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The Impact of Fragmented Audiovisual Content on Adolescents' Values in the New Media Era

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Abstract. With the rapid development of modern new media, short video platforms have achieved unprecedented popularity. For the younger generation, short videos are far more than a simple pastime; they have gradually become an essential channel for daily relaxation and social information acquisition. Due to their rich content and extensive influence, short videos continuously affect teenagers' cognition of the outside world. Nevertheless, such widespread popularity also brings hidden risks. A considerable number of short videos contain biased viewpoints, inappropriate content and excessive recreational elements, which may mislead teenagers and cause them to accept incorrect values or imitate inappropriate actions. On the other hand, many high-quality short videos can deliver positive ideas and broaden teenagers' horizons effectively. This study mainly discusses the communication characteristics of fragmented audiovisual materials and their impacts on the formation of teenagers' values. By sorting out relevant domestic and international research results, this paper analyzes the adverse influences of short videos on adolescent values and explores their underlying causes. On this basis, it puts forward feasible suggestions for standardized development. This research clarifies the mechanism of short videos acting on teenagers' moral cognition and daily behaviors, so as to provide references for optimizing online content management. Relevant institutions should strengthen content supervision, formulate standardized management rules, and guide teenagers to establish rational online behaviors. In this way, adolescents can form healthy world outlooks and sense of responsibility, which is of great significance for their personal growth and the long-term development of the whole society.

Keywords: New media, fragmented video content, teenager

1. Introduction

In an era where new media technology is advancing rapidly, short videos have gradually turned into a primary source of daily leisure and information for teenagers. With diversified content and rapid dissemination, they have exerted a far-reaching impact on adolescents' behaviors and values. At present, the ecological environment of Internet video content is undergoing a changing process characterized by the coexistence of high-quality and inferior content, and many short-form video platforms are confronted with challenges such as distorted values, vulgar content, excessive commercialization and promotion of material enjoyment. Due to their wide dissemination, rapid

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influence and strong impact, such content is very likely to mislead the thinking modes of minors and induce them to make inappropriate behavioral choices. Nevertheless, numerous high-quality and uplifting short videos exist online. These resources deliver sound values, spread scientific knowledge and cultural traditions, and enrich teenagers' understanding of the world, effectively facilitating the development of their ideological concepts.

As the major group of new media users, adolescents are still in a critical stage of value formation. Their outlooks remain flexible and easily affected by external information. For this reason, studying the influence of short videos on teenagers' values and daily decisions carries profound practical significance rather than mere academic interest.

This research specifically explores how short videos affect teenagers' thoughts and behaviors, and puts forward operable strategies to regulate content on platforms such as Douyin. These approaches can guide adolescents to use online applications in a reasonable and healthy manner. Meanwhile, the study helps teenagers establish stable life attitudes and provides educators with effective guidance in the new media environment. Overall, this research possesses practical value and can generate tangible positive effects in reality.

2. Fragmented audio-visual content

Fragmented audio-visual content really dominates the new media landscape these days. People are talking about short videos, vertical-screen updates, and live stream clips—stuff that is quick, varied, and served up by recommendation algorithms. It is easy to spot: shallow, fast, interactive, and powered by algorithms. This kind of media grabs people in their spare moments and fits perfectly with our hectic routines. The low barrier to entry, flashy visuals, and personalized feeds keep younger audiences hooked. Over time, this shapes how they think and what they value [1].

3. Adolescents' values

Adolescents—kids between 12 and 18—are just starting to shape their sense of right and wrong, good and bad, justice, self-interest, beauty, and ugliness. This happens as they grow up and interact with the world around them. Their minds and bodies are not fully developed yet, so their values shift easily. They are still figuring things out, especially when it comes to resisting outside influences or making tough moral decisions. New media—social platforms, videos, whatever is trending online—plays a huge role here. It is how teenagers connect with society and make sense of what is going on. The messages they see online, the values and behaviors that get spotlighted, even the general vibe of public opinion—they all shape how teens judge situations, act day to day, and, eventually, who they become. So, new media is not just background noise. It is a major force in how young people form their values [2].

