

Challenges and Countermeasures for Ideological and Political Education of College Students in the Context of the Short Video Trend

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Abstract

With the rapid development of the internet and the widespread adoption of mobile smart devices, short-video platforms have gained immense popularity among college students due to their brevity, visual appeal, and immersive nature. However, this phenomenon poses significant challenges to the systematic, authoritative, serious, and relatable nature of ideological and political education. This study analyzes the deep coupling relationship between short videos and ideological and political education for college students from multiple dimensions, including the alignment of media characteristics with educational approaches, the contest for discourse space and ideological ground, the internalization of online behavior and value recognition, and the transformation of knowledge sources and educational evaluation. It systematically elaborates on the challenges posed by short videos to ideological and political education, including undermining its systematic nature, weakening its educational guidance, eroding the authenticity of information, dissolving the seriousness of education, and diluting students' willpower. On this basis, the study proposes systematic countermeasures across four dimensions: content supply reform, technological algorithm empowerment, discourse expression innovation, and subject competency enhancement. These aim to establish a comprehensive ideological and political education framework characterized by multi-stakeholder participation, balanced emphasis on content and form, and integrated online-offline engagement. The objective is to transform short videos' dissemination and influence into guiding and shaping power for ideological and political education, thereby enhancing its effectiveness among college students.

Keywords: short videos, ideological and political education, college students

1. Introduction

The global digital landscape is undergoing profound transformation driven by short-video platforms such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts. These platforms, characterized by brevity, immediacy, high immersion, and algorithmic targeting, have particularly captivated Generation Z users — including hundreds of millions of college students worldwide. According to the 54th Statistical Report on China's Internet Development released by the China Internet Network Information Center, as of June 2025, China's internet user base reached nearly 1.123 billion, with an internet penetration rate of 79.7%. Short video users surpassed 1.085 billion for the first time, achieving a usage rate of 96.7%¹. Short videos serve not only as entertainment tools but also as vital platforms for information acquisition, social interaction, and identity construction, subtly shaping college students' worldviews, values, and ways of thinking. While short videos offer college students a new

¹ China Internet Network Information Center. (2025). The 54th statistical report on internet development in China. China Internet Network Information Center.

platform for immersive social entertainment and open up fresh avenues for knowledge acquisition, they also exert negative influences on students' thinking patterns, academic lives, and behavioral habits to some extent, posing risks and challenges to ideological and political education. Against this backdrop, how to effectively leverage short videos for ideological and political education has become a pressing issue in contemporary college student ideological work.

2. The Intrinsic Connection Between Short Videos and Ideological and Political Education for College Students

The intrinsic connection between short videos and ideological and political education for college students has transcended simple tool application, evolving into a deep coupling of the digital era's media ecosystem, cognitive patterns, and educational objectives.

2.1 Alignment of Media Characteristics with Educational Methods

The fragmented, visual, and highly transmissible nature of short videos precisely aligns with contemporary students' information consumption habits. These characteristics facilitate the use of short videos for ideological and political education by transforming grand narratives into everyday, contextualized micro-stories and light interpretations, enabling targeted delivery of educational content. This approach partially compensates for the shortcomings of traditional classroom education, which often relies on a one-size-fits-all approach. Simultaneously, their immersive and emotionally resonant narrative style transforms dry abstract theories into vivid, tangible experiences, significantly enhancing educational effectiveness.

2.2 The Battle for Discourse Space and Ideological Grounds

Currently, short video platforms serve as one of the frontlines for ideological clashes, where a vast sea of content harbors intense collisions of diverse values. If educators fail to actively engage on these platforms, the mixed bag of information will erode students' minds. Educators must recognize this reality, moving beyond traditional lecturing to engage students through relatable approaches that frame topics and interpret reality in ways appealing to young adults. This is crucial for securing a foothold on this vital platform. More importantly, short video platforms' interactive nature transforms information dissemination from one-way transmission into multi-subject dialogue. Educators can also observe students' thought patterns through platform interactions and content engagement, guiding their thinking within discussions to make the educational process more interactive and targeted.

