

# Strengthen Chinese Campus Media's Ability of International Communication

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## Abstract

**Chinese universities are a key part of national soft power and foreign cultural exchanges. In recent years, the Chinese universities have gradually gone abroad which had accumulated a certain degree of international influence. It is inevitable for them to enhance the power of international communication. As an important channel for the outside world to understand domestic universities, campus media should strengthen the international communication capabilities from the aspects of establishing awareness, clarifying positioning and goals, and constantly innovating communication strategies.**

## Keywords

**Communication Power; Campus Media; Universities; Internationalization.**

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, China's international status has been continuously improved while the economic strength has been continued to increase. Under the new international competition environment, China's national development strategy puts forward new requirements for the internationalization of higher education. The *National Medium and Long-term Educational Reform and Development Plan Outline (2010-2020)* proposes that higher education should facilitate cross-cultural exchanges which help students in China know more about different countries and cultures, letting other countries understand Chinese education at the same time. As a window for foreign cultural exchanges and an important part of the country's soft power, universities carry the important mission of enhancing China's international influence and the right to speak.

Communication power determines influence. There is still a big gap between China's international communication capabilities and Western countries. How to improve the media's international communication capabilities and shape a good international image of China has become a topic of widespread concern in academic circles and education management circles. Based on the international influence and communication power of universities in China, we start to analyze university's role in the construction of China's international communication capacity, and propose corresponding strategies for enhancing the international communication power of campus media.

## 2. International Influence and Communication Power

Many domestic universities in China have responded to the government's call to go abroad, and have begun to explore the mode of running schools overseas. At present, the overseas students that have officially enrolled are Soochow University in Laos (2011), Xiamen University Malaysia Branch (2016), Tsinghua University Global Innovation School (2015), Zhejiang University-Imperial College of Technology (2013), Tongji University Florence Campus (2014), Beijing Language and Culture University, Japan (2015), etc. According to the 2020 *World University Rankings* TOP100 list published in the British *Times Higher Education* magazine, there are 6 universities in Mainland China on the list. Peking University and Tsinghua University ranked

42nd and 47th respectively in 2015, and jumped to 22nd and 16th respectively by 2020. The international level of Peking University and Tsinghua University and their rankings all show an upward trend. Fudan University, Zhejiang University, Shanghai Jiaotong University and the University of Science and Technology in China are finally on the list. However, there is still much room for improvement in the international competitiveness and influence of China's higher education compared with world-class universities.

Strengthening the international communication power is of great significance for enhancing Chinese universities' international influence (Han SS and Zhong Z, 2014). According to the *Report on Overseas Network Communication Ability of Chinese Universities (2019)* released by Beijing Normal University, universities in mainland China have made certain progress in their overseas online communication capabilities. However, compared with universities in Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, the gap is still very obvious (Fang ZQ et al, 2016). To improve the Chinese universities' international communication power, we should give full play to the role of campus media. But the campus media in Chinese universities should firstly establish awareness and clarify the positioning and goals of international communication, then innovate in methods and strategies.

### 3. Establish Awareness

Campus media includes not only traditional media represented by newspapers, radio, television, and website, but also new media platforms such as Weibo and WeChat, which are mainly online social media. The awareness of news propaganda in domestic universities has increased in recent years. With the rapid development of new media, many universities have begun to try new social media such as Weibo and WeChat, and actively explore media fusion innovation. But at the same time, the international communication of campus media is still in a spontaneous and passive state. If China's higher education is going to the world, the top priority is to strengthen the campus media's awareness of international communication in Chinese universities (Fang ZQ et al, 2016).

While the Chinese government actively promotes the internationalization of higher education, international communication has become a strategic and overall task of universities in China which requires a global perspective, continuously strengthened overall awareness, and good explanations of Chinese universities and the well-educated people's stories. The Chinese dream reflects the values of teachers and students of contemporary Chinese universities, guides the international community to fully and objectively understand the Chinese youth elite group with a good image (Liu BQ, 2015). There are obvious cultural differences in news propagation between China and the West. Therefore, campus media should follow the rules of international communication to spread the development achievements of Chinese universities in the fields of teaching, scientific research and social services, so that the Western countries can know more about Chinese higher education circles, especially the unique contribution of Chinese universities to the development of human civilization.

### 4. Clarify the Positioning and Goals

A clear positioning and goals are the cornerstone of Chinese university's successful internationalization strategy, and a guarantee for strengthening its international communication capabilities. Campus media should serve the Chinese universities' positioning and goals of international communication and enhance their international influence by explaining the stories mainly from the aspects of academic exchanges and cultural communication.

First, it is necessary to present the active exploration and contributions made by Chinese universities in various disciplines, highlighting their discipline advantages and ability to serve the society. The academic influence of China's scientific research does not match the rapid growth of input and output. The campus media should increase the coverage of scientific research projects and academic achievements so as to enhance China's international academic influence. According to our previous research on the topic selection of news reports on the Chinese and English homepages of Chinese universities' websites, the proportion of teaching and research topics is increasing. For example, Tsinghua University, Peking University, Tianjin University and other universities have more than 20% of teaching and research news topics. The report shows that Chinese universities have significantly paid more and more attention on academic influence.

