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Innovative Models for Television News Program Scheduling in the Era of Visual Culture (Post-print)

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Abstract

With the rapid development of China's economy, people's material life has been greatly enriched and improved; merely increasing income levels and solving subsistence problems can no longer satisfy people's pursuits. Simultaneously, the public increasingly emphasizes enriching spiritual culture and diversifying cultural and entertainment activities. Especially in today's era of rapid technological advancement, channels for cultural dissemination are becoming increasingly abundant; computer networks spread global news on the internet at unprecedented speeds, and the rate at which people obtain information is no longer what it once was. For traditional television news, in contrast to online news, to maintain a stable position and steady development under current circumstances, it must innovate program formats and seek development through innovation. This paper begins by examining the necessity of innovative arrangement modes for television news programs, and argues from multiple perspectives—including “guiding public opinion orientation,” “expanding news information volume,” and “enhancing audience loyalty based on distinctive features” —that program innovation constitutes an important pathway for contemporary television news programs to achieve breakthroughs. On this basis, the paper conducts a brief analysis of television news program arrangement methods, identifies existing problems, and proposes several innovative suggestions to address these issues, with the aim of promoting the steady development of China's traditional television news programs under the impetus of visual culture.

Full Text

Preamble

Abstract: With China's rapid economic development, people's material living standards have been greatly enriched and improved. Merely increasing income

and solving basic subsistence needs can no longer satisfy people' s aspirations; simultaneously, the public increasingly emphasizes enriching their spiritual and cultural lives with diverse cultural and entertainment activities. Particularly in today' s era of rapid technological advancement, channels for cultural transmission have become increasingly abundant, with computer networks disseminating world news at unprecedented speeds, fundamentally transforming how quickly people access information. To maintain its position and achieve stable development in this context, traditional television news must innovate its program formats and seek development through innovation. This paper begins by examining the necessity of innovative scheduling models for television news programs, arguing from multiple perspectives—including “guiding public opinion,” “expanding news information volume,” and “enhancing audience loyalty based on unique features” —that program innovation represents a crucial pathway for television news programs to achieve breakthroughs. On this foundation, the paper briefly analyzes current television news scheduling methods, identifies existing problems, and proposes several innovative recommendations to address these issues, aiming to promote the steady development of China' s traditional television news programs under the impetus of visual culture.

The wave of socio-economic development has, on the one hand, brought tremendous changes to people' s lives, enabling faster cognition of novelties, stronger absorption capacity, and shortened identification cycles for new phenomena. On the other hand, it has accelerated scientific and technological innovation, particularly with the emergence and popularization of the internet, which has broadened the scope of information dissemination and diversified access to effective information. Traditional television news programs face challenges from new technologies; if they stubbornly adhere to existing formats without making changes, they will gradually constrain their own development, with market share being progressively eroded, ultimately leading to decline. Fortunately, television news programs can analyze and reform existing formats, innovate scheduling methods, and enrich their content with quality information to gain audience loyalty. The following sections provide a detailed analysis of the necessity for innovative scheduling in television news programs and offer recommendations for innovative models.

1. The Necessity of TV News Program Scheduling Innovation in the Visual Culture Era

Television news plays a vital role, making the study of scheduling innovation necessity particularly valuable.

1.1 Facilitating Value Transmission and Guiding Public Opinion

Television news programs do not simply string together collected news events. Rather, they gather, categorize, and arrange diverse news stories through editorial sequencing to maximize their value, urging vigilance against corrupt behav-

iors while advocating and disseminating correct values to influence public behavior. Currently, numerous news media platforms have emerged, with short-news apps rapidly proliferating, such as Toutiao, Qutoutiao, Huitoutiao, and Jukandian. These applications represent a double-edged sword for the public: on one hand, they expand information access channels, accelerate dissemination speed, stimulate competition among news media, and activate the news market; on the other hand, some short-news platforms prioritize increasing readership over quality, featuring bizarre content and disseminating false information, thereby undermining news authenticity and effectiveness, misguiding public attention, and wasting audience time with sensationalist headlines and low-quality news.

