

An investigation of new forms of youth entertainment in Generation Z's crystal healing practices

Yiyan Huang

School of Literature and Communication, Guangdong Polytechnic Normal University, Guangzhou, China

13682832856@163.com

Abstract. Generation Z youth have reshaped natural minerals into healing carriers integrating aesthetic, social and gaming functions, thus turning crystal healing into an emerging form of youth entertainment practice. Taking the crystal healing phenomenon on platforms such as Xiaohongshu and Douyin as the research object, this paper conducts analysis from three dimensions: emotion, identity and value. The study finds that Generation Z achieves emotional comfort in entertainment practices through re-enchantment narratives and ritualized performances, and attains identity recognition via circle discourse and subcultural symbols. However, vigilance is required against commercial capital weaving consumption illusions by virtue of symbolic value, which traps individuals in the information enclosure constructed by algorithms. While over-reliance on metaphysical narratives can provide temporary comfort, it tends to cover up practical problems and cause subjects to lose the courage to change the status quo. In view of this, individuals should establish rational cognition and regard crystals as an auxiliary tool; the society shall build a diversified psychological support system to reduce metaphysical dependence. Ultimately, it is necessary to transform psychological energy into practical actions and seek a dynamic balance between spiritual sustenance and rational practice, so as to reconstruct inner order.

Keywords: crystal healing, Generation Z, youth entertainment, youth subculture

1. Introduction

In recent years, crystals, as traditional natural minerals, have undergone remarkable cultural reshaping and meaning shift among Generation Z youth, evolving from simple ornaments into a highly sought-after "healing medium" for this generation. Generation Z refers to young people born between 1995 and 2009. As digital natives, they are deeply influenced by social structural transformation, technological revolution and cultural changes, presenting distinctive individualized characteristics, flat social interaction patterns and circle-oriented consumption tendencies [1]. On social media platforms, crystals are re-narrated as "healing artifacts" and carriers of "metaphysical fortune reversal" that bring good luck, heal psychological trauma and enhance energy. Taking the Xiaohongshu app as an example, the topic¹ #Crystal has garnered over 4.3 billion views

¹ Data source: Topic pages of "#Crystal" and "#Energy Crystal" on Xiaohongshu App, <https://www.xiaohongshu.com/>

and more than 46 million discussions; the topic #EnergyCrystal has exceeded 2.1 billion views and over 25 million discussions. Generation Z youth's demands for crystals combine emotional comfort with pragmatic expectations such as "attracting wealth", "improving academic performance" and "warding off malicious people". In the process of selecting, wearing, sharing and exchanging crystals, they experience aesthetic pleasure and social fun, and further transform overwhelming survival pressure into operable daily rituals to regain the power of interpretation and control over life. As a result, crystal healing transcends the mere category of religion or superstition and evolves into a new type of entertainment practice integrating aesthetics, metaphysics, social interaction and self-expression.

Academic research on youth entertainment has gradually shifted from the functional explanation of early leisure sociology to cultural interpretation, regarding it as a composite practice of emotional comfort, identity expression, circle belonging and value negotiation. Ao Chengbing's investigation of Generation Z's consumption concepts points out that Generation Z's consumption has incorporated subcultural identity and value expression [2]. From the perspective of symbolic consumption, Jean Baudrillard argues that what people consume is the symbolic meaning represented by objects, and this theory has been widely verified in youth studies [3]. Studies by Ma Zhonghong et al. on youth subculture and bullet-screen websites regard entertainment as a process for youth to organize styles and accumulate cultural capital in digital spaces [4]. Studies on "sang culture", blind boxes, "guochao (national trend)", buddy socializing and internet-famous check-in spots also define entertainment as a comprehensive process of emotional comfort, flexible social interaction and symbolic consumption [5-12]. Research on blind boxes is a representative achievement in recent years: Liu Senlin examines the formation mechanism of Generation Z's blind box consumption landscape [13]; Ding Yanyan et al. focus on the dilemma and generation of identity in blind box practices [14]; Yang Faxiang and Li Anqi reveal its emotional demands [15]; Yue Qizhen and Sheng Qizhi regard blind boxes as Generation Z's "social currency" and emotional bond [16]. Short video and game research constitutes another important section: Wen Fengming and Xie Xuefang point out that algorithms are not neutral technologies [17]; Zhou Ye and Zhang Yuhan further reveal young people's path dependence on fragmented entertainment content under the logic of capital and traffic. Research on merchandise consumption and star-chasing practices focuses on symbolic consumption and emotional investment [18]; Wang Yongtao summarizes Generation Z's subcultural consumption as "emotional tribe" behavior [9]; Peng Lan discusses how entertainment is deeply coupled with circles and platforms from three dimensions: relationship, culture and technology.

