Exploration of the Innovation Path in Radio Music during the New Media Era

Huang Zeyuan

Shuda College, Hunan Normal University, Changsha, China
hzy2001520730@163.com

Abstract: *The rise and rapid development of radio music programs during the 1940s and 1950s represented a monumental shift in twentieth-century music. From their inception, radio music programs have been intimately intertwined with media technology, serving as a medium that harmonizes humanistic care, artistic expression, scientific advancements, and entertainment. Over the past few decades, these programs have evolved in tandem with the community, keeping pace with the continuous innovation and development of media platforms and channels. In today's era of new media, technology advances at an unprecedented rate, profoundly impacting traditional media such as radio, music programs, and print media. These traditional media outlets face dual challenges and opportunities within the digital economy and new media. This article analyzes media development during the new media era, delves into the inherent advantages of radio music programs, and explores the current challenges they encounter. Emphasis is placed on describing the prevailing issues faced by radio music programs. Additionally, the article highlights an innovative trajectory for radio music programs within the new media era. This entails leveraging value leadership to foster listener development, ensuring content quality as a sustainable source of captivating material, innovating approaches to enhance the music experience, achieving diversified communication through exploring novel communication carriers, and cultivating the innovative growth of radio music programs within the new media landscape.*

Keywords: *new media era; radio music programme; path; innovation*

1. Introduction

In September 2020, the General Office of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the General Office of the State Affairs Governance Administration issued the Opinions on Accelerating the Deep Convergence of Development. This policy emphasizes the need to establish new mainstream media platforms that are highly competitive and influential. It also calls for gradually deploying a mainstream public opinion discourse pattern that integrates online and offline realms, connecting internal and external publicity. Furthermore, the policy highlights the importance of establishing content technology as a fundamental aspect, advanced technology as support, and innovative technology as a guarantee for an all-media communication system.

On March 12, 2021, the Outline of the Fourteenth Five-Year Plan for the National Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China and the Vision for the Year 2035 was publicly released. This document explicitly promotes the deep integration of media and emphasizes the need to strengthen new mainstream media.

The new media era exposes the audience to information and entertainment through increasingly diverse channels, such as short videos, webcasting, and WeChat public accounts. These emerging forms of entertainment have a new sensory impact on the audience, leading to a decline in the value of radio music programs. As a result, competitors and competitive pressures continue to increase. Radio music programs have been active since the 1980s, and their development has gradually become stable and mature. They serve as important means of broadcasting publicity, and their irreplaceable advantage lies in their entertainment value. However, radio music programs have encountered various challenges and dilemmas over the decades. Addressing these issues and identifying innovative development directions for further research is crucial.

2. Analysis of the current situation of radio music programs in the new media era

2.1. Status of Media Development in the Media Age

The media era is characterized by constant change, presenting numerous opportunities and challenges. The future development trend of the media will be marked by increased diversification, rapid updates, more intelligent technology, and international communication platforms. In this new media era, the traditional media industry must continuously adapt to global changes, lead the way in the zeitgeist, and drive progress in a constantly evolving environment. It should focus on continuous self-innovation and reinforce the quality of content to prevent information homogenization and the formation of "digital cocoons" that restrict the integration and dissemination of information. Strengthening the management and standardization of information authenticity is also crucial for ensuring the healthy development of the media industry.

The media industry will encounter both opportunities and challenges. The key is to innovate and adapt to meet people's ever-changing needs and aspirations for a better life. Furthermore, it should closely follow the development and changes in digital technology, grasp the trends of media diversification, rapidity, intelligence, and internationalization, and strengthen the regulation of content quality and information authenticity. These measures are crucial for enhancing its core competitiveness.

In the new media era, the media's development has advanced and hindered the progress of radio music programs. On one hand, the development of the media in this era has led to innovation and advancements in radio music programs. On the other hand, radio music programs face increased competition and challenges. Audience preferences and demands for higher-quality entertainment have evolved continuously. Therefore, the development of radio music programs still has a long way to go to meet these growing expectations.