According to agenda-setting theory, the emphasis placed on an event directly affects its impact on people, with intensity correlating positively with influence. Television news operates similarly: when a news story is repeatedly emphasized or contrasted with other events, it stands out among numerous stories, deepening audience impressions. This deeper impression influences public interpretation and judgment, thereby guiding the direction of public opinion. Therefore, in the visual culture era, innovative scheduling of news content constitutes a process of guiding public discourse. Emphasizing an event signals its importance; repeatedly broadcasting positive stories transmits correct values and life perspectives, while highlighting negative events with their adverse impacts serves as a warning against wrongful or illegal actions. Additionally, some unscrupulous media outlets prioritize profit over content quality, allowing malicious actors to exploit these platforms to disseminate anti-social and anti-human criminal information. Since specific individuals cannot be identified, only the media organizations can be held accountable, enabling the true perpetrators to escape justice. Eliminating inferior news media and sustaining quality news programs helps correctly guide audience values and aligns with journalistic principles of authenticity. Innovative scheduling models are essential for quality news media and television programs to survive, transmit correct values, and maintain news effectiveness and authenticity.

1.2 Integrating Resources to Expand News Information Volume

Television news programs operate on the foundation of a vast information integration system, composed of numerous small news segments. Materialism holds that the whole comprises parts, and the overall message transmitted must necessarily be a synthesis of multiple individual perspectives. Moreover, the impact of integrated news exceeds the sum of individual stories. Effective resource integration and content arrangement significantly expand news information volume and enhance effectiveness. For instance, combining two similar news stories may diminish their collective impact ($1+1<2$), while juxtaposing two contrasting stories deepens impressions and more effectively conveys underlying information, potentially achieving synergistic effects ($1+1\approx 2$). Thus, proper integration of news resources acts as a catalyst for news impact, with innovative scheduling techniques substantially improving television news effectiveness and stabilizing

program development while expanding information volume.

1.3 Understanding Unique Features to Enhance Audience Loyalty

Distinctiveness and unique characteristics are essential for long-term audience attraction, and television news programs are no exception. With rapid online information dissemination and intensifying industry competition, coupled with the rapid expansion of new media platforms such as Weibo, WeChat, and various news apps, audiences have greater autonomy in selecting information sources. To survive and establish a position among numerous programs while maintaining vitality amid new media impact, television news programs must possess unique, exclusive qualities that constitute their competitive advantage. Innovative scheduling can differentiate programs from other media, highlighting distinctive elements to convert interested viewers into loyal audiences and stabilize ratings. In the visual culture era, understanding and innovating unique features—including content, anchors, and program formats—proves crucial. While innovations in program format, anchor presentation style, and scheduling can yield quick results in attracting attention, content innovation requires long-term commitment to sustain lasting appeal. Ultimately, understanding unique features and innovating scheduling genuinely enhances competitiveness and stabilizes and expands audience groups.

2. Recommendations for TV News Program Scheduling Innovation in the Visual Culture Era

Innovative scheduling plays an irreplaceable role in the survival and development of television news. Many traditional programs have recognized this and begun seeking innovation, attempting integration with new media and exploring new approaches through resource consolidation and repositioning to improve dissemination efficiency and build brand programs. The following recommendations are proposed from two perspectives: integrating program resources to improve dissemination efficiency, and establishing clear positioning to build brand programs.

2.1 Integrating Program Resources to Improve News Dissemination Efficiency

With rapid technological development and expanded information channels accelerating news dissemination, television news programs must urgently address how to win ratings during the same broadcast period and improve dissemination efficiency. Programs should integrate existing resources and utilize them rationally to identify innovative approaches from multiple angles.

First, increase interaction to strengthen audience engagement. Currently, many stations have launched new television news programs, while new media has opened novel dissemination channels and internet news apps proliferate, giving audiences more and newer sources and the initiative to choose media. With

strengthening audience autonomy and growing preference for directly selecting content and participating in dissemination, television news programs should adapt accordingly. Programs could incorporate interactive elements such as hot-lines, SMS participation, and live comment interactions, enabling synchronous audience participation during broadcasts and enhancing engagement with anchors to stabilize audience groups and improve dissemination efficiency.

