

A Study on the Current State of Ideological and Political Education in China in the Era of Digital Intelligence

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Abstract. Rapid diffusion of digital tools has altered where, when, and how ideological and political education is delivered. Online and blended formats extend instruction beyond the classroom, yet they also expose students and teachers to faster cycles of competing narratives and misinformation. The convenience of automated platforms can dull independent judgment if it substitutes for reading, discussion, and evidence checking; fragmented modules and apps further disperse content when planning is weak. Given these conditions, viable development paths should be defined with reference to concrete practices—delivery modes, moderation rules, assessment routines, and teacher training—rather than general slogans. The near-term priority is to calibrate innovation to first principles: protect ideological security, improve learning outcomes, and integrate technology only where it adds pedagogical value. In practical terms, this requires clarifying the sequence of reforms, identifying a small set of problems that block implementation, and testing remedies in real settings. Such discipline links technological adoption to educational aims instead of the reverse.

Keywords: digital-intelligence era, ideological and political education, current state of education

1. Introduction

With the continuous iteration and upgrading of virtual technologies such as big data, the Internet of Things, and artificial intelligence, digital technology has increasingly become a major force reshaping human cognition and modes of practice. In the era of digital intelligence, strengthening technological empowerment and striving to build a society characterized by “virtual technology+” has become an inevitable trend. As an integral part of society, education must also advance the integration of digital intelligence and educational practices. Digital-intelligence technologies hold strategic significance for the development and transformation of ideological and political education today, for cultivating scientific and technological talent, and for building a strong nation in both education and human resources. Integrating ideological and political education with digital-intelligence technologies reflects the discipline’s efforts to keep pace with contemporary developments. Rapid advances in AI-driven personalization have widened students’ exposure to materials and formats, a shift already noted in the literature [1]. Many schools now use digital-intelligence tools to reorganize and circulate ideological and political content across online,

blended, and extracurricular settings, extending instruction beyond fixed times and places and enabling more context-sensitive learning. These gains, however, come with distinct risks. The most immediate pressure falls on value guidance. Algorithmically targeted feeds and immersive virtual environments accelerate the spread of heterogeneous narratives, complicating students' value judgments and, for some, loosening commitment to shared ideals. As subtle cues accumulate, the persuasive reach of mainstream values narrows, making guidance harder to deliver with credibility. At the same time, the traditional concentration of discourse in formal ideological and political education has fractured. False or nihilistic claims travel quickly under algorithmic amplification, skewing perceptions of social reality and encouraging extreme or highly individualized stances; in such settings, a portion of students drift from mainstream constraints and develop fragmented, one-sided value frames. Foundational weaknesses in resources and platforms further limit effective implementation. High-quality materials remain scattered, insufficiently curated, and prone to homogenized repetition, which undermines coherence at the point of use. Under these conditions, a grounded assessment of China's current practice is required to steer digital-intelligence reform. The task is to align technological adoption with first principles—safeguarding ideological security and improving learning effectiveness—while mapping practical routes forward and sequencing reforms so that ideological and political education keeps pace with digital-intelligence development and cultivates the talent needed in the new era.

2. Literature review

2.1. Studies on the characteristics of the era of digital intelligence: the core features of the digital-intelligence era lie in the deep integration of digitalization, globalization, and intelligentization, as well as the comprehensive and systemic impact this integration exerts on society

To begin with, the essence of digitalization lies in extracting the value and “intelligence” embedded in digital technologies and enabling their shared use. Through digital connectivity, the virtual and the real are linked, allowing both humans and machines to acquire “intelligence” and develop collaboratively, thereby empowering the present and the future through a model of human-machine coexistence. Next, globalization relies on worldwide network connectivity to break down geographical boundaries, facilitating the cross-regional flow and efficient allocation of resources. This enables technological influence to transcend local limitations and form a development pattern characterized by global interconnectedness. Finally, information technology has deeply permeated every sector, becoming the core support for both production and daily life. It has accelerated the emergence of a networked social structure, which is marked by significant transformations in governance models and reshaping of public cognition and behavioral logic. Artificial intelligence, in particular, has enabled the creation of more powerful, efficient, and intelligent internet applications and services, enhancing the personalization and intelligence of technology while contributing to the cultivation of public rationality and the improvement of public order. Some scholars point out that contemporary artificial intelligence is essentially the product of machines conducting logical reasoning and perceptual learning based on big data, thereby engaging in deep interaction with the real world within a digital ecosystem. The foundational support of digitalization, the core empowerment of intelligentization, and the expanded scope of globalization together form the three indispensable characteristics of the digital-intelligence era.