2.3 Online Behavior and the Internalization of Value Identification

Short videos serve not only as information platforms but also as social spaces where young college students project themselves and seek validation. The actions of the subjects, which include the creation and sharing of content, liking, commenting, and following others, can be considered as implicit expressions of their values. By showcasing positive role models and their deeds, short video content subtly reshapes students' worldviews, outlooks on life, and values. This transition is most evident when students transition from passive viewers to active creators, documenting social practices through their own perspectives and narrating compelling Chinese stories. This process internalizes values and concepts at the deepest level, propelling students from cognitive "observation" to behavioral "practice."

2.4 Transformation of Knowledge Sources and Educational Evaluation

The short video environment has eroded traditional educational authority, where educators are no longer the sole source of knowledge. This necessitates a shift in teachers' roles to become companions and guides in students' learning and growth. Simultaneously, this transformation is driving a change in the evaluation standards for ideological and political education. The focus has shifted from emphasizing knowledge assessment to placing greater emphasis on students' media literacy, value judgment capabilities, and rational expression skills demonstrated in online practices. The assessment of educational effectiveness has partially shifted from a sole emphasis on test scores to evaluating whether students can produce objective and rational content and discern the authenticity of online information.

3. Key Challenges Short Videos Pose to College Students' Ideological and Political Education

3.1 Fragmented Information Undermines Educational Systemicity

The "fragmentation" of information is a defining characteristic of short videos, which conflicts with the systematic and in-depth nature required for ideological and political education.

3.1.1 Undermining the Systemic Nature of Ideological Education

Ideological education demands systematic continuity, whereas short videos often fragment complex content into isolated viewpoints or emotional snippets. While this facilitates dissemination, it sacrifices overarching frameworks and logical arguments. Some short videos lack thorough argumentation, featuring incoherent or

selectively quoted content. Superficial, fragmented expressions disassemble students' cognitive structures, while fleeting emotional peaks disrupt their mental agility and hinder cognitive continuity. This often leads to superficial problem-solving, undermining students' capacity for deep thinking and holistic logical reasoning¹.

3.1.2 Weakening the Effectiveness of Ideological and Political Education

The effectiveness of ideological and political education for college students lies in whether the actual impact of disseminated content aligns with expectations. Short videos, through high-intensity sensory stimulation and instant feedback, shape users' browsing habits of frequent updates and rapid scrolling. This leads students to lose the ability to critically evaluate and reflect on educational content and social phenomena that require discernment and deep deliberation, thereby weakening the effectiveness of ideological and political education for college students.

3.2 The "Information Cocoon" Weakens Educational Guidance

While enhancing user experience, the algorithmic recommendation systems of short video platforms create "information silos," significantly diminishing the guiding power of ideological and political education.

3.2.1 Solidifying Student Preferences and Narrowing Horizons

Short video platforms continuously push homogeneous content based on user preferences, inadvertently reinforcing existing interests and cognitive biases. Algorithms confine students to their preferred topics, reducing or even blocking their exposure to mainstream ideological content and other subjects. This diminishes the influence and penetration of mainstream ideologies. Simultaneously, this mechanism amplifies cognitive biases among college students, solidifying their existing stances and leading to rigid thinking patterns. This hinders the development of students' ability to view issues comprehensively and engage in dialectical thinking.

3.2.2 Erosion of Traditional Educators' Authority

In traditional ideological education, educators served as the sole source and primary voice for political information. However, within algorithm-driven personalized information ecosystems, the content students encounter on short-video platforms is largely determined by their interests and algorithms. This shifts the balance of authority, diminishing the traditional influence of ideological educators and weakening their position as primary discourse providers.

3.3 Mimetic Environments Undermine Information Authenticity

A mimetic environment refers to the information landscape shaped by mass communication activities. It is not a mirror-like reflection of the objective environment but rather an environment restructured and presented to the public through the selection, processing, and reporting of news and information by mass media.²

3.3.1 Disseminating False Information and Breeding Online Rumors

The immersive experience offered by short video mimetic environments is highly appealing, intensely stimulating users' curiosity. Short videos replace students' opportunities to engage deeply with real-world scenarios through virtualized usage contexts, yet they struggle to deliver authentic, in-person realism. In terms of content characteristics, these "manufactured" short videos cannot substitute for genuine social life scenarios.³ Within this online simulacrum environment, the massive content supply on short video platforms enables certain users to spread misinformation and propagate online rumors under the guise of "authority," misleading others. The "group polarization" effect further subtly erodes people's steadfast beliefs, undermines national spirit and culture, and severely disrupts social order, posing ideological concerns for ideological and political education among college students.

