

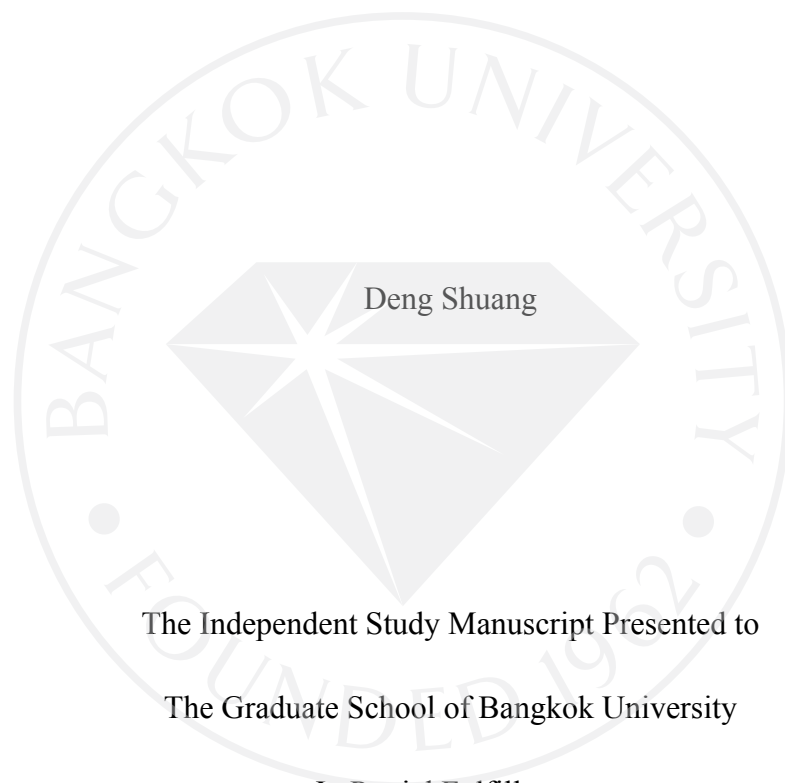
THE FEMALE STEREOTYPE: A CASE STUDY OF CHINESE TV

COMMERCIALS IN CHINA



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The Independent Study Manuscript Presented to

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COMMERCIALS IN CHINA

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The Female Stereotype: A Case Study of Chinese TV Commercials in China (95 pp.)

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### **ABSTRACT**

In today's society, because the development of the mass media, advertising has become a part of our lives. Advertising is a reflection of social culture, and it can deeply affect our daily life. Among the many advertisements, the status of TV commercials is particularly important. The wide coverage of TV commercials, coupled with the sound, text, and images, so that it can be said that have a certain degree of guiding effect on the choice of the mass public. Females are an important element of social composition, meaning that the significance of female unique, and the females is a symbol of beauty. In our commercial advertisements, the most common way be used is to combine the image of female and the products. The advertisers let female display their products through specific language and actions,

attracting the attention of the audience that's the reason the females be highly valued by advertisers. Inevitably in this process, in China, the patriarchal society is deeply rooted, and this kind of thinking leads to a stereotype of women in Chinese commercial advertisements that cater to the men's aesthetic.

This research analyzes the female stereotypes among 58 Chinese TV commercials from Hunan Satellite TV in the third week of November 2018, uses the content analysis method to analyze the female stereotypes in three aspects: physical attractiveness, role behavior and occupation. This research will analysis what kind of image does the female always been portrayed, what is their representative behavior in daily life and what kind of occupations suitable for the female in advertiser's mind, also provides some valuable advice for the elimination of the negative female stereotypes in Chinese TV commercials.

*Keywords: TV commercials, the female stereotypes, physical attractiveness, role behavior, occupation,*

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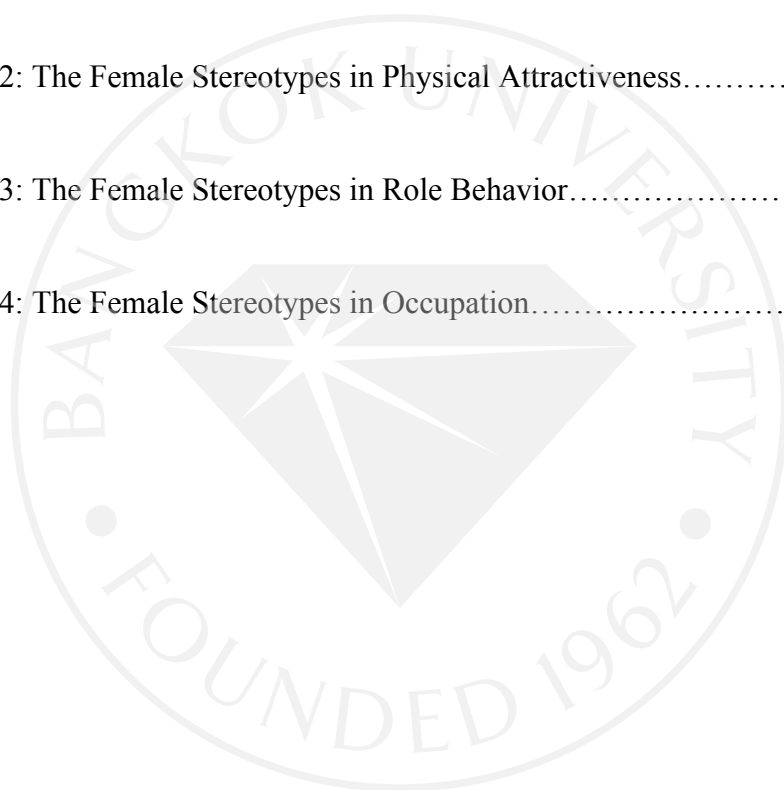
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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Rationale and Problem Statement

With the development of Chinese economy, people's material level becomes higher and higher, People's need is not only staying at only for food and clothing, now people are more careful about their material world. Since the 1990s, China has ushered in reform and opening up. With the rapid development of the economy, China's TV advertising has developed rapidly, not only have the number of TV commercials increased, but the types of TV commercials have also spread throughout the industry, including food, clothing, housing and transportation, as long as people can imagine. The more gratifying thing is that the quality of TV commercials also makes a great progress, an analysis research by Chen and Wang (2014), in 2010, the overall size of Chinese commercial advertising reached 700 billion yuan, surpassing Japan commercial advertising market, it was the first time becoming the second largest advertising market in the world. Among all kinds of advertising platforms, TV

advertising occupied the highest share, it nearly approaches to 140 billion Yuan, TV

advertising is the largest segment within all of Chinese advertisement industries.

and TV advertising is still the mainstream market for Chinese advertising in 50 years.

Zheng (2014) considered that in China, all the levels of satellite TV stations are

supervised by China government, therefore, the television media has stable

credibility, and moreover it has a strong persuasion among the mass public. Likewise,

Ying (2013) concluded that it has the characteristics of strong intuitiveness, large

impact as well as fast transmission speed, powerful contagiousness without cultural

limit, brings the colorful insights to human, hence, the TV commercials has

unmovable position: the king of all the type of advertisements. TV commercial is the

economic support of TV programs, it has occupied the first position in the share of the

revenue of the broadcasting industry for longtime (Wang, 2017).

From the beginning, Chinese commercial was simple, rough, and hard to watch,

but now it has been gradually transformed into exquisite and touching so that the

audience can enjoy the TV commercials with the beauty and pleasure mood when

they are watching it. Even many viewers will be attracted to the content of the ad and stay for interesting TV commercials. Chen (2014) said accomplish with the mass media, using mass media as a carrier, the advertisements industry getting into a dynamic era as well.

According to China Business Intelligence Network (2017), from 1979 Chinese advertisements restore development, Chinese advertisements industry become a complete system, in 2014, Chinese commercial industry annual growth rate is 11.7%, total turnover reached 560.6 billion yuan, in 2015, this number increase up to 597.3 billion yuan, in 2016 up to 624.5 billion yuan, up 19.3% than last year. Nowadays, people's daily life influenced by advertisements. Tereas (2004) point out that on average, most people see 3,000 advertisements in each week, and each person spends approximately 3 years of his or her life watching. The TV commercials is the most powerful mass media allover China at present, it is also the most popular and complicated form among all the advertisement type nowadays (Wang, 2003), Huang



(2006) wrote in his book that over 75% of people will combine consumption behaviors and commercials.

No matter of people like or not, initiative or passive, it's an inevitable thing that contact with advertisements. People can choose not to open television, not to read the magazine, refusing surf the internet, but we can 't avoid accepting advertisements like outside billboard; mobile advertising on various of transportation; advertisements on the public elevator. Whatever is the rendered form it is, those advertisements using their unique expressions and spreading way, to occupy people's daily life.

Because of the continuously developing information technology, the era of traditional text advertisements having been changed. According to Bian (2016), one of the most important elements of advertisement is the lively image, it can be said that we are entered the era of image revelry, and at this time, television media has become an important platform for advertising, television advertising came into being. Shi (2017) concluded the TV commercial advertisement, he said TV commercial advertisement is an important market resource that been occupied by advertisers.

