

Research on online video culture and adolescent ideological and political education

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Abstract: Youth ideological and political education is an important component of overall youth education; the emergence of online video culture has exerted a significant influence on this field. Online video culture is characterized by openness, freedom, strong timeliness, and high interactivity. While these characteristics have a positive impact on youth ideological and political education, they also pose substantial pressure and challenges to its effectiveness. By leveraging online video culture to guide moral education through factual content and employing entertainment-based education as a method to promote civic education and emotional expression to strengthen psychological education, it can play a vital role in enhancing the effectiveness of youth ideological and political education.

Keywords: Online video culture, Ideological and political education, Moral education, psychological education

1. Introduction

China today is undergoing a profound transformation characterized by technological advancement, marketization, and informatization. The dominant mode of information dissemination has shifted from a language-based culture centered on text to a visual culture dominated by imagery. This convergence of visual culture and digital technology has propelled online media—such as the internet, mobile devices, and blogs—into primary channels for public information access. With the deepening penetration of the internet, network culture has proliferated rapidly, giving rise to increasingly specialized subsets, including online visual culture, online textual culture, and online video culture. As the first generation develops in tandem with network culture, adolescents are uniquely and profoundly impacted by it. The emergence of online video culture has exerted a disruptive influence on ideological and political education for young people. Consequently, strengthening research on this cultural form is essential to achieving substantive improvements in the effectiveness of such educational efforts.

2. Characteristics of online video culture

2.1. The evolution of the web 2.0 era

Network culture—an information-based culture predicated on trans-regional dissemination via the Internet—comprises essential elements such as computers and peripherals, netizens, virtual cyberspace, and digitization, collectively fostering novel modes of existence, activity, and cognition. As Jack Ma observed, society is transitioning from the IT era to the DT era, representing not merely a technological upgrade but a paradigm shift from a "self-centric" to an "other-centric" ideology. This evolution is epitomized by the shift from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0, where the former operated as a unilateral broadcast model (akin to radio or television) with corporations monopolizing content generation for passive consumption, while the latter constitutes a user-centric platform model enabling dynamic interaction. Web 2.0 is defined by four salient characteristics: user sharing of real-time information, persistent information aggregation within cyberspace, the formation of interest-based communities through a "clustering effect," and unrestricted open platforms that facilitate unconstrained expression. Consequently, Web 2.0 transforms the Internet from a static

repository of corporate-published content into a dynamic seminar—exemplified by microblogs, blogs, and forums—where users actively generate diverse content based on personal interests and engage in multilateral commentary and exchange, fundamentally reshaping the architecture of network culture.

2.2. The multidimensional features of video culture

As a nascent cultural form, network culture performs several core functions: orientation, transmission, permeation, and education. Online video culture—a prominent subset of this phenomenon—inherently possesses all these network-based attributes while exhibiting four distinctive characteristics of its own. First, it demonstrates pronounced interactivity. In the Web 2.0 era, information recipients function concurrently as content disseminators; viewers not only consume video content but also articulate critiques and engage in multilateral dialogue with creators and other users, thereby forging potent currents of public opinion. Second, it offers immediacy and rapid dissemination. The information age has actualized the adage that one can "know all under heaven without stepping outside one's door"; a video capturing an emergent event can accrue millions of views within hours, achieving near-instantaneous ubiquity. Third, it delivers heightened audio-visual impact. Compared to static text or images, video provides dynamic, vivid, and intuitive sensory engagement. By integrating moving images with auditory explanation, it strips away the high abstraction of linguistic codes and the physical heft of print media. This immediacy collapses the distance between the perceiver and the object, liberating viewers from constraints imposed by cultural literacy or linguistic proficiency; consequently, the cognitive impact and societal influence of disseminated information are significantly amplified. Finally, online video content is marked by heterogeneity and informational dissonance. Given that participants of varying ages, educational backgrounds, moral standards, and value systems converge in cyberspace, the resulting content is a mixed repository of both merit and malice.

