

Female Media Image in "Variety Show for Women": A Case Study of "Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves"

Shijin Liu

School of Journalism and Communication, Beijing Institute of Graphic Communication, Beijing, China

Abstract: With the awakening of female consciousness and the rapid development of Internet technology, "Variety Show for Women" has emerged and gradually risen. This paper takes "Sisters Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves" as an example, using the questionnaire survey method and case study method to deeply analyze the construction of female media images in "Variety Show for Women" from the aspects of presentation, construction mechanism, existing problems and countermeasures. The research finds that the program presents female images that are fashionable, talented, individualistic, independent and has leadership ability. They break the age barrier, show professional ability, maintain independence and pursue self-worth. Through mechanisms such as breaking the traditional program format, conforming to market development trends, and expressing female discourse, female media images are constructed, but there are also problems such as the program presents a single aesthetic standard, commercial logic dominance, and a lack of in-depth discussion of female issues. Therefore, this paper proposes countermeasures such as breaking free from the constraints of fixed standards, balancing commercial profit and content quality, and deepening the discussion of female issues. This study is conducive to enriching the research perspective and content system of "Variety Show for Women", and providing practical references for variety show production, female image shaping and brand cooperation. Through the research on the construction of female media images in the "Variety Show for Women"—"Sisters Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves", this paper aims to help achieve the diverse, true and three-dimensional presentation of female images in the media, and promote the wide spread and social recognition of gender

equality concepts.

Keywords: Variety Show for Women; Female Image; Media Image; Image Construction

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background

With continuous social progress and the rising status of women, public attention to female issues has grown significantly. Women's position in social, economic, cultural, and other domains has notably improved, and their influence has increasingly expanded. Against this backdrop, "Variety Show for Women," which adopts a female-oriented perspective, has emerged and become an important subject for studying the construction of female media images.

"Variety Show for Women" refers to a new type of variety format that takes women as the narrative subject of the program, articulating women's living conditions, focusing on their emotional experiences, highlighting their social value, and attending to female growth from three levels—individual, family, and society. In 2004, the female music talent show Super Girl became a nationwide phenomenon, marking the true beginning of "Variety Show for Women." In the following years, variety formats such as in-depth talk shows and beauty/fashion programs began to appear in the market. Since 2012, a wide range of "Variety Show for Women" programs with diverse themes, types, and flexible formats have emerged continuously—for example, Mamma Mia! Goddess's New Clothing, and Flower Sisters—ushering in a period of explosive growth for this genre.

In the era of mobile internet, various online variety shows have gradually risen. Major television media platforms have shifted their creative focus for "Variety Show for Women" toward online variety. In April 2018, Tencent Video released the female youth group growth

program Produce 101 (China), which, through professional media packaging, truly shaped female idols and brought online "Variety Show for Women" to an unprecedented new height, beginning to show a vigorous development trend.

In 2020, Mango TV launched the female music competition variety show *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves*. Immediately after its broadcast, it sparked widespread attention and discussion on the internet. On its premiere day, the two main episodes achieved a total of 122 million views. After two episodes, it scored 8.4 on Douban and ranked first in the weekly domestic word-of-mouth variety chart, becoming the most popular variety show in the summer of 2020. Unlike previous idol talent shows, *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* invited 30 veteran female entertainers, all aged 30 and above, as contestants. Through shared accommodation and stage competitions, the program ultimately selected seven members to "form a group beyond age." By utilizing media techniques such as cinematography, editing, and special effects, the program presents distinct and diverse female images, showcases the authentic states and life attitudes of women at different ages, personalities, and life stages, and expresses contemporary women's quest for self-worth and self-meaning, evoking emotional resonance among many female viewers. It is not merely a women's variety show but also an observational record of women's self-challenge, self-transcendence, and the shaping of their independent and strong image. Based on this, *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* has successfully elevated "Variety Show for Women" to another peak, becoming a typical case for studying the construction of female media images in this genre.

1.2 Research Significance

At the theoretical level, this study focuses on the construction of female media images within the specific genre of "Variety Show for Women." By delving into the shaping methods, characteristics, and influencing factors of different female images in *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves*, this research can add new perspectives and content to media image theory and help further refine the theoretical system of media images. At the same time, the analysis of how female images in the program break free from traditional image

constraints and display diverse charms helps to expand the scope and depth of feminist media studies.

At the practical level, by thoroughly investigating the innovations and successes in the construction of female media images in *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves*, this study can summarize effective image construction strategies and methods, providing concrete references for the production of other variety shows and improving their production quality and innovation capacity. Furthermore, by analyzing the successful experiences and shortcomings of different types of female images in the program, this study can help women better understand their own image positioning in the media and enhance their discursive power and image-shaping ability in media communication. In addition, this research can effectively assist various brands in accurately selecting collaborative guests, developing more targeted marketing strategies, and improving the effectiveness and impact of brand promotion.

At the social level, this study can guide women to establish a correct self-perception, encourage them to break free from traditional constraints, bravely pursue their dreams and value, and promote self-growth and development. By analyzing the diverse female images and their outstanding performances in the program, the study can foster a more comprehensive and deeper understanding of women's abilities and charm among the general public, reduce stereotypes and prejudices against women, create a fairer and more inclusive social environment, and advance the dissemination and development of gender equality concepts. At the same time, studying the female images in this program allows for a deeper understanding of contemporary society's expectations and demands on women, as well as women's own intellectual pursuits and self-development changes, providing a vivid lens for examining the transformation of cultural and social values of the era.

1.3 Literature Review

1.3.1 Current state of research on "variety show for women"

At present, academic research on "Variety Show for Women" is still in its early stages. With the rise of this genre in 2020, scholars have begun to explore it from multiple perspectives, and the number of related studies has shown a

significant growth trend.

First, many scholars have focused their research on the construction and presentation of female images in "Variety Show for Women." Shi Miaomiao, taking 13 episodes of *Mom, You're so Beautiful*, the nation's first "Variety Show for Women" targeting the silver-haired female demographic, as her research subject, explored the construction and interpretation of the media image of silver-haired women in this genre. She pointed out that the program had limitations in shaping the silver-haired female image, including scripted content, industrialized image production, and contradictions in value presentation [1]. Wang Tong, using *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* as an example, summarized four representative types of female images presented in the program: the ambitious and enterprising woman, the versatile woman with infinite possibilities, the hardworking but less confident woman, and the highly emotionally intelligent and leadership-oriented woman [2].

Second, scholars have paid close attention to the program content and narrative strategies of "Variety Show for Women." Starting from the theory of interaction rituals, Qin Tian conducted an in-depth study of the interactive segments in *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves*, finding that the program, through diverse interaction methods and channels, provides viewers with rich interactive experiences, thereby promoting emotional exchange and sharing between viewers and the program, as well as among viewers themselves [3]. Zhang Luyuan and Xu Baodan pointed out that in terms of gender narrative, "Variety Show for Women" is characterized by female dominance and the breaking of gender stereotypes, but it also faces problems of content homogenization and excessive entertainment [4]. Yin Le and Shen Zhe noted that the images that have developed from "Variety Show for Women"—such as the "self-disciplined woman," the "sister spirit," and the "clear-headed woman"—have become the main models for female narratives. However, the commercial logic behind "Variety Show for Women" traps female narratives in the paradox of consumerism, making it difficult to break free from inherent narrative difficulties [5].

In addition, some scholars have studied "Variety Show for Women" from the perspective of socio-cultural influence and value orientation.

Liu Zhaopeng believes that "Variety Show for Women" is of great significance in reshaping female media images and constructing a society of gender equality [6]. Wang Lili and Ye Qun, based on gaze theory, explored the expression and construction of misogynistic discourse in "Variety Show for Women," pointing out that the program carries strong traces of the male gaze and exerts an impact on female images and society [7]. Zhao Hao pointed out that while representing women's lives, emotions, and careers, "Variety Show for Women" should focus on integrating content production and enhancing audience stickiness, so as to achieve the widespread dissemination of female values in contemporary society, consolidate the "her power" of female groups, and jointly create a beautiful "her era" for women [8].

In summary, the rise of the "Variety Show for Women" phenomenon has not only brought new ideas and methodological support to related research, filling a gap in online variety studies in this area, but has also promoted the continuous deepening and refinement of such research. The relevant research findings of previous scholars have laid a solid theoretical foundation for this study and provided diverse research perspectives.

