

## Innovation and Dissemination of Television Theory Programs in the New Media Era (Postprint)

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### Abstract

Television theory programs differ from other popularized media programs, often prioritizing the dissemination of correct social value concepts as their primary production objective. Particularly in the era of rapid development of internet-based new media, television theory programs typically utilize materials such as journalist interviews, guest dialogues, and documentary narratives for program planning and design. This article principally investigates the developmental trajectories of innovation and communication for television theory programs in the new media era, and proposes strategies to foster the innovative development of both format and content through systematic review and analysis of the current state of television theory programs.

### Full Text

#### Preamble

Unlike other popular media programs, TV theory programs primarily aim to disseminate correct social values. Particularly in the era of rapidly developing internet new media, TV theory programs typically utilize materials such as journalist interviews, guest dialogues, and documentary narratives for program planning and design. This paper explores the innovative development directions of TV theory programs in the new media era, analyzing their current state and proposing strategies to promote innovation in both format and content.

**Keywords:** new media era; TV theory programs; innovation; dissemination

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Current TV programs in China exhibit great variety. Film, television, variety shows, and entertainment information programs, characterized by their popular, entertaining, and relaxed nature, attract widespread attention from the

general public. In contrast to these diverse entertainment programs, TV theory programs tend to be overly formulaic in content and presentation, typically adopting dialogue interview formats that create a solemn and serious atmosphere. Therefore, this study examines the content and form of Chinese TV theory programs from the perspective of new media communication, exploring directions for reform and development of interview-style TV theory programs.

### 1.1 Types and Main Characteristics of TV Theory Programs

TV theory programs are theoretical and educational in nature, focusing on disseminating mainstream values while aligning with national political and economic ideologies. The key question for various TV platforms is how to reform and innovate these programs. Current TV theory programs launched by provincial and municipal stations mainly include dialogue interviews, field reporting, and documentary narratives, each employing different promotional methods and emphases.

Dialogue interview programs, such as *A Date with Luyu* and *Yang Lan One on One*, feature live conversations and guest interviews. Compared to field reporting and documentary formats, dialogue interview programs are more popular for three reasons: (1) **Celebrity effect**: These programs invite renowned guests who are experts or leaders in their fields, wielding significant social influence and public attention; (2) **Topicality and mass appeal**: Interview programs typically select hot topics as entry points for interaction with guests, engaging in two-way discussions using accessible language; and (3) **Information density**: Interview programs contain substantial information, with both parties focusing on specific topics within a short timeframe, meeting the fast-paced knowledge acquisition needs of modern life.

TV theory programs emphasizing policy and political propaganda typically adopt documentary formats to interpret major national theories and issues of public concern, occasionally incorporating field interviews to enhance the authenticity of political and ideological content. However, the singular format of documentary-style TV theory programs makes it difficult to generate interest among general audiences, often creating a dull viewing experience.

### 1.2 Media Convergence Trends for TV Theory Programs in the New Media Era

Media convergence, a concept proposed by Puer from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, literally refers to the integration of internet new media and traditional media to facilitate real-time dissemination and interaction of television and news information. However, as a new form of media communication, convergence represents not merely innovation in information transmission methods but the integration of multiple media information, functions, and advantages, with the fundamental goal of achieving digital information dissemina-

tion. Therefore, under the current landscape of diversified real-time news and television content, the integration of TV theory programs with digital technology has become an inevitable path for the industry's future development. The key challenge lies in leveraging various information transmission technologies to promote the digital delivery of text, images, video, and audio.

For the innovation and dissemination of TV theory programs, reforms should focus on two aspects: (1) **Integration and strengthening of TV theory communication information:** With the rapid development of new media platforms such as portals, Weibo, and WeChat, the internet contains vast amounts of television content and social information. However, compared to the sheer volume of information dissemination, online TV theory program content suffers from low quality, inadequate gatekeeping that leads to misleading content, and unclear information sources. These issues significantly reduce the watchability of TV theory programs and erode the credibility of some authoritative media outlets. Therefore, selecting appropriate topics, integrating diverse TV communication information, and collecting and verifying program materials have become crucial means to promote the healthy development of TV theory programs.

