Research on the Communication Advantages of China's First Funny Experimental Reality TV Show "*Have Fun*"

Yange Chen [1, *]

[1] Landscape architecture, Architectural Arts, China Academy of Art, Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, 310000, China

*Corresponding author: 3200501070@caa.edu.cn

Abstract. Since China's reform and opening up, entertainment culture and media technology have developed continuously, and variety shows in Chinese Mainland have also sprung up. However, due to the change of national policies and people's higher quality requirements for entertainment activities, China's variety shows are also facing many challenges. Zhejiang satellite TV is one of the most famous satellite TV in Chinese Mainland, and its variety shows have been widely known in China with high ratings and popular audience popularity, since 2008, Zhejiang satellite TV has launched a number of well-known and high-quality variety shows since it established the banner "China Blue" was an important watershed. "*Have Fun*" is the first funny experimental reality show in China launched by Zhejiang satellite TV in 2021. The communication advantages of this program are reflected in many aspects, but so far there is not much research literature on this program. This paper mainly uses the observation method to study and analyze the communication advantages of *Have Fun* from all aspects and extracts the reference significance of the program for reference.

Keywords: Experimental variety show; Innovation path; Zhejiang TV; Communication advantages.

1. Introduction

The development of culture always follows the progress of economic and political factors. Due to the progress of science and technology, satellite TV technology was born. China's society as a whole has been developing towards the trend of openness and tolerance, people's entertainment life is gradually diversifying, and people's demand for entertainment is gradually putting forward higher requirements. Under the influence of various factors, various TV programs are gradually born. Variety shows are a kind of TV programs with entertainment, and the earliest origin of entertainment variety shows in mainland China was a live performance of disabled soldiers on Beijing TV, the predecessor of CCTV, in the 1950s, which was the beginning of variety shows in mainland China. Since then, the development of variety shows in China can be roughly divided into three stages: the "start-up period", the "flourishing period" and the "breakthrough period" [1].

In recent years, the innovation and development of variety shows in mainland China has been met with waves of challenges. The Chinese government has released many policies, such as the 2011 "Entertainment Restriction Order", to prevent over-entertainment and vulgarity, and to meet the demand for more diverse viewing tastes. At the same time, various types of variety show imported from overseas have also taken over the market, so the quality of content and innovation of variety shows in mainland China are being demanded more. Despite all the challenges, many Chinese TV channels have continued to perform well, topping the ratings year after year.

Zhejiang TV is one of the most well-known TV channels in China, and its ratings and audience popularity are very high. Looking back at the development history of Zhejiang TV, from 2008, when the banner "China Blue" was an important watershed, followed by the "China Dream Show", "The Voice of China" and "The Voice of Dreams" as the representative of the seasonal studio reality shows reflecting the theme of "dreams", etc., the program accelerated. In 2014, Zhejiang TV launched an all-star outdoor competition reality show, "Running Man", against the backdrop of the rapid development of variety shows in Chinese television. Since its launch, it has attracted a lot of attention and gained a high reputation and influence, which has led to the formation of a trinity of "brand power, guiding power and communication power" for Zhejiang TV's variety shows [2]. Zhejiang TV has always been exploring the road of sustainable innovation in variety shows, and in 2021, Zhejiang TV

launched China's first reality show of experimental curiosity - "*Have Fun*", which is unique and provides a good example of innovation, richness and value breakthrough of Chinese variety shows.

The show is a fun and knowledgeable show. Inspired by the "Funny Nobel Prize", the program creates an immersive "science environment" and is dedicated to researching strange and bizarre human experiments to verify some novel ideas and interesting brainstorms. The program's experiments involve psychology, physics, medicine, philosophy and other fields. According to the data, the first broadcast of "*Have Fun*" ranked in the top two among all TV programs on all provincial TV stations (source: China TV's Sophia Media Research (CSM)). The program makes theory and practice "on the ground", in line with the current orientation of young people, using an innovative perspective to inspire the public to think in a flexible and dialectical way, taking into account the fear of science and the love of life and life, the program's unique design of the segment, the transmission of positive energy, flexible to expand the boundaries of the audience's thinking, but also reflects the program team's innovation and It also reflects the innovation and social responsibility of the program team [3]. Chinese mainstream media such as *Guangming Daily*, *China Youth Daily* and *Jiefang Daily* have all given high praise to the program.

