

Optimized Paths for TV Variety Shows in China according to Paradigm Shift of Uses and Gratifications Approach in the Era of New New Media

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Abstract: *Through case analysis, questionnaire survey, data interpretation and other empirical research methods, this paper focuses on audiences' reaction to current TV variety shows as a starting point, discusses the paradigm shift of uses and gratifications approach and the possibility of whether Chinese TV variety shows can satisfy audiences' demand under the perspective of media convergence in the era of new new media and provides a new way for the production and broadcasting of TV variety shows in China.*

Keywords: *TV variety show; Media convergence; Media audience; Uses and gratifications approach; Multi- screen interaction; Audience demand; new new media*

1. Introduction

This paper combines quantitative and qualitative research to analyze the localization of Chinese TV variety shows in the new new media era from the perspective of audiences' demand, and provides suggestions for the improvement of Chinese TV variety shows based on the evolution of the theory of use and gratifications.

2. Current situation of China's TV variety shows in the era of new new media

Since the 1990s, TV variety show industry has become an important content product and economic pillar in mainland China[1], occupying an important media niche. From relatively monotonous 'party' period to colorful 'entertainment reality show' period, the quality of China's TV variety shows has been greatly improved, the content has been increasingly enriched, and the form has become more innovative, which have enriched people's spiritual and cultural life and improved their aesthetic level. Recently, the development of multimedia has accelerated the advent of 'new new media'[2] .(Paul Levinson) Nowadays, online video service platforms led by Youku, IQiyi, Tencent Video and Mango TV have made remarkable achievements in production, broadcasting and promotion of variety shows. Their self-made variety shows have accumulated a huge group of audiences, invigorated the platform resources, and set off a new wave of social entertainment and culture. Under the impact of network variety shows with novel models and strong interactivity, traditional variety shows relying on satellite TV technology have fallen into unprecedented difficulties. The number of viewers who turn on TV continues to decline and the share of viewers is greatly reduced, which are great threats to TV stations. According to CSM, the average viewing time of variety shows in the first half of 2019 was 2,114 minutes, down 13.5% from 2,444 minutes in the first half of 2018. [3] Meanwhile, by March 2020, The average Chinese netizen spent 30.8 hours online per week, an increase of 3.2 hours from the end of 2018. [4] On the one hand, the audience rating of TV variety shows continues to decline; on the other hand, people spend more time online. How to retain the audience has become a major challenge in the production and broadcasting of Chinese TV variety shows.

3. Analysis of audiences' demand on TV variety shows according to paradigm shift of uses and gratifications approach in the era of new new media

The emergence of new new media has exerted a fundamental impact on the media platform of

variety shows. While watching the programs provided by the new media, the audience has strengthened the use of the new media platform itself, so that the audience's new needs have sought new opportunities on the new media platform of "satisfaction". People's exposure to the media is motivated, driven by social and psychological factors, which means that people are rational, clearly and able to express their needs, and aware of whether the media meets their needs. Hence, if TV variety shows cannot satisfy needs of users, they will lose a decisive advantage in competing with online variety shows.

4. Investigation of audiences' reflection and demand on current TV variety shows

4.1. Data source and survey process

This survey was carried out in Changsha, Hunan province in November 2021. According to the age standard, the subjects were divided into four groups: 0-17 years old, 18-35 years old, 36-59 years old and over 60 years old.

The survey was conducted from four dimensions of production accuracy, including precision of production, content depth, innovative form and communication mode. The subjects were asked to evaluate TV variety shows on the Rensis A Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). In order to test the validity of the questionnaire, the author set up a pair of questions with the same content but opposite ways of asking questions. If the answers of the subjects are inconsistent, the questionnaire is regarded as invalid. In this survey, a total of 300 samples were recovered, 40 invalid samples were excluded and 260 valid samples were collected, with a questionnaire recovery rate of 86.7%. In the effective sample, the age group of 0-17 years old accounted for 24.6%, the age group of 18-35 years old accounted for 33.1%, the age group of 36-59 years old accounted for 20.4%, and the age group of over 60 years old accounted for 21.9%. Below, the author will illustrate the results of the survey.

4.2. Likert scale of survey results

Table 1: Distribution of participant's views on the key factors of TV variety shows

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Production precision is crucial for TV variety shows	117	103	36	4	0
Content depth is crucial for TV variety shows	140	96	24	0	0
Innovative form is crucial for TV variety shows	122	86	48	4	0
Communication mode is crucial for TV variety shows	75	119	66	0	0

Table 2: Distribution of participant's views on the effectiveness of today's TV variety shows

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Today's TV variety shows are well-made	4	24	84	81	67
Today's TV variety shows are profound	0	8	48	104	100
Today's TV variety show's form is innovative	8	24	83	109	36
Today's TV variety shows have a wide range of communication channels	0	28	64	96	72

4.3. Descriptive statistics

Through the survey, the author found that audiences pay most attention to the content depth and production accuracy of TV variety shows, and pay more attention to the innovative forms and communication modes of the shows. However, most audiences think that the above four aspects of TV

variety shows do not meet their viewing demand.

