

The Role of Emotional Content in Media within the Framework of Social Psychology in the Emotional Resonance and Behavioral Guidance of the Audience

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Abstract: This article aims to explore the role of emotional content in media on the emotional resonance and behavioral guidance of the audience under the framework of social psychology. Through the sorting out of relevant theories and in-depth analysis of actual cases, it reveals how the emotional content of the media triggers the emotional responses of the audience and thereby influences their behavioral decisions. Research has found that the emotional content of media has a significant effect in triggering emotional resonance among the audience, and this resonance will further guide the audience to develop specific behavioral tendencies, such as consumption behavior and social participation behavior. Meanwhile, factors such as individual differences among the audience and social and cultural backgrounds will also have a moderating effect on the effect of emotional content in the media.

Keywords: Social Psychology; Emotional Content in the Media; Emotional Resonance; Behavioral Orientation

1. Introduction

In the current era of information explosion, media, as a key carrier of information dissemination, its content forms and dissemination methods are constantly evolving. Emotional content is receiving increasing attention in the media field. Whether it is news reports, advertising campaigns, or social media information, more and more emphasis is placed on the expression and transmission of emotions. From the perspective of social psychology, there exists a complex interactive relationship between the emotional content of the media and the audience. It can touch the inner emotions of the audience, trigger emotional resonance, and

further influence the behavioral orientation of the audience.

Existing studies have shown that emotions play a key role in information dissemination and audience response. For instance, Hoffman and Novak [1] pointed out that in the digital media environment, emotional experiences can enhance users' participation and memory of the content. This discovery provides a theoretical basis for understanding the importance of emotional content in the media. Meanwhile, the research by Appel et al. [2] indicates that emotional advertising can stimulate consumers' positive emotions, thereby enhancing brand preference and purchase intention. These studies all highlight the necessity of studying the impact of emotional content in media on the audience within the framework of social psychology.

A deep understanding of the role of emotional content in the media in resonating with the audience's emotions and guiding their behaviors not only helps media practitioners accurately grasp the psychology of the audience and enhance the effect of information dissemination, but also benefits social managers in effectively guiding public behavior [3], promoting the harmonious development of society. Therefore, an in-depth study of this subject has significant theoretical and practical significance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Relevant Research on Emotional Content in Media

Emotional content in media refers to the form of content in which media, during the process of information dissemination, integrates emotional factors through various elements such as language, images, and sounds to trigger emotional responses from the audience. Existing studies have shown that the emotional content of the media has obvious advantages in attracting

the audience's attention and enhancing the memorability of information.

For instance, in the field of advertising, the research by Puntoni et al. [4] found that emotional advertising can establish a closer emotional connection with consumers and enhance brand loyalty. This study, through a comparative analysis of different types of advertisements, points out that the application of emotional elements in advertisements can trigger emotional resonance among consumers, thereby influencing their perception and attitude towards the brand. In terms of news dissemination, emotional reporting makes news more infectious [5] and can trigger extensive public attention and discussion. Through the analysis of the emotional tendencies of news reports and audience feedback, they found that emotional content can stimulate the emotional responses of the audience and prompt them to participate more actively in the discussions of news topics.

2.2 Relevant Research on Emotional Resonance

Emotional resonance is the process by which an individual generates a similar emotional experience when perceiving the emotions of others. In social psychology, emotional resonance is regarded as an important mechanism of interpersonal interaction and social cognition [6]. Emotional resonance can promote understanding, trust and cooperation among individuals. Although this study was published relatively early, its pioneering research in the field of emotional resonance has provided an important theoretical basis for subsequent studies. In recent years, Morelli et al. [7] further explored the neural mechanism of emotional resonance and found that specific regions in the brain are activated during the process of emotional resonance, which provides a new perspective for understanding the physiological basis of emotional resonance.

In the field of media, the emotional resonance between the audience and the emotional content of the media is an important manifestation of the effect of information dissemination. When the audience resonates emotionally with the media content, they are more likely to deeply understand and accept the information being disseminated. In health communication, emotional content can evoke emotional resonance among the audience, thereby enhancing their acceptance of health information

and willingness to change their behavior [8].

2.3 Relevant Research on Behavior Orientation

Behavioral orientation refers to the behavioral tendencies exhibited by an individual in a specific situation based on factors such as their own cognition, emotions and values. The influence of media content on the behavioral orientation of the audience has always been the focus of communication studies.