Wang (2018) made a research, the research used number to illustrated that the amount of TV commercials has been slightly narrow, and the growth rate has gradually slowed down. However, in the entire advertising industry, TV advertising is the largest subject, accounting for about 40% of the total advertising share. Of course, the use of TV commercials is also very extensive, not only it played as a separate commercial, but it also can insert into TV news for fast playback (Ying, 2013).

TV commercial advertisements want to pass the information about the product which the inviters want to sell. Cheng and Liang (2015) reported that due to the television is the media based on image and sound, the most obvious features are visualization. The audiences using their own feeling to experience which spreading on TV, advertisers need to give the audience the beautiful feelings. TV commercial advertisements is also an art behavior, this kind of promotion need to create a beautiful atmosphere, on the image of their showing, the actors, the plots, the hue, the modeling all of these elements should be defined with beautiful. Only injecting lots of wonderful things, the commercial advertisements can catch the audience's eyes. The

actors are the most common element always appearing on TV commercials advertisements, especially those female actors representing the beauty thing.

The advertisement is a way of expressing consumers' identity and making them want to buy this product or service. Mao (2018) posted a paper, analysis about the female portrayal in China TV commercials, he thought in modern China TV commercials, using exquisite and artistic short films to attract the audience's vision making the expression more and more attractive. By selecting the protagonist of the advertisement, the advertisers want to appear a perfect image, which causes the consumer's psychological resonance and indirectly longing, so that can make the audiences have their desire to make purchasing. Because of the status of female is been valued, the frequency of female images in the production of TV commercials is also increasing, which always plays a decisive role.

The French feminist Beauvoir (1952) refers to men as “first sex” and women as “second sex” attached to men in her classic book *Second Sex*. In today's advertisements, women become absolute "first sex" and men become "second sex."

Zhu and Bo (2003) wrote a book about the female images in Chinese commercials, they considered at present, there are almost 87% of China's mainstream media using the characters with the symbol of human images and more than 94% of them choosing with the symbolic elements of adult women.

Time goes by, the position of female become more and more significant, lots of advertiser start to focus on women, promoting their product by using the actress, but somehow the inevitable thing is there are still have stereotypes about the females. The year of beginning organized women's movements and growing concerns over the portrayal of women was in 1964, since that, people started to pay attention to the female portray in the advertisements, and lots of studies focused on the continually changing image of the female. Venkatesan and Losco (1975) had a comprehensive research to analyze the images of women depicted in Chinese advertisements since 1957-1971. Although the describer of women as sexual objects was decreasing after the year 1959, however the other kinds of stereotypes still used widely. (e.g. women as dependent on man, housewife, sexy, high-living, physically beautiful). From Siu

and Au (1997) they pointed that one traditional thought control China for many years is the Confucian, which requires the female be a modest kindly and dutiful, that is what the female portray before 1966. After that, China ushered in the period of the Cultural Revolution during 1966 to 1976, Andrews and Shen (2002) said the whole of China followed the slogan of the temporary Chairman the Mao: “women holding up half the sky,” at that time, female’s image should be asexual, austere, and as capable as men, this time period, the social expectation to female are departure from the Confucian conception. In the late 1970s, after the economic reform to nowadays. Hung (2006) said there weren’t too many limitations of female image, the culture because more and more freedom, the whole society are promoting the image of female full of independent, confident, knowledgeable and enjoying her own life style. Chen and Li (2016) said that in the past few years, the image of Chinese female is mild and gentle, located as an object which attached to the male.

In the past research, Cao, Zhu, Wang, and Yin (2016) conducted a study that the context is about commercial advertisements which confirm the audience's gender

stereotype are benefits to increasing promotion effect, while Fan (2006) found that by using female stereotype in TV commercial advertisements can have impact on catching the attention of customers.

In the year of the female stereotype in TV commercial advertisements is changing. In today's society, female consciousness has awake, corporates must recognize that if they want to dominate the market, win the consumers' heart, the need to learn how to respect the females (Wang, 2017).

A study over the past few years point out that the advertisements on abroad, nearly two-thirds of the spokespersons are female (Bandura, 2010). On Chinese TV advertisements, the female character also more popular than male, as the situation in some western counties, the images of women are being loved by the advertiser.

From the classification of merchandise which the main consumer groups are females, such as cosmetics, skin care products and washing product are using women as the main role in these advertisements. For some product that users both male and female, like household appliances, furniture, Foods, and some service agency which apply

education service or health service, these spokespersons most of them choose the female to play the main character on their advertisement video. Even if some products, their target customers are male, such as the men suit, shaver and leather shoes for men also reference to female's aesthetic, female images always appear in their advertisements, this type of phenomenon shows that female has the unique status in advertisements market.

This study focuses on TV commercials because, first, the current research wants to investigate the advertising industry's practices and provide implications for advertisers; secondly, TV commercials are likely to use and reinforce gender-stereotypical depictions in their characters (Klinger, Hamilton, & Cantrell, 2001); Third, the repetitive nature of commercial is likely to influence society's viewpoints. Therefore, in this study the researcher will analyze the stereotype of Chinese female in 2018 TV commercial advertisements, testing on usually what kind of female stereotype is showing up in TV commercial advertisements. This research in the file

of female stereotyping will give a new vision to advertisers and marketers in gender representation.

### 1.2 Objective of Study

In the objective of this study is:

1. To examine the female characters in 2018's Chinese TV commercial ads based on the physical attractiveness aspect.
2. To examine in the female characters in 2018's Chinese TV commercial advertisements based on the role behaviors.
3. To examine in the female characters in 2018's Chinese TV commercial advertisements based on the occupations.

### 1.3 Scope of Study

This study is to examine the female stereotype in today's Chinese TV commercial advertisements. The sample will be chosen from Hunan Satellite TV, which has the second place in China national TV ratings. This study is 100 Chinese TV commercial advertisements. Selected 100 representative advertisements in 2018.



There are 5 categories covering food and drink, health products, IT products, cars, and toiletries. They cover almost all the common types of products.

This study observe the roles played by women in the 100 advertisements, such as the physical appearance (e.g., bright skin, long hair and thin...), role behavior (e.g., Passive, dependent, and compassionate...), occupations (e.g., housewife, work leader...). Analyzes the stereotyped image of women in China through the content and image of women in advertisements.

#### 1.4 Significance of the Study

1. The finding of the study will benefit for dissipate the conception of gender distortion.
2. The conclusion will benefit to advertisers pay more attention to the image of the female building, give them equal right to grasp the female consumers' heart.
3. This study will help the public build a correct gender perspective while watching TV commercial advertisements, avoiding abuse in the wrong direction.

## 1.5 Definition of Terms

1.5.1 Advertisement can be the definition as a non-personal introduction of any kind by a recognizable advocate on the payment of goods or services, or even on an action's opinion or idea.

1.5.2 Gender role behavior refers that different sexual of people have different behaviors way. Personality psychologists describe individual differences in people's gender roles as masculine, feminine, androgynous and undifferentiated. The traits of male and female are opponent.

1.5.3 Stereotype is an intrinsic view of some things or some objects, and continuing hold this kind of opinion, extending the whole things or the whole objects have the same feature, ignoring to distinguish the individual.

1.5.4 Female Stereotype means the customary view of the whole female. Such as women are often limited to the role of "housewives", women are usually taken traditionally civilian work like secretary and accounting, females are usually the sex object of the male, wearing sexy clothes waiting for male's purchase.

1.5.5 Physical attractiveness refers to the degree in which a person's physical characteristics are appreciated by the other people. The object of physical attractiveness is human, for example, physical attractiveness including the charm of laughter, the charm of voice, the charm of eyes, the attractiveness of body, and there are many kinds of factors can cause physical attractiveness including growing environment, social cognition, and subjective personal hobbies, etc.

1.5.6 Occupations are the division of social labor. At every division of the labor system, labor objects, labor tools, and labor expenditures, each has their own particularities. This particularity determines the difference between varieties of occupations. Different countries in the world have different national conditions, and their standards for dividing occupations are different.

1.5.7 Female portray in Chinese TV commercials is the reflections of females' images on Chinese society. Containing almost all types of the female characters (e.g., youthful, mature, feminine, sexy and hot, housewife, sultry...)

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Related Literature and Previous Studies

According to Jones and Colman (1996), the organization of “Stereotype” is from the Greek word: “Stereos” meaning that meaning solid and tupos, meaning image or impression, from tuptein to strike. A stereotype was from a solid printing mould or plate which once have been posted was hard to change. Afterward, “Stereos” had been altered by Walter Lippmann (1922), Walter Lippmann was a news critic, the words “Stereotype” was first proposed by him on his book “Public Opinion”. He gave a definition to “Stereotype” as a distorted picture or image in a person’s mind, not based on personal experience, but derived culturally. In Lippmann’s view, he thought “Stereotype” is not formed by a single cause but three kinds of reasons, each of them are: social, political, and economic motivations. “Stereotype” has inherited, when time flowing, it still can pass from time zone, from one generation to the next generation, and also “Stereotypes” are universal, easy to disseminate and widely

accepted. This term is to illustrate people's fixed and simplified view of some particular things. It also company with their emotional feeling.

