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The Communication Effectiveness and Optimization Paths of Short Video Platforms in University Ideological and Political Education

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Abstract: In recent years, short videos have rapidly emerged as a highly influential and ubiquitous media format, fundamentally altering information consumption habits among college students. In the realm of higher education, their application has garnered increasing academic and practical attention, particularly within the context of ideological and political education. Characterized by brevity, precision, and ease of comprehension, short videos have introduced both transformative pedagogical opportunities and unprecedented challenges to university ideological education. This article takes the current application of short video platforms in ideological and political education as its foundational starting point. It comprehensively analyzes their distinct communication advantages, specifically focusing on media form innovation, technical algorithm matching, and the significant amplification of social attributes. Furthermore, the study deeply examines critical contemporary issues, including content production homogenization, the inherent contradiction between serious educational topics and entertaining digital expression, the formation of information cocoons caused by precise algorithmic recommendation, and the overall superficiality of long-term communication effects. Adopting a problem-oriented approach, this study proposes systematic and actionable optimization strategies. These include differentiated approaches tailored to specific vertical fields, narrative innovations that carefully balance solemnity with humor, algorithm-driven ethical agenda-setting, and robust value transformation through closed-loop feedback mechanisms. Ultimately, these comprehensive measures aim to significantly enhance short video platforms' capacity to support universities' fundamental mission of fostering moral integrity and holistic talent development, providing sustainable solutions for advancing ideological education in the digital new era.

Keywords: short videos; ideological education; communication; optimization strategies; digital education

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1. Introduction

The rapid development and widespread adoption of mobile internet technology have led to the emergence of short videos as a significant and influential media format [1, 2]. These videos, characterized by their visually engaging and dynamic presentation, have become a preferred medium for young people to consume information and articulate their perspectives. The ease of access and efficiency in dissemination offered by short video platforms have further amplified their popularity among this demographic. In light of these transformative changes in the media landscape and the evolving habits of media consumption among students, higher education institutions face an urgent need to adapt their approaches to ideological and political education. As key entities responsible for nurturing the next generation of contributors to socialist development, these institutions must explore innovative strategies to ensure that their educational efforts remain relevant and impactful. By harnessing the unique advantages of short video platforms, such as their ability to reach wide audiences and facilitate interactive engagement, universities

can significantly enhance the effectiveness and resonance of their ideological and political education initiatives.

2. The Unique Advantages of Short Video Platforms in Empowering Ideological and Political Education in Universities

2.1. Media Format Innovation Spurs Audience Engagement

Short videos exhibit the unique media characteristic of being both "concise and impactful," making them particularly well-suited to the fast-paced information consumption habits of contemporary college students [3]. These videos, with durations ranging from a few seconds to a few minutes, are ideal for fragmented time slots, allowing students to engage with educational content without the cognitive fatigue often associated with traditional, lengthy theoretical lectures. Furthermore, the interactive ecosystem fostered by short-video platforms—through features such as likes, comments, shares, and @-tagging—transforms the educational process from a one-way transmission of information into a dynamic, multi-directional dialogue. This shift enables students to transition from passive recipients of information to active participants who can immediately share their perspectives and engage in meaningful discussions. Such participatory experiences significantly reduce the psychological distance between educators and students, which is often a barrier in traditional ideological and political education settings. By fostering a more interactive and engaging environment, these platforms enhance the appeal and accessibility of abstract theoretical concepts. The ability to integrate multimedia elements, such as animations and visual storytelling, further enriches the learning experience, making complex ideas more relatable and easier to comprehend [4]. This innovative approach not only modernizes educational methods but also aligns with the evolving preferences of the digital generation.

2.2. Technical Algorithms for Precise Matching of Personalized Needs

The intelligent recommendation algorithm serves as a pivotal technological foundation for the precise dissemination of ideological and political education content. By leveraging advanced data analytics, the algorithm examines user-specific data, such as browsing history, time spent on particular content, and interaction patterns, to construct detailed cognitive and interest profiles for each student. This enables the system to deliver tailored content that aligns closely with individual preferences and learning needs. For example, students with a focus on STEM disciplines and an interest in technological innovation may receive prioritized recommendations for multimedia content that highlights advancements in technology and the ethos of craftsmanship. Conversely, students in the humanities and philosophy fields are more likely to encounter content emphasizing cultural confidence and the preservation of traditional heritage. Furthermore, big data technology facilitates real-time monitoring of content performance, offering actionable insights to content creators. When engagement metrics for a specific topic are low, the system dynamically adjusts its recommendation strategies or provides guidance to creators on refining their narrative techniques. This iterative process ensures the continuous optimization of educational resource allocation, enhancing the overall effectiveness and resonance of the delivered content.

