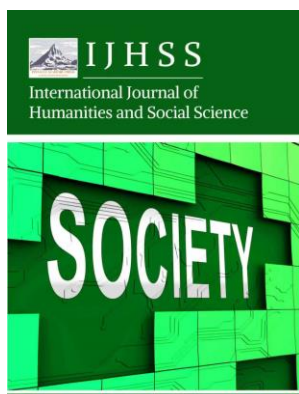*Article*

Mainstream Ideological Education Discourse of Post-00s College Students in the Era of Omnimedia the Logic of the Improvement of Guidance Force

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Abstract: The all-media revolution has fundamentally reshaped the cognitive landscape of Generation Z college students, exposing mainstream ideological education to three critical challenges: erosion of discourse authority, narrative disengagement, and entrenched cognitive barriers. This study examines three key dimensions-societal ideological infiltration, algorithmic technology distortion, and lagging media literacy-to reveal the deep-seated causes of mainstream discourse's declining influence. It proposes a three-pronged optimization strategy: establishing an "agenda-setting and discourse absorption" mechanism to strengthen mainstream discourse definition; employing algorithmic recommendations for precision-targeted outreach to break information cocoons; and implementing media literacy programs to solidify the foundation of critical thinking.

1. Introduction

The pervasive integration of omni-media technologies has fundamentally reshaped the spatiotemporal dynamics and interactive mechanisms of ideological dissemination. The cognitive patterns, value orientations, and communicative practices of Generation Z (post-2000s) undergraduates are undergoing a revolutionary transformation. Grounded in the characteristics of omni-media communication and the cognitive patterns of Gen Z students, this study adopts a logical framework of "analyzing challenges-identifying root causes-developing optimal solutions" to systematically examine the barriers hindering the enhancement of discourse guidance. It explores both theoretical and practical approaches to address these challenges, providing academic support and actionable guidelines for the innovative development of mainstream ideological education in higher education institutions in the new era [1].

2. A Review of the Difficulties in the Guidance of the Mainstream Ideological Education Discourse for Post-00s College Students in the Era of All-media

At present, the mainstream ideology education in the era of all media is facing multidimensional realistic challenges, which not only comes from the impact of technological change on the traditional education mode, but also from the structural change of the interaction between the subject, the medium and the object of education,

leading to the obvious attenuation of the communication efficiency and the acceptance effect of the mainstream discourse [2].

2.1. The Loss of Discourse Authority of Education Subject: The Image of Traditional Teachers' "Knowledge Authority" Encounters with the Dilution of All Media and the Challenge of Multiple Discourse

The defining feature of the omnimedia era lies in the decentralization of information production and dissemination power. The traditional monopoly of educators over knowledge interpretation and discourse dominance has undergone structural deconstruction. On one hand, the flattening of information access has freed Generation Z college students from singular reliance on teachers. Through short video platforms, knowledge communities, and social networks, they simultaneously access diverse ideological discourses, diluting the traditional teacher's identity as the "sole source of knowledge." On the other hand, the pluralistic competition in discourse fields has intensified the erosion of authority. Omnimedia has given rise to new discourse forms like algorithmic recommendation systems, characterized by anti-authority and personalization, which starkly contrast with the seriousness and normativity of traditional educational discourse. For instance, when interpreting social hotspots or theoretical concepts, explanations by Bilibili "UPs," Zhihu contributors, or Weibo "influencers" may reach students earlier than teachers, pre-setting cognitive frameworks through their unique narrative styles. If teachers fail to promptly absorb and transform these diverse discourse elements, their classroom lectures may be perceived as lagging or disconnected sermons, resulting in the awkward scenario of "the speaker earnestly, the listener dismissively." Therefore, teachers' discourse authority can no longer be naturally acquired through identity alone. Instead, it must be reacquired through dialogue, competition, and strategic engagement with pluralistic discourses-relying on the truthfulness of their content, the depth of their interpretations, the appeal of their expression, and the persuasive power of their values [3]. However, some educators still cling to a top-down indoctrination approach. They lack the ability to decode youth-oriented discourse such as internet memes and niche slang, and fail to establish new authoritative relationships through equal dialogue. This results in their communication failing to resonate effectively with students. The traditional 'knowledge authority' is gradually giving way to 'discourse identity authority,' while educational practitioners exhibit noticeable adaptive lag in this transformation process [4].

