

# Research on the Construction of Communication Ethics for Film and Television Short Videos in the Digital Age

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**Abstract:** Against the backdrop of the digital age, the iterative innovation and widespread application of media technologies have provided the public with more diverse channels for information dissemination and emotional expression. As an emerging media form, short videos have rapidly become an important carrier for information dissemination and interaction, relying on their immersive experience, visual narrative, and fission-style communication methods. However, alongside the technological dividends of film and television, short videos raise ethical issues such as the proliferation of false information and deviations in value orientation. This paper analyzes the connotation and research directions of film and television short videos, as well as the existing ethical problems, and preliminarily explores the construction paths of their communication ethics from four aspects.

**Keywords:** Digital age; Film and television short videos; Construction of communication ethics

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## 1. Introduction

In the current era of vigorous development of mobile internet, online live streaming and short video platforms have become the main tools for public entertainment. With the rapid expansion of platform user bases, the difficulty for short video platforms to manage user-uploaded and forwarded video content is increasing<sup>[1]</sup>. In particular, the popularity of video contents such as “dangerous actions”, “gluttony-type”, and “high-profile wealth display” on major platforms has sounded the alarm for short video supervision and the construction of communication ethics. Meanwhile, pan-entertainment culture, malicious editing, and indecent content are emerging in an endless stream, continuously eroding the healthy communication ecology of short videos. This not only affects the formation of audiences’ correct values but also poses great challenges to platform images and the fulfillment of social responsibilities. Therefore, how to construct the communication ethics of film and television short videos has become a key issue that needs to be solved urgently.

## **2. Connotation and research directions of film and television short videos**

### **2.1. Connotation of film and television short videos**

Film and television short videos, as the name suggests, are short video clips that are secondarily processed based on film and television works. In terms of content, creators often select highlight segments of film and television dramas and re-splice the storyline and rhythm according to their own ideas, thus bringing audiences a different viewing experience. In terms of form, creators often use methods such as cutting, splicing, mixed editing, and analysis to endow the original film and television works with new vitality <sup>[2]</sup>.

### **2.2. Research directions of film and television short videos**

Although film and television short videos have reached a state of “in full swing”, related research is relatively lagging <sup>[3]</sup>. At the present stage, the research on film and television short videos by experts and scholars is mainly reflected in four aspects: First, the definition of concepts. Some experts believe that film and television short videos are the secondary editing of original film and television works through means such as cutting, splicing, and mixed editing. Such videos are characterized by fast rhythm, obvious storyline, and short duration, allowing users to complete the viewing of the entire film or television drama in a short time. Some scholars believe that the above concept definition is too narrow. The real film and television short videos should be content with the creators’ thoughts and emotions, rather than simple transportation. Under specific circumstances, the holders of film and television works can also cooperate with secondary creators to further improve the influence and communication degree of film and television works. Second, research on infringement issues. Some experts believe that there are problems of unclear boundaries in the secondary creation of film and television short videos, such as the copyright ownership of edited segments and whether the original creators’ benefits are damaged, which need to be clarified urgently. For example, whether the secondary creators’ operations of mixed editing and adaptation of unauthorized film and television dramas constitute copyright infringement, and how to define the standards and boundaries of infringement if so <sup>[4]</sup>. Some scholars propose to establish a “film and television material open library” and seek a balance between film and television works and secondary creators through an authorization dividend mechanism to prevent innovation vitality from being affected by infringement disputes. Third, research on the opportunities and challenges of film and television short videos. Most experts and scholars believe that the characteristics of fragmented communication and strong interactivity of film and television short videos can not only create favorable conditions for the value regeneration and secondary communication of classic film and television works but also broaden the audience threshold and improve the popularity of directors and actors. However, current film and television short videos are facing problems such as serious content homogenization and uneven quality, which severely restrict their long-term development <sup>[5]</sup>.