Stereotypes are used to interpret those wrong ideas and judgments about what they think of the sociality phenomenon, stereotypes are lacking rationality, just judge something by what they think. After Lippmann given an interpretation of "Stereotype", lots of scholars also have given their own opinions about "Stereotype". From the early research about "Stereotype" wrote by Katz and Braly (1933), they thought stereotypes describe the same recognition extract from different groups, they focus on stereotypes have a bad influence on society, it may produce deviation versus cognition. Some theories in psychology will have influences on stereotype, such as "Frustration-aggression theory" (Dollard et al., 1939). Lots of specifications showing strong interesting in analysis prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination (Brewer & Brown, 1998; Dovidio, 2001; Duckitt, 1992; Fiske, 1998). Hewstone, Rubin and Willi (2002) said this kind of social attitudes are popular among the intergroup.

Stereotypes is a solid model when people want to get information and perceptions to something or someone (Hilton & Von Hippel, 1996). Stereotypes are including people's thinking of the features of some special groups of people and also involving other messages, like what is their social roles, the degree to which members of the group share specific qualities (i.e., within-group homogeneity or variability), and will have some impacts on the people who are in the specific group. Oakes & Turner (1990) said "Stereotypes" refer to when thinking of one group of people, they will apply a great amount of messages to expand their recognitions and will have expectations about their following actions.

Bruner (1957) connected the form of stereotype with people's previous perceptions, they thought it's easy to assimilate the incoming messages to a formed view, then contribute to the growing stereotype.

Some recent studies have further insights about the stereotypes. From the research of John (2010), the amount of stereotyping is enlarging in two aspects: the quantity and perspective. From the side of quantity, searching with the keywords like

prejudice, stereotypes or discrimination in an academic website: PsychInfo, it appears to be a geometric progression, from only 29 works in the 1930s and it up to 1,829 from 2000 through 2008. On traditional situation, the stereotypes are focused on the issuers, but in Goffman's (1963) famous work, he wrote down his perception that stereotypes are stressed the targets of stereotypes.

A research worked by Hoffman and Hurst (1990) and Eagly & Diekmann (2005) Jost and Banaji (1994) study the relationship between social structure and stereotypes, stereotypes can contribute to bias with acknowledging, understanding and determinations. They think stereotypes are producing from discriminations and also strength discriminations, stereotypes prove there are reasonable between different groups of people judging by their roles on the sociality and occupations. As it follows, comparing with the people with high social reputation, people with low social reputation are lacking passion, motivation, the strength of competitiveness... Besides that, some internal group members are used to using the view of stereotype to classify their group members as different grades (Jost, Banaji and Nosek, 2004). Stereotypes

are oppressive forces, said by John, Miles, Peter and Victoria (2010), in their research they expounded that stereotypes make a consistent on people's view and what their cognitive of characters or behaviors, at the primary period of perceptual process, stereotype can enrich people's mind by making some attached point of view. An example to support this view is ethnicity stereotype, due to in the early period of the Western countries, the situation of social at that time was not stable, some black people will use the method of violent crime to gain money, so it was left the white people a stereotype that the black was associated with violence crimes. There was a study by Aronson (2002) showed that stereotypes have threat reflections, the response happened when the team members become to know some negative stereotypes about them.

Stereotypes are a series of understandings about the essence of a group.

Stereotypes exist in people's brain then influence people's behaviors. It uses the tools of socialization, the media, the language and discourse to spreading. John F. D, Miles H, Peter G, and Victoria M. E (2010) defined to stereotype as kind of relationship and



faith about the characteristics and attributes of a group and it decided the way interact with the group members.

Mass media as a social and cultural communication tool, it can't avoid undergoes the adjustment of the patriarchal culture, showing with strong expectations about females, that's mean the patriarchal culture to build the female images by the concepts of itself. One classical example is in the advertisements, the portrayal of males always related to rational, authoritative and full of leadership while the portrayals of females are described as the image of emotional, dutiful and depends on the males. That's because the patriarchal civilization shaped this kind of media model, and as a back action, this kind of media model also works on human's mind. (Zhong, Lou, and Ye, 2006)

Hye-Jin, Michelle, Alexandra (2011) made a conclusion they said the gender role portrayals in advertising have strong social influence, it can force gender stereotypes to become permanent, and become some kind of standard to measure male and female behaviors.

Gender role portrayals in advertising also accompanying with important creative decisions which decided the target of those advertisements (Morrison and Shaffer 2003) and supplied by Debevec and Iyer (1986) they considered that those portrayed gender role behaviors in advertisements make a huge effect on audience behaviors and consumptions.

About gender role portrayals in advertising, some scholars have done relatively researches, however, all of them were developed by two seminal studies: one was done by Goffman (1978), he gave an opinion that advertisings can make powerful presentation, other was proposed by McArthur and Resko (1975) which guide the content analysis method about gender role portrayals in advertising research by comparing over 400 print advertisements in the United States. In Goffman's research, he proved how advertising portrays gender roles in a specific way which are narrow down the realistic situations about gender portrayals, over more, he demonstrated the specific body languages can lead to stereotypes or strength stereotypes. McArthur and Resko (1975) focused on content analysis of TV commercials. After they examined

over 400 TV commercial, they summarized that when TV commercials described males and females were using different way related to the traditional gender conceptions. When McArthur and Resko investigated the gender behavior, they found men always appeared higher authority and professional qualifications than women in TV commercials. Males always been portrayal as independent character, and always appeared in workplace. While in contrast, females exposed product users with a dependent portray always need the help of others, overall, there were great possibility females be set in domestic place.

During 1970s to 1980s, the early studies approved the evidence for advertisers to use the gender role portrayal in advertisements which can stimulate the sales. (Maria & David, 2003) Even though some person who has been surveyed they claimed they dislike the gender role portrayed by commercials, however, the advertisements were still had affections on their behaviors and opinions by observed their reaction to advertising and the celebrities. Gender stereotypes are more than non-traditional advertising (Courtney & Whipple, 1983; Ducker & Tucker, 1977; Wortzel & Frisbie,

1974). Craig (1992) published a study result, this research not only can explain the traditional gender role imagination can help advertisers sell goods, but also proofed the audiences were comfortable and used to the advertisements which contained strong gender role portrayals.

Lots of literature in the western countries were founded that the way they portray the characters were using the gender role behaviors which were associated with stereotypes. Gilly (1988) and Lysonski (1985) said the images of females are younger than males and pay more attention to females' physical attractiveness than males' because the female behaviors are sexy while the male behaviors are usually serious. Furnham and Voli (1989) said females have been depicted as product users or demonstrators, this trend is continues extending (Ferguson, Kreshal, & Tinkham 1990).

Some Asian literature showed that likeability of a character can be inferred from its positive or negative portrayal (Rolandelli, 1991). From the United Nations General Assembly (1995), some of medias are continuing to use the gender portrayals which

is negative and damage to the female images, and the media in lots of countries not depict the power of female which has been given a great number of contributions to today's world. There were more than 70 times theme forums, surrounded the relationship between the media with females' portrayals, among them, the portrayals about females in advertisements is one of the hottest topics. Some representatives thought among the commercials all over the world, the women always be portrayed with traditional images which contain female stereotypes in a certain degree (Liu and Bo, 1997). From the view of social psychology, this phenomenon is called gender role stereotype of advertising. Zhao (2003) gave a special example to explain what is gender role portrait in advertisement: the males always connect with as independence, decisiveness, powerful, self-regulation, self-control, pursuit of achievement, power, aggression etc. in advertisements, females are portrayed with the traits: dependence, compassion and helpful, active seeking emotional expression, sensitive perception of other people's needs, and have a good ability of communication.

Published by Aronson (2002), stereotypes in advertisements is spreading the theme messages of itself by the actors and actresses, making some kind of relationship between people's gender and the products, it will have some influences on the communication of advertising information. Chen and Liang (2015) thought making the full used of the image of the females are more male's intentions, female image in TV commercials always is young and beautiful, thin figure and elegant, those features are set for stimulating the senses of the audience, especially for the men group.

There has a golden rule in the advertisement industry pointed out by Ogilvy (1863): "3B principle": beauty, baby, beast. He put beauty as the first position, actually, it is using gender cues to promote consumption.

However, gender stereotypes are being using extensively in TV commercials, most of those commercials are focusing on female stereotypes. As we all know, the roles protracted by TV commercial can make deep influences on these expectations and believes about female stereotypes. Studies have dealt with the portrayal of women

in all forms of media, according to Vaishali (2003), a recent research about female stereotypes in media at least including one or more than one of following aspects:

1. Females' image is taking care of family at home (see Figure 2.1)
2. Female and her job (see Figure 2.2)
3. Female and their age stage (see Figure 2.3)
4. Female appearances and clothing (see Figure 2.4)
5. Regarded female as product representatives or as product users (see Figure 2.5)
6. Female and her social status (see Figure 2.6)



Figure 2.1: Females' Image is Taking Care of Family at Home



Figure 2.2: Female and Her Job



Figure 2.3: Female and Their Age Stage



Figure 2.4: Female Appearances and Clothing





Figure 2.5: Regarded Female as Product Representatives or as Product Users



Figure 2.6: Female and Her Social Status

One of the earliest researches studied about the female stereotypes in television commercial wrote by Bardwick and Schumann (1967). In this examination, they focused on the images which portrayed by both men and women in the television advertisement, and the result showing that comparing with the males, the advertising

scenes played by women mostly occurred in the domestic while when the males are the important role, it was always happened at outside.

