

Reality and Guiding Direction of Discourse Dissemination in Ideological and Political Theory Courses in Application-Oriented Universities in the Digital Age

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Abstract: *The process of discourse distribution in ideological and political theory classes is shifting gradually from the typical linear classroom discourse distribution model to a complex discourse distribution model shaped by multiple factors like multimodality, multiple stages, and algorithm. However, in this process of shifting, some problems still remain. They include the discrepancy between discourse generation and the cognitive system of youth, division of theory systems through symbolic language, and imbalance in the process of discourse distribution through platform algorithms. In light of this situation, this paper adopts the methodology of digital communication to create a multi-sensory controlled experiment design, which groups the process of discourse distribution into three categories. The comparison and analysis of effects of understanding, value awareness, and interaction behavior are carried out according to different dissemination models, which can illustrate the difference in the processes and paths of discourse dissemination. The results reveal that the multimodal integration group performed better than the classroom group in terms of theoretical understanding effect, scoring 86.7 and 4.4 in value awareness, both significantly higher than those of the classroom group at 78.4 and 3.9, respectively.*

Keywords: *Ideological and political education discourse dissemination; digital age; multimodal fusion; platform algorithm mechanism; controlled experimental study*

1. Introduction

In the context of the fast development of digital technology in the field of education, the ideology and politics discourse in higher education has experienced radical transformation [1-2]. With the advent of new methods of communication like short video, social media, and smart classroom technologies, the process of information creation and transmission keeps evolving, thus leading the ideology and politics course to be shifted from linear communication in classroom settings to networked communication on a platform.

Based on this, this paper, from the perspective of digital communication, systematically analyzes the current state, existing problems, and structural characteristics of ideological and political theory course discourse communication. It also constructs a multi-communication scenario control experiment to compare the differences in understanding, value recognition, and interactive behavior among three paths: traditional classroom teaching, multimodal integrated teaching, and short video communication. Based on empirical data, it further reveals the impact mechanism of different communication structures on students' cognition and behavior, and proposes paths such as optimizing the digital expression ability of mainstream value discourse, constructing a multimodal integrated communication system, and improving the platform algorithm guidance mechanism, aiming to provide theoretical support and practical reference for improving the quality of ideological and political theory course discourse communication in applied universities in the digital age.

2. Related Works

Existing research focuses on the reform and optimization of ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities. It mainly focuses on multiple dimensions such as curriculum structure optimization, improvement of practical teaching, reflection on theoretical functions, and empowerment

by information technology. It gradually forms a research path that progresses from "content reconstruction - practice enhancement - technology integration - value expansion". In terms of curriculum system and content optimization, Runyan proposed to optimize teaching content with textbooks as the core carrier and improve the systematicness and coherence of teaching through curriculum content integration and structural reorganization in the integrated teaching of ideological and political theory courses in colleges and universities [3]. This study started from the basic elements of the curriculum and provided an important idea for the structural optimization of integrated teaching.

In terms of improving practical teaching and teaching effectiveness, Zeng and Sutumawong focused on the reform of practical teaching in ideological and political courses in colleges and universities. They pointed out that the current practical teaching has problems such as insufficient attractiveness and unsatisfactory teaching effect. Based on the analysis of the importance of practical teaching, they put forward improvement suggestions and emphasized that by enhancing the practical link, the matching degree between the course and the students' real needs can be improved, thereby improving classroom participation and teaching effectiveness [4]. These studies all point to a core issue: traditional ideological and political education still has significant shortcomings in terms of practical application and student participation, which need to be addressed through reforms in teaching methods.

At the level of theoretical function and political philosophy reflection, Stahl, starting from the ideological attributes of ideal theories, pointed out that the key issue lies not in the theoretical content itself, but in its functional role in political discourse, that is, it may cause normative concepts to become detached from real practice, thereby weakening the ability to critique existing structures [5]. This perspective expands the theoretical depth of ideological and political education research, extending the research from the teaching level to the analysis of discourse structure and ideological function.

