

Research on Cultivating National Security Awareness among College Students in the New Era

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Abstract

National security issues are related to the overall development, national destiny, and people's happiness. Cultivating national security awareness among college students in the new era is an urgent need to adapt to the unprecedented changes in the world. This article focuses on the current situation and problems in the cultivation of national security awareness among college students in the new era in China. Combining with the new requirements of the national security situation, it explores the path of cultivating national security awareness among college students that meets the requirements of the times. The aim is to provide new ideas and methods for enhancing national security awareness among college students, and to provide useful references and suggestions for the improvement and enhancement of national security awareness cultivation among college students in China.

Keywords

National Security Awareness, A Holistic Approach to National Security, College Students

1. Introduction

National security is the fundamental interest of a country, which involves major aspects such as national power, sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity, people's well-being, and sustainable economic and social development. In today's complex and ever-changing international environment, national security faces various challenges and threats from both inside and outside (Zhao, 2023). As the

backbone of national development, the group of college students in the new era will have a direct impact on the long-term development of the country and the overall security situation due to their national security awareness. However, Cao (2018) thinks there is a significant gap between the cultivation of national security awareness among college students in China and the actual needs, and there is an urgent need to further explore a path to cultivate national security awareness that meets the requirements of the times.

2. Analysis of the Current Situation Faced by College Students

Through the analysis of the questionnaire, it is revealed that there are problems in the current national security awareness of college students, which are mainly manifested in the following three aspects:

College students lack attention to incidents that infringe upon national sovereignty and affect national stability. When asked about “whether you usually pay attention to national security related events”, only 32.69% of students expressed “paying close attention”, and as high as 67.31% of students expressed “completely not paying attention” or “occasionally paying attention”. This data indicates that the group of college students in the new era pays relatively little attention to the international situation and national affairs, and often overlooks national security issues (Figure 1).

Teachers’ teaching ability and awareness of national security need to be urgently improved. In the question of “university students’ evaluation of teachers’ national security awareness teaching level”, only 19.62 per cent of teachers focused on guiding students to think about national security issues in their daily teaching. In addition, 43.46% of college students said that teachers are unable to promote their teaching work according to the law of the formation and development of students’ national security awareness, and that there are certain problems in their teaching ability and quality. This reflects that some teachers neglect national security education in teaching, which is not conducive to the cultivation of college students’ national security awareness (Table 1).

The national security management system in colleges and universities is not sound, and the basic guarantee is not solid. In response to the question “whether colleges and universities often organize extracurricular practical activities aimed at fostering national awareness among college students”, only 23.67% of the college students said that their colleges and universities often carry out extracurricular activities or thematic lectures on national security. As many as 57.85% of the respondents said that the frequency of national security education activities in their colleges and universities was low, and the contents and forms of the activities were relatively simple, failing to keep pace with the complex national security situation faced by college students at present. This situation limits the depth and breadth of national security awareness education for college students, and is in urgent need of improvement and optimization (Figure 2).

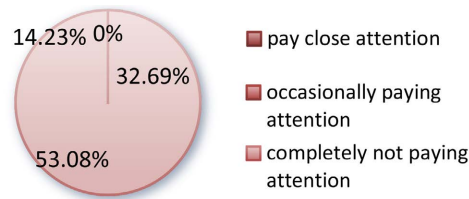


Figure 1. The attention of college students to national security related incidents.

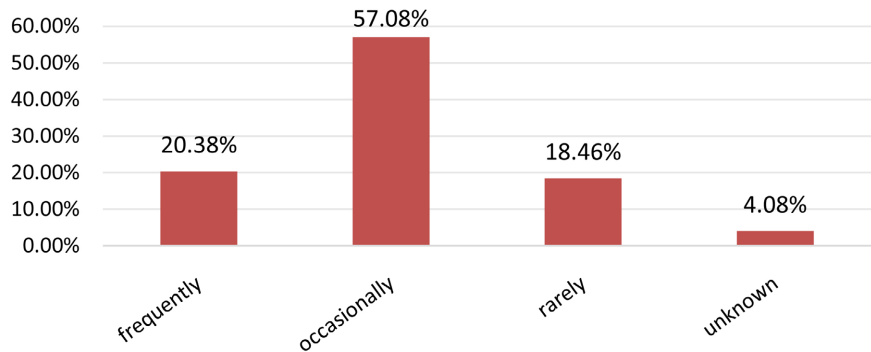


Figure 2. Analysis of whether colleges and universities regularly organize extracurricular practical activities aimed at fostering national awareness among students.

