

The Realistic Challenges and Solutions for Cultural Program Hosts in Effectively Narrating China's Stories

Jiang Ziyao

*School of Literature and Media, Hebei Minzu Normal University, Chengde, China
19503344161@163.com*

Abstract: *With the continuous advancement of digital technology, numerous high-quality cultural programs have emerged, leading to the widespread dissemination of traditional Chinese culture. As a key figure in these programs, the presenter has assumed the crucial responsibility of effectively narrating China's stories. This paper first examines the presenter's value in linking program segments, spreading cultural knowledge, and connecting with the audience. It then elaborates on the realistic challenges presenters encounter in contemporary cultural programs, focusing on three aspects: cultural literacy, professional competence, and the development of intellectual media. Furthermore, the paper analyzes the multiple roles presenters play within these programs, specifically guides, narrators, and interviewers, by drawing on examples from several high-quality cultural shows. Finally, the paper explores strategies for enhancing cultural program hosts' role in modern contexts.*

Keywords: *cultural programmes; presenters; role reinvention; telling China's story*

1. Introduction

With the continuous innovation of cultural programs, many aspects of traditional Chinese culture have been brought to the screen, enabling Chinese stories to be heard and shared widely. The host plays a pivotal role as cultural programs serve as a vital medium for showcasing these stories.

As cultural programs continue to innovate, their formats have diversified, leading to the emergence of various "culture +" programs. This diversification has prompted an evolution in the role of the host. Today, a host is not just a guide or a narrator but also a listener to the guests and an active participant in the content, showcasing their adaptability and versatility.

While diverse program formats provide hosts with multiple roles, they also present significant challenges in effectively telling China's stories. In light of these challenges, this article will analyze several high-quality cultural programs, such as "China in the Classics," "Exploration of the Chinese Bamboo Slips," and "Chinese Poetry Conference," to explore how hosts can enhance their ability to narrate Chinese stories effectively. Focusing on the host as the central figure, this article proposes solutions in five key areas: cultural heritage, professional competence, aesthetic sensibility, personal traits, and role modeling.

2. The value of the presenter in the program

Presenters play a pivotal role in programs, serving as the primary conduit for conveying critical information to the audience through spoken language. Presenters disseminate Chinese culture in cultural programs, articulate the nation's voice, and narrate its stories, embodying multifaceted values. From the standpoint of program structure, the presenter functions as a critical intermediary, seamlessly linking content and guiding the program's progression. In content communication, the presenter explores and elucidates the cultural significance of traditional Chinese culture, thereby enhancing cultural self-confidence domestically and facilitating artistic exchange and mutual understanding on a global scale. From the audience's perspective, the presenter acts as a vital bridge, connecting the program with its viewers and enhancing the efficacy of cultural transmission through active engagement and interaction.

2.1. Integrated program content

As the program's leader, the host plays a crucial role in managing content. Faced with rich and diverse material, hosts must effectively link program segments, oversee progression, and maintain rhythm. By presenting a cohesive and engaging experience, hosts foster a sense of connection and involvement among the audience. Such an approach enhances the program's appeal and ensures the successful dissemination of its content. Serving as the 'bridge' within the program hosts skillfully connect various independent segments through transitions, summaries, and previews. This strategy guarantees coherence and fluidity, allowing the audience to grasp the overall structure and logic of the program.

With the ongoing innovation of cultural programs, the format has become increasingly varied, often adopting a "culture +" approach. In such multi-segment formats, the host's ability to seamlessly integrate content becomes even more critical, highlighting their central role in the program's success.

2.2. Dissemination of cultural content

Presenters convey program content through spoken language, deeply exploring cultural meanings and disseminating mainstream values to the public. As society's demand for cultural and spiritual enrichment grows, cultural programs continuously innovate, placing higher expectations on presenters. The role of the presenter has evolved from simply conveying Chinese culture clearly to telling compelling Chinese stories, reflecting the increasing importance of their ability to communicate cultural depth and meaning.

