

Improvement of Media Literacy and Cultivation of Cross-cultural Communication Awareness among College Students Based on UGC Short Videos

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Abstract: *In the digital age, UGC (User Generated Content) short videos have become an important form of information dissemination, posing new requirements for the media literacy and cross-cultural communication awareness of college students. This article analyzes the characteristics of UGC short videos and their impact on college students, pointing out the current problems in media literacy and cross-cultural communication awareness among college students, such as insufficient media discrimination ability and cross-cultural cognitive bias. By drawing on relevant practices at home and abroad, specific strategies are proposed to use UGC short videos to enhance the media literacy and cross-cultural communication awareness of college students, including building a curriculum system, conducting practical activities, and creating a campus atmosphere, in order to promote the comprehensive development of college students and better adapt to the global development trend.*

Keywords: UGC short videos; College student; Media literacy; Cross cultural communication awareness.

With the rapid development of Internet technology, UGC short videos have swiftly emerged as a crucial means for college students to acquire information and express themselves, characterized by their convenience, interactivity, and entertainment value. UGC short videos have not only altered the mode of information dissemination but also exerted a profound influence on college students' values, ways of thinking, and behavioral habits. However, there are numerous deficiencies in college students' media literacy and cross-cultural communication awareness, such as the inability to effectively discern the authenticity of information and a lack of understanding and respect for different cultures. Therefore, exploring how to utilize UGC short videos to enhance college students' media literacy and cross-cultural communication awareness holds significant practical importance.

UGC short videos have their unique characteristics. The primary characteristic is the diversification of communication subjects. UGC short videos have broken the monopoly of information dissemination by traditional media, allowing anyone to become a producer and disseminator of information. As an active group on the internet, college students are both consumers and creators of content on UGC short video platforms. They express their views and emotions through shooting, editing, and sharing short videos, interacting and communicating with other users. The second characteristic is the diversification of content forms. The content of UGC short videos covers various aspects of life, including entertainment, education, culture, technology, etc. Its forms are also diverse, such as funny videos, knowledge popularization videos, food preparation videos, etc. This diverse content form meets the different interests and needs of college students, providing them with a vast space for information acquisition and expression. The third characteristic is the fast dissemination speed and wide range. Leveraging the communication advantages of the internet, UGC short videos can be rapidly disseminated to all parts of the world in a short time. College students can quickly expand the influence and dissemination range of information by sharing short videos on social media platforms. A high-quality UGC short video may receive a large number of likes, comments, and shares in a short time, attracting widespread social attention. The fourth characteristic is strong interactivity: UGC short video platforms provide rich interactive functions, such as likes, comments, sharing, private messages, etc. College students can interact with other users in real time through these functions, express their views and feelings, and form a good social atmosphere. This interactivity not only enhances the stickiness and loyalty among users but also promotes the exchange and dissemination of information.

UGC short videos have both positive and negative impacts on college students due to their unique characteristics. The positive impact is that UGC short videos provide college students with rich learning resources and entertainment options. They can broaden their knowledge by watching educational videos and enhance their expression and innovation abilities by participating in short video creation. In addition, UGC short videos provide

a platform for college students to showcase themselves, which helps to boost their self-confidence and self-identity. The negative impact is that due to the low threshold for dissemination of UGC short videos, the quality of information varies greatly. Some harmful information, such as fake news, violent and pornographic content, may have a negative impact on college students' values and physical and mental health. Furthermore, excessive indulgence in UGC short videos may lead to chaotic time management, affecting learning and daily life.

The current issues faced by college students in terms of media literacy and cross-cultural communication awareness are as follows. Firstly, there is a lack of media discernment in terms of media literacy: In the era of information explosion, college students are exposed to a vast amount of user-generated content (UGC) short videos every day. However, they often lack the ability to discern information and cannot accurately judge the authenticity and value of information. Some false news and rumors may spread rapidly among college students, causing adverse effects. The second issue is weak media critical awareness. When faced with UGC short videos, some college students lack critical thinking and are prone to blindly following trends and accepting information. They often fail to conduct in-depth analysis of the source, content, and dissemination purpose of information, making them vulnerable to the influence of bad information. The third issue is weak media ethics and legal awareness. Some college students lack media ethics and legal awareness when participating in the creation and dissemination of UGC short videos. They may infringe on others' intellectual property rights, privacy rights, and other legitimate rights and interests, or disseminate illegal or irregular information, causing unnecessary trouble for themselves and others.

