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Research on New Media-Based High-Quality Television Program Scheduling (Postprint)

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Abstract

The quality of television program scheduling is directly related to the viewership effectiveness of programs. Correspondingly, new media has also imposed higher demands on television program scheduling, which must not only embody the characteristics and thematic elements of the era, but also manifest the responsibilities and missions conferred by the times. While generating economic benefits, it is imperative to also consider the development of social benefits, thereby establishing a foundation for fostering a superior television media environment.

Full Text

Preamble

Research on High-Quality Television Program Scheduling Based on New Media

(Nanyang Radio and Television Station, Nanyang, Henan 473000)

Abstract: The effectiveness of television program scheduling directly impacts viewership ratings. Correspondingly, new media has placed higher demands on television programming, requiring not only contemporary characteristics and thematic elements but also a clear demonstration of the responsibilities and missions entrusted by the era. While generating economic benefits, television stations must also prioritize social value, thereby laying the foundation for a healthy media environment.

Keywords: new media; television programs; scheduling methods; broadcast time slots; audience demands

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In the context of new media, competition within the television industry has become increasingly fierce, and high-quality television programs require reasonable scheduling strategies to achieve their intended viewership effects.[?] Therefore, during the programming process, it is essential not only to fully consider the main factors influencing television scheduling but also to adopt correct scheduling methods based on established principles. Only in this way can each television program achieve optimal...

1.1 The Impact of Audience Demands

Differences in age and gender, hobbies and interests, education and culture, and lifestyle and occupation all create distinct psychological demands among viewers. Consequently, television programming must fully integrate the contemporary context and address the most prevalent psychological needs. For instance, due to high work pressure, people generally favor more entertaining programs;[?] as national emphasis on Chinese language education and cultural promotion has grown, audience preference for programs featuring ethnic culture has gradually increased. These signals from the era regarding programming direction can serve as valuable references and represent important factors influencing television scheduling.

1.2 The Impact of Broadcast Timing

Television programs are typically scheduled according to people's daily routines, which necessitates that broadcasters seize opportunities, understand time slots, and keep pace with fashion and the times when arranging programs. This is crucial for achieving ultimate viewership success. Seizing the opportunity means identifying the optimal broadcast window, which requires scheduling personnel to maintain keen judgment regarding political, market, cultural, and social psychological trends to identify the most appropriate timing. This is vital for programming effectiveness and often yields twice the result with half the effort.

Understanding time slots refers to the intervals and segments within broadcast schedules, which are closely related to programming content. Whether morning, noon, or evening, or prime time, sub-prime time, or non-prime time, audiences have corresponding viewing needs, and program types determine the regularity of broadcast slots. Generally, morning slots are suitable for high-frequency, information-intensive news summaries and service-oriented content to meet the needs of most viewers, particularly office workers. Daytime slots are more appropriate for television dramas.[?] Late-night slots tend to favor emotional talk shows, psychological interviews, evening news, and commentary programs.

2. Principles for Television Program Scheduling in the New Era

Under the backdrop of the new era, television program scheduling must adhere to certain principles. First, to ensure healthy development of television production within a regulatory framework, and second, to provide normative guidance for scheduling decisions.

2.1 Holistic Principle

When scheduling programs, television stations aim to demonstrate their operational purpose and principles. The holistic principle serves as directional and goal-oriented guidance for programming and creation, existing as the operational philosophy of each station. For example, Hunan Television has adhered to the holistic principle of “Happy China” for many years, striving to build China’s most dynamic television entertainment brand and innovatively achieving industrialized media development. In programming, it has created highly entertaining and engaging shows such as “Happy Camp,” “Day Day Up,” and “Brave Forward,” which have received widespread acclaim from audiences.

2.2 Timeliness Principle

The timeliness principle requires that the form and content of television programs reflect the major trends, background, and direction of the new era. Viewers should be able to fully experience the achievements of the new era’s development and the uniqueness of contemporary television programs through watching. Domestically, every television program is a product of social and cultural development, making programs with era-specific characteristics more easily recognized and accepted by the public.

For instance, following the recent trend of “traditional culture fever,” an increasing number of programs focusing on Chinese traditional culture have emerged and gained popularity. Cultural programs such as “National Treasure,” “The Reader,” and “Idiom Conference” have been reasonably scheduled on CCTV, representing television products rich in new era characteristics.[?]

2.3 Distinctiveness Principle

With technological advancement and development, television scheduling methods must also improve. In recent years, new media has become prevalent, with various television programs emerging in large numbers, creating an oversupply. However, the number of programs that can truly attract audiences is limited, creating a contradiction between abundant supply and limited consumption. The prerequisite for healthy television media development is resolving this contradiction through market segmentation and distinctive brand building. This requires television scheduling to keep pace with the open information and internet age, utilizing diversified information resources to seek innovation in scheduling and

incorporating more fashionable elements to create high-quality programs with distinctive features and novel changes. Program content should present “old topics in new ways,” while forms should fully integrate with the internet. For example, legal program scheduling should incorporate new laws and regulations while adopting diverse formats.

2.4 Promotion Principle

In addition to the above principles, television scheduling must also follow promotion principles. Consumers go through a series of stages before purchasing: attention, interest, association, desire, comparison and deliberation, trust, and final action. Therefore, from the moment a program attracts attention, it must be promoted to strengthen audience interest, reinforce desire, build trust, and ultimately generate viewing behavior.

Additionally, the punctuality principle is crucial—if scheduled programs cannot be broadcast on time, scheduling loses its meaning. Factors affecting punctuality mainly involve variations in program length and advertising duration, so technical scheduling via computer should be used to minimize errors. The differentiation principle allows programs to enter time slots earlier to compete for audience resources.[?] Furthermore, differential programming selection can be employed—for instance, when other satellite channels broadcast dramas, scheduling strategies can be adjusted to use entertainment programs to capture audiences unwilling to watch dramas. Other important principles include lead-in programming, rebroadcasting, and program matching.