2.2. Radio music programs and their advantages

2.2.1. Radio music programs

Radio music programs are a type of program that primarily revolves around music. They can be standalone programs or a program's main focus/theme. For instance, music radio stations and television music channels offer a wide range of content, including on-demand pop music and live broadcasts of high-level music ensemble concerts. In a radio music program, the audience can fully immerse themselves in a complete song or piece, enabling them to enjoy music amidst their busy lives. In the case of music radio programs, the music serves as an accompanying soundtrack without any additional spoken content.

2.2.2. Advantages of radio music programs

The advantages of radio music programs are very evident and rich in features, mainly manifested in the following aspects: Firstly, the sound quality of radio music programs is exceptionally pure, making it difficult for murmurs or interference to occur. This allows listeners to enjoy radio music programs even under adverse natural conditions or while driving on the highway. Additionally, radio music programs operate at high frequencies and have a large capacity, allowing them to accommodate 16 stereo sound broadcasts simultaneously. This high capacity contributes to their inclusive nature. Moreover, radio music programs are not limited to providing music alone; they also offer a wide range of additional information. This includes news updates, traffic conditions, emotional communication, weather updates, stock market information, etc. Thus, radio music programs are a perfect amalgamation of informative content and entertainment. The radio music program also has a powerful function of data storage. Once there is a need for information collection or scheduling, it can easily retrieve all the required information within a very short period. Furthermore, the transmitter power of the radio music program is very low. As long as it is connected through the cable television network and the live satellite broadcasting system, it can easily cover the global frequency of the radio music program signals.

2.3. The development process and current situation of radio music programs

The study reveals that the development stage of radio music programs in China has progressed from integration to specialization, with three main stages: integrated arts and culture stations, series of music stations, and type of music stations. The integrated arts and culture station refers to channels that broadcast various arts and culture programs, including music, opera, and variety shows. These stations

had a broad content focus and were most active in the 1980s. The third set of arts and culture broadcasting of China Central Radio is an excellent example of this stage. Serial music stations are specialized music stations primarily playing pop music with occasional inclusion of other genres. This stage was predominant in the 1990s, with Beijing Music Station being a typical representative. The type of music station is exemplified by the Central People's Broadcasting Station, specifically the third set of programs called "Sound of Music." It is generally considered to be the first genre-specific radio station in China. In recent years, China's music broadcasting has exhibited a mature and stable development trend.

Regarding audience positioning, the core listeners of radio music programs and new media overlap significantly. Consequently, competition between the two is intense. Generally, young people are the main target audience, as they embrace new trends rapidly. The typical profile of new media users comprises individuals between 15 and 35.

3. Problems and Dilemmas of Radio Music Programmes in the New Media Era

3.1. Serious tendency of entertainment and fragmentation

Firstly, the entertainment aspect of radio music programs is significant. The music content of these programs tends to focus on popular music, including grassroots music by online singers, entertainment music, and covers of popular songs. Often, the music content is fleeting, like a passing cloud. With the rise of various new media platforms like TikTok and WeChat short videos, the audience's focus on music has shifted from deep appreciation to casual listening. As long as a song receives much airplay and becomes familiar to netizens, it becomes popular, regardless of its musical beauty or lyrical depth. This phenomenon reflects the notion of "content for the sake of traffic" prevalent in this era.

Consequently, the music industry has faced criticism for songs with vulgar lyrics, such as "Ace of Spades." It works by established singers like Li Ronghao, whose song for Netflix features the lyrics, "Your shallow smile is like umeboshi sauce." Classical and instrumental music in radio music programs should be more appreciated, as they lack the immediate appeal that popular music offers. Moreover, in addition to listening to and enjoying music, many radio music programs also incorporate socializing, gaming, and time-killing functions. These additional features can easily divert listeners' attention and hinder focused music appreciation.

