

SWOT Analysis and Development Path of College New Media Matrix in the Era of Media Convergence

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Abstract. With the development of media convergence, the media at all levels have been reformed, including the college media. Constructing the new media matrix is the main way to build the college official media in the era of convergence media. In addition to broadening the horizon and paying attention to the influence of the overall environment on the college media inside and outside the university, this paper analyzes the Strengths (S), Weaknesses (W), Opportunities (O), and Threats (T) of the college new media matrix via the SWOT analysis to put forward relevant constructive suggestions.

Keywords: Colleges, New Media Matrix, SWOT Analysis.

1. Introduction and Literature Review

With technology promoting the evolution of media ecology, the development of the digital economy and Internet economy further brings about communication reform. Media transformation as a hot spot leads media convergence to be the trend. The media industry has built its own new media matrix and media convergence platform to cope with the communication market filled with fierce competition.

The media industry reform also can be seen in the college media construction. At present, colleges have traditional media platforms represented by school newspapers and periodicals, together with the advertisement of the new media matrix such as official accounts of WeChat, Weibo, Douyin, and bilibili, which gradually shows the trend of media convergence and resource sharing. On the one hand, the official college new media matrix is key to the construction of college campus culture, responsible for information release, public opinion guidance, and public relations construction. On the other hand, students, as the main audience of college media, catch limited attention under the massive information in new media, so college media have to fight for the attention economy. Therefore, it's necessary to effectively integrate the college's advantages, give full play to its social and educational functions, and create the college new media matrix that publicizes at universities to promote campus culture integration and bravely shoulder social responsibilities to actively displays as an example.

The existing research on college media focuses on its integration development paths, such as the Converged Development Path of College Campus Media from All-media to Media Convergence (Tan, 2021) and Current Situation and Ways of College Media Convergence authored (Li, 2018). These studies mostly explore its current situation and existing problems from the perspective of media convergence.

There are also some studies from the management perspective, exploring the application of the central kitchen system, an internal media management mechanism in college media, including A Preliminary study on college media convergence from the perspective of talent training: A case study of central kitchen media (Chen, 2019) and Research on the construction of new media matrix of college ideological and political work based on SWOT analysis (Miao, 2018) that analyzes college media construction via management analysis.

In addition, some scholars explore the college media from the educational perspective. Scholar Bai Zhongde pointed out how to promote college education from four aspects of college media in his Path Research on Strengthening the Educational Function of College Media (2012). And some scholars use empirical research methods to analyze the current situation of media construction on a certain platform or university. Taking the official WeChat account of the East China University of

Science and Technology as an example, Zhou Shuangju, Gu Yiyang, and Lu Xiaoxuan empirically analyzed its content and dissemination using programs coding by Python (2020). Moreover, Li Yingying studied the integration and innovation mechanism of university media ideological education with the platform Xuexi.cn as the object (2020).

Generally speaking, there is much existing research about college media, which effectively analyzes its present situation and future development from the aspect of media convergence. However, they relatively lack research on the college new media matrix from a holistic perspective as well as its construction, management, and the composition of reporting and editing teams. Secondly, less literature can be found using SWOT analysis from the perspective of management. College media construction and campus culture management are closely related, thus management methods for analysis are feasible. Finally, the existing research on college media mostly focuses on campus, separating college communication from social communication. But the audience's attention is regarded as a commodity and competed by the media in the current all-media era, and it is difficult for them to resist other media. Therefore, the research on college media should not be limited but consider the whole communication environment to comprehensively analyze in combination with the communication chain, industrial chain, and resource chain.

Therefore, this study explores the construction and development of a college new media matrix via SWOT analysis in management to deeply analyze its advantages and disadvantages, opportunities and challenges. Finally, this paper strives to combine college communication with the external communication environment with a broadening vision to provide relevant suggestions for the college new media matrix.

2. SWOT Analysis of College New Media Matrix in the Era of Media Convergence

2.1 Strengths (S) of College New Media Matrix

(1) Communicator: Clear Organizational Architecture of Operation and Management Team

With the development of new media and higher education, the management system of college media is constantly improving. At present, the college new media have undergone further reform to adapt to the new media development with its most obvious feature is that platforms plan and integrate various operation teams. The college media have set up news centers, most of which are co-located with the Publicity Department of the School Party Committee. Meanwhile, various campus media such as Weibo, WeChat, Tik Tok, and bilibili are integrated into the standardized management of the communication system with instructors to supervise and inspect. Each college new media platform usually has its operation team mostly run by students. To be more specific, senior students assist instructors in content production, platform operation, and internal organization management. The organization is led by the party Committee with a perfect and clear organizational architecture, which is easy to manage. At the same time, the content and activities are logical, such as the content organization as well as reporting and editing process, where the workload system is set up in the student team to quantify the contribution, measure, and evaluate the communication effect (Wang, 2012).

