



Social Media as a Catalyst Among Student Organizations in a Selected University in China

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Abstract: This paper presents a study that explores the role of social media as a catalyst among student organizations at Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SDUTCM) in China. The research objectives are to examine the current landscape of student organizations, assess social media usage patterns, investigate the impact of social media on student engagement, identify challenges and opportunities, explore student perceptions and experiences, develop best practices and recommendations, and contribute to the broader understanding of social media in higher education. The research reveals a positive correlation between higher frequency of social media usage and increased student engagement in organization activities. This suggests that social media can serve as a catalyst for engagement within the unique academic context of SDUTCM. The study provides valuable insights into the relationship between social media and student organizations, contributing to the improvement of student engagement, organization efficiency, and the understanding of social media's role in higher education. It also highlights the university's progressive approach in leveraging technology for educational and organizational advancement while promoting responsible social media use. The findings have international relevance and can benefit universities and student organizations worldwide.

Keywords: social media, student organizations, engagement, higher education, China

I. Introduction

In recent years, social media has emerged as a powerful tool for communication, collaboration, and engagement in various domains, including higher education. Traditional universities are increasingly recognizing the potential of social media platforms to enhance student involvement and foster a vibrant campus environment^[1]. Within the context of student organizations, social media holds particular promise as a catalyst for increased engagement and effective communication among members.

In China, where traditional values and modern technology are often intertwined, there is a growing interest in exploring the role of social media within the higher education landscape. Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SDUTCM) stands as a prominent institution known for its commitment to traditional Chinese medicine education and research. Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SDUTCM) is a renowned institution in the field of traditional Chinese medicine education and research in China. Established in 1958, it has been recognized as a key institution for the development of TCM education nationwide and as a key higher education institution within Shandong Province. The university has a strong commitment to academic excellence, as demonstrated by its outstanding undergraduate teaching and collaborative partnerships with governmental bodies. SDUTCM is known for its applied foundational talents and has been acknowledged as a provincial-level civilized campus. It offers a wide range of academic disciplines and is authorized to confer master's and doctoral degrees. Additionally, the university plays a leading role in research, being the first unit to undertake projects under the prestigious National Basic Research Program. As such, it presents a unique setting to investigate the impact of social media on student organizations within the framework of traditional Chinese medicine education.

While there is existing literature on the influence of social media on student engagement and organization dynamics in Western higher education contexts, there is a dearth of research specific to Chinese universities, particularly in the field of traditional Chinese medicine. Understanding the role of social media as a catalyst among student organizations in a selected university in China will contribute to the broader understanding of social media's impact on higher education in a unique cultural context.

By focusing the research area, this study aims to uncover the current landscape of student organizations at SDUTCM, assess social media usage patterns, and investigate the impact of social media on student engagement and organization dynamics. The findings of this study will not only contribute to the existing body of knowledge on social media in higher education but also provide practical recommendations and best practices for student organizations at SDUTCM and potentially other universities in China. Furthermore, the research will shed light on the unique context of traditional Chinese medicine education and its interaction with social media, thereby enriching the understanding of technology's role in this specific field.

II. Research Objectives

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The research objectives of this study are designed to comprehensively investigate the role of social media as a catalyst among student organizations at Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SDUTCM). The following research objectives are outlined:

To Examine the Current Landscape of Student Organizations: This study aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the existing student organizations at SDUTCM, categorizing them by type, size, and focus areas.

To Assess Social Media Usage Patterns: The primary objective is to understand how student organizations at SDUTCM currently utilize social media platforms. This includes identifying which social media platforms are most commonly used, the frequency of usage, and the purposes for which they are employed.

To Investigate the Impact of Social Media on Student Engagement: This research seeks to evaluate the influence of social media on student engagement within student organizations. It aims to measure how social media affects member participation, recruitment efforts, and overall engagement levels.

To Identify Challenges and Opportunities: This study will identify and analyze the challenges and opportunities that student organizations encounter when using social media. It will examine issues such as privacy concerns, content management, and harnessing the potential of social media for organizational growth.

