

Reflection and Design of Biased Thinking in the Digital Media Era

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Abstract: With the development of society and the arrival of the the big data era, mass media categorizes things quickly and easily in order to enable the audience to receive information better and faster, so labeling has become the best way and primary means to process information. Stereotypes are everywhere, affecting everyone in different ways to varying degrees, and they don't just exist. In the design of this project, "stereotype" is used as a carrier to let the public understand the social psychological phenomenon of "stereotype", which has the important promotion function in elimination of discrimination, enhancement of friendship and the construction of a truly equal and harmonious society.

1. Introduction

Stereotyping is mostly caused by a person not having enough time to get to know an individual, which means that we treat things and people that are different from us with fixed ideas and have rigid or oversimplified beliefs or assumptions about things.

Morrill first used the term "stereotype" in his book *The Adventures of Harry Baba* in the early 19th century. About 100 years later, Walter Lippmann first introduced this concept to the field of social psychology in his classic work *Public Opinion*, in which Lippmann also mentioned the concept of "pseudo-environment". In this age of advanced network, people live in the midst of a large amount of information on the Internet every day, so they can learn about many things that are not happening around them by browsing the Internet. In many cases, the information we receive may not be the objective facts, but what is shown to us after the mass media has filtered, processed and recombined the objective facts. Thus, without really knowing the facts, people tend to look at things with stereotypes.

Historically, psychologists have done a lot of research on stereotypes, and they've looked at the causes of stereotype formation. From a cognitive perspective, stereotypes can guide people's interpretation of the information they receive and thus influence their decisions and behaviors. Stereotypes formed in communication help to promote people's cultural identity and understanding of different cultures, but also prevent people from participating in intercultural dialogue.

2. Current Status of Biased Thinking

Stereotypes are passed on through interpersonal communication, which is constantly replicated and passed down from generation to generation in cultural inheritance. People try to convey unbiased stereotypes, but the old ideas in the stereotypes still exist in the society, such as age stereotypes, gender stereotypes, racial stereotypes, vocational stereotypes, etc. Take the most common "gender stereotype". It's actually a gender bias, a stereotypical impression of male or female characteristics. Gender stereotypes, such as "men are strong and women are weak", "men don't cry easily", "women should follow the rules of the three obedience and four virtues", "women drivers are road killers", and "sissy", were and are common in all parts of the world. It is believed that men must be strong, independent and fit for competitive work, while women must be gentle, vulnerable and can only do housework. Many of these impressions do not accord with objective facts, but they are important factors affecting individual socialization, which often result in gender discrimination in work and life, and become obstacles in interpersonal relationships.

3. Media Expression Based on Biased Thinking

A stereotype is a manifestation of fixed thinking. Once certain groups are stereotyped, labeled as “group labels” (such as tattooed people, psychopath, homosexuals, etc.), and generically given specific titles, the evaluation of these groups is often not accurate, unbiased and objective. Based on the cognition of group labels and fixed thinking existing in the society, “*Stereotype*” is used as the carrier for creation in this project, in which three common phenomena in social life are listed. In the short film, the form of flipped thinking is adopted, that is, the person who is stereotyped is swapped with the person who is stereotyped on others. The program came in second place in the ROOTS design competition and has also achieved good results in the broadcast of different platforms. The presentation and expression of the project are as follows:

The first piece of the story tells the daily life of a “male” driver: When a “male” driver picks up an order, the customer cancels the order because of concerning that he is a road killer, a “male” driver; even after receiving an order, customers will always ask him if it is difficult for him, as a “male” driver, to receive an order; When he is in the underground garage and someone else's car is scratched, the owner of the car gets out and sees that he is a “male” driver and starts blaming him indiscriminately. In this part of the story series, we hope to make people think about the prejudice that female drivers often encounter in driving through the design of such flipped context.

The second story is about the stereotype of tattoos: Xiaoma is a young man who is looking for a job, but because he doesn't have a tattoo, he encounters many obstacles. When he goes to an interview, because he doesn't have a tattoo, the interviewer doesn't hire him considering the company's image; when he goes to the grocery store to buy food, the clerk treats him badly because he doesn't have a tattoo; when waiting for the elevator, after seeing his clean skin, the girl will instinctively feel that he is a bad man, so she refuses to take the same elevator with him. In this part of the story series, we hope to make people think about a question through such flipped context design -- whether tattoo is a personal hobby or a social symbol, a symbol representing a bad impression.

