

Research on the homogenization dilemma and innovative strategies of short dramas in the era of intelligent generation

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Abstract

The popularization of intelligent generation technology has greatly lowered the threshold for short drama creation, increased industry output, and quickly become an important form of mass cultural consumption due to its adaptation to fragmented consumption. However, with the expansion of the industry, the problem of homogenization permeates the entire process from creation to operation. Not only are there themes of urban romance and rebellious literature, but there are also phenomena such as fixed narrative routines, repetitive visual materials, and single promotion paths, which directly restrict the industry's transformation from "scale expansion" to "quality improvement". This article combines the actual situation of the short drama industry, first sorting out the specific manifestations of homogenization, then analyzing the causes of technology template dependence, traffic orientation, and insufficient creator literacy, as well as the negative impact of homogenization on content competitiveness and industry vitality. Finally, strategies such as optimizing the application of intelligent technology, deepening the cultivation of diverse themes, and building an original ecology are proposed to provide practical reference for the short drama industry to break through the low-quality cycle and achieve sustainable development, and to help the industry play its cultural communication and entertainment service value.

Keywords

Intelligent generation, short drama, homogenization dilemma, content innovation, industry sustainable development.

1. Introduction

Opening the short video platform, you can frequently watch short dramas - episodes of 5 to 10 minutes each, with fast pace and direct conflicts. It is just suitable for fragmented time such as commuting and lunch breaks, and has become the first choice for many people to relieve boredom in their daily lives. The intelligent generation technology behind it has been a great help: AI scripting tools can automatically build plot frameworks, ready-made editing templates and visual materials can enable inexperienced people to quickly produce films, and even sound effects and subtitles can be easily adapted with just one click. The threshold has been lowered, and more people are doing short dramas. The industry's output has doubled, transforming from niche creation to a ubiquitous form of cultural consumption.

Behind the hustle and bustle, the problem is becoming increasingly apparent. After watching it for a long time, you will find that a large number of short dramas have highly similar content: either "Boss Chases Wife" or "Grassroots Rebel", how to create conflicts at the beginning, how to reverse in the middle, and how to leave hooks at the end, all of which are carved from the same mold; The scene is either at home or on the street, with even the actors' expressions and lines exuding a sense of familiarity; Even the title and cover design are similar, but when you click on them, you realize that it's just a matter of changing the soup without changing the medicine. This kind of "homogenization" gradually makes the audience lose novelty and move

faster. The team that originally wanted to make a name for themselves through short dramas has also fallen into a low traffic valley due to the lack of novelty in the content, which has led to an awkward situation in the entire industry where "the quantity has increased but the quality has not kept up" [1].

In fact, short dramas should not just stay at the stage of "gathering quantity". This article aims to follow the actual development of the industry, first explaining the specific issues of homogenization, then digging into whether it is technical templates, traffic thinking, or creator abilities that are holding back, and finally finding some practical ways to help the short drama industry shift from "following the trend to gather popularity" to "relying on the original to establish a foothold", truly moving steadily and far.

2. The development trend and core characteristics of short dramas in the era of intelligent generation

The threshold for making short dramas is much lower now than in previous years, and the key lies in intelligent generation technology. Previously, one had to understand script creation and be able to use professional editing software. Now, even those who have not been exposed to film and television can open AI script tools and input keywords such as "urban romance" and "family conflicts" to automatically generate plot frameworks with conflict points; When editing, there is no need to adjust frame by frame. The intelligent template can directly match the picture and sound effects, and even automatically add subtitles. Nonprofessional creators such as milk tea shop practitioners and college students can create a short drama in just two or three days, and the number of creative subjects in the industry has suddenly increased [2].

The output also goes up, opening the entrance of Tiktok and Kwai short plays, or vertical APP such as "Tomato Short Play" and "Seven Cats Short Play". Every day, new plays are launched, ranging from short stories to suspense reversal, covering more and more widely. And the dissemination is particularly convenient. Users can easily share interesting plots on their friends' circle or WeChat group, and many short dramas have gradually become popular through this "fragmented sharing".

As for the core feature, the most obvious one is "short" - a single episode is usually 5 to 10 minutes long, which is just suitable for fragmented time such as commuting and lunch breaks. There is no need to memorize complex plots like watching long dramas, and you can watch them on your phone without wasting time. Next is "fast", with a tight plot rhythm and conflicts that need to be thrown out in the first 30 seconds, such as "the female lead discovers her husband is cheating" or "the male lead suddenly inherits the inheritance". If the user is slow, they will swipe away, and the middle transition is also fast, with few lengthy foreshadowing.

In addition, with the intelligent generation of cost reduction, short dramas have also found a clear way to make money: some insert daily necessities advertisements in the plot, some are free in the first few episodes and unlocked after payment, and the platform pays according to the playback volume, allowing more non professional creators to enter the market with "low cost+fast monetization". This "low-cost, fast output, and monetization" model has made more and more small teams and even individuals willing to join, but it is also important to note that the template based operation of intelligent tools can sometimes make the visuals and plot frameworks of different short dramas similar [3], which is where the industry needs to adjust next.

