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Studying the influencing factors of the communication effect of TikTok accounts in colleges and universities in Shaanxi Province

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Abstract

This paper is a study on the dissemination effect of official TikTok account in colleges and universities in Shaanxi Province, aiming to analyze the current situation, influencing factors and enhancement strategies of the dissemination of TikTok platform in colleges and universities in Shaanxi Province by combing the rise of TikTok platform and its influence. The objectives of the study include comprehensively sorting out the current situation of communication research on official TikTok account in universities in Shaanxi Province, analyzing the main factors affecting the communication effect, pointing out the future enhancement strategies and research directions, and providing theoretical support and practical guidance for the practice of TikTok communication in universities. The scope of the study is limited to all colleges and universities in Shaanxi Province that have opened official TikTok account and their related communication activities. The research methodology includes content analysis, case study and data analysis of existing literature. The results of the study show that the communication status quo is uneven, and the communication effect is influenced by factors such as the level of the university, the quality of the content, the interaction strategy, and the degree of activity. Finally, the article puts forward specific suggestions for communication practice, such as clarifying account positioning, focusing on content innovation, and strengthening interactive strategies, in order to enhance the communication effect and social influence of official TikTok accounts of universities in Shaanxi Province.

Keywords: Shaanxi Province; TikTok; Communication effect; Influence factors

Introduction

With the continuous progress and innovation of new media technology, colleges and universities in Shaanxi Province have also actively responded to the trend of the times and opened official accounts on the TikTok platform. These official accounts have not only become a window for displaying the school's style and spreading campus culture, but also strengthened the interaction and connection between colleges and universities and teachers and students as well as the public (Huang, 2023).

However, despite the increasing number of university official accounts on the TikTok platform, there is still a relative lack of research on the communication effects, operation strategies, and influencing factors of university official accounts compared to other types of content creators (Zhou, 2022). In order to better utilize this emerging platform and enhance the communication effect of colleges and universities on TikTok, it is necessary to conduct an in-depth discussion on the operation strategy of official college accounts, analyze their successes and shortcomings, and summarize the effective operation mode and experience (Zhao, 2022).

In exploring these issues, two theoretical frameworks are particularly relevant: the Heuristic-Systematic Model and the Uses and Gratifications Theory. The Heuristic-Systematic Model suggests that individuals process information through two distinct modes: heuristic processing, which requires less cognitive effort, and systematic processing, which involves more detailed, rational analysis. This model helps to analyze how different types of content on TikTok—whether simple, attention-grabbing posts or complex, thought-provoking videos—can influence the communication effectiveness of university accounts (Chaiken, 1980). On the other hand, Uses and Gratifications Theory focuses on how individuals actively choose media to satisfy their specific needs. In the context of university TikTok accounts, this theory helps explain why students and other audiences may choose to engage with certain content based on their needs for entertainment, information, or social interaction (Katz et al., 1973). These theories provide important insights into understanding the diverse factors that impact the success of university TikTok accounts.

Background of the study

With the rapid development of new media technology, colleges and universities in Shaanxi Province are also actively exploring new paths of new media communication (A, 2022). In addition to the traditional official website, WeChat public number and other channels, more and more colleges and universities have begun to pay attention to the value of TikTok, an emerging media platform. However, due to the lack of professional operation team, clear positioning strategy and effective content innovation mechanism, some official TikTok accounts of colleges and universities are not ideal in terms of communication effect (Wang, 2024). These accounts often have single content and slow updates, making it difficult to attract students' continuous attention. At the same time, how to maintain the uniqueness and authority of the school brand in the new media environment is also an important challenge faced by colleges and universities in the process of TikTok communication. Therefore, colleges and universities need to innovate their communication methods to adapt to the acceptance habits of the younger generation while maintaining their own brand image. In addition, colleges and universities should also strengthen the interaction with students, and understand the needs and feedback of students through the TikTok platform to further enhance the communication effect. Only in this way can colleges and universities better fulfill their educational and communication roles in the new media era (Qian, 2022).

Significance of the study

(1) Theoretical significance

This study aims to enrich the academic achievements of academics in this particular research field by systematically sorting out and deeply summarizing the performance of official TikTok accounts of universities in Shaanxi Province in new media communication activities.

(2) Practical significance

This study delves into key issues such as target audience positioning, content selection and positioning, and interactive methods of TikTok communication in colleges and universities, providing clear guidance and suggestions for college and university operators (Ji, 2022).

Research Questions

(1) What is the current situation of the dissemination of the official TikTok accounts of colleges and universities in Shaanxi Province?