3. Impact of online video adolescent ideology

3.1. Beyond time and space: online video as a pedagogical frontier

The adolescent population is predominantly composed of individuals born in the 1990s; this younger generation has been immersed in the digital age from birth, closely following and adapting to its developments, while simultaneously driving the advancement of this era forward. Their behavior clearly reflects the influence exerted by the online video culture of the digital age. The impact of this online video culture on the ideological and political education of adolescents stems ultimately from the distinctive characteristics of this culture itself; this influence encompasses both positive and negative aspects.

The positive impact of online video culture on the ideological and political education of adolescents: Firstly, the Web 2.0 era is characterized by user-generated sharing, information aggregation, and open platforms; as a result, ideological and political education for adolescents through online video culture has been expanded in terms of both time and space compared to traditional approaches. The convenient channels for accessing information enable adolescents to obtain vast amounts of learning materials on ideological and political education without leaving their homes, whether by searching for online instructional videos or recordings of lectures delivered by renowned educators. This allows adolescents to understand the knowledge they acquire in a vivid and intuitive manner, thereby enhancing their interest in learning; furthermore, once these learning materials and instructional videos are downloaded, they can be stored for an extended period and viewed or rewatched multiple times, which helps consolidate the acquired knowledge and improve learning efficiency. Secondly, traditional ideological and political education is constrained by the theoretical expertise of the instructors; generally, the higher an instructor's theoretical knowledge level, the more effective their teaching tends to be, whereas the opposite holds true. In contrast, within the context of online video culture, students can explore a wide range of knowledge and content related to their studies, broaden their horizons, and stay informed about the latest research findings in relevant fields, thereby overcoming the limitations imposed by the theoretical expertise of individual teachers [2]. Furthermore, given that online video culture possesses permeating and educational functions—and is characterized by its high visual appeal and significant impact—when adolescents watch videos circulating on the internet that promote patriotic education, education on socialist core values, or other content conveying positive messages, they experience a subtle yet profound influence on the

formation of correct values and worldviews. This, in turn, plays a positive role in fostering the innovation of traditional concepts among adolescents, supporting their personal development, and helping them cultivate a healthy psychological state, thereby facilitating the implementation of ideological and political education initiatives among young people.

3.2. Amidst the mire and sand: the impact of negative information

3.2.1. Disordered content ecosystem

Just as a coin has two sides, online video culture is also a double-edged sword that exerts a significant negative influence on ideological and political education, particularly on the ideological and political education of young people. This negative impact stems from the mixed nature of online videos, as mentioned earlier. In the Web 2.0 era, online platforms are characterized by openness; users can freely upload videos to the internet based on their preferences for others to watch. As a result, this openness and spontaneity lead to a diverse range of videos being disseminated—containing both positive and negative content. Today's Generation Z youth place greater emphasis on individuality and excitement; however, videos with positive messaging are often perceived as dull and fail to capture their interest, whereas leaked or negative content tends to attract their attention and spread at an exponential rate—mirroring the saying, "Bad news travels fast" [3]. To attract such users' attention, increase click-through rates, or boost website traffic, many internet users and online video platforms often deliberately seek out sensational or negative videos. When such content is unavailable, they may use video editing techniques to modify originally positive videos, altering them so that they convey ideas contrary to the original intent. Psychologist Kurt Lewin proposed a well-known theory in communication studies known as the "Gatekeeper Theory," which posits that after news media gather a vast amount of information from various sources, it undergoes a process of editing and filtering; the criteria for selecting this information depend on the "gatekeeper" themselves. As times have changed, this theory has also evolved: the "gatekeepers" are no longer just one individual but multiple actors. Take simple news reporting, for example: the creation of a news story begins with a journalist conducting real-time interviews and investigations; then, based on the findings from these interviews and investigations, a dedicated news feature is drafted. To ensure that this news feature is accepted by the editors and subsequently broadcast, it undergoes further editing and refinement before being submitted to the editor; the editor then further edits and revises it before forwarding it to the deputy editor-in-chief; and after the deputy editor-in-chief has reviewed it, it is passed on to the editor-in-chief. Thus, the journalist, the editor, the deputy editor-in-chief, and the editor-in-chief all serve as "gatekeepers" in the processing and dissemination of this news story. Not only has the number of gatekeepers increased, but their role in handling information is no longer limited to simple screening or cutting; it now also involves active editing and processing; for instance, transforming positive content into negative news to capture the audience's attention and create a sensational impact. However, adolescents' correct values and worldview are still developing; they lack the ability to discern the truth from falsehood or to distinguish between right and wrong. As a result, they are often influenced by such information, which poses significant challenges for ideological and political education efforts. To give a simple example: the "Ma Jiajue Incident" and the "Fudan University Poisoning Case" were able to attract intense public attention within a short period, whereas the exemplary deeds highlighted in the annual "Top Ten Heroic Figures" selection are relatively less prominent.