2. Literature Review

Innovation in variety shows has long been an inescapable element of successful communication, and scholars have studied and analyzed many successful varieties shows in mainland China so that future people can continue to learn and reflect on them. In an environment of "pan-entertainment," some variety shows have come up with new ideas, and Yu Xiwen discusses the feasibility of developing "slow variety shows," which are more likely to have emotional resonance with today's society than fast variety shows with tight pacing and fierce confrontation, and to meet audiences' The psychological demands of the audience [4]. Exploring the development path of Chinese variety shows by pursuing innovative themes is a general trend to optimize variety shows, but not all variety shows that pursue innovative themes are perfect. He affirms the content innovation - unlike other consistent youth idol talent shows, the show focuses on independent women over 30 years old and tries to build a new generation of women's image. But at the same time, Wang also reflects on and criticizes the problems of "excessive catering to the audience" and "the negative influence of the celebrity halo" and discusses the causes of the program's dissemination process deviating from the original intention and the "high start and low finish". The reason for the "high start and low finish" of the program is discussed [5]. From the perspective of spreading youth subculture forms, Tan Leichun affirms that "China New Rap" has created a unique new trend of Chinese hip-hop in the localization and reconstruction and has become the transmitter of its own culture as a successful new method of cultural dissemination [6].

At the same time, many scholars have identified many problems with China's recent social entertainment variety shows and have studied various possible directions for improvement. Han Xiaojiao points out the importance of the "model". Without models, it is difficult to guarantee the quality of programs, and the industry in China has paid too little attention to models to promote them to other countries [7]. Some scholars have proposed a new concept of "legitimacy" in the new media environment, which is a complex situation in which multiple subjects, including the public and subcultural groups, compete. The understanding of legitimacy transcends the single state category and considers the risk of legitimacy faced by media practice as a pressure structure with diverse sources [8]. Emphasizes the need for Chinese entertainment culture to remain legitimate from various perspectives, especially not to deviate from the mainstream ideology of Chinese society and culture, and to avoid the failures and risks of spreading misconceptions.

The quality of Zhejiang TV's variety shows has always been excellent, and many scholars have tried to explore where the communication advantages of Zhejiang TV in maintaining excellent program quality year-round lie. Wu Mengyao believes that the material disseminated by various new media platforms should be selectively cut according to the characteristics of individual platforms and

target users' preferences. 70 minutes in length is acceptable to the public when broadcast in traditional media such as radio and TV, but the videos released in Bili Bili should be controlled within 5 minutes as much as possible, and the material on platforms such as Kuaishou and TikTok is selected from the best part of the program and the climax (the completion rate of videos in 8 seconds on TikTok is over 60%) [9]. Jin Shanshan pointed out the importance of STP strategy in the success factors of the program "Run for Your Life". The first step the program took in branding was to implement STP strategy and abandoned the previous status of simply introducing the program and actively cooperated with the Korean team, thus laying a solid brand foundation for "Running Man" [10]. The Voice of Dreams attempted to take a different path in the burgeoning music variety market, with the aim of "public welfare, interaction and dream fulfillment", breaking through the paradigm of competitive and normal program production. It is a reasonable way to avoid the risk of restrictive policies in music talent competitions. It demonstrates the successful use of the "unique selling point" theory in variety shows by Zhejiang TV [2].

Although many scholars have conducted in-depth studies on the problems and solutions of variety shows in mainland China from a variety of perspectives and dimensions, and Zhejiang TV's variety shows, as the outstanding producer of variety shows in mainland China, have long been a model for numerous industry and non-industry references, there is one variety show that seems to be forgotten in the focus of most scholars' studies. As the first experimental reality show in China, "*Have Fun*" is not only unique in terms of content innovation, but also in terms of its leading ratings and positive comments from the mainstream media, which show that "*Have Fun*" is a variety show of great learning significance. Therefore, this paper will explore the various aspects of "*Have Fun*" to study the specific performance of its communication advantages and whether there is room for further improvement on this basis and summarize the excellent communication methods applicable to other variety shows.

