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Building a People-Centered New Development Pattern for Educational Media: A Case Study of Jiangxi Education Media Group (Postprint)

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Abstract

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Full Text

Constructing a People-Centered New Development Paradigm for Educational Media: A Case Study of Jiangxi Education Media Group

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Abstract: Faced with new demands in educational development and a transformed media landscape, the educational media industry must establish a “people-centered” orientation for its publicity work. Jiangxi Education Media Group has unwaveringly adhered to the fundamental principles of serving the people, relying on the people, and connecting with the people, thereby achieving high-quality development of educational media undertakings and constructing a new development paradigm for educational media.

Keywords: educational media; people-centered; service; media convergence; media development

As China enters the 14th Five-Year Plan period and stands at the historic juncture of the Two Centenary Goals, a defining characteristic is the requirement that all sectors ground their reform and innovation practices in the new development stage, apply the new development philosophy, and thereby foster a new development paradigm. The educational media industry constitutes a vital component of the national education system, fulfilling important social functions including educational publicity, public opinion guidance, and service to teachers and students. Against the backdrop of profound global changes unseen in a century, rapidly evolving media technologies and shifting domestic and international environments present both opportunities and challenges for educational media. Confronted with new educational needs and a transformed media landscape, the industry must establish a “people-centered” orientation for its publicity work to achieve high-quality development and construct a new development paradigm.

Taking Jiangxi Education Media Group (hereinafter referred to as JEMG) as an example, the group has focused on its core business, expanding from a single journal to a multi-carrier portfolio encompassing periodicals, websites, WeChat platforms, and mobile applications. This has enabled comprehensive coverage across kindergartens, primary and secondary schools, teachers, and parents throughout Jiangxi Province, reaching over 5 million people in the education community and securing the main front for educational publicity. Through these primary channels and positions, JEMG’s media outlets have closely centered their work around the priorities of the Ministry of Education and Jiangxi Provincial Department of Education, disseminating authoritative educational information, promoting exemplary educational practices, and organizing rich activities for teachers and students. In doing so, they have effectively told the story of Jiangxi’s education and created a favorable atmosphere for the reform and development of education in the province.

1. Serving the People: Upholding Craftsmanship Spirit to Deepen Core Business and Serve Teachers and Students

1.1 Occupying the Main Position: Manifesting the Essential Attributes of Educational Media

Media serves as a bridge connecting all things, a crucial channel for national will to flow from top to bottom, and an essential tool for people to understand their information environment and better their lives. In China, all media possess distinct ideological attributes and bear the important functions of communicating with society, transmitting information, and providing social services. Fundamentally, media exhibit three dimensions of attributes: political, economic, and cultural-public welfare. The political attribute positions media as the eyes, ears, and voice of the Party and the people, while the economic attribute manifests as “public service in nature, enterprise in management,” enabling media to create

wealth as market entities and drive economic and social development. Educational media must focus on the fundamental task of fostering virtue through education, uphold correct political direction, publication orientation, and values.

Educational media represents the primary platform through which society accesses educational information and receives educational services. As China enters a new development stage, practitioners must fully comprehend that being people-centered forms the cornerstone of their enterprise, strengthen their understanding of providing educational, cultural, and public welfare services, consistently center their work around the educational cause, continuously satisfy people' s cultural needs, and enhance their spiritual strength. JEMG, for instance, has in recent years focused on its core business, evolving from a single journal to multiple carriers including periodicals, websites, WeChat platforms, and mobile applications. This has achieved comprehensive coverage across early childhood, primary and secondary students, teachers, and parents in Jiangxi Province, reaching over 5 million people in the education community and occupying the main front for educational publicity.

