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Innovation and Adherence of Television Cultural Programs: Postprint

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Abstract

With the continuous development of the television industry, television culture programs have gradually established a distinctive identity and emerged prominently—an inevitable outcome of television practitioners' persistent dedication to mastering the production of high-quality cultural programming. For such programs to remain enduring, they must steadfastly uphold innovation while adhering to fundamental principles. This entails achieving breakthrough innovations in communication content, distribution channels, and transmission methods, while television practitioners must concurrently accomplish self-renewal to enhance their cultural literacy, thereby ensuring that programs maintain high-quality production standards and convey proper values.

Full Text

Abstract

As the television industry continues to evolve, cultural television programs have gradually carved out a distinct identity and risen to prominence—the inevitable result of television professionals' relentless dedication to crafting premium cultural content. For such programs to endure, they must persist in innovation while steadfastly upholding core principles. This involves breakthroughs in communication content, distribution channels, and transmission methods, as well as self-renewal among television practitioners to enhance their cultural literacy. Television programs must maintain high-quality production standards and convey correct values.

Keywords: television programs; cultural programs; television professionals; communication channels

Over the past two years, cultural television programs have emerged in abundance, demonstrating a favorable trend. Diverse cultures are presented to audiences through competitions, dramatic performances, singing, and other formats, creating a refreshing viewing experience. In 1948, Harold Lasswell identified three functions of communication in his essay “The Structure and Function of Communication in Society” : surveillance of the environment, coordination of social relations, and transmission of social heritage. A decade later, Charles Wright proposed a fourth function—entertainment. Today, cultural television programs are packaged in variety show formats that, while providing entertainment, place greater emphasis on transmitting social heritage, making China’ s splendid culture accessible to younger generations in approachable ways.

McKinsey’ s “30-second elevator pitch” theory posits that every professional must be able to fully present a proposal to a client within the brief span of an elevator ride. Extending this to television media, every program must capture audience attention within 30 seconds. This demands that television professionals adhere to professional standards, ensuring quality while pursuing innovation. Even seemingly rigid cultural television programs must prioritize innovation and understand the importance of adherence to stand out and achieve excellence.

1. Innovation in Communication Channels

As internet technology advances, communication channels are diversifying. Traditional institutional media are gradually losing appeal among young people due to fixed broadcast times, lengthy programming, and relatively serious content. Platforms such as WeChat official accounts, Weibo, short-video apps, and the bullet-comment live-streaming platform Bilibili have become mainstream channels today. These mobile internet-based platforms are characterized by rich information content, powerful interactive functions, and strong timeliness, allowing users to access content anytime and anywhere. This enables emerging channels to generate significant attention and foster UGC (user-generated content) propagation—a manifestation of group infection theory. These platforms provide audiences with spaces to actively discuss television programs, where they influence each other. Certain viewpoints and emotions permeate audiences’ minds through group infection, shaping their actions. Given such powerful communicative influence, producing a television program requires consideration not only of the program’ s intrinsic quality but also its distribution channels, which indirectly determine audience reach and communication effectiveness. CCTV’ s *National Treasure* program expanded its distribution beyond television to include conventional video websites like Youku, short-video apps such as Miaopai, and bullet-comment live-streaming platforms like Bilibili. This channel extension made *National Treasure* widely known among young people born in the 1990s and 2000s, sparking discussions on youth-dominated Weibo and ultimately sustaining the program’ s popularity through viral propagation.

2.1 Enhancing Stage Presentation Effects

Technology offers stages limitless possibilities, enabling the presentation of various realistic and stunning effects. Television professionals should fully utilize technological means to create outstanding cultural television programs. While artifacts are the protagonists in *National Treasure*, the program integrates ancient and modern elements through spectacular stage design, presenting them to audiences in entirely new ways. High-tech, modern equipment such as LED opening platforms, 360-degree holographic phantom imaging systems, and cubic gauze boxes give audiences opportunities to embrace national treasures from thousands of years ago, showcasing Chinese culture with unparalleled splendor by combining each artifact's unique charm. When performers sing, robots dance throughout the venue with flexibility and unity, demonstrating remarkable creativity. The fusion of classical lyrics with technologically sophisticated robots provides opportunities for ancient and modern essences to share the stage, delivering a visual feast to audiences.

2.2 Technology's Role in Perfecting Program Production

In the era of big data, technology has integrated into every aspect of television program production. Professor Peng Lan noted in her paper "New Disturbances Facing Journalism in the Big Data Era" that big data technology can penetrate the core of news production, reset quality benchmarks, and further enhance the value of audience feedback while expanding the breadth and depth of user analysis. This applies equally to television programs—modern science and technology can permeate the core of television production. Beginning with topic selection, television professionals can use big data analysis to identify culturally-oriented topics that audiences prefer. In post-production, technology brings traditional culture to the forefront, infusing it with fresh vitality. For audience feedback and public opinion monitoring, technology establishes new standards for television programs, and through cloud computing and other technologies, fully leverages its advantages to enhance program quality and value.