In terms of the integration of teaching models and technology, Qi et al. proposed the deep learning-based Integrated Education Framework (DLIEF), which realizes online and offline integrated teaching through video-on-demand, data compression and database technology, so as to improve the quality of classroom teaching and student participation, and promote the digital transformation of ideological and political education models [6]. At the same time, Li et al., from the perspective of value expansion, explored the path of integrating low-carbon and environmental protection concepts into ideological and political education, pointing out that relevant educational activities can enhance students' environmental awareness and comprehensive quality, and realize the extension of the educational function of ideological and political education [7].

Overall, existing research has explored the reform of ideological and political education in colleges and universities in a relatively systematic way from different levels, but there are still problems such as relatively scattered research paths and insufficient integration of collaborative mechanisms. Further efforts are needed to deepen and expand the research in terms of multi-dimensional integration and the construction of a holistic education system.

3. Methods

3.1 Real-World Manifestations of Ideological and Political Education Discourse in the Digital Age

The medium of short videos and social media that uses algorithmic recommendations is an important channel through which ideological and political communication reaches students. On the other hand, intelligent classroom systems, online courses, and learning management systems have jointly promoted the digitalization of pedagogical practices. In this context, classroom-based pedagogy and the internet space become mutually entangled to form a channel of communication called "classroom education-extending online-mobility on mobiles." Ideological and political communication does not occur from one single point but from several points, hence complicating the route of dissemination.

As far as the articulation of discourses is concerned, there is an obvious sign of fragmentation of ideologic and politicized content in its nature by following the multimodal pattern. The conventional system-based explanations have already lost their significance as the textual articulation tends to reduce in length and follows the conventional pattern of "Knowledge point + Case + Context". On the other hand, imagery, video, animation, and interactivity have been incorporated into the new symbolic system through which theories can be articulated effectively in graphical and contextual ways. Though highly effective in terms of dissemination, such a pattern has negatively affected the systematic nature of the theory.

Concerning methods of obtaining information, nowadays, college students alter their conduct from simple receivers to participants of the communication process. Utilization of smartphones, as well as opportunities provided by platforms, makes it possible for students to obtain ideological and political information in numerous situations and even participate in spreading ideology by leaving comments, creating bullet screens, liking posts, and debating topics. Moreover, there are cases when students generate new content based on what they observed previously by means of short videos and graphics, contributing to the repetition of disseminating ideological information. Nevertheless, in addition, information overload and attention deficit have become widespread issues, posing the threat of devaluation of information.

3.2 Major Problems in the Dissemination of Ideological and Political Education in the Digital Age

With regard to digital media, a particular gap is observed between the production of discourse within ideological and political education classes at applied universities and the cognitive process of young learners. While a few of the learning resources tend to be inclined toward the theoretical understanding of discourse that emphasizes logic and systematization, these forms of discourse fail to cater adequately to the cognitive process of young learners who are accustomed to receiving information in the form of short video and social media posts. At the moment, young learners find it easier to receive fragmented and contextualized information than theoretical information, rendering the cost of interpreting the information quite expensive.

When it comes to the widespread use of video fragments and multimodal discourse in ideologies and politics, one can easily see that there is a clear tendency towards symbolism and fragmentation. In order to meet the speed of communication and pay attention, some communications are simplified into either general symbolic knowledge or fragmentary events, thereby simplifying the process of communication and visualization. However, on the other hand, the logical and systematic aspects of theory become obscure as complicated theories are simply reduced to single-point communication that is vulnerable to misunderstanding.

Regarding the dissemination mechanism itself, the recommendation mechanism of the algorithm platform improves the rationality of the dissemination process by increasing clicks, stays, and interaction, and as a result, sensational and emotional information receives much attention, while the ideology education discourse has fewer chances to disseminate systematically and coherently, thus leading to a disparity between the two. However, regarding the teacher-led dissemination process, it is still prevalent, where the active role is played by teachers while students are passive participants in the creation and dissemination of the discourse.

3.3 Structural Characteristics of Discourse Dissemination in Digital Environment

3.3.1 Data-Driven Content Distribution and Recommendation Mechanism

As far as online learning is concerned, the dissemination process of ideological and political education lessons takes the form of a "data-driven" approach, where the pathway of disseminating the content of the educational lessons can be greatly dependent on algorithmic calculations based on behavioral data collected during the learning process. Therefore, the dissemination of lessons does not depend anymore on their organization in a specific teaching course, but their dissemination becomes significantly affected by various data factors like click rates, dwell time, interaction rates, and sharing rates.

