

CURRENT STATE OF HIGHER JOURNALISM EDUCATION IN CHINA СУЧАСНИЙ СТАН ВИЩОЇ ЖУРНАЛІСТСЬКОЇ ОСВІТИ В КИТАЇ

The article deals with current status and shortcomings of journalism education in China. It aims to gain in-depth insights into the journalism education model, considering the vast number of students in Chinese universities and focuses on innovations in journalism education within the context of rapid media development. The analysis primarily focuses on representative universities identified from Chinese academic assessments, aiming to detect commonalities and provide insights for other universities.

Journalism education in contemporary China has experienced rapid development, with various types and levels of institutions establishing journalism and communication programs. The origins of higher education in media studies can be traced back to journalism, which later evolved into the discipline of journalism, incorporating communication studies. In 1997, communication studies were established as a separate academic discipline. Apart from journalism and communication education, film and media arts education has also seen rapid growth in China. With the advancement of the internet and digital technologies, the media industry has undergone significant transformations, posing new challenges and requirements for future journalists. From the current state of journalism education, it is apparent that universities face issues related to educational objectives, program offerings, and teaching methodologies.

To improve the quality of future journalists' training, universities should adjust journalism programs accordingly: emphasizing theoretical learning while enhancing practical teaching, increasing collaboration with news media companies to encourage students' active participation in practical activities, identifying and addressing deficiencies through hands-on experience, and making the cultivation of versatile journalists a key educational objective.

Key words: Chinese journalism education, higher education, journalism and communication, education model.

У статті розглядається сучасний стан та недоліки журналістської освіти в Китаї,

з метою отримати поглиблене розуміння моделі журналістської освіти, враховуючи величезну кількість студентів у китайських університетах, і зосередження на інноваціях у журналістській освіті в контексті стрімкого розвитку ЗМІ. Аналіз, в основному, зосереджується на репрезентативних університетах, визначених за результатами академічного оцінювання, з метою виявлення спільних рис і надання інформації іншим університетам.

Журналістська освіта в сучасному Китаї пережила швидкий розвиток, коли різні типи та рівні закладів створюють журналістські та комунікаційні програми. Витоки вищої освіти в медіадослідженні можна простежити до журналістики, яка згодом перетворилася на дисципліну журналістика, що включає дослідження комунікації. У 1997 році комунікація була виділена як окрема навчальна дисципліна. Окрім журналістики та комунікаційної освіти, у Китаї також стрімко розвивається освіта в галузі кіно та медіа-мистецтва. З розвитком Інтернету та цифрових технологій медіаіндустрія зазнала значних трансформацій, поставивши перед майбутніми журналістами нові виклики та вимоги. З поточного стану журналістської освіти стає очевидним, що університети стикаються з проблемами, пов'язаними з освітніми цілями, програмними пропозиціями та методиками навчання.

Щоб підвищити якість підготовки майбутніх журналістів, університети повинні відповідним чином скоригувати програми журналістики: акцентувати увагу на теоретичному навчанні та покращити практичне навчання, розширити співпрацю з новинними медіа-компаніями для заохочення активної участі студентів у практичній діяльності, виявити та усунути недоліки через практичний досвід, а також зробити виховання різносторонніх журналістів ключовою освітньою метою.

Ключові слова: китайська журналістська освіта, вища освіта, журналістика та комунікація, освітня модель.

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Introduction and statement of the problem.

In today's Chinese higher education landscape, journalism education is a crucial component. Despite the decline of traditional media in the digital age, the expansion of communication systems, including new media, continues. As of the end of 2015, there were 681 universities across the country offering journalism education. These universities had 1.244 undergraduate programs, with a total of 226.000 undergraduate students [9]. Due to differences in the schools to which journalism departments are affiliated, the systems in which these schools are situated, their relationships with industries and government departments, as well as changes in student training objectives and curriculum structures, journalism and communication education varies significantly among institutions.

Consequently, it is necessary to investigate different educational models in order to learn advantages and make improvements as the present media landscape is undergoing a substantial transformation of epochal significance, with media formats and structures being profoundly adjusted.

The focus of this article is the study and analysis of journalism education in China. Additionally, this article also employs the case study method. During the argumentation, a substantial number of relevant journalism education cases are chosen, particularly cases from prominent institutions with journalism programs, to enhance the article's content and credibility.

This research **aims** to review the current status of journalism education in China and focuses on

innovations in journalism education within the context of rapid media development. Its purpose is to drive the development of the journalism discipline and educational innovation in China, expedite the establishment of a distinctive Chinese journalism discipline system, enhance China's attention to and theoretical research on media convergence technology in journalism education, facilitate the rapid development of journalism education in universities, and provide relevant recommendations for nurturing multifaceted future journalists in response to societal needs. Furthermore, it envisions the integration of the latest digital technology in journalism education, exploring directions for educational development suitable for China and other developing countries.

