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RESEARCH ARTICLE

RESEARCH ON THE OPTIMIZATION OF COLLEGE SECOND-HAND TRADING PLATFORM IN THE BACKGROUND OF GENERATION Z

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ABSTRACT

In the Background of Generation Z and low-carbon lifestyle, the second-hand market in universities has attracted attention of public. Therefore, this paper analyzes the current situation of the second-hand market in universities and finds the market has great potential, and the trading goods have a trend of diversification and high-end. It is believed that the second-hand market in universities may become a blue ocean market. At the same time, the study clarifies the problems encountered in the development of second-hand trading in universities, such as lacking of professional campus trading platform, complex product categories, uneven quality and limited by time, place et al. To deal with the problems above mentioned, we point out some suggestions, like establishing a professional second-hand trading platform, classifying and labeling products and so on. It is also suggested that students in colleges should be actively guided to have a full understanding of second-hand goods in order to better promote the healthy development of second-hand economy in colleges. Furthermore, the optimization of the universities second-hand trading platform can also enhance the environmental awareness of Generation Z and help the country vigorously develop a low-carbon economy.

KEYWORDS

Generation Z; second-hand trading platform; college; low-carbon

1. INTRODUCTION

With the carbon peaking and carbon neutrality goals, consumers' awareness of environmental protection have risen, so second-hand e-commerce platforms have been developing rapidly in recent years. idle transactions have developed from a relative niche The money-saving behavior has developed into a fashionable lifestyle, especially loved by young consumers (Wang and Ding, 2022). Among them are the figures of Generation Z (Gen Z), whose contrasting behavior of not loving new goods and loving "second-hand goods" has also been highly valued by all walks of life.

Gen Z, also known as the "Internet Generation" and "Digital Media Indigenous", refers to the generation born between 1995 and 2009. Those people are influenced by digital information technology and familiar to intelligent terminal equipments, therefore they have been seamlessly connected to the Internet information era since birth (Anya, 2022). In China, the population of "Gen Z" is about 264 million, accounting for 19% of the total population. In 2021, Gen Z has leveraged the consumption space of more than 5 trillion yuan. It is predicted that the overall consumption scale of China's Generation Z will grow to 16 trillion yuan in 2035, which means that the influence of Gen Z consumer groups is quite significant. China Youth Network and Economic Observation Network both published articles about the current situation of Gen Z consumers in China's second-hand market and the fast cycle of "circular fashion". The "circular fashion" is popular among Gen Z. The above information is conveying that the green trend of second-hand trading is popular among the young groups, especially Gen Z. Gen Z may become the mainstream of the second-hand trading market.

2. THE CURRENT SITUATION OF THE SECOND-HAND TRADING MARKET

2.1 E-commerce Platform with Huge Potential

With e-commerce development and consumption upgrade, China's second-hand transaction market has gradually shifted from offline to online. As shown in Figure 1., the scale of second-hand e-commerce users in China exceeded 263 million in 2022, and the total transaction volume has reached an astonishing 480.2 billion yuan in the same year, with a year-on-year growth of 20% compared with 2021. China's second-hand trading market conforms to the trend of the Internet era and completes the online transformation. The number of online users and transaction volume of China's second-hand e-commerce trading platform have achieved a great leap in just a few years.

2.2 Second-Hand Goods in Universities Tend to be Diversified and High-End

The commodity sources of second-hand are relatively special, most of which are idle goods or obsolete goods of consumers, so the commodities in the second-hand market of universities are closely related to the daily necessities of college students. With the continuous improvement of consumption level and the optimization and upgrading of consumption structure, the commodities circulating in the second-hand trading market of universities are also advancing with the Times, and the categories are gradually developing towards diversification and high-end.

According to the "Emission Reduction Report", the current scope of China's idle goods trading has covered almost all consumer goods categories, including 3C electronic products, clothing and accessories,

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household goods, and books. In addition, such as shoes, handicrafts, and peripheral products are also popular among Gen Z in the college.

