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## “Change and Constancy: The Adherence and Innovation of Traditional Journal Publishers in the Context of Media Convergence—A Case Study of Jiangxi Education Media Group (Postprint)”

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### Abstract

**[Objective]** To explore the transformation path of traditional journal publishers under the background of media convergence.

**[Methods]** Grasp the dialectical relationship between “change” and “unchange”: adhere to the correct political direction to win influence and recognition; persist in building first-class journals and new media platforms to establish reputation and create brands; remain rooted in the education system of Jiangxi Province to expand survival and development space through social benefits; and adhere to the all-media matrix layout to lay the foundation for a century-old enterprise through diversification.

**[Results]** Taking orientation as the soul, quality as the foundation, service as the priority, and convergence as the essence is the necessary path for the transformation of traditional journal publishers.

**[Conclusion]** Only by upholding the unchanging while advancing through seeking change can traditional journal publishers walk better and farther on the path of transformation.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

ChinaXiv Partner Journal

“Change” and “Unchange” : The Perseverance and Innovation of Traditional Journal Publishers in the Context of Media Convergence—A Case Study of Jiangxi Education Media Group

(*Jiangxi Education Media Group, Nanchang, Jiangxi 330038*)

## Abstract

**[Purpose]** This study explores the transformation path for traditional journal publishers in the context of media convergence. **[Method]** By grasping the dialectical relationship between “change” and “unchange,” the approach involves: upholding the correct political direction to win influence and recognition; building first-class journals and new media platforms to establish reputation and brand; rooting deeply in Jiangxi’s education system to expand survival and development space through social benefits; and implementing a full-media matrix layout to lay the foundation for a century-old enterprise through diversification. **[Result]** The study concludes that taking guiding principles as the soul, quality as the foundation, service as the priority, and convergence as the essence constitutes the necessary path for transforming traditional journal publishers. **[Conclusion]** Only by persevering in what remains unchanged while advancing through seeking change can traditional journal publishers achieve a better and more sustainable transformation.

**Keywords:** journal publishers; transformation; full media; guiding principles; high quality; convergence

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Jiangxi Education Media Group Co., Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as “Jiangxi Education Media” ) is a cultural enterprise primarily engaged in educational journal publishing, founded in 1950. As the earliest-established, most diverse, and most comprehensive journal publisher in Jiangxi Province, it currently edits and publishes nine journals (*Jiangxi Education, Teacher’s Panorama, High School Students’ Friend, Junior High School Students’ Friend, Primary School Students’ Friend, Happy, Happy Children, Smart Spring, and Popular Science World*) across 22 editions. The Jiangxi Correspondent Station of China Education Daily and China Education News is affiliated with Jiangxi Education Media, which also operates over ten new media platforms including the Jiangxi Education Learning Strong Country account, China Education Release Jiangxi Provincial Department of Education account, and WeChat public accounts and video channels such as Jiangxi Education Online, Jiangxi Education, and Teacher’s Panorama. As of the end of December 2022, Jiangxi Education Media achieved

total operating revenue of 600 million yuan and profits of 160 million yuan.

As a traditional journal publisher, Jiangxi Education Media has always maintained a sense of crisis, keeping pace with media convergence development. By managing the dialectical relationship between “change” and “unchange,” the group consistently upholds the correct political direction and public opinion orientation, insists on content as king to ensure journal quality, prioritizes social benefits while striving for “dual benefits,” vigorously promotes deep media convergence and innovation, and explores new forms of serving grassroots units and schools in its transformation journey.

## 1. Guiding Principles as the Soul: Upholding the Correct Political Direction to Win Influence and Recognition

All publications possess ideological attributes and must adhere to guiding principles as their soul. Taking serving the central work and the overall situation as the primary task, Jiangxi Education Media maintains political direction as the top priority, continuously consolidating the guiding position of Marxism in the ideological field and the common ideological foundation for the unity and struggle of the entire Party and people nationwide.