A study did by Courtney and Whipple (1983), they founded that men and women represented different types of products, for the cosmetics products there was 75% played by female, but for those dynamic products showed on television commercial advertisements, such as the cars, the sport equipment is 75% displayed by male.

Almost three-quarters of advertisements set the female's place was at home, female was always in kitchen, bathroom and living room as the television advertisement background, but at the same time, male's background is at outside, on business environments. This kind station was pointed out that a stereotype about the females, female's place is at home instead of the working place or outside. They observed tons of television commercials, got some rest findings:

1. Female for male was sex objects, which means even if female didn't show up on the television commercial but they still represented male's goal (see Figure 2.7)

2. Female couldn't make important decisions by herself, always need male's alimentation and help (see Figure 2.8)
3. For the voice-over, almost 87% was using male's voice, just 6% using the voice of female



Figure 2.7: Female for Male was Sex Objects



Figure 2.8: Female couldn't Make Important Decisions by Herself

One comprehensive analysis exceeded 60 studies by Martin (2010) he founded a similar mode of female stereotypes portrayals thought many TV commercials, in the mass, these results lend support to the idea that the women are portrayed differently portraits than men which can make sure that female stereotypes widely existed. Here is some of what they study results:

1. Compared with the males, female characters were 4 times more likely without speaking role
2. Compared with the males, female characters were 3 times more likely to be actually common products user, but the male characters used to portray the authority one
3. Compared with the males, female characters were 3.5 times more likely be set as domestic environment while male are more likely showing on workplace or outside
4. Compared with the males, female characters were 2 times more likely related to daily necessities (such as foods, cleaning supplies and kitchen supplies...)

Overall, it seems like there have proofs to support female stereotyping and showing that men and women imagine in the advertisements are not equal.

Stereotyping is everywhere, no matter people are willing to see or not, on every kind of advertisement, especially on TV commercials, it happened all the time, even if in children's programs (Courtney & Whipple, 1983). Female stereotypes are always shown at two kinds of TV commercials: the one is attractiveness, and the other one is the females presentation (Downs & Harrison, 1985; Lin, 1997). Women are always in domestic when they have been shown at TV commercial advertisements (Bretl & Cantor, 1988). On regular basis, in the TV commercial advertisements, female's voice is used seldom as a voice-over then male's voice (Allan & Coltrane, 1996; O'Donnell, 1978). Comparing with male, female is less represented as an award winner (Allan & Coltrane, 1996), but on the other hand, they founded that TV commercials are appealing female is various of occupations and higher participation in the workplace from the 1950s to the 1980s. Welch, Huston-Stein, Wright and Plehal (1979) broaden their knowledge about female stereotypes: Male-oriented TV commercials are

including the fragments of violence, force, rudely actions and loud background music, while the contains of female-oriented TV commercials are softness, peacefulness, moderate behaviors and relaxed rhythm. One of interesting thing summarized by Lahle (2018), even if some products with the label of “men’s”, such as cars and sports products, female still on the leading status of products purchasing. A study by Certified (2018), it is an organization of female customer advocacy in the USA, women spend \$4 trillion annually, this number occupied 83% of all USA consumer spending, in a similar vein, an examination of female customers by DT E-commerce (2017), from the overall of China, women are still a majority of household consumption decision makers.

## 2.2 Related Theories

### 2.2.1 The Theory of Communication

The communication theory believed that human’s behavior is influenced by the social interactions, that means people communicate with each other within the rules understanding.

The mass media is always used to reflect some specific cultures by repeating statement and emphasize to reach the identity of the public. At the same time, it is also an important source of modeling, has the functions of constructing gender meaning of mode, the container which presented by mass media always become the social expectations, influencing the gender recognition. Subsequently conclusion is that if there exists any type of gender-unequal situation, it will present on the media in a very short time and transfer it into stereotypes to affect the social behaviors, for example, the advertisement give female some features like young, beautiful, gentle and obedient, consequently become a stereotype of female which is under the patriarchal values.

### 2.2.2 Social Role Theory

Social role theory is one of the social psychology theories that are currently concerned by the academic community and the public. It has certain practical significance in understanding and solving some social problems. The first scholar who posted this conceptual by Mead (1934), he is also the founder of the social role

theory. He saw the society as a big stage, every single society member is the performer, he made this kind of analogy become a conceptual model which can explain the relationship of social and dissecting social structures. By tons of years hard working, scholars believe that according to the social role theory, it is a theory that explains people's behavior and reveals the social regulations. As we all know, the performance made by actors is influenced by the script, the scene, the instructions of the director, the performance of the companion actor, the reaction of the audience, and the actor's own understanding of the role and the skill of the player. People who live in real life also similar to characters on stage. Our society is a huge mutual assistance system which makes up of the different people in unequal position. Every composition has his or her rights and responsibilities, hence they are playing their own role. However, no matter who plays a specific role, the main behaviors are must be similar, because this is determined by the “social script”, there exist some differences due to everyone has different understandings of their own roles or different character skills.



According to previously posted social role theory, Eagle (1987) furtherly supplemented it, he believed that gender can lead to differences in social behaviors by influencing social role expectations (gender role expectations) and individual beliefs or skills (gender role performance); society expects male jobs to be higher than females. While women's family roles are expected to be higher than men's, men and women follow these gender roles to expect different gender roles.

### 2.2.3 Gender Hierarchy

According to the social role theory, the division of labor between social and social roles interacts. Eagly, Wood and Diekmann (2000) got the gender hierarchy theory: on the one hand, women's social roles require them to take care of their families so that they cannot participate in the construction of social politics and corporate structure. On the other hand, male's social roles require them to participate in political society and assume the role of leader. This shows that in the comparison of male and female, women's personality is more stable and less risky than men. Men

tend to be tied to high rights and status, and more men become leaders, and often women's ideas are not so easily valued.

### 2.3 Conceptual Framework

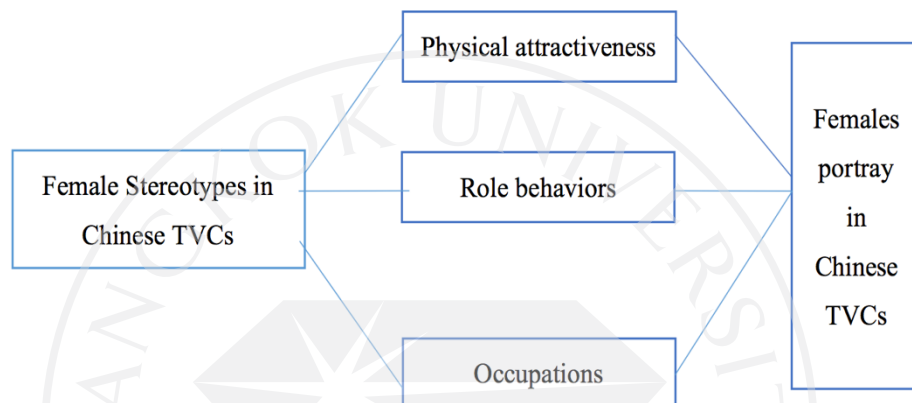


Figure 2.9: Conceptual Framework

### 2.4 Research Questions

1. What is the stereotype of female physical attractiveness in Chinese TV commercials?
2. What is the stereotype of female role behavior in Chinese TV commercials?
3. What is the stereotype of female occupation in Chinese TV commercials?

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter wrote about the research methodology and the sampling process to test the female stereotypes in Chinese TV commercials. Four elements build up the concept of gender stereotypes putted forward by Deaux and Lewis (1984). This character including six sections, all of them are research design, population and sample selection, research procedure, research instrument and data analysis, validity, and reliability.

#### 3.1 Research Design

The purpose of this paper is to study the female stereotypes expressed in Chinese TV commercials and present them in four aspects. The central point of this study is to analyze the portrayal of female stereotypes in Chinese TV commercials. The results of this analysis were obtained through the way of analyzing the contents of commercial advertising.

This study is qualitative research, the specific method is to use the method of content analysis, this research uses TV commercials to investigate Chinese female stereotypes. Qualitative analysis is adopted because it can be a bottom-up process from single TV commercial to the whole perception, from concrete to abstract, which is useful to the understanding of research issues comprehensively. Michael (2000) wrote in his book, content analysis is a systematic description of the explicit content of the communication.

This study will analyze the elements of female stereotypes by observing 58 of advertisements and providing the advertisers and readers with a relevant analysis of female stereotypes in Chinese commercial advertisements. In addition, content analysis been chosen because content analysis not only analyzes the information contained in the dissemination content but also analyzes the entire communication process, including explicit information and implicit information that needs to be detoxified. In summary, this study is accepted because it uses content analysis to

investigate the portrayal of female stereotypes in Chinese commercials and to explain the analysis of these elements.

### 3.2 Population and Sample Selection

This research has chosen the commercials which have been played at Hunan Satellite TV (the most popular and representative TV channel in China). Recorded the commercials which showed on Hunan Satellite TV between the times of 18:00-22:00 (evening) for the third week at the middle of November in 2018. The commercials which the main character are children, virtual characters or animals and public service announcement were excluded the range of this statistical process.

