

# THE HOSTING STYLE OF TV VARIETY SHOW HOSTS AND AUDIENCE IDENTIFICATION

Yifan Zhu<sup>1</sup> and Manissa VASINAROM<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts, Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University, Thailand;  
1461826225@qq.com (Y. Z.); manissa.va@ssru.ac.th (M. V.)

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## ABSTRACT

This study investigates the impact of hosting styles in TV variety shows on audience identification, focusing on programs such as "Great Detective Season 9" (China), "Sisters Riding the Winds and Waves" (China), "Youth With You" (China), "Running Man" (South Korea), "Saturday Night Live" (United States), and "Britain's Got Talent" (United Kingdom). Through a mixed-method approach combining content analysis, audience surveys, and expert interviews, the research examines how different hosting styles-ranging from traditional and humorous to fashionable and emotional-shape audience perceptions and emotional engagement across diverse cultural and programmatic contexts. The findings reveal that hosting styles significantly influence audience identification, with humorous and natural styles being the most preferred (69.3% and 57.9%, respectively). Additionally, the study highlights the importance of aligning hosting styles with program content and cultural context to enhance audience satisfaction and program effectiveness. These insights provide valuable guidance for TV variety show production teams in optimizing hosting styles to improve program quality and audience loyalty in a globalized media landscape.

**Keywords:** Hosting style, Audience Identification, TV Variety Shows, Cross-cultural Analysis

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## INTRODUCTION

In the era of media diversification and globalization, TV variety shows have become a cornerstone of popular entertainment, attracting millions of viewers worldwide. As one of the core elements of these programs, the host plays a pivotal role in shaping the program's identity and engaging the audience. The hosting style—whether traditional, humorous, fashionable, or emotional—directly influences the audience's perception and emotional connection to the program (Li, 2021; Liu, 2020). This study aims to explore the relationship between hosting styles and audience identification across a diverse range of TV variety shows, providing insights into how different styles impact viewer engagement and program success in various cultural and programmatic contexts.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform both academic discourse and industry practices. While existing studies have examined the role of hosts in media, few have systematically analyzed how specific hosting styles affect audience identification across different types of variety shows and cultural settings (Qi & Xue, 2011; Wang, 2020). By focusing on programs such as "Great Detective Season 9" (China), "Sisters Riding the Winds and Waves" (China), "Youth With You" (China), "Running Man" (South Korea), "Saturday Night Live" (United States), and "Britain's Got Talent" (United Kingdom), this study seeks to fill this gap and offer actionable recommendations for program producers and hosts operating in a globalized media landscape.

The research questions guiding this study are: 1) How do different hosting styles influence audience identification across diverse cultural and programmatic contexts? 2) What are the most effective hosting styles for specific types of variety shows and cultural settings? 3) How can hosts adapt their styles to meet evolving audience expectations in a globalized media environment? To address these questions, the study employs a mixed-method approach, combining content analysis, audience surveys, and expert interviews. This comprehensive methodology allows for a nuanced understanding of the complex relationship between hosting styles and audience engagement across different cultural and programmatic contexts (Liu & Guo, 2024; Pei, 2023).

The theoretical foundation of this study draws on Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory and Schechner's (2002) social performance framework, which emphasize the performative aspects of media hosting. These theories suggest that hosts navigate both "front-stage" (e.g., on-air performance) and "back-stage" (e.g., preparation and rehearsal) roles to create an immersive experience for the audience (Goffman, 1959; Schechner, 2002). By applying these theories to the context of TV variety shows across different cultures, this study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how hosting styles contribute to audience identification and program success in a globalized media landscape (Li, 2021; Liu, 2022).

In summary, this introduction sets the stage for an in-depth exploration of hosting styles in TV variety shows, highlighting their importance in shaping audience engagement and program effectiveness across diverse cultural and programmatic contexts. The subsequent sections of this study will delve into the theoretical framework, research methodology, and empirical findings, ultimately providing a comprehensive understanding of how hosting styles can be optimized to enhance audience identification and program quality in a globalized media environment (Wang, 2020; Zhang, 2015).

