

# Research on the Practical Effectiveness of Ideological and Political Education in University Archives Museums in the New Era — A Case Study of Zhejiang University of Finance and Economics

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## Abstract

In the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2022, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed new requirements to “strengthen the country through science and education” and “enhance talent support for modernization.” “Ideological and political education in the curriculum” is a novel method for universities to undertake the national task of “cultivating virtue to educate people” in the new era. Universities provide ideological and political education throughout the entire process, in order to enhance talent cultivation quality. Focusing on the connotation and requirements of “ideological and political education in the curriculum” and combining the logic of archival participation in ideological and political education in curriculum, this research adopted questionnaire surveys to explore the practical effectiveness of ideological and political education in university archives museums in China. The aim of this research was to improve the construction model of ideological and political education in university curricula and enhance the in-depth implementation of “comprehensive education.”

**Keywords:** ideological and political education, archives museum, university history museum, archival education, practical effectiveness

## 1. Introduction

Since the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, the central government has assigned great importance to ideological and political education in schools. In the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work of Colleges and Universities in December 2016 and the Symposium of Political Theory Teachers in April 2019, General Secretary Xi Jinping explicitly stated that (Hu, Y, 2021) ideological and political work should run through the entire process of education, achieving all-round education. “In light of the development positioning and talent cultivation goals of schools to construct a comprehensive, diverse, progressively structured, and mutually supportive ideological and political education curriculum system”, “thoroughly explore the resources of ideological and political education inherent in various courses and teaching methods”, “integrate the application of both formal and informal educational settings, continually expanding the approaches and methods for ideological and political education development of curriculum” were proposed by the Ministry of Education issued the “Guidelines for the Construction of Ideological and Political Education in Higher Education Institutions” (Ministry of Education, 2023) in 2020. In the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2022, General Secretary Xi Jinping proposed new requirements for “providing strategies for invigorating China through science and education” and “enhancing talent support for modernization”. On July 6th, 2021, when the new building of the first Chinese historical archives museum was inaugurated, General Secretary Xi Jinping instructed that “archival work should serve both the compilation of village histories and the nurturing of political education”, “efforts should be made to properly preserve and

utilize revolutionary archives embodying the original aspirations and mission of the party (Editorial News, 2021)", "provide better services for the overall operation of the Party and the country (Editorial News, 2021)". The archives and history museums of university are critical components of campus education which possess rich resources for ideological and political education. They serve as the second classroom for students to investigate the history of the Party and the university. These institutions are considered as vital practical bases to enhance cultural confidence of national, reinforce cultural identity of campus, and strengthen ideological awareness of students. They play irreplaceable roles in ideological and political education at schools and take an undeniable responsibility in contributing to the overall educational goals of the Party and country.

The main aim of ideological and political education of curriculum is to evaluate ideological and political elements in different courses, helping students shape correct life outlooks, worldviews, and values (Ministry of Education, 2023). The core of curriculum ideological and political education lies in exerting the function of ideological and political education in an imperceptible and subtle manner (Yan, J, 2020). So far, researchers have conducted certain explorations on ideological and political education in the discipline of archival science in universities. Based on the investigation of Jie et al. on the actual status of ideological and political education in the discipline of archival science along with the current situation of archival science discipline at Jilin University a construction model was developed for integrating ideological creativity and fostering synergy (Ma, J., Zhao, T., Tian, Y., & Deng, J, 2022). Minghui et al. proposed a logical framework to construct ideological and political education in the discipline of archival science supported by elements such as the goals of archival science curriculum, module construction, teaching tools, resource foundation, and evaluation system (Qian, M., & Fan, A, 2022). Taking the Department of Information Management of Peking University as an example, Jiuzhen et al. introduced the ideas and practices of course ideology and politics construction of the four categories of traditional courses, namely graphic information file, basic courses, general education courses and practice courses (Zhang, J., Bu, Y., Li, S., & Zhang, P, 2022). Jing et al. adopted the effectiveness theory of ideological and political education to reflect the effects of ideological and political through the following five sets of relationships: explicit and implicit, Dao (way) and instrument, external and internal, zero and whole, and open and closed, combining with the practice of ideological and political education in Sun Yat-sen University (Zhang, J., & Chen, C, 2022). In the field of archival science, researchers such as Yongjun (Xu, Y., & Xiong, W, 2021) and Le (Zhai, L, 2021) investigated the significance and approaches of integrating archival science into 'ideological and political education.' Dianlao et al. analyzed the intrinsic logic of ideological and political education in archival science guidance courses, focusing on the construction goals and approaches of ideological and political education in archival guidance courses (Li, D., Wang, X., & Chen, Y, 2022). Researchers have also investigated strategies such as 'ideological and political education construction based on revolutionary archives resources (Di, X, 2022)', 'design of ideological and political micro-courses in archival thought (Zhu, L., & Wang, S, 2021)' and 'construction path of ideological and political education in archival graduate courses.'

