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# What is the self-presentation of millennial employees in WeChat?

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## ABSTRACT

WeChat Moments is a personalized stage for everyone, especially millennial employees. Basing on study objects' data, this research focuses on self-presentation of millennial employees in WeChat Moments. The study looks for the characteristics of their Moments in different jobs by classifying the methods of self-presentation. Meanwhile, it summarizes three functions of WeChat Moments, including sharing information, expressing emotions and self-disclosure. And then the research analyzes the effects of self-presentation in working and living situations.

## 1. Introduction

Since the birth of WeChat in 2011, the number of users rises in an astonishing speed. The number of logged-in users per day has increased by 35%, up to 768 million by the end of the September in 2016. After QQ and Weibo.com, WeChat has become another new style of social media. The typical users who lie on WeChat deeply are 80s and 90s, accounting for 65% of active users. They apply not only "Chats" to communicate instantly, but the "Moments" to realize self-presentation: including sharing information on Moments, uploading photos, commenting on others' contents and so on. Users tend to record the life of themselves through the Moments in order to build the self-image and anticipate getting responses from their friends and families.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Self-presentation

The study of self-presentation originates from symbolic interaction theory by George Herbert Mead. He told us that the symbol is one kind of tools to shape and change people's mind, self and social.<sup>[i]</sup> In the research of QQ Space with questionnaires, the results showed that the higher the frequency was, the more noticeable the copying behaviors were. <sup>[ii]</sup>When using WeChat to express something, individual tend to play a social role to build an ideal self-image by strategies.<sup>[iii]</sup> Undergraduates usually apply positive strategies, in-between strategies and masking strategies to realize self-presentation and self-monitoring.<sup>[iv]</sup>

### 2.2 WeChat Moments

WeChat V4.0 started in 2012, with the words" everything starts from a picture, and you can record every moment in your daily life" appearing on the surface. Now WeChat Moments has become an essential part of our life. There are there ways to present yourself in Moments. Firstly, post something in your moment. You can public original pictures, words, or pictures with words together to your friends. Secondly, share the articles from others' Moments. The last but not the most, you also can add your opinions with the articles you forward. When your friends in your WeChat read them, they can give you a like, forward to their own Moments or comment on them.

We can study the mechanism of self-presentation from the form, frequency, and motivation of sharing behaviors.<sup>[v]</sup> Moments is a stage for undergraduates to play "My show", including love, family, and interests.<sup>[vi]</sup>

### 2.3 Social Currency

Jonag Berger, who is a famous professor in the University of Pennsylvania, said that social currency was a new type of currency and put forward as an advanced concept as an emerging theory of social media economy. Social currency accounts for why people enjoy sharing knowledge and what's type of knowledge people tend to share.

As well as real money to pay for goods or services, you can be more attractive and well received by using social currency in your relationship with them. Simply, basing on individuals' enjoying sharing their mind with others, social currency is used to spread self-brand and reputation. Social currency is estimated by six dimensions, including affiliation, conversation, utility, advocacy, information and identity.<sup>[vii]</sup>

### 2.4 Millennial Employees

The term "millennial employees" was first used and mentioned in a document of government in 2010. It refers to the fact that this generation is confronted with a social environment completely different from that of the last generation. Millennial employees live in a communication age of the Internet and globalization since their childhood, so they have diversified values, possess innovative concepts and more easily accept different working environments. Also they are always eager for new experiences, willing to try different fields and positions. Besides their contribution to corporations, millennial employees also want to pursue their personal career development and improve working abilities, so their demission rate is much greater<sup>[viii]</sup>.

## 3. Date of Study Object

In this research, we select 10 members of millennial employees, and collect the sharing knowledge in their Moments from January to May in 2017 as the object of our study. Each of them has the different job. The details are as followed Table 1.