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

The integration of performing arts into media hosting has been a subject of significant academic interest, particularly in the context of TV variety shows. This literature review synthesizes existing research on the role of hosting styles in shaping audience identification, focusing on three key areas: the theoretical foundations of hosting as performance, the emotional and

psychological impact of hosting styles, and the adaptation of hosting styles to different program formats and cultural contexts.

### **Theoretical Foundations of Hosting as Performance :**

The application of performance theory to media hosting provides a robust framework for understanding the role of hosts in TV variety shows. Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory, which posits that social interactions are akin to theatrical performances, is particularly relevant. According to this theory, hosts navigate both "front-stage" (on-air performance) and "back-stage" (preparation and rehearsal) roles to create an engaging and immersive experience for the audience. Similarly, Schechner's (2002) social performance framework emphasizes the performative aspects of hosting, suggesting that hosts use a combination of vocal modulation, body language, and emotional expression to connect with viewers. These theories underscore the importance of performance skills in media hosting and provide a foundation for analyzing how hosting styles influence audience identification across different cultural contexts (Goffman, 1959; Schechner, 2002).

Recent studies have expanded on these theories by examining how cultural differences shape hosting styles. For example, Li (2015) highlights how South Korean variety show hosts often employ a more interactive and humorous style, which resonates strongly with local audiences. In contrast, British and American hosts tend to adopt a more formal and authoritative style in talent shows like "Britain's Got Talent" and "Saturday Night Live" (Hill, 2005). These cultural nuances suggest that hosting styles must be adapted to align with the cultural expectations of the target audience.

### **Emotional and Psychological Impact of Hosting Styles :**

The emotional and psychological impact of hosting styles on audience engagement has been widely studied. Li (2021) highlights the importance of emotional authenticity in hosting, arguing that hosts who can effectively convey emotions through voice and body language are more likely to resonate with viewers. This is particularly relevant in variety shows, where the host's ability to create an emotional connection with the audience can significantly enhance program appeal. Liu (2020) further elaborates on this point, emphasizing the role of vocal techniques such as tone, pitch, and pacing in shaping the audience's emotional response. These studies suggest that hosting styles that prioritize emotional engagement are more effective in fostering audience identification.

Cross-cultural studies have also explored how emotional expression varies across cultures. For instance, in East Asian variety shows like "Running Man," hosts often use exaggerated emotional expressions to create a sense of camaraderie and humor, which aligns with the collectivist cultural values of the region (Li, 2015). In contrast, Western shows like "Saturday Night Live" rely more on satire and wit, reflecting the individualistic and critical nature of Western audiences (Shales & Miller, 2002).

### **Adaptation of Hosting Styles to Program Formats :**

The adaptation of hosting styles to different program formats and cultural contexts is another critical area of research. Qi and Xue (2011) discuss the concept of "non-role performance" in TV hosting, arguing that hosts must adapt their styles to suit the specific requirements of each program. For example, a humorous and energetic style may be more effective in entertainment-focused shows like "Running Man," while a more formal and authoritative style may be better suited for talent competitions like "Britain's Got Talent." Wang (2020) expands on this idea, suggesting that hosts must continuously innovate their performance techniques to meet changing audience expectations, particularly in a globalized media environment.

Cultural adaptation is also crucial in ensuring the success of TV variety shows. For example, the emotional and inspirational style of "Sisters Riding the Winds and Waves" resonates strongly with Chinese audiences due to its alignment with traditional values of perseverance and community (Li, 2021). Similarly, the fast-paced and interactive style of "Running Man"

appeals to South Korean audiences who value high-energy entertainment (Li, 2015). These examples highlight the importance of aligning hosting styles with both program content and cultural context to maximize audience engagement.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a mixed-method approach to investigate the impact of hosting styles on audience identification in TV variety shows across diverse cultural and programmatic contexts. The research design integrates qualitative and quantitative methods, including content analysis, audience surveys, and expert interviews, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between hosting styles and audience engagement. The following sections outline the specific methods used in this study, with enhanced methodological rigor and expanded scope to address the limitations identified in the review feedback.

### Content Analysis :

The first phase of the research involved content analysis of six popular TV variety shows: "Great Detective Season 9" (China), "Sisters Riding the Winds and Waves" (China), "Youth With You" (China), "Running Man" (South Korea), "Saturday Night Live" (United States), and "Britain's Got Talent" (United Kingdom). A total of 60 episodes (10 episodes per show) were selected for analysis, focusing on the hosts' language, behavior, and interaction methods. Key elements such as tone of voice, body language, and audience interaction were systematically recorded and categorized to identify different hosting styles.

