

# Campus Vlogs: A Youthful Expression of Sino-Foreign Cooperative University

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**Abstract:** Video Blog(Vlog) is a way of presenting video that integrates elements such as text, images and music. Sino-foreign cooperative university as a special university mode of China, has various unique features and strengths. Taking vlogs from platforms such as Tiktok, Bilibili and Xiaohongshu as research samples, this research mainly uses textual analysis to explore the way of youthful expression of campus vlogs based on the 5W model of communication.

**Keywords:** Vlog; Sino-Foreign Cooperative University; 5W Model

## 1. Introduction

Vlogging has increased public documentation of personal experiences. In 2018, the spurt of online Vlogs received widespread attention in China. The size of the domestic user base has shown a continuous upward trend. From 126 million users in 2018 to 488 million in 2021, the cumulative growth is 362 million, a rapid growth rate. Hence, there is a big market for Vlog in China (iiMedia Research,2021).

In order to meet the growing demand for quality education, there is a type of university in China called Sino-Foreign Cooperative Universities (SFCUs), which local and foreign universities jointly run. In 2004, the first Sino-foreign cooperative university with an independent legal personality was established; after more than a decade of development, by 2022, there were already ten such universities.

As SFCUs, they have many different features and strengths for spreading campus vlogs. 1) a more international perspective and resource. The flexibility of bilingualism for students under the entire English language curriculum allows it to overcome the language barrier in its brand communication and go bilingual in the first place. 2) diverse and multiple channels. For information exchange, information about

these universities will appear on foreign websites, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. 3) mission of cultural exchange. As China's comprehensive strength and international status grows, it is increasingly important to spread the image of China and Chinese culture to the outside world. These universities have a profound international soil, and the cultural exchange mission of the mother university makes it the best stage for cultural outreach.

School-related Vlogging concerns the growing importance of academic research. However, more is needed to know about the communication and intersection of Vlogging about SFCUs. This research was conducted to investigate the following research questions to address this gap.

Q1:Characteristics: The Vloggers who can be more qualified, and the viewers who and why watch them?

Q2: Context: What can Vloggers share about Sino-foreign cooperative universities?

Q3:Channel: Where can Vloggers post vlogs and interact with viewers?

## 2. The Communicator: an Idealised Campus Label Persona

Regarding self presentation in daily life, Goffman analyzed the interaction between people and how individuals shape their ideal image through performance, and used theatre to illustrate the contrast of personal behavior in front and behind the scenes. When on the stage, actors adhere to specific rules and social conventions to perform well and perfectly portray the image/character they want to portray. However, in a private backstage setting, the actor's behaviour would be different as there would be no need to perform.

The stage for performers to present themselves has changed, and they have a new front stage. Bilibili, Xiaohongshu and Tiktok have become

the new front stage for them to present themselves, providing us with a way to become idealised people.

What is an idealised performance in front stage? We searched for campus Vlogs on Xiaohongshu and found that most of the search results on the front page were based on well-made makeup or elaborated environments as the cover of the videos. By looking at the content of these Vlogs, it is easy to see that most of them are labelled as sophisticated university students on campus, sharing goodies and learning, i.e. Beauty is everything. Considering mixed identity within Goffman's framework can be understood as the self-being just a mask that a person chooses to wear when facing and interacting with others; other people are unaware that the other self beneath the mask will be used in different situations.



**Figure1. Search on Xiaohongshu Using "Campus Vlog" as a keyword**

**3. The Content: Encoding of Campus-Exclusive Symbols**

According to Baudrillard (2004), when there is great material abundance, the satisfaction of individuality is achieved through symbolic consumption, which is essentially cultural consumption, consuming the cultural meaning represented by symbols. Saussure (1966) said an individual sign is a system composed of multiple parts: an expression, concept, or object, commonly called the signifier; a meaning attributed to that expression, commonly called the signified. The communicator, therefore, creates the Vlogs through various media means and needs to meet the symbolic value needs of the current audience, i.e. the continuous encoding of exclusive campus symbols. The Vlogs can mostly use fixed visual symbols, such as exclusive logos, fixed opening and closing credits, special effects for transitions

and unique narrative perspectives to show the characteristics of the SFCUs through signs.

