

The Impact of Publishing Industry on the Supply of Application-orientated Undergraduate Textbooks

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Abstract—Starting with the supply of application-orientated teaching materials, this paper is largely divided into three main sections: first, the specific impact of publishing industry on colleges and universities is elaborated. Then, a detailed analysis will be made on the status and problems that may be found in the publishing industry development. Finally, the appropriate measures are discussed.

Index Terms—publishing industry; application-orientated undergraduate; supply of teaching materials

I. INTRODUCTION

Since the inception of the 21st century, digital technology along with Internet technology has been on the track of rapid development. In response to the trend of information age, the "application-orientated" teaching idea has been widely embraced by the undergraduate institutions and traditional publishing industry that are embarking on a transformation road. Publishers and universities have always been mutually reinforced. This is not only because publishers as the textbook suppliers are able to provide a solid backing that ensures the good teaching of colleges and universities, but also because the university's teaching materials circulation, for the publishing industry, serve an important source of its economic system. Alternatively, an appropriate model of textbook supply acts as an essential prerequisite for a win-win situation.

At present, some undergraduate colleges are on the way to transformation into the so-called application-orientated institutions. As the name suggests, on the basis of the original theoretical knowledge, more attention are paid to practical training items. And the original published textbooks may be criticized due to some problems like the theoretical knowledge too sophisticated, less practical, and no longer to keep the pace with the undergraduate colleges orientated at application. As to the publishing industry, adapting to the development of the times means a sharp demand to actively publish the corresponding series of teaching materials. Ultimately,

its market presence could be reinforced to maintain the economic benefits.

II. IMPACT AND ANALYSIS OF PUBLISHING AND DISTRIBUTION INDUSTRY ON APPLICATION-ORIENTATED UNDERGRADUATE TEXTBOOKS

In 2016, the National Development and Reform Commission, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security jointly issued the Notice on the Preparation of the Planning Project Construction on the "Thirteenth Five-Year-Plan" Industry and Education Integration Development Project (Fa-Gai-She-Hui [2016] 547#), marking the start of the implementation of the planning projects on the industry & education integration development project for the vocational education. A strong support would be offered to the construction of a number of the prestigious vocational colleges and application-oriented undergraduate colleges and universities with significant influence and competitiveness. As to the national long-term development, more efforts are expected to be made on cultivating the application-oriented and compound talents. Upon entering the period of industrialization, the country needs to make more adjustments on the industrial structure. Accordingly, its higher education should come along the way, aiming to cultivate a large number of application-oriented talents with the needed high-quality teaching materials. In China, undergraduate construction based on application is still facing some problems, partially due to the supply of textbooks from presses. The following will be elaborated in three aspects: Supply of teaching materials, price of teaching materials and quality of teaching materials.

(1) Supply of teaching materials

Currently, the way of consuming the college teaching materials has changed a lot. The most common change: In the past, a student had to pay a few hundred yuan, buying teaching materials from the department of teaching materials; the publisher would send the books to the school, where this department was responsible for distribution. And now students are permitted to buy books on their own, and the school is no longer in the position to charge the fees on teaching materials. For students, there are a variety of ways available to obtain teaching materials. More and more of them choose to

acquire second-hand books or pay to get the copies. Comparatively, the purchase enthusiasm of new textbooks continues to be down, with the return rate on a rising level. Nonetheless, there are still a considerable proportion of students who need the excellent teaching materials used in the past years and reprinted by the publishers. As publishers, in consideration of their economic benefits, the publication of reprinted textbooks usually counts on sales in previous years to estimate the number of demand for this year. More often, all these factors combined result in the hoarding of some high-quality, excellent materials or even the reprinting request to be refused. This is bound to bring some negative impact. Basically, the refusal of the press makes it difficult for teachers to pick the right materials, but rather to barely make do, indirectly affecting the quality of teaching. Also, chances are that this year's demand for teaching materials may be greater than the actual amount of printing. An extra printing may be scheduled, but the teachers could be helpless in timely preparing lessons in advance, and harmful to the teaching process.

(2) *Price of teaching materials*

In the past, teaching materials in colleges and universities were supplied in the following way: Agency station of college books delivers the books to the department in charge of teaching materials, where settlement is done. The agency station transfers the payment back to the press, with the discount points taken as the profit. But things change at the Internet age, where online shopping has become the primary choice for college students. In a striking contrast, the traditional publishing industry is facing a lot of troubles in pursuit of profits simply through the distribution of textbooks. As a result, the quality of printing and college discounts will be inevitably shrinking in order to take care of their own interests. No matter what the impact might be, that'd be a burden unaffordable to students.

(3) *Quality of teaching materials*

The teaching materials for the application-orientated purposes shall be prepared within the frame of the subject knowledge theory in an aim to cultivate the ability of the students to solve the practical problems. Teaching materials of this kind are expected to take care of both the theoretical knowledge of subjects and the application aspects. This would inevitably increase the difficulties in the selection of textbooks to promote the development of colleges and universities. And this task mainly falls on the shoulders of university textbook publishing houses. The publishing houses also put forward higher requirements for the discipline ability of the book editorial talents. Driven by the different operating ideas and their interests, colleges and universities may seek to take full advantage of the features of their own, which are able to satisfy the needs of the publishing industry and conducive to the employment of students. In fact, these two aspects are not contradictory. At the ever changing times, the progress of the publishing industry comes along with the diversity of the needs of the editorial talents. This is not

merely able to support the changes of the educational model, but also to create a broader room for the development of higher education.

III. PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

With the advent of the information age, China's economic take-off is proven to have failed to realize a timely transition. When coping with changes in the macro environment, the enterprises are confronting various problems, so is the publishing industry. Traditional publishing industry in such a scenario is desperately needed to actively complete such a transition in order to keep up with the pace of the times. Specifically, all possible aspects with problems should be covered before a real satisfied solution could be obtained. Here, a detailed analysis is given from three aspects: the profit, the growth rate of practitioners and industry prospects.

3.1 ASPECTS WITH PROBLEMS

(1) *Macroeconomic factors forcing profit to fall*

Affected by the domestic macroeconomic factors, there has been a rapid increase in the cost of enterprises, including rent, personnel, logistics and other related costs. This aspect has become an important reason for the decline in the profits of the distribution industry. Distribution businesses are making a growing larger discount, which is also responsible for the decline in profits. Especially in the group buy, college textbooks, bookstores are simply not profitable as ever. The suppression of the online shops also forces publishers and bookstores to give up substantial profits to maintain a market share. Unfortunately, such helpless measures only misled outsiders to believe that distribution is a profiteering industry, making publishers more cautious in pricing. So lack in an improved pricing space, publications have no way to achieve sales without giving up enough benefits, the publishing industry has been forced into a very embarrassing situation.

(2) *A slow growth rate of employment*

In the past two years, the number of employment in the distribution industry has been growing slowly, only by 0.1%. This figure produced an image far from being optimistic. The slow growth in employment is directly associated with the declining industry profits. In addition to the industry crisis, enterprises tend to reduce their investments in the industry projects, even turning back from the industry or posts. Despite that the weak growth in employment does not indicate the trend of traditional distribution industry, an industry that cannot fully absorb the employment is probably not too much optimistic about its future vision.

(3) *The prospect of publishing industry in a twilight zone*

Business costs are soaring, including the rising expenditure on labor, freight, rent, water and electricity, and the tax burden is not yet reduced. At present, many bookstores only have their net profits maintained at 1%

to 2%. Bookselling itself is a low-profit sector, where profiteering is only the product of the times when the publishing market and system were not regulated. That is to say, it is common for the distribution industry to see its profits going down, which will also become a normal thing. At the same time, the digital reading has become a new habit of readers who produce a growing reading amount. This is no doubt an icier cold for the traditional distribution sector to survive on an even lower profit.

3.2 SOLUTIONS

(1) Be professional, featured and quality-assured

To tackle this new situation, the first task of a university press needs to become more professional, featured and quality-assured. The university press is expected to give full play to its own advantages in professionalism, technologies, resources and talents, whilst relying on the application-orientated background to hold the leading position of practical knowledge. Real-time tracking of academic status helps achieve the goal. Highlighted features can be the winning strategy to hold a market share.

(2) To keep an eye on the international trend for sustainable development

University presses are now facing a favorable opportunity of a fast growing economy and the rapid development of science and technology education. We should keep our eyes fixed on that distant horizon to enhance our international competitiveness. Apart from doing a good job in education, university presses are expected to earnestly learn from overseas peers with successful experiences and practices. Combined with the advantages of application-orientated colleges and universities, more efforts should be made to establish a brand on the world stage to strengthen the market presence.

(3) To enhance the value-added service system of teaching materials

Value-added services are rooted in the core content that refers to the customer demands, aiming to provide services beyond the regular scope of service, or to provide services in a way superior to the conventional practice. Publishing industry, especially the publishing practitioners in colleges and universities, needs to face the practical objects of the major colleges and universities. So it is required to understand the needs of teachers and students for practically used materials. This is especial true for the practical characteristics of the application-orientated undergraduate industry. Hence, custom development of some practical value-added services is a must:

A. By scanning the two-dimensional code, course dynamic video can be replayed to illustrate the operating demo needed for job posts, breaking through the bottleneck of the "space limit" in paper books. More of good values can be felt by readers to increase the student's intuitive sense and their interest in learning.

B. Based on digital publishing, an online platform for value-added services can be built up to produce the amplification effect of value-added services. A typical instance is the People's Health Publishing House, which works with the Renwei Medical Network (<http://exam.ipmph.com/>), and has successfully built up a special value-added service platform for the teaching materials, monographs and reference books. Readers are allowed to open an experience account, by which each click to a link leads to a wealth of multimedia materials. For example, a textbook of internal medicine, the original book may only contain the author's PPT or a small amount of video. With the help of this online platform, the matched medical materials can be selected from the database to enrich the original presentation. This platform-based content appreciation can be described as a sort of long-term cumulative service, which can be attractive to readers in the field of expertise, and also effectively avoid the piracy dispute.

C. Remote training system with teaching materials can be set up to meet the different needs of teachers before and after taking a post. Modules like "A Intense Training with New Versions of Textbooks before the Use", "Daily Training", "School-based Training Zone of Undergraduates, and Postgraduates & Advanced Studies" can all be established to provide the first-line teachers with search, interpretation and Q&A. The use of textbooks may involve series of teaching preparation, case studies, lesson assessment, competition and other multi-dimensional network services; online services are available with online e-book reading and downloading features, database customization and search of reference books. All in all, university press should strive to achieve the use of new media to serve the application-orientated college education. By breaking the limitations of the traditional publishing industry, a virtuous circle may be created to obtain excellent teaching results with highlighted features.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, the impact of publishing and distribution industry is closed connected with the entire supply chain of textbooks and also the development of their own businesses. As to the supply of teaching materials, colleges and universities engaged in application-based education should attach great importance to the featured teaching so that higher quality could be guaranteed to hit the training goal. Quality assurance and pre-class availability in accuracy and timeliness are absolutely essential for the supply of teaching materials to higher learning. How to establish a better mode in this regard still remains as the urgent need to be addressed for both colleges and publishers.

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