(2) Recipients: Coverage Rate and Reading Volume Improved by Younger Audience

The so-called coverage rate refers to how many users pay attention to the WeChat official account within a certain range. With the advantage of internal communication, college students first need to notice the college new media to meet their own needs for campus consultation. Secondly, students following the college new media platform are also influenced by the driving psychology of interpersonal communication, which leads to its coverage rate that is much higher than other social media. The advantages of large-scale active young audiences in college media stimulate the audience to pay attention to new things inside and outside the school, which guarantees the reading volume to some extent. Part of the reading volume comes from alumni because the school has cultivated the

audience base of students for many years, who generally do not cancel their follow when they leave school, ensuring the basic reading volume of media platforms.



Figure 1. Schematic Diagram of College New Media Architecture

(3) Transmission-Reception Relationship: Communication and Interaction Enhanced by the Equal Transmission-Reception Relationship

Although the college new media platform is managed by teachers, its main force of content production is still students themselves. At the same time, its audience includes college employees, parents, alumni, and other social forces, but its main communication object is students. Concerning the whole content production process, students are its backbones of transmission and reception. With the communicator and receiver in the same and equal position, the willingness of both parties to listen to each other is promoted effectively, which activates the interactive communication mechanism and produces news and information that students are prone to watch and participate in.

(4) Communication Content: News Value and Novelty Promoted by News Proximity

The communication content selected by college media is usually closely related to students' lives. For example, content including campus consultation, campus life, alumni stories, etc. has innate proximity, one of the five elements of news value (timeliness, importance, significance, proximity, and novelty). The content selection of campus media with news value can attract students' attention to express their opinions.

(5) New Form of Communication: Expanding Social Attributes of Community communication and Communication Integration

In recent years, with the help of new media platforms, cluster communication has appeared in college media communication. For example, with the entry of the college official media on the bilibili, individual bloggers can join the campus forum to see the posts of college media and other students after passing the campus certification. Another example is that the college official media on Weibo usually set up their fan base, where students can apply to join. Cluster communication led by college media also has a cluster effect with strong interactivity and information diversity (Yang, 2017). It may also lead to extremely high communication efficiency in a short time and encourage the publicity of college public opinions, especially in the significant events,.

2.2 Weaknesses (W) of College New Media Matrix

(1) Communicator: Communicator Team Needs to be Developed

At present, the production and operation teams of college media are characterized by clear organization and easy management. But its content production mostly focuses on students' part-time jobs and relies on students' editing teams to a certain extent. However, students who should pay attention to both their studies and the content production of campus media have insufficient energy,

professional knowledge, ability, and experience with their vague understanding of school communication architecture. Fortunately, this is not an irrevocable weakness. It's feasible and necessary to actively support the student team, regularly train the student editorial reporter team, and recruit full-time staff from the industry to help students, which can undoubtedly transform its weakness into strength.

(2) Communication Architecture: Underdeveloped Connection and Coordination Among Different Departments

Although each college media has its platform, such as WeChat, Weibo, etc., their development is not coordinated enough, with the characteristics of each platform failing to maximize its communication advantages. Specifically, except for the short video operation mode of Tik Tok, there is little difference in the content of each platform, especially Weibo and WeChat with obvious content homogeneity and repeatability together with insufficient convergence and coordination.

(3) Communication Content: Relatively Insufficient Novelty and Timeliness

Although the communication content of college media is close to some degree, it's hard to avoid the cliched and less attractive content selection, due to the changing students' production and operation teams year by year as well as the repetitiveness of significant college events (such as sports games, debate competitions, etc.). Therefore, attention should be paid to creating new works based on old topics and avoiding homogenization with both news value and innovation. In addition, the college media highlights the three-trial system consisting of trials from student cadres, instructors, and mentors level by level, which leads to the delay in timeliness somehow. The reasons for this situation are as follows. Firstly, the limited quality of students' first trial, triggering a large workload of follow-up audits; Secondly, the communication between the three-level audits is not timely and efficient (Liu, 2018).

2.3 Opportunities (O) of College New Media Matrix

(1) Communication Environment: Promising New Media with the Development of the Digital Economy

The new phenomena and effects brought by the integration and development of emerging media have attracted great attention from all walks of life. Furthermore, the digital economy led by technological development has attached new media with prominence and significance. With the generally younger college media target, it has the most dynamic and creative audience in the current market. New media features timeliness, interactivity, individuality, and wide coverage, which meets the needs of the young audience. Developing new media will be the trend in college media.

(2) Communication System: Supported by National Policy and Campus Culture Construction

Traditional campus culture construction is completed through campus activities, campus radio, television, etc. In the present era of mass-decentralized communication, students are also decentralized and the traditional pattern is inevitably difficult to implement. Nowadays, college media takes over the campus culture construction, which not only leads students to participate in forum communication and interactive communication but also enhances their collective cohesion and sense of belonging. Moreover, by integrating the traditional moral education and socialism core values with Chinese characteristics into the new media communication mode, universities can use the new media platform to carry out campus activities such as cultural lectures to enrich the campus activities.