3. Methodology

The study used the observation method, observing a total of 14 episodes of "*Have Fun*", 14 themes, 55 experiments,40 representative landscapes, and 13 guests. The observation method is a method of determining the object of observation on the basis of determining the research question, making observation records, and obtaining empirical facts. This paper analyzes and summarize the communication advantages of "*Have Fun*" itself by observing the program content of "*Have Fun*", observing the general environment and communication channels of variety shows in mainland China as well as comprehensively observing the development of other outstanding variety shows in mainland China.

4. Result

From the ratings of the first season of "*Have Fun*" on CSM63 city network premiere ratings, "*Have Fun*" has always maintained the first or second place since its broadcast, and has never fallen to the third place, and the share of ratings share has also maintained an upward trend, which shows that it occupies a far leading position among all provincial TV programs. Its communication advantages can be seen from the following aspects: first of all, the inspiration and thematic content of "*Have Fun*" is very novel, which can stand out from the themes of general variety shows and attract the public's attention. The background of "*Have Fun*" is inspired by the Ig Nobel Prizes founded by Mark Abrahams. The unique background of the program determines the general direction of "*Have Fun*" to explore science in a funny way, which also lays the foundation for the program to be accepted and loved by most viewers. Secondly, the scene setting of "*Have Fun*" has been upgraded and become very rich and close to life, and its scene design is also very cutting-edge, reaching the level of the top variety show scenes in mainland China. For example, the "*Have Fun* Base" in the second season of the program, compared with the first season, its decoration and scene arrangement are more artistic

and aesthetic, and the use of space is completer and more diversified. In addition to the fixed interior scenes, there are also very flexible and different exterior scenes, such as the second phase of the first season, where some of the scenes were set in the zoo, which led to a hot viewing effect. Moreover, *Have Fun*'s segments are very compact, interlocking and constantly upgrading the rules of the game, and the coherence of the segments and the narrative of the plot of this variety show are important parts of its communication advantages. For example, in the second season, besides keeping the original 4-5 experiments operated by the MCs in each episode, two new segments of "Morning Class" and "Pi Coin Exchange" have been added, which link the clues of the whole program and add competition and interaction for the MCs in the program. These two segments link up the whole show and add competition and interactivity to the MCs, which is more in line with the audience's preference.

5. Discussion

There have been many science-based variety shows in mainland China, including Jiangsu TV's "The Strongest Brain", which is a competitive show featuring the brain power of "genius kids". CCTV launched "Close to Science", a popular science TV program that focuses on news clues, social life, and narrative descriptions of scientific events. Another CCTV program, "The Smartest Man," focuses on artificial intelligence and is a scientific challenge program that showcases cutting-edge science and technology. Each of these existing science-themed variety shows has its own characteristics, but *Have Fun* is also unique and innovative in its inspiration and creativity, which is inspired by Mark Abrahams' Nobel Prize, a funny parody of the Nobel Prize that aims to select those who are "funny at first sight, but thought-provoking later. The purpose of the Nobel Prize is to select research that is "laughable at first sight, but thought-provoking later" [11]. Based on this general direction, each episode of "*Have Fun*" sets a different theme of exploration, which involves various fields, such as the sun, animals, plants, social life, human body, chemistry, etc. Through a series of bizarre scientific experiments conducted by the five MCs to verify the novel ideas and strange ideas contained in each theme, to convey the spirit of scientific inquiry to the audience in a light-hearted and fun way It also hopes to provoke viewers to think about and explore various things in life. *Have Fun*" captures the essence of the funny Nobel Prize, based on scientific experiments, and establishes the value of science popularization, education and communication of the variety show. At the same time, it follows the important feature of the Nobel Prize, "sense of humor", so as to establish the fun effect of this variety show, as well as the wide acceptance of the audience. The theme of the third installment of the first season is "The Sweet Plan of Sour Oranges", the theme is to explore whether oranges have the ability to sense external changes, and whether the external effects will cause changes in the acidity of oranges. In the course of the program, the MCs took the oranges on various exciting entertainment facilities such as roller coasters and sledgehammers and let the oranges "watch" the wild dance show of muscle men to test the degree of acidity change of the oranges. to think boldly about everything in daily life and not to worry about whether the result will achieve the expected effect. Although this theme is very innovative and groundbreaking, there are certain drawbacks and loopholes, such as whether the operation of each MC is standard when testing the acidity of oranges, and whether other factors affect the results of the experiment due to improper operation or lack of control of variables in place during the test. Although the show focuses on variety effects, its original purpose is to encourage people to have a scientific spirit of inquiry, so the lack of rigorous experiments is somewhat contrary to the original purpose of the show. The theme of the program is very broad, and also involves cultural exploration and research, the seventh episode of the first season of the program is "Imaginary Wonderful Journey", the MCs of this episode will be challenged to achieve "global travel" in Hangzhou, travel through Paris, France, the Alps, the East African Rift, and the East African Rift. The show's MCs were challenged to travel around the world in Hangzhou, through Paris, the Alps, the East African Rift Valley, and more. The program not only covers geography and culture, but also gives an account of the "round-the-world trip" by extracting the significant cultural features and local customs of each city. For example, a fine French meal near the Eiffel Tower in Paris, France, where