1.3.2 Current state of research on female media image

Research on female media image outside China began with the wave of feminist movements in the 1960s. The study of media content has been the most concentrated area of research on women and media abroad. Researchers have attempted to expose the encoded gender meanings in media texts, analyze how media texts represent women, and what kinds of female images are represented. In 1963, Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* was published and is widely regarded as the beginning of female media research. In this book, Friedan pointed out that the media, in collaboration with the ruling class of society, had created the image of the "happy housewife," thereby reinforcing women's traditional family roles [9].

As research on women and media deepened, Western scholars began to focus on stereotypes and sexism in media representations of women. In her 1994 book *Feminist Media Studies*, Liesbet van Zoonen criticized the existing phenomena of stereotyped representations of women and the male gaze in the media, pointing out that existing media largely neglect how to

mobilize and support feminist ideas and actions. She urgently called for enhancing the media's role as "public knowledge spokespersons" [10]. Entering the 21st century, scholars were no longer satisfied with merely critiquing the representation of female images in the media. Instead, they began to explore more diversified and in-depth analytical paths. Researchers started to further investigate how the media shapes and influences gender consciousness, as well as the social and cultural connotations carried by female images in the media.

In summary, research on female media images by foreign scholars started relatively early, with research directions mainly focusing on how media texts encode female images, gender stereotypes and sexism in the media, and the media's influence on shaping female images and transmitting gender awareness. These research findings not only contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of women's images and roles in the media but also provide important theoretical support for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

Compared with the West, domestic research on female media images started relatively late. The earliest related studies began in the 1990s, primarily focusing on female images in advertising. In 1997, Liu Baihong and Bu Wei published "A Research Report on Female Images in Chinese Television Advertising" in *Journal of News and Communication Research*. This report found that at the end of the 20th century, about one-third of domestic television advertisements exhibited sexist tendencies, mainly manifested as gender role stereotyping of women and using women as bait for attraction [11].

Entering the 21st century, as feminist thought continued to permeate the media field, research on female media images gradually increased. First, many scholars focused on the historical evolution of female media images and the demands of the era. Li Gang and Liang Xiaojuan pointed out that between 1950 and 1966, *People's Pictorial*, as a medium, used a combination of images and text to outline a blueprint for women's liberation, with the principle of serving the newly established China becoming the dominant direction for women's growth [12]. Gao Huanjing, taking news reports on "March 8th Red-Banner Pacesetters" in *People's Daily* from 1960 to 2013 as her object of study, examined the presentation and changes

in the media image of "model women." She found that model women were the main news figures and primary implementers of news events, and their media images bore distinct characteristics of the era [13].

Second, the types and characteristics of female media images are also a hot topic in related research. Luan Yimei and He Yayan proposed the concept of "her image," arguing that female media images in short videos exhibit three main trends: female beauty consumption remains mainstream, female media images show "defeminization," and diverse images balance media bias [14]. Xu Jiabiao and Han Qing argued that since the 1990s, female images on television media have continued to be typed and stereotyped, still following the processing, representation, and narrative logic dominated by patriarchal culture [15].

Some scholars have also paid close attention to the factors constructing female media images. Zhang Xinjie, Peng Ling, and Liu Yijie pointed out that coverage of female athletes in the Beijing Winter Olympics primarily focused on introducing their achievements, adopted a predominantly positive stance, and mainly centered on disseminating competition content and sportsmanship, showcasing the self-reliant, confident, brave, resilient, success-seeking, and self-transcending personality traits of Chinese female athletes [16]. Scholar Luo Hui argued that the shaping of female images by mass media has its socio-cultural origins, and the reproducibility of media culture also has a non-negligible impact on women's survival and development [17].

Furthermore, some scholars have focused on the construction strategies of female media images. Zhou Ziyu pointed out that a newly emerging trend of female fitness in mainland China, promoted by online media, seems to be redefining and amplifying the autonomy of the female body. The new fitness discourse advocated by fitness proponents is being constructed in mass media in a scientific and rational mode [18]. Liu Ting, Song Zongpei, Feng Peiming, and Sun Chenchen pointed out that, positively influenced by media power, the shaping of female images in sports media exhibits characteristics such as diversification of communication subjects, enrichment of communication content, diversification of communication channels, and rationalization of communication audiences. Sports media should

enrich the media for female sports communication in the context of the all-media era and promote the development of gender equality concepts in the sports field [19].

In summary, through a review of the domestic and international literature on the construction of female media images, it is evident that this field of research has accumulated rich findings. Although academia has touched upon the issue of constructing female media images, research specifically on the construction of female media images in variety shows, especially "Variety Show for Women," is relatively scarce, and the depth of existing research needs to be strengthened. Overall, there are still many gaps in the research on this topic. Currently, the number of directly relevant literature sources is not yet abundant.

On this basis, this study will take the "Variety Show for Women" *Sister Riding the Winds* and *Breaking the Waves* as an example, focusing its research on the construction of its female media images. This study will analyze the construction process of its female images from multiple dimensions, including the program's production methods, narrative strategies, and audience feedback, revealing how the program shapes female images through different means. The study will focus on the strategies and impact of constructing female images in the program. Through a questionnaire survey, it will understand the audience's perceptions and evaluations of the female images in the program, further revealing the role of "Variety Show for Women" in shaping women's self-perception, with the aim of providing new perspectives and ideas for research in related fields.

1.4 Research Methods

1.4.1 Questionnaire survey method

This questionnaire was designed around the female images in the "Variety Show for Women" *Sister Riding the Winds* and *Breaking the Waves*, and the survey was conducted by distributing the questionnaire online in a random manner. After collecting the raw data, a quantitative analysis was performed, and other literature sources were integrated for an in-depth and detailed comprehensive analysis.

1.4.2 Case study method

This study selects *Sister Riding the Winds* and *Breaking the Waves*, produced by Mango TV of Hunan Television, as its research case. Since its launch, this program has gained the support and

affection of a broad audience by virtue of its unique program format and profound social significance. It has not only achieved great success in the variety show market but has also sparked extensive discussions in the socio-cultural sphere, becoming an iconic work within the "Variety Show for Women" genre.

This study aims to explore how the program presents female media images and the mechanisms through which it constructs these images, by conducting an in-depth analysis of multiple dimensions, including its theme selection, expression of female attitudes, narrative techniques, and rhetorical use of audiovisual language. It will also examine the problems existing in the program's construction of female media images and propose corresponding countermeasures.

1.5 Questionnaire Design and Data Overview

The target population of this questionnaire survey was the audience of *Sister Riding the Winds* and *Breaking the Waves*. After an in-depth review of a substantial body of literature on "Variety Show for Women" and female media images, this study drew on the questionnaire design experience of previous scholars in the field of women and media research to complete the design of the relevant questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed to audiences nationwide through online platforms such as WeChat, Weibo, Xiaohongshu, Douyin, and QQ groups, to ensure the breadth and diversity of the data.

Among the 312 valid questionnaires collected, 153 respondents (49.04%) were male, and 159 respondents (50.96%) were female, indicating a relatively balanced gender ratio among the respondents, which provides strong support for the representativeness and scientific validity of the study.

In terms of age distribution, the largest proportion of respondents fell in the 18-30 age group, accounting for 32.37%, followed by the 31-45 age group, also accounting for 32.37%. In contrast, the proportions of respondents in the 46-60 and 60+ age groups were relatively low, at 7.69% and 3.21% respectively. This indicates that younger groups held a significant advantage in this survey. Regarding occupational distribution, the survey results showed that 33.33% of the participants were corporate employees, 28.21% were students, and the proportions of other occupations were relatively

low. Therefore, the participants in this survey were primarily students and corporate employees. As the audience of *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* is predominantly younger, this age and occupational distribution is both representative and feasible for the purposes of this study.

Furthermore, the survey results also showed that in terms of channels for learning about the program, 64.42% of the surveyed viewers watched the program through video apps (Mango TV, iQiyi, Tencent Video, etc.), and 48.08% learned about program-related information through social media (Weibo, WeChat, Xiaohongshu, etc.). The majority of the audience accessed the program and its related information through online channels. Regarding the frequency of watching the program, over 70% of respondents indicated that they "watch every episode" or "watch frequently." Therefore, the surveyed viewers had a good level of familiarity with the program, providing a favorable foundation for the scientific validity of the study.

The data analysis related to the research questions within the questionnaire will be elaborated in detail in the following sections.