At the same time, the secondary market of universities is also showing high-end transformation. The goods in second-hand market of college are filled with 3C digital products, sneakers, and high-value products such as art toys. In addition, there are also many niche second-hand goods, such as Han-style clothing and Lolita, which are expensive. The technical

threshold and technical requirements for trading platforms are also higher, which will lead to more convenient and modern trading platforms being favored by consumers. Meanwhile, external second-hand e-commerce platforms are capturing the market share of second-hand trading platforms in colleges. Therefore, the university's second-hand market needs to establish competitive advantages, including providing effective services, technology, and branding, to gain a foothold in the highly competitive second-hand market (Sun et al, 2022).

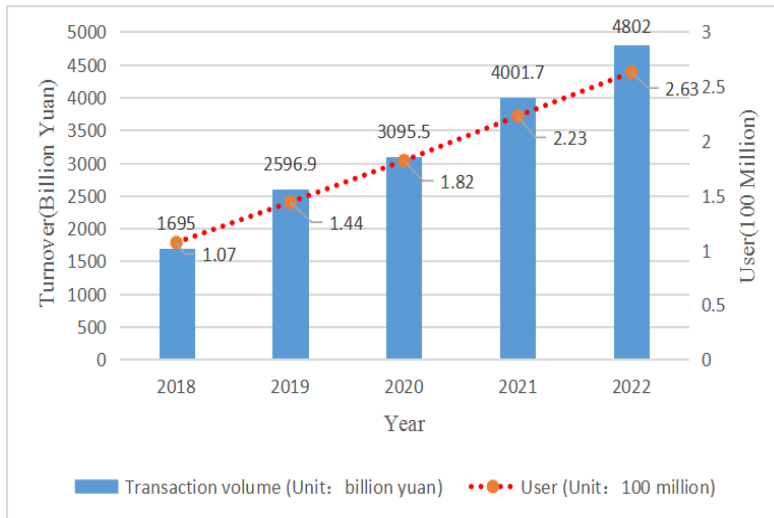


Figure 1: Second-hand E-commerce Industry Transaction Size and User Size from 2018 to 2022
Data from: Web Economics, "2022 Annual China Used E-Commerce Market Data Report"

2.3 The Universities May Become a Blue Ocean Market

According to the E-Commerce Research Center's analysis, the valuation of Xianyu, Zhuanzhuan is more than 20 billion yuan, and Wanwu's latest market value is 618 million dollars, The business of these three platforms occupy most of the second-hand market share. The rest of the platforms, such as Ai Huishou, Duo Zhuayu et al. have chosen to focus on verticals, and among them, the second-hand market of colleges, where Gen Z is highly gathered, is a blue ocean market of concern.

In recent years, as China's universities continue to expand, universities

have become a huge consumer market. As shown in Figure 2, the number of new students in China's universities reached 10.145 million, and the total size of China's higher education students reached a record high of 36.594 million in 2022. For second-hand trading platforms, the large number of college students with strong spending power and relatively high acceptance of second-hand trading makes them an ideal user group. With the development of China's circular economy, the society has put some new requirements of environmental management and resource recycling on colleges, and it is difficult for colleges to complete alone, which also provides the possibility for enterprises to enter the market of colleges.