3.2.2. The erosion of educational authority

Moreover, ideological and political education for adolescents within the ecosystem of online video culture exhibits several distinct new characteristics. First, there is a marked erosion of the educator's authority. In the information age, the traditional monopoly of educators over information and experiential reserves has dissipated; adolescents can now access data more rapidly and conveniently than their instructors, thereby undermining the latter's authoritative status.[4] Second, learners' autonomy in content selection has intensified. The open and decentralized nature of the network environment empowers adolescents to selectively engage with content aligned with their preferences. Furthermore, they can synthesize acquired information to formulate independent viewpoints, meaning that the validity of theoretical frameworks is no longer unilaterally dictated by the educator. Consequently, learners possess

significantly greater agency.[5] To secure genuine learner buy-in, pedagogical content must demonstrate enhanced appeal and persuasiveness; otherwise, it will fail to stimulate student interest or foster a sense of identification. This dynamic places considerable pressure on educators in the realm of ideological and political instruction.

3.3. The new landscape of ideological and political education under the "internet+" initiative

On the morning of March 5, 2015, at the Third Session of the 12th National People's Congress, Premier Li Keqiang first introduced the "Internet+" Action Plan in the Government Work Report. The concept of "Internet+" proposed by Premier Li Keqiang represents a further deepening and development compared to the foundational discussion on "using the Internet to transform traditional industries" that had been the focus of earlier conversations among relevant internet enterprises. With the government's strong support for the "Internet+" initiative, the internet industry is poised to enter a new phase of rapid growth; the digital landscape will become increasingly complex and diversified, and the online market will become more open. Meanwhile, the influence of Western values will exert a more intense impact on the existing terrain of ideological and political education, undoubtedly adding to the already formidable challenges facing this field.

4. Optimizing online video for ideological education

Since the launch of the reform and opening-up policy, the Party and the State have begun to place greater emphasis on and strengthen ideological and political education for young people. The reports delivered at the 15th and 16th National Congresses of the Communist Party of China explicitly stated: "Young people represent the future of our motherland and the hope of our nation; therefore, great importance must be attached to the ideological and moral development of young people." The effectiveness of ideological and political education is crucial to the future of the Party and the State; thus, it must be given the highest priority. Strengthening ideological and political education requires the coordinated implementation of various educational initiatives and the adoption of a multi-pronged approach to create a synergistic effect. In the context of online video culture, this can be addressed from the following perspectives.

4.1. Using factual revelations to guide moral education

Moral education serves as the foundation for ideological and political education; the Report to the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China repeatedly emphasized the importance of focusing on "moral construction" as the foundational pillar, defining the fundamental task of education as "cultivating virtue and nurturing talent." Hu Jintao stated: "School education should be rooted in nurturing individuals; among the four aspects of moral, intellectual, physical, and aesthetic development, moral education takes precedence." Xi Jinping pointed out: "To run socialist universities with Chinese characteristics effectively, we must adhere to the principle of cultivating virtue and nurturing talent and integrate the fostering and practice of socialist core values into every aspect of teaching and educating students." We can leverage the social revelation function of videos to serve moral education. Traditional ideological and political education materials often focus on theoretical indoctrination but lack vivid case studies; incorporating real-life materials to support theoretical exposition not only enhances students' interest in learning but also deepens their ability to think critically by connecting theory with practice. By relating these materials to real-world social contexts, students can gain a deeper understanding and engage in thoughtful reflection on seemingly mundane theoretical statements. Videos with positive value-oriented messaging can be fully showcased in the classroom to achieve a positive influence, while videos depicting negative or challenging realities can also be presented to students. By promptly incorporating video materials that reflect new social issues and trends into classroom teaching, we can guide students to adopt a "problem-awareness" approach when contemplating the boundary between theory and reality—thereby effectively addressing the phenomenon of the disconnect between theory and practice in ideological and political education [6].

