

# Research on National Identity Education of Hong Kong and Macao Students in Chinese Mainland Universities

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## Abstract

At present, the values of Hong Kong and Macao students are positive at the national, social and individual levels, but at the same time, they also expose sharp problems. Colleges and universities in the Chinese mainland have made good achievements in the education and management of this group, but there are still many omissions. In view of this, the national identity education of Hong Kong and Macao students in Chinese mainland universities should build systematic ideological education, strengthen professional legal education, inject "antibodies" to resist negative public opinion, and promote the institutional construction of identity.

## Keywords

Chinese Mainland Universities; Hong Kong; Macao; College Students; National Identity Education.

## 1. Introduction

With the support of the central government and the acceleration of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area's construction process, various policies and measures to promote the development of Hong Kong and Macao youths in the Mainland have been promulgated one after another, and the number of Hong Kong and Macao students going to mainland universities for further studies has been increasing. According to the data of the Education Bureau of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, in 2020, the number of students admitted by mainland institutions through the diploma test enrollment plan will increase by nearly 14% compared with 2019, reaching a new high in seven years. Throughout the world, strengthening the national identity of young students is the top priority of the national education system, which is basically carried out under "one country, one system", while in China, the national identity construction of students in Hong Kong and Macao is characterized by the promotion under "one country, two systems and three laws", which is unique in the world. Therefore, how to build a national identity education path in line with the spirit of "one country, two systems" is not only of practical and strategic significance for promoting the integration of Hong Kong and Macao youth into national development and training reserve talents for the governance of Hong Kong and Macao, but also of great exploration value for the innovative development of patriotic education. Based on the research data of the research group of Hong Kong, Macao and Pearl River Delta Research Center of Sun Yat-sen University (a questionnaire survey was conducted among 1,443 Hong Kong and Macao students in mainland universities in 2018, and an in-depth interview was conducted with 16 heads and front-line personnel of Hong Kong and Macao student management departments in 2019), this paper makes an in-depth analysis of the above issues.

## 2. Problems and Causes of Values of Hong Kong and Macao Students in Chinese Mainland Universities

### 2.1. Characterizations and Problems of Values of Hong Kong and Macao Students

#### 2.1.1. National Values: Positive Perception But Simple Cognition

National values are the sum total of the subject's understanding, emotion and evaluation of national objects. The state is objective and factual, and it is also shaped by subjective behavior (Berger, 2020). There are different criteria for measuring national values. Among them, the most intuitive standard is the recognition and attitude to the forms and symbols of national symbols, while cultural relics, natural and cultural heritage and written language all bear the national mark and imagination. According to the survey, 63.23% of Hong Kong and Macao students have shown positive emotional reactions to the Great Wall, Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City. 77.89% of Hong Kong and Macao students are proficient in communicating in Putonghua, and 88.54% of Hong Kong and Macao students are suitable for writing simplified characters. It can be seen that the majority of Hong Kong and Macao students tend to have a positive evaluation of the country, which is in great contrast with local Hong Kong and Macao college students. In addition, Hong Kong and Macao students' cognition of the country is still at the stage of accumulation of common knowledge, lacking a systematic and stable evaluation system to identify and classify various national narratives. At the same time, in the cognitive networks and experience materials of many Hong Kong and Macao students, the time series of the process of national construction is in a broken or fragmentary state. More than 50% of the students surveyed do not know the trajectory nodes of some major events in modern Chinese history, let alone ask them to have a deep understanding of the meaning of the country.

#### 2.1.2. Social Values: Pay Attention to the Combination of Chinese and Western, But also have the Tendency of Radical Westernization

Since the return to the motherland, Hong Kong and Macao societies have shown two main values: first, focusing on "one country", carrying forward patriotism and love for Hong Kong (Macao), pragmatic struggle, harmony and stability; Second is to advocate "two systems", freedom and democracy, human rights and the rule of law, and professionalism. Both of these values have their own social support, and their supporters all think that their values are the most important part of social core values, and there is no consensus among them. In this regard, the recognition and acceptance of Hong Kong and Macao students is an important window for observing the social values of this group. According to the survey, 66.17% (71.86%) of Hong Kong and Macao students agree that "patriotism and love for Hong Kong (Macao) is a fine tradition of Hong Kong and Macao society", 69% of Hong Kong students agree that "freedom, democracy and the rule of law are the most valuable things in Hong Kong", and 65.8% of Macao students think that Macao is free of speech and law-abiding. It can be seen that nearly 70% of Hong Kong and Macao students are relatively rational. Instead of showing the "either-or" value choice in the circle of public opinion, they put these two value in a balanced position. However, many Hong Kong and Macao students have unilaterally turned to the Western values camp and privately supported or participated in illegal social movements such as Occupy Central.

