

# Research on the Current new Characteristics, Operation Problems and Innovation Strategies of the Official WeChat official account of Chinese Universities Driven by "Generation Z"

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**Abstract.** Today, the official WeChat official account of Chinese universities has entered a new era with "Generation Z" (1995-2009) college students as the main audience and content producers. While opening up a broader communication space and more diversified communication possibilities for Chinese universities, it also provides a campus media platform for "Generation Z" college students with distinctive personality, rationality, independence and tolerance to create, share, express and talk. However, the current official WeChat official account of Chinese universities shows many new features and problems in accuracy, innovation, cohesion, empathy and integration. Based on this situation, this study proposes innovative and optimized strategies for the operation, construction and development of the official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities from the aspects of deep cultivation of content, distribution interaction, team building, brand communication, management mode, etc., in combination with the cultural circle characteristics and subcultural needs of Chinese "Generation Z" young college students, in order to diversify, multi circle Find the balance and fit point between "official publicity" and "Gen Z demand" in a multi field space, and build an influential official WeChat official account brand of Chinese universities.

**Keywords:** Generation Z; Official Wechat Official Account of Chinese Universities; New Operation Problems; Innovative Strategies.

## 1. Introduction

In 1999, Chinese Taiwanese scholars introduced the concept of "Generation Z" for China, which usually refers to the Chinese youth group born between 1995 and 2009. As "Internet natives", "anime" and "digital natives", they have lived in the digital media world since birth, contacted digital information, network technology and mobile devices, and become a generation born and growing together with the network and virtual platform, It is the first generation of people whose life course is "completely embedded" in the digital society (Xie Yang&Wang Xiying, 2022).

As "Generation Z" has become the main body of Chinese college students, since Huazhong University of Science and Technology opened China's first official WeChat official account platform in August 2012, Chinese colleges and universities have successively opened official WeChat official account to adapt to the media usage habits of "Generation Z" college students in the new era. According to incomplete statistics, nearly 80% of China's 3012 universities have opened official WeChat official account. The official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities has become an important platform for publicizing the image of Chinese colleges and universities, connecting with "Generation Z" college students, providing services for "Generation Z" college students, and finding and resolving public opinions.

## 2. New Operating Characteristics of Official Wechat Official Account of Chinese Universities Driven by "Generation Z"

The "Generation Z" college students in China are characterized by personality, love to share, desire to be recognized, high cultural tolerance, rationality, originality, willingness to accept new things, broad and different interest circles, and identity overlap in multiple circles (Zhang Jiaqi, 2022). The

official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities provides a platform for "Generation Z" students to create, share, express, talk, exchange and share, giving them corresponding space for positive freedom and peace. However, due to the "official nature" and "official mechanism" of the official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities, it is still unable to accurately and effectively match the group characteristics, value orientation, behavior, communication habits and interest extremes of "Generation Z" college students, and can not fully enable "Generation Z" college students to completely liberate themselves in the cultural space of Chinese colleges and universities. At present, compared with the challenges faced by the official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities when it was just emerging, it also presents many new features.

## 2.1 New "Blood" and New Ways

In terms of the main body of communication, the official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities is generally compiled and operated by the publicity department of colleges and universities. On the one hand, the staff of the publicity department of colleges and universities gradually transformed into leaders and organizers, rather than indoctrinators, playing an important role in "strengthening the dominance, discourse and communication rights in the ideological field". On the other hand, influenced by the "decentralization" of the Internet (Liang Yingying, 2017), under the leadership of the University Publicity Department, the "Generation Z" college student team specifically responsible for the interview, writing, editing, commenting and sending of the official WeChat official account of colleges and universities has gradually changed from "obeying orders and implementing" to the content production subject of "independently discovering hot spots";

In terms of communication methods, the "indoctrination", "official" and "orthodox" communication methods in the past are no longer applicable, especially for "Generation Z" college students who like to accept new things, which is obviously lack of attraction and resonance. Therefore, the current official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities needs to use new technology, combined with forward and reverse output, to promote the continuous updating of the communication methods of the official WeChat official account.