Accordingly, the dissemination mechanism is characterized by a dynamic hierarchical form. In particular, the content that is attractive for users because it is relevant to their interests or looks appealing visually are most likely disseminated at a higher hierarchy level and are thus distributed rather quickly; secondly, in theoretical and profound content can probably end up at a lower level hierarchy and thus be distributed through the activity of the teacher and proactively sought by users.

3.3.2 Human-Machine Collaborative Discourse Production Model

With the advent of digital technology, there has been a revolution in the way discourse for ideological and political theory courses is constructed through the adoption of a new process known as the "human-computer interaction mode." In this process, the role of the humans is that of taking the control of value judgments and content development of the discourse; meanwhile, the utilization of AI technologies has become increasingly critical in the process of text writing, material selection, and image designing.

For example, the technology of generative AI could be used to enhance efficiency and flexibility of content production in terms of rewriting, generation, and structuring of discourse. During the process of short video production and multimodal expression, intelligent editing plays an important role as an auxiliary factor in order to make the ideology more compatible with mobile communication environment. To some extent, the integration of human and computer in discourse production expands the range of discourse, transforming the ideological and political discourse into the one made by "a single person" into that by "human leading + intelligent assistance." Nevertheless, on another side, it creates a new requirement on coherence and value orientation of the discourse.

3.3.3 Stratification and Social Network Diffusion Paths

Due to the influence of both social media and the methods used for dissemination, the characteristics of ideological and political theoretical courses dissemination include the hierarchical dissemination features. Under the joint effect of the interests of the users, their social relations, and algorithmic recommendations, the users are able to form relatively stable groups that can be receiving information. This process also exhibits tendencies for the differentiation of information dissemination among various communities.

The frequent dissemination of ideological and political information among acquaintance or interested user groups can contribute to the increase of information dissemination and emotional resonance in the hierarchical dissemination process. However, on the other hand, owing to the presence of interests' difference during the cross-hierarchical dissemination process, there appears certain barriers to content dissemination, resulting in the structural dissemination process that features "internal reinforcement and external weakening."

3.4 Guiding Directions for the Dissemination of Ideological and Political Education in the Digital Age

3.4.1 Strengthening the Digital Expression Capability of Mainstream Value Discourse

During the digital communication era, enhancing the digital expression capacity of the mainstream value discourse is an essential strategy for boosting the effectiveness of the spread of ideological and political courses. Under the present-day information consumption atmosphere, which is defined by the prominence of short videos and mobile devices, the ideological and political discourses must integrate into the dissemination rhythm and expression pace of the digital media without sacrificing their theoretical strength and value stance.

There should be efforts on two fronts, that is, the front of expression mode and narrative style. On the one hand, thanks to case study-oriented discourse construction, contextualized narrative mode, and life-oriented method, the theoretical knowledge can take on a pragmatic look and make sense to the realities of the world, thus bringing the mainstream value discourse closer to the understanding of young people. On the other hand, the disseminability of the discourse should be improved. To cite an example, when dealing with short videos, the structural emphasis on "core views + key evidence + emotional resonance" should be increased.

3.4.2 Constructing Multimodal Integrated Discourse Expression System

The development trend in the dissemination of ideological and political education discourse in the age of digital communication is multimodal integration. The modes of discourse traditionally focused on text and verbal articulation have become outdated within the context of multi-channel information reception. In order to deal with this challenge, there is a necessity to develop a mode of expression based on multiple media.

Through the increased ability of scenes reproduced by micro-videos, improving visual representation of abstract ideas via images and animation, as well as enhancing interaction in participating students, the transformation from "one-way transmission" to "mutual multi-channel comprehension" can be realized. Meanwhile, it is required not only to enhance the formality of multimodality in the expression process but to also consider the multimodal logic reasoning so that each medium can perform some function of knowledge generation.

