Archives Microblogs and Archival Culture in China

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ABSTRACT

Microblogging, like Twitter in America, has become an important and influential platform for disseminating and sharing information and communicating with others in China. By October 20, 2013, 59 government public archives in China had opened their own microblogs on the biggest microblogging platform, Weibo, run by the Internet company Sina. However, the application of microblogging in Chinese archives has some problems and limitations including a small number of archives microblogs, a paucity of posts and followers, scanty information about archival holdings, lack of attention to the development of other related microblogs, and few planning or development strategies. Current studies in China allude to some of the problems and limitations of Chinese archives microblogs and articulate some recommendations, but they do not delve into the reasons for the existing problems of Chinese microblogs. This article analyzes the problems and limitations of Chinese archives microblogs from the perspective of archival culture, since organizational culture is important in determining people's patterns of thinking, feeling, acting, planning, and controlling processes within organizations; it has a great influence on the adoption and use of information and communication technologies in organizations as well as organizational performance. The article argues that the prevailing organizational culture of Chinese archives is the underlying reason for the existing problems and limitations of Chinese archives microblogs; to some degree, it blocks the adoption and development of microblogging in Chinese archives. This study, therefore, explored the problems and limitations of Chinese archives microblogs using Web investigation and semistructured interviews. It used Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory to understand the characteristics of Chinese archival culture as well as the influences of this culture on Chinese archives microblogs.

KEY WORDS

Archives microblog, Archival culture

Microblogging (*Weibo* in Chinese), like Twitter in America, has become an important and influential platform for disseminating and sharing information and communicating with others in China. This popular Chinese saying vividly describes its influence:

> When your micro blog has over 100 followers, it is an internal magazine; when your micro blog has over 1,000 followers, it is a bulletin; when your micro blog has over 10,000 followers, it is a magazine; when your micro blog has over 100,000 followers, it is a city newspaper; when your micro blog has over 1,000,000 followers, it is a national newspaper; when your micro blog has 10,000,000 followers, it is the CCTV [China Central Television].

According to the *32nd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China* issued by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC), an agency responsible for administering Internet services, surveying Internet trends, and producing statistics, there were 331 million users of microblogging in China by the end of July 2013.[1]

In 2007, the State Archives Administration of China (SAAC), the overarching national archives administration, proposed establishing an archives use system so that the general public could conveniently access archival holdings.[2] In 2011, the SAAC issued the *Twelfth Five-Year Plan for the Development of Chinese Archives Work*, requiring archives at all levels to construct archives use systems and calling on archives to publish archival information through the Internet and other media.[3] Considering the widespread influence of microblogging, some archives began to use it as a platform to publish information about their archives. By October 20, 2013, 59 verified government public archives in China had opened their own microblogs on the biggest microblogging platform, Weibo, run by the Internet company Sina. Some of these microblogs have over 10,000 followers and have indeed published some archives information. However, the application of microblogging in Chinese archives still has some problems and limitations, including the small number of archives microblogs, a paucity of posts and followers, scanty information about archival holdings, lack of attention to the development of other related microblogs, and few planning or development strategies. To date, Chinese archives microblogs have not been used to their full potential to publish archival information or to serve the people, and their social influence remains very limited.

What are the reasons for these problems and limitations? Current studies in China allude to some of the problems and limitations of Chinese archives microblogs and articulate some recommendations,[4] but they do not delve into the reasons for the existing problems with Chinese microblogs. Not knowing the reasons for the problems, it is not possible to identify effective measures to solve them.

This research, therefore, sought to fill in the gap by analyzing these problems and limitations from the perspective of archival culture, since

organizational culture is important in determining people's patterns of thinking, feeling, acting, planning, and controlling processes within organizations;[5] it has a great influence on the adoption and use of information and communication technologies in organizations as well as organizational performance.[6] This article argues that the prevailing organizational culture of Chinese archives is the underlying reason for the existing problems and limitations of Chinese archives microblogs, and, to some degree, it blocks the adoption and development of microblogging in Chinese archives. This study, therefore, explored the problems and limitations of Chinese archives microblogs using Web investigation and semistructured interviews. It used Geert Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory to understand the characteristics of Chinese archival culture as well as the way this culture influences Chinese archives microblogs.

By analyzing archival culture and its influence on the development of archives microblogs in China, the author hopes the archival community will pay more attention to archival culture and take effective measures to improve it, which will in turn promote microblogging and other new information technologies to help archives provide public services.

Discussion of Key Concepts

This article only discusses government public archives in China (also known as "comprehensive archives"), which are established according to administrative divisions or historical periods and that manage many kinds of archives within their specified scopes.[7] The "archives microblogs" discussed in this article refer only to microblogs generated by government public archives.

