Effect of Psychological Counseling on Ideological and Political Education: An Empirical Analysis Based on Cognitive Psychology

Zhenhua Zeng

Abstract

Ideological and political (I&P) education is an important subject in Chinese colleges that facilitates the moral education of college students. From the perspective of cognitive psychology, this paper explores the influence of psychological counseling on the I&P education in colleges. A total of 462 students were selected and divided into a survey group (232) and a control group (230). The survey group received both psychological counseling and the I&P education, while the control group only received the I&P education. Finally, the two groups were compared based on the examination scores of the I&P education. The results show that gender and age have little influence on the effectiveness of the I&P education, while major has no significant influence on this issue; the examination scores of the I&P education of engineering students are the most dispersed, while those of liberal arts students are the most concentrated; the survey group have much higher examination scores than the control group, revealing the promoting effect of psychological counseling on the I&P education. The research results contribute to the improvement of ideological and political education and moral education of college students.

Key words: Cognitive Psychology, Ideological and Political (I&P) Education, Psychological Counseling, Moral Education.

Received: 04-02-19 | Accepted: 22-08-19

INTRODUCTION

Moral education of college students has been paid more and more attention in higher education (Sim, 1996; Pope & Shaw, 1981; Little & Akin-Little, 2008). It is the key to ensure students’ mental health and stability to do a good job in college students’ moral education. In ideological and political education, enough attention should be paid to students’ psychological quality. Without stable psychological quality, ideological and political (I&P) education is like a castle in the air and will not achieve the expected results (Floden, 1981; Takanishi, Deleon, P. H., & Pallak, 1983). Only on the basis of healthy psychological state can we ensure the smooth implementation of I&P education and achieve better results (Glaser & Takanishi, 1986; Schwartz, 1997; Ashis, 1982). The integration of psychological counseling and I&P education provide a new possibility for I&P education in colleges and universities (Lee, 2011; Marecek, 2012). The students’ healthy psychological condition provides the guarantee for the I&P education in colleges and universities. The development of psychological consultation in colleges and universities helps students deepen their understanding of themselves so as to improve their psychological condition and to improve their psychological quality and moral level by receiving ideological and political education.

Cognitive psychology is an important branch of psychology, and self-cognition is one of the
important tasks of cognitive psychology. Highlighting the role of cognitive psychology in psychological counseling will help students make sober judgments about their own strengths and weaknesses and improve them in a targeted manner. I&P education can help students broaden their horizons, find more ways to improve them, and choose the best solution. Therefore, the combination of cognitive psychology, I&P education and psychological counseling is a very effective means to improve the moral education level of college students.

By setting the survey group and the control group in the experiment, and analyzing the moral education level of both, the results of this study can provide some suggestions for the moral education of college students.

THEORETICAL BASIS

Cognitive psychology
Cognitive psychology is a theoretical branch of psychology. Cognition is the sum of the processes of acquisition, processing and analysis of information. Cognitive psychology is the study of cognitive process, which basically describes the psychological changes in the cognitive process of human beings. Cognitive psychology divides the cognitive process of human beings into different stages. For example, at the perception stage, cognitive psychology studies how human beings receive, collect, and screen external information; in the attention stage, cognitive psychology mainly focuses on the attention of human beings to vivid images; at the memory stage, cognitive psychology mainly studies how human beings deal with and store information, which is a very important task in cognitive psychology.

Ideological and political education
I&P education is a kind of education to improve the moral education level of college students. Its fundamental purpose is to cultivate college students with more comprehensive development. I&P education is an important link in the cultivation of college students, and is also an important task in colleges and universities. In the new era, college students’ education pays more attention to both ability and political integrity, and the whole society pays attention to the I&P education of college students. Nowadays, with the rapid development of science, technology and economy, the growth and development of college students are faced with many new problems. Therefore, starting from training students with high moral level, colleges and universities should attach importance to ideological and political education, deepen the depth of ideological and political education, make full use of the teaching resources of ideological and political education, improve the level of ideological and political education, and construct a complete I&P education system.

However, there are still many unsatisfactory problems in the current ideological and political education. On the one hand, I&P education is usually limited to the theoretical level and can’t go deep into the bottom of students and touch them. On the other hand, ideological and political workers usually lack a firm belief in their work. Colleges and universities attach importance to professional knowledge but pay little attention to ideological and political education, so that ideological and political workers are marginalized to a certain extent. As time passes, they also lost faith in their work.

Psychological counseling
Psychological counseling consists of consultant and client. Client makes a request for psychological counseling, and consultant provides psychological counseling services. Psychological counseling refers to the process in which the consultant makes full use of psychological knowledge to provide assistance and solutions to the psychological problems and obstacles existing in the client. In the whole psychological counseling process, the client and the consultant mainly communicate through language. Through long-term communication, both build mutual trust, then analyze the problems, and put forward the means to solve the problems.

EMPIRICAL STUDY

Participants
The participants are divided into the survey group and the control group. Among them, 232 are in the survey group and 230 in the control group. The age distribution of the survey group and the control group is shown in Figure 1-2.

The age distribution of the survey group is shown in Figure 1, with the majority ranging in age from 19 to 22 years, with fewer persons aged 18, 23 and 24 years.
The age distribution of the control group is shown in Figure 2, with majority within the range of 19 to 22 years, with fewer persons aged 18, 23 and 24 years. That is, the age distribution of the control group is similar to that of the survey group, and there is no significant difference.

