

Thoughts on the Problems of Workplace Observation Reality Show and Its Innovation Path

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Abstract: The innovative of workplace observation reality shows integrates the popular “observation” element with workplace themes, breaking through the solidified thinking of early workplace reality shows and love observation programs, as well as returning reality shows with workplace themes to the audience. This paper studies the narrative strategy and value connotation of workplace observation reality shows, explores the development and communication path of workplace observation reality shows, as well as summarizes the program characteristics of workplace observation reality shows. At the same time, the problems behind the popularity of observation programs have been sought after to put forward suggestions for the development of future workplace observation reality shows.

Keywords: Reality show; Observation type; Workplace

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1. Introduction

In recent years, with the popularity of self-made network variety shows, reality shows are increasing. Under the hot broadcasting of reality shows, people should pay attention to and reflect on the reality show itself. In workplace, reality shows assume “job hunting” as the main line and tend to build a communication and publicity platform. From the current situation, there are many problems to be solved in the development of China’s reality show. Finding and solving problems are the only way for reality shows to develop. On the basis of studying experience and lessons, this paper summarizes several methods that can provide reference and guidance for the follow-up development of workplace observation reality shows in China, and it is committed to contributing to the sustainable development of workplace observation reality shows in China.

2. Literature review

Taking workplace observation reality shows as the research subject, one of the relevant studies is the *Research on the Narrative Mode of the Reality TV Series of Workplace Observation in South Korea – Taking “The Birth of New Staff: Good People” as an Example* by Beibei Chen. The study analyzed the narrative mode of the program, mostly describing the content fragments in the program, without in-depth analysis of the connotation and propagation value of the program. Domestic research on workplace reality shows mostly focuses on the program “Jobs Come Jobs Go.” *Analysis of the Reasons for the Popularity of “Jobs Come Jobs Go”* by Xiaojing Wu and *Analysis of the Success Factors of Workplace Reality Show “Jobs Come Jobs Go”* by Haoshu Chen also explored from the perspective of reasons, but the relevant value connotation has not been deeply explored. To sum up, the research on the narrative strategy and value connotation of the innovative “workplace + observation” reality show has practical theoretical significance

to supplement and improve the elements of relevant theories. At the same time, it can also provide some reference value for the innovative practice of workplace observation reality shows in the future.

3. Research methods

This paper adopts the literature analysis method. Many literatures and much relevant information have been referred to in the early stage of writing this paper. At the same time, using the advantages of the internet, lessons have been drawn from the research themes and achievements of predecessors in several aspects, enriching the background of the paper on the basis of relevant theoretical knowledge of news and communication as well as further combing and analyzing the innovative development of workplace observation reality shows.

4. Analyzing the problems of workplace observation reality shows

4.1. The homogenization of workplace observation reality shows

Local program producers should consider breaking through the unchanging themes and mode restrictions in order to achieve innovative expression of content. From China's observation reality shows, it can be seen that the subject matter and content of these programs are seriously homogeneous, mechanically repeating the "one-to-many" two-way selection mode of marriage and love reality shows. They lack real workplace scene performances; hence, the logic and focus of these programs are relatively weak for the overall framework of the content. The development trend of workplace observation reality shows is good, but there may be a long way to go for the development of Chinese variety shows in the future because according to past experiences, once a certain type of program becomes popular, many similar programs emerge, resulting in the inundation of the program homogenization phenomenon ^[1].

4.2. The implantation of advertisements in workplace observation reality shows

There are many implanted advertisements. To a certain extent, workplace observation reality shows tend to avoid the phenomenon of excessive exaggeration and lack of authenticity but rather pay more attention to the workplace itself. Therefore, these types of reality shows do not focus on the "show" itself but rather tend to be subdued by weak plot reality shows, which are not mature in balancing artistry and commerciality. Exaggerated commercial slogans and short film advertisements may be inserted into the program through funny oral broadcast or VCR short films in line with the theme of the reality show. However, weak plot reality shows mainly emphasize the recording of life rather than dramatic plots and performances. Therefore, it is difficult for the audience to accept many forcibly implanted advertisements as there are no advertisements in life. The implantation of advertisements in workplace observation reality shows destroys the logic and rationality of the program, and it is likely that the audiences would reject these advertisements and even to the extent of shunning the whole program itself ^[2].

4.3. The over-hype of workplace observation reality shows

Many of these reality shows only cater to the audience to improve ratings, and the excessive consumption of star image hypes the program. Many reality shows in China use these means to blindly meet the needs of the audience, such as prying one's privacy, the hunting psychology with curiosity, and abnormal idol worship. These behaviors satisfy the audiences' voyeuristic desire, thus helping them to achieve a certain physiological satisfaction. At the same time, while observing people's internship stories, they tend to make third-party judgments. This is the second kind of psychological satisfaction that the audiences get. When a communication channel is not smooth going or an individual does not want to disclose his or her privacy, the individual will share and learn from other people's behavior, observe other people's lives and use them as reference, as well as change his or her behavior according to the moral standards recognized by the media

and the public^[3]. Therefore, the lives of these plain interns will be infinitely enlarged, thus gaining authority as “opinion leaders” in a certain field. However, excessive attention to their working lives and the speculation of their offline private lives out of voyeurism will lead to excessive consumption and promote the spread of voyeurism culture to a certain extent^[4].