2.3. Social Attributes Amplify the Value Dissemination Effect

The social networking nature of short video platforms significantly enhances the dissemination of ideological and political content, granting it a unique viral potential. When students engage with and endorse a particular ideological video, they often share it with their peers, such as roommates and classmates, or post it on their social media platforms [5, 6]. This behavior initiates a secondary dissemination process through personal social networks, which is often more effective and persuasive than traditional official media campaigns. The trust inherent in peer-to-peer sharing fosters a more receptive audience, as individuals are more likely to consider content recommended by those they know personally. Furthermore, the exchange of perspectives and the

interaction of differing values among peers create a "soft" peer education mechanism. This dynamic encourages students to reflect on and discuss the content, even if they were initially indifferent to it. When a specific value concept gains traction and becomes a trending topic among students, the collective interest often draws in those who might not have engaged otherwise. Features such as topic tags and challenge competitions further amplify this effect by consolidating individual viewpoints into a unified collective voice. This collective engagement reinforces positive values within the social fabric, creating a robust mechanism for value dissemination.

3. The Current Practical Challenges in the Dissemination of Ideological and Political Education on Short Video Platforms

3.1. Homogenization of Content Production Leads to Attention Dilution

An analysis of the current ideological and political content ecosystem on short-video platforms highlights a significant trend of homogenization in both topic selection and narrative techniques. Common themes, such as "Quick Q&A on the Party's Centennial History" and "curated compilations of iconic quotes from heroic figures," dominate the landscape, often adhering to repetitive narrative frameworks. While these productions aim to engage audiences and promote ideological education, their lack of originality frequently results in a diminished impact. This is particularly evident among college students, who, as digital natives, are accustomed to fast-paced and diverse content. Their limited attention spans make them prone to disengagement when faced with repetitive visual elements and standardized storytelling patterns [7]. The absence of innovative approaches in content creation reduces the ability of such material to capture and sustain their interest. Consequently, the communicative potential of high-quality ideological content is undermined, limiting its capacity to leave a lasting and meaningful impression. To address this challenge, creators must explore novel methods of storytelling and diversify their content strategies to better resonate with the target audience, ensuring that the educational objectives of these platforms are effectively achieved.

3.2. A Tension Persists between Serious Topics and Entertaining Expression

A natural tension exists between the entertainment-oriented nature of short video platforms and the inherent seriousness of ideological and political education. These platforms often prioritize content that aligns with algorithmic preferences, which tend to favor visually engaging and entertaining material. As a result, some creators adopt lighter and more accessible approaches, such as utilizing internet memes, humorous dialogues, or staged costumed performances, to interpret significant theoretical propositions or historical events. While these methods can effectively lower the threshold for audience engagement and make complex topics more relatable, they also present notable challenges. Overemphasis on entertainment elements risks undermining the gravity and solemnity of core issues, potentially leading to the dilution of deeper ideological substance. This phenomenon raises concerns about whether the educational value of such content can be preserved amidst the pursuit of visual appeal. Therefore, creators must carefully navigate this balance, ensuring that their work remains both engaging and intellectually rigorous. Achieving this equilibrium is essential for maintaining the integrity and effectiveness of ideological and political education in the digital age.

3.3. The Emergence of the Information Cocoon Effect under the Precision Push Mechanism

Algorithmic recommendation technology plays a crucial role in driving the functionality of short-video platforms, significantly influencing the scope of information users encounter while simultaneously enhancing their overall experience. By analyzing users' historical behavioral data, these systems are designed to deliver content that aligns closely with individual preferences. However, when such algorithms consistently present ideologically and politically homogeneous content, student audiences may inadvertently find themselves confined to a narrowly defined information environment. This personalized content delivery, while improving relevance and user satisfaction, can

inadvertently limit exposure to diverse perspectives and critical viewpoints. Over time, students immersed in this algorithmically curated "comfort zone" may develop a tendency to adopt singular and potentially biased viewpoints when analyzing complex social phenomena. This phenomenon subtly restricts their cognitive flexibility, thereby hindering the cultivation of critical thinking and independent judgment skills. The gradual narrowing of cognitive boundaries occurs in an almost imperceptible manner, making it a subtle yet profound issue that demands comprehensive academic attention and further exploration to mitigate its long-term implications on intellectual development.

