

# The Realistic Dilemma and Path Choice of Cultural and Creative Development on College Campus

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**Abstract:** Campus cultural and creative products are not only an important carrier of campus culture and image communication, but also carry out the connotation of campus culture communication with other universities and cities. A small number of well-known colleges and universities can bring their own Intellectual Property (IP) because of their popularity. As for ordinary schools how to enhance the "cultural output" and commercialization by virtue of their own cultural and creative products is an urgent problem. The successful practice of commercialization of the Forbidden City IP can provide useful reference. The study innovatively puts forward the idea of "new cultural creation" to empower traditional cultural creation, focusing on the core of cultural and creative IP construction, improving the cycle of cultural creation product chain to stimulate the endogenous power. It is a good choice of path to promote the development of cultural creation in colleges and universities by relying on regional cultural industries, with strong basic support from schools and support from the government to promote the regionalization of campus linkage.

## 1. Introduction

Since the 21st century, almost every college or university has more or less emerged with cultural and creative products with its own elements, loved by students and alumni. There is a sizable potential market for cultural and creative products in colleges and universities. However, it can not be ignored that most of the university cultural and creative products received low attention and limited profits due to the lack of distinction and recognition in category and creativity as well as modern marketing and communication means. On the other hand, in foreign countries and Taiwan, there is a very mature cultural and creative development model for colleges and universities, and the products have formed a mature commercial operation from positioning, design, production to publicity and sales. Therefore, it is of great practical significance to explore the path of cultural and creative development in colleges and universities.

## 2. The reality of the dilemma of cultural creation on college campuses

### 2.1. Serious convergence of product design ideas

At present, Most of the design and research and development of college are based on the school logo as the carrier, simply combined with other elements, which lacks personality and innovation. Even if there is innovation, most of them are only micro-improvements in appearance. The homogenized design and appearance make consumers aesthetically fatigued, and some surveys show that the purchase rate of campus cultural and creative products, especially the repurchase rate, is not high<sup>[1]</sup>. This shows that the existing campus cultural and creative products do not make good use of the unique cultural resources and university IP of the campus, and the perennial solidified product style cannot arouse people's expectations for cultural and creative products. Excellent cultural and creative products are not only designed to give consumers a strong sensory and psychological impact, but also to meet consumers' needs for aesthetics, product function experience, and rich spiritual and cultural connotation.

## **2.2. Uneven development of the various segments of the product chain**

Product design and development, production, sales, and after-sales service is a complete product chain, and at present, the development of most campus cultural and creative industries in this chain is uneven. The product design of colleges and universities has been widely emphasized, and the product categories are gradually enriched, but the production and marketing links are relatively weak. From the perspective of production, many cultural and creative products are often designed from platforms like Taobao to find some small factories for OEM production, and the quality of production is difficult to ensure and the cost is high. From the point of view of sales, it is a common phenomenon to use both online and offline channels to sell. However, only selling products in offline cultural and creative stores or passive sales in Taobao stores lacks active, systematic and sustainable promotion, resulting in low attention to products and unable to attract target users.

## **2.3. Insufficient attention from school authorities**

Colleges and universities are the soil for the initial germination and development of campus culture and creativity, and the attention and participation of the university authorities is the key force for the growth of culture and creativity. These weak studios are the sprout of the development of college culture and creativity which need strong support from the university if they want to be bigger and stronger. However, most of the colleges and universities do not pay attention to its development and leave it to fend for itself. Lacking support from universities in terms of policy, funding and management, these studios do not have a long lifespan, and there are few representative cultural and creative companies with a sizable scale and continuous operation. After graduation, there is no good intergenerational inheritance, and the studios set up by students are just standing still, unable to operate commercially on a sustainable basis, and unable to go out of the campus to participate in the broader market competition.

In summary, compared with the flourishing cultural and creative practices in the fields of others, the cultural and creative practices of colleges and universities, which are rich in high-quality talents and historical and cultural precipitates, are far behind their overall strengths in terms of development.