3. Analysis of Specific Television Program Scheduling Methods

Under the new era context, guided by the above principles, television scheduling can adopt corresponding measures to ensure high quality and vitality.

3.1 Implementing the “Four Strategies” to Enhance Scheduling Quality

First, the horizontal strategy. This common scheduling method involves broadcasting the same program at the same time daily. To achieve uniformity and continuity in viewership, this format must be maintained over extended periods to cultivate target audiences. This approach helps build a stable “like-minded” viewer base, creating an implicit agreement between program and audience where loyal viewers tune in punctually. Consequently, ratings remain relatively stable without major fluctuations. For example, CCTV’s comprehensive channel broadcasts “Focus Talk” daily at 19:40, employing this horizontal scheduling strategy.

Second, the vertical strategy. This complementary method involves broadcasting similar or related programs consecutively to ensure viewers remain interested after one program ends and are not eager to change channels. This continuous

broadcasting of similar content allows enthusiasts to enjoy a seamless viewing experience, thereby maintaining overall channel ratings. CCTV's sports, movie, and education channels, as well as Jilin TV's life channel, extensively employ vertical scheduling to enable fans of specific program types to thoroughly enjoy content within a single channel.[?]

Third, the forward strategy. This scheduling method is based on investigating other media's programming arrangements and scheduling similar programs to compete directly for audience resources. This widely used approach demands strict requirements for program brand competitiveness—similar programs must be competitive; otherwise, rather than attracting audiences, they become homogenized and lose ratings. For instance, when scheduling dating shows, if a station's program cannot compete with the established brand “If You Are the One,” forward strategy should be avoided in favor of the differentiation principle with staggered timing.

Fourth, the reverse strategy. Contrary to forward strategy, reverse strategy avoids direct competition with strong programs by scheduling different content during the same time slot to capture remaining audience groups. Effective implementation requires a station to possess highly competitive core programs. For example, after the News Broadcast ends, most satellite channels air television dramas, but Hunan TV employs reverse strategy by broadcasting entertainment program “Happy China 730,” which possesses strong brand power and competitiveness. This strategic scheduling shift avoids vicious homogeneous competition and creates unique success.

3.2 Developing Distinctive Programs from a Talent Perspective

No industry can develop without talent, which serves as the driving force for social progress and industrial development. Therefore, the television media industry must emphasize talent cultivation and reserves. Every television program production is a complex process requiring preliminary research, mid-term production, and later-stage operation. In the new era, television media has undergone tremendous changes, with production techniques and business processes becoming increasingly sophisticated. To secure a position in fierce competition, stations must cultivate and value outstanding talent with comprehensive capabilities and professional qualities, providing them with opportunities and platforms to fully demonstrate their abilities. The convergence of various talents—including directors, cinematographers, props managers, actors, logistics staff, sound and lighting designers, graphic designers, and computer technicians—is essential to ensure programming effectiveness.

In the new era, television scheduling must establish distinctive brands and create program labels with urban and regional characteristics. High-quality program scheduling requires comprehensive packaging encompassing host characteristics, advertising features, slogans, cultural elements, and thematic distinctiveness. This approach should highlight the program's charm while authentically ex-

pressing its spirit. For example, “Sisters Who Make Waves” presents song and dance performances combined with sound, lighting, and stage technology to provide audiences with audio-visual feasts. However, its deeper meaning lies in fully showcasing modern female beauty and strength, representing concrete demonstration of respect for women in the new era—that through unremitting effort, women can achieve brilliant lives.[?]

3.3 Integrating High Technology with Quality Evaluation Mechanisms to Enhance Scheduling Quality

In the new era, rapid development of internet technology, computer technology, 3D technology, and other emerging technologies has provided greater convenience for television scheduling, enabling effects, scenes, and formats impossible in traditional programs to be realized on modern stages. Therefore, contemporary television scheduling cannot succeed without effective application of modern scientific and technological means, which can create rich and wonderful effects while providing audiences with refreshing experiences. For instance, at the 2021 Spring Festival Gala, the holographic projection technology used for “Andy Lau’s Virtual Stage Appearance” left deep impressions on everyone—a technical feat impossible in traditional television programming. Additionally, due to COVID-19, many programs adopted “cloud recording” methods, achieving unprecedented presentation effects. Not only was program recording not interrupted,[?] but technical formats significantly enhanced production quality.

To ensure efficient and stable television scheduling, a sound evaluation mechanism is essential. Producers must improve evaluation systems based on actual working conditions. On one hand, key rating metrics—audience market indicators—must be established. Research should begin from audience satisfaction to analyze whether programs achieve expected effects and audience acceptance, followed by scientific analysis of rating data. Then, dynamic evaluation of program and segment attention should be conducted to determine whether ratings can maintain stable levels over time. On the other hand, advertising market indicators for judging program effectiveness must be measured. If a program maintains high advertising placement rates within specified periods, it demonstrates successful production and will achieve higher ratings, also reflecting scheduling effectiveness. As crucial guarantee for smooth program operation, advertising revenue also proves scheduling success.[?] A low ratio between production cost and advertising revenue indicates effective program scheduling.

In conclusion, under the new era context, competition in the television media industry is intensifying. In future competition, only programs with novel themes, distinctive features, high scheduling quality, and alignment with popular tastes and demands will succeed. Therefore, television scheduling in the new era requires producers to possess strong market foresight, keeping pace with the times while examining audience preferences and aesthetic tastes to ensure high-rated programs can convey correct values, concepts, and culture to the public, guaranteeing positive thematic content.

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