### 1.1 Strengthening Thematic Propaganda

Jiangxi Education Media seizes important special time nodes, closely integrating thematic propaganda with the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of China, Party history education, and the 20th Party Congress. In 2021, the centennial year of the CPC, Jiangxi Education Media mobilized comprehensively, devoted full energy, and provided full coverage, planning the province-wide “Sand Painting Party History, Children’s Hearts Always Toward the Party” campaign for primary and secondary schools— “Taking the Same Party History Lesson Together.” This activity featured broad participation and strong social influence, achieving over 20 million online views as a tribute to the Party’s centennial. In the 2022 “Youth Journals Tell Party History” thematic propaganda campaign, journals including *Primary School Students’ Friend*, *Junior High School Students’ Friend*, *High School Students’ Friend*, *Smart Spring*, and *Popular Science World* took proactive initiatives, carefully selecting topics, launching special columns and issues, and publishing outstanding articles that generated excellent social response and received commendation from the Central Propaganda Department’s Publication Bureau. *Jiangxi Education* launched over 20 special topics including “Studying and Implementing the Spirit of the 19th CPC Central Committee’s Sixth Plenary Session,” “Jiangxi Education in the Past Decade,” “Welcome the 20th Party Congress, See Education Changes,” and “Studying and Implementing the Spirit of the 20th Party Congress.” *Teacher’s Panorama* organized the “Welcome the 20th Party Congress, Be a ‘Great Teacher’ in the New Era” essay competition, effectively promoting and facilitating the implementation of the 20th Party Congress spirit and General Secretary Xi

Jinping’s important speeches throughout the province’s education system, while creating a favorable public opinion atmosphere for uniting efforts to promote high-quality development of Jiangxi’s education.

### 1.2 Timely Planning of Special Topics Around Education Hotspots

Before the 20th Party Congress, Jiangxi Education Media actively communicated with the Propaganda Department of Jiangxi Provincial Committee of the CPC Education Working Committee and the Provincial Integrated Media Center to launch the “Youth Confession to the Motherland” activity, with all 106 universities in the province participating in an online relay format, opening a special column on the Jiangxi Learning Platform of Learning Strong Country. On the eve of the 2022 “August 1st” Army Day, jointly with the Nanchang August 1st Uprising Memorial Hall, it launched the “Take a Photo with August 1st” activity, which was forwarded and participated in by over 30 universities and local education administrative departments at all levels. During July-August 2022, combining ideological and political work during summer vacation, it planned the “Youth Responsibility in Summer Vacation” special topic. All these initiatives secured forwarding by Xinhua News Agency’s Jiangxi Channel, with some articles reaching over 1 million views, generating excellent scale benefits and social impact.

### 1.3 Focusing on Central Work and Serving the Overall Situation

Jiangxi Education Media consistently serves the central work of Jiangxi Provincial Committee of the CPC Education Working Committee, Provincial Department of Education, and Provincial Publishing Group. Through columns, special issues, special reports, and short videos, it intensifies coverage of key educational reform and development priorities including high-quality and balanced compulsory education development, “double reduction,” education evaluation reform, and new college entrance examination reform. The group deeply excavates and reports typical experiences and distinctive highlights from various schools, giving full play to the focusing and leading effects of concentrated propaganda. For “double reduction” propaganda, it established columns and special topics, publishing 21 articles in *Jiangxi Education* in 2022 and broadcasting 73 short videos on its public account and video channel, making important contributions to Jiangxi’s “double reduction” propaganda work ranking among the top ten nationwide.

## 2. Quality as the Foundation: Building First-Class Journals and New Media Platforms to Establish Reputation and Brand

*Primary School Students’ Friend* and *Junior High School Students’ Friend* have been repeatedly selected as among the 100 excellent newspapers and periodicals recommended by the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio,

Film and Television to national children and adolescents. *Junior High School Students' Friend* won the second National Journal Award as one of 100 key journals. Behind these honors lies Jiangxi Education Media Group's tireless pursuit of shaping brands and creating excellent publications.

