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## The History, Current Status, and Countermeasures of Media Economics Research (Postprint)

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### Abstract

This paper primarily discusses three aspects: the history of foreign media economics research and its influence on domestic media economics education, the current state of media economics research in China, and methods for strengthening such research, with the aim of promoting the progress and development of media economics research in China.

### Full Text

### Preamble

#### Media Economics Research: History, Current Status, and Strategies

**Abstract:** This paper examines three key aspects of media economics research: the historical development of media economics studies abroad and its influence on domestic education, the current state of media economics research in China, and methodological approaches to strengthen Chinese media economics research. The aim is to advance the progress and development of media economics research in China.

**Keywords:** media economics research; history; influence; current status; methods

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## 1. Foreign Media Economics Research History and Its Influence on Domestic Education

Foreign countries have conducted research in media economics for over a century, with Professor Picard carefully delineating this history into three distinct phases. The first phase, the exploratory stage before the 1970s, featured extensive contributions from mainstream economists in numerous publications. For instance, in 1925, Professor Jemay in the United States introduced the concept of broadcast economics in *The Economics of the Radio Industry*. In 1927, Professor Wiley examined the relationship between advertising expenditure and corporate sales performance in *The Economics of Advertising*. The 1936 publication *Telecommunications: Economics and Regulation* introduced the concept of “telecommunications economics.” A notable characteristic of this period was the broad participation of leading economists.

The second phase, from the 1970s to the 1980s, marked the formation of media economics as a disciplinary structure. During this period, the concept of media economics emerged and developed significantly. In 1988, the launch of the *Journal of Media Economics* became a milestone event that substantially advanced the field. Subsequently, 1989 saw the publication of specialized monographs on media economics.

The third phase, beginning in the 1990s, represents a deepening stage of media economics research. This era has been characterized by the convergence of media industries and the transformation of research methodologies driven by the development of network information technologies [1].

The United Kingdom has become a preferred destination for many Chinese students seeking advanced education in media studies. As the birthplace of the world’s first television station, the BBC, the UK boasts a long history of media research, with numerous universities offering comprehensive media programs that provide students with excellent knowledge and skills training. Institutions such as the University of Sheffield, the University of Leeds, and Newcastle University offer courses in digital media, international journalism, and new media studies. The University of Glasgow, one of the world’s oldest universities, offers a Media Management program with a focus on media economics and media and cultural policy. This combination of a rich media history and diverse university curricula has made UK media programs particularly attractive to Chinese students.

Gillian Doyle, Head of Media Management at the University of Glasgow, founder of the UK’s media management discipline, and a world-renowned professor of media economics, has significantly influenced Chinese media economics education. Her book *Understanding Media Economics*, published by Tsinghua University Press, has become an influential textbook for the development of media economics in China. The book provides detailed explanations of economic concepts relevant to media economics and offers accessible summaries of fundamental concepts. Professor Doyle comprehensively analyzes print media, film, television

media, advertising media, and new media, thoroughly examining how public policy is significantly shaped by economic considerations. This work is particularly valuable for non-economics scholars and students of media economics. In my view, *Understanding Media Economics* offers a comprehensive review of the economic concepts, current developments, challenges, and future directions of media economics, providing substantial guidance for our research. Simultaneously, her other work, *Media Ownership*, published by China Communication University Press, has offered guidance for the management of domestic media enterprises. Therefore, future research must engage in profound analysis of both *Understanding Media Economics* and *Media Ownership* to inform our research thinking, methodologies, principles, and objectives [1].

## 2. Current Status of Media Economics Research in China

China's research in media economics began relatively late, starting only in the 1980s. Prior to the 1980s, China had not undergone modern developmental transformation, with the state and government exercising strict control over media. Since the implementation of reform and opening-up policies in the 1980s, and particularly since the beginning of the 21st century, China's media industry has achieved tremendous progress and development, propelling media economics research into a much deeper stage.

Against this backdrop, Chinese media economics research exhibits four main characteristics. First, it emphasizes the study of media economic issues, thereby contributing to national economic development. Second, it meets societal development needs while simultaneously providing media and cultural services for social progress. Third, it summarizes general patterns from research findings, yielding precise results that play a crucial role in guiding our understanding of essential phenomena. Fourth, media economics research must be tested in practice, with careful analysis of new problems that emerge in practical applications [2].

## 3. Strategies to Strengthen Chinese Media Economics Research

### 3.1 Emphasizing the Study of Media Economics History and Current Status

Conducting research in Chinese media economics requires careful examination of the history and current state of the field. We must clearly grasp the developmental trajectory, characteristics, and structure of media economics to analyze its fundamental attributes, thereby laying a solid foundation for current and future research.

### 3.2 Strengthening the Construction of Theoretical Systems in Media Economics Research

Establishing a robust theoretical system is crucial for Chinese media economics research. Several approaches can be pursued. First, the state and government must attach sufficient importance to media economics research, investing substantial human, material, and financial resources to advance research progress. Second, with state and governmental support, Chinese universities should establish specialized media economics disciplines to cultivate large numbers of qualified professionals. Outstanding students should be selected for advanced studies, particularly by absorbing and utilizing foreign research achievements in media economics. After achieving self-improvement, China should also contribute to global media economics development by promoting Chinese research findings internationally—essentially, a strategy of “bringing in” first, then “going out.” Third, we must construct a scientific architecture for media economics research, emphasizing the integration of applied and basic theoretical knowledge to develop media economics into a comprehensive discipline. Fourth, media economics research should fully incorporate scientific methodologies from cybernetics, systems theory, and information theory to refine research models and build a media economics framework with distinctive Chinese characteristics. Fifth, media economics must conduct integrated analyses with sociology, mathematics, economics, journalism, measurement statistics, and communication studies to enrich and develop the field, facilitating better research. Sixth, media economics research should combine empirical and normative approaches, focusing on disciplinary development and existing achievements while simultaneously attending to real-life conditions to prevent research from becoming detached from reality [3].

### 3.3 Adopting a Scientific Research Attitude to Advance Chinese Media Economics Research

A scientific research attitude is essential for advancing Chinese media economics research. First, under the guidance of the Party and government, we must analyze the characteristics of media in China’s new historical development period to promote media industry progress and identify factors that hinder media economics research, thereby developing detailed plans to eliminate these obstacles. Second, we must adopt a proactive, exploratory, and challenging attitude toward difficulties and setbacks encountered in Chinese media economics research, simplifying and concretizing abstract and complex media economics phenomena. For example, we can employ rigorous mathematical logical reasoning to analyze favorable and unfavorable factors in Chinese media economics research, construct necessary development models, scientifically analyze various variables, and summarize patterns from general phenomena to yield precise research results that guide our understanding of essential characteristics [4].

### 3.4 Deepening Practice to Enhance the Effectiveness of Media Economics Research

Chinese media economics research must be grounded in practice and continuously refined to produce effective results. For instance, the rapid development of China's media industry has enriched and expanded the scope of media economics research. In this context, Chinese experts and scholars must immerse themselves in practice to test and develop their research content, comprehensively advancing their studies so that these research findings can, in turn, promote further development of China's media industry [5].

## 4. Conclusion

Studying the history, influence, current status, and strategies of media economics research enables Chinese scholars to identify patterns from the historical and contemporary development of the field, better guiding Chinese media economics research. Furthermore, our research must adhere to a pragmatic and truth-seeking approach, employing methods that integrate theory with practice to enhance research quality.

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

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