

The Reshaping of Students' Cultural Identity in the Age of Digital Civilisation Challenges and Missions for Cultural Education in the Context of the Online Society

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Abstract: Cultural identity serves as a vital foundation for individuals to understand their relationship with society and to form a sense of belonging, whilst also providing crucial support for cultural heritage and social development. With the advancement of digital civilisation, the online community has gradually become a key space for students to engage with culture, express themselves and construct their identities, leading to profound changes in the modes of cultural transmission and the mechanisms of identity formation. Whilst digital media broadens students' cultural horizons and promotes multicultural exchange, it has also given rise to practical issues such as the fragmentation of cultural information, a superficial understanding of culture, and the increasing complexity of value judgements. Grounded in the evolving cultural communication environment of the digital age, this paper analyses the impact of online society on the formation of students' cultural identity, explores the new challenges currently facing cultural education, and proposes educational responses in areas such as cultural understanding, digital literacy, value judgements, and the cultivation of intercultural communication skills. The study argues that cultural education in the digital age should not be confined to the transmission of cultural knowledge, but should place greater emphasis on guiding students to understand cultural significance and form rational judgements, whilst fostering a modern cultural identity characterised by cultural confidence and a sense of communication within an open and diverse online environment.

Keywords: Normal University Students; Professional Identity; Identity Theory

1. Changes in Cultural Forms in the Age of

Digital Civilisation: from the Dissemination of Traditional Culture to the Emergence of Internet Culture

1.1 The Mode of Cultural Dissemination Has Shifted from Linear Transmission to Networked Dissemination

Culture has always evolved alongside the development of human society, and its modes of existence and transmission have also adapted in response to changes in social structures and technological conditions. In traditional societies, cultural transmission relied primarily on stable social structures such as the family, school, clan and community, ensuring the continuity of knowledge, values and ways of life through intergenerational transmission. This model of transmission was characterised by a high degree of continuity and normativity, enabling individuals to develop a sense of belonging to their own group within a relatively stable cultural environment. However, with the development of the digital age, cultural transmission has gradually transcended traditional spatial and organisational boundaries, entering a phase of open dissemination based on online media.

Digital technology has transformed not only the speed and scope of cultural transmission, but also the fundamental ways in which culture is generated and circulates. Internet platforms, social media and various digital communication tools mean that culture is no longer merely transmitted unidirectionally from a handful of cultural institutions or traditional authorities to members of society; rather, it is constantly produced, modified and disseminated through the interactive participation of different actors. Communication technologies in the digital age are reshaping the ways in which civilisations interact, causing cultural exchange to increasingly exhibit characteristics of mediatization, networking and interactivity.

Emerging communication channels such as internet platforms and social media are becoming vital spaces for digital natives to engage in cultural exchange. Communication technologies in the digital age are reshaping the ways in which civilisations interact, causing cultural exchange to increasingly exhibit characteristics of mediation, networking and interactivity; emerging communication channels such as internet platforms and social media are becoming vital spaces for digital natives to participate in cultural exchange [1]. This implies that cultural communication has shifted from the previously relatively well-defined 'process of transmission' to a 'process of generation' involving the joint participation of multiple actors.

This change is particularly evident amongst students. In the online environment, students are no longer merely recipients of cultural content; they are also disseminators and creators of it. An online video, a popular expression or a community of shared interests can all become important vehicles for cultural dissemination. The formation and development of culture have come to rely more on interactions between individuals, rather than being sustained solely by traditional cultural institutions. Consequently, cultural education in the era of digital civilisation requires a renewed understanding of the principles governing cultural dissemination; it must not focus solely on how traditional cultural resources are incorporated into the education system, but must also consider how students are participating in new processes of cultural production.