3.4. Superficial Understanding of Communication Effects and Barriers to Deep Cognitive Transformation

Short-form media, defined by its "short, concise, and rapid" dissemination characteristics, offers a streamlined method for delivering information efficiently. However, this format inherently limits the depth of educational outcomes, particularly in fostering profound ideological and political understanding. While such media often elicits immediate emotional resonance or cognitive engagement among students, these reactions seldom evolve into comprehensive theoretical comprehension or enduring value internalization. The fragmented nature of information consumption restricts learners to surface-level perceptual stages, impeding their ability to synthesize scattered knowledge into a cohesive cognitive framework. Furthermore, a notable disparity exists between conceptual acceptance and practical application. Although students may develop a strong sense of value identification after engaging with such content, translating this identification into tangible actions in their daily lives remains challenging due to various practical barriers. These obstacles include insufficient intrinsic motivation, lack of structured guidance, and limited opportunities for real-world application. Consequently, the sustainability and depth of the educational impact require significant enhancement to ensure that ideological and political education achieves its intended transformative goals. Addressing these challenges necessitates innovative pedagogical strategies that bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and actionable practice, fostering deeper cognitive transformation and long-term behavioral change [8, 9].

4. Optimization Paths for Short Video Platforms to Enhance Ideological and Political Education in Universities

4.1. Specialize in Vertical Sectors to Build a Differentiated Content Ecosystem Matrix

Universities encounter significant challenges in maintaining student attention due to the prevalence of homogenized content. To address this, they should move away from a generic content production model and instead adopt specialized creative strategies that reflect their unique disciplinary strengths and regional cultural characteristics. Students from various academic disciplines possess distinct knowledge frameworks and interests, necessitating ideological and political education content that resonates deeply with their professional fields. This approach can foster a unique development model, such as "one university, one signature" or even "one college, one signature." For instance, institutions specializing in science and engineering can focus on themes like scientific ethics and the spirit of master craftsmanship, integrating Marxist principles with advancements in technology. Similarly, universities in the humanities and social sciences can explore historical and cultural resources, deriving contemporary relevance from classical literature. Art institutions, on the other hand, can innovate in presenting revolutionary classics, embedding value-oriented guidance within aesthetic education practices. Regional characteristics also play a pivotal role in differentiation. Universities in western regions might emphasize themes such as poverty alleviation and ecological civilization, while those in eastern coastal areas could focus on reform, opening-up policies, and innovation-driven development. For example, a "New Energy Science and Engineering" program could produce a short video series titled "The Responsibility Behind Clean Energy," linking carbon neutrality goals with professional expertise. Faculty could involve students in field research at wind farms, documenting real-world applications of new

energy technologies that align with national strategies. This approach vividly illustrates abstract concepts like ecological civilization through tangible engineering projects [10]. By adopting this vertical content production strategy, universities can avoid repetitive and overly similar topics, creating an organic connection between ideological and political education and professional learning. This integration allows value-based guidance to seamlessly permeate the process of knowledge dissemination. Moreover, it establishes a distinctive content brand that enhances student engagement and enthusiasm for participation. Such a tailored approach not only enriches the educational experience but also ensures that the content remains relevant, impactful, and aligned with the broader goals of fostering well-rounded, socially responsible individuals.

4.2. Exploring the Harmony between Substance and Unity: Innovating Lightweight Narratives with Value Delivery

In the era of short videos, ideological and political education faces the challenge of balancing engagement with depth. If such education merely adheres to traffic-driven logic, it risks succumbing to excessive entertainment, which undermines its core purpose. On the other hand, rigidly maintaining a serious tone often alienates younger audiences who prefer dynamic and relatable communication styles. To address this dilemma, content creators must find a harmonious balance between seriousness and humor, ensuring that the presentation style aligns effectively with thematic depth. This approach facilitates the seamless delivery of value messages, allowing serious topics to be conveyed through engaging and relatable expressions. By transitioning from "teaching through entertainment" to "entertainment through teaching," creators can enhance the resonance of their content. It is essential to move beyond superficial approaches that prioritize form over substance and instead adopt a theme-driven creative philosophy. Moderately entertaining formats, such as micro-dramas, short variety shows, and knowledge-based talk shows, can serve as effective tools for integrating logical reasoning into narrative progression, character dialogues, and ideological exchanges. This integration ensures that ideological elements are as naturally embedded as salt dissolving in water, maintaining content depth while improving communication effectiveness. For instance, the "Ideological and Political Education" program could include a micro-drama series titled "The Decade of Common Prosperity," which portrays life scenarios from three ordinary families between 2015 and 2025. Through scenario-based performances, the series could illustrate the micro-level impacts of policies such as poverty alleviation, industrial upgrading, and rural revitalization. Characters could demonstrate the warmth and benefits brought by these policies through everyday interactions among family members and neighbors [11]. This approach enables students to observe how macro-level narratives influence individual destinies while fostering emotional resonance that highlights institutional advantages. By transforming policy provisions into tangible narrative texts, creators can ensure that short videos serve not merely as tools for driving traffic but as effective mediums for value dissemination, bridging the gap between abstract concepts and real-world understanding.

