

# The Cultural Value Evolution of We-Media in the Era of Information Technology

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**Abstract:** Culture is the soul of social development, and values are the soul medium of culture. Cultural values are the core of social ideology and the basis for the evolution of social content. Culture, as an important energy easy for people to accept and to promote the prosperity of social culture, has a positive impact on social evolution. With the continuous updating and iteration of Internet technology, the application of big data, artificial intelligence, virtual reality and other technologies to the we-media, the new technology has changed the production mode of we-mediatization, but also changed the space and time. We-media comes to change the social and cultural ecology by influencing people's lives. Using a multidisciplinary perspective, this paper explores the developing and changing we-media, analyses the different classifications and characteristics of we-media culture, and the guidance and control of the mainstream media's cultural values over the mainstream media cultural values, youth cultural values, and emerging values, as well as revealing the unique characteristics of China's contemporary we-media culture. It is of great practical significance to realize the harmonious coexistence of pluralistic values and human progress and social mainstream ideology in the we-media era through reasonable cultural value guidance.

## 1. Introduction

In contemporary society, with the rapid development of Internet technology and the rise of we-media culture, the dissemination and evolution of culture have shown unprecedented vitality. As the soul of social development, the evolution of culture is influenced by various factors, while cultural values become the core of cultural evolution. This paper focuses on China's we-media culture and uses it as a medium to explore in-depth the pluralistic categorization and characteristics of culture, revealing the guidance and influence of mainstream media on popular culture, youth culture, and emerging values, while paying attention to the continuous change of we-media culture spawned by Internet technology. Through the analysis of multidisciplinary perspectives, this paper aims to understand the evolution of we-media culture and its important role in constructing and guiding cultural values in society. This study aims to provide useful insights for us to deeply understand the complexity of cultural evolution in contemporary society.

## 2. The Categorization and Characteristics of We-media Culture

We-media culture refers to a cultural phenomenon rich in individuality, independence and interactivity established by individuals or small groups through the means of the Internet and digital technology by creating and disseminating content on their own. It emphasizes the autonomy and creativity of individual creators as well as the direct interaction with the audience. The main features of we-media culture include: individual creators: the core of we-media is individuals or small groups, compared with traditional media, more civilian, anyone has the opportunity to become a content creator; diversified forms of content: the we-media culture covers a variety of media forms such as text, pictures, audio, video, etc., adapting to the preferences and needs of different audiences; strong interactivity: compared with traditional media, we-media emphasizes the interaction and feedback

between audiences, comments, audio, video and so on; and the forms of commenting, sharing and liking enable the creators to directly perceive the audience's needs and responses; platform diversity: we-media content can be disseminated through a variety of platforms, including social media, blogging platforms, video sharing platforms, etc., and the creators can choose the platforms that are most suitable for their own styles and target audiences; rapid dissemination: we-media content is usually disseminated more quickly, and the content can be disseminated within a short period of time through social sharing and algorithm recommendation. Through social sharing and algorithmic recommendation, the content can be spread to a wide audience in a short period of time; diversified cultural values: due to the decentralized nature of we-media, a wide variety of cultural forms have emerged, and different creators and communities represent different cultural perspectives and value orientations. The rise of we-media culture is attributed to the technological development in the digital era, which breaks the threshold of traditional media and allows more people to participate in the expression and sharing of cultural creativity, forming a vibrant and innovative cultural ecology.

We-media culture covers a wide range and can be divided into several categories according to different standards. According to the content of the we-media, it can be divided into text we-media, including blogs, WeChat official accounts, etc., focusing on textual expression and in-depth thinking; image we-media, is centered on pictures, such as Instagram, Pinterest, highlighting the visual communication; video we-media is mainly based on the video as the main mode of expression, including YouTube and Jitterbug, etc., emphasizing the audio-visual experience. According to the theme orientation, it can be divided into lifestyle media that focuses on daily life, food, travel, etc. and shows individual attitude towards life, professional media that focuses on specific industries or fields and provides professional knowledge and in-depth insights, and entertainment media that focuses on celebrities' personal image and entertainment content and enhances interaction with fans. In addition, we-media can also be categorized according to the degree of user participation, including two main types, interactive we-media: its purpose is to encourage users to participate, comment, share, and build community consensus, such as Reddit, Zhihu; information-based we-media: its main focus is to deliver information, and the user is more the receiver of information. In addition, amid the rise of artificial intelligence, we-media culture can also be categorized according to technological innovation, including virtual reality (VR) we-media, which utilizes VR technology to provide an immersive experience and expand the form of content dissemination, and AI-assisted we-media, which utilizes AI-generated content, recommendation algorithms and other technologies to improve the efficiency of we-media production. We-media culture is characterized by diversity and richness, and each category has its unique characteristics and development direction.