Metaphysical elements have become increasingly prominent in emerging entertainment forms in recent years. Blind box draws, fortune-telling interpretations in star-chasing circles, divination culture in games, and topics on constellations and tarot together reflect the two-way penetration of the entertainment of metaphysics and the metaphysicalization of entertainment. As digital natives, Generation Z generally refers to young people born between 1995 and 2009, presenting individualized, flat and circle-oriented tendencies. Research on Generation Z's metaphysical practices continues to emerge: Zeng Yiguo, based on post-subcultural theory, points out that Western astrology has evolved into a "new folk belief" in China's network society; Liu Youjia and Liu Jianfeng warn of the risk of "transcendentalization of belief" accompanying constellation worship [19-22]; You Zhichun and Zhao Yueying point out that MBTI has become young people's "social currency" and ice-breaking tool, but excessive obsession will trap people in the trap of consumerism [23]; Li Sheng et al. investigate youth online divination from the perspective of network subculture, revealing the interactive characteristics of virtual dependence and subjective integration [24]; Dang Qiaoqiao's discussion on Generation Z's "pseudo-sense of ritual" starts from the cultural level to investigate the representation patterns and realistic causes of youth ritual practices [25]. However, crystal healing, as a metaphysical entertainment

practice with material, aesthetic, ritual and wearable properties, still lacks systematic investigation: relevant studies mostly classify crystals into the general category of metaphysical consumption, lack in-depth analysis of its material and entertainment attributes that distinguish it from other metaphysical carriers, and relatively insufficient integrated investigation from the three dimensions of emotion, identity and value.

This paper adopts digital ethnography as the main research method. Since October 2025, it has continuously followed core topics such as #Crystal, #EnergyCrystal and #CrystalHealing on Xiaohongshu, tracked the content updates and fan interactions of more than 20 crystal bloggers, and taken Douyin and WeChat groups as auxiliary field sites to supplement empirical materials of short video narratives and acquaintance communities. The observation materials cover multiple sources such as note texts, short videos, comment interactions and community discussions, focusing on understanding young people's emotional distress in scenarios related to crystal healing, their emotional narratives of crystal efficacy, as well as empathetic responses and sharing of healing experiences within the community. Meanwhile, the author immersively participates in crystal topic discussions and interactions as an ordinary consumer, and deeply analyzes Generation Z's entertainment behaviors of self-regulation and community connection relying on crystal healing through participatory observation. This paper positions crystal healing as an emerging form of youth entertainment, carries out analysis around three dimensions of emotion, identity and value, and reflects on the secondary risks that may be brought by commercial capital and algorithmic recommendation.

Based on the above background and literature review, this study focuses on the following core scientific question: through what mechanism does crystal healing, as a metaphysical entertainment practice with material, aesthetic and ritual properties, spread widely among Generation Z and form a stable cultural form? Specifically, this study aims to answer three interrelated sub-questions: first, how does Generation Z transform crystal healing into an entertainment practice of emotional comfort and psychological adjustment through re-enchantment narratives and ritualized performances? Second, what symbolic function does crystal healing play in the process of circle identity and subcultural identity construction? Third, while empowering individuals, how does this entertainment practice give rise to new subjective dilemmas with the intervention of commercial capital and algorithmic logic? This study attempts to break through the existing research framework that generally classifies crystals into metaphysical consumption, and conducts an integrated investigation of Generation Z's crystal healing practices from three dimensions of emotion, identity and value, so as to provide empirical basis and theoretical reference for understanding the deep logic of new forms of contemporary youth entertainment.