## **3. Empowering traditional cultural and creative development with "new cultural and creative" ideas**

The new cultural creation is a cultural production method centered on IP construction. The concept of the new cultural creation is a solution to the problem<sup>[2]</sup>. This concept gives a good idea to solve the current dilemma faced by the university cultural creation. Wider subject linkage implies the synergistic interaction of designers, producers, sellers and consumers, and the support of schools, local governments, local cultural industries and other related forces can make the looser design, production, sales and users in traditional university cultural creativity become closer, which will help the construction of high-quality IP of university cultural creativity and sustainable commercialization. Combined with the idea of new cultural creation, the study innovatively puts forward the following path model for the development of college cultural creation:

### **3.1. Improvement of the cultural and creative product chain to stimulate endogenous momentum**

The complete product chain of college campus cultural and creative mainly includes four key links: product users, product design, product branding and product sales.

#### **3.1.1. Based on the user profile and clear product positioning**

User profiling is an effective tool for outlining target users and linking user requirements to design direction. Each specific information of the user is abstracted into labels, and these labels are used to materialize the user image, so as to provide targeted services for the user.

There are two main categories of main users of campus literature and creativity, one of which is the large number of school students. The number of students enrolled in colleges and universities

has reached 38,293,680, including graduate students, general undergraduates, and vocational undergraduates<sup>[3]</sup>. The gathering of such a large number of people in a limited space means that the development of cultural and creative industries in colleges and universities has some inherent advantages.

The other category is graduating alumni, domestic and foreign small, medium and high school student visiting groups. The number of such consumers is not large, but the social influence is broader, so it is also a group that cannot be ignored. College students are more exploratory in their behavior and more focused on cultural consumption, which is reflected in the fun and cultural expression of the products in the design of cultural and creative products<sup>[4]</sup>. For the second group of consumers, on the basis of ensuring the fun and cultural expression of the products, more attention should be paid to deepening the emotional connection and highlighting the personality. Only with these design elements can a cultural and creative product create an instant peak experience for users, thus generating positive purchasing behavior.

### **3.1.2. Cross-boundary derivative design of high-value cultural and creative products**

From the previous discussion, it can be seen that the serious homogenization design of college cultural and creative products not only affects the user's sense of experience, but more importantly, does not reflect its due value. Therefore, each university needs to dig deep into its own cultural history, carry out cultural archaeological interpretation and innovation, carry out targeted, compartmentalized cultural grooming and genetic kernel extraction, and combine university culture and creativity with clothing, food, tourism, and entertainment to carry out secondary cross-border derivation.

### **3.1.3. Build a cultural and creative brand by drawing on the commercialization practice of the Forbidden City IP**

Since the Palace Museum started the Palace Super IP program in 2013, it has become a well-deserved big IP in the field of traditional culture in China. In 2019, the revenue obtained by the Palace through IP construction reached 1.5 billion yuan, a figure that exceeded that of more than 1,500 A-share listed companies in the same year. The cultural creation of the Palace Museum has not only led to the development of the museum's cultural creation, but its practice can provide a useful reference for the creation of cultural creation brands in universities. The Palace Museum carries out the creation of cultural and creative brands through two forms.

First, independent design but Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) production. The Forbidden City has the top aesthetic heritage in China, appealing excellent designers from universities and enterprises to design products for it. Contact manufacturers with excellent quality control for its OEM production when the entire copyright of its products belongs to the Palace. This is also known as the OEM model. In this model, the IP of the Palace Museum's cultural creations is not externalized, and remains preserved in its own hands. This model can prompt the Palace Museum to put a lot of energy on the product, coordinating the design and functionality while the right to choose the foundry is also held by it the quality of the product can be guaranteed. Under this model, the Palace Museum has repeatedly produced fine products.

Secondly, IP licensing on a regular or permanent basis. The Palace Museum as a quality IP in the field of traditional culture can not be surpassed by any domestic museum industry. No matter what products, as long as labeled as "produced by the Palace Museum", will be able to attract a large number of consumers. As a result, many enterprises have begun authorized cooperation with the Palace Museum and its multiple operating entities. The Palace Cultural and Creative Enterprises will authorize original photography, drawing and other works to brands. They can find elements that fit with their own business philosophy, corporate culture, and product core, sublimate the theme of the series of products, and increase the added value of the products, during which the Palace Museum will no longer claim any rights to the IP. In recent years, the Palace Museum has carried out a series of licensing projects, such as Herborist Taiji Dan, Forbidden City furniture, Xiaomi MIX3 cell phone special edition of the Forbidden City, the Forbidden City beauty masks, all of which have achieved good sales and reputation. It reflects the strong market appeal of the Forbidden

City IP.

