

A Study on the Impact of Short Videos on the Ideological and Political Education of College Students and the Corresponding Countermeasures

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Abstract: This study looks at how short video communication influences college students' ideological and political education and puts forward a more organized response strategy. To do this, the research uses questionnaire surveys, in-depth interviews, and bibliometric analysis, combining theoretical discussion with empirical investigation. The findings suggest that short videos, as a new carrier for education, have clear educational value. At the same time, problems in their content ecology and the fragmented way they spread can also create negative effects. These effects are not minor. In response, the study builds a strategy framework from three dimensions: governance subjects, educational fields, and educated individuals. More specifically, it argues for stronger supervision mechanisms in campus network governance, the production of high-quality short video content, and better media literacy so college students can identify and use media information more effectively. It also proposes stronger positive value guidance, new teaching models in pedagogical practice, and support for independent learning and self-discipline at the level of individual growth. Together, these measures provide practical support for ideological and political education practitioners as they adjust college student education to the short video context.

Keywords: New media; College students; Education; Impact; Countermeasures; Short videos

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1. Introduction

1.1. Research background

In the contemporary digital communication field, short videos have rapidly risen to become a highly popular content carrier in the social media ecosystem due to their unique advantages of immediacy, ease of operation, and integration of audio and video. According to the latest industry statistics, by the end of 2025, the total

number of short video users has soared to 1.074 billion, and this number accounts for 95.4% of the total number of Chinese netizens ^[1]. Among them, college students constitute one of the core user groups on short video platforms ^[2].

Short videos not only offer users a convenient channel to access information but also, through real-time interaction and decentralized dissemination models, create a content ecosystem involving the whole people. Under such a background, college students, as digital natives, have a particularly high degree of participation in short videos, and their study, daily life, and social behaviors are deeply influenced ^[3].

Within the basic framework of talent cultivation in higher education, ideological and political education is responsible for shaping college students' world outlook, outlook on life, and values, while guiding them to form lofty ideals, firm beliefs, and sound moral principles. As short videos have become part of nearly every aspect of campus life, examining how they affect ideological and political education among college students, and through which paths, has clear practical value.

1.2. Problem statement

The rapid development of short videos not only brings new opportunities but also presents a great many challenges to the ideological and political education of college students. On the one hand, short videos with abundant educational resources and innovative dissemination forms supply new media and new approaches for ideological and political education. On the other hand, things like the uneven quality of short video content and the information narrowing that is caused by the algorithm recommendation mechanism have also exerted complex influences on college students' ideological concepts and value judgments ^[4].

Current research on the impact of short videos on the ideological and political education of college students has made some progress, but it still lacks breadth and depth. In some studies, the focus is mainly on the negative effects of short videos, while their possible positive role receives much less attention. The gap is fairly clear. Some research also does not connect closely enough with the actual practice of ideological and political education in colleges and universities, so the proposed countermeasures often have limited relevance and are difficult to apply ^[5].

In view of this, this study is committed to analyzing the impact of short videos on the ideological and political education of college students from multiple dimensions, and accordingly exploring effective countermeasures, so as to make up for the deficiencies in the current relevant research fields.

1.3. Research objectives

This study examines how short videos affect the ideological and political education of college students and, on that basis, proposes specific and practical countermeasures and suggestions to provide a scientific reference for practitioners of ideological and political education in colleges and universities.

On the basis of the above research results, this study intends to offer theoretical support and practical guidance for perfecting the ideological and political education system of colleges and universities and raising its educational effect.

The study then analyzes the causes of these influences. Specifically, the analysis covers government regulatory mechanisms, characteristics of short-video platforms, the cultural guiding role of colleges and universities, and the inherent traits of college students. Based on these factors, the study proposes practical response measures at four levels: government, platform, college, and student ^[6].

With the above research work finished, this study seeks to provide theoretical support and practical guidance to optimize the ideological and political education system of colleges and universities and strengthen its educational effectiveness.