#### 2.1.3. Personal Values: Pay Attention to the Balance among Individuals, Place and Reality

Personal values are self's subjective tendency and attitude towards the behavioral norms, cultural patterns and lifestyles of the life world (Yi Junqing, 2015). It is the first place where personal values are subtly cultivated. As the realistic projection of social relations in family organizations, ethical laws and regulations are embedded in family customs, family rules and ceremonies, which virtually restrict the behavior of family members, spontaneously regulate

the interpersonal relationships in the neighborhood and orderly guide the meaning cycle of community life. However, with the simultaneous development of globalization and regionalization in Hong Kong and Macao, the basic schema of tradition and modernity is developed in the construction of individual daily life value under the competitive tension structure. The survey shows that for Chinese cultural traditions, Hong Kong and Macao students pay more attention to festivals closely related to their families. For example, 90.18% (80.98%) of Hong Kong and Macao students said that they like the Spring Festival (Mid-Autumn Festival); However, the traditional customs preserved by the people are not very attractive to them. Only 36.45% (26.04%, 33.26%) of Hong Kong and Macao students express their preference for festivals such as Qingming, Qiangshanbao and Chongyang. This kind of situation also occurs in the preferences of western cultural traditions. As for lifestyle and identity, more Hong Kong and Macao students love local cultural characteristics and microscopic things symbolizing modern prosperity. 77.17% (69.39%) of Hong Kong and Macao students like Hong Kong-style tea restaurants and the night scenes of Victoria Harbour, and 65.65% (69.79%) of Hong Kong and Macao students have a strong sense of belonging to Hong Kong and Macao groups. It can be seen that students from Hong Kong and Macao pay attention to the realistic trade-off among personal preferences, local habits and current needs, showing a pragmatic value orientation.

## **2.2. Causes of the Problems of Hong Kong and Macao Students' Values**

### **2.2.1. Relations Involving "State-local" Always Follow a Separate Cognitive Framework**

Since Hong Kong and Macao returned to the motherland, the explanation of "one country, two systems" has been placed in a simplified and separate cognitive framework. For example, the country is equivalent to "the central government only cares about national defense diplomacy", Returning to the motherland only means "only changing the national flag", and "two systems" is equivalent to "river does not invade well water" and so on. Under this framework, school education teaches the culture, system and history of China, Hong Kong and Macao respectively, and the Constitution and the Basic Law have separate themes. Essentially, this way of knowledge transfer regards the country, Hong Kong and Macao as two different, unrelated or not closely related subjects. In this way, there is no connection between "home" and "country" in Hong Kong and Macao students' cognitive system, and the country is external, and there is always a significant border between Hong Kong and Macao and the mainland. From the cultural point of view, the country is a community of culture and interests, which produces collective memory. "one country, two systems" means that what happens in the country should also happen in Hong Kong and Macao, but due to the differences in systems, it is presented in different ways, and vice versa. However, the cognitive framework of separation constantly creates the imagination of space and power for the separation between the country from Hong Kong and Macao, which not only makes it difficult for the mainland to influence Hong Kong and Macao, but also makes it difficult for young students from Hong Kong, Macao and the mainland to have new common memories, thus making it difficult to form a sense of community.

### **2.2.2. Patriotism Education is Separated from Daily Life Practice**

In the past, the patriotic education in Hong Kong and Macao schools was too rigid in content or method, which was out of touch with daily life experience. The national narrative, symbolic forms, rights and obligations that young students are exposed to tend to be abstract, which is difficult to connect with daily life and sink to the microscopic level of concept construction. For a long time, the values of liberalism have occupied a dominant position, and the state ownership is not unique, but optional. This social ideology, accompanied by the handover of Hong Kong and Macao from generation to generation, is integrated into the growth process of the new generation of individuals, blocking the possibility that patriotic words and deeds can be transformed into knowledge accumulation and experience materials of the younger generation,

and creating many "opportunistic patriots". When they show political loyalty to the central government, they can make ends meet, and switch their personal action strategies according to the changes of the situation.

