



Visual Analysis of Chinese Research Teams in Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education (2014-2021)

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ABSTRACT

Recent years, research on curriculum-based ideological and political education is one of hotspots in the field of higher education in China. Based on relevant literature of China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), research field, cooperative relationship between authors and research teams, years of publication and research interests of scholars of 429 papers from 2014 to 2021 on curriculum-based ideological and political education have been analyzed visually with the help of CiteSpace and traditional quantitative research methods. The study has found that research of curriculum-based ideological and political education in China is currently in its growth spurt. However, from research results, the number of publication and cooperation of teams are still in infancy with more potentials in the future.

Keywords: curriculum-based ideological and political education; CiteSpace; research team; visual analysis.

INTRODUCTION

Curriculum-based ideological and political education is highly related to the fundamental task of what kind of talents colleges and universities cultivate, how to cultivate them, and for whom to cultivate them [1]. Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, CPC General Secretary Xi Jinping has repeatedly proposed the fundamental task of "morality education" and raised it to the national level in the reform of college education [2]. At the National Conference on curriculum-based ideological and political education in December 2016, Xi emphasized that "through making full use of teaching in the classroom as the main method, curriculum-based ideological and political education should insist on both consolidation and improvement in order to enhance its appetency and pertinence and to meet the growth students. According to their expectations, all other courses must guard their own fields, thus various courses and ideological and political education can share the same-direction advance so as to form a synergistic effect". [1] It has solved the disconnection between teaching and education in higher education and started ideological and political courses nationwide. In October 2018, the Ministry of Education issued the "Opinions on Accelerating the Construction of High-level Undergraduate Education to Comprehensively Improve the Cultivation of Talents", which laid the foundation for the development of curriculum ideological and political

education. In June 2020, the Ministry of Education also issued the "Guidelines for the curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education", and thus its construction has entered the stage of promotion and implementation.

The promulgation and implementation of curriculum-based ideological and political policies have not only aroused heated discussions in the society, but also aroused widespread concern in the academic circles, which has become a hot topic in the study of reform in higher education in the new era. Therefore, who are the high-yield authors and their institutions in this field? Recent years, most literature has focused on the trend and hotspot of curriculum-based ideological and political education. However, they haven't made a detailed analysis of the research teams and institutions.

The literature from CNKI database in this paper are set from January 1, 2014 to July 30, 2021, because 2014 is the first year of curriculum-based ideological and political education. Based on bibliometric method and co-occurrence analysis method, research field, cooperative relationship between authors and research teams, years of publication and research direction of scholars of 429 papers from 2014 to 2021 on curriculum-based ideological and political education have been analyzed visually with the help of CiteSpace and traditional quantitative research methods. According to the data, drawing a knowledge map to clarify the schools of curriculum-based ideological and political research in China, the author has sorted out and analyzed the development of curriculum-based ideological and political policies. Therefore, it also provides objective and accurate reference for the construction and development of research teams in this field and for further policies in promoting the reform of curriculum-based ideological and political education.

DATA SOURCES AND RESEARCH METHODS

This paper selected the sub-database of academic journals of China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), set "curriculum-based ideological and political education" and "colleges and universities" as the subject headings, ranged from 2014 to 2021, and the locked literature source categories were Peking University core periodical catalogue, CSSCI journals and CSCD journals. After retrieval and manual screening, non-academic journal papers such as book reviews, interview transcripts, meeting minutes, call for papers, and journal introductions were excluded, and eventually 429 papers were refined (as of July 30, 2021).

Co-occurrence analysis method uses a software to analyze co-occurrence information quantitatively among various information so as to explore the relationship between research objects and reveal the structural evolution of a certain field, mainly including analyzing the cooperation between authors and their institutions, understanding the research hotspots, changes of topic structure and trends through keywords, which is suitable for the trend of emerging research fields [4]. Based on this method, CiteSpace5.8.R1 by Dr. Chen Chaomei of Drexel University in the United States was finally selected in order to explore the curriculum-based ideological and political education teams in China through comparative analysis of the advantages and characteristics of various scientific tools. Its mapping knowledge domains (MKD) are based on the knowledge by "snapping" the scientific knowledge in a certain field [5,6], and concatenating the pictures to form a panorama of information. This is used to identify key literature, hotspots and frontier directions of curriculum-based ideological and political education [7].