## **3. Ethical problems of film and television short videos in the digital age**

### **3.1. Obvious indecent content phenomenon**

On the one hand, affected by the “bad money drives out good money”, short video creators in various fields are becoming more and more “involutionary.” On the other hand, in order to cater to big data algorithms and the audience’s curiosity psychology, many creators add more or less indecent content to film and television short videos. For example, creator A of film and television short videos implants indecent film and television segments at the beginning for the “golden 5 seconds” to attract countless fans; creator B of film and television short videos has been using “filthy language” and “politically sensitive” language in the commentary process to create

blockbusting videos to retain users; creator C of short videos directly transports banned films full of indecency, blood, and violence to domestic short video platforms for dissemination, instantly becoming a blogger with millions of fans.

### **3.2. Numerous malicious editing phenomena**

In the video editing process, common editing techniques include: cut (direct scene conversion), jump cut (creating rhythm impact), montage (narrating and lyricizing through shot combination), etc. Some film and television short video creators use these techniques, or through technologies such as animation, C4D, and AE, to “dock” the plots and characters in different film and television dramas, thus bringing unexpected film and television display effects <sup>[6]</sup>. For example, the currently popular Shengdai CP (Sun Wukong + Lin Daiyu) on the Internet. These two literary characters, which should have nothing to do with each other, have achieved “cross-border” bonding under the brainstorming of film and television short video creators. With their superb editing techniques, they cleverly spliced the segments of Sun Wukong played by Liu Xiao Ling Tong in the 1986 version of *Journey to the West* and Lin Daiyu played by Chen Xiaoxu in the 1987 version of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, making the two interact constantly and full of “sweet points” in the video. At the same time, some short video creators dress “Lin Daiyu” in the vest of “Lu Zhishen,” such as “Lin Daiyu uproots the willow tree” and “Lin Daiyu battles the Great Sage Equaling Heaven.” Although the two examples have the same effect, the latter has obvious “malicious editing,” while the former combines the strengths of both to create brand-new film and television works <sup>[7]</sup>.

## **4. Effective strategies for constructing communication ethics of film and television short videos in the digital age**

### **4.1. Strengthen ethical propaganda and improve ethical self-discipline**

With the rise of new media forms such as “short videos”, the brilliance of other communication paths has become increasingly dim. Among them, film and television short videos stand out from many short video contents due to their high-quality content, prominent highlights, and closeness to public life. For example, creators will add elements such as stories and poetry in the process of making film and television short videos, which can not only inject new vitality into film and television dramas but also deepen the audience’s in-depth understanding of film and television dramas. However, under the influence of wrong short video creation concepts such as “traffic first”, “content vulgarization”, and “value distortion”, the short video market has become “chaotic.” For example, at the content end, some creators use false data to mislead the audience; at the video technology end, they manipulate content presentation through improper editing; at the intelligent technology end, they carry out content fraud by means of face-changing, etc. These bad behaviors will not only interfere with the authenticity of information and events but also seriously affect the audience experience and the healthy development of the short video industry <sup>[8]</sup>. Therefore, relevant departments must strengthen the intensity of network ethics education, guide film and television short video creators to establish correct network ethics concepts, strictly abide by network laws and regulations and network ethics rules, respect others’ intellectual property rights and labor achievements, play the role of public opinion participants and guides, and resolutely resist and publish bad information and distorted facts, so as to lay a foundation for the healthy and green development of film and television short videos <sup>[9]</sup>.

## **4.2. Improve the supervision mechanism and improve the ethical environment**

The popularity of short videos has allowed many ordinary people to see the opportunity of “getting rich overnight.” Therefore, more and more film and television short video creators begin to make short videos with the benchmarks of “vulgar content”, “distorted values”, and “eye-catching.” The behaviors of these bad creators will not only damage the film and television short video market but also affect the overall short video creation environment. Therefore, relevant departments must formulate a perfect film and television short video content supervision mechanism, clarify the content standards, review processes, and corresponding punishment measures for different types of film and television short videos, and resolutely resist the spread of vulgar, distorted, and other bad contents<sup>[10]</sup>. From the beginning of the popularity of short videos to the present, the national relevant management departments have carried out many special rectification actions on short videos and online live broadcasts, and severely dealt with violating accounts, companies, and individuals. At the same time, short video platforms should also actively respond to national policies, increase the number of short video reviewers, optimize the platform review mechanism, and always maintain a zero-tolerance attitude towards short video accounts that play edge balls and operate in violation of regulations, so as to eliminate illegal, violating, and unethical film and television short videos in the bud.

