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# **The Development and Innovation of Archival Education in China under the Social Media Environment: Taking Archival WeChat Public Accounts Operated by Universities as an Example**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This paper conducts a thorough review of the current state of archival education within Mainland China. Furthermore, it endeavors to explore the future developmental trends of archival education within social media environments. To accomplish this, we examine the operation of WeChat public accounts of archives within Chinese universities as a prime example. The paper highlights the transformative role of social media on the conventional approach to archival education. Social media has fostered advancement and originality in archival education, broadened the scope and depth of its significance, and has had an unparalleled impact on its ongoing development. Nevertheless, the utilization of social media also poses a myriad of predicaments. The paramount difficulty we confront today pertains to how we can effectively harness the benefits of archival WeChat public accounts on a sustained and enduring basis, while ensuring their persistent existence and growth.

**Keywords:** Archival Education, Social Media, WeChat Public Accounts, Universities, China

## **INTRODUCTION**

In digital environment, the iterative evolution of information technologies has promoted the continuous reform of archival work, especially the technologies represented by the Internet, cloud computing, big data and artificial intelligence, which have had a profound impact on the environment, ideologies and modes of archival work. It is indispensable to constantly update the concepts, curriculum system and talent training path of archival education.

This paper examines the operation of WeChat public accounts of archives within Chinese universities as a prime example. The WeChat public account, also known as the WeChat public platform, was officially launched in August 2012. It is a new functional module added by Tencent on the basis of WeChat, which is similar to Instagram and Twitter. Individuals or corporate organizations can apply for public accounts. The WeChat public account is a platform for expressing ideas, sharing and disseminating knowledge. Once users subscribe to the WeChat public accounts, they can receive relevant information, such as pictures, texts, videos, voices, etc.

Many industries have tried to strengthen their ties with customers by creating and operating WeChat public accounts. In the era of digitalization, WeChat public accounts have become carriers for information releases and online interactions, and important platforms for providing public services. They are also the main channels for people to receive various kinds of information on a daily basis.

After 2014, many archival institutions and universities in China have created and operated WeChat public accounts to advocate archival education, archival research and archival work, which has found a broad audience. Their development has reflected remarkable characteristics. First, WeChat public accounts have adhered to the formation of personalized features for a long time, and tweeted articles around archival industry, which has formed a certain degree of reader cohesion. WeChat public accounts with mature operations generally have a stable reading volume of articles, which means consistent groups of followers. Second, WeChat public accounts are dedicated to the promotion of high-quality original articles. The foundation of the existence of archival WeChat public accounts is to maintain the quality of tweets, ensure the originality of articles, and retain valuable historical and cultural knowledge. Readers can strengthen emotional identification and enhance their understanding of archives, archival work and archival science while following tweets. Third, WeChat public accounts focus on improving users' reading experience, such as paying attention to the typesetting, making pictures, texts, audios and videos, etc. In terms of language expression, the combination of professionalism and popularity is particularly preferred. Fourth, the two-way interaction between operators and readers is enhanced. For example, authors and editors of articles and readers have online communications in message boards; authors and editors can respond to readers' messages one by one, and answer questions timely so as to improve readers' satisfaction.

## **BACKGROUND OF ARCHIVAL EDUCATION IN CHINA**

China's modern archival education began in the 1930s. Through constant adjustment and systematic reform, an archival education system with Chinese characteristics gradually formed. Entering the 21st century, China's archival education has entered a new stage of stable growth. In 1996, there were 24 universities offering the major of Archival Science, 27 in 2000, 31 in 2005, and a total of 32 universities offering the major of archival science by 2010. Different from the Western countries, which mainly focus on postgraduate education, China's archival education is based on undergraduate education, supplemented by graduate and postgraduate education, and aims to provide society with specialized professional talents.

The new liberal arts have provided an important direction for the development of archival education in China. From a historical perspective, whether in China or in Western countries, social science has always been closely linked with social change and progress, and is an important driving force for social development. From a realistic perspective, since the beginning of the 21st century, the trend of integration between liberal arts and modern information technology has become more and more obvious, the boundaries between various branches of liberal arts have become increasingly blurred, and the development of new technologies, industries and products continue to trigger new social topics. It requires people to adapt to changes as well as break through the traditional thinking mode of liberal arts, "promote the expansion of academic vision of liberal arts and the change of thinking paradigm, and promote the integration and innovation of research content as well as methods of liberal arts" (Fan, 2021).

