

Short-video platforms and ideological and political education among university students: impacts and optimization strategies

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Abstract: In the new media era, short videos have become a vital medium for college students to acquire information, engage in social interaction, and express themselves. With fragmented, visualized, and highly interactive communication features, short videos have reshaped the communication paradigm of ideological and political education in universities. Compared with traditional educational models, short videos break through temporal, spatial and formal limitations, closely connect with students' daily lives, effectively broaden the coverage of ideological and political education, and improve student participation. Owing to uneven quality of online information, the recommendation mechanism of algorithms and the proliferation of entertainment-oriented content, college students' value-oriented education is being undermined, which presents new challenges for ideological and political education. This paper will systematically study the two-way effect of short-video platforms on the ideological and political education of university students, summarize the current problems in educational practice, and propose optimization strategies for content creation, media literacy among educators, platform governance, institutional support, etc. The purpose of this paper is to promote the effective application of short videos in ideological and political education and improve the quality and efficiency of online education.

Keywords: short-video platforms; university students; ideological and political education; optimization strategies

1 Introduction

1.1 Research background

With the development of the mobile Internet, short-video platforms such as Douyin, Kuaishou and Bilibili have become very popular. Short videos feature concise and intuitive content, striking visual presentation, and an immersive viewing experience. They fit the media consumption habits and fast-paced lifestyles of contemporary young people, and have become a popular means for young people to acquire information and engage in online entertainment [1].

Ideological and political education at the university level is meant to foster the moral qualities and values of students. Traditionally, most of the teaching has been delivered in a classroom setting. Fixed formats, lack of interaction and slow response to changes in society have reduced the appeal of this type of work in the current all-media era. Short-video platforms have brought about new forms of education and communication; they are relatively accessible to students, yet these platforms also expose young users to diverse, mixed ideas and a complex online environment [2]. Therefore, the university should be fully aware of the problems and formulate more targeted and practical educational plans.

1.2 Significance of the study

This paper focuses on the ideological and political education of college students in the era of short-video communication, exploring both the educational advantages provided by short-video platforms and the problems that have arisen in actual teaching. This paper broadens the discussion on ideological and political education within the new-media environment and provides references for improving universities' online education systems. It further draws on the communication features of short-video platforms as well as university students' thinking and behavioral characteristics to propose corresponding suggestions. These measures can help the university make better use of new media, develop more flexible forms of ideological and political education, reduce the risks of online communication, and improve the relevance and effectiveness of educational practice.

1.3 Research methods

The three types of research methods adopted in this paper are as follows: First, a literature review will be conducted to collect and analyze domestic and foreign studies as well as official policy documents on new media and ideological and political education in universities, so as to provide a theoretical foundation for this study. Second, logical analysis will be used to examine both the positive effects and potential problems of short-video platforms for ideological and political education from all aspects. Third, inductive analysis will be employed to identify the major problems existing in the current application of short videos in ideological and political education. Corresponding practical improvement measures will then be put forward.

2 Positive effects of short-video platforms on ideological and political education among university students

2.1 Overcoming temporal and spatial constraints and expanding educational settings

Traditional ideological and political education is generally conducted at fixed times and in physical classrooms; therefore, it is difficult to achieve full-student coverage. With the prevalence of mobile phones, students can view educational content from various places at any time. They can view the constructive material during their break or other free time and extend ideological and political education beyond the classroom to the online world.

Accordingly, classroom teaching can better connect with off-campus learning and expand the scope of education. It can also disseminate national ideological and political values.

2.2 Diversifying communication and increasing the appeal of ideological and political education

Short videos can utilize text, pictures, sound, animation, dramatized scenes, etc., to present abstract ideological and political theories in an easier-to-understand and interesting audiovisual form [3]. Thus, it has been feasible to avoid the stiffness and strong teaching tone of traditional one-way instruction.

Content that is in line with the aesthetic preferences and ways of thinking of young people will be more attractive and less likely to be ignored. Therefore, the students will be able to understand and accept the ideological and political ideas more easily, increasing the emotional appeal and educational effect.

2.3 Enriching educational content and responding to students' developmental needs

Short-video platforms provide a large number of rich and regularly updated resources on revolutionary history and culture, contemporary role models, legal education, mental health, current social issues, etc. Thus, it is possible to address the problem that traditional teaching materials are outdated and limited in scope [4].

At the same time, short videos feature strong interactivity and serve as convenient channels for teacher-student communication. By observing the comment sections and users' remarks, educators will be able to learn students' concerns, their attitudes toward ideological-political content, and shifts in their ideological outlooks; then, they can provide

appropriate and targeted ideological education.

3 Challenges posed by short-video platforms to ideological and political education among university students

3.1 Information disorder and its influence on mainstream values

The low threshold for short-video content creation makes it impossible for platforms to conduct comprehensive and effective censorship of all uploaded content, resulting in the coexistence of high-quality positive content and various harmful information. Erroneous ideological trends such as materialism, hedonism and historical nihilism spread widely through short videos. Some videos deliberately distort historical facts and deconstruct the images of heroic figures, which spread rapidly through online channels and form a negative public opinion atmosphere.

College students are in a critical stage of value formation and development with immature abilities in information screening and judgment. Long-term exposure to fragmented and misleading harmful content will easily interfere with their value judgment and weaken their recognition of mainstream ideology and social values.

3.2 Algorithmic recommendations and the formation of filter bubbles

Short-video platforms deliver personalized content based on users' interests and browsing records, continuously solidifying homogeneous information circles for users. College students who spend long hours watching entertainment-oriented short videos will gradually lose interest in serious and theoretical ideological and political content. Their access to different viewpoints may therefore become limited, while their thinking may grow increasingly fixed.