To ensure methodological rigor, a detailed coding scheme was developed based on Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory and Schechner's (2002) social performance framework. The coding scheme included categories such as "humorous interaction," "emotional expression," "authoritative tone," and "cultural adaptation." Two independent coders were employed to ensure inter-coder reliability, with a Cohen's Kappa coefficient of 0.85, indicating strong agreement. This approach allowed for a nuanced understanding of how hosting styles vary across different cultural and programmatic contexts.

### Audience Survey Research :

The second phase of the research involved a large-scale audience survey to collect data on viewers' perceptions of hosting styles and their impact on program engagement. A questionnaire was designed to capture both quantitative and qualitative data, including audience preferences for specific hosting styles (e.g., humorous, emotional, authoritative) and their emotional responses to the host's performance. The survey was distributed to a diverse sample of 1,000 viewers, stratified by age, gender, cultural background, and viewing habits.

To enhance the validity and reliability of the survey, a pilot study was conducted with 100 participants to refine the questionnaire. The final survey instrument included both closed-ended questions (e.g., Likert-scale items) and open-ended questions to allow respondents to provide detailed feedback on their viewing experience. For instance, respondents were asked to describe how the host's style influenced their emotional connection to the program and whether it enhanced their overall viewing experience. The survey data were analyzed using SPSS, with advanced statistical techniques such as factor analysis and regression analysis to explore the relationships between hosting styles and audience identification.

### Quantitative and Qualitative Data Analysis :

The data collected from the audience survey were analyzed using statistical software (SPSS) to identify trends and patterns in audience preferences. Quantitative analysis focused on the correlation between hosting styles and audience identification, while qualitative analysis (e.g., text analysis of open-ended responses) provided deeper insights into the audience's emotional responses. For example, the analysis revealed that younger audiences (aged 18-25) preferred humorous and energetic hosting styles, while older audiences (aged 40+) favored more formal and authoritative styles. Additionally, interviews with a subset of respondents were conducted

to gain a more nuanced understanding of how hosting styles influence audience identification on a personal level.

#### **Expert Consultation and Interviews :**

To complement the audience survey, in-depth interviews were conducted with 20 industry experts, including variety show producers, directors, and senior hosts from China, South Korea, the United States, and the United Kingdom. These interviews focused on the experts' experiences and perspectives on hosting styles, audience engagement, and program quality. For example, producers shared their strategies for selecting hosts whose styles align with the program's goals and cultural context, while senior hosts provided insights into how they adapt their style to different audiences and program formats.

The interviews were semi-structured, allowing for flexibility in exploring emerging themes. All interviews were transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and insights. The findings from the expert interviews were triangulated with the content analysis and survey data to ensure the robustness of the study's conclusions.

#### **Case Comparison Study :**

A comparative analysis of the six selected variety shows was conducted to examine how hosting styles vary across different program formats and cultural contexts and their impact on audience identification. For example, the logical and humorous style of "Great Detective Season 9" was compared with the emotional and inspirational style of "Sisters Riding the Winds and Waves" and the high-energy, interactive style of "Running Man." The study also examined how the hosting style in "Youth With You," which targets a younger audience, differs from the styles used in the other programs. By comparing these cases, the study aims to identify best practices for hosting styles in different types of variety shows and provide actionable insights for program producers and hosts operating in a globalized media environment.

#### **Ethical Considerations :**

Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were prioritized. Informed consent was obtained from all survey participants and interview respondents, and the confidentiality of their responses was maintained. The use of audio and video clips from the selected variety shows was conducted in compliance with ethical guidelines for media research, ensuring that no personal information of hosts or audience members was disclosed.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS**

This study has yielded significant findings through an in-depth analysis of hosting styles in TV variety shows, focusing on "Great Detective Season 9," "Sisters Riding the Winds and Waves," and "Youth With You." The results are presented in four key areas: the diversity of hosting styles, the correlation between hosting styles and audience identification, the impact of hosting styles on program effectiveness, and audience expectations for stylistic innovation.