However, archival science tends to focus on the integration of ideological and political education into professional courses. Relatively few research works are available on ideological and political education in practical courses — extracurricular activities in the second classroom (including archives, libraries, and school history museums). Relevant discussions have focused on topics such as 'construction strategies for ideological and political education in practical courses in archival profession' (Song, X., & Xing, Y, 2022) and 'combination path of patriotism education in archives and ideological and political education' (Jiang, D., Wang, F., & Han, S, 2014). There still exists a gap in investigating the effectiveness of ideological and political education in second classroom courses. Hence, this research focused on designing questionnaires based on various theories such as technology acceptance, social exchange, use and gratification, and show up theories. It investigated the influences of ideological and political education in courses offered by university archives and school history museums, examining the current status and affecting factors of ideological and political education in these courses in new liberal arts environment. This was of theoretical and practical importance in promoting research on the construction of ideological and political education in practical courses in universities.

## **2. Theoretical Foundation and Model Construction**

### *2.1 Theoretical Foundation*

Davis introduced technology acceptance model (TAM) in 1989, which posited that the behavioral intention of an individual was affected by the combined effects of perceived usefulness and ease of application (Davis F, 1989). In assessing the effectiveness of ideological and political education in the second classroom, selection of learning contents by learning subject should be easily accessible. Hence, this research introduced the variable "perceived ease of use," suggesting that when facing ideological and political education in university archives and history museums, perceived ease of use affected students' choices to engage with these courses.

Katz proposed "uses and gratifications" theory based on audience perception, to mainly determine the psychological and behavioral utilities that using specific media for communication could bring to individuals.

According to uses and gratifications theory, in ideological and political education classrooms in archives and university history museums, the learning subjects could actively select the ideological and political information they needed. The primary goal of university archives and history museums in conducting ideological and political education is to understand and analyze the properties and requirements of learning subjects, which could better promote the construction of ideological and political education in practical courses. Hence, by choosing the factors affecting “satisfaction” and “likability,” attention was paid to the content of ideological and political education.

Lazarsfeld et al. developed “two-step flow theory” in 1940s, suggesting that mass communication information was not directly transmitted to the general audience. Instead, opinion leaders first comprehended the information and willingly passed it on to general audience (Zhang, F, 2012). In the ideological and political education of archives and university history museums, interpreters and tour guides essentially act as “opinion leaders.” Through comprehension and narration of these “opinion leaders,” ideological and political information from archives is conveyed to learning subjects. Therefore, the variables “willingness to share” and “persuasion ability” were adopted to explore the effects of teaching subjects on ideological and political education.

Show up theory is a new theory in online product marketing. The fundamental condition of a product to eventually be sold was to appear on the consumer’s purchasable list at the right time and in appropriate way. Products not appearing in a timely manner were considered equivalent to non-existent (Baidu Baike, 2019). Ideological and political education in archives and university history museums could also be considered as a “product” for the spiritual development of learning subjects, which was applicable to show up theory. Hence, this research selected the variables “course timing” and “course frequency” to evaluate the cognitive and behavioral aspects of learning subjects regarding ideological and political education in university archives and history museums.

Zhejiang University of Finance and Economics integrated the education of university history into the construction of the ideological and political system of the school. This University adhered to conducting education on the history and current situation of the university at the beginning of each academic year, providing an immersive ideological and political education platform for party and youth league activities. Since its opening in November 2014, university history museum has provided ideological and political education for more than 38,000 students. This was achieved through activities such as history lectures during freshmen orientation and incorporation of ideological and political education into the second classroom, gradually realizing the value of practical ideological and political education.