Table 1. University students’ evaluation of teachers’ level of teaching national security awareness.

Option	Number	Percentage (%)
Teachers have high teaching standards and often guide students to think about national security issues	51	19.62
The teaching level of teachers is average and they cannot promote teaching work according to the formation and development pattern of students’ national security awareness.	113	43.46
The level of teachers is low and national security issues are rarely discussed	88	33.85
No comment	8	3.07

3. The Importance of Cultivating National Security Awareness among College Students in the New Era

3.1. The Inevitable Requirements for Adapting to the Layout of National Security Strategy in the New Era

In the rapidly evolving international situation, China is facing increasingly severe development risks and challenges for progress. Based on the development trends of the international community and the historical positioning of China’s development, a profound analysis of the security issues faced by China has been conducted, forming a national security theory such as the overall national security concept. At the same time, relevant national security strategic plans have been formulated. In this context, the Ministry of Education has issued a series of policies related to national security education for primary, secondary, and ter-

tiary schools, clarifying the overall requirements and main content of national security education, and pointing out the importance of strengthening the cultivation of national security awareness among college students in the new era (Gao, 2023). As the backbone of the country's future, the cultivation of national security awareness among college students will directly affect the long-term development of the country and the overall security situation. Strengthening the education of national security awareness among college students is an inevitable requirement to adapt to the strategic layout of national security in the new era. It helps to stimulate the sense of responsibility and mission of college students in maintaining national security in the new era, and thus make positive contributions to the cause of national security.

3.2. The Inevitable Choice to Prevent the Impact of Erroneous Social Trends

In the digital age, the rapid development of various online social media has facilitated more convenient and efficient communication and connection between countries and individuals around the world (Skolnikoff, 2003). Contemporary college students are mainly "post-95s" and "post-00s". They live in the era of Internet development and are increasingly becoming active participants and promoters of the Internet. The Internet has become an indispensable part of their study, life and work. It has become their daily habit to obtain information resources and engage in social activities through the Internet. However, as aborigines of the Internet, college students have also become targets of hostile forces and wrong thoughts, which may be affected (Dong, 2019). Some western media spread false and erroneous information on a large scale through Internet media and platforms, trying to influence Chinese college students in the growth period of value through cultural infiltration activities, and undermining the will of Chinese youth and social stability and harmony. In addition, some illegal hostile forces use online platforms and high salaries as bait to lure college students to steal and sell state secrets, leading some college students who lack national security awareness astray. In such a complex online environment, it is particularly important to strengthen the national identity of college students and enhance their awareness and action awareness in maintaining national security.

3.3. The Inevitable Way to Maintain Ideological Security in Universities

The construction of ideological education in universities has a positive impact on the country and society, including the stability of political and economic order, good guarantee of social life, harmonious campus atmosphere, and the development of young people's good thinking and intelligence (Grubbs, 2019). Many college students today belong to the post-2000s generation, who not only enjoy the fruits and material benefits of social development, but also face challenges and changes. In order to meet the needs of society and improve competitiveness, students try to use their usual time to prepare for various exams. Under

the pressure of academic and personal life, they may overlook ideology and focus more on other aspects. The hostile forces in the West recognize the important role of youth in social development and attempt to influence the ideology of modern youth. Therefore, we need to attach importance to the ideological security construction of universities, strengthen the promotion and education of socialist core values, cultivate the judgment and clear mind of college students, make socialist ideology the primary content of national security education, maintain the ideological security of universities, prevent political infiltration and differentiation of Western capitalist countries, and enable students to make due contributions to the comprehensive construction of a socialist modernized strong country and the realization of the second centenary goal with a healthy and normal mentality.