2. Literature review

2.1. Current research status on short videos

As a new force in the digital media ecology, the booming development of short videos is inseparable from the popularization and deployment of 4G networks and the popular penetration of smart mobile terminals. After entering the 5G era, this media form has achieved leapfrog growth with its lightweight creation process, scene-based content supply, and efficient social fission-type communication characteristics, and its social radiation has formed extensive penetration in multiple fields such as culture, education, and commerce ^[7]. Studies indicate that short video platforms leverage algorithmic mechanisms to achieve precise user targeting, not only meeting personalized needs but also significantly enhancing information dissemination efficiency ^[8].

When this issue is viewed within higher education, the spread and influence of short videos looks more complex. For college students, this form of media provides a quick way to receive and share information, and it gives them space to present themselves and voice their views. At the same time, the uneven quality of content on these platforms may gradually shape young people's value cognition and ways of thinking. The effect is mixed.

The academic community now pays close attention to the spread of short videos in higher education, and within the ecology of network communication, they have become a main carrier of information. Even so, the internal mechanism by which short videos influence the ideological and political education of college students still needs clearer theoretical explanation and empirical investigation.

2.2. Research on ideological and political education for college students

Ideological and political education for college students is intended to train socialist builders and successors with correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. Its main objectives include education in ideals and beliefs, patriotism, and moral and legal education ^[9]. In the traditional education system, teaching is still largely centered on classroom lectures, while practical work and campus culture development usually play a supporting role. Overall, this structure is fairly systematic and has a long-standing theoretical basis.

In practice, however, this model also shows some clear limits. The educational content is relatively monotonous, and the forms used are rather dull, so it is difficult to fully motivate students or encourage a strong sense of participation ^[10]. With rapid advances in information technology, traditional models of ideological and political education are under pressure. Recent studies suggest that many contemporary college students now get information mainly through new media platforms, which appears to have gradually weakened the influence of traditional educational methods ^[9].

Therefore, how to innovate ideological and political education methods in line with the characteristics of the new era has become an urgent issue for colleges and universities to address ^[10].

2.3. Research on the correlation between short videos and ideological and political education for college students

Existing research on how short videos affect ideological and political education for college students mainly

looks at two areas: the mixed effects of short videos and the ways these effects might be addressed. Some studies treat short videos as a useful new tool for ideological and political education because they present content vividly and draw on a wide range of resources. At the same time, the algorithm-based logic behind information distribution, along with the fragmented way this content is spread, may contribute to problems such as ideological confusion and intellectual insulation among college students ^[11].

Some scholars point out that the proliferation of bad information on short video platforms poses potential risks to the cultivation of college students' values, and it is urgent to strengthen regulation and guidance to reduce its negative impact ^[12]. However, there are obvious limitations in the existing academic research: on the one hand, the specific implementation situations of short videos in the field of ideological and political education are not fully explored; on the other hand, the construction of systematic countermeasures for the actual needs of colleges and universities is also lacking ^[11].

Based on the above analysis, this study intends to put forward countermeasures with both pertinence and practical value from four dimensions: the government, platforms, universities, and students, so as to provide a useful reference for the optimization and upgrading of ideological and political education in universities.

3. The impact of short videos on ideological and political education for college students

3.1. Positive impacts

3.1.1. Enriching educational resources

Short video platforms adopt flexible and diverse content creation mechanisms. They can integrate massive types of information resources, which provide high-quality teaching resources for university ideological and political teaching. These resources cover positive value stories, current affairs reviews, as well as popular historical and cultural content. Such diverse content can well make up for the shortage and homogenization defects of traditional ideological teaching resources.

The widespread dissemination of heroic deeds, public welfare scenes, and patriotic short videos can easily arouse strong emotional feelings among college students. The vivid and visualized presentation mode greatly improves the attractiveness and persuasion of ideological and political education ^[2].

Moving on, short video platforms provide timely interpretation of major domestic and international news events. It enables college students to perceive real social changes and cultivate their sense of social responsibility and patriotic spirit to a certain degree ^[7]. In the meantime, short video media enriches the teaching resource system, making college ideological and political education better fit the real social context of the current era.

3.1.2. Innovating educational forms

Boasting vivid display effects, compact content, and striking visual attractiveness, short videos fit the fragmented learning habits of college students nowadays perfectly. This creates a new path to renovate the presentation forms of ideological and political education. Unlike classroom teaching and text reading in traditional modes, short videos combine vision and hearing to grab students' attention faster, and their concise and straightforward presentation naturally improves students' willingness to participate and learning passion.