### **3. The We-Media Culture in China**

In recent years, new media has developed rapidly in China. According to the 52nd China Internet Network Information Centre (CNNIC) Statistical Report on the Development Status of China's Internet, as of June 2023, the number of Internet users in China reached 1.079 billion, an increase of 11.09 million compared with December 2022, and the Internet penetration rate reached 76.4% [1]. China's we-media culture has some unique characteristics, influenced by China's social, cultural and technological development. Chinese we-media culture relies heavily on social media platforms, such as Weibo, WeChat, and TikTok, which have become the main venues for we-media creators to disseminate their content and build a fan base. Some we-media creators have become social observers and guides through the platforms by expressing their concerns and criticizing social issues. While entertainment-oriented we-media, represented by celebrities, has become a unique cultural phenomenon, deepening the connection between celebrities and their audiences through interaction with their fans. Media platforms encourage interaction between users, forming large fan bases and communities. These communities play an important role in the dissemination, discussion and mutual influence of content. We-media culture has contributed to the creation of many new online languages and cultural phenomena, and has become a unique cultural expression in the Chinese context in the Internet era. However, China's we-media culture is subject to government regulation, and discussion of some sensitive topics is somewhat restricted, but a certain degree of freedom of expression is

retained within legal limits.

#### **4. The Influence of Mainstream Media Cultural Values on Society**

The cultural values of we-media, as part of the mainstream media, have a profound impact on popular cultural values, youth cultural values and emerging values. This influence is reflected in the following aspects.

##### **4.1 The Influence of Mainstream Media on Popular Cultural Values**

Mainstream media are important builders of social and cultural consensus, shaping and influencing the public's social concepts, perceptions and value orientations through the dissemination of specific cultural values. At the same time, mainstream media usually reflect the mainstream values of the society and promote the formation of common cultural beliefs among the masses by widely disseminating the emphasis on specific values. As the main platform for information dissemination, mainstream media widely disseminate cultural elements through news, television, movies and other forms, thus shaping the public's cultural concepts, perceptions and value orientations. They usually reflect the mainstream concepts of society, and their reports and presentations often have a direct impact on the views and attitudes of the general public. The mainstream concepts reflected in the media may become part of the social consensus. In addition, by promoting cultural products such as movies, music and literature, the mainstream media guide the public's acceptance and identification with various cultural forms. These cultural products often carry specific values. By promoting consumer culture through advertisements and other forms, the mainstream media also influence the public's shopping concepts, tastes and lifestyles. The idealized images and lifestyles presented in advertisements have a guiding effect on the public. On the social level, the mainstream media, by reporting social issues and emphasizing certain values, guide the public and influence their views and attitudes towards social issues, which has an important influence on the formation of social concepts. On the cultural level, the mainstream media spreads culture through entertainment forms, influences the public's leisure and entertainment orientation, and promotes certain entertainment and cultural values. As an important participant in the field of public opinion, the mainstream media's reports and interpretations of social events influence the public's views on the events and form the consensus and opinions in the society.

Although mainstream media play a positive guiding role in shaping popular cultural values, it is also important to note the potential limitations of the media's communication methods, tendencies, and information selection on popular cultural values. With the development of the Internet and social media, the public's access to information has become more diversified, and new forms of media, such as we-media, are emerging, making popular cultural values more diverse and complex.

##### **4.2 The Influence of Mainstream Media on Youth Cultural Values**

According to the survey, among Chinese netizens, youth group occupies about 35% [1], and among various applications, contemporary college students use chatting and making friends, followed by watching videos and listening to music, as shown in Figure 1. Mainstream media guides and shapes the aesthetic concepts of youth through music, movies, fashion and other forms [2]. Among them, the promotion and display of pop culture and celebrity idols have become important factors in shaping youth aesthetic trends. At the same time, mainstream media, as an important communication channel of social culture, conveys and expresses the mainstream values of society. Youth acquire social information through mainstream media, and then form the cognition of social values [3]. In addition, mainstream media pay attention to fashion and trends, and by promoting new things and emphasizing fashion elements, they also influence the consumption concepts and lifestyles of youth groups, forming a leading effect of fashion culture. Through the social media platform, mainstream media shape the social behaviour of youth. The popularity of social media makes young people pay more attention to social groups and build social networks through sharing and interaction. Through news reports, variety shows and other forms, mainstream media convey various social, moral and cultural values, which directly or indirectly influences the youth groups' views and evaluation standards on

things. Some mainstream media emphasize a sense of social responsibility, public welfare actions, etc., and through the propaganda, youth groups are motivated to participate in social welfare activities and emphasize a sense of social responsibility [4].