4. Literature review

Foreign academic researchers have built up a well-established and sophisticated framework to explore how media content interacts with the growth of teenagers. Drawing on insights from communication studies, psychology and education, the majority of relevant investigations fall into three clear research strands, each with its own unique areas of emphasis.

The first research avenue delves into how media content shapes adolescent cognition. Ample evidence shows that prolonged exposure to fragmented audiovisual material can curtail their attention spans. It also impairs in-depth reading, systematic thinking, and logical analysis skills,

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fostering a preference for instant gratification and superficial comprehension. This hampers their ability to engage in long-term, structured learning and rational thought [3].

Another major research stream centers on the impact of media content on teenagers' value systems and daily behavioral patterns. International academics have conducted in-depth analyses of internet celebrity phenomena, the prevailing influencer economy, and consumption-oriented content widely shared across social media and short-video channels. Consistent research outcomes indicate that such media environments encourage young people to engage in social comparison, intensify their appearance-related insecurities, and gradually cultivate pragmatic and utilitarian mindsets. As a result, numerous adolescents begin to equate online popularity, positive feedback and material possessions with genuine success. Worse still, harmful online posts and hostile public remarks exacerbate these adverse effects; they alter teenagers' self-perception, distort their moral judgment, and inflict lasting damage on their mental and emotional stability [4].

The third research direction concentrates on practical approaches to improving teenagers' media literacy capabilities. Global scholars have formulated targeted and structured policy systems to promote media literacy education, with school instruction and family guidance regarded as the two most fundamental implementation pathways. Through such systematic training, young people can gradually develop stronger information identification skills, independent critical thinking and basic cybersecurity awareness. These competencies enable adolescents to proactively screen inappropriate media content and reduce potential harm from misleading online information, ultimately forming a comprehensive and effective media risk protection mechanism [5].

Most researchers agree that algorithm-driven recommendation mechanisms are the core driver enabling fragmented audiovisual materials to accurately reach teenage audiences. Such content, characterized by brevity, interactivity and recreational value, perfectly matches the media usage habits of young people and easily leads to deep-seated media dependence. Consequently, adolescents are frequently confined within algorithm-generated information cocoons; continuous exposure to repetitive content gradually makes their thinking mode rigid and limits their cognitive scope.

Recent empirical studies clearly demonstrate that teenagers devote an increasing amount of time to short fragmented videos every year. They watch these clips whenever they have free time, whether after class, during commutes, or while relaxing at home. The content they mainly consume tends to be casual and entertaining, including funny skits, daily vlogs from internet celebrities and gaming clips, while educational and inspirational videos rarely attract their attention [6]. Long-term immersion in such low-value entertainment content will inevitably exert negative influences on the shaping of adolescents' core values.

Previous studies have fully illustrated the dual-sided effects of fragmented audiovisual resources on teenagers. High-quality fragmented content can effectively eliminate restrictions on geography and knowledge acquisition. It provides young people with diversified access to information, allowing them to encounter different cultures, social customs and motivating life stories. These positive inputs help cultivate their sense of patriotism, social accountability and enthusiasm for learning, laying a solid foundation for the development of healthy and positive values.

On the contrary, long-term contact with vulgar, overly pragmatic and radical negative online content will trigger multiple adverse consequences among adolescents. They may gradually develop superficial ways of thinking, experience difficulty in concentrating, and suffer a decline in academic performance. In addition, such content can push teenagers to form utilitarian mindsets, blur their basic moral boundaries, erode their sense of collective belonging, and even drive them to imitate inappropriate online behaviors, resulting in serious distortion of their core values.