### **3.1.4. Use content marketing to spread the university cultural and creative IP**

Although there is a traditional target user group for cultural and creative products in colleges and universities, it is not enough to rely on offline campus stores, online stores and other displays to get out of the campus and make it known by a wider group of people. The success of many high-quality cultural and creative IP shows that, in the era of consumer upgrading and web traffic dominating, an excellent cultural and creative product not only needs to have a characteristic appearance and creativity, but also needs to attract the audience and improve the conversion rate by creating and sharing valuable and free content, and utilizing the huge communication capacity of online media and content platforms, and using text, pictures, videos as the medium of communication to carry out integrated communication. This is in line with the fact that the audience of cultural and creative products tends to be younger and more dependent on new media. Practice has proved many times that excellent content can bring explosive traffic for customer acquisition in the enterprise market at a low enough cost. Compared with the ubiquitous crude advertisements, content marketing is easier for users to accept. Content marketing content is mainly distributed through content community platforms.

### **3.2. Schools provide strong basic support**

At present, university student teams are the main force in the creation, design and operation of cultural and creative products, with little participation from the university. As an important link in the cultural and creative industry chain, colleges and universities should provide strong support for the cultivation of cultural and creative forces, the exploration of cultural and creative academics, and the development of cultural and creative industries<sup>[5]</sup>. First, relevant departments and organizations should be established to lead the development of cultural and creative industries. For example, starting from Tsinghua University's Center for Cultural and Creative Industries in 2004, Tsinghua University has established the Tsinghua University Art Museum, Tsinghua University Education Foundation "Tsinghua Impression", Tsinghua University Basic Industrial Training Center, Tsinghua University School of Economics and Management MBA Students' Club for Cultural and Creative Industries, and other organizations and entrepreneurial groups to provide support for the development of cultural and creative industries. These organizations provide a strong platform for the development of cultural and creative industries<sup>[6]</sup>. With these organizations in the lead, we focus on creating cultural activities that can radiate to all students, such as campus carnivals, important campus festivals, campus cultural and creative competitions, and making use of these activities to promote the development of cultural and creative industries. Secondly, the school introduces a professional cultural and creative operation team. The intervention of professional operation team can provide professional services in product design and development, branding, production and sales, which can improve the operation ability of university cultural and creative products and facilitate the construction of university cultural and creative IP. This shows that colleges and universities should pay attention to and actively participate in the guidance from the aspects of policy, funding and organization, and only in this way can a benign and sustainable development be formed.

### **3.3. The Government supports the promotion of regional campus linkage**

Cultural creation is a highly concentrated field of knowledge creation. The theory of knowledge spillover shows that knowledge has chain effect, imitation effect and exchange effect. The radiation range of a single university is limited, and university clusters are conducive to concentrating the cultural resources of each university. Putting the resources of universities on the same cultural and creative platform can better stimulate the potential re-creative ability of universities. Government authorities step in to organize inter-school exchange activities in the region, relying on inter-school exchange activities to launch some large-scale creative competitions, cultural and creative exchange fairs, festivals, and works exhibitions. High-level schools will play a leading role in driving a number of universities in the region to develop campus cultural resources and improve students'

sense of belonging to their Alma mater. The "Night of the Forbidden City on the New Year's Eve" cultural activity jointly organized by the Propaganda Department of the CPC Beijing Municipal Committee and the Palace Museum during the 2019 Lantern Festival is a typical representative of the government providing stages for cultural and creative IP that is worth learning from. In order to integrate the cultural and creative resources of colleges and universities, to carry out organized innovation and entrepreneurship, and to promote the effective connection and integrated development of the innovation chain, industrial chain and talent chain, some regions have shown signs of cultural and creative development and linkage of colleges and universities in the region. In 2019, Tsinghua University and other domestic and foreign universities jointly established the International Creative Management Committee to promote the development of China's creative management. In 2023, the Jilin Province's College Innovation and Entrepreneurship (Cultural and Creative Category) Alliance was officially launched, and the members of the alliance now cover 92 colleges in 59 colleges and universities across the province<sup>[7]</sup>. The common linkage of many colleges and universities has made the vein of Chinese college culture and creativity clearer and stronger. This is also a better new path for win-win cooperation and integrated development of culture and creativity in colleges and universities.

