

A Preliminary Analysis of the Impact of Media Convergence on Post-print Educational Book Publishing

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Abstract

New media, which relies on information technology, is developing with strong momentum and has exerted significant influence on the traditional educational book publishing industry. The domestic educational book publishing industry is facing a critical juncture of reform and transformation. [Purpose] To enhance core competitiveness in the context of media convergence and the “Double Reduction” education policy, professionals in educational book publishing must comprehend the impact of media convergence on the publishing industry, clearly recognize the current situation, and seek appropriate strategies. [Method] This article elaborates from five aspects: introducing the concept of media convergence in book publishing, examining development trends of educational publishing under media convergence, analyzing the current state of educational book publishing, identifying existing problems in the field, and exploring solutions through constructing a talent system for publishing under media convergence and establishing an operational model for educational book publishing media convergence. [Result] The educational book publishing industry must implement reforms in talent cultivation, operational model restructuring, and topic selection innovation. [Conclusion] Only by carrying out reforms and transformations in aspects such as publishing process optimization can the industry overcome its current difficulties and achieve better development.

Full Text

Preamble

ChinaXiv Cooperative Journal: A Brief Analysis of the Impact of Media Convergence on Educational Book Publishing
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Abstract

Driven by information technology, new media has developed rapidly, exerting a significant influence on the traditional educational book publishing industry. China's educational publishing sector now faces critical reform and transformation pressures. To enhance core competitiveness amid media convergence and the "Double Reduction" education policy, educational publishing professionals must understand how media convergence affects the publishing industry, accurately assess the situation, and seek appropriate countermeasures. This article examines five key aspects: introducing the concept of media convergence in book publishing, analyzing development trends in educational publishing under media convergence, reviewing the current state of educational book publishing, identifying existing problems, and exploring solutions through building a publishing talent system for the media convergence era and constructing integrated operational models for educational publishing. The results indicate that the educational book publishing industry must undertake reforms and transformations in talent cultivation, operational model innovation, and topic selection planning. Only through optimizing publishing processes and other critical dimensions can the industry overcome current challenges and achieve sustainable development.

Keywords: media convergence; book publishing; educational books; topic planning; impact analysis

1. The Concept of Media Convergence in Book Publishing

Media convergence refers to the collaborative development and integration of multiple communication channels, including online media, traditional print media, broadcast media, and television media. It represents an inevitable trend in the information dissemination industry within the information age, demonstrating the vitality and prospects of information technology development. This convergence has transformed traditional information dissemination patterns and promoted socio-economic development. The integration of multimedia and information industries has also changed people's lifestyles, providing more innovative information products such as Taobao, Douyin (TikTok), WeChat, and Xigua Video. Consequently, media convergence has altered the forms of social information dissemination, transforming the general public from passive information recipients into active information publishers who utilize various online platforms to release images, videos, audio, and other multimedia content.

Media convergence encompasses not only the integration of dissemination channels but also the convergence of information products, transmission technologies, and information terminals. Scholars have proposed three hierarchical levels: media interaction, media integration, and comprehensive media convergence. The first level represents tactical convergence, the second involves the merging of different media organizations, and the final level constitutes the complete form of media convergence. Foreign scholars have identified various stages including cross-promotion, cloning, co-opetition, content sharing, and fusion, with inter-

active relationships between these stages ultimately achieving content sharing and integration.

In the context of media convergence, the educational publishing industry has encountered new development opportunities, enabling innovation in publishing environments, book content selection and planning, and reading terminals. Through multi-media integration and collaboration, the industry can open new development pathways, achieve transformation under the current “Double Reduction” policy, establish online and offline educational book brands, provide diverse resource search and reading methods for students and teachers, and fulfill the educational service mission through multiple channels to meet the personalized development needs of different users.

2. Development Trends in Educational Publishing Under Media Convergence

2.1 Digitalization Trends

As a crucial component of the information dissemination industry, publishing faces challenges brought by high-tech integration in the information age, though different publishing sectors demonstrate varying degrees of responsiveness. Professional publishing leads in digitalization—for instance, Thomson Reuters became one of the earliest digital publishers, with digital revenue now accounting for 93% of total income, while RELX Group’s digital revenue reaches 72%, demonstrating the enormous potential of digital transformation in publishing. In contrast, trade publishing shows the lowest digitalization level, with Penguin Random House’s digital revenue at only 23%, reflecting consumer characteristics of trade books.

