

A Preliminary Study on the Construction of College Students' Self-identity Under the Online Media

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ABSTRACT

Contemporary college students are at an important stage of self-identity improvement. The rise of the Internet has provided a new way of self-identity for college students. In this paper, we analyse the double influence of online media on the self-identity of college students, and give suggestions for the construction of positive self-identity of college students.

Keywords: Online media, College students, Self-identity.

1. INTRODUCTION

In the National Conference on Ideological and Political Work in Colleges, General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that the ideological and political education work in colleges should be changed according to the situation, advanced according to the time and new according to the situation. In order to make university education more up-to-date and target-oriented, and in line with the basic requirements of socialist core values, the 18th Party Congress put forward the new requirement that the fundamental task of university education is to "establish moral education". The introduction of this requirement emphasises the specific goal of holistic student development and the need for students to grow and develop and improve their self-identity. Nowadays, the Internet has become the most convenient channel for people to connect with society (Akram, Kumar, & Engineering, 2017). Looking ahead to China's 14th Five-Year Plan's strategy of strengthening the country through the Internet, there is no doubt that self-identity is significant to the healthy growth and development of people (Y. Zhang et al., 2015). When self-identity is in harmony, individuals can find purpose in life and experience the meaning of life; when self-identity is in crisis, individuals will feel that life is empty and boring (James, 2017). This is why building self-identity is vital for everyone, especially for university students. University students are a special group, they are the backbone of the country and the hope of the future. As university students are still immature in their outlook on life and values and are at a

critical stage in the formation of their self-identity, the problem of self-identity is more pronounced in this group (Côté, 2018). At present, China's university students are mainly the new generation of "post-95" and "post-00" students, they are growing up in an era of more rapid economic development, more open and diversified culture, and more developed Internet information technology, and are therefore more independent and open-minded, with a strong sense of self-awareness, high ideals and generally positive values (Shipman, 2015). But at the same time, as the new generation of university students grow up almost simultaneously with the new online media, they are also easily influenced by the fragmentation and virtualization characteristics of the new media, and their self-identity is deeply branded with the online media (Marsh, 2015).

2. THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN THE ONLINE MEDIA

Psychologists generally agree that the university stage is an important time for establishing an individual's view of self-identity and for the transformation of identity from youth to adulthood (Brandon-Friedman, Kim, & Services, 2016). This is the period when university students start to think about "who I am" and "who I want to be". It is also important to reflect on the past and to understand oneself well enough to have a clear understanding of one's role in the

light of past experiences. A person with a healthy personality is able to actively dominate his environment, exhibits a certain unity of personality and is able to perceive the world and himself correctly (Brandon-Friedman et al., 2016). This is a period of trial and error for all students, whether in terms of their thinking, their attitude to life or their future plans for self-development, in which they will eventually be able to transform their role in society. Students with a stable view of self-identity are able to make calm and objective choices that are suitable for their future development, rather than being caught unprepared and helpless in the face of difficulties (Melin, 2015). Once a person have a positive view of self-identity, he will be clear about his mission as an adult, and he will be able to cope with his studies and work in a positive and motivated state, which is not only related to the growth of the individual student's mind but also to the harmony of the whole school and society (Ryan, Deci, & Vansteenkiste, 2016).

The influence of online media has been deeply felt by our university students, and all kinds of online information is flooding their study, life and work, and online media such as Weibo, WeChat circle of friends and Zhihu have become the main channels for university students to obtain information (T. Yang, Yu, Oliffe, Jiang, & Si, 2017). Influenced by the globalization of the world, the trend of cultural intermingling among countries around the world has increased, and the cultures of various countries are widely spread through the Internet, which also profoundly affects the establishment of the world view, life view and values of the current generation of Chinese university students (Martell, 2016). Although the Chinese nation has a long history and culture and fine traditional virtues, and the establishment of core socialist values has profoundly influenced every aspect of people's lives, university students who are deeply influenced by online media are more likely to choose to accept popular culture and values on the Internet, and the traditional virtues and socialist values of the Chinese nation are not given due attention. In our current education system, before entering university, due to the heavy academic pressure, most students spend their main energy on their studies and less on thinking about life and self, and do not have a sense of self-identity construction (Martell, 2016). After entering university, university students begin to have free time to think about life and self issues, and their awareness of self-identity construction awakens, but due to the lack of appropriate guidance, there is a gap in the construction of self-identity among university students (E. C. MacFarlane, 2018). The high degree of freedom, fast search function and quick communication platform of the Internet attract college students (Castellacci & Tveito, 2018). Without proper guidance, it will lead to a series of problems in the ideology of college students, triggering a crisis in their self-identity and leading to

great changes in their lifestyles and interaction styles (Clydesdale, 2015).