Research shows that the emotional content of the media can guide the audience to exhibit specific behaviors by influencing their emotions and cognition. For example, in the field of public service advertisements, the research of Goldberg et al. [9] found that public service advertisements stimulate the public welfare behaviors of the audience through emotional expression. Through the tracking investigation of the communication effect of public service advertisements and the changes in audience behavior, they found that emotional content can evoke the audience's compassion and sense of responsibility, and prompt them to take practical actions to participate in public welfare activities. In terms of commercial advertising, the research by Dahl et al. [10] indicates that emotional advertising can stimulate consumers' purchasing desire and promote their purchasing behavior. Through the analysis of the consumers' purchasing decision-making process, they found that emotional factors play an important role in purchasing decisions. Emotional advertising can influence consumers' emotional states and thereby affect their purchasing behaviors.

2.4 Relevant Research from the Perspective of Social Psychology

Social psychology provides a rich theoretical framework for studying the impact of emotional content in media on the audience. For example, the social identity theory holds that individuals acquire self-concept and a sense of belonging through identification with specific groups. In recent years, Reed et al. [11] applied the theory of social identity to the field of media. The research found that the emotional content of media can trigger the group identity of the audience by shaping the group image and values, and thereby influence their behavior. For instance, some brands promote the sales of their products by emphasizing their connections with specific groups, such as environmental

organizations and sports enthusiasts, to evoke group identification among the audience.

The theory of emotional contagion emphasizes the dissemination and diffusion of emotions among individuals. The emotional elements in the emotional content of media can influence the emotional state and behavior of the audience through the mechanism of emotional contagion. For instance, a film full of positive energy can evoke positive emotions in the audience through emotional contagion, thereby influencing their behaviors in real life.

3. The Mechanism by which Emotional Content in the Media Evokes Emotional Resonance Among the Audience

3.1 Precise Application of Emotional Elements

The emotional content of media evokes the emotional resonance of the audience by ingeniously applying various emotional elements. In terms of language, media workers will choose infectious words and sentences. For instance, when describing a touching story, use delicate and vivid language to depict the emotional changes of the characters, making the audience feel as if they were there and experiencing the joys and sorrows of the characters in the story. In advertisements, some brands use warm and inspiring words, such as "Companionship is the most sincere declaration of love", to evoke consumers' appreciation for family and friendship, thereby evoking emotional resonance.

Image elements also have a strong emotional appeal. The application of color is an important means of expressing emotions in images. Warm tones such as red and orange usually convey emotions of warmth, enthusiasm and vitality, while cool tones such as blue and green tend to remind people of tranquility, peace and melancholy. For instance, in media content that showcases environmental protection themes, green is often used as the main color, conveying love for nature and calls for environmental protection, and evoking the audience's attention and emotional resonance with environmental issues. In addition, the details such as the expressions and actions of the characters in the images can vividly convey emotions, making it easier for the audience to have a sense of immersion.

The sound element also plays an indispensable

role in the emotional content of the media. Music is the most common way of expressing emotions through sound. Different music styles and melodies can create different emotional atmospheres. In sad scenes, slow and low music can enhance the sadness of the audience. In a cheerful setting, light and lively music can make the audience feel happy and excited. In addition, the application of sound effects can also enhance the effect of emotional expression. For example, in horror movies, the eerie sound effects can make the audience more nervous and frightened.

3.2 In-depth Construction of Story-based Narrative

Story-based narrative is the core means for emotional content in the media to evoke emotional resonance among the audience. A complete story usually contains elements such as plot, characters, conflicts and ending. By carefully constructing these elements and integrating emotional elements into them, the media makes it easier for the audience to have a sense of immersion.

In terms of plot design, the media will set up ups and downs to attract the audience's attention. For instance, in some TV dramas, the protagonists will encounter all kinds of setbacks and difficulties, but eventually overcome them through efforts and achieve their goals. This kind of plot setting can enable the audience to have an emotional resonance with the protagonists, feeling happy for their success and regretful for their failure.

Character shaping is the key to story-based narration. The media will endow characters with distinct personalities and emotional characteristics, enabling the audience to deeply understand the inner world of the characters. For instance, in some anime works, the protagonists often possess qualities such as bravery, kindness and justice. When facing difficulties and challenges, they always maintain firm beliefs and positive attitudes. The audience will have emotional resonance because of their love and identification with the characters.

Conflict is an important factor that drives the development of the plot in story-based narration. The media will set up various conflicts, such as contradictions between characters and conflicts between humans and nature, etc., to trigger emotional fluctuations among the audience. For instance, in some disaster movies, the conflict between humans and natural disasters can make

the audience feel the insignificance and powerlessness of human beings, and at the same time, it can also inspire their compassion and sense of responsibility.