Secondly, the fragmentation of radio music programs in the new media environment is quite evident. Listeners enjoy these programs during their leisure time, such as commuting, dining, or at work breaks. However, the advantage of fragmented music appreciation is notable as it allows for prolonged music listening sessions, exposure to a greater variety of songs, and the ability to alleviate work and life pressures.

3.2. Music itself needs innovation

Radio music programs face significant fragmentation in the new media environment, and there is a strong entertainment tendency within these programs. This often leads to focusing on popular music content to cater to the audience's preferences and capture a larger market share. Consequently, there is a situation where they "want to be fast, but unable to achieve it fully." Radio programs tend to emphasize popular music heavily. It is worth noting that even though sound originates outside the human body and is captured by our external organs, the sensations it creates are felt internally within the individual.[1] Although the quality of radio music is guaranteed, we must remain mindful of our role as content distributors and the responsibility it entails. Our duty is to preserve the utmost sincerity, simplicity, and positive values to encourage and heal listeners. The responsibility of content disseminators is to preserve the utmost sincerity, simplicity, and positive values to encourage and heal the audience. This reflects the spiritual value of radio music programs and their social impact. As content distributors, we contribute to society by promoting its development and pointing out the direction for progress. We aim to bring hope and light to our people through radio music programs. These programs serve as a crucial means of broadcasting communication, playing a necessary role in our society. Therefore, some Western scholars believe that contemporary radio holds an important communication value: "to stimulate intellectual thinking."[2]. However, the essence of the value of a radio music program lies in its ability to effectively communicate information to the audience through the optimal use of sound and language. It is essential to strike a balance and use just the suitable white space. The host of a network music program possesses crucial skills in delivering concise and engaging narration while maintaining control of the program's rhythm.[3].This process should not aim to be superior but rather to empathize with the audience,

encouraging them to accept the information we provide consciously. Therefore, innovative planning and design of radio music program copywriting, along with the host's tone of voice and style of expression, become particularly important. Furthermore, the soul of the radio music program lies in its use of music and sound effects. In the new media era, radio communication must create a "sense of intimacy" and "sense of communion" with the audience. The ability of radio to evoke emotional memories in listeners greatly contributes to this sense of communion.[4] Music is a powerful medium to convey emotions with its boundless expressive power, while sound possesses an enduring charm that attracts and influences all creatures on Earth. Humans live immersed in a sea of sound, often taking it for granted. However, the question remains: How can we fully harness the expressive power of sound? The answer lies in the combination of music and sound effects. Music and sound are not merely about evoking feelings; they are art and aesthetics that require technical precision. The crucial first step is to capture the listener's attention, compelling them to keep the music radio program playing without hesitation. If this initial connection is not established, everything afterward becomes mere speculation. Retaining listeners is insufficient; we must also create an immersive experience that captivates them, making them want to continue listening. This involves integrating sound selection, playback, and the copy and design mentioned earlier. Through these elements, radio music programs can create a sense of atmosphere, transforming a series of sounds into a unique scenario. All of these components are essential for ensuring radio music programs' production stability and quality.

3.3. Diversification of communication methods

The saying "iron still needs its own hard" holds in various situations. Possessing the necessary qualities is necessary to succeed. In the case of radio music programs, having a solid foundation is crucial, just like a person needing professional skills to excel in their job. As journalist and host Bai Yansong once said, it is essential to go your own way, be yourself, and develop your own style to showcase your unique charm.[4] Currently, radio music programs primarily follow a single mode of communication. Although traditional radio music programs integrate music resources to a great extent, there is still significant room for progress. However, one major challenge many music radio programs face is the increasingly diversified forms of music consumption. Overcoming this obstacle is vital for traditional and innovative radio music programs.

A music radio program is an important aspect of arts and cultural broadcasting. It involves selecting and processing music from society to create a unique, auditory-based arts and cultural program. Taking the essence while discarding the unnecessary is a major challenge. The innovation journey will inevitably encounter difficulties and obstacles, including conceptual conflicts, adapting traditional practitioners to short-term industry transformation and upgrading, and promptly finding the direction of transformation and upgrading. The adaptability of senior listeners to the current state of industry transformation and upgrading remains to be seen.