As organizations, archives have distinctive internal cultures. *Culture* is thought to be "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language."[8] It is the same in Chinese. Different disciplines define "culture" from different perspectives. British anthropologist Edward Taylor first proposed the term in 1871 and explained: "culture . . . is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society."[9] Since then, many definitions of culture, including that of Dutch social psychologist Geert Hofstede (which has been adopted for this research), have been proposed. Hofstede contended that culture is a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others. Symbols, heroes, rituals, and values are all manifestations of culture.[10] Based on this definition, Hofstede defined national culture as "the collective programming of the mind acquired by growing up in a particular country"[11] and organizational culture as "the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one organization from another."[12]

Archival culture in government public archives in China is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes archives from other organizations. People working for archives in a particular country have specific values, ethics, and ways of acting and interacting that set them apart from those working for other organizations in that country and from those working for archives in other countries.

Literature Review

Currently no Chinese literature has studied archives microblogs from the perspective of culture, and there is very little Chinese literature on archives microblogs or on archival culture. A review of the CNKI (the biggest Chinese periodical database) from 2009 when microblogging was first used in China, to October 20, 2013, reveals only 5 papers discussing archives microblogs in China. These studies contemplated the functions of archives microblogs, pointed out some problems of Chinese archives microblogs using Web investigation, and then put forward some recommendations to promote the development of Chinese archives microblogs. Zhe Yin believes archives microblogs can help archives promote a good public image; publicize themselves, especially their highly valuable archival holdings; communicate with the general public; and transmit other related information.[13]

Xiaochuang Yan investigated the number of Chinese archives microblogs on the platform of Sina Weibo, the numbers of their followers and posts, the number of other organizations these archives microblogs paid attention to, their opening dates, and frequency of updates. Yan concluded that the number and quality of Chinese archives microblogs are inferior to those of other Chinese government microblogs, the information posted on Chinese archives microblogs is very simple and mainly administrative, and the microblogs' interaction with the public is not good. He proposed that archives should pay attention to other microblogs, including other archives microblogs, should publish more varied information on their microblogs, and should organize professional teams to operate their microblogs.[14]

Wenqi Peng and Xinrong Huang investigated the number of archives microblogs on 4 Weibo platforms including Sina Weibo, the numbers of their followers and posts, and the content of their posts. They concluded that very few archives use microblogging to serve the people, that most archives microblogs have not attracted the attention of the public, and that the information posted on archives microblogs is boring and not valuable. They recommended that archives should attach more importance to microblogging and designate specific staff to operate their microblogs.[15]

These studies identified problems existing in Chinese archives microblogs and put forward similar recommendations, but they did not delve into the reasons for the problems of Chinese microblogs. This makes their analyses of the problems and especially their recommendations neither systematic nor in depth.

The Chinese archival community has paid little attention to archival culture; only 5 Chinese papers have examined the topic. They discussed the definition, function, and construction of archival culture. Li Luo believed that archival culture was the spiritual fortune created by archivists during the process of archives management. It includes values, professional ethics, and archives consciousness.[16] Wenjun Dong expressed a similar opinion that archival culture was the combination of values, ethics, codes of conduct, ideals, and beliefs formed through long-term archival work.[17] Hui Luo believed archival culture, as with other kinds of culture, consists of material culture and spiritual culture. Material culture is made up of archives buildings, holdings, facilities, and environment, and spiritual culture includes the values, ethics, regulations, and organizational structure of archives.[18] Hui Luo and Wenjun Dong further contended that archival culture can guide and unite archivists, restrict archivists' behavior, promote the development of archives, and influence society.[19] They mainly focused on the positive effects of a good archival culture, but Li Luo argued that archival culture can promote or restrain the development of archival work. He pointed out that, for historical reasons, the current archival culture in China hinders the development of archival work: archivists lack subject consciousness, innovative ideas, and collaborative ability; the archives are closed and only care about the government's needs; autocratic leadership exists in archives; and archives lack clarity in punishment and reward. He asserted that if archives intend to construct a positive archival culture, the priority is to improve the quality of archivists.[20]

The literature about archival culture in China provides the basis for this research, but current studies do not analyze how their definitions of archival culture are determined and do not fully discuss the characteristics of Chinese archival culture as well as its influence on archival work. There is considerable room for further research on archival culture in China. In addition, many studies on the topics of "archives microblogs" and "archival culture" were not conducted using systematic and rigorous empirical methods.