Archival Science needs to respond and adjust itself according to the new situation, which is part of social sciences. People also need to take into consideration the characteristics of archival education under the background of information technology innovation, use technical means to promote the integration of new media into archival education, and build an efficient education system within the whole life cycle so as to make contributions to the construction of new liberal arts in China.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND METHODOLOGY

This paper uses literature research method and network survey method, focusing on the interaction between China's archival education and archival WeChat public accounts operated by universities, and proposes the following research questions:

RQ1: How can China's archival education system promote its development and innovation in the social media environment?

RQ2: What is the current situation of archival WeChat public accounts operated by universities in China?

RQ3: How does archival WeChat public accounts operated by universities promote the development of archival education in China?

Literature research method in Chinese social science research is mainly applied for analyzing secondary data, emphasizing the collection and analysis of literature through standardized methods, and conducting in-depth historical and exploratory analysis of the research object (Qiu, 2007). This method runs through the whole research process and provides solid literature support for this study. According to the needs of the topic selection, the types of literature surveyed in this study mainly include research papers, academic journals, newspapers, etc., as well as academic databases in both Chinese and foreign languages (including CNKI, Wanfang Data, Web of Science, SCOPUS, Springer, ProQuest, etc.). It needs to be pointed out that although the literature referred to in this study is relatively extensive, the main channel for collecting and analyzing literature related to China's archival education and archival WeChat public account is to search and read the titles, abstracts and key words in papers published in 10 Chinese journals of Archival Science that have been indexed in Peking University's *A Guide to the Core Journal of China* (中文核心期刊要目总览) from 1996 to 2022 through CNKI artificially. The journals are *Archives Science Bulletin* (档案学通讯), *Archives Science Study* (档案学研究), *China Archives* (中国档案), *Beijing Archives* (北京档案), *Zhejiang Archives* (浙江档案), *Archives and Construction* (档案与建设), *Archives Management* (档案管理), *Shanxi Archives* (山西档案), *Lantai World* (兰台世界) and *Archives* (档案). In 1996, the XIIIth Congress of International Council on Archives (ICA) was held in Beijing, China. Much literature on archival education in China's Archival Science circle emerged after this event. However, literature concentrating on archival WeChat public accounts emerged largely after the major amendment of the WeChat Public Platform *Authentication Service Agreement* in 2016.

Network survey method refers to the practice of collecting, recording, organizing, and analyzing the information from the Internet or the WeChat public accounts. In China, some universities have their own archives, and they also operate WeChat public accounts. Taking Sun Yat-sen University as an example, we can search *Sun Yat-sen University Archives* (中山大学档

案馆) in WeChat search column, but it is not a desired research object for this topic. However, *Lingnan Archives* (岭南档案) which is operated by students majoring in Archival Science in Sun Yat-sen University is our real research object. In this research, we choose to search educational units and their public accounts in WeChat one by one and then make assessments on whether the accounts are operated by students or teachers in universities. There are three specific steps for applying the method in this research. First, according to the latest China Archival Undertaking Development Report (2022) published by Renmin University of China, we search the name of educational units in WeChat search column, and check the relevant news released by public accounts. Generally, news for any educational unit in Chinese universities can usually be found on WeChat. Then, we check the public accounts that release relevant news one by one, and determine the main positioning of public accounts based on the content of information released in the past. Finally, we check the authentication information of public accounts, identify the main operator, and judge whether the public account is consistent with the research scope of this study. Through this process, we selected 17 archival WeChat public accounts operated by educational units of Chinese universities.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

In view of the general situation of China's modern archival education, relevant research has referred to the history of archival education, the existing problems and solutions in class teaching, the curriculum design for Archival Science, the experience of archival education in other countries as well as its impacts on China, and the reorganization and innovation of Archival Science discipline system under the background of new liberal arts construction. The history of China's modern archival education is deeply related to the steady development of education towards Library and Information Science (Feng et al., 2020). The characteristics and achievements (Xiao et al., 2011) as well as problems and countermeasures (Kong, 1999; Fan, 2000; Zhang, 2000; Lian, 2002; Chen, 2013; Yang, 2022) of China's archival higher education from the late 1970s to the 2010s have been analyzed. During the process of new liberal arts construction, China's archival education has a new development vision and multiple demands placed on it (Zhou, 2021). Therefore, it is helpful to clarify the principles of formulating and optimizing professional training programs for undergraduate and graduate students majoring in Archival Science (Chen, 2008; Jian, 2010; Bian, 2019). In this respect, rational construction of the curriculum system is also important (Fang, 2014; Ni, 2014). From a global perspective, the development and achievements as well as characteristics of European and American archival education have been summarized (Liu, 1998; An, 2003; Wang, 2008; Li, 2008; Xiao, 2021), and archival education among iSchools worldwide has been introduced (Li et al., 2021). Through these efforts, similarities and differences with China's archival education have been noticed.

