

A Study on the Changes in Male Images in Family-type Public Service Advertisements on CCTV since 2010

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Abstract: As the market for consumer goods continues to diversify, the image of men in advertisements is becoming more and more diverse. China Central Television (CCTV), as an important public opinion propaganda field in China, it is of great significance to study the changes of male images in its family-based public service advertisements. In this paper, a quantitative content analysis approach is used to study CCTV's family-type public service advertisements from 2010 to 2017 using framework theory as a perspective. The study has found that the overall difference in male image portrayal in this type of advertisements is relatively small, showing a trend of change in both the external and internal images. Among them, there is a softening of the external image of men, and as the years go by, it has appeared to be the reduction of male dominance and the diversification of appearance, in part in response to feminist expectations of male roles; the internal image of men is relatively traditional and conservative, and they remain in an active role in the family environment, which to some extent leads to a homogenization of the way men are perceived by the public.

1. Introduction

The issue of people's livelihood is the most important issue faced by Chinese society. Since the Eighteenth CPC National Congress, with the deepening of the construction of "family culture", a large number of family-related advertisements have emerged. As a reflection of national values, cultural concepts and moral ethics, family-related public service advertisements have received high social attention. Under the new background of social economy, the market for male consumer goods is gradually opening up, and the image of men in advertisements is becoming richer and richer, and thus, such changes are also being reflected in the family public service advertisements. Through reviewing studies from home and abroad, it is found that the number of studies on male images in TV commercials is relatively small compared with those on female images. Male image studies in family advertisements are also sporadic, failing to show the changing trend of male image in depth.

This paper takes the family-type public service advertisements broadcast by CCTV from 2010 to 2017 as study subjects, codifies the male images in the advertisements, and analyzes the specific content of the changes in male images over the years in order to understand the basic rules of male image creation in such advertisements; in addition, the paper also draws a portrait of men who are in line with the mainstream family values of the new era, in order to clarify the gender expectations of men in today's society. Social stereotypes are naturally present in CCTV public service advertisements, which stereotypes have changed and which stereotypes are still present is the core concern of this paper. Studying the changes in the image of men in public service advertisements can help us identify which concepts are lagging behind the times, so that we can make targeted suggestions to help diversify the image of men in media products.

2. Research Methods

The samples in this study are all from CCTV's national work pool of excellent radio and television public service advertisements. Since the work pool was updated in September 2014, a total of 891 public service advertisements have been updated, which is characterized by large inventory and wide influence. In this study, stratified sampling has been used to first screen out all the "family-type advertisements" in the work pool, establish a sampling frame based on this, stratify the samples according to the year, then determine the sampling proportion according to the number of samples in each category, and finally 56 samples have been selected proportionally.

Regarding the construction of the indicator system and coding criteria, this paper mainly refers to Wei Bu and Bohong Liu's quantitative indicators on gender role image in TV commercials. Their coding index mainly includes five dimensions: advertising sample index, advertising character index, role index, role relationship index, and self-awareness index. On the basis of the quantitative indicators, Chinese scholars have refined the indicators according to their own research needs. Advertising sample indicator includes the brand, product category, and region to which they belong; advertising character indicator includes character gender, character age, and voice-over gender; role indicator includes location, occupational attributes, and dress style; and role relationship indicator includes gender relationship, status relationship, and relationship between subject and oneself.

3. Research Findings

3.1. Softening of the Male External Image

3.1.1. Diminished Dominance of Male Voice Image

Male voice-over image refers to the image information that can be perceived through direct observation, and in this paper, we mainly study both voice image and appearance image. The correlation test shows that the year has a significant correlation with the gender of the voice-over. As the year increases, the number of CCTV family commercials with male voice-over tends to decrease. However, the number of advertisements without voice-over gradually increased, which indicates that the male dominance of voice-over in CCTV family advertisements gradually decreased with the change of year.

The gender paradigm focuses on the subjects who hold the discourse power of films and TV productions, mainly investigating their viewpoints, positions, and the distance between the gender discourse in media mimesis and the real society. The male voice-over in advertisements naturally makes men the subjects of discourse, and their positions and opinions are also based on the male perspective. The proliferation of similar advertisements creates media mimicry of male thinking, which is not conducive to the construction of a reasonable gender image of the family in reality.

3.1.2. Emphasis on "Tenderness" of Male Close-up Parts

By observing the number of close-up shots of body parts such as arms, back, chest and abdomen, it can be seen that there are more close-up shots reflecting male facial images, while there are fewer close-up shots that are easy to show male strength such as legs, chest and back, and most of these shots are not aimed at showing male strength. For example, in 2017's advertisement "Wait for a Chapter", the producer used a lot of facial close-ups, hand close-ups and back close-ups to show the emotional changes of the characters, and there was almost no show of male strength, which showed that this kind of advertisement emphasized less strong masculinity and reflected its tender side more in family scenes.

3.1.3. Stability and Diversity Trends in Male Appearance

By analyzing the indicators of stature, dress and beard in the scale, it can be seen that the male appearance images in CCTV family advertisements have been relatively uniform over the years, with

more patterned characters. Their appearance images are relatively conservative and formal, lacking a certain degree of individuality and difference. However, some cases also reflect their diversification trend. For example, the bearded image seldom appears in the theme advertisement, but in the 2015 advertisement *Love Continues*, a bearded male figure holding a baby appears. The image contradicts the traditional loving temperament, but the film shows the male's deep affection for the baby in close-up facial shots. The film provides a good model for the diversification of men's image in this type of advertisement by adding softness to the traditional tough man image.