Such strengths stand out greatly when complicated ideological and political theories need to be

explained. Short videos are capable of converting abstract theoretical knowledge into concrete, intuitive content with the help of animations, charts, and various multimedia techniques. That can lower the difficulty students feel when learning the content and may also improve learning efficiency ^[3]. Apart from that, short video environments encourage student discussion and personal opinion exchange, which helps optimize the overall quality of ideological and political education. This study finds that using short videos in ideological and political education makes teaching methods more varied and can also increase students' interest in learning, as well as the appeal and persuasiveness of the course ^[10].

3.2. Negative impacts

3.2.1. Uneven content quality

While abundant ideological and political education resources can be acquired from short video platforms, the quality of such content varies greatly, which may exert adverse influences on the ideological cognition of college students. Some short videos contain vulgar, false, or value-distorting material, which may mislead students who are still forming their worldview, outlook on life, and values. The problem is real.

When attention is pulled mainly toward entertainment, students may spend less time engaging with serious social issues. Content that promotes materialism or extreme individualism can also shape value orientations in a harmful way, making it harder for students to form correct values ^[4]. False information can distort students' understanding of facts and, over time, weaken their trust in ideological and political education. On short video platforms, harmful content makes this work harder for colleges and universities, especially when teachers try to help students judge whether information is authentic and avoid negative influence ^[5].

3.2.2. Fragmented information undermining critical thinking

The fragmented dissemination model of short videos may meet users' demand for fast access to information, but it also appears to weaken college students' ability to think deeply and reason logically. Most short video content is delivered in brief, scattered segments, so this way of receiving information makes it hard for students to form systematic knowledge frameworks. In some cases, it may also encourage more superficial thinking patterns. For example, repeated exposure to fragmented information can gradually accustom students to passively receiving isolated pieces of knowledge. Over time, this seems to reduce both their motivation and their ability to carry out in-depth analysis and think about issues in a more systematic way ^[6]. As these ways of thinking become more fixed over time, students may find it harder to absorb and internalize knowledge in ideological and political education, and their ability to deal with practical problems may also weaken. Existing research points out that the fragmented spread of short videos creates new difficulties for building knowledge systems in ideological and political education in colleges and universities, so targeted guidance and intervention are needed to reduce these negative effects ^[8].

4. Reasons for the impact of short videos on ideological and political education for college students

4.1. The role of government regulatory mechanisms in influencing ideological and political education via short videos

4.1.1. Orientation of regulatory policies

As short video platforms have expanded rapidly, the government has gradually introduced a series of

regulatory policies on online content, especially short videos, to standardize how information spreads, guide value orientations, and create a better external environment for ideological and political education for college students. By clearly prohibiting the spread of vulgar, violent, and false information, these policies have pushed short video platforms to adjust and improve their content supply structures. That change affects both the type and the quality of information college students encounter. At the same time, relevant policies encourage the production and dissemination of positive content, which gives colleges and universities more high-quality resources for ideological and political education. From a practical point of view, these policies seem to have improved the overall quality of short video content and, to some extent, increased college students' recognition and acceptance of mainstream values. As a result, the effectiveness of ideological and political education appears to have increased as well ^[4].

Yet the implementation of regulatory policies is constrained by multiple realistic conditions. Massive volumes of short video content plus its rapid update speed make comprehensive supervision hard to realize in law enforcement work. Furthermore, platforms differ greatly in the speed and initiative of implementing relevant policies, leading to inconsistent governance outcomes across the industry. Hence, tighter integration between policy formulation and implementation becomes essential. Once such a connection is missing, regulatory rules will merely stay on paper instead of functioning well in real scenarios. Universities ought to integrate policy-related guidance into ideological and political courses, helping students establish and practice positive values correctly. Such practice can expand the coverage and lasting influence of regulatory policies ^[4,14].

