Professionalism of Appearance: A Study on the Relationship between Journalists' Appearance and TV News Value

Han Shijuan
School of Business Administration, Henan Finance University, China
Corresponding author E-mail: 1659721964@qq.com

Abstract: The continuous development of visual communication under the background of the new media era has enhanced people's pursuit of beauty, and the news industry has also been deeply affected by it. Based on communication theory, the research is carried out by means of questionnaire survey and in-depth interview. The research on the relationship between journalists' appearance and news value reveals that different audiences have tendencies towards journalists with different appearances, which affects the audience's judgment on news value.
Key words: news value, phenomenology, reporter's appearance, visual communication

1 Introduction

The rapid development of the new media era has consolidated the position of visual information in the communication, and anchors with good appearance have also received widespread attention from the public on the Internet. In 2020, the "Youth Study" released a news that CCTV reporter Wang Bingbing was invited, which aroused the great attention of netizens as soon as it came out. Since then, the "May Fourth Youth Special Edition" hosted by CCTV anchor Long Yang and the fourth program of 2023 hosted by Feng Lin of Fudan University have all aroused heated discussions among netizens on new media social platforms. Some netizens even said that making these journalists with good appearance become permanent, which can ensure the enthusiasm of learning, making audience take the initiative to pay attention to news information. Therefore, we found that the proportion of visual factors in various decisions made by netizens has increased significantly. Although many people advocate rejection of "Appearanceism", there is no positive correlation between natural appearance and one's own personality and knowledge. However, we can still observe in daily life that the overall appearance of TV news reporters can still significantly affect the value judgment of others on the news.

We wondered: Why does a journalist's appearance affect the audience's value judgment of the news? Will a reporter's appearance and figure affect the audience's judgment of the value of TV news? What is the mental process of the audience? What other factors change an audience's judgment of newsworthiness?

2 Literature review

2.1 A review of the phenomenon that journalists' appearance affects the value of TV news

The audience's judgment on the value of news has led to multi-perspective research in the academic community. From the aesthetic value of news value and the relationship between information value and aesthetic value, the domestic scholar Sun Dehong published Value Issues in News Aesthetic Communication in 2008, showing that aesthetic value intervenes in the subject and object of news, ensuring that facts and their communication texts can directly hit the subject's heart and form emotional resonance with the subject, so as to achieve the maximum communication effect.

In 2002, Chen Huan discussed the impact of audience psychological needs on newsworthiness from six aspects: audience curiosity, innovation, similarity, difference, fun and beauty. In terms of the psychological needs of beauty, he believes that human beings understand life and create life in accordance with the laws of beauty, and human beings have always tended to pursue beauty, so there is also an aesthetic psychology when receiving information, and the desire for information can bring aesthetic feelings to the subject. However, these studies ignore the relationship between the appearance image of the main body of television news transmission and the news value.

2.2 A literature review of the phenomenon that journalists' appearance affects the value of TV news

2.2.1 A review of phenomenological theory

Phenomenological theory was first proposed in Husserl's Studies in Logic. He advocated recognizing the fundamental relationship between phenomenon and essence, special and general, and clearly explaining the structure and laws of cognition itself.

Gao Hongyan published Facing "Newsworthiness" Itself: A Phenomenological Methodology for News value Theory Research Practice in 2002, which decomposes the phenomenon of newsworthiness into two stages of "facing facts" and "facing cognition" through practical phenomenological methods. In "facing facts", journalists point to the part of the facts that conform to their own news intentions, identify the target news value by way of evaluation, and the news information method in "facing cognition" comes out of the objectivity of the facts, and exists as a projection and reflection of our concepts, with objective factual information and subjective conceptual information as one of the news form.

2.2.2 A Review of Visual Communication Theories

American visual communication expert Paul M. Lester divided visual theory into two categories: sensory theory and intuition theory. Sensory theory holds that images or media images are made up of light and very few other elements, while intuitionistic theory focuses on people's associations of meaning in objects they see.