In summary, according to TAM, uses and gratifications theory, two-step flow theory, and show up theory, and considering objective conditions affecting course evaluation such as communication media, information content, and learning conditions, this research adopted six variables of perceived ease of use, willingness to share, expected reward, satisfaction and likability, media exposure timing, and media exposure coverage to develop a conceptual model. Taking the ideological and political education in archives and university history museums at Zhejiang University of Finance and Economics as an example, this research empirically tested the practical effects of ideological and political education in university archives and history museums based on new liberal arts background.

## *2.2 Hypothesis Deduction*

### *2.2.1 Willingness of College Students to Accept*

In the diffusion of innovations theory developed by Rogers, information dissemination process involved awareness — persuasion — decision — implementation — confirmation (Everett M. ROGERS, 2019). Awareness and persuasion stages represented the process of college students’ ideological and political information acceptance. Hence, the acceptance of ideological and political information in school history museum of universities sets the starting point for practical classroom ideological and political education. Willingness of college students to receive ideological and political education in school history museum classroom had a fundamental effect on the effectiveness of classroom ideological and political education. Therefore, this research proposed the following hypothesis:

H1: Willingness to accept has a positive effect on the effectiveness of ideological and political education among college students.

### *2.2.2 Usefulness of Content and Willingness to Accept*

According to TAM model, perceived usefulness is a major factor affecting college students’ motivation and stronger perceived willingness resulted in higher possibility of prompt action. Xun confirmed that the perceived interest and satisfaction of college students in the ideological and political education of the university history museum were crucial factors influencing their continued acceptance (Zhan X. & Yan X, 2014). Hence, the following hypotheses were proposed in this research:

H2: Perceived usefulness has a positive effect on college students' willingness to accept.

H3: College students' satisfaction has a positive effect on their willingness to accept.

#### 2.2.3 Reward Mechanism and Willingness to Accept

Blau developed social exchange theory suggesting that the anticipated value of returns expected from interactions was one of the key factors driving interactive behaviors. Consequently, it could be inferred that in the process of conducting ideological and political education in university history museums, the anticipated value had an important effect on college students' participation in the ideological and political education of the university history museum. This anticipated value could be a reward mechanism under a credit system (Ma, J., Zhao, T., Tian, Y., & Deng, J, 2022), such as credits for the second classroom and honorary titles. This reward mechanism could motivate college students to take a positive attitude towards participation. Hence, the following hypotheses were proposed in this research:

H4: Reward mechanism has a positive effect on college students' willingness to participate.

H5: Rich content has a positive effect on college students' participation in ideological and political education.

#### 2.2.4 Course Frequency, Timing, and Willingness to Accept

Based on show up theory, conducting courses at specific times and increasing course frequency could enhance college students' awareness and, consequently, increase their willingness to accept such ideological and political courses. This led to the following hypotheses in this research:

H6: The frequency of ideological and political education courses has a positive effect on college students' willingness to accept.

H7: The timing of ideological and political education course offerings has a positive effect on college students' willingness to accept.

In summary, the hypotheses proposed in this research are summarized in Table 1 and the model is illustrated in Figure 1.

Table 1. Model Hypotheses

Hypotheses	
H1	The willingness to accept positively impacts the ideological and political education effectiveness in college students
H2	Perceived usefulness has a positive effect on college students' willingness to accept
H3	College students' satisfaction has a positive effect on their willingness to accept
H4	The reward mechanism has a positive effect on college students' willingness to participate
H5	Rich content has a positive effect on college students' participation in ideological and political education
H6	The frequency of ideological and political education courses has a positive effect on college students' willingness to accept
H7	The timing of ideological and political education course offerings has a positive effect on college students' willingness to accept

