

# The Realistic Dilemma and Causes of Campus Radio in Chinese Universities

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## Abstract:

As an important part of university campus media, campus radio used to play an important role in education, propaganda and service. At present, campus radio is facing the competition and impact of media inside and outside the university, and it must actively improve its competitiveness in many aspects, such as communication concept, vision, system improvement and development awareness, so as to get out of the survival dilemma.

## Keywords:

University, Broadcasting, Survival Dilemma

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## 1. Introduction

As an important part of university campus media, broadcasting plays an important role in education, propaganda and service. But at present, college radio has revealed multiple crises, such as the weakening of itself, which is manifested by the old content and single function of communication, and the weakening of communication effect. On the other hand, we can also see the rapid development of other media on campus, such as campus network, campus-run newspaper and TV. At the same time, external media also occupy a large number of campus audience. However, in the face of the crisis, there is little awareness and active measures to deal with it. Therefore, it is important to analyze the current survival situation and find out the reasons for the limitations of college campus broadcasting.

## 2. Internal and External Enemies: the Survival Reality of College Broadcasting

### 2.1. Competition of Campus Media

Campus media are composed of radio, TV, internet and newspaper, which have the characteristics of campus media as well as media in general. The latter is unique in its content, scope, time, and mode of operation, which are dependent on the campus. The content is mainly related to all aspects of the campus, which is not as broad as the content of off-campus media; the scope of communication is also limited by the scale and strength of campus media, and its scope is narrower. [1] For example, the campus

TV network cannot be owned by everyone, and the campus newspapers are mostly in the form of weekly newspapers with old content. In addition, campus radio is strictly controlled by the university propaganda department, which is characterized by low funding, low professional staff, strict supervision, and poor mobility, resulting in the lack of competition among campus media. If there is competition, it mostly comes from the competition of media's respective characteristics to attract different audiences, which is a kind of unconscious competition. Although there is less competition among campus media, this random and scattered media development has really sapped the competitiveness of each media and thus prevented them from breaking through to innovation in terms of content and format. However, campus is always a dynamic field. As practitioners of campus media, college students are bold and innovative in creating campus blogs and student personalized journals, which also bring freshness to the development of campus media.

The blog of Hao Ting of Peking University, for example, has brought freshness to the development of campus media. For example, Hao Ting's blog "Hao Ting Daily Talk" of Peking University is a representative example. Although they are small in scale and influence, they have not yet become "big", but they can also be an inspiration for the development of campus radio.

## ***2.2. The Impact of Off-Campus Media***

Since the 1990s, the media outside the university has had a stronger and stronger influence on campus radio. Among the reasons are: a. the competition among media brings audience segmentation, and many media aim at the campus audience market; b. the media's own style positioning of some columns and the needs of the campus audience trigger the campus audience's media contact and dependence; c. the negative development of the campus media itself cannot meet the needs of the campus audience, which triggers its gaze to the outside. All these reasons make the campus media feel the squeeze of external media more and more. The following is an analysis of this reality in terms of off-campus broadcasting, internet and off-campus newspapers. [2]

Off-campus radio: Most of the local radio stations where colleges and universities are located have programs targeting college students, such as "Boys' Dormitory" of Jiangsu Economic Radio and "Campus Singing List" of Jingzhou People's Radio. These programs are based on informative surveys and thus have accurate positioning and distinctive features. In addition, off-campus radio also cooperates with local universities, such as recruiting students to be amateur radio hosts and co-hosting campus programs with campus radio stations. Although these forms provide new development ideas for campus radio and create opportunities for students to exercise, they are still essentially business strategies to actively expand campus audiences and occupy campus communication space.

Internet: The media characteristics of the Internet, such as information sharing, open strategy, convenient operation, and in-depth daily life, have become a powerful driving force for its rapid development. The audience of online media has the distinctive characteristics of "individuality, virtualness, autonomy and participation". Roughly speaking, its audience is composed of three generations from the 1960s to the 1980s. Among them, the new generation in the 1980s became the main force of the Internet users. The characteristics of the network and the characteristics of the network audience fit together, so as the mainstream audience on campus, college

students naturally have a much higher affinity for online media. Compared with campus network, off-campus network is rich in content, extensive information and diversified forms, which greatly meets the psychological expectation of campus students for new and different things from the outside world.

Off-campus newspapers: Off-campus newspapers such as metropolitan, morning and evening newspapers, and off-campus periodicals such as Reader, Youth Digest, computer magazines and comics have a fixed audience on campus. [3] The former is easy to obtain, inexpensive and comprehensive; the latter is more professional than the on-campus periodicals, beautifully decorated and with different tastes. To a certain extent, these newspapers and periodicals meet the individual needs of students on campus.

