Original Paper

SDGs in The Context of Media Convergence—Taking Sichuan Radio and Television's Experience of Media Convergence as an Example

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Abstract

Under the constant impact of new media developed based on the Internet, traditional media have been introducing media convergence for years. Traditional media have enhanced their vitality and competitiveness by integrating the technology and other features of new media while grasping their own core concepts. This paper takes the experience of media convergence of Sichuan Radio and Television as an example to analyze the media convergence of traditional media itself, and also analyzes how this process can achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals, which is conducive to media to give full play to their own communication efficiency and provide motivation for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Keywords

media convergence, Sichuan Radio and Television, traditional media, The UN Sustainable Development Goals

1. Necessity of Media Convergence

Media convergence refers to the integration of traditional media and new media supported by modern science and technology. Thus, different types of media in the process of communication presents the trend of multifunctional convergence. In the context of the Internet constantly assuming the important role of information dissemination, new media forms such as some big data algorithm-based applications are gradually becoming more influential in mainstream, but traditional media focusing on

radio, TV, newspapers and magazines, on the other hand, are constantly showing signs of decline under the impact of new media forms, and the survival space of traditional media is being squeezed by the popularity of new media.

In the case of China, since 2014, when the China Radio and Television Bureau issued an important instruction for the national media field, encouraging traditional media to move towards a media convergence path that is in line with the development of the times, Sichuan Radio and Television (SRT) opened up a full media path and started a media convergence transformation with video and online social as the main elements in order to accelerate the process of media convergence and achieve sustainable development goals of traditional media. This transition from traditional media to a combination of old and new media methods means that Sichuan Radio and Television officially opened the road to media convergence. This major decision can be statistically traced. As of 2022, China's local Internet users have reached 829 million, of which 98.6% are cell phone users. After a well-rounded research on the contemporary netizens' access to information, Sichuan Radio and Television decided to set their main development market in the major social platforms accordingly.

2. The Nature of Media Convergence—From Past to Future

2.1 Convergence That Had Already Implemented

The Internet has become the main venue for information dissemination, and the easy portability of mobile media terminals such as smart phones has helped the Internet increasingly take the place of traditional media. The public's growing reliance on information from mobile devices has prompted traditional TV stations to extend into the Internet, which has made media convergence an inevitable choice for major traditional media under the principle of sustainable development goals. In 2014, Sichuan Radio and Television established a holding subsidiary, Sichuan Golden Panda Media Company, to establish a new Internet-centric development strategy and transform its future development plan into a full media platform. Specifically, Sichuan Radio and Television integrated the corresponding creative departments and launched Sichuan Internet Radio and Television, Panda TV and mobile Internet applications for viewers (Sichuan News, Panda News), which have now formed a full-media operating environment with one application each for news, video and broadcasting. Sichuan Internet TV has been vigorously promoting the development of new media services in Sichuan, including IPTV, OTT, mobile TV, etc., to penetrate into the public's life through the Internet, enhance the communication ability and influence of Sichuan Radio and TV among the public, and thus achieve a healthy and sustainable development path in the field of Internet-oriented media.

2.2 Developable Media Convergence In The Future

Sichuan Radio and Television is in the process of exploring media convergence, in which it has partly achieved media convergence through its presence in mobile applications, using the communication features of the Internet era to integrate itself into the daily life of the public. However, in order to maintain authority of authoritative media, and become an evergreen and sustainable brand in the media

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field, Sichuan Radio and Television's media convergence strategy needs to be further developed.

