

# Exploring the innovative path of variety programmes in traditional cultural communication

**Wang Jialin**

*Shandong University of Political Science and Law, Jinan, China  
13105260933@163.com*

**Abstract:** *Cultural variety shows play an important role in promoting the inheritance, innovation and development of outstanding traditional culture in the dissemination of traditional culture, but at the same time, this kind of programme faces a series of dilemmas and challenges such as a narrower audience, a single form of dissemination, and insufficient investment in creation in the development of this kind of programme. This paper analyzes and explores through questionnaires and other methods, and concludes that this kind of programme needs to broaden cultural genres, innovate programme forms, take advantage of the melting media, improve professionalism, promote emotional resonance, accelerate the construction of the industry, and help creative transformation and innovative development of the excellent traditional culture from various aspects.*

**Keywords:** *Cultural variety programmes, dissemination of traditional culture, cultural innovation*

## 1. Introduction

When culture flourishes, national fortunes flourish; when culture is strong, national fortunes are strong. Traditional culture is the treasure of Chinese culture, which is the valuable spiritual wealth left for us by our predecessors. However, with the development of the Internet and the foreign influence of other cultures the inheritance and development of excellent traditional culture has fallen into a bottleneck. As a form of communication that can satisfy the aesthetic and entertainment needs of the audience, variety programmes play an indispensable role in the dissemination of traditional culture.

In order to explore the cultural heritage effect of the cultural variety show exemplified by "Meet the Temple of Heaven", the author adopted the research method of questionnaire survey, collecting a total of 191 valid questionnaires, mainly focusing on the viewing experience, shortcomings and deficiencies, dissemination frequency and paths of the cultural variety show and other issues. Participants in the questionnaire included people of all ages, educational levels (except primary school), and all types of occupations, making the scope of the survey relatively comprehensive. Based mainly on the results of this survey and various types of network statistics, the author will analyse the positive role played by cultural variety shows in the dissemination of traditional culture, and at the same time analyse the dilemmas encountered in the process of dissemination, and explore new paths of cultural dissemination that are more suitable for China's national conditions, so as to help the innovation, dissemination, and development of excellent traditional culture.

## 2. The value implications of cultural variety shows in the dissemination of traditional culture

Unlike other cultures, traditional culture, because of its unique historical, philosophical and theoretical characteristics, is difficult to achieve good communication effects in contemporary society through universal communication methods. As a branch of variety shows, cultural variety shows combine the characteristics of traditional culture while incorporating the entertainment elements unique to variety shows, which neutralises the cultural characteristics of traditional culture and promotes the inheritance, innovation and development of excellent traditional culture.

### 2.1. Contributing to the transmission of outstanding traditional culture

In the new media era, network communication has become a bridge and link between people, many netizens in the social platform to share the good books they read, watch all kinds of programmes, and at the same time in the process of watching the content of the continuous research and discussion, in the

unknowingly play a role in the cultural heritage. The Temple of Heaven was built in the 18th year of the Yongle reign of the Ming Dynasty (1420), and is the largest, best-preserved and most beautifully modelled ancient sacrificial complex in China. The programme "Meet the Temple of Heaven" is a cultural experience programme co-produced by BTV, Beijing Tiantan Park Management Office and Daye Chuangzhi. With Feng Shaofeng, Miao Miao and Huang Minghao as interns, the programme focuses on the Temple of Heaven and allows more groups of people to come into close contact with the Temple of Heaven and experience different Temple of Heaven careers. Once aired, the programme has gained unanimous praise from viewers, allowing more people to see the unique charm of traditional culture. Based on the questionnaire survey, 87.63% of the people chose to share and spread the programme based on the pride they felt when watching it, usually through daily chatting to their own strong relationship network, with a small portion of them sharing with strangers through social platforms. At the same time, most of the cultural variety shows have the value and significance of popular science education, many parents will consciously lead their children to watch and learn cultural variety shows, so that children can learn about excellent traditional Chinese culture, further broaden their horizons and knowledge, and discuss with them to exchange the philosophies of life contained in the culture, a series of interactive behaviours that contribute to the inheritance of the development of excellent traditional culture.

