

Optimization Path Analysis of Slow Variety Art from the Perspective of Audience Demand

Ji Liangqin

School of Art, Jilin University of Arts, Changchun, China
Alexandra_Q@163.com

Abstract: Under the perspective of audience demand, slow variety shows have become a bridge for modern urbanites to heal their souls. This paper analyses the localisation path and realistic dilemmas of slow variety shows, and takes a variety show as an example to explore the construction of its idyllic life and the creation of a sense of companionship. It is proposed that slow variety shows should accurately position guests and deepen emotional resonance; integrate multi-channel communication and strengthen interactive experience; and deeply cultivate cultural connotations and convey philosophy of life and social responsibility in order to cope with the challenges of content production, marketing and communication.

Keywords: slow-burning variety show; demand from the masses; localization

1. Introduction

In modern society, the rapid development of science and technology, especially the Internet and new media, has plunged individual life into “habit” and “information cocoon”. Media use goes beyond needs and integrates into daily inertia, weakening the pluralistic function of the media and exacerbating individual psychological complexity and uncertainty. Loneliness and anxiety become the norm, and while technology brings people closer together, it deepens the sense of alienation. Slow variety shows have emerged, with “slow” as the core, advocating the return of nature and life, and becoming a haven for spiritual healing. This paper discusses the optimisation path of slow variety shows, takes a variety show as an example, analyses its successes and shortcomings, and puts forward optimisation suggestions such as guest selection, communication strategy and programme content.

2. Lonely and Anxious Modern Man in the Accelerated Evolution of Modern Society

2.1 People living in a media network: the double dilemma of habitus and “information cocoon”

In Katz's “Individual Use of Mass Communication”, he proposes “Use and Satisfaction”, in which the audience is an individual with specific “needs”, and their use of the media is driven by their own needs and purposes. However, in the new media era, users do not necessarily contact and use the media based on explicit needs, but may also interact with the media based on inertial dependence on digital existence. In today's increasingly prominent trend of mediatization, individual life and society itself gradually become part of the media environment, although individuals can use the Internet and mobile social media anytime, anywhere, but the habitual and daily characteristics of this behavior is also becoming more and more profound, so that users no longer think about the purpose of turning on their cell phones to browse the web, flipping through the WeChat circle of friends, and brushing the microblogs every day. At this point, it is easy to enter the “information cocoon” of the fixed media circle. More users are not using the media, but are habitually exposed to the media because they live in the media all the time, and most of the time they are not aware of it.

2.2 Lonely and Anxious Urbanites: Slow Variety as a Bridge to Spiritual Healing

In contemporary society, with the acceleration of urbanization and the comprehensive coverage of the Internet, information is exploding at an unprecedented rate, which has not only greatly changed people's way of life, but also profoundly affected their psychological state. Between the high-rise buildings, the life of urbanites is increasingly far away from nature, and anxiety, like an invisible net,

quietly envelops every corner. Myrie Ruddy's insight reveals the characteristics of this era: "Anxiety, a negative emotion, seems to have permeated every breath of air we breathe, and has become synonymous with our times." In her book *Group Loneliness*, Shirley Turkle further analyzes the paradox faced by individuals in modern society: although technology has brought people closer together, it has also inadvertently exacerbated the sense of alienation between people, creating the unique phenomenon of "group loneliness". This kind of loneliness is not only the isolation in physical space, but also the longing and loss of real emotional communication in the depths of the heart. In this context, many urbanites turn to entertainment consumption, trying to find a hint of solace in the interweaving of virtual and real.

As a cultural phenomenon born out of this background, slow variety shows have accurately captured the inner tension and anxiety of urbanites. With "slow" as its core concept, it advocates returning to nature and living close to life, and creates a haven for viewers to get away from the hustle and bustle and find inner peace by showing simple and rustic living conditions.^[1] Under the lens of the slow variety show, viewers can temporarily forget the busyness and pressure of the city and follow the camera as they stroll through the idyllic landscape, experiencing the true nature and beauty of life, and thus obtaining a kind of ineffable peace and fulfillment deep in their souls.

3. The Road to Slow Variety Show Localization and Practical Dilemmas

3.1 Localization Practices of Slow Variety Show

Slow variety art, as a kind of program form originated from overseas, has been deeply localized in China's media field in recent years, and its rise is a dual response to the homogenized competition of fast-paced variety art and changes in the audience's psychological needs. In the variety art market dominated by "fast variety art", slow variety art, with its unique "slow" rhythm, provides viewers with solace and new aesthetic experience, marking a new turn in variety art programs.

