

Research on Communication Strategies for Integrating Excellent Traditional Chinese Culture into Ideological and Political Education in Dongguan Universities within the Short-Video Era

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Abstract: This study examines the communication strategies for integrating excellent traditional Chinese culture (ETCC) into ideological and political education (IPE) in Dongguan universities within the short-video era. Employing a questionnaire survey of 247 university students, the research analyzes students' short-video usage behaviors, exposure to cultural and ideological content, perceptions of communication effectiveness, and participation intentions through quantitative statistical methods. The findings indicate that short-video platforms have become a primary channel for students' media consumption and demonstrate significant potential for enhancing cultural identity and value recognition. However, challenges remain, including insufficient content depth and systematicity, a mismatch between communication formats and youth aesthetic preferences, and underdeveloped collaborative production mechanisms. Based on communication theory, IPE theory, and youth culture perspectives, this study proposes strategies emphasizing content optimization, format innovation, and multi-actor collaboration. The research contributes empirical evidence for improving digital communication models of IPE and provides practical implications for universities seeking to promote culturally grounded education in the new media environment.

Keywords: Short video; Excellent traditional Chinese culture (ETCC); Ideological and political education (IPE); University students; Communication strategy

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1. Introduction

In recent years, short videos, as a rapidly developing new media form, with their characteristics of

fragmentation, strong visual appeal, and algorithm-driven nature, have profoundly changed the way information is disseminated and the cognitive habits of college students. This brings new challenges to the ideological and political education (IPE) of traditional linear universities, and also provides opportunities to improve their attractiveness and efficiency. At the same time, integrating Chinese cultural elements that are highly compatible with excellent traditional Chinese culture (ETCC) is an inevitable requirement to enhance cultural self-confidence. This study focuses on diverse and active student groups in colleges and universities in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, investigates the frequency, preference type, and cognitive status of their exposure to short video contents related to ETCC, and finally analyzes the actual dissemination effects and the primary challenges in this process. The ultimate goal is to build a set of systematic and effective communication strategies based on the research results, so as to effectively improve the communication effect of ETCC and IPE. The results of this research can not only combine communication research with the theory of IPE, thus broadening the research horizon, but also provide data support and feasible strategies for local universities in ETCC content design, form innovation, and effect evaluation.

2. Literature review

2.1. Studies on short videos and university IPE communication

With the rapid development of digital media technologies, short video platforms have emerged as significant channels for information dissemination and youth engagement, reshaping the communication ecology of university IPE. Existing studies indicate that the transition from traditional single-media communication to algorithm-driven, multimedia environments has fundamentally altered how IPE content is produced, delivered, and received ^[1]. The visual immediacy, emotional resonance, and interactive features of short videos enhance audience participation and reduce cognitive barriers to theoretical learning, thereby improving students' acceptance and understanding of ideological and political discourse. Meanwhile, scholars have explored various application models of short video platforms in IPE practice, including theoretical interpretation through micro-content, the promotion of exemplary figures, and value-oriented narrative storytelling ^[2]. These approaches leverage platform algorithms and participatory culture to expand the reach of mainstream ideological content among university students. However, research also highlights the ambivalent effects of short videos. While they provide innovative tools for educational communication and broaden students' social perspectives, they may simultaneously contribute to challenges such as fragmented information consumption, algorithm-induced information cocoons, and excessive media dependence. Additionally, the pursuit of attention-driven content by some creators may introduce sensational or value-deviant material, potentially influencing students' value formation and ideological judgment. Consequently, scholars emphasize the need to balance technological opportunities with educational guidance and ethical regulation in short video-based IPE communication.

2.2. Research on integrating ETCC into IPE

The integration of ETCC into IPE has become an important research focus in recent years, driven by both national cultural strategies and educational reform initiatives. Scholars generally agree that ETCC possesses vital educational value in cultivating moral character, strengthening cultural identity, and fostering patriotism among university students ^[3]. The philosophical concepts, ethical norms, and aesthetic traditions embedded in Chinese cultural heritage are viewed as inherently compatible with the objectives of IPE, providing rich

cultural resources for value education. Current studies mainly examine pathways for incorporating ETCC into university education through classroom instruction, curriculum reform, campus cultural activities, and social practice programs^[4]. Within the framework of “Curriculum Ideology and Politics (CIP)”, researchers advocate constructing systematic integration mechanisms that encompass curriculum design, pedagogical innovation, assessment systems, and faculty development^[5]. Such approaches aim to transform traditional cultural resources into accessible educational content while maintaining their historical depth and contemporary relevance. Despite these advances, most studies remain focused on traditional educational settings and pedagogical models. Comparatively limited attention has been paid to the role of emerging digital media—particularly short video platforms—in facilitating the creative transformation and innovative dissemination of ETCC within IPE contexts.

