

# Research on the Path of Constructing Postgraduate Campus Culture

Jingbo Xu<sup>1,\*</sup>, Wei Chang<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>General Administration Office, China University of Geosciences (Beijing), Beijing, China

<sup>2</sup>Organization Department, China University of Geosciences (Beijing), Beijing, China

\*Corresponding Author.

**Abstract:** The "campus culture" in colleges and universities can be understood as a concept system with its own characteristics that is formed through long-term accumulation during the development of a university and shared by all teachers and students of the school. "Postgraduate campus culture", as an important subculture of the campus culture in colleges and universities, refers to a unique set of concepts held only by the graduate student group and distinct from the undergraduate and teacher groups within the concept system shared by the entire university. Postgraduate campus culture is of great significance for building a high-level institution, as evidenced by the heterogeneity of the graduate student group, which determines the urgency of constructing postgraduate campus culture, and the creativity of the graduate student group, which determines the importance of constructing postgraduate campus culture. To build a unique and excellent postgraduate campus culture in colleges and universities, it is necessary to start from the three levels of material culture, institutional culture, and spiritual culture, and let the three levels form a synergy.

**Keywords:** Postgraduate Campus Culture; Material Culture; Institutional Culture; Spiritual Culture

## 1. Introduction

The construction of campus culture is of great significance for building a high-level institution. Campus culture is an important carrier for educating people in colleges and universities [1], and there is a close connection between campus culture and the core competitiveness of colleges and universities [2] [3]. Campus culture also plays an important

role in cultivating students' innovative qualities [4]. Although there are few studies discussing the construction of postgraduate campus culture alone so far, constructing postgraduate campus culture is of outstanding significance for colleges and universities, whether in terms of the urgency or the importance of the construction of postgraduate campus culture.

## 2. The Connotation and Internal Levels of Postgraduate Campus Culture

### 2.1 The Connotation of Postgraduate Campus Culture

In the domestic academic circle, there are mainly the following views on the connotation of "campus culture": the "subculture" theory, such as Zhou Yan [2], defines campus culture as a kind of subculture that is both connected to and relatively independent of social culture; the "cultural phenomenon" theory, such as defining campus culture as a unique cultural phenomenon created intentionally or unintentionally during the development of a university [5, 6]; the "cultural ecosystem" theory, such as defining campus culture as a cultural ecosystem with its own distinct characteristics that is formed through long-term cultivation and accumulation during the development of the school and shared by all teachers and students [7]; the "cultural ideology" theory, such as defining campus culture as the cultural ideology that is naturally accumulated during the long-term practice in the specific region of the university and subtly dominates the behavior of teachers and students [3]; the "spiritual wealth" theory, such as defining campus culture as the spiritual wealth created by teachers and students in the specific cultural atmosphere of the school during their various activities inside and outside the classroom based on the special conditions of the school.

Most of these conceptual definitions of campus culture are descriptive, and some conceptual definition methods make the concept of campus culture itself more ambiguous by introducing another undefined concept. A good concept should not only accurately describe the object we want to study but also be suitable for the purpose of our research on this object. In this regard, Edgar H. Schein, a foundational figure in the study of "organizational culture", gives us good inspiration. Schein formally defined the concept of organizational culture based on the dynamic model of how culture is learned, inherited, and changed, believing that organizational culture is "a set of basic assumptions that are created, discovered, or developed by a given organization in the process of learning to deal with external adaptation problems and internal integration problems. It should work well and be considered effective, and therefore is used to teach new organizational members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel when facing the above problems" [8]. Referring to Schein's conceptual definition of organizational culture, we believe that the "campus culture" in colleges and universities can be understood as a concept system with its own characteristics that is formed through long-term accumulation during the development of a university and shared by all teachers and students of the school. And "post graduate campus culture", as an important subculture of the campus culture in colleges and universities, means a unique set of concepts held only by the graduate student group and distinct from the undergraduate and teacher groups within the concept system shared by the entire school.

## **2.2 The Internal Levels of Postgraduate Campus Culture**

In the domestic academic circle, there are mainly three types of analysis on the levels of campus culture: 1. It is believed that campus culture has two levels: material and spiritual, and the spiritual level includes three elements: concepts, systems, and behaviors [9]; 2. It is believed that campus culture includes the shallow material culture, the middle institutional culture, and the deep spiritual culture [10]; 3. It is believed that campus culture can be divided into three levels: management cultural environment, life cultural

environment, and learning cultural environment.

We believe that the analysis of the levels of campus culture is to better grasp the essence of campus culture. The reason why we establish a vertical profile of campus culture is to meet the needs of our observation and analysis to conform to the logic of going from the surface to the deep, and inferring the latent elements from the dominant elements. From this standpoint, postgraduate campus culture can be divided into the surface material culture, the middle institutional culture, and the deep spiritual culture. The material culture, institutional culture, and spiritual culture influence and interact with each other, forming the whole of postgraduate campus culture and jointly shaping the concepts and behaviors of graduate students.