Research Method. The use of literature analysis involves extensive collection and organization of domestic and international literature on journalism education. By collecting and reviewing literature related to journalism education, one can develop a comprehensive understanding of the changes in journalism education. Building upon the collection of primary data, structured analysis is conducted to create a research framework and to propose one's perspective and feasible approaches to addressing issues.

Literature review. Mark Deuze classifies global journalism and communication education models into five categories. The first category is university journalism school education, mainly found in the United States, Canada, Argentina, and gradually emerging in the United Kingdom and Australia. It has become a dominant model. The second category combines specialized journalism vocational education with university college education, primarily in countries as France, Germany, India, and South Africa. The third category is specialized journalism vocational education in countries such as the Netherlands and Denmark. The fourth category encompasses on-the-job education offered by news media themselves, including apprenticeship programs, mainly in the United Kingdom and Japan. The fifth category includes all of the above and extends to internal training programs within universities, commercial projects, media groups, publishers, trade unions, and other entities, as well as government initiatives, particularly prevalent in Eastern Europe, North Africa, Central Africa, and the Middle East [2]. According to this classification, journalism education in China falls into the second category.

Professor Wu Tingjun classifies global journalism and communication education models into three categories. The first category integrates journalism practice into academic institutions, with the United States as a representative. This model combines education and media operations, closely linking theory and practice. The second category is apprenticeship-based, primarily represented by the

UK before 1990, focusing more on practical training in news organizations. The third category, represented by Japan, involves collaboration between universities and media outlets, directly offering journalism courses to students or conducting short-term training programs [7].

Professor Cai Wen's perspective aligns with Wu Tingjun's but outlines the characteristics slightly differently into three types. The first type is the American education model, emphasizing the imparting of practical skills while being grounded in social sciences. The second type is the European model, represented by the UK, emphasizing on-the-job training. The third type is the Japanese model, where universities rarely offer journalism majors. Instead, news media recruit talent from graduates of other disciplines and provide internal training to develop journalism professionals [8].

The categorization mentioned above is often significantly influenced by the type of school. Some researchers classify educational models based on the nature and characteristics of the schools. For example, Professor Chen Changfeng [1] makes a distinction between comprehensive and specialized university journalism education. She also specifically mentions journalism education sponsored by China's two major central media outlets, People's Daily and Xinhua News Agency. Furthermore, some scholars analyze different models based on whether schools are self-run or jointly operated, whether they are independent departments or rely on other disciplines [4].

Results and Discussion. The education of journalism and communication in China started relatively late and drew on the experiences of Western countries. In the 1920s, universities in cities like Shanghai, Beijing, and Xiamen began to establish departments or schools of journalism. Although the institutions varied, the basic educational model was similar. These schools mainly followed the American model, aiming to cultivate applied talents with a focus on education and training in journalism knowledge and skills.» For instance, Fudan University's Department of Journalism, established in 1929, was designed based on the blueprint of the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri in the United States,» with the goal of «cultivating editorial and managerial talents for domestic newspapers» [3]. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, with the progress of the times, journalism and communication education entered a period of prosperity.

To our understanding, in the field of education, the term «mode» is often used to encompass different styles of education. Gu Mingyuan defines, «Educational mode is the specific pattern that education takes under certain social conditions» [6]. Chen Jianping suggests that, «Educational modes are constrained by a society's economic, political,

and cultural factors, and different eras have different educational modes» [5]. Journalism education modes represent various representative and exemplary styles within the diverse types of journalism education. They serve as methodologies and knowledge systems that effectively address the issues in journalism education. Since journalism education is primarily carried out by university journalism departments, these modes are often named after the universities where they originate, such as the «Missouri Model.» Currently, journalism education has transcended national boundaries, becoming a global phenomenon. Therefore, when discussing journalism education modes, a more international perspective has emerged, leading to considerations such as the «American Model» and «German Model».

1. The Development of Journalism Education in China

Examining the history of media convergence in classifying it based on the different forms of media convergence, the author believes that this can be primarily divided into four stages.

The Beginning of Journalism Education in China

By reviewing historical records, it is evident that journalism education in Chinese universities began in 1918. In the 1920s, China experienced its first wave of development in journalism education. According to statistics, a total of 12 universities in the country established journalism programs, such as the School of Journalism at Fudan University. These journalism schools were primarily initiated with investments from American newspapers, thus adopting the American journalism education model. Since then, the initial framework of journalism education in China gradually took shape. Prior to 1949, it is estimated that there were approximately 460 students enrolled in journalism programs in China.