4.1.2. Intensity of regulation and enforcement effectiveness

The content governance of short video platforms largely depends on government rules as well as the intensity of policy implementation. The above factor directly decides what short video information college students can access, and further exerts influence on the final effect of ideological and political education. In recent years, the Cyberspace Administration of China and relevant departments have kept tightening supervision over short video platforms through special rectification campaigns, routine inspections, and technical supervision methods. For instance, once vulgar content and false information spread on individual platforms, official departments will issue warnings, impose fines or remove applications accordingly. The above measures curb the dissemination of harmful information ^[19]. Such mature regulatory systems push short video platforms to upgrade internal content auditing systems. Moving on, it motivates the whole industry to strengthen self-regulation and set more standardized norms, thereby building a healthier information environment for college students.

On the other hand, smooth supervision implementation cannot proceed without the assistance of supporting technical tools. Artificial intelligence, big data analysis, and other emerging technologies enable regulators to discover and dispose of illegal content more efficiently, raising the precision and efficiency of supervision ^[22]. Although technological progress greatly improves supervision efficiency, several hidden troubles cannot be completely solved so far, which forms practical restrictions. Accordingly, regulatory technologies require continuous upgrading, and law enforcement procedures need standardized arrangement. These efforts aim to guarantee the quality of short video content and maintain a positive network environment for college ideological and political education ^[19,22].

4.1.3. Policy support and guidance

The government has rolled out a series of supportive policies to motivate the creation and dissemination of positive short video works. The aim is to promote higher-quality content and foster a healthier public opinion environment and cultural atmosphere for ideological and political education for college students^[11]. Such policy incentives encourage diverse social groups to produce positive video content. They also supply abundant practical cases and valuable teaching resources for university ideological and political teaching. In addition, several local governments have launched characteristic short video projects rooted in regional culture, which integrate local cultural elements with educational themes. Students can usually relate to this kind of content more easily, and it may help strengthen their cultural confidence and patriotism^[16].

The government has constructed multi-party cooperation mechanisms to facilitate in-depth collaboration between short video platforms, universities and social institutions, with the aim of building a more positive content ecosystem^[11]. Long-term policy guidance and support bring improvements beyond content quality optimization, and also exert positive guiding effects on social value orientation. By continuing to encourage the spread and wider reach of positive short videos, the government has established a stronger ideological foundation for ideological and political education among college students, which helps them stay clear-minded and firm in the complicated online environment^[16].

4.2. The influence of short video platform characteristics on ideological and political education in colleges and universities

4.2.1. Algorithmic recommendation mechanisms

Serving as the core technical function of short video platforms, algorithm recommendation is built upon big data statistics and artificial intelligence technologies. Platforms distribute customized content for users according to browsing trajectories, likes, comment records, and other behavioral indicators left by users. Personalized content distribution fits users' hobbies well and optimizes user experience. Yet it may trigger information homogenization or chaotic information distribution, bringing adverse impacts on college ideological and political education^[15,17]. Educational content that matches students' preferences can be accurately screened and distributed by algorithm systems, significantly boosting the appeal and emotional resonance of ideological and political courses. Nevertheless, this technological merit is accompanied by hidden risks. If students rely excessively on algorithm recommendations, they will be confined to the closed "information cocoon." Inside such an environment, students can only receive homogeneous values or entertainment-oriented content. Gradually, they will become less receptive to different viewpoints and fail to think critically about diverse viewpoints^[15]. Furthermore, numerous platforms prefer content with strong emotional impacts to increase user activity and user retention. Under such influence, students tend to judge complex social events one-sidedly, which damages the practical effect of ideological and political education^[17].

From a technical angle, developers design algorithm recommendation systems primarily to sustain user activity and retain users, rather than attaching importance to content quality and educational value. College students browsing short video platforms hence mostly receive fragmented, superficial information, which conflicts with systematic, in-depth learning demanded by ideological and political education^[15]. Furthermore, platforms keep iterating their algorithms constantly, making it difficult for students to actively select and seek educational resources with learning value. Without proper external guidance, most students passively accept countless contents recommended by platforms. Surveys show over 60 percent of college students confess that algorithm recommendations lead them to get addicted to specific types of short videos.

Such addiction occupies plenty of study time and even triggers deviations in personal values ^[17]. Therefore, optimizing existing recommendation algorithms so as to strike a balance between users' personalized needs and standardized ideological education demands has turned into a key research issue.

