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The Impact of Short Video Platforms on the Media Literacy of Young People

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Abstract: Short video platforms have become an important channel for teenagers to obtain information due to their fragmented and interactive features. By exploring the impact of short video platforms on the media literacy of young people, it is found that they have a positive effect in improving cognition and broadening horizons, but there are also potential risks such as forming erroneous cognition and blindly imitating. The research points out that the key is to improve teenagers' network literacy, which requires the cooperation of families, schools, platforms and other parties to jointly create an Internet environment conducive to the healthy growth of teenagers. The improvement of policies and regulations and the establishment of platform self-discipline mechanisms are also important guarantees for protecting the online rights and interests of young people

1. Introduction

According to the 2019 China Network Audiovisual Development Research Report, the scale of short video users is huge, with a significant proportion of teenagers. The impact of short video platforms on the media literacy of young people is becoming increasingly prominent, providing them with opportunities for learning and broadening their horizons, but also bringing a series of potential risks. This study aims to explore the impact of short video platforms on the media literacy of adolescents and provide relevant suggestions to promote their healthy growth.

2. The Impact of Short Video Platforms on the Media Literacy of Young People

2.1. Positive Impact

Short video platforms have improved the cognitive abilities and learning efficiency of teenagers. According to the 2019 China Network Audiovisual Development Research Report, the number of short video users has reached 648 million, with a user utilization rate of 78.2%, of which teenagers

account for a significant proportion. Data shows that nearly 80% of the surveyed minors have used short videos to learn light knowledge, reflecting that short videos have become an important channel for teenagers to obtain information. For example, Lv Chen, a Tiktok science popularization expert, has an account with more than 3 million fans, and one of the videos explaining the Mid Autumn Moon has received nearly 230000 praise points, indicating that short videos have significant effects in science popularization education. Short video platforms have broadened the horizons of teenagers. The column "Science and Technology Innovation China · Academician Lecture" co founded by China Association for Science and Technology and Tiktok invited domestic well-known academicians to teach various top scientific and technological knowledge, providing young people with access to cutting-edge technology. Tiktok and the Palace Museum launched the "Diaoyin Cloud Shopping" plan, which will make the collection of cultural relics in the Palace Museum visible and create a video encyclopedia, so that young people can enjoy the charm of Chinese culture without leaving home. Short video platforms also meet the expression and sharing needs of teenagers. According to a report by CNNIC, as of June 2019, the proportion of teenage internet users reached 26%, of which 20% said they "almost always" watch short videos, and the proportion of "watching a few times a day" was close to 10%. This high frequency of use reflects that short videos have become an important platform for teenagers to express themselves and interact socially, helping to cultivate their social skills and self-awareness 0.

2.2. Negative Impacts

Short video platforms may lead to misconceptions among teenagers. The Youth Blue Book: Report on Internet Use by Chinese Minors (2023) pointed out that the risk awareness of Internet use by minors is generally insufficient, and network literacy needs to be improved urgently. Some short videos may publish content that contains negative, pseudoscientific, and unhealthy values in order to attract traffic. For example, the incident in 2019 where a 14-year-old girl in Zaozhuang, Shandong Province imitated a short video to make popcorn and died from severe burns highlights the serious consequences that lax content review can have. Short video platforms can easily lead to blind imitation behavior among teenagers. A survey shows that 36.11% of minors frequently browse short video apps with graphic and textual content, and high frequency exposure may increase the risk of imitating dangerous behaviors. The "information cocoon" effect of short video platforms limits the knowledge breadth of teenagers. Personalized push algorithms may lead to long-term exposure of adolescents to homogeneous content, affecting their overall development. Data shows that 47.5% of minors use the internet for the purpose of "watching videos", and this high dependence may exacerbate the information cocoon effect. The consumerism content prevalent on short video platforms may distort the values of young people. A large amount of commercialized and consumable information may lead to the early formation of a materialistic mindset among teenagers. The fragmented nature of short videos may affect teenagers' attention and deep thinking abilities [2]. Frequent switching of short videos may make it difficult for teenagers to focus on long-term, in-depth learning and thinking, thereby affecting their cognitive development and learning outcomes.

3. Multi Party Collaboration to Enhance Teenagers' Online Literacy

3.1. The Fundamental Role of Family Education

Family is the primary environment for teenagers to access the internet, and parental guidance is crucial for the formation of teenagers' internet literacy. The Youth Blue Book: Report on Internet Use by Chinese Minors (2023) pointed out that parents tend to be open to minors' Internet use, but

protection and guidance work still need to be strengthened. Parents should actively understand the characteristics of short video platforms, work together with their children to develop reasonable usage rules, and cultivate their ability to identify online information. Parents need to create a good family atmosphere for their children, reduce their tendency to overly rely on the internet, and guide them to balance online entertainment and real life [3].

3.2. The Core Position of School Education

As the main place for teenagers to receive systematic education, schools play a core role in improving their online literacy. The Regulations on the Protection of Minors' Networks explicitly require education departments to guide and support schools in carrying out online literacy education for minors. Schools should incorporate network literacy education into their curriculum system and offer specialized courses on network security and media literacy. Teachers need to constantly update their knowledge structure, master new media technologies, and conduct teaching in a way that is close to students' actual situations. Schools can invite experts, scholars, and industry practitioners to hold lectures, allowing students to gain a deeper understanding of the opportunities and challenges in the online world.