Transition in Journalism Education in China

After 1949, a period of reconstruction and development began. During this time, adjustments were made in journalism education. In 1952, many journalism schools underwent reorganization.

Innovation Stage of Journalism Education in China

By the 1980s, China's journalism programs were gradually restored and experienced rapid development under the guidance of reform and opening up policies. In 1977, Renmin University of China rebuilt its School of Journalism, which marked the beginning of numerous universities across the country establishing journalism programs. Especially in 1983, a joint seminar on journalism education hosted by the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and the Ministry of Education laid a solid foundation for the reform of journalism education. According to statistics, at that time, 21 universities in China offered journalism programs, marking the comprehensive

development phase of journalism education. As of now, there are 681 universities in China with a total of 1244 undergraduate programs in journalism and communication. Among these, 326 universities offer journalism programs, 378 universities have programs in advertising, 234 universities offer radio and television studies, 140 universities have programs related to internet and news media, and there are also 82 universities with programs in editing and publishing, 71 universities with programs in communication studies, and 13 universities with programs in digital publishing.

2. Current Status and Insufficiencies of Journalism Education in China

The journalism and communication education model can be understood in various ways, depending on the perspective taken. This multiplicity arises from differences in observation angles. At the end of 2017, the Ministry of Education announced the results of the fourth national assessment of first-level disciplines. Among the 81 journalism departments that participated, the top four schools are currently Renmin University of China, Communication University of China, Fudan University, and Huazhong University of Science and Technology. In order to comprehensively analyze the status of undergraduate journalism education in China, we have chosen two prestigious institutions, the School of Journalism at Renmin University of China and the School of Journalism at Fudan University, for comparative analysis, with the aim of providing a clearer depiction of the current state of undergraduate journalism education in China.

Current Status of Journalism Education Objectives

It is worth noticing that educational objectives are a critical issue in journalism education. Therefore, the first step involves studying the training programs for journalism majors in Chinese universities. By comparing the undergraduate journalism education objectives of two universities, as shown in Table 1, we can gain a general understanding of the current status of higher education journalism training objectives.

In Table 1, it can be observed that in the era of media convergence, the educational objectives of journalism have three main characteristics. Firstly, to adapt to the environment of media convergence, universities continue to cultivate students' qualities but also emphasize the development of their professional competence and broad knowledge. Due to media convergence, the media industry demands professionals with extensive knowledge and proficient skills, and universities have adjusted their requirements accordingly. Secondly, the current requirements for undergraduate journalism education involve practical journalism training for students. This indicates that China has laid a practical foundation for journalism majors to smoothly enter the media industry after graduation.

Table 1

Comparison of Journalism Education Objectives at Two Universities (Partial, with omissions)

School of Journalism	Education Objectives	Educational Requirements
Renmin University of China (2017 Education Objectives)	To cultivate journalism professionals with a multidisciplinary knowledge base, comprehensive professional skills, and excellent development potential.	Study philosophy; master the fundamentals of journalism; proficiently use advanced technology in journalism activities; establish a solid foundation in journalism practices; and demonstrate proficiency in using a foreign language.
School of Journalism, Fudan University (2012 Education Objectives)	To cultivate high-quality professionals with knowledge and skills in journalism, a good understanding of Chinese news and publicity policies and regulations, and the ability to work in editing, reporting, and management roles within the fields of journalism, publishing, and public relations.	Possess a solid foundation in the fundamental theories of journalism; undergo basic training in journalism practices; understand the principles of philosophy in journalism; have a strong base of knowledge in the humanities; proficiently master skills in news gathering, writing, and editing; and be skilled in using a foreign language.

Table 2

Curriculum for the 2017 Undergraduate Journalism Program at Renmin University of China (partial)

Course type	Course name	Credit hours	Course name	Credit hours
Required	Basics of Journalism Practice	2	Cross-media Communication Experiment	2
	History of Chinese Journalism and Communication	2	Introduction to Sociology	2
	History of Foreign Journalism and Communication	2	Basic of economics	2
	Communication Theory	2	Fundamentals of Political Science	2
	Journalism Theory	2	Introduction to Law	2
	Journalism Ethics and Regulations	2	News interview writing	2
	Digital Communication Technology Application	2	News Editor	2
	Imaging Technology	2	News Reviews	2
	Strategic Communications	2	Photojournalism	2
	Communication Research Methods	2	Graduation Internship	4
Electives	In-Depth Reporting	2	Graduation Thesis	4
	Data News Visualization	2	English interviews and reporting	2
	Magazine Editor	2	Data Journalism Basics	2
	Argument and Debate Analysis	2	Media reporting and hosting	2

Lastly, looking at the two universities mentioned above, the journalism education programs are quite similar, with broad and less operational requirements. These characteristics not only hinder students' individual development but also impede the cultivation of journalistic awareness.