3.3.2 Erroneous Ideologies Like Historical Nihilism Frequently Emerge

Within the online mimetic environment, certain short videos distort historical facts and heroic figures through sensationalist gimmicks. Such content is often packaged under the guise of "independent thinking," possessing strong deceptive and inflammatory qualities. It readily undermines the already incomplete historical understanding of college students, allowing historical nihilism to steadily erode their worldview.

3.4 Entertainment-Oriented Styles Dissolve Educational Seriousness and Student Willpower

The fundamental challenge of ideological and political education lies in transforming moral understanding into

¹ Li, D. (2011). Opportunities and concerns for mobile media in a fragmented context. *Journalism Enthusiast*, (23), 38–39. <https://doi.org/10.16017/j.cnki.xwahz.2011.23.024>

² Lippmann, W. (2018). *Public opinion* (Y. Kewen & H. Jiang, Trans.). Shanghai People's Publishing House.

³ Xu, G., & Zou, Z. (2022). Practical issues and countermeasures in educating through online short videos in the new era. *Guide to Ideological and Theoretical Education*, (12), 142–147. <https://doi.org/10.16580/j.sxlljydk.2022.12.012>

corresponding behaviors and habits¹, with willpower playing a pivotal role in this process. As commercial entities driven by profit, short video platforms prioritize maximizing traffic to generate revenue. This incentivizes them to recommend highly viral, entertainment-oriented, and vulgar content to users, severely undermining the solemnity of the lofty ideals and patriotic sentiments inherent in ideological and political education.

3.4.1 The Trivialization of Noble Themes

Some creators, driven by traffic, present serious subjects like heroic deeds and revolutionary history in an entertaining manner. While this approach superficially bridges the gap with young college students, it diminishes the gravity and educational value of these events, making it difficult for students to develop the proper reverence for historical moments and heroic figures.

3.4.2 Hindering the Development of Resilient Character

The entertainment-driven style of short videos tends to reinforce college students' desire for instant gratification, leading them to become overly immersed in the high-stimulus, high-sensation virtual world constructed by these videos, thereby disconnecting them from real life. Simultaneously, it fuels the pursuit of abnormal values like overnight fame and get-rich-quick myths, causing individual values to diverge from mainstream ideology². This obscures the value orientation of ideological and political education behind entertainment. The series of negative, pessimistic "pseudo-entertainment" phenomena stemming from short video entertainment severely impedes the development of strong willpower among college students.

4. Countermeasures for Ideological and Political Education of College Students in the Context of the Short Video Trend

Currently, short videos pose profound challenges to ideological and political education for college students. Educators must recognize the situation and respond proactively. A systematic approach can be developed along four key dimensions: content development, technological empowerment, discourse innovation, and competency enhancement. This approach aims to construct an educational model that effectively integrates with short-video platforms while aligning with the cognitive patterns of college students.

4.1 Content Supply Reform: Building a "Concise Yet Profound, Refined Yet Dynamic" Ideological and Political Content Matrix

To counter the impact of fragmented short-video content, the core lies in shifting from passive adaptation to proactive action. This involves promoting innovative presentations of ideological and political education content on short-video platforms, establishing a model that combines systematic guidance with fragmented delivery.

4.1.1 Thematic Focus and Serialized Breakdown

Centered on teaching and educational objectives, we aim to scientifically "fragment" and deconstruct the grand theoretical framework of ideological and political education. This breakdown is not a simple division but involves designing serialized, thematic clusters of short video micro-courses around core concepts and major theme, such as "Chinese Modernization," "Common Prosperity," and "New Quality Productivity". Each short video should focus on a single sub-point or case study, standing independently while maintaining logical connections between series to form a "string of pearls" knowledge map. Aggregate content through collections, dedicated pages, and hashtags to guide students from individual "fragments" into a systematic learning pathway.