1.2 Cyberspace Has Become a Key Arena for Students' Cultural Experiences

The formation of cultural identity is not simply a matter of passively accepting certain cultural content, but is gradually established through long-term social interaction and cultural practice. In traditional societies, the family, school and local communities constituted important sources of an individual's cultural experience; students gradually came to understand their cultural environment through daily life, educational activities and social interaction. However, in the age of digital civilisation, cyberspace has gradually become an integral part of students' social lives, as well as a key arena for them to engage with culture, express their identity and forge relationships.

What makes cyberspace unique is that it transcends the geographical constraints of the physical world, enabling individuals with shared interests, values and cultural preferences to form new cultural groups. For example, online communities, fan groups, gaming communities and various interest-based circles have all become important spaces for students to engage in cultural interaction. The development of new media has led youth culture to gradually shift from traditional, fixed forms towards digital, virtual and interactive forms of expression. Cyberspace has not only transformed the modes of dissemination of youth culture but has also become a vital arena for young people to seek cultural belonging and form group identity [2].

This indicates that students' cultural experiences are no longer entirely dependent on the real-world environments of the family and school, but are instead continually shaped through the interplay between the physical and online worlds. Online culture and subcultural phenomena are not merely forms of entertainment, but rather important means by which students understand society, express themselves and seek a sense of belonging. Online youth subcultures have formed close links with technology, consumption and everyday life, and are gradually influencing young people's lifestyles, cultural consumption and the expression of their values [3].

Consequently, when addressing the issue of students' cultural identity in the digital age, education must not simply regard online culture as an external influencing factor, but should recognise that cyberspace has become an integral part of students' cultural lives. Only by understanding the real cultural environment in which students find themselves can education play a more effective guiding role.

1.3 Digital Culture Promotes Diversification of Cultural Expression

Digital civilisation has not only transformed the channels through which culture is disseminated, but has also driven profound changes in the forms of cultural expression. In traditional cultural contexts, written text, books, classroom teaching and ceremonial activities were the primary forms of cultural expression; in the digital age, however, cultural expression is increasingly characterised by visualisation, interactivity and multimedia. New forms such as videos, images, games, online communities and

virtual spaces enable cultural content to enter social life in a more intuitive and vivid manner. This shift has broadened the possibilities for cultural dissemination and created new conditions for exchange between different cultures. Cultural content that was previously constrained by geographical boundaries-such as local traditions, ethnic arts and historical memory-can now be accessed by a wider audience through digital media. Culture is no longer confined to specific spaces but is constantly reinterpreted and disseminated as it flows across the internet. Digital communication technologies have driven a transformation in the ways civilisations interact, making cultural exchange more open, diverse and equitable; digital media is becoming a vital channel for dialogue and mutual learning between different civilisations [1].

However, the richness of cultural forms of expression does not automatically imply a corresponding increase in the depth of cultural understanding. Cultural content in the digital environment is often characterised by rapid dissemination and a high degree of fragmentation; whilst students may be able to quickly encounter a vast array of cultural symbols, they may not necessarily be able to gain an in-depth understanding of the historical context, values and social implications underlying them. Consequently, the development of digital culture has not only expanded the resources available for cultural education but has also placed new demands upon it.

At the same time, cultural exchange in the digital age has further transcended national and geographical boundaries, resulting in more frequent contact between different cultures. Cultural identity is no longer formed in a closed environment, but is constantly adjusted and constructed through multicultural interaction. Digital technology has transformed the environment in which cultural identity is formed, enabling individuals to gain greater scope for expression and choice in the process of cross-cultural communication, whilst also facing issues of cultural differences, identity conflicts and the reconstruction of identity [4].

It is thus evident that cultural forms in the era of digital civilisation have undergone a fundamental transformation. Culture is no longer merely a body of existing achievements to be preserved and transmitted, but rather a dynamic

process continuously generated through online interaction, media dissemination and social practice. This transformation has altered not only the ways in which students engage with culture, but also the social environment in which they form their cultural identity. Consequently, cultural education must respond to the new changes brought about by digital civilisation; whilst helping students understand their own culture, it must guide them towards the formation of a cultural identity that is more open, rational and autonomous.

