

Transformation Path of Television Program Creation from the Perspective of Cultural Communication

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Abstract: *In the context of global exchanges and cultural convergence, it is crucial to understand emerging patterns in globalization and cultural dynamics. Promoting traditional Chinese culture and its spiritual values is essential for strengthening China's international cultural influence and advancing global civilization. The transformation of television programs plays a key role in this process and requires broad support. Television media, traditional Chinese culture, and digital technology must be integrated through intercultural communication. As the aesthetic preferences of Generation Z evolve, it is important to examine changes in television discourse and narrative mechanisms that drive cultural innovation. Despite challenges in cross-cultural communication, such as cultural misunderstandings, value differences, and technological barriers, solutions must be found. Television programs must create a discourse system rooted in cultural forces and integrate digital technology to facilitate information flow. This approach will effectively convey China's story and create a platform for traditional Chinese culture to flourish in a globalized world.*

Keywords: *television program; Program Transformation; cultural diffusion*

1. Introduction

The development of television programming in China began in the 1950s. Since the turn of the century, the sector has undergone significant changes. New technological advancements and industrial shifts have driven the widespread adoption of digital technology, transforming mediated life. The rise of new media aligns with contemporary trends. This has posed challenges to traditional television. As a result, the transformation of television programming has become a vital issue in cultural development.

Developing a socialist culture with Chinese characteristics has been a long process. After the founding of the People's Republic of China, culture and education became key national priorities. Cultural construction and the enhancement of China's soft power are crucial for building a socialist cultural powerhouse by mid-century. This goal is vital for achieving the "Two Centenary Goals" and the Chinese Dream of national rejuvenation.

Cross-cultural communication studies began in the early 20th century. Early work focused on community-communication relations in the United States. Nearly a century later, the field has expanded. Intercultural communication involves exchanging information between individuals and groups from different cultural backgrounds. China's rich traditional culture is now undergoing a creative transformation and innovative development.

2. Multi-Dimensional Support for TV Program Transformation

The transformation of television programs is an inevitable trend for traditional media in the new era. The conditions for this transformation have been established on multiple levels. Innovation lies at the core of Chinese television's strategic resources and media soft power, driving the growth of China's television sector amidst competition from various media platforms. Reflecting on the paradoxical nature of innovation, the multi-dimensional integration of television programs emerges as a critical factor in this process. This integration plays a significant role in shaping the future of television programming and its cultural impact.

2.1. The Field of Cultural Diffusion

Intercultural communication involves the dissemination of information and the interaction of

cultures between people from diverse backgrounds. As such, it has become an essential means of communication and mutual understanding among the world's civilizations. It is also a critical pathway for China to build a cultural powerhouse. The transformation of television programs must, therefore, integrate cross-cultural communication.

The relationship between culture and communication is often expressed as "culture as communication and communication as culture."^[1] Television programs are pivotal in disseminating culture, addressing the audience's art appreciation, recreation, and cultural cultivation needs. Intercultural communication provides favorable conditions for TV cultural programs to thrive.

Communication involves creating, modifying, and transforming a shared culture. Pluralism and equality are fundamental principles of intercultural communication, necessitating that television programs adhere to ethical norms. Intercultural communication is deeply rooted in cultural ethics, offering a moral framework for overcoming cultural barriers and preserving cultural diversity.^[2] Many aspects of traditional Chinese culture possess spiritual qualities that remain relevant and necessary in the contemporary world. Television programs, through intercultural communication, can reinvigorate traditional culture. Cultural exchanges enable us to "build on and abandon," fostering new progress and achieving significant success in cross-cultural communication in China today.

2.2. Driven by Chinese Excellence

Culture is the soul of a nation and its people. Creative transformation and innovative development are fundamental for modernizing China's outstanding traditional culture and fully realizing its contemporary values.^[3] This approach aligns with the requirements of intercultural communication, responds to global cultural trends, and pushes the boundaries of television programming. It provides a way forward for the innovative cultural connotation, interpretation, and development of a discourse system for studying and interpreting Chinese traditional culture. To some extent, it drives the transformation of television programs toward greater relevance and quality.

Feuerbach once stated, "In an age when symbols are more important than objects, copies are more important than originals, and phenomena are more important than essences, the highest fantasy is also the highest sanctity." The environment in which human society exists includes the symbolic environment as an element. Today's basic meaning of visual culture lies in the visual element, particularly the imaging factor, which dominates culture.

Television programs are inherently symbiotic with cultural communication, reflecting culture's internal and external dimensions. Outstanding traditional Chinese culture serves as the internal driving force behind the transformation and development of television programs.