With the development of social media, application of WeChat public accounts in archival education has gradually received attention in relevant research. At the macro level, the development status as well as strategies of archival WeChat public account operations have been elaborated (Sun et al., 2020), and based on the core positioning of the construction of new media platforms for the major of Archival Science in universities, the urgent needs to establish operating mechanisms in terms of teams, platforms and information contents have been analyzed (Xie et al., 2019). Besides, the significance of applying WeChat online services represented by archival WeChat articles to campus culture construction and archival advocacy has been

affirmed (Cheng, 2019; Xu et al., 2020), and overall steps to promote the development of archival WeChat public accounts have been proposed (Xu, 2021). At the micro level, there are studies paying attention to the sources for information delivery, which select typical archival WeChat public accounts to investigate account types, platform contents, the WeChat Communication Index (WCI), etc., and summarize the communication characteristics as well as feasible paths for improvement (Chen, 2018; Fan et al., 2019; Chen, 2022; Luo, 2022). Also, there are studies paying attention to the audience in information delivery, which adapt the grounded theory to sort out information needs of archival WeChat public accounts' users and influencing factors of these needs, and put forward suggestions for existing problems (Li et al., 2020).

Based on different aspects, relevant research has deepened the understanding of China's modern archival education as well as the operational practice of archival WeChat public accounts, which reflects theoretical innovativeness and application value. In general, the research on the development of archival education in China mainly involves five aspects: (i) the origin and history of archival education; (ii) the concepts and paradigms of archival education; (iii) the construction and layout of degree programs related with Archival Science; (iv) the construction of faculty, teaching plans and premium courses; and (v) comparative discussions on archival education between China and other countries. In this overall situation, the research focusing on application of WeChat public accounts in archival education includes four aspects: (i) services provided by archival WeChat public accounts; (ii) professional functions of archival WeChat public accounts; (iii) operation strategies of archival WeChat public accounts; and (iv) evaluation on the contents and the effect in advocacy of articles on archival WeChat public accounts. However, there are also avenues for further research. With regard to the reform and development of China's archival education in the new media environment, more attention needs to be paid to the optimization of archival teaching and research systems using social media such as WeChat. In fact, related research mostly discusses how to develop, operate and utilize archival WeChat public accounts as new tools for propagation from the technical view specifically, but it is also necessary to concentrate on the impacts from archival WeChat public accounts operation on archival education in the new media environment. It is of significance not only to the high-quality development of China's archival education, but also to the growth and prosperity of archives management in China.

## CURRENT SITUATION OF CHINA'S ARCHIVAL EDUCATION

According to Chen and Su's report *The Characteristics of the Development of Archival Higher Education in China and Its International Impacts* in AERI 2019, China has established the largest and most complete archival education system in the world. As of May 2023, there are 34 universities offering undergraduate education in Archival Science, 30 universities offering postgraduate education and 12 universities independently offering doctoral education (Table 1). The number of masters degree sites is close to the number of undergraduate education sites. Also, since 2019, 4 independent doctoral degree awarding points and 2 doctoral degree anchoring points have been added (Yang, 2022). On the one hand, this situation reflects that the higher education of Archival Science in China has entered a higher level of development. On the other hand, it also reflects the trend of increasing demands for individuals with advanced degrees in Archival Science in the current society.

