Trends in Scholarly Publishing

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Journal Publishing in China: Experience, Lesson and Prospect

Charley Miao
Director TrendMD, China

Corresponding Author: Charley Miao (charley.miao@trendmd.com)

ABSTRACT

Academic research has gained new momentum in China with the rapid development of journal publishing, while government R&D investment has also increased. Several initiatives in academic publishing have been launched in recent years by the Chinese Government, societies and funding organizations. The study presents five main aspects of journals: Evolution, dynamics, experience, lessons and prospects, to set a valuable example and nurture their development in other Asian countries. The number of academic journals in China stands at more than 6,500, of which 6,069 have Chinese titles and abstracts, making language one of the major barriers to their growth. Additionally, the imbalance of development in various regions adds to the situation. China published more scientific articles than the USA and the UN combined in 2017 and 2019, but the majority are in Chinese. There is a sharp increase trend in journal impact factors in some top-profile journals in China, despite the lower average citations per article than in the USA. Among all those effective marketing tools, TrendMD has developed a high performance-to-price ratio over the years. The reason is TrendMD's collaboration with over 6,000 academic journals and its free widgets that have helped scholarly publishers increase readership, enhance international reputations, drive impact factors and even increase sales.

KEYWORDS

Academic research, China, Asian countries, TrendMD, academic growth, citation, widgets

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INTRODUCTION

With the rapid development of journal publishing in China, academic research has gained new impetus and government R&D investment has increased, further strengthening the journal publishing industry. In recent years, the Chinese Government, societies and related funding organizations have realized the importance of journal development and have launched a series of initiatives in academic publishing.

To set up a valuable example and help to nurture the development of journals in other Asian countries, this summary, consistent with my presentation, explores and illustrates the reasons behind the following aspects: Evolution, dynamics, experience, lessons and prospects.

In China, the first scholarly journal was launched in 1887-1889 and at present, there are more than 6,500 academic journals, of which 6,069 are in Chinese with English titles and abstracts. This is 93.37%, so only 431 Chinese STM journals and about 100 Chinese S&H journals are published in English. Chinese academic

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journals in English, in particular, are relatively few, leaving a large field for growth. A major cause of this severe situation is the government's strict approval regulations and bureaucratic administration. In contrast to most of the academic journals in the world, those called official journals in Mainland China have both ISSN and CN, as well as managed by supervisors, sponsors and editorial offices. One of the practical solutions is to launch solely international journals by partnering with international publishers directly.

In addition to language barriers, another obstacle to the growth of scholarly journals in China is the imbalance of development in various regions[1]. Over 28% of journals are registered in Beijing and Shanghai, while Tibet has only 14 journals. On the other hand, the disciplines of the scholarly journals are distributed evenly and reasonably and the top 5 are: (1) Social and humanities (33%), (2) Engineering and techniques (31%), (3) Medical sciences (15%), (4) Natural sciences (8%) and (5) Agricultural sciences (7%).

Outstanding progress in the total amount of Chinese scientific articles in China published overpassed those in USA and UN in 2017 and 2019, respectively[2]. China produced 660,000 academic articles in 2020, accounting for 21.2%, while USA and the UN accounted for 15.6% and 19.7%, respectively[2]. In the meantime, the total non-self citations for Chinese scholarly journals have increased steadily and sharply, from 292,534 in 2011 to 994,635 in 2019, increasing by 240%.

To make clear why the journal publishing industry in China[3] has been developed so obviously, the underlying dynamics for scholarly journal publishing in M. China must be analyzed deeply in the following 4 aspects:

- Construction of the world's top-ranking universities
    - International Academic Ranking Evaluation, i.e., QS, U.S. News, THE, ARWU
    - Civil Academic Ranking Evaluation: The 211 Project, the 985 Project and most recently "Double First-Class" Initiative
- Individual promotion
    - Faster promotion
    - Better academic reputation
    - More student fans
- China's rise
    - World turning eyes to China
    - More academic confidence
- Policy incentives
    - R&D expenditure increase
    - Government and university incentives to publish in internationally renowned journals and local journals
    - Heavy funding for supporting journal development: Excellence program in recent 5 years and will be continued

The policy incentives for R&D expenditure increase have been taking an extremely important role in journal development in China. The top 3 heavily funded countries are the USA, China and Japan and the overall amount of R&D expenditure is huge in the whole Asian countries or regions, indicating that the journal development will be promising and prosperous in the near and far future.

Although the average citations per article in China are far lower than in the USA, some top-profile journals in China have shown a sharp increase trend in journal impact factors, especially those that pay extremely high attention not just to their quality content but also to their effective marketing efforts. Over the years, TrendMD has gradually emerged as a highly reputed brand with a high performance-to-price ratio in all those effective marketing tools.

Since its establishment in 2014 up till now, TrendMD has partnered with more than 6,000 academic journals published by more than 450 known or well-known international publishers. Using its AI algorithm and widgets, TrendMD has helped scholarly publishers increase readership, enhance international reputations, drive impact factors and even increase sales. Many international publishers use this free widget installation service to achieve their development mission and financial targets. As an example, consider the well-known publisher World Scientific. By installing the free TrendMD widgets on March 1, 2018, TrendMD helped the publisher increase more than 286 million views and more than 0.7 million reads. TrendMD has also sent its articles to top journals like Science, PNAS, JAMA, the BMJ and others for millions of views, attracting thousands of interested readers outside of its website and these readers are spread throughout the world, including the USA, UN, India and so on.

Finally, an internationalized development policy in the following four aspects has been very successful for journal development in China:

- **Positioning Internationalization:** Based in China, facing the World
- **Internationalization of Content:** Research must focus on worldwide topics and content must attract worldwide attention
- **Internationalization of Publishing:** Global manuscript solicitation, international editorial norms, international cooperative publishing
- **Internationalization of Dissemination:** Diversified formations, accessible languages, diversified channels and wider readers

CONCLUSION

Thanks to increased awareness and government policies, the journal publishing industry has seen a more significant rise in China than in the rest of the world. As part of the internalization of research and content in China and globally, the dissemination tools like TrendMD have played a major role in the success of journal development in China.

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