The refined 429 literature data were converted and imported into CiteSpace 5.8.R to generate a visual map of authors (Author) and collaborating groups, so as to realize the network analysis of cooperation. Through statistical analysis and map interpretation, this paper mainly answers the following two questions:

- (1) What is the current situation and trend of the publication of literature in curriculum-based ideological and political education in China and how to position its development?
- (2) What is the cooperation between the core teams and institutions of curriculum-based ideological and political education in China?

Analysis of Literature in Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education

Time of Publication and Distribution of Research Fields

As the endogenous force of the research, the authors and their institutions are of great significance to the development and evolution of a certain discipline [8]. The temporal distribution of publications is helpful to evaluate the past and present stages and to predict its future development trend [9]. According to the data, the number of annual publications in curriculum-based ideological and political education in China from 2014 to 2021 is demonstrated in Figure 1 with a wave-like growth. As academic research can be regarded as an industry, industrial life cycle theory in industrial economics is used to divide the diachronic development of academic research into four stages, including formation, growth, maturity, and downturn, whose inflection point is the demarcation point of the life cycle [10,11]. Since the curriculum-based ideological and political education in China is only 7.5 years, according to the linear trend in Figure 1, the research has only developed to the second stage (growth stage), so the formation period of the first stage is further divided into budding period and low-speed developing period. Accordingly, the development of curriculum-based ideological and political education in China from 2014 to 2021 can be divided into three stages: the budding stage (2014-2016), the low-speed developing stage (2017-2018), and the growth stage (2019-2021).

The budding period is the initial stage when the paper is quite little. There are only 17 papers in three years and the number of published papers is not stable, thus it belongs to the exploration stage. The number of papers during the low-speed developing period grows slowly, but the average annual number of papers is still limited, which can be seen the initial stage. From the entire period, the curve is convex to the horizontal axis which demonstrates a slow rate of growth, a short duration and a small number of papers. According to the meetings and policies in curriculum-based ideological and political education of Table 1, this is the stage of formation and development. It was not until the second half of 2018 that curriculum-based ideological and political education was basically formed and upgraded to a high level, which laid the theoretical and policy foundation for its comprehensive development. An academic paper needs a mature theoretical basis, therefore, before the formation of theoretical framework, the output of high-quality academic papers is not quite large, which explains the reason why the total number of papers published during the formation period is small.

According to the characteristics of the growth period, it can be judged that it is currently at the explosive growth period. Since 2019, the rate of growth has increased rapidly, and by 2020, the first leap in the number of papers (147 papers) has been achieved, which is known as the "Year of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education" [12]. The policy shows the all-round guidance of the Ministry of Education on curriculum-based ideological and political education in China. However, from the perspective of the entire growth period, it has not yet reached its

peak. As the data in 2021 is affected by the date of collection, the papers selected in this paper are from January 1st to July 30th (the specific date of collection). According to the exponential trend line (R^2 close to 1 indicates a good fit), the growth rate and magnitude continue to increase, indicating that the number is increasing year by year. It is expected that the number of literatures will exceed 200 in 2021, achieving a new high. This stage is the most critical period for the prosperity. With the continuous improvement of the theoretical framework and the completion of the first stage, curriculum-based ideological and political education has entered the stage of practice under the guidance of a mature theoretical framework from the stage of exploration. It is the foundation stage for the in-depth development of the research in this field, and the growth rate and total number of papers in this stage are surging. The author predicts that the literature will rapidly reach a new peak in the next few years, and then the growth rate will slow down and develop steadily to the third stage (mature stage). Before the arrival of the third stage, research in this field needs to make breakthroughs and innovations in some practical directions, or to combine with other disciplines, promoting the further improvement and maturity of curriculum-based ideological and political education.