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Chinese researchers have constructed a mature and complete solution framework, which mainly consists of a four-dimensional collaborative mechanism covering families, schools, online platforms and the whole society. Specifically, relevant online platforms should strengthen internal content auditing procedures, launch exclusive usage modes tailored for adolescent groups, strictly shield illegal and harmful information, and prioritize the distribution of positive and high-quality audiovisual works. Schools should work media literacy right into their everyday teaching, helping teens spot misinformation and build smart media habits. Families have to step up, really guide their children, keep an eye on what they're watching, and set reasonable limits on screen time and content. And society as a whole needs to update laws and regulations, strengthen oversight, and work together to keep the online environment clean and healthy [7].

5. Negative impacts of fragmented audio-visual content on adolescents' values

In the new media landscape, fragmented audio-visual content subtly, persistently, and pervasively undermines teens' values. Daily exposure to harmful material can gradually skew their judgment, erode rationality, and diminish moral responsibility, affecting their values' development.

On TikTok, some bad customs such as comparison and showing off are relatively common. These short videos may mislead teenagers and make them pay too much attention to material enjoyment and superficial image. According to the survey, 65.2% of teenagers have increased their desire to buy virtual goods and Internet celebrity products after using the TikTok platform, and 66.46% of teenagers have increased their longing for famous brands and luxury goods [8]. If they keep soaking up this stuff, they start comparing themselves blindly, worrying about how they look, and missing the point of what actually matters—like character, learning, and responsibility. Over time, they end up stuck in a mindset that worships money and pleasure, drifting away from healthier, more meaningful values

Second, when teenagers constantly take in scattered, bite-sized content, their ability to think deeply takes a real hit. They stop asking questions, stop digging for meaning. Most of what they see and hear is shallow—meant to entertain or stir up a quick reaction, not push them to sort out ideas or connect the dots. Over time, if they just sit back and soak up this kind of media, they get used to staying on the surface. Real analysis, careful reading, genuine reflection—these skills fade. It is not just their schoolwork that suffers. Their sense of right and wrong blurs, too. They start to follow whatever is loudest online, lose grip on independent judgment, and struggle to build a steady set of values they can trust.

Fragmented, low-quality content chips away at mainstream values and plants the seeds of impatience, blind following, and extreme thinking. You see some short-form videos pushing extreme opinions, illegal acts, and warped worldviews—all for traffic and popularity. Sometimes, they even glamorize bad habits and crime. Teenagers, still figuring things out and quick to imitate, soak this up. They copy what they see, pick up the wrong values, and their sense of rules, community, and responsibility starts to fade. Such negative effects are further amplified by algorithmic mechanisms. These technologies essentially isolate teenagers within isolated digital spaces by continuously pushing repetitive and homogeneous content, which gradually narrows their scope of cognition. As a result, adolescents tend to form biased and superficial perceptions of the world, and lose opportunities to develop inclusive mindsets, rational judgment and healthy values. In the long term, these subtle influences will profoundly mold their worldviews, life attitudes and core beliefs, generating long-lasting impacts that extend well beyond the virtual online environment.

Fragmented audiovisual content has become a major hidden danger to the healthy growth of adolescents, exerting a severe negative impact on their overall development. This kind of content

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tends to convey unrealistic life states of online influencers and distorted social codes, which directly distorts young people's self-cognition and their judgment of the real society. Driven by such content, teenagers often gradually regard virtual recognition and online praise as more important than sincere interpersonal bonds, thus ignoring the maintenance of family ties, precious friendships and their own long-term personal growth. As this situation continues, many adolescents will gradually become estranged from real life, prone to negative psychological and personality traits such as social withdrawal, emotional loneliness, impulsive behavior and excessive vanity. In turn, these problems will further aggravate their confusion about moral standards and lead to more deviant behaviors in daily life.

The formation of adolescents' distorted values is closely associated with fragmented audiovisual content, and this negative outcome does not stem from a single cause. Instead, it results from the combined effects of multiple influencing factors, including the inherent communication logic of online content, the psychological and developmental characteristics of teenage groups, insufficient family guidance, deficient supervision from internet platforms, and imperfections in social education systems. Overall, these core inducements can be summarized into five major categories.