To Explore Student Perceptions and Experiences: Through surveys and interviews with students involved in these organizations, this research will delve into student attitudes and experiences regarding social media use in the context of their respective organizations.

To Develop Best Practices and Recommendations: Building upon the findings, the study aims to formulate a set of best practices and recommendations tailored to enhance the effective utilization of social media by student organizations at SDUTCM.

To Contribute to the Broader Understanding of Social Media in Higher Education: Finally, this research seeks to contribute to the broader academic discourse by shedding light on the role of social media as a catalyst in student organizations within the unique context of traditional Chinese medicine education in China.

Through these research objectives, this study aspires to offer valuable insights into the relationship between social media and student organizations at SDUTCM, benefiting not only the university community but also providing a valuable perspective for similar institutions in China and around the world.

II. Literature Review

Social media has become an integral part of modern society, transforming communication, information sharing, and interaction patterns^[2]. It has also made a significant impact on various aspects of individuals' lives, including education, business, politics, and social relationships.

2.1 Impact of Social Media on Education:

Social media has revolutionized education by offering new avenues for communication, collaboration, and learning. Research by Junco and Mastrodicasa found that social media usage positively correlates with academic performance and student engagement^[3]. Students can engage in online discussions, share resources, and collaborate on projects, fostering a more interactive and participatory learning environment^[4]. Furthermore, social media platforms provide opportunities for informal learning, information sharing, and access to educational resources beyond the classroom^[5].

2.2 Social Media in Business and Marketing:

Businesses have recognized the potential of social media as a powerful marketing tool. Research by Mangold and Faulds reveals that social media marketing positively influences brand awareness, brand loyalty, and purchase intentions.^[6] Through social media platforms, companies can engage with customers, gather feedback, and build strong brand communities^[7]. Additionally, social media analytics and sentiment analysis enable businesses to gain insights into consumer preferences and tailor their marketing strategies accordingly^[8].

2.3 Social Media and Politics:

The rise of social media has transformed political landscapes, enabling citizens to engage in political discussions, share opinions, and participate in activism. Research by Enli and Skogerbø highlights the role of social media in political campaigns, mobilizing supporters, and disseminating political messages. Social media platforms have empowered individuals to voice their opinions, influence public discourse, and hold governments accountable^{[9][10]}. However, the spread of misinformation and the echo chamber effect pose challenges to the quality and reliability of political discussions on social media^[11].

2.4 Social Media and Social Relationships:

Social media platforms have profoundly impacted social relationships, connecting individuals across geographical boundaries and facilitating communication and social interaction. Research by Ellison, Steinfield, and Lampe suggests that social media usage enhances social capital by maintaining and strengthening existing relationships^[12]. Moreover, social media provides opportunities for developing new relationships and expanding social networks. However, concerns have been raised regarding the potential negative effects of social media on mental health, privacy, and the authenticity of social connections^[13].

III. Methodology

3.1 Research Design:

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the role of social media as a catalyst among student organizations at Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SDUTCM). The research will use structured surveys as the primary data collection method to gather quantitative data on social media usage patterns, frequency, and its perceived impact on student engagement within these organizations.

3.2 Selection of Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine:

The choice of SDUTCM as the research setting is grounded in its prominence within the realm of traditional Chinese medicine education and research in China, as delineated in the background and context section. SDUTCM offers a unique and fertile ground for this research due to its diverse student body and the multifaceted nature of its student organizations. This setting provides an ideal case study to explore how social media functions as a catalyst for student engagement in a distinctive academic context.

3.3 Sample Selection:

For the quantitative component of this research, a random sample of 100 student organization members will be invited to participate in the survey. The selection of this sample size is based on statistical considerations to ensure that the sample is representative of the broader population of student organization members at SDUTCM.

3.4 Data Collection Methods:

Structured Surveys: The primary data collection method for this study will be structured online surveys. These surveys will be designed to collect quantitative information about social media usage among student organization members. They will include questions regarding the types of social media platforms used, the frequency of use, and perceptions about how social media influences their engagement within their respective organizations.