Archival research literature produced outside China in the last few years has focused on archival applications of Web 2.0, but not specifically on archives and microblogs. Some studies investigated the reasons archives are slow or do not use Web 2.0 applications. Elizabeth Yakel contended that this is because of a wariness toward moving away from the traditional relationship between archivist and researcher, as well as the archivist's desire to maintain the authority of metadata about digital collections.[21] Marta Nogueira argued that archives are

reluctant to employ Web 2.0 applications because archivists lack knowledge of such applications or do not accept them as official or valid. Web 2.0 applications also have a negative side: protection of user data may not always be guaranteed, danger exists in giving third parties with commercial motives access to data, and some of these applications may not be available for free in the future.[22] Rebecca Hopman conducted a survey of social media use in archives and special collections from July 18–31, 2012. She found that some repositories do not use social media because of lack of time (54%), lack of staff (51%), lack of interest (36%), lack of training (26%), and lack of money (10%).[23]

These studies identify a number of reasons for archives' reluctance to use Web 2.0 tools, but no findings are offered from the perspective of archival culture. In contrast, some literature discusses the influence of culture on the adoption and use of IT in the information management community. Helen Hasan and George Ditsa studied the adoption and use of IT in three regions of widely diverse cultures and argued culture influences the adoption and use of IT. They contended that successful adoption of IT is more likely to occur in a low power-distance environment[24] because, in such environments, IT staff will be more likely to give advice to managers, presumably leading to more favorable IT adoption outcomes.[25] Angel Cabrera et al. argued that organizational culture is a key construct in understanding and managing the behavior of people in an organization and in implementing organizational change. They concluded that successful technology assimilation requires either the technology to fit the organizational culture or the culture to be reshaped to fit the demands of the new technology.[26] Dorothy Leidner and Timothy Kayworth did an extensive literature review and confirmed the influence of culture on the adoption and use of information and communication technologies.[27]

Therefore, this study attempts to fill in the gaps by using empirical methods to investigate the current status of Chinese archives microblogs, applying Hofstede's theory of culture to analyze the characteristics of Chinese archival culture, and analyzing the existing problems and limitations of Chinese archives microblogs from the perspective of Chinese archival culture.

Research Design

The author took a quantitative, qualitative, and inductive approach to study the problems and limitations of Chinese archives microblogs and the characteristics of Chinese archival culture and its influence on the development of archives microblogs. Specifically, the research questions were as follows:

1. What is the current status of Chinese archives microblogs, and what problems and limitations are associated with them?
2. What are the characteristics of Chinese archival culture?

3. Does Chinese archival culture influence the employment and development of microblogging in Chinese archives?

To learn the current status, problems, and limitations of Chinese archives microblogs, the author conducted an empirical study and collected data using two methods. First, a Web investigation was carried out through October 20, 2013. Because Sina Weibo, run by the Internet company Sina, is the biggest microblogging platform in China,[28] this study chose the archives microblogs on Sina Weibo as samples. To guarantee the authenticity of the archives microblogs, only verified archives microblogs authenticated by Sina Weibo were selected. To assess the application of microblogging in archives or libraries, the following measures are often used: number of followers, number of posts, content of posts, and frequency of updates.[29] Based on these, as well as the functions of Sina Weibo,[30] this study analyzed Chinese archives microblogs using the following measures: number of archives microblogs, opening dates, number of followers, number of microblogs followed by archives, number of posts, and content and type of posts.

Second, the author conducted semistructured interviews from September 2013 to December 2013 to obtain additional information about the application of microblogging in archives. The author contacted 13 government archives in Shanghai by email, and 5 of them replied and agreed to be interviewed (for obvious reasons, all the archives and the archivists involved in the interviews are anonymous). Among them, 2 archives have launched microblogs, and the 2 archivists in charge of these microblogs were interviewed. The main questions used for the interviews were 1) Why did your archives open a microblog? 2) Are you the full-time staff in charge of the microblog? 3) Are there specially allocated funds for the management of your archives microblog? 4) Has the archives manipulated plans or strategies, or rules or regulations, concerning the development of its microblog? Why or why not? 5) What is the review process for the posts on your archives microblog? 6) Has your archives paid attention to or is it familiar with microblogs opened by other archives or libraries at home or abroad? Why or why not? 7) What are the main problems you faced during the construction of your archives microblog?

The other 3 archives have not opened their microblogs yet, and the 3 archivists in charge of the application of new technologies there were interviewed. The questions posed to them were 1) Why has your archives not opened a microblog? 2) Do you know the functions of microblogging? And do you know how to apply microblogging to archival work? 3) Do you know of or pay attention to microblogs opened by other archives or libraries at home or abroad? Why or why not? 4) Will your archives consider opening a microblog in the future? Why or why not? 5) What do you think are the main barriers to the application of microblogging in archives?