Each commercial recorded only one time, and the repeat times of playing were not counted in this statistic.

This procedure selected from 401 commercials on Hunan Satellite TV, 58 individual advertisements to be analyzed (from 18:00-20:00 in the evening). Because from 6 o'clock to 10 o'clock in the evening is the prime time for TV viewing, at that time period, there are more people watching, and the advertising played during this

time period has a wide influence. Numbers were uneven because that reflected the advertisements actually available, the data is real and effective.

### 3.3 Research Instrument and Data Analysis

As this study used a qualitative approach, there was used of content analysis measurement, the coding sheets were combined the study by Deaux and Lewis (1984) and Dong (2013) and added some other female stereotypes in nowadays, just like Livingstone and Green (1986) said, the masculine stereotype also can refer to the females.

The secondary data (58 commercials in Hunan Satellite TV) were be analyzed in the following steps:

1. To analysis which gender is the main character in the advertisements.
2. To analysis each of the 58 commercials belongs to what kind of female stereotype in the physical appearance.

3. To examine each of the 58 commercials belongs to what kind of female stereotypes in the role behavior.

4. To examine each of the 58 commercials belongs to what kind of female stereotypes in the occupations.

#### 3.4 Validity

This study by observed TV commercials to analysis the female stereotypes that exist in Chinese society. The conceptual framework according to the study of Deaux and Lewis in 1984.

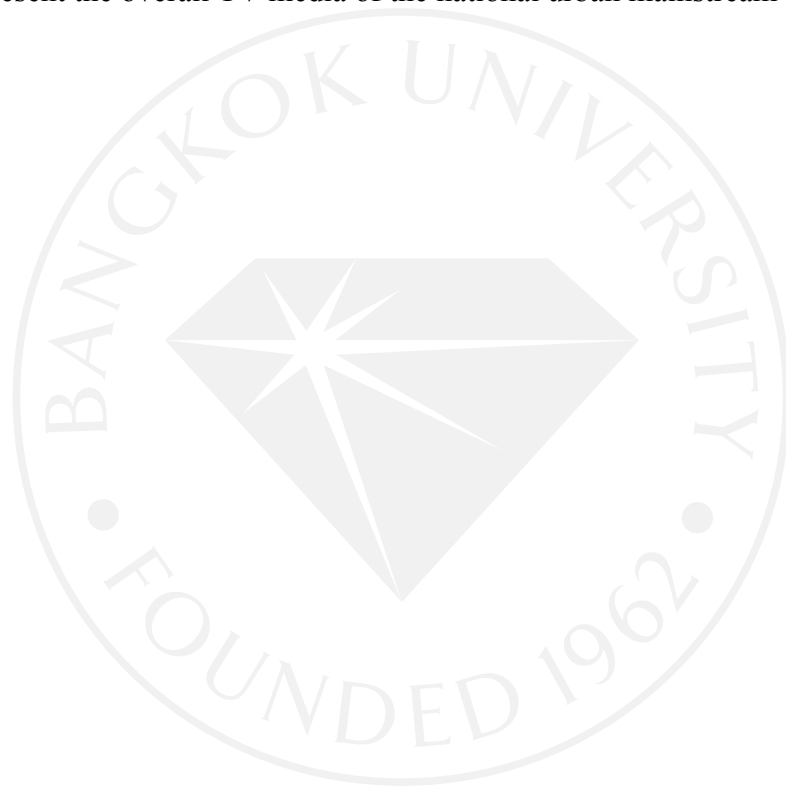
The part of data analysis processes was directed by this conceptual framework, therefore, the validity of this research has a certain degree of conviction.

#### 3.5 Reliability

In order to ensure the reliability of the experiment, the advertisements studied in this survey were recorded. The advertisements selected in this experiment are all

recorded and recorded advertisements from Hunan Satellite TV. Every advertisement has been approved by the State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television.

Therefore, this study is convinced because the sample of our actually recorded can represent the overall TV media of the national urban mainstream media.





## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

This research did a content analysis of characters in 401 TV ad samples, according to the advertising target, TV commercials are divided into six types: food and drink, health products, IT products, cars, toiletries and other kinds of products.

In order to fully grasp the information related to female stereotypes in each TV commercial, the research classifies different TV commercials, specific into 4 types, each of them is the main character gender, physical attractiveness, role behavior and occupation to count and analysis.

#### 4.1 Finding in Main Character Gender

The main character only focus on male, the occupancy rate is 17.21% (69), only use female as the main character the rate is 23.44% (94), mix two gender is 37.91% (152), there was 8.22% (33) is the public service announcement, and there was 13.22% (58) of the advertisements is virtual theme advertisement, both the public service announcements and the virtual theme advertisements can't be count. Overall

the commercials, the most of them using two genders as their main character 37.91% (152), if only considered one gender as lead role, then should be female 23.44% (94),

In general, the probability of female characters appearing is 6.23 percentage points higher than that of men. If we remove the duplicate, only male protagonists, public service announcements and the virtual theme advertisements, according to statistics, we collected 58 valid analyzable commercial ads with female characters.

It is illustrated that the advertisers and enterprises more like using female images than male to display their products in the commercials. This proved the statements of some scholars like Zhu and Bo (2003) and Mao (2018), the image of female is more popular and used in communication and advertising than other.

Table 4.1: The proportion of male and female images in TV commercials

| <b>Main Character gender</b> |            |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Male                         | 69(17.21%) |
| Female                       | 94(23.44%) |

(Continued)

Table 4.1 (Continued): The proportion of male and female images in TV commercials

|                             |             |
|-----------------------------|-------------|
| Mix male and female         | 152(37.91%) |
| Public Service Announcement | 33(8.22%)   |
| Virtual theme Advertisement | 53(13.22)   |
| Total                       | 401         |

#### 4. 2 Finding in the Physical Attractiveness

Age is one of the important references for judging women's attractiveness.

Among the 58 sample ads that we selected, most of them used young and beautiful female characters between the ages of 18 and 35. The ratio was 87.93%, while the remaining is 12%, which used middle-aged and older woman (over 35 years old).

Among the commercial advertisements which the age of main character female is over 35 years old, the proportion of food and drink is the highest: 8.62% and the toiletries is the lowest: 1.72%. The proportion of other products using middle-aged and older women (over 35) is almost 0%.

According to the characteristics of female, this experiment divides women into four categories, namely: sexy and seductive, cute, mature and intellectual, strong and masculine. Among the four categories, women's physical attractiveness showed the most are those females who are cute, up to 18.97%, followed by sexy and seductive, accounting for 17.24%, and smart mature women accounting for 15.52% in our 58 non-repetitive ads. Among those commercials, the none of them with the physical attractiveness of strong and masculine.

In the sexy and seductive categories, food and drink, health products, IT products and other use of this image as the endorsement of women are not much, accounting for each of them is only 1.72%, the type of cars (5.17%) and toiletries (5.17%) advertisements like to choose women who are sexy and occasionally have bare skin as spokespersons.

In the category of cute, food and drink and other (such as app promotion ads, and service ads...) like to use cute female characters as contemporary speakers, their proportions are 6.9% and 8.62%. The cute women who are usually be portrayed as the

image with petite, a good-looking face and dressed in a sunny and youthful manner.

Health products, IT products use only 1.72% of cute women's performance products, while car and toiletries do not use cute women to display products in this research.

Mature and intellectual female images are more evenly distributed, food and drink, toiletries and other is 2.45%, health products, IT products and cars is 1.72%.

Among all the 58 valid advertisements have been sampled, no any of advertiser and company chose strong and masculine as the image of the spokesperson.

Advertisers and companies are still biased towards traditional female dressing and feminine women to express their merchandise.

Among the advertisements we analyzed, women's wear was divided into dress up very well and simple dressed. Dress up very well women are often dressed in delicate makeup, dressed in formal attire or dresses when appearing on the screen, always set outdoor, banquet or some special scenes as their location. Among women who dress up very well, toiletries and other accounted for the highest proportion, reaching

17.24%, food and drink second, accounting for 15.52%, health products, IT products

and cars, the female characters were not so emphasize, easier than the other

Simple dressed women are more evenly distributed among the five types of

advertisement, their place always set at a domestic place. Food and drink, IT products

and cars is 8.62%, followed by health products, 6.9%, then toiletries and other is

3.45%.