2.2. The Decline of Narrative Efficacy in Educational Media: The Alienation Between Grand Narratives and the Daily, Circle-based Discourse System of Post-00s College Students

Mainstream ideological education typically relies on grand narratives that construct highly integrated, historically continuous, and goal-oriented theoretical frameworks to explain the inevitable laws of social development and assign historical roles and life significance to individuals. However, some narratives remain at the level of formulaic macro-discourse, failing to skillfully and organically embed grand themes into the daily life scenarios and social discourse contexts of Generation Z college students. For instance, traditional narratives about hard work and perseverance may be perceived as irrelevant moral admonitions if they fail to effectively connect with contemporary students' real-life mentalities like involution and complacency. Such discourses risk becoming detached "grand words" that fail to resonate deeply [5]. On one hand, meticulously designed educational content may be labeled as mandatory learning tasks rather than intellectual resources worthy of exploration, leading to passive acceptance over active internalization. On the other hand, the meaning systems spontaneously formed by students within their familiar social circles may create a disconnect with the meaning frameworks promoted by mainstream ideological education, potentially resulting in invisible "meaning competitions." Therefore, innovating narrative strategies to break down the "dimensional

barriers" between grand narratives and daily life/social discourse, achieving "micro-macro alignment" and "cross-circle dissemination" of mainstream discourse, remains a critical challenge in enhancing the guiding power of ideological communication.

2.3. The Cognition Barrier of Education Object is Solidified: The Emotional Guidance of "Post-Truth" and the Cognition Closure and Value Judgment of the Strengthened Circle Belonging

As digital natives, Generation Z's cognitive development is deeply embedded in an omnimedia environment. However, their lagging media literacy makes them vulnerable to post-truth-era cognitive distortions [6]. Compounded by the reinforcing effect of social circle affiliation, this creates insurmountable cognitive barriers that prevent mainstream ideological education from penetrating their cognitive frameworks. From a cognitive logic perspective, post-truth-era information dissemination prioritizes emotions over facts, making Gen Z's value judgments more susceptible to emotional influence than rational analysis. Some online platforms leverage algorithmic recommendations to push emotionally charged content with ideological biases-stigmatizing mainstream policy interpretations as didactic and packaging Western values as free individuality. These narratives, delivered through short videos and meme-style content, exploit empathy as a trigger to rapidly resonate with students. Lacking critical thinking skills, Gen Z often equates emotional identification with value alignment, forming preconceived negative perceptions. Even when exposed to objective mainstream discourse later, they may reject it due to emotional aversion [7]. Socially, Gen Z's circle affiliation exhibits strong identity attributes, where internal discourse consensus creates a "cognitive echo chamber." Within these circles, mainstream ideological narratives are often labeled as official rhetoric and collectively rejected, while diverse ideological voices gain legitimacy through shared group identity. This cognitive closure within social circles has led the post-00s generation to develop rigid value judgments. They internalize group consensus as their core beliefs, forming an innate defense mechanism against differing viewpoints. When mainstream ideological education attempts to break through these cognitive barriers, it is often perceived as an affront to their social identity, triggering stronger resistance. This creates a paradoxical situation where educational guidance becomes increasingly counterproductive, as efforts to influence them only intensify their opposition.

3. Root Cause Analysis of Enhancing the Guiding Power of Mainstream Ideological Education Discourse for Post-00s College Students in the Era of All-Media

The fundamental cause of the mainstream ideology's communication barriers stems from the tripartite interplay of social, technological, and individual factors. Three key elements collectively form a complex obstacle: the pervasive infiltration of diverse social ideologies, algorithmic technology-induced cognitive disorientation, and structural deficiencies in media literacy. To address this, we must examine its mechanisms and pathways through a systems theory lens [8].