This study used Hofstede's theory on national culture to identify the characteristics of Chinese archival culture. National culture deeply influences organizational culture because "national culture enters an organization through the individuals who join the organization,"[31] and people's values and ethics are largely developed and strongly influenced by national culture before they join an organization.[32] Furthermore, as organizations, Chinese government public archives are different from companies or other corporate entities in that they are established by the state. In China, government public archives[33] are also administrative agencies.[34] Many leaders of archives are administrative officials without archival educational backgrounds, transferred from other administrative agencies. Most staff of Chinese archives are civil servants, and only some of them are professionally trained. In 2003, there were 23,086 archivists at all levels of government public archives, but only 1,660 (7%) had bachelor's degrees in archival studies, and 40% were not professionally trained at all.[35] In recent years, with the development of archival education in China, the situation has improved, but the percentage of archivists having a bachelor's degree in archival studies or above is still not high. Therefore, due to a relatively low level of professional training that might instill professional values and ethics, Chinese national culture inevitably and profoundly affects Chinese archival culture. Based on survey data about the values people hold in more than 50 countries around the world, Hofstede proposed a 5-dimensional model that allows one to perceive differences among national cultures.[36] A score on each of the 5 dimensions characterizes each country in his model.[37] Hofstede's theory on national culture has been widely applied to many areas, including information management. New Zealand archival scholar Gillian Oliver used Hofstede's theory to analyze the interactions of organizational culture with information and its management.[38] She concluded that national culture influences the culture of individual organizations and that Hofstede's dimensions had implications for information management in organizations.[39] This current study also adopted Hofstede's national culture dimensions and further pursued Oliver's findings that national culture can influence the culture of individual organizations.

Findings

Current Status of Chinese Archives Microblogs

On October 20, 2013, there were 59 verified archives microblogs on Sina Weibo. According to statistics published by the National Bureau of Statistics of the People's Republic of China, there were 3,325 government public archives in 2013.[40] The percentage of the archives establishing microblogs, therefore, was only 1.7% of the total government public archives in China. Among the 59 archives, 30 are

located in the east of China (hereinafter referred to as East),[41] and 29 are located in the midwest of China (hereinafter referred to as Midwest) (see Table 1).

Table 1. Number and Location of Archives Establishing Microblogs

	Number	Percentage ($n = 3,325$)	Location	
			East	Midwest
Archives opening microblogs	59	1.7%	30 (51%)	29 (49%)

Ten archives microblogs (17%) began in 2011 (8 archives are located in the East); 22 archives microblogs (37%) began in 2012; 27 (46%) began in 2013 (see Table 2). Considering Sina Weibo was launched in 2009,[42] archives lag behind in establishing microblogs.

Table 2. Beginning Date of Archives Microblogs

Beginning date of archives microblogs	Number of archives ($n = 59$)	Location of archives	
		East	Midwest
2013	27 (46%)	9 (33%)	22 (67%)
2012	22 (37%)	13 (59%)	5 (41%)
2011	10 (17%)	8 (80%)	2 (20%)

Among 59 archives microblogs, only 18 (30.5%) have over 1,000 followers (among them, 11 archives are located in the East, where Shijingshan District Archives, Beijing, has the largest number of followers—30,366), and 10 archives microblogs (17%) have fewer than 100 followers (among them, 8 are located in the Midwest) (see Table 3). Most Chinese archives microblogs have not attracted the attention of the public.

Table 3. Number and Location of Archives Microblogs with More than 1,000 or Fewer than 100 Followers

Number of followers	Number of archives ($n = 59$)	Location of archives	
		East	Midwest
≥1,000	18 (30.5%)	11 (61%)	7 (39%)
≤100	10 (17%)	2 (20%)	8 (80%)

Twenty-one archives microblogs (35%) followed more than 100 microblogs (10 archives are located in the East), and only Foushan Archives followed more

than 1,000 microblogs, which suggests that most archives do not pay much attention to related organizations or people (see Table 4).

Table 4. Number and Location of Archives Microblogs that Follow more than 100 Microblogs

Number of microblogs followed by archives	Number of archives (n = 59)	Location of archives	
		East	Midwest
≥100	21 (35%)	10 (48%)	11 (52%)
≥1,000	2 (3%)	2 (100%)	0 (0%)

This finding is consistent with that of the interviews. Four archivists said they have not paid attention to microblogs opened by other archives or libraries. Only one archivist said he sometimes looks through other Chinese archives microblogs, but he never pays attention to the microblogs opened by Chinese libraries or museums or foreign archives. When asked why they do not pay attention to other microblogs, 2 archivists said they had no time to do so. Another said he did not need to know about other microblogs or libraries for now, and the last 2 said it never occurred to them to pay attention to those microblogs.

Only 22 archives microblogs (37%) published over 100 posts (12 archives are located in the East); 3 published over 1,000 posts (5%). Nine archives microblogs published fewer than 10 posts (5 archives are located in the Midwest), none of which have been updated since they were opened (see Table 5).

Table 5. Number of Posts on Archives Microblogs

Number of posts on archives microblogs	Number of archives (n = 59)	Location of archives	
		East	Midwest
≥1,000	3 (5%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)
≥100	22 (37%)	12 (55%)	10 (45%)
≤10	9 (15%)	4 (44%)	5 (56%)

The contents of posts on archives microblogs include an introduction to archives; news about archival work; activities held by archives; exhibitions of the valuable archival holdings; and social news forwarded from other microblogs. Only 16 archives microblogs (27%) post digital copies of valuable archival holdings or information about archival outreach activities (15 located in the East). Some archives microblogs have many posts, but the content is not about archival holdings or archival activities. For example, the Fengjie County Archives microblog has 360 posts, but all of these posts are social news.[43]

Compared with textual information, pictures and videos are often more attractive to users. However, most posts on the archives microblogs comprise textual information. Although some archives microblogs post images, the number is very small and most are unrelated to the holdings, archival work, or archives activities. No videos were found on archives microblogs.

