

Preliminary Analysis of Survey and Countermeasure Research on Current Ideological Status of Young Journalists in Municipal Newspapers: Postprint

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Abstract

Faced with the challenges and transformations of media convergence development, the overall ideological quality of young journalists in traditional media, particularly in prefecture-level newspaper offices, demonstrates positive, healthy, and upward development. However, as various hot-button and challenging issues gradually emerge, they have caused significant ideological fluctuations among young journalists. To safeguard the healthy growth of young journalists and facilitate media convergence development, prefecture-level newspaper offices should strengthen and improve ideological and political work for young journalists in a targeted manner, enhance their professional competence in editorial and reporting capabilities, provide effective career planning guidance, and synchronize and consolidate the thoughts of young journalists with the reform and development of the newspaper offices.

Full Text

A Brief Analysis of the Current Ideological Status of Youth Journalists in Municipal Newspapers: Investigation and Countermeasures

Abstract: In the face of challenges and transformations in media convergence development, the overall ideological quality of youth journalists in traditional media, particularly municipal newspaper offices, demonstrates a positive, healthy, and upward trend. However, as various hot-button and difficult issues gradually emerge, they have caused considerable ideological fluctuations among young journalists. To ensure the healthy growth of youth journalists and promote media convergence development, municipal newspaper offices should

strengthen and improve ideological and political work among youth journalists in a targeted manner, enhance their editorial and business capabilities, conduct effective career planning, and align their thinking with the reform and development of the newspaper office.

Keywords: youth journalists; communication; career planning; moral cultivation

Journalists are often perceived by the public as knowledgeable, well-informed, and passionate professionals, making newspaper offices a desirable career destination. Most young journalists view these institutions as platforms to realize their personal capabilities and values. Consequently, they cherish their editorial positions, strive to leverage their strengths, and eagerly integrate into their work environment to gain recognition, ultimately achieving their career aspirations through the newspaper's development.

With the rapid evolution of internet technologies and applications, new media has risen swiftly, and media convergence represents a profound and significant transformation in the communications field. Amid these challenges and changes, traditional media—especially municipal newspapers—must continuously accelerate reform, innovation, and transformation. During this process, young journalists, characterized by high educational attainment, strong professional competence, quick thinking, and innovative spirit, generally exhibit positive, healthy, and upward ideological trends. However, as various hot-button and difficult issues surface, they have triggered considerable ideological fluctuations among youth journalists.

Under these circumstances, resolving doubts, easing emotions, settling ideological conflicts, and unifying the understanding of young journalists has become an important issue facing newspaper offices, particularly at the municipal level, that urgently requires research and resolution. Therefore, accurately grasping the ideological dynamics of youth journalists and strengthening targeted ideological and political work is crucial for boosting their morale, reinforcing their sense of responsibility, and promoting newspaper development.

1.1 Strong Enterprising Consciousness Among Youth Journalists

The majority of young journalists possess strong enterprising consciousness. They value their editorial work highly and actively seek to contribute to their institution's development.

1.2 Rapid Enhancement of Comprehensive Qualities

For youth journalists at municipal newspapers, although grassroots materials are abundant, geographical limitations constrain their ability to produce influential work. However, such limitations do not eliminate opportunities. Contemporary university students represent the finest segment of youth, and today's young journalists—mostly university graduates—possess solid theoretical knowledge

in journalism, strong learning abilities, and innovative consciousness. Through continuous practice, their professional capabilities steadily improve, enabling them to produce and edit numerous excellent manuscripts and layouts. Through competitive selection and performance reforms, newspaper offices continuously optimize the growth environment for youth journalists, allowing them to quickly emerge as the main force in the journalist corps.

2. Some Non-Negligible Phenomena in the Youth Journalist Corps

As young journalists continuously join newspaper offices, they inject fresh blood, steadily improving the educational level and comprehensive qualities of the corps and altering its composition. The proportion of youth journalists increases annually. Taking Huaihua Daily as an example, from 2011 to 2016, over 30 young journalists were recruited, accounting for approximately 30% of the entire editorial team. Youth journalists are increasingly becoming the backbone of reform and development at the newspaper, playing an irreplaceable role in editorial work, with their growth progressing in tandem with the newspaper's development.

2.1 Weak Enterprising Consciousness

Influenced by the social environment, a minority of young journalists lack firm ideals and beliefs, with new changes occurring in their value orientation and behavior patterns. At work, many focus excessively on material and economic benefits, lack sufficient confidence in current newspaper reforms and their institution's future, demonstrate weak team spirit, and lack self-motivation.

2.2 Increased Work Pressure

In the era of media convergence, increasingly fierce competition among media has heightened journalists' attention to and investment in their work. Most young journalists work on the front lines of editorial positions, facing heavy workloads and tasks, frequently working overtime with irregular lifestyles. With increasingly strict media oversight and control, they live in constant fear of making mistakes, which over time causes mental strain and increases psychological burden among some editors and reporters.