**Table1. Commonly used Symbols in Campus Vlogs**

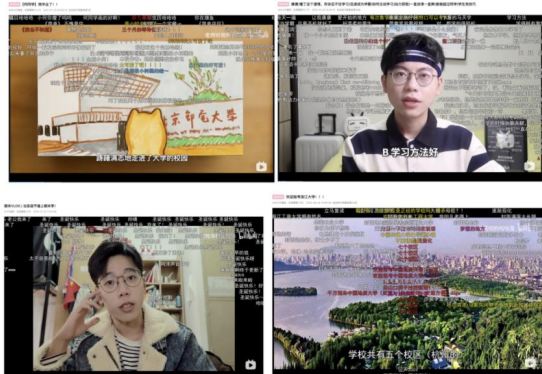
Vlog Title	Symbols
Campus Vlog   Just spend a weekend with me at Peking University	Dorm room, classroom, club recruitment, revision on the underground, course schedules as ipad desktops
Yu's Vlog   Healing to campus life   Study routine in the dorm room   Full of energy in the days of spring	Dormitory, dormitory breakfast, watching ted, partitioned wallpaper, English test
Campus Vlog   A record of busy study life at school	Self-study, dormitory breakfast, study materials, library, revision week
Last Month at Tsinghua University   June Vlog	Campus card, library, presentation, canteen, final exams

For campus Vlogs, typical contents include dormitory life, self-study, campus activities, military training and other campus-specific symbols. With a simple camera, you can record campus life, and videos with these campus symbols have vivid and exciting content without any sense of distance. For the Sino-foreign cooperative universities, we can look for exclusive elements that attract users exclusive symbols of these universities, such as hotel-style dormitories, small-class teaching, international faculty, and featured activities. The Vlog is a collection of exclusive visual consumption symbols to enhance the viewability and readability of the content.

**4. The Channels: Enhancing The Meaningful Space for Interaction with Audiences**

Originally used as a physical term, Simmel argued that space was a form of social interaction and that the interaction of minds between people fills space and makes it alive and meaningful. Space is social, and social relations pervade it; the production of space has gone beyond the material to become a production of meaning and social culture. In the internet age, no front-stage act is a one-person orgy. As for Vlogs, the space of meaning is created in the interaction between the

communicator and the audience, and gaining more attention in this space requires a complete understanding of the platform's characteristics and a stronger interaction with the audience.



**Figure2. Bullet Screen Interaction for Campus Vlogs in Bilibili**

Bullet screen is a real-time comment platform which enables viewers to publish their opinions and interact with others. The bullet screen on Bilibili is a feature of the platform and a mainstream way of interacting with it, allowing audiences to use it to express their views and feelings after watching a video and interact with the uploaders and other viewers. Bullet-screen comments are overlaid on the online video, which makes the video more interactive. Therefore, it is essential to focus on the interaction; the uploaders can regularly pay attention to the bullet screen and then, based on the feedback from it, understand the preferences, interests, feedback and opinions of the audience, to further improve the content and form of the subsequent video output and keep up with the times, to be the first to pitch to the audience.

### **5.The Audiences: Use and Gratifications Approach to Grasp Audience Psychology**

According to the Uses and Gratifications theory (Katz, 1974), media use is goal-directed; people choose media based on their needs. Gratifications refer to people's perception of the satisfaction of the needs brought about by media use. They summarised the five major categories of needs of individuals using media: *cognitive needs*, *emotional needs*, *personal integration needs*, *social integration needs*, and *stress relief needs*. Mastering the five major needs of individuals using the media will help the creation of campus Vlogs in Sino-foreign cooperative universities.

For example, the Sino-foreign cooperative university Vlog needs to meet the audience's psychological needs for information and can adopt different ways with Chinese and foreign characteristics, as well as pleasant and relaxing to meet the audience's multiple needs for information acquisition. Vlogs provide a sample of other people's real lives, where content that would otherwise be in the backstage area is brought to the foreground by the author, allowing audiences to get a visual glimpse into the author's life in just a few minutes as if they were there. A Vlog showing student life on campus, such as food, classes, dormitories and club activities, indicates the image of university students on campus, thus satisfying the audience's curiosity about Sino-foreign cooperative universities. Also, compared to other forms of video, vlogs contain many selfie shots, and when watching the video, it feels like talking to a friend face-to-face in reality, creating a sense of dislocation where everything is right in front of you. A campus Vlog could feature an unboxing video, such as "What is the offer from a Sino-foreign cooperative university?" In the video, the photographer is at the centre of the screen, showing the details of the offer from a personal perspective, as if a friend is telling you about his acceptance letter so that the viewer meet the personal integration needs through the Vlog.

### **5. Conclusion**

Vlogs, as a short video combining text, images and music, are popular among young people because of their personal style. Today, because of the development of technology, the threshold and time cost of shooting and editing Vlogs has been greatly simplified. The Sino-foreign cooperative University can use it as a means of brand communication and find a rejuvenation paradigm through its own international vision and resources to create a brand identity. This research uses the 5W model of communication science to draw the following main conclusions for the rejuvenation of the brand communication of these universities from the four elements of communicator, communication content, communication channel and communication audience: create the persona of the campus label through idealised performance and mystified performance under dramaturgical theory; continuously encode and output the exclusive

symbols of the campus through the first perspective; seize the bullet screens and comments in the communication channel to strengthen the meaningful space of interaction with the audience; grasp the psychology of the audience and met their needs in content selection and production.

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