2. Presentation of Female Media Image in the "Variety Show for Women" *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves*

As a "Variety Show for Women" with extremely high ratings, topicality, and discussion volume, *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* centers its narrative on the sisters and strives to present uniquely charming female images through various means. According to the data from the questionnaire, viewers of the program recognized multiple characteristics in the female images presented. The relevant data are shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2 below:

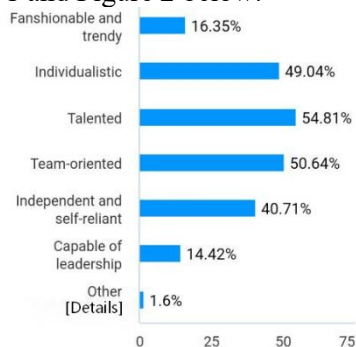


Figure 1. What Characteristics Do You Think the female Images Presented in this Program Have?

210	When expressing emotions, they display a gentle and delicate side, capable of reaching deep into people's hearts and touching the audience's emotions.
211	The female images in the program not only possess outstanding appearances but also have intelligent and sharp minds, enabling them to make quick judgments and decisions in complex environments.
212	When facing responsibilities and challenges, they have the courage to take charge and do not shirk responsibility, demonstrating women's courage and sense of duty.
213	The sisters of <i>Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves</i> always maintain an optimistic and upward mindset. No matter what difficulties they encounter, they face them positively and transmit positive energy.
215	They demonstrate the ability of cross-border integration in the program, not only achieving accomplishments in their own professional fields but also displaying extraordinary talent and charm in other areas.

Figure 2. What Characteristics do you think the Female Images Presented in this Program Have? (Detailed Breakdown of the "Other" Option)

According to the data, respondents made diverse choices. Among them, 54.81% chose "fashionable and trendy," followed by "talented" at 49.04%, indicating that viewers highly recognized the fashion sense and talent of the female images in the program. The option "individualistic" was chosen by 50.64% of viewers, also receiving strong support, showing viewers' positive attitude toward the sisters' expression of their personalities. In addition, 16.35% of respondents chose "independent and self-reliant," and 14.42% chose "capable of leadership," reflecting viewers' attention to women's independence and leadership abilities. In the detailed breakdown of the "Other" option, respondents specifically noted that "the female images in the program not only possess outstanding appearances but also have intelligent and sharp minds, enabling them to make quick judgments and decisions in complex environments," and that "when facing responsibilities and challenges, they have the courage to take charge and do not shirk responsibility, demonstrating women's courage and sense of duty." These responses show a positive and affirmative attitude toward the sisters' personal qualities and spiritual outlook, demonstrating the diverse charms and values of the female images presented in the program.

2.1 Breaking the Shackles of Age, Releasing Female Charm

In modern society, when discussing women, age remains an inescapable topic. In the entertainment industry in particular, the age of 30 and above is often regarded as an "awkward period" in the career of female artists. It often seems that only young and beautiful women can present themselves to society and the public, while women aged 30 and above are confined to

marriage and family. However, *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* presents to the public female images that break the shackles of age and display women’s unique charm. In the program, the sisters are all women in the entertainment industry aged 30 and above, with an age span from 30 to 52. Regardless of their age, they all convey to the audience an attitude of defying age constraints and bravely showcasing their own style. The relevant data obtained from the questionnaire in this study are shown in Figure 3 and Figure 4 below:

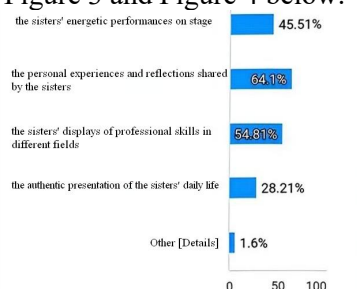


Figure 3. Which Aspects of the Program Do You Think Reflect Women Breaking Free from Age Constraints and Displaying Their Personal Charm and Style?

216	The program invited many female artists in their 30s, 40s, and even 50s to participate. Their age is no longer a limitation but rather becomes capital for displaying mature charm.
217	No matter how many achievements the sisters have made in their respective fields, they choose to stand on this stage and start over, challenging themselves with new skills in singing and dancing, demonstrating women's continuous enterprising spirit.
218	From singing and dancing to playing musical instruments and performing opera, the sisters each excel in different talents, blossoming fully on stage and showcasing women's diverse abilities.
219	The sisters in the program prove through their own actions that age, occupation, and identity labels cannot define them. They are unique individuals with infinite possibilities.
220	An attitude of actively facing challenges

Figure 4. Which Aspects of the Program Do You Think Reflect Women Breaking Free from Age Constraints and Displaying Their Personal Charm and Style? (Detailed Breakdown of the “Other” Option)

According to the data analysis, the option “the personal experiences and reflections shared by the sisters” was selected by 64.1% of respondents, making it the content that respondents believed best reflected women breaking free from age constraints and displaying diverse images in the program. This was followed by “the sisters’ displays of professional skills in different fields” at 54.81%, and “the sisters’ energetic performances on stage” at 45.51%. This indicates that viewers recognized the program’s presentation of the sisters’ charm on stage, their professional abilities, and the personal reflections conveyed

by the women. In the “Other” option, some respondents also stated, “The program invited many female artists in their 30s, 40s, and even 50s to participate. Their age is no longer a limitation but rather becomes capital for displaying mature charm,” and “From singing and dancing to playing musical instruments and performing opera, the sisters each excel in different talents, blossoming fully on stage and showcasing women’s diverse abilities.” These responses reflect the audience’s recognition of the female images in the program for breaking the shackles of age and displaying female charm and positive qualities.

In the program, the sisters indeed demonstrate their fearlessness toward aging through their personal reflections and their performances. Wan Qian, aged 38, said frankly, “Women at every age have their own charm. Why should I deny myself? I have already reached my golden period.” Huang Shengyi, aged 37, resolutely stepped out of her comfort zone, using her highly infectious singing and dancing abilities to display her unique charm and bravely pursue her long-held dream of singing and dancing. Ning Jing, aged 48, the “sister among sisters,” has always appeared as an uninhibited and free-spirited figure, but in the program, she practiced with all her might in the rehearsal room, overturning viewers’ previous stereotypical perceptions of her and demonstrating women’s courageous striving and positive spiritual outlook. Through their words and actions, the sisters break through traditional stereotypes about women’s age, reinterpret the unique style and charm of women aged 30 and above, and endow the public’s perception of this demographic with new meaning.

2.2 Demonstrating Professional Competence, Highlighting Female Strength

In traditional social conceptions, a woman's value was judged not on the basis of her own abilities but on the role she played in marriage and family. *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves*, however, focuses more on women's professional competence. In the program, the sisters demonstrate their strong professionalism and abilities through each stage performance, releasing their personal charm.

As shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6, in this survey, respondents also held positive and affirmative attitudes toward the sisters' stage performances and professional competence. The

data show that "demonstrations of difficult singing techniques" and "creative stage design presentations" were the main elements that viewers believed showcased women's professionalism and charm on stage, with 61.54% and 58.97% of respondents selecting these two options respectively. Furthermore, 39.74% of respondents considered that the sisters' meticulously choreographed dance performances demonstrated women's professionalism and personal charisma on stage. In the "Other" option, some viewers also noted that "through their singing, dancing, and expressions on stage, the sisters convey rich emotions, allowing the audience to feel their inner strength and charm," and that "some sisters tried performance forms they were unfamiliar with, such as drama and rap. These cross-genre attempts demonstrated their courage and exploratory spirit." These comments reflect the respondents' high praise for the sisters' professional skills and stage performances, as well as their strong recognition of the sisters' seriousness and rigor toward the stage, their perseverance and bravery during training, and their mutual support in teamwork, highlighting powerful and resilient female strength.

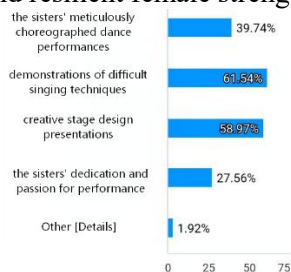


Figure 5. Which Aspects of the Program Do You Think Showcase Women's Professionalism and Charm on Stage?

221	The sisters collaborate with their teams to create unique stage performances. From costumes and props to dance movements, their innovative abilities and artistic aesthetics are reflected.
222	Improvisational performance
223	Teamwork
224	through their singing, dancing, and expressions on stage, the sisters convey rich emotions, allowing the audience to feel their inner strength and charm
225	some sisters tried performance forms they were unfamiliar with, such as drama and rap. These cross-genre attempts demonstrated their courage and exploratory spirit
226	In their interactions with the audience or judges, the sisters demonstrate good communication skills and approachability, enhancing the infectiousness of the stage.

