

Uncovering Consumer Culture-Driven Media in Disguise of Feminism: A Multimodal Content Analysis of Sisters Who Make Wave

Authors : Zhen Li

Abstract : In contemporary China, the rise of consumer culture and feminism has facilitated the 'She-Economy', where Chinese women's consumption power has been boosted along with the thriving Chinese economy. Domestic reality TV shows such as Sisters Who Make Waves (hereafter SWMW) target female audiences by bringing women's issues such as age, appearance, and balance between family and career to the discussion. Against this backdrop, this study adopted multimodal content analysis to investigate how SWMW failed to live up to the feminist goals the show had claimed and how serious women's issues were consumed and capitalized by the consumer media culture from consumer culture and feminist perspectives. The findings reveal that while the female-themed work claims to uncover the charm that age brings to women over their thirties, it merely mentions female anxiety and uses feminism in disguise to achieve commercial success without in-depth thinking and discussion of what real-life issues women in China are tackling. They further show that the mass media-promoted modern femininity combined with consumerism deepens anxiety over aging among female audiences. The study sheds light on understanding the new development of Chinese femininity and the impact of consumer culture on feminist consciousness in contemporary China.

Keywords : consumer culture, feminism, multimodal content analysis, she-economy

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