2. Changes in the Mechanisms Governing the Formation of Students' Cultural Identity in the Age of Digital Civilisation

The development of digital civilisation has not only transformed the external forms of cultural transmission but has also profoundly influenced the internal mechanisms governing the formation of students' cultural identity. Cultural identity is not merely an individual's simple acceptance of certain cultural content, but rather a sense of self that is gradually formed through social interaction, cultural practice and the construction of meaning. In traditional societies, students primarily acquired cultural experiences through the family, school and local communities, forming an understanding of their own identity and sense of belonging within a relatively stable cultural environment. However, the emergence of the digital society has disrupted this relatively fixed model of cultural identity, causing students' cultural identity to gradually exhibit characteristics of diversified origins, networked expression and dynamic construction.

2.1 Cultural Identity: from Traditional Inheritance to Diverse Construction

Cultural identity is, first and foremost, an understanding of 'who I am'; it encompasses both an individual's affirmation of their cultural affiliation and reflects their value positioning within social relationships. In the past, cultural identity was primarily transmitted through stable social structures, with lifestyles within the family, cultural education in schools and shared social values collectively forming the essential foundation for students' understanding of their cultural identity. In this process, students primarily learnt, accepted and inherited culture within existing cultural systems.

However, the digital age has transformed the social environment in which cultural identity is

formed. Cyberspace transcends the boundaries of physical geography and social groups, enabling students to access a richer array of cultural resources and ensuring that cultural identity no longer depends entirely on a single social context. Cultural identity in the digital society is gradually transcending the boundaries of traditional individual and collective identities; new forms of identity are continually emerging through online interactions and relationships, and are becoming increasingly open and dynamic as social mobility increases [5]. This implies that students' cultural identity in the digital age is no longer merely the result of being 'bestowed', but is continuously constructed through the process of encountering, comparing and selecting diverse cultural information.

This shift affords students a broader cultural perspective. On the one hand, the online environment enables students to access cultural content from different regions, ethnic groups and even countries, thereby enhancing their capacity for cultural understanding and communication; on the other hand, the simultaneous influx of diverse cultures into students' lives also renders the process of cultural identity formation more complex. Students need to understand and make judgements amongst different cultural symbols, value systems and lifestyles. Consequently, cultural identity in the digital age does not represent a dissolution of traditional cultural heritage, but rather a reconstruction within a more open environment.

In this sense, cultural identity is inherently dynamic and social. Individual identity is not an isolated psychological state, but a process that is continually shaped within social relationships and cultural contexts; it is influenced by the external environment whilst also encompassing a process of active individual choice and reflection [6]. For students, the online society offers a richer array of cultural choices, but it also requires education to help students enhance their cultural understanding, enabling them to form a stable and rational cultural identity within a multicultural environment.

2.2 Online Interaction Transforms the Ways in Which Students Express Their Cultural Identity

In the era of digital civilisation, students are not merely recipients of culture, but also participants and creators of culture. Cyberspace provides students with freer channels for cultural

expression, meaning that cultural identity is no longer primarily manifested through social roles in the physical world, but can be expressed through online interactions, interest groups and digital forms of expression.

For example, students may express their identity by participating in a particular online community, following certain types of cultural content, using specific online slang or engaging in particular leisure activities. These online behaviours actually constitute an important way for students to understand their relationships with themselves and others. Interest circles, fan communities and gaming communities within online culture are not merely spaces for entertainment; they have also become important venues for students to forge emotional connections and seek a sense of belonging.

The development of new media has driven youth culture away from centralised expression in traditional spaces towards interactive expression in cyberspace. Youth subcultures are gradually taking on characteristics of digitalisation, virtualisation and participatory engagement, with the internet becoming a vital arena for young people to develop a sense of cultural belonging and express their identities [2]. Consequently, when addressing online culture, education must not simply regard it as an external factor influencing students' development, but must recognise that online culture has become an integral part of students' real-life cultural experiences.

