

## Article

# Building Ideological and Political Educational Practices and Civic Engagement of Students in Chongqing, China

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**Abstract:** This study explored the relationship between ideological practices and civic engagement among university students. It assessed profiles, perceptions of ideological practices, and civic engagement levels across dimensions like knowledge, identity, and participation. While practices were generally rated as "Practiced," areas like real-world applications require improvement. Civic engagement was moderate, with strengths in identity and responsibility but gaps in knowledge. Senior students showed lower engagement levels. A modest correlation was found, with innovative teaching and subject integration enhancing skills and identity. The study highlights the need for experiential, interdisciplinary, and senior-focused programs to foster socially responsible, civically engaged graduates.

**Keywords:** ideological education; civic engagement; interdisciplinary learning; education policy; civic responsibility

## 1. Introduction

The cultivation of ideological and political educational (IPE) practices and civic engagement are pivotal in fostering informed citizenship and societal progress [1]. Global studies emphasize the role of civic education in shaping university students' attitudes and contributions [2]. Innovative approaches such as interactive learning, experiential education, and leveraging technology are essential for fostering active citizenship [3]. This study explores the unique opportunities and challenges in integrating IPE with civic engagement, providing insights for cultivating socially responsible graduates prepared to address societal issues.

### 1.1. Background of the Study

In China, IPE in universities aims to instill patriotism, socialist values, and social responsibility, but traditional methods often fail to promote critical thinking and active citizenship. Innovative strategies, such as integrating interactive discussions and community service into curricula, aim to empower students as active contributors to society. The Chinese government emphasizes IPE's importance through initiatives like curriculum reforms, Marxist theory courses, and monitoring students' activities to align with national values [4]. Integrating IPE into diverse disciplines, such as nursing, engineering, and language education, further reflects its significance in developing students' moral and civic consciousness [5,6].

### 1.2. Ideological and Political Educational Practices

IPE integration into academic disciplines emphasizes developing students' ethical awareness and civic responsibility. Studies highlight innovative teaching methods, such as flipped classrooms and interdisciplinary approaches, as effective means of fostering moral and civic development [7,8]. Incorporating "red culture" resources, promoting re-

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gional culture, and aligning curricula with national guidelines enhance the effectiveness of IPE in various contexts [9]. The use of technology and models like TPKCEE facilitates integrating IPE into disciplines like nursing and engineering, enabling holistic education that merges technical skills with moral values [10].

### *1.3. Civic Engagement of Students*

Civic engagement among students involves active participation in societal matters, encompassing dimensions like civic knowledge, attitudes, participation, and responsibility. Research shows how sociopolitical contexts and institutional support shape students' engagement. For instance, trust dynamics influence participation in China, while racial and sociopolitical factors impact Black students in the U.S. [11,12]. Social media platforms like Snapchat have emerged as tools for mobilizing youth, as demonstrated during the U.S. elections [13]. Studies in Africa, Asia, and Europe highlight the importance of integrating civic principles into curricula to promote active citizenship [14,15].

### *1.4. Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks*

Civic Education Theory provides a robust framework for understanding the role of universities in shaping students' civic engagement [16]. IPE practices, including curriculum reforms and innovative teaching, align with this theory's focus on promoting critical thinking and democratic participation. The study's conceptual framework includes assessing students' profiles, perceptions of IPE practices, and civic engagement levels. It also examines differences based on demographics and the correlation between IPE practices and civic engagement, culminating in a proposed learning plan to enhance these areas [17,18].

### *1.5. Statement of the Problem*

This study investigates the relationship between IPE practices and civic engagement among university students in Chongqing, China. Key questions include:

Students' profiles (sex, grade level, program).

Assessment of IPE practices in terms of curriculum reform, teaching methods, subject-specific integration, and promotion of educational models.

Differences in IPE assessment and civic engagement based on demographics.

Levels of civic engagement across dimensions such as knowledge, attitude, participation, and responsibility.

Correlation between IPE practices and civic engagement.

Recommendations for a learning program.