### **2.2.3. Educational and Legal Activities Overemphasize Professional Independence**

For a long time, the social operation in Hong Kong and Macao has been promoted according to the elite governance mode. Under the cultivation of western technocrats, elites have formed a set of relatively independent activity plans with their own standards, putting professionalism above patriotism. The "as it should be" option to safeguard national security is not in the professional activities of "as it should be" operation. In addition, according to the provisions of the Basic Law, the education system and policy arrangement of Hong Kong and Macao are highly independent and autonomous. For the public officials and education professionals in the SAR, the implementation of patriotic education is only a response to the political and moral requirements of the work procedures of the central authorities, rather than major issues concerning vital interests and political accountability. Because many professional groups are easy to take advantage of the reasons of professional autonomy, refuse to hold patriotic activities and fulfill the obligation of safeguarding national security, it is difficult for all sectors of society to form a joint efforts of patriotic education, and the cultivation of values of Hong Kong and Macao students may be full of loopholes.

## **3. Education and Management of Hong Kong and Macao Students by Chinese Mainland Universities**

### **3.1. Hong Kong and Macao Students' Education and Management Effectiveness**

#### **3.1.1. Universities in Mainland China Pay Special Attention to Students from Hong Kong and Macao, and Their Education Methods are Flexible and Diverse, Reflecting the Importance of the Country**

To a certain extent, the institutional arrangement of "one country, two systems" framed the intangible boundary between Hong Kong and Macao students and mainland students. Although Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan students belong to Chinese students in national identity, the management of major universities still regard Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan students as a special group and pay special attention to them, just as mainland universities treat ethnic minority students. From the source of students, there are two main types of Hong Kong and Macao students recruited through "Joint Recruitment" and "Exemption from Examination": one is the group of students who grew up in Hong Kong and Macao, and the other is the students whose parents have a mainland background or as mainland immigrants. Compared with mainland students, Hong Kong students have more personality, and Macao students are more unified in group psychology and behavior. In terms of knowledge structure and learning ability, mainland students are better than Hong Kong and Macao students as a whole, so that some colleges and universities adjust the ratio of final grades to normal grades and give proper care of Hong Kong and Macao students. Generally speaking, in view of the national attention and policy inclination, universities generally hold a positive attitude towards the education management of Hong Kong and Macao students.

#### **3.1.2. Management Methods to Promote the Integration of Students from Hong Kong, Macao and Mainland China Make it Easier for Hong Kong and Macao Students to Adapt to the Learning Environment in Their Daily Life**

Universities in mainland China basically emphasizes the management mode of "convergence" and "integration", that is, "equal treatment and proper care". On the basis of comprehensive consideration of teaching and management costs, universities in basically don't set up separate classes in Hong Kong and Macao, but put Hong Kong and Macao students and mainland students

together for teaching. In the daily life management of Hong Kong and Macao students, there are some cases in which universities live or separate from mainland students or international students according to accommodation resources or conditions. Many students from Hong Kong and Macao actively integrate into the Mainland Student Union and participate in various student organization. In universities with a large number of students from Hong Kong and Macao, this group spontaneously set up student organizations similar to "Student Union" or "Hometown Association", build their own social networks, transmit information on study, friendship, employment and other information, and provide assistance services.

### **3.1.3. Universities in Mainland China Attach Importance to the Education of National Conditions and Ideological and Political Education for Hong Kong and Macao Students. Although the Forms are Different, They Make up for the Initial Cognitive Deficiency**

In view of the urgency and importance of national identity education for Hong Kong and Macao students, the Ministry of Education abolished the stipulation of "exempting political courses and military training courses", and proposed that "the credits of political courses and military training courses can be replaced by those of other national conditions courses". Colleges and universities responded positively, and according to their own school-running characteristics (such as comprehensive courses, teachers' courses, politics and law courses, finance and economics courses, etc.), Hong Kong and Macao students' scale, teachers' strength and other specific conditions, developed special or alternative programs for Hong Kong and Macao. At the same time, according to the matching funds, many colleges and universities carry out supplementary patriotic education such as pre-school education, festival evenings, extracurricular activities (organizing outdoor study tours, red tours, etc.). Although the development forms are different, to a certain extent, it has opened a window for Hong Kong and Macao students to understand their national conditions, and even accelerated their national identity from shallow cognition to deep emotion. For example, some Hong Kong and Macao students volunteered to participate in military training, even applied to join the Party.