First, if the traditional media wants to achieve the sustainable development goals, it needs to utilize the information technology to solve the problems existing in the traditional media. On the road to transformation of media convergence, the traditional media should make full use of the existing big data technology, analyse the audience's reading preferences and reading requirements based on the existing database resource. Specifically speaking, users can be analyzed and classified according to the data resource, and the actual needs of the overall audience can also be judged by big data algorithm, which enables the application to provide the corresponding content and products according to audience's own preferences. The use of big data technology according to local conditions is a corporate strategy that has been gaining attention in recent years, which requires the company to tailor its products and services to various cultures on the basis of background checks on the target market. At the same time, social media should effectively ensure the security of user data, strictly prevent the occurrence of data theft phenomenon, and take user privacy as a basic requirement for the development of the global market, so as to successfully enter the market of different countries or regions. Moreover, with the strengthening of the trend of economic and cultural globalization, internationalization has become an unavoidable development topic of the media industry. As a new force in the media industry and even in the international communication field, social media has become a "window" for countries to enhance exchanges, cross-cultural communication and mutual understanding which is primarily based on big data algorithm. With the rapid rise and impact of Internet information technology, international social media companies represented by Twitter, Facebook and Instagram have developed rapidly based on big data technology and expanded effectively around the world, building a social empire of virtual platforms in just a few years, thus connecting the world closer than ever, adding irreplaceable bricks in building up a globalized world. Having seen this trend, taking the experience of Tik Tok as an example, China's new social media platforms can take it as a representation of successful enlargement of social media, who relies on Tik Tok lay the foundation in China's domestic development from the aspects of technology, capital, cultural power breakthrough, actively implement the strategy of internationalization by database, constantly analyze audience characteristics and explore overseas short video market, which brought valuable experience for the convergence of traditional media and emerging social media. The cultural content in the Tik Tok platform is dominated by excellent traditional Chinese culture, supplemented by modern and popular fast food culture, which has won the attention of countless overseas users to Chinese culture with its unique advantages. Specifically speaking, videos on Tik Tok usually only lasts for 15 seconds long, and users with fast paced lives in the United States and other Western countries can use their fragmented time to watch these videos recommended to them according to big data algorithm, thus to stimulate their curiosity about the unknown world and enjoy a moment of relaxation. Moreover, the personalized big data algorithm mechanism is the key to the success of TikTok. According to a TikTok engineer, after understanding the user's interests, the machine will recommend videos with similar content at a certain

frequency, but will not recommend too many videos of a certain type to cause aesthetic fatigue. In addition, TikTok will also make up for the shortcomings of the big data algorithm by artificially selecting some of the quality content and recommending it to users who are interested in the relevant tags. In conclusion, applying big data algorithm in the communication field has become an unpreventable trend which is in accord with the masses' needs and requirement, it offers traditional media great opportunities towards a more sustainable, personalized, targeted (in terms of the audience) and globalized future.

Secondly, traditional media need to continuously strengthen the communication ability between themselves and their audiences, instead of conducting one-sided information output. Unilateral information output is no longer applicable to the demand of information exchange in this fast changing information era. People are no longer satisfied with receiving the information they need through the preaching mode of traditional media, but instead, they unprecedentedly show the wish and desire to participate in the process of information dissemination and communication. Under these circumstances, traditional media can change with the time, combine the network and user side together to create information communication channels with interactivity, and use the webcast platform to carry out programs to achieve online interaction between media and audience, thus attracting potential audience. This facilitates media practitioners to monitor the broadcast effect of their programs—when the quality of program resources and information is found to be relatively low, practitioners can rectify it in time with the help of audience feedback and suggestions, so as to improve the broadcast effect of the program. For example, the program "Hello, Traveling Friends" launched by Fujian TV Travel Channel in 2017 achieved the goal of bringing interactions between the host and the audience by inviting its audience to participate in the show in the form of comedy performance and talk shows, and its witty and interesting content which makes the audience feel thoroughly involved attracts more potential audiences; moreover, it uses the live broadcast platform to live broadcast the show content, and the host can interact with the audience in real time through pop-ups during the live stream.

In conclusion, the subjectivity of media is descending step by step, and media these days are providing more information services rather than concept transmission. Therefore, it is inevitable for traditional media to absorb and learn from new media, actively use modern technology, and actively get close to the public's life.

3. Benefits of Media Convergence

3.1 Influential Communication Effects

Media convergence allows the features of various media to be combined with each other, resulting in more influential communication effects. Each media form has its own strengths and weaknesses. After the whole convergence process, the inherent weaknesses of each medium disappear or at least are reduced, while the inherent strengths are somehow highlighted. Through cross-media convergence, Sichuan Radio and Television has been able to increase its exposure to the public through the

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integration of content, branding and other resources through the use of different media forms such as newspapers, radio and television, the internet and mobile phone software, as described above.

3.2 Innovation

Media convergence leads to subsequent creation of new media forms, which can expand the scope for media innovation and content innovation. The convergence of media forms is a product of technological development, allowing various media forms to integrate to achieve optimization of content resources and provide audience with a richer source of information. This is valuable concerning that some unprecedented news concepts and means of expression have been developed and born out of the practice of media convergence. Sichuan Radio and Television had launched a combination of live stream and TV programs, and developed mobile apps for platform users, such as Sichuan News and Panda News, under the goal of media convergence. The convergence of media forms has made it possible for a wide range of users to participate in content production, constantly bringing new thoughts to content innovation in traditional media, and the diverse content and cultural resources have secured Sichuan Radio and Television's competitive advantage over its rivals.