4.2. Promoting civic education through recreational and educational activities

The report of the 17th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC) introduced the imperative to "strengthen civic awareness education," a call further developed in the report of the 18th CPC

National Congress, which advocated "expanding orderly political participation for citizens across all levels and spheres." This trajectory underscores that building a harmonious socialist society necessitates the emergence of qualified citizens equipped with a sense of agency, awareness of rights, social responsibility, and practical competence. Consequently, it is imperative to integrate civic education into the ideological and political education system within higher education institutions. Civic education is defined as a comprehensive array of pedagogical means aimed at cultivating citizens' effective participation in national and social life. While the philosophy of civic education boasts a long lineage in the West, China's traditional ideological and political education framework has historically exhibited certain deficiencies in this domain. Therefore, China can judiciously draw upon Western experiences and strengths in civic education, adapting them to domestic educational characteristics to formulate tailored policies. Specifically, within the realm of online video culture, institutions can leverage existing university network resource platforms, particularly those utilized for extracurricular student entertainment and content sharing [7]—using video as the primary medium. Through "edutainment" (Yujiro you le) in the "second classroom," educators can promote civic education among adolescents, thereby facilitating the modern transformation of ideological and political education. For instance, domestic films such as *Assembly* and *Not One Less*—which successfully blend entertainment with pedagogical value—can effectively guide adolescents toward core socialist values, subtly disseminating the tenets of ideological and political education [8].

4.3. Strengthening psychological education through emotional support

Amidst the myriad pressures stemming from both the broader societal context and the specific school environment, the mental health of adolescents is a cause for concern. Adolescents are still in a phase of immature psychological development; their emotions are often volatile, making them prone to swinging from one extreme to another. Setting aside the extreme cases—such as self-harm, suicide, or even homicide—that occur among many adolescents due to setbacks related to academics, social interactions, or relationships with the opposite sex at school, even some young teachers responsible for student affairs at schools have succumbed to overwhelming frustration and chosen to end their own lives, triggering what has been described by the media as a "public incident." When psychological issues are not effectively addressed or guided, they can severely impact adolescents' physical health and academic performance. Youth ideological and political education should not only aim to elevate adolescents' moral standards and help them develop correct values and worldviews but also place emphasis on strengthening psychological education, enabling adolescents to learn and live more effectively with a healthy, positive mental state. Given the subtle, guiding, and educational nature of online video culture, we can distribute mental health counseling videos or entertainment programs related to mental well-being on websites that attract significant adolescent attention; alternatively, inspirational videos focused on psychological education can be screened in ideological and political education classes to encourage students to think critically and help them establish a psychological early-warning mechanism to cope with the common setbacks they may encounter in the future. When adolescents face significant stress, providing them with a safe and reliable channel to release and vent their emotions, such as through online stress-relief videos—can help them maintain a relaxed and optimistic mindset, thereby better overcoming the disruptions caused by stress [9].

5. Conclusion

Adolescents represent the future of our nation and the hope of the people; they bear the historic responsibility of realizing the Chinese Dream of the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. Therefore, it is imperative to strengthen the ideological and political education of young people. Scientific and technological advancements will inevitably propel informatization toward a more open and convenient direction. While online culture, dominated by online video content, presents significant opportunities for the ideological and political education of adolescents, it also carries greater adverse impacts. Only by intensifying research on the integration of online video culture into ideological and political education for adolescents and by making full use of this double-edged sword can we ensure that it plays an even more prominent role in the effective implementation of such education.

6. References

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