Huang Jun's Development Logic and Improvement Path of Short Video News in the Intelligent

Media Era, published in 2023, emphasizes the sense of news scene based on the characteristics of short video news under visual communication, and believes that the restoration of real scenes can trigger the empathy of the audience and improve the communication effect. The combination of virtual and real VR news has changed the way of news dissemination, from the previous real communication between people to virtual communication between people and machines, allowing the audience to complete the task of news dissemination through the multi-dimensional stimulation of "absence" and "presence", and stimulate the audience's deep emotional resonance.

However, these studies did not study the audience's value judgment and decision-making on news from the perspective of appearance, so they did not answer the questions about the relationship between journalists' appearance and TV news value.

2.3 Question Proposal

Therefore, this article will start from phenomenological theory and visual communication theory, and try to answer the following questions: Is the appearance of a journalist related to the newsworthiness of TV news? How does a journalist's appearance affect the audience's judgment of newsworthiness? What are the psychological changes in the audience? What other factors influence differences in audience news choices?

3 Research methods

This paper adopts the research methods of questionnaire survey method and interview method to try to answer the above questions.

3.1 Questionnaire method

3.1.1 Hypothesis Establishment

Based on the above question, the corresponding assumptions are proposed here:

H1: The higher the audience rates the appearance of the same newscaster, the more interesting the news is.

H2: The higher the audience rates the appearance of the same newscast reporter, the closer the news is.

To prove the hypothesis, this study used a questionnaire method to sample the population and produce a questionnaire.

3.1.2 Sampling methods

In this study, young people are selected as the research subjects. With the rapid development of emerging media and the active adaptation of the news industry, young people have become the new main followers of national development and social progress, and the main force participating

in news topics.

Firstly, we conduct representative sampling of this group, and select the classes of freshman to senior students in a university in Zhengzhou to compile the overall sampling frame. Third, with a confidence interval of 95% and a sampling error of 3%, the sampling frame was stratified and multi-level sampling, and 400 students were selected as the sample.

The data collection, collation and analysis process of this survey was completed on May 4, 2023, and the survey mainly focused on open-ended and closed-ended topics, and the main contents were: (1) Confirmation of basic information: including age and gender. (2) Score the appearance of the journalist (3) Score the fun and closeness of the news. This questionnaire contains 22 questions, including 9 multiple-choice questions, 1 multiple-choice question, and 12 scale questions, which are distributed through a combination of online and offline methods, including WeChat Moments, QQ Zone, Questionnaire Star Sample Bank and offline.

3.2 In-depth interview method

3.2.1 Interview outline design

1.Interviewees' basic perception of journalists' appearance and newsworthiness

(1) How old are you? Do you usually watch the news?

(2) Is the content of the news itself or the anchor reporting the news that motivates you to pay attention to the news?

(3) For you, does the appearance of the news broadcast anchor and reporter affect your judgment of news value?

2.Recognition of journalists' appearance and newsworthiness

(1) Do you often pay attention to high-value journalists and anchors?

(2) Do you pay attention to this news because of the reporter's good looks?

(3) Do you want journalists and anchors to be a group of good-looking people? Why?

(4) After watching the news, do you specifically mention the appearance of the reporter in the comments because you notice the reporter's high appearance?

(5) Do you prefer high-value male or female journalists to broadcast the news?

(6) What drives you to pay attention to the appearance of journalists?

(7) What value do you pay more attention to when you pay attention to the news? (Timeliness, importance, prominence, proximity, interestingness, etc.

(8) Do you belong to the party that actively receives news or the party that passively receives news? (Active: take the initiative to search for understanding because the news is valuable; Passive: forced to watch and understand due to completing the task)

(9) Do you tend to make positive comments when judging the value of news content to you? Or do you make indignant remarks because you feel that the news content is worthless?