At the same time, online culture exhibits distinct characteristics of social circles. Different interest groups form relatively stable cultural communities through the internet, enabling students to gain emotional support and a sense of identity. Online youth subcultures have evolved from early, purely online phenomena into significant cultural forms that influence young people's cultural consumption, lifestyles and expressions of values [3].

Of course, online communities may also present certain limitations. When students remain within a single interest group for extended periods, a relatively insular cultural environment can easily develop, leading to a lack of understanding of other cultural forms. Consequently, a key task of cultural education in the digital age is not to discourage students' participation in online culture, but rather, whilst respecting their cultural practices, to guide them towards developing a more open and diverse cultural

perspective.

2.3 Algorithmic Recommendations Transform the Environment for Students' Cultural Engagement and Identity Formation

If online platforms have altered the spaces through which students engage with culture, then algorithmic recommendations have further transformed the specific ways in which they do so. In the traditional media environment, cultural content was primarily selected and organised by communicators, whereas algorithms on digital platforms filter and push information based on users' data records, browsing habits and preferences. This has gradually shifted students' engagement with culture from 'active seeking' to 'precise recommendations'.

Through data analysis, user profiling and content matching, algorithmic recommendations establish a link between the supply of information and user demand, shifting information dissemination from the traditional mass-market model to a more personalised model, and gradually becoming a significant force influencing the construction of the information environment [7]. This change has improved the efficiency of accessing cultural information, enabling students to engage more conveniently with cultural content that interests them, but it has also altered the environment in which cultural cognition is formed.

Algorithmic recommendations have certain positive implications. They can help students discover more cultural resources—for example, by learning about traditional culture, artistic works and the cultures of different countries through platform recommendations—thereby broadening the scope of their cultural exposure. However, algorithmic recommendations may also lead to limitations in cultural cognition. As algorithms tend to continuously recommend similar content aligned with users' interests, students may find themselves persistently immersed in an information environment that closely matches their own interests, thereby reducing opportunities to engage with differing perspectives and cultural forms.

By tagging user information and delivering personalised recommendations, algorithmic recommendations, whilst improving the efficiency of information matching, may also create 'information silos', causing individuals to engage predominantly with information that aligns closely with their existing beliefs, thereby

influencing their value judgements and cultural understanding [8]. For students in their formative years, this impact warrants particular attention, as their values and capacity for cultural judgement are still developing.

Consequently, the challenge facing students' cultural identity in the digital age is not merely one of increased cultural resources, but rather one of how to understand and select culture. Algorithms can help students access a wider range of content, but they cannot substitute for students' own cultural judgements. Education must cultivate students' ability to discern information and engage in cultural reflection, enabling them to maintain cultural agency within a complex digital environment.

It can be said that digital civilisation has transformed the social foundations upon which students' cultural identity is formed. Students' cultural identity has shifted from a relatively stable process of cultural inheritance in the past to a process of continuous construction influenced by online interactions, multicultural exchanges and algorithmic environments. This change has expanded the potential scope of students' cultural development, whilst also presenting new educational challenges. Consequently, cultural education in the digital age must focus not merely on 'what culture to transmit', but more importantly on helping students develop the ability to understand, select and create culture.

3. Practical Challenges Facing Students' Cultural Identity in the Age of Digital Civilisation

Digital civilisation has transformed students' cultural identity from a relatively stable process of transmission into one of continuous choice, negotiation and reconstruction. For students still in the stages of cognitive development and value formation, the difficulty no longer lies in a scarcity of cultural resources, but rather in whether they can establish a stable framework of understanding amidst the vast quantity, diverse forms and constantly platform-curated cultural information. The practical challenges manifest primarily as tensions between cultural exposure and deep understanding, cultural diversity and value judgements, participation in subcultures and value choices, and media usage and cultural experience.