3.1. Social Level: The Compression and Penetration of Mainstream Ideological Discourse Space by Diverse Social Trends

The omnimedia ecosystem is not merely a technological environment, but a complex arena of ideological discourse. The deep-seated societal roots of mainstream ideology's declining influence stem from diverse social ideologies leveraging omnimedia platforms to precisely encroach upon and deeply permeate ideological discourse spaces. These ideologies no longer propagate through systematic theoretical frameworks, but instead employ "discursive fragments," "emotional tags," and "cultural symbols" to skillfully address the existential dilemmas and value pursuits of Generation Z college students. By embedding themselves in films, internet memes, social media commentary, and even daily consumer scenarios, they create a pervasive yet subtle infiltration. This "problem-oriented" infiltration naturally resonates emotionally with young audiences. When

mainstream ideological education fails to promptly incorporate these legitimate demands into its discourse system, students develop a perception of insufficient explanatory power when comparing practical solutions. More alarmingly, diverse ideologies leverage omnimedia's community-driven dissemination to form an infiltration chain of "ideology → community → individual." In youth-centric spaces like gaming communities, anime fandoms, and knowledge-sharing platforms, ideological perspectives are transformed into localized slang, humorous anecdotes, and lifestyle guides, covertly transmitting values. Mainstream discourse's limited community engagement often results in didactic preaching from an "outsider" perspective, failing to breach cognitive defenses. This ultimately leads to continuous compression of mainstream ideological discourse space, significantly limiting the reach and influence of its core values [9].

3.2. Technical Level: Algorithmic Recommendation Dominates the Information Cocoon Effect, Intensifying Cognitive Bias and Value Polarization

Algorithmic recommendation systems in the omnimedia era are not neutral technological tools. Their commercial essence of maximizing user engagement and traffic fundamentally creates information cocoons and solidifies cognitive barriers. By continuously tracking user behaviors like clicks, dwell times, shares, and comments, these algorithms accurately map users' interest profiles and emotional tendencies, relentlessly pushing similar and reinforcing content to form highly homogenized information streams. For Generation Z college students, this mechanism leads to two critical issues: First, active narrowing of cognitive horizons. Students are constantly bombarded with information matching their existing interests and preferences. Immersed in content they enjoy and trust, they encounter increasingly rare heterogeneous information, unknowingly building a solid information cocoon. For example, a student initially curious about non-mainstream views may encounter more and more homogeneous and extreme content through algorithmic reinforcement, accelerating the solidification of their perspectives. Second, group polarization of value judgments [10]. In networked communities, algorithms further amplify the "echo chamber" effect. Members continuously exchange and reinforce similar views while rejecting dissent to consolidate internal consensus, causing initially moderate opinions to become extreme through group interactions. When mainstream ideological discourse attempts to penetrate the cocoon, it is often marginalized by algorithms due to its heterogeneity or instinctively resisted by community members, making it difficult to break through the information cocoon and reach educational targets, rendering its guiding power virtually nonexistent. Therefore, technology has been transformed from an information distribution tool into a hidden driver that shapes cognitive bias and accelerates value polarization, which constitutes the technical root obstacle that the mainstream discourse guidance must confront and resolve.

3.3. Individual Level: The Media Literacy of Post-00s College Students Lags Behind the Development of Technology, and Their Critical Thinking Ability Is Weakened

As digital natives, Generation Z have unprecedented access to diverse media channels, yet their media literacy lags significantly behind technological advancements. The structural deficiencies in critical thinking skills pose fundamental challenges to mainstream ideological education's effectiveness. Contemporary Generation Z students grapple with information overload and judgmental gaps. While adept at using multiple platforms and navigating apps, they lack critical analysis of content creation contexts, dissemination motives, underlying logic, and potential impacts. Key issues include: 1) Insufficient fact-checking skills. Easily swayed by sensational headlines, inflammatory content, or fabricated "evidence," they struggle to verify cross-source information and remain vulnerable to post-truth-era emotional manipulation. 2) Poor source credibility assessment. They prioritize follower counts, likes, and personal alignment over professional credentials, often credulously accepting biased or ideologically misleading