Figure 6. Which Aspects of the Program Do You Think Showcase Women's Professionalism and Charm on Stage? (Detailed Breakdown of the "Other" Option)

In the program's first public performance, Yu Kewei opened with a magnificent operatic singing style, demonstrating her professional

strength as a singer while performing highly infectious choreography with her teammates. She was widely praised by netizens and fellow sisters as the "strongest singer among the dancers." In the program, Wu Xin tried musical and dance styles she had never performed before, took on the role of team leader, and performed her own original rap on stage, winning recognition and affection from both the audience and her fellow sisters. In the third public performance, Wan Xi assumed the role of team leader, conducting tactical analysis for her five-person team. During training, she actively encouraged her teammates to push beyond their limits and guided them on how to deliver a high-level stage performance. The mutual help and encouragement among the sisters reflected the beautiful bond of solidarity among women. As Wan Xi said in an interview recorded for the variety show: "The five of us teammates support each other. And it's not just the five of us—whenever something happens in society, all women really do stand up. Isn't there a saying, 'Sisters are coming'? That's the power that comes from women."

2.3 Maintaining Independence, Pursuing Self-Worth

The awakening of female self-awareness is an important starting point for women's liberation. It marks the transition of women from being slaves to others' thoughts to becoming masters of their own minds, beginning to observe and reflect on themselves, affirming the self, and establishing their own thoughts to achieve self-worth [20]. In contemporary society, with the gradual awakening of female self-awareness, women's adherence to independence and the pursuit of self-worth realization have become highly respected values. Maintaining independence for women not only means economic independence or self-sufficiency in daily life but also, at a deeper level, refers to psychological and spiritual independence. Women should not become appendages to others in any form; rather, they should construct self-awareness, pursue emotional independence and self-actualization, build a strong inner world, and display their unique personal charm and self-worth on the stage of life.

In the program, the sisters express their commitment to independence and their pursuit of self-worth. Zhang Yuqi understands the term "sister" as "a state of being self-reliant or

independent." Speaking about independent women, she said: "An independent woman must first have the ability to manage her own time. Second, we must have the ability to say no to violence and to fists. Third, we must have the ability to showcase our talents. And to those in this world who judge ability by appearance, we must tell them that wisdom and beauty can coexist." This not only reflects her profound understanding of the spirit of female independence but also demonstrates her firm pursuit of self-worth realization. Speaking about "female sense of security," Aduo said: "A woman's sense of security lies in knowing who you are and knowing your own value." This statement not only reveals the essence of female security but also emphasizes the importance of female self-awareness and value identification. The sisters actively explore and express their profound understandings of female autonomy and the pursuit of self-worth, showcasing the value orientation of modern women toward self-reliance, self-improvement, and courageous self-actualization, inspiring more women to bravely pursue their own wonderful lives.

3. Mechanisms of Constructing Female Media Image in the "Variety Show for Women" Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves

3.1 Breaking Away from Traditional Program Formulas, Showcasing Women's Personal Charm

In the past, television variety shows tended to shape traditional female images such as wives, mothers, and daughters. Under such a creative model, women's rich personalities, diverse professional pursuits, and unique inner worlds were largely overlooked. However, "Variety Show for Women" has reversed this conventional market thinking, setting topics centered on women, shifting the program's perspective from the long-standing "male gaze" to a "female gaze," focusing on female-centric group narratives and presenting the rich diversity of female charm and value.

As shown in Figure 7, respondents were generally positive about the program's innovative format and presentation of rich content. 29.81% of respondents rated the program as "very good," indicating that the program breaks away from traditional formulas and presents novel, diverse, and rich content.

Another 36.86% rated it as "relatively good," suggesting that the program has achieved certain successes in format innovation. Only 10.26% of respondents rated the program as "relatively poor" or "very poor," demonstrating that the majority of viewers recognize the program's breakthroughs and innovations in format.

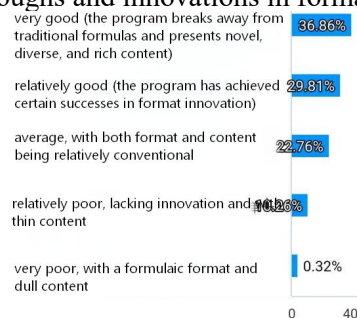


Figure 7. How Well Do You Think This Program Has Done in Innovating Its Format and Presenting Rich Content?

Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves breaks away from the established patterns of portraying female roles and positioning in previous variety shows. It takes the sisters as the narrative subjects of the program, strengthening their charm and value as independent individuals. In the program, the 30 female guests have largely married and had children in real life, but their identities as "mothers" and "wives" are not highlighted in the program. Instead, they return to their subjective identities in the program, blossoming with their personal charm through various means. In the "stage performance" section, the program meticulously crafts the sisters' public performance stages, fully displaying their versatility and infinite possibilities, allowing society and the public to feel women's abilities and value. In the "diligent practice" section, through authentic camera recording, the program shows viewers the hardships and efforts the sisters put into their stages, demonstrating women's courage, resilience, and strength. Finally, the "daily life" section focuses on the sisters' dormitory life, showing their authentic selves beyond the camera lens, allowing viewers to see the beautiful bond of mutual encouragement and support among women.

As shown in Figure 8, respondents also believed that the segments designed by the program highlighted women's personal qualities and characteristics. 60.58% of participants selected "teamwork tasks" as the segment that best highlights women's personal characteristics—the highest proportion—closely followed by "the

sisters' daily interactions" at 55.13%, and then "stage performances" at 32.05%. The data indicate that respondents believed these segments in the program indeed helped showcase women's personal charm and characteristics.

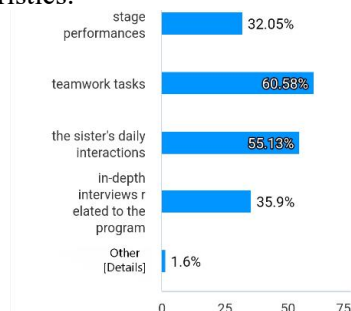


Figure 8. Which Segments of This Program Do You Think Highlight Women's Personal Qualities and Characteristics?

At the same time, compared with similar female group talent shows, *Sister Riding the Winds* and *Breaking the Waves* takes a unique and boldly innovative approach, subverting the previously recognized ideal image of a female group in public perception. The program invited 30 "sister-generation" female artists born before 1990, with an age span from 30 to 52. The program aimed to ultimately select seven members from these 30 "sister-generation" female artists to "form a group beyond age," creating a "sister-type" female group of women aged 30 and above. With the thematic concept of "Thirty, self-renewing; youth finds its place" and the theme song *Priceless Sister* composed by singer Li Yuchun, the program endowed the 30 participating female artists with the identity role of "sisters." It gave women aged 30 and above the opportunity to display their talents and express their personalities, shaping a group image of women in their 30s and beyond, thereby reshaping the self-worth of this demographic in the public eye. This ingenious planning enabled the program to find a differentiated positioning from other similar programs, successfully filling a market gap and creating a "Variety Show for Women" with novel concepts and unique perspectives. Consequently, upon its launch, the program captured viewers' attention, sparked high interest across various sectors, and generated great expectations for its subsequent development, with its popularity continuing to rise.

3.1 Adapting to Market Development Trends, Meeting Audience Demand for "Female-

Oriented" Variety Shows

In recent years, the "she economy" has gradually risen. In various fields, women have increasingly demonstrated tremendous consumption power and potential, gradually becoming the main force in the consumer market. Female consumers are continuously shaping new consumer markets, with more and more women shifting from "pleasing-others consumption" to "pleasing-self consumption." This has driven the emergence of "female-oriented" cultural consumption in the media sector. The media industry has begun to create cultural works specifically targeting female audiences or to create works using women's own discourse, projecting women's inner desires and emotional patterns [21]. In the era of the "she economy," "Variety Show for Women," which takes women as the narrative subject, starts from a female perspective, explores women's lives, emotions, careers, and other issues, focuses on women's living conditions, and discusses women's personal value, has gained great popularity among the public.

