

On University Students’ Political Participation in the Context of Network new Media

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Abstract

Along with further ideological emancipation in China, university students’ concepts have undergone dramatic changes. Their progress of political ideas is especially impressive. Some ideas held by university students are representative and progressive, and change long with the development of network. However, as their degree of political participation gradually increases, some problems related to network development are also popping up. This paper mainly discusses and analyzes advantages and disadvantages of university students’ political participation in the context of the network new media.

Keywords: Network new media, University students, Political activities, Advantages and disadvantages.

1. Introduction

University students are the largest network group. Network allows them to pursue their rights and push their current political participation to a peak. As China gives more freedom of speech to its people, university students have obtained more political rights. However, some express their political ideas not in line with relevant regulations. Therefore, it is imperative to study university students’ political participation in the new situation.

2. Status of University Students’ Political Participation in the Development Context of Network New Media

2.1 Increasing number of participants

Nowadays, mobile phones have become a necessity to university students’ life. In the modern society, acquisition of political information is realized through webpage browsing. Below are survey results of students’ acquisition of political information and online browsing. From Table 1, it can be seen that students’ frequency of surfing the Internet is mainly divided into three levels, namely daily, frequent and now and then. No matter how frequent university students surf the Internet, news browsing is an indispensable part of their Internet surfing.

Table 1 Survey of university students’ Internet surfing

frequency and content

Daily	Frequent	Now and then
Browse news, games and videos	Browse news and videos	Browse news

The above data suggest that university students’ political participation through the network is common. Data also show that the number of university students browsing news while surfing the Internet accounts for 70% of the total. This, to some extent, reflects the importance of political participation to university students’ life. Besides, university students pay attention to a wide range of events, including some hotspot social issues, such as the improvement of the endowment insurance index, the current social employment situations, the laws newly promulgated by the country, the government corruption, the natural disasters, the environment protection measures, etc. The breadth and depth of university students’ political participation can promote progress of China’s politics.

2.2 Diversifies ways of appeal

The current scientific and technological progress has strengthened university students’ capability of political participation. First, university students can air their political comments through QQ, WeChat, microblog, etc. Among them, microblog is the most widely used. China is a country with an extensive degree of democracy. Some national leaders have also opened their microblog to interact with the public. University students can also comment and leave messages about some national policies through the microblog, and show their complaints about some unfair terms and treatment. In this sense, university students’ political participation can contribute to China’s democratization progress. Moreover, university students can discuss with e-pals about national events on BBS, and exchange their ideas. This has been the most population way of appeal. Last but not least, university students can provide suggestions for different government departments according to different events. For example, if they have dissents about the financial measurements after reformation,

they can send QQ mails to the financial minister of the central or local government to show their complaints and suggestions. Therefore, diversification of ways of appeal has also been a key factor to strengthening of university students' capability of political participation.

3. Irrational Behaviors of University Students' Political Participation in the Context of Network New Media

3.1 Blindness of university students' political participation

The current network environment becomes increasingly complexity. University students might easily lose their bearing during political participation. In the network environment, everyone acts and speaks under an unknown identity. This results in unscrupulousness of political discussion. For example, as to Japanese' worship of the Yasukuni Shrine, some university students could not tell right from wrong due to their craziness for Japanese cartoons, and even commented irrationally and blindly about the event, totally not realizing that this was a national issue. This example also suggested that some university students had not yet formed correct values, thus being vulnerable to political misleading and coming up with some wrong political ideas. [1]

3.2 Emotionality of university students' political participation

Many university students are in their youth. They might easily have emotional outbursts, which might lead to some irrational political comments. Some major national affairs are involved with multiple factors, which might be too hard for university students to comprehend. They often attack at other countries based on some hearsay. Such behaviors are unwise. Some students even become emotional based on guess of some irrational opinions. Experts once did the following survey to study whether university students had even had personal attack against others: (See below)

Table 2 Survey of university students' personal attack against others

Never	Personal attack against those having disputes with oneself	Personal attack against strangers
60%	30%	10%

Though 60% of university students had never had personal attack against others, it should not be ignored that there was 10% having personal attack against strangers. This was not expected of a qualified university student. It

reflected irrationality of university students' political comments in the network environment. Therefore, emotionality is another irrationality of university students' political participation. [2]

4. Measures to Promote Rational Political Participation of University Students

4.1 Enhance university students' understanding of political information

To enhance university students' understanding of political information is an efficient way to avoid their blindness and emotionality of political participation. In the new era, university students are all intellectuals, so they should do things in line with their identity and deepen their ideological and political learning. First, university students should carefully learn ideological and political courses, strive to make an example to the network comments, and show their insights in the Internet. By doing so, they can contribute to China's democratization. Second, in club activities, university students should hold more debates about national hotspot issues. As each airs his own views, university students' understanding of national politics can be more extensive. Third, university students should deepen their understanding of laws and regulations about the network. To the end, they can participate in some network competitions to standardize their discussion of political issues. University students' safeguarding of their freedom of political speech is of profound significance to national development. Fourth, university students should participate in more social practices for public good. For example, university students can participate in "Sunflower Poverty Relief" so that they can learn the basic regional situation and reflect the situation to relevant national departments through the network interaction, based on which the country can give immediate support to the impoverished areas. [3].

4.2 Integrate the traditional and new network

The network is ever-changing, and exerting a profound influence on life of contemporary university students. The current new media should be a correct orientation for university students to discuss political issues rationally. To achieve the goal, efforts can be made in two aspects. First, enhance the connection between traditional organizations and university students. Some student cadres can be recommended to cooperate with the Youth League Committee so that their understanding of national politics can be enhanced. Second, build some political scenes among students and upload them to the network to provide guidance for other students' correct political participation. For example, as to the dispute about the ownership of "the

South China Sea,”students can discuss it in two groups. One group can draw the complete map of China. The other group can play the role of the US and Philippines to show dissents. At last, students can upload the video to the network to promote other students’knowledge of current international events. [4]

4.3 Strengthen supervision of network opinions

Blindness of some students’political participation is caused by irrational network opinions. Therefore, it is imperative to enhance supervision of network opinions. First, the country can designate personnel to be responsible for each political issue and provide authoritative knowledge in the complex network environment. When some irrational network opinions are found, the government’s network supervision personnel can make some statements immediately, avoiding misleading students. Second, in terms of some irrational and emotional ideas among students, the supervision personnel should patiently introduce correct ways for political speech to them. If they can guide students as a friend, the effects will be much better. Last but not least, BBS leaders can show their political ideas in the virtual space, thus providing efficient approaches for students’political participation. [5]

5. Conclusions

To sum up, university students’ political participation in the network new media has a profound influence. It is a reflection of social progress and era development. Nowadays, ways for university students’ political participation have made huge breakthroughs. However, there are some defects with the political speech participation based on the network media. Under the situation, university students should take the initiative to standardize their behaviors and speech, thus contributing their share to promoting China’s democratization progress.

Acknowledgments

This work was supported by Top-notch Academic Programs Project of Jiangsu Higher Education Institutions(No.PPZY2015B105) and Yancheng Teachers University School of Humanities and social science research project.

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