2.3. Research gap

Although present research has generated valuable insights into both short video communication in IPE and the educational integration of ETCC, several gaps remain. First, current studies often treat these two research domains independently, with insufficient exploration of how short video media can function as an integrated communication mechanism for disseminating ETCC within IPE frameworks. Second, empirical investigations remain relatively limited. Much of the literature relies on theoretical discussion or qualitative observation, while large-scale quantitative analyses examining students’ media usage behaviors, content preferences, and learning outcomes are still lacking. Third, prior research predominantly focuses on macro-level policy discussions or elite universities, leaving regional institutions underexamined. The specific communicative environments, student characteristics, and educational needs of local universities—such as those in Dongguan city—require more context-sensitive investigation. Addressing these gaps, the present study combines short video communication research with ETCC-integrated IPE practice through an empirical case study of universities in Dongguan city. By employing a quantitative survey method, it seeks to provide micro-level evidence on students’ engagement patterns and to propose regionally grounded communication strategies that enhance the effectiveness of culturally informed IPE.

3. Theoretical foundation

3.1. Communication theory

This study draws upon key communication theories to explain the mechanisms through which short video platforms influence the dissemination and reception of IPE content among university students. First, Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) emphasizes audience agency in media selection and use, and analyzes users’ motivations, media-use behaviors, and the gratifications obtained from communication processes^[6-7]. Guided by this theory, the study examines Dongguan University students’ motivations for using short videos—such as entertainment, information acquisition, and cultural learning—as well as their usage contexts. UGT provides a basis for designing targeted short video content that better meets students’ needs and enhances the communication effectiveness of ETCC. Second, Media Convergence Theory (MCT) explains the integration of different media forms in communication processes, structures, and functions^[8-9]. Beyond technological change, convergence reshapes cultural consumption and communication patterns. In this study, MCT supports the integration of short video platforms with traditional IPE channels, including classroom teaching and campus

cultural activities, to construct an online–offline integrated communication framework.

3.2. IPE theory

IPE theories provide normative guidance for evaluating educational objectives and value outcomes. Firstly, Collaborative Education Theory (CET) highlights coordinated participation among schools, families, and society to promote students' comprehensive development through shared resources and cooperative mechanisms^[10]. Applied to short video communication, it emphasizes collaboration among university media platforms, teachers, students, and external institutions to form educational synergy. Secondly, the Theory of Fostering Virtue through Education (TFVE) serves as the fundamental principle of higher education, prioritizing moral cultivation as the core mission of talent development^[11]. In this study, it functions as a value-oriented framework for assessing whether short video communication contributes to students' moral development, cultural literacy, and value formation.

3.3. Youth culture and new media theory

Youth culture and new media theories help explain students' media preferences and value construction in digital environments. First of all, Youth Subculture Theory (YST) interprets how young people form cultural identities through shared interests and online interaction^[12–13]. It is used here to analyze students' preferences for short video formats and narrative styles, as well as their aesthetic and psychological acceptance of cultural content. Then, Value Identity Construction Theory in the New Media Context (VICT-NMC) explains how individuals actively internalize values through interaction with diverse media content^[14–15]. By examining behaviors such as viewing, liking, commenting, and sharing, this study explores how engagement with cultural and ideological short videos promotes cultural identification and value internalization.

4. Methodology

4.1. Research design

This study follows the logical sequence of describing the current situation, diagnosing problems, and constructing strategies. At first, a questionnaire survey was conducted to understand the current situation. Then, based on relevant theories, the data was analyzed in depth to identify the problems and their causes. Lastly, targeted communication strategies were proposed.

