the educational concept, get close to the actual learning and living conditions of students, and formulate practical work policies based on economic and social development. Traditional ideological and political education focuses on teaching students. However, with the development of the economy and society, especially the popularity of the Internet, this way of working has obvious disadvantages and can't capture

the students' psychology. To do well in the ideological and political work of Generation Z university students, we should keep pace with the times, listen more to what students want, and focus on meeting their individual needs. As a university counselor, we should take the initiative to understand the characteristics of students' thinking and behavior and their ideological and political situation. Centered around the students, we should care for and serve them, respect their subject status, teach according to their aptitude, and meet their individual growth needs. We should establish a service-oriented approach to students, encourage them to take the initiative to participate in learning.

3.2 Fully utilizing new media and adapting to the needs of networked ideological and political education

Generation Z university students are also known as the Internet generation, growing up with the development of the Internet. In their study and communication, the Internet is an indispensable part of their lives, as an important platform for sharing joy, anger, sorrow and happiness, and the main way they socialize. To do well in the ideological and political work of Generation Z university students, we must make good use of the Internet and various new media, especially "two microblogs and one short video". Firstly, we should use new media platforms to understand students' lives and learning conditions, be aware of their dynamics on new media, pay attention to their ideological and political situation, provide appropriate guidance and help them find a suitable way of growth. Secondly, we should use new media to push content tailored to students' preferences, which can help them to learn and change their thinking. We should guide students to be active campus citizens and spread positive energy on the network, tap the advantages of the Internet, and explore new ways and new positions for ideological and political education. Thirdly, we should make good use of the advantages of big data, widely explore students' hobbies and strengths, provide them with exhibition platforms, and cultivate self-confidence; we should also analyze the psychological characteristics and development trends of university students, grasp students who may be in a crisis situation in a scientific way; fourthly, faced with the convergence of various ideas on campus, we must resolutely guard the ideological and political education position of the network, actively promote the theory of socialism with Chinese characteristics, actively promote red culture, socialist advanced culture, and fight against all kinds of decadent ideas.

3.3 Enhancing personal ability and improving comprehensive quality

University counselors are the backbone of ideological and political education in universities, and the backbone of dealing with various problems of students in their studies and lives in the front line. To do well in the ideological and political work of students and handle problems encountered, counselors need to have solid skills and enhance their ideological and political education capabilities. Generation Z university students face complex and disorderly network information and various public opinion orientations. Due to their insufficient social experience and lack of ability to distinguish harmful information, they are easily manipulated by Western forces. Therefore, university counselors need to enhance their own ideological and political theoretical literacy, deepen university students' understanding of Marxism, teach them to use scientific methodology to understand problems, and use a developmental perspective to look at problems, understand the world, analyze the world, and guide them to form correct personal views, worldviews and values. Through ideological and political education, we encourage students to grow and develop, collect cases during the work process, summarize and form their own work system, further enhance the level of ideological and political work, and implement the fundamental task of moral education.

References:

- [1] General Secretary Xi Jinping's speech at the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China;
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