2. Intergenerational transformation of entertainment practice: from ornament to healing medium

2.1. The individualized turn of the subject of demand and the construction of boundary defense

Crystal healing presents different demand characteristics among different generational groups. Although both middle-aged and elderly groups and Generation Z youth hold expectations of praying for wealth and peace, the social context and the subject of demand have changed. The middle-aged and elderly groups take ethical values as the core, and tend to devote themselves to family affairs when dealing with personal, family and social relations, regarding "family" as responsibility and belonging [26]. Their prayer discourses are deeply rooted in the traditional family-based concept: praying for wealth mostly refers to family prosperity, and praying for peace is related to the tranquility of the family home. In sharp contrast, Generation Z, as digital natives, is deeply influenced by social structural transformation, advocates and pursues an ideal lifestyle loyal

to oneself, and presents a high degree of individualization tendency. Individualization gives people the space to choose independently and live for themselves, enabling them to break through traditional life paradigms, but it also makes them fall into anxiety due to breaking away from established traditions [27]. When facing unprecedented modern challenges such as workplace assessments, marriage and childbearing choices, and housing pressure, young people are increasingly prone to anxiety and fear of uncertainty. At this time, pragmatic expectations such as attracting wealth or improving academic performance through crystals carry a strong individual-oriented color. Especially when facing complex interpersonal relationships, a netizen complained: "There are always colleagues in the office who like to make sarcastic remarks. It is said that wearing obsidian can ward off malicious people. I hope annoying people stay away from me" (Xiaohongshu platform, September 14, 2025). Another netizen also shared: "Recently I wear obsidian to ward off malicious people, and it also serves as a warning to colleagues: keep strangers away, don't bother me" (Xiaohongshu platform, May 27, 2025). The "warding off malicious people" in Generation Z's demands has broken away from the simple pursuit of good fortune and avoiding evil in the traditional sense, and has turned into a defensive behavior to establish personal psychological boundaries. It also reflects young people's urgent need for self-protection and individual boundary defense in a highly competitive social environment.

2.2. Participatory customization of belief meaning and the shift of discourse power

In crystal healing practices, when middle-aged and elderly groups come into contact with crystals, they often stay at the materialized level of traditional beliefs, and their trust mechanism is usually based on transcendental rules such as traditional feng shui theories or folk customs. Ordinary individuals are mostly passive recipients and rarely participate in the recreation of meaning. Different from this, Generation Z presents cyber metaphysics and gamified characteristics in the new form of crystal entertainment, and a shift of discourse power has taken place in the meaning of belief. Generation Z mainly acquires crystal knowledge from Xiaohongshu notes, Douyin short video science popularization and exchanges with like-minded people in WeChat groups. Each participant is both a consumer of information and a producer of meaning, who can verify or revise the efficacy of specific crystals based on their own practical experience. Taking "strawberry quartz" as an example, its symbolic meaning of "attracting romance" has been continuously strengthened and refined in the sharing and interaction of a large number of users, and then derived more specific practice guidelines on the relationship between crystal quality and energy, as well as the norms of wishing operations.

The source of trust of Generation Z has shifted from authoritative experts to Key Opinion Leaders (KOLs) and Key Opinion Consumers (KOCs). Crystal bloggers, healers and ordinary users who actively share in the community have become new authorities, constructing a new discursive field based on trust and emotional connection. At the practical level, Generation Z is keen to combine their own emotional demands with digital labels, and carry out participatory customization of belief meaning relying on multiple digital media such as astrology analysis, tarot divination and MBTI personality typing. Many crystal bloggers' posts mention "crystals suitable for the twelve zodiac signs", "exclusive energy crystals for MBTI types" and so on. A netizen said: "You should choose crystals according to your own Five Elements, be careful of conflicts" (Xiaohongshu platform, March 21, 2026). Consumers are not satisfied with buying finished products, but prefer to recombine different crystals according to personal needs and aesthetic preferences. A netizen shared: "Wearing clear quartz and aquamarine is very effective for improving Mercury retrograde. Things have gone smoothly during this period, and I feel much better looking at the custom design I matched myself" (Xiaohongshu platform, July 9, 2025). Regarding the meaning of crystals, Generation Z often does not fully accept a single theoretical system, but selectively adopts, integrates and even reconstructs different views according to their own needs. They may simultaneously agree with the scientific interpretation of "trace elements", the metaphysical

interpretation of "energy" and "chakras", and the psychological analysis of "placebo effect". As one netizen put it: "I know crystals are just quartz stones. For example, amethyst is colored because it contains iron and manganese. Whether the color is rich may have nothing to do with energy, but only depends on the content of trace elements. But I still buy them for their appearance. While appreciating them, I can't help but marvel at the wonders of nature. Life also needs such small blessings, even if they are just psychological placebos" (Xiaohongshu platform, July 5, 2025).