Dong Qing, a prominent host of the "Chinese Poetry Conference," exemplifies this evolution by crafting memorable expressions that use poetry to reveal deeper cultural connotations, illustrating the intrinsic connection between Chinese poetry and Chinese culture. Her deep understanding of classical literature, combined with analytical insight, allows for a compelling presentation of cultural essence in a way that resonates with the audience's values. Such alignment fosters cultural identity and pride, showcasing the unique romanticism of Chinese culture ^[1].

The role of presenters in disseminating cultural content extends beyond mere transmission and popularization. It encompasses the demonstration of cultural diversity, the promotion of cultural values, the fostering of innovation, and the strengthening of cultural identity and national self-confidence. Moreover, presenters play a significant role in promoting cross-cultural exchanges and understanding. Their professionalism, personal charisma, and influence enhance the impact and appeal of culture, thereby supporting its prosperity and development.

2.3. Bridging the gap between the program and its audience

Cultural programs often rely on the presenter as a bridge, bringing culture closer to the audience. By engaging directly with viewers, presenters can enhance the program's impact, fostering a sense of participation that allows audiences to deeply experience cultural elements and enrich the value of the content.

In the show, "The Reader," Dong Qing exemplifies this role by serving as the host and an in-depth interviewer. Her conversations with guests, sharing their life stories and reading experiences, invite audience involvement in the reading process. This approach makes culture more accessible to viewers, enhances the program's interactivity, and fosters a sense of inclusion.

Integrating the audience into the program transforms their role from passive recipients to active participants in cultural exploration. This shift fully enables viewers to appreciate the artistic charm and motivates them to engage with cultural subjects proactively. Such a transformation highlights the presenter's role in bridging the gap between the program and its audience. An effective presenter uses approachable language to build this connection, significantly amplifying the impact of cultural dissemination.

3. The reality of the presenter's dilemma in cultural programs

In the new era, facilitators encounter increased challenges and more significant opportunities. From the public's perspective, there is a growing demand for spiritual and cultural enrichment, which places higher expectations on the artistic literacy of hosts regarding program formats. Continuous innovation in cultural programming challenges hosts' adaptability and responsiveness. Additionally, the advancement of intelligent media presents new challenges to the hosts' ability to maintain empathy and connection

with their audience.

3.1. The lack of cultural literacy

With the growing demand for spiritual culture among the public, the quality of cultural programs is continuously improving, raising the expectations for the content delivered by hosts. Presenters must move beyond the traditional role of merely vocalizing and disseminating program content in this evolving context. They are now required to convey deeper cultural connotations, necessitating continuous enhancement of their cultural literacy and internal competencies.

The emergence of acclaimed cultural programs such as the "Chinese Poetry Conference" and "The Reader" highlights the significant role of hosts in these settings. The high-quality cultural output these hosts provide aligns with the audience's aspirations for spiritual enrichment, contributing to a cultural identity rooted in Chinese traditions, boosting cultural confidence, and earning widespread acclaim from viewers.

Hosts must possess robust cultural skills to meet the demands of contemporary television cultural programs and the audience's aesthetic expectations^[2]. However, despite these advancements, presenters must recognize the need to continuously improve their cultural background to effectively fulfill the mission of narrating China's stories.

3.2. Challenges of Resilience

With the continuous innovation in program formats, hosts must assume multiple roles and adapt to various contexts, presenting a significant challenge to their adaptability. In cultural programs, including guests who are experts or individuals with extensive knowledge enhances the authority and depth of the content. Presenters need to skillfully engage in in-depth discussions with these guests, guiding them to elaborate on their expertise while steering the conversation back to the program's central theme if it deviates or becomes mired in technical jargon. Such management ensures that the program remains coherent and accessible to the audience.

Cultural programs frequently encompass content from diverse cultural backgrounds, necessitating presenters to exhibit high cultural sensitivity. They must understand the cultural context, respect different cultures, and avoid inadvertently offending any group. Presenters should manage discussions objectively and fairly when addressing sensitive topics or cultural differences to prevent unnecessary controversies.

3.3. The development of smart media

With the continuous advancement of AI technology, AI hosts have begun appearing on screens. These AI hosts excel in execution, efficiency, imitation, and precise data management, which puts pressure on today's human hosts and raises concerns about the potential for AI to replace human presenters.