4.2.2. Content moderation standards

From a comprehensive perspective, the internal content auditing standards of short video platforms decide overall information quality, which further shapes the effectiveness of college ideological and political education ^[12,20]. Various short video platforms have not formed unified content review mechanisms. Some platforms adopt strict auditing rules and place great emphasis on content legality, authenticity, and educational value. On the contrary, several platforms focus excessively on traffic growth and user expansion, leading to loose review standards and the rapid proliferation of vulgar and harmful content. These different operating modes eventually generate entirely different educational impacts. Strict content moderation enables effective screening of false information, harmful values, and illegal content, building a positive online atmosphere for college students during the formation of their outlooks on the world, life, and values ^[12]. In comparison, platforms with inadequate auditing constraints provide spreading space for inappropriate content, which may mislead students' value judgment and reduce their recognition and acceptance of ideological and political education ^[20].

Specifically, platform content auditing rules affect the development of university ideological and political education in diverse ways. Rigorous review systems allow positive and high-quality works to obtain broader public exposure, including videos that promote socialist core values and documentaries that record national development achievements. Such positive content helps strengthen college students' patriotism and social responsibility, thereby supporting the implementation of ideological and political education ^[12]. Meanwhile, inadequate content supervision permits inappropriate ideological content such as historical nihilism and extreme individualism to circulate online, which hinders the overall improvement of students' ideological literacy. Since different platforms apply inconsistent auditing criteria, students are likely to receive conflicting information when switching between different applications. This situation easily triggers cognitive confusion and value ambiguity, creating obstacles for ideological and political education ^[20]. As national online governance policies become increasingly standardized, most short video platforms have upgraded their supervision systems by adopting intelligent algorithm screening and expanding manual review teams. These adjustments greatly improve the accuracy and efficiency of content filtering ^[12]. Despite these progressions, practical challenges still remain. It is still difficult for platforms to balance strict content control with diversified content creation, and new technical problems continue to emerge. For this reason, it is necessary to continuously optimize content review standards, so as to accommodate diverse user needs and better support the development of college ideological and political education.

4.2.3. Platform-driven commercial interests

The commercial operation modes adopted by short video platforms greatly determine content production and dissemination rules, which exert indirect influences on college ideological and political education ^[18,21]. As profit-led internet enterprises, these platforms take commercial benefit as their core operating goal, mainly through advertising placement, influencer economy, and traffic realization. Advertising business occupies a major proportion of platform revenue and quickly converts user traffic into economic benefits. However,

excessive commercial infiltration will degrade overall content quality, and some misleading value orientation will contradict the fundamental goals of university ideological and political education. The influencer economy also faces the same dilemma. As a central part of short video platforms, it attracts users by building influential online personalities and then turning that attention into monetized traffic ^[18]. Nevertheless, this operational mode brings many hidden problems. Some online creators deliberately pursue sensational and entertaining effects to gain popularity and profits, and their vulgar and exaggerated performances adversely affect students' values. The prevalent influencer culture may also lead students to equate personal success merely with online fame and economic income, while ignoring moral cultivation and social responsibility, which deviates from the fundamental purpose of ideological and political education. In addition, traffic monetization, as the core profit logic of platforms, encourages the dissemination of eye-catching content to maintain user activity. Such operation can improve user experience in a short period, but long-term development will lead to serious content homogenization and overall quality decline ^[21].

For short video platforms, one of the main issues in future development is how to balance commercial interests with social responsibility. This trend also puts forward new challenges and updated standards for college ideological and political education.

4.3. The embodiment of the guiding role of university culture in the influence of short videos on ideological and political education

4.3.1. Campus culture construction

Campus culture constitutes the core educational environment for university ideological and political work. Its developmental direction and internal connotations jointly shape college students' short video usage behaviors and personal value systems. Guided by socialist core values, campus culture strives to create a positive cultural atmosphere through the integrated construction of material, institutional, and spiritual culture ^[11]. Such a favorable campus environment imperceptibly influences students' ideological perceptions and subtly regulates their selection preferences for short video information ^[16]. A variety of themed activities and cultural festivals carried out in campus construction offer rich offline practical experiences for students. These immersive interactive activities effectively strengthen students' ability to judge and screen online short video content, further consolidating the comprehensive effectiveness of university ideological and political education.