The 3 archivists all stated that they have not established microblogs because the leadership of the archives does not require it; they depend upon the decision of the leadership as to whether they may establish microblogs in the future. The 2 archivists who established microblogs said that the leadership of the archives required them to do so.

When asked why the leadership does not require them to establish microblogs, the 3 archivists stated that the leadership lacks awareness about microblogging. In addition, one archivist said: "The leadership does not want to take risks, because once the archives information is published on the platform of microblogging, it is easy for anyone to forward, download and spread, so it is difficult for archives to control the situation, and the leadership does not want to take risks." As for why the leadership required 2 archivists to establish microblogs, one archivist said: "The reason our leadership required us to open the microblog is because we need to issue the training notices and news to the trainees when teaching the professional training courses, and microblogging is a good platform to do that. We did not think about using the platform to publish archives or to communicate with patrons at the beginning." (Nearly all the posts on this archives microblog are news and notices about its professional training.) The other archivist said: "Our archives is always leading in adopting new technology, so the leadership required us to open the microblog to keep the fame" (but, actually, only 26 posts have been issued on this archives' microblog since it was opened 2 years ago, and all the posts are news about archival work.)

The 2 archivists emphasized that the leaders of the archives must review the information posted on their microblogs. One of the archivists said: "We are not free to post information about archives, all the information issued on the microblogs shall be reviewed by the leaders."

The 2 archivists from the archives with microblogs said that they have not yet created any plans, strategies, or regulations concerning the management and development of their microblogs; they still need time to think about the issue. They established their microblogs in 2012, one on March 27, the other on September 19.

The 2 archives that have established microblogs have not designated full-time staff to manage them. They just assign current staff to operate microblogs, some from the information technology department, some from the administrative office. And no specific fund has been established for the management of their microblogs.

The archivists interviewed mentioned the following problems and barriers to the development of archives microblogs: leadership of the archives is unfamiliar with microblogging; lack of full-time and professional staff to manage the microblogs; lack of funds; and worry that other new tools such as Wechat will replace microblogging.[44]

Dimensions of Chinese Archival Culture

According to Hofstede, the 5 dimensions of Chinese national culture are high power distance, collectivism, weak uncertainty-avoidance, masculinity, and long-term orientation. Four of Hofstede's dimensions of Chinese culture were proposed in the 1970s; the fifth, long-term orientation, was added in the 1980s. Since the 1980s, the economics and politics in China have changed dramatically due to increased openness to the rest of the world and economic reform. However, contemporary Chinese national culture has changed little, with the exception that the fifth dimension has changed from a long-term to a short-term orientation.[45] This study adopted the 5 dimensions of Chinese national culture to analyze the characteristics of Chinese archival culture.

High Power Distance

Power distance refers to the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.[46] In a high-power-distance situation, superiors and subordinates in an organization consider each other as existentially unequal, and the organization maintains a hierarchical system based on this existential inequality. Organizations centralize power as much as possible in a few hands. Subordinates expect to be told what to do. Superiors are entitled to privileges, and contacts between superiors and subordinates are supposed to be initiated by the superiors only.[47] Moreover, in high-power-distance countries, employees are frequently afraid of disagreeing with their bosses, and bosses are seen as autocratic or paternalistic.[48]

Influenced by this national culture, one of the most outstanding characteristics of Chinese archival culture is centralized power, that is, power is centralized in the leadership, and the leadership makes all decisions, including whether or not the archives uses microblogging or other new media or technologies and what information can be disclosed by new platforms such as microblogging. Leadership tells archives staff what to do, and the staff seldom disagree or they are afraid to disagree. This characteristic is consistent with the top-down, unitary administrative system of Chinese archives.

Moreover, influenced by this national culture, the relationship between archives and their patrons also is not equal, which makes Chinese archives

agency-centered rather than user-centered organizations. The leadership and staff of archives are not accustomed to interacting with the public directly or learning their needs and publishing information for them.

Collectivism

Collectivism is a second well-known characteristic of Chinese national culture, and it usually has a close relationship with high power distance. A high-power-er-distance organization is likely to be more collectivist. Chinese archives are collectivist organizations, where the leadership is like the parents of a family, and the staff members depend on the leadership and comply with the leaders. They seldom express disagreement with their leadership. In a collectivist organization, an employee's poor performance is not a reason for dismissal,[49] which is consistent with the current civil service system in Chinese archives.[50]

Weak Uncertainty-Avoidance

Organizations in countries with a weak uncertainty-avoidance index are usually characterized by having no more rules than strictly necessary, tolerating ambiguity and chaos, believing in generalists and common sense, and working hard only when needed.[51] Chinese archives exhibit similar characteristics, and the civil service system gives the staff in archives little sense of urgency.