3.4.3 Optimizing the Value Guidance Mechanism in the Platform Algorithm Environment

Considering the algorithm dissemination structure from a dissemination structure of platforms perspective, it is evident that the algorithm mechanism is a core element in the regulation of the ideology and political education discourse dissemination process. In light of the aforementioned, it is

essential to enhance the value guidance framework from a combination of institutional and technological perspectives. In other words, under the assumption that the operational logic of the platform would not change, it is possible to showcase the mainstreaming value-based discourse more effectively via means of content management and tagging. Thereby, a list of tags pertaining to the high-quality ideology and political discourse is established, ensuring that there is a dissemination path for high-quality discourse within the algorithm. Consequently, due to the optimization of the recommendation mechanism and content rating process, a greater share of high-quality discourse becomes recommended by the algorithm itself. Furthermore, the collaborative approach that exists among the educational and traditional media sources can provide an opportunity to create reliable channels for the distribution of high-quality ideological and political content and reduce the negative effect of algorithm changes on the effectiveness of its dissemination. By implementing the project-based approach to learning and completing specific tasks on the theme, with the use of the collaborative approach on the platform, students may be encouraged to produce secondary content on ideological and political topics. It includes creating video content, editing case studies, and forming attitudes towards various theoretical questions.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Overall Experimental Design and Group Structure

The experimental study made use of the "Multi-scenario comparison + Difference in dissemination modes" approach, where the ideology dissemination can be divided into the following groups:

Traditional classroom learning group

Multimedia integration group

Short video website dissemination group

By contrasting the reception and interactive feedback on different communication models, the variations in the discourse dissemination could be observed.

Group A: Traditional classroom learning group (offline PPT + lecturer)

Group B: Multimodal integration group (video + text + interactive class)

Group C: Short video website group (short video clips + commentary)

Both the theme and time frame remained consistent for all groups.

4.2 Experimental Variables and Measurement Indicator System

Indicator system of the study as applied to table 1 includes three types of indicators: independent variable indicators, dependent variable indicators, and behavioral observation indicators which are used to assess the impact of different types of media of communication, communication practices, and interactions on ideological dissemination amongst the students.

Table 1. Experimental Variable Setting

Indicator Type	Indicator Content	Indicator Description
Independent Variable Setting	Communication Media Type	Communication media are classified into classroom communication, multimodal communication, and short-video communication to compare the differences in the dissemination effectiveness of ideological and political content under different media environments.
Independent Variable Setting	Expression Mode	Expression modes are divided into systematic expression, multimodal expression, and fragmented expression to analyze the influence of different content organization forms on students' understanding and acceptance.
Independent Variable Setting	Interaction Mechanism	According to interaction depth, mechanisms are categorized into low interaction, medium interaction, and high interaction to investigate the impact of participation level on communication effectiveness.
Dependent Variable Setting	Theoretical Understanding Level	Used to measure the depth of students' understanding of the core viewpoints of ideological and political content.
Dependent	Content Memory	Used to reflect students' long-term memory retention of

Variable Setting	Retention Rate	disseminated content.
Dependent Variable Setting	Value Recognition Level	Used to evaluate students' emotional identification with and acceptance of ideological and political values.
Dependent Variable Setting	Interaction Participation Frequency	Used to reflect students' level of active participation during the dissemination process.
Dependent Variable Setting	Secondary Dissemination Intention	Used to analyze students' willingness to further share and disseminate related content.
Behavioral Observation Indicator	Comment Participation Frequency	Used to measure students' interaction activity during the dissemination process.
Behavioral Observation Indicator	Content Dwell Time	Used to reflect the duration of students' attention to disseminated content.
Behavioral Observation Indicator	Secondary Creation Frequency	Used to observe students' behaviors of adapting, reposting, or reprocessing content.
Behavioral Observation Indicator	Active Questioning Ratio	Used to evaluate the extent to which students develop active thinking and deep participation during the dissemination process.

4.3 Experimental Process Structure Design

4.3.1 Unified Content Control

The three experimental groups all revolve around the same ideological and political theme (e.g., "Youth Responsibility and National Development") to ensure content consistency.

