An Exploration of Publisher-University Collaborative Innovation in Scientific and Technological Journal Publishing Models: A Case Study of Psychology: Techniques and Applications (Postprint)

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Abstract

Amidst the growing demand for scientific journals, traditional journal management models can no longer satisfy the developmental needs of periodicals. Reform, innovation, and integrated development are imperative. As a scientific journal, merely publishing academic research and technological innovation achievements is insufficient; it must also be able to provide guidance for academic research and technological innovation activities, and promote the construction of a social innovation environment. This article takes "Psychology: Techniques and Applications" as an example, introduces the achievements of Exploration Publishing House in collaborating with universities to innovate the scientific journal publishing model, and hopes to provide reference for the selection or reform of publishing models in related disciplines.

Full Text

Exploring an Innovative Sci-Tech Journal Publishing Model through Publisher-University Collaboration: A Case Study of *Psychology: Techniques and Applications*

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Abstract: Amidst growing demand for scientific and technological journals, traditional publishing models can no longer meet the needs of journal development. Reform, innovation, and integrated development are urgently needed. As

sci-tech journals, it is insufficient to merely publish academic research and technological innovation achievements; they must also provide guidance for academic research and technological innovation activities, while promoting the construction of a social innovation environment. This article uses *Psychology: Techniques and Applications* as an example to introduce the achievements of an innovative publishing model that combines publishers and universities, hoping to provide reference for the selection or reform of publishing models in related disciplines.

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As China' s science and technology continue to advance, market demand for sci-tech journals has also risen steadily [1]. Against the backdrop of integrated publishing, traditional publishing organizations need to increase revenue through expanded distribution, as exemplified by the 270 journals published by Oxford University Press. Traditional structures are no longer adapted to the needs of integrated publishing development and have become obstacles to deep publishing integration, necessitating reform and innovation [2]. In recent years, various publishing forms for sci-tech journals have emerged, such as independent sponsorship by learned societies and co-sponsorship by societies and research institutes [3], offering multiple options for journal operation models [4-5].

1. Domestic and International Sci-Tech Journal Publishing Models and Their Characteristics

1.1 International Publishing Models and Characteristics

Currently, sci-tech journals in countries with developed publishing industries generally implement market-oriented operations, adopting market-oriented journal philosophies. Their operation models tend toward specialization, internationalization, digitization, intensification, and separation of editing and business operations [6], providing academic exchange platforms for scientific and technological workers. Internationally, mainstream sci-tech journal publishing models can be divided into two major categories: those relying on academic organizations such as learned societies/associations or universities and research institutions; and market operation models including publishers (journal societies) and commercial publishing groups [7-14].

1.1.1 Academic Organization-Based Publishing Models This model mainly includes two types: learned society/association publishing models and university/research institution publishing models.

The first is the learned society/association publishing model. Professional societies and associations possess strong expertise and disciplinary advantages; consequently, sci-tech journals dominated by professional societies and associations lead in academic level and influence within their respective fields. Most society/association publishing models have relatively low publishing costs, and their publications constitute an important component of academic research.

The second is the university and research institution publishing model. This model is not profit-oriented but serves the teaching and research of the institution. However, considering operational costs and other factors, such publications are viewed as part of academic research due to their weak strength and small scale.

1.1.2 Market Operation Publishing Models This model mainly includes two types: publisher (journal society) publishing models and large commercial publishing group models.

The publisher (journal society) publishing model is exemplified by *Science* and *Nature* magazines. They are not completely independent journal societies but are not controlled by any academic institution or organization, emphasizing editorial independence, which is regarded as an essential condition for ensuring journal quality. Under this operation model, papers are generally published relatively quickly with unified standards.