Despite their accurate imitation and broadcasting capabilities, AI presenters operate solely based on data algorithms and lack emotional depth^[3]. As a result, their content often fails to generate empathy with the audience. In contrast, human hosts can connect emotionally with viewers through genuine expressions of feeling. However, many presenters struggle to engage their audience effectively, leading to a sense of distance and making it harder to foster empathy. Consequently, those who fail to connect emotionally may find themselves at risk of being replaced by AI.

Presenters should take a more nuanced approach to addressing the challenge of telling Chinese stories and promoting Chinese culture. By interpreting content from the audience's perspective, exploring cultural connotations in-depth, enhancing empathy, and fostering cultural identity, presenters can mitigate the impact of AI advancements and strengthen their relevance in cultural communication.

4. Role reinvention of cultural program hosts

The continuous innovation of cultural programs in the new media era has led to diverse program formats and multifaceted roles for hosts. Hosts can adapt these roles to effectively tell compelling Chinese stories, enhance content dissemination, and meet the audience's expectations for showcasing excellent traditional Chinese culture.

4.1. The guide

By shifting from program stringer to program guide roles, hosts can more effectively engage the audience and encourage active exploration of the cultural content. This approach enhances communication and deepens the audience's understanding of cultural nuances.

Innovation in cultural programs often involves presenting content through various segments that capture viewers' attention. In programs with diverse and independent segments, the presenter's role as a guide becomes crucial. Through skillful language and strategic linkage, the host connects different content areas, ensuring that the program is delivered in a cohesive and multidimensional manner. For example, some programs integrate theatrical performances and cultural interviews, merging these seemingly disparate elements to enrich the artistic message and amplify the program's impact. This highlights the host's importance in guiding the content.

The interconnected program format, facilitated by the host's guidance, increases viewer interest and immersion, encouraging them to explore the history and culture presented proactively. This method effectively promotes the dissemination of excellent traditional Chinese culture.

4.2. The interviewer

The host plays a crucial role in the program as an interviewer, guiding guests to share their personal stories. This process involves eliciting the guests' internal emotions and facilitating their emotional expression, which fosters an emotional exchange with the audience and triggers emotional resonance^[4].

During interviews, the host must employ a logical structure to guide the conversation effectively, helping guests articulate their stories and uncover more profound meanings. The host's role extends beyond merely facilitating the exchange; they must also present the information in a clear and accessible manner to bridge the gap between the guest and the audience. Additionally, the host should summarize, explain, and expand upon the interview content to enhance the audience's understanding and engagement. This approach improves the educational and entertainment value of the program.

4.3. The participant

In recent years, many cultural programs have introduced innovative approaches by employing more diverse and profound expressions, thereby revitalizing excellent traditional Chinese culture. When hosts actively participate in the program, they often excel at bridging the gap with the audience and conveying the deeper truths and beauty of the culture.

Some programs have incorporated dramatic elements to spread culture through theatrical interpretation. This approach immerses the audience in a narrative that connects the past with the present, showcasing the creative transformation of traditional culture into contemporary forms and integrating it with modern life. By participating in the program, the host enhances the presentation's depth, making the cultural content more accessible and engaging for the audience.

5. Paths of enhancement for presenters in cultural programs

As China's overall strength continues to grow, the world is eager to hear China's story in the new era. With cultural programs evolving, the expectations of hosts are increasing. As storytellers of Chinese culture, hosts must stay in tune with current trends, adapt to changes, and continuously improve themselves to share China's story effectively^[5].

5.1. Enhancing cultural heritage and telling China's story

Many excellent hosts make memorable remarks because they have a solid knowledge base that supports their cultural insights. Everything in nature and society tends to balance out, following a principle of equilibrium: what goes out must come in, and what comes in must go out. The same principle applies to a presenter's content output. To effectively tell a good Chinese story and promote Chinese culture, a host needs a solid cultural foundation and a deep understanding of Chinese traditions.