- (2) **Innovation in TV theory program expression:** As China's society and economy continue to develop, audience demands for television programs are constantly evolving. Content that is more authentic, novel, creative, interesting, and positive has become a key focus for viewers. To gain initiative in ideological communication, TV theory programs must reform traditional content and presentation formats, incorporating more artistic and appealing elements. By combining various TV theory program types, they can provide audiences with fresh audiovisual experiences, achieving popularization and mass appeal in program dissemination.

## 2.2 Reforming Singular Program Content and Planning Formats

Traditional TV theory programs predominantly feature dialogue interviews and documentaries, with overly singular formats and content expression that fail to capture public attention or emotional resonance. Therefore, the fundamental approach to content planning and format organization for TV theory programs lies in reforming traditional theoretical propaganda by placing creators and audiences on equal footing, allowing audience aesthetic preferences to guide production styles to meet the viewing needs of ordinary people. On one hand, programs should focus on national political ideologies and social livelihoods according to their nature; on the other hand, they must select appropriate organizational methods for presentation. For instance, the 2012 documentary *The Central Rear Committee in Linxian* produced by our station adopted an ordinary citizen's perspective, narrating the unforgettable historical development of the Lüliang period through historical accounts, character interviews, and field investigations, achieving effective value guidance.

## 2.1 Enhancing Market Share and Influence of TV Theory Programs

Internet new media era television program dissemination no longer faces scarcity of TV resources or content duplication. Instead, it is replaced by diversified and entertaining programs spreading in multiple forms. Among them, film, television, variety shows, and entertainment information programs have broad and multi-layered audiences, ranking highest in ratings and online playback volume. Under this diversified communication environment, TV theory programs will inevitably be eliminated by the network ecology if they do not innovate in content and dissemination formats. Therefore, carrying out networked innovation in TV theory programs is an inevitable choice to meet the development of the entertainment market. Only by innovating TV content and program presentation forms under the guidance of audience viewing habits can TV theory programs effectively improve their ratings and social influence.

## 3.1 Unclear Development Positioning of TV Theory Programs

In the network era of diversified information reception, new media development has expanded people's access to information, causing TV theory programs to lose their original content advantage. Young audiences are increasingly unwilling to watch dull political propaganda programs, leading to continuously declining ratings for interview and government affairs programs. The primary reason for this problem lies in the unclear self-positioning of TV theory programs. For example, some TV programs, when establishing columns and selecting topics, blindly follow young people's viewing habits, choosing themes related to social hot events for programs on national history, political ideology, and language interviews, while setting up interactive segments with guests and other groups. This creates an awkward viewing experience where form outweighs content.

Conversely, another extreme also exists. Some TV theory programs ignore audience preferences, focusing solely on political ideology and social hot topics. These interview programs center on experts, hiring top scholars and academic leaders across various fields to conduct in-depth discussions on political, philosophical, educational, medical, and other social issues. While highly professional and profound, these programs often use excessive technical jargon lacking connection to social reality, resulting in an esoteric and inaccessible dilemma.

## 3.2 Homogenization and Similarity of TV Theory Program Form and Content

Compared to entertainment TV programs, TV theory programs are overly serious, facing numerous barriers and difficulties in format innovation. Consequently, current TV stations exhibit a tendency toward homogenization and similarity in organizing theoretical program content and formats. For example,

since CCTV launched the theory program *Amazing, Our New Era*, which was well-received by audiences at various levels, other stations have followed suit by creating similar party-building propaganda programs. However, in terms of content and organizational format, these party-building programs show high similarity and serious copycat problems in planning and presentation.