#### **Diversity of Hosting Styles :**

This study has yielded significant findings through an in-depth analysis of hosting styles in TV variety shows, focusing on six programs: "Great Detective Season 9" (China), "Sisters Riding the Winds and Waves" (China), "Youth With You" (China), "Running Man" (South Korea), "Saturday Night Live" (United States), and "Britain's Got Talent" (United Kingdom). The results are presented in four key areas: the diversity of hosting styles, the correlation between hosting styles and audience identification, the impact of hosting styles on program effectiveness, and audience expectations for stylistic innovation across different cultural contexts.

#### **Diversity of Hosting Styles :**

The analysis revealed a wide range of hosting styles across the selected variety shows, reflecting the influence of cultural and programmatic contexts. In "Great Detective Season 9," the host demonstrated a humorous and logical style, using wit and reasoning to engage the

audience during case discussions. In contrast, the host of "Sisters Riding the Winds and Waves" employed an emotional and inspirational style, using motivational language and storytelling to connect with the audience on a deeper level. Meanwhile, the host of "Youth With You" adopted a friendly and natural style, which resonated strongly with the program's younger audience. In the international programs, the host of "Running Man" showcased a high-energy and interactive style, characterized by physical humor and spontaneous interactions with guests, which aligns with the program's fast-paced format and South Korean cultural preferences for dynamic entertainment. In "Saturday Night Live," the host's style was marked by satire and wit, reflecting the program's comedic and critical nature, as well as the individualistic cultural values of the United States. Finally, in "Britain's Got Talent," the host adopted a formal yet approachable style, balancing authority with warmth to create a sense of inclusivity, which is consistent with British cultural norms of politeness and reserve.

#### **Correlation Between Hosting Styles and Audience Identification :**

The study found a strong correlation between hosting styles and audience identification, with variations based on cultural and demographic factors. Survey results indicated that 69.3% of respondents preferred humorous hosting styles, while 57.9% favored natural and generous styles. These preferences varied significantly across cultural contexts. For example, younger viewers (aged 18-25) in East Asia showed a strong preference for humorous and energetic styles, as seen in "Running Man" and "Youth With You," while older viewers (aged 40+) in Western countries favored more formal and authoritative styles, as exemplified by "Britain's Got Talent."

Regression analysis further revealed that cultural background was a significant predictor of audience preferences. For instance, South Korean viewers rated high-energy and interactive styles more positively, while British and American viewers preferred styles that balanced authority with emotional engagement. These findings highlight the importance of aligning hosting styles with the cultural expectations of the target audience to enhance viewer engagement and program loyalty.

#### **Impact of Hosting Styles on Program Effectiveness :**

The hosting style was found to have a direct impact on program effectiveness, as measured by audience satisfaction and engagement. In "Great Detective Season 9," the host's logical reasoning and humorous expression were praised by 75% of viewers, who reported that these elements enhanced the program's appeal. Similarly, in "Sisters Riding the Winds and Waves," 80% of the audience felt that the host's inspirational and emotional style positively impacted the program atmosphere.

In the international programs, the high-energy style of "Running Man" was credited with increasing viewer engagement, particularly among younger audiences, with 85% of respondents reporting higher levels of enjoyment. In contrast, the satirical style of "Saturday Night Live" was effective in fostering critical engagement, with 70% of viewers appreciating the host's ability to address social issues through humor. Finally, the formal yet approachable style of "Britain's Got Talent" was praised by 78% of viewers for creating a sense of inclusivity and fairness, which enhanced the program's credibility.

#### **Audience Expectations and Stylistic Innovation :**

The study also revealed that audience expectations for hosting styles are constantly evolving, particularly in a globalized media environment. In "Great Detective Season 9," viewers expressed a desire for the host to maintain a humorous style while becoming more involved in case reasoning. This reflects a broader trend of audiences expecting hosts to not only entertain but also contribute to the intellectual and emotional depth of the program. Similarly, in "Youth With You," viewers appreciated the host's ability to create a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere, which encouraged greater audience participation and engagement.

In the international programs, viewers of "Running Man" expressed a preference for hosts who could seamlessly blend humor with physical challenges, reflecting the program's emphasis on action and entertainment. In "Saturday Night Live," audiences valued hosts who could use satire to address contemporary social issues, indicating a demand for socially relevant content. Finally, in "Britain's Got Talent," viewers appreciated hosts who could balance authority with emotional warmth, suggesting a preference for styles that combine professionalism with relatability.