**Table 1***List of Higher Education Institutions of Archival Science in China*

No.	School Name	Location	Bachelor	Master	Doctor
1	Renmin University of China	Beijing	√	√	√
2	Beijing Union University	Beijing	√	√	
3	Tianjin Normal University	Tianjin	√		
4	Nankai University	Tianjin	√	√	√
5	Hebei University	Hebei	√	√	√
6	Shanxi University	Shanxi		√	
7	Hohhot College for Nationalities	Inner Mongolia	√		
8	Shanghai University	Shanghai	√	√	√
9	Shanghai Normal University	Shanghai	√		
10	Nanjing University	Jiangsu	√	√	√
11	Nanjing University of Science and Technology	Jiangsu		√	
12	Soochow University	Jiangsu	√	√	
13	Yangzhou University	Jiangsu	√	√	
14	Yancheng Teachers University	Jiangsu	√		
15	Zhejiang University	Zhejiang	√	√	
16	Anhui University	Anhui	√	√	
17	Fujian Normal University	Fujian	√	√	
18	Nanchang University	Jiangxi	√	√	
19	Shandong University	Shandong	√	√	
20	Zhengzhou University	Henan	√	√	√
21	Zhengzhou University of Aeronautics	Henan	√	√	
22	Xiangtan University	Hunan	√	√	√
23	Wuhan University	Hubei	√	√	√
24	Hubei University	Hubei	√	√	
25	Central China Normal University	Hubei		√	√
26	Heilongjiang University	Heilongjiang	√	√	
27	Jilin University	Jilin	√	√	√
28	Liaoning University	Liaoning	√	√	
29	Liaoning Institute of Science and Technology	Liaoning	√		
30	Sichuan University	Sichuan	√	√	
31	Guizhou Education University	Guizhou	√		
32	Yunnan University	Yunnan	√	√	
33	Sun Yat-sen University	Guangdong	√	√	√
34	Hanshan Normal University	Guangdong	√		
35	Guangxi Minzu University	Guangxi	√	√	
36	Northwest University	Shaanxi	√	√	

37	Xizang Minzu University	Shaanxi	√		
38	Political College of National Defence University	Shaanxi		√	√

In terms of geographical location, the overall distribution of archival education in China is relatively uniform. East China has the most universities offering undergraduate, masters, and doctoral education in Archival Science. Compared with East China, the number of universities offering Archival Science education in North China, Central China, Northeast China, Southwest and South China is smaller, but most provinces offer it. In Northwest China, only Shaanxi Province offers Archival Science education, while Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia and Xinjiang haven't offered it yet.

China has formed a complete archival science education system that includes undergraduate, master and doctor education. In the advent of the big data era, universities are closely integrating archival education with the current new generation of information technology, and they have initially explored and established a modern archival education system that adapts to the digital age. Moreover, the forms of archival education are also constantly innovative, such as the integration with social media. The paper takes archival WeChat public accounts as an example to investigate the innovation situation of archival education in China.

## CURRENT SITUATION OF ARCHIVAL WECHAT PUBLIC ACCOUNTS IN UNIVERSITIES

Upon inputting pertinent data pertaining to educational institutions, including schools, colleges, and majors, into the search field of the WeChat public account, a discovery was made that out of the 38 universities that provide archival education within China, a total of 17 universities have established their own archival WeChat public accounts, which constitutes 44.7% of the aforementioned universities.

The paper provides details on the names of universities and colleges, the names of archival WeChat public accounts, their founding dates/times, their number of releases, their release frequency, as well as column sorting and operation mode. As shown in Table 2 (survey deadline: May 31, 2023):

**Table 2**

*Summary of Survey on Archival WeChat Public Accounts of Universities*

No.	University and College	WeChat Account	Founding Time	Number of Posts	Release Frequency	Column Sorting	Operation Mode
1	School of Information Resource Management, Renmin University of China	<i>About Archives</i> (档案那些事儿)	2014.6.1	1657	4-5/week	Knowledge Dissemination, Archive Repository, Contact Us	Joint operation of teachers and students

