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Brand Communication of Local Scientific Journals in the New Media Environment: A Case Study of the Journal of Gansu Sciences (Post-print)

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Abstract

This article takes *Gansu Science Journal* as a case study, deeply analyzes the current state of brand communication for regional scientific journals, dissects the challenges confronting scientific journal brand construction in the new media environment, and proposes relevant recommendations, with the aim of providing a reference basis for building distinctive regional scientific journal brands.

Full Text

Preamble

Research on Brand Communication of Local Scientific Journals in the New Media Environment: A Case Study of *Journal of Gansu Sciences*

Abstract: This paper takes *Journal of Gansu Sciences* as a case study to analyze the current state of brand communication among local scientific journals, examine the challenges confronting journal brand building in the new media landscape, and propose recommendations to provide a reference for developing distinctive local scientific journal brands.

Keywords: new media; local scientific journals; brand building

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With the widespread adoption of network information technology, the development environment for academic journals has undergone tremendous changes and challenges. As a platform for sharing research information and academic exchange, the survival methods of scientific journals have fundamentally transformed. The emergence of new media and diverse communication channels has altered the production, processing, and dissemination of research outcomes. Although scientific journals should be at the forefront of technology, their lack of brand recognition and market influence has resulted in outdated manuscript submission and review processes, making it difficult to expand their pool of authors and reviewers. For many local scientific journals that lag in internet integration, insufficient brand influence and low visibility leave numerous high-quality manuscripts with nowhere to submit, while the external review process remains cumbersome. This clearly hinders the presentation and exchange of research findings.

1. Current Status of Brand Communication for Local Scientific Journals

Many local scientific journals primarily rely on print distribution, with online data sharing failing to keep pace with digital development. For researchers working at the grassroots level, on one hand, they lack awareness of the need to communicate and showcase their findings more broadly; on the other hand, the exclusive reliance on print distribution and internal publication formats prevents scientific achievements from being shared and exchanged on larger platforms. Although local scientific journals are numerous, the process of digital transformation has not received adequate attention, nor has brand awareness been established. Only a handful possess independent journal websites and digital editorial management systems [1-3,6].

Externally, local scientific journals face difficulties with delayed adoption of internet technology and limited distribution scope. Internally, many suffer from papers lacking innovation and timeliness, narrow author bases, and limited reviewer resources. The primary contributor base—grassroots researchers—lacks knowledge-sharing awareness and has no access to the latest research materials, while rarely participating in academic exchanges. If the submission and review process is also inefficient, it severely dampens authors' enthusiasm for submission. Compared with the digital publishing philosophy of “two micro-platforms and one terminal” (Weibo, WeChat, and mobile app) adopted by university-based scientific journals, local scientific journals struggle with even the most basic technical bottlenecks in submission and review, making it difficult to select high-level, innovative papers and achieve the goal of research exchange [4,5]. The rapid development of internet technology and the emergence of various new media have profoundly impacted the survival environment and communication methods of scientific journals, making digital transformation of print journals an inevitable trend.

2. Brand Communication Status and Effects of *Journal of Gansu Sciences*

Established in 1989, *Journal of Gansu Sciences* is a bimonthly publication recognized as a Chinese S&T Statistical Source Journal (Chinese Core Journal of Science and Technology), a source journal for the Chinese Science Citation Database, and a source journal for the Chinese Core Journal (Selection) Database. As an excellent journal in Gansu Province and a comprehensive natural science academic publication sponsored by the Gansu Academy of Sciences, it enjoys certain recognition both within and outside Gansu Province. The journal is organized into major disciplinary sections including basic sciences, engineering technology, physics, biology, and medicine. Although integration and reorganization over the years have created distinctive broad disciplinary categories, among various scientific journals published in Gansu Province, the journal's brand recognition remains relatively modest, as academic research is not confined to specific columns. For *Journal of Gansu Sciences* to achieve widespread acceptance and renown, journal brand building and brand communication constitute indispensable components.

2.1 Digital Communication Methods

Starting from changing readers' reading and submission habits, *Journal of Gansu Sciences* has developed HTML web-based reading and adopted the Tengyun online editorial system to digitize submission and review processes. Simultaneously, it has built an interactive WeChat platform, gradually improved online browsing on its journal website, and innovated service functions. By proactively pushing electronic journal issues to researchers in relevant fields via WeChat and email, and through its WeChat public account, authors no longer need to repeatedly call to inquire about review progress or acceptance status—they can check manuscript status via WeChat, significantly improving editorial office efficiency. Beyond contributing authors, the journal also maintains a group of regular subscribers who may potentially be developed into future authors and reviewers through WeChat interactions.