## **3.2. Omissions in the Education and Management of Hong Kong and Macao Students**

### **3.2.1. How to Grasp the Universality and Particularity of National Education**

At present, there is no standard arrangement for the national education of students from Hong Kong and Macao in major universities. Colleges and universities offering characteristic courses emphasize the urgency of insufficient understanding of the national conditions of Hong Kong and Macao students and the importance of carrying out ideological and political education. Universities without specialized courses emphasize that the education of Hong Kong and Macao students should be consistent with that of mainland students, so as to avoid emotional conflicts caused by specialized courses. These two reasons are sufficient and must be considered at the same time. Generally speaking, colleges and universities with abundant resources and concentrated students from Hong Kong and Macao can be encouraged by special funds, equipped with professional teachers, and explore ethnic education model with Hong Kong and Macao characteristics. For colleges and universities with poor resources, we can consider offering national conditions courses with corresponding credits, and replacing them with other related political, economic, social and cultural courses, so as to make up for Hong Kong and Macao students' insufficient understanding of the country to the greatest extent. However, in practice, colleges and universities lack unified curriculum guidelines, evaluation criteria and feedback mechanisms, which leads to uneven educational and management effects.

### **3.2.2. How to Grasp "Equal Treatment" and "Differential Treatment" in Integration-oriented Management?**

Although major universities regard Hong Kong and Macao students as the same group as mainland students in education and management, Hong Kong and Macao students do have "specialized" treatment in many objective options. For example, in terms of scholarships and grants, Hong Kong and Macao students and mainland students have different channels to apply. Hong Kong and Macao students can enjoy subsidies from the SAR government, but mainland students do not. In terms of military training, Hong Kong and Macao students can make their own choices, but it is mandatory for mainland students. Mainland students have standardized selection channels when applying to join the Party, while Hong Kong and Macao students have no clear integration channels despite their willingness to join the Party. It can be seen that the Integration-oriented management methods of major universities do not completely "fuse" the mainland and Hong Kong and Macao students in one furnace, but in fact there are still barriers. Such problems may affect the strengthening of national identity of Hong Kong and Macao students. Many colleges and universities reflect that the learning ability of Hong Kong and Macao students who enter famous universities through joint recruitment actually fails to meet the requirements of famous universities. The learning process of these students is difficult, and they often "fail". Colleges and universities need to respond. For example, some colleges and universities let Macao students' homecoming organizations help each other, which is worthy of other schools' reference. The national authorities need to consider this issue as early as possible when expanding the enrollment in Hong Kong and Macao, and give relevant guidance to colleges and universities.

### **3.2.3. How to Grasp "Strength" and "Scale" in Ideological and Political Work**

Through interviews, it is found that during the "Anti-revision Storm", many university leaders asked the Hong Kong and Macao students authorities to do ideological work for Hong Kong and Macao students alone, telling them that Hong Kong and Macao students can have different personal opinions, but they can't publicly spread inappropriate remarks among the groups. Thanks to the implementation of the stabilization mechanism in colleges and universities, the ideological situation of Hong Kong and Macao students is relatively stable, without obvious ideological fluctuation or extreme behaviors. However, from another angle, the "Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Affairs Office" in colleges and universities has a strong political significance, and students are more sensitive to it. Front-line counselors from various departments go deep into Hong Kong and Macao students groups to do ideological work, and adopting the "big to small" method may achieve better results, and it is not easy to cause resentment and conflict. In the special period of major political events in Hong Kong and Macao, paying attention to students from Hong Kong and Macao can reflect the attention of the state. However, how to grasp the measurement well, avoid forcing Hong Kong and Macao students to make political statements and make them "frightened birds", is an important and realistic challenge for the ideological and political work of major universities.

## **4. The Practical Path of National Identity Education for Hong Kong and Macao Students in Chinese Mainland Universities**

### **4.1. Building Systematic Ideological Education**

In the course content compilation, it integrates the national macro-historical narrative and the micro-cultural vision of Hong Kong and Macao, encourages massive open online courses (MOOC) platform, and promotes excellent ideological education courses that takes into account the true nature of Chinese civilization and local characteristics of Hong Kong and Macao. In terms of education methods, targeted education should be conducted to meet the needs of undergraduates and postgraduates, freshmen and postgraduates at different learning stages,

for example, freshmen focus on awareness training, sophomores focus on conceptual learning, juniors focus on emotional transformation, seniors focus on employment and entrepreneurship counseling, and postgraduates focus on national education exploration and international interpretation. In the way of assessment, we can develop the "National Learning App" for Hong Kong and Macao students, integrating information reading, online answering, integral incentive and interactive sharing. In the allocation of teachers' resources, we can cultivate a professional ideological education team that not only understands Marxism-Leninism, but also Hong Kong and Macao. In campus management, peer counselors should be provided, the mainland "circle of friends" of Hong Kong and Macao students should be expanded, and the experience of home-country integration should be strengthened.