3. Re-enchantment narratives and ritualized entertainment in the emotional dimension

In the highly rationalized picture of modern society, although science and rationality have established the objective order of the world, they have also brought about a lack of meaning and loss of emotion. Disenchantment, the classic concept of Max Weber describing the process of modernity, reveals the process in which the world gradually fades its mysterious color under the influence of scientific rationality. In his combing of Weber's view of disenchantment, Wang Zeying points out that disenchantment is both an achievement of modernity and a crisis of modernity; when the rational world cannot fully respond to individual emotional and meaning needs, people will seek a path back to re-enchantment from the state of disenchantment [28]. Generation Z, living in a highly rationalized and digital era, completes the reconstruction of spiritual connection in secular life through crystal healing, and transforms this process into an operable, repeatable and shareable form of entertainment practice.

3.1. Narrative empowerment in crystal healing

Narrative is a basic way for human beings to understand the world, construct self-identity and endow experience with meaning. Crystals are placed in a rich cultural narrative framework, integrating ancient myths, Eastern philosophy and modern psychology and other diverse concepts, to complete the transition from objective matter to emotional carrier. For example, "chakras" originating from Indian yoga culture: red garnet corresponds to the root chakra and clear quartz corresponds to the crown chakra, which are believed to balance energy and promote physical and mental harmony; "Five Elements" originating from traditional Chinese culture: people choose to wear crystals with different effects according to Eight Characters fortune-telling; rose quartz is narrated as "the sacred stone of Venus, the goddess of love", symbolizing unconditional love and healing; obsidian is associated with the powerful energy of volcanoes and endowed with the function of "absorbing negative energy and warding off evil spirits".

The core of crystals moving towards re-enchantment lies in endowing natural minerals with agency through the reconstruction of discourse system. Minerals are endowed with life characteristics such as "energy", "magnetic field" and even "personality". Generation Z shares stories of crystals "recognizing their owners", "resonating" or "averting disasters" on social media, conducting subjective and emotional construction of objective matter. Such a narrative strategy breaks the mechanical interpretation of the world by instrumental rationality, elevates crystals from mere decorative consumer goods to special existences with spiritual companionship functions, and adds mystery and sanctity to them, so as to fill the emotional gap that scientific rationality cannot reach.

Most importantly, crystal healing assists Generation Z in achieving the separation of problems from individuals, which conforms to the core logic of narrative psychotherapy. In traditional psychological attribution, problems such as anxiety, insomnia or social frustration are often internalized as some kind of physical defects or personality flaws, regarding the problem as part of the person [29]. In the "fortune

reversal" narrative of crystal healing, problems can be externalized: anxiety is attributed to "magnetic field disorder", and recent misfortunes are named "Mercury retrograde", which can be solved by suitable crystals. As a result, crystals become a third-party object bearing psychological burdens, enabling Generation Z to detach from the entanglement of problems, which has significant emotional empowerment significance.

3.2. The construction of ritual sense and life control

Narrative empowerment completes the meaning reconstruction at the conceptual level, while a series of embodied operations around crystals are the process for Generation Z to internalize concepts into emotional experience and gain a sense of life control through ritual performances. In modern life full of mobility and risks, Generation Z artificially cuts out a sacred "liminal space" from the flow of daily life by establishing a set of standardized and symbolic behavioral norms. Ritual Theory holds that rituals, through a series of standardized and symbolic behaviors, can help people deal with emotions, define identities and endow time and space with sacredness [30].