4.2. Participants

The participants in this study consist of 247 students (**Table 1**). Female students constituted the majority of the sample (70.85%), while males accounted for 29.15%. Most respondents were undergraduates, with junior students representing the largest group (59.92%), followed by sophomores (24.70%). In terms of academic majors, humanities-related disciplines comprised the largest proportion (42.91%), followed by education (15.38%) and science and engineering (10.12%). Regarding student leadership experience, 36.44% of participants served as student leaders or organization members. What is more, most respondents originated from Guangdong Province outside Dongguan (72.87%), with smaller proportions from Dongguan (14.57%), other provinces (11.34%), and Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan region, or overseas regions (1.21%). Overall, the sample mainly consisted of undergraduate students from Guangdong province, providing an appropriate basis for subsequent analysis.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of participants (N = 247)

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	72	29.15
	Female	175	70.85
Grade	Freshman	18	7.29
	Sophomore	61	24.7
	Junior	148	59.92
	Senior	16	6.48
	Graduate student	4	1.62
	Major	Humanities, History, Philosophy & Law	106
	Economics & Management	9	3.64
	Science & Engineering	25	10.12
	Art & Design	12	4.86
	Education	38	15.38
	Other	57	23.08
Student Leadership	Student leader/organization core member	90	36.44
	Non-leader	157	63.56
Birth Place	Dongguan	36	14.57
	Guangdong (excluding Dongguan)	180	72.87
	Other provinces	28	11.34
	Hong Kong/Macao/Taiwan or overseas	3	1.21

4.3. Data collection and analysis

Data were collected through an online questionnaire survey targeting full-time students from universities in the Dongguan area. The questionnaire (consisted of six sections: basic demographic information; short video usage behaviors and motivations; exposure to and cognition of traditional culture and ideological-political content; scale items measuring perceived platform characteristics, content quality, source credibility, value identification, educational effectiveness, and participation intention; communication strategy preferences; and open-ended questions) was distributed using a snowball sampling method via online platforms. A total of 249 responses were received, of which 247 were valid after data screening, yielding a valid response rate of 99.2%. The sample included students from different grades, majors, and places of origin, demonstrating reasonable diversity and representativeness for subsequent analysis.

Then, quantitative statistical methods were employed to analyze the data using SPSS. For example, descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to calculate frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, providing an overview of participants' demographic characteristics and short video usage patterns.

To ensure measurement quality, reliability, and validity, tests were performed. The overall scale demonstrated excellent internal consistency, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.983. Reliability coefficients for all dimensions exceeded 0.90, indicating high reliability. Validity was assessed using the KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity. The KMO value reached 0.959, and Bartlett's test was statistically significant (P

< 0.001), confirming that the data were suitable for factor analysis and that the questionnaire possessed strong construct validity.

5. Findings

5.1. Short video usage behavior of university students

The survey results indicate that short video usage has become highly prevalent among university students in Dongguan. Regarding daily usage duration, 31.17% of respondents reported using short video platforms for more than three hours per day, while 26.32% used them for 2–3 hours and 25.51% for 1–2 hours. Only 5.26% used short videos for less than 30 minutes daily. These findings suggest that short videos have become an important component of students' everyday media consumption.

In terms of platform preference, Douyin was the most frequently used platform (88.26%), followed by Xiaohongshu (58.70%) and Bilibili (42.11%). Other platforms, such as WeChat Channels and Kuaishou, showed comparatively lower usage rates. The dominance of entertainment-oriented and algorithm-driven platforms indicates a highly visual and personalized media environment among students.

Regarding usage scenarios, students primarily watched short videos during extracurricular leisure time (91.09%) and before sleep (75.30%), followed by commuting or waiting situations (53.85%). These results demonstrate that short video consumption mainly occurs in fragmented time periods.

The primary motivations for using short videos were entertainment and relaxation (94.74%), followed by obtaining information (65.99%) and learning skills or knowledge (65.99%). Only 31.17% reported using short videos specifically to learn about traditional culture, indicating that educational content still occupies a relatively secondary position in users' motivations.

5.2. Exposure to ETCC and IPE content

Most respondents reported moderate exposure to ETCC content on short video platforms. Within the past month, 48.58% stated that they had “occasionally” encountered traditional culture content, while 25.51% reported “frequent” exposure. Only 2.02% indicated no exposure at all.

Similarly, exposure to content combining traditional culture with ideological or value guidance was mainly at a moderate level, with 47.37% selecting “occasionally” and 24.70% selecting “frequently.” This suggests that although such content exists on short video platforms, its dissemination intensity remains limited.

Concerning content types, students were most likely to encounter intangible cultural heritage (68.83%), traditional festivals (68.02%), and historical figures or stories (65.59%). Comparatively fewer students accessed classical texts (37.65%) or traditional etiquette content (38.06%), indicating a preference for narrative and visually expressive cultural forms.

