

The Value Guidance and Social Responsibility of Cultural Program Hosts

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ABSTRACT

In the context of the cultural powerhouse strategy and the integration of media development, hosts of cultural programs bear the mission of promoting cultural confidence. This article will focus on the value-leading role and social responsibility of hosts in cultural programs, analyzing the challenges hosts face in today's cultural programs, how they guide values, and how they fulfill their social responsibility as cultural inheritors and trendsetters.

KEYWORDS

Cultural program host; Value leadership; Social responsibility; Cultural strategy

1 Introduction

Currently, China is committed to building a socialist cultural powerhouse with Chinese characteristics. With the implementation of various policies, people's demand for spiritual culture is growing, and cultural television programs are becoming increasingly popular with audiences. However, as times continue to change and evolve, cultural programs face a series of challenges, including the impact of the entertainment wave, market competition and pressure from ratings, the risk of technological dependence, the complexity of cross-cultural communication, and the limitations of the hosts themselves. Among them, the host acts as a bridge between the program and the audience, directly influencing the program's dissemination effect. Therefore, in the new historical context and media environment, how cultural program hosts can effectively lead the way in terms of values and fulfill their social responsibilities, and how they can better accomplish this glorious mission of the times by improving their own qualities and optimizing the external environment, is a topic worthy of in-depth discussion.

2 The strategy of building a cultural powerhouse and cultural programs in the context of the integrated media era

Culture is closely related to the foundation and destiny of a nation. When culture thrives, the nation thrives; when culture is strong, the nation is strong. With the implementation of the strategy to build a cultural powerhouse, a series of well-produced cultural programs have entered the public eye^[1]. Cultural programs, as important vehicles for disseminating advanced culture and promoting mainstream values, have ushered in unprecedented development opportunities. Programs such as "China Poetry Conference," "National Treasures," "The Reader," and "China in Classical Texts" have sparked a cultural craze, won widespread praise from audiences, and fostered a strong sense of cultural identity and cultural confidence in society.

In the current sweeping wave of cultural revival and innovation, the role and function of cultural program hosts have undergone profound changes. Compared to the early days when hosts were responsible for simple tasks such as introducing segments, announcing the program, and reading scripts, the role of the host has gradually evolved into the core of the program, becoming the narrator, the connector of emotions, and the leader of values. The host is no longer an outsider observer, but rather deeply involved in the process of cultural dissemination. Through their personal knowledge, cultivation, wisdom, and emotions, they breathe life and warmth into cold words and heavy history, guiding the audience to deeply understand and accept the cultural connotations and values conveyed by the program.

3 Value-leading function

Value-driven programming refers to the deliberate use by program hosts of their discursive power, social influence, and personal charisma to integrate the value concepts inherent in socialist core values, excellent traditional Chinese culture, revolutionary culture, and advanced socialist culture—such as patriotism, dedication, integrity, friendliness, benevolence, harmony, and perseverance, into the narrative and interaction of the program through narrative construction, rhetorical discourse, contextual creation, and interactive guidance. This aims to positively and constructively guide viewers' ideological understanding, moral standards, aesthetic preferences, and behavioral choices. Its connotation

encompasses multiple dimensions, including political identity leadership, cultural confidence leadership, moral norms leadership, and aesthetic taste leadership.

3.1 The connotation of value-led development

3.1.1 Political identity leadership: setting the direction

Political identity guidance is the most core and fundamental dimension of value guidance, concerning the underlying tone and foundation of the content disseminated by cultural programs. Hosts should employ exceptional political acumen to integrate grand national narratives and policy concepts into concrete, relatable stories and characters. Cultural programs often involve evaluations of historical figures and events. At such times, hosts must maintain a clear political mindset and a firm stance, using verifiable historical facts and appropriate language to celebrate the heroic achievements and noble spirits of revolutionary martyrs. They should guide audiences to establish correct historical, ethnic, and national perspectives, voluntarily safeguard ideological security, and ensure that the program's direction never deviates from the mainstream value framework. Through subtle yet effective means, they should consolidate the common ideological foundation for the united struggle of all the people.