4. The Current Dilemma in Cultivating National Security Awareness among College Students

4.1. Social Aspect: Network Information Media Downplays the National Security Awareness of College Students

College students in the new era are a group of people growing up in the rapid development of the Internet, known as “mobile Internet natives”. They enjoy the convenience of Internet information and communication and sharing, but also face difficulties in distinguishing between the virtual world and the real world. [Mowery \(2019\)](#) thinks the high level of information in society provides convenient conditions for harmful media to spread harmful information and manipulate public opinion. Some unscrupulous media, in order to gain attention and traffic, even resort to any means to publicly disseminate incorrect and false information, which has fostered a negative atmosphere in society. Some college students may lack vigilance against the threat of hostile forces at home and abroad, have weak security awareness, and may easily fall into a numb mindset of “national security issues have nothing to do with me”. In addition, despite the continuous improvement of national cybersecurity regulations, some college students still have weak awareness of security protection, and many personal information may be inadvertently leaked. A small number of college students may fall into the trap of online leaks due to the temptation of interests, which requires high attention and serious reflection from educators. In today’s era, college students cannot escape from the internet, so they should make good use of the internet, learn national security knowledge reasonably, and have a correct understanding of national security issues.

4.2. Education Aspect: Imbalance between Supply and Demand of National Security Education Courses

There are some problems in the current national security awareness education and practical needs of college students ([Grygiel, 2013](#)). Firstly, the relevant course arrangements lack systematicity. The New Era School Ideological and Political Theory Course Reform and Innovation Practice Plan proposes to integrate

national security education into ideological and political courses. However, schools usually arrange some content of national security education in military training and military theory courses. The existing curriculum system has shortcomings in the form and content of national security awareness education, often focusing on traditional political, military, national defense and other fields, and neglecting the attention to non-traditional security issues. Secondly, the teaching staff of certain universities need to be strengthened. Some teachers lack a comprehensive understanding of national security and a strong awareness of national security. Some teachers neglect national security education in their teaching due to insufficient energy and time. Thirdly, in the new era, the connotation and extension of national security have undergone profound changes. The national security knowledge education provided by schools can no longer keep up with the current needs of college students to cope with complex national security situations, which restricts the depth and breadth of national security awareness education for college students.

4.3. Student Level: The Awareness of National Security Needs to Be Improved

College students are the promoters, participants, and protectors of sustainable and stable development in China, and are also regarded as important targets for ideological infiltration by hostile Western forces. However, contemporary university students have long grown up in a peaceful and stable domestic environment, lacking sufficient in-depth understanding of national security issues. This is mainly reflected in the following aspects: firstly, some university students tend to overlook national security issues, believing that these issues are not related to themselves, and that the task of maintaining national security is only the responsibility of relevant government departments, thus unable to actively learn national security knowledge. Second, college students have insufficient grasp of national security related knowledge, lack the awareness and ability to resist the development trend of external ideological errors, and are more vulnerable to the influence of erroneous trends of thought on the Internet and in daily life, and are used and instigated by Western hostile forces. Thirdly, the worldview, outlook on life, and values of college students have not yet fully matured, and the proliferation and fragmentation of information have led to the interference and influence of external information on most college students. At the same time, it has also increased the challenge and reflection on their own ideas, making them more prone to falling into blind spots of patriotic emotions and even engaging in irrational and extreme wrong patriotic behaviors.

5. A New Path to Cultivate National Security Awareness among College Students in the New Era

5.1. Theoretical Level: In-Depth Research and Learning on the Overall National Security Concept

Theoretical education is an important way to promote students' understanding

of the overall national security concept and also the cognitive foundation for students to practice this concept (Avey et al., 2022). Therefore, it is necessary to fully leverage the guiding role of theoretical education and deepen the research and learning of the overall national security concept. The overall national security concept proposes a series of original and contemporary new security concepts, which are of great significance for safeguarding national interests, promoting international peace and development, promoting domestic reform and development, enhancing national governance capabilities, and ensuring the safety and well-being of the people. Therefore, in-depth research on the theoretical knowledge of the overall national security concept is an important direction for cultivating the national security awareness of college students in the new era. When promoting overall national security education, universities should actively explore new educational models, combine with mass media, and expand channels for cultivating national security awareness. Through positive interaction, transform students' national security concepts, integrate them into teaching content, and improve the technological content of education. For offline classrooms, it is necessary to increase the fun and attractiveness of teaching content and moderately change teaching methods. In addition, national security awareness education can be carried out through special and traditional festival activities to create a relaxed atmosphere, allowing students to learn more about national security knowledge and guiding them to form correct national security awareness.