Data from a sample survey conducted by CMMR (China Mainland Media Research) show that the core user base of China's variety show market exceeds 600 million. Among variety show users, women account for 62% and men 38%, making women an important audience for variety shows. Furthermore, on Mango TV, one of the main broadcasting platforms for *Sister Riding the Winds* and *Breaking the Waves*, female users account for as high as 78.4%, the highest proportion among the six major video platforms. For the platform, pleasing female users means capturing the core audience [21]. Therefore, Mango TV has for many years continuously cultivated and deeply explored female vertical content, comprehensively laying out a diverse presence across the female track—from television dramas to variety shows. On this basis, *Sister Riding the Winds* and *Breaking the Waves*, which aligns with the focal points and interests of both the core audience of "Variety Show for Women" and the platform's core audience, was bound to attract widespread attention and gain great popularity and support from the masses upon its broadcast.

Sister Riding the Winds and *Breaking the Waves* uses documentary-style cinematography, tracking and recording from multiple angles, comprehensively, and over long periods, presenting the daily lives, training, emotional

changes, and interpersonal interactions of the female artists authentically to the audience, constructing a group image of women aged 30 and above, adapting to market trends and the development of the social environment. As shown in Figure 9, according to the survey results, the vast majority of respondents held a positive attitude toward the question of whether "the program meets the audience's demand for 'female-oriented' variety shows and adapts to market development trends." Among them, 123 respondents (39.42%) indicated that the program basically meets market demands and audience preferences, and 100 respondents (32.05%) indicated that it fully meets market demands and audience preferences. Thus, 71.47% of respondents indicated that the program at least "relatively meets" their needs, showing that audience satisfaction with the program is relatively high and that the program aligns with market trends and audience preferences to a certain extent.

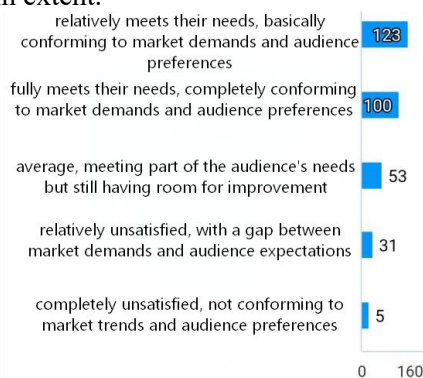


Figure 9. Do You Think This Program Meets the Audience's Demand for "Female-Oriented" Variety Shows and Adapts to Market Development Trends?

3.3 Expressing Female Discourse, Transmitting Female Values

French philosopher Foucault's theory of discursive power points out that discourse is a power relation, a form of power expression, and a tool for knowledge dissemination and power control. It implies who has the right to speak and who does not [22]. For thousands of years, the right of discourse in China has been dominated by males, while female discourse has long been in a state of voicelessness in history. With the development of the Western feminist movement and the May Fourth Movement in China, the status and destiny of women received attention after the founding of New China, gender equality was advocated, and women's status

continuously improved. In modern society, the increasingly advanced development of internet technology has provided diverse channels for women to construct discursive power and express their personal thoughts and viewpoints, and "Variety Show for Women" is one such channel.

In this questionnaire survey, regarding the question of "which aspects of the program express female discourse and transmit female values," the relevant data from respondents' answers are shown in Figure 10 and Figure 11. As can be seen from the data, respondents' recognition of the expression of female discourse and values in the program is mainly concentrated in the following areas. First are "the mutual encouragement and support among the sisters" and "the sisters' insights and reflections on social phenomena," with 60.9% and 61.54% of respondents selecting these two options respectively. This indicates that the program, by showcasing the solidarity and wisdom among women, conveys the idea that women should unite and collectively create value, thereby successfully transmitting a positive image of female mutual support and thoughtful reflection. Second is "the sisters' speeches and discussions in the program," accounting for 38.46%, showing viewers' attention to women's expression of their own viewpoints. In the details of the "Other" option, respondents also noted that the sisters in the program were "confident and brave," "interpreted the value of independence through their actions," and "did not give up bravely pursuing their dreams despite high-intensity training and competition, constantly trying new things." These aspects all reflect the program's support for women's discursive power and its expression of female values.

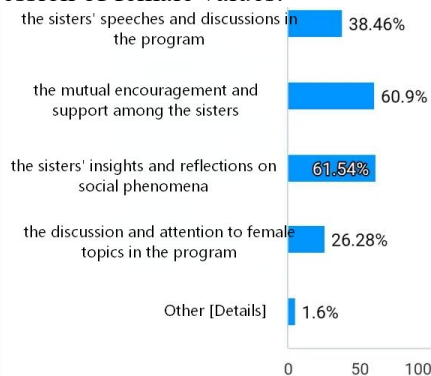


Figure 10. Which Aspects of the Program Do You Think Express Female Discourse and Transmit Female Values?

227	confident and brave
228	interpreted the value of independence through their actions
229	did not give up despite high-intensity training and competition
230	bravely pursuing their dreams, constantly trying new things
231	The program encourages women to show their authentic selves without catering to others' expectations

Figure 11. Which Aspects of the Program Do You Think Express Female Discourse and Transmit Female Values? (Detailed Breakdown of the "Other" Option)

A deeper examination of the expression of female discourse and values in the program reveals that it is manifested in the program's copywriting, promotional slogans, theme song, and other elements. In the program's opening remarks, promotional copy for each stage's performances, and other texts, phrases such as "Thirty, striving! In the tempering of time and the resonant clang of the era, we constantly renew our ability to question the world and life," "Striving and overcoming, never discouraged, always believing. Laughing and crying freely, youth finds its place!" and "All that has passed is but a prologue! Set sail straight toward the clouds, ride the winds and break the waves!" express generously and powerfully the ideas of women's independence, self-confidence, and bravery, emphasize the importance of women's self-worth in contemporary society, and convey a value concept of "women should strive for self-strength." Meanwhile, the program adopts the promotional slogan "Thirty, renew oneself; youth finds its place." The phrase "Thirty, self-renew oneself" cleverly uses a homophone, which means a fine horse to replace the character "establish" in the original idiom "thirty, establish oneself", metaphorically suggesting that women aged 30 and above can still gallop forward like steeds and achieve accomplishments. "Youth finds its place" means that women aged 30 and above still have the right to define their own youth. Their youth does not disappear with age; rather, after being tempered by time, it returns with a more mature, confident, and charming posture, displaying unique style and value. Furthermore, the program's theme song, Priceless Sister, through its playful yet pointed lyrics and upbeat, retro melody, advocates for women's independence, emphasizes women's self-worth, calls on society to pay attention to women's talents and

achievements, and encourages women to pursue their personal dreams and lifestyles. At the same time, the song's lyricist and performer, Li Yuchun, has successfully integrated her androgynous temperament into the public's horizon of expectation, thereby reshaping the public's perception of female images. Her image not only extends the meaning of the song but also, to some extent, breaks society's stereotypical impressions of traditional female temperament and image [23].

4. Problems and Countermeasures in the Construction of Female Media Image in the "Variety Show for Women" Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves

4.1 Existing Problems

Although Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves, as a representative "Variety Show for Women," has stood out in the variety show market, certain problems still exist in its construction of female media images. The relevant data obtained from this study are shown in Figure 12 and Figure 13 below:

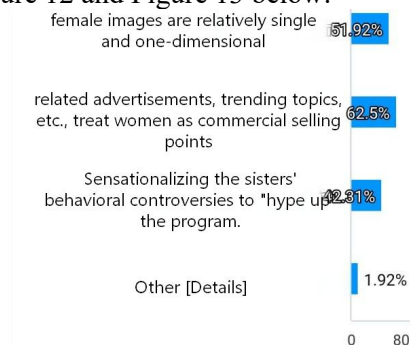


Figure 12. What Problems Do You Think Exist in the Construction of Female Images in This Program?