If colleges cannot update the guiding direction and specific content of campus cultural construction to keep pace with new media development, students may develop selective or one-sided cognition while accepting short video information. Traditional and rigid campus cultural modes often fail to attract modern young learners. For this reason, students tend to turn to diverse short video resources, which may contain unhealthy and inappropriate information ^[11]. In view of this, universities should adhere to basic educational goals and practical development needs, and incorporate short video media into the overall construction of campus culture in a targeted and reasonable manner. It is vital to develop characteristic cultural brand activities that fit the spirit of the new era and reflect unique campus features. These efforts can guide students to treat short video content rationally and critically. Accordingly, short video resources can be fully leveraged to innovate ideological and political education modes and enrich diversified educational approaches.

4.3.2. Implementation of ideological and political education activities

University ideological and political education acts as a core method to shape college students' personal

values. The interaction between formal educational activities and short video media can be either mutually reinforcing or contradictory, which directly determines the overall teaching effectiveness. Universities are able to innovate traditional educational forms by adopting short videos as a new medium to disseminate positive values ^[15]. Nevertheless, the entertaining attributes of mainstream short video content may pose challenges to conventional offline ideological teaching, and even make students resist standardized and systematic ideological learning content ^[19].

To resolve the aforementioned conflicts and dilemmas, universities are supposed to integrate short video resources into daily ideological teaching while maintaining a balance between content quality and diversity. Colleges can organize professional instructors and academic experts to develop high-quality short video courses, and transform classic ideological teaching cases into well-polished short video works. Such innovative practices can greatly enhance content attractiveness and improve students' learning acceptance ^[15]. Meanwhile, universities must clearly realize that short video platforms inevitably carry misleading and harmful information. By organizing targeted thematic seminars, debate competitions, and other practical educational activities, colleges can consolidate students' stable value cognition system and effectively weaken the negative impact of poor short video content on ideological and political education.

4.3.3. The guiding role of teachers

Teachers are indispensable subjects in university ideological and political education. Their application of short video tools in classroom teaching, as well as their guidance on students' rational use of short videos, directly determines the overall effect of ideological and political teaching. In classroom teaching, teachers can adopt high-quality short video resources to visualize and concretize mainstream values. When explaining ideological and political theories, for example, they can draw on short video cases linked to current social issues. This usually increases students' interest in the topic. It also makes abstract concepts easier to understand ^[17]. In daily educational management, teachers ought to keep track of students' behavioral changes under the short video media environment. Through regular thematic conversations and in-depth ideological communication, teachers can grasp students' dynamic content preferences, value changes, and emotional fluctuations in a timely manner, so as to provide targeted and personalized educational guidance.

Teachers' comprehensive new media literacy is an essential prerequisite for effective student guidance. If teachers have a strong level of new media literacy, they can use short video platforms more effectively, create original content that fits students' needs, and respond quickly to students' questions through interactive functions ^[21]. Such interactive communication shortens the psychological distance between teachers and students and enhances college students' recognition of mainstream values. On the contrary, insufficient operational ability of short video platforms or delayed grasp of students' ideological dynamics will reduce the pertinence and effectiveness of educational guidance. Accordingly, universities should launch systematic new media literacy training for teachers to consolidate their guiding function in ideological and political education.

4.4. The impact of college students' own characteristics on the influence of short videos on ideological and political education

4.4.1. Cognitive level

College students belong to the formal operational stage in cognitive development, which enables them to conduct abstract thinking, hypothetical reasoning, and systematic problem analysis. Nevertheless, such

cognitive capabilities still have obvious limitations when confronting complicated and mixed online information. Short video content is typically fragmented, instantaneous, and strongly sensory-stimulating. In this setting, college students may rely more on intuitive judgments instead of engaging in deeper analysis while processing information ^[4]. The superficial and entertaining attributes of short videos will further reinforce such cognitive habits, hindering college students from forming a thorough understanding and internalizing ideological and political education content. Existing findings indicate that college students with higher cognitive levels are better able to filter short video information and accept it critically, whereas those with relatively lower cognitive levels are more likely to be affected by negative content, which may reduce the effectiveness of ideological and political education ^[12].