#### **Summary of Key Findings :**

In summary, the results of this study demonstrate that hosting styles play a crucial role in shaping audience identification and program effectiveness across diverse cultural and programmatic contexts. The diversity of hosting styles highlights the importance of aligning the host's style with the program's content and cultural expectations. By optimizing hosting styles, TV variety shows can enhance viewer engagement, improve program quality, and maintain a competitive edge in the globalized media industry.

## **DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study underscore the pivotal role of hosting styles in shaping audience identification and program effectiveness in TV variety shows across diverse cultural and programmatic contexts. By analyzing programs such as "Great Detective Season 9," "Sisters Riding the Winds and Waves," "Youth With You," "Running Man," "Saturday Night Live," and "Britain's Got Talent," this research provides valuable insights into how different hosting styles influence viewer engagement and program success. The following discussion synthesizes the key findings and their implications for both academic research and industry practice.

#### **Theoretical Implications :**

The study validates and extends existing theories on the role of hosting styles in media, particularly Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical theory and Schechner's (2002) social performance framework. These theories emphasize the performative aspects of hosting, suggesting that hosts navigate both "front-stage" (on-air performance) and "back-stage" (preparation and rehearsal) roles to create an engaging experience for the audience. The findings of this study align with these theories, demonstrating that hosting styles that prioritize emotional authenticity and adaptability are more effective in fostering audience identification. For example, the humorous and logical style of the host in "Great Detective Season 9" not only entertained viewers but also enhanced their intellectual engagement with the program.

Moreover, the study highlights the importance of cultural context in shaping hosting styles. The high-energy and interactive style of "Running Man" resonated strongly with South Korean audiences, while the satirical style of "Saturday Night Live" appealed to American viewers' preference for critical humor. These findings suggest that hosting styles must be adapted to align with the cultural expectations of the target audience, supporting the application of performance theories in a globalized media landscape.

#### **Practical Implications :**

The study offers actionable insights for TV variety show producers and hosts. The results suggest that hosting styles should be carefully aligned with the program's content and target audience to maximize viewer engagement. For instance, humorous and energetic styles are more effective in entertainment-focused programs like "Youth With You" and "Running Man," while emotional and inspirational styles are better suited for programs like "Sisters Riding the Winds and Waves." Additionally, the study highlights the importance of continuous innovation in hosting styles to meet evolving audience expectations. Hosts who can adapt their styles to reflect changing trends and cultural preferences are more likely to achieve long-term success and viewer loyalty.

### **Social Impact and Cultural Significance :**

The study also highlights the broader social impact of hosting styles in TV variety shows. By creating an emotional connection with the audience, hosts can foster a sense of community and shared experience among viewers. This is particularly evident in programs like "Sisters Riding the Winds and Waves," where the host's inspirational style encouraged viewers to engage with the program on a deeper level. Similarly, the inclusive and approachable style of "Britain's Got Talent" promoted values of fairness and diversity, making it a powerful tool for social influence and cultural exchange.

### **Limitations and Future Research :**

While this study provides valuable insights, it is not without limitations. The research focused primarily on six popular TV variety shows, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could explore the impact of hosting styles in other program formats and cultural contexts to validate and expand upon these results. Additionally, the study relied on a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, but further research could incorporate experimental designs to more rigorously test the causal relationships between hosting styles and audience identification. For example, future studies could examine how different hosting styles influence viewer retention and loyalty in various media environments.

### **Conclusion :**

In conclusion, this study affirms the transformative potential of hosting styles in TV variety shows. By enhancing audience identification, driving emotional engagement, and fostering a sense of community, hosting styles have proven to be a powerful tool for program success. The findings of this study not only contribute to the theoretical understanding of hosting styles in media but also offer practical guidance for broadcasters seeking to elevate the quality and impact of their programs. As TV variety shows continue to evolve in the digital age, the integration of innovative and adaptable hosting styles offers a viable pathway for maintaining relevance and fostering meaningful connections with audiences. This research serves as a foundation for future explorations into the dynamic interplay between hosting styles, audience engagement, and program success in the ever-changing media landscape.

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