3.2. Conservative Inner Image of Male

3.2.1. Imbalance in the Image of Active and Passive Status

The inner image of men is mainly reflected in the active and passive role in the family, as well as in the explicit and implicit nature of gender relations. The active and passive judgment of family role is based on Bohong Liu and Wei Bu's role relationship scale. If male role is shaped as indicator, user, commender, protector, problem solver, sought after, payer, respondent and served, it is judged as active position. Being shaped as instructed, praised, protected, problem maker, sought after, approached, spent, questioned and served, it is judged as passive status.

As early as 2010, CCTV noticed that men's passive position was presented in advertisements. However, the analysis shows that 66.1% of male images were in active position and 33.9% were in passive position during the eight years, indicating that the gender image representation in family relationship is still not balanced enough. For example, in the 2017 Chinese New Year Gala public service advertisements *Waiting Chapter* and *Wrap Chapter*, women are mostly portrayed as waiting at home for their husbands, cooking for their husbands and children, and as service providers in the family; men, however, are mostly the image of husbands working outside, enjoying the fruits of family labor. This shows that the inner image of men in CCTV family advertisements is still relatively traditional at this stage, and men are still in an active position in the family.

3.2.2. The Implicit Nature of Gender Relations

The CCTV public service advertisements of the family type are largely devoid of gender relations, with 83.9% of all advertisements not containing gender relations. In the sample involving gender relations, the majority of the advertisements are suggestive of gender relations. CCTV family public service advertisements seldom use "sex" as a means to attract attention. This contradicts Goffman's advertising strategy of using women's sexual attractiveness to attract male attention as noted in *Gender Advertising*, thereby undermining the reinforcing effect of advertising on the social cues of both genders and creating a normal gender cognitive framework for the viewer.

4. Conclusion and Reflection

4.1. A Male Image that is Both "Soft on the Outside" and "Conservative on the Inside"

Since 2010, the portrayal of men in CCTV's public service advertisements of family type has been changing steadily. Generally speaking, the differences in male image portrayal are small, but there is a certain trend of change in both the external and internal images. In terms of external image, the dominance of male image is gradually decreasing, and there is less emphasis on the strong and powerful masculinity and more on the tender side. This shows that the external image of men in this type of advertisements shows a tendency to soften, which is to some extent in line with feminism's expectation of male characters.

However, in terms of internal image, men's images are conservative. In general, men's images are more active, especially among the adult male population. This means that the spiritual core of male images is still relatively traditional, and cannot get rid of the restrictive framework of "men are in

charge of jobs, women are in charge of household". As for the portrayal of gender relations, CCTV is more subtle and euphemistic, mainly being suggestive, which to a certain extent weakens the reinforcing effect of advertisements on gender social cues.

4.2. The Phenomenon of "Hyper-Ritualization" in the Portrayal of Masculinity

It is worth reflecting on the fact that the degree of change in the family-type public service advertisements of the CCTV since 2010 has been relatively small, both in terms of the external and internal images, and that there is a templaticization of the image of men. This is partly an emphasis on certain social elements, thus homogenizing the way the public views men. In Gender Advertising, Goffman proposes the concept of "hyper-ritualization" in relation to the portrayal of women in advertisements, where advertisements may unintentionally emphasize certain social elements, thus "further customizing our customs".

In the case of male images, there is less emphasis on the social element at the level of sexual attractiveness and more emphasis on the social element of active status. Men are more often portrayed as protectors, payers, and consumers. On the one hand, the overemphasis on family responsibilities increases the social pressure on the male group, and the over display of the active position makes the emotional expression of the male group more subtle in reality; on the other hand, the emphasis on the "active status" of men has also increased the rate of displaying the "passive status" of women, resulting in the "hyper-ritualization" of women's images, which is not conducive to the creation of a harmonious family environment.

In order to get rid of this hyper-ritualized phenomenon, CCTV family public service advertisements need to face the objective reality of change and development, and reduce the need to conform to the traditional gender expectations of society. By diversifying the image of men and further balancing the relationship between the image of men and that of women, the social stereotypes of the male population can be reduced and the image of men can be diversified.

4.3. Advertising Male Image Setting in the All-Media Era

In the all-media era, TV media, network media and mobile media are highly interactive, and the content broadcast on TV can be displayed on multiple platforms. The research on male image in TV advertisement can also provide enlightenment for setting male image in advertising on all-media platform. At present, the change of male image in TV advertisements is still superficial, and the active nature of his family status has not changed, which is not in line with the requirements of family harmony and even the construction of "family style". Therefore, when designing male images, advertisers should set up male roles in a diversified way, break away from the shackles of the traditional family framework, and balance the active and passive positions of male and female images. Diversified male character design is similar to the male image in the real environment, which is in line with the actual feelings of the audience and is more easily accepted by the audience; The new male image created by it will form a new media mimicry, thus promoting the sound development of "family style".

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