## 2.2 New Audience and New Requirements

Under the premise that the audience subject of the official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities has changed, the group psychology of "Generation Z" college students is extremely vulnerable to the impact of social trends, showing the new characteristics of "materialism and post materialism intertwined, pluralistic integration and niche differentiation, confusion and identity coexist, coupling and tension intertwined" (Qi Fenghua, Huang Liying&Chang Yongqing, 2022), and they basically have no worries about material life, The purpose of life is to pursue a higher level of spirit. While paying attention to free choice, it is easy to form a virtual social circle, which shows a niche differentiation with personal interests as the link. The understanding of social moral standards conflicts due to exposure to foreign cultural values (He Shaohui, 2022).

Therefore, new requirements are put forward for the University Publicity Department to establish and operate the official WeChat official account of colleges and universities, not only to deeply understand the basic problem of "for whom", but also to adhere to the principle of "leading by mainstream values, integrating communication resources, fitting the main characteristics, and stimulating the main potential", accurately understand and accurately grasp the group characteristics and psychological characteristics of "Generation Z" college students, and ensure "symptomatic medicine", Change the communication content and interaction mode of the official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities, and improve the communication effect.

## 2.3 New Carrier and New Discourse

In terms of communication carrier, the official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities was founded to spread monotonously and linearly, mainly text and pictures and single

platform communication. However, "Generation Z" college students are familiar with the use of media and are keen to accept new things. They want to show their own characteristics and be different from others from inside to outside. At present, the new trend of integrating the official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities with the official website of colleges and universities, the official microblog of colleges and universities, the official short video of colleges and universities, the official B station of colleges and universities, the official red book of colleges and universities and other platforms into the university campus media matrix has become very obvious. It is urgent for the university publicity department to organically combine the digital communication habits of "Generation Z" college students, connect and integrate various campus media, and strengthen closeness, interactivity Empathy enables more college students to actively participate in the official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities from multiple channels, and participate in forwarding, praising and commenting;

In terms of communication discourse, the "long-standing problem" of the official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities lies in the dilemma of the new "Generation Z" college students' audience's understanding of the original discourse model. It is urgent to promote "discourse leadership" to "discourse guidance", and explore a set of discourse models popular with "Generation Z" college students, From "teacher discourse", "classroom discourse", "official discourse", "formal discourse" to "student discourse", "after class discourse", "folk discourse", and "informal discourse", it is naturally applied to the official WeChat official account of colleges and universities, making it "connected to the antenna above, connected to the atmosphere below", more "lively, diverse, and easy to understand".

### **3. New Problems in the Operation of Official Wechat Official Account of Chinese Universities Driven by "Generation Z"**

At this stage, the official WeChat official account of Chinese universities driven by "Generation Z" mainly has the following problems: in terms of personnel participation, the platform construction and operation development of the official WeChat official account of universities are regarded as the independent work of the university publicity department, which has nothing to do with the personnel and teachers of other departments; In terms of management mode, the system and mechanism system for the construction of official WeChat official account and the integration of campus financial media in Chinese universities are not perfect, and there are a series of fundamental problems such as "lack of integration standards, limited service forms, and difficulties in interaction between schools and students" (Guan Shaofeng&Xu Zhenglin, 2022). Many universities simply add the official WeChat official account and other campus media, The phenomenon of "strong integration" and "hard integration" is not uncommon, showing a situation of "two skins" and "two hands", and there is no financial media matrix of "one newspaper, two platforms, two WeChat terminals" in colleges and universities;

In terms of communication content, the official WeChat official account of Chinese colleges and universities has the problem of multiple use of one draft and highly homogeneous content within the scope of college campus media, ignoring the media characteristics of different campus media, and lacking the professional ability to create differentiated content of the official WeChat official account of colleges and universities; In terms of communication mode, we still use the formal, indoctrinated and official way of publicity, which cannot effectively combine the media usage habits and interests of "Generation Z" college students;

In terms of ideology, there is a lack of awareness of the importance of the construction of the official WeChat official account of colleges and universities and its use as an auxiliary channel of "curriculum ideological and political" in colleges and universities, a lack of deep understanding of the role of its implicit education, a lack of top-level system design, and some even have the phenomenon of not being integrated and blindly integrated, which makes an insurmountable "natural gap" between the official WeChat official account of colleges and universities and "curriculum

ideological and political", Neither the purpose of implicit education can be realized, nor can it arouse the resonance of "Generation Z" college students.