3.1.2 Leading with cultural confidence: cultivating a strong foundation

Cultural confidence is a more fundamental, broader, and deeper form of confidence. Cultural confidence provides guidance, aiming to help audiences gain a deep understanding of the unique creations, value concepts, and distinctive characteristics of Chinese culture, thereby inspiring a sense of cultural pride and belonging. Proper guidance in cultural confidence enables the Chinese nation to maintain its composure and move forward with confidence amid the challenges of the times. The host must play the role of a "transformer," creatively interpreting and modernizing China's excellent traditional culture, transforming the ancient wisdom dormant in classical texts and artifacts into spiritual nourishment that contemporary young people find appealing and enjoyable. In programs such as "China Poetry Conference," the host uses insightful commentary to reveal the historical context, philosophical wisdom, and aesthetic value behind the poems, skillfully connecting them to contemporary life and giving viewers a genuine sense of the breadth, depth, and enduring appeal of Chinese culture. In National Treasures, the host tells stories about the past and present of national treasures, bringing cold artifacts to life and making them warm, inspiring a sense of national pride in viewers.

3.1.3 Moral norms as a guiding force: permeating people's hearts

Moral norms focus on shaping social ethics, professional ethics, family virtues, and personal integrity, aiming to guide audiences to aspire to and pursue a moral, respectful, and ethical lifestyle, thereby fostering an upward and virtuous social trend. This leadership is often achieved through exemplary narratives and emotional resonance. Hosts should be adept at uncovering and showcasing the extraordinary qualities of ordinary people. In the annual "Touching China Figures" program, we can see many ordinary individuals shining brightly in their ordinary lives. Moral standards are no longer abstract concepts, but rather transform into a powerful emotional force that cleanses the hearts of the audience. In addition, the host's own words and actions serve as a silent moral example. Their respect for guests, sincerity toward the audience, reverence for culture, humility in the details, inclusiveness, and kindness will all be conveyed to the audience through the screen. A bow, a patient listening ear, and a warm word of encouragement all subtly convey positive energy to society, demonstrating good manners and noble character, and promoting the continuous improvement of social civilization.

3.1.4 Aesthetic taste leadership: aesthetic value

Aesthetic taste leadership refers to the host using their refined cultural taste, exquisite language skills, and grasp of the program's aesthetic style to guide the audience in improving their aesthetic judgment and appreciation, pursuing a higher level of spiritual enjoyment that is richer in content. First, the host is a model of linguistic aesthetics. Language should strive for accuracy, vividness, elegance, literary flair, and philosophical depth. For example, Dong Qing's narration in the program is rich in classical references, elegant in language, and well-paced, providing an aesthetic experience for the audience. This kind of linguistic influence can effectively improve the audience's linguistic taste and aesthetic standards. Secondly, the host is the shaper and leader of the overall aesthetic style of the program. Their taste in makeup, props, and scenery, as well as their control of the mood, rhythm, and atmosphere of the live show, together constitute the aesthetic tone of the program. A well-produced, elegant cultural program is in itself a feast for the senses, showcasing the beauty of artifacts, the beauty of poetry and rhythm, the beauty of history, and the beauty of humanity.

3.2 Ways to achieve value leadership

3.2.1 Narrative construction: conveying values through storytelling

Abstract values need to be conveyed through concrete, vivid, and moving stories. As the leader of the narrative, the host should be skilled at discovering and telling good stories that embody core values. Take CCTV's "Stories of China" as an example. The program focuses on the real historical events and heroic figures behind classic literary and artistic works. Through interviews with guests, the host concretizes the grand revolutionary spirit and patriotic sentiments into the fates and emotional conflicts of flesh-and-blood characters that can be felt and touched. This narrative structure allows audiences to naturally accept the baptism of noble values through an immersive storytelling experience, effectively conveying values and beliefs.

3.2.2 Discourse rhetoric: using effective linguistic symbols to convey value

Language is the most basic and important tool for a host. Excellent rhetorical skills can transform abstract values and concepts into compelling and persuasive language symbols. In "China Poetry Contest," the host rarely uses empty praise, but instead skillfully connects the imagery and allusions of ancient poetry with contemporary life and modern emotions. This rhetorical strategy not only showcases the inherent charm of poetry but also transforms it into a vivid interpretation of modern values such as diligence, optimism, and a love for life. Through the bridge of poetry, it achieves a connection and resonance between ancient and modern values, revitalizing traditional cultural values in a contemporary context and realizing the creative transformation of cultural values.