5. The innovation path of workplace observation reality shows

5.1. Subject innovation

The re-innovation of workplace observation programs should be based on the accumulation of existing programs, in order to promote higher level, progressive production. The development of current programs should be considered from a long-term perspective. With the increase of the number of observation programs, the diversity and richness of themes have made new developments. However, from the perspective of the broadcast, most of the themes are still focused on “observing the life of stars,” “family intergenerational communication,” as well as “youth marriage and social contact.” The themes are relatively narrow. Moreover, the trend of being single is increasing nowadays, and the values of marriage are more diversified. The topic of “being urged to marry,” which is derived from it, is more likely to cause aesthetic fatigue among young people. By observing the film lists released by major satellite TV and platforms, the issue of homogenization of views and themes has emerged. Therefore, innovating the program content, maintaining the vitality of a program, and attracting the attention of the audience continuously are urgent issues that need to be considered^[5].

In choosing observation as the subject type, it is possible to observe the work life of different professions, based on the “observation +” mode. This mode is proposed by “An Exciting Offer,” beyond the existing themes of “social marriage and love” as well as “parent-child communication” in China. For example, “Hyena on the Keyboard,” a South Korean “observation + music” program launched by KBS, mainly records the whole process from the birth of a song. SBS’s “observation + food” program, “Eating Out Day,” combines observation and food to create innovative program content. “Workplace + lawyer” can be taken as the starting point to create knowledge popularization in different industries. Programs can use different career angles, such as “workplace + finance” or “workplace + online popularity,” to provide real experience in different industries to college students in a period of career confusion or to young people full of expectations for certain industries.

5.2. Cultural value innovation

In essence, operating an overseas program locally is also an innovative form of learning from foreign programs. Local elements should be integrated on this basis, and the Chinese feelings should be expressed in such a way to tell good Chinese stories. In the process of introducing copyrighted Korean programs and transplanting original Korean variety shows, improvement and innovation in terms of localization are necessary. In the vertical differentiation category of observation programs, the extended creation of “Never Mind If You Don’t Do Well” is a successful innovative attempt of local programs to reconstruct the parent-child relationship by using the father-son identity interchangeably. It uses new media methods, associated with the size of the screen, the length of communication, and so on to make a breakthrough by focusing on trendy topics, such as education and exams. However, the innovation of some reality shows are still in the process of splicing elements and selecting characters, which requires the reshaping of the program from the perspectives of form, angle, and value connotation. In the process of developing observation reality shows, program producers need to meet the cultural needs of the audience at all levels. Using workplace programs to lead social values and establish industry norms has feasible practical significance for accelerating employment. In the future, greenhorns entering the society in the new era will say, “I have chosen to enter this industry and grow in this industry because I have watched this program.”

From the micro aspect, by establishing professional industry norms, it is possible to establish the authority of a program and have the capital to compete against the same type of program. Just as Yang Tianzhen said at the beginning of “Me and My Agent,” “If this program will do, it must choose a company, I think it should be us.” In view of such professionalism and standard, the program has confidence and a background. Therefore, when selecting specific companies in the industry, priority should be given to companies with a high degree of standardization and professionalism. Such companies display first-class standards in the industry.

5.3. Operation mode innovation

Bullet screen, a new product of network synthesis, is a unique perspective of network variety. Bakhtin’s carnival theory holds that the carnival world brought by carnival puts forth a “carnival square” for people in the middle ages, different from the conventional serious life. The bullet screen carnival presented in self-made variety plays the role of a “carnival square” in workplace observation reality shows, providing a platform for the audience to express their opinions freely. The bullet screen provides a more idealized expression platform for differentiated views. In an anonymous environment, this “carnival square” is a platform for the audience to freely express ^[6].

The observation room opens up a new perspective. The new perspective of workplace observation slows down the “fast variety” workplace (fast variety shows refer to fast-food variety shows with strong confrontational nature and mainly competitive, including fast-paced variety shows), which can be understood as an advanced “slow variety” (slow variety shows refer to relatively fast variety shows, without complex game links, mainly referring to life programs, where the guests will be in a natural state). Unlike competitive reality shows, it has a strong purpose, but it changes the perspective to a more life-oriented content presentation. South Korea was the first to introduce “slow variety,” presenting the social relations between people in a relatively strange independent environment. In addition to drawing lessons from the Chinese version, the elements found in European and American reality shows are integrated. At the same time, the Chinese culture is integrated to convey the amalgamation of life and business. It is an innovative progress of self-made programs ^[7].

6. Conclusion

The development of reality shows in China began with European and American competitive reality shows, and now evolved into Korean experience reality shows, from plain guest reality shows to star guest reality shows, which then developed to the current “star guest and plain guest combination” reality shows. With the popularity of various types of reality shows, such as traveling, parenting, and love observation, workplace observation reality shows also came into being, enriching and developing the types of variety shows in China with cultural adaptability and changeable themes ^[8].

Although the development prospects of workplace observation variety shows are promising, China still faces difficulties in developing workplace observation programs. Their narrative innovation and value endowment still require in-depth exploration. Only relying on aesthetic appearance may attract the audience for a short period of time, but having its value orientation and spiritual connotation adapt to China’s social culture is the essence of long-term development.

Disclosure statement

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