4.1.2 Deep Narrative and Visual Presentation

Moving beyond superficial information dissemination, we commit to crafting "thoughtful visual stories" to counteract the tendency toward shallow cognition. By integrating diverse formats, including documentaries, micro-films, situational dramas, data visualization, and VR/AR immersive experiences, facilitates the transformation of abstract ideological theories into tangible, relatable narratives. We delve deeply into historical details, contemporary achievements, and the spiritual essence behind exemplary figures. The integration of fundamental Marxist theories with contemporary social development practices is guided by a three-part creative logic, which is comprised of "principle, case study, and insight." This approach yields premium content rich in both emotional resonance and intellectual depth, enabling ideological and political education to subtly instill values through pervasive influence.

4.1.3 Establish Authoritative "Resource Pools" and Co-Creation Platforms

Universities should collaborate with mainstream media, outstanding faculty, and student leaders to build

¹ Wang, M. (2002). *Theory of ideological and political education reception*. Hubei People's Publishing House.

² Wei, P. (2023). Challenges and countermeasures of short video entertainmentization to ideological and political education in higher education institutions. *Media*, (7), 81–83.

institutional, regional, and even national-level short-video ideological and political content repositories and distribution platforms, ensuring the authority and professionalism of content supply. Encourage faculty to transform academic research findings and classroom teaching highlights into short videos, enriching the repository's scholarly depth. Simultaneously, establish a co-creation mechanism encompassing "topic provision – student creation – professional guidance – promotion of outstanding works," integrating students into content production. This approach leverages authoritative guidance while infusing vibrant youth perspectives and creativity, achieving precise alignment between supply and demand.

4.2 Technology and Algorithm Empowerment: Achieving Dual Effects of "Precision Targeting" and "Expanding Reach"

Algorithms are the core operational mechanism of short video platforms. Rather than viewing them as adversaries, we should study, utilize, and guide them to become "amplifiers" and "navigators" for mainstream value dissemination.

4.2.1 Intervene in Algorithmic Logic to Strengthen Mainstream Weighting

Educational institutions should proactively establish effective cooperation mechanisms with short video companies, promoting the inclusion of authoritative government accounts, official university channels, and outstanding ideological and political works into the "mainstream value content pool." This should grant them higher recommendation weighting and "public welfare traffic" support. Algorithms should implement a certain proportion of "benevolent recommendations" or "necessary exposure" to break through the barriers of purely interest-driven "information silos." This allows college students to encounter more diverse and high-quality ideological and political content within short video feeds, guiding them to transcend their cognitive silos.

4.2.2 Optimize Platform Algorithms and Leverage Algorithmic Recommendations Wisely

While intelligent recommendation algorithms efficiently address short video supply-demand issues, they also risk creating information silos. Effective regulation of algorithmic technology is essential. Further refine algorithmic techniques to develop specialized recommendation algorithms centered on ideological and political education. Leverage the Heterogeneous Data Fusion Platform¹ to push ideologically valuable videos to college students via algorithmic recommendations. This achieves scientific integration and precise delivery of ideological and political education resources, enhancing the targeted effectiveness of such education.

4.2.3 Implement "Algorithm Literacy" Education

Integrate algorithmic principles, the information bubble phenomenon, and its impacts into media literacy courses and ideological education modules. Instructors should employ case studies and group discussions to help students intuitively grasp the strengths and limitations of algorithmic operations. Simultaneously, cultivate students' ability to proactively search for and cross-verify information from multiple sources, encouraging them to consciously engage with diverse information channels. This transforms students from passive recipients into active constructors of knowledge.

4.3 Innovative Discourse Expression: Transforming Ideological and Political Discourse from "Didacticism" to "Resonance"

In the short-video era of scarce attention spans, ideological and political education must creatively transform its discourse system while upholding content integrity, building communication bridges through approaches resonating with young audiences.

4.3.1 Master Youth-Oriented Language and Internet-Savvy Expressions

The essence of short-video social interaction lies in emotional connection and bonding, with warmth and inspiration being the primary emotions evoked by popular short videos.² Educators must deeply study Gen Z's communication methods, symbolic systems, and aesthetic preferences, delving into the dissemination patterns of youth subcultures like bullet-screen culture, internet slang, and meme-based expressions. Ideological educators should adopt a style that is relaxed yet not frivolous, fashionable yet dignified, transforming political and academic discourse into vivid, relatable online language to resonate with students and bridge the generational gap. University short videos should balance grand narratives with micro-narratives, using relatable people and events from students' lives to illustrate profound truths. Compelling stories should resonate emotionally with