Digitalization, at its core, converts activities into machine-readable data and builds the infrastructures—standards, cloud services, interoperable platforms—through which that data

acquires use-value. As data circulates, virtual layers bind to physical settings: sensors, platforms, and analytics create feedback loops in which people and machines learn together and coordinate tasks in real time. This human-machine co-ordination, not “intelligence” as a metaphor, explains why digital systems alter both present operations and future planning.

Globalization extends these dynamics across distance. High-bandwidth networks and cross-border platforms reduce frictions in information and resource allocation, enabling capabilities developed in one locale to be deployed elsewhere with minimal delay. The result is a pattern of interdependence in which technological influence is no longer bounded by geography but by connectivity and governance.

Intelligentization refers to the embedding of algorithmic prediction and decision support into production and daily routines. Machine-learning models, fed by large heterogeneous datasets, now underpin content delivery, logistics, risk control, and public-service interfaces. This diffusion has reconfigured organizational governance (more process monitoring, new coordination rules) and has begun to reshape public cognition and behavior (greater exposure to tailored content, faster feedback, and, where guardrails exist, more consistent rule enforcement). Artificial intelligence, in particular, enables applications that personalize interactions and automate routine judgments, thereby raising the “intelligence” of services while—under well-designed oversight—supporting reasoned participation and more orderly public environments.

In short, digitalization supplies the infrastructure and data substrate, intelligentization provides the core computational capabilities, and globalization scales both beyond local confines. Together they constitute the three mutually necessary characteristics of the digital-intelligence era.

2.2. Studies on the current state of ideological and political education in the digital- intelligence era

Scholarly work in this area examines how digital-intelligence technologies open practical avenues for renewing ideological and political education, with several mechanisms recurring across the literature. As one account puts it, “the deep application of modern information technology is accelerating the shaping of a digital ecosystem” [2]. In concrete terms, platforms that combine content management, learning analytics, and communication tools have allowed institutions to reorganize teaching workflows: instruction is no longer tied to fixed venues or schedules; materials circulate across learning management systems, mobile apps, and social media channels; and interactions continue before and after class through forums, short videos, and live streams.

Beyond distribution, data pipelines enable finer-grained alignment between content and learner needs. Big-data profiling and recommendation engines support targeted delivery of readings, cases, and discussion prompts; dashboards surface common misconceptions, helping instructors adjust sequencing, difficulty, and feedback in real time. When used thoughtfully, these capabilities shift pedagogy from one-size-fits-all to more adaptive guidance without surrendering foundational aims.

Format diversity also matters. Micro-lectures, scenario simulations, annotated primary sources, and debate-oriented prompts translate abstract principles into context-specific tasks. Such design choices, together with timely moderation, tend to make instruction more legible and engaging for heterogeneous cohorts while preserving argumentative rigor.

Taken together, the integration of digital-intelligence tools has expanded the usable boundary of resources and pressed teaching models toward more systematic orchestration—planning, delivery, assessment, and revision linked in a tighter loop. In this sense, technology’s contribution is less a generic “upgrade” than a restructuring of how ideological and political education is organized and maintained in practice..

2.3. Studies on the problems and challenges of ideological and political education in the digital-intelligence era

Digital-intelligence tools have accelerated delivery and widened access, but they also alter the information environment in ways that complicate value guidance and classroom practice. Algorithmic ranking and virality can privilege sensational or nihilistic claims over reasoned argument, narrowing the perceived reach of mainstream values and dispersing the authority that formal ideological and political education once concentrated. In such feeds, subtle cues—framing, repetition, source mimicry—accumulate and erode students' confidence in shared standards of judgment even when overt misinformation is absent.

The same infrastructures that support personalization can magnify negative externalities. Continuous streams of low-friction content create information overload; recommender loops enclose learners in narrow topical bands; and time-on-task migrates from engaged reading and discussion to passive scrolling. Under these conditions, educators struggle to maintain coherence: value guidance competes with rapid-cycle distractions, while materials calibrated for the median learner fail to match heterogeneous needs.