statements from online influencers and niche opinion leaders. 3) Weak ability to identify ideological subtleties. They fail to recognize value infiltration disguised as entertainment, fashion, consumption, or even "science popularization" and "humanistic" narratives, lacking insight into ideological manipulation. 4) Declining capacity for rational dialogue and tolerance of dissent. Immersed in algorithm-generated "comfort zones" and echo chamber culture, Generation Z tends to develop an either-or mindset. They often lack the patience to listen to differing viewpoints or the ability to engage in rational debate, frequently resorting to labeling, taking sides, or even cyberbullying. This weakened critical thinking leaves them passive recipients rather than active discerners and thinkers when confronted with complex multimedia information. Such cognitive barriers hinder the effective implementation of mainstream ideological education and value guidance [11].

4. The Path to Enhance the Guidance of Mainstream Ideological Education Discourse for Post-00s College Students in the Era of Omnimedia

To address the challenges in guiding mainstream ideological education discourse, a three-pronged approach combining institutional innovation, technological empowerment, and competency cultivation is essential to establish a dynamic guidance system for the omnimedia era. This system must not only enhance the agenda-setting capacity of mainstream discourse but also overcome technological barriers to achieve precise outreach, while simultaneously strengthening individual cognitive foundations to foster intrinsic motivation.

4.1. Premises and Basis: Constructing the Agenda Setting and Discourse Absorption Mechanism of Mainstream Ideology to Diverse Social Trends

The primary prerequisite for enhancing discourse guidance lies in transitioning from passive defense to active construction, with the core being the establishment of a mainstream ideological agenda-setting and discourse absorption mechanism that combines resilience and flexibility. This mechanism aims to systematically address the root causes of mainstream discourse space being squeezed by diverse social ideologies, representing a dynamic process of "guidance-integration-transformation". Firstly, it strengthens problem-oriented agenda-setting capabilities and secures discourse definition authority. Mainstream ideological education must abandon its self-contained closed model, proactively addressing the concerns of Generation Z college students in practical issues such as employment, marriage, and intergenerational relationships. Through big data analysis and community research, it precisely identifies problem convergence points among diverse ideologies. Secondly, it establishes a systematic "discourse absorption-transformation" process to achieve organic integration. Educators should adopt a critical absorption attitude, incorporating reasonable elements from diverse ideologies into the mainstream discourse system. By means of conceptual reconstruction and narrative restructuring, these elements can be transformed into positive components that mainstream discourse can embrace and guide. Thirdly, it innovates "discourse packaging" and "symbol production" to enhance affinity and communicative power. Mainstream discourse should adopt communication strategies adept at creating cultural symbols and emotional connections, upgrading "discourse packaging". This means transforming abstract theoretical logic into concrete, experiential, and participatory "meaning symbols". Through this tripartite mechanism of "agenda-setting-discourse absorption-symbol transformation", mainstream ideology can shift from being "challenged" to becoming "issue leaders" and "meaning providers", fundamentally consolidating and expanding its discourse space.

4.2. Main Project: Break through the Information Cocoon with Algorithmic Support and Precision Drip Irrigation to Achieve Effective Reach of Mainstream Discourse

To address the echo chamber effect caused by algorithmic solutions, we must proactively apply algorithmic logic and big data technologies to achieve precise identification, intelligent matching, and flexible delivery of mainstream value content. This transforms the crude "one-size-fits-all" approach into targeted "personalized drip irrigation." First, establish a "Mainstream Value Content Algorithmic Recommendation Model." Education authorities should collaborate with universities, mainstream media, and tech platforms to jointly develop "positive algorithm" models serving ideological education. By incorporating mainstream value weighting factors, these models not only increase the quantity of mainstream content in the pool but also optimize algorithms to intelligently match high-quality, ideologically sound content with Generation Z users across diverse interest groups. Second, implement a "User Profile-Content Tagging" bidirectional precision matching project. Leveraging smart campus data from universities and anonymized online behavior data, we will construct a more refined and dynamic cognitive profile of Generation Z college students' ideological concerns. Simultaneously, we will conduct in-depth deconstruction of massive mainstream ideological education content, labeling it with multi-layered, granular tags. Based on this, algorithms will achieve intelligent matching between individuals and content, converting grand narratives into countless personalized "narrative packages" tailored to individual interests, cognitive levels, and reception habits for targeted delivery. Third, create a new paradigm of human-machine collaborative intelligent ideological education dissemination. Educators should serve as algorithmic curators and interactive guides. By leveraging algorithm-driven data analytics, they analyze student demographics and trending topics to design integrated online-offline campaigns. When algorithmic recommendations spark student engagement, they promptly facilitate discussions with expert guidance and clarification. Simultaneously, they promote lightweight, modular content tailored to algorithmic distribution patterns-such as 3-minute theoretical videos and themed meme series-easily identifiable and distributable by algorithms. This hybrid approach of algorithmic precision and human wisdom cultivates a mainstream discourse ecosystem that achieves both broad reach and targeted influence. Like spring rain that "comes silently at night, nourishing all things without a sound," it effectively penetrates echo chambers and resonates deeply with students.