3. THE INFLUENCE OF ONLINE MEDIA ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' SELF-IDENTITY

The Internet, as an open information and communication platform for the general public, has a wide range of channels, rich content and speed. From one side, people at different times, with different life backgrounds, have different character traits at each stage (Becker, McClellan, & Reed, 2017). On the other hand, individuals in the same period are influenced by the important events of the period in which they live (Katz, Lazarsfeld, & Roper, 2017). It is also an important historical feature of this era that the internet has flourished and is the most influential and fastest spreading (Rojecki, Meraz, & Society, 2016). Especially during university, when the relatively closed environment of high school is over and the mind is in a state of extreme freedom, any topical event can either boost or interfere with the construction of self-identity (Cuypers, 2017). The Internet era has made up for the single dullness of the four traditional media in the way it is communicated, but it has also brought about a double-sided impact.

3.1. Positive Impact

The online media provides an important platform and new resources for students to construct their self-identity, and is a channel for them to turn crisis into opportunity and construct a new self-identity (Cover, 2015). In recent years, our government has attached more and more importance to the construction of the network ecology. The development of online media will be more and more beneficial to the construction of self-identity of university students. First of all, with the orderly development of the online media, the massive information of the online media will become a source of information for college students' self-cognition and the main channel for them to understand society and participate in political life (Liu, Zhu, Zhang, & Zhou, 2020). Secondly, with its powerful interactivity, the network media gives college students absolute autonomy to publish and accept information, providing them with a fast and convenient channel for self-expression and interaction, enabling them to fully feel a sense of self-equality, belonging and compensation (C.-c. J. J. o. A. R. Yang, 2018). Finally, students have long been accustomed to using various online media software to record their daily life, and these self-records will not disappear with the decline of memory, and the powerful media memory function of online media can preserve them permanently, which helps the continuity of students' self-identity (Botterill, Bredin, & Dun, 2015). Therefore, to a large extent, the online media is helpful

to the construction of students' self-identity. This requires the ideological and political education of universities to play an active role in all aspects of students' self-identity and guide them to construct a new self-identity in the online media environment (C. Zhang, Fagan, & Education, 2016).

3.2. Negative Impact

As the most active and psychologically sensitive group in modern society, university students are particularly sensitive to social change (Fiske, 2018). As a symbol of the information age, online media has to some extent overturned traditional ways of identifying with university students (Brown, 2016), even putting them in the midst of potential identity problems such as a lack of sense of value, a lack of sense of belonging, a weak sense of social responsibility and a confused sense of behavioural direction. First, university students face the potential problems of a weakened sense of social responsibility and a lack of creativity in the online media (Okazaki, Plangger, West, & Menéndez, 2020). While the development of online media provides a new environment and a new way for college students to assume social responsibility, the "virtual interaction" in online media also brings corresponding problems to college students, that is, long-term immersion in virtual interaction leads to a certain degree of weakening of the sense of social responsibility and a lack of creativity among some college students. Secondly, university students face the potential problems of losing their sense of behavioural direction and deflating their ideals and beliefs under the online media (Karahanna, Xu, Zhang, & Practice, 2015). In the online media, the online media dominated by the logic of capital has created various scenes of false consumption prosperity for college students, which has changed the self-cognition and self-identity of some college students, turning their rational pursuit of ideals and beliefs into the false pursuit of material subject lifestyles, thus causing some college students to face the potential problems of losing their sense of behavioural direction and deflating their ideals and beliefs. Thirdly, university students face the potential problems of core value deficiency and moral personality differentiation under the online media (Burr, Taddeo, Floridi, & ethics, 2020). The characteristics of fragmented information, cultural pluralism and virtualized interactions under the Internet media have stimulated college students' self-awareness and broadened their interpersonal interactions, while also making some of them prone to problems such as lack of core values and moral personality differentiation. Fourth, university students face the potential problems of lack of belonging and confusion about the meaning of life under the online media (Strayhorn, 2018). For university students, a sense of belonging means that they identify with and invest in the school and class they belong to mentally, emotionally and psychologically,

