

DOCTORAL THESIS

The rise and fall of popular variety programs – A Hong Kong Case Study SIU, Chiu Shun Patrick

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STUDENT'S NAME: SIU Chiu Shun Patrick

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This is to certify that the above student's thesis has been examined by the following panel members and has received full approval for acceptance in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration.

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ABSTRACT

“How to produce a popular TV program?” has been the most important and fundamental question whirling in the minds of all the TV production personnel of all generations when they are producing new TV variety programs. Especially under the current unstable economic environment, it is crucial to explore the factors leading to the success of popular productions so that production personnel and investors can minimize the losses and investment risks as well as maximize the returns of the investment. Yet, there have been a limited number of researches that analyze the mechanism behind successful TV programs, and it can be said that no systematic method or model are developed to help production personnel to ensure the programs they produce will eventually become popular. Previous studies have briefly touched on basic factors that help construct a successful TV program. Yet, most of these studies have been constructed from the point of view of the production personnel and the characteristics of the TV program itself. Little if not none scholarly work has recognized the importance of market orientation behind successful TV programs in our everyday lives.

This research is aiming at examining, identifying and verifying those successful factors in order to provide guidance to production personnel to create popular productions, in the hopes of reviving the Hong Kong TV production industry that has been going downhill due to new competitions from surrounding regions and emerging online streaming platforms.

To analyze the rise and fall of Hong Kong variety TV shows, an exploratory study is conducted in this research for identifying the relationship between the TV program, and program factors that have an impact on the audience, which in turn contribute to the consequential success of TV programs. This research is confined to a designated geographic location (Hong Kong), delivery medium (TV) and program type (TV variety programs) (1970-2020). I interviewed more than a dozen senior associates in the Hong Kong TV industry to understand their experiences and opinions on my research topic.

After analyzing the qualitative data given by all the interviewees, a research model is developed to explicate the influence of five key factors, namely fun, family, information, long-term focus and positive element, on the success of TV programs and how the influences are moderated by technology and economic development. This model will advance our theoretical development and filled the knowledge void in

the literature. The model explains why the five factors contribute to a good program, yet at the same time explains the reasons behind other failures. In other words, both the rise and fall of the Hong Kong TV industry can be explained by this model in different angle of developments. I hope the original and new model derived from this thesis will provide a backbone for future variety TV show production in Hong Kong.