¹ Wang, Y., & Cui, J. (2025). Algorithm-driven transformation of ideological and political education: Discourse reshaping, hidden risks, and optimization pathways. *Research on Ideological and Political Education*, 41(2), 124–131. <https://doi.org/10.15938/j.cnki.iper.2025.02.019>

² Luo, Q. (2020). Mainstream media's short video content production and dissemination strategies: A case study of People's Daily's Douyin account. *Media*, (22), 44–46.

individual students, amplify collective sentiment, foster emotional resonance, and reinforce mainstream value pursuits.¹

4.3.2 Cultivate Personified IPs and Approachable Figures

Encourage ideological and political educators, counselors, and outstanding student party members to establish authentic, multidimensional presences on short video platforms, developing influential and trustworthy “ideological influencers” or specialized knowledge-sharing IPs. Through interview-style videos, vlogs, and other formats, they interpret current political hot topics, share personal growth insights, and address student concerns. This establishes an approachable, equal, and friendly interactive relationship, anchoring value guidance in relatable and credible personal charisma. This enhances the persuasiveness and empathy of ideological theories.

4.3.3 Foster Interactive Ecosystems to Guide Diverse Dialogue

Leverage short video features like comments, bullet screens, and live connections to transform one-way communication into multi-directional discourse. Educational institutions should actively monitor comment sections and engage with discussions. Open-ended topics should be introduced to guide rational debates, enabling students to discern truth from falsehood and build consensus through interactive exchanges. Additionally, organizing themed activities can inspire students to express their understanding of mainstream values through short videos. By fully leveraging the platform’s interactive ecosystem, educators can construct online practice classrooms for students.

4.4 *Enhancing Core Competencies: Building a Protective System Combining “Individual Immunity” and “Healthy Online Environment”*

Faced with the diverse ideologies and complex content on short video platforms, efforts must focus on enhancing the digital literacy of both teachers and students. Through multi-party collaboration, we should strive to cultivate a healthy and wholesome online cultural environment.

4.4.1 Comprehensively Enhance the “Digital Ideological and Political Capabilities” of the Educational Workforce

It is essential to cultivate the fundamental competencies of frontline ideological and political educators in planning, producing, and operating short video content, as well as guiding public sentiment, particularly for ideological and political course instructors and counselors. In terms of assessment, digital literacy and the effectiveness of utilizing new media for ideological and political work should be incorporated into the evaluation system. Additionally, integrate campus resources to establish cross-disciplinary ideological and political new media teams, combining expertise from journalism, information technology, humanities, and arts to continuously produce outstanding content.

4.4.2 Systematically Cultivate Students’ “Critical Media Literacy”

Integrate digital media literacy education into required courses, focusing on developing four core competencies: information discernment, value judgment, rational expression, and digital citizenship responsibility. This enables students to identify misinformation, uphold correct values amid diverse information, engage responsibly in online discourse, and proactively disseminate positive energy. Additionally, specialized lectures and practical activities can be utilized to enhance students’ media literacy and fortify their ideological “firewall.”

4.4.3 Strengthen Campus Account Governance and Positive Content Supply

Enhance the registration and management of campus self-media accounts, establishing robust content review, proofreading, and error-correction notification mechanisms. Regularly recognize outstanding content creators and commend faculty and students who actively disseminate wholesome material. Organize themed events like “Campus Short Video Positive Energy Competitions” and “Most Beautiful Campus Story Collections” to foster a campus culture that honors excellence and emulates role models. This cultivates a positive campus microenvironment to counteract negative influences from broader short-video platforms.

In summary, the short video craze presents both a formidable challenge to traditional ideological and political education and a historic opportunity for its innovative development. Universities should adopt an open yet prudent approach, proactively entering this new domain. Through systematic and innovative strategic adjustments, they can transform the dissemination power and influence of short videos into the guiding and shaping power of ideological and political education. Ultimately, this will enable them to firmly grasp the initiative in education during the digital age and cultivate a new generation capable of shouldering the great

¹ Gao, J. (2023). Empowering college ideological and political education through mainstream short videos: Values, mechanisms, and optimization pathways. *Research on Ideological and Political Education*, 39(5), 143–149. <https://doi.org/10.15938/j.cnki.iper.2023.05.023>

responsibility of national rejuvenation.

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