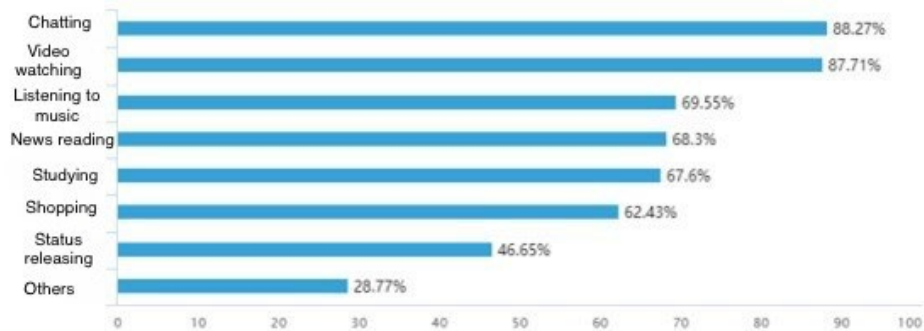


Figure 1 Contemporary college students' tendency to use we-media

### 4.3 The Influence of Mainstream Media on Emerging Values

The influence of mainstream media on emerging values plays an important role in contemporary society, especially with the constant changes in society and the rapid development of science and technology. The influence of mainstream media on emerging values is mainly reflected in the following aspects:

a) Science and Technology Innovation and Scientific Concepts: Through reporting on science and technology innovation and scientific discoveries, mainstream media promote the public to form positive scientific and technological concepts and promote the formation of emerging scientific and technological values, such as the acceptance and recognition of artificial intelligence, virtual reality and other technologies.

b) Green and Sustainable Development: Mainstream media focus on environmental protection and sustainable development issues, and guide the public to form emerging values that emphasize ecological balance by publicizing environmental protection concepts and reporting on green technological innovations.

c) Social Equality and Multiculturalism: Mainstream media pay attention to social equality and multiculturalism, and promote the public's acceptance of multiculturalism and equality values through reporting on inclusive and equal views, so as to promote the formation of emerging social concepts.

d) Self-expression and Individual Rights: social media, as an important part of mainstream media, emphasizes individual self-expression and rights, promoting the emerging value of individualism and emphasizing the uniqueness and independence of each person in society.

e) Mental Health and Balanced Life: Mainstream media are increasingly concerned with mental health issues, promoting emerging values that emphasize work-life balance and the importance of mental health, and guiding society to form a new concept of focusing on the overall health of individuals.

f) Entrepreneurship and Innovation Culture: Mainstream media coverage of entrepreneurs and innovation emphasizes the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, and promotes emerging values that encourage innovation and respect entrepreneurs.

g) Digitalization and Information Transparency: Mainstream media emphasize information transparency, authenticity and fairness through digital reporting means, promoting emerging information values and focusing on factual verification and truthful reporting.

Despite the positive role of mainstream media in promoting emerging values, it should also be noted that the rise of new media platforms, such as social media and we-media, has made it easier for individuals to express their views and develop more diverse and personalized values. This also means that mainstream media need to be more flexible and adapt to multicultural trends when guiding emerging values.

## 5. Conclusion

In today's society, the mainstream media play a key role in shaping cultural values, with far-reaching impacts on the cultural values of the general public, the cultural values of youth and emerging values. First, through news reports, movies, music and other forms, mainstream media widely disseminate cultural elements, reflect the mainstream concepts of society, and shape and guide the cultural concepts, perceptions and value orientations of the general public. The mainstream concepts reflected in the mainstream media become part of the social consensus and directly influence the views and attitudes of the public. Secondly, mainstream media play an important guiding role in shaping youth cultural values. Through entertainment, fashion, social media and other forms, mainstream media shapes and guides young people's aesthetics, consumerism, social behaviour, and promotes the formation and evolution of youth culture. At the same time, the influence of mainstream media on emerging values has become increasingly significant. By emphasizing issues such as technological innovation, environmental protection, and social equality, mainstream media promote the formation of emerging technological and social concepts, and guide the public to identify with green, innovative, and pluralistic emerging values.

However, with the rise of the Internet and social media, it has become easier for individuals to express their own views, resulting in a trend of more diverse and personalized cultural values. Mainstream media need to be more flexible in guiding these values, while also facing the challenges of new media forms to adapt to changes in cultural pluralism. Mainstream media's influence on popular, youth and emerging values is constantly evolving, presenting a complex cultural ecology of mutual influence and molding. It is of practical significance to realize the harmonious coexistence of we-media space presenting pluralistic values, human progress, and mainstream social ideology through reasonable cultural value guidance. By guiding the we-media to disseminate multicultural values, it helps to break down the barriers of single concept, promote social understanding and tolerance of different cultures, and reduce social conflicts and differences. Reasonable guidance of cultural values can help stimulate innovative thinking and practice, and promote the continuous progress of human society.

In this era of rapid information dissemination, the guidance of cultural values in we-media has far-reaching impacts, therefore, the rational guidance of cultural values has become an important path to realize pluralistic values, human progress and social harmony.

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