The Influence of We-Media on Youth Values

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Abstract. With the progress of science and the development of the times, we-media has penetrated into all aspects of people's lives. As an important group of we-media users, teenagers have active minds, strong curiosity, and a wide range of interests, and their values are more easily influenced by we-media. This paper comprehensively analyzes the influence of we-media on adolescents' values through the literature research method and survey questionnaire method, mainly discussing the positive and negative influence of we-media on adolescents' values in three dimensions: life view, interpersonal view, and aesthetic view, respectively. The study finds that the positive effects include: opening up the horizons of teenagers; meeting the diversified social needs of teenagers; and broadening the aesthetic horizons of teenagers. The negative effects include: it makes adolescents form wrong attitudes towards life; it makes adolescents indulge in virtual networks; the vulgarization of information induces adolescents' aesthetic vulgarization and flatness.

Keywords: We-media, Internet, Adolescents, Values, Influence.

1   Introduction

We-media, as a new type of network carrier, has penetrated into people's studies, socialization, and other aspects, and its influence has gradually spread, so we-media is more and more widely concerned by scholars [1-2]. At present, the characteristics, forms, and effects of we-media are the main research directions of scholars. From the perspective of media sociology, Professor Pan Xianghui of Zhejiang Media College believes that we-media has opened up the era of "popularization of media", which has highlighted the power of civilians and individuals to the greatest extent and contributed to the individualistic revolution of communication [3]. Han Li, a master of communication at Jilin University, believes that "the problems of vulgarity of information, going with the flow, and the increasing fragmentation of information in the we-media challenge the integrity of society, and impact the moral bottom line" [4]. All of these articles provide in-depth analyses of the social impact of the digital age, but none of them are specific to a specific group, particularly youth. Previous studies are used as references and guidance for the writing of this paper. Previous studies have not focused on the issue of values education, which provides opportunities and challenges for the

writing of this thesis. In the era of rapid development of we-media, it is not only necessary to analyze the positive effects of we-media on adolescents' growth but also to pay attention to the negative effects on them, so that the impact of we-media on adolescents' values can be understood more deeply and comprehensively. This paper is divided into four parts. The first part is an explanation of relevant concepts. The second part is the research method. This paper uses the literature research method and the questionnaire method, along with statistics and analysis of the basic situation of adolescents' use of we-media. The third part is the analysis of the results. The conclusion of the study can, to a certain extent, help understand the real thoughts and needs of teenagers and help them to establish correct ideology and scientific and reasonable values.

2   Relevant Theoretical Definitions

In late 2002, the term "We Media" was first coined by the famous American columnist Dan Gilmer in his official article [5]. Regarding the definition of we-media, there are three representative views at home and abroad: (1) In a research report by the American Press Institute's Media Center, Scheinman and Chris Willis defined the concept of "we-media" as "a way for society at large to provide or share information" [6]. (2) Peng Xiaomao defines we-media as "a new type of media centered on individuals, publishing and sharing information, sending and receiving information through computer and cell phone networking functions." [7] (3) In "A Study of the We-Media Paradigm", Tang Xuemei proposed that "We-media is a kind of media in which the public publishes and shares their own news and events and has obvious characteristics such as interactivity, communication, and opinion orientation." [8] In short, we media is a communication platform for personal creation and communication without relying on traditional media institutions. Due to its characteristics of populism, strong interaction, and fast communication speed, we media is very easy to have an impact on teenagers' thinking modes, communication modes and behavior modes.

Different disciplinary perspectives and different focuses have led scholars at home and abroad to analyze the definition of values in different dimensions. For example, Huang Xiting, a professor of psychology at Southwestern University, divides values into ten categories: life view, moral view, political view, religious view, etc. [9]. More classical internationally is Kluckhohn's definition of value description, where he argues that "a value is an outward or implicit, perception about what is worthwhile. It is a personal or group characteristic that influences people's behavior, means, and goals" [10]. Simply put, values are the standards of behavior and principles of conduct that people adhere to when carrying out their activities. They have a profound influence on people's living habits, social styles, and attitudes. The main characteristics of the adolescent group are: values are not yet firmly formed and they have a greater curiosity about new things; values are diverse and easily changed [11].

