

Content Reigns Supreme: Charting the Future of Television Programming Development through Innovation and Realism

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Abstract

Contemplating the future trajectory of television programming in contemporary society's rapidly-evolving media landscape is a matter of considerable intellectual import. This paper embarks upon an ambitious analytical undertaking, scrutinizing the interplay of three disparate, yet mutually interlocking dimensions-namely, the salience of localized sentiments amidst the process of urbanization, the resonant nexus between emotions and the wave of globalization, and the dire need to alleviate stress in an information society marked by an ever-increasingly frenetic pace-with the goal of offering cogent recommendations for enhancing the future development of TV programs at the content level.

Keywords

Television Programming Development; People-Centered Content; New Medium; Neo-Realist Values.

1. Introduction

In the current era of rapid technological advancement, the landscape of entertainment is constantly evolving, with the proliferation of the Internet and smartphones altering the ways in which individuals engage with media on a daily basis. As a result, traditional modes of entertainment, such as television programming, have become less popular in recent years. China's television program production time has hit a new historical low, indicative of a broader trend away from conventional programming. This trend is mirrored in both urban and rural areas, where television program coverage has reached a point of saturation. Notably, traditional radio and television program sales revenues have experienced significant declines, a trend that has contributed to a decline in overall market competitiveness. In the face of such challenges, it is clear that the future development of television programming must be transformed in order to remain viable. However, regardless of the nature of such transformations, the most crucial factor will always be the content itself. In order to remain relevant and engaging, television programming must adapt to the times, while remaining mindful of contemporary realities. Indeed, it is only through innovative creation and a focus on people's preferences that television programs will succeed in capturing the imagination of audiences.

2. Nostalgia and People-centered Content Creation

As China's urbanization process accelerates, the notion of 'nostalgia' has emerged as a prevalent cultural theme. In a mere four decades since the country's policy of reform and opening-up, its urban population has increased by a staggering 600 million, as people have migrated from rural areas to the city. This mass movement has brought to the fore the nostalgia of hundreds of millions of people, in ways that are unprecedented. The nostalgia that is being felt is not the same as that of the past, when roads were often impassable and communication was difficult. Today, with the rise of media platforms such as television and the internet, people can easily

access their hometowns and rekindle old memories, even when they are thousands of miles away. Over the past two years, there has been a marked increase in the number of original dramas that focus on realistic themes, as well as variety shows that explore the nuances of everyday life. Television productions that are "grounded", "people-oriented", and "live" have become increasingly popular with audiences. One such hit drama is "Where the Wind Blows," which debuted in 2023 and captured the attention of viewers with its portrayal of Yunnan's simple customs and rich non-traditional culture, creating a phenomenal effect of a drama that fires up a city. Similarly, the travel experience reality show "Happy Start Again" quickly became a sensation in the summer of 2022. In the realm of short videos, Li Ziqi's works were awarded the "Cultural Communication Personality of the Year Award" by China News Weekly in December 2019. As of March 2021, the number of subscribers to her short videos on YouTube exceeded 27 million, with each video receiving no less than 5 million views.

Whether it is idyllic life-healing dramas like "To a Place with Wind," Chinese idyllic short videos such as Hua Nong Brothers and Li Zi Qi, or slow-paced variety shows like "Life to Live" and "Happy Start Again," the reason why they have garnered recognition and popularity among the general public lies in their people-oriented nature. In the face of the gradual "materialization" of modern life, these productions have truly grounded themselves and created a poetic habitat that is both down-to-earth and full of interest. For the media, it is understandable to prioritize ratings and economic benefits. However, it is essential that content creation does not become a "stranger to life" and lose touch with the seriousness and vitality of everyday experiences. While there is nothing wrong with "flying the wings of imagination," media producers must not lose sight of the importance of solidly-grounded, people-centered content creation.

3. Globalisation and New Medium for Social Communication

As globalisation continues to advance, society is grappling with a multitude of complex and interrelated challenges, including the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, the alarming effects of global warming, the scourge of pollution, and the recent outbreak of COVID-19. These challenges have sparked a profound reconsideration of the relationship between humans, technology, and the natural world. In the age of new media, communication platforms such as microblogging have become one of the primary vehicles for people to voice their opinions, engage in social movements, and stir emotional resonance. The virtual realm created by new online technologies inspires humans and offers new experiences that transcend traditional modes of communication. However, the virtual identities that people assume online also free them from moral norms and cultural customs, leading to emotional excesses and destructive behavior. Some users even resort to online violence to flaunt their individuality or challenge authority. The proliferation of mobile short videos as a new medium for social communication has further amplified the impact of individual emotions, allowing them to be shared, stratified, and even socialized. However, many government departments lack strict, scientific, and orderly public opinion response plans and measures to address conflicts arising from these incidents. As a result, the negative responses often outweigh the positive ones, leading to harsh measures such as "forceful dispersal" and "arrest and detention."