1.2 Deeply Cultivating the Journal Business: Building a High-Quality Educational Journal Cluster

As educational media deeply participates in the social market and remains closely connected to people' s lives, its core prerequisite for survival and development lies in creating a portfolio of journal products with solid content quality and positive social response. Educational journals represent the traditional domain of educational media development and serve as the main front for releasing educational information, facilitating exchanges and discussions, and conducting educational publicity. In the new media era, while the Internet has exerted unprecedented impact on traditional media forms—leading to frequent news of traditional newspapers ceasing publication, merging, or restructuring, and talent drain—the new media landscape has also significantly lowered the threshold for information dissemination. The “attention economy” driven by the short, flat, and fast characteristics of new media has further led to content quality control being neglected in pursuit of attention, even generating a series of negative social impacts. Western communication scholars Paul Lazarsfeld and Robert Merton, in their work *Mass Communication, Popular Taste, and Organized Social Action*, proposed the theory of mass communication' s negative functions, arguing that if mass media indiscriminately provides vast amounts of information, it can create a “narcotizing dysfunction” —causing people to become overindulged in superficial information and popular entertainment, leading them to unconsciously lose social agency and settle for “passive knowledge accumulation” [?], ultimately forfeiting their ability for independent choice and judgment.

For educational media, the new media boom necessitates a return to self-reflection and calm consideration of its core business 坚守. By continuously

building its brand journals, excavating core values, and shouldering the attitude and mission of being responsible to the people of society with the craftsmanship spirit of striving for excellence, educational media can fulfill its societal obligations.

With over 70 years of development, JEMG has always regarded journal quality as its lifeline, adhering to the publishing philosophy of “producing excellent articles, creating brand columns, and running first-class journals.” The group’s *Elementary School Students’ Friend* and *Teacher’s Overview* have been recognized as Double-Benefit Journals in China’s Journal Matrix, while *Junior High School Students’ Friend* and *Smart Spring* have won Gold Awards for Chinese Children’s Press, and *Happy Early Childhood* achieved zero error rates in national press quality inspections organized by the National Press and Publication Administration, earning excellent social response. Behind these quality journal products lies the steadfast inheritance of craftsmanship spirit among educational media practitioners. As President Xi Jinping emphasized at the National Conference for Model Workers and Advanced Workers, through long-term labor practice, we should cultivate and promote the “craftsmanship spirit of dedication, pursuit of excellence, meticulousness, and striving for perfection.” Craftsmanship spirit is not merely a professional ethos but a concentrated embodiment of professional ethics, competence, and quality.

Educational journals serve teachers, students, and parents, and their editors must implement craftsmanship spirit in editorial and publishing work—avoiding arrogance and impetuosity, striving for perfection, advancing with the times, and endeavoring to make journal services thoughtful and warm. To provide more tailored journal services for different readership groups, JEMG has launched a series of well-positioned and distinctive quality journals: *Jiangxi Education* and *Teacher’s Overview* for teachers and education administrators; comprehensive journals *Happy Early Childhood*, *Elementary School Students’ Friend*, *Junior High School Students’ Friend*, and *Senior High School Students’ Friend* for kindergarten and K-12 students; science popularization journals *Smart Spring* and *Science Popularization World* for K-12 students; and *Happy* for senior citizens. Each journal has established corresponding WeChat public accounts and video channels, constructing a new media matrix that enables all-media dissemination across multiple carriers. Through long-term dedication to its core journal business, JEMG has laid the foundation for a media development paradigm centered on the people and guided by craftsmanship spirit.

1.3 Optimizing Content Supply: Serving the Professional Growth of Teachers and Students

Against the backdrop of rapid economic and social development and an increasingly large educated population, diverse and precisely targeted demands for educational information have rapidly emerged. Educational media practitioners must first establish a correct concept of public service, consistently placing people’s needs at the highest priority, providing quality content supply for the

masses, and guiding and satisfying educational information needs at various stages and dimensions.

Educational media possesses professional attributes. To lead and satisfy the professional growth of teachers and students, it must make substantial efforts in optimizing content supply. First, it should strengthen topic planning to reflect the professionalism and guidance of educational media. Comprehensive educational journals feature rich content, and each issue should incorporate one or two key plans based on current affairs, reader needs, and editorial perspectives to give journal content depth and highlights. Additionally, an annual themed column can be planned to proceed gradually and exert subtle influence. For instance, in response to requirements from the Ministry of Education, JEMG's journals have timely launched themed plans on the 100th anniversary of the Communist Party of China, patriotism education, excellent traditional Chinese culture, and civic moral education, presenting more and better content to readers. Second, it should actively innovate content forms and embrace technology to make content more vivid. Through media convergence, educational journals can bring text to life—for example, by equipping articles with audio and video resources or using VR and AR technologies to present content. This not only expands journal content but also satisfies readers' visual experiences. For student journals, key columns feature QR codes that allow readers to listen to or watch stories; teacher journals include video resources such as expert lectures or exemplary classes to meet readers' higher demands for learning and exchange.