Second, extend depth to elevate news values. As China's cultural empowerment strategy advances, citizens' knowledge levels have generally improved, enabling them to better filter and obtain needed information, distinguish right from wrong, and form independent opinions. Since audiences have clearer definitions of quality news and willingness to listen to deeper insights, programs should enhance scriptwriting and analysis, selecting meaningful and profound content that resonates with viewers. Additionally, during broadcasts, programs should incorporate extended commentary segments to convey deeper connotations behind events, increasing audience identification, elevating program news value, and improving dissemination efficiency and value through word-of-mouth.

Third, highlight previews to attract audience attention. News programs must select numerous stories daily for broadcast, which can be categorized as highlight news or ordinary news based on impact scope and timeliness. Highlight news possesses greater timeliness, universality, and influence. Therefore, innovative scheduling can use highlight news as a breakthrough point. As the most attractive component, highlight stories can be briefly introduced during initial program forecasts to generate audience interest from the outset, motivating viewers to watch the entire program while awaiting detailed coverage of highlighted stories, thereby improving ratings.

2.2 Establishing Clear and Precise Positioning to Build Brand Programs

Knowing oneself ensures victory. While universal principles exist, so do particularities. As news programs, it is essential to recognize necessary qualities while clearly identifying distinctive features that differentiate from competitors. Only through precise positioning, continuous deepening and improvement, and becoming a leader among similar programs to build a brand can programs obtain richer quality resources.

First, cooperate with television stations to achieve mutual benefit. News programs must understand their relationship with their broadcasting stations as mutually beneficial and interdependent. Programs rely on stations as carriers to deliver news to audiences, enhancing influence and market share, while stations need quality programs as brand assets to improve reputation and rankings. Therefore, programs should cooperate with stations to secure premium resources and broadcast rates, generating greater economic returns and positive public reputation for stations, thereby achieving win-win outcomes.

Second, establish precise positioning and develop depth. News program styles

can be categorized into numerous types, including sports news, entertainment news, serious domestic and international news, and civic news, each with distinct characteristics. To innovate and build a brand, programs must have precise positioning, clearly recognizing their news type and nature. However, positioning is merely the first step; its purpose is self-recognition and, more importantly, driving continuous development based on that foundation. Programs must thoroughly understand their characteristics, package program formats accordingly, experiment with different scheduling approaches, achieve stylistic diversification and specialization, and identify development models that meet their needs.

Third, secure prime time slots to increase viewership. As is well known, television broadcast periods are divided into prime time and ordinary time slots, with prime time typically concentrated during lunch and dinner periods, weekends, and holidays when audiences have more substantial time and relaxed atmospheres for consuming news. Therefore, programs should strategically select competitive time slots aligned with their program type. When a news program achieves higher ratings within its time slot, more premium resources, sponsors, and station cooperation will naturally follow, creating a virtuous cycle.

Fourth, integrate with new media to innovate broadcast formats. The emergence of new media presents both opportunities and challenges. Many media outlets have proactively innovated, such as incorporating live commenting features during video playback, allowing audiences to share opinions synchronously with news broadcasts. This unexpected development has proven highly popular. Other innovations include combining anchor commentary with on-screen scrolling text to increase information density and segment-based news broadcasting, which integrates similar news types for high-density absorption and enhanced memory. Television news programs should adopt these popular formats, integrating excellent elements while adapting them to create unique styles, thereby building brand programs and expanding market influence.

In the context of the visual culture era, the rapid development of new media derivatives presents both opportunities and challenges for television news programs. How to enhance themselves and establish a firm position, how to avoid being abandoned by the times, and even how to create new brilliance by turning challenges into opportunities—these are the issues facing television news programs. This paper argues that television news programs, as effective vehicles for transmitting correct values and perspectives through authentic news stories, urgently require scheduling innovation as a critical task for long-term development. Through detailed analysis of the necessity for innovative scheduling and practical recommendations grounded in current audience characteristics and competitive market conditions—from integrating resources to improve dissemination and establishing precise positioning to build brands—this paper hopes to contribute to the innovative scheduling of television news programs.

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Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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