4.3. Practice Requirements: Implementing the Media Literacy Cultivation Project for Post-00s College Students to Strengthen Critical Thinking

The ultimate goal of enhancing discourse guidance lies in strengthening Generation Z college students' immunity and discernment to resist erroneous ideologies while rationally embracing mainstream values. Therefore, a three-pronged media literacy cultivation framework integrating "curriculum systems + practical platforms + campus ecosystems" should be established, embedding critical thinking development throughout the educational process to transform students from passive "information receivers" into active "rational evaluators" and "value architects". First, institutionalize media literacy education through systematic curricula. Integrate media literacy into mandatory general education courses, focusing on cultivating critical thinking through training in information decoding, fact-checking, identifying ideological subtleties, algorithmic awareness, and public discourse ethics. Incorporate real-world online case studies for scenario-based teaching, enabling students to master analytical tools through debate and analysis. Second, develop immersive critical thinking training platforms. Universities should collaborate with mainstream media and internet regulatory authorities to create simulated "omni-media information storm" training environments. These platforms should replicate complex information scenarios like Weibo trending topics and short video feeds, designing real-world "task packages" based on current social events and

historical contexts. Students will work in teams to complete tasks requiring information tracing, identifying stakeholder positions, and analyzing factual elements within arguments. This immersive training transforms critical thinking into actionable "muscle memory". Third, establish a sustainable cultivation ecosystem combining "peer mentoring + collaborative practice communities". The cultivation of critical thinking cannot rely solely on classroom instruction. It is essential to nurture a group of student leaders with strong media literacy and solid theoretical foundations, who can serve as "peer mentors." These mentors will demonstrate rational discourse and counter misinformation through age-appropriate language and methods in clubs, communities, and online forums. Simultaneously, students should be encouraged to establish campus-based self-media platforms focused on fact-checking and in-depth investigations, applying their knowledge to real-world information dissemination. By building an integrated ecosystem of "curriculum, training, peer interaction, and practice," critical thinking can be internalized as a core cognitive habit among Generation Z college students, thereby laying the most solid cognitive foundation for mainstream ideological discourse to take root in their minds.

5. Conclusion

Enhancing the guiding power of mainstream ideological education for Generation Z college students in the omnimedia era constitutes a strategic systemic project vital to national ideological security and youth development. This initiative profoundly reveals the new normal in ideological guidance work, shaped by the interplay of technological transformation, social transition, and individual growth. Through three analytical dimensions-examining challenges, exploring root causes, and constructing solutions-the paper demonstrates that overcoming the decline in guiding efficacy requires paradigm shifts: transitioning from defensive control to proactive leadership, from crude indoctrination to precision-focused cultivation, and from external implantation to internalized recognition. This demands not only acknowledging the limitations of traditional discourse models in specific dimensions but also innovating at the intersection of omnimedia communication patterns and youth development principles. Only through such efforts can mainstream ideological discourse penetrate information cocoons, integrate into community contexts, and ultimately achieve contemporary elevation of its value-guiding function through deep dialogue and resonance with Generation Z students. This will lay a solid ideological foundation for nurturing the new generation capable of shouldering the great mission of national rejuvenation.

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