The Study of the Changes in the Content Production and Profit Model of Television Programs in the Era of Media Convergence

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Abstract

The global Television industry is entering a post-broadcast era, where audiences are fragmented and content is distributed on multiple platforms. The impact of convergence is particularly evident in China. With the acceleration of media convergence, many traditional media in China face the challenge of new media. They have begun to evolve to a new Television viewing model of "Television screen + PC screen + Smart mobile terminals". In practical experience and academic debate, media convergence is "booming". Simultaneously, in the era of information explosion, the public has more choices and more specific demands on Television programs. This essay describes the changes in Television production and its profit model in the Chinese media convergence era. Following this, the article demonstrates that the preferences of Chinese audiences have shifted. Finally, the conclusion concludes by advising media practitioners on improved Television programs, not only for China but also for the rest of the world.

Keywords

The Content Production; Profit Model; Television Programs; Media Convergence.

1. The "New Turn" in the Context of Multi-screen Communication

1.1. The Chinese Television Programs

Chinese Television programs have served politics for a long time, so the program content strategy is not too deeply rooted in the vertical field, but only for political communication. A summary of the history of Chinese Television programs is of great significance for a comprehensive understanding of the unique Television program profit model and production system of Chinese Television production.

In the beginning, Chinese Television programs were always associated with the realm of ideology. It could even be argued that there is an abnormal cooperative relationship between culture, creativity, and politics (Liu, 2011).

However, with the development of agriculture and manufacturing during the period of reform and opening up in the 1980s, Chinese policymakers began to realize the impact of the knowledge economy, which meant that China was no longer isolated from global power and ideas, and began to focus on producing high-quality Television programs. China has embarked on economic and political reforms and implemented a variety of new policies, including some that have influenced China's mass media, to a certain extent, in the history of media (Hong, 1993).

After entering the 21st century, China has been putting forward innovation policies, strengthening original programs, and transforming the image of "Made in China" into "created
in China". One of the main goals is to transform the non-competitive Chinese cultural industry (Keane, 2007). According to the annual series of National Blue Books of Cultural Industries (2015), Television has been regarded as one of the core industries since 2001.

The domestic media have always provided free services to the public rather than paid subscriptions in terms of the profit model. Behind the free access to Television programs lies the traditional media business model.

According to Liu (2011), the media was mainly state-owned in China before the economic reforms of 1979; therefore, the media system was seen as part of the state bureaucracy, primarily responsible for ideology, not information or entertainment. In addition to government funding aid, the rest of the profits were from advertising revenue. Therefore, advertisers used to measure the advertising value of each channel through ratings, which means that the original intention of traditional media is to maximize the audience of programs. The content strategy of programs catered to the interests of the majority of audiences, thus losing innovation and characteristics.

The traditional media, presently, combines the profit model of traditional media and new media. This combination of both models is since new media has vibrant profit models in China, which means that new media can make money in many different ways. The effective combination of new media profit models is a good condition for the development of traditional media (Xia, 2017).

In terms of content production, with the development of technology, the connection between each screen is becoming closer and closer, which has led to the increasing influence of new media on traditional media. Television program content is no longer only presented on the screen of the Television terminal but distributed to all screen terminals. In other words, traditional media must transform to survive. In the face of new opportunities and challenges, traditional media needs to be transformed into new modes of communication and information products to fully use the function of information communication (Xie and Huan, 2017).

In general, the Chinese Television industry's whole format has improved in terms of content production, content distribution channels, advertising revenue, industry, and other aspects.

1.2. The Audiences

The audience is one of the core concepts of mass communication, and it is the base point for investigating the effect of mass communication. In mass communication theory, which consists of the complicated relationship between the media, society, and human beings, the audience is the intersection of all issues. In other words, Television programs can influence and are greatly influenced by the audience. All communication exists in the context of its audience, so it has an impact on the whole field (Fletcher and Nielsen, 2017). In the communication mechanism composed of audience, Television media, and network media, although placed at the end of the communication chain, the audience is the critical link that connects the whole communication activity.

Nowadays, audience is more willing to make their own choices than ever before. In the context of multi-screen communication, the audience can wander around in the "media supermarket" choosing and buying their favorite media products to perform artistic appreciation and aesthetic re-creation activities.

2. The "New Business Format" of the Chinese Television Programs in the Context of Multi-screen Communication

The performance of media convergence has the following characteristics: decentralized, fragmented, youthful, and diversified. Having the most users is the consensus of all media to
have the most users, which requires content producers to start from the perspectives of users and use big data thinking to produce Television programs.

Even though Chinese social media and big data account for an indispensable share of the global Internet, they have not attracted enough attention (Jiang and Fu, 2018). According to the CNNIC (China Internet Network Information Centre), with 772 million Internet users and 1.36 billion mobile phone users, increasing Chinese participation in the digital world and the digital economy marks a significant expansion in the global practice and governance of the Internet, social media, big data, and other information technologies. Therefore, in the process of Television program production, practitioners are expected to be experts in using big data, utilizing China's inherent advantages in big data, and using scientific and technological power to bridge the gap between audience expectations.

There are already many examples of using big data in the Western media industry to create new formats of business. House of Cards is an American quality drama in the digital age (Plipets and Winter, 2016). This is an excellent example of using big data for data correlation analysis to achieve huge Television viewing success. The production company of the series has analyzed 30 million actions generated by its users, such as pause, replay, fast forward and stop, and collected 4 million Television ratings and 3 million search keywords to plan the plot that the scriptwriting will be more appealing to the audience. Therefore, it can be concluded that big data has unlimited potential to attract viewers in the Television industry.

Similarly, in the Chinese Television industry, Television dramas use the AI intelligent broadcast system to accurately predict user needs and market preferences and choose the heroine that audiences are most likely to like. Famous variety shows use big data to select the most popular themes and successfully attract the attention of the audience. The above example can be regarded as the successful use of big data in the Chinese Television industry.

3. The "New Direction" of the Chinese Television Programs in the Context of Multi-screen Communication

The key to the success of current Chinese Television programs is that it eliminates the crux of excessive entertainment of Television programs in the context of pan-entertainment and its strong Television culture and humanistic emotional atmosphere. It satisfies the value of contemporary Television audiences to Television culture, which desires to return. However, long-term development requires more adherence to the development principle of "content is king". On the one hand, it is necessary to formulate a strategy for co-dissemination using the media matrix, learn from the development model of website programs and social software, and combine emerging technologies such as big data. On the other hand, keeping in mind balancing the attributes and values of the noumenon of human relationships makes Television culture a valuable return.

4. Conclusion

It has been discovered that significant changes in these years have occurred in the content production and profit model of the Chinese Television industry. Besides, Chinese audiences demonstrated their increasingly critical media consumption habits, which has led to continuous progress in the Chinese Television industry. The above phenomenon has given some inspiration to practitioners in the Chinese Television industry. It is wise to combine the background of media convergence and make full use of big data and various technologies to produce Television programs. To produce high-quality Television programs with a high degree of attention in China and the rest of the world.
References