3   Methodology

This study intends to investigate and study the influence of adolescents'(13-19 year old) values by we-media under the guidance of relevant theoretical foundations and draw conclusions after statistical analysis of the data.

3.1   Literature Review

The paper drew on a large number of domestic and international literature and monographs, constructed the theoretical foundation, and conducted further investigation and research.

3.2   Questionnaire

The subjects of this study were selected to conduct a questionnaire survey of middle and high school students from Dahua High School in Dahua County, Hechi, Guangxi Province, and the 13th Middle School in Urumqi, Xinjiang Province. For the selection of the sample, the reliability of the data was ensured by considering that both schools belonged to remote areas and the education level and living standards of the adolescents were similar. The use of we-media by youth in remote areas was selected for analysis, which is representative of a realistic analysis of the impact of we-media. A total of 203 questionnaires were distributed, 203 were actually collected, and the valid data was 100%. The questionnaire was set up with the following aspects in mind: the basic situation of teenagers' use of we-media; the impact that teenagers think we-media has on them; some of their views on the content of we-media communication; and the problems they encounter in the process of using it. Among the 203 valid questionnaires, the numbers of middle school and high school students were 87 and 116, accounting for 42.86% and 57.14%, respectively, with little difference in proportion and a more even distribution of numbers. Middle school and high school students have different levels of education and treat things differently, so the sample size of each age group is sufficient to effectively reflect the characteristics of the values of middle and high school-aged adolescents under the influence of we-media. Among the 203 valid questionnaires, 85.22% of teenagers said they had used we-media, and only 14.78% of teenagers said they did not use it often, indicating that many teenagers have been exposed to we-media now.

4   The Influence of We-media on Youth Values

In the survey on the frequency of teenagers' use of we-media, nearly 70% of teenagers use we-media every day, followed by 2~3 times a week (20.81%), once a week (6.94%), and once in two weeks or longer (4.05%). It is easy to see that most teenagers use we-media very frequently, and we-media has occupied an indispensable position in teenagers' lives. According to the data, the number of teenagers using QQ, WeChat, and other communication platforms, Tik Tok, Kuai Shou, and other live platforms is

much higher than other social platforms, with 93.06% of the former and 61.85% of the latter. From the data, it can be seen that young people use instant messaging platforms such as QQ and WeChat and live-streaming platforms the most, from which we can see that the age characteristics of young people determine that they like novelty, personality, and social interaction.

4.1 Positive Influence of Life View

Expanding Horizons. As shown in Table 1, 70.52% of the teenagers think that we-media has brought them a positive impact on "opening up their horizons and deepening their understanding of the world". As shown in Table 2, 62.42% of the teenagers said they often look up knowledge on we-media platforms, and 76.32% of the teenagers said they prefer to browse news about current affairs when they browse news-related content. We-media has broadened access to knowledge for teenagers, stimulated their desire to understand and learn new knowledge, and helped them realize the importance of independent thinking and innovation.

Table 1. Statistics on the positive impact of using we-media

Option	Number of people	Ratio
Relaxing and reducing stress	137	79.19%
Share life and show oneself	99	57.23%
Increasing access to learning	113	65.32%
Expanding horizons and deepening understanding of the world	122	70.52%

Table 2. Main purposes of using we-media

Option	Number of people	Ratio
Relaxation and Recreation	146	84.39%
Searching for Knowledge	108	62.43%
Browsing News	100	57.8%
Others	4	2.31%

Pursuing the Ideal of Life. Table 3 shows that 72.83% of teenagers define success as "realizing dreams and achieving self-realization," followed by 68.21% of teenagers who think success is "contributing to society and realizing self-worth". We-media output has a guiding effect on teenagers' choice of ideal careers. It can help teenagers recognize their ideal lifestyle, which can reflect their life choices and attitudes. This result shows that we-media has a positive influence on the career values of most teenagers.