Educational publishing currently ranks between these extremes, ahead of trade publishing but behind professional publishing, with major educational publishing companies achieving digital revenue ratios of 40%-70%. Compared to digital development, traditional educational publishing operates through relatively simple linear workflows based on paper media and manual offline processes, resulting in a straightforward industry structure with a relatively homogeneous consumer base.

Domestically, China officially implemented the “Double Reduction” policy in 2021, emphasizing burden reduction and efficiency improvement for primary and secondary school students and charting a new direction for educational development. The COVID-19 pandemic and related prevention policies in 2020 further accelerated acceptance of online services, including telemedicine, remote work, online education, and online consulting, particularly generating substantial demand for online educational resources. Consequently, digitalization has become a new trend in educational publishing development, as online educational resource development can better meet the needs of students, teachers, and parents while supporting educational development in the post-pandemic

era [1].

Digital educational publishing has attracted attention from numerous publishing enterprises, many of which have attempted digitalization based on their quality educational resources. Electronic textbooks and digital supplementary materials have achieved remarkable results. Some publishers have developed integrated service projects, such as online teaching service platforms, providing educational interaction opportunities for teachers and students and demonstrating the advantages of media convergence in educational publishing. Notable examples include Shandong Education Press, which launched free electronic textbooks through its official website in 2020, building an electronic textbook knowledge service platform that features audio-visual courses, online guidance, and tutoring functions, earning widespread recognition from teachers and students and repeatedly breaking online visitor records. Chongqing Publishing Group began constructing a comprehensive educational cloud service platform in 2020, developing media convergence projects such as Cloud Classroom, primary and secondary school teacher professional title evaluation systems, competition activity platforms, and 5G+ Smart Education digital textbook applications. These initiatives have achieved success by integrating quality content from the publishing group to provide full-link services for content, data, and applications, creating a Chongqing education ecosystem matrix.

2.2 Branding Trends

Brand development remains crucial in any era. During the exam-oriented education period, many supplementary books directly established brands that helped students improve their academic performance, gaining significant attention from parents and teachers. Under the “Double Reduction” policy, supplementary book publishers should update and optimize previous brand impressions, reshape brands, expand market influence, and endow educational book brands with new vitality. As the saying goes, “no brand, no market.” In the information age, educational book brands should be reflected not only in content but also in reading methods and media forms.

Information technology has become the core technology for transformation across industries, and people have adapted to the convenience brought by online shopping and online reading. Therefore, the educational publishing industry should integrate quality content with information technology to construct online reading, online marketing channels, and online educational services, thereby enhancing publishers’ influence on the internet. Market research demonstrates that brand image plays a crucial role in the marketing development of educational publishing, as most consumers are audiences of educational publishing house brands who select resources based on publishers’ brand images. Consequently, the educational publishing industry should seize media convergence trends, think from a multi-industry perspective, create new brand images, expand audiences and markets, and obtain higher benefits.

Regarding media convergence, educational publishing should comprehensively apply big data, artificial intelligence, AR, VR, and other technologies to develop B-end sales markets, further integrating publishing, audiobooks, and video courses. Publishers should also engage in live-streaming sales, cloud book fairs, and online education businesses based on educational publishing content to enhance influence [2].

2.3 Integration Trends

Digitalization and branding represent specific manifestations of media convergence. Educational publishers should regard digital textbooks and precise content as primary work for strengthening their advantages, formulating digital development plans focused on “developing digital products and building knowledge service platforms,” increasing online electronic educational resources, and constructing diversified, integrated educational publishing industries. The transformation and upgrading of educational publishing cannot be accomplished overnight; publishing units must conduct thorough top-level planning and design, fully considering portal construction, brand building, warehousing, and transportation issues. This represents both a test of publishing units’ responsiveness and emergency capabilities and a significant challenge to educational publishing professionals’ expertise.

3. Current Status of Educational Book Publishing

3.1 Challenges Facing Educational Publishing Under the “Double Reduction” Policy

The “Double Reduction” policy represents a crucial decision in China’s recent educational reform, directly addressing current domestic educational problems and proposing thorough rectification measures. Driven by macro-level policies, reforms in education-related fields have been vigorously implemented. “Double Reduction” implies reducing burden while improving efficiency, which inherently includes reducing the “quantity” of supplementary books used by students, consequently causing the supplementary book market to lose its former popularity and support. According to the “2022 China Book Retail Market Report” provided by Beijing OpenBook Information Technology Co., Ltd., supplementary and textbook books accounted for only 18% of China’s total book sales in 2022, a significant shrinkage compared to previous years. Even professionals from other industries can observe the contraction trend of supplementary books during this period.