### **2.1 Planning First, Attracting Readers with Quality Content**

Closely monitoring the “urgent, difficult, and pressing” issues in education, Jiangxi Education Media has planned nearly 100 hot topics including “How to Reduce the Burden of Off-Campus Training,” “Should Parents Correct Homework,” “Reflections on Education in the Post-Pandemic Era,” “Boundaries Between School Education and Family Education,” general-vocational 分流, and vocational education college entrance examination. Focusing on two professional development topics for teachers—professional growth and creating efficient classrooms—it specially planned topics such as “In the Intelligent Era, Has Our Education Kept Pace?” “How to Further Alleviate Our Education Anxiety Under ‘Double Reduction,’ ” and “Reflections on Education Under ‘Double Reduction.’ ”

### **2.2 Process Excellence, Enhancing Product Quality Through Solid Editorial Work**

Jiangxi Education Media has always adhered to the concept that “quality is the lifeline of journal survival and development,” firmly establishing awareness of responsibility, quality, and excellence. The group strictly implements the “three reviews and three proofreads” system, establishes pre-print review and post-print reading mechanisms, implements the responsible editor system and editorial quality guarantee system, strengthens editor training, and enhances editor quality to ensure excellent journal quality. In annual national editorial quality spot checks of children's newspapers and periodicals, journals published by Jiangxi Education Media including *Primary School Students' Friend*, *Junior High School Students' Friend*, *Happy Children*, and *Smart Spring* have repeatedly achieved “zero errors,” receiving national commendation. In the group's internal 2022 assessment, 59 issues achieved “zero errors” based on comprehensive pre-print and post-print review results.

### **2.3 Strict and Effective Rewards and Punishments to Enhance Team Quality**

On the foundation of comprehensively improving the political quality and professional level of editorial staff, Jiangxi Education Media implements strict performance assessments, optimizes incentive mechanisms, and encourages editorial personnel to go deeper into grassroots levels, journalists to write more influential reports, and editors to produce more excellent articles. Consequently, the content quality, formal quality, and brand reputation of the group's nine journals across 22 editions have been further enhanced and promoted. First,

the group strictly controls personnel access: those who fail to obtain journalism or publishing qualifications within two years of employment are transferred from editorial positions. Second, it strictly implements editorial quality reward and punishment regulations: for errors exceeding one ten-thousandth but not reaching two ten-thousandths in pre-print plus post-print reviews, responsible editors and reviewers are penalized according to standards; for errors exceeding two ten-thousandths, responsible editors, reviewers, and final reviewers are penalized; for “zero error” journals, editorial staff receive a 3,000 yuan reward per issue. Third, it implements the “Editorial Staff 1291 System,” requiring editors to spend one month studying, two months in grassroots fieldwork, nine months processing manuscripts, and completing one professional paper annually. Those not meeting study time requirements are denied qualification registration, while those not meeting grassroots interview and research time requirements or failing to complete professional papers have year-end assessment scores reduced.

### **3. Service as the Priority: Rooting Deeply in the Provincial Education System to Expand Survival and Development Space Through Social Benefits**

Enterprises can only gain market recognition and returns, achieve social and economic benefits, and find survival and development space by providing products (tangible or intangible) that meet the needs of their service targets. Therefore, enterprises must rely on service quality improvement, expand service boundaries, and elevate service standards to win greater and better development. As a cultural enterprise with 73 years of history rooted in Jiangxi’s education system, Jiangxi Education Media has always shouldered social responsibility, prioritizing service and social benefits to give back to society and thereby gain widespread social recognition.

#### **3.1 Using Reading as the Leverage to Provide Quality Spiritual Nourishment as the Main Business**

Jiangxi Education Media’s main business is journal publishing. Its “Three Friends” magazines (*Primary School Students’ Friend*, *Junior High School Students’ Friend*, *High School Students’ Friend*) are renowned publications in China’s children’s press sector and influential journals in the 60 years since New China’s founding, deeply loved by readers. Following the requirements of national reading activities and focusing on cultivating and practicing socialist core values, Jiangxi Education Media has conducted the “Children’s Press Reading Season” activity for seven consecutive years across Jiangxi Province. This initiative includes reading and using journals, essay and painting competitions, writers entering campuses, parent-child reading, and journal donations—enriching and diversifying the “Scholarly Jiangxi” thematic activity and enhancing the social impact of national reading campaigns.