243	Sometimes the program may unconsciously fall into stereotypes of female images
244	the program's emphasis on competition and rivalry may lead audiences to misunderstand relationships among women
246	Single aesthetic standard
247	in shaping female images, the program may fail to fully present each woman's unique personality and experiences, leading to a homogenization of image construction
248	for the sake of program effect, female images are sometimes over-packaged, deviating from real life and affecting audiences' perception of women's authentic states

Figure 13. What Problems Do You Think Exist in the Construction of Female Images in This Program? (Detailed Breakdown of the "Other" Option)

According to the data analysis, certain problems

do exist in the program's construction of female images. The majority of respondents selected the option "related advertisements, trending topics, etc., treat women as commercial selling points," which, at 62.5%, became the primary problem identified by respondents, reflecting their concern about the commercialization of female images and their dissatisfaction with women being used as commercial bait. Second, the option "female images are relatively single and one-dimensional" was selected by 51.92% of respondents, indicating that from the audience's perspective, the program fails to fully present the diversity of female images. At the same time, some respondents expressed concern that the program has a suspicion of sensationalism in its content. Respondents who selected the "Other" option also noted that "the program's emphasis on competition and rivalry may lead audiences to misunderstand relationships among women," "in shaping female images, the program may fail to fully present each woman's unique personality and experiences, leading to a homogenization of image construction," and "for the sake of program effect, female images are sometimes over-packaged, deviating from real life and affecting audiences' perception of women's authentic states." These aspects all reflect the limitations of the program's understanding of female images, resulting in constructed female images that are one-dimensional, insufficiently authentic, and lacking in depth.

Regarding the impact of these problems on the audience, the relevant data from respondents' selections are shown in Figure 14 and Figure 15 below. According to the data, the impact of these problems on audiences is mainly reflected in the following aspects. First, 65.06% of respondents believed that these problems limited their perception of the diverse value of women, indicating that audiences are generally aware of the impact of content uniformity on female images. Second, 46.79% of respondents mentioned that these problems led to negative evaluations of the program, showing audiences' concern about program quality. Finally, 40.71% of respondents believed that these problems caused them to misunderstand female images, suggesting that the content may contain gender stereotypes and fail to guide audiences toward a more comprehensive and authentic understanding of female images. Audience who chose "Other" also stated that this would reinforce gender stereotypes and mislead the

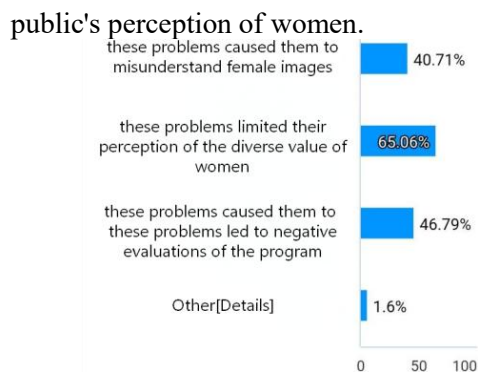


Figure 14. What Impact do You Think These Problems Have on Audiences?

249	Deepened gender bias
250	Positioning women in specific roles may lead audiences to have limited expectations of women's professional and family roles
251	Ignoring the influence of social context on women's growth may lead audiences to have cognitive biases regarding women's status and role in society
252	If the female images in the program excessively pursue material things or physical appearance, it may mislead the audience's value orientation and cause them to neglect the importance of inner qualities
253	One-sided perception of female images

Figure 15. What Impact Do You Think These Problems Have on Audiences? (Detailed Breakdown of the "Other" Option)

Thus, respondents generally believed that the female images presented in the program tend to be one-dimensional, overemphasizing external beauty and sexiness while neglecting inner value and diverse characteristics; that program-related advertisements, trending topics, etc., treat women as commercial selling points; and that the program insufficiently demonstrates influence and a sense of responsibility regarding female-related topics such as personal growth, family and marriage, and gender equality, failing to effectively guide correct values. The following is a specific analysis of the existing problems in the program.

4.1.1 Interference of rigid thinking patterns, resulting in a single standard of female aesthetics In the introduction to *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir pointed out: "One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman"^[24]. De Beauvoir argued that the term "woman" refers not only to a biological category but, more importantly, to a social category. To be recognized as a member of this social category, being born female is not sufficient; one must also acquire the behavioral patterns deemed appropriate for women at a specific time and place. In this sense, femininity is not merely a natural expression of female traits but is constructed by society and culture, or

even an imposition of culture—a set of expectations, norms, and prohibitions enforced through a system of rewards and punishments. In modern society, requirements regarding women's body shapes and appearances—such as "A4 waist," "comic book legs," and "fair, young, and slim"—restrict and constrain the expression of female images, confining women's images within the bounds of conventional stereotypes and reflecting a single standard of female aesthetics held by some people.

In *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves*, the production team remains influenced by rigid thinking patterns, consciously or unconsciously associating certain things with women, resulting in a relatively one-dimensional constructed female image. For example, in traditional entrenched concepts, red lipstick and high heels are considered standard equipment for women. Therefore, the production team used the sisters' lip prints as their respective identity markers during the entrance segment. In terms of gender color associations, red is often linked with women, so the team adopted red as the main color tone, using it in various scenes such as promotional images and entrance passages. At the same time, although the sisters' ages span from 30 to 52, they generally possess outstanding appearances and slim figures, showing no significant difference from the images of younger women aged 20 to 30. From this perspective, the female beauty and femininity constructed by this program remain persistently associated with youthful appearances and slender figures, reflecting a relatively single aesthetic standard.

4.1.2 Strong dominance of commercial logic, restricting the authentic shaping of female images

Modern society has become a consumer society, where everything has become a commodity that can be consumed. On the one hand, the media act as constructors and drivers of social hotspots, guiding and shaping the direction and trends of hot social events; on the other hand, the fermentation and formation of social hotspots in turn influence the media's production content and direction. Through media products, utilizing celebrity endorsements, advertising, and other forms, capital enables audiences to participate in the "reproduction" process of the program. The media obtain high click-through rates and substantial advertising revenue, while advertisers gain economic benefits through the public's

consumption of products worn or used by celebrities or the "exquisite and beautiful life" they imagine. In essence, the "Variety Show for Women" *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* is a media commodity dominated by commercial logic under consumer culture [25]. Driven by commercial logic, the sisters in the program seem to have become tools for generating traffic and economic benefits. The core theme centered on women is weakened and marginalized to a certain extent, and the authentic shaping of female images is subject to certain limitations.

In later episodes, *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* embedded a large number of product advertisements aimed at helping women stay young and beautiful, and the advertising slogans continuously guided female viewers to value their appearance and spend money on maintaining beauty—for example, "Van Meline, the brand all the sisters use," and "Discover the little secrets of sisters' beauty on the So-Young APP." This leads people to question whether the sisters, while claiming to reject age and appearance anxiety, are simultaneously paying to maintain youth and beauty. At the same time, the program advocates the concept of "women defining success for themselves," yet its actual competition format conflicts with this concept [26]. For instance, the "audience preference" vote plays a decisive role. Under this mechanism, the retention of contestants depends more on popularity than on professional competence or individual differences. This forces the sisters to remain under the scrutiny and evaluation of others throughout their stage performances, limiting their ability to express their individuality and show their true selves to a certain extent, and also makes it difficult for audiences to discern whether their performances are expressions of their true selves or are done to meet and cater to others' expectations. For example, during the third public performance, in order to cater to an increasingly younger market, the program required sisters aged 50 and above to perform electronic music "otaku dances" with large and vigorous dance movements, while ignoring the sisters' own true thoughts and wishes. Rather than focusing on how to shape diverse, authentic, and three-dimensional female images, the program is more concerned with its ratings, topicality, advertising revenue, and how to gain attention, generate traffic, and achieve economic

benefits.

4.1.3 Lack of in-depth discussion of female issues, making it difficult to render female images three-dimensional

Before its broadcast, *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* attracted a large audience by virtue of its novel format, high-minded program concept, and high-profile female celebrities. The public eagerly anticipated what this unprecedented "30+ female group" would look like, as well as the choices faced by middle-aged women in their 30s and beyond regarding issues such as age, family, career, and relationships; their reflections on women's situations and rights; and how the program would present, discuss, and guide female topics. However, the program did not present or discuss these issues extensively, and its understanding and display of female issues remained relatively superficial. As a result, "Variety Show for Women" has been reduced to a thin symbol rather than a vehicle for conveying healthy and positive female values to the public, and the female media images it constructs cannot be rendered three-dimensional.

In addressing the social issue of "women's age anxiety," although the entire program was promoted under the slogan of "highlighting women's value and breaking age-based biases against women," it only touched on the issue superficially. It did not use any program segments, guest interactions, or other means to guide audiences to think deeply about the difficulties and challenges women face as they age, how to overcome these difficulties to achieve self-worth, or leverage the program's influence to help women overcome age anxiety. The program team was keen on crafting the sisters' brave persona of "riding the winds and breaking the waves," but did not deeply explore their authentic mental journeys and coping strategies when facing multiple difficulties in real life. For example, when discussing workplace issues, it only briefly mentioned the difficulties sisters have faced in the entertainment industry, without delving into deeper issues such as the gender discrimination and promotion bottlenecks they commonly encounter in the workplace. In terms of family issues, the difficult choices sisters face in balancing family and career were also only lightly touched upon, without elaborating any valuable discussion.

