

A Study of Emotional Consumption Patterns in Emotionally Observational Reality TV Shows

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Abstract: In recent years, emotional observation reality shows have seen explosive growth, and these programmes not only focus on emotional topics such as love and marriage, but also involve family relationships, intergenerational communication and other dimensions, providing viewers with a rich observation perspective. The factors that influence the emotional consumption patterns of such programmes include narrative structure, guest selection, programme content, and the audience itself. Against the background of ubiquitous consumerist forms and selections, appropriate emotional consumption pushes audiences to satisfy their emotional needs and realise their self-worth, and also creates a benign interactive space in society, while excessive emotional consumption leads to psychological distortion of the audience, which in turn produces adverse effects. This paper will analyse the emotional consumption mode of emotional observation reality TV shows to enlighten the public with a multi-dimensional perspective to think about and eliminate the operation mechanism of emotional consumption and the creative boundaries of variety shows.

Keywords: Emotional observation reality TV, emotional consumption mode, empathic narrative, viewers' emotional needs

1. Introduction

Observation variety shows first originated in Japan, and their broadcasting model of "reality TV + observation room" provides inspiration for today's emotional observation reality shows. These programmes adopt a highly interactive and authentic approach, attracting the attention and participation of a large number of viewers. Viewers are often attracted by emotional stories when watching such programmes, which produce the effect of empathy and resonance and are consumed as part of the emotional experience. However, the theoretical and empirical research in this field is relatively limited. With the help of Google Scholar, the number of relevant literature collected on "emotional reality TV" and "observational reality TV" is relatively small, and in the relevant papers, the research analyses the use of "emotion" and "observation" as media elements, instead of analysing them as themes.

In this paper, we will collect relevant theories and researches through literature review, combine them with relevant communication and psychology theories, and adopt the logic of hierarchical progression to analyse the realisation of the emotional consumption mode from

the relevant theories and researches on emotional consumption. At the same time, we will focus on analysing the impacts of this type of emotional consumption mode and give reasonable suggestions. audience's emotional experience and emotional consumption behaviours in emotional observation reality shows, it can not only help producers better produce and disseminate such shows to meet the audience's high-level spiritual needs, but also provide the audience with a richer and more satisfying emotional consumption experience.

2. Relevant theories and researches of emotional consumption mode

As the starting point of human spiritual activities, emotion is people's personal experience of natural existence. Wei Xinghua and other scholars believe that "productivity is the fundamental force driving social progress", and further pointed out that the core component of productivity is human emotion and desire [1]. From this they conclude that emotion plays a vital role in productivity and can be said to be a decisive element of productivity.

Western countries have taken the lead in stepping into the track of a consumption-based society driven by the two industrial revolutions. In this process, rational consciousness gradually penetrates into the emotional world. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory states that people will pursue a higher level of spiritual satisfaction after satisfying their basic material needs. The rapid development of Internet technology has further intensified this trend. Variety programmes, as a product of a mediatised society, have keenly captured this change in emotional needs.

Emotional consumption refers to the consumer behaviour of purchasing virtual emotional products through market-based exchange, so as to obtain a kind of virtual emotional satisfaction and support. This kind of virtual emotional product can cross the limitations of physical space and provide consumers with an instant and convenient emotional communication experience. In emotional observation reality shows, the programmes use emotion as a gimmick to attract the attention of the audience or achieve other utilitarian purposes, so as to achieve the emotional consumption mode.

3. The realisation of the emotional consumption model

Emotional observation reality shows adopt a multi-line narrative structure, in which the traditional "single space" is revolutionised into a "double-site" setting, showing different spaces in the same time dimension through intertwined narratives, and viewers can realise a change from a single perspective to multiple perspectives in this narrative mode. The shift from a single perspective to multiple perspectives is used as a way to facilitate the process of emotional consumption.

Topic setting is a social behaviour [2]. The producer will dig deep into the target audience's interests and current social hotspots in the pre-production period of the programme in order to set up the most competitive topics. Most of the programmes focus on the familiar emotional areas such as family and marriage, providing viewers with a wealth of emotional references. In this process, the audience automatically integrates the programme with their personal emotional elements in a specific emotional domain, it increasing the audience's stickiness and emotional consumption of the programme.