Table 3. Definition of success

Option	Number of people	Ratio
Earning a lot of money	83	47.98%
Contributing to society	188	68.21%
Achieving the dream	126	72.83%
Achieving high social status	73	42.2%

4.2   Negative Influence of Life View

A Clear Tendency Towards Money-worship. We-media has made many teenagers tend to be utilitarian in their career choices. According to the survey, 45.09% of teenagers expressed envy of bloggers earning millions of dollars a year on we-media, and 32.37% of teenagers said they would like to be professional netizen or anchors if they disregarded the opinions of their parents and friends. In Table 3, 47.98% of teenagers think the definition of success is to earn a lot of money and achieve wealth freedom. These figures show that teenagers have an obvious tendency to worship money, and in the long run, it is easy for teenagers to form a distorted view of life.

Vulnerable to Extreme Ideas. Due to the openness of we-media discourse and the lack of a certain regulation and censorship mechanism, extreme words and even extreme ideas often appear on we-media discussion platforms. For example, in Table 4, 43.35% of teenagers said that they "easily argue with netizen and use uncivilized language, which seriously affects their emotions" when using we-media. In Figure 4-5, 52.02% of the teenagers think that the negative effects brought by the current we-media include "lack of supervision and easy to produce bad guidance". The above tables show that teenagers are easily influenced by extreme ideas when using we-media, and if they are not supervised, they are easily led to have a wrong view of right and wrong.

Table 4. Statistics on the negative impact of using we-media on students

Option	Number of people	Ratio
Easy to quarrel with people	75	43.35%
Affecting the reality of interpersonal relationships	78	45.09%
Susceptible to extremist ideas	68	39.31%
Disdain and doubt for traditional culture	38	21.97%

Table 5. Problems in we-media

Option	Number of people	Ratio
False content	109	63.01%
Aesthetic vulgarity	92	53.18%

Addictive and time consuming	114	65.9%
Lack of supervision	90	52.02%

4.3   Positive Influence of Interpersonal View

As adolescents grow older, they spend less time with their parents and more time with their classmates and friends. It is not easy for adolescents to pass this period of sudden physical and mental changes, so whether adolescents have a good and healthy interpersonal outlook affects the future development of their personality. According to Table 2, 84.39% of teenagers said that they use we-media most often for relaxation and recreation, such as making friends, posting news or browsing friends' news. According to Table 1, 57.23% of teenagers think that the most positive effect of we-media is that they can "share their life with others and show themselves". From the data, it can be seen that the equal and open communication form of we-media has created a new interpersonal environment and space for interpersonal development for adolescents, meeting their diverse social needs. According to Table 6, 72.83% of the teenagers said they would respect each other's views and discuss calmly when they were asked about their attitudes when discussing with others in we-media. The online environment in which we-media is located is conducive to teenagers expressing their inner world more actively and proactively, allowing them to communicate with others more boldly and their social circles to expand. The result shows that when there are inconsistent views on the we-media, teenagers can expand their horizons by exchanging views with others, promoting the enthusiasm of communication and enhancing interpersonal interaction.

Table 6. Statistics of attitudes during network discussions

Option	Number of people	Ratio
Respecting each other's views	126	72.83%
Assuming that the other side is wrong and using various data to prove yourself right	31	17.92%
Will be angry because of the other party's bad language	16	9.25%

4.4   Negative Influence of Interpersonal View

Causing Indifference in Interpersonal Relationships. As shown in Table 5, 65.9% of the adolescents think that we-media is addictive and takes up a lot of time. In addition, Table 4 shows that 45.09% of teenagers think that we-media affects their interpersonal relationships in reality and that they become silent. In addition, in response to the question "How would you feel if there was no we-media?", 28.32% of teenagers thought their lives would be uninteresting and lonely, while 23.7% of teenagers felt isolated from others and the world. From the data, it can be seen that we-media has weakened the initiative of teenagers' real interpersonal communication, weakened their

ability to communicate in reality, and caused teenagers' real interpersonal relationships to become indifferent.

Causing a Crisis of Trust in Interpersonal Relationships. According to Tables 5, 63.01% of adolescents believe that there is a problem of false content and inaccurate sources on we-media, and the data shows that nearly 60% of adolescents admit to having been deceived by false information. This shows that some adolescents can stick to their own views and not be influenced by others' views in the face of false information and opinions on the Internet, but there are also adolescents who are easily influenced and have doubts about interpersonal trust under the stimulation of such information and have a crisis of interpersonal mutual trust.