3.1 the Contradiction between the

Enrichment of Cultural Exposure and the Superficialisation of Cultural Understanding

Short videos, digital museums, online courses, 'Guochao' products and works with historical themes enable students to engage with traditional culture with a lower barrier to entry. Cultural content has expanded from textbooks and classrooms to images, music, games and virtual spaces, significantly increasing the channels through which students encounter cultural symbols. However, this broader exposure does not naturally translate into a deeper level of understanding. Digital platforms often attract attention through brief narratives, eye-catching symbols and immediate emotional appeal, whilst complex historical relationships and value systems are easily oversimplified. Hanfu may be understood merely as an aesthetic style; traditional festivals may be reduced to consumer events; and historical figures may be transformed into character labels designed for easy dissemination. Whilst culture has gained greater visibility, it also faces the risk of being reduced to mere symbols and trivialised for entertainment.

For young people, cultural identity is not merely a single-dimensional 'preference', but encompasses progressive layers such as cultural symbols, cultural identity and cultural values. Surveys indicate that young people's identification with traditional culture takes various forms, including uniformity, passivity, cognitive engagement, depth and superficiality. This suggests that the ability to recognise cultural symbols and participate in cultural activities does not equate to an understanding of the underlying sentiments of patriotism, social responsibility and personal values. Students may have accumulated a vast amount of cultural 'facts', yet lack the ability to contextualise this fragmented information within historical frameworks and real-life situations; as a result, their engagement with culture tends to remain at the level of 'having seen it' or 'liking it', making it difficult to develop a rational understanding of cultural significance [9].

3.2 Insufficient Capacity for Value Judgement in a Multicultural Environment

Cyberspace brings together cultures from different regions, ethnic groups, nations and social circles within a single interface. Students can, within a very short space of time, encounter traditional culture, Western popular culture,

anime and gaming culture, consumer culture, and various online ideologies. This juxtaposition of cultures makes students' interests more diverse; however, cultural choices do not occur in a completely free and neutral environment. Research on digital platforms for young people has found that cultural tastes in the digital age are characterised by a pattern where diverse interests dominate whilst single interests coexist, and are jointly influenced by generation, gender and the way platforms operate. The platforms themselves are also undergoing a transformation from niche subcultural spaces to diverse, mainstream cultural spaces. It is thus evident that cultural diversity does not necessarily imply cognitive openness; it may equally give rise to new cultural divisions and value biases [10].

As students' social experiences and knowledge structures are not yet fully developed, they are prone to making judgements based on trends, group attitudes and personal emotions when confronted with conflicting cultural concepts. Personalised recommendations, in turn, continuously provide similar content, repeatedly reinforcing existing preferences whilst gradually pushing heterogeneous information out of view. The 'information bubble' not only restricts the scope of information but may also lead students to mistake familiarity for correctness and popularity for value. Research focusing on university students has already demonstrated that the continuous accumulation of homogeneous information can solidify an individual's cognitive framework and weaken their willingness to actively engage with unfamiliar information. For younger students, whose judgement is still developing, this influence warrants particular vigilance. The result may be either the simplistic imitation of foreign cultures and online trends, or an emotional rejection of different cultures. Whilst these two approaches appear to be opposites, in essence they both lack comparative analysis grounded in historical context, real-world conditions and fundamental values [11].

3.3 the Influence of Online Subcultures on Students' Value Choices

Anime, video games, fan culture, internet slang and fan-created works have become important spaces for students to express their interests, find peers and participate in cultural production. The internet has enabled young people to gradually transition from recipients of mass culture to

creators and disseminators of content; moreover, the relationship between local youth subcultures and mainstream culture is not always one of simple opposition, but rather one that is constantly evolving through consumption, negotiation, borrowing and integration. Some youth subcultures even utilise their own media language to participate in public cultural expression, forging new connections with mainstream values. Therefore, one cannot adopt an attitude of blanket rejection towards online subcultures; otherwise, it will be impossible to understand students' authentic cultural experiences, nor will it be possible to establish effective educational dialogue [12].