specifically by actively participating in school activities and willingly assuming the responsibilities and obligations of being a member of the group (Gummadam, Pittman, & Ioffe, 2016). In the process of integrating and contributing to the community, students are able to find meaning in their lives and develop their own identity (Patton, Renn, Guido, & Quaye, 2016). At present, the "symbolic consumption" in the online media takes up a lot of time and energy of university students, causing some of them to gradually detach from the real community, bringing them a strong sense of loneliness and emptiness in their hearts, and even causing them to be confused about the meaning of life (Doster, 2018).

4. HOW TO GUIDE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TO CONSTRUCT A POSITIVE SELF-IDENTITY UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF ONLINE MEDIA

First of all, colleges and universities should grasp the power of online discourse and establish a positive and active online media culture. Due to the important role of online media in the daily study, life and work of college students, it is therefore necessary to build online media as a platform to guide college students to establish positive self-identity, and to take online media culture as an important battlefield to guide college students to establish positive self-identity (Paré, 2017). On the one hand, universities should carefully study the trends and characteristics of online media culture, grasp the pulse of online media culture, promote the spread of positive online media culture, curb the spread of negative online media culture, and grasp the power of online media discourse. On the other hand, through college idols and opinion leaders to promote positive and positive online media culture such as socialist core values, and resist the spread of negative online media culture such as online subculture (Hartley, 2019).

Secondly, promote the dissemination of the core socialist values and the fine traditional virtues of the Chinese nation in the form of online media that university students can easily and willingly accept. The establishment of socialist core values has established the mainstream social values of our country, and university students who are the pillars of the country should actively practise socialist core values and establish a correct outlook on life and value orientation (Shuyun, 2015). At the same time, contemporary university students are increasingly aware of their freedom and independence, and they hate frequent lectures and indoctrination, preferring to make value judgments and choices with their own way of thinking (B. Macfarlane, 2016). Universities should take into account the psychological characteristics and growth rules of university students, and use their favorite online media to spread the fine traditional Chinese virtues and

socialist core values, and guide university students to establish a positive self-identity in this framework.

Third, to strengthen research related to online media and university students' self-identity. On the one hand, the rapid development of online media in recent years and the emergence of various new forms (Bello-Orgaz, Jung, & Camacho, 2016). It is necessary to strengthen the research on online media and grasp the development rules and future development direction of online media in a timely manner (Tsatsou, 2016). The gap in self-identity and the prevalence of negative self-identity among university students further highlight the lack of self-identity research among university students in China (Al-Barashdi, Bouazza, Jabur, & Reports, 2015). The special nature of the life stage of university students requires us to study in depth the psychological characteristics, value orientations and personality formation of university students (Y. Zhang et al., 2015). Only by keeping abreast of the rules and directions of online media development and understanding the psychological characteristics, intrinsic needs and values of university students can we be comfortable in guiding them to build a positive self-identity through online media.

5. CONCLUSION

With the deepening of network socialization, people have a richer network platform for communication and exchange (Shin & society, 2015). The rapid development of online media has brought a wide space for college students to develop, and also provided a diversified stage for them to display themselves and manifest their individuality (Lindgren, 2017). On the basis of the positive effect of online media on the lives of university students, it is inevitable that it will also have a negative impact on them, causing problems in the construction of their self-identity and triggering a crisis in their self-identity, leading to great changes in the way they live and interact. This paper initially explores the construction of college students' self-identity in the online media environment, and provides suggestions for colleges and universities to guide college students to construct a positive and rational self-identity through online media, so as to promote the goal of college students' self-conscious growth into a new man of the times who meets the needs of social development.

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