(3) Communication Architecture: Abundant Resources Available

With the development of media integration, the central kitchen system has been introduced into media reporting and editing in content production. The central kitchen system refers to the university communication mode that features one collection, multiple manners of production, and diversified communication established by the news media (Chen, 2019). Imitating this system, the college new media matrix is actively building a central kitchen for college media. In addition to the resource integration of internal communication, external communication among colleges also implements resource integration. For example, universities jointly create IP brands and publish graduation videos

in bilibili to integrate resources among universities. In the new media era, it is tenable and affordable for colleges to create the coordinated development of college media publicity.

2.4 Threats (T) of College New Media Matrix

Communication Channels: Fierce Competition of College New Media

Internal communication is one of the important ways to spread college new media, and so is external communication because of its social benefits. Therefore, it is inevitable to fall into competition with other college new media and seize the attention of the audience, who judge its content and tend to generate stereotypes.

Communication Economy: Inactive Self-Development Caused by Insufficient Economic Benefits

In the past, college media only focused on educational functions and partially realized social benefits, ignoring market benefits. Up against the development of the digital economy, it is reasonable for college media to emphasize economic benefits. On the one hand, economic benefits can effectively combine campus marketing to cultivate the reporting and editing team that better suits realistic communication situations. On the other hand, economic benefits can stimulate the team's enthusiasm and creativity. In addition, the development of campus public relations and IP building will be promoted thanks to economic benefits. In this way, universities will be sold into the market as products and brands, which enhances the popularity and reputation of universities. Finally, economic benefits can also be used to integrate alumni resources and realize the benign talent transfer.

3. Suggestions on College New Media Matrix in the Era of Media Convergence

(1) Adapt to the Times and Improve the Quality of College New Media Matrix

To realize the new communication ecology, firstly college new media must improve their quality. An integrated development mechanism should be established to further optimize the central kitchen system; A news resource sharing database should be set up to implement unified management in topic selection and design, news collection, reports release, and technical support. Besides, colleges need to formulate relevant rules to realize rational allocation and optimal utilization of resources. In addition, we should correctly position our attributes, such as expanding the campus cultural internally, assisting the publicity of the university image externally, and bravely acting as the communicator of campus culture, the promoter of academic dissemination, and the propeller of local culture development (Zou, 2016). The positioning of college media on various platforms should be distinguished. For example, Bilibili mainly promotes youth culture, Tik Tok focuses on leisure and entertainment news, and WeChat innovatively released serious news. Finally, the official college new media should be reformed and innovated appropriately. In terms of content, it should look for a new perspective for topic selection and design. With regard to communication technology, we should actively explore the use of college new media for emerging communication technologies, such as VR, AR news, live news, etc., so as to increase the timeliness and novelty of communication. MCN industrialization communication platform that incubates campus celebrities can be built to publicize brand campus image, brand campus programs, and brand campus columns. College new media should also optimize the audit mechanism, including establishing audit groups, shortening the audit process, and increasing the timeliness of news releases.

(2) Improve the Talent Structure and Enhance the Talents Training of College New Media Matrix

The college new media matrix also strengthens the construction of the talent chain. With a group of students and teachers engaged in and studying relevant professional knowledge in colleges, it should fully mobilize their enthusiasm and encourage them to participate in the construction of the college new media matrix. Participation in the production and operation of college new media is an opportunity to practice and expand their horizon for students of related majors. College new media should assume the responsibility of educating media talents and motivate them to join the construction of official college new media, which is also a manifestation of cultivating the locality of college new media. In addition, college new media should also try to attract and exchange talents. On the one hand,

local professional media teachers should be introduced to guide the school how to gain new thinking and new models; On the other hand, students should be offered opportunities to practice in the industry, so as to cultivate their enthusiasm for work and guide them on how to face employment. Internal and external exchanges should also be actively promoted to build an intermediary platform for talent circulation inside and outside schools. Finally, the college new media can also introduce special supporting funds by holding activities such as Culture and Art Festival and College Student Journalist's Day. It can also establish and improve the reward mechanism, explore excellent student journalists and news works, and cooperate with off-campus media to further go out of the campus and face the whole country.

(3) Strengthen Off-Campus Cooperation and Optimize College New Media Matrix Model

College new media can strengthen exchanges and cooperation with local media and media-related enterprises to realize talent exchanges, provide new development resources and thinking, and bring inspiration to its innovation of content selection. Local media and related media enterprises can broaden the horizons of college new media. Paying attention to local off-campus news closely related to a college education can make the content of college news more life-oriented and interesting. Apart from promoting school-enterprise coordination, universities can also promote inter-school cooperation, establish friendly relations with other universities, and realize the sharing of communication content and resources to achieve campus communication and win-win cooperation.

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