Table 4.2: The Female Stereotypes in Physical Attractiveness

| Physical Attractiveness    |                |                 |             |           |            |            |            |
|----------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| Physical attractiveness    | Food and drink | Health products | IT products | Cars      | Toiletries | Other      | Total      |
| 1. Age : 18-35             | 9(15.52%)      | 6(10.34%)       | 7(12.07%)   | 7(12.07%) | 11(18.97%) | 11(18.97%) | 51(87.93%) |
| Over 35                    | 5(8.62%)       | 0(0%)           | 0(0%)       | 0(0%)     | 1(1.72%)   | 1(1.72%)   | 7(12.07%)  |
| 2. Sexy and seductive      | 1(1.72%)       | 1(1.72%)        | 1(1.72%)    | 3(5.17%)  | 3(5.17%)   | 1(1.72%)   | 10(17.24%) |
| 3. Cute                    | 4(6.9%)        | 1(1.72%)        | 1(1.72%)    | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)      | 5(8.62%)   | 11(18.97%) |
| 4. Mature and intellectual | 2(3.45%)       | 1(1.72%)        | 1(1.72%)    | 1(1.72%)  | 2(3.45%)   | 2(3.45%)   | 9(15.52%)  |
| 5. Strong and masculine    | 0(0%)          | 0(0%)           | 0(0%)       | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)      |

(Continued)

Table 4.2 (Continued): The Female Stereotypes in Physical Attractiveness

|                       |           |          |          |          |            |            |            |
|-----------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|------------|------------|------------|
| 6. Dress up very well | 9(15.52%) | 2(3.45%) | 2(3.45%) | 2(3.45%) | 10(17.24%) | 10(17.24%) | 35(60.34%) |
| 7. Simple dressed     | 5(8.62%)  | 4(6.9%)  | 5(8.62%) | 5(8.62%) | 2(3.45%)   | 2(3.45%)   | 23(39.66%) |
| 8. Other              | 0(0%)     | 3(5.17%) | 4(6.9%)  | 0(0%)    | 3(5.17%)   | 0(0%)      | 10(17.24%) |

#### 4.3 Finding in the Role Behavior

There are 8 categories about female role behaviors as generally, each of them is: romantic, hardworking and progressive, warm and kind, independent and confident, dependent and submissive, quiet and unimpressed, damage and violence, sex object and other. In a single commercial, female characters may have only one or more than one role behavior as female stereotypes.

Among these sample advertisements, the highest frequency of images portrayed by women is independent and confident. Among the 58 sample advertisements, 16 of the advertisements appear in the image of independent and confident. These women have their own ideas and can make their own decisions without relying on anyone, fully believe in their own abilities.

Subsequently is the female stereotypes which are quiet and unimpressed, warm and kind, dependent and submissive based on frequencies of 14, 11 and 10. Quiet and unimpressed, dependent and submissive female role behaviors are often appearing in the family, obedient and dependent on others. Hard to make their own decisions while requires the protection of others. Warm and kind women are very helpful female portrayal in helping others or caring for others. In addition, women often perform romantic roles, accounting for 8, such as using various behavior to describe they're falling in love.

Among the eight role behaviors, three kinds of behavior that occur rarely or not: hardworking and progressive, sex object, damage and violence. Among these advertisements, only three times of women were portrayed as hard-working characters. However, all the three advertisements appeared in the background of the workplace. The appearance of the Sex object is also rare, which proves the phenomenon that the females are more respected than the past. None of the



advertisements was used the damage and violence female behavior, indicating that women are gentle and peaceful in the eyes of the public.

About the Food and drink commercials, those advertisements like to use female role behavior with quietly and unimpressed, as well as romantic, up to 5 and 4 times. Health products like to use female role behavior with dependent and submissive, frequency is 3 times. Independent and confident, quiet and unimpressive female stereotype be liked by IT products, each of them showed about 3 times. The cars commercials also like using independent and confident to describe a female. Toiletries like use independent and confident female role behavior to express productions which frequency is 7. In other sorts of commercial, female stereotypes in independent and confident, dependent and submissive, quiet and unimpressed are more than the other kinds of female role behavior.

Table 4.3: The Female Stereotypes in Role Behavior

| <b>Role Behavior</b>           |                |                 |             |      |            |       |       |
|--------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|------|------------|-------|-------|
| Role behavior                  | Food and drink | Health products | IT products | Cars | Toiletries | Other | Total |
| 1. Romantic                    | 4              | 1               | 2           | 0    | 0          | 1     | 8     |
| 2. Hardworking and progressive | 1              | 0               | 0           | 1    | 0          | 1     | 3     |
| 3. Warm and kind               | 3              | 2               | 1           | 1    | 2          | 2     | 11    |
| 4. Independent and confident   | 0              | 0               | 3           | 3    | 7          | 3     | 16    |
| 5. Dependent and submissive    | 2              | 3               | 0           | 1    | 1          | 3     | 10    |
| 6. Quiet and unimpressed       | 5              | 0               | 3           | 1    | 2          | 3     | 14    |
| 7. Damage and violence         | 0              | 0               | 0           | 0    | 0          | 0     | 0     |
| 8. Sex object                  | 1              | 0               | 0           | 1    | 0          | 0     | 2     |

#### 4.4 Finding in the Occupation

The survey selected ten representative female occupations, namely: teacher, management, financial practitioner, businessman, media worker, assistant, celebrity, servicer, housewife and student. The first eight are formal jobs, while the last two housewife and students are unemployed. There is only one occupation for the one female subject in each ad, so the total number of statistics is 58.

Among the ten roles, the occupancy ratio of housewife is the highest, reaching 37.9%, followed by celebrity, and the frequency of celebrity is 17.24%.

Management, businessman, servicer and student these four kinds of occupations only showed once in the research, the frequency is 1.72%. Teacher, financial practitioner, media worker, assistant were not shown during the investigation process, the proportion is 0%. Other kind of occupations such as freelancer or the females' occupational expression is unclear up to 22 of the commercials, the proportion is 37.93%. Housewife's place is at home, always serve as a mother or wife to take care of the family. Celebrity often uses young and beautiful female

stars or women who are particularly good at some aspect, such as the national women's basketball players. Most of the other categories are female characters with unclear occupations.

It can be seen that in the food and drink category, female characters appeared 14 times, accounting for 24.14% of the total sample. The highest occupation in Food and drink was the housewife, three times, with a frequency of 5.17%, followed by celebrity, twice, with a frequency of 3.45%. Management, businessman and servicer only showed at once, the frequency is 1.72%. There are 6 other times (24.14%) for other occupations.

Among the products of health product, female characters appeared 6 times, accounting for 10.34% of the total sample. Four of the occupations about women are housewife, the frequency is 6.90%, and the remaining two are other occupations that do not appear in the statistics.

Among the products of IT products, the female character appeared 7 times with a frequency of 12.07%. There are 6 times that are depicted as housewife, and the frequency is shown to be 10.34%. The scene was always set when a man introducing an electronic product to a woman and showing her how to use this electronic product. The amount of female is seven who were endorsement IT products, only one was in other occupations, with a frequency of 1.72%.

In cars, female characters appear 7 times with a frequency of 12.07%. Both appearances are occupations of housewife, the frequency is 3.45%. 5 times are other occupations (8.62%) that do not appear in the statistics table.

In the Toiletries, the female character appeared 12 times with a frequency of 20.69%. Celebrity and housewife are both appearing 5 times with a frequency of 8.62%. The remaining 2 times (3.45%) are occupations that do not appear in the statistics.

In other product advertisements, female characters appeared 12 times with a frequency of 20.69%. Women appear 3 times as Celebrity with a frequency of 5.17%, women appear twice as housewife, with a frequency of 3.45%, and women appear as a student with a frequency of 1.72%. The remaining 6 times (10.34%) are occupations that do not appear in the statistics.

It can also be seen that in these 58 advertisements, 24.14% of women used to endorse food and drink, 20.69% of women were selected to endorse toiletries, 12.07% of women were selected to endorse IT products and Cars, and 10.34% of women endorsed health products. The remaining 20.69% of women endorsed other products.

Table 4.4: The Female Stereotypes in Occupation

| <b>Occupation</b> |                |                 |             |       |            |       |          |
|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------|-------|------------|-------|----------|
| Occupation        | Food and drink | Health products | IT products | Cars  | Toiletries | Other | Total    |
| 1. Teacher        | 0(0%)          | 0(0%)           | 0(0%)       | 0(0%) | 0(0%)      | 0(0%) | 0(0%)    |
| 2. Management     | 1(1.72%)       | 0(0%)           | 0(0%)       | 0(0%) | 0(0%)      | 0(0%) | 1(1.72%) |

(Continued)

Table 4.4 (Continued): The Female Stereotypes in Occupation

|                           |            |           |           |           |            |            |            |
|---------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|------------|------------|
| 3. Financial practitioner | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)      |
| 4. Businessman            | 1(1.72%)   | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)      | 1(1.72%)   |
| 5. Media worker           | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)      |
| 6. Assistant              | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)      |
| 7. Celebrity              | 2(3.45%)   | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 5(8.62%)   | 3(5.17%)   | 10(17.24%) |
| 8. Servicer               | 1(1.72%)   | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)      | 1(1.72%)   |
| 9. Housewife              | 3(5.17%)   | 4(6.90%)  | 6(10.34%) | 2(3.45%)  | 5(8.62%)   | 2(3.45%)   | 22(37.93%) |
| 10. Student               | 0(0%)      | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)     | 0(0%)      | 1(1.72%)   | 1(1.72%)   |
| 11. Other                 | 6(10.34%)  | 2(3.45%)  | 1(1.72%)  | 5(8.62%)  | 2(3.45%)   | 6(10.34%)  | 22(37.93%) |
| Total                     | 14(24.14%) | 6(10.34%) | 7(12.07%) | 7(12.07%) | 12(20.69%) | 12(20.69%) | 58(100%)   |

#### 4.5 Summary of the Findings

In China's TV commercials, female have an absolute advantage as an advertising protagonist. However, the portrayals of females are often materialized as the image that just has a perfect face or body. Such an expression can indeed

attract some viewers' attention, but some advertisements are too exaggerated for women's physical attractiveness. One-sided pursuits are young and beautiful, using beautiful women's to express products which stand at the males' side.