Long-Term Orientation versus Short-Term Orientation

Affected by economic reform, more and more organizations in China are adopting a short-term rather than a long-term orientation. Chinese archival culture is also affected by short-term orientation. Furthermore, the heads of Chinese archives, transferred from other agencies, will usually transfer to other agencies after one or two terms, so they are more concerned with short-term effects than long-term direction.

Masculinity versus Femininity

On this dimension, Chinese archives differ from the assessment of national culture in that they are more oriented toward femininity than masculinity. Hoftstede et al. argued that "It did make sense to call some occupations more masculine and others more feminine. It was no surprise that the masculine occupations were mostly filled by men, and the feminine occupations mostly by women. And men in feminine occupations held more feminine values

than women in masculine occupations."[52] According to statistics issued by the National Archives Administration of China in its report *The Number and Age of Archivists, 1996–2005*, from 1995 to 2004, female archivists comprised nearly 65% of all archivists.[53] The situation remains similar today. In a feminine-oriented organization, the staff usually are modest, conservative, and less ambitious. At the same time, as administrative agencies, the long-term closed administrative culture in China deeply affects archives. All of these combined, therefore, promote a closed and risk-averse culture in Chinese archives.

Discussion

Because of the centralized power in Chinese archives, the leaders of archives play an extremely important role in the adoption of new technology and the disclosure of archival information. Therefore, as the interviews found, archival leadership decides on the adoption of microblogging and the posts to the archives microblogs. However, the leaders of Chinese archives are usually administrative officials who have no archival educational background. For them, ensuring archives are kept secure and confidential is the priority; they are very cautious about publishing information about archives or archival work. Meanwhile, influenced by the closed, risk-averse, and agency-centered culture of Chinese archives, few archival leaders will initiate microblogging to publish archival holdings and interact with users. This is the first barrier to archives microblogging. Therefore, nearly 98% of archives in China have not established microblogs yet.

Archives establishing microblogs may have recognized the benefits of microblogging and want to try this platform, but archival culture deeply affects the development of archives microblogs.

Short-term orientation restrains the long-term development of Chinese archives microblogs. Establishing microblogs can gain face for some archives in the short run, but their development is time consuming and requires deliberate planning, professional staff, and investment of funds. The benefits of microblogging take a long time to realize; moreover, there are some risks to using microblogging to publish information or interact with users, and, with the rapid development of information technology, the sustainability of microblogging is still debatable. The leaders of power-centralized archives, therefore, do not concern themselves with developing microblogs. Without leadership's attention and support, no full-time staff would be designated to manage archives microblogs, no funds would be invested, and no long-term development plans, rules, or regulations would be stipulated. Short-term orientation results in archives microblogs that are "displays" containing scant information, brief introductory posts, or news about the archives' work that is not classified or sensitive. Such microblogs might

even contain information unrelated to archives. These archives microblogs do not attract the public's attention, so their followers are very few.

Weak uncertainty-avoidance keeps Chinese archives from adopting too much new technology; therefore, Chinese archives have lagged behind in adopting microblogging (not until 2011 did 10 archives establish their microblogs, and half of the archives microblogs were established in 2013). Weak uncertainty-avoidance also makes archives slow to stipulate the necessary development plans, strategies, or rules for the development of archives microblogging, so until recently, no archives had done so.

Collectivism has a negative effect on the enthusiasm of staff in charge of archives microblogs. Because no full-time staff are dedicated to overseeing archives microblogs in Chinese archives, staff in charge of archives microblogs must also fulfill their other job duties. Spending extra time or energy microblogging inevitably adds to their workloads, and, because in the collectivist organization performance is reason for neither dismissal nor promotion, staff may be reluctant to spend extra time and effort. Therefore, some archives have never updated their microblogs; the information on their microblogs is scanty and simple; and the benefits of archival microblogs have not been fully realized.

The closed, risk-averse culture also makes archivists very conservative in adopting new information technologies or new media, and some archivists do not know or are not interested in learning how to fully employ archives microblogs. Therefore, they care little about other information organizations' activities, and they do not have a clear sense or are not eager to know how other archives are using microblogs or other social media. Furthermore, in the archives of this culture, the leadership and staff are used to dodging risks, including the possible risks brought about by the disclosure of archives holdings on microblogging platforms. After all, third-party companies operate the current microblogging platforms; once information is published on these platforms, it is difficult for archives to control it. Therefore, most archives are reluctant to post holdings on their microblogs. The agency-centered culture further exacerbates these problems, so posts issued on Chinese archives microblogs do not focus on users' needs but mainly contain "safe" information such as a simple introduction or even irrelevant information. Archives seldom use microblogging to interact with patrons or encourage them to participate in the interpretation of archival holdings.