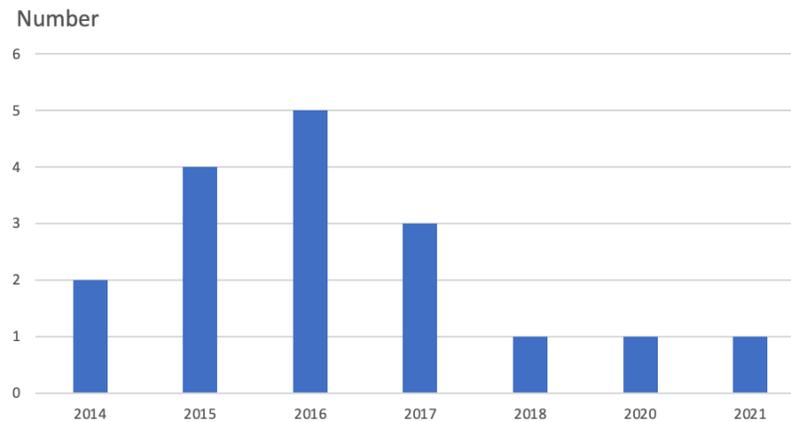
2	School of Information Management, Sun Yat-sen University	<i>Lingnan Archives</i> (岭南档案)	2014.10.22	547	1/week	Featured Archives, Academic Frontiers, Industry Trends, Research Team, etc.	Joint operation of teachers and students
3	School of History and Archives, Yunnan University	<i>Information and Archives in Yunnan University</i> (云大情报与档案)	2015.3.4	773	2-3/week	Undergraduate Campus, Home of Graduate Students, Department Introduction	Main operation of teachers
4	School of Information Management, Zhengzhou University	<i>Zero Distance with Archives</i> (档案零距离)	2015.11.23	545	1-2/week	Lantai News, Special Columns	Main operation of students
5	School of Management, Hebei University	<i>Agents of Archiving Time</i> (时光特攻)	2015.11.26	596	2-3/week	News Delivery, Archival Practice, About Us	Joint operation of teachers and students
6	School of Humanities, Shanghai Normal University	<i>Me &amp; Archives</i> (吾观档案)	2015.12.2	175	1-2/week	Characteristic Archives, Archival Practice, Student Activities, Industry Trends, Shanghai History and Culture	Main operation of students
7	School of Information Management, Heilongjiang University	<i>Archive Gangster</i> (档案黑帮)	2016.4.21	33	Irregular release	Major Overview, Undergraduate and Master Teaching, Teach and Research	Joint operation of teachers and students
8	School of Management, Jilin University	<i>Meet Archives</i> (遇见兰台)	2016.5.4	184	Previously regular, now irregular	Subject Introduction, Academic Exchange, Student Activities	Joint operation of teachers and students
9	School of History and Culture, Shandong University	<i>Archival Science of Shandong University</i> (山大文秘档案学系)	2016.6.9	190	1/week	News Delivery, Academic Report, Student Presence, Conference Notice	Main operation of teachers

10	School of Information Management, Wuhan University	<i>ICA</i> (国际档案理事会)	2016.7.28	728	2-3/week	ICA Exclusive, Industry News, IAW Activities	Joint operation of teachers and students
11	School of Management, Liaoning Institute of Science and Technology	<i>Archives Exhibition Planning Platform</i> (档案展览策划平台)	2016.9.1	30	No longer updated	Archives Exhibition, History in Archives, Student Activities	Main operation of students
12	Public Management School of Xiangtan University	<i>Archives of XiangTan University</i> (XTUA 闻湘拾档)	2017.3.30	117	No longer updated	Popularizing Social Science Knowledge, Social Spots, Expert interviews	Joint operation of teachers and students
13	School of Management, Tianjin Normal University	<i>Go with Archives</i> (与档同行)	2017.9.20	449	Previously regular, now irregular	Tianshi Archives, characteristic classroom, Archives News	Joint operation of teachers and students
14	School of Public Administration, Sichuan University	<i>Future Archives Laboratory</i> (未来档案实验室)	2017.12.4	56	No longer updated	Archive future imagination, experience sharing	Joint operation of teachers and students
15	School of Social Sciences of Soochow University	<i>Library Information and Archival Science in Soochow University</i> (苏大图情档)	2018.11.16	233	Previously regular, now irregular	News flash, feature column, About us	Joint operation of teachers and students
16	School of Information Resource Management, Liaoning University	<i>Archives of Liaoning University</i> (辽档云)	2020.8.9	456	3/week	Charging Station, Teacher-student Interaction, About Us	Main operation of students
17	School of Social Development Yangzhou University	<i>Archives of Yangzhou University</i> (扬大档案人)	2021.2.1	82	1/week	Reading Club, News Delivery, Exchange and Q&A, Teachers Achievements, Graduation Salon	Joint operation of teachers and students

Judging from the founding time of archival WeChat public accounts, since the School of Information Resource Management of Renmin University of China established the first archival WeChat public account *About Archives* in 2014, more and more universities have created their own archival WeChat public accounts in 2015, 2016, and 2017 (Figure 1). Social media is playing an increasingly important role in higher education.