#### 4. Promotion of cultural and creative industries based on regional cultural industries

The intention of the cultural and creative industry to develop significantly is inevitably based on a well-developed cultural industry. Whether it is a campus cultural and creative industry or a tourism cultural and creative industry, the backdrop is the comprehensive cultural environment of a region. From this point of view, the campus cultural and creative industry and the tourism industry that has been vigorously developed in some regions go in the same direction. As non-profit social and cultural public service organizations, the development of museums and public libraries can be a good reflection of the objective face of a region's cultural undertakings. Take the museum industry in Heilongjiang Province, which ranks 19th in the 2019 China Culture Industry Development Index and Culture Consumption Index Report, as an example:

Table 1 Main data of the museum industry in Heilongjiang Province.

| Number Year         | 2022 | 2021    | 2020    | 2019    | 2018    | 2017    | 2016    |
|---------------------|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| Museum Institutions |      | 177     | 191     | 193     | 191     | 183     | 176     |
| Museum employees    |      | 2872    | 2743    | 2668    | 2691    | 2893    | 2867    |
| Museum visits(10k)  |      | 1087.76 | 2675.36 | 2217.89 | 2144.40 | 2331.64 | 2201.42 |

(Source: National Statistical Office)

Table 2 Key data on the national museum sector.

| Number Year         | 2022 | 2021     | 2020     | 2019      | 2018      | 2017     | 2016     |
|---------------------|------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Museum Institutions | 6091 | 5772     | 5452     | 5132      | 4918      | 4721     | 4109     |
| Museum employees    |      | 125704   | 118913   | 107993    | 107506    | 105079   | 93431    |
| Museum visits(10k)  |      | 74850.45 | 52652.35 | 112225.16 | 104403.58 | 97172.15 | 85061.03 |

(Source: National Statistical Office)

The number of museums in Heilongjiang shows a steady upward trend from 2016 to 2019 with an increase of 10% or less. The number of museum employees is basically flat in 2016-2021. The number of visits in 2016-2019 grows by about 7.5%. Due to the New Crown Epidemic, the public sector data in 2020 does not have a reference value (see Table 1). In contrast, the national museum industry has made steady progress from 2016-2019, with the number of museum institutions rising by about 25%, which is about 2.5 times higher than that of Heilongjiang Province. The number of museum employees rising by 34.5% (2016-2021) and the number of visits to museums nationwide

rising even more by 32% (2016-2019), which is 4.3 times higher than that of Heilongjiang Province (see Table 2).

As can be seen from the table above, compared with the overall situation in the country, the backwardness of cultural industry in Heilongjiang can be seen from the museum industry. When the cultural industry is weakly developed, the connotation of cultural and creative products is generally thin, which is an urgent problem to be solved in order to create a pillar cultural and creative IP. To develop a good cultural entrepreneurship, we must develop the relevant cultural undertakings, the government should do a good job of cultural and educational propaganda, vigorously develop the development of media, libraries, museums, paper media industry, the formation of the cultural industry, production and marketing to promote each other. As far as Heilongjiang is concerned, it is currently a better choice to integrate the development and operation of college cultural and creative products into brand activities such as the Harbin Cultural and Creative Fair, the Harbin Summer Concert, and the Ice and Snow Festival, and build a college cultural and creative brand with regional characteristics.

## 5. Conclusion

Creative culture in colleges and universities is a product of brand extension of colleges and universities, and is an effective tool to improve the visibility and reputation of a large number of ordinary colleges and universities. Creative culture on college campuses needs to be developed with the idea of "new cultural creation", so as to form a good ecosystem with the construction of creative IP as the core, a complete product chain as the foundation, and a diversified external support force. The university should give due attention and support to create a unified campus cultural and creative support platform. If a single campus operates independently and there is no communication between campuses, it is bound to be affected by IP dilution, and it is difficult to make a complete industrial chain for campus cultural and creative industries. Starting from regional campus cultural creativity, cultivating a group of incubation enterprises, integrating cultural resources of each school, and forming a comprehensive industrial chain from design company to producer, to sales end and then to communication platform, is the ideal development path for campus cultural creativity industry. When conditions are sufficient, campus culture and creativity will radiate with enterprise culture and creativity and regional tourism culture and creativity, obtaining the agglomeration benefit of regional culture and creativity industry chain.

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