4. Impacts of emotional consumption model in emotional observation reality shows

4.1. Positive Impact

4.1.1. Satisfy the audience's own various needs

The Uses and Gratifications Theory proposed by E. Katz points out that the audience uses the media to satisfy their own psychological or social needs. Individuals are not passive users of media; they choose a media type based on their personal needs and motivation-driven goals [3,4]. The U&G theory suggests that audiences are rational, which means that people are aware of their interests and motivations for viewing when they watch emotionally observational reality shows. Social fulfilment is the most important factor influencing user satisfaction and emotional engagement [5], and although this media experience is to some extent entertaining for the viewers, the emotional involvement with the characters is highlighted in the modelling of narrative engagement and supersocial relationships [6], such as the process of romantic relationship development that enables the viewers to become immersed in it, which in turn helps the viewers to form the social fulfilment that they are looking for. However, in the context of social comparison and the proliferation of aesthetic experiences, such emotional experiences may stimulate the audience's self-reflective process while satisfying their needs and having an impact on their self-identity.

4.1.2. Satisfying the public's voyeurism

In today's new media age, where individuals can extend the range of information they receive through various types of media, studies focusing on the psychological appeal of reality TV have provided preliminary empirical evidence that there is a positive correlation between the tendency to use the media for its intended purpose and the consumption of reality TV shows [7], i.e., the rational use of exposure and voyeuristic elements of reality TV may have a positive impact on the emotional consumption of reality TV programmes. The voyeuristic appeal of gazing at individuals from the viewer community is also closely related to the needs of television viewers and the exhibitionism of programme participants [8]. Both the scene and the observation room provide an emotional basis for reinforcing the identity of the audience's gazing subject, while the real world where the audience actually exists is the outermost viewing space. This gaze satisfies the viewer's own voyeurism, but this voyeurism is different from the concept corresponding to the field of psychiatry, which does not emphasise sexual transgression, but rather conceptualises voyeurism as a common pleasure that comes from accessing private details [9], a satisfaction that is usually non-pathological, and the very existence of emotionally observant reality TV shows is to provide the viewer with a safe and legally recognised of gazing places.

4.2. Negative Effects

4.2.1. Mimetic Emotional Environment and Standard Surrogate Reality

In modern societies in the context of consumerism, it has been suggested that to focus on emotion is to emphasise experiential and material considerations [10], and it is thus clear that 'consumption' is more or less relevant to a number of manifestations in the arts and humanities. Emotions are sometimes recognised as shopping versus the process of establishing and maintaining identity [11]. Such associations inevitably have a misleading or negative impact on the audience in the process of emotional consumption. Reality TV shows

often have dates in high-end western restaurants, accompanied by exquisite gifts or flowers. Audiences are forced to accept these emotional behaviours and objects, and subconsciously use them in real life to construct their own symbols of love. In everyday life, the capitalist is to seize such emotional narrative factors; diamonds symbolise the eternity of love; "cinema," "amusement parks," and other places in the public consciousness have long been inextricably linked with love, but in fact, the concept of consumption is different from person to person! Just a series of emotional narratives are imposed on these materials and spaces, packaging the goods with emotions to give them a nobler and richer value.

4.2.2. Privacy consumption is legitimised

The medium has intensified the publicisation of private behaviour compared to the past. The mature use of many symbols for the purpose of consumption of emotional goods by emotionally observant reality TV may increase the misunderstanding of the media by the general public, who may confuse voyeurism with social curiosity, i.e., the general public believes that voyeuristic displays disclosed by reality TV are legitimate behaviours that are protected.

The premise of privacy sharing is the subjective initiative of the individual, and by allowing private emotional content to become an object of consumption for the audience, producers are tacitly approving of this kind of voyeuristic behaviour. While the social conventions associated with the inaccessibility of these private behaviours (e.g., self-disclosure or gossip) require restraint on the part of both the source and the potential recipients [12], emotionally observant reality TV gives legitimacy to the voyeuristic behaviour of the public, breaking down the fourth wall between the programme and its audience: participants choose to disclose rather than to be modest, and the viewer chooses not to avert his or her eyes, but to carefully gaze [13]. And the mass media's guidance and condoning of this behaviour have made the consumption of emotional privacy a common, collective behaviour that lacks moral binding.