5.2. Practical Level: Expanding National Security Awareness and Diversifying Practical Learning Platforms

In order to integrate the education of national security theory courses into the entire process of student learning and life, it is necessary to increase practical teaching of cultivating national security awareness. Universities can organize various forms of activities, such as cultural salons, knowledge competitions, etc., to provide students with more practical opportunities. Through practical teaching, students can understand and feel the importance of national security awareness, and internalize it into their daily behavior. At the same time, various national security themed education activities can be actively carried out by student unions, student organizations, etc., to strengthen students' national security awareness and consolidate the teaching achievements of the overall national security theory course. Universities should develop practical and feasible plans for practical activities, deepen the content of national security practical teaching, innovate relevant teaching methods, and make practical teaching activities more conducive to cultivating the overall national security awareness of college students. For example, a national security awareness education forum can be created to fully utilize resources both inside and outside universities, enabling students to actively explore the connection between national security awareness education content and practical issues. In the process of cultivating national security awareness, we should give full play to the main role and initiative of stu-

dents, adhere to people-oriented principles, strengthen their ability to make independent choices, and gradually cultivate their national security awareness. At the same time, it is necessary to explore the establishment of off campus national security awareness education institutions to improve the pertinence and effectiveness of teaching. The Party and government should cooperate with governments at all levels, media, and various sectors of society to establish a complete social education and practice platform, and strengthen the cultivation effect of national security awareness among college students.

5.3. Institutional Level: Improve the Education System and Mechanism for National Security Awareness

To cultivate national security awareness among college students in the new era, it is necessary to establish a complete institutional system to ensure the popularization, far-reaching, long-term, and efficient work. Due to the complexity of overall national security education, it is difficult to simply attribute the development of national security awareness among college students to a single aspect of work. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a mechanism for implementing key work responsibilities, clarify the “responsibility list” of each department, and form a linkage mechanism for overall national security education work. Rule of law is the fundamental strategy for governing a country and the foundation for achieving long-term stability. Establishing a comprehensive and scientifically established national security legal system is necessary for overall national security education (Gong, 2024). Firstly, optimize the legal system of national security under socialism with Chinese characteristics, so that it does not violate the spirit of the Constitution and gains the recognition and support of the people. Secondly, it is necessary to clarify the law enforcement system of the overall national security education platform at all levels, effectively implement the systems of different departments, form a joint law enforcement force, and improve law enforcement efficiency. Finally, strengthen the promotion of the new National Security Law, enhance citizens’ awareness of abiding by the law, and promote the construction of a rule of law society.

5.4. Cultural Aspect: Creating a Campus Atmosphere for National Security Awareness Education

Creating a positive educational atmosphere with a holistic view of national security can effectively stimulate students’ interest in learning and stimulate their desire for active exploration and learning. The national security education for college students in the new era should be based on creating a campus atmosphere and fully leveraging the role of the school, strengthening public opinion guidance, and effectively improving the overall effect of cultivating college students’ national security awareness. A good campus atmosphere always conveys specific ideas, norms, and values to students through its unique “symbols”. Therefore, creating a campus atmosphere for the education of overall national security awareness can subtly influence and regulate the behavioral orientation of college

students. Firstly, universities should incorporate national security education into the national education system, incorporate national security legislative education into youth rule of law courses, and systematically plan and scientifically determine the direction, principles, requirements, and methods for promoting national security education in the education process, in order to better carry out this work. Secondly, education departments and other relevant institutions can utilize the learning resources of national security awareness education to establish online libraries and directly offer relevant online courses, providing students with more learning resources. This is because the online world is also one of the irreplaceable activity places for college students to study and live, aiming to further stimulate the cohesion of the overall national security concept campus atmosphere through the internet. Thirdly, universities should actively promote national security knowledge, widely organize national security knowledge competitions, special lectures, themed class meetings and other activities, actively participate in national security knowledge promotion and other activities, carry out multidimensional publicity, and guide students to establish and cultivate national security awareness.

6. Conclusion

In today's new era, college students are born at great historical moments, shouldering the heavy responsibility of national construction, and are the backbone of realizing the great review of the Chinese nation. Exploring a path to cultivate national security awareness among college students that meets the requirements of the times is crucial in the complex and ever-changing domestic and international environment. Through different levels of thinking and exploration, finding a new path to cultivate national security awareness among college students not only helps to promote the comprehensive improvement of their overall quality, but also makes beneficial contributions to China's national security cause.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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