### *1.6. Significance of the Study*

This research offers insights into how universities can enhance IPE practices to foster civic engagement. Policymakers and educators can use these findings to develop targeted interventions and improve curricula. Students benefit from greater awareness of civic responsibilities, while engaged graduates contribute positively to society through activism, volunteerism, and advocacy.

### *1.7. Scope and Delimitation*

The study examines the interplay between IPE practices and civic engagement among students in a Chongqing university. It profiles respondents, evaluates IPE practices, measures civic engagement levels, and explores correlations between the two. Demographic factors such as sex, grade level, and program are analyzed for differences in perceptions and engagement levels. The study aims to inform future educational strategies to promote active citizenship.

### 1.8. Definition of Terms

**IPE Practices:** Methods to impart ideological and political education, including curriculum reform, teaching innovations, and subject-specific integration.

**Civic Engagement:** Active involvement in community and societal affairs.

**Civic Knowledge:** Understanding of democratic principles, government structures, and societal issues.

**Civic Attitude:** Beliefs and values regarding civic duties and responsibilities.

**Civic Participation:** Active involvement in community activities like volunteering and advocacy.

**Civic Skills:** Competencies like critical thinking, communication, and leadership for effective civic engagement.

**Civic Responsibility:** Sense of duty toward societal welfare.

**Civic Efficacy:** Belief in one's capacity to effect change through engagement.

**Civic Identity:** Sense of belonging and connection to community as active citizens.

By addressing these aspects, the study offers a comprehensive understanding of how IPE practices influence civic engagement, providing actionable insights for educational institutions.

## 2. Research Methodology

The study utilized a quantitative comparative correlational design to investigate the relationship between ideological and political educational practices and civic engagement among students at Chongqing Institute of Foreign Studies. This approach enabled the measurement of variables through numerical data and statistical analysis, identifying patterns and relationships. The comparative component examined differences in students' perceptions and engagement across demographics such as sex, grade level, and program. The correlational aspect assessed the strength and direction of relationships between ideological practices and civic engagement, making the design suitable for achieving the study's objectives.

The research was conducted at Chongqing Institute of Foreign Studies, a prestigious institution in China known for its excellence in language studies and international relations. With two campuses in Yubei and Qijiang, it offers diverse programs, including eight language-focused disciplines, international trade, and tourism management. Its commitment to innovation and practical education made it an ideal setting for exploring civic education dynamics.

**Participants:** The study used random sampling to select 377 participants from a student population of 20,000, ensuring a diverse representation across grade levels and programs. The sample, comprising 1.885% of the total population, was sufficient for quantitative analysis. Data were collected via structured questionnaires administered to students, enabling a comprehensive exploration of ideological practices and civic engagement.

### 2.1. Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a researcher-made questionnaire meticulously designed to capture a comprehensive understanding of ideological and political educational practices and civic engagement among students at the University in Chongqing Institute of Foreign Studies. This questionnaire was divided into several distinct parts, each serving a specific research objective and addressing key constructs pertinent to the study.

#### 2.1.1. Part 1: Profile

The first part of the questionnaire focused on profiling the participants. It delved into demographic aspects such as sex, grade level, and program of study.

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade level: \_\_\_\_\_

Program : \_\_\_\_\_

### 2.1.2. Part 2: Ideological and Political Practices

The second part of the questionnaire, as shown in Table 1, assessed the ideological and political practices within the university, focusing on aspects such as curriculum reform and practice, innovative teaching methods, subject-specific integration, and the promotion of educational models.