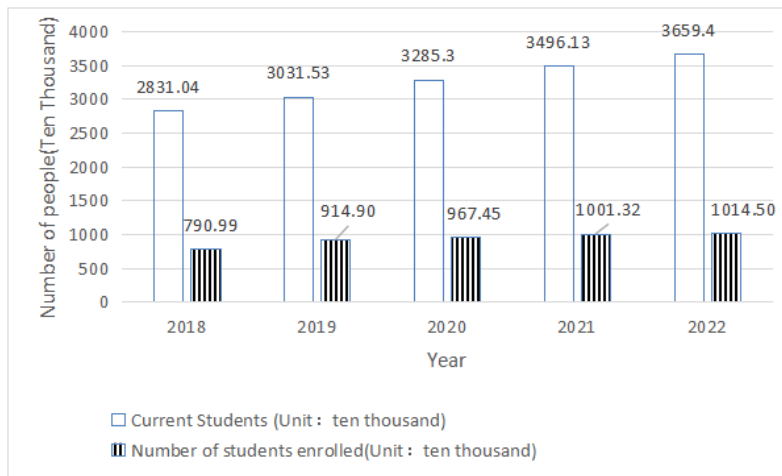


Figure 2: The number of students in colleges and the number of enrollment from 2018 to 2022
Data from: Web Economics, National Bureau of Statistics

3. PROBLEMS IN THE SECOND-HAND TRADING MARKET OF COLLEGES

3.1 Lacking of Professional On-campus Trading Platform

Most universities have not established exclusive second-hand trading platforms, students mainly rely on the group of QQ or WeChat for second-hand trading, lacking of professional platform. This kind of mode exists much shortcomings (Wu et al, 2022). Firstly, the group chat is single and inconvenient without other facilitated functions, resulting high turnover and hard to form a good trading system. Secondly, the trading group lacks an entry threshold, and constraint mechanism, which brings some security risks. In addition, the second-hand trading market established by

groups is relatively narrow in scope, and can only be promoted by users themselves. The current publicity of the second-hand market in colleges is still low, which makes the audience of the second-hand market in colleges limited and the dissemination efficiency is low. Finally, because the information about products is released in the group chat, the information of products in the front of the group chat is easily covered by the information sent later, which is not convenient to catch the information needed.

3.2 Lacking of Evaluation Standards for Kinds of Goods

College students trade a wide variety of second-hand goods, however, because of the difference in value and purchasing power, those goods are

roughly divided into high-end, middle and low-end goods. Due to the lack of professional management, there is no clear standard to judge the value of second-hand products, resulting in the value judgment of both buyers and sellers is prone to deviation. If the quality and price fail to meet buyers' expectations, it will affect users' shopping experience and affect the success rate of goods transaction. Similarly, if the price is lower than the seller's psychological expectations, it will also affect their motivation. In order to enhance the success rate of second-hand transactions, it is necessary to improve the evaluation criteria for the types of goods in the campus second-hand market in order to increase users' confidence in purchasing and to guarantee the quality of goods (Xiao et al, 2022).

3.3 Restricted by Time and Place

Compared with the society, colleges are closed to a certain extent, which easily leads to the secondary trading market limitation, rather than forming a regional scale system. In the graduation season, the second-hand goods market oversupply, due to the lack of professional platform to put on the shelves, promotion, resulting in a waste of resources. When freshmen are enrolled, the demand is greater than the supply, and orders are lost. The time difference and information asymmetry of graduation season and enrollment of new students are easy to cause a serious imbalance in the relationship between supply and demand. In the construction of second-hand trading market, certain adjustments should be made on the basis of different time and place, so as to alleviate the impact of different time and place (Yi et al, 2020). On the other hand, the trading of second-hand goods in universities is also affected by logistics factors (Guo, 2022). Although the price of second-hand goods in universities is low, if you want to trade with people outside the university, you need to bear high transportation costs, which makes it difficult to form a regional scale system, so that goods can only be sold in your own university, which tends to lead to an excessive hoarding of similar products, but too few buyers are difficult to sell the goods.