3.1.1 The Rise and Influence of Slow Variety Shows Abroad

Since Norway pioneered "slow TV" in 2009, there has been a global "slow" trend. Based on their own cultural traditions and audience preferences, different countries have created their own slow variety shows. For example, Britain's "Letters Live" conveys emotions by reading letters, France's "Meet in the Unknown Zone" shows adventure and humanities, India's "Woosai, Wonderful" and "The Great Writer" promote poetry culture, Japan's "Time Travel Hunter" tells history from the perspective of traveling, and Korea's "Three Meals at Three Times" and "Yoon Eat Hall" have pushed slow variety shows to the peak. These programs have not only enriched the global variety market, but also provided valuable experience for the localization of slow variety in China.

3.1.2 Localization Exploration and Practice of Domestic Slow Variety Art

Under the background of globalization and cultural integration, the vision of Hölderlin's 19th century romantic poet "Man, Poetically Dwelling" has been deepened by Heidegger's philosophy and evolved into "Poetically Dwelling on Earth", which deeply touches the desire of modern people to seek spiritual solace in the fast-paced life. This concept deeply touches the desire of modern people to seek spiritual solace in the fast-paced life. In contrast, traditional variety shows are often fast-paced, high-intensity confrontation and entertainment as the core, the short term can attract viewers, but in the long term, this single sensory stimulation can easily lead to aesthetic fatigue, the audience for the deeper spiritual support of the demand is increasingly prominent.

It is under the dual driving force of cultural psychology and social demand, combined with the guidance of policy on program innovation, "slow variety" as an emerging program form came into being. In 2017, Hunan Satellite TV's "Longing for Life", as a pioneer of domestic slow variety arts, took the lead in breaking the framework of traditional variety arts and led a trend of returning to slow life. Subsequently, the successive launch of diversified slow variety shows such as "Dear Inn", "I'm Reading on the Island", "Flowers and Teenagers" and "Let's Plant" not only broadened the boundaries of the subject matter of slow variety shows (covering traditional culture, simulated life experience, outdoor travel exploration and other dimensions), but also drew on the concept of international slow variety shows while integrating in-depth the essence of China's local culture and social realities, creating programs that have an international outlook and are rich in local characteristics. In addition, it has borrowed the concept of international slow variety shows while deeply integrating the essence of Chinese local culture and social reality, creating a program style and narrative strategy with both an international perspective and local characteristics. This series of localization practices not only satisfies the audience's desire for a

spiritual habitat, but also opens up a new path for the innovative development of Chinese variety shows.

3.2 The core dilemma in the localization practice of slow variety shows

3.2.1 Content production: the double challenge of originality bottleneck and aesthetic enhancement

In the field of domestic slow variety show, although it has shown its unique charm as a new form of variety show, the reality of late start has led to the lack of originality as the primary bottleneck restricting its development. The serious homogenization of program models, mostly relying on imitation and copying of successful foreign models, has not only exacerbated the vicious competition within the market, but also seriously undermined the innovation drive and copyright interests of the first creators, making it difficult to build up differentiated core competitiveness. Therefore, how to maintain the core concepts of “true” and “slow” while improving the originality and aesthetic level of content production has become a key issue for the slow variety industry.

3.2.2 Marketing communication: the double-edged sword of the star effect and the lack of precise positioning

Slow variety shows rely excessively on celebrity effects in their marketing communications, and while they can quickly attract public attention in the short term, the long-term effects of this single strategy are questionable. The overexposure of celebrities often obscures the depth and breadth of the program's content, deviating from the original intent of delivering a healthy lifestyle and deep culture. At the same time, the generalized communication model leads to ambiguous audience positioning, making it difficult to form stable audience groups and brand loyalty.

3.2.3 The Practical Dilemma of the “Slow” Concept and the Lack of Authenticity

The core of the slow variety show is the “slow” attitude to life and emotional experience, but in practice there is often the phenomenon of “not slow but fast”. Many B&B and business experience slow variety shows have a fast pace due to the lack of transition period for the guests' career change and the intense program setup, which is contrary to the concept of slow life. In addition, some of the programs deliberately create topics to attract attention, and lack of real feelings and in-depth thinking.

4. Analysis of Slow Variety Shows: Taking a Slow Variety Show as an Example

4.1 The Idealised Construction and Emotional Attachment of the Idyllic Pastoral Life

In today's fast-paced society, a certain programme is like a breath of fresh air, weaving a dreamy picture of an idyllic utopia with its unique form of slow variety accompaniment. The programme selects ten youthful teenagers to form the ‘ten hardworking days’, and records every moment from sowing to harvesting on the vast 142.8 acres of land, from the first light of the morning to the end of the night, in a realistic and delicate manner. This process is not only a visual display of the hardships and joys of agricultural labor, but also a heartfelt depiction of an ideal state of life of self-sufficiency and harmonious coexistence. This process is not only a visual display of the hardships and joys of agricultural labor, but also a heartfelt depiction of an ideal state of life of self-sufficiency and harmonious coexistence. The idyllic pastoral life constructed by this variety show not only gently awakens people's memories of the old countryside, but also accurately captures the yearning for nature and peaceful life in the hearts of modern urbanites.