Distorting and commercializing the female body is not conducive to the correct dissemination of gender concepts. The results of this survey show that most of the ads highlight women's feminine qualities (sexy and cute) to increase the appeal of advertising. Most advertisements require women's feminine external good-looking image to express goods so that consumers can resonate with the purchase of goods.

The female stereotypes in the physical attractiveness which confirms the theory of communication: mass media often reflects a cultural order by selectively emphasizing some stereotypes. The advertisements give women with the stereotypes of young and beauty, sex and cute, reflecting the female images that the society expects which are under the patriarchal values.



This study believes that the predecessors' research theories are rich and involve many aspects, but there are still some limitations in some aspects, such as the research did by Courtney and Whipple in 1974.

The image of modern women presented by contemporary advertisements has changed compared with the traditional female images in the past. They have become more independent and confident and have their own ideas based on the role behavior of the females in the traditional sense. With the improvement of economic status, women's values have also changed, they are brave in pursuing their own lives, are willing to make decisions for themselves, and have relatively independent social relations. They are a reflection of positive and affirmative social thoughts. However, the traditional female role behaviors are still affecting the depiction of female characters in modern advertising, or a certain percentage of women are described as obedient and hesitant roles.

Research findings that the female stereotype in role behaviors supports the social role theory, the roles of men and women are gender roles, which refer to the

quality characteristics, thought patterns and certain behavior patterns that are consistent with certain social expectations due to different genders.

In this survey, Chinese women have two types of images that are the most portrayed. The first kind is an amiable young woman dressed as a housewife, without any of tried looking enthusiastic recommendation products are always combine with some attached roles such as husband and child. The second kinds of female are the celebrity who wearing gorgeous clothes, smile, and using the transformation of body posture to display products and stimulate the audience's eyes. But the amount of females appearing in workplace is very less, not alone set as the authority in the workplace.

According to Chinese Women's Development Program (2017), although the employment rate of Chinese women has reached 43.5%, the current advertisements are still not fully aware of the value of women in the workplace, and do not regard women as equal partners in work and life.

Research findings in female stereotypes on occupations matches the gender hierarchy theory, female should take care of family and cannot participate in the construction of social politics and corporate structure.



## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

This chapter focuses on the discussion of this study. Making a conclusion about the female stereotype in Chinese TV commercials in nowadays thought social role behavior, gender hierarchy theory and several other theories which pointed out before, especially the structure of gender stereotypes made by Deaux and Lewis in 1984. Moreover, this research gives the limitations of this study, suggestions and gives recommendations for further study.

#### 5.1 Conclusions the findings

This study aims to research the female stereotypes in Chinese TV commercials by observing the most popular TV satellite station Hunan Satellite TV which have a certain representativeness. The total 58 TV commercials contained the female character in the Third week of November were been selected. Content analysis is by analyzing those 58 commercials to explore the female stereotypes behind the advertisement.

Based on the data analysis progress of 58 TV commercials, the research found that the female stereotypes in Chinese TV commercials focus on the three kinds of stereotype elements: the stereotype of females' physical attractiveness, the stereotype of females' role behaviors and the stereotype of females' occupations. Advertisers and companies want to use the image of celebrities or normal people to get the attention of the mass public by using some typical stereotypes for better communicating with the audiences and also for promoting their products.

#### 5.1.1 Physical Attractiveness

This study analyzes the content of 58 Chinese TV commercials. The result shows that female stereotypes are relatively simple, and the mainstream aesthetic is biased towards the traditional sexy and lovely femininity, similar to previous research results. From this point of view, advertisers believe that the aesthetic standards of Chinese audience prefer a more conservative way to portrayal female. As Chan (2012) said, the mass media using the classic and feminine image as the most popular

female stereotypes will make readers consider that female's appearance attractiveness is more important than inside.

The use of female symbols in advertising is an organic combination of natural beauty and commodity marketing, such a female image does help to cater to the taste of some viewers, increases the brand identity as soon as possible. Women are still "watched" in commercial advertising, while men are still the main viewers of commercial advertising. However, in the background of the modern market economy, some advertisers are too exaggerated about the physical attractiveness of female, and too much emphasis on the external appearance, it qualitatively strengthens the stereotype of women's appreciation and maneuverability. This kind of phenomenon is easily passing a wrong concept which is easy affects the audience's judgment criteria, making physical attractiveness is the only criterion for evaluating women and distorts the normal values.

### 5.1.2 Role Behavior

The survey found that the female characters presented in the commercials are positive images. In recent years, the improvement of women's economic status and the rise of self-awareness have accompanied the female role behavior becoming more and more independent. They can choose the items or lifestyles they want, but there are still a large proportion of female characters which still keep quiet and obedient role behavior. It is generally a typical image of women such as taking a good care of family even the sex object of the male which is in line with the public's psychological cognition.

On the surface, Chinese women seem to have a considerable sense of subjectivity, they have places to express their own abilities and values. However, there is no real conscious subject consciousness in the deep structure of ideological understanding. Their subjective consciousness is only in the form of the surface. When they faced with specific choices, still choose to attach to male make a decision. The female character is non-threatening role behavior, shaped by male values and desires, was originally a female role behavior in the mind of men.

### 5.1.3 Occupation

The study found that among the selected 58 TV commercials, the specific occupation of women is often deliberately hidden. Basically, women are not set up in the workplace, most of the women's occupations are beautiful celebrities and industrious housewives. They continue to convey to the public a stereotype of female that it's their obligation of doing housework at home. Female endorsement commercials are mostly products that are cheaper for daily necessities and food, rather than products that are scientific and authoritative.

The value of women in the workplace today is still not valued. The occupations that women portrayal on TV reflects mostly are ornamental and service roles, while men are leaders and operators. The traditional social concept of “male take charge of outside, female take charge of inside” still dominates the occupational distribution in the mass media, especially in the television media, because in the history of human civilization, women have been materialized for a long time, and women are defined as



secondary roles. Women's professional stereotypes are still fixed by the media in traditional occupational distribution.

## 5.2 Discussions

### 5.2.1 Relating Findings to Theory

The previous studies have proved that advertising has the role of social education. The mass media is the guiding theme in the relationship between women's social roles and the holder of stereotypes. In China, female advertising has a certain degree of misleading public female role. The commercials are the way of cultural expressive, it is a platform to convey information to the public at every moment. Sometimes it ignores the seriousness of some problems and still conveys the ancient stereotypes to the public. Commercials should fully reflect the characteristics of women in the new era and in all aspects. While paying attention to the external beauty of women, they should pay more attention to the inner beauty of women guide the whole society and women to have a correct awareness of the female gender roles.

According to the gender hierarchy theory, women are often responsible for caring for the family, men participating in political activities or more economic life, that's the fact showing on the TV commercials. In today's life, the commercials are the reflection of this gender hierarchy theory. This theory guides advertisers to reflect our general life phenomenon on the screen.

The essence of female consciousness is the affirmation of women themselves, like independent personality, unique value, creativity and, various advantages. It is also a denial of blindly focus on male-centered culture and thinking from the perspective of women. In the TV commercials of this survey, some of them present the important economic status of women, independent personality and other talents.

However, there are still advertisements that give women a variety of stereotypes, thinking that women are accessories and ignoring other talents, just like it used to be.

### 5.2.2 Related Findings to Previous Research

Previous scholars keep the same opinion that stereotypes can help advertisers to promote products. such as Craig (1992), he thought stereotypes not only can attract

the audience's attention but also will help the advertisers making a good sale. Gilly (1988) and Lysonski (1985) explain the image of the young and beautiful female are more charm than male. That's is the same conclusion with this study, the advisers like to use the female image to portrayal kinds of goods.

Liu and Bo in 1997 made a research revealed that the women always be portrayed with traditional images which contain female stereotypes in a certain degree, in this research the result illustrated that Chinese female image on the TV commercials most of the time been portrayed as a traditional female image, the sexy and cute women, the housewives. Liang (2015) though female always keeps the young and beautiful when they showing on the commercials, according to this study, there has a stereotype of female that most of the advertisers will choose the young and beautiful woman to be the main character of their commercials. Zhao (2003) gave a definition to explain female stereotypes in the advertisement female are compassion and helpful which also illustrated in this research, the females always be warm and kind.

### 5.2.3 Relating Findings to Expectations

The results of this survey show that the data obtained from the experiment has some degree of commons are similar to the expectations in the past days, but still has different point:

Similar to previous expectations, Chinese TV commercials use female stereotypes to present the characteristics of goods. They prefer to use young and beautiful women, with a feminine role behavior, and for the spokespersons' occupations mostly are the celebrities or the housewives.

What is the difference from expectations is that women have too few portrayed in the workplace, even in today's modern society where women's employment rate almost up to 50%, it's still hard for us to see women as a profession female in the workplace.

### 5.2.4 Practical Implication

Stereotypes are not only belonged to physical attractiveness, role behaviors, and occupations, there are lots of other aspects, essentially, stereotypes are people's impressions of gender.

