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The Practical Dilemmas and Implementation Pathways of Integrating Long March-themed Films into Moral Education at Vocational Undergraduate Institutions—Taking the Film *The Battle of Xiangjiang* as an Example

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Abstract

In the current moral education efforts of vocational undergraduate institutions, films depicting the Long March serve as vivid and intuitive educational resources with an irreplaceable role. Taking the film *The Battle of Xiangjiang* as an example, it authentically recreates the tragic yet heroic story of Red Army soldiers breaking through the Nationalist Party's multiple blockades during the Long March. Rich in revolutionary spirit and moral significance, it provides abundant material for the moral education of vocational undergraduate students. Therefore, integrating Long March-themed films into the moral education of vocational undergraduate institutions not only enriches educational content and constructs new models of moral education but also holds significant importance for enhancing students' ideological and moral standards and strengthening their sense of professional responsibility and mission.

Keywords

Revolutionary cinema; Moral education; Practical pathways

1. Introduction

As a classic Long March-themed film bearing profound revolutionary history, Blood Battle on the Xiang River employs epic narrative to recreate the Central Red Army's tragic journey through the Xiang River blockade during the Long March. The revolutionary spirit and moral significance it embodies hold profound implications for moral education in vocational undergraduate institutions (Li, 2023). However, integrating the film into moral education at vocational undergraduate institutions presents numerous practical challenges. It necessitates exploring new approaches and methodologies under contemporary conditions to fully leverage the film's unique role in vocational undergraduate moral education (Zhang, 2022).

2. Practical Challenges in Integrating the Film *The Battle of Xiangjiang* into Moral Education at Vocational Undergraduate Institutions

2.1 Discrepancies Between Student Perceptions and Practical Requirements

The current student body at vocational undergraduate institutions exhibits significant diversity in cultural backgrounds and interests. Having grown up in an era of information explosion, their values are characterised by pluralism.

In terms of ideological perception, the brutal war scenes, solemn narrative tone, and complex character relationships depicted in the film Blood Battle of Xiangjiang starkly contrast with the everyday information consumption preferences of some students. This accentuates the disconnect between students' cognitive frameworks and the educational demands of Long March-themed films, leading to a disregard for the historical significance conveyed by such works. Some students even simplistically equate these films with "didactic tools," thereby hindering the transmission and internalisation of revolutionary spirit. While some students may reluctantly complete screenings, they struggle to establish a profound connection between the revolutionary spirit depicted and their own personal development. Their engagement often remains confined to the sensory stimulation of war scenes, failing to delve into the ideals, patriotic sentiments, and sense of mission conveyed by the film (Liu, 2023). This disconnect between perception and practical requirements hinders the genuine internalisation of moral education objectives and their subsequent externalisation through action, thereby undermining the effectiveness of Long March-themed films in vocational undergraduate institutions' moral education programmes. From a practical perspective, vocational undergraduate institutions primarily focus on cultivating technical and skilled professionals. Students often prioritise knowledge and practices directly relevant to their professional development and employability. Under this "skills-oriented" mindset, students generally link educational content directly to career advancement, perceiving films about the Long March as offering little immediate benefit for future professional development. This perspective starkly contrasts with the educational expectations that seek to cultivate students' patriotic sentiments, sense of responsibility, and other comprehensive qualities through revolutionary cinema. In their moral education efforts, institutions have insufficiently considered these practical student concerns, failing to effectively integrate the values embodied in films like *The Battle of Xiangjiang* with students' preoccupations regarding career advancement. Consequently, moral education initiatives struggle to achieve their intended outcomes.

2.2 Limitations in Educational Stakeholders and Resource Allocation

Currently, vocational undergraduate institutions face dual constraints when utilising the film *The Battle of Xiangjiang* for moral education: uneven capabilities among educational stakeholders and insufficient resource allocation. On one hand, some teaching staff possess limited depth of research into the history of the Long March and revolutionary culture, lacking a systematic and comprehensive knowledge framework. They can only provide basic historical context for the film, failing to offer profound interpretations of the strategic logic behind the Battle of the Xiang River or the spiritual motivations driving the characters' decisions. Consequently, they struggle to deliver insightful, accurate, and thought-provoking explanations and guidance to students before and after screenings. When interpreting the film, some educators fail to grasp its profound implications and spiritual essence accurately. They are further unable to tailor explanations to students' professional contexts—such as how this spirit manifests in mechanical processing, nursing practice, or engineering construction—preventing students from gaining deeper intellectual enlightenment. This undermines the full potential of Long March-themed films in moral education (Chen, 2022). Concurrently, vocational undergraduate institutions predominantly allocate resources towards "tangible indicators" such as programme development, practical training facilities, and skills competitions. This results in underinvestment in moral education—particularly red culture education—manifesting as insufficient funding for specialised red education curriculum development. Consequently, institutions struggle to organise resources for creating film interpretation materials and teaching designs tailored to professional disciplines. This limitation confines moral education activities to the traditional "film screening plus discussion" format. It is difficult to employ immersive or experiential methods to enable students to deeply grasp the essence of revolutionary spirit, achieve scale effects, and sustained influence. This consequently constrains the deep integration and long-term development of Long March-themed films within vocational undergraduate institutions' moral education, diminishing the effectiveness of red culture education in shaping vocational undergraduate students' values and enhancing their professional competencies (Zhao, 2024). Moreover, this dual challenge of inadequate educational capacity and insufficient resource allocation reflects vocational undergraduate institutions' insufficient prioritisation of red culture education within their moral education frameworks. The failure to integrate red film-based moral education into holistic educational planning results in a lack of systematic support during implementation (Wang, 2021).