4. OPTIMIZATION MEASURES OF UNIVERSITY SECOND-HAND MARKET

4.1 Build an Online and Offline Second-Hand Trading Platform

First of all, in order to improve the quality and efficiency of second-hand commodity trading on colleges, an on-colleges trading platform integrating online and offline sales should be established, instead of over-relying on the chatting groups (Pan and Hong, 2022). Users can enter the online platform through authentication, and then release the second-hand commodities that conform to the regulations of the platform. In addition, an organization dedicated to the second-hand commodity trading is established offline, which is responsible for the management and maintenance of the second-hand trading platform and the formulation of some rules, as well as the formulation and publicity of activities. This kind of mode solves the security problem of the second-hand trading market in colleges to a certain extent, and provides users with certain transaction protection. Secondly, the colleges' second-hand trading platform should further enrich its means of operation and improve user stickiness. Diversified functions can be introduced on the platform, such as adding some functional sections such as leasing, proxy business and social networking, or introducing some interesting multiplayer games into the platform, so as to attract more users and improve the exposure and recognition of the platform. Finally, it is necessary to enrich the publicity methods of the second-hand trading platform (Li, 2021). For example, through the cooperation of the school community departments, regular green environmental protection lectures and competitions are held, which not only promotes the low-carbon concept, but also enhances the popularity of the second-hand commodity trading platform.

4.2 Classify and Label Products and Provide Guarantees

In order to improve the browsing efficiency and convenience of second-hand trading in universities, certain commodity groups can be set on the online second-hand trading platform, for example, commodities can be divided into convenience goods, durable goods, electronic products, etc. Sellers can choose the corresponding commodity category group according to their own product information. At the same time, sellers can also classify commodities of different quality and damage degree and specify different price ranges. In the offline trading place, they can also classify goods according to the online platform, divide different locations for users to browse, and price according to different damage degree. For some second-hand electronic products or other high-value goods, the platform can provide third-party identification according to the buyer's requirements, so as to improve the user's trust in the platform. By identifying the authenticity of the goods, it can prevent students from being cheated in the transaction of large-value goods such as electronic

products and provide more security for the transaction of large-value goods. In short, no matter it is online platform or offline trading place, by classifying and integrating second-hand goods according to different categories and providing a firm third party for large amount of electronic goods, users can better improve the transaction efficiency and security of their second-hand goods, thus solving the problems mentioned above, such as high information coverage rate of second-hand trading market, difficult to find and security. At the same time, it can avoid buyers' expectations when they see the product. Further promote the development of second-hand trading platform of the whole university.

4.3 Mediating Market Resources to Ease the Balance Between Supply and Demand

In the graduation season, college graduates usually sell a lot of second-hand goods. The second-hand trading platform of colleges and universities can recycle necessities and other easily sold products needed by freshmen to alleviate the waste of resources. Recycled secondhand items can be stored in offline trading venues and sold in bulk during the freshman season. Generation Z college students have a higher tolerance for second-hand goods and are willing to consume such second-hand goods. The transfer through the platform not only avoids the waste of resources, but also enables the freshmen to buy appropriate second-hand goods. At the same time, it can promote the platform and enhance the visibility. In addition, in order to solve the problem of excessive recycling of second-hand goods on university platforms, relevant second-hand goods can be transported to other nearby university platforms for trading and selling, expanding the trading area, and gradually forming a regional and wider range of second-hand trading market system, improving the platform influence and increasing the number of active users.

5. CONCLUSION

Under the background of Generation Z consumption, the problem of second-hand commodity trading market has attracted more and more people's attention. At present, as a special position with the largest number of people in the Z era, colleges and universities should establish a second-hand commodity trading platform specially serving colleges and universities, and this platform should be perfected. This paper aims to discuss a series of problems existing in the process of second-hand economy development in colleges and universities, and put forward effective solutions. In addition to establishing a more perfect second-hand commodity trading platform in colleges and universities, we also need to strengthen the supervision and management of second-hand commodity trading platform, so as to protect the rights and interests of students in the platform and improve the efficiency of students' second-hand commodity trading. In addition, it is also necessary to strengthen the promotion of green and environmentally friendly second-hand commodity trading concepts and integrity awareness, actively guide college students to have a full understanding of second-hand commodities, and promote the healthy development of second-hand economy in universities. But the most important thing is to widely apply these measures to reality, grasp and implement.

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