The large commercial publishing group model involves foreign publishing groups that generally develop through mergers and reorganizations based on asset ties, typically as private joint-stock companies or family businesses with market-oriented business strategies, such as Springer and Elsevier. While such publishing models aim for profit, they also emphasize academics first and quality foremost. The collectivization of large commercial publishing group models manifests in two aspects: first, strong capital alliances or resource complementarity; second, super-scale development of single journals. Collectivized journals have relatively tight organization, detailed professional division of labor, operate journals under unified management institutions, and establish specific departments responsible for various journal components (publishing, sales, advertising, etc.). Under the operation of foreign sci-tech journals with scale, industrialization, and flexible and diverse management, they have achieved virtuous development, realized publishing resource sharing, reduced business risks, continuously expanded operational scale, and enhanced brand influence.

1.2 Domestic Publishing Models and Characteristics

Currently, most Chinese academic journals are supervised and sponsored by research institutes, major universities, and science and technology associations

[15], among which universities sponsor more than 2,500 sci-tech journals, accounting for approximately 50% of China' s total sci-tech journals [16]. The publishing models for Chinese university sci-tech journals can be mainly divided into three types: independent journal operation models; cooperative operation models with other organizations; and network platform virtual intensive models.

1.2.1 Independent Journal Operation Models Independent journal operation models mainly include three categories: single-journal models, intensive journal society models (institutional operation), and magazine society models (enterprise operation).

The single-journal model refers to the traditional operation model established as a single journal editorial department within a university. Due to its small operation scale and dispersed nature (scattered across various university departments or secondary units), its aggregation effect is insufficient. The sponsoring unit generally pays insufficient attention, and relevant government departments face greater management difficulties for journals under this operation model.

The intensive journal society model refers to the operation model where universities integrate journals originally scattered across various departments or units to establish a journal society, achieving resource sharing. This operation model has obvious advantages, such as facilitating management, effectively reducing promotion costs, thereby improving work efficiency, and more effectively utilizing human, material, and financial resources.

The magazine society model is an operation model where universities gather journals originally scattered across various departments or units to establish a magazine society with legal entity qualifications. The magazine society model implements enterprise operation, adopting intensive management and operation models. Under this model, the work enthusiasm and efficiency of journal staff are improved, achieving a combination of social and economic benefits. However, under this model, staff stability is relatively insufficient, long-term 磨合 is needed for work coordination, and excessive pursuit of the market may impact the sustainable development of pure academic publications.

1.2.2 Cooperative Operation Models with Other Organizations Cooperative operation models with other organizations mainly include three categories: affiliation with university press models, cooperation with professional publishing group models, and academic-publishing separation models.

The affiliation with university press model involves uniformly assigning journals scattered within the school to the university press for operation and management, establishing a journal center or branch under the press. Each journal can share the press' s platform, implement enterprise management for journal editors, transform work concepts, enhance innovation consciousness and market awareness, and improve work efficiency. However, journal editorial staff are relatively stable, and there may be hidden dangers such as reducing academic

levels due to excessive pursuit of economic benefits.

The cooperation with professional publishing group model involves affiliating the journal with domestic or foreign large professional publishing groups while keeping the journal' s staff, premises, and property unchanged. The journal pays annual fees to the professional publishing group (for management, promotion, etc.), and the professional publishing group arranges dedicated personnel to coordinate journal publishing-related work. Although the journal can leverage the professional publishing group' s brand effect to enhance its influence, this cooperation method results in relatively dispersed journal management, may generate profit distribution issues, and this dual management can cause the journal to lack a relatively long-term and stable direction, leading to significant variables in journal development that are not conducive to long-term sustainable development.

The academic-publishing separation model means that the editorial department is responsible for journal planning, manuscript organization, and review, while professional publishing institutions are responsible for journal publishing, distribution, and related income and expenditure. This publishing model not only effectively resolves the contradiction between improving journal academic quality and achieving business benefits but also improves work efficiency after personnel diversion. However, this publishing model makes it difficult to monitor the entire journal publishing process.

1.2.3 Network Platform Virtual Intensive Models The network platform virtual intensive publishing model is a publishing model that has emerged with the development of network-based and digital publishing. It refers to a virtual intensive sci-tech journal publishing model based on network platforms. Under this model, various journals can conduct joint distribution and advertising investment through network platforms, not only achieving win-win benefits with alliance journals but also enhancing the influence of each journal through unified promotion and publicity on the network platform [6].