With the development of economic and social environments, people's lifestyles are becoming more and more diverse, not limited to fixed thinking and cognition. In order to effectively eliminate the stereotypes of women in advertising, this study believes that we must adhere to the uniqueness and creative female images in the advertising industry, intervene to break the tradition, and design advertisements with unique thinking. Combining the spirit of innovation with the beauty of women and contrasting with traditional female characters.

In addition, it is also necessary to improve the artistry of female advertisements, combining artistic and new female images, so that it can produce beauty and be easily accepted by consumers, and achieve highly efficiency and harmony.

### 5.3 Limitations

The sample has limitations due to the time problem, this study selected 58 female-themed commercials broadcast by one TV station within one week. The accuracy is not enough for accurately describe the comprehensive situation about the female stereotypes in Chinese TV commercials.

With the use of the content analysis method to analyze selected Chinese TV commercials in 2018, there are some limitations.

First of all, this research focus on the Chinese female stereotypes observed from TV commercials, but it still based on the preliminary study level, do not offer a whole aspect of the female stereotypes in Chinese commercial market.

Secondly, there are many different kinds of commercials, excepting for TV commercials, still have the other forms like broadcasting, newspaper, magazine over more is billboard... The female stereotypes may different by different carries. Also, the contents of female stereotypes in other kinds of commercials are deserved to be analysis, it will benefit to expand the research area of female stereotypes.

#### 5.4 Recommendation for Further Application

Base on the overall results, summary, and discussion of this research, this study shows the female stereotypes in Chinese TV commercials, including 3 aspects: physical attractiveness, role behavior and occupation.

The female stereotypes in Chinese TV commercials emphasized the aesthetic needs of the public to a certain extent, but this kind of female stereotypes is not helpful to the development of the whole society. Such unilateral pursuit of commercials will only continuously improve the status of men, will continue to materialize the image of females, and flatten the original comprehensive female image. Portrayal of female with stereotypes is not conducive to the cultural construction of a pluralistic society. We should hold a critical and dialectical opinion about this phenomenon. Specifically, there are the following points:

First, we must establish a correct gender concept and respect gender equality, affirming the important status of women in society, eliminate stereotypes as much as possible, and improve the status of females.

Secondly, it is recommended to establish relevant supervision mechanisms to strengthen the supervision and management of women's image in advertisements and to pay attention to the image of women in the mass media, so as to eliminate the

negative female stereotypes, highlight women's own characteristics, and shows that each female is uniqueness.

Finally, from the perspective of TV workers, TV workers should constantly improve their own quality and self-cultivation, and establish the concept of gender equality. The advertiser needs to positively shape the female image and rationally use the female image to achieve the purpose of advertising.

## 5.5 Recommendation for Further Research

According to the findings and analysis, the researcher also has some recommendations for future study.

### 5.5.1 Recommendations in Directions of Research

From the perspective of the types of advertisements, future researchers can analyze the female stereotypes in different kinds of carriers like magazines, broadcasts, online advertisements and other different forms of advertising and study the differences between female stereotypes presented by different platforms. Future



scholars can also compare female stereotypes between different regions of different countries.

### 5.5.2 Recommendations in Methodology

From the perspective of the number of explorations, future researchers can consider expanding the number to a larger size, which will help improve the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the research. Selecting the number of advertisements broadcasted by multiple TV stations at the same time as the sample, the analysis should be more comprehensive.

In addition, researchers may consider and transfer this study to quantitative research to see to obtain more strategic data from the results.

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**APPENDIX**

## APPENDIX

1. 58. Com  
Type: Other  
Year: 2018
2. Ambrosial Yoghurt  
Type: Food and drink  
Year: 2018
3. Bosch Yefrigerator  
Type: Other  
Year: 2018
4. Douyin  
Type: Other  
Year: 2018
5. Dove (Body wash)  
Type: Toiletries  
Year: 2018
6. Dove (Chocolate)  
Type: Food and drink  
Year: 2018

7. Guangming Mike  
Type: Food and drink  
Year: 2018
8. Hui ren Medicine  
Type: Health products  
Year: 2018
9. Taizi  
Type: Toiletries  
Year: 2018
10. Kangwang Care Solution  
Type: Health products  
Year: 2018
11. Kashou Health Care  
Type: Health products  
Year: 2018
12. L'oreal Revitalift Water  
Type: Toiletries  
Year: 2018
13. Lancome Cream  
Type: Toiletries  
Year: 2018
14. Lux Body Wash  
Type: Toiletries

Year: 2018

15. Meihaoshiguang

Type: Food and drink

Year: 2018

16. Meiweichen

Type: Food and drink

Year: 2018

17. Qichu

Type: Toiletries

Year: 2018

18. Saic Volkswage

Type: Cars

Year: 2018

19. Snickers

Type: Food and drink

Year: 2018

20. TS Shampoo

Type: Toiletries

Year: 2018

21. Weishan

Type: Other

Year: 2018



22. Weishi  
Type: Other  
Year: 2018
23. Benteng  
Type: IT products  
Year: 2018
24. Xizhilang  
Type: Food and drink  
Year: 2018
25. Yakult  
Type: Food and drink  
Year: 2018
26. Yangshengtang  
Type: Health products  
Year: 2018
27. Yiyezi  
Type: Toiletries  
Year: 2018
28. Yongfenflajiang  
Type: Food and drink  
Year: 2018
29. 999 Medicine  
Type: Other

Year: 2018

30. Audi

Type: Cars

Year: 2018

31. Baidu

Type: Cars

Year: 2018

32. Bosideng

Type: Other

Year: 2018

33. Chevrolet

Type: Car

Year: 2018

34. China Mobile

Type: Other

Year: 2018

35. Dalaofei

Type: Food and drink

Year: 2018

36. Dyson

Type: IT products

Year: 2018



37. Estee Lauder 1

Type: Toiletries

Year: 2018

38. Estee Lauder 2

Type: Toiletries

Year: 2018

39. Fangtai

Type: IT products

Year: 2018

40. Huawei

Type: IT products

Year: 2018

41. Toyota

Type: Cars

Year: 2018

42. Oppo

Type: IT products

Year: 2019

43. Jinritoutiao

Type: Other

Year: 2018

44. Kangshifu

Type: Food and drink



Year: 2018

45. Ds

Type: Cars

Year: 2018

46. Libai

Type: Toiletries

Year: 2018

47. Maodou

Type: Other

Year: 2018

48. Nanfu

Type: Other

Year: 2018

49. Niancian

Type: Health product

Year: 2018

50. Nutrilite

Type: Health product

Year: 2018

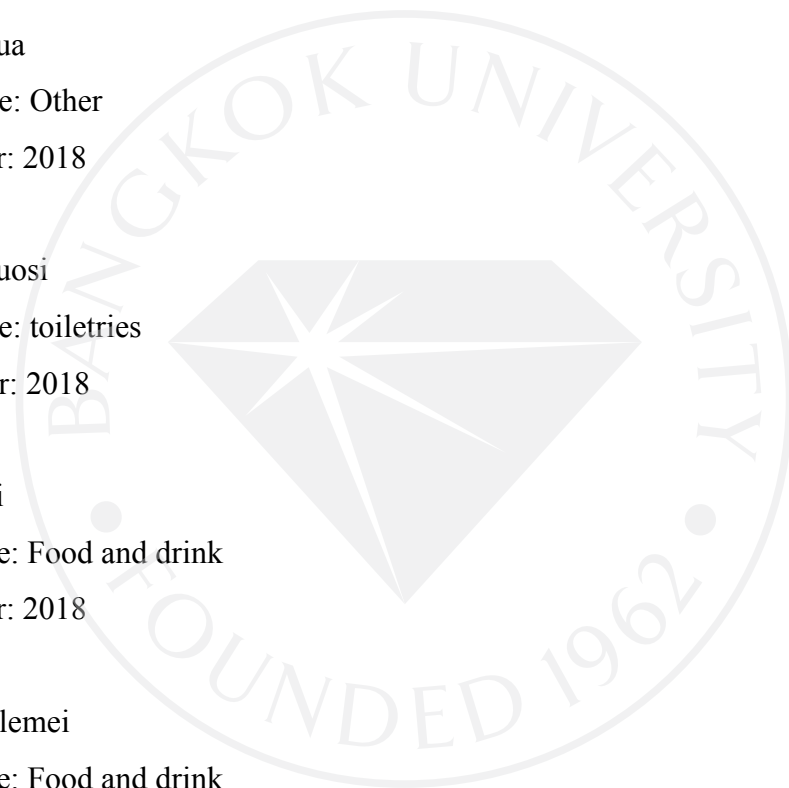
51. Pinduoduo

Type: Other

Year: 2018



52. Qicheng  
Type: IT products  
Year: 2018
53. Shimenganju  
Type: Food and drink  
Year: 2018
54. Xigua  
Type: Other  
Year: 2018
55. Xinuosi  
Type: toiletries  
Year: 2018
56. Yilli  
Type: Food and drink  
Year: 2018
57. Youlemei  
Type: Food and drink  
Year: 2018
58. Infiniti  
Type: Car  
Year: 2018



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