On the whole, the off-campus media has made a proactive and strong impact on the university campus. This impact gradually divides the audience of campus radio and makes the influence of campus radio weaken gradually. Of course, the attitude of each type of off-campus media towards campus audience development is different, and thus the degree of influence on campus radio varies. Currently, radio, as the “weaker media”, is the most active and effective in developing the campus field. Off-campus networks have also developed special services for college students in their respective territories, such as classmates’ records and college communities. All these show that off-campus media have already started a clear competition for the college audience.

### **3. Multiple Constraints: the Reasons for the Constraints of College Radio**

Why the influence of college campus radio is weakened and the space for survival is shrinking? The author believes that there are two reasons. One is the relative weakening of the technical advantages of broadcasting caused by the change of media technology brought by the new technological revolution in the information age; the other is the backward development of campus broadcasting itself. This paper focuses on the fundamental reasons for the backward development of campus broadcasting itself.

#### ***3.1. Backward Communication Concept***

Campus broadcasting is managed by the party committee propaganda department of universities and operated by full-time managers and student groups. This model makes the broadcast media communicators cover both school department leaders and students. The leaders’ understanding of the media still stays in strengthening the function of “mouthpiece” and thus fail to develop campus broadcasting as a business or industry. On the one hand, it is because the main task of the university is not here; on the other hand, it is because campus radio has been placed in the ivory tower for a long time, and it is disconnected from the outside media development, and has not been influenced by the outside media changes. Many new communication concepts and development ideas cannot be introduced into the development of campus radio. In addition, as leaders, they are always hesitant to develop new ideas and methods, and are afraid of innovation. [4] In addition, most of the managers do not study broadcasting theory in depth and pay attention to the actual development of broadcasting, so they cannot make overall planning and propose specific ideas for the innovative development of campus broadcasting. From the perspective of students, many campus broadcasters are full of enthusiasm, but they do not have much rational

understanding of the characteristics of broadcasting media, the needs of campus audiences, and the updating of communication concepts. The theoretical lack and the conceptual backwardness make it difficult for the real operators of campus broadcasting to really accomplish the important task of development and innovation.

### ***3.2. Narrow Thinking and Vision***

The program of campus radio is influenced by the superior regulations, short broadcasting time, and vague positioning, etc. The thinking and vision of opening columns are extremely narrow. The author's survey shows that: within a fixed period of time (campus radio broadcast time averages two hours a day, roughly 0.5 hours in the morning and 0.5 hours in the afternoon and 1 hour in the evening), most campus radio stations are subject to the regulations of their superiors to broadcast the Central People's Broadcasting Station's "News and Newspaper Digest" program in the morning. In the afternoon, most of the programs are campus news programs, while in the evening, because of the longer time, there are music (appreciation, recommendation, song ordering, etc.), literature and arts, education and other types of programs. The morning and lunchtime programs are subject to strict supervision by the higher authorities, and the content and format of the programs are rather stagnant. In addition, campus news is mostly regular news on campus, and it is difficult to meet the diversified and individual needs of young students for information in terms of writing angle, composition, broadcasting tone and content arrangement. Although the types of evening programs are diverse, the planners and producers mostly choose music, literature and educational materials according to their personal preferences, and in most cases, they do not meet the needs of campus audiences. The overall survey shows that the programs of campus radio show obvious narrow thinking and vision, resulting in low listening rate, weak attention and poor communication effect.

### ***3.3. Lack of Institutional Chain***

A smooth program production chain often requires three mechanisms: the incentive mechanism at the beginning of program creation, the guarantee mechanism during program broadcasting, and the evaluation mechanism after program broadcasting. The three mechanisms constitute a kind of institutional chain that strongly activates the innovation, stability and development of programs. However, due to the influence of managers' philosophy, most college radio programs have only two links: review and broadcast, and even only broadcast after the program is finalized. This creates a situation of lack of innovation, lack of protection and lack of evaluation of programs. The innovative ideas of program producers are often not stimulated, and many good programs are aborted due to the lack of security during the broadcast process.[5] As a result, producers gradually lose their sense of innovation and are left with a single, simple and crude program that lacks evaluation and thus loses its goal of perfection. The lack of institutional chain seriously destroys the quality improvement of program production, which is also an important reason for the shrinking survival space of college radio.

### ***3.4. Lack of Development Consciousness***

Due to the failure to seriously analyze the situation of campus broadcasting itself and the failure to realize the reality and the dilemma of future development, most of the managers of campus broadcasting lack the awareness of media competition and innovation, which makes the development of campus broadcasting still in a natural

state of development. The result is not only the regression of campus radio itself, but also the gradual loss of campus radio functions. This runs counter to the current process of building a harmonious campus culture. Throughout the above analysis, the cruel survival reality and the multiple constraints of concept, vision, system and consciousness make us, as media researchers and workers, call for innovation of this important campus media. Only innovation can renew the passion of campus radio; only innovation can stimulate the powerful function of campus radio; only innovation can break the survival dilemma of college radio. It is expected that college campus radio will go to the light in innovation.

## Conflicts of Interest

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