The real problem starts with how these algorithms work—they push fragmented content and chase profits by focusing on traffic. Every short-video platform now runs on this logic: keep users hooked, drive up traffic, and make money. Algorithms boost content that is flashy, controversial, or stirs up emotions. Meanwhile, thoughtful, rational, or well-researched material barely gets noticed. To keep the numbers up, platforms loosen their review standards, letting vulgar, shallow, and extreme posts slip through. Harmful information ends up reaching teens with uncanny precision. This is not just a one-off—it is a cycle. The more this kind of content spreads, the more it shapes and distorts adolescent values.

Adolescents sit at a tricky crossroads. Their bodies and minds are still growing, and that makes them especially open to outside influences—sometimes the wrong ones. Kids between 12 and 18, right in the middle of puberty, have not settled into their own values yet. Their mental development is still catching up, so they struggle to tell right from wrong, resist temptation, and think for themselves. On top of that, they're curious by nature, quick to mimic what they see, and always looking for a sense of belonging. So when they stumble across new, exciting, or easily available content, they are drawn in fast. They do not always have the tools to judge what is good or bad, and that is exactly why negative influences can spread so quickly among this group.

Third, when families skip over teaching values or do not offer daily guidance, problems multiply. Right now, a lot of parents do not pay enough attention to what their kids do online. Some ignore the endless scrolling on short-video apps, never asking what their kids are watching or for how long. Others go in the opposite direction—laying down harsh rules, banning everything, or scolding, but never sitting down to actually talk things through. Patience and real guidance are missing. Sometimes, parents themselves get pulled into these apps, glued to their own screens, and fail to set any kind of example. They miss chances to challenge the wrong ideas their kids pick up. Adolescents move through a world of media, but no one steps in to help them make sense of it, and the negative effects just keep piling up.

The way schools handle media literacy just is not cutting it. They pour most of their energy into teaching academic subjects and pretty much ignore media literacy. Specialized courses barely exist, so kids do not really learn how to make sense of new media or figure out what is true online. Schools are not paying close attention to how students behave online or how their values shift. They're not giving students the tools to use media wisely or spot misinformation. So when teenagers

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face a flood of scattered content, they're left defenseless. They struggle to tell right from wrong and end up wide open to harmful influences.

Social supervision and content governance still have holes, and people have nott really built a clean cyber environment yet. Regulators have tightened policies for online audio-visual content, but some platforms fall short—they let non-compliant material slip through, take too long to remove it, and do not enforce youth protection modes well enough.

Harmful online audiovisual materials can still circulate widely through various channels. Furthermore, current social education and guidance targeting adolescent new media literacy remain insufficient. A complete and systematic governance mechanism is still absent, and the collaborative linkage between different social departments and stakeholders remains inadequate. These existing institutional and educational loopholes allow fragmented audiovisual content to continuously impose adverse impacts on teenagers' value cultivation, making it difficult for academic research and practical governance to fundamentally curb such negative trends.

To effectively alleviate the negative impacts that fragmented audiovisual content exerts on teenagers' value development, an integrated four-dimensional governance system is indispensable. Covering online platforms, families, schools and the broader social environment, this systematic framework emphasizes multi-party coordinated participation and joint management. Its core objectives include purifying the online content ecosystem, strengthening ideological education and positive guidance, eliminating harmful information at the source, and ultimately helping adolescents establish healthy and correct outlooks on values.