2.3 Weak Sense of Belonging

Some young journalists view journalism as a youth-limited career, believing they will lose market value with age. Consequently, many think they are still young with many opportunities ahead, leading them to be picky about their work environment and adopt a "body here, heart elsewhere" mentality. At the slightest dissatisfaction, they lose confidence, feel disappointed, and may even consider job-hopping. Particularly at municipal media outlets with poor working condi-

tions and benefits, these factors significantly shake young journalists' confidence and affect their work enthusiasm.

2.4 Poor Work Adaptability

Some young journalists suffer from being overly ambitious but lacking practical skills—willing to think but reluctant to act, wanting only to write major stories and win awards while unwilling to start with small pieces or work from the front lines, failing to understand that major awards accumulate from small stories. Other young journalists, lacking innovative consciousness, produce repetitive content; for instance, stories written during Labor Day, National Day, or Valentine's Day differ little from those written in previous years. Over time, this leads to boredom, weak sense of responsibility, poor execution, and insufficient self-planning.

3. Reflections on Strengthening Ideological Guidance for Youth Journalists

3.1 Upholding People-Oriented Principles and Strengthening Positive Guidance

As the most active, positive, and vital force in newspaper offices, the mainstream of youth journalists is progressive and their contributions undeniable. Given the new circumstances and problems emerging from the ideological status of youth journalists at municipal newspapers that inevitably affect their growth, strengthening positive guidance becomes particularly crucial.

On one hand, we must continuously strengthen education on political stance, ideological consciousness, moral character, and laws and regulations, as journalism is a highly political professional work. With the continuous expansion of the youth journalist corps, newspaper offices need to strengthen ideological and political work and socialist core values education to help and guide young journalists in establishing correct worldviews, outlooks on life, and values, consciously resisting erosion by unhealthy ideologies.

In ideological and political education, we must adopt a targeted approach—"shoot the arrow at the target, prescribe the right remedy" and "one key for one lock"—helping young journalists correctly understand themselves and their positions. They must recognize that since they have chosen the newspaper environment and editorial work, they must continuously adapt and improve, refraining from blind complaints when encountering difficulties or being overly ambitious. This eliminates ideological misunderstandings, confusion, and concerns among young journalists during reform and development while boosting their confidence. During ideological education, many believe young people are uninterested in traditional political "sermons" and difficult to manage. In reality, we can carry out learning and education activities throughout the newspaper office to promote journalistic professionalism, improve professional ethics, and

cultivate noble spiritual sentiments.

At Huaihua Daily's weekly news meetings, staff from its "two newspapers, one website, and one app"—Huaihua Daily, Biancheng Evening News, Huaihua News Network, and "Palm Huaihua" client—gather together. In addition to reviewing the previous week's news performance and reporting story leads for the current week, they also organize journalists to study central, provincial, and municipal directives on news work, learn relevant laws and regulations, eliminate fake news, enhance their sense of responsibility in news propaganda, and consciously establish good images as journalists.

On the other hand, leaders at all levels of newspaper offices must play exemplary roles, establishing benchmarks in morality, talent, learning, and knowledge among youth journalists to demonstrate and guide them, achieving an "teaching them to fish" effect. We should vigorously publicize and commend selfless, dedicated individuals, using their advanced deeds and spirits to inspire young journalists.

Huaihua is the main battlefield for regional development and poverty alleviation in the Wuling Mountain area. This year, Huaihua Daily became the assisting unit for Shibanjiao Village in Dachong Township, Hongjiang City. To earnestly shoulder the responsibilities and missions of party news and public opinion work and create a favorable public opinion atmosphere for the decisive battle against poverty, Huaihua Daily focuses on the central task and serves the overall situation. In addition to strengthening news planning and publicizing good experiences and practices in poverty alleviation work, it also guides editorial staff—especially young journalists—to actively engage in the main battlefield of poverty alleviation, participate in poverty assistance activities, and become contact persons for assistance. This allows them to go deep into the grassroots and among the masses, assisting poor households, thereby forging a politically, professionally, and stylistically excellent journalist corps.

3.2 Enhancing Communication and Strengthening Care for Harmony

Building harmonious interpersonal relationships requires respecting youth journalists' opinions and motivating them to care about the newspaper's development, making them truly feel respected. We must enable everyone to develop their talents and play their roles in a caring environment, promote emotional exchange among colleagues, foster a strong atmosphere of "the newspaper office is our home, development depends on all of us," and create a safe and comfortable work and learning environment. This enhances young journalists' sense of ownership and increases their happiness, pride, and sense of belonging.