The final story is about the daily routine of a professional with a stereotype called “Glasses”, which addresses the everyday stereotypes about how people dress: When the protagonist and his sister go downstairs for a walk, they see a boy in cool clothes, they tease him that he doesn't know how to love himself because he wears so little; The protagonist's chat with a friend is aimed at a male intern in the company, thinking that boys should do housework at home and that coming to work at the company will only make things worse. We hope to make people think about the issue of women and workplace prejudice through the design of such flipped context.

How would you feel if, as a normal person, you were easily judged by people who didn't know you and wore colored glasses?



Fig.1 A Scene from the Filming of “Stereotype”



Fig.2 A Scene from the Filming of “Stereotype”

In life, everyone is labeled in some way because of stereotypes, but these labels are often negative, and the direct results of these negative labels are prejudice and discrimination. The source of many problems is not the problem itself, but the perception of each person from different angles. It is irresponsible to label someone without authorization. Therefore, interactive poster installation art is used to interact with the audience in the poster design of this project.

4. Reflection on Digital Media Short Films Based on Biased Thinking

With the upsurge of short video, the popularization and acceleration of mobile terminals, major platforms have gradually begun to favor the short, adaptable and fast mass traffic content of communication. The production process of the short film is simple and the production cost is relatively low, and “stereotype” is one of the hot topics of today's attention, so it can be serialized as a series of columns.

The latest creative advertisement about gender stereotypes launched by Heineken Beer has aroused heated debate and thinking among netizens on the Internet. The montage approach used in the ads allows us to see waiters' stereotyping of dietary choices between the sexes: women prefer salads and cocktails, while men prefer burgers, fries and beer. “Cheers to All”, Heineken's global campaign to break stereotypes, is undoubtedly a successful marketing. “The campaign was inspired by real life experiences,” says its Director of Brand Development and Communications, “The only way to break these stereotypes is to acknowledge their existence. The design team wanna our ads to do this in a fun way. We wanna remind people around the world that everyone should be free to enjoy their favorite drink, so we launched 'Cheer to All'!”

From the advertising creative design of Heineken Beer, we can find that the issue of stereotype has attracted more and more concern. The victim of a stereotype is not just one side, it strikes a chord on on both sides.

The development of serial advertising starting from stereotypes is beneficial for improving consumers' affection for brands and trust in enterprises, stimulating potential consumer groups, and thus increasing the repurchase rate. In the future, our design team will continue to develop the commercial cooperation of the corresponding theme to find the possibility of commercial cooperation. In this era of Internet, in order to create sensationalism, most media will not seriously understand the authenticity of things, but label things with fixed thinking. In the end, the mass media's loss of social responsibility is a result of the fact that people who don't know the truth and like to follow others tend to stereotype things with them. In order to attract attention and report quickly, untruthful, thoughtless and one-sided propaganda will bring unnecessary troubles to the parties concerned, which has also become a very important factor for the generation of social stereotypes.

In the meantime, the important reason for the formation of stereotypes is the discourse power of one side and the discourse absence of the other side. For example, the stereotype of “female drivers”. In fact, not all women drivers are “road killers”, but those who are good at driving and make no mistakes are not reported, and only those who have had accidents are cited, but they are only a small percentage of women drivers. When the media focus on similar events over a period of

time, it creates the impression of a “majority.” Over time, the stereotype of female drivers will only deepen. For another example, when it comes to tattoos, many people subconsciously associate them with the underworld and crime. Since tattoos are permanent marks, everyone has different reasons behind their decision to get a tattoo. It's not just a matter of a few superficial labels. Some people get tattoos to commemorate, some for art, and some for inspiration. Tattoos are now slowly becoming a culture. There is no good or bad thing about tattoos. Another example is a social stereotype about women in the workplace. Many teams have excellent female professionals who can not only play a role in the family, but can also be independent in their work. Women are held back in their careers by nothing more than their periods, their minds and their attitudes towards work, but these are all stereotyped images of them. Research shows that women have the same skills as men in many non-manual occupations. So women actually need more support, recognition and understanding in the workplace.

Stereotypes are here to stay, and it's worth talking about. Maybe discussion can't solve the problem, but this process can let everyone hear some different voices, because only when the number of people participating in the voice increase, when the problem can attract the attention of others, the stereotype group's concept will be gradually transformed.

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