Based on information processing theory, individual cognitive differences among college students determine their specific modes of information encoding, storage, and extraction in browsing short video content. Short video platforms adopt algorithm recommendation systems to deliver personalized content for different users. When college students do not have the cognitive ability to judge the authenticity and value orientation of that information, they may be misled or drawn into the “information cocoon” effect ^[4]. Therefore, optimizing college students’ overall cognitive literacy has always been a fundamental task of university ideological and political education, and it also plays a positive role in alleviating the potential negative impacts brought by the widespread use of short video media.

4.4.2. Stage of value formation

College students are in a critical period of value cultivation and shaping. At this developmental stage, they are highly sensitive to various value messages in the external environment and susceptible to diverse external influences. In Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development, a main task of young adulthood is the formation of self-identity. This process does not happen all at once. It develops through ongoing exploration and trial and error, as individuals gradually clarify their value orientation and life goals ^[18]. As an indispensable information acquisition channel for modern college students, short video platforms contain various value orientations that profoundly affect students’ value construction. Positive short video works are conducive to cultivating students’ social responsibility and patriotic awareness. In contrast, excessive entertaining content and vulgar information on platforms may weaken their identification with mainstream values and, in turn, interfere with ideological and political education ^[20].

College students in this life stage generally possess strong curiosity and pursue personalized and novel experiences. They tend to accept new things actively and are willing to explore diverse lifestyles and value ideas. At the same time, their values are still developing, which may make them more vulnerable to the influence of negative information ^[18]. Furthermore, the instant dissemination mode and strong interactive characteristics of short video communication amplify the adverse impact of negative information on college students’ value development. Given this, the practical work of ideological and political education needs to place more emphasis on guiding and shaping college students’ value orientations in light of the particular features of short-video platforms, so that they can gradually form a scientific world outlook, outlook on life, and values.

4.4.3. Self-management ability

College students’ self-management competence directly determines their rational use of short video platforms

and further influences the overall effect of ideological and political education. Such comprehensive ability covers multiple dimensions, mainly including time arrangement, information screening, and emotional regulation. When students engage with short videos, differences in these abilities shape both their behavior and their psychological state ^[16]. Students with excellent self-management skills can reasonably arrange their short video browsing time, refrain from over-reliance on virtual platforms, and actively select high-quality informational resources, so as to improve the overall efficiency and quality of information learning. On the contrary, students with insufficient self-management capacity tend to regard short video browsing as a major way of leisure and distraction, which can then interfere with the learning and internalization of ideological and political education ^[19].

From the perspective of time management, the immersive design of short video platforms easily causes poor time control among some college student users, resulting in the occupation of normal study time and even the psychological state of “time distortion.” Studies ^[20] have shown that among college students who watch short videos for more than one hour daily, over 70% report having delayed academic tasks due to their addiction to short videos. This phenomenon affects college students’ learning efficiency and may also reduce their attention to ideological and political education, which can weaken its effectiveness. Meanwhile, inadequate information identification ability makes students more likely to be exposed to vulgar and negative online content. This can further strengthen the negative effect of short videos on ideological and political education ^[16].

5. Countermeasures to address the impact of short videos on ideological and political education among college students

Short videos are now part of college students’ everyday study and daily life. In this setting, they affect students’ ideology, values, and behavior. Accordingly, the improvement of college ideological and political education requires joint governance from the government, short video platforms, universities, and students themselves.

5.1. Government level: Improvement of laws and regulations and implementation of policies

The government needs to strengthen industry supervision under the guideline of prioritizing correct value orientation, abiding by legal norms, and adhering to government-led governance. It is necessary to optimize relevant laws and regulations to standardize short video content, clarify the responsibility scope of video platforms, and fully implement normative policies including the Detailed Rules for the Review of Online Short Video Content ^[14]. Moving forward, administrative departments should continuously strengthen routine supervision and law enforcement. Advanced intelligent technology can be fully leveraged to assist online governance. Regulatory authorities are able to identify and delete non-compliant content more efficiently with the support of big data and artificial intelligence tools. Meanwhile, building a cross-department collaborative governance system is essential. It enables coordinated work among cyberspace administrations, educational departments, and public security organs, which effectively boosts comprehensive regulatory performance ^[4].