During the interviews and research, researchers tried to avoid the fourfold ethical issues and deviance highlighted by scholar AI-an Bryman: (1) cause harm to study participants; (2) do not use informed consent permission documents or materials; (2) violate the privacy of study participants; (4) deceive the study participants. And if the interviewee has any unwilling questions

or dissatisfaction in the process, he or she can remain silent or withdraw, and the interview materials that interviewee does not want to be made public are not included in the study.

3.2.2 Selection of interviewees

In this study, 15 interviewers, including professional commentators (media practitioners), opinion leader commentators, grassroots commentators (ordinary netizens), "not-well-known commentators" (netizens without real names), etc., were interviewed for 50 minutes. The interviews began in May 2023 and ended in the end of this month. The interviewees firstly included people who followed the news around the researcher, and secondly recruited more researchers through commenters under the official account of Douyin@CCTV News. According to the principle of maximum sampling of qualitative research methods, when the 15th interviewee is collected, the content of all interviews is sufficient to answer the research questions, and the sample collection ends. There are differences in the interviewees' age, occupation, education background and other aspects, so the degree of homogeneity is low.

The interviews were conducted by means of telephone interviews, WeChat interviews and face-to-face interviews. The results of the interviews were compiled into verbatim drafts, and the processing of the interview content was completed by the author.

4 Research findings and discussion points

According to the research and survey of the questionnaire, we found that nearly 30% of the audience expressed that they were very concerned about the appearance of journalists when watching the news, and believed that the appearance of journalists would indeed affect their attention to news content, and nearly 50% of the samples said that "I am very much looking forward to the news being broadcast by a good-looking reporter". After sorting out and analyzing the answers of 15 interviewees, we also found that 9 interviewees said that when watching the news, they would always be unconsciously attracted by high-value journalists, so as to make a comparison of this news High attention. Analyzed from the perspective of subject-object dichotomy, people as subjects have a calm and objective view of the external world of objects. However, from a perceptual point of view, people's perception of the world is dominated by sensation or subconsciousness. People's cognition and perception of the world are nothing more than five forms of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. The high sensitivity of the system makes human beings instinctively generate visual attention, while the psychological needs for beauty are subtly affecting people's choices. Similarly, when the news is broadcast, the attention of the audience is affected to varying degrees due to the differences in the appearance of the journalists. Different audiences also have certain differences in their inclinations for different appearances, and they have a very clear understanding of this inclination. stability.

4.1 Sample feature description

In terms of gender, more than 50% of the samples are girls, and 45.42% of the samples are boys. Judging from the distribution of attention to the appearance of journalists, most of the samples are "very concerned", with a total of 87, accounting for 28.43%. Judging from the distribution of the audience's expectations for news broadcast by high-value journalists, most of the samples are "very looking forward to", a total of 142, accounting for 46.41%. Among the attention paid to the external factors of journalists, nearly 60% of the samples select "facial features".

4.2 Gender affects the audience's attention to the reporter's appearance

The appearance of a reporter does not directly determine the level of news value, and the gender factor affects people's perception of the appearance of a reporter in news reports. The data in the questionnaire shows that there are statistical differences in the ratings of the appearance of the two female journalists and the two male journalists by the audience, but the samples show gender factors in the scoring of the news value. The difference is that in the news reports of female journalists, there is no phenomenon that the higher the appearance, the higher the news value. However, among the male journalists, there is a positive relationship between appearance and news value.

A total of 306 valid questionnaires were collected in this questionnaire survey. Through descriptive analysis, it was found that the average appearance scores of the four journalists (two women and two men) in this survey were: Wang Bingbing 4.13, Tian Meng 3.49, Yang Guang 2.70, Li Chengchao 3.94, among which Wang Bingbing's appearance scored the highest. Then, the author further conducted a difference test on the appearance scores between the two groups of hosts and found that the data of the appearance scores of the two female reporters did not conform to the normal distribution, and the significance level of the S-W test was less than 0.05, so the paired sample Wilcoxon test was used. According to the difference analysis, there is a statistically significant difference in the appearance of the two female reporters, and the appearance score of reporter Wang Bingbing is significantly higher than that of reporter Tian Meng. Similarly, the difference test of the appearance scores between the two male hosts found that the appearance scores of the two male reporters did not conform to the normal distribution. Therefore, using the paired sample Wilcoxon test for difference analysis, it is found that there is a statistically significant difference in the appearance of the two male reporters, and the appearance score of reporter Li Chengchao is significantly higher than that of reporter Yang Guang. Therefore, there are statistically significant differences in the appearance scores of different journalists.