4.2 Countermeasures

In this questionnaire survey, regarding the question of "what improvement suggestions do you have for this program in terms of female image construction," respondents expressed diverse opinions, which can be summarized as follows. First, the program should increase the display of female diversity, including different ages, occupations, body types, and cultural backgrounds, breaking free from traditional aesthetic constraints. Second, it should strengthen the emphasis on women's inner value and abilities, focusing on showcasing women's inner virtues, professional capabilities, team spirit, and leadership skills, while encouraging women to pursue their dreams and goals. The program should introduce discussions on real-world issues related to women and set up interactive segments between the audience, the program, and female guests, enhancing audience participation and feedback mechanisms. Furthermore, content innovation should be strengthened, and program formats should be enriched by adding diverse forms such as interviews, discussions, and talent showcases to comprehensively present women's diverse charms and abilities. At the same time, mental health experts could be brought in to provide psychological counseling and health knowledge, enhancing women's self-protection awareness and quality of life. The program team could also organize female guests to participate in social welfare activities, demonstrating their sense of social responsibility and promoting women's positive influence in society. This study summarizes these suggestions as follows:

4.2.1 Breaking free from the constraints of fixed standards, advocating for diverse aesthetics of women

When constructing female media images, the "Variety Show for Women" *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* should actively abandon traditional single aesthetic standards and advocate for diverse aesthetics of women to the public. If the program wants to convey the concept that "confidence is beauty," it should select women of different body types and appearances as program guests, rather than selecting only women who already conform to the public's definition of "beauty" to advocate for "rejecting appearance anxiety"⁵. At the same time, in terms of makeup and styling design, the program team should no longer limit itself to traditional female elements such as red lipstick

and high heels. Instead, it should create personalized looks based on the personalities and styles of the female guests, allowing viewers to see the diverse possibilities of female images. For example, for sisters who have a neutral appearance and personality, the program team could design outfits such as suits, trousers, and leather shoes to showcase their unique charm and personal style.

At the same time, the program should emphasize the reinforcement of diverse aesthetic concepts through its segment design. The program should give the sisters more opportunities for autonomous expression, allowing them to showcase their unique aesthetic concepts and life attitudes. For example, the program could set up themed games and activities such as "My Fashion Attitude" or "The Thousand Layers of Women's Charm," allowing the sisters to choose their own clothing combinations or design their own makeup, thereby showcasing the diverse charm and value of female beauty. Furthermore, a spin-off program focused specifically on female aesthetics could be launched, giving the sisters the opportunity to express themselves freely and share their views on female beauty, thereby strengthening aesthetic education for women, transmitting diverse aesthetic concepts to viewers, helping them break free from rigid thinking, accept and appreciate different types of female beauty, and inspiring viewers to reflect on and identify with diverse female aesthetics.

4.2.2 Taking the shaping of female images as the foundation, balancing commercial profitability with content quality

The "Variety Show for Women" *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* should take the shaping of female images as its foundation, balancing the relationship between commercial profitability and high-quality content creation. The program team should optimize advertising placements, paying more attention to the fit with shaping female images in terms of both advertisement selection and placement methods. The program should avoid excessively embedding product advertisements that emphasize women's appearance, and instead choose to collaborate with brands that reflect women's beautiful inner qualities and support women's self-development. At the same time, in the design of advertising slogans, the program should also focus on highlighting women's value, showcasing women's beautiful qualities, and constructing authentic, diverse, and three-

dimensional female media images, thereby guiding viewers to focus on women's inner qualities and female values. For example, in terms of wording, phrases such as "female confidence," "female self-growth," and "rejecting age anxiety" could be used more frequently, shaping female images that are self-reliant, self-improving, and brave in pursuing self-worth, making healthy and positive female values deeply rooted in people's hearts.

At the same time, the program must clarify its own positioning, adhere to the core theme centered on women, and take the shaping of diverse and three-dimensional female images as its core goal. In the process of program planning and production, it should fully consider women's needs and values, avoiding being overly influenced by commercial interests. During the successive broadcasts of the program, the program team could conduct audience surveys to understand audience feedback and expectations regarding the shaping of female images in the program, and adjust the program's content and direction in a timely manner based on reasonable audience opinions. Furthermore, the competition rules should be adjusted in a targeted manner, re-examining the rationality and feasibility of the program's format. The program could also increase the proportion of professional judges, conducting comprehensive evaluations of the sisters from multiple dimensions such as professional competence, artistic innovation, and personal growth, thereby allowing the sisters to focus more on self-expression and artistic creation on stage, rather than making changes solely to cater to audience preferences. For example, a panel of professional mentors could be established to provide in-depth critiques and guidance on the sisters' performances, helping them better interpret their true and unique selves, while also allowing viewers to see women's growth and breakthroughs in professional fields.

4.2.3 Deepening the discussion of female issues, portraying three-dimensional female images

The "Variety Show for Women" *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* should actively design in-depth topic segments around female issues, showcasing the sisters' in-depth discussions on these issues. The program team could invite experts from relevant fields to participate, engaging in deep discussions with the sisters on hot female issues such as age, family, career, and relationships, guiding viewers to think deeply about the difficulties and

challenges women face in different social roles, and how to overcome these difficulties to achieve self-worth. The program team should place importance on unearthing the authentic stories behind the sisters, presenting their authentic mental journeys and coping strategies when facing difficulties in real life through documentaries, interviews, and other forms. The sisters could share stories of how they overcame gender discrimination and achieved career advancement in the workplace, or how they maintained independent personalities within marriage and family, thereby allowing viewers to see women's resilience and wisdom, evoking emotional resonance among female viewers. Based on this, the distance between ordinary female viewers and the sisters can be narrowed, strengthening the value and significance of the sisters as female narrative subjects, and concretizing the thin and abstract symbol of "sister," thereby portraying three-dimensional female media images.

At the same time, by leveraging the immense influence of the program, "Variety Show for Women" should also be committed to driving social action. The program team could proactively initiate social activities related to women's issues, such as establishing a "Female Growth Fund" to support women's development in education, entrepreneurship, and other fields; launching themed public welfare activities such as "Women Breaking Age Bias" and "Women Embracing Themselves" to raise social awareness of women's age-related issues. Through these actions, "Variety Show for Women" can not only promote in-depth exchanges on women's topics but also enable the feminist values conveyed by the program to take root and truly contribute to the development of women's equal rights.

5. Conclusion

The study finds that in terms of the presentation of female media images, the sisters in the "Variety Show for Women" Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves are fashionable, individualistic, talented, team-oriented, independent, and capable of leadership, presenting uniquely charming, vibrant, and diverse female images. Through the sisters' brilliant stage performances, shared personal experiences and reflections, and displays of professional skills, the program presents to the public the sisters' fearlessness toward aging, as

well as their courageous striving and positive spiritual outlook, breaking through traditional stereotypes about women's age. Through difficult singing techniques, creative stage presentations, and the sisters' displays of professional skills in different fields, the program demonstrates the sisters' seriousness and rigor toward the stage, their perseverance and bravery during training, and their mutual support in teamwork, thereby highlighting powerful female strength and breaking traditional social biases about women's personal value. The sisters' expression of independent spirit and pursuit of self-worth realization in the program reflect the value orientation of modern women toward self-reliance, self-improvement, and courageous self-actualization, indicating that women should not become appendages to others in any form but should instead construct a strong inner world. This inspires women to bravely pursue their own value and their own wonderful lives, demonstrating the program's emphasis on and positive guidance in portraying women's inner spiritual world.

In constructing female media images, the "Variety Show for Women" Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves employs a reasonable set of mechanisms. The "Variety Show for Women" sets topics centered on women, focuses on female-centered group narratives, and presents vibrant and diverse female images. By creating a "sister-type" female group of women aged 30 and above, and by strengthening women's personal value through stage performances, daily training processes, and life scenarios, Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves breaks away from traditional program formulas, showcases women's personal charm, and reflects the program's emphasis on women's subjectivity and the display of diverse charms. At the same time, against the backdrop of the rise of the "she economy," the program, by taking women as the narrative subject, exploring women's issues from a female perspective, and highlighting women's personal value, adapts to market development trends, meets audience demand for "female-oriented" variety shows, and demonstrates success in analyzing changes in market rules and audience needs. Furthermore, through the mutual encouragement and support among the sisters and their insights and reflections on social phenomena, the program constructs a group image of women who are confident, brave, wise,

and united. Through the program's copywriting, promotional slogans, theme song, and other elements, the program actively expresses female discourse and transmits female values such as independence, courage to move forward, and the pursuit of self-worth, reflecting the program's recognition of the importance of women's discursive expression and value guidance in social culture, thereby facilitating the shaping of vivid and three-dimensional female media images.