### 3.3 Low Integration Between TV Theory Programs and Network New Media

Although TV theory programs in various regions have begun emphasizing integration with websites, Weibo, WeChat, and other platforms along with new media popularization, the scheduled nature of TV theory program broadcasting prevents true networking in information dissemination. In other words, the current integration between TV theory programs and network new media remains low, failing to achieve the influence of network information communication. First, TV theory programs still rely on satellite channels as their primary distribution channel, making it difficult for audiences to access program replays or key segments after broadcast. Second, content dissemination on Weibo, WeChat, and other network platforms features real-time, interactive, and entertaining characteristics, yet maintaining and updating network new media information requires substantial human and financial resources. Consequently, even when some TV theory programs open official Weibo and WeChat accounts, they cannot achieve real-time content updates and interaction, leading to increasingly low networking levels for TV theory programs.

### 4.1 Clarifying the Goal Positioning of Ideological Education in TV Theory Programs

For TV theory program production, ideological and political concepts are more important than organizational form, determined by the political and serious nature of these programs. Before organizing and planning program content, it is essential to select appropriate topics and directions, clarifying the goal positioning of ideological, political, and cultural education to enable further content organization and presentation. For example, Zhejiang Satellite TV' s program *Why the Communist Party of China Can Succeed* features clear ideological value orientation and educational objectives. This program, using party constitution and history as educational content, organizes each season around specific themes for ideological interpretation and policy promotion, including Season 1 “Face-to-Face with the 19th Party Congress Spirit” and Season 2 “Red Boat.”

Under China' s rapid socio-economic development, TV theory programs must keep pace with the times, planning topics and content around popular themes such as the 40th anniversary of reform and opening up, the 70th anniversary of national founding, the Belt and Road Initiative, anti-corruption, and poverty alleviation. While staying close to people' s lives, these programs should promote mainstream values and positive energy. By clarifying program positioning

and educational objectives, they can strengthen audience participation and ritualistic experience, enhance audience identification, and thereby improve ratings and influence.

## 4.2 Promoting Diversification of TV Theory Program Content and Organizational Forms

With the rapid development of internet new media, two-way interactive communication between information creators and audiences has become a main characteristic of film and television content dissemination in the new media era. Based on this, TV theory programs must effectively integrate and coordinate various program formats—including guest interviews, host explanations, field reporting, and documentaries—according to current development patterns. Furthermore, they should use promotional language that ordinary audiences can understand, grasp, and implement in program production and dissemination to enhance innovation and contemporary relevance. For example, Jilin Satellite TV's program *Study Well* enhances attention and influence through diversified content and organizational formats. *Study Well* is a program aiming to popularize Marxism for the masses. In its content organization, the program group sets up two educational platforms: an indoor platform where students are divided into study groups for Marxist Q&A and explanations, and an outdoor platform that leads students into rural areas, campuses, or communities for ideological and political education. This combination enables students to gain deeper, more intuitive understanding of Marxism. Therefore, reforming and innovating TV theory program content and organizational formats can achieve effective theoretical propaganda and practical results while aligning with ordinary people's emotions and values.

## 4.3 Emphasizing Civilian Perspective and New Media Adaptation for TV Theory Programs

In recent years, new media such as Weibo and WeChat have become integral to people's lives and primary platforms for ordinary citizens to browse information and communicate. As an ideological and political education program, TV theory programs must also utilize internet new media for networked adaptation and production to promote media convergence. According to the propaganda nature of TV theory programs, similar programs can collaborate with new media websites and clients by releasing condensed versions and short videos to guide online users toward watching TV theory programs, thereby increasing playback volume and online influence. Simultaneously, program creators must maintain a civilian perspective in theoretical propaganda, as only by catering to ordinary audiences' emotional concepts and psychological needs can they create a "group effect" in networked dissemination.

TV theory programs are characterized by their ideological nature, with the primary goal of conveying correct ideological values. In China's current era of

fragmented television communication, different groups have different aesthetic preferences and viewing habits, making it impossible for TV media to win universal acclaim through single program content. Therefore, TV theory program communication in the internet era must reform and innovate homogeneous content from perspectives of program themes, content, and dissemination methods, utilizing various online video platforms, social media, and news clients to achieve real-time dissemination of diverse TV program content, ultimately enhancing market competitiveness and online influence.

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

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