Work communication is an important skill for leading cadres and managers, directly reflecting leadership competence. In work and life, managers at all levels must firmly establish communication awareness, master communication methods and skills, comprehensively listen to journalists' voices through multiple channels. Meanwhile, given that youth journalists have active minds and diver-

sified value orientations, we should widely solicit opinions and pool collective wisdom. Through heart-to-heart talks, we can timely understand their development status and topics of concern, grasping their current situation in work, life, learning, and ideology.

We should organize young journalists to contribute ideas and suggestions for the newspaper's reform and development, encouraging them to propose rational recommendations, thereby strengthening their sense of ownership and achieving the goal of mutual growth between youth journalists and the newspaper office.

3.3 Conducting Rich Cultural and Sports Activities to Cultivate Noble Sentiments

To enhance the cohesion and sense of responsibility among youth journalists, we must create a favorable cultural atmosphere with both pressure and motivation tailored to contemporary youth characteristics. By strengthening cultural activity construction, we can promote professional ethics education and elevate youth journalists' cultural taste and literacy. Huaihua Daily frequently organizes youth journalists to participate in cultural activities, seizing opportunities such as Labor Day and Journalists' Day to conduct events like "May 1st News Labor Competition" and "Good Journalists Tell Good Stories." Through competition promoting learning and learning promoting application, these activities improve news business capabilities while cultivating noble ideological sentiments.

Additionally, organizing young journalists to actively participate in city-wide activities such as civilized and sanitary city creation and volunteer work gives full play to their leading role, promotes the spirit of Lei Feng, and fosters new social trends.

3.4 Focusing on Career Planning to Enhance Comprehensive Qualities

Young journalists face heavy reporting tasks and busy news work, leaving them little time for quiet reflection on career path planning. This causes emotional fluctuations among some young journalists when encountering difficulties, affecting their work. Therefore, career development planning for youth journalists is particularly important, providing them with more guidance and clear development directions.

Based on the principle of "developing according to talent and employing according to capacity," we should customize personalized career plans according to differences in youth journalists' interests, abilities, and qualities, and implement planned training to fully utilize and develop their talents. For experienced young journalists who can work independently, we should fully trust and encourage them, promoting them boldly.

To further strengthen mentorship and cultivate all-media journalists adapted to the new situation of media convergence, Huaihua Daily has specially launched

the “Famous Journalist Training Camp” since this year. The camp runs for three years per session, with mentors providing “one-on-one, point-to-face” guidance to participating journalists, helping them improve their ability to handle topics and express themselves. The camp holds monthly topic research meetings where everyone must report topics, determine mentors and publication schedules based on topics, and mentors comment on the previous month’s topics. Through participation in the “Famous Journalist Training Camp,” a large number of young journalists have developed the good habit of “learning while working, working while learning,” continuously tapping their potential, improving the overall quality of the young journalist corps, and presenting a fresh mental outlook. A group of expert editors and reporters has emerged. Simultaneously, this establishes and improves the backup talent training mechanism, reasonably tapping, developing, and cultivating backup talents, and accelerating the newspaper’s talent pipeline construction.

With the progress of the times, the media environment is constantly changing, bringing new challenges to newspaper editorial staff. Society now demands composite news talents, and newspaper journalists must become all-media journalists. New media technologies require not only understanding but also operational competence. Therefore, we should quickly adapt to the new development situation, strengthen news business training, reinforce the all-media integration concept among youth journalists, and continuously practice.

To improve newspaper quality, we must establish a sound compensation and incentive mechanism, scientifically setting work objectives and rationally distributing tasks to protect the enthusiasm and creativity of editorial work. Huaihua Daily effectively uses assessment as a ruler and lever, fully listening to opinions and suggestions from leaders and staff, continuously optimizing its performance distribution scheme. Every editor and each manuscript receives quantitative assessment scores, which are promptly posted on the evaluation board. Those with objections may apply to the chief editor’s office for re-review, truly reflecting the principle of more pay for more work and fully leveraging the incentive effect of the performance salary distribution system. The newspaper also encourages youth journalists to write good stories and create excellent pieces, conducting monthly selections and rewarding winners.

While material incentives are important, spiritual incentives are equally crucial. We should vigorously identify and establish advanced models emerging from editorial work, guiding youth journalists to actively participate in excellence-seeking activities, creating a competitive atmosphere where everyone strives for excellence. This not only enhances their capabilities and qualities but also increases their sense of achievement.

To enable youth journalists to achieve results and make contributions in their positions, newspaper offices must provide fair competition and promotion platforms, offering more promotion opportunities to young people, establishing more standardized and improved competition and selection mechanisms with equal competition, discovering new talents, providing greater development space, and

continuously creating opportunities and platforms for step-by-step promotion, allowing youth journalists to see their development prospects.

4. Conclusion

In summary, under the new situation of newspaper media convergence development, whether from the perspective of newspaper development or the healthy growth of youth journalists, the ideological work of youth journalists should receive high attention. This constitutes an important prerequisite for promoting the reform and development of municipal newspaper media convergence.

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