**Figure 1**

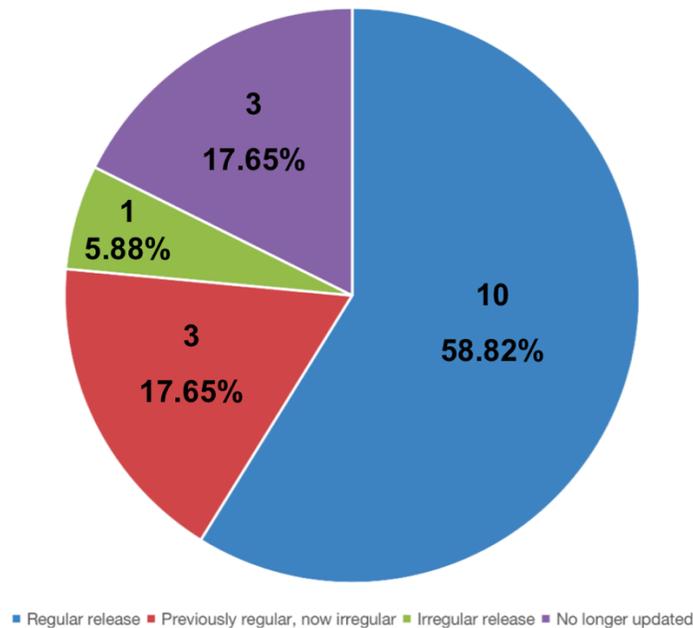
*Distribution of Founding Time of Archival WeChat Public Accounts*



In terms of release frequency, 58.8% (10) of the archival WeChat public accounts have formed their own posting rules (Figure 2). Among them, *About Archives* tweets 4-5 times every week; while *ICA*, *Archives of Liaoning University*, *Information and Archives in Yunnan University*, *Agents of Archiving Time*, each tweet 2-3 times per week. *Zero Distance with Archives* and *Me & Archives* tweet 1-2 times per week while *Lingnan Archives*, *Archival Science of Shandong University*, *Archives of Yangzhou University* tweet once per week. Among the 17 archival WeChat public accounts, 17.6% (3) used to be released regularly, but with the passage of time, they are now released irregularly. They are *Go with Archives*, *Library Information and Archival Science in Soochow University* and *Meet Archives*. *Archive Gangster* is relatively special. Since its establishment, it has been tweeted irregularly, that is, the release time is not fixed, and the release content has not yet formed a regular pattern. Besides, 17.6% (3) of the archival WeChat public accounts have not been updated since 2021, basically in a state of death, such as *Archives Exhibition Planning Platform*, *Archives of XiangTan University*, *Future Archives Laboratory*. To a great extent, the frequency of releases has an impact on how archival WeChat public accounts contribute to the advancement of archival education. Those with a higher frequency of releases can make a relatively significant impact on the educational sphere in a short span of time; however, they also require a proficient operational team and content generation ability. On the other hand, those with a lower frequency of releases may take more time to establish their social influence. If there is indeed more time and time utilization is also more effective, they have a higher probability of creating remarkable and superior articles.

**Figure 2**

*The Distribution of Archival WeChat Public Accounts by Posting Frequency*



In terms of the operation mode of archival WeChat public accounts, 65% (11) of them are jointly operated by teachers and students, including theme selection, modification and releasing. Among them, *About Archives* and *ICA* are aimed at the teachers and students whose major is Archival Science in China, which is good for cross-school cooperation. 23% (4) of the archival WeChat public accounts are mainly operated by students, such as *Zero Distance with Archives*, *Me & Archives*, *Archives Exhibition Planning Platform*, *Archives of Liaoning University*. The remaining 12% (2) of the archival WeChat public accounts are mainly operated by teachers, such as *Information and Archives in Yunnan University*, *Archival Science of Shandong University*. Generally, WeChat public accounts operated by students independently can efficiently cater to the young people' taste in terms of page design, topic selection, language expression, etc., but they have weak points in adhering to the professional direction and spreading knowledge of Archival Science accurately; WeChat public accounts operated by teachers and students jointly, whose information release is often more formal and official, can sufficiently embody professionalism but also keep away from students' preferences in some occasions.

Throughout the well-run archival WeChat public accounts, its core release content mainly includes the following four parts. First, official news, such as discipline construction, curriculum construction, teaching staff, academic achievements, etc. Second, academic information, such as the latest information, academic reports, conferences, etc. Third, student activities, such as experience introduction, research display, learning experience, etc. Fourth, industry information, such as laws and regulations, archival practice, work experience, etc. The four components encompass a blend of theoretical and practical knowledge, highlighting the most contemporary advancements in Archival Science. Additionally, these components comprise industry practices, dynamic practices, and other related topics.