2.3. Digital Technology in Support of Transformation

McLuhan's media theory asserts that "no medium is more than an extension or amplification of human sensory faculties." The continuous innovation and development of media technologies further enhance the tangible experience of what is being extended. Therefore, the "revitalization" of culture in television programs must be achieved technologically. On one hand, technology brings the "presence" of culture to the audience. On the other hand, it allows viewers to interact with traditional culture through digital formats, such as augmented and virtual reality. As cultural products and industries evolve, digital technology is increasingly integrated, giving rise to what is now termed "digital culture."^[4]

The rapid transmission speeds and vast data capacities of 5G communication technology provide a foundation for big data, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence advancements.^[5] These developments enable television programs to present multifaceted, immersive perspectives on future media. Technological breakthroughs across the entire audiovisual production chain—such as camera technology and display systems advancements—have significantly transformed the landscape. For example, the dance performance Luoshen Shui Fu in Henan TV's "2021 Dragon Boat Festival Wonderful Tour" utilized underwater high-definition photography to recreate the classical Chinese literary work, Luoshen Fu. Additionally, technologies like 360-degree panoramic dome screens, 4K and 8K resolution displays, and 3D imagery have created the technological conditions necessary to expand the innovative possibilities of television discourse.

3. Aesthetic Spectrum Flux of Television Programs

Contemporary film and television productions' stylized and auteur-driven nature has broadened audiences' aesthetic thresholds. The authorship of a work is primarily manifested through two key elements: narrative and audiovisual expression. Creating themes and content inspired by excellent traditional Chinese culture aligns with mainstream cultural trends and current global needs. Digital film and television technology plays a crucial role in unveiling these works' emotional depth and resonance, enabling audiences to engage with and appreciate traditional Chinese culture. This approach fosters acceptance and affection for traditional culture, resulting in a more profound connection with the audience.

3.1. Reinventing TV Discourse Patterns

Intercultural communication relies heavily on media discourse. Television discourse, often called "televisual discourse," is grounded in established visual languages and symbol systems, such as camera techniques and other information delivery methods. These dissemination activities are organized according to specific rules and structures, which reflect the complex interactions between human beings and the underlying social relations that shape them.^[6] However, with the rapid advancements in digital technology and the influence of new media, television's traditional discourse style has become increasingly tiresome for audiences. In response, there is a growing trend toward reinventing television discourse patterns that offer more vital audiovisual stimulation, more approachable communication formats, and heightened sensory pleasure.

The concept of discourse is central to television programming. By addressing universal themes, television programs can integrate elements of traditional Chinese culture that resonate as shared values for humanity. This bridges China with the rest of the world, fostering meaningful cross-cultural communication. For example, the traditional Chinese cultural principle of "harmony" encompasses ideas such as the "unity of heaven and man," "harmony in diversity," "harmony in real life," and "global harmony." These concepts are pillars of Chinese culture and valuable guides for social progress worldwide. Television programs that incorporate such themes—such as the narrative in "China in the Canonical Books," which "travels through the past and present"—demonstrate how technology can be used to "revitalize" traditional Chinese culture, offering a compelling example of how this can be achieved in mainstream television.

3.2. Integrated Development of Cultural Contexts

Malinowski was among the first to distinguish between "situational context" and "cultural context." Cultural context is the socio-cultural background that influences verbal communication and affects daily interactions and aesthetic expression. The transformation of television programs should align with the construction of cultural contexts. The conservative "wait-and-see" mentality is an important factor hindering innovation in television media. The development of culture requires a conducive environment that fosters top-down support, stimulating the growth of cultural innovators.

In the history of the People's Republic of China, the "Red Classics" have played an integral role in nation-building, profoundly influencing the emotional fabric and lifestyles of the Chinese people. These works have become central to the "cultural memory" and "national memory" of China.^[7] The "re-telling" of the red spirit and iconic red images in television programs is a key theme in constructing the Chinese cultural context in the new era. It also plays a vital role in transforming television programs within cross-cultural communication. Programs featuring "Red Classics," such as *My Long March*, *Founding of a Nation*, and *Founding of the Party*, contribute to the creative development of red culture. This, in turn, facilitates the transformation of discourse practices in television programming.

3.3. Digital Technology Empowers Aesthetics

The creative landscape of the "New National Style" TV program retains the traditional format of promoting Chinese culture while introducing more dynamic and flexible elements. This satisfies the "horizon of expectation" in audience aesthetics.^[8] In the innovative transformation of many mainstream television series, technology plays a key role in the aesthetic evolution of TV programs. For instance, the program *Jane's Adventure into China* employs virtual reality (XR) and CG animation special effects to create immersive live theater and surreal broadcast environments. Technological advancements in various segments empower a new aesthetic paradigm for television production.