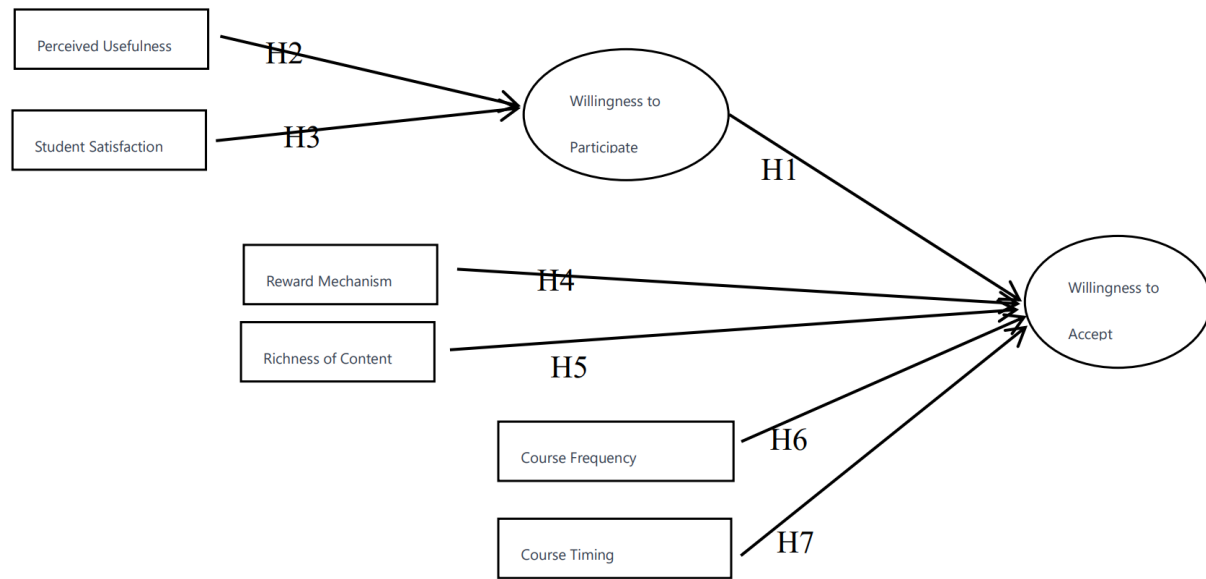


Figure 1. The Developed Theoretical Model

### 3. Scale Development and Data Collection

#### 3.1 Determination of Variable Measurement Items

To validate the developed theoretical model and hypotheses, this research adopted current students at Zhejiang University of Finance and Economics, ignoring inter-subject differences. Questionnaire survey method was adopted and 5-point scale Likert was applied in designing the questionnaires which was consisting of “strongly disagree”, “disagree”, “neutral”, “agree” and “strongly agree”. Survey questionnaire comprised two parts: the first part covered personal basic properties and the second part investigated willingness to accept and related variables with total of 18 items. The measurement of research variables, drawing on well-established measurements in various literatures, utilized Davis, 1989 scale for perceived usefulness, attitude, and willingness to participate, comprising 7 items. The measurement of expected reward was performed based on the conceptual definition provided by researchers such Wesley Shu et al., with a scale of 3 items. Satisfaction and liking as well as the usefulness of content were measured based on the scale developed by Jarvenpaa in 2000, which comprised 4 items. Course frequency and course timing were measured according to appearance theory with a scale of 4 items.

#### 3.2 Data Collection

Pre-survey for questionnaire, focusing on investigating factors influencing college students’ willingness to accept ideological and political education in the school history museum classroom, was performed on Questionnaire Star platform. 36 questionnaires were distributed and collected. According to the gathered data and feedback, the reliability and validity of the questionnaires met the requirements for scale measurement. Therefore, the author adopted this questionnaire as the final version. Questionnaires were distributed on Questionnaire Star platform, with a total of the collected 252 questionnaires, and 245 valid questionnaires, achieving an effectiveness rate of 97.2%.

### 4. Data Analysis and Empirical Conclusions

#### 4.1 Reliability Analysis

To explore the reliability of scale data results, this research applied SPSS 25.0 and conducted reliability analyses using Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. Generally, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients of greater than 0.7 and corrected item-total correlation (CITC) values of greater than 0.5 are considered as indicators of good reliability for a questionnaire. As presented in Table 2, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients in this questionnaire ranged from 0.7 to 0.9 for different variables and CITC values were all above 0.5, indicating good reliability in sample data.

Table 2. Reliability Analysis

Variable	Indicator	CITC	Cronbach $\alpha$ Coefficient
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Willingness to Participate	a1	.700	.821
	a2	.718	
	a3	.621	
Willingness to Accept	b1	.666	.798
	b2	.666	
Perceived Usefulness	c1	.637	.773
	c2	.637	
Satisfaction and Favorability	d1	.657	.788
	d2	.657	
Richness of Content	e1	.655	.792
	e2	.655	
Reward Mechanism	f1	.795	.904
	f2	.826	
	f3	.810	
Course Frequency	g1	.755	.860
	g2	.755	
Course Timing	h1	.748	.856
	h2	.748	

#### 4.2 Validity Test

The accuracy and validity of scale variables need to be evaluated through validity analyses and factor analysis of the measurement scale is a common method for validity testing. Hence, this research performed factor analysis on the eight extracted variables and cumulative explained variances are summarized in Table 3. Cumulative explained variance for all variables was above 50%, indicating that various indicators in the questionnaire had good construct validity.