3.3 Revenue

Media convergence can also bring considerable revenue to traditional media. Traditional media can achieve development of multiple businesses by trading programme rights, attracting advertisers and extending potential market. In order to add value to media industry, Sichuan Radio and Television had implemented the production of its newly-developed products through the convergence of old and new media forms, generating new resources and products. Afterwards, Sichuan Radio and Television relied on the trend of online shopping to promote its products in the market which had taken advantage of its high exposure of authoritative media, creating new profit models and thus adding external value to the media industry.

4. Negative Effects of Media Convergence

4.1 Information Sender: Neglect of the Humanistic Heritage in the Communication Process

In the past, where the overall communication environment required traditional media to behave as the main mean (or nearly the only mean) of information dissemination, most of the main spokesmen and spokeswomen were professional writers with professional quality and humanistic and literary accomplishment. They made speeches through the official ways of traditional media such as newspapers, radio stations, magazines and TV stations, and they need to afford corresponding responsibilities for their own words and deeds. However, things has changed dramatically throughout years. The mainstream environment now places too much emphasis on the importance of media convergence, i.e., on optimizing the way in which information is disseminated, and instead neglects to look through the content itself, resulting in a situation in which the content disclosed is not sufficiently refined and up-to-date. YouTube, for example, which was registered in 2005, has more than 2 billion registered users worldwide by 2022 and is now one of the most important sources of first-hand

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information for the public. The registered users of the site can upload an unlimited number of videos, but the quality of the content is not guaranteed, and its authority and credibility are not as high as that of traditional media, requiring the audience to observe and distinguish the authenticity of the countless videos themselves. For traditional media, media convergence has overemphasized the role of communication technology to some extent rather than constantly refine and optimize content quality, resulting in a decline in the quality of public content for the public. When the threshold of disseminating information dissemination is constantly reduced by the characteristics of social networks and new media, anyone, regardless of their life experience and personal quality, can use the convenience of the Internet to express their perspectives without paying any actual responsibility. Their comments and ideas on these platforms certainly have the advantages of reference, also there will definitely be unhealthy and even extreme personal comments, some even use the convenience of social media to promote terrorism in the world range. The huge influx and spread of vulgar culture into almost infinite free social network platforms create cultural chaos, making the development direction of culture go completely reversed from people's real vision, and causing a serious strike to the development prospect of cultural environment.

4.2 Information Receiver

4.2.1 Information Cocoons

Cass R. Sunstein, a professor of law at the University of Chicago, proposed the concept of "Information cocoon" in his book Infotopia: How Many Minds Produce Knowledge. The public's demand for receiving information has a certain upper limit, rather than all-round demands. The public's demand for receiving public information often follow their interest, they always search for and try to comprehend the topics and events they are interested in through social networks and media platforms, while at the same time the public will not take the initiative to understand those areas they are not paying attention to. As time passes, this problem will shackle oneself in the cocoon room like silkworm cocoon. Although the Internet is able to provide a wealth of information, it is not necessarily an infinite open social platform, but a closed self-oriented space in the long run, which deteriorates the individual's mind and spirit. Information cocoon is another perspective of the influence of network to the masses. What network brings to individuals and society is not only open and diversified, but also extreme and closed. This problem has become increasingly serious under the popularity of big data algorithms and its recommendation mechanism built up in recent years. Nowadays, many people get their information through various social networking software, and many mainstream media are increasingly using algorithms to recommend customized content to individuals. In the long run, as people become more and more accustomed to big data, their ability to actively retrieve and access information will become weaker and weaker, their minds will become more and more closed and extreme, and they will also become more accustomed to and dependent on the delivery methods of platforms. The information cocoons effect tends to limit personal vision, increase group polarization and weaken social and cultural pluralism. Under the information cocoons effect, users only focus on the

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areas they are familiar with and continue to deepen their interests repeatedly, which will inevitably lead to limited vision. Limited information types reduce their ability to think independently and prevent them from forming a big picture. A common phenomenon is that many people pay too much attention to entertainment information while ignoring other types of information around them, becoming unaware of current affairs and politics, the serious ones might even start to lose touch with the society.