5.3. Perception of platform characteristics and content quality

Students generally held positive perceptions of platform mechanisms and content presentation. The overall mean score for perceived platform characteristics was 3.89 (out of 5). Algorithmic recommendation functions ($M=3.98$) and interactive features such as likes and sharing ($M=3.87$) were perceived as promoting continued engagement with traditional culture content.

Content quality evaluation also showed favorable results, with an overall mean of 3.90. Respondents agreed that traditional culture IPE short videos were engaging, clearly structured, and aligned with their

aesthetic preferences. Narrative attractiveness received the highest evaluation ($M=3.94$), suggesting that storytelling plays an important role in audience acceptance.

5.4. Source credibility perception

The perceived credibility of communication subjects received a slightly lower overall mean score ($M=3.79$). Students showed relatively higher trust in university official accounts ($M=3.85$) and collaborative production involving multiple participants (official institutions, teachers, and students) ($M=3.84$). Meanwhile, teacher-led content received comparatively lower enthusiasm ($M=3.68$), implying that diversified communicators may enhance audience engagement.

5.5. Value identification and educational effectiveness

The results demonstrate strong positive outcomes in value identification and educational impact. The overall mean score for value identification reached 4.03, indicating broad agreement that short video content enhances cultural pride and promotes correct value orientation. More than half of the respondents agreed that such content strengthened their willingness to learn traditional culture and supported integrating traditional culture into university IPE.

Educational effectiveness also scored highly ($M=4.01$). Students reported that short videos helped them better understand ideological-political content, clarify value judgments, and encourage positive behavioral intentions. Compared with traditional classroom formats, short videos were perceived as more accessible entry points for engaging with ideological content.

5.6. Participation intention and communication behavior

Participation willingness showed moderately positive results ($M=3.86$). Students expressed willingness to like, share, and recommend high-quality traditional culture short videos ($M\approx 3.9$). However, active participation in content creation activities was slightly lower ($M=3.77$), indicating that passive engagement remains more common than active production.

5.7. Communication strategy preferences

Students demonstrated clear preferences regarding communication strategies. The most favored formats were situational short dramas (65.59%), animation or Chinese-style illustrations (55.47%), and campus vlogs (53.44%). Traditional lecture-style explanations were least preferred (10.53%).

Regarding video length, students preferred concise formats: 15–60 seconds (38.46%) and 1–3 minutes (36.44%). In terms of publishing subjects, collaboration with high-quality external creators (39.27%) and official university accounts (35.63%) was most favored.

When asked about factors improving communication effectiveness, respondents prioritized entertaining content (68.02%) and deeper viewpoints (56.68%), suggesting that both engagement and intellectual depth are essential for successful dissemination.

6. Discussion

6.1. Effectiveness of short videos in disseminating IPE of ETCC

Short videos play a significant role in disseminating IPE of ETCC, as their immersive narratives and algorithmic

recommendation mechanisms largely lower students' acceptance thresholds. For instance, more than 78% of students believe that, compared to traditional classroom methods, short videos make them more "willing to engage with" IPE content ($M=3.98$). Moreover, short video content is also prominent in emotional arousal and cultural identity shaping. Approximately 94% of students agree that related short videos enhance their pride in Chinese culture ($M= 4.03$). Over 90% of respondents express agreement that "integrating ETCC into university IPE is necessary" ($M=4.04$). Thus, short videos not only enhance the appeal of IPE in form but also effectively promote students' value identification and emotional identification with ETCC at a substantive level, injecting new communicative vitality into traditional IPE.

6.2. Existing problems and cause analysis

First, the depth and systematic nature of current content remain insufficient. Survey results show that 56.68% of students expect short videos to provide deeper perspectives and meaningful interpretations. However, much existing content still focuses on superficial popularization or visual presentation, emphasizing symbolic display rather than explaining the spiritual essence and contemporary relevance of ETCC. As a result, knowledge is often fragmented and lacks coherent structure, making it difficult for students to develop sustained understanding or form an integrated cognitive framework.

Second, there is a noticeable mismatch between communication formats and youth aesthetic preferences. Students demonstrate strong interest in expressive formats such as situational storytelling, animation, and creatively edited videos, while university-produced content frequently resembles institutional publicity materials or recorded lectures. Such productions are often perceived as rigid and lacking online appeal, failing to meet students' expectations for engaging, entertaining, and "meme-friendly" content. This gap weakens communication effectiveness despite the growing popularity of short-video platforms among young audiences.