**Table 1.** Part 2 - Assessment of Ideological and Political Practices in University Education.

STATEMENTS	4	3	2	1
Curriculum Reform and Practice:				
1. The university's curriculum effectively integrates ideological and political education into various academic disciplines.				
2. The curriculum provides opportunities for critical analysis of political and social issues.				
3. There is a clear emphasis on fostering civic awareness and responsibility within the curriculum.				
4. The curriculum encourages students to engage in discussions and debates on ideological and political topics.				
5. The university regularly updates its curriculum to reflect contemporary political developments and societal challenges.				
Innovative Teaching Methods:				
1. The university employs innovative teaching techniques to enhance students' understanding of ideological and political concepts.				
2. Teachers utilize multimedia resources and interactive technologies to engage students in ideological and political discussions.				
3. The university encourages active learning strategies, such as group discussions and project-based assignments, to promote student engagement.				
4. Teachers incorporate real-world examples and case studies into their teaching to illustrate the relevance of ideological and political concepts.				
5. The university provides professional development opportunities for faculty to learn and implement innovative teaching methods in ideological and political education.				
Subject-Specific Integration:				
1. Ideological and political concepts are effectively integrated into courses across various academic disciplines, including literature, history, and economics.				
2. Teachers demonstrate the relevance of ideological and political education to students' respective fields of study.				
3. The university encourages interdisciplinary approaches to teaching ideological and political concepts, fostering connections between different academic disciplines.				
4. Students have opportunities to apply ideological and political concepts learned in class to real-world situations within their field of study.				
5. The university promotes collaboration between faculty from different departments to ensure seamless integration of ideological and political education across the curriculum.				
Promotion of Educational Models:				
1. The university promotes diverse educational models, such as experiential learning and service-learning, to enhance ideological and political education.				
2. There is a clear emphasis on student-centered learning approaches that empower students to take an active role in their education.				
3. The university fosters a culture of inquiry and critical thinking through its educational models, encouraging students to question assumptions and explore multiple perspectives.				

4. Teachers provide opportunities for students to engage in collaborative projects and research, promoting peer learning and knowledge sharing.

5. The university supports the implementation of innovative educational models that prioritize the holistic development of students, including their civic awareness and engagement.

### 2.1.3. Part 3: Level of Civil Engagement of the University Students

Lastly, the questionnaire as shown in Table 2 evaluated the level of civic engagement among students. It encompassed various dimensions including civic knowledge, attitude, participation, skills, responsibility, efficacy, and identity.

**Table 2.** Part 3 - Level of Civic Engagement of University Students.

STATEMENTS	4	3	2	1
Civic Knowledge:				
1. I have a clear understanding of the political structure and processes in my country.				
2. I am knowledgeable about current social issues and challenges facing my community.				
3. I can articulate the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democratic society.				
4. I am familiar with the historical events that have shaped our nation's political landscape.				
5. I understand the role of government institutions in addressing societal problems and promoting the common good.				
Civic Attitude:				
1. I believe it is important for citizens to actively participate in community activities and initiatives.				
2. I feel a sense of responsibility towards addressing social injustices and inequalities.				
3. I am optimistic about the potential for positive change through collective action.				
4. I value diversity and inclusivity in my community and believe in equal opportunities for all.				
5. I am committed to upholding democratic principles and respecting the rights of others.				
Civic Participation:				
1. I regularly volunteer my time to support community organizations or causes.				
2. I actively participate in local government meetings or civic events.				
3. I engage in political activism or advocacy efforts to promote social change.				
4. I contribute to community service projects aimed at improving the well-being of others.				
5. I collaborate with peers to address community issues and find solutions together.				
Civic Skills:				
1. I am proficient in communication techniques necessary for effective civic engagement, such as public speaking and writing.				
2. I possess critical thinking skills that enable me to analyze complex social issues and propose solutions.				
3. I am adept at working collaboratively with others to achieve common goals.				
4. I can navigate the political landscape and understand how to advocate for policy changes.				

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5. I demonstrate leadership abilities by organizing and leading community initiatives or projects.

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Civic Responsibility:

1. I believe it is my duty as a citizen to contribute positively to society and the common good.
  2. I take personal responsibility for addressing social issues and working towards solutions.
  3. I hold myself accountable for my actions and their impact on others and my community.
  4. I am committed to ethical behavior and integrity in my civic engagements.
  5. I understand the importance of civic duty and actively fulfill my obligations as a citizen.
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Civic Efficacy:

1. I believe that my actions as an individual can make a meaningful difference in my community.
  2. I feel confident in my ability to influence government decisions and policies through civic engagement.
  3. I am optimistic about the potential for positive change in society, even in the face of challenges.
  4. I trust in the power of collective action to address social issues and bring about change.
  5. I am motivated to engage in civic activities because I believe in my ability to effectuate positive outcomes.
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Civic Identity:

1. I strongly identify as an active and engaged citizen of my country and community.
  2. My civic identity is an integral part of my overall sense of self and belonging.
  3. I feel a deep connection to the values and principles of democracy and civic responsibility.
  4. I actively seek out opportunities to participate in civic activities and contribute to my community.
  5. I take pride in my role as a citizen and am committed to upholding the ideals of democracy and social justice.
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## 2.2. A researcher-made Questionnaire Was Employed, Divided into Three Sections

### 2.2.1. Demographics

Addressed sex, grade level, and program of study, contextualizing the data and identifying group-specific trends.

### 2.2.2. Ideological Practices

Focused on curriculum reforms, innovative teaching methods, subject-specific integration, and promotion of educational models. Items were based on established literature, ensuring content validity and reliability via internal consistency checks.

### 2.2.3. Civic Engagement

Assessed knowledge, attitudes, participation, skills, responsibility, efficacy, and identity. Questions were aligned with established civic engagement frameworks, ensuring robust data reliability and validity.

## 2.3. Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection involved face-to-face surveys conducted on campus with prior approval from university authorities. Participants provided informed consent, and ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to, ensuring confidentiality and the right to withdraw



without consequences. Trained researchers administered questionnaires in a professional and respectful environment, prioritizing participants' comfort and clarity.

#### 2.4. Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and means, summarized demographic and key variables.

Inferential statistics like t-tests and ANOVA examined differences in ideological practices and civic engagement based on demographics.

Correlation analysis (Pearson's  $r$ ) assessed relationships between ideological practices and civic engagement dimensions.

The analyses were conducted using SPSS or R, with significance set at  $p < 0.05$  and effect sizes considered for practical significance, ensuring rigorous and reliable conclusions.

#### 2.5. Ethical Considerations

The study followed strict ethical protocols, securing necessary permissions and informed consent from participants. Confidentiality was upheld, with data securely stored and accessible only to the research team. Findings were reported transparently, aggregating data to prevent individual identification. The study disclosed potential conflicts of interest and prioritized participants' rights, maintaining the highest research integrity and respect for all involved.

### 3. Results

The study examined the relationship between ideological and political practices at a university and the level of civic engagement among students across seven dimensions: Civic Knowledge, Civic Attitude, Civic Participation, Civic Skills, Civic Responsibility, Civic Efficacy, and Civic Identity. The analysis highlighted both strengths and areas for improvement in fostering civic engagement.

#### 3.1. Demographic Profile

The majority of respondents were female (57.6%), with the largest proportion from Grade 1 (32.4%). Respondents were distributed across programs, with a slightly higher representation in Marxism (22.8%) and Xi Jinping Thought (21.8%). The demographic diversity provided a robust basis for analysis.

#### 3.2. Assessment of Ideological and Political Practices

##### 3.2.1. Curriculum Reform and Practice

Respondents rated curriculum reforms positively, with an overall mean of 2.95 (SD = 0.62), categorized as "Agree" (Practiced). The highest-rated indicator was encouraging discussions on ideological topics, while interdisciplinary integration scored lower, suggesting room for improvement.

##### 3.2.2. Innovative Teaching Methods

This dimension received the highest overall mean of 3.01 (SD = 0.43). Active learning strategies like group discussions and project-based assignments were rated the highest, while employing innovative techniques ranked lowest, highlighting opportunities to expand creative teaching approaches.

##### 3.2.3. Subject-Specific Integration

With an overall mean of 2.94 (SD = 0.44), subject-specific integration was positively assessed. The interdisciplinary approach received the highest rating, while real-world application scored the lowest, indicating a need to strengthen experiential learning.

### 3.2.4. Promotion of Educational Models

This dimension scored an overall mean of 2.86 (SD = 0.53). A culture of inquiry and critical thinking was rated highest, while support for holistic educational models ranked lowest, suggesting a need to enhance civic engagement through diverse approaches.