#### **4.2. Strengthening Professional Legal Education**

After the promulgation of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China Upholds the National Security Law, many Hong Kong and Macao students' voices focused on the discussion of terms and details such as judicial review, jurisdiction, bail pending trial rules, selection of judges, etc. Some doubts and concerns were intertwined with silence and wait-and-see attitude. Therefore, the education and legal circles need to have a full discussion to form a text of explanation and popularization of law, which can provide a guide for dispelling doubts. At present, the basic law education is mixed with cross-promotion in different disciplines, and the educational effect is not good. The implementation of the law is not only to shape the country's grand political ideas, but also to transform the provisions and details of the bill itself into students' basic knowledge in a simple way. According to teenagers' cognitive development rules and differentiated learning conditions, the Basic Law and the National Security Law are divided into different versions from easy to difficult, step by step, from top to bottom, unify teaching materials, teaching guidelines and evaluation standards, and cultivating students' awareness of observing laws and regulations and safeguarding national security. In addition, national security education can not be generalized. In order to avoid increasing distortion and misleading space, special arrangements should be made to systematically train educators in legal knowledge (including jurisprudence, laws, cases, etc.) and improve the professional level of legal education.

#### **4.3. Injecting "Antibodies" to Resist Negative Public Opinion**

Public opinion about Hong Kong and Macao has always been labeled as "sensitive", and the mainland is used to handling public opinion with the idea of "anti-blocking". However, Hong Kong and Macao students' exposure to the negative public opinion of western or local media stigmatized countries will not be reduced due to the network protection barrier. We should change our thinking and think about how to actively "channel" and "correct" the psychological influence of negative information on students from Hong Kong and Macao. First, expand the public channels for media literacy education and improve the ability of Hong Kong and Macao students to distinguish truth from falsehood, think independently and judge value. According to the new way for the new generation to obtain information, we will improve the technical content of national education, such as packaging, display and dissemination, seamlessly connect with media information channels such as social groups, micro videos and online games, and guide Hong Kong and Macao teenagers to cross the public opinion trap set by the opposition when facing the indiscriminate bombing of internet information. The second is to study the feasible scheme of recruiting students from Hong Kong and Macao to join the Party, and to integrate their channels to know the country, the Communist Party and the mainland through the party organizations. The "anti-Communist" social psychology left over from the middle of the last century was passed down by parents, and more or less negative emotions were transferred to the younger generation in Hong Kong and Macao. They had no real experience, so they could only prove their curiosity about the past history through media information. Most

of the evidence providers are opposition figures with colored glasses. If the country does not take the initiative to explain, it will not only be scolded, but also deepen misunderstanding.

#### 4.4. Promoting the Institutional Construction of Identity

Identity is not only reflected in the discourse and propaganda in the media, but also in the teaching and regulation of institutional rules. In view of the strong discourse power and insufficient system in the current identity politics, it is necessary to improve the national unity of identity card system, various rights and obligations related to identity and other national symbols and the institutionalization of Chinese citizenship. Orderly eliminate the objective barriers of national identity of students from Hong Kong and Macao, and gradually clean up the expressions, norms and systems that highlight the differences in national identity, such as Hong Kong and Macao as overseas, Hong Kong and Macao residents as foreign citizens and Hong Kong and Macao capital as foreign capital. We can consider trying it out in mainland cities of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, speed up the establishment of a new management method of "double integration" for Hong Kong and Macao residents, and improve the convenience and comfortable experience of Hong Kong and Macao youth living, working and studying in the mainland through identity authentication systems such as business, government affairs, police affairs and finance, so as to ensure that Hong Kong and Macao youth enjoy the same complete rights and equal national treatment as Chinese citizens in the mainland.

### 5. Conclusion

The Fourth Plenary Session of the 19th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China pointed out that it is necessary to strengthen the education of Hong Kong and Macao society, especially public officials and teenagers, about the constitution and basic law, national conditions, Chinese history and Chinese culture, and enhance the national consciousness and patriotism of Hong Kong and Macao compatriots. (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, 2019) It can be seen that under the new situation of "one country, two systems", the central government has put forward new requirements and pointed out new directions for the education of national identity for young students in Hong Kong and Macao. We believe that with the efforts of various parties, the national identity education of Hong Kong and Macao students in Chinese mainland universities will achieve good results.

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