the MCs learn how to cook the representative dishes of French cuisine, presenting a special French feast and passing on the knowledge of French food culture. The cultural communication method in "*Have Fun*" follows the trend of cultural communication in the new media era and empowers cultural communication with a more flexible and innovative presentation method, and infiltrates culture into the entertainment experience of the audience watching the program in a subtle way. It also provides an excellent demonstration of how to build a bridge between variety models and cultural communication.

In addition to the uniqueness of the thematic content that greatly contributes to the program's communication effect, the excellent scene setting is also one of the program's communication advantages. *Have Fun*" has outdoor and indoor scenes, and the venues for recording the program are different according to the needs of different types of experiments, and the differences in the venues are also very obvious, ranging from a small room to a large lake, some are very modern and technological indoor scenes, and some are directly "borrowed view" from the landscape of nature. The richness of the program scenes is also one of the important components of its communication advantages. Among the indoor scenes there is a fixed *Have Fun* base, the role is equivalent to the five members of the "home", especially in the second season of the program, *Have Fun* base is further upgraded, compared to the first season of the program, the second season of the base in addition to meet the basic needs of the members of the program, but also configured more Compared to the first season, the second season of the show, in addition to meeting the basic needs of the members of the show, the base is also equipped with more professional experimental space basement tool room, outdoor pool, courtyard, sports field. On the one hand, it can make the program guests have more sense of belonging and intimacy during the recording, and enhance the quality of their interaction in the program, on the other hand, it also directly improves the picture effect of the program, making the scenes appear in the program more complete, making up for the disadvantages of the first season of the program in terms of the mobility of the base settings and imperfect facilities, and also making the scenes of the shooting in a uniform and rich at the same time. In addition to fixed base scenes, "*Have Fun*" often involves location shooting, such as the second episode of the first season, part of the shooting scenes are in the zoo, the experimental theme of this episode is "Animal Adventure", the shooting scenes directly selected in the zoo, in fact, can be equivalent to invite a variety of animals to the same As a guest of the program, the zoo is also a distinctive site characteristics of the place itself, for the audience is also a good sensory experience, the program CSM63 city group ratings 1.845, the first in the same period, won the platform hot search 152, microblogging hot search 36, short video platform hot search 24, Hi put the main topic read 1.59 billion, people can see the change of scene The change of scenes and input also affects the viewing effect of the program to a certain extent.