Table 3. Validity Analysis Results

Variable	Cumulative Explained Variance %
Participation Willingness	73.988%
Acceptance Willingness	83.307%
Perceived Usefulness	81.848%
Satisfaction and Favorability	82.841%
Richness of Content	82.771%
Reward Mechanism	84.011%
Course Frequency	87.746%
Course Timing	87.386%

#### 4.3 Model Development and Fit Analysis

Based on the theoretical framework presented in Figure 1 and incorporating questionnaire data, a structural equation model was developed using AMOS to derive a model for the effectiveness of ideological and political education in university archives, as shown in Figure 2.

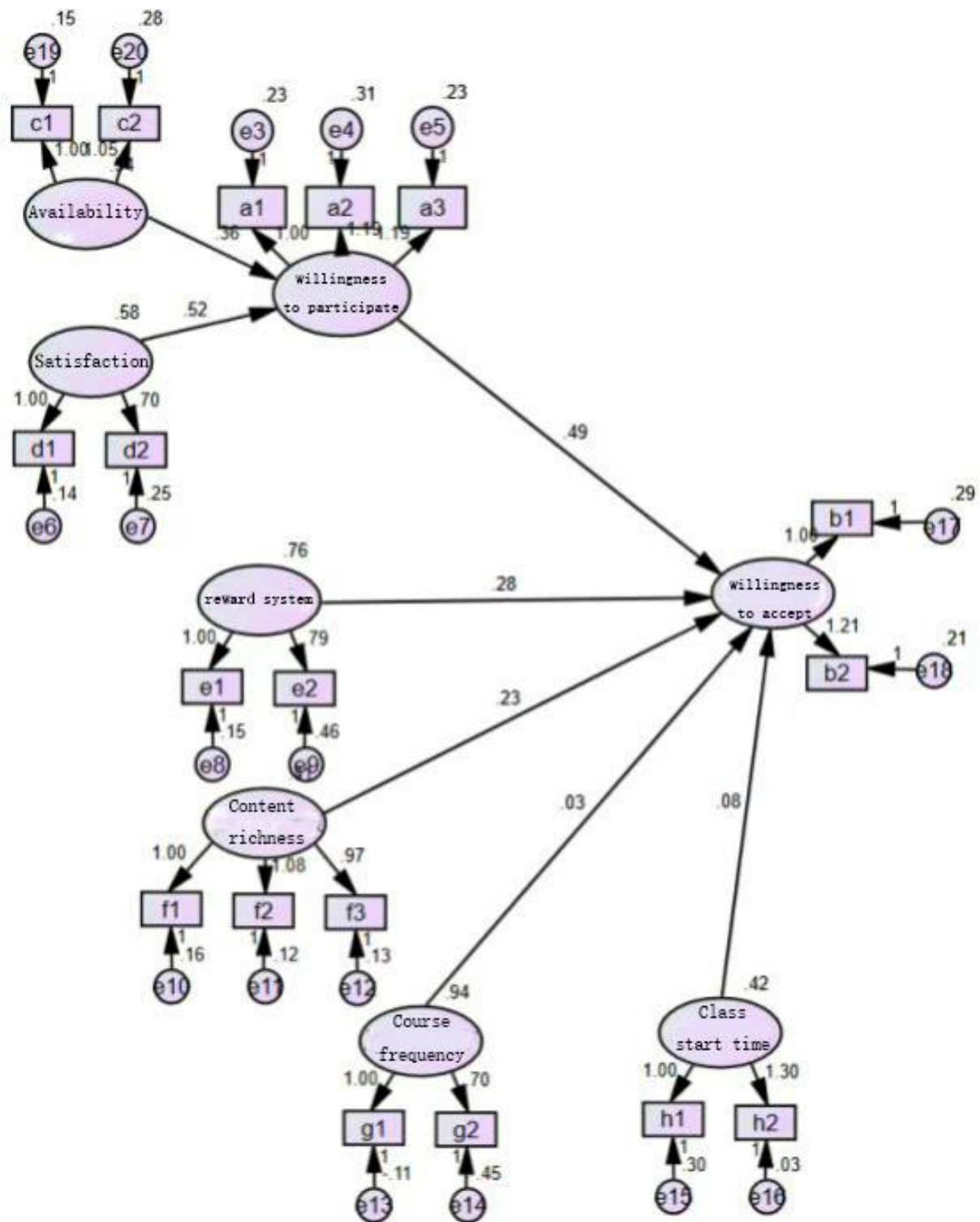


Figure 2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Also, AMOS output report was examined to achieve model fit results, as given in Table 4.

Table 4. Model Fit Results

Indicator	GFI	AGFI	NFI	NNFI	CFI	IFI	RFI	RMR	RMSEA
Indicator Value	0.91	0.85	0.93	0.93	0.94	0.96	0.92	0.030	0.070

From Table 4, it was seen that AGFI value was 0.85, slightly below but close to 0.9; RMR value was 0.030, which was below 0.05; RMSEA value was 0.070, which was below 0.08; and other indicators were all above 0.9. Hence, the model exhibited a relatively high goodness of fit.

#### 4.4 Hypothesis Testing Results Analysis

According to Figure 2 and using AMOS to explore the significance of each hypothesis path, the test results were obtained which are detailed in Table 5.

Table 5. Significance Results of Hypothesis Path Coefficients

	Relationship	Estimated	Confidence Check	Test Results
H1	Participation Willingness<-> Acceptance Willingness	.490	***	Support
H2	Acceptance Willingness <-> Usefulness Perception	.363	***	Support
H3	Acceptance Willingness <-> Satisfaction	.517	***	Support
H4	Acceptance Willingness <-> Reward Mechanism	.282	***	Support
H5	Acceptance Willingness <-> Richness of Content	.226	***	Support
H6	Acceptance Willingness <-> Course Frequency	.025	.615	Not Supported
H7	Acceptance Willingness <-> Course Timing	.076.	.0164	Not Supported

In Table 5, Estimated represents the degree of correlation significance, and Confidence Check indicates the reliability of data results. From the table, it was evident that H1 to H5 had passed hypothesis testing, while H6 and H7 did not pass. This implied that reward mechanisms, satisfaction, and content richness significantly and positively affected willingness to accept. On the other hand, the frequency and timing of courses did not have a significant effect on willingness to accept.