Nowadays, short videos play a significant role in enhancing the cross-cultural communication skills of college students. However, the current state of college students' awareness regarding cross-cultural communication is far from satisfactory. Firstly, cross-cultural cognitive bias: Due to differences in cultural backgrounds, college students may encounter cognitive biases when encountering and understanding different cultures. They often judge other cultures based on their own cultural standards, lacking respect and understanding for diverse cultures. Such cognitive biases may lead to cultural conflicts and misunderstandings, affecting the effectiveness of cross-cultural communication. Secondly, college students' cross-cultural communication skills are inadequate. Cross-cultural communication requires a certain degree of language proficiency, communication skills, and cultural adaptability. However, some college students currently lack in these areas. Their foreign language proficiency is limited, making it difficult for them to accurately express their views and ideas; they lack cross-cultural communication skills, making it challenging to effectively communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds; and their understanding of the target culture is not deep enough, preventing them from adjusting their communication strategies based on different cultural backgrounds.

How to utilize UGC short videos to enhance college students' media literacy and cross-cultural communication awareness has become an important research topic for university teachers, who can draw on relevant practical experiences from both domestic and international contexts. In terms of domestic practice, the New Media Research Center of Tsinghua University has carried out multiple research projects on UGC short videos and college students' media literacy. By organizing academic seminars and conducting research activities, it provides theoretical support and practical guidance for universities to carry out media literacy education. Some universities have established new media clubs, organizing students to engage in UGC short video creation and dissemination activities. Through participating in these activities, club members not only improve their media literacy and cross-cultural communication skills but also contribute to campus culture construction. In terms of international practice, American universities attach great importance to media literacy education, integrating it into the general education system. Many universities have offered specialized media literacy courses, adopting diversified teaching methods such as case studies and practical teaching to cultivate students' media critical awareness and innovation ability. Some European countries have carried out cross-cultural communication projects, promoting exchanges and integration between different cultures by organizing international student exchange activities and conducting cross-cultural research. These projects provide college students with a broad platform for cross-cultural communication, enhancing their cross-cultural communication skills.

In addition to drawing on existing domestic and international experience, the following strategies can be utilized to enhance college students' media literacy and cross-cultural communication skills through UGC short videos. Firstly, the first strategy is to construct a curriculum system in the reform of higher education. Offer courses related to media literacy and cross-cultural communication: Universities should incorporate media literacy and cross-cultural communication education into their talent cultivation systems, offering relevant professional and general education courses. Through systematic teaching, students can be helped to understand the basic knowledge of media, communication rules, and ethics, and to grasp the theories and methods of cross-cultural communication.

Incorporate UGC short video case teaching: In the teaching process, teachers can introduce a wealth of UGC short video cases and guide students to analyze the characteristics of media information dissemination and the application of cross-cultural elements in these cases. Through case analysis, students can gain a more intuitive understanding of the importance of media literacy and cross-cultural communication, enhancing their ability to analyze and solve problems. The second strategy is that relevant practical activities should be carried out in universities. Firstly, organize UGC short video creation competitions: Universities can regularly organize UGC short video creation competitions, encouraging students to create works around specific themes. During the competition, students need to apply the media knowledge and cross-cultural communication skills they have learned to produce short video works that are thought-provoking, artistic, and entertaining. Through the competition, students' creative enthusiasm can be stimulated, and their practical and innovative abilities can be improved. Secondly, carry out cross-cultural exchange activities: Universities can cooperate with foreign universities or institutions to carry out cross-cultural exchange activities, such as online cultural exchange festivals, short video exchanges, etc. By participating in these activities, students can personally experience the charm of different cultures and enhance their cross-cultural cognition and understanding abilities. At the same time, students can also use UGC short video platforms to share their cross-cultural exchange experiences and feelings, disseminate Chinese culture, and improve their cross-cultural communication abilities. The third strategy is to create a campus atmosphere through various platforms and media. Firstly, strengthen the construction of campus media: universities should enhance the development of campus media and establish an influential campus UGC short video platform. Through campus media, release positive, healthy, and educational short video content to guide students in establishing correct values and media perspectives. At the same time, campus media can also provide a platform for students to showcase themselves, encouraging them to actively participate in short video creation and dissemination. Secondly, carry out media literacy and cross-cultural communication promotional activities: universities can organize lectures, exhibitions, themed class meetings, and other forms to conduct media literacy and cross-cultural communication promotional activities. Invite experts, scholars, and industry elites to explain relevant knowledge of media literacy and cross-cultural communication to students, sharing successful cases and experiences. Through promotional activities, create a positive campus atmosphere and enhance students' media literacy and awareness of cross-cultural communication.

In summary, the rise of UGC short videos presents new opportunities and challenges for enhancing media literacy and fostering cross-cultural communication awareness among college students. Universities should fully recognize the significant role of UGC short videos in education. By constructing curriculum systems, organizing practical activities, and creating a campus atmosphere, they can leverage UGC short videos to enhance students' media literacy and cross-cultural communication awareness. Additionally, universities should draw from relevant practical experiences both domestically and internationally, continuously exploring innovative educational models and methods, and contributing to the cultivation of high-quality talents with a global perspective and cross-cultural communication skills.

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