In the digital age, social media represented by archival WeChat public accounts has injected new vitality into China's higher archival education. Archival WeChat public account innovates a multi-party cooperation mechanism, which is conducive to improving the quality of teaching. First, teacher-student cooperation as 65% of archival WeChat public accounts are jointly operated by teachers and students. By guiding students to operate archival WeChat public accounts, teachers closely combine theoretical teaching with practical activities, which greatly enhances effective communication and cooperation. Taking *Lingnan Archives* as an example, the operation team has 17 members, including 1 professor, 1 postdoctoral fellow, 6 doctoral students, 1 master student and 8 undergraduates. In the process of specific operation, the team is divided into four groups and they cooperate with each other. The themes of tweets are closely combined with professor's research projects and students can also combine their own research interests, then form some tweets, which can cultivate students' theoretical sensitivity, reflecting the characteristics of the combination of teaching and research. Second, industry-university-research cooperation. Team of *About Archives* worked closely with enterprises such as SINOPEC, team members have conducted several investigations and developed a series of research reports. Teams of *Lingnan Archives* work closely with local archival enterprises, aiming to introduce the latest achievements of electronic archives management based on industry hot topics. Meanwhile, *Guangzhou Archival Society* (广州市档案学会) provides external support for the operation and practice of *Lingnan Archives*, such as data sources and social resources. As an open social media platform, archival WeChat public account is conducive to knowledge innovation, dissemination and exchange. First, to promote exchanges between academia and industry. Taking *About Archives* and *ICA* as examples, their team members come from different universities in China; they cooperate and communicate with each other on common topics to promote exchange and cooperation in the field of domestic archival higher education. Second, when the tweets are published, all subscribers can make comments, which forms a complementary relationship with the basic theory education of archives, and has positive significance for the development and innovation of archival education.

## **FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF CHINA'S ARCHIVAL EDUCATION FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

The operation of archival WeChat public accounts is significant to the development and innovation of archival education in the social media environment. It is expected to facilitate China's archival education from three aspects in the future.

First, the diversified, professional and inclusive ideology of archival WeChat public accounts operation is conducive to promote the overall reform of archival education in China. China's Ministry of Education is expected to unceasingly revise the curriculum of Archival Science in the future. In this process, the traditional teaching paradigm, mainly based on historical archives, archives management and practical knowledge of archival work, will be replaced by new paradigm which emphasizes more on archival advocacy and archival activism. China's universities are also expected to optimize the deployment of teachers and form their own training programs based on the different regional characteristics.

Second, the operation of archival WeChat public accounts is expected to supplement the teaching contents of archival courses, such as strengthening the practice of new media operation

and maintenance, promoting the combination of theory and work in learning process, and providing intellectual support for keeping the sustainability of archival WeChat public accounts. The shortage of human resources can be alleviated in public accounts operation through continuous practical training. Practical training can enable students to directly acquire operational skills, facilitate occupational planning and employment, and cultivate fresh archivists of the new era with both comprehensive abilities and professional literacy.

Third, archival WeChat public accounts operation is expected to profoundly change the existing teaching form for archival courses, expand the field of publicity, and improve the communication effects. In the digital era, university classes no longer have to be common for students and teachers in time and space, also, “water lessons” are supposed to be out of favor. In this case, universities will pay more and more attention to the role of new media in teaching and launch a number of “golden courses” with online and offline influences to improve the quality of knowledge delivery. In addition to offline teaching, videos and other learning materials will be offered to the society through tweets of archival WeChat public accounts, supplemented by online Q&A, microtests, etc., which is expected to expand the form of archival advocacy and enhance the social influence of archival education.

## CONCLUSION

The advent of novel entities is invariably accompanied by an expansion and transformation. Social media, born in the digital era, has profoundly influenced peoples’ lives and practices. Archival WeChat public accounts play an increasingly important role in advocating and promoting archival education in China, but how to maintain the sustainability and long-term development of them is truly an important issue. From the research results above, we find that sustainable operation of WeChat public accounts is inseparable from the output of contents. It is not easy to be constantly enthusiastic about professional work, collective work and persistent work. Besides, when cooperation has become mainstream, how to better utilize social media to promote cooperation between domestic and foreign universities, cooperation between teachers and students, cooperation between schools and enterprises, cooperation among industry, education and research, etc. are also significant topics that need to be considered in the future.

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