Furthermore, as the saying goes, “to forge iron, one must be strong oneself.” Educational media workers in the complex information environment must continuously enhance their professional competence and capabilities. On one hand, they need to adapt to the demands of the era, mastering basic operations and applications of new technologies and media—including social media and short videos—on the foundation of traditional newspapers and magazines to convey diverse educational information through different forms. On the other hand, they need to improve media literacy and possess a high degree of educational information sensitivity to “grasp the latest educational policies and concepts in a timely manner and have theoretical support when selecting and editing articles” [?], thereby correctly guiding the direction of educational information for the people.

2. Relying on the People: Conducting Down-to-Earth Educational Publicity Activities that Gather Public Support

As the saying goes, “those under the roof know when it leaks; those in the fields know when governance fails.” Constructing a people-centered development paradigm for educational media requires adhering to the principle that development is for the people, relies on the people, and shares its fruits with the people. Only then can a correct view of development and modernization be established. Conducting educational publicity represents the most direct way for educational media to rely on and face the masses, which must achieve organic integration

in all aspects.

2.1 Upholding the Unity of Party Spirit and People-Centeredness

In his 2013 speech at the National Conference on Propaganda and Ideological Work, President Xi Jinping pointed out that propaganda and ideological work must uphold the unity of Party spirit and people-centeredness, establish a people-centered work orientation, and combine serving the masses with educating and guiding them, integrating the satisfaction of needs with the improvement of literacy. Educational information publicity remains an important component of the Party's news and publicity work and must fully achieve the unity of Party spirit and people-centeredness.

On one hand, as education represents a national priority and the foundation of people's livelihood, the importance of educational publicity is self-evident—it concerns the banner and path, advancing the Party and state's educational cause, the cohesion and centripetal force of the entire Party and people of all ethnic groups, and the future of the Party and state. In today's educational publicity, educational media must firmly uphold the principle of Party spirit, enhance political stance in educational publicity, strengthen guidance consciousness by launching more quality publicity activities that respond to each other around the overall situation and coordinate traditional and emerging media, and enhance management consciousness by strengthening gatekeeping over publicity talent teams, editorial teams, and activity planning teams to prevent erroneous or misleading information.

On the other hand, conducting educational publicity activities requires standing together with the people, consistently mastering publicity forms that are popular among the masses, and carrying out colorful, diverse, down-to-earth, and public-gathering educational publicity activities. Today, people increasingly value experiential feelings and educational gains. A down-to-earth educational media outlet and a vital educational journal must rely closely on the masses, coming from the masses and going to the masses, establishing influence among the people, and truly achieving the unity of economic and social benefits. Traditional media has long maintained offline activity-based publicity methods, going deep among readers and grassroots levels to conduct down-to-earth and livelihood-focused publicity activities that are more realistic and closer to life, accumulating considerable publicity experience. Educational journals in the new era should plan activities that center on educational development and the growth of teachers and students. For example, JEMG annually conducts various essay contests and journal reading season activities for different audience groups that are down-to-earth and popular, including the “Caring for Left-Behind Children Dual-Million New Bud Project,” Jiangxi Province “Three Friends” Self-Reliant Youth Selection and Funding Activities, and “Children's Press Reading Season” activities, which have attracted numerous readers' participation and attention. Journal reading activities not only provide learning and reading platforms for readers but also offer conditions for journals to discover and cultivate excellent

authors, while expanding journal brand influence, earning good social reputation, and promoting market-based subscriptions. Publishing units can also timely extend related training, teaching materials, and exhibition activities to form an operational internal cycle of publishing, activities, and training businesses, thereby enhancing the core competitiveness of media operations.