A further constraint is structural fragmentation. Although dissemination has become faster and more diverse, content often arrives as de-contextualized snippets—micro-lectures, short videos, slides—without clear sequencing, cross-references, or assessment hooks. Learners may not know which item addresses which competency, and high-quality resources remain scattered across platforms with inconsistent metadata. The result is a persistent mismatch between supply and demand: students cannot reliably locate materials that fit their level and purpose, and instructors cannot stitch dispersed assets into a cumulative curriculum.

2.4. The current state of ideological and political education in China in the digital- intelligence era

Across China, schools have moved beyond pilot experiments and begun to reorganize ideological and political education around digital-intelligence workflows. The emphasis has shifted from ad hoc tool use to the tighter coupling of platforms, pedagogy, and assessment, with reforms visible in three closely related domains.

First—educators and learners. Networked platforms now carry core instructional interactions: teachers stage lectures live or on demand, layer multimedia and primary sources into sequences, and pull vetted materials from national repositories into local syllabi. Planning revolves around goals and learner profiles rather than room schedules, allowing instructors to mix synchronous seminars with asynchronous discussion, quizzes, and reflection prompts. For students, these arrangements expand agency: they can pace difficult readings, revisit short video segments tied to key concepts, and test understanding through low-stakes checkpoints, while exposure to multiple vantage points encourages comparative reasoning instead of one-pass reception.

Second—content resources. Digitization has widened the window of timeliness and reach.

Materials once confined to print packets circulate as annotated texts, case libraries, and short explainer videos, all indexed for search and reuse. Cross-regional sharing reduces the isolation of schools with thinner local holdings: courses, expert talks, and curated learning objects from leading institutions can be integrated into community-college or secondary-school contexts with minimal friction. The resulting pool is larger, easier to access, and more evenly distributed, which supports more consistent baselines across cohorts without prescribing a single template.

Third—instructional media. Presentation modes now extend well beyond static text-image formats. Scenario simulations, VR/AR walk-throughs, and data-driven visualizations give students structured vantage points on historical episodes and contemporary issues; mobile mini-programs and dedicated apps sustain practice outside the classroom through micro-tasks, reminders, and interactive polls. When aligned with clear objectives and moderation rules, these media invite participation rather than passive viewing and make it easier to connect abstract principles with situated judgment.

Taken together, the integration of ideological and political education with digital-intelligence technologies has replaced one-way delivery with interactive orchestration: teachers and students coordinate in real time and over longer arcs; peers respond to one another's work; and learning extends to times and places that previously sat outside formal instruction. The model is more convenient, but its real significance lies in fit: it matches contemporary study habits while preserving room for individualized progression and stronger engagement.

2.5. Challenges faced by ideological and political education in China in the era of digital intelligence

Marx once warned: “The triumph of technology seems to have been purchased at the cost of moral degradation.” [3] While digital-intelligence technologies inject vitality into China's ideological and political education, their inherent characteristics also give rise to three prominent challenges that hinder its effective implementation:

First, educational content remains scattered and fragmented. Although digital-intelligence technologies have transformed traditional modes of information dissemination in ideological and political education, they still lack unified management and strategic planning. Content is dispersed across various online platforms in a fragmented manner, creating a mismatch between the supply of educational resources and the needs of learners. This not only hampers the aggregation and efficient circulation of high-quality resources but also reduces the overall efficiency of resource utilization, thereby weakening the overall effectiveness and influence of ideological and political education.

Second, both educators and learners tend to rely excessively on digital-intelligence system feedback, which diminishes instructional effectiveness. When learners become accustomed to using technology merely to receive information rather than to engage with ideas, their capacity for deep thinking and imagination is gradually constrained. Likewise, as educators rely more heavily on data-driven algorithms, their teaching practices become increasingly standardized, making it easy to overlook the humanistic care essential to student development.