5.2. Short video platform level: Fulfillment of social responsibilities and enhancement of platform content

Short video platforms ought to take on corresponding social obligations while making full use of their technical and communication advantages. Specifically, platforms can optimize algorithm recommendation systems to weaken the “information cocoon” effect and proactively disseminate high-quality ideological and political content that embodies socialist core values ^[11,16]. Besides, the integration of intelligent algorithm identification and manual auditing can further upgrade the overall content review system and improve screening accuracy. Meanwhile, the construction of user credit assessment systems and reporting incentive mechanisms can encourage ordinary users to participate in online public opinion supervision ^[20]. In addition, platforms are supposed to set up a special area for college ideological and political education, and cooperate with universities to create high-quality educational short videos. Such measures help transform the traditional traffic-driven operation mode into a value-oriented development model ^[18,21].

5.3. University level: Cultural guidance and up-to-date teaching methods

Universities must consolidate their cultural guiding function and integrate short video resources into the complete ideological and political education system ^[11]. Campuses can further improve their new media layout by launching official short video accounts to encourage student participation, interaction, and positive public discussion ^[15,19]. At the same time, institutions are expected to provide systematic media literacy training, enabling students to enhance their ability to identify information and form rational self-regulation habits when browsing online media. Furthermore, teachers should adapt to the evolving new media environment and adopt short videos as supplementary classroom teaching resources, so as to make ideological and political courses more vivid, appealing and effective ^[17,21].

5.4. Student level: Development of cognitive level and critical thinking

College students need to improve their cognitive and self-discipline abilities ^[16]. Short-video entertainment and information should be approached rationally rather than used excessively. Users should choose positive and useful content and avoid vulgar or false material ^[19]. Furthermore, students ought to cultivate independent critical thinking capabilities, so as to refrain from blindly accepting and forwarding unverified online information.

6. Conclusion

6.1. Research summary

This study examined how short videos affect the ideological and political education of college students, looked at the reasons behind these effects, and proposed corresponding countermeasures. The findings show that short videos, as a newer form of media, stand out for their immediacy, convenience, and vivid presentation, and they influence ideological and political education in colleges and universities in both positive and negative ways. Short videos can add to educational resources, introduce newer teaching formats, and make ideological and political education more appealing and easier for students to engage with. But the issue is not one-sided. Differences in content quality, along with the fragmented way information is spread, can also affect college students’ ideological concepts and their ability to think in a more sustained and critical way ^[2,3]. Recommendation algorithms on short video platforms, gaps in university network supervision and

value guidance, and characteristics of the student group itself all deepen these negative effects. In response, this research puts forward strategies at several levels. Universities need to improve cyberspace governance, and teachers need to strengthen their media literacy and update their teaching methods. Students also need a stronger sense of self-identity and self-discipline. At the same time, schools should respond to current challenges in a more systematic way by producing high-quality short video content and improving classroom teaching. The aim is to provide a practical reference for professionals engaged in ideological and political education in universities and to support the continued improvement of this work.

6.2. Research prospects

Although this study obtained some findings on the impact of short videos on the ideological and political education of college students and on possible countermeasures, several limitations remain. The research samples are mainly collected from universities in designated regions, which means the research conclusions cannot fully reflect the overall national situation. In addition, short video platform environments are characterized by rapid iteration and dynamic updates. Given the continuous rapid development of short video technologies and platform ecological systems, this study fails to conduct an in-depth exploration of the potential impacts of emerging technological applications on ideological and political education.

Future research can be further optimized and expanded based on the above limitations. On the one hand, emerging technologies including artificial intelligence and big data can be adopted to analyze the textual and contextual features of short video content, and further explore their specific influencing mechanisms on college students' ideological trends and behavioral habits. On the other hand, interdisciplinary theories and research methods in communication, psychology, education, and other disciplines can be integrated to construct a more comprehensive and standardized research system. The sample could also be expanded to include students from universities in different regions and of different types, which may improve the findings' representativeness and general applicability^[4,5]. These efforts should do more to support the scientific use of short videos in ideological and political education in colleges and universities, and offer solid support for training well-rounded socialist builders and successors.

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Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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