The program *The Legend of the Masters* is based on "Ideas + Art + Technology." Integrating new technologies such as 270-degree green screens, 3D modeling, VR, AR, and MR offers audiences a diverse and immersive aesthetic experience.^[9] This TV show explores the essence of life, appreciating simplicity while enjoying art. It showcases a multi-tonal aesthetic spectrum. The convergence of digital technology and co-creation enriches the program's presentation, creating layered content and producing several iconic cultural TV programs. This approach opens new pathways for the production of cross-cultural communication works that highlight Chinese traditional culture.

4. Writing a Blueprint for TV Program Innovation

Cultural diffusion brings rich cultural treasures and aligns with the global trend of civilizations exchanging and learning from one another. It is a strategic approach to promote outstanding traditional Chinese culture internationally while embracing other civilizations that contribute to the development of our country. As a central pillar of cultural communication, television media should act as a catalyst for integrating other media platforms, driving the growth of artistic initiatives.

4.1. Guardianship of the Cultural and Spiritual Home

The outstanding traditional Chinese culture, created and perpetuated by the Chinese people over thousands of years, is the root and soul of the Chinese nation. Innovative cultural symbols in television programs should be examined from the internal perspective of Chinese culture and its external representation in cross-cultural communication. This approach aims to create branded national wave symbols as decoding tools for intercultural dialogue. For instance, *Black Myth: Wukong* integrates traditional Chinese culture into game design, subtly cultivating Chinese cultural values while providing entertainment and enhancing cultural transmission's effectiveness.

In the era of total media, the guardianship of the cultural home must extend across all aspects of media life, making a comprehensive effort to foster the "one-way man" spirit. This entails creating a cultural atmosphere with distinct Chinese characteristics, ensuring parallelism between internal cultivation and external promotion. A three-dimensional, realistic, and panoramic view of Chinese traditional culture should be established. Cross-cultural dissemination of China's cultural heritage, which reconnects humanity with nature, must continue contributing to global endeavors. By creating emotionally resonant television programs, we can guide individuals who are lost in pursuing instrumental rationality to rediscover the value of rationality.

4.2. A New Bureau of National Emotional Sympathy

Culture is embedded in everyday life, manifesting in food, clothing, architecture, and more. Television programs must balance conservatism and innovation when developing branded content. To achieve this, they should tap into the cultural aspects of daily life while staying ahead of trends. For example, the revival and popularization of the horse-face dress promotes traditional Chinese culture and broadens people's clothing choices. Ironically, Dior was first credited for "discovering" and incorporating this design.

Similarly, the rising popularity of executive jackets reflects new media's focus on their craftsmanship and quality. This highlights the integration of traditional Chinese elements into modern fashion. Another example is the Zhongshan suit, which has become a way to promote Chinese red culture. Its modern adaptations and creative reimagination align with various occasions, demonstrating the innovative potential of traditional apparel.

This approach uncovers the cultural life embedded in everyday practices, helping to build a shared cultural system for the Chinese people. It is pivotal in strengthening national identity and confidence, forging a deep sense of community. Promoting China's cultural tide to the international stage opens new avenues for cultural exchange and mutual understanding among world civilizations.

4.3. Implementing the Science and Technology for Cultural Advancement

To accomplish significant achievements, it is essential to have the appropriate tools. The success of building a national trend brand relies on harnessing the power of technology, following the path of science and technology to develop culture. Unique literary figures from Chinese history, such as famous immortals, ancient heroes, and modern martyrs, can be embedded in various television formats,

including anime, animation, film, and television programs. By drawing on successful examples from other countries, we can create interactive products like theme parks, cultural creations, and program peripherals.

Relying on technology, we can build an international cultural brand with Chinese characteristics that integrate the entire industry chain. This will allow the world to experience the beauty of Chinese culture and feel the Chinese spirit.

For example, the National Treasure program combines classical aesthetics with modern technology by using large LED displays, movable Skyrail hanging screens, and hologram technology with 3D stereoscopic effects.^[10] This fusion of technology and aesthetics expands both the presentation and interpretation of beauty, becoming a key trend in the transformation of television programs.

5. Conclusion

Television programs are vital in intercultural communication and are a key medium for presenting China's narrative to global audiences. The priority is telling China's story from within and building a national cultural brand that resonates globally. Through creative transformation and digital innovation, television programs can meet audience demands and serve as a powerful vehicle for cultural exchange.

However, the cross-cultural dissemination of China's traditional culture remains limited if it fails to offer immersive, experiential engagement. Media must adopt a concurrent development approach. This involves integrating online and offline platforms. The goal is to create environments where audiences can engage with and experience the culture. This shift will enable China's cultural brands to reach a global audience effectively.

Television programs' transformation should adhere to innovation, talent cultivation, and technological advancement. By investing in media technology, nurturing talent, and developing new formats, television can transcend market constraints and promote the aesthetics and values of China's traditional culture. Ultimately, this will contribute to a richer, more diverse cultural exchange domestically and globally.

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