Finally, educational content lacks strong value-oriented guidance, and its value direction is often weakened by digital-intelligence technologies. Although these technologies can make ideological and political content more diverse and vivid, within such a vast flow of information, it “becomes difficult to produce a strong 'deep voice' or to transmit values with sufficient force; instead, it is easily submerged amid a cacophony of competing value expressions” [4]. Digital-intelligence

technologies may unintentionally dilute mainstream values: negative or harmful content can be amplified through algorithmic mechanisms, weakening the discourse power and leadership of mainstream ideology and undermining the cultivation of positive value orientations.

In summary, the challenges posed by digital-intelligence technologies to ideological and political education concern not only risks to value guidance but also issues related to the capabilities of educational actors and the allocation of educational resources. Accurately identifying these challenges is a necessary foundation for exploring optimal pathways to enhance ideological and political education in the digital-intelligence era.

2.6. Pathways to realizing digital-intelligence-driven ideological and political education

Advancing digital-intelligence reform in ideological and political education requires coordinated action in three tightly linked domains—platform orchestration, value-oriented pedagogy, and resource governance—so that technology serves instructional aims rather than the reverse.

Platform orchestration. Build a coordinated platform that treats interoperability and security as first-order design constraints. Interfaces should allow data to move across departments and systems under clear standards (common identifiers, metadata schemas, role-based access, audit logs), while a security architecture—encryption in transit and at rest, tiered permissions, breach-response playbooks—protects sensitive information. With students' developmental needs at the center, analytics can surface knowledge gaps, recurrent misunderstandings, and salient ideological concerns; these signals should feed recommender rules that route learners to course units, case banks, and guidance materials with transparent rationale codes rather than opaque “black-box” pushes. Curated collections—authoritative, time-stamped, and category-labeled—support precise delivery and reduce noise, enabling instructors to implement tailored instruction without sacrificing comparability across cohorts.

Value-oriented pedagogy. Guard against a slide into instrumental rationality by making value guidance explicit in the design of tasks and interactions. Replace one-way transmission with structured exchanges—live seminars, moderated forums, debate prompts—in which teachers function as guides and co-analysts. Where appropriate, AI, VR, and other tools can stage scenarios, visualize alternatives, and pace feedback; their role is to scaffold judgment, not to substitute for it. Students' agency should be made visible and consequential: assign reflective notes tied to primary sources, require evidence-backed posts in online discussions, and connect digital work to supervised social-practice activities. In this arrangement, technology amplifies inquiry and internalization by giving students more frequent, accountable opportunities to test and revise their reasoning.

Resource governance. Establish a positive-oriented repository that pairs openness with oversight. Use big-data signals to detect redundancy, polarization spikes, and low-quality material; apply review workflows and provenance tracking to “clean the stream,” mitigate information cocoons, and keep recommended content balanced and constructive. A rolling update mechanism should ingest original materials from teachers and students, align additions with current events and curricular objectives, and retire outdated items. Versioning, citation links, and quality annotations help users understand why a resource is included and how it should be used.

At bottom, the challenge is alignment—linking technological affordances to educational essence and value orientation. In practice, progress depends on three anchors working together: high-quality resources as the foundation, humanistic values as the compass, and a unified platform as the

backbone. When these elements are integrated and sequenced—standards before scale, pedagogy before automation—the advantages of digital-intelligence technologies translate into durable gains in the quality and efficiency of ideological and political education.

3. Results and discussion

The integration of digital-intelligent technologies with ideological and political education is an inevitable trend in the evolution of the times. The central argument of this study supports the deep integration of these technologies into ideological and political education, but such integration must follow the principle of “value guidance as the core, technological application as the instrument, and humanistic concern as the foundation.” Only through such coordinated development can we avoid

both the one-sided pursuit of technological empowerment and the blind rejection of technological innovation.

Digital–intelligent technologies now shape ideological and political education in visible, concrete ways. On the interaction front, networked platforms decouple instruction from fixed class periods and rooms: teachers and students meet through live sessions, Q&A threads, low-stakes quizzes, and feedback dashboards that keep dialogue moving between meetings. On the content side, cross-regional repositories and licensing frameworks let schools reuse and update high-quality materials quickly, improving both accessibility and timeliness. Carrier innovation adds another layer: VR/AR scenario walk-throughs, interactive timelines, and mobile micro-tasks translate abstract principles into situated judgments, which in turn lift students’ motivation to engage actively. Read this not as a generic “upgrade” but as a reorganization of workflows that gives ideological and political education productive momentum and supports the fundamental mission of cultivating virtue and nurturing people [5].