### ***2.2. Promoting innovation in outstanding traditional culture***

Perhaps the content of traditional culture is static, but the values and meanings embedded in it are relevant to every era. The programme "Meet the Temple of Heaven" makes full use of the advantages of traffic stars during the planning process, and restores the classic stories that have been widely circulated in history through a more enjoyable form of performance for the audience. For example, the third phase of the programme, Yang Ying partner Feng Shaofeng challenge Qing dynasty drama, Feng Shaofeng as Kang Xi diligence and love of the people, in order to better solve the problem of the people's food many experiments in the imperial rice two seasons of continuous crop, but because of the law and little effect. Yang Ying plays a consort experienced in farm work, who wakes up the dreamer with a single word and provides a new idea to solve the problem. This form of presentation allowed the audience of a group of children at the scene to learn about history and culture without realising it. The crew's careful production brought the boring stories to life and inspired the audience to watch. Through this form of innovation, traditional stories are endowed with contemporary values and the dissemination of excellent traditional culture is promoted. Once the programme was broadcast, the audience praised it constantly.

### ***2.3. Promotion of national cultural literacy***

Reading history makes one wise, and knowing the past can help us appreciate the present. Our traditional culture is profound and has a long history. From the large to the governance of the country, small to the family trivia, the ancients have left us valuable cultural and spiritual wealth and practical experience. Cultural variety shows show us the infinite wisdom of the ancients. Through situational interpretation and the interaction between the show's guests and professionals, "Meet the Temple of Heaven" outputs professional knowledge to the audience while restoring the classic stories. For example, in the second episode of the programme, Yang Mi and Huang Minghao searched for the "childhood photo place", and demonstrated scientific knowledge of ancient architectural culture and ecological culture through interaction with various professionals at the Temple of Heaven, which subconsciously exported knowledge to the audience and broadened their horizons, while also allowing them to find the shadow of life in the world in the excellent traditional culture. At the same time, it also allows the audience to find the shadow of life in the present world in the excellent traditional culture, use the spiritual kernel of traditional culture to solve the problems of contemporary people's life, make full use of its essence, and promote the improvement of the overall cultural literacy of the society. This kind of personal growth brought about by culture may not be immediate, but it is beneficial to our personal and social development in the long run.

## **3. Dilemmas and shortcomings of variety shows in the dissemination of traditional culture**

Although variety shows have to a certain extent promoted the dissemination and development of excellent traditional culture, it cannot be ignored that there are still many dilemmas and deficiencies in the dissemination process. These dilemmas come either from the profound and incomprehensible nature of traditional culture or from external resistance in the process of dissemination. In short, cultural variety shows want to break through the development barriers, must face up to the various types of difficulties

encountered in the development process.

### ***3.1. High cultural content and limited dissemination***

According to the results of the questionnaire survey, 6.99% of the people said they did not like cultural variety shows, of which 46.15% disliked them because the content was too boring, and 15.38% disliked them because the form was not new. Based on the data, even though cultural variety shows have to some extent made use of the characteristics of variety entertainment to neutralise the more boring and difficult to understand parts of traditional cultural content, they still cannot avoid the boring aspects and content that still exist in comparison with pure entertainment variety shows." Cultural variety shows require a certain cultural and educational background from viewers, unlike entertainment programmes which have an innate affinity." A cultural variety show producer said. We must recognise that more viewers choose to watch cultural variety shows based on the channel settings of the TV programmes, and very few are truly obsessed and willing to actively search and learn. Most viewers are in a learning input state when watching cultural variety shows, in the face of unfamiliar knowledge, if there is no high concentration and a strong sense of immersion, it is difficult to truly understand the deep cultural heritage contained therein, which is prone to low mood, and it is difficult for viewers to produce the interest and idea of persistent viewing, the scope of the audience group will be further reduced, which is not conducive to the dissemination of cultural variety shows.