3.2.3 Creating the right atmosphere: conveying value through ceremonial spaces and emotional resonance

The acceptance and consolidation of values often depend on specific contexts and emotional experiences. Hosts should be adept at utilizing various elements such as stage design and music in conjunction with language to create a cultural environment that is both ceremonial and emotionally charged. In the program "China in Intangible Cultural Heritage," the host often visits the original sites of intangible cultural heritage projects or carefully recreated workshops and scenes to experience and explain them. When the host stands beside the huge waterwheel explaining the thousand-year-old papermaking technique and introduces Hakka folk customs in front of the magnificent earthen buildings, this sense of presence greatly enhances the solemnity of the culture and the weight of history. The host guides the audience to develop admiration for the spirit of craftsmanship and appreciation for cultural heritage by touching ancient artifacts, experiencing the manufacturing process, and engaging in heartfelt conversations with the inheritors of these traditions. This kind of atmosphere makes people feel good about the show and helps them connect with the cultural values it shares.

3.2.4 Interactive guidance: inspiring value-based thinking through dialogue and questioning

The host's value guidance is not a one-way transmission, but rather a multi-directional interaction with guests, contestants, and audiences. Through clever questions and guidance, the host inspires the audience to draw their own conclusions and complete the construction of their value system. For example, in the verbal interaction between the host and guests of "Hello Life," the simple yet profound topic of "home" is elevated, prompting viewers to reflect on their hometowns while also conveying themes of dreams, perseverance, and determination. Personal stories of struggle and resilience inspire audiences, encouraging contemporary youth to persevere no matter how challenging their current circumstances may be, as those with ambition will ultimately succeed. Through hard work and perseverance, they can realize their youthful aspirations. This approach deeply respects the audience's agency, allowing the seeds of value to grow naturally through reflection and dialogue, making it more persuasive and influential ^[2].

Although the styles of hosts in different cultural programs vary greatly, there are commonalities in their approach to value guidance: a solid cultural foundation is the cornerstone, and sincere emotional investment is the key. Whether it is Dong Qing's delicate empathy or Sa Beining's passionate enthusiasm, both stem from their genuine belief in and deep understanding of the values they promote. In recent years, people have become increasingly eager to pursue cultural knowledge, actively seeking to learn more about culture, enhance their spiritual and cultural literacy, and elevate their personal charm and inner depth. This has placed higher demands on hosts of cultural programs. Every host should cultivate a mindset of lifelong learning, continuously expanding their knowledge base, and actively exploring and developing a unique hosting style and personal brand ^[3].

4 Social responsibility

Social responsibility here refers specifically to the responsibilities and obligations that cultural program hosts, as a

particular social role, should assume toward their audience, society, ethnicity, and country. These include political responsibility, cultural responsibility, moral responsibility, and historical responsibility, among others. These responsibilities are intertwined and together form the core content of a host's social responsibility.

The response strategies for health communication TV programs in the age of smart media is mainly discussed from three aspects: make the content of the program more "informative", make the form of communication more "interesting", make emotional expression more "powerful".

4.1 Theoretical basis

In the 1940s, the United States proposed the theory of social responsibility, asserting that mass communication possesses a strong public dimension and that media organizations must assume and fulfill certain responsibilities and obligations toward society and the public. For cultural hosts, this theory provides a theoretical foundation for their behavior: their power of speech is conferred by the public and must be used to serve the public interest, spread truth, goodness, and beauty, and promote social progress and harmony.

4.2 Requirements of the times: Hosts should have a strong sense of social responsibility

As the most widespread and influential modern media platforms, broadcasting, television, and online audio-visual platforms are ideal channels for disseminating mainstream values. Cultural programs, with their refined taste and profound content, are particularly well-received by audiences and serve as effective platforms and channels for promoting mainstream values.

As the "spokesperson" for this platform, the host's stance, views, and emotions directly impact the effectiveness of communication. This requires the host to possess a high degree of political acumen and sense of responsibility, ensuring that program content remains aligned with mainstream social values and serves as a cornerstone for consolidating and strengthening mainstream ideology.

At present, we are at a critical juncture in terms of inheriting China's excellent traditional culture and enhancing the cultural confidence of the entire population. As the frontline of cultural dissemination, hosts serve as a bridge connecting ancient wisdom with contemporary audiences and classic texts with popular interpretations. Whether a host can deeply understand and eloquently interpret the essence of Chinese culture, and whether they can inspire audiences to feel love, pride, and a sense of belonging toward their own culture, directly impacts the quality of cultural heritage transmission and the effectiveness of building cultural confidence.