4. Countermeasures for innovation in radio music programs

4.1. Value Leadership: Promoting Listener Development

Embodying the essence of excellent Chinese culture and spreading the power of China's advancement in the new era should be the primary focus of radio music programs. It is challenging to innovate, but it is possible to delve deep into the spiritual connotations of traditional culture in order to help the Chinese understand and appreciate it. A development strategy for producing and promoting short videos on excellent traditional culture should aim to enhance the compatibility between traditional culture and the modern context. It should also aim to extract and refine the essence of Chinese traditional culture to address the challenges of comprehension and presentation. In this regard, podcasts stand out from other broadcasters and TV stations.

Podcasting, a form of digital broadcasting technology, gained recognition when it was selected as the 2020 Gopeng word category in the "State of Language Life in China" report released on June 2, 2021. Podcasting initially involved combining a software called "iPodder" with portable players. It lets users download online radio or similar audio programs to their iPods, MP3 players, or other portable digital audio devices. It enables them to listen on the go without being tied to their computers or real-time broadcasts. Moreover, podcasting provides an avenue for creating and sharing personalized audio programs with the public.

Blogs have played a significant role in driving innovation in radio music programs. "Intertextuality

plays a crucial role in enhancing the listening content by adding value. It contributes to developing knowledge, storytelling, and overall interest in the material. Additionally, intertextuality expands the psychological experience of listening, triggering a unique sense of empathy beyond simply listening to a curated song list. This sense of empathy makes radio listening events stand out and creates a special connection between the listeners and the content." [5] Financial writer Wu Xiaobo once stated that community is the greatest service provided by the Internet. The concept of community in this context refers to "a group of individuals with shared interests who form a sense of belonging and common values through communication and interaction within the virtual network space." [6] While radio music programs have a profit-oriented purpose and entertainment as their primary element, it is important to prioritize the dedication to serving the people. Profit-making ensures the industry's survival but should always follow the fundamental goal. The nature of entertainment and profitability should always aim to satisfy the people's value needs, with the underlying principle being the spiritual enrichment that drives the people's thoughts and emotions, akin to a source of nourishing water for their minds.

4.2. High-quality content: Ensuring the source of living water

Professors Zang Guoren and Cai Yan, renowned for their extensive research in humanistic-oriented mass communication, propose that communication should be seen as a "human-centered" exchange of stories, emphasizing the narrative paradigm. This approach focuses on challenging-to-measure aspects such as life stories, human nature, values, ethics, and other related topics. People share and listen to each other's life experiences through various mediums, ultimately promoting understanding and mutual exchange[7]. Under the premise of a human-centered approach for promoting correct values and exercising appropriate control in different stages of life, it is also closely related to what we commonly refer to as the "three views" of life, values, and career. The development of one's "three views" does not happen overnight but through gradual and persistent efforts, much like water dripping over a stone. It is essential to create music programs that offer new ideas and perspectives. Radio stations should assume the corresponding social responsibility by actively seeking and nurturing local original music brands. By transitioning from mere music distributors to music creators, they can access and control the upstream resources of the music industry, thereby enhancing the brand value and popularity of their music programs.

