

Cognitive Perception of Chinese Audience on Media Image of Foreign Media

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Abstract This study tries to conduct a second-order CFA model of audience perception and evaluation on media image of foreign media. Communication capacity, popularity and credibility are the three factors tested in this study through utilizing online questionnaire survey. The results show that besides the frequency of media exposure that could affect the perception and evaluation of audience on media image, the three factors of communication capacity, popularity and credibility all have significant influence in contributing to the media image build. The significance of research on media image lies in that it is the most intuitive cognitive outcomes of audience as well as the most direct means in highlighting the inherent quality of media in the competitive market, and also the most intuitive signs to highlight differences with other media.

Keywords Chinese Audience, Cognitive Perception, Foreign Media, Media Image

1. Introduction

Existing studies related to media image focus on examining how public figure of individuals (public figures, social organizations, state apparatus, companies, products, brands, etc.) derived from media communication. Little research has explored the image of media individuals themselves, which can be referred to as the representation or impression of various categories of media organizations. The reason may lie in that there has been no clear definition of media image in academic and the concept of media image contains various dimensions.

Although there is lack of research on image of media itself, media image plays important roles in affecting the perception and evaluation of audiences in receiving information from media. It is important for media to learn about how effective media images can be conveyed to audience by grabbing and retaining the attention of

audience, in order to further expanding influence and gaining market share.

Besides the popularity which can be reflected directly in audiences' impression on the visual image package, the connotation and influence power of the media can be reflected in various aspects including its media attribute, country of location, communication capacity, credibility and etc.

In order to exam the media image, the article chooses media belonging to countries outside of the great China as the subjective and tries to evaluate how the receiving end, namely, Chinese audience percept and evaluate three dimensions (communication capacity, credibility and popularity) of the media image of foreign media.

The core issues of the research are:

What are the images of foreign media conveyed to Chinese audience?

What are the factors that exert influence on the cognitive perception of foreign media among Chinese audience?

The purpose of the research is to further understand the cognitive perception of Chinese audience on international media. Besides, the study also endeavors to explore appropriate communicative means for foreign media corporations to further develop in the mainland China. The findings of this research are also expected to supply empirical data for the 'Media Image' studies. It is worth noting that the practical significance of the study lies in its efforts to magnify the communicative effects of foreign media in China and further develop international communication theories by means of making an exploration into the media images of foreign media conveyed to Chinese audience.

2. Foreign Media in China

Since China entered the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2002, a myriad of international media groups have gradually entered China's media market, ranging from television, films, music soundtracks to theme parks,