Before wearing a crystal for the first time, one needs to perform "cleansing and purification", including moonlight bath, sage smudging, singing bowl sound healing or placing it on a clear quartz cluster; for daily wishing, one needs to hold the crystal and "infuse" one's wishes into it through meditation or silent recitation; on the night of the full moon, place the crystal under the moonlight to "amplify its energy" and so on. Through a series of interactive rituals with their exclusive crystals, Generation Z creates a sacred liminal space, allowing individuals to temporarily detach from the fast pace and competition of modern society. Even if the rituals have some performative characteristics, they also reflect young people's desire for a better life and self-affirmation. Through every step of the healing ritual, Generation Z dismantles the macroscopic and uncontrollable course of fate into specific executable action units, and obtains psychological suggestions of being able to intervene in reality and avoid risks with the help of crystals with specific effects, thus regaining the power of interpretation and dominance over life at the psychological level. As a result, crystal healing has become an important form of entertainment for Generation Z to explore themselves and build psychological resilience, guiding young people to pay attention to their current state and inner feelings.

4. Subcultural circle identity and group belonging in the identity dimension

The entertainment attribute of crystal healing among Generation Z is also manifested in the strengthening of social attributes and the emergence of subcultural circles, which has gradually evolved into a new type of social currency circulating among groups. The crystal clear and colorful natural beauty of crystals, as well as the exquisite design of bracelets and ornaments, not only satisfy young people's pursuit of aesthetic appeal, but also provide ice-breaking topics for interpersonal communication. On social media, crystals are often combined with content such as daily outfits, desk aesthetics and daily vlogs, becoming fashion symbols that show personal taste and lifestyle. The social interaction maintained by crystals has obvious subcultural attributes. Relying on online social platforms, Generation Z has broken the traditional constraints of geographical and on-site connection, created unique communication discourse and circle jargon in the interaction of interest-based groups, and formed a large number of online communities and offline markets around the purchase, appreciation, popularization and experience sharing of crystals, showing strong youth subcultural attributes. For example, specific terms such as "symbiosis", "super seven" and "karmic bonding" constitute the exclusive linguistic system within the circle, enabling members to quickly identify each other as like-minded people in the massive information flow. Digital interaction based on virtual space makes emotional resonance replace physical co-presence as the core scenario of Generation Z's social interaction.

The experience exchange and mutual comfort of young people in online interaction allow participants to absorb emotional energy, achieve subjective integration in virtual space, and complete the adjustment of self-cognition and real life situation. They respond to life pressure through group mutual assistance, thus obtaining spiritual motivation to move forward and a sense of group belonging.

From the perspective of identity construction, Generation Z's crystal healing practice presents dual dimensions. Internally, young people express their unique personal taste through crystal selection: rose quartz represents the yearning for intimate relationships, obsidian symbolizes the defense against external pressure, and amethyst projects the pursuit of knowledge and growth. Crystal selection itself becomes a concrete outlet for self-narrative. Externally, young people distinguish themselves from non-enthusiasts through circle language and common rituals, and complete the confirmation of group belonging. Crystal healing undertakes the dual functions of individual expression and group cohesion at the same time, and becomes an important carrier for Generation Z to complete identity negotiation in entertainment practices.

5. The potential and limits of self-empowerment in the value dimension

Generation Z's entertainment practice of seeking psychological comfort and self-empowerment through crystal healing is an attempt by individuals to reconstruct life order in a risk society. They are used to seeking inner peace from crystals when they feel irritable or tired, believing that crystals can remove negative energy, adjust lifestyle, and even solve emotional and sleep problems. However, young people may still face secondary risks in the process of seeking spiritual breakthrough. From the perspective of Baudrillard's consumer society, object consumption has shifted from use value to symbolic value. Commercial capital keenly captures the emotional pain points of Generation Z, deeply binds natural minerals with spiritual discourses such as "energy manifestation", "magnetic field purification" and "metaphysical fortune reversal", and creates an emotional illusion for consumers to obtain redemption in consumption. The logic of capital cleverly embodies young people's longing for a better life, desire for intimate relationships and anxiety about class mobility into purchasable commodities. If Generation Z falls into the symbolic myth woven by capital, they may face a double dilemma: the problems at the real level remain unsolved, while chasing expensive and rare crystals brings new economic pressure and consumption traps, making individuals bear heavier psychological burdens in the process of pursuing inner peace.