3. Practical Pathways for Integrating the Film *Battle of Xiangjiang* into Moral Education at Vocational Undergraduate Institutions

3.1 Strengthening Value Recognition and Establishing Real-World Connections

To strengthen vocational undergraduate students' value recognition of the revolutionary spirit embodied in the film *The Battle of Xiangjiang*, establishing a close connection between the film's content and students' real lives is crucial.

On one hand, thematic class meetings and specialised lectures can be organised to encourage students to explore the application of the film's revolutionary spirit within their professional development, considering their academic specialisations and future career plans. For instance, engineering students might be guided to reflect on how to uphold perseverance and tenacity in technological innovation and engineering projects, while arts students could discuss how to embody selfless dedication and patriotic devotion in cultural preservation and social service. While delving into the intrinsic connection between the revolutionary spirit depicted in the films and the historical mission borne by contemporary university students, institutions can also arrange for students to interview veteran Party members and military veterans within their communities. Furthermore, inviting distinguished alumni from relevant industries to return to campus to share their experiences of overcoming professional challenges by drawing upon the willpower and character of revolutionary forebears would prove valuable. For instance, students in construction cost management could hear from alumni who, while undertaking projects in remote regions with harsh conditions and limited resources, optimised cost plans and ensured project progress by learning from the Red Army's spirit of "making do with local materials and overcoming difficulties". Through this "dialogue between history and reality," students tangibly grasp that the spirit conveyed in the film is not a distant historical memory, but a valuable asset guiding their own learning and professional development. This encourages them to proactively internalise revolutionary spirit as their own value pursuit (Wang, 2022). On another front, immersive teaching scenarios can be designed around pivotal plot points in the film. For instance, centred on the core plot of "Red Army soldiers sacrificing their lives to protect the central column and breach the Xiangjiang River defences," students could simulate decision-making scenarios such as "prioritising strategic supply transport during shortages" or "selecting breakthrough routes under enemy pursuit." This hands-on approach guides them to grasp the essence of "putting the greater cause first and embracing sacrifice." Furthermore, by integrating the professional characteristics of vocational undergraduate institutions, these scenarios can be linked to students' future career contexts. For instance, students in modern logistics management could explore "how emergency logistics strategies from the revolutionary era inform contemporary emergency supply chain resilience"; For mechanical design students, analysing "the innovative spirit and craftsmanship embodied in the Red Army's rudimentary weapon maintenance techniques" enables students to recognise the intrinsic alignment between revolutionary spirit and professional competence development, transforming the revolutionary legacy from a "historical symbol" into a "guide for action" (Chen, 2022).

3.2 Strengthening Faculty Development and Optimising Resource Allocation

To better integrate the film *The Battle of Xiangjiang* into vocational undergraduate institutions' moral education, strengthening faculty development and optimising resource allocation are crucial safeguards. Regarding faculty development, specialised training on "Integrating Red Resources with Professional Teaching" should be conducted for educators engaged in moral education. This involves deepening their understanding of the film's historical context, revolutionary spirit, and historical value. Subject-specific lecturers should be invited to explain their programmes' talent development objectives and curriculum frameworks, helping moral education teachers identify synergies between red education and professional instruction. This enables them to convey the film's moral elements to students more accurately and vividly. For subject-specific teaching staff, expert lectures and case studies will help transform the spiritual elements from films into teaching materials. For instance, mechanical engineering instructors could integrate the "innovative approach to Red Army weapon maintenance" depicted in films into their "Fundamentals of Mechanical Design" course, guiding students to cultivate innovative thinking and problem-solving skills through design practice (Zhou, 2023). Resource allocation will involve establishing an integrated mechanism linking internal and external resources to provide teachers and students with abundant and accessible teaching materials. Internally, a dedicated fund for red film-based moral education is established. This centralises the compilation of film clips, historical documents, and research findings related to *The Battle of Xiangjiang*, developing a comprehensive database and establishing an online sharing platform for teachers to access and utilise at any time. Externally, partnerships have been forged with revolutionary education bases such as the Xijiang Campaign Memorial Hall and Revolutionary Martyrs' Cemetery. Faculty members participate in practical training programmes for revolutionary education, experiencing historical settings firsthand and gathering primary teaching resources. Concurrently, experts in revolutionary culture studies and veterans are invited as external mentors to regularly visit campuses, offering instructional guidance and assisting faculty in developing high-quality integrated curricula (Wang, 2021).

4. Conclusion

The film *The Battle of Xiangjiang*, a classic within the Long March genre, has demonstrated its value by deeply exploring its moral education potential. It actively addresses practical challenges during integration, continuously innovates moral education models, enriches the substance of moral education, and explores feasible practical pathways. This ensures the revolutionary spirit is genuinely internalised and externalised through actions, forging a distinctive and effective path for moral education within vocational undergraduate institutions.

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