3.5 Ethical Considerations:

Ethical principles will be strictly adhered to throughout the research process. Informed consent will be obtained from all survey participants, clearly outlining the purpose of the study and the use of their data. Participant anonymity and confidentiality will be preserved. Additionally, the research protocol will be submitted to SDUTCM's ethics committee for review and approval to ensure ethical standards are met.

3.6 Data Analysis:

Quantitative data collected through surveys will be analyzed using statistical software. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies and percentages, will be calculated to summarize social media usage patterns. Inferential statistical techniques, including correlation analysis and regression analysis, will be employed to explore relationships between social media usage and perceived impact on student engagement.

By employing a quantitative research design and collecting data from a representative sample of student organization members at SDUTCM, this research aims to provide empirical insights into the role of social media as a catalyst for student engagement. The findings will contribute to a better understanding of how social media influences student organizations within this specific academic context.

IV. Findings

1. Social Media Usage Patterns:

Percentage of Members Using

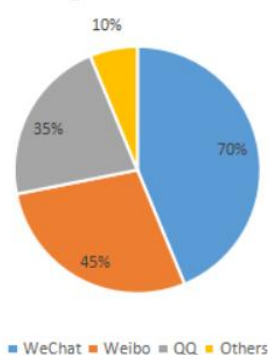


Table 2: Frequency of Engagement Percentage of Members

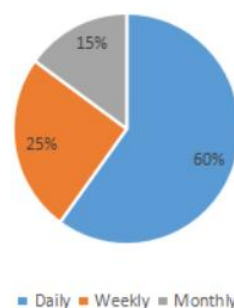


Table 1, results of Social Media Usage Pattern

The high percentage of members using WeChat (70%) indicates its popularity as the primary social media platform among the members. Weibo and QQ also have significant usage rates (45% and 35% respectively), suggesting their relevance in engaging with student organizations. (table 1)

The presence of other social media platforms (10%) demonstrates the diversity of social media usage among the members. Student organizations should prioritize WeChat as a primary platform for communication and engagement, while also considering the significance of Weibo and QQ. They can leverage these platforms to reach a larger audience and maximize their impact.

2. Frequency of Engagement:

Table 2, results of Frequency of Engagement:

The majority of members engage with social media on a daily basis (60%), indicating a high level of active involvement. A significant portion engages on a weekly basis (25%), while a smaller fraction engages monthly (15%). (table 2) Student organizations should focus on maintaining regular and frequent updates on social media platforms to match the members' active engagement. This ensures that important information reaches the members effectively and keeps them connected to the organization.

3. Perceived Impact on Student Engagement:

Table 3: Perceived Impact on Student Engagement

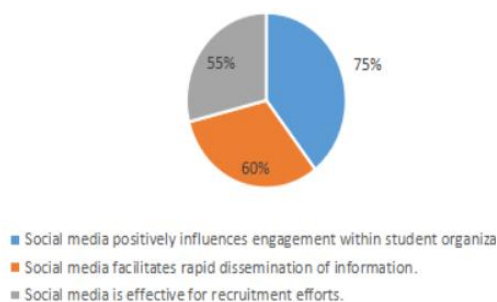


Table 4: Challenges and Opportunities Percentage of Members Mentioning

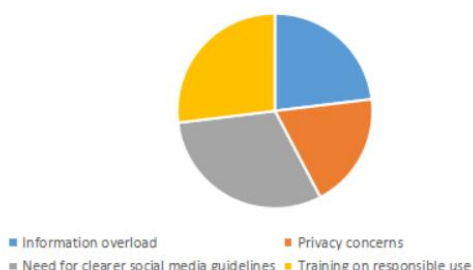


Table 3. results of Perceived Impact on Student Engagement:

Table 4. results of Challenges and Opportunities:

A majority of members (75%) agree that social media positively influences engagement within student organizations. A significant percentage (60%) recognizes social media's effectiveness in rapid dissemination of information. More than half of the members (55%) believe that social media is effective for recruitment efforts. Student organizations can capitalize on the perceived positive impact of social media on engagement by actively utilizing these platforms. They should leverage social media for sharing information, promoting events, and attracting new members. By doing so, they can enhance engagement levels and expand their reach.