5. Recommendations

5.1. Focus on the "real world" of reality

Current emotional observation reality TV shows still use the high standard of guests to complete the symbolic construction, but it should be clear that the de-elitism of casting is a direction for future development. Although the guests in "In Between" have the differentiation of middle-aged groups, they can actually be categorised into the same group, i.e., mature and idealised elite guests, and part of the audience associates this elite image with a good emotional life, in which they build the necessary existential relationship. However, in the same age group, there are many more youthful groups, whose personalities are diverse and cannot be easily defined. Although the programme is obsessed with many high-standard character symbols to shape the guests, one of the important factors of the emotional reality show is the common feelings with the audience, the guests as a consumer object, not to provide the audience with an untouchable high-level identity. To achieve the presentation of emotional consumption, the audience should not only look at the program with the psychology of curiosity but should also be concerned about the reality of their own lives, pay attention to the emotional needs of their own or around the ordinary class, and experience emotional consumption more than the real world. In order to avoid losing confidence and interest in life in the illusory sweetness constructed by mass media, the process of emotional consumption is more focused on the exchange of ideas rather than on

the high consumption of life forms. While realising that guest status meets the expectations of the public, digging deeper and experiencing the underlying emotional narrative is the optimal solution for viewers to make up for the emotional void in the real world by way of emotional consumption.

5.2. Clarify the validity of the observation

The logical construction of emotional observation reality TV programmes is intended to satisfy the psychological needs of the audience, but in the logic of consumption, the boundaries between public and private areas are gradually blurred. Private topics gradually throughout the entire programme, emotional observation of the content of the privacy of the variety show, and Freud's "I" desire coincides with [14]. The public has mastered the right and wrong standards of moral rules to varying degrees in the process of social education, and people know clearly how to restrain their social behaviour in public areas, but the process of emotional consumption is full of temptation, and the big presentation of emotional privacy by emotional observation reality TV shows allows viewers not to have to bear the consequences of the moral criticism triggered by the act of voyeurism, and even provides the viewers with a model for over-consumption of other people's privacy, which To a certain extent, the audience relaxes its vigilance, weakening the public's sense of self-binding and public morality. As independent individuals, viewers have the responsibility to spontaneously pay attention to and clarify the difference between "observation" and negative "voyeurism", and not to accept others' viewpoints wholesale when accepting the emotional rendering of reality TV guests. What viewers ultimately gain should be the emotional richness and discernment of the spiritual level, rather than the mere satisfaction of visual selfishness and curiosity.

6. Conclusion

As a clear stream in the variety market, the simplicity and depth of emotional observation in reality shows have won widespread acclaim. Unlike complicated competition systems and glamorous stages, it uses the simple "observe and be observed" approach to deeply analyse the emotional bond between people.

However, under the wave of commercialisation, emotional observation reality TV is not immune to the impact of consumer culture. As a hotspot of popular emotional consumption, it accurately captures the audience's voyeuristic desires and emotional needs. In this process, the emotions of the programme guests are treated as a display element, and their privacy is also put under public discussion, corresponding to the consumption scene and consumption content, which makes the programme gradually form a set of relatively fixed emotional consumption patterns. Meanwhile, the setting of "observation room" gives audiences a more reasonable reason to watch, immersing themselves in the fun of observing other people's lives and creating emotional resonance with the guests.

It is worth noting that while entertaining the public, emotional observation programmes also bring some hidden worries. In a consumer society, we may inadvertently become "voyeurs", fall into the quagmire of entertainment, and be lured by commercial emotional symbols. Therefore, while pursuing the innovation and development of the programme, we should also be alert to its possible negative impact.

As the variety market is changing, it is difficult to predict whether emotional observation reality shows will continue to prosper. In order to maintain its longevity, practitioners should adhere to the original intention of creation, the bottom line of emotional consumption and the

real purpose, and the audience should pay attention to the real emotion behind the programme, to avoid being held hostage by consumerism. This paper has only conducted a preliminary discussion on the emotional consumption mode of emotional observation as reality shows, but there are still many shortcomings. In the future, we will continue to pay attention to its development trend and update our research perspectives and methods in order to provide more useful references for its healthy development.

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