It is important to be wary of the fact that once subcultures are jointly organised by platform traffic, commercial capital and closed circles, interest-based identity may transform into group discipline. Online communities reinforce members' sense of belonging through specific language, behavioural norms and identity markers, whilst also drawing boundaries between 'us' and 'them'. Students may view purchasing products, participating in chart-topping campaigns, supporting their idols or conforming to the community's opinions as ways of proving their loyalty, with cultural participation gradually evolving into consumer behaviour and data labour. Driven by algorithms and capital, the value of cultural content is easily supplanted by the number of 'likes', views and followers, whilst individual judgement is readily swept up in collective sentiment. Online subcultures are not the problem in themselves; the issue lies in whether students can maintain a necessary critical distance whilst participating, recognising the commercial mechanisms and power dynamics behind these communities of interest, rather than allowing 'belonging to a particular circle' to replace an understanding of the cultural content itself [13].

3.4 the Digital Media Environment Erodes Deep Cultural Experiences

Cultural understanding requires time. Reading classics demands immersion in their full context; historical understanding requires situating events within their causal chains; and aesthetic experiences require repeated contemplation and comparison. Short videos and news feeds, however, organise attention through rapid switching, continuous stimulation and instant feedback, making cultural engagement

increasingly resemble a succession of fleeting fragments. Repetitive content recommendations further reinforce media dependency and the fragmentation of information, squeezing out the space for independent choice and sustained reflection. Once students become accustomed to obtaining conclusions and emotional gratification swiftly, they find it increasingly difficult to tolerate the slowness, unfamiliarity and uncertainty inherent in cultural learning—precisely those processes that are indispensable to deep understanding. When culture is reduced to content that is swiftly viewed, shared and forgotten, students may gain nothing more than fleeting impressions, rather than cultural understanding that can become part of their personal experience and value system.

This shift cannot be simply attributed to a lack of self-discipline among students. Field research on short-video usage among rural adolescents indicates that reliance on short videos is also linked to a lack of companionship in real life, a scarcity of activity resources, and unmet needs for self-expression. Algorithms that continuously push content resembling personal experiences make adolescents feel 'understood', yet they may also mistake the emotional resonance pre-set by technology for sufficient and authentic connections with the world. Short videos thus become not merely tools for entertainment, but also living spaces where adolescents can process their emotions, affirm their identities and imagine their futures. When the digital space provides more immediate responses than the home or school, students' cultural experiences may come to rely more on emotional resonance and less on real-life interactions, physical practices and long-term accumulation. The weakening of profound cultural experiences essentially signifies that students' connections to history, society, others and real life are becoming increasingly tenuous [14].

4. The Mission and Practical Responses of School Cultural Education in the Age of Digital Civilisation

The analysis in the preceding section indicates that whilst digital media have broadened students' exposure to culture, they also pose risks of fragmentation, emotionalisation and segmentation in cultural understanding. In response, schools must neither regard internet culture as a scourge nor assume that simply using a few more digital tools constitutes

educational innovation. What cultural education truly needs to address is how to transform rich yet scattered cultural information into cultural experiences that students can understand, evaluate and put into practice, thereby enabling them to form a stable yet open-minded cultural identity within an open digital environment.