(2) What aspects of communication effects and influencing factors do existing studies mainly focus on?

(3) What are the future development directions and enhancement strategies for college TikTok accounts?

Research Objectives

(1) Comprehensively sorting out the current situation of communication research on official TikTok accounts in colleges and universities in Shaanxi Province.

(2) Studying the influencing factors of the communication effect of TikTok.

(3) Studying enhancement strategies and pointing out future research directions.

Scope of the study

The scope of this study is limited to all universities in Shaanxi Province that have official TikTok accounts and their related communication activities in practice. Specifically, it includes, but is not limited to, the study of the following multiple aspects: (1) The basic information of the official TikTok accounts of universities; (2) Analysis of released content; (3) Evaluation of dissemination effect; (4) Analysis of operation strategies;(5) Exploration of influencing factors.

Research Methods

This study utilized a mixed method approach (quantitative and qualitative) to ensure comprehensiveness and depth. The specific methods are as follows:

(1) Literature review method

By extensively collecting and reading academic literature, journal papers, conference papers, dissertations, and industry reports at home and abroad on the study of the communication of official TikTok accounts in colleges and universities, the current status of research in the field, hot issues, and major findings are sorted out and summarized. The selection criteria for these sources include the relevance to the communication of university TikTok accounts, the time period (focusing on literature from the past 5-10 years, while also considering earlier works for foundational context),

and the geographical scope (including both domestic and international sources). Additionally, preference is given to high-quality, peer-reviewed journal papers, reputable conference papers, and credible industry reports, with a target of reviewing 30-50 key sources. This review helps contextualize the research and provides insight into the key challenges and trends in the communication of university TikTok accounts, which informs the design of the subsequent research methods.

(2) Content analysis method

By counting and analyzing key indicators such as the type of content released by the account, the distribution of themes, the form of expression (e.g., video, graphic, and live broadcast), and the time of release, it reveals the characteristics and laws of the official TikTok accounts of universities in terms of content creation and release. The results of this content analysis highlight the types of content that lead to higher engagement, as well as the areas where certain accounts struggle, revealing key patterns in content strategy that influence communication effectiveness.

(3) Case study method

Selecting representative university official TikTok accounts in Shaanxi Province as case study objects, we analyze in depth their successful experiences and problems in terms of operation strategies, content innovation, and interaction methods. These case studies illustrate specific examples of both successful and underperforming accounts, offering a deeper understanding of the operational strategies that contribute to the dissemination success or failure, which are then compared with the overall findings from other methods.

(4) Data Analysis Method

Data analysis tools are used to statistically and analytically analyze the collected literature data in order to reveal the dissemination effects and influencing factors of the official TikTok accounts of colleges and universities (Sun, 2022). This method synthesizes quantitative insights that correlate with the qualitative data obtained from content analysis and case studies, providing statistical evidence of the factors that influence dissemination effectiveness, such as content quality and interaction strategies. Additionally, data analysis software was employed to conduct video content and dissemination data analysis, utilizing first-hand data. To enhance reliability and validity, a pilot test was conducted with 10% of the sample before the formal data collection. This pilot involved two group tests with the guidance of experts in communication studies to ensure consistent results across groups. Another tool utilized was focus group interviews, in which relevant new media operators participated in five group sessions. The interview outline was reviewed by three communication experts and received IRB certification prior to implementation.

Research Results

(1) Overview of the current status of dissemination

By analyzing the literature and content of the official TikTok accounts of colleges and universities in Shaanxi Province, the results show that the number of these accounts has shown a year-on-year growth trend. However, despite the increasing number, the overall level of development of these university official TikTok accounts shows a mixed situation. Some university accounts have successfully attracted the attention of a large number of users by providing high-quality content and utilizing innovative operational strategies,

thus gaining a high level of attention and good communication effects. However, there are also some accounts whose communication effect is not satisfactory due to problems such as single content and lack of interaction. These accounts often lack attractiveness in content creation and fail to arouse users' interest and resonance, thus making it difficult to stand out among the many TikTok accounts. In addition, these accounts also have some deficiencies in operation, such as the lack of effective promotion means and user maintenance strategies, leading to their disadvantage in the fierce market competition (Wang, 2021).