Third, collaborative mechanisms among communication actors are underdeveloped. Although students express trust in a collaborative model combining official institutions, teachers, and students, practical coordination within universities is still limited. Official media accounts often operate independently, many teachers lack the skills or incentives to participate in short-video creation, and student creativity has not been fully mobilized. In addition, cooperation with external high-quality creators lacks stable institutional channels, resulting in fragmented production processes and reduced overall communication synergy.

6.3. Practical implications for Dongguan universities

The findings of this study provide several practical directions for improving the effectiveness of IPE communication in Dongguan universities within the short-video environment.

In the first place, universities should integrate ETCC resources into campus media strategies by establishing specialized short-video columns or thematic accounts. By aligning cultural content with students' daily learning experiences and local cultural characteristics of Dongguan, institutions can transform abstract ideological education into accessible and relatable digital narratives, thereby enhancing students' cultural identification and learning engagement.

In the second place, it is necessary for Dongguan universities to promote a practice-oriented talent cultivation model that combines education with media production. Student participation in content planning, scripting, filming, and dissemination can be incorporated into practical courses, innovation projects, or extracurricular activities. Such an approach not only improves communication authenticity but also cultivates

students' digital literacy, cultural expression ability, and sense of responsibility as active communicators of traditional culture.

In the third place, universities ought to strengthen institutional support and collaborative governance mechanisms. Establishing cross-departmental coordination among publicity offices, academic faculties, and student organizations can improve resource integration and production efficiency. At the same time, cooperation with local cultural institutions, media organizations, and regional creative industries in Dongguan can expand communication channels and introduce professional expertise. Through these measures, Dongguan universities can form a sustainable and locally grounded model for innovative IPE communication in the short-video era.

7. Conclusion

7.1 Summary of key findings

This study explored the communication effectiveness and optimization strategies for integrating ETCC into IPE in Dongguan universities within the short-video media environment. Based on questionnaire data from 247 university students, several key findings were identified.

First, short videos have become a dominant media form in students' daily information consumption. Most respondents spend considerable time on short-video platforms, primarily for entertainment and information acquisition, indicating that these platforms possess strong potential as channels for educational communication. However, learning-oriented motivations remain secondary, suggesting the need for more attractive educational content design.

Second, students demonstrate moderate exposure to ETCC-related short videos and generally positive evaluations of platform characteristics and content quality. Algorithmic recommendations and narrative attractiveness significantly enhance engagement, while short videos effectively promote cultural identity and value recognition. The findings confirm that short videos can serve as effective supplementary tools for IPE by lowering cognitive barriers and strengthening emotional resonance.

Third, despite positive educational outcomes, several structural problems remain. Current content often lacks depth and systematic interpretation, communication formats do not fully align with youth aesthetic preferences, and collaborative production mechanisms among universities, teachers, students, and external creators are insufficiently developed. These issues limit the long-term educational impact and communication sustainability of ETCC-related short videos.

To summarize, the study demonstrates that short-video platforms provide both opportunities and challenges for integrating ETCC into university IPE. Effective communication requires balancing entertainment value with intellectual depth while establishing collaborative and professionally supported production systems.

7.2. Limitations and future research direction

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations.

First, the sample was limited to universities in Dongguan, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regions or different types of higher education institutions. Regional cultural environments and institutional resources may influence students' media behaviors and educational perceptions.

Second, the research primarily relied on self-reported questionnaire data, which may be affected by subjective bias and cannot fully capture actual behavioral patterns or long-term learning outcomes. Future

studies could combine quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews, experimental designs, or platform data analysis to obtain more comprehensive evidence.

Third, this study mainly adopted cross-sectional analysis, focusing on current communication effects rather than longitudinal changes. Future research could track students' value identification and learning engagement over time to examine the sustained educational influence of short-video communication.

In addition, further studies may explore algorithm governance, content personalization mechanisms, and interdisciplinary cooperation between education, communication studies, and digital media production. Comparative research across regions or international contexts would also help clarify how cultural communication strategies can adapt to diverse media ecosystems.

Through continued empirical investigation and theoretical refinement, future research can further support the innovative development of culturally grounded ideological and political education in the digital media era.

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Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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