Second, the main purpose is to export Chinese traditional culture and values. As a window for external cultural communication, Chinese universities must fully reflect the cultural output function they undertake in international exchanges, with emphasis on Chinese language teaching and cultural and artistic exchanges. Campus media demonstrates the contributions made by Chinese universities in propagating Chinese culture, especially their achievements in overseas education and the construction of Confucius Institutes. It also demonstrates that Chinese universities are resolving the differences in thinking, value orientation and cultural background between China and the West while dispelling the one-sided understanding of Chinese culture by the international community. The Last but not least, it shows the achievements of Chinese universities in conveying true and comprehensive Chinese culture and obtaining fair discourse rights.

## 5. Strategic Analysis

Campus media has made many active explorations in improving the international communication capacity, but there are also some problems, such as the low degree of cultural integration of the content. At present, in order to enhance the international communication power, it is urgent to construct a grand scale of propagation, starting from many aspects such as quantity, speed, coverage and effect.

The first is to expand the propaganda channels and carriers. Strengthening the international communication capacity should not only make full use of traditional campus media, but also be good at leveraging on the international platform of domestic mainstream media, keeping up with the trend of new media such as social networks, and making a multi-faceted voice. The main carriers for the international communication of domestic universities now include propaganda albums, overseas versions of propaganda films, and the English version of the school homepage as a few universities have multilingual versions. In my opinion, due to the lack of sufficient attention from the leadership and the uneven abilities of the staff, the existing overseas promotional materials of Chinese universities often fail to meet the requirements of international communication. For example, the English homepages of Chinese universities, as the primary position for international communication, have shown an upward trend in overseas visits in recent years. From the perspective of improving communication capabilities, the Chinese universities should strengthen the screening and promotion of news content in the English homepage, and improve the relevant service modules from the function, so that foreign audiences can easily understand the recruitment and enrollment information (Cui WR,2014).

The channels and means of international communication are showing a trend of diversification, digitization and networking. Campus media should be good at channel innovation by expanding the media carries. While domestic mainstream medias make efforts to improve international communication capabilities, domestic universities should fully cooperate with mainstream

media's overseas platforms, such as China Daily Education Edition, Sina.com Education Edition, Xinhua News Agency, People's Daily, CCTV Global Times, to increase the coverage.

With the rapid development of new media such as social networking websites, domestic universities also can consider using overseas network communication platforms. According to *Report on Overseas Network Communication Power of Chinese Colleges and Universities (2019)*, the Google News search volume of the *211 Project* colleges and universities in China is small (Fang ZQ et al, 2016). The popularity of Wikipedia is high but the number of edits is low. None of the Twitter accounts and Facebook accounts is officially certified. Instagram usage is low. It is suggested that while paying attention to the building of domestic new media propaganda teams, domestic universities can also establish special teams for official operations of major foreign social medias such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Campus media should take promoting international communication as an important task of shaping the international image and expanding the international influence of the universities, and take social media as an important platform.

The second is to dig out core competitiveness. Strengthening the international communication capacity of campus media must be combined with the domestic universities' positioning and international propagation goals. In terms of content, it is necessary to integrate and tap the universities' core competitive advantages in international education, including discipline, language, geography, and culture. To highlight the advantages of disciplines, it is necessary to show the achievements of research and social service, and focus on the universities' achievements in the internationalization of scientific research, such as the publication of international high-level journals, international cooperation projects or the publication of papers at international conferences. The English homepages of some domestic *211 Project* colleges and universities, such as Shanghai Jiaotong University, Fudan University, etc., have published the scientific research achievements of researchers with international influence in the key visual area, demonstrating their discipline scientific research advantages.

Besides, the domestic universities should propagate its contribution in spreading the advantages of Chinese traditional culture, such as Sino-foreign cooperation in running schools, international cultural exchanges, Confucius Institutes, Chinese teaching, etc. On the other hand, the domestic universities should show their long history and uniqueness of campus culture, which is very important to improve their recognition. In order to build an education brand with international influence (Qian YF, 2015), the domestic universities' international communication needs to be more in-depth and more targeted, which focusing on the innovation of the universities' teaching mode and the internationalization of teaching concepts, such as foreign students studying in Chinese universities and foreign teachers coming to teach in Chinese universities, etc.

The third is to innovate the discourse system towards the Western countries. The government affects the news propaganda of domestic universities. There are often authoritative discourses in expressions. However, as Western audiences are completely in a different cultural environment, they often cannot understand news reports that are translated from Chinese. This requires campus media to first innovate the discourse system towards the Western countries so as to improve the international communication capabilities. To facilitate the western audiences' understanding, the campus media should transform the rigorous, formal and standardized news into vivid and concise stories, and do a good job in the discourse conversion of the Chinese text (Yi YG, 2015).

To strengthen the campus media's international communication capacity, the domestic universities should not only spread the news abroad, but also learn how to tell stories, which can build the Chinese universities' international image in a three-dimensional manner. In addition to *learning to tell stories*, the international communication of campus media should be

closer to teachers and students in terms of topic setting. The English homepage of Tsinghua University has a daily special report format covering teaching and research, campus figures, student club activities, etc., so that foreign audiences can have a more comprehensive understanding of events happening on Tsinghua campus. The author believes that its experience is worth learning.

## 6. Conclusion

In summary, strengthening the campus media's international communication capabilities is of great practical significance for enhancing China's international image and international influence. However, since this topic is still at the stage of conceptual discussion and lack of practical examples, it is still impossible to conduct an in-depth analysis of the classic cases of enhancing the international communication power of domestic campus media to obtain more meaningful strategic suggestions. I hope that more domestic scholars and college journalism practitioners will pay attention to this research field and provide more educational research ideas and related cases in the future.

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