Higher Education Undergraduate Journalism Curriculum and Credit Distribution in China

Based on own analysis of journalism curriculum at most universities across China, the curriculum for undergraduate journalism in recent years mainly consists of two parts: public foundational courses (such as politics, English, and computer science) and journalism major courses (including news reporting and writing, data journalism, and converged journalism). Below is an analysis of the curriculum content and credit distribution at two universities to examine the current state and characteristics of journalism programs.

We suppose that looking at the curriculum and credit requirements for the undergraduate journalism programs in these two universities, combined with Figure 1, we can gain a clear understanding of the current status of journalism education in China in recent years.

In recent years, journalism programs in China have four main characteristics. First, the credit requirements are essentially the same, all exceeding 140 credits. Moreover, the proportion of required courses is much greater than elective courses. Second, theoretical content has a larger proportion, while practical courses have a smaller share and fewer credits. Third, there is a similarity in the professional and general education courses offered among universities, lacking distinctive features. Fourth, to adapt to the development of digital technology and media integration, some universities have introduced media integration-related courses at the undergraduate level.

Curriculum for the 2010 Undergraduate Journalism Program at the School of Journalism at Fudan University (partial)

Course type	Course name	Credit hours	Course name	Credit hours
Required for majors course	Photojournalism	3	News Communication Laws and Ethics	2
	History of Journalism and Communication in China	2	History of Journalism in the People's Republic of China	2
	News Interviewing and Writing	3	Basics of Network Communication	2
	Introduction to Media Convergence	2	Journalism and Communication Frontier Lecture	
	News Editing and Commentary	3	Media Management	2
	In-depth report	2	Teaching internship	2
	History of Foreign Journalism and Communication	2	Teaching Internship	4
	External Reporting	2	Graduation Thesis	4
	Radio and Television News	2		
Professional electives course	Cross-Cultural Communication	2	Selected English Newspapers and Periodicals	2
	Communication Research Methods	2	Public Affairs Reporting	2
	Computer Assisted Journalism	2	Visual Communication	2
	Public Opinion	2	Integrated Reporting	2
	Integrated Marketing Communications	2	Multimedia Production	2
	Mass Media and Culture	2	Political Communication	2
	Sports and Entertainment Reporting	2	Introduction to Publishing	2
	Photography Special Topic (Full English Course)	2	Marketing Communication Planning	2
	Financial Reporting	2	Foreign News Legal System	2
	Magazine Research	2	Chinese Newspapers and Chinese Society	2

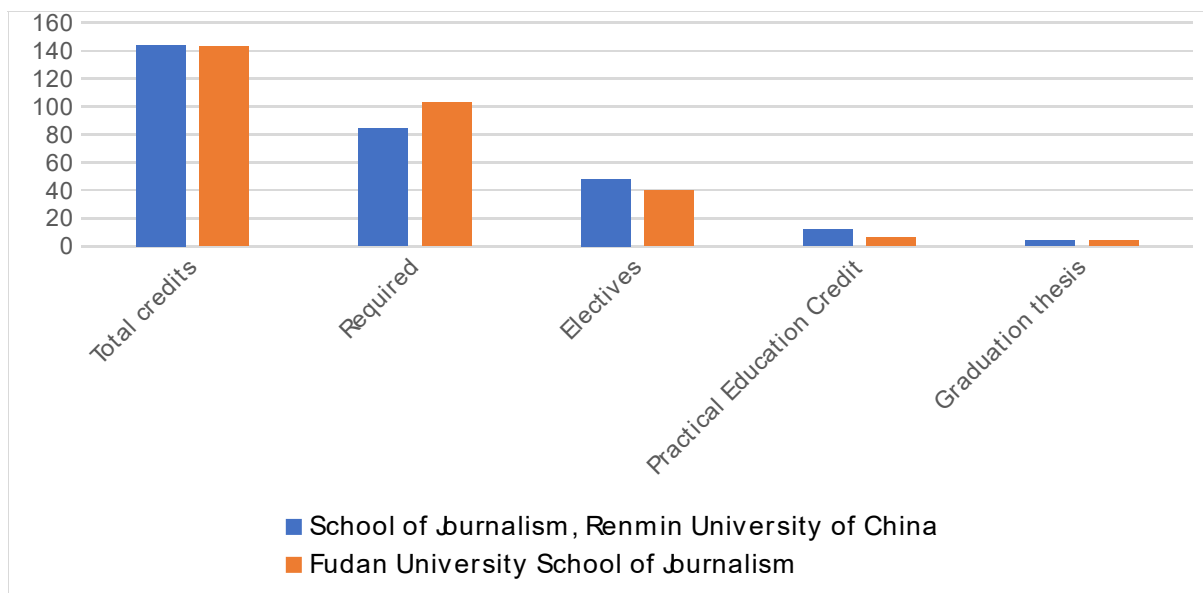


Fig. 1. Two universities' journalism course types and credit requirements distribution chart