At the same time, this study reduces the news value to news interest and news closeness. The author found through descriptive analysis that the interviewees rated the news value of the news broadcast by reporter Wang Bingbing as 3.23, and the news value of the news broadcast by reporter Tian Meng was 3.55. Therefore, between the two female reporters, there is no phenomenon that the better appearance, the higher the news value. The interviewees rated the news value of the news broadcast by reporter Yang Guang as 3.18, and the news value of the news broadcast by reporter Li Chengchao as 3.71. It is preliminarily judged that the higher the value of male reporters, the higher the news value. existing. Further Pearson correlation analysis was used

to find that there was a significant positive correlation between reporter Yang Guang's appearance and news value ($r=0.383$, $P<0.05$), and reporter Li Chengchao's appearance and news value had a significant positive correlation ($r=0.554$, $P<0.05$), so the appearance of a male reporter is directly proportional to the news value, that is, the better the appearance of a male reporter, the higher the news value.

4.3 The level of appearance is directly proportional to the closeness of news

When we conducted further in-depth interviews and tried to obtain answers on the question of whether the appearance of journalists affects the audience's judgment of newsworthiness and whether the audience prefers female or male journalists with good appearance, we were surprised to find that the difference in journalists' appearance will indeed gain different degrees of attention from the audience, and there are different relevant attitudes towards high-value female journalists and high-value male journalists, and the interviewee's answer testifies to my thoughts:

" I will definitely take a few more looks at beautiful people, especially ones with a decent occupation and background?" (S1)

"It may not be good, but I have to admit that I do pay further attention to what he broadcasts because of his good appearance." (S5)"

"Although I also like handsome male reporters, no one can refuse a beautiful sister, I prefer beautiful female reporters, just like I still can't refuse Wang Bingbing. I finish watching her news broadcasting on my mobile phone every time." (S3)

"I feel like that even if a female reporter makes a little mistake in the news broadcast, I can still accept it. If the reporter is a male, I may feel that his professional ability is not strong, and the visual interference brought to me may be reduced." (S7)

In the transcripts of 15 interviewees, we found that 11 respondents said that they would prefer female journalists with good appearance to broadcast the news, and at the same time have a certain degree of emotional support and tolerance for female journalists. When it comes to male journalists, the audience often treat them more strictly. The emergence of this phenomenon may be related to the long-term weak position of women and the changes in the status of women in the current society.

Through interviews, we found that the audience will prefer journalists with good appearance to broadcast news, especially high-value female journalists. Although this can distract the audience from the news content to a certain extent, it also prolongs the audience's attention to the news content, and when the male reporter with good appearance broadcasts the news content, audience also pay more attention to the news content itself, especially when the male reporter and the female reporter are broadcasting the same news, the audience will feel that the female reporter's broadcast is more interesting and closer to their own lives.

5 Summary and reflection

This study theorizes the influence of journalists' appearance on TV news value through

questionnaire survey, and attempts to answer whether journalists' appearance is related to TV news value. Through the study, it is found that the higher the audience scores the appearance of a journalist, the higher the value of the news.

This study reflects the development of "appearance economy" in TV news, and on the other hand, it also provides a basis for the relationship between the appearance of journalists and TV news value in the context of modern Chinese TV news. What is more, it is worth noting that this study also found that excessive pursuit of journalists' appearance can lead to the depreciation of the value of news itself, which is worthy of vigilance and reflection.

However, this study still has research shortcomings due to factors such as the gender of journalists, and in future studies, researchers in the field of television journalism may need to pay attention to the impact of journalists' gender factors on the value of television news.

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