Conclusion

The organizational culture of archives embodies and determines the archivists' specific values, ethics, and modes of acting and interacting. Influenced by the national culture, Chinese archival culture is characterized by centralized power, agency centrism, collectivism, weak uncertainty-avoidance, short-term

orientation, and closed and risk-averse behavior. The organizational culture exerts considerable influence on the development of Chinese archives microblogs and results in the current problems and limitations surrounding them, including few existing archives microblogs, a paucity of posts and followers, scant information about archival holdings, little attention given to the development of other related microblogs, and lack of planning or development strategies. Furthermore, the core values of microblogging as a social media tool are participation, openness, transparency, and equality, all of which Chinese archival culture contradicts to some degree. Therefore, Chinese archival culture is the underlying reason for the current problems and limitations of Chinese archives microblogs, or, we can say that the current prevailing Chinese archival culture has more or less blocked the adoption and development of microblogging in Chinese archives.

This research only used Hofstede's theory to analyze Chinese archival culture, and interviews were limited to some archivists in Shanghai. Therefore, the findings of this study may not be generalized to other cases. Future studies could delve further and more richly into Chinese archival culture by using an ethnographic approach. Interviewing archivists from other regions to improve the representativeness of the study would also serve to validate these findings. Future studies could also compare the differences between archives microblogs in the east of China and those in the midwest to identify factors affecting the archival culture. They could explore the measures that our archival community can take to improve archival culture to benefit public services and outreach. Furthermore, parallel comparative studies could examine the differences in archives microblogs in China and other countries and then relate this to the differences in archival culture in the various countries.

Notes

[1] CNNIC, *32nd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China*, http://www.cnnic.cn/hlwfzyj/hlwxzbg/ hlwtjbg/201307/P020130717505343100851.pdf.

[2] State Archives Administration, "Advice on the Archives of People's Well Being, " http://daj.loulan .gov.cn/gongwenwenjian/2013-06-03/36076.html

[3] State Archives Administration, "The Twelfth Five-Year Plan for the Development of Chinese Archives Work," http://www.jyb.cn/info/jyzck/201103/t20110311_419089.html.

[4] See Zhe Yin, "Study on the Opportunities and Challenges of Archives Brought by Microblog," *Beijing Archives* 5 (2012): 18–21; Xiaochuang Yan, "Analysis on the Status of Micro Blogs of Archives Administrations," *Archives Management* 2 (2013): 66–67; Wenqi Peng and Xinrong Huang, "Research on the Situation and Problems in the Application of Microblogs in Chinese Archives," *Shannxi Archive* 4 (2012): 38–39.

[5] Geert Hofstede, Gert Jan Hofstede, and Michael Minkov, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind*, 3rd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2010), 315.

⁶ See D. E. Leidner and T. Kayworth, "A Review of Culture in Information Systems Research: Towards a Theory of IT-Culture Conflict," *MIS Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2006): 357–99; K. S. Cameron and R. E. Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture: Based on the Competing Values Framework* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005), 5.

⁷ See DA/T1—2000, "General Terminology for Archives Work," http://www.nmgepb.gov.cn/tslm/dagl/hb/201009/t20100930_66211.html.

⁸ R. Williams, *Keywords* (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1983), 87.

⁹ Edward Taylor, *Primitive Culture London,* 1st ed. (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, W., 1871), 1.

¹⁰ Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 6, 8.

¹¹ Geert Hofstede, *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind,* 1st ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 1997), 262.

¹² Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations*, 344.

¹³ Zhe, "Study on the Opportunities and Challenges of Archives Brought by Microblog," 18–21.

¹⁴ Xiaochuang, "Analysis on the Status of Microblogs of Archives Administrations," 66–67.

¹⁵ Wenqi and Xinrong, "Research on the Situation and Problems in the Application of Microblogs in Chinese Archives," 38–39.

¹⁶ Li Luo, "The Construction of Archives Culture," *Archives Management* 2 (1990): 17–19.

¹⁷ Wenjun Dong, "Study on Archives Management and Archives Culture," *Zhejiang Archives* 12 (1994): 4–5.

¹⁸ Hui Luo, "Research on Archives Culture," *Dang An* 1 (1996): 17–18.

¹⁹ Wenjun, "Study on Archives Management and Archives Culture"; Hui, "Research on Archives Culture."

²⁰ Li, " The Construction of Archives Culture."

²¹ Elizabeth Yakel, "Inviting the User into the Virtual Archives," *OCLC Systems and Services; International Digital Library Perspectives* 22, no. 3 (2007): 159–163.

²² Marta Nogueira, "Archives in Web 2.0: New Opportunities," *Ariadne*, no. 33 (April 2010), http://www.ariadne.ac.uk/issue63/nogueira/.