### ***3.2. Lack of cultural innovation and a single form of communication***

The form of cultural communication plays a crucial role in its effectiveness. Throughout the history of the development of cultural variety shows, most of the more out-of-the-loop programmes have appeared in the form of "reading aloud" and "congresses", and over time, viewers have begun to experience aesthetic fatigue, greatly reducing their interest in watching cultural variety shows. Since 2018, cultural variety shows such as "The New Forbidden City", "National Treasure" and "Meet the Temple of Heaven" have gradually emerged, and although the programme planning has gradually gotten rid of the single indoor studio recording format and the subject type of poetry and culture, the phenomenon of the same type of thematic communication piling up has made the audience lose its freshness for cultural variety shows. The form of eye-catching is a prerequisite and important guarantee to attract the audience's attention to the content, but also an important preservative for the sustainable development of cultural variety shows. At the same time, most of the cultural variety shows only focus on the display and test of the participating guests, and lack of interaction with the audience. A single one-way communication allows the audience to only passively accept the knowledge, the lack of interactive experience as well as active thinking process. This form of communication will not leave a deep impression in the minds of the audience, which is not conducive to the long-term development of excellent traditional culture.

### ***3.3. Low conversion benefits and insufficient investment in creativity***

Among the top 10 CCTV TV variety ratings in 2021, "China Poetry Conference 6" ranked fourth and "China in the Canon" ranked sixth, with cultural variety programmes becoming increasingly popular. However, in the three rankings of TV seasonal variety show ratings, network broadcast volume and broadcast heat, cultural variety shows have not reached the top ten rankings. Even though it has received unanimous praise from the audience, it is difficult to get rid of the reality that it is difficult for cultural variety shows to make a wide circle. Restricted by the special nature of their own programme positioning, cultural variety shows can hardly bring economic benefits comparable to entertainment variety shows, which leads to a lack of sufficient financial support for the programme, in the absence of financial support, it is difficult for cultural variety shows to survive, let alone to broaden the market share. The cycle repeats itself, and cultural variety shows are no longer able to get out of the ring. Funding, as a fundamental condition for the success of the project, determines the upper limit of the quality of the programme. We must recognise that sometimes funding brings about improvements in quality that technology cannot compensate for. A break in the funding chain is therefore likely to lead to a decline in the quality of programmes.

## **4. Innovative paths of variety programmes in the dissemination of traditional culture**

After fully understanding the role and dilemma of cultural variety shows, we need to constantly explore cultural variety show communication forms suitable for China's national conditions according to

the current social development trend and the spiritual needs of the people, so as to prescribe the right medicine and make constant breakthroughs.

#### ***4.1. Developing cultural genres and enriching programme content***

At present, the market for the development of cultural variety programmes mainly focuses on cultural categories such as poetry and idioms or intangible cultural heritage, for which other categories have yet to be developed. In recent years, with the improvement of social and cultural level and people's aesthetic needs, dress culture has attracted widespread attention. Hanbok, once regarded as exotic clothing, attracted women's attention, and the rise of the horse-faced dress pushed the craze to a peak. This phenomenon promotes the dissemination and development of good traditional culture, while driving local economic growth. For example, Cao County because of the surge in orders for horse face dresses to achieve a breakthrough in performance of more than 5 billion in sales in 2 months. Paying attention to social trends, focusing on hot topics in society, paying attention to the needs and favourites of more groups, especially the younger ones, and tapping into more and wider areas of traditional culture will achieve the dual goals of cultural dissemination and social development.

#### ***4.2. Innovative programme formats with emphasis on audience experience***

The concept of "immersive communication" was put forward by Li Qin, a communication scholar in China, which refers to a state of multi-media symbiosis and co-production. The reason for the emergence of the immersion phenomenon is the blurring of the boundary between the perception of physical space and the perception of media space in the space of consciousness, and immersive communication aims to prolong this boundary blurring as much as possible by means of specific techniques.<sup>[1]</sup>In order to improve the actual participation of the audience, it is necessary to create an "immersive experience" communication environment, which can rely on modern science and technology, such as VR, 3D and other modern science and technology to enhance the actual experience of the audience for the excellent traditional culture, and deepen the audience's understanding and impression through the special feeling of immersion. By using a variety of symbols, China in the canon builds a mimetic space composed of thousands of symbols, macroscopically presenting a multi-stage, multi-space all-round classical interpretation.<sup>[2]</sup>Such a design can enhance the audience's sense of immersion, explore the infinite charm and mystery of the excellent traditional culture from the first perspective, improve the audience's sense of acquisition and happiness, and satisfy their curiosity. Human beings, as a species that combines emotion and reason, sometimes need emotional resonance and connection to make a deeper impression. Storytelling and first-person substitution are ideal ways to trigger empathy. Cultural variety shows can present the touching moments behind the outstanding traditional culture in the form of storytelling or performances such as stage plays and musicals, triggering emotional resonance in the audience.