#### **4. Innovation Strategy of Official Wechat Official Account of Chinese Universities Driven by "Generation Z"**

##### **4.1 Content: Highlight Closeness, Accuracy, Interaction and Empathy**

First of all, stick to the actual learning life of teachers and students, and do a good job of "four degrees", that is, achieve the integration of speed, depth, temperature and dimension, especially highlight the efficiency and role of temperature. Only by choosing the content that can first move their own communication, can they deeply process, which is likely to move ordinary "Generation Z" college students; Secondly, we should precisely and deeply cultivate the communication content that the "Generation Z" college students are interested in. The complex identity characteristics of "Generation Z" college students endow them with many rich and contradictory characteristics, such as rice circle, national style circle, game circle, Man circle, LO Niang circle, baby circle, hand account circle, etc. According to the survey, their favorite content of WeChat official account of colleges and universities is: campus life with empathy; Familiar campus scenery or proud school history; The deeds of advanced people who give themselves the strength to move forward; Proud of the school's progress or achievements; Learning or living tips that can bring convenience to life (Tang Yayang&Chen Sanying, 2018). Therefore, the content of the official WeChat official account of Chinese universities should focus on the above information; Do a good job of interaction between online operations and offline links.

Third, it is advocated to make online activities offline, enhance the sense of audience participation, and realize the sense of interaction between "Generation Z" college students and the official WeChat official account of colleges and universities; Fourth, attach importance to and do a good job in the communication of empathy. Empathy is the ability of a person to understand another person's unique experience and respond to it (Arthur Joramikali, 2017:3). It is an innate ability of human beings (Yuval Herali, 2018:3). The communication of empathy is the formation, transmission and diffusion of common or similar emotions (Zhao Jianguo, 2021). To achieve the communication of empathy, we should skillfully use intermediaries, turn the grand narrative at the ideological level to the micro expression of "small and beautiful" in daily life, and make good use of multi subject narrative, so that the "Generation Z" college students' community and discourse style can break through the expression circle and realize the identity commonality (Yu Juan&Li Yixuan, 2022).

##### **4.2 Form: in Line with the Media Use Characteristics of "Generation Z" College Students**

First, realize the visualization of the communication form. It is better to include text, pictures, audio and video in the works of the official WeChat official account of colleges and universities. Try to use H5, VR and other visualization technologies to actively match the media use preferences and psychological characteristics of "Generation Z" college students: both pursue innovative and avant-garde communication forms, and quickly like the new and dislike the old, advocating the development of personal characteristics, not willing to be "generalized";

Secondly, make good use of the marginal information in the form of communication, and try to fit in with the audience's thinking and media needs of "Generation Z" college students. According to the survey, their preference for the form of communication of online content shows new characteristics: they rely more on marginal information such as school popularity, release time, format and so on (Tang Yayang&Chen Sanying, 2018), use more explosive and fresh and appropriate online popular words, and be good at fitting their collective common code;

Third, we should attach importance to the interaction and empathy of communication forms. "Generation Z" college students' comments and comments on social media become their way to "brush their sense of existence". This requires that the official WeChat official account of colleges

and universities not only create original content to actively interact with fans, strive to become friends of fans, but also select the message function in the message area to let colleges and universities understand students' thoughts and thoughts, Quickly build channels to solve problems and serve students. In addition, we should also vigorously develop cultural and creative products in colleges and universities (such as graduation cultural and creative products, gift boxes for the Spring Festival, customized moon cakes, calendars, postcards, bookmarks, canvas bags, etc.), so as to stimulate college students' strong recognition of the official WeChat official account of colleges and universities and colleges.

#### **4.3 Management: Integrate Campus Media Resources and Jointly Operate**

First of all, promote the official WeChat official account platform of colleges and universities to quickly integrate into the college financial media management, straighten out the media subject management system, break down the mechanism barriers that restrict the media operation, and create a Chinese college media management and organizational operation model with the integrated development of multiple media.

Secondly, we will build a multi sector college financial media management organization, coordinate the operation and management of college official WeChat, college official microblog, official website, college newspaper, college radio, college official video number and some APP ports, eliminate barriers to cooperation among campus media, and better complete college media construction, public opinion guidance, special education, cultural construction and other work.

Third, strengthen the construction of software and hardware facilities, and timely update the broadcasting, editing, photography, camera and other equipment used by the official WeChat official account platform of colleges and universities, so as to ensure the needs of acquisition, writing, editing, and distribution, highlight multiple forms, and form a joint force of communication.