3. Concrete manifestation of the homogenization dilemma of short dramas in the era of intelligent generation

After watching short dramas for a long time, it is easy to feel a sense of "deja vu" - this is the most intuitive feeling of homogenization, and in terms of creation and dissemination, several obvious problems can be identified.

First, let's talk about the theme. There are only a few twists and turns: either the urban romance of "the bully falls in love with an ordinary girl, with a vicious supporting woman in between", or the satisfying plot of "the protagonist suddenly cheats after being bullied, and fights back all the way". Occasionally, there are a few suspenseful films, and most of them are the old trick of "the wife discovers the husband's secret". I haven't seen many short dramas that tell stories about traditional culture, rural life, and niche industries. There are only a few flowers in the theme pool, which makes people feel aesthetically fatigued.

Narratively, it's more like a set of formulas, with conflicts thrown out in the first 30 seconds, either catching infidelity or being fired; The transition in the middle is so fast that it's illogical. One second they were still arguing, and the next second they suddenly reconciled; There is always a "hook" at the end, either "the next episode reveals his real identity" or "her choice surprises everyone", even the suspense design is the same [4]. Without delicate emotional groundwork or fresh narrative angles, relying solely on fixed routines to catch the eye.

The content expression is not innovative, and the lines are frequently filled with internet buzzwords such as 'family members who understand 'and' Juejuezi ', lacking original expression. There are few serious plot dialogues; The setting is even more convenient, whether it's a rental house or a street side café. Occasionally, I would take a photo of an office, and even the placement of tables and chairs would be similar. Later, I found out that many of the intelligently generated materials were directly reused. The office background of this drama can be used in another movie by changing the character, and the painting presents highly similar features.

Even the dissemination is the same model, with titles such as "Shocking! She Did This" and "Episode 3: Turning Around and Crying". The covers feature both male and female leads confronting each other, with a shiny filter added; When promoting, the language used is the same, either "staying up late to watch 12 episodes" or "not watching the regret series". They always follow the trend and use whichever song becomes popular as a BGM, completely lacking their own characteristics.

4. Analysis of the Core Causes of the Homogenization Dilemma in Short Dramas

The template based feature of intelligent generation tools is an important technological incentive for homogenization - the AI scripts and editing tools on the market today are based on popular short dramas from the past. When you open the tool to choose a theme, it's nothing more than "urban romance" and "son-in-law counterattack". After selecting, the AI directly gives you a ready-made plot framework, even setting the conflict points and turning points for you; Editing materials is more convenient, as both home scenes and street scenes are readily available, making it the same for anyone to use. Creators already want to release their films quickly, why would they be willing to spend time modifying templates? Just set it up and it will take half a day to produce one, so it will naturally become more similar [5].

Looking at the actual situation in the industry, industry entities often prioritize short-term traffic revenue as their core goal. Most people who do short dramas are afraid of taking risks. If they know that a certain genre (such as "Boss Chases His Wife" or "Grassroots Rebel") has become popular before and can earn views and platform revenue, they will follow suit and do

it. After all, following the trend does not require trial and error. If you create a new theme, no one will watch it and you will lose money. This kind of "making steady money" mentality has led more people to give up original content and focus solely on copying popular trends.

There are also issues on the creator's end. After AI lowered the threshold, many people who had never done content before also came in, such as those who opened small studios or worked part-time. They have not learned how to explore new themes, how to create unique plots, and have no patience to ponder. For them, using AI templates to quickly produce and monetize is the real thing, regardless of whether the content is important to others? Originality takes time and may not necessarily bring returns, so naturally no one is willing to do it.

Finally, we cannot ignore the audience's needs - watching short dramas is just a way to relieve boredom during commuting or lunch breaks, without having to watch too complicated content. The formulaic plot is easy to understand without using your brain, just enough to satisfy this "instant pleasure" [6]. Since the audience is willing to watch, creators have even less motivation to create new things. Anyway, "old tricks" can retain people, gradually forming a cycle of "you do it, I do it too".

5. The negative impact of homogenization dilemma in short dramas on industry development

The audience's acceptance and retention rate of short dramas continue to decline. In the past, you could watch a short drama in one episode, but now there are too many homogenized contents. You can tell the ending right from the beginning - for example, when you see "the female lead is being harassed by her mother-in-law", you know that she will "counterattack and hit her face" later; As soon as I see the male lead hiding his identity, I know he will eventually reveal his trump card. The audience gets tired of watching it, and the scrolling speed is getting faster. Many short dramas experience a significant decline in viewership after only two or three episodes, leading to a decrease in the efficiency of content dissemination in the industry. Teams that rely on short dramas to attract traffic often cannot recoup their costs [7].

It is difficult for the industry to retain high-quality creative resources and talents. Originality requires time to polish, such as researching traditional cultural themes and refining the plot. But now, following the trend and making dramas like "Boss" and "Counter Strike" can bring faster monetization. Who would be willing to focus on originality? Slowly, aspiring screenwriters and directors feel lost and either switch to long videos or leave the industry. With the departure of high-quality talents, the industry is dominated by template creators, and innovation vitality is becoming increasingly weak, falling into a vicious cycle of "the more homogeneous, the less talented, and the less talented, the more homogeneous". It is impossible to shift from "gathering quantity" to "doing quality".