Chinese university sci-tech journals have been actively exploring and practicing new publishing models. However, university journal reform differs from university press reform in many aspects, such as service objects and missions. Additionally, compared with international sci-tech journal publishing models that emphasize both academic quality and marketization, China' s current university sci-tech journal system still has many problems. Under the independent journal operation model, although journals rely on universities and research institutes and have relatively abundant academic resources to utilize, guaranteeing author and reviewer sources to a certain extent, this model lacks market operation and distribution resources, resulting in a relatively narrow readership that is not conducive to expanding journal influence. Under the cooperative operation model with other organizations, marketization levels increase, but due to affiliating with other institutions, they lack academic resources in corresponding fields, cannot guarantee the quantity and quality of authors and reviewers,

and may also encounter situations where journal promotion and distribution are not valued. Similarly, journal quality and influence improvement and long-term development cannot be guaranteed.

Therefore, how to better utilize the academic resources of universities and research institutes while enhancing journal marketization levels, simultaneously improving journal quality and promotion/distribution capabilities, and expanding journal influence are issues that sci-tech journals have been continuously exploring and researching.

2. Origin and Operation of the Innovative Publishing Model

Under the trend of increasing demand for sci-tech journals, traditional sci-tech journal operation models can no longer meet the needs of journal development. Reform, innovation, and integrated development are urgently needed. As sci-tech journals, it is insufficient to merely publish academic research and technological innovation achievements; they must also provide guidance for academic research and technological innovation activities while promoting the construction of a social innovation environment. *Psychology: Techniques and Applications* magazine was founded in 2013, adopting a publisher-university collaborative publishing model for sci-tech journals. It is supervised by the China Association for Promoting Democracy, co-hosted by Kaiming Publishing House and Central University of Finance and Economics, with Professor Xin Ziqiang from the university' s School of Society and Psychology serving as editor-in-chief. *Psychology: Techniques and Applications* is a professional journal in applied psychology that publishes cutting-edge academic research results in applied psychology, including original research exploring real-world issues in economics, society, health, education, and other fields through the application of psychological principles, methods, and techniques. It is also one of the first academic journals recognized by the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television and is indexed by multiple authoritative databases. The publisher-university collaborative publishing model has achieved certain results in its exploration process, effectively utilizing Central University of Finance and Economics' leading advantages and radiating effects in nationwide academic research, achievement transformation, and social service, as well as Kaiming Publishing House' s long-term accumulated advantages in psychology publishing. The joint publishing model not only improved journal quality and influence but also better fulfilled its role as an exchange platform for psychological technology research, discussion, application, and transformation of psychological research achievements into social applications, promoting psychology' s better service to the public and society.

2.1 Rationale for the Innovative Publishing Model

2.1.1 Publisher-University Collaboration as an Adaptation to Journal Reform and Development Currently, most Chinese academic journals are hosted by higher education institutions, research institutes, and industry associations. Journals like *Psychology: Techniques and Applications* that are hosted by publishing houses are relatively rare. As an academic journal, *Psychology: Techniques and Applications* faces a historical node of reform and innovation. Deepening publishing system reforms has placed higher demands on journal development. After recognizing the situation and tasks facing academic journals, *Psychology: Techniques and Applications* magazine has further transformed its thinking, expanded its operational ideas, and innovated its publishing model in an orderly and cautious manner to advance reform. Collaborating with universities helps promote the development of university research capabilities and drive academic journal development. It is also beneficial for fully integrating universities' academic research advantages with publishers' publishing resource advantages. This represents *Psychology: Techniques and Applications* magazine' s active exploration and innovation in publishing models to meet the requirements and needs of China' s journal reform and development trend.

2.1.2 Publisher-University Collaboration as a Means to Build a Stable, High-Quality Author Team The development of any journal cannot be separated from author support, and sci-tech journals are no exception. With sufficient manuscript sources and a strong author team, a journal can remain invincible in fierce competition. University journals have natural advantages in this regard, as the academic research force is mainly concentrated in higher education institutions or research institutes hosted by higher education institutions, with strong basic research capabilities. Therefore, the author team from universities is large, and there is also a broad readership. The publisher-university collaborative publishing model for sci-tech journals can unite a large number of high-quality academic researchers, continuously providing a large quantity of excellent and innovative academic manuscripts. Therefore, collaborating with universities to run journals is both a need to ensure stable manuscript sources and a need to build a large, stable, high-quality author team.