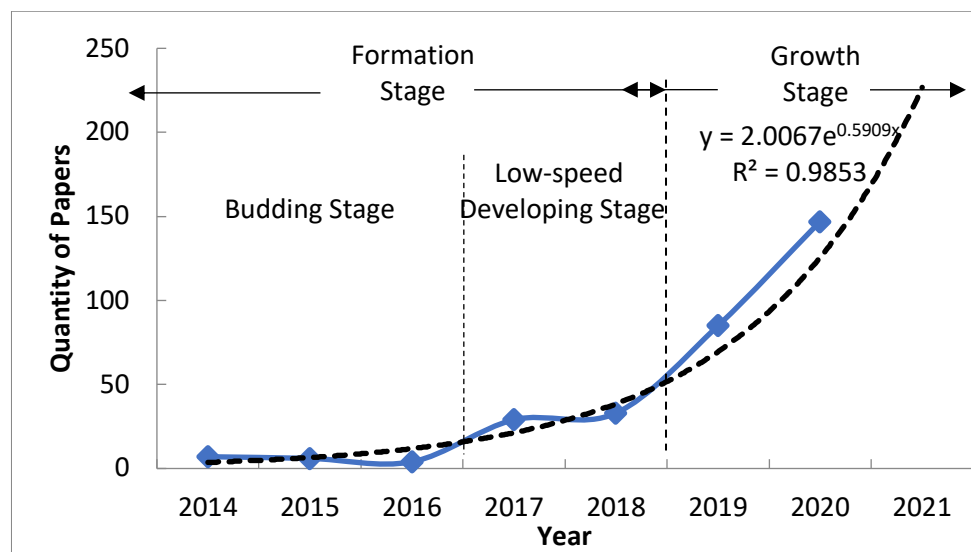


Figure 1. Trend of the annual number of papers in curriculum-based ideological and political education in China (2014-2021)

Table 1. Sort and position of policies in the development stage of curriculum-based ideological and political education in China

Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education in China						
N o.	Meetings or Policies	Time	Stage of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education		Stage of Literature Research	
1	Comprehensive Education Reform Plan in Shanghai(2014-2020)	November, 2014	pilot	beginning of the theory	budding stage	formation period
2	National Conference of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education	December, 2016	beginning			
3	Opinions on the Improvement Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education	December, 2017				
4	The Year of Teaching Quality in Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education in 2017 and Shanghai Research Conference —— From "Ideological and Political Courses" to "Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education"	June, 2017				
5	Opinions on Deepening the Reform of the Educational System and Mechanism	September, 2017				
6	Implementation of Improving the Quality of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education	December, 2017				
7	National Conference on Undergraduate Education of Higher Education in the New Era	June, 2018	deepening	development of the theory	low-speed developing stage	
8	National Education Conference	September, 2018	formation			
9	Opinions on Accelerating the Construction of High-level Education and Improving the Cultivation of All-round Talents	October, 2018	institutionalization			
10	Opinions on Deepening the Reform and Innovation of Ideological and Political Courses in the New Era	August, 2019	planning	teaching practice: perpetration	growth stage	
11	Opinions of the Ministry of Education on Deepening the Reform of College Education and the Comprehensive Improvement of Talents	October, 2019				

12	Guidelines for the Construction of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education	June, 2020	beginning	teaching practice: full implementation	
13	Online Conference of Comprehensively Promotion in Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education	June, 2020			
14	Conference on Promoting the Reform of Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education in Shanghai in 2020 Opinions on Further Promoting Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education in Shanghai	September, 2020			
15	Promotion of Ministry of Education in Curriculum-based Ideological and Political Education	June, 2021	periodic summary		

Searching from CNKI, it has been found that 429 papers are mainly distributed in the fields of higher education (90%), education theory and education management (3.5%), foreign languages (2.6%) and (2.6%). The first paper on curriculum-based ideological and political education of foreign languages and physical education is both published in 2019. It can be seen that curriculum-based ideological and political education is still limited to the field of higher education and that researchers in other disciplines have not paid much attention to it. At present, only two major disciplines, including foreign language and physical education, first focus on the practice of the ideological and political education. In addition, with the development of the research in educational technology, online learning platforms such as MOOCs, curriculum-based ideological and political education in the past five years have also concerned the fields of educational theory and educational management, mainly researching the teaching practice with blended teaching models, Internet +, flipped class model and new media technology.