²³ Rebecca Hopman, "2012 Survey Results Social Media Use in Archives and Special Collections," http://rebeccahopman.com/index/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2012surveyresults.pdf

²⁴ In a low-power-distance environment, superiors and subordinates treat each other equally. Subordinates expect to be consulted and will readily approach and contradict their superiors. Also, superiors encourage independent thought and contributions to problem solving and expect to be challenged.

²⁵ H. Hasan and G. Ditsa, "The Impact of Culture on the Adoption of IT: An Interpretive Study," *Journal of Global Information Management* (January–March 1999): 5–15.

²⁶ Angel Cabrera, Elizabeth F. Cabrera, and Sebastian Barajas, "The Key Role of Organizational Culture in a Multi-System View of Technology Driven Change," *International Journal of Information Management* (June 2001): 245–61.

²⁷ Leidner and Kayworth, "A Review of Culture in Information Systems Research," 357–99.

²⁸ Weibo.com, The Internet Map, http://internet-map.net/#4-49.972337008878064-157.89597744831835.

²⁹ Chunbo Hu, "Investigation and Analysis on Microblog Services in Public Libraries in China," *Library and Information* 3 (2012): 96–99; Jing Zhang, "The Current State and Inspiration of Chinese Library Micro Blogs," *New Century Library* 5 (2012): 81–83, 26; Nang Zhang, "Investigation on the Application of Microblog in Chinese Libraries and the Development Strategies," *Information and Documentation Work* 1 (2012): 102–4.

³⁰ The functions of Sina Weibo include publishing information including text, pictures, and videos; forwarding information; becoming the others' followers; commenting on posts; and searching posts. See Sina Weibo, http://baike.baidu.com/view/2762127.htm.

³¹ Linda Smircich, "Concepts of Culture and Organizational Analysis," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 3 (1983): 339–58.

³² Geert Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations across Nations* (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2001), 10.

³³ The Chinese archives management system is centralized. At the central level are the Central Archives and the State Archives Administration. At the local level are the local government public archives and local archives administration, which are subordinate to the Central Archives and the State Archives.

[34] By the *Scheme on the Allocation of Function, Internal Organization, Personnel Arrangement* of *the Central Archives and the State Archives Administration* enacted jointly by the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Council. In 1993, the Central Archives and the State Archives Administration were merged into one agency. Since then, the archives and archives administration at all levels have merged into one agency, so the archives in China is also an administrative agency.

[35] Hua Fu, "Behind the Prosperous Digit: Analysis on the State of Archivists in China," *Zhejiang Archives* 1 (2007): 10–13.

[36] The 5 dimensions are power distance, collectivism versus individualism, femininity versus masculinity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-term versus short-term orientation.

[37] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations,* 31, 38.

[38] Gillian Oliver, "Investigating Information Culture: A Comparative Case Study Research Design and Methods," *Archival Science* 4 (2004): 287–314.

[39] Gillian Oliver, "Cultural Dimensions of Information Management," *Journal of Information and Knowledge Management* 2, no. 1 (2003): 53–61.

[40] The number of comprehensive archives is available at http://data.stats.gov.cn/search.htm?s=档案.

[41] "East" refers to the districts located in the east of China, mainly including 11 provinces: Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Liaoning, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian, Shandong, Guangdong, Hainan. Accordingly, the rest of China is called midwest. Relatively, the districts located in the east of China are more developed in economy than those in the midwest of China.

[42] *Wikipedia,* s.v. "Sina Weibo," http://zh.wikipedia.org/wiki/%E6%96%B0%E6%B5%AA%E5%BE%AE%E5%8D%9A.

[43] Fengjie Archives, http://e.weibo.com/u/3079225262?ref=http%3A%2F%2Fweibo.com%2F3219718643%2Fmyfollow%3Ft%3D1%26gid%3D3533134580993606%26page%3D1.

[44] Wechat is an app developed by Tencent Company, an Internet company in China. This app can be installed on mobile phones or other mobile terminals and provides services such as sharing information as text, pictures, videos, audio, and chatting, and communicating by sending text or voice messages.

[45] Hengxiao Xie, "The Effect of Chinese Culture on the Innovation from the Perspective of Hofstede's Theory on Culture," *Science and Technology Monthly* 1 (2007): 27–29.

[46] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations,* 61.

[47] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations,* 76.

[48] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations,* 61.

[49] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations,* 120.

[50] In China, civil servants have life tenure. They will not be fired because of poor performance unless they commit crimes or violate the discipline.

[51] Hofstede et al., *Cultures and Organizations,* 217.

[52] Hofstede, *Culture's Consequences,* 150.

[53] Yuan Rao, "Question and Rethink the Feminization of Archivists," *Archives Bulletin* 2 (2008): 13–16.

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