Fourth, we should improve the distribution operation mechanism. The official WeChat official account platform of colleges and universities should pay more attention to the operation while refining the content, and create a "four level distribution" system of "official WeChat official account of colleges and universities - class leaders - students" to maximize the operation effect.

#### **4.4 Team: Pay Attention to Humanistic Care and Stimulate Group Identity**

First of all, to strengthen the operation team, it is necessary to create an official WeChat official account platform operation team of colleges and universities that focuses on students' collection, editing, writing and posting, supplemented by teacher team management and content control, and is familiar with the reading habits of "Generation Z" college students, so as to give it greater freedom to push works.

Secondly, build a "Generation Z" college student reporter team, explore and establish a team mechanism of "only advancing but not retreating", and strengthen the reserve mobile force; Precise grouping can be carried out according to professional skills, including the Press Department, the Vision Department, the Design Department, the Culture Department, the Secretariat Department, the Typesetting Department, the Handman Department, the Photography Department, the Copywriting Department and other departments, which can be grouped according to the type of work required to achieve full preparation; Set up a rating system for junior, intermediate and senior journalists of the college student reporter corps to encourage the rapid growth of student journalists; Invite front-line journalists and experts in the industry to carry out professional training on a regular basis, and go to brother colleges for exchange and study; Fully respect the intellectual property rights of the works, and attach the names of student journalists involved in the production of each issue at the end to stimulate their enthusiasm and creativity; To improve the incentive system, in addition to cash incentives, there should also be internal benefits, such as the production of university cultural and creative products that are only for free but not for sale.

Third, we should pay attention to making people use their feelings. "Generation Z" college students need to be recognized to reflect their value. They should focus on creating an emotional atmosphere

for the operation team, and regularly hold internal league building. For example, some WeChat official account teams in Chinese universities regularly hold cosplay parties and farewell parties, take graduation photos, organize teachers and students to have a hot pot dinner, and make team T-shirts and logos, so as to provide humanistic care for team members from various aspects, stimulate emotional resonance, and strengthen group belonging.

#### **4.5 Brand: Build a High-Quality Brand of Media Communication in Chinese Universities**

First, we need to focus on the preparation, promote the deep integration of the collection and editing teams, form the editorial committee meeting system and the central topic selection meeting system, and adopt the workflow of multi-point triggering, integrated planning, one-time collection, key compilation and distribution, interactive communication, and public opinion guidance to achieve the maximum synergy of the media operation team.

Second, we should revitalize resources and promote the in-depth integration of the communication matrix. Effectively integrate different media resources, maximize the functions of various media, and improve the communication effect by geometric progression. Some Chinese university financial media have set up more than 20 official communication matrices, including official websites, school newspapers, campus radio stations, campus TV stations, official WeChat official account, official microblogs, Tiktok, Kwai, Toutiao, B stations, Xiaohongshu, etc., to create a financial media communication matrix of "one network, one newspaper, two stations, two WeChat N-ends".

Third, innovate the mechanism, promote the deep integration of release modes, and realize the whole process planning, full media release, and full chain communication in the communication process of financial media works, so as to form a gradient three-dimensional release mode of "official media first release, college and department forwarding, multi platform distribution, and foreign media diffusion". Fourth, we should make more efforts to build a high-quality campus media communication brand, that is, to build a high-quality Chinese university media communication brand of "ideological communication, information communication, empathy communication, character communication, and cultural communication".

### **5. Conclusion**

The media and technological changes brought about by the Internet have enabled Chinese "Generation Z" college students to obtain new forms of expression and cultural status. The media needs of "Generation Z" college students are no longer divided and marginal, but more interactive, forming a new trend of networking, gaming and precocity. During their participation in the construction and interaction of the official WeChat official account platform of Chinese colleges and universities, they have accumulated the energy to constantly achieve "new breakthroughs", which has had an important impact on the campus culture of Chinese colleges and universities and the overall social culture of Chinese youth. However, the group of "Generation Z" college students has the problem of insufficient sense of reality and continuous differentiation (Wang Shuixiong&Zhou Jiteng, 2022). It is urgent to find the best balance between the "official media attribute" of the official WeChat official account platform of Chinese universities and the "youth attribute" of "Generation Z" college students in communication.

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