2.1.3 Publisher-University Collaboration as a Means to Improve Journal Quality and Academic Influence Publishing quality is the lifeline of academic journals, with academic quality being the core. The academic level of articles published in academic journals directly affects the overall quality of the journal. Improving the academic influence of *Psychology: Techniques and Applications* is the top priority for enhancing journal quality. The publisher-university collaborative publishing model is also a need to improve journal quality and academic influence. This model helps leverage universities' leading advantages and radiating effects in academic research, achievement transformation, and social service. It strengthens author team building, increases readership, and improves the journal' s impact factor and citation frequency through these methods, form-

ing a virtuous cycle.

2.1.4 Publisher-University Collaboration as a Need to Enrich Journal Topic Selection Professionalization of editors leads to alienation between journals and scholars, making it inevitable for topic planning to become isolated from the academic community. Even when good topic directions are identified, suitable authors may not be found, and editors without any academic achievements find it difficult to have a voice in academia, let alone the ability to attract and organize excellent manuscripts [17]. Although increasing voices in the industry call for "editor-scholarization" or "academic editors" [18-19] and emphasize editorial independence [20], whether editor-scholarization or academic editors are processes that accumulate over time and are difficult to achieve in a short period in reality. The publisher-university collaborative publishing model for sci-tech journals allows experts and scholars to assume responsibilities and missions in the journal operation process, making the topic selection of *Psychology: Techniques and Applications* more abundant. Under the leadership of Editor-in-Chief Xin Ziqiang, the publication of special topic papers has also achieved good results.

2.1.5 Publisher-University Collaboration as a Need to Improve Review Efficiency Academic quality and publication cycle are the two most important factors in evaluating sci-tech journals [21]. Expert review is the core component of the three-review system for sci-tech journals, and the expert review cycle affects the journal' s manuscript publication cycle to a certain extent [22]. Issues such as mismatch between experts and manuscript directions, poor communication between editors and experts, and busy experts lead to overdue review cycles. The publisher-university collaborative publishing model enhances journal influence. On the one hand, it expands the reviewer team, thereby improving the matching degree between experts and manuscript directions. On the other hand, reviewers have a better understanding of the journal' s positioning and direction, improving review efficiency. Improving review efficiency is necessary to shorten manuscript publication cycles and also to improve author submission satisfaction, helping maintain author teams and enhance journal quality.

2.2 Operation of the Innovative Publishing Model

The innovative publishing model of publisher-university collaboration can simultaneously give full play to the publishing advantages of publishers and the academic research resource advantages of universities. In specific operations, the two parties divide labor and cooperate, complementing each other. Taking *Psychology: Techniques and Applications* as an example, the School of Society and Psychology at Central University of Finance and Economics, where Editor-in-Chief Xin Ziqiang is based, is mainly responsible for journal topic selection, special issue organization, content and quality control, and expanding the reviewer and author teams. Kaiming Publishing House mainly utilizes its own

publishing resources, focusing on organization and coordination, publishing and editing, proofreading quality control, and final printing and distribution. Publicity work is jointly completed by both parties. Universities are also where the main readership of sci-tech journals is located, so publicity work within the school and corresponding academic circles helps expand journal visibility and obtain more authors, reviewers, and readers. Publishers also play an important role in journal publicity through website new media promotion and peer exchanges.

This operation model of division of labor and complementary advantages can greatly improve the work efficiency and quality of sci-tech journals and can also respond to social hot issues in a timely manner, playing the role of academic research serving society and the people. For example, the sudden COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 threatened not only people' s physical health but also caused great negative impacts on everyone' s mental health. *Psychology: Techniques and Applications* magazine responded quickly, organizing special topic series on "social psychological services" and "COVID-19 pandemic" to discuss psychological issues that the public cared about during this special period, helping everyone understand and regulate their own emotions and psychological fluctuations.