The core journals in this field are fingered out through analyzing their carriers, which provides a basis for literature collection and management, and significant information of “the same direction” [13]. According to CNKI, 429 papers came from 109 journals among which the high-quality journals (Peking University core, CSSCI journals and CSCD journals) only accounted for 10%. It demonstrates that the research on curriculum-based ideological and political education is becoming more and more popular, but it is still in the infancy when there are a small number of high-quality research results. Thus, the research on this filed has great potentials. Among these high-quality journals, *China Higher Education* (13%), *The Party Building and Ideological Education in Schools* (10%), *Teaching Reference of Middle School Politics* (9%) and *Leading Journal of Ideological & Theoretical Education* (5%) contain the largest number of publications on curriculum-based ideological and political education. Therefore, only higher education and the theory and practice in ideological and political education are the most concerned categories at present, but others pay less attention to this field, confirming its infancy similarly. In this

stage, the research perspective is quite single. In the future, curriculum-based ideological and political education can be combined with other disciplines and chose a variety of research perspectives to achieve interdisciplinary research. Moreover, some journals also could encourage papers on this field through specific columns and other ways.

AUTHORS AND RESEARCH TEAMS

Authors and their institutions as the endogenous force are of great significance to the development and evolution of curriculum-based ideological and political education [8]. Therefore, research on authors and teams which is helpful of the management and guidance in their scientific activities promote the balanced and rapid development of curriculum-based ideological and political education [8,14]. With the help of CiteSpace, this study pays attention to the cooperation among authors of 429 papers and generate a knowledge map (Figure 2). The graph shows 172 network nodes and 46 connecting lines, and the network density is only 0.0031. This simple and loose connection indicates that the degree of cooperation between authors in this field is quite low. There are only 4 small-scale cooperative teams, including Gao Deyi's team, Dong Cuixiang's team, Shen Yang's team and She Shuanghao's team. Among them, the larger Dong Cuixiang's team is composed of Fan Sanming, Li Mengxin, Zhu Chunshan, Ji Liu and Gao Yanli. According to the number of papers, main members of these four teams publish more than that of others, which also highlights the character of high output in groups. Taking the number of papers by each author into consideration, Han Xianzhou from Capital University of Economics and Business published most among 172 authors with a total of 4 papers. However, Prof. Han has not yet cooperated with others. The proportion of authors with two or more papers is only 14% through calculations. According to Lotka's Law, the proportion of authors with more than one paper less than 40% means the immaturity of one certain field [15]. Thus, curriculum-based ideological and political education is still in the early stage when a certain academic team has not yet formed and the current research also lacks leading figures. In addition, the distribution of research institutions reflects the loose cooperative relationship. The study found that the institutions of high-yield authors are mainly concentrated in Marxist colleges and other ideological and political education administrative institutions and research centers. According to the number of papers, East China Normal University (13 papers) and Southwest University (9 papers) published the most papers. Hohai University, Wuhan University, Fudan University and Higher Education Press ranked third with 6 papers. In conclusion, the institutions of high-yield authors mainly come from East China and Central China, especially from Shanghai. Authors in Shanghai published most mainly because Shanghai is the birthplace of curriculum-based ideological and political education. It must first produce the results and promote the development of other places. From the perspective of teams, the team of East China Normal University led by Dong Cuixiang team and Hohai University led by Shen Yang team in Eastern China, and the team of Wuhan University led by She Shuanghao team in Central China have been established currently. Although Southwest University published a large number of papers, it has not yet had a research team in this field.