4.2.2 Manipulate the Emotional Tendencies of the People

Social media actually controls the information sources that users are exposed to in the online world, and take this as a guide, they covertly guide the users' emotional tendencies-even if they claim that their internal algorithms are powerful enough to analyze and recommend content to their users according to their own interest. The ability to manipulate users' emotions shall not be overlooked, which is enough to drive social media companies to incite people to engage in political activities unconsciously that benefit these companies' own interests. The trajectory of Silicon Valley tech giant Facebook's operations in recent years can support this argument. Its monopoly can be seen in the basic statistics of Facebook: about 70 percent of American adults can not live their lives without social media, with the vast majority using Facebook and some other products, e.g. Twitter, Tumblr. More than two-thirds of Americans are users of the core sites-Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, with one-third using Instagram and one-fifth using WhatsApp. By sharp contrast, less than one-third report using Pinterest, LinkedIn, or Snapchat. Using Facebook started out as light-hearted online entertainment between friends and has unprecedentedly now become the main way for people of all ages to conduct online communication and one of the most important ways for people to connect with the world. No user can easily disconnect from the influence of Facebook because when you give up using social media led by Facebook, you will to some extent lose touch with those friends who still use social media, and this means that one is somehow disconnected from the whole virtual society who always focuses on social media. With the company's absolute monopoly on the social media market, Facebook holds a huge share of the right of speech in the field of public opinion environment and at the same time act as a leading role in guiding people's emotional tendencies. The company's upgraded algorithm is optimized to prioritize content that gets more interaction from the users, and according to Facebook's own research, this algorithm makes people more likely to see content that is full of disgust, and sometimes even more extreme and more divisive contents, because people are most likely to become angry than any other human emotion. Fake and emotionally extreme messages are more appealing to most people and more likely to keep people on the platform. For example, after the bankruptcy of the government's social welfare system-that is, an undeniable serious failure of government functions-the challenges to people's survival conditions occur, that is the period when domestic social tensions between social classes become increasingly acute. Through the emotional directing role of social media, social tensions can be somehow diverted, people's anger can be shifted to a direction unrelated to the government's failure, thus triggering internal social contradictions instead of tensions between people and the government(in other words, the social media successfully shifts and catalyzes people's anger).

This will lead to conflicts within the society and bring further problems to the society in terms of overall security and even basic survival environment. From this perspective, Facebook and other social media platforms are basically a magnification of the stain of humanity.

5. Media Convergence and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aim to thoroughly address development issues in three dimensions—social, economic and environmental—in an integrated manner from 2015 to 2030, allowing the international community to shift to a sustainable development path. Faced with the relatively stable geopolitics and unequal communication structure at the current stage, traditional media such as Sichuan Radio and Television and some emerging social media on the Internet including Instagram, Twitter and WeChat have made optimizing the global communication order the overall goal of sustainable development, and they further elaborate the communication advantages of media convergence, so that the influence of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will further penetrate into the international community, thus building a pluralistic society with sustainable development as the benchmark. The following paragraphs will discuss the practice of the SDGs from the perspectives of poverty eradication and gender equality in the media convergence process of Sichuan Radio and Television.

5.1 NO POVERTY

The eradication of poverty in all its forms remains the most daunting challenge faced by human beings. Poverty is not only a lack of income and resources that makes it difficult to sustain livelihoods, but also manifests itself in the situation of hunger and malnutrition, inadequate access to education and other basic public services, social discrimination and exclusion, and lack of participation in decision-making process. Economic growth must be inclusive in order to provide sustainable employment and promote equity in the world range to meet the sustainable development goals. Globally, more than 800 million people still live on less than $1.25 a day. Moreover, many lack access to food, clean drinking water and sanitation. Rapid economic development in countries like China has helped lift billions of people out of poverty, but development overall remains uneven. Poverty rates are higher for women because they have less access to paid work, education and property rights than men, according to the statics. The international community has made great strides in helping people out of poverty. Although least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing states continue to make progress in overcoming poverty, inequalities persist. Although the number of people living in extreme poverty has fallen by more than half from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 836 million in 2015, there are still hundreds of people whose basic survival needs remain unmet. Since 1990, extreme poverty rate has fallen by approximately half. Despite the remarkable results presented in the report, one in five people in the developing region still live below $1.25 per day, and millions of people barely earn more a day, and many others are still at the risk of returning to poverty. Reducing inequality within and among countries requires maintaining the voice of developing countries and making their lives known

internationally, so that the international community can conduct targeted poverty eradication work in developing countries and regions. The practice of media convergence in traditional media brings the international community more attention to the worldwide phenomenon of poverty through efficient information dissemination, and creates personalized poverty eradication programs for each poor region of the world through convenient information sources.