Each episode of "*Have Fun*" will set 4-5 experiments around a theme, the five MCs will receive a delivery box every morning, which contains the most important "experiment manual" of the program, and then the five MCs will complete the experimental tasks one by one according to the contents of the experiment manual, verifying the conjectures with facts, and after the end of each day's experiments, they will summarize and reflect on the day's experiments. After each day's experiment, they will summarize and reflect on the day's experiment, and draw conclusions that may or may not be useful. The second season of "*Have Fun*" retains this format and takes it a step further. In addition to the basic experiments, the second season also includes two additional sessions, "Morning Class" and "Pi Coin Exchange", in which the morning class is set after the MCs wake up every day. The morning class was also equipped with a leave mechanism, which was closely related to the "π coin exchange" session. During the whole day's experiment, the five MCs go through certain assessment criteria to earn π coins, which can be exchanged for morning class leave vouchers. The "competitiveness" is one of the reasons why many viewers love to watch the show. The tandem of these two links makes the whole process of the show less monotonous and more purposeful and clue-oriented, which is also an important reflection of the continuous improvement and updating of the show's mechanism. In addition, in occasional episodes, the experimentation process has also changed

slightly, such as in the fifth episode of the first season, which featured a film shot by the MCs themselves, with the experimentation permeating each segment of the film shot, from beginning to end, as a tandem of the same story, using a more narrative approach to organize the rhythm of the show.

6. Conclusion

The development of variety shows in mainland China is fast and diversified, but at the same time, they also face various problems such as generalization of entertainment. *Have Fun*" is the first experimental reality show in China, and the program's intention, content innovation, scene setting, and link mechanism are all very meaningful and have outstanding communication advantages. This paper focuses on how this show has created a different kind of popular science variety show that is well accepted and loved by the public, breaking through the stereotypical and innovative framework of the subject matter and extending to more knowledge areas, while enriching the content of the show by adding cultural output in the context of scientific exploration. And in addition to the content settings, in the construction of the theme scene, scene art design from a broader dimension of thinking and creation, more for the program's communication advantages. At the same time, although the program has been more mature and successful, but there is still some room for improvement, these spaces provide the direction for the optimization of the program, such as the program's link mechanism is constantly updated and upgraded, and the rigor of scientific experiments worth further examination, how to balance the high requirements of scientific experiments and the entertainment nature of variety shows is also the direction to be improved in the future. Therefore, a comprehensive analysis of *Have Fun*'s existing communication advantages and future breakthrough possibilities is the core of this paper, in the hope that it will provide a good reference for the creation of other variety shows in the future.

References

[1] X. G. Chen, TV variety shows: historical and ontological characteristics, China TV，2001.

[2] Y. Yao, Talking about the application of the theory of "unique selling points" in variety shows -- Taking Zhejiang satellite TV as an example, China Academy of Arts, 2018.

[3] China Youth, Finding the secret of "me" the second season of "Hi Fang Pai" begins, 2022-08-08, retrieved 2022.9.11 from http://fun.youth.cn/gnzx/202208/t20220808_13903234.htm.

[4] X. W. Yu, An analysis of the development path of Chinese variety shows -- Taking the slow variety "yearning for life" as an example, Media Forum, 2021.

[5] X. J. Wang, The construction of female images in the talent show "sister riding the wind and waves", Northwestern University, 2021.

[6] L. C. Tan, Multidimensional perspective and development of youth Hip Hop Culture -- from the perspective of China's new rap, Youth exploration, 2021.

[7] X. J. Han, Research on innovation and reform of Chinese TV variety show, Shanxi University, 2015.

[8] K. Zhou, D. L.Huang, The legitimacy of entertainment: the concept and practice of contemporary TV variety shows in Chinese Mainland, Journal of International Communication, 2021.

[9] M. Y. Wu, Research on the dissemination of Intangible Cultural Heritage Based on new media -- Taking "Miao Mo Chinese heart" of Zhejiang satellite TV as an example, Culture industry, 2022.

[10] S .S. Jin, Research on the marketing strategy of mode introduction programs -- Taking Zhejiang satellite TV's running brothers as an example, Sichuan Normal University, 2015.

[11] Zhejiang province's satellite, The Cloud Networking Session of "*Have Fun*" unexpectedly staged a laughing challenge, and the guest group's ideas turned the audience upside down, 2021.8.14, retrieved 2022.9.11 from https://baijiahao.baidu.com/s?id=1708008904560400944.