4.1 Moving from Symbolic Transmission to Cultural Understanding: Optimising School Curriculum Content

The school curriculum is not a mere reproduction of socio-cultural material, but rather an educational choice regarding 'which aspects of culture are worth learning for the next generation'. The texts, figures, events, works of art and value systems featured in the curriculum all influence the way students observe society, understand history and perceive themselves. Curricular knowledge is inherently cultural in nature; its content selection, objective setting and implementation methods are all shaped by specific cultural values. School cultural education must therefore not be content with merely listing cultural facts, but should help students recognise the underlying values and practical significance of that knowledge [15]. Curriculum optimisation must first break free from the mindset that 'adding content equates to strengthening education'. Whilst it is certainly important for traditional festivals, historical figures and classical poetry and prose to feature in textbooks, if students merely memorise dates, famous quotations and plot lines, cultural education may still remain confined to the symbolic level. Traditional culture is not synonymous with ancient culture that has become detached from reality, nor is 'excellence' a ready-made label that can be applied directly to all traditional material; cultural curricula should showcase the continuity and complexity of tradition, as well as its connections to contemporary life, guiding students to form their own value judgements through understanding and comparison [16]. Therefore, schools should integrate Chinese language, history, ethics and the rule of law, arts and integrated practical courses around common themes, placing cultural knowledge back within specific historical contexts and real-world issues, so that students progress from 'knowing a culture' to 'understanding why that culture emerged and what significance it holds today'.

4.2 Moving from the Use of Technology to Deep Experiences: the Prudent Development of Digital Cultural Resources

Digital resources offer new possibilities for cultural education. Digital museums, virtual exhibitions, video archives and digital teaching materials can transcend the temporal and spatial constraints of the classroom, establishing links between static text and cultural contexts, artefacts and social life. For example, when studying ancient architecture, pupils can use 3D resources to observe spatial structures; when learning traditional crafts, they can use video footage to understand the entire production process and gain hands-on experience through practical activities. The true value of digital teaching materials lies not merely in the addition of sound, animation and links, but in the reorganisation of fragmented cultural resources to create participatory learning contexts, and in enabling students-through multidimensional interaction-to shift from passively receiving cultural knowledge to actively constructing cultural meaning [17].

However, the richer the technological forms, the more necessary it is to define their educational boundaries. If classrooms merely pursue visual novelty and the excitement of hands-on activities, cultural content may, conversely, be reduced once again to fleeting stimuli. Whether technology should be incorporated into the curriculum should not be determined by its level of advancement, but must be subject to a comprehensive assessment of educational objectives, practical outcomes, ethical standards and its value for student development; technology must serve the educational aims of the curriculum, rather than dominating it [18]. Digital resources should be integrated with classic reading, teacher-led explanations, real-world visits, hands-on activities and reflective discussions. Otherwise, whilst the screen may have evolved from a blackboard to a high-definition display, education may still be treading water-merely with a more expensive 'packaging'.

4.3 Moving from Information Reception to Rational Judgement: Strengthening Digital Media Literacy Education

Faced with algorithmic recommendations, commercial marketing and the spread of emotional content, it is far from sufficient for students merely to know how to search for

information and operate digital devices. Media literacy education should be integrated into the daily curriculum, guiding students to question who publishes information, why it is promoted, on what grounds, and what might be omitted from a particular cultural narrative. Schools can conduct case studies centred on short videos, trending online topics and platform recommendations, enabling students to compare different sources, distinguish between facts, opinions and emotions, and recognise the commercial mechanisms behind traffic metrics. Digital literacy is not merely an isolated technical skill, but a comprehensive set of competencies comprising knowledge, skills and attitudes. It encompasses not only the ability to access, analyse and create information, but also critical thinking, digital safety, public engagement, an awareness of rules, and an attitude towards the responsible use of technology [19]. Consequently, when cultivating students' cultural discernment, schools must not merely teach them 'how to find information'; they must also train them to judge whether information is reliable, whether cultural expressions respect others, and whether personal choices are being manipulated by algorithms and group sentiment. A true digital subject is not one who is passively fed content by platforms, but one who is able to understand and reflect upon platforms, and, where necessary, reject the tastes dictated by them.