Before the “Double Reduction” policy, teachers and parents tended to increase students’ problem-solving volume, improving students’ skills and academic performance through extensive practice. Market demand for supplementary books favored knowledge accumulation and large quantities of exercises, with some publishers even copying similar products directly, resulting in numerous homogeneous books in the market—a key factor restricting the development of the

supplementary book industry. Additionally, some supplementary book publishers, aiming to capture market share, blindly shortened publication cycles, leading to inadequate review processes, numerous printing errors, and seriously affecting supplementary book quality [3].

3.2 Incomplete Educational Publishing Operational Mechanisms

A sound operational mechanism provides the fundamental guarantee for the orderly development of the educational publishing industry. Particularly under media convergence, the educational publishing industry should possess service consciousness, integrated media thinking, and copyright awareness, adopting targeted operational models based on different educational resources to achieve standardized publishing. However, current educational publishing operational management and organizational structures remain inadequate and imperfect, causing lagging media convergence development and severe limitations.

Many educational publishing houses still adopt flat management and centralized management models, which cannot address media convergence work requirements. These models result in internal organizational redundancy, duplicated functions, slow decision-making, insufficient collaboration between departments, lack of information sharing and interaction channels, and inability to achieve resource integration. Particularly when facing rapidly changing online operational issues, entire publishing houses appear very passive and unable to make timely decisions regarding book topic selection and planning, product launch, pricing, and printing processes [4].

3.3 Insufficient Media Convergence Capabilities Among Practitioners

Compared to traditional development situations, the information age and “Double Reduction” policy have, to some extent, opened up broader market prospects for the educational book publishing industry. However, many educational publishing enterprises appear helpless when facing this more open development environment. Having lost the security of the traditional supplementary book market, they cannot achieve higher levels in selecting diverse educational content. This situation stems from the lack of skills among industry personnel in innovative compilation, integrated development, and integration feedback capabilities. Long-term dependence on the traditional supplementary materials market has left them without innovative selection and publishing capabilities. Some publishing enterprises even lack high-level responsible editors, making it difficult for technology-deficient companies to respond to policy and market changes, ultimately resulting in elimination from the market due to inadequate technological conditions for innovative development.

Particularly under media convergence, compound talents with professional capabilities can empower the educational publishing industry. For instance, educational publishing houses require editors with information literacy and digital technology skills when transforming online educational resources and building

online education platforms to meet digital work requirements. However, most publishing houses currently focus only on professional abilities during talent recruitment, neglecting information literacy. Consequently, large numbers of editors cannot cope with digital development and media convergence situations, seriously affecting the digital development of educational publishing [5].

4. Building a Publishing Talent System Under Media Convergence

4.1 Developing a Media-Convergent Publishing Education System

Faced with media convergence trends in the publishing industry, an upgraded and optimized talent cultivation mechanism can provide momentum for industry innovation and development. Therefore, educational institutions should strengthen social research to understand basic trends in educational publishing reform and development under media convergence, adjust publishing education curricula according to industry talent demands, and construct a media-convergent publishing education system to cultivate more compound talents for the educational publishing industry.

First, institutions should seize digitalization and media convergence trends, update publishing education concepts, grasp morphological and medium changes in the publishing industry under media convergence from a market perspective, and understand theoretical knowledge related to media convergence and basic dissemination concepts, thinking modes, and integrated industry models for industry innovation and development. Updated teaching concepts can prevent educational reforms from falling into the trap of technology determinism and provide new ideas for publishing education reform and development. Given current media convergence trends, institutions should consider research subjects, publishing industry development models, and development strategies from the perspective of publishing media convergence, summarize problems in traditional educational publishing development and teaching, and follow basic industry development orientations to update publishing education concepts.

Second, institutions must reorganize publishing curriculum priorities, integrate media convergence concepts into the curriculum system, and modify core course requirements. Core professional education courses include publishing history, publishing fundamentals, digital publishing introduction, and editorial practice. Building upon these foundations, institutions should increase practical experience opportunities, integrate digital technology to create distinctive curriculum systems, enhance publishing practitioners' professional responsibility, and cultivate rigorous editorial work styles. Additionally, institutions should reform specialized courses according to the latest requirements for publishing industry talents under media convergence, adding courses related to traditional integrated media and digital publishing processes to supplement students with more integrated media knowledge. Courses such as publishing industry management, enterprise management, new media theory and application, and digital technol-

ogy principles and software can all enhance students' comprehensive qualities [6].