5. Feasible measures for Chinese TV variety shows to meet the needs of audiences

Through the above research, I will discuss the feasible path for Chinese TV variety shows to meet the needs of the audience in the context of integrating media in view of the audience's reaction to the current TV variety shows.

5.1. To improve the production of TV variety shows

5.1.1. Using new media technology to optimize audience audio-visual experience

The production team of TV variety shows should focus on the needs of content expression, digitize the physical world through sensors and other media technologies, and then through virtual reality Augmented reality technology, such as expanding the audience perception threshold [5], transfer the user audio-visual, brings a stronger sense and experience autonomy In Chinese poetry Yang Yu professor in the fifth season of immersive in the link using mixed reality technology, elaborate the natural stage using symbolic poetry and audience interaction, explained the people back to the poem in the painting. This cutting-edge visual media presentation technology superimposes the digital virtual influence on the real environment, providing users with the texture of interaction and integration of images, and enhancing the effect of artistic expression. Additionally, Multi-modal neural data can be used to describe the complex emotions of the audience and Ultra-scanning technology can be utilized to audience emotional interaction.[6]

5.1.2. Improving clipping method

The editing team in the later stage should enhance the narrative subjectivity of the program, based on the integrity of the expression of the program content, logical and smooth editing, and design a way of arrangement that meets the needs of the public, so as to achieve the best quality and effect of TV variety shows.

5.2. Paying attention to the connotation of the program and highlighting the humanistic care

The producers of TV variety shows should give full play to the traditional advantages of radio and television in the content field and spare no effort to produce in-depth, warm and valuable content. Only with the active participation and sharing of users can valuable content become valuable.[6] If TV variety shows cannot resonate with the audience and trigger the audience's thinking, they will not be able to obtain sustained attention and maintain their attractiveness. Recent Hunan satellite TV new variety show *See You Again* conveys profound social issues by visiting news parties of different eras, conveys warmth to the audience and provides inspiration for young people about life choices. Only by being rooted in Chinese society and demonstrating humanistic care can TV variety shows attract more audiences.

5.3. Establishing innovative thinking

In recent years, most of the explosive TV variety shows that have created a lot of topics are introduced from abroad, rather than 'native in China'. *I Am a Singer* is a singer competition program imported from MBC Television in South Korea, and *Voice of China* is an inspirational professional music review program imported from the Dutch IPCN International Media Company by Zhejiang Satellite TV, which are derivative programs that are rearranged with Chinese elements on the basis of foreign programs, rather than original programs rooted in Chinese soil. In terms of stage performance and program format, the homogenization of derivative programs is serious, which can easily cause aesthetic fatigue of the audience. In the face of the real dilemma, TV variety show producers must dare to localize the transformation and innovation of program content and models on the basis of following the operation mechanism of the TV market. For example, *The Voice of Chinese Dreams : Our Song* has created a new 'double blind selection' program model. Senior singers and new vocal singers pursue each other through sound. They cooperate to adapt the golden songs of the times, breaking down the inter-generational barriers and helping audiences of all ages find a sense of cultural identity and belonging in popular songs.

5.4. Giving full play to the advantages of cross-media content production and communication

In the era of all-media communication, it is far from enough for TV variety shows to be transmitted only by traditional TV media. In order to occupy its own media niche in the complex network variety shows, TV stations must coordinate all resources, integrate content production and channel release and strive to improve the efficiency mechanism of production, communication and operation of variety shows. In September 2020, Shanghai Oriental Media Group (SMG) and its listed company Oriental Pearl New Media Corporation announced the launch of a streaming media strategy. 'BestTV+' streaming media brings together Shanghai TV's capabilities in content production, dissemination technology and extended services. Through the linkage of large and small screens and the connection of content users, it covers cable TV, IPTV, OTT and other media in the form of 'one account, multi-channel distribution'. APP and other multi-terminal expand the spread of Shanghai TV's on-air variety shows and activate a wider audience traffic pool. [8]

In immersion led by the transmission medium of the third age, content producers should abandon the one-way communication paradigm, adopting two-way multidimensional interaction for users to realize the humanized spread. TV variety show system should enhance efforts to touch the net, actively introduce micro-blog, wechat, BBS and other new media elements, release program related consultation and gags to keep in deep interaction with the audience. The program team of Hunan TV's *Sisters Who Brave Winds and Waves* actively released program previews, gags and exclusive interviews on website accounts and encouraged UGC (User Generated Content). They also decided singers' songs by online voting on micro-blog, which improved audience participation.

6. Conclusions

There is no doubt that the efforts made by TV variety shows to meet the demand of audiences are far from enough. TV media practitioners should improve media literacy [9] and pay attention to users, optimize the communication content and innovate the communication mode. We believe there will be more amazing television theatrical presentations later on.

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