Dege County is located in the northwest of Garzê Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Sichuan Province, China. Constrained by various factors such as transportation, geography, history and environment, Dege County lagged behind in economic development and was relatively weak in infrastructure, making it the most difficult of poverty eradication goals. In the last few years, Sichuan Radio and Television gave full play to media such as radio and television and new media on the Internet to turn public attention to this place, and actively coordinated the introduction of various media resources and forces to report on Dege, and a series of measures taken to help achieved significant results. Sichuan Radio and Television promoted the regional culture of Dege through its TV news, newspaper, mainstream video websites and mobile live streaming platform, which had created brand awareness of Dege as one of the best places of tourism in southwest China, resulting in effectively promoting the prosperity of local tourism. According to incomplete statistics, the mobile live streaming platform "Panda Live" alone had been watched by more than 6.8 million users worldwide online, with more than 8.1 million likes.

5.2 GENDER EQUALITY

While countries have made progress on gender equality in line with the Millennium Development Goals, women and girls around the world continue to suffer from inequality. Gender equality is not only a basic human right, but also a necessary foundation for world peace, prosperity, and sustainable development. Giving women and girls access to education, health care, decent work and participation in political and economic decision-making will promote sustainable economic development that benefits society and humanity as a whole. More efficient communication and a more comprehensive audience brought about by media convergence has shifted the public's focus from fragmented gender equality education to more concrete inculcation of ideas. Various media use gender equality education as an entry point while big data mechanisms provide concrete statistics for gender equality education, giving the public a more comprehensive cognition of gender issues around the world.

According to a statistical data report from the Sichuan Radio and Television database in 2021, 35% of women in China have experienced violent treatment. In the relatively backward western region in China, it is estimated that about 13,300 girls and women have experienced some form of gender-based violence. Due to the constraints of the domestic public opinion environment, this data was not released through television news channels, but was instead published on Sichuan Radio and Television's new media platform. As the popularity of new media platforms in China has reached 82%, the release of this data generated great attention from the public and sparked intense debate on social media platforms. This report on gender violence in China has successfully brought the issue of gender equality to the

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public through media convergence, and addressed its importance to the public.

5.3 Expectations

Sichuan Radio and Television is currently working to accelerate the process of media convergence and open the way to all-media, so as to achieve the sustainable development of traditional media. Sichuan Radio and Television is also trying to build a new type of radio and television media under the trend of local adaptation, around the cultural needs of the people. After media have become constructors and practitioners of pluralism in the global communication order, media organizations that are experiencing media convergence should also adhere to the new goal of shaping cultural pluralism and provide sparks for the transformation of the global communication order.

6. Conclusion

The way of production and lifestyle of the Internet has broken or will break all the orders in the socio-economic and cultural fields, and open up the way forward for sustainable development. As far as the communication field is concerned, the new network media technology has profoundly changed the communication order, greatly influenced the way news organizations operate, bred various new spaces for exploration and innovation, and provided constant sparks for the sustainable development of the media field. Traditional media and new online media have initially formed a pattern of division of labor and progressive dissemination, with traditional media having the advantage of first-hand authoritative resources and new media having the advantage of technology and mechanism, both of which play different roles in different stages of news and information dissemination, effectively promoting the sustainable development path of information dissemination. On the basis of media convergence, traditional media and new media should further improve communication mechanisms as well as communication contents under the guidance of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, provide diversified cultural resources for the international community, and provide opportunities for the sustainable development of the world. At the same time, it is far beyond necessary to use the advantages of media convergence in order to unite the whole world's people to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in the turning point of the times. Both the old and new media platforms can be converged to cater for the needs of the times according to their own characteristics, effectively promote the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the context of the world situation and developments of recent decades, and then flexibly adjust the priorities of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals based on the real world feedback. This makes the work of the United Nations less mysterious and more quantifiable to the public, increasing public participation in the realization of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, and enhancing public understanding and participation in international affairs.

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