The programme cleverly employs the ‘Embodied Simulation Theory’, which allows the viewers' mirror neurons to be activated unconsciously through multiple live broadcasts, as if they were personally in the vibrant fields, sharing the pain and suffering with the teenagers, experiencing the sweat of labour and the joy of harvesting together. This ‘immersive’ experience not only brings the audience closer to the characters of the programme, but also subconsciously inspires the audience to aspire to and pursue an ideal life.

4.2 The creation of a sense of companionship and emotional fulfilment in group variety shows

In a certain variety show, the producers of the programme cleverly used the narrative technique of group variety to create a strong sense of companionship among the viewers through the long hours of daily punching and diverse live broadcast formats. The teenagers picked up their mobile phones to record their farming routines, and the mobile phone footage became the viewers' “eyes”, allowing them to access

the microblogging live broadcast platform to watch anytime, anywhere. This immersive viewing experience not only allows viewers to gain a deeper understanding of the teenagers' living conditions and psychological changes, but also allows them to release the pressure of life and gain positive emotional energy in the healing idyllic images and slowly unfolding rhythms. Purely appreciative live broadcasts such as "Evening Sunset Live" and "White Noise Sleep Live" have also been introduced amongst this programme to further enrich the viewing experience. This kind of accompanying live broadcast not only enhances the audience's sense of participation, but also provides them with more emotional support and emotional value.

4.3 Building mimetic companionship and emotional resonance

In Baudrillard's world of mimesis and simulation, people gradually lose interest in the real world and become immersed in media-constructed mimetic environments. This variety show, skilfully navigating between the real and the fictional, not only enhances the audience's viewing enjoyment through the immersive experience of the protagonist, but also profoundly reveals the protagonist's personality and deepens the audience's emotional connection and understanding. Walter Lippmann's theory of communication states that the mass media shape our mimetic environment, which is based on reality but transcends it to form a unique cognitive framework.

The show blends the twin charms of a real farm and an ideal idyll, and the introduction of the pop-up area makes this anthropomorphic environment even more vivid and authentic. Netizens freely express their opinions in the cyberspace, and together they build a social scene that transcends reality, where they are more likely to open up and find a sense of identity, companionship and belonging.

4.3.1 Real-time pop-ups: alternative gratification and the 'insider' effect

The ten teenagers on this variety show face the hardships and challenges of farming, inspiring empathy in viewers. The pop-up area has become a hotbed for viewers to find empathy, where they meet like-minded 'anthropomorphic people', and through the collision and resonance of ideas, they get the 'alternative satisfaction' that is hard to find in real life. This kind of interaction not only satisfies the audience's emotional needs, but also makes them the real 'insiders' of the programme.

4.3.2 Ritual building and fan culture

Since the first episode of the show, the pop-up comment section has become a bridge for viewers to interact with the show. As the programme's popularity increases, the breadth and depth of topics continue to expand, and the identities of 'fans' and 'tourists' in the pop-ups gradually become clearer and clearer. The unique guest badge system has deepened the sense of belonging and loyalty of the fans, who are united by their common interest and understanding into a powerful force to promote the spread and development of the programme.

4.3.3 The pop-up function: emotional detachment and deepening of the companion relationship

As a companionable slow variety show, its diverse live streaming formats (e.g., daily punchline, life streaming, immersive streaming, etc.) all enable real-time interaction with viewers through the pop-up area. This feature not only ensures the full flow of information and dead-end communication, but also greatly relieves the audience's viewing pressure. In the company of the pop-up screen, the distance between the audience and the programme, and between the audience and the audience is infinitely drawn closer, and a sense of trust, belonging and identity emerges.

5. The Optimisation Path of Slow Variety Shows

5.1 Guest selection: pinpointing and deepening empathy

5.1.1 Abandon traffic supremacy and shift to content as king

With the guidance of national policies, reality TV programmes are gradually transforming from celebrity and entertainment to civilian and real. The Notice on Strengthening the Management of Reality TV Programmes and the General Rules for Auditing the Contents of Internet Audiovisual Programmes have been introduced to clarify the restrictions on excessive celebrityisation and to encourage an increase in the proportion of ordinary people in programmes. This policy direction has prompted programme producers to abandon the short-sighted thinking of 'traffic first' and focus instead on the depth and authenticity of programme content. In terms of guest selection, a multi-dimensional screening

mechanism should be established, taking into account the guest's popularity, compatibility with the programme's theme, personal charisma, attitude towards life and ability to express themselves, so as to ensure that the guest is able to truly reflect the programme's main theme and deepen the audience's resonance.