As shown in Figure 3, the gender distribution of the survey group is 51.72% for boys and 48.28% for girls and that of the control group is 54.35% for boys and 45.65% for girls. The proportion is close to 1:1. There is no significant difference in gender distribution between the survey group and the control group.

The major distribution of the survey group and the control group is shown in Figure 4. Both groups have the largest number of engineering students, followed by the science students and the least number of liberal arts students. There is no significant difference in the major distribution between the survey group and the control group.

**Experimental design**

The experimental design in this study is divided into the following steps:

(1) After recruiting students of different gender, different major and different age in seven universities, they are divided into the survey group and the control group according to the principle of random allocation;

(2) The students of the survey group are given I&P education and psychological counseling, while the students of the control group are given I&P education once a week for three months.

In psychological counseling, psychological
guidance should be provided for students mainly based on relevant theories of cognitive psychology to solve the related problems;
(3) When the experiment is over, all the students in the two groups are required to take ideological and political examination, and the full score is 100 points.

Analysis of experimental results
This study takes age, gender, major and group as influence factors, and observes the influence degree of different factors on the score of ideological and political examination, as shown in Figure 5-8.

**Figure 5. The effect of age on scores**

![Boxplot showing the effect of age on scores](image)

In this study, participants are divided into two groups according to their age. Student less than or equal to 21 years old are in a group and students more than 21 years old are in the other group. The effect of age on score is shown in Figure 5, showing that the effect of age on the scores of ideological and political examination is not obvious.

**Figure 6. The effect of gender on scores**

![Boxplot showing the effect of gender on scores](image)

The effect of gender on scores is shown in Figure 6. As can be seen from Figure 6, the effect of gender on the scores of ideological and political examination is not obvious.

**Figure 7. The effect of major on scores**

![Boxplot showing the effect of major on scores](image)

The effect of the major on scores is shown in Figure 7. It can be seen from Figure 7 that the effect of major on the average scores of ideological and political examination is not obvious, but has a certain influence on the distribution range of the scores. The distribution range of the scores of ideological and political examination of engineering students is the largest, followed by that of science students. The distribution range of the scores of ideological and political examination of liberal arts is the most concentrated.

**Figure 8. The effect of group on scores**

![Boxplot showing the effect of group on scores](image)

The effect of group on scores is shown in Figure 8, indicating that the effect of group on the average scores of ideological and political
examination is obvious, and the test scores of ideological and political examination of the students in the survey group are obviously higher than those of the students in the control group.

The test result of independent sample t is shown in Table 1.

The test result of the independent sample t in Table 1 also shows that, after multiple tests, only different groups are found to cause significant differences in scores of ideological and political examination among students, while gender, age and major will not lead to significant differences in scores of ideological and political examination of students.

**Table 1. Independent sample t test results**

| Variables                          | P value | Result               |
|-----------------------------------|---------|----------------------|
| Survey group and control group    | 0.032   | Significantly different |
| Students of 21 years and older and students under 21 | 0.101 | Not significantly different |
| Male and female students          | 0.075   | Not significantly different |
| Engineering students and science students | 0.081 | Not significantly different |
| Engineering students and arts students | 0.112 | Not significantly different |
| Science students and arts students | 0.067   | Not significantly different |

**CONCLUSIONS**

This study mainly explores the effectiveness of psychological counseling based on cognition on I&P education by means of experiment. The conclusions are as follows:

(1) Through independent sample t test, it is found that gender and age have no significant effect on the effectiveness of ideological and political education;

(2) Through independent sample t test, it is found that major has no significant influence on the effectiveness of ideological and political education. However, the distribution range of test scores of ideological and political examination of students in different disciplines is different. The distribution range of engineering students is larger than that of science students and liberal arts students.

(3) Through independent sample t test, it is found that group has a significant effect on the effectiveness of ideological and political education. The scores of ideological and political examination of the students in the survey group are higher than those in the control group. Psychological counseling based on cognitive psychology plays a certain role in improving the scores of ideological and political examination of the students.

**REFERENCES**

Ashis, N. (1982). The psychology of colonialism: sex, age, and ideology in British India. *Psychiatry, 45*(3), 197-219.

Floden, R., E. (1981). Chapter 2: the logic of information-processing psychology in education. *Review of Research in Education, 9*(1), 75-109.

Glaser, R., & Takanishi, R. (1986). Creating a knowledge base for education: psychology’s contributions and prospects. *American Psychologist, 41*(10), 1025-1028.

Lee, C. (2011). Cognitive theory and therapy: distinguishing psychology from ideology. *Australian Psychologist, 28*(3), 156-160.

Little, S. G., & Akin-Little, A. (2008). Psychology’s contribution to education: an introduction to the special issue. *Psychology in the Schools, 45*(3), 191-193.

Marecek, J. (2012). The global is local: adding culture, ideology, and context to international psychology. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 36*(2), 149-153.

Pope, M. L., & Shaw, M. L. G. (1981). Personal construct psychology in education and learning. *International Journal of Man-Machine Studies, 14*(2), 223–232.

Schwartz, B. (1997). Psychology, idea technology, and ideology. *Psychological Science, 8*(1), 21-27.

Sim, J. (1996). Focus group interviews in education and psychology. *Physiotherapy, 82*(11), 645.

Takanishi, R., Deleon, P. H., & Pallak, M. S. (1983). Psychology and education: a continuing, productive partnership. *American Psychologist, 38*(9), 996-1000.