4.2 Innovating Publishing Education Models

Under the major trend of media convergence, publishing education must maintain its professionalism, with reforms reflected in educational models and teaching methods. Institutions should add publishing practice education content to original disciplinary positioning, encourage students to conduct career planning, and allow them to select second majors or degrees according to their career plans to enhance comprehensive qualities and employment competitiveness.

Second, institutions should change the current situation of overly detailed publishing major divisions, achieve integration and sharing of teaching resources across departments, construct multi-level publishing education systems, and cultivate more high-level publishing talents. For example, universities can guide students in reasonable career planning during freshman year foundational publishing courses, allow them to select courses in relevant professional fields during sophomore or junior years, and arrange internships at professional publishing houses or editorial departments during senior year to enrich publishing work experience and learn more about media convergence development [7].

5. Constructing Media-Convergent Operational Models for Educational Book Publishing

5.1 Media Convergence Models for Educational Content Resources

Supplementary books and textbooks at various stages represent important resources for educational publishing groups and constitute their primary profitable book categories. However, under the current media convergence background and "Double Reduction" policy, China's educational books face new challenges. How to achieve educational book publishing reform and integrate different media resources has become crucial for educational publishing group development.

Traditional supplementary book publishing and marketing primarily relied on media groups' own copyrights or leased copyrights, providing paper-based educational supplementary materials through printing and distribution. This business model remains overly singular, offering limited access for teachers and students to supplementary resources, with schools' usage of supplementary books entirely dependent on teachers. Publishing groups' services typically ended after delivery. The above process reveals the profit model of traditional educational book publishing—cost-benefit from paper book sales, with publishing groups' revenue depending mainly on supplementary book brand value, key resource capabilities, and the audience reach of copyrighted supplementary books.

Under new circumstances, publishing groups should expand educational book publishing and operational scope through media convergence, incorporating

school teachers, parents, and education administrators into their service systems while adding various educational content such as teacher evaluation and teaching management to enrich educational book content. Regarding acquisition channels for educational publishing resources, publishing groups can build online learning platforms and hardware-software teaching systems based on their educational content resources, expanding influence through technical support and increasing the value space of the entire publishing business system. For example, East China Normal University Press has fully developed its publishing resource advantages in basic education, higher education, and vocational education, using information technology to achieve educational service upgrades and integrated publishing. The press developed the digital product “Huashi Little Assistant App” through the “Xuexi Qiangguo” platform, providing convenience for users and opening opportunities for integrated publishing development [8]. Chongqing Publishing Group has integrated its accumulated proprietary copyrighted content and quality educational resources from cooperative units, developing media convergence projects such as Cloud Classroom, Cloud Teaching Research, and 5G+ Smart Education Digital Application Cloud through its self-built secure reading cloud smart application service platform. This has constructed an educational service matrix encompassing content output, textbook training, teacher team building, and teaching effectiveness evaluation, comprehensively serving local education and creating a new model integrating traditional publishing with media convergence.

5.2 New Models for Educational Book Publishing Processes Under Media Convergence

The core competitiveness of educational publishing groups in the publishing field lies in their accumulated educational content resources and quality author resources from years of publishing. Under traditional publishing models, conventional book publishing processes and operational models include topic planning, manuscript organization, author solicitation, manuscript review and publication, followed by printing, marketing, and distribution through various channels. Educational book publishing under media convergence must combine professional disciplinary knowledge, strict publishing processes, and multiple media dissemination methods to build digital service platforms. This approach emphasizes multi-channel content dissemination to meet personalized reading needs and provide targeted educational services, thereby maximizing the social value of quality educational resources.

Media-convergent educational book publishing brings changes to publishing processes, requiring comprehensive understanding of reader needs from the initial topic planning stage, considering multi-media integration pathways, planning multi-channel marketing methods, and achieving cross-media operation of educational publishing resources to maximize the educational service function of books. In summary, facing new trends in media convergence development, the educational publishing industry should clarify its era responsibilities, actively

seek new development opportunities, seize media convergence opportunities, rely on information technology to build knowledge interaction platforms and online learning platforms, achieve integration and extension of publishing businesses, optimize topic selection and planning for educational books, enhance educational book quality, create new educational publishing brands, and promote the sustainable development of the educational publishing industry.

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

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