## 3.3. Civic Engagement Dimensions

### 3.3.1. Civic Knowledge

Rated at 2.59 (SD = 0.59), respondents demonstrated moderate knowledge, with strengths in understanding political structures but gaps in articulating democratic principles and government roles.

### 3.3.2. Civic Attitude

With a mean score of 2.68 (SD = 0.63), respondents valued inclusivity and community participation but showed less engagement in addressing social injustices and respecting democratic principles.

### 3.3.3. Civic Participation

Rated at 2.80 (SD = 0.55), respondents were engaged in volunteering and collaboration but showed limited participation in structured community service projects and civic events.

### 3.3.4. Civic Skills

Scoring 2.91 (SD = 0.37), collaboration and leadership were strengths, while navigating political systems and advocacy required further development.

### 3.3.5. Civic Responsibility

With a mean of 2.93 (SD = 0.58), respondents demonstrated ethical behavior and accountability but showed less initiative in addressing social challenges.

### 3.3.6. Civic Efficacy

Rated at 3.02 (SD = 0.36), trust in collective action and confidence in influencing policies were highlights, while personal motivation for civic activities required strengthening.

### 3.3.7. Civic Identity

The highest-rated dimension (mean = 3.05, SD = 0.34), respondents actively participated in civic activities and identified strongly with civic values, though pride in democratic ideals was slightly lower.

## 3.4. Correlations Between Practices and Engagement

Significant relationships were identified between certain ideological practices and civic engagement dimensions:

**Innovative Teaching Methods** positively correlated with Civic Skills ( $r = .211, p < .001$ ) but negatively with Civic Responsibility ( $r = -.122, p = .018$ ).

**Subject-Specific Integration** showed positive correlations with Civic Skills ( $r = .236, p < .001$ ) and Civic Identity ( $r = .111, p = .032$ ).

**Promotion of Educational Models** correlated positively with Civic Knowledge ( $r = .156, p = .002$ ), Civic Attitude ( $r = .128, p = .013$ ), Civic Responsibility ( $r = .105, p = .042$ ), and Civic Efficacy ( $r = .112, p = .030$ ).

Overall, ideological and political practices demonstrated a significant positive correlation with civic engagement ( $r = .114, p = .027$ ), though the effect size was modest, suggesting opportunities for targeted improvements.



### 3.5. Differences by Demographics

#### 3.5.1. Sex

No significant differences in civic engagement were observed between male and female respondents across all dimensions, indicating equitable practices.

#### 3.5.2. Grade Level

Significant differences were found in Civic Attitude ( $p < .001$ ) and Overall Engagement ( $p < .001$ ), with Grade 4 respondents reporting lower engagement levels, suggesting declining optimism and involvement in advanced study years.

#### 3.5.3. Course

Significant differences were identified in Civic Skills ( $p = .027$ ), Civic Responsibility ( $p = .015$ ), and Civic Identity ( $p = .006$ ), with variations reflecting course-specific influences.

### 3.6. Key Insights

The findings underscore the effectiveness of innovative teaching methods, interdisciplinary integration, and diverse educational models in enhancing civic engagement. However, gaps in fostering civic knowledge, responsibility, and participation highlight areas for strategic interventions. Tailored programs addressing these dimensions could strengthen students' preparedness for active citizenship and societal contributions.

## 4. Discussion

The study explored the relationship between the ideological and political practices at a university and the level of civic engagement among students, highlighting areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. This discussion synthesizes the key findings, emphasizing their implications and providing a foundation for strategic enhancements in civic education and engagement.

### 4.1. Profile of Respondents

The diverse demographic profile revealed balanced representation in gender, grade level, and course affiliation, ensuring comprehensive insights. The predominance of female respondents (57.6%) and the higher participation of younger students (Grades 1 and 2) suggest greater engagement or availability within these groups. Course affiliations were evenly distributed, reflecting varied ideological exposures, particularly in Marxism and Xi Jinping Thought. This diversity provided a robust context for analyzing how demographic factors influence perceptions of civic engagement and ideological education.