Cultural heritage must balance preservation with innovation to remain relevant. Similarly, a host's career needs to balance tradition with creativity. "Preserving" represents maintaining the essence of traditional Chinese culture, while "creating" involves expressing and interpreting that culture in new

ways. A successful combination of preservation and innovation will ensure that traditional Chinese culture evolves and is effectively communicated.

5.2. Strengthening business skills to navigate the linguistic landscape

In response to the "threat" posed by the rise of artificial intelligence anchors, human hosts should focus on enhancing their skills to leverage their unique strengths, such as empathetic communication and handling unexpected situations—areas where AI falls short.

From an empathy perspective, hosts should develop sensitivity to better understand and relate to others. They also need strong hosting skills to manage the flow and tone of their speech effectively, using language to convey emotions and connect with the audience.

Regarding resilience, hosts must be adept at reacting quickly and managing emergencies. For instance, if a guest struggles with their speech, the host should be able to guide the conversation smoothly, helping the guest express their emotions clearly to the audience.

5.3. Expanding aesthetic vision to align with the program's style

As cultural programs improve quality, they increasingly offer viewers visual beauty through advanced aesthetics. Many programs now combine stage technologies such as ring-screen casting, augmented reality, and real-time tracking to provide a powerful visual experience. This allows the audience to engage with history and culture in a more immersive way.

The host's image has also seen innovation. In programs that highlight traditional culture, hosts often wear clothing with distinct Chinese national style elements, enhancing the program's thematic style and providing visual pleasure. To be most effective, the visual appeal of the host's appearance should align with the program's overall aesthetic, making it more engaging for the audience ^[6].

5.4. Identifying personal characteristics to improve recognition

Hosts often adopt similar styles in the mission of telling China's story. If they consistently emulate others without cultivating their distinctive traits, they may fail to distinguish themselves and leave a lasting impression on the audience. Presenters need to develop a unique personal identity and enhance their individual recognition.

For example, when we think of dignified and cultured, we recall Dong Qing; for humor and wit, Sa Beining comes to mind; and for unbiased and objective reporting, Kang Hui is remembered. Therefore, developing a distinct personal style is essential for hosts to tell China's story and make a lasting impact effectively.

5.5. Mastering characterization and integrating program content

With the diversification of cultural programs, presenters are required to assume various roles. They must master the presentation of each role and adapt flexibly between them. When hosting, presenters should be dignified, composed, and authoritative in their language; during interviews, they should be gracious, calm, and gentle; and in dramatic interpretations, they should convey a sense of immersion and expressive engagement.

As presenters navigate these diverse roles, they should focus on the program's core theme, adjust their roles accordingly, and seamlessly integrate the program content. This approach helps stimulate audience interest, achieve the desired program effect, and enhance the depth and breadth of cultural communication.

6. Conclusions

In the new era, cultural program hosts encounter numerous challenges arising from the urgent need to promote Chinese culture, rapid advancements in artificial intelligence technology, and ongoing innovations in program formats. These evolving circumstances present both challenges and opportunities for presenters narrating China's story. By adapting to contemporary trends, continuously improving their skills, and developing distinctive personal characteristics, profound cultural heritage knowledge, and exceptional business acumen, presenters can successfully navigate these changes and effectively convey

China's story.

References

- [1] Wang, Yu. (2018). *Cultural communication: The mission and responsibility of cultural TV program hosts--The example of Dong Qing, the host of "Chinese Poetry Conference."* *Television Studies* (09), 30-31.
- [2] Yang, Tao. (2024). *Role transmutation of TV cultural program hosts.* *News Communication* (12), 91-93.
- [3] Guo, Lan. (2021). *On the crisis and countermeasures of broadcasters and hosts in the environment of artificial intelligence.* *Media Today* (02), 54-56.
- [4] Feng Mengyuan. (2019). *The role of the presenter in different contexts under the view of oral communication.* *Media Today* (05), 118-120.
- [5] Fan, Wenming. (2023). *Communication strategies for presenters to tell China's stories in the new era.* *Sound and Screen World* (15), 33-35.
- [6] Yan, Zhenjiang. (2023). *Analysis of the changing roles and functions of hosts in cultural programs--Take the host of "China in the Canon," Sa Beining, as an example.* *Western Radio and Television* (23), 169-172.