4.5   Positive Influence of Aesthetic View

Aesthetics is to see the world from the perspective of aesthetics, and a progressive and healthy aesthetic concept can help people correctly discover and deeply feel beauty, and transform themselves and the world according to the law of beauty. Therefore, it is very important to establish correct aesthetics for the development of young people's lives. We-media communication is rich in content, and as the data in Tables 7 and 8 show, 53.76% of adolescents are more inclined to browse entertainment content, especially celebrity variety and film dramas, and the diversified content output of these categories in terms of aesthetic genres helps adolescents enrich their aesthetic perspectives, broaden their aesthetic horizons, and enhance their ability to discover beautiful things.

Table 7. Preference of browsing content types

Option	Number of people	Ratio
News	38	21.97%
Entertainment	93	53.76%
Shopping	11	6.36%
Education	31	17.92%

Table 8. Entertainment content browsing preferences

Option	Number of people	Ratio
Sports Competition	14	21.97%
Film & TV Drama	15	53.76%
Star variety show	28	6.36%
Game Contest	27	17.92%
Others	9	9.68%

Language is not only used for communication but also has the function of promoting the development of social culture. The creation and development of online language in the age of we-media has further enriched the forms of language expression, and some

online languages have positive implications for language development, such as "yyds" for "eternal god" and "juejuezi" for "great". For example, "yyds" stands for "eternal god" and "juejuezi" stands for "great", which makes language expressions more humane and interesting. According to the data, 92.48% of teenagers said they did not reject this innovative new language and literature, and 31.79% of them said they liked this mode of expression. This shows that we-media helps teenagers break the traditional linguistic aesthetics and enhance creativity.

4.6   Negative Influence of View of Aesthetic

Aesthetic Vulgarization. We-media has enriched the lives of teenagers, but it is also full of vulgar information. As shown in Table 9, 41.62% of the teenagers said they did not reject the content of "eating broadcast", "playing ugly" and "suspected pornographic live broadcast". The question of how do you feel about the content such as "big appetite king eating broadcast", "accompanied by vulgar and ugly" and "suspected pornographic live broadcast", 41.62% of teenagers said they did not reject it, and even 8.09% of teenagers said they liked these phenomena and found them interesting. It can be seen that these aesthetically vulgar contents can lower the aesthetic taste of teenagers and induce them to become aesthetically vulgar.

Table 9. Statistics on the perception of related vulgar content

Option	Number of people	Ratio
Enjoy	14	8.09%
Not interested but not exclusive	72	41.62%
Very nasty, aesthetic vulgarity	87	50.29%

Aesthetic Flatness. The flatness here refers to the loss of depth. As shown in Table 8, 53.18% of young people think that the current content of the we-media is "aesthetically vulgar and has no depth". For example, many young people in China pursue beauty only in appearance, and even many girls only take "white, young, and thin" as the aesthetic benchmark, which can easily make the aesthetic flattening of teenagers and lose the level and connotation.

5   Conclusion

Through the analysis of data, it can be seen that we-media does have a significant impact on teenagers' values. This paper mainly discusses the positive and negative impacts of we-media on teenagers' values in three dimensions: life view, interpersonal view, and aesthetics. The first is the outlook on life, whose positive effects are: opening up horizons; helping youth pursue their ideals in life. While the negative effects are: the obvious tendency of money worship; being susceptible to extreme ideas, resulting in a

wrong view of right and wrong. The second is the interpersonal outlook, whose positive effects are: meeting the diverse social needs of youth; promoting positive communication. The negative effects are: causing indifference in interpersonal relationships; causing an interpersonal relationship trust crisis. The last is aesthetics, whose positive effects are: opening up aesthetic horizons; helping to enhance creativity; and negative effects are: aesthetic vulgarization; aesthetic flatness. Because this research involves two fields, i.e., we-media and adolescent values, there is a lot of room to explore the combination of the two. Future research will conduct a deeper exploration.

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