In addition, Generation Z's crystal healing practice is highly dependent on social media platforms, and algorithmic recommendation plays a key role in it. When a user browses or searches for content related to "crystal fortune reversal" once, the algorithm will continue to push homogeneous information flow based on their emotional preferences and browsing traces, providing Generation Z with high-density emotional resonance and group identity, but also easily constructing a closed emotional echo chamber. Complex social issues and personal dilemmas are simplified into whether the correct crystal is worn or whether an appropriate purification ritual is performed. The explanatory framework that over-attributed to "magnetic field" and "energy" is repeatedly strengthened in the enthusiast community, making immersed young people develop path dependence. Whenever they encounter setbacks in real life, they tend to retreat into the metaphysical narrative constructed by crystals for explanations, rather than resorting to rational analysis to find solutions.

Facing the crisis of modernity, young people gain psychological hints of being able to dominate fate and intervene in reality by selecting crystals, arranging crystal grids and wearing bracelets. While entertainment practice indeed endows individuals with a sense of security and life control psychologically, it also tends to ignore the direct confrontation and struggle against realistic structural contradictions, and cannot provide substantive help for solving practical problems. When Generation Z numbs their will and action to change the

status quo in the warm metaphysical narrative of crystal healing, the thing-based self-empowerment may eventually become nothing but a spiritual victory carried out in the private sphere, which is difficult to touch the real living conditions of individuals in the broad social space, and also makes young people gradually lose critical thinking and the courage to engage with real society.

6. Conclusion

Through crystal healing practices, Generation Z has completed the meaning reconstruction and self-empowerment of natural minerals in a modern society full of uncertainty. With the diversified development of youth subculture, crystal healing has gradually evolved into a new form of youth entertainment: emotionally, young people obtain psychological comfort and a sense of control through re-enchantment narratives and ritual performances; in terms of identity, circle interaction and subcultural language system endow young people with a sense of belonging and space for self-expression; in terms of value, entertainment practice carries the possibility of self-empowerment, but also faces the limits of symbolic consumption traps and algorithmic echo chambers.

In general, spiritual sustenance relying on things cannot completely replace the solution of realistic dilemmas. To avoid the symbolic siege of commercial capital and the information enclosure constructed by algorithms, young people need to establish a more sober and rational cognitive framework, improve media literacy and critical thinking, treat symbolic illusions under the logic of consumerism cautiously, and regard crystals as a tool to assist emotional regulation rather than the ultimate answer to change fate. While enjoying spiritual comfort, young people also need to be wary of falling into a state of spiritual closure that overly relies on metaphysical narratives, and avoid losing the motivation to engage with reality due to indulging in the illusory sense of control.

It is necessary to advocate the construction of a diversified social psychological support system. Educational institutions and social organizations need to pay attention to the deep-seated psychological demands reflected behind youth subculture, provide more scientific and inclusive psychological counseling and emotional counseling services, and reduce the helplessness of individuals who can only resort to metaphysics for shelter. Only by transforming the psychological energy accumulation into practical actions to meet realistic challenges and finding a dynamic balance between spiritual sustenance and rational practice can we truly break the shackles of modern anxiety and realize the reconstruction of individual inner order and authentic self-growth.

References

- [1] He, S. H. (2022). The formation background and group characteristics of Generation Z youth. *Chinese Youth Studies*, (8), 5-12.
- [2] Ao, C. B. (2021). Diverse characteristics, realistic causes and subcultural significance of Generation Z's consumption concepts. *Chinese Youth Studies*, (6), 100-106.
- [3] Zhu, Q., & Zhang, H. (2019). Symbolic consumption: A perspective on youth consumption behavior under the purchasing agent boom. *Chinese Youth Studies*, (1), 5-11.
- [4] Ma, Z. H. (2010). New media and the turn of youth subculture. *Literature and Art Studies*, (12), 104-112.
- [5] Chen, Y., Cao, S. Q., & Wang, T. (2013). A perspective on bullet-screen websites and bullet-screen clans: A youth subculture perspective. *Youth Exploration*, (6), 19-24.
- [6] Dong, Z. M. (2017). Emotional release and technological impetus: An interpretation of "sang culture" in the new media environment. *Press Circles*, (11), 45-51.