6. Countermeasures and suggestions for guiding adolescents' values

Online platforms ought to assume substantive responsibility for the content they disseminate across the internet. Rather than prioritizing commercial traffic and click volume alone, internet enterprises must balance profit-oriented operations with social accountability. It is necessary for platforms to optimize and upgrade content auditing mechanisms, strictly screen vulgar and one-sided information, and prevent the proliferation of detrimental online content at an early stage. In terms of adolescent protection, passive regulatory statements are far from sufficient, and more intelligent youth protection mechanisms are urgently required. Optimized youth modes can effectively restrict excessive online usage, intercept inappropriate information, and actively recommend positive and high-quality audiovisual resources. Furthermore, platforms should adjust their original algorithmic logic, which tends to recommend superficial and potentially harmful content to teenagers. Instead, priority should be given to the dissemination of popular science knowledge, traditional cultural works, and positive inspirational stories. Through such proactive adjustments, online platforms can provide correct value guidance for adolescent groups, rather than merely sustaining mindless user scrolling behaviors.

Families play an indispensable role in adolescent value cultivation and should prioritize daily family education to build a healthy growth atmosphere for teenagers. Rather than simply supervising children's online duration and short-video browsing content through rigid and one-sided prohibitions, parents are advised to adopt more open communication and interactive companionship. It is essential for guardians to guide teenagers in distinguishing high-quality online resources from harmful content and rectify their biased cognition and incorrect values in a timely manner. Additionally, parents should adhere to the principle of role modeling. To help teenagers develop rational media usage habits, adults need to regulate their own over-reliance on short-video platforms, establish positive behavioral examples, and subtly convey correct values in daily life.

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Such family education methods can lay a solid foundation for adolescent growth and ensure the sustainability and effectiveness of family guidance.

Schools need to strengthen the correct value guidance. Schools are the main position of youth value education, and we should give full play to the important value leading role of schools. First, keep up with the needs of the times and respond to real concerns. Do not avoid hot spots and controversial issues in online short videos, guide students to think independently and deeply, and cultivate students' value judgment ability. Second, make good use of the media attributes of online short videos to stimulate students' main participation. Teachers change the traditional single teaching mode and give students more space, so that students can make videos around mainstream values and deepen their understanding and recognition of mainstream values in the planning and shooting process. Third, build a new type of educational carrier and expand the space for education. The school establishes an official account for online short videos, outputs the main theme content, and takes the initiative to occupy the high ground of youth value education [9].

Society needs to step up and tighten its supervision system to keep online media clean and healthy. National authorities must refine laws regulating online audio-visual content, crack down harder on platforms that break the rules or spread harmful material, and push platforms to actually follow these regulations. Everyone involved needs to take responsibility. At the same time, people all should focus on positive publicity and guidance—promote mainstream values, produce more high-quality media that speaks to young people, and fight back against negative content with messages that carry real positive energy. People need to actively intervene, consciously push mainstream values to the public, and spread positive energy. In the face of teenagers who have no discernment and judgment on false short video information, people need to shoulder the responsibility of moral education for teenagers. Society should create a good online moral environment for teenagers, so that teenagers can clearly understand the value of short videos and promote the spread of positive energy [10]. When society, schools, families, and platforms work together, people build a strong force for guidance and governance. That is how people create a media environment that helps adolescents develop healthy values.

7. Conclusion

Fragmented audio-visual content is everywhere in teens' lives now—it shapes how they think and what they value, for better and for worse. The harmful stuff hides in plain sight. It slips past filters, sticks around, and quietly influences them over time. That is not something people can ignore. These influences do not come from just one place. They're born out of the way platforms spread content, who teens are as individuals, how their families talk things through, what schools teach, and how society keeps an eye on everything. If people want to curb the negative effects and help audio-visual content guide teens in a positive direction, people cannot just leave it up to one group. Poeple need everyone—platforms, families, schools, and society—to work together and build a system that actually makes a difference.

People need platforms to step up and take responsibility. Families have to stay involved, schools must provide structured education, and society as a whole should keep a close eye on things. That is how people build a healthier online environment, help teenagers use new media wisely, and teach them to recognize and avoid harmful content. In this study, looking closely at the factors influencing adolescent media use and dig into the root causes. Based on that analysis, putting forward clear, targeted guidance. The goal is simple: help young people find the right values in this complicated digital world, shape healthy perspectives on life, and set them on a path toward real, well-rounded growth—physically and mentally.

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