As the important inheritors of future outstanding traditional culture, it is also necessary to cater for the aesthetic and spiritual needs of young people. The obscure poetry culture itself is difficult to catch the eyes of the youth, but the youth group has its own unique preferences, and stargazing is a typical characteristic of them. Many variety shows on CCTV take advantage of this characteristic of young people by inviting popular stars to participate in the recording of the programme. For example, the first episode of "National Treasure" invited actor Wang Kai, and with the traffic support of popular stars, many young people watched the programme because of their favourite idols, and eventually continued to watch it because they were attracted by the high-quality content.<sup>[3]</sup>At the same time, the youth group, as a more energetic group in the family, can drive other family members to watch cultural variety shows together. In the process, the impact of the programme is increased through emotional connection, and then the audience is retained through emotional resonance. We can find that sometimes the programme ratings are not high is not entirely a problem of the quality of the programme, but the subject matter itself discourages people, if you can find a let the public deepen their understanding of the port, so that viewers personally experience the cultural charm, the subsequent ratings will no longer become a problem.

#### ***4.3. Improvement of professionalism by taking advantage of the melting pot of the media***

In the era of melting media, people's lives are filled with all kinds of social entertainment software, which has become an important way for people to obtain information. Increasing the visibility of cultural variety programmes can start with information channels. Nowadays, many famous media, film and television programme groups will register their official accounts in social software such as Jitterbug, B station, Weibo, etc., to promote the programme through short videos, stills, etc., to whet the audience's

appetite, attracting the audience's sustained attention, so as to generate an interest in understanding the watch. Cultural variety shows can make use of this feature to produce more promotional materials full of attractions, and at the same time can strengthen the interaction with the audience, fully listen to the audience's views on all aspects of the programme and creativity, and absorb the implementation of the recommendations, to establish a good persona and reputation. As a new media communication channel, in the process of communication, you can properly innovate the communication content, combined with the network development trend, the production of interesting works with a sense of contrast with the content of the main film, but also with the help of the celebrity effect, invite their own flow of topics of the stars of the netroots for the dream linkage, with the help of the power of big data for the extensive promotion of the work.

The quality of a programme is a fundamental factor in attracting and retaining viewers. From the overall planning and design of the programme to the costumes and props of the guests, all of them reflect the degree of care of the programme team. Cultural variety shows that require stage performances are an exceptional test of the production expertise of the programme team. Peng Kan, a post-doctoral fellow at Beijing Normal University's School of Arts and Media, once suggested: "Successful variety shows invariably have a layered and concise programme model, and cultural variety shows are no exception. In the programme, there must be iconic visual elements that constitute the memory point for the audience." The programme "Meet the Temple of Heaven" focuses on the actors' costume configuration when restoring the classic scenes, which brings the audience a more realistic and intuitive visual experience through a more detailed restoration display, and is more likely to leave a deep impression on the audience. Therefore, the programme team should start from the stage design, audio-visual combination, costumes and props, plot setting and other aspects to improve the quality of the final stage presentation.

Improving technical expertise should also focus on improving the professionalism of content presentation. Traditional culture is so profound that many people devote their lives to understanding only a fraction of it. For the "white" audience, we would like to see more in-depth science, more professional explanation.

Therefore, in terms of the professional level of content display, the programme team should increase the level of control, so that professionals do professional things, can invite more professional scholars for professional knowledge, and strive for an accurate explanation of knowledge. Of course, culture serves social development, and scholars can discuss with the audience the theories and experiences of traditional culture that contribute to contemporary development, so as to closely integrate excellent traditional culture with contemporary social development.

## 5. Conclusions

Traditional culture is profound and has a long history. We should continue to deepen our learning and understanding of traditional culture, and at the same time inherit and spread the excellent traditional culture. We should let the world see China's splendour and hear China's voice, and let traditional culture become China's unique national image.

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