4.3. Mode Innovation: Enhancing Music Experience

With the advent of the new media era and the rapid development and constant iteration of media technology, various forms of traditional media have lost their former authority in discourse. Communication has transitioned from a one-to-many mode to a two-way mode. Hosts can also adopt a dual-platform approach, known as the "dual-platform" mode. In this mode, hosts utilize social media to publish content that is not directly related to the program. It emphasizes that microblogging is not just an accessory to the program but an equally important platform.[8] Once upon a time, only copywriters, presenters, and radio broadcasters had the authority to speak, making them opinion leaders who held the power to strengthen and guide public thinking within a group. Meanwhile, the message's recipients were typically passive, silent, and subordinate to the crowd. Communication has evolved into a two-way exchange through the development of new media. The audience now possesses their aesthetic, cognitive consciousness, and an increased desire for self-expression. As a result, changes in music communication should embrace richness, diversity, and three-dimensionality, akin to a cinematic experience. These developments undoubtedly foster innovation in the music industry and drive communication methods. Within this context, nostalgic episodes also appear, allowing for intergenerational dialogues between the new and old, infused with tension between the future and the past.[9] In today's new media era, there are numerous ways in which radio music programs can innovate to enhance the musical experience. For instance, the selection of songs in radio music programs can be diversified, considering whether vocals, ambient sounds, or acoustic rhythms predominate. This aspect can serve as an entry point for music selection. The compatibility between the song's sound and the listener's playback device is also essential. Each type of playback device may have suitable sound recommendations. Understanding the reasons behind listener preferences or dissatisfaction is crucial in music distribution innovation. Hence, it becomes important to establish a solid social relationship network that bridges the gap between online and offline realms.[10] It is important to achieve innovation at a technical level to enhance the listener's music experience during the dissemination process. Furthermore, the disseminator should strive for maximum interactivity in the dissemination process. When preparing the copy for a music radio program, the copywriter needs to increase interactivity with the audience. This can be achieved by encouraging the audience to follow the radio host's thoughts and evoking emotional resonance. Naturally, the radio

music program host should express their true feelings while hosting the program. It is vital to avoid exaggeration and falsehoods. The examples given should be based on real experiences. When analyzing music, it is crucial to refrain from excessive subjective emotions and personal aesthetics. The analysis should be diverse, three-dimensional, and objective while offering a fair and impartial point of view when recommending music works. To enhance the listener's emotional experience, oral communication should use short pauses before and longer expressive segments after broadcasting. Personal feelings should be sincerely and appropriately expressed without being overly intense, sad, or out of control while upholding the host's professionalism. This approach aims to maximize the listener's emotional experience, allowing the one-dimensional expression of sound to drive the listener's multidimensional sensory imagery and create a sense of immersion akin to a cinematic experience.

4.4. Multi-Communication: Innovative Communication Vehicles

Media magazines, media broadcasting, touch media, and other emerging media platforms provide robust scientific support for the innovative development of music radio programs. In the dissemination process, radio music programs should harness the support of science and technology. Precise placement and user profiling are crucial to achieve innovative development in the communication carrier of radio music programs. This ensures that each radio music program reaches a more accurate audience group and enables a deeper exploration of their preferences. The goal is to enhance audience engagement, create personalized radio music programs, and establish a brand effect. This transformation aims to make radio music programs more personalized and unique.

Meanwhile, achieving comprehensive coverage of different audience groups remains a significant concern in the process of technological innovation. Despite the rise of new media, an information and digital divide still exists in radio music programs. The government should prioritize implementing a national strategy to promote digital rural areas, focusing on accelerating infrastructure and digitalization in remote and rural areas. Additionally, developing high-quality radio music programs that cater to the needs of farmers, such as agricultural knowledge or special programs, is essential. It is also important to improve the musical literacy of farmers, taking a dual-pronged approach to address these challenges.

5. Conclusions

Radio music programs have traditionally dominated the highly competitive radio program landscape. However, in the new media era, these programs have expanded beyond mainstream media, with more enthusiasts joining the creation of internet radio music programs. Individuals can independently complete editing, planning, copywriting, and hosting broadcasts. This presents opportunities and challenges, pushing traditional radio music programs to transform and upgrade. Government regulation is important to avoid inferior content prevailing. Innovating communication channels and carriers can enhance the music experience, leading to innovative development. Overcoming subsequent difficulties and preparing for transformation requires careful consideration. Vigilance and attention to changing trends are necessary for continued growth, akin to a steady trickle of water.

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