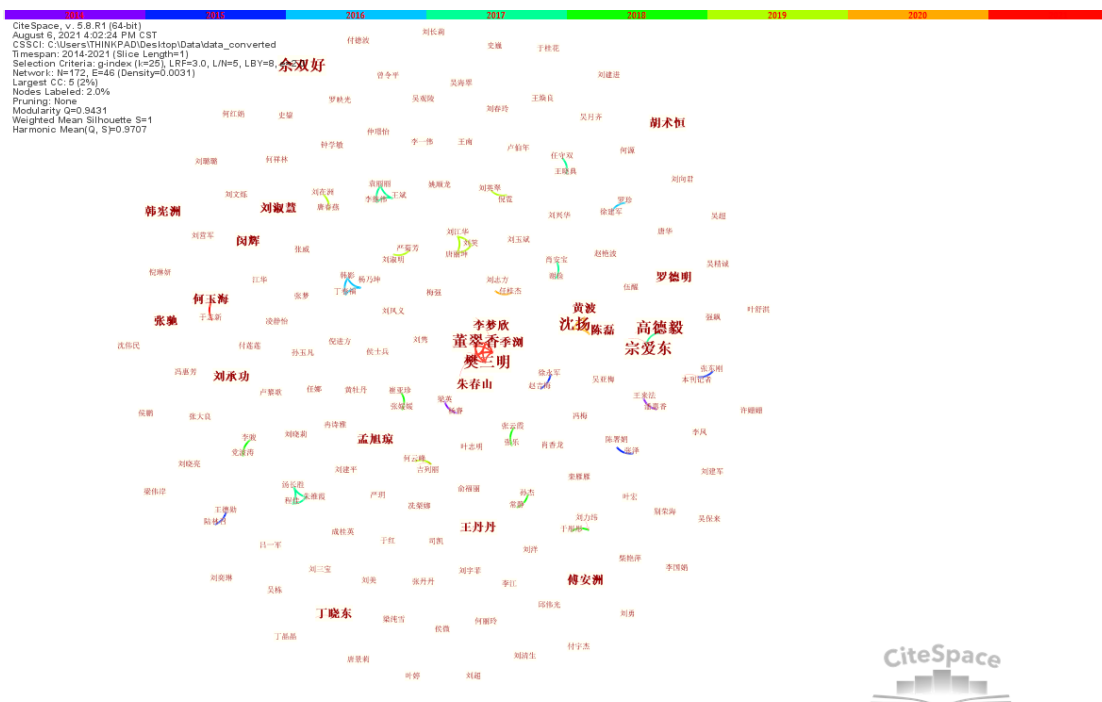


Figure 2. The knowledge map of the cooperation network of authors in curriculum-based ideological and political education of China

Based on the above analysis, the loose cooperation of the authors and their institutions is due to the fact that curriculum-based ideological and political education is still in its early stage. The theoretical research has formed a certain framework. Although the research is extremely popular, the it is still in the stage of “letting a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred schools of thought contend”, featured as low concentration, limited research depth and breadth, and single research direction. In addition, from the perspective of the nature and scholars' cognition of curriculum-based ideological and political education, some scholars have a bias of positioning its category. Actually, it belongs to the comprehensive interdisciplinary research, thus authors in other disciplines based on their research background are able to cooperate with curriculum-based ideological and political education so as to realize the interdisciplinary study. In this way, the sharing and construction of different disciplines can be realized. Through expanding the research teams and forming a certain scale of research area and multi-core research team, the in-depth development of curriculum-based ideological and political education could be realized.

CONCLUSION

This study has analyzed papers of curriculum-based ideological and political education in China from 2014 to 2021 and then found out the stage of this field with the help of CiteSpace and traditional statistical methods. Putting policies in order, the author has positioned each policy in each stage. Meanwhile, through the atlas analysis, the authors and their teams were obtained, which outlined the school in curriculum-based ideological and political education. Curriculum-based ideological and political education in China has gone through a budding stage and a low-lying stage, and is currently in the explosive stage of a growth period. However, there are not many high-quality papers with more potential in the future. In the cooperation among research groups, groups and institutions in curriculum-based ideological and political education have

not yet formed a certain scale. Due to certain knowledge barriers between other disciplines, it is more difficult to form scientific communities in interdisciplinary fields. It is expected that under the guidance of higher education policies, research in this field will be separated into several major research teams and institutions based on hotspots and disciplines in the future. Its research path will expand from the theory to practice. As a result, multidisciplinary research can be advanced to achieve more practical result in order to complete the transformation from microcosmic to macrocosmic view point. If the ideological and political elements can be integrated into all kinds of courses, China will achieve a unified curriculum-based ideological and political education, realize the fundamental goal of moral education and then promote the maximization of higher education research.

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