#### 4.5 Conclusion

Through analyses, the following conclusions were drawn: 1) Path coefficient from participation willingness to acceptance willingness was 0.49 and path coefficients from usefulness and satisfaction to acceptance willingness were 0.36 and 0.52, respectively, indicating that participation willingness had the most significant influence on the participation of college students in archival and historical courses. 2) Path coefficient from reward mechanisms to acceptance willingness was 0.28 and that from content richness to acceptance willingness was 0.23, suggesting that reward mechanisms and content richness had significant positive impacts. 3) Path coefficient from course frequency to acceptance willingness was 0.03 and that from course timing to transmission willingness was 0.08. None of these path coefficients passed confidence check, indicating that course frequency and timing did not have significant impacts on acceptance willingness.

### 5. Implications

According to the results of the performed empirical study, the following insights were gained: 1) To further enhance the effectiveness of archival and historical courses in universities, university archives and historical departments should strengthen resource construction for archival and historical ideological education. This involves in-depth evaluation and integration of archival and historical ideological education resources, systematizing and digitizing information, and forming valuable ideological education materials for classrooms to increase the richness of ideological content within archives and meet ideological learning needs of college students to maximum extent. 2) Introduction of incentive mechanisms into ideological education activities in university archives can enhance the effectiveness of these courses. Providing diverse rewards and adjusting them in a timely manner based on students' feedback can stimulate the enthusiasm of college students to actively participate in archival and historical ideological education. Through incentive measures and continually increasing attention and cohesion of students with the ideological information within the archives, the overall effectiveness of archival and historical courses in universities can be improved. 3) Archival and historical ideological information should be easily accessible and convenient to use. Application of interactive settings through new media in courses can enhance classroom experience of college students, attract their attention, and thus enhance the effectiveness of ideological education in the classroom.



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