3. Advantages and Areas for Improvement of the Innovative Publishing Model

3.1 Advantages of the Innovative Publishing Model

As mentioned above, the innovative publishing model of publisher-university collaboration like *Psychology: Techniques and Applications* has multiple advantages.

First, it helps ensure high-quality author and reviewer expert teams. The academic resources of universities are the main guarantee for sci-tech journal author teams. Relying on universities and corresponding academic circles can ensure a continuous supply of high-quality authors and also obtain support from more reviewers in corresponding disciplinary fields. These aspects are fundamental and of utmost importance for the long-term development of sci-tech journals.

Second, it helps enrich sci-tech journal topic selection and organize timely academic special issues in response to current events. Academic circles in universities have more accurate and in-depth grasp of current academic frontiers and hot topics, which can compensate for the disadvantage of journal editors not being able to follow disciplinary development in real time, thereby greatly enriching sci-tech journal topic selection and grasping the pulse of disciplinary development. Additionally, as mentioned above, the abundant academic resources of universities also help journals quickly and timely organize special issues in response to national social hot issues. The topic selection of sci-tech journals should not only focus on academia but also grasp social hot issues that the

public cares about, so as to attract more readership and benefit the public with academic achievements.

Third, it helps improve journal quality and academic influence. This model can effectively leverage universities' leading advantages and radiating effects in academic research, achievement transformation, and social service, attract more high-quality manuscripts, enhance the academic quality of journals, thereby further attracting more readership, increasing citation rates, improving the journal' s impact factor, and forming a virtuous cycle.

Finally, it helps improve work efficiency, especially review efficiency, and shorten publication cycles. Universities have abundant academic expert resources that can provide sufficient reviewer expert teams for sci-tech journals. At the same time, university editorial board members facilitate communication with reviewer experts, enabling reviewers to better understand journal positioning and direction, thereby improving review efficiency both quantitatively and qualitatively. Additionally, the division of labor and cooperation between universities and publishers, with each leveraging its resource advantages, can substantially improve overall work efficiency.

3.2 Areas for Improvement of the Innovative Publishing Model

Of course, this innovative publishing model is still in a stage of continuous exploration and improvement, with many areas needing enhancement.

First, seize the opportunities of integrated publishing and fully utilize emerging technologies such as the internet to enhance journal influence. In recent years, media convergence has become an irreversible trend in the publishing field [23]. Sci-tech journals must also seize the opportunity and fully utilize emerging technologies such as the internet and big data to stay at the forefront of integrated publishing, so as not to be abandoned by the times. New media platform development has matured, and the public has become more accustomed to reading on mobile phones, computers, and other mobile electronic devices. Therefore, sci-tech journals can use new media platforms for promotion to increase readership and influence.

Second, learn from international publishing group models to form aggregation advantages. The influence of a single journal is ultimately limited. Although it can rely on university academic research resources, it still mostly focuses on a single disciplinary field, making it difficult to further expand journal influence. Therefore, learning from the publishing models of large foreign publishing groups and gathering numerous disciplines to form aggregation advantages can better meet customer needs and help sci-tech journals gain broader influence and sustainable development [24].

Third, focus on establishing journal market brands. With numerous domestic and foreign journals available today, with hundreds of academic journals in each discipline, sci-tech journals must have the awareness to establish their own

market brand to stand out among similar journals. In this regard, experience can also be drawn from large international publishing groups [24].

Academic journals, as professional media, bear important responsibilities for disseminating academic information, publishing academic research results, leading research development, and bridging academic research and practical application. Universities, as research institutions, have natural advantages in scientific research, technological innovation, and talent cultivation. Publishing institutions and universities co-sponsoring academic journals is not only an innovative publishing model and a need to adapt to publishing reform but also a need for journals themselves to accelerate connotative development and improve publication quality. The development of sci-tech journals still needs to explore more diversified publishing models, and the publisher-university collaborative publishing model represents a viable path for journal development that can promote the development of sci-tech journals to a certain extent.

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