Word of mouth has also been heavily dragged down. Nowadays, many people say that short dramas are "not nutritious" and "just clichés" when it comes to them. Even if there are a few carefully crafted works, they are overwhelmed by homogenized content. Once this negative impression is formed, new audiences are unwilling to try, and brand owners dare not cooperate easily - after all, no one is willing to invest advertisements in content that is "not watched and has poor reputation". Over time, the commercial value of the industry continues to decline [8].

In the entire cultural consumption market, the advantage of short dramas is being lost - compared to the deep content of long videos and the creative segments of short videos, their "fragmented entertainment value" is weakened due to homogenization, making it difficult to have differentiated competitiveness. Nowadays, audiences have a wide range of entertainment options, and dramas and books are also undergoing lightweight adaptations. If short dramas still rely on homogeneous content support and lack unique value, they will eventually be

eliminated by the market, and even their original fragmented consumption share cannot be maintained.

6. Innovative strategies for breaking through homogenization in short dramas in the era of intelligent generation

To break down homogenization, efforts need to be made in three dimensions: optimizing technology applications, deepening content innovation, and improving industry ecology, to avoid focusing too much on popular templates.

6.1. Optimizing the application logic of intelligent generation technology

Intelligent tools should avoid excessive reliance on popular templates and can add a "niche theme library", such as traditional woodworking, rural e-commerce, and other rare directions; The editing tool can add a "personalized adjustment" function, allowing creators to change the scene color tone and shot rhythm themselves, reducing the reuse of ready-made materials. More importantly, creators need to use AI as an "assistant" rather than a "crutch", such as using AI to search for intangible cultural heritage materials but create their own plot, or using AI to cut clips but arrange the sequence of shots to avoid technical framing of content [9].

6.2. Deepening Content Creation and Multidimensional Innovation

Don't stick to popular themes, you can shoot vertical themes that are close to life, such as "The Daily Life of Post-95s Watch Repairers" and "Community Pet Rescue", because they are rarely done and are prone to differences; The narrative should not always start with "grabbing the horse", but can start with small things, such as a drama about old craftsmanship, where the plot is laid out from the details of the craftsman grinding the tools, creating a more immersive experience; Don't pile up "absolute" hot words in your lines, write more life oriented dialogues, and don't limit the scene to home. Go to the market or intangible cultural heritage studio to shoot for a more unique visual experience.

The industry ecosystem needs to address the issue of 'traffic first'. The platform should not only divide traffic based on views, but can also set up an "original short drama section" to expose more dramas that are not following the trend but have new ideas; If plagiarism templates are found, they will be deducted points and removed from the platform to give the original creators a sense of direction. Capital should not only invest in popular products, but also support small teams with vertical themes, such as helping to connect with intangible cultural heritage inheritors and community resources, and reducing the cost of original trial and error.

Creators need to "fill in gaps" and combine the characteristics of intelligent tools, such as using AI to mine vertical theme materials but self grind the plot [10]; If you have no experience, you can go to industry association offline classes to learn the "technology assisted original creation" method, such as digging up themes around you, creating plot levels, and communicating more with other creators to avoid tricks. Don't always strive for "quick release and quick profit". Although original dramas may take time, they are easy to attract loyal audiences and are more stable in the long run.

7. Conclusion

Intelligent generation technology brings opportunities for the large-scale development of the short drama industry, promoting its rapid integration into the mass cultural consumption market. However, the dilemma of homogenization has become a core bottleneck restricting the high-quality development of the industry. It runs through the entire process of content creation, dissemination, and operation, and its causes involve multiple dimensions such as technology application, industry ecology, creator capabilities, and audience needs. It not only weakens the

core competitiveness of short drama content, but also destroys the industry development ecology and hinders the long-term upgrading of the industry.

To solve the problem of homogenization in short dramas, it is necessary to base on the actual development of the industry and build a multidimensional collaborative innovation system: optimize the application logic of intelligent generation tools at the technical level, and strengthen the empowering effect of technology on originality; Deeply cultivating diverse innovation at the content level, breaking the shackles of routine from the dimensions of theme, narrative, and expression; Building an original oriented ecosystem at the industry level and improving incentive and regulatory mechanisms; Enhance comprehensive literacy at the creator level and adhere to the core of originality; Innovate differentiated paths at the communication level and accurately connect with audience needs. Only by taking multiple measures and working together can we break down the barriers of homogenization and reverse the development status quo of the industry's "increasing quantity and weak quality".

The long-term development of the short drama industry relies on original content as the core, intelligent generation technology as the support, and balancing the entertainment and value connotations of the content to create high-quality and differentiated content. In the future, with the gradual implementation of innovation strategies, the original ecology of the industry will continue to improve, and innovation vitality will be constantly stimulated. The short drama industry is expected to achieve a transformation from scale expansion to quality improvement, build a healthy and orderly development pattern, consolidate its core position in the cultural consumption market, and provide the public with richer and more diverse cultural consumption choices, helping the diversified and high-quality development of the cultural industry.

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