The same integration exposes fault lines that require design, not slogans, to fix. Content arrives in snippets and loses sequence; teachers and learners lean too heavily on automation; value orientation blurs in fast, personalized feeds. These symptoms reflect a slide toward instrumental rationality—optimizing clicks and throughput—at the expense of education’s value rationality, rather than any intrinsic flaw in the tools themselves. Generative AI can sharpen targeting and feedback, yet biased training data and opaque objectives can erode the systematic and evidence-grounded character of theoretical instruction. What follows is a governance task: specify guardrails that keep technology subordinate to educational aims—clear sequencing and metadata for resources; transparency and audit for recommendation logic; role-based oversight and moderation; and assessment regimes that reward reasoned argument over engagement metrics—so that the balance between technological affordances and educational values remains dynamic but stable.

To promote deep integration between digital–intelligent technologies and ideological and political education in the future, efforts should focus on three key directions. First, a “value-embedded” technological application system should be built, integrating educational value orientations into the entire process of algorithm design and resource generation so that technology becomes a “digital accelerator” for disseminating truth. Second, the “human–machine collaborative” teaching model should be improved by strengthening the teacher’s role in value guidance and enhancing students’ agency. This requires interdisciplinary collaborative teams to optimize technology application scenarios and prevent the weakening of humanistic care. Third, a “closed-loop” governance ecosystem for educational resources should be established. Leveraging big data, mechanisms for resource review, updating, and feedback should be developed to address

problems such as information cocoons and content fragmentation. Only through these measures can digital–intelligent technologies truly serve the essential needs of ideological and political education and achieve an organic unity between technological empowerment and value guidance.

4. Conclusion and summary

In the context of the digital–intelligent era, China’s ideological and political education has made substantial strides in its digital transformation. Educational participants, supported by online resources, VR tools, and other technological carriers, have expanded the temporal and spatial boundaries of “learning for everyone, anywhere, anytime.” Teaching content has shifted from a single paper-based format to diverse and vivid digital resources, while innovations in instructional media better meet the learning needs of contemporary students, promoting the modernization and personalization of ideological and political education.

Technological gains arrive with three persistent fault lines. Content: As materials circulate through short-video feeds, forums, and messaging apps, heterogeneous narratives crowd the foreground; sensational or nihilistic items travel faster than reasoned argument, narrowing the salience of mainstream values and diluting positive instructional effects. Participants: Heavy reliance on automation—summarizers, auto-quizzes, one-click recommendations—shrinks time for slow reading and deliberation; when algorithms steer pacing and selection, the subtle human work of encouragement, correction, and care recedes. Resources: Assets are dispersed across platforms in small, de-sequenced units with uneven metadata, so learners struggle to locate items that actually fit their level and purpose, and instructors cannot assemble coherent progressions. At root, these symptoms signal a misalignment: tools are optimized for throughput and convenience, while education is oriented toward judgment, meaning, and values. Realignment therefore requires design choices that put educational essence and value orientation ahead of automated efficiency.

Addressing these challenges requires a three-dimensional pathway of “resources–values–platforms.” A digital–intelligent resource repository ensures the positivity and integrity of educational content; a human-centered value framework restores the humanistic dimension weakened by technological dependence; and an integrated platform enables coordinated resource delivery and precise targeting. The future digital-intelligent development of ideological and political education must balance technological efficiency with educational warmth. It should leverage digital–intelligent technologies to expand the reach and appeal of education, while maintaining the core of value guidance and returning to the essence of moral cultivation. At the same time, the deep application of technologies such as big-data learning analytics and intelligent Q&A systems can enable personalized instruction—“a thousand learners, a thousand profiles.” Online–offline interactions and educators’ emotional guidance should reinforce humanistic care, allowing technology to serve as a “bridge” for transmitting mainstream values. Finally, a dynamic value calibration and feedback mechanism should ensure that digital–intelligent resources remain firmly aligned with the fundamental task of moral and character development, achieving mutual reinforcement between technological empowerment and educational quality, and nurturing a new generation of youth who are both technologically literate and firmly grounded in core values.

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