Shortcomings in Chinese Journalism Education in the Era of Media Convergence.

Outdated Training Objectives. Firstly, journalism programs in university journalism schools have similar curricula, hindering the individualized development

of journalism talents and not conducive to fostering students' journalism awareness. Such training objectives do not enhance the employability of journalism majors and make them easily replaceable by students from other disciplines. Secondly, another

drawback in the training objectives for Chinese undergraduate journalism programs is that they have not kept pace with the times.

Incomplete Curriculum. First, the curriculum is outdated. Even though some universities have introduced courses related to media convergence technology in this environment, their number is limited. Second, there is an imbalance in the course ratio. As observed from the investigation into renowned universities mentioned earlier, the proportion of compulsory courses in Chinese undergraduate journalism programs is significantly higher than that of elective courses. Third, there is a strong emphasis on theory over practice. In the context of media convergence, the dearth of professional practice courses will directly affect the employment prospects of journalism students.

3. Prospects of Higher Journalism Education in China

Timely Update of Training Objectives. To our understanding, in the ongoing trend of media convergence, the current training objectives in higher journalism education are significantly outdated, necessitating the establishment of new talent training programs. This study reviewed the training programs of the top 20 universities in China for journalism, as listed on the China Science and Education Evaluation Network. It was observed that there have been minimal changes in the undergraduate journalism education programs in our country recently. According to the 'Opinions on News Talents Education and Training Plan 2.0' released by the Chinese Ministry of Education, the new goal of journalism education in China is to cultivate versatile journalists equipped with a wide range of skills. We can emphasize that current university journalism education should proactively adapt to the development trends of the information society and media integration. It should promptly revise and improve talent training programs, enhance curriculum design, and promote interdisciplinary education.

Innovate Curriculum Design. In the rapidly evolving media landscape, journalism programs must adapt by introducing interdisciplinary courses. Journalism, as a field, should continue to incorporate the achievements of other disciplines. For instance, in the context of journalism education in Japan, in many universities journalism programs have merged with other disciplines, such as sociology, media studies, information technology, and law. The media industry has diverse demands for journalists, and only versatile journalists can meet these requirements. Secondly, there is necessity to introduce courses related to media convergence. With the advent of the media convergence era, journalism education must adjust its existing curriculum. This involves integrating and optimizing existing courses, incorporating elements of media convergence into the curriculum.

Simultaneously, courses on multimedia journalism reporting, new media advertising, and other media integration-related subjects should be added. This will enhance students' awareness of media integration and familiarize them with the unique characteristics of media convergence technology. Not only will it help students master advanced digital communication techniques, but it will also deepen their understanding of the communication dynamics of media convergence, enabling them to better integrate into the new media industry and adapt to the developments of the media convergence era.

Conclusion. The development of digital technology has led to the convergence of media outlets. The changes in the news industry not only affect media companies and professionals but also impact the journalism education model in universities. In the era of media convergence, journalism education in universities faces numerous challenges. To enhance the quality of future journalists' training, universities should adjust journalism programs accordingly: emphasizing theoretical learning while enhancing practical teaching, increasing collaboration with news media companies to encourage students' active participation in practical activities, identifying and addressing deficiencies through hands-on experience, and making the cultivation of versatile journalists a key educational objective. Additionally, to combat fake news, there should be a focus on nurturing students' professional ethics and moral values through education.

Regarding faculty, universities can optimize their teaching resources by hiring industry experts, increasing the proportion of professional teachers with practical experience, sharing faculty resources among universities, and organizing teacher training workshops. Furthermore, in terms of teaching methods, Chinese journalism education can diversify instructional approaches to enrich the learning experience.

However, one thing that can be affirmed at present is that in the era of media convergence, journalism education cannot be separated from the news media industry and technology. To promote the development of journalism education, universities must innovate in journalism education, and teachers must understand and master the new technologies of media convergence. Only by enhancing awareness of the media environment and harnessing various favorable factors can we better train future journalists and improve the quality of journalism education.

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