## **3. The Significance of Constructing Postgraduate Campus Culture for Colleges and Universities**

### **3.1 The Heterogeneity of the Graduate Student Group Determines the Urgency of Constructing Postgraduate Campus Culture**

Unlike the undergraduate student group, the graduate student group naturally presents a high degree of heterogeneity. Firstly, in terms of age structure, some graduate students may enter directly from undergraduate studies in the same year of admission, while others may have worked for many years before entering graduate school, resulting in a large age difference between them. The age difference leads to many differences in concepts towards people and things. Secondly, in terms of the purpose of studying, some graduate students hope to lay the foundation for their path to academic research through their studies at the graduate level, and therefore focus on knowledge learning during their school years and study hard; some graduate students regard the graduate stage as a stepping stone to find a better-paid job after graduation, and for them, knowledge learning is not the first priority during school, but it is important to use this buffer period to contact the working world in advance and prepare themselves for job hunting after graduation; while some graduate students regard the graduate stage as a safe haven to avoid social pressure, and their purpose of studying during school is unclear.

The different purposes of studying determine the differences in attitudes towards learning during school. Thirdly, in terms of the space for study and life, some graduate students in science and engineering focus on the laboratory and studio of their supervisors, while some graduate students in liberal arts focus on classrooms and dormitories, lacking physical space intersections. Due to the differences in study and living environments, there are differences in work and rest schedules, learning methods, and interpersonal relationships among the graduate student group, which indirectly lead to differences in study and living concepts. The high degree of heterogeneity of the graduate student group caused by these factors results in many graduate student groups in colleges and universities being in a scattered state, lacking conceptual and emotional resonance with each other. What's more, since many graduate students come from other schools, the postgraduate culture of the university itself is not cohesive enough and is constantly impacted and diluted by external cultures, making it even more urgent to refine its own unique and excellent postgraduate campus culture.

### **3.2 The Creativity of the Graduate Student Group Determines the Importance of Constructing Postgraduate Campus Culture**

The biggest difference between the learning at the graduate level and the undergraduate level is that the learning at the undergraduate level is mainly based on the one-way transmission of teachers, while the learning at the graduate level needs to realize the transition from one-way transmission to two-way inspiration and knowledge creation. The undergraduate stage is the accumulation stage of professional basic knowledge, which requires the guidance of teachers hand in hand. The most important thing for undergraduates is to digest and absorb knowledge and broaden and consolidate the professional foundation. After four years of undergraduate training, graduate students already have a certain professional foundation and need to try to independently explore knowledge and build higher and sharper on a certain point of the professional foundation. This transformation in the learning method of graduate students determines that they have more creativity than undergraduates. For a

high-level institution, producing and disseminating the most cutting-edge knowledge is its foundation and destiny, and creativity is undoubtedly of great significance to colleges and universities. It is at this point that cultivating and constructing an excellent postgraduate campus culture in colleges and universities is of outstanding importance.

### **4. Exploration of the Path to Constructing Postgraduate Campus Culture**

To build a unique and excellent postgraduate campus culture in a college or university, efforts must be made in material culture, institutional culture, and spiritual culture to form a synergy among the three levels.

#### **4.1 Construction of Material Culture for Graduate Students**

Material culture is the shallowest part of graduate campus culture, and because it is the shallowest, it is also the easiest to be designed and transformed artificially in the short term. The specific manifestations of material culture include the school emblem, school motto, school song, the layout, vegetation, buildings, sculptures, and interior decorations of the campus. A common mistake made by domestic colleges and universities in the construction of material culture is to pursue grandeur and emptiness, resulting in a lack of coordination among the various material culture carriers of the university, and a lack of distinctiveness in content and form among different universities. In terms of the construction of material culture for graduate students alone, not only does it have the above-mentioned universal problems in the construction of material culture, but also the attention paid to it is far less than that of undergraduates.

In response to this situation, to strengthen the construction of material culture for graduate students, we should first recognize the unity of the three levels of material, institutional, and spiritual in the construction of campus culture. Investing in the construction of material culture is to form a synergy with institutional culture and spiritual culture to jointly shape the unique and excellent postgraduate culture of the university. Avoid chaotic and repetitive construction in the construction of material culture. In addition to paying attention to the coordination and unity among the three levels of construction of postgraduate culture, the