**Table 1 Study objects' jobs**

Identify Label	Job	Identify Label	Job
NO.1	Tour Guide	NO.6	Operating Officer
NO.2	Banker	NO.7	Entrepreneur
NO.3	Fund Manager	NO.8	Marketing

NO.4	HR	NO.9	College Counselor
NO.5	Professor	NO.10	Retailing Executive

According to these study objects' Moments, we can collect their detailed data. They are 375, 264, 66, 143, 22, 326, 191, 168, 205, and 37 in turn. These 10 subjects have 1797 items in total, containing 912 of posting, 302 of sharing and 583 of sharing and commenting. What's more, only NO.2 and NO.10 have more data in sharing than that in posting. Others are on the contrary, and some of the left 8 persons have more than 10 times data in posting than sharing.

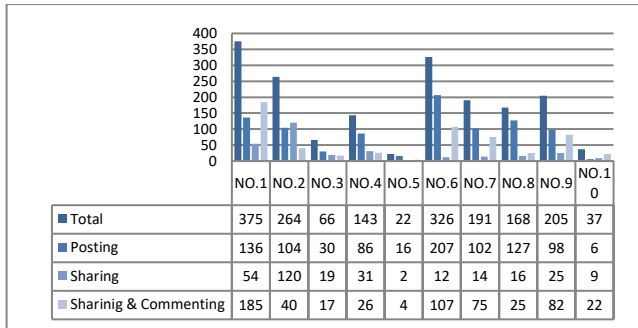


Fig.1 Detailed data of objects' Moments

4. Functions of Moments

For the sake of intensive study, we classify their sharing knowledge into two parts, working and living, basing on the previous researches.

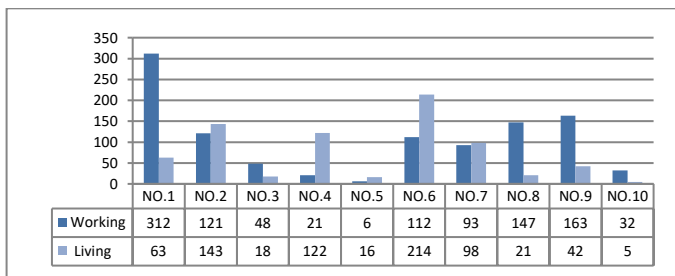


Fig. 2 Detailed data of objects' Moments

The interpersonal communication in reality has many effects, just like exchanging information, maintaining the relationship and so on. According to present researches, we summarize three functions, covering sharing information, expressing emotions and self-disclosure. Then we will explain its three functions in working and living.

In working, first of all, millennial employees usually share objective information about their work with others in their Moments, not only wanting friends around to know more about them, but sharing specific knowledge with colleagues. Secondly, millennial employees share some

articles or post some words and pictures to express their love to the company, colleagues or the job. The last but not the least, millennial employees often use Moments to label themselves and build an ideal image, which sometimes can give a surprise to their friends. For example, NO.4 showed some pictures and objective comments of her company's product and competitor's. She is not only a HR as we know, but an industry expert.

In living, in the first place, millennial employees frequently share the information they are interested in to find out the friends with similar interest, like running, drawing and traveling. Second, millennial employees are used to share the same words, pictures or articles to voice the similar emotions, namely produce affectional resonance. For instance, a hot article about huge pressure of millennial employees is almost shared by every 80s, and we can find out the same sharing in these 10 objects' Moments. Maybe this article just shouts out the difficulties of millennial employees facing in their daily life. Finally, almost all of millennial employees show their freedom in part time. Most they shared about living are delicious food, traveling or a party with friends.

Combining with the 10 study objects' jobs, tour guide, banker, operating officer, marketing and college counselor are much more likely to present themselves in Moments. Then tour guide, marketing and college counselor had more sharing and posting in working than living.

5. Conclusions

WeChat Moments is a stage for millennial employees to present themselves by posting words or pictures, sharing articles and commenting they shared. Millennial employees have performed more lively. This research focuses on millennial employees and tries best to look for the characteristics of their Moments, especially in different jobs. But the sample size is not big enough, which should be made up in further study.

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