- [7] Dong, K. Y. (2017). The "sang culture" phenomenon and the perspective of youth social mentality. *Chinese Youth Studies*, (11), 23-28.
- [8] Zeng, X. (2021). Emotional comfort, flexible social interaction and value realization: The blind box trend from the perspective of youth subculture. *Journal of Fujian Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, (1), 133-141.
- [9] Wang, Y., & Fan, H. S. (2024). The development context, types and motivations of Generation Z's "guochao consumption". *Chinese Youth Studies*, (11), 12-20.
- [10] Wang, X. D., & Hu, P. H. (2023). Buddy socializing: A new trend of youth social interaction and its formation logic in contemporary society. *Chinese Youth Studies*, (8), 90-95.
- [11] Wang, Y., & Xu, R. (2021). The internet-famous generation of check-in attractions: An analysis of users' daily practices in the short video environment. *Chinese Youth Studies*, (2), 105-112.
- [12] Xing, H. Y. (2021). "Guochao" and "true self": Self-presentation of youth groups in the internet era. *Journal of Southwest Minzu University (Humanities and Social Science Edition)*, (1), 126-134.
- [13] Liu, S. L. (2022). "People in the box": The blind box consumption landscape of Generation Z and its formation mechanism. *Chinese Youth Studies*, (2), 78-84.
- [14] Ding, Y. Y., Chen, X., & Li, W. L. (2025). The dilemma and generation mechanism of Generation Z's identity in blind box practices. *Chinese Youth Studies*, (11), 23-30.
- [15] Yue, Q. Z., & Sheng, Q. Z. (2022). Symbolic consumption, value identity and emotional connection: A study on the behavior of Generation Z's blind box fan groups. *Southeast Communication*, (9), 115-118.
- [16] Wen, F. M., & Xie, X. F. (2022). The operation logic and ethical concerns of short video recommendation algorithms: From the perspective of actor-network theory. *Journal of Southwest Minzu University (Humanities and Social Science Edition)*, (2), 160-169.
- [17] Zhou, Y., & Zhang, Y. H. (2026). Research on the influence mechanism of short video algorithm recommendation on college students' value shaping. *Journal of University of Science and Technology Beijing (Social Sciences Edition)*, (1), 31-38.
- [18] Wang, Y. T. (2021). The logic of Generation Z's subcultural consumption. *Chinese Youth Studies*, (11), 88-95.
- [19] Zeng, Y. G. (2020). "New folk belief" in the network society: "constellation fans" from the perspective of post-subculture. *Journal of Northwest Normal University (Social Science Edition)*, (4), 20-28.
- [20] Le, J., & Wang, Z. M. (2025). New consumerism of youth: The development context and cultural mechanism of the "merchandise economy". *Chinese Youth Studies*, (9), 5-14.
- [21] Ouyang, Y. M. (2025). Meaning migration in the digital age: A sociological explanation of youth's "merchandise craze". *Chinese Youth Studies*, (9), 15-25.
- [22] Ye, Z. P., & Du, X. T. (2025). The social password of ACGN culture: Emerging youth communities in virtual communities — A virtual ethnographic study of the "merchandise circle" on Kuaishou. *Chinese Youth Studies*, (9), 26-35.
- [23] You, Z. C., & Zhao, Y. Y. (2024). Introvert or extrovert?: Analysis and reflection on the "MBTI craze" among youth. *Chinese Youth Studies*, (7), 83-92.
- [24] Li, S., Shao, Y. Q., & Fu, R. (2025). Virtual dependence and subjective integration: The interactive practice of youth online divination from the perspective of network subculture. *Contemporary Youth Research*, (2), 85-94.
- [25] Dang, Q. Q. (2025). The representation patterns, realistic causes and correction strategies of Generation Z's "pseudo-sense of ritual". *Beijing Youth Research*, (2), 83-90.
- [26] Yang, J. (2018). Relational families: Life characteristics and individualization paradox of middle-aged and elderly urban families. *Journal of China Agricultural University (Social Sciences Edition)*, (6), 101-109.
- [27] Zhang, J., & Du, J. M. (2026). From data intimacy to digital social connection: The dilemma of platform intimate relationships and communication reconstruction in the era of individualization. Press Circles.
- [28] Wang, Z. Y. (2009). The significance and crisis of disenchantment: A probe into Max Weber's view of disenchantment and its influence. *Hunan Social Sciences*, (4), 1-6.

- [29] He, X. S. (2006). Narrative therapy: A new paradigm of social work practice. *Journal of East China University of Science and Technology (Social Science Edition)*, (3), 1-5.
- [30] Peng, Z. R. (2002). A review of anthropological ritual research. *Ethno-National Studies*, (2), 88-96.