various carriers of material culture for graduate students should also be coordinated with each other. The school emblem, school motto, school song, campus buildings, sculptures, and interior decorations should all reflect the unique temperament consistent with the discipline characteristics of the university. Secondly, we should attach great importance to the construction of campus culture for graduate students and emphasize the academic and research character of graduate students in the construction of campus culture. Undergraduates spend a long time receiving collective teaching in the school, have a high degree of familiarity with the school emblem, school motto, and school song, and are deeply influenced by the overall cultural atmosphere of the school. Many graduate students transfer from other schools and spend a short time in collective learning in the school, and many students are not familiar with the campus culture of the school until graduation. Therefore, at the beginning of their enrollment, graduate students should be awarded the school emblem, and taught to recite the school motto and learn to sing the school song. In the places where graduate students study and live daily, such as the library, graduate laboratory, graduate studio, and graduate dormitory, portraits and sculptures of academic masters should be displayed, and the scientific research achievements and honors obtained by outstanding alumni and current graduate students should be exhibited to inspire graduate students to study hard and dare to explore. Thirdly, we should make good use of new material culture carriers such as the campus BBS and the school's Weibo to create a lively and upward virtual space for graduate students. Graduate students have different study and living schedules, and rarely have the opportunity to gather together in physical places. The campus BBS and Weibo just make up for this limitation, providing a virtual community for graduate students to share topics about study and life and place their spiritual and emotional sustenance.

#### **4.2 Construction of Institutional Culture for Graduate Students**

Institutional culture is the middle layer of postgraduate campus culture. Building a good institutional culture for graduate students can directly affect their behavior, by encouraging

and strengthening the behaviors advocated by the school, and punishing and suppressing the behaviors opposed by the school, so that the overall spiritual character of graduate students meets the educational goals set by the university.

In terms of specific practices, firstly, we should attach great importance to the formulation and implementation of graduate management regulations. A common problem in domestic colleges and universities is that they emphasize personal rule over norms. This is partly because the number of graduate students recruited by colleges and universities before was relatively small, and there was no need to introduce separate school regulations specifically for graduate students; on the other hand, it is also due to the selfishness of managers, who deliberately leave room for the operation of power. However, it is known that nothing can be accomplished without rules. In places where the regulations are ambiguous, transgressive behaviors will inevitably breed. Take the academic integrity of graduate students as an example. It is precisely because of the lack of strict regulations and the low cost of violations for counterfeiterers that academic plagiarism has been repeatedly prohibited. Secondly, we should strengthen the construction of student affairs counselor team for graduate students. For the management of undergraduates, the Ministry of Education clearly stipulates the ratio of student affairs counselors to undergraduates, but only makes constructive requirements for graduate students. In fact, the mental health issues of graduate students deserve more attention at present. Because they are exposed to more social trends of thought, face greater realistic pressure, and perceive more obvious social gaps among peers, many graduate students are lost in their thinking, which requires a large number of graduate counselors to do meticulous work. Thirdly, we should strengthen the construction of graduate class collectives and graduate student associations. The graduate class collective is the basic unit for graduate students' daily study and exchange. Building a good class collective and giving full play to the role of peers is of key significance to constructing graduate culture. Various associations of graduate students are interest platforms for graduate students to enrich their campus life and exercise their social skills.

Building good graduate student associations is an important supplement to graduate class collectives.

### 4.3 Construction of Spiritual Culture for Graduate Students

The spiritual culture of graduate students is the core layer of postgraduate campus culture. A high-level institution is renowned not because of its beautiful campus or shiny teaching buildings, but because of its excellent spirit that has stood the test of time and is still vibrant. Constructing a unique and excellent spiritual culture for graduate students in a university requires the slow influence of time. We can do some constructive work based on our own characteristics.

Firstly, we should attach great importance to the education of the school's history. Every college and university is unique and has an unforgettable past that condenses the countless hardships of its predecessors. Almost every college and university in China has established its own school history museum and archives, but these costly museums have played a limited role in the education of students on the school's history. The school's history is the most precious wealth of a college or university, and it is the step-by-step accumulation of history that has led to the campus today. For graduate students who carry the innovation and transformation power of the university, reviewing and recognizing the persistence and dedication of their predecessors can prepare them spiritually for tomorrow's struggle. Secondly, we should give full play to the exemplary role of school leaders and teachers in teaching by precept and example. School leaders and teachers are not only mentors for graduate students in knowledge but also role models in spirit. If the leaders and teachers of a university have a superficial style and improper behavior, it is easy to imagine that the students they cultivate will also imitate them. Thirdly, we should give full play to the exemplary and leading role of outstanding graduate students. For the outstanding academic models and good deeds models emerging from the graduate student group, the university should timely organize honor recognition meetings and experience sharing meetings to drive other graduate students to learn from the advanced and spread positive energy among graduate students.

### 5. Conclusion

This paper explores the connotation and internal levels of postgraduate campus culture. From the two aspects of heterogeneity and creativity of the postgraduate group, it discusses the importance of building postgraduate campus culture, and puts forward the path of building postgraduate campus culture from three levels of material culture, institutional culture and spiritual culture.

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