2.2 Diversified Audience Services

The reader information database is an emerging product of the integrated media era. Through the editorial management system and CNKI journal database, the journal tracks statistics on downloads, reads, clicks, and citation rates. With support from this real-time data, the editorial office can timely adjust column settings for the following year based on reader preferences and focus areas. Audience feedback can be collected indirectly through methods like email browsing and account registration, or directly through phone calls and website messages. Both approaches reflect audience attention levels and opinions about the journal to varying degrees.

2.3 Author Consultation and Feedback via Website and WeChat Messages

In addition to traditional communication methods like phone and email, the journal has established a dedicated message board on its website for reader-editor exchanges. By regularly responding to author inquiries, the editorial office can promptly grasp author dynamics. Many grassroots researchers actually learn how to write academic papers by reading scientific journals. Through exchanges between editors and authors/readers, the journal can not only provide submission suggestions for incoming manuscripts and introduce publication trends across disciplines, but also subtly broaden authors' thinking and improve their writing skills. These diverse audience knowledge services have further expanded *Journal of Gansu Sciences'* s recognition within Gansu Province' s scientific journal community. Online communication enables timely notification of authors to revise manuscripts that do not conform to the journal' s formatting requirements, and targeted adjustments to disciplinary column settings have led to a substantial increase in submission rates in recent years.

3. Recommendations for Local Scientific Journal Brand Building

3.1 Enhance Brand Building and Communication Awareness

The driving force behind scientific journal development lies in their brand value and characteristics. Therefore, for local scientific journals to stand out among numerous publications, they must establish and strengthen brand awareness. Influenced by operational mechanisms, most local scientific journals rely primarily on special funds allocated by supervisory authorities, resulting in a lack of competitive consciousness, crisis awareness, and brand building awareness. To attract as many authors and readers as possible in this environment, local journals must look to outstanding provincial and national research institutions and universities, end their "solo performance" status, and cultivate their own brand development consciousness [6].

3.2 Organize Special Issues and Columns on Featured Disciplines

Special columns represent an important editorial approach. Editors of local scientific journals must not only deeply explore article quality but also actively solicit contributions from influential author groups, accurately identify characteristics and hot topics in specific disciplines, and plan special issues and columns, inviting scholars to write dedicated articles. By combining editorial initiative and creativity with reader needs, journals can cultivate their own distinctive features through special issues/columns, enhance academic influence and competitiveness, create brand-name columns and journals, and occupy the high ground in disciplinary development. The integration of modern management consciousness and academic influence injects new development momentum into local scientific journal brand building. Organizing special disciplinary

issues/columns not only expands journal visibility but also improves editors' manuscript organization capabilities and professional standards [7].

3.3 Expand Journal Influence Through Academic Conferences

Academic conferences are meetings focused on promoting scientific development, academic exchange, and research topics. Many scientific journals have recognized the authority, high-level knowledge, and interactivity of academic conferences and use them to publicize journal brands and expand academic influence. When hosting or co-organizing academic conferences, information promotion through integrated media platforms and careful quality control can attract a large number of high-quality papers from national research institutions and universities, further improving publication standards. While traditional submission methods rely on long-term reputation accumulation, academic conferences can consolidate authors from different institutions into a stable contributor base for the journal, rapidly enhancing brand influence in the short term and significantly optimizing the journal's brand building process.

3.4 Accelerate Journal Digitalization

Today, traditional media faces impact, the concept of print media is weakening, mobile reading has become mainstream, and readers increasingly prefer paperless, fragmented reading. Digital publishing is gradually becoming a sunrise industry overtaking traditional publishing. Accessing and sharing academic resources online has become the norm for research. Rapid content dissemination represents the competitive advantage of digital development for scientific journals. Networked editorial office operations can not only shorten publication cycles but also reduce publishing costs. Journal publishers can expand author and reader communities online and build academic exchange platforms. Therefore, local scientific journals must accelerate independent website construction and digitalization to expand brand influence via the internet [8].

As an important component of research exchange and presentation, the role of local scientific journals cannot be ignored. In the wave of journal reform and media convergence, how to leverage local research characteristics and further enhance the brand influence of local scientific journals is a topic every practitioner should contemplate. Establishing and communicating distinctive scientific journal brands is the inevitable path for journal development. In the process of brand building and communication, local scientific journals must emphasize innovation and leadership while integrating local research characteristics to create distinctive journal brands that differ from general scientific publications.

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