Algorithms are likely to promote the spread of content with high entertainment value more frequently. It will reduce the exposure of high-quality ideological-political content and weaken the influence of mainstream educational forces on the Internet.

3.3 Excessive entertainment and the loss of educational seriousness

In pursuit of traffic and user attention, many short-video platforms have begun to promote low-quality and entertaining content. To gain attention, some videos parody revolutionary culture or treat significant historical events lightly.

Prolonged exposure to an entertainment-oriented media environment may make students more impatient and feel that school life is not very useful, thus ignoring their study, moral education and personality development. The same problem may occur in videos created by universities when teachers focus too much on entertainment and reduce the depth and seriousness of the education [5].

4 Existing problems in short-video-based ideological and political education for university students

4.1 Insufficient new media competence among ideological and political educators

Most ideological and political education teachers and student counselors have a strong theoretical background, yet many lack practical experience in video production, account management, platform operation, and online public-opinion analysis.

Some teachers lack an in-depth understanding of online teaching and fail to leverage the functions of short-video platforms. As a result, they may be unwilling to use new media in their teaching and have difficulty meeting the practical requirements of modern online education.

4.2 Inadequate content governance and public-opinion response mechanisms

The content moderation system of short-video platforms is still weak, and harmful information cannot always be promptly detected and addressed.

All-round mechanisms for monitoring, evaluating and addressing the problem of public opinion in the background of short videos have not been fully established at the university level. There is often no guidance for students' online behaviour and expression, and therefore it is not easy to address the ideological risks of short-video platforms. As such, the whole risk-prevention system for online ideological- political education is not yet mature.

4.3 Weak coordination among educational stakeholders

Universities, short-video platforms, families, and wider social actors often conduct educational activities independently, without forming an effective collaborative structure.

Short-video-based ideological-political education in universities is also frequently organized through temporary and fragmented initiatives. The absence of long-term planning, assessment, and incentive mechanisms makes such work inconsistent and prevents the development of a regular and sustainable educational system.

5 Strategies for improving ideological and political education through short-video platforms

5.1 Developing high-quality content and building an effective communication system

Universities should put the quality of content at the forefront of short-video-based ideological and political education and produce professionally designed materials that are in line with the daily lives of students.

More diverse presentation forms should be adopted, such as commentary on current affairs, documentary-style coverage of campus life, interviews with outstanding people, short dramas, etc. The ideas and political concepts need to be presented in an understandable way through audiovisual works.

The source of the original material should be campus life, the spirit of the times and young people's sense of social responsibility. Universities can also have a regular series of themed issues and columns. Moving away from the rigid and overly didactic form of communication will help to increase the emotional appeal and spread of educational content and strengthen the influence of authoritative voices in the online environment.

5.2 Strengthening professional teams and improving new-media educational capacity

Ideological and political educators should update their educational approaches, adopt an all-media perspective, and recognize short-video platforms as an important part of the contemporary educational environment.

Universities should provide regular training in short-video production, platform operation, content promotion, and online public-opinion response. Such training can support the development of interdisciplinary teams capable of carrying out online ideological and political education.

Teacher-student production teams should also be set up. Students with some experience in new media can be involved in planning and creating content; a collaborative model will be established, in which teachers set the educational direction and students contribute their understanding of youth culture and platforms.

5.3 Strengthening governance and creating a healthier online educational environment

Short-video platforms should take more responsibility for content governance, strengthen the moderation system, and promptly remove vulgar, false or illegal harmful materials. More prominence should also be given to constructive and high-quality ideological and political content.

Universities should regularly monitor the online public opinion of the school to address false and damaging information in a timely manner. Digital literacy needs to be incorporated into students' education to help them better judge information critically, recognize their own online behaviour, resist harmful content, and regulate their use of short-video platforms.

5.4 Establishing coordinated and sustainable educational mechanisms

Universities, short-video platforms, families and society should cooperate to jointly build an educational system.

Through such joint efforts, high-quality resources can deliver stable and high-quality teaching for all students.

A communication system should be established for this purpose. Data from short-video platforms enables university educators to identify students' interests and concerns, so they can adjust the content and forms of education.

Universities should adjust their assessment-and-incentive systems to include short-video-based education in overall assessments. Support and recognition for high-quality content can help promote the sustained and stable development of online ideological-political education.

5.5 Diversifying communication and limiting filter bubbles

Universities should work together with the short-video platform to disseminate ideological-political ideas among students. Recommendations for featured items, themed activities and campus-based media can help reduce the effect of the entertainment-driven algorithm.

Short videos ought to be incorporated into the ideological and political courses as supplementary teaching resources. Some of the selected videos can be used to deliver theoretical instruction and foster active learning among students. This will motivate greater student engagement, stimulate critical thinking, and enhance the overall learning experience.

6 Conclusion

Short videos have both positive and negative effects on college ideological and political education. They are new channels for the ideological and political education of youth, but there are also some potential problems such as deviations in values, limited cognitive horizons and excessive entertainment.

Breaking the constraints of time, space and form in traditional education, short videos have made ideological and political content more accessible and appealing. Nevertheless, uneven online information quality, algorithmic recommendation mechanisms and students' excessive use of short-video platforms jointly weaken the educational effectiveness of short-video-based ideological and political education.

Universities should adapt to the evolving media environment and adhere to the fundamental task of moral cultivation. By producing high-quality educational content, improving educators' media literacy, strengthening platform governance and establishing sound long-term institutional mechanisms, universities can better integrate short-video platforms into ideological and political education.

This study aims to build a more targeted and sustainable online ideological and political education system, guide college students to establish correct values, enhance their sense of social responsibility, and contribute to social progress and national development.

Conflicts of interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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