### 3.2 Using Growth as the Leverage to Promote Healthy Student Development as the Primary Responsibility

Under the guidance of Jiangxi Provincial Committee of the CPC Education Working Committee and Provincial Department of Education, Jiangxi Education Media has held five consecutive sessions of the “Three Friends” Self-Reliant Youth Selection and Funding Activity with the theme “Building Chinese Dreams Together, Jiangxi Youth Are Strong.” Launched in June 2014 and held biennially, the activity has commended and funded 300 youths who remain self-reliant despite adversity, with cumulative funding nearing one million yuan. This demonstrates the spiritual outlook of contemporary youth in the red land, fully leveraging exemplary demonstration and educational guidance roles. The group has also compiled these self-reliant youths’ stories into books and donated them to schools to encourage more young people to strive upward and fly against the wind.

[Figure 2: see original paper] *Scene from the Fifth Jiangxi Province “Three Friends” Self-Reliant Youth Selection and Funding Activity*

Furthermore, *Popular Science* magazine, jointly with two distribution companies, organized the “Smart Spring Cup” Scientists Enter Campus activity, inviting Chinese Academy of Sciences members Xu Wenyao, Shi Lei, Xu Bangnian, Shanghai Observatory’s Bu Defu, senior scientists Gao Dengyi and Chen Baoqin, field expedition expert Yang Rurong, and entomology doctoral candidate Li Zhu to deliver over 50 science lectures to more than 20,000 primary and secondary school students in Ganzhou and Fuzhou. These events not only disseminated scientific knowledge and interpreted the charm of science but also sowed the seeds of patriotism.

### 3.3 Using Care as the Leverage to Support Teacher Professional Growth and Health

Jiangxi Education Media’s teacher journals *Jiangxi Education* and *Teacher’s Panorama* have always focused on teacher professional development. On one hand, they publish numerous teaching cases, methods, and learning guidance needed for teacher education and instruction; on the other hand, they provide platforms and venues for teacher academic exchange, research projects, and experience summarization. A large number of young teachers have grown into teaching backbones, academic leaders, and even renowned teachers and principals under the nourishment of these two journals. Additionally, the group organizes social-benefit-oriented reading clubs, teacher forums, and reading and writing training courses, inviting domestic experts to teach teachers on-site. It also pays attention to teachers’ mental health by opening relevant columns and publishing special issues to provide theoretical guidance, and concerns itself with teachers’ physical health by organizing activities such as the “Rural Mountain Area Teacher Health Week” and “Caring for Rural Education Large-Scale Public Welfare Reporting,” all generating excellent social benefits.

[Figure 3: see original paper] *Group Photo of Jiangxi Education Press Public Welfare Reporter Team in Xishan Town*

#### **4. Convergence as the Essence: Implementing Full-Media Matrix Layout to Lay the Foundation for a Century-Old Enterprise Through Diversification**

The Party Central Committee has proposed accelerating media convergence development, insisting on complementary advantages and integrated development between traditional and emerging media, promoting deep integration in content, channels, platforms, operation, and management, and striving to build a batch of new mainstream media with diverse forms, advanced methods, and strong competitiveness, establishing several new media groups with powerful strength, communication capacity, credibility, and influence. In the context of deep media convergence, as a traditional publishing unit primarily focused on print journals, Jiangxi Education Media has planned ahead, proactively adapted to changes, implemented a full-media matrix layout, and promoted diversified development to lay a solid foundation for building a century-old enterprise.