4.4 from Closed Identity to Open Understanding: Fostering an Environment for Cross-Cultural Exchange

A stable cultural identity does not imply isolating one's own culture. The digital space facilitates frequent encounters between different cultures; students may either blindly follow popular culture due to a lack of grounding in their own cultural heritage, or misinterpret cultural confidence as a rejection of difference. Schools should provide students with opportunities for equal discussion of different cultures through cultural comparison, thematic reading, international understanding courses and collaborative projects. The purpose of comparison is not to determine which culture is 'superior', but to understand the historical conditions that have shaped different systems, customs and values.

Cross-cultural education should help students recognise cultural diversity and interdependence;

on the basis of understanding their own culture, they should learn to respect differences, engage in dialogue and cooperation, and transform encounters between different cultures into mutual understanding rather than mutual isolation [20]. For primary and secondary school pupils, this ability need not be framed as a grand 'mission of international communication'; it can begin with understanding ways of life in different regions, respecting their peers' cultural habits, and avoiding the use of stereotypical labels. A sign of mature cultural confidence is not an inability to tolerate differing views, but rather the ability to articulate one's own cultural stance through comparison and exchange, whilst acknowledging that others also have the right to be understood.

It would appear, therefore, that the mission of cultural education in schools in the age of digital civilisation is not to compete with the internet for the volume of information, but to provide systematic understanding, value judgements and authentic interaction-elements that online platforms struggle to replicate. Only by integrating curriculum development, digital resources, media literacy and cross-cultural understanding can schools help students evolve from cultural consumers shaped by online traffic and social circles into cultural agents with cultural roots, reflective capacity and an open outlook.

Digital civilisation has not brought an end to cultural transmission; rather, it has made the issue of cultural identity more complex. Online platforms have broken through the temporal and spatial boundaries of traditional cultural transmission, enabling students to access an unprecedented array of cultural resources, whilst also allowing algorithmic recommendations, competition for traffic, interactions within social circles and online subcultures to gradually influence the formation of their values and sense of identity. Consequently, students' cultural identity is no longer a stable outcome transmitted unidirectionally by the family and school, but has become a dynamic process of continuous selection, negotiation and reconstruction amidst a diversity of cultural information.

This shift not only holds the potential for cultural innovation and self-expression, but also brings with it real risks such as a superficialisation of cultural understanding, emotionalised value judgements, the

compartmentalisation of cultural identity, and a weakening of profound cultural experiences. The root of the problem lies not merely in students spending excessive time online, but rather in the fact that the commercial logic and technical mechanisms of these platforms are quietly altering the way cultural content is presented. When popularity replaces value, labels replace understanding, and emotional resonance replaces historical reflection, students may appear to have more cultural choices, but in reality they may simply be clicking repeatedly amongst a limited set of options. Algorithms do not force people to believe anything; they are more cunning than that: they simply keep telling people 'what they like'.

Consequently, cultural education in the age of digital civilisation cannot be confined to increasing knowledge of traditional culture, nor can it rely on simply restricting media use to solve the problem. Schools should leverage the systematic nature of the curriculum, the professionalism of teachers and the public nature of education to guide students in understanding the historical context, ethical spirit and practical significance behind cultural symbols; make judicious use of digital teaching materials, virtual exhibitions and online resources to shift cultural learning from screen-based viewing to real-world experiences; strengthen digital media literacy education so that students can recognise algorithmic influences, commercial manipulation and group sentiment; and, at the same time, foster an open environment for cultural exchange, enabling students to respect differences and understand others whilst maintaining a firm cultural stance of their own.

Ultimately, digital technology may determine the speed at which culture reaches students, but it cannot determine the depth to which it penetrates their spiritual world. The true mission of cultural education in schools is to help students evolve from individuals merely surrounded by information into cultural agents capable of understanding culture, judging values and assuming public responsibility. The continuity of civilisation has never depended on how much data we preserve, but on whether the next generation truly understands why this data is worth preserving.

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