### 4.2. Assessment of Ideological and Political Practices

Respondents rated the university's ideological practices favorably, with all dimensions categorized as "Practiced." Innovative Teaching Methods emerged as a strength, with active learning strategies and multimedia integration receiving high ratings. These approaches effectively engaged students and enhanced their understanding of ideological concepts. However, the Promotion of Educational Models dimension scored the lowest, highlighting the need to expand experiential and interdisciplinary learning opportunities. This gap indicates limited connections between theoretical concepts and real-world applications, underscoring the importance of practical experiences, such as internships and service-learning, in fostering civic engagement.

#### 4.3. Differences in Profile-Based Perceptions

Perceptions of ideological practices were largely consistent across genders, reflecting the equitable impact of university initiatives. However, female respondents rated Innovative Teaching Methods higher than their male counterparts, suggesting greater receptiveness to modern pedagogical approaches. Grade-level analysis revealed significant differences in the Promotion of Educational Models, with Grade 2 students providing the highest ratings. This finding suggests mid-level students benefit most from experiential and interdisciplinary approaches, possibly due to their academic positioning. Tailoring practices to these variations can enhance their inclusivity and effectiveness.

#### 4.4. Assessment of Civic Engagement

Respondents demonstrated moderate engagement across all civic dimensions. Civic Identity scored the highest, reflecting strong alignment with civic roles and democratic values. Students expressed pride in their responsibilities and a sense of belonging to their communities. Civic Responsibility and Civic Skills also scored positively, indicating accountability, ethical behavior, and collaborative abilities. However, Civic Knowledge received the lowest rating, revealing gaps in students' understanding of political systems, democratic processes, and societal structures. This deficiency highlights the need for targeted civic education to address these knowledge gaps and support informed participation in civic life.

#### 4.5. Decline in Senior Students' Engagement

Grade-level analysis identified a significant decline in Civic Attitude and Overall Engagement among Grade 4 respondents. This trend suggests that senior students may deprioritize civic engagement due to competing academic and career demands. Targeted interventions, such as mentoring programs and civic-oriented capstone projects, can help sustain their enthusiasm and involvement as they transition to post-university life. Maintaining engagement among upper-year students is crucial to fostering lifelong civic participation.

#### 4.6. Correlations Between Ideological Practices and Civic Engagement

The study found a modest overall correlation between ideological practices and civic engagement, suggesting that while these practices positively influence engagement, their impact is limited. Significant correlations were identified in specific dimensions:

**Innovative Teaching Methods** positively correlated with Civic Skills, indicating the effectiveness of modern pedagogical approaches in developing critical thinking and collaboration. However, a negative correlation with Civic Responsibility highlights the need to better align these methods with fostering accountability and ethical behavior.

**Subject-Specific Integration** correlated positively with Civic Skills and Civic Identity, emphasizing the importance of embedding ideological concepts in academic disciplines to strengthen practical skills and civic awareness.

**Promotion of Educational Models** demonstrated the strongest correlations, positively influencing Civic Knowledge, Civic Attitude, Civic Responsibility, and Civic Efficacy. This dimension effectively connects ideological education with real-world applications, empowering students to engage meaningfully in civic life.

#### 4.7. Implications for Civic Engagement Development

The findings highlight the importance of refining ideological practices to better align with civic engagement goals. While Innovative Teaching Methods and Subject-Specific Integration contribute significantly to civic skills and identity, expanding experiential learning opportunities through the Promotion of Educational Models is crucial for broader impacts. Additionally, addressing gaps in Civic Knowledge and sustaining en-

gement among senior students are key priorities for fostering a well-rounded, civically active student body.

### 5. Conclusion

The study underscores the value of integrating ideological and political practices into university education to promote civic engagement. Strengths in innovative teaching, interdisciplinary integration, and civic identity provide a foundation for growth. However, addressing gaps in civic knowledge, fostering accountability, and sustaining senior students' engagement require targeted interventions. By refining these practices and aligning them with civic objectives, the university can empower students as informed, responsible, and proactive citizens, prepared to contribute meaningfully to society.

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