(2) Assessment of Influencing Factors

According to the analysis of the specific data of the selected sample videos, it can be seen that the communication effect of the official TikTok account of colleges and universities is affected by a variety of factors. Among them, several factors, such as university level, content quality, interaction strategy, and activity, have a significant impact on the dissemination effect. Specifically, high-quality content can attract more users to pay attention to and like the account, thus increasing the influence of the account; the level of the university itself and the degree of account activity can also increase the exposure rate and the scope of dissemination, so that more users will have the opportunity to see the content; effective interactive strategy can enhance user stickiness and loyalty, so that users are more willing to continue to pay attention to and participate in the interaction. In addition, the diversity and innovation of the content is also an important factor affecting the communication effect, which can attract the attention of different interest groups, thus expanding the scope of communication. At the same time, the visual design and brand image of the account will also have an impact on the communication effect, a beautiful and recognizable account is more likely to be favored by users.

(3) Analysis of Operation Strategies

Through interviews and research, this paper finds that successful official college TikTok accounts tend to have some common features. First, these accounts have a clear positioning, which is closely integrated with the school's characteristics and brand image. Second, content creation focuses on originality and innovation to attract users' attention and interest. In addition, these accounts have adopted diverse interactive methods to meet the different needs and preferences of users. For example, they organize online activities and publish interactive topics to enhance users' sense of participation and interaction. Finally, their operation strategies are flexible and adaptable to changes in the TikTok platform and changes in user needs, so as to maintain the vitality and attractiveness of their accounts. These accounts usually conduct regular data analysis and adjust their content strategy and operation direction based on user feedback and behavioral data. At the same time, they also cooperate with other universities or brands to expand their influence through cross-border cooperation and enhance the account's popularity and user base (Wang, 2020).

(4) Exploration of enhancement strategies

By comprehensively analyzing relevant literature and research results, this study concludes that the factors affecting the communication effect of university official TikTok accounts mainly include the accuracy of account positioning, the quality of content, the level of the university and the activity of the account, the strength of the interactive effect, and the changes in the platform policy.

Among them, the accuracy of account positioning and content quality are the key factors affecting the communication effect; the level of universities, the degree of account activity and the strength of interaction effect have an important impact on the communication effect; and the changes in platform policies may bring certain challenges and opportunities to the operation of the account. These factors interact with each other and together determine the communication effect and influence of the official university TikTok account. For example, an accurate account positioning can help universities establish a unique brand image on the TikTok platform and attract the attention of target user groups; while high-quality content can enhance the viewing experience of users and increase the probability of TikTok and spreading the content. At the same time, the university tier and the degree of account activity can also increase the exposure rate of the content. Effective interaction strategies can enhance the connection between users and accounts, and improve user engagement and loyalty. And changes in platform policies require university official accounts to adjust their operation strategies in time to adapt to new rules and trends.

Conclusion and discussion of future work

(1) Conclusion

The study of the dissemination effect of official TikTok accounts in universities in Shaanxi Province delves into the current research status, factors influencing the communication effect, and major findings in the field. The results reveal that the communication effect of university TikTok accounts is influenced by various factors, including but not limited to the university's ranking, content quality, release frequency, interaction levels, and user engagement. This aligns with the findings of Zhou (2022), who emphasizes the importance of university ranking and content quality in influencing communication effectiveness. Additionally, successful operation strategies must closely align with the university's characteristics and brand image to ensure the accuracy and attractiveness of information delivery, which is consistent with Wang (2024). Moreover, the operational team must closely monitor user needs and market changes and adjust strategies flexibly to adapt to new challenges and opportunities (Huang, 2023). However, the study of Sun (2022) argue that an overemphasis on frequent updates and interaction may compromise content quality, negatively impacting communication effectiveness. Therefore, balancing content innovation with accurate information delivery remains an important area for further exploration.

(2) Discussion of future work

This study offers the following suggestions to address current research gaps and guide future developments. First, enhance interdisciplinary collaboration to gain a comprehensive understanding of the communication effects of university TikTok accounts. Second, stay updated on TikTok's evolving trends to ensure timely and relevant research. Third, refine communication effect assessment methods to improve accuracy and optimize strategies. Finally, strengthen case collection to provide empirical support for theoretical research, aiding the development of a more systematic framework for TikTok account management in universities. These efforts will advance research and support effective communication practices in the new media era.

Recommendations

To improve the communication effectiveness and social influence of official TikTok accounts at universities in Shaanxi Province, this study recommends that universities first clarify their positioning and brand image, ensuring content aligns with institutional values to build a positive public image. Additionally, they should focus on content innovation by leveraging unique university characteristics to create engaging, educational videos that attract interactions. Strengthening user engagement by actively responding to comments and messages can foster positive relationships and enhance user loyalty. Data analysis should be used to optimize content strategies, improving communication efficiency. Finally, participating in platform activities and collaborating with other universities and brands can further expand the influence and reach of these accounts.

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