Nevertheless, certain problems still exist in the construction of female media images in *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves*. For example, the program remains influenced by rigid thinking patterns, resulting in a relatively single standard of female aesthetics. It lacks in-depth reflection on the norms and standards of female aesthetics shaped by social culture, as well as an awareness of its own shortcomings in breaking free from traditional aesthetic constraints and displaying diverse female aesthetics. At the same time, the program is strongly dominated by commercial logic, which to a certain extent restricts the authentic shaping of female images, limits women's expression of individuality and self-presentation, and places excessive emphasis on gaining attention, generating traffic, and achieving economic benefits. In addition, the program lacks in-depth discussion of female issues, presenting and discussing them only superficially, without deeply exploring women's real-life dilemmas, challenges, and coping strategies, resulting in shortcomings in the three-dimensional shaping of female images.

In response to the above problems, this paper proposes several countermeasures. First, "Variety Show for Women" such as *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves* should break free from the constraints of fixed standards, transcend traditional aesthetic frameworks, abandon traditional aesthetic standards, incorporate diverse female images, and advocate for diverse aesthetics of women, thereby guiding society to form a diverse aesthetic understanding of women and disseminating positive female aesthetic values through the program. Second, the program should take the shaping of female images as its foundation, balancing commercial profitability with content quality. The program should strengthen its resistance to excessive interference from commercial interests, achieving a win-win

situation between commercial success and cultural dissemination through high-quality content creation, while adhering to the core theme centered on women and taking the shaping of diverse and three-dimensional female images as its core goal. Furthermore, "Variety Show for Women" should deepen the discussion of female issues and portray three-dimensional female images, reflecting the program's due consideration and practical exploration in promoting in-depth exchanges on female topics, evoking emotional resonance among audiences, and advancing the development of women's equal rights.

At present, the construction of female media images still faces many challenges, which require the efforts of women themselves and the active attention of all sectors of society. Society should provide a fair environment for women to display their diverse talents. The media should actively play their role, maximizing the presentation of authentic female images. With the joint efforts of all sectors of society and women themselves, women can maintain independent images, pursue their dreams, uphold positive values, and promote social progress and healthy and orderly development.

References

- [1] Shi Miaomiao. The Construction and Interpretation of the Media Image of Silver-Haired Women in "Variety Show for Women". Donghua University, 2023. DOI: 10.27012/d.cnki.gdhuu.2023.000836.
- [2] Wang Tong. A Study on the Female Image in "Variety Show for Women". Northeast Normal University, 2022. DOI: 10.27011/d.cnki.gdbsu.2022.000351.
- [3] Qin Tian. A Study on Interaction Rituals in "Variety Show for Women". Wuhan Textile University, 2024. DOI: 10.27698/d.cnki.gwhxj.2024.000147.
- [4] Zhang Luyuan, Xu Baodan. A Study on the Gender Narrative of Female Variety Shows from the Perspective of "Her Culture". *Contemporary TV*, 2024, (03): 50-55. DOI: 10.16531/j.cnki.1000-8977.2024.03.009.
- [5] Yin Le, Shen Zhe. "The Women Who Are Seen": An Analysis of Female Narrative in "Variety Show for Women". *China Television*, 2022, (03): 100-106.
- [6] Liu Zhaopeng. An Analysis of Innovative Paths for Shaping Female Media Images in "Variety Show for Women". *Literary and*

- Art Weekly, 2024, (04): 78-80.
- [7] Wang Lili, Ye Qun. Reflection on the Construction of Misogynistic Discourse in "Variety Show for Women" from the Perspective of Gaze Theory. *Journal of Zhejiang Sci-Tech University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 2024, 52(01): 33-38.
- [8] Zhao Hao. Form Transformation, Discourse Reshaping and Value Reconstruction—The Realistic Writing of Female Groups in "Variety Show for Women". *Journal of Jinhua Polytechnic*, 2023, 23(01): 73-79.
- [9] Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. Translated by Cheng Xilin, Zhu Hui, Wang Xiaolu. Guangzhou: Guangdong Economic Publishing House, 2005.
- [10] Van Zoonen, Liesbet. *Feminist Media Studies*. Translated by Cao Jin, Cao Mao. Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2007.
- [11] Liu Baihong, Bu Wei. A Research Report on Female Images in Chinese Television Advertising. *Journal of News and Communication Research*, 1997, (01): 45-58+96.
- [12] Wang Shenhong. Reading and Shaping: Female Media Images in New China (1949-1966)—A Case Study of People's Daily. *Journal of Fuyang Normal University (Social Science Edition)*, 2019, (02): 132-136. DOI: 10.14096/j.cnki.cn34-1044/c.2019.02.25.
- [13] Gao Huanjing. The Presentation and Changes of "Model Women" Images in Mainstream Media—People's Daily (1960-2013). *Journal of Yunnan Minzu University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 2014, 31(06): 139-144. DOI: 10.13727/j.cnki.53-1191/c.2014.06.022.
- [14] Luan Yimei, He Yayan. Technology Empowering "Her Image"—A Study of Female Media Images in Short Videos. *Audiovisual World*, 2019, (06): 36-43. DOI: 10.13994/j.cnki.stj.2019.06.009.
- [15] Xu Jiabiao, Han Qing. The Media Construction of Female Images from the Perspective of Cultural Hegemony—A Case Study of Popular Domestic Female-Oriented TV Dramas in Mainland China Since the 1990s. *Journal of Shaanxi Normal University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition)*, 2012, 41(06): 21-29.
- [16] Zhang Xinjie, Peng Ling, Liu Yijie. The Manifestation of "Her Power": The Media Image Construction of Chinese Female Athletes in the Beijing Winter Olympics—An Analysis of Titan Sports Reports from the Perspective of Framing Theory. *Ice and Snow Sports*, 2024, 46(01): 7-12+17. DOI: 10.16741/j.cnki.bxyd.2024.01.002.
- [17] Luo Hui. The Construction of Female Images in the Media and Its Impact on Women's Survival and Development. *Journal of Shandong Women's University*, 2012, (01): 57-60.
- [18] Zhou Ziyu. The Consumption Trap of "New Fitnessism": An Analysis of Female Body Image Construction from the Perspective of Online Media. *News Communication*, 2023, (21): 24-27.
- [19] Liu Ting, Song Zongpei, Feng Peiming, et al. A Study on the Influence of Media Power on Female Images in Sports Media Communication. *Journal of Guangzhou Sport University*, 2020, 40(03): 46-49. DOI: 10.13830/j.cnki.cn44-1129/g8.2020.03.013.
- [20] Wang Xiao. From the Other to the Establishment of Subjective Personality and Female Discourse Expression—The Awakening of Female Self-Awareness in Educated. *Overseas English*, 2024, (13): 205-207.
- [21] Mou Fangyi. The Causes and Reflections on the Popularity of "Variety Show for Women" from the Audience Perspective. Hebei University, 2022. DOI: 10.27103/d.cnki.ghebu.2022.001637.
- [22] Foucault, Michel. *The Order of Discourse*. Translated by Xu Baoqiang, Yuan Wei. Beijing: Central Compilation & Translation Press, 2000: 22-26.
- [23] Yan Lu. A Study on the Construction of Female Media Images in "Variety Show for Women" from the Perspective of Framing Theory. *Lanzhou University of Finance and Economics*, 2024. DOI: 10.27732/d.cnki.gnzsx.2024.000460.
- [24] Beauvoir, Simone de. *The Second Sex*. Translated by Tao Tiezhu. Beijing: China Book Publishing House, 2004.
- [25] Shi Wenqin. *Consumed Female Issues*. Lanzhou University, 2022. DOI: 10.27204/d.cnki.glzhu.2022.002089.
- [26] Wang Xuejie. The Construction of Female Images in the Talent Variety Show *Sister Riding the Winds and Breaking the Waves*. Northwest University, 2021. DOI: 10.27405/d.cnki.gxbdu.2021.002116.