4.3.2 Implementation Path of Dissemination

Group A: Classroom lectures + blackboard presentation

Group B: Video case studies + image materials + classroom interactive Q&A

Group C: 3-5 minute short videos + platform comment section interaction

4.3.3 Information Exposure Cycle Setting

The information exposure cycle is uniformly set into three stages:

Initial exposure

Delayed review (after 24 hours)

Further dissemination observation (after 48 hours)

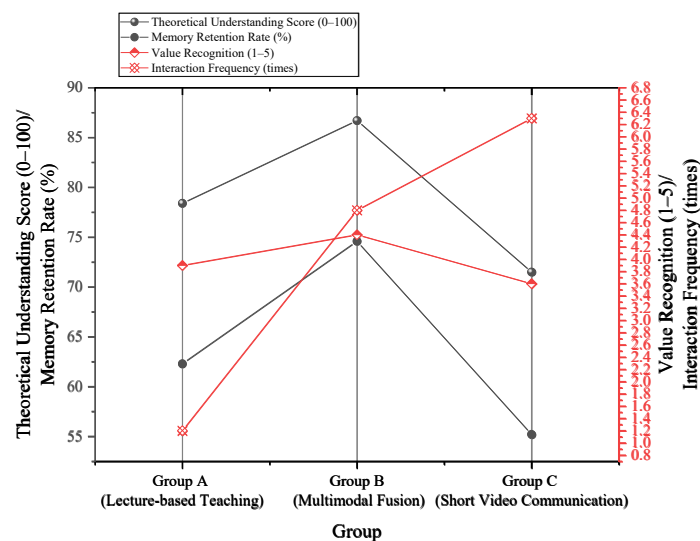


Figure 1. Comparison of Understanding and Recognition Data under Different Communication Methods

From Figure 1, it can be seen that there is a great structural difference in the comparison of the effectiveness of different types of communication in the education of politics and ideology. In the understanding of theoretical knowledge, the combination of multimodal group (Group B) had the best score (86.7) which was better than the scores of the classroom teaching group (78.4) and the short video communication group (71.5). It demonstrates the effectiveness of multimodal integration in the creation of abstract knowledge through pictures, video, and context. Regarding value cognition, Group B got the best score (4.4).

Table 2. Data on Student Communication Behavior and Re-creation

Group	Comment Participation Rate (%)	Secondary Sharing Rate (%)	Active Questioning Rate (%)	Dwell Time (min)
Group A	18.2	5.4	12.6	28.5
Group B	41.7	19.3	36.8	42.1
Group C	63.5	27.9	21.4	19.6

The study on the behavior of dissemination and creation of student data exhibits major disparities when it comes to the level of involvement and dissemination capacity of the different dissemination strategies employed. The dissemination strategy using short videos (Group C) produced the highest outcome in terms of both participation and secondary dissemination at 63.5% and 27.9%, respectively. This indicates that fragmented dissemination and dissemination through social media platforms can effectively encourage the participation and dissemination of information by the students. In addition, it exhibited the lowest percentage of proactive questioning at 21.4%, implying that it is still at the surface level of interaction.

On the other hand, the dissemination strategy using multimodal fusion (Group B) performed satisfactorily in terms of both measures of participation. The participation through comments rate was 41.7% and the percentage of proactive questioning was even higher at 36.8%. This is higher than those from other groups. Furthermore, this particular dissemination strategy yielded the longest average time spent at 42.1 minutes, as shown in Table 2.

5. Conclusion

The research work studies the current situation, existing challenges, and structural characteristics of ideological and political education discourse in applied colleges in the digital age. Through a comparative experiment, it establishes the difference in the perception of effectiveness, value, and interaction between various communication approaches, thereby proving the effectiveness of multimodal integrated communication both theoretically and in terms of value acceptance. On top of this, it shows the significance of short videos in the interactive dissemination process and the stability of class lectures in systematic dissemination. From the findings in this study, it is concluded that the dissemination process of ideological and political education discourse in the digital age comprises three factors: platformization, multimodality, and algorithmic approach, all of which are highly influenced by the type of media used. Nevertheless, there are several weaknesses associated with this study. One example is the use of a small sample size and failure to control variables. Future studies may consider pursuing the same line of inquiry by widening the scope of their research through incorporating information from other types of universities and longitudinal analysis of the subject matter under investigation. In the coming years, it could be necessary to consider improving the multimodal expression system and collaborative management of platform algorithms, as well as fostering teacher-student co-creation systems.

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