The ending is the closing part of the story-based narrative and it can leave a deep impression on the audience. A good ending can enable the audience to feel emotional satisfaction and elevation. For instance, in some romantic films, the male and female protagonists eventually end up together and live a happy life. Such an ending can enable the audience to feel the beauty and power of love, thereby generating a strong emotional resonance.

3.3 Emotional Resonance with Aligned Values is Strengthened

When the values conveyed by the emotional content of the media are in line with those of the audience, it is more likely to trigger emotional resonance among the audience. Values are the evaluation criteria and behavioral norms by which people evaluate things, and they influence people's emotions and behaviors. When the audience believes that the values advocated by the media content are in line with their beliefs and pursuits, they will develop a sense of identification with the content and have a positive emotional response.

For instance, some media content about family and kinship emphasizes the significance of family and the preciousness of kinship, which aligns with the values of many audiences who value family and care for their loved ones. When the audience comes into contact with these contents, they will recall the wonderful times they spent with their families, feel the warmth and happiness of the family, and thus generate a strong emotional resonance.

For instance, some media content about social responsibility and public welfare advocates that people pay attention to social issues and actively participate in public welfare activities, which is consistent with the values of some audiences who have a sense of social responsibility and public welfare awareness. When these audiences are exposed to such content, they will be inspired and motivated, and develop the desire and action to contribute to society.

4. The Influence of Emotional Content in Media on the Behavioral Orientation of the Audience

4.1 Multi-dimensional Influences of Consumer Behavior Orientation

In the business field, the emotional content of media has a multi-dimensional guiding role on consumers' purchasing behavior. From a cognitive perspective, the emotional content of the media, through vivid description and presentation, enables consumers to have a deeper understanding of products or services. For instance, some cosmetic advertisements increase the possibility of purchase by presenting the comparison effects of the products before and after use, as well as the beautiful images of the models, allowing consumers to have a direct understanding of the efficacy of the products.

On the emotional level, the emotional content of the media can evoke emotional resonance among consumers, making them develop a favorable impression of the product or brand. As mentioned earlier, Apple's advertisements often attract consumers' attention with simple, fashionable designs and infectious emotional expressions. When consumers watch these advertisements, they will be attracted by the values of innovation, high quality and pursuit of excellence conveyed by the Apple brand, thus developing a love and recognition for Apple products and subsequently generating a desire to purchase.

Furthermore, the emotional content of the media can also influence consumers' brand loyalty. When consumers resonate with the emotional content of a certain brand, they will be more willing to continuously purchase the brand's products or services and recommend the brand to people around them. For instance, some sports brands have attracted a large number of consumers' attention and support by sponsoring sports events and inviting sports stars to endorse their products, thereby conveying a positive and challenging brand spirit. When purchasing sports products, these consumers tend to give priority to this brand, demonstrating a high level of brand loyalty.

4.2 Active Promotion of Social Participation Behavior Orientation

The emotional content of the media can effectively guide the social participation behavior of the audience. When media content focuses on social hot issues and evokes emotional resonance among the audience, the audience is more likely to participate in related social activities.

When facing natural disasters, the media evoke the public's compassion and sense of responsibility through emotional reporting, such as presenting the tragic experiences of the affected people and the heroic deeds of rescue workers. Many audiences will donate money and goods because of these reports, or participate in social public welfare activities such as volunteer services to provide help to the disaster-stricken people. For instance, after the Wenchuan earthquake, media across the country carried out a large number of emotional reports one after another, which aroused widespread attention and active participation from the people of the whole country and formed a powerful social rescue force.

In the face of social injustice, the emotional content of the media can also stimulate the public's sense of justice and awareness of rights protection. Some news reports and documentaries that expose social injustice, through true stories and touching plots, enable the audience to understand the predicaments and helplessness of the people at the bottom of society, prompting them to pay attention to issues of social fairness and justice, and actively participate in related social movements and rights protection activities.

4.3 Long-term Guidance for Changes in Attitude and Behavior

The emotional content of the media can also have a long-term guiding effect on the attitudes and behaviors of the audience. Through continuous emotional communication, the media can change the audience's views and attitudes towards certain things, and thereby guide them to adopt new behaviors.

For instance, some media content about healthy living, through emotional expression, enables the audience to recognize the importance of health. These contents may tell some real cases of health problems caused by bad living habits, causing the audience to feel fear and worry, thereby prompting them to change their bad living habits and develop a healthy lifestyle. Such as reducing smoking and drinking, increasing physical activity, and having a balanced diet, etc.

In the field of environmental protection, emotional content in the media can also guide changes in the attitudes and behaviors of the audience. By demonstrating the severe consequences of environmental pollution and the

tragic state of ecological damage, as well as the proactive actions of some environmentalists, the audience can feel the urgency and importance of environmental protection. The audience may thus reduce the use of disposable plastic products, choose green travel methods, and actively participate in environmental protection activities, etc.