## **4.3. Algorithm constraint mechanism to broaden user vision**

The docking of short videos and big data algorithms, on the one hand, has brought new opportunities to film and television short videos. It has realized the transformation from “people looking for videos” to “videos looking for people”, further promoting the development of film and television short videos<sup>[11]</sup>. On the other hand, it also brings huge challenges. Under the influence of algorithms, users’ eyes will be completely “blinded”—they can only see the content they want to see, rather than correct, scientific, and rich information. Over time, their vision will become narrower and narrower, and they will even lose the ability to “think.” Therefore, the national relevant departments must formulate corresponding algorithm constraint mechanisms, reduce the intervention of short video platform algorithms on users, respect the “human” attribute of users, and weaken their “commodity” attribute. For example, the behaviors of film and television short video creators such as traffic investment and buying fans are all manifestations of the “commoditization” of people. In short, after all, no matter how good the algorithm is, it is controlled by “people” behind it. Therefore, relevant departments must increase their intervention in platform executives, reduce the impact of algorithms on users, so as to improve the film and television short video market environment, enable users to access diverse and rich contents, and broaden their vision. At the same time, publicly reward network platforms with normal algorithms and authors who create high-quality film and television short videos, so as to guide creators to return to their original creative intention, drive users to take the initiative to broaden their vision, and then create a healthy, positive, and vibrant film and television short video ecology<sup>[12]</sup>.

## **4.4. Leverage platform algorithms to strengthen ethical awareness**

In the process of constructing the communication ethics of film and television short videos, in addition to creators and platforms, users are also important participants. As the receivers and disseminators of film and television short video contents, users’ behaviors and concepts have a non-negligible impact on communication ethics. For example, some users blindly follow the trend to spread unconfirmed film and television rumors, misinterpret the plot in the comment area to attract attention, and carry out secondary spread and diffusion of vulgar contents, which

seriously disrupt the short video communication ethics order<sup>[13]</sup>. To this end, relevant departments can cooperate with short video platforms and use their big data algorithms to regularly push short video ethics education videos to users, such as Film and Television Rumor Identification Guide, Civilized Comment and Rational Expression, The Harm and Resistance Methods of Vulgar Contents, Case Analysis of Copyright Protection in Short Video Communication, etc. Through a large number of vivid case analyses, users' short video ethics awareness can be effectively improved. At the same time, users will also gradually establish correct film and television short video ethics awareness in the process of watching such short videos, practice the core socialist values, take the initiative to screenshot and report inferior contents that violate public order and good customs and ethical rules, so as to reduce the continued spread of inferior and bad contents. Or when browsing transported videos and unauthorized contents, users can take screenshots, send private messages to original creators, and report to the system, so as to maintain the originality of film and television short videos<sup>[14]</sup>.

In addition, relevant departments and platforms should run the idea of "love other people's children as one's own" through all links of film and television short video production, dissemination, browsing, and commenting, establish a full-process minor protection mechanism, and awaken the empathy of users, creators, and reviewers, so as to clarify the responsibility awareness of short video "users" in different links, play the role of "gatekeepers" and "responsible persons" of film and television short videos, resolutely resist vulgar, low-quality, and kitsch contents, fully establish moral awareness, value awareness, ethical awareness, and legal awareness, and jointly maintain the communication and creation environment of film and television short videos<sup>[15]</sup>.

## 5. Conclusion

In a word, the development of short video platforms, the iterative upgrading of big data algorithm technologies, and the increase in the number of user groups have little impact on the improvement of short video ethical and moral standards. When film and television short video platforms have huge public opinion influence in media traditions, participants in different links must adhere to the ethical and moral bottom line to return a "clear sky" to short videos. Aiming at the ethical problems exposed in the current film and television short video industry, relevant management departments must take practical and effective measures to rectify and standardize them, such as strengthening ethical propaganda, improving ethical self-discipline, improving the supervision mechanism, improving the ethical environment, establishing an algorithm constraint mechanism, broadening user vision, leveraging platform algorithms, and strengthening ethical awareness, so as to maintain the healthy ecology of the short video industry.

## Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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