2.3 Self-Renewal of Television Professionals

As technology develops, concerns have persisted within news media about whether artificial intelligence will replace media workers. However, AI represents not only a challenge but also an opportunity. Media professionals should focus more on how to harness AI, fully leveraging its advantages for human benefit, making self-renewal essential.

To be a qualified television program planner, the first requirement is discovery—the ability to identify television themes that reveal larger truths through small details and pinpoint program value points. Updating one's discovery ability requires constant attention to current events and trending topics. Cultural programs, too, must address subjects that follow contemporary trends to capture public attention, beyond just poetry and literature. The second requirement

is creativity, the external manifestation of a planner' s creative thinking and the core of program planning. Television professionals should draw from life and fully employ divergent and reverse thinking to elevate knowledge and experience. Cultural program workers must accumulate flashes of inspiration in their minds, interpreting culture in accessible ways from different angles. The third requirement is coordination. A television program is a collaborative work involving multiple departments and professionals, requiring coordination skills among all television workers, including planners—both in terms of human resources and the allocation of material and financial resources. Cultural programs must properly balance proportions between ancient culture and contemporary applications, artifact display and cultural explanation, knowledge sharing and atmosphere creation. This requires extensive preparation and timely absorption and adjustment of ideas about program ratios, learning from strengths to offset weaknesses.

Television must become an adapter to new technological waves and a counterforce against chaotic turbulence. The production model of rigidly following conventions and working behind closed doors has derailed from this rapidly evolving era. Television professionals must possess a vision of “change,” continuously exploring and embracing the new, observing from the forefront of technology, pooling wisdom and efforts, making timely adjustments to adapt to contemporary characteristics, and creating meaningful, audience-attracting programs.

3.1 Television Professionals Must Continuously Enhance Their Cultural Literacy

In the big data era, television professionals must continuously strengthen their information discrimination abilities to become the first gatekeepers of television programs. Information verification constitutes a crucial segment throughout the entire program production process. While internet development enables television professionals to access information more conveniently and rapidly, the massive volume of mixed-quality information also increases the difficulty of discrimination. For cultural television programs, professionals must trace origins, thoroughly understand the culture involved, and precisely verify information—such as the authorship, pronunciation, and sources of ancient poetry—carefully considering and confirming sources when preparing host scripts and post-production voice-over copy. During recording, television professionals must constantly monitor whether communication content presents any issues. At the 23rd Magnolia Awards ceremony, Dong Qing stated: “As a national media outlet, CCTV has, in this clamorous era, refocused its attention on the world of words—simple yet rich, plain yet profound. We must shoulder this cultural banner. As media professionals, we should also forge ahead unswervingly on the path of cultural inheritance and innovation.” Compared to self-media with lower barriers to entry, television—as a widely accessible communication channel—bears a heavier responsibility for promoting Chinese culture. Television pro-

professionals must persist in learning, continuously absorbing new knowledge, fully embodying the spirit of new professionalism, maintaining reading habits, enhancing their cultural literacy, improving their overall grasp of programs, and ensuring accuracy in both broadcast content and audience absorption. Only then can they create premium cultural television programs.

3.2 Television Programs Must Uphold High-Quality Production

In today's society, institutional media is no longer the sole player; self-media has captured an increasing market share. In the past, television media's absolute advantage lay in market monopoly, as audiences had few alternatives for information beyond television. Now, platforms beyond television are thriving. The greatest negative consequence is the endless stream of fake news that confuses public perception and judgment. Amid this "chaotic proliferation," television media must maintain the principle that change is the only constant, upholding high-quality production standards. Content is the soul of news, and regardless of external form changes, "content is king" remains the essential component of quality news and programs. As General Secretary Xi Jinping emphasized: "To promote the prosperity and development of literature and art, the most fundamental task is to create outstanding works worthy of our great nation and great era." Beyond all external manifestations, quality is the fundamental factor that determines whether a program can resonate deeply and achieve lasting popularity. For cultural programs to establish themselves among numerous television and online programs, they must maintain high-quality production that demonstrates sincerity and dedication. As the boundaries between virtual and reality shorten, public and private merge, and machine and human blur, television programs must identify their positioning and guide the healthy development of journalism.

Since 2017, cultural television programs have emerged in the market, showcasing distinctive features and captivating charm. Meng Man, a commentator on *Chinese Poetry Conference*, once noted: "The popularity of cultural programs actually aligns with the pre-existing societal need to understand traditional culture." However, for cultural television programs to break through the dilemma of shrinking audiences in recent years, they must pursue an innovative path encompassing content, channels, methods, and even the self-renewal of television professionals. While innovating, they must not "forget their roots" but adhere to principles and maintain bottom lines: television professionals must persist in enhancing their cultural literacy, television programs must uphold high-quality production, and they must insist on conveying correct values. Only by achieving a rational balance between innovation and adherence can a cultural television program be produced with lasting vitality.

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

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