2.2 Upholding the Unity of Policy Advocacy and Diverse Services

Educational media information publicity bears two fundamental missions. First, it must ensure timely and accurate transmission of national education-related guidelines and policies to audiences, providing correct direction and educational references for teachers, students, and parents. Second, it must satisfy the information service needs of various stages and roles regarding education, schooling, and further studies, thereby better enhancing people's sense of educational gain.

Taking JEMG as an example, in the new media environment, the group has fully implemented the people-centered philosophy, coordinated various information media platforms under its umbrella, and carried out educational publicity activities through division of labor and coordination. Its journals and magazines primarily serve the functions of information sharing, experience exchange, and exhibition of educational learning outcomes, with relatively stable audience groups that have widely praised them. On the JEMG Online network platform, the group has fully utilized the Internet's fast update speed and unlimited hyperlinks. The website is divided into sections such as Educational Information, Gaokao Special Topics, JEMG Research and Study, Activities and Competitions, and Ten-Thousand-Teacher Home Visits. Based on audience needs, particularly those of teachers and students, the group has also launched WeChat service accounts and mobile apps to conduct educational information publicity activities, including "Gaokao Progress," "Expert Interpretation," "University Interviews," and "Gaokao Express" under the major theme of college entrance examinations, which have received long-term positive evaluations from teachers, students, and parents for addressing practical confusions.

3. Connecting with the People: Advancing In-Depth Media Convergence Development with User Thinking

The mass line represents the lifeline and fundamental work method of the Party, serving as an important legacy that maintains the Party's youthful vitality and combat effectiveness. Constructing a people-centered development paradigm for educational media requires following the mass line and deeply connecting with the people, primarily manifested in advancing in-depth media convergence development with user thinking.

3.1 Adapting to Trends and Transforming Media Development Concepts

“Wise people adapt to the times; knowledgeable individuals adjust according to circumstances.” From the merger of former China Central Television, China Global Television Network, and China National Radio to form the China Media Group, to the vigorous construction of media convergence centers nationwide, numerous practices have demonstrated that deepening reform and restructuring development paradigms for educational media in the new development stage fundamentally requires self-revolution of its own systems and mechanisms to continuously stimulate internal motivation and foster epochal innovation.

In 2020, the General Office of the CPC Central Committee and the General Office of the State Council jointly issued the *Opinions on Accelerating In-Depth Media Convergence Development*, clarifying the overall requirements for media convergence development and the overall framework for an all-media communication system. Media convergence has risen from early theoretical discussions to the height of national strategy, providing direction and guidance for the practical work of various media outlets. Emphasizing user thinking and integrating user audiences represents the standard and original aspiration of media convergence. The *China Media Convergence Development Report* has pointed out that at the current stage, media convergence still exhibits a phenomenon of “converging without integrating” [?], which warrants attention.

Jiangxi Education Media Group has actively responded to national comprehensive deepening reform requirements, independently explored media development models, and consistently regarded institutional and mechanism reform as a key factor in maintaining healthy and stable media development. In 2012, the self-financing enterprise-managed public institution was wholly transformed into an enterprise and renamed Jiangxi Education Periodicals Co., Ltd. In 2015, Jiangxi Education Media Group was established with Jiangxi Education Media Group Co., Ltd. as the parent company. Behind this series of reforms and transformations lies the commitment to riding the wave of the times, consistently centering on the people, and transforming development concepts.

To effectively conduct educational publicity and public opinion guidance, educational media must first transform traditional media development concepts at the top-level design and firmly establish user thinking. In the development history of China’s media industry, media have possessed the dual attributes of “public service nature and enterprise management.” The public service nature requires media to typically implement a director responsibility system and editor-in-chief responsibility system in operation and management. This system with distinct hierarchical attributes facilitates upward and downward information flow and clear division of functions but simultaneously generates some authoritarian influences and media-centric thinking. However, “media communication innovation research that does not value users has no vitality” [?]. In the era of media convergence, media must prioritize transforming development concepts in oper-

ation and management, better understand user profiles, and incorporate user characteristics and preferences into media practice considerations to increase user stickiness and thereby enhance their own communication power, guidance power, influence, and credibility.

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

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