5. Factors Influencing the Effect of Emotional Content in the Media

5.1 Individual Differences Among the Audience

The individual differences of the audience, such as age, gender, personality, values, etc., will have an impact on the effect of emotional content in the media. People of different age groups have different ways of understanding and expressing emotions, and therefore their responses to the emotional content of the media will also vary. For instance, young people may be more likely to be attracted by the emotional content of fashion and trends, while the elderly tend to prefer warm and traditional emotional expressions.

Gender differences can also lead to different preferences of the audience for emotional content in the media. Women are usually more sensitive to emotions and more easily moved by emotional content. For instance, in some emotional TV dramas and variety shows, the proportion of female viewers is often relatively high. While men may pay more attention to the practicality and logic of the content, they may not be very interested in some overly sentimental and emotional content.

Personality factors can also affect the audience's response to the emotional content of the media. People who are extroverted and emotionally rich may be more likely to have emotional resonance, while those who are introverted and emotionally reserved may be relatively less touched by emotional content.

5.2 Social and Cultural Background

The social and cultural background is also an important factor influencing the effect of emotional content in the media. Different cultures have different understandings and expressions of emotions. Therefore, the dissemination effect of emotional content in the media will also vary in different cultural backgrounds.

For instance, in some Western cultures, expressing emotions directly is regarded as normal and positive, while in some Eastern cultures, people may be more inclined to express emotions implicitly. Therefore, when media disseminate emotional content, they need to take into account the cultural background of the target audience to ensure that the content can be understood and accepted by the audience. In the advertisements of some international brands, localization adjustments are made according to the cultural characteristics of different countries and regions, and emotional expression methods suitable for local cultures are adopted to enhance the communication effect of the advertisements.

5.3 Media Communication Channels and Methods

The channels and methods of media dissemination can also affect the effectiveness of emotional content. Different communication channels have different characteristics and advantages. For example, television advertisements can convey emotions more vividly through the combination of audio-visual methods. Social media, on the other hand, is characterized by strong interactivity and fast dissemination speed, enabling the audience to participate more directly in the dissemination and discussion of emotional content.

In addition, the communication methods of the media, such as the frequency and timing of communication, will also have an impact on the emotional response and behavioral orientation of the audience. If the dissemination frequency of emotional content in the media is too high, it may cause the audience's aversion. However, if the timing of dissemination is inappropriate, the expected dissemination effect may also not be achieved. For instance, during major festivals, when the media launches emotional content related to the festivals, it often can better evoke emotional resonance and behavioral responses from the audience.

6. Conclusion

This article explores the role of emotional content in media on the emotional resonance and behavioral guidance of the audience within the framework of social psychology. Research has found that the emotional content of media can trigger the emotional resonance of the audience through mechanisms such as the precise application of emotional elements, the in-depth

construction of story-based narratives, and the strengthening of emotional resonance in line with values. This emotional resonance will further influence the behavioral orientation of the audience, including aspects such as consumption behavior, social participation behavior, as well as attitude and behavioral changes. Meanwhile, factors such as individual differences among the audience, social and cultural backgrounds, as well as media dissemination channels and methods will have a moderating effect on the effect of emotional content in the media.

Media practitioners should focus on the creation and dissemination of emotional content, deeply understand the emotional needs and values of the audience, and apply appropriate emotional elements and narrative methods to improve the quality and dissemination effect of emotional content. At the same time, personalized communication strategies should be formulated based on different communication channels and target audiences to better evoke emotional resonance and behavioral guidance from the audience. For instance, on social media platforms, more interactive communication methods can be adopted, such as initiating topic discussions and holding online activities, to enhance the audience's sense of participation.

Social managers can take advantage of the positive role of emotional content in the media to guide the public to pay attention to social hot issues and promote social participation and public welfare behaviors. For instance, by creating and disseminating infectious public service advertisements, we can arouse the public's environmental awareness, sense of social responsibility, etc., and promote the harmonious development of society. Meanwhile, it is necessary to strengthen the supervision of media content, ensure the authenticity and positive health of emotional content, and avoid the adverse impact of false and vulgar emotional content on society.

The audience should improve their media literacy, enhance their ability to distinguish emotional content in the media, and avoid being misled by false emotional information. Meanwhile, we should treat the emotional resonance triggered by the media rationally, transform positive emotions into practical actions, and contribute to the development of society. For instance, when confronted with some public welfare appeals, one should actively

participate in them based on their own actual situation, rather than merely being moved emotionally.

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