In the current context of increasingly frequent exchanges, integration, and clashes in the field of ideology and culture, this is a necessary requirement for responding to diverse trends of thought and guiding public opinion. Cultural programs often involve historical evaluations, character assessments, and value judgments. Hosts must take a clear stance, possess solid knowledge, and have strong analytical skills to clarify misconceptions in their programs through thorough reasoning and detailed historical facts. They should guide the public, especially young people, to form correct views on history, ethnicity, the nation, and culture, thereby creating a clear and healthy public opinion environment.

4.3 Core meaning: the social responsibility of hosts

4.3.1 Guardians of political orientation

This is the primary connotation and bottom-line requirement of a host's social responsibility. It requires hosts to possess exceptional political wisdom and political artistry, integrating the correct political direction and public opinion guidance into the careful selection and clever interpretation of cultural content. To achieve the goal of educating through entertainment and influencing people subtly, we must use language and phrases that allow the audience to naturally feel a sense of patriotism, national pride, and the spirit of the times, thereby achieving a high degree of unity between political, ideological, and artistic elements.

4.3.2 Promoters of excellent culture

Hosts should immerse themselves in the classics, cultivate a rich cultural foundation, and develop a unique and profound understanding of the cultural content they aim to disseminate. They should skillfully employ language and formats that resonate with the general public, engaging in creative adaptation and innovative development to transform profound philosophical concepts, obscure classical texts, and forgotten history into spiritual nourishment that contemporary young people can comprehend, embrace, and eagerly share. Only by bringing traditional culture to life can it truly become popular.

4.3.3 Leader of social trends

As public figures, hosts have a significant influence on their audience, especially young people, through their on-screen image, behavior, and interests. They must lead by example, adhere to professional ethics and social morality both on and off screen, practice traditional Chinese virtues, and demonstrate a positive, healthy, and uplifting spirit. By recommending good books, sharing uplifting stories, and advocating charitable actions, we can guide society toward forming a positive social climate that values virtue and encourages emulation of the good.

4.3.4 Connecting with public sentiment

Outstanding hosts often possess strong empathy and are conveyors of warmth. They are adept at identifying points of emotional resonance and, through sincere listening, warm dialogue, and philosophical consolation, provide spiritual comfort and spiritual enlightenment to anxious modern people. They create an atmosphere of emotional community in their programs, promoting social harmony and inclusiveness, and allowing grand value concepts to truly resonate with people through subtle emotional resonance. As seen in *The Reader*, the program conveys personal emotional experiences through conversations between the host and guests, complemented by the guests' sincere emotional readings of literary works. There is no flashy program packaging, no excessive sentimentality, and no tedious program segments. Instead, there is a genuine appreciation for the works, life, and the profound insights into existence, allowing audiences to truly experience the beauty of Chinese culture through the readings^[4].

5 Conclusions

Under the cultural powerhouse strategy, cultural program hosts must work hard to build a comprehensive knowledge system and systematically cultivate their expertise in their respective fields in order to lead by example and fulfill their social responsibilities. They should strive to become experts in their fields. More importantly, it is essential to enhance text reading comprehension skills, develop one's own perspectives, and, based on this foundation, cultivate the ability to independently create audiovisual content that is informative, intellectually profound, and aesthetically pleasing—content that is both accessible and appealing to the general audience. This is the key ability that determines whether a host can truly produce a valuable cultural program. Only when the host himself becomes a thoughtful and knowledgeable cultural figure will he have the confidence and strength to promote cultural confidence.

In the context of deepening media convergence, cultural program hosts face both challenges and opportunities. They must keep pace with technological developments and cultivate their comprehensive competencies from multiple dimensions, including professional knowledge, knowledge reserves, innovative thinking, and humanistic care.

We must explore new forms of expression that are suited to the new media context, using more relaxed, lively, fashionable, and innovative methods to attract young audiences^[5]. This will enable us to present high culture in a lighter, more entertaining way, ensuring that mainstream values truly resonate with people online—not just in their ears, but in their minds and hearts.

While improving the quality of cultural program hosts, the industry must also establish a support and guarantee system and build a long-term training mechanism to help them broaden their horizons and improve their professional skills. Reform of the evaluation and incentive mechanisms is also crucial. A comprehensive assessment system should be established, incorporating indicators such as the program's value orientation, cultural content, social response, and degree of innovation into the basis for evaluating hosts, thereby guiding hosts to focus their efforts on improving program quality and value content. Only by fostering a positive ecosystem that combines individual effort, platform support, academic assistance, and social encouragement can we continuously produce a new generation of outstanding cultural program hosts who can lead the way in creating value and taking on social responsibility.

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