3.3. Social Responsibility of Short Video Platforms

Short video platforms play an important role in the online life of teenagers and shoulder significant social responsibilities. The platform should strictly implement a content review mechanism, filter out inappropriate information, and push high-quality content. For example, Tiktok's "Teenager Mode", "Time Management System" and other functions can effectively control the length of use and content acquisition of teenagers. The platform should also collaborate with educational institutions to develop high-quality content suitable for young people. For example, Tiktok cooperated with the China Association for Science and Technology in the program "Science and Technology Innovation China - Academician Lecture", which provides high-quality science popularization content for young people. The platform also needs to optimize algorithm recommendations to avoid the "information cocoon" effect and promote the comprehensive development of young people.

3.4. The Protective Role of Policies and Regulations

A sound system of policies and regulations is an important guarantee for protecting the online rights and interests of young people. The "Regulations on the Protection of Minors on the Internet", which will come into effect on January 1, 2024, make targeted provisions on issues such as minors being addicted to the Internet and suffering from cyberbullying, marking a further improvement of China's system for protecting minors on the Internet. Policy makers need to continuously monitor changes in the online environment and update regulations in a timely manner. Relevant departments should strengthen law enforcement efforts to ensure that policies are implemented effectively [4]. The government should also encourage and support relevant research to provide scientific basis for policy-making and promote the establishment of a more comprehensive system for protecting minors online.

4. Measures and Policy Regulations for Protecting Young People on Short Video Platforms

4.1. Implementation and Improvement of the "Youth Model"

Tiktok took the lead in 2018 to launch the time lock function, which limits the cumulative use time of teenagers in a single day. Subsequently, the platform successively launched functions such as "Discovery" channel, age appropriate recommendation, and "Parent Child Platform" to provide a safe and healthy browsing environment for teenagers. These measures have been carefully designed in terms of usage duration, usage period, functional restrictions, and content recommendations. However, the 'youth model' still needs further improvement, such as strengthening the standardization between different platforms, refining the usage rules for different content types, and increasing parents' awareness and usage of this model.

4.2. Establishment of Content Review Mechanism

The platform needs to establish strict content review standards and processes, combined with manual review and AI technology, to effectively filter out harmful information. In 2019, the China Network Audiovisual Program Service Association released the "Management Standards for Network Short Video Platforms" and the "Detailed Rules for Network Short Video Content Review Standards", providing guidance for platform content review. The platform should continuously optimize its review mechanism based on these standards, with a focus on sensitive content involving minors. Establish a user reporting and feedback mechanism, encourage all sectors of society to participate in supervision, and form a multi-party governance content ecosystem.

4.3. Building A High-quality Content Ecosystem

Short video platforms should actively introduce professional organizations and high-quality creators to create a content pool suitable for teenagers. For example, TikTok's "DOU Knowledge Program", "DOU Art Program", "All Reading books" and other projects, together with scientific research institutions, art institutions and publishing houses, to provide high-quality knowledge content for teenagers. The platform can also be optimized through algorithms to improve the exposure rate of quality content and guide teenagers to access more useful content. Set up a special fund to support the creation of quality content, cultivate a healthy and upward creative atmosphere, and ensure the quality of content from the source.

4.4. Implementation of the Regulations on the Protection of Minors' Networks

The implementation of the Regulations on the Protection of Minors' Networks marks a further improvement of China's system for the protection of minors' networks. The regulations clearly stipulate the responsibilities and obligations of network service providers, schools, families, and other parties in protecting the online rights and interests of minors. It requires internet service providers to establish a network protection model for minors, limit usage time, and filter out harmful information. The regulation also emphasizes the importance of online literacy education and requires its inclusion in the school education system [5].

4.5. The Importance of Multi departmental Collaborative Governance

Protecting the online rights and interests of young people requires collaborative governance among multiple departments. The departments of cyberspace, public security, education, culture,

and tourism should establish a linkage mechanism to form a regulatory synergy. The cyberspace administration department can take the lead in formulating industry standards, the public security department is responsible for cracking down on online illegal activities, the education department promotes online literacy education, and the cultural and tourism departments control online cultural content. Encourage social organizations and parent groups to participate in supervision, and form a diversified governance pattern with government leadership, corporate self-discipline, and social participation. Establish a regular evaluation mechanism, adjust policy measures in a timely manner, and ensure governance effectiveness.

5. Conclusion

The impact of short video platforms on the media literacy of young people has both positive and negative aspects. Improving the online literacy of young people is the key to addressing challenges, which requires collaborative efforts from families, schools, platforms, and all sectors of society. By improving regulations, strengthening platform self-discipline, optimizing content ecology, and other measures, a safe and healthy online environment can be created for young people. At the same time, cultivating critical thinking and self-protection abilities in teenagers can help them better cope with the complexity of the online world. Only through joint efforts from multiple parties can we fully leverage the positive role of short video platforms, minimize their negative impacts, and promote the healthy growth and comprehensive development of young people.

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