5.1.2 Celebrities paired with ordinary people to break the aura of stardom

The mode of pairing celebrities with ordinary guests has become a highlight of slow variety shows. Through the interaction and communication between celebrities and ordinary people, it breaks the traditional celebrity aura and shows a more grounded, real and relatable picture of life. This mode not only meets the audience's curiosity about the stars, but also shows the real life of ordinary people, bringing them closer to the audience and enhancing the programme's sense of immersion and empathy. At the same time, it reduces the over-reliance on celebrities, which helps to cultivate the long-term brand value of the programme and achieve sustainable development.

5.1.3 Digging deeper for emotional resonance

Slow variety programmes should focus on digging out the stories and emotional experiences behind the guests to find an entry point that resonates emotionally with the audience. Through delicate emotional expression and sincere interactive communication, viewers can find emotional support and resonance in the programme. This requires the programme producer to dig deep into the inner world of the guests during the guest selection and programme planning process, and to carefully design interactive links to ensure that the content of the programme can touch people's hearts and enhance the programme's emotional impact. This requires the programme producer to dig deep into the inner world of the guests during the guest selection and programme planning process, and to carefully design interactive links to ensure that the content of the programme can touch people's hearts and enhance the programme's emotional impact.^[2]

5.2 Communication Strategy: Multi-channel integration and enhanced interactive experience

5.2.1 Full utilisation of new media platforms

Today, with the rapid development of the Internet and new media technology, slow variety shows should make full use of new media platforms such as Weibo, Jieyin and B Station to expand the dissemination scope and influence of the programmes. Increase your audience engagement by posting program previews, highlights, and guest interviews. Utilize short videos, live broadcasts, and other media formats to enhance interaction frequency and depth with the audience, boosting their sense of participation and belonging.

5.2.2 Social Media Marketing

Establish an official social media account for the program, regularly release program news, behind-the-scenes tidbits, and other content, and establish close contact with fans. Through topic discussions and voting interactions, audience feedback and suggestions are collected to adjust the programme content and communication strategy in a timely manner. Social media marketing can not only enhance the interactivity of the programme, but also improve the brand awareness and reputation of the programme.

5.2.3 Cross-border cooperation and brand linkage

Cross-border co-operation with related fields such as tourism, food and fashion, and the launch of co-branded products and themed activities can not only enhance the commercial value of the programme, but also enrich the programme's content and enhance its attractiveness and viewability. At the same time, linkage promotion with well-known brands is conducted to further promote the programme with the help of brand power and expand the programme's audience base.^[3]

5.3 Programme content: deepening culture and transmitting values

5.3.1 In-depth excavation of local culture

Slow variety shows should dig deep and show the unique charm and value of local culture. Through the personal experiences and insights shared by the guests, viewers can have a more intuitive feeling of the profoundness and long history of Chinese culture. At the same time, it focuses on the innovative expression of cultural elements and the diversification of communication methods, so that traditional culture can take on new vigour and vitality in modern society. This not only enhances the cultural connotation of the programme, but also promotes the audience's cultural confidence and sense of cultural

identity.

5.3.2 Transmission of the Philosophy of Life

Slow variety shows should convey positive life philosophies and values. Through the real performance and emotional communication of the guests in the programme, it guides viewers to pay attention to their inner world, cherish the present life and pursue spiritual satisfaction and happiness. This delivery of positive energy helps viewers to find inner peace and balance in the fast-paced life, and to achieve self-growth and value realisation.

5.3.3 Assumption of Social Responsibility

As one of the important carriers of cultural communication, slow variety shows should assume the corresponding social responsibility. Through the careful planning of programme content and the scientific use of communication strategies, they can convey positive energy, carry forward the main theme and lead the social trend. This requires programme producers to pursue economic benefits while not forgetting their social responsibility and mission to contribute to the harmonious development of society.

6. Conclusions

In the fast-paced modern life, slow variety art is like a clear stream, soothing the tired hearts of urbanites with its unique charm. However, the road to the localisation of slow variety shows is not a straight one, and the difficulties in content production, marketing and communication need to be solved. In the future, we expect Slow Variety to become an important force in connecting people's hearts and delivering beauty through continuous innovation and exploration.

References

- [1] Shi Zhuqing, Niu Haibo. (2024). *The Emotional Relief Strategies and Value Functions of Accompanying Slow Variety Art from the Perspective of Accelerated Society. Literary and artistic contention*, (01), 174-180.
- [2] Fu Tingyu. (2024). *A Study of Empathic Narratives and Strategies in Domestic Slow Variety Programmes. Contemporary TV*, (06), 76-80.
- [3] Li Guanghui, Xiao Ying. (2024). *Slow variety show 'Let us read together' the road to 'break the circle'. China Radio & TV Academic Journal*, (05), 112-115.