##### **4.1 Establishing Specialized Institutions to Build Platforms and Secure Positioning for Media Convergence**

Jiangxi Education Media originally had three departments (subsidiaries) engaged in information technology and new media work: Hanguang Education Technology Company, Renren Popular Science Company, and Sanyou Technology Company. To advance media convergence, the group established an Integrated Media Center at the end of 2019 based on these existing foundations, clearly defining its functions as new media platform operation, new media content development, editorial digital transformation and development, and new product research and development. The center ensures sufficient quantity and quality of talent, with one senior professional title, two associate senior titles, three intermediate titles, and a group of young people with high new media literacy. The compensation coefficient for the Integrated Media Center is set at the highest level of 1.3 to improve departmental treatment and attract outstanding talent. It insists on prioritizing social benefits by not assigning economic targets, ensuring its public welfare nature in education propaganda work. “Jiangxi Education Media Group Establishes Integrated Media Center” was selected as a 2020 national excellent case of media convergence.

##### **4.2 Building a Media Matrix to Form Synergy and Create a Grand Propaganda Work Pattern**

Jiangxi Education Media’s proprietary platforms cover everything from preschool education to high school education, from education administrative departments to ordinary teachers. Traditional and new media complement each other, forming synergy to build a grand propaganda work pattern. Particularly

according to the work arrangement of the Propaganda Department of Jiangxi Provincial Committee of the CPC Education Working Committee, the Jiangxi Provincial Department of Education account on the Ministry of Education's "China Education Release App" is tasked with content submission by Jiangxi Education Media's Integrated Media Center. On November 9, 2020, the "Jiangxi Education" Learning Strong Country account officially launched, operated by Jiangxi Education Media Group. Both new media platforms are listed as key propaganda platforms of Jiangxi Provincial Committee of the CPC Education Working Committee and Provincial Department of Education.

The Jiangxi Education public account has surpassed 500,000 followers, with total annual views exceeding 15 million in 2022. Particularly in coordination with the School Safety and Stability Office of Jiangxi Provincial Department of Education, it pushes "Student Safety Reminders" on the Jiangxi Education public account at a frequency of at least one per week. Basically, each reminder receives over 100,000 views, with total views nearing 20 million, playing an excellent role in enhancing student safety awareness and reducing campus accidents. *Jiangxi Daily* reported specifically on this with the article "Jiangxi Provincial Department of Education Regularly Releases Student Safety Education Reminders."

#### 4.3 Adhering to Diversified Development to Lay a Solid Foundation for a Century-Old Enterprise

To address the challenge of squeezed space for print publications, Jiangxi Education Media adheres to a diversified development strategy. While maintaining traditional journal publishing, it conducts effective explorations in education informatization, study tours, campus culture, and training.

Hanguang Company, relying on platforms such as "Jiangxi Education Online" and "Jiangxi Education Study Tours," provides education information for schools, consulting services for college entrance examination candidates, and study tour services for primary and secondary school students, accumulating over 6 million followers and achieving operating revenue of more than 75 million yuan in 2022. Jiayide Company seized the opportunity of high-quality and balanced education development assessments, using campus culture building as a breakthrough to help schools in Shanggao County, Xinyu City Xiannu Lake District, Yingtan City Yujiang District, and Yiyang County enhance their cultural quality, achieving operating revenue of 37 million yuan in 2022. Renren Popular Science Company, using "Smart Homework" as a breakthrough, helped Jiangxi's "double reduction" work be selected as a national excellent case, while also driving sales of education equipment primarily consisting of "smart pens," achieving operating revenue of over 18 million yuan in 2022.

[Figure 4: see original paper] *Students at Sizhen Central Primary School in Shanggao County reading in a brand-new book bar*

In the context of media convergence, traditional journal publishers must remember their original mission and purpose, base themselves on their main

business, assume their primary responsibilities, continuously improve service levels, broaden development thinking, and expand market space while courageously shouldering social responsibility. Only by persevering in what remains unchanged while advancing through seeking change can they achieve a better and more sustainable transformation path.

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## Author Biography

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*Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.*

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