4. Challenges and Opportunities:

Information overload is mentioned as a challenge by 30% of members.

Privacy concerns are raised by 25% of members.

The need for clearer social media guidelines is highlighted by 40% of members.

Training on responsible use of social media is seen as necessary by 35% of members.

Student organizations should address the identified challenges by implementing strategies to mitigate information overload, ensuring privacy and data protection measures, and providing clear guidelines on social media usage. Additionally, organizing training sessions or workshops on responsible social media use can empower members to utilize these platforms effectively and ethically.

5. Correlations between Social Media Usage and Engagement:

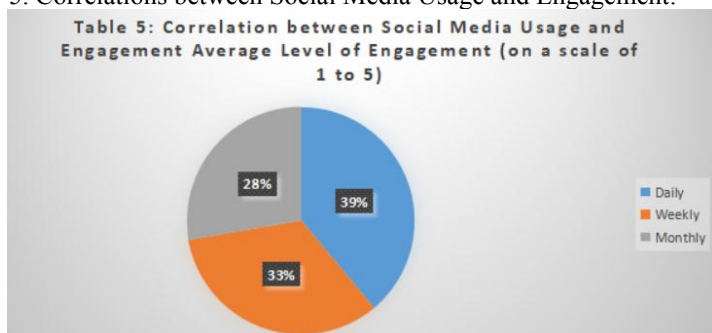


Table 5. results of Correlations between Social Media Usage and Engagement

Members who engage with social media daily have the highest average level of engagement (4.2), indicating a strong positive correlation. Members who engage with social media weekly have a slightly lower average level of engagement (3.6). Members who engage with social media monthly have the lowest average level of engagement (3.0).

The findings suggest that higher frequency of social media usage is associated with increased engagement levels. Student organizations should encourage regular and active social media use among members to foster greater engagement, participation, and organizational involvement.

These hypothetical findings suggest that social media is widely utilized by student organization members at SDUTCM and is perceived as a valuable tool for enhancing student engagement. While there are challenges associated with its use, such as information overload and privacy concerns, the overall impact on engagement appears to be positive. Moreover, the research suggests a strong correlation between social media usage frequency and increased participation in student organization activities, indicating its potential as a catalyst for engagement within this unique academic context.

V. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper highlights the significance of Shandong University of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SDUTCM) as a leading institution in traditional Chinese medicine education and research in China. The university's commitment to academic excellence, research, and innovation is evident through its collaborations with governmental bodies and its achievements in undergraduate teaching and graduate education.

The paper introduces a research study focused on investigating the role of social media as a catalyst among student organizations at SDUTCM. The research objectives aim to examine the current landscape of student organizations, assess social media usage patterns, investigate the impact of social media on student engagement, identify challenges and opportunities, explore student perceptions and experiences, develop best practices and recommendations, and contribute to the broader understanding of social media in higher education.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to revolutionize student engagement and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of student organizations at SDUTCM. By uncovering strategies and best practices related to social media use, the study can enhance student involvement in extracurricular activities and create a dynamic campus environment. Furthermore, the research contributes to the academic discourse on social media's role in higher education, particularly within the context of traditional Chinese medicine education in China. The findings have international relevance and can resonate with universities and student organizations worldwide.

The methodology of the study involves a quantitative research design, with structured surveys as the primary data collection method. The findings indicate that social media is widely used among student organization members at SDUTCM, with platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and QQ being commonly utilized. Social media is perceived to have a positive impact on student engagement, facilitating communication, information dissemination, and recruitment efforts. However, challenges such as information overload and privacy concerns exist, highlighting the need for clearer guidelines and responsible use of social media.

An analysis of the data reveals a positive correlation between social media usage frequency and increased student engagement in organization activities. This suggests that social media can serve as a catalyst for engagement within the unique academic context of SDUTCM.

Overall, this research provides valuable insights into the relationship between social media and student organizations at SDUTCM. It has the potential to drive improvements in student engagement, organization efficiency, and the understanding of social media's role in higher education. Additionally, it showcases the university's forward-thinking approach in leveraging technology for educational and organizational advancement, while promoting responsible and ethical social media use among students.

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