Against this backdrop, television news media can play a crucial role in addressing the challenges of the globalised world. By utilizing its functions of environmental monitoring, decision-making consultation, and knowledge popularisation, television can maintain its competitive edge as a mass communication medium. To achieve this, television news media must be contemporary, astutely attuned to the resonant emotions of the times, and prompt in identifying and addressing the current plight of mankind and the hope for the future. In conclusion, the wave of globalisation has brought with it an array of challenges that require thoughtful and empathetic responses from media professionals. By focusing on the resonance

of emotions and promoting constructive engagement, we can navigate the complexities of the modern world and work towards a more sustainable and equitable future.

4. Mirror Stage and Neo-realist Values

The current generation of young people is facing unprecedented challenges in their daily lives, including navigating their career and educational paths, managing finances, coping with the uncertainty brought about by the pandemic, and maintaining healthy relationships with family and friends. These stressors have become the main sources of anxiety and tension for many young people, and their need for emotional support and connection has led them to seek refuge in various forms of media and entertainment. When examining the productions that have been popular in the domestic TV and online content market since 2020, it becomes evident that these works have struck a chord with audiences by directly addressing the social issues and hot-button topics that are most relevant to them. Reality shows such as *The Heartwarming Offer* and *Leap to the High Level Workplace*, talk shows like *Spitting Image Conference*, *Talk Show Conference*, and *Oddball Talk*, and dramas like *Anjia*, *All is Well*, *Little Joy*, and *Little Shedding* have all resonated with viewers by providing a mirror through which they can reflect on themselves and their experiences.

The mirror theory, as articulated by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, posits that the mirror stage is a critical developmental milestone in a person's life, allowing them to recognize themselves as distinct individuals and begin constructing their sense of self. In the context of media and entertainment, viewers are drawn to characters and storylines that they can identify with, projecting their own desires and values onto the fictional world and seeking to learn from the motivations and behaviors of the characters they encounter. This process of identification and reflection is not merely a form of escapism or entertainment, but rather a means of engaging with the world and exploring the deeper meanings of life. As audiences watch television and online content, they are also engaging in a process of self-examination and enrichment, using the mirror provided by the media to reflect on their own virtues and shortcomings and to aspire to greater heights of personal growth and development. At the same time, the popularity of these works also reflects the broader societal trends and values that are shaping the consumption patterns of modern audiences. The "neo-realist values" of love of beauty, fear of death, and lack of love are driving consumer preferences and upgrading behavior, particularly among the new middle class. These audiences are willing to invest more time and money in high-quality content that resonates with their values and needs, and they are looking for media and entertainment that can provide them with care, empathy, and tolerance. In conclusion, the popularity of domestic TV and online content in recent years is a reflection of the deep-seated needs and desires of modern audiences, who are seeking connection, reflection, and personal growth through the media they consume. By providing a mirror through which viewers can see themselves and their world, these works are not only entertaining, but also enriching and enlightening, helping audiences to navigate the challenges of contemporary life.

5. Conclusion

In light of the current state of the television market, which has been characterized by a somewhat sluggish trajectory, it is nonetheless evident that certain television programs have persevered and continue to seek out fresh avenues for advancement. Looking ahead, it is plausible that such programs will strive to shatter the confines of traditional modes of production, thematic content, and audience reception, while simultaneously preserving the preeminent status of content as the primary driver of success. Alternatively, these programs may opt to chart novel courses in the realm of technology by undertaking forays into the burgeoning domains of interactive film and 5G telecommunications technology, or by

producing shorter, vertically-oriented screen features. As a whole, it is clear that the terrain of television programming is still replete with possibilities for expansion and maturation. It remains to be seen which trajectories will be taken by enterprising producers and industry luminaries. Nevertheless, one thing is certain: there is still a substantial distance to be traversed in the ongoing evolution of television programming, and it is imperative that all stakeholders remain attuned to the ever-shifting currents of audience tastes and technological innovations.

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