4.3. Optimizing Algorithms for Positive Outcomes: Establishing an Agenda That Actively Breaks Down Barriers

Currently, the recommendation algorithms of short-video platforms often prioritize user preferences as the primary guiding principle. This approach can lead young students to remain confined within homogeneous content circles for extended periods, limiting their exposure to diverse ideological perspectives [12]. To address this issue, it is crucial to integrate mainstream values into algorithmic logic by combining human intervention with intelligent recommendations. By proactively setting positive agendas during trending events, ideological and political content can subtly permeate students' information feeds, akin to the gentle nourishment of spring rain. Rather than merely serving as distributors of traffic, platform algorithms should act as navigators of values, providing weighted support for high-quality ideological and political content within their distribution mechanisms. This would amplify the reach of mainstream messages and

ensure their resonance with users. For instance, when students browse campus updates or social issues, the system could intelligently match their interests with relevant policy analyses, inspiring personal stories, and other meaningful content. This creates a seamless pathway from initial interest to value alignment.

Taking the "Journalism and Communication" major as an example, instructors could utilize platforms such as TikTok and Bilibili to design a series of micro-lectures under the theme "The Mission of Youth in the New Era." Initially, they might release Vlog-style clips showcasing campus life to capture students' attention. Links to ideological theory explanations and expert interviews could then be embedded in the comment sections of these videos. The algorithm would naturally recommend these curated contents to users who engage with the initial clips. Additionally, instructors could invite professional student hosts to act as "ideological ambassadors," producing video series that combine digital appeal with intellectual depth. When a positive topic gains traction on the platform, the system could prioritize recommending these meticulously crafted ideological and political contents. This approach allows students to subconsciously absorb value guidance while consuming videos.

By leveraging students' preferred narrative styles and communication rhythms, this agenda-setting strategy avoids rigid preaching. Instead, it integrates ideological and political content into students' daily information consumption habits, achieving an organic fusion of algorithmic recommendations and value guidance. This ensures that mainstream ideology is not only disseminated effectively but also resonates deeply with the audience, fostering a more balanced and enriched digital environment.

4.4. Establish a Closed-Loop System to Integrate the Value Chain from Touchpoint to Implementation

Universities should aim to establish a comprehensive educational transformation mechanism that encompasses phases such as "watching--reflecting--acting." This approach elevates short videos from being mere tools for content dissemination into platforms that foster value-driven practices. In designing content, creators should strategically leave room for extension at the conclusions of videos by embedding guiding questions or action prompts. This encourages students to transition from passive reception to active reflection and engagement. Comment sections should include dedicated interactive spaces featuring recommended theoretical references, discussion tags, and entry points for both online and offline activities. A multi-tiered content integration framework should be developed, ensuring that each short video becomes an integral component of a broader learning ecosystem. Educational institutions must coordinate primary and secondary classroom resources, integrating video viewing into ideological education curricula to create a spiral learning path that progresses from media exposure through theoretical deepening to practical validation. For instance, in the Environmental Engineering program, instructors could produce short videos highlighting ecological civilization initiatives. These videos could prompt students to reflect on their professional responsibilities while showcasing environmental achievements. The videos could conclude by launching "Green Campus Transformation Initiatives" campaigns, motivating students to apply their expertise in designing energy-saving solutions. This approach transforms conceptual commitments into tangible technical practices and meaningful social engagement. Additionally, tracking feedback mechanisms should be implemented to document students' progression from video viewing to subsequent actions, generating personalized growth records [13]. Educational institutions should also establish collaborative relationships with social practice bases and volunteer service organizations to provide students with practical platforms for applying ideological and political concepts in real-world settings. Furthermore, incentive mechanisms should be introduced to recognize students who actively participate in extended activities. These incentives could include corresponding credit accrual or honorary awards, thereby reinforcing a positive feedback loop and encouraging sustained engagement in value-driven educational practices.

5. Conclusion

Short video platforms have emerged as transformative media tools in the digital age, significantly broadening the scope and impact of ideological and political education within universities. These platforms offer unique opportunities for educators to engage students through innovative and interactive content delivery methods, fostering deeper connections and enhancing the accessibility of educational materials. However, their rapid evolution also introduces challenges, such as the need to critically assess dissemination patterns and address potential risks associated with misinformation or value misalignment. To maximize their potential, educators must focus on creating a robust educational ecosystem that leverages the dynamic characteristics of new media while maintaining a strong emphasis on value-oriented guidance. This involves developing comprehensive quality assurance mechanisms to ensure the integrity and effectiveness of educational content. Looking ahead, the integration of short videos into ideological and political education is expected to diversify further, necessitating ongoing research into scientifically grounded implementation models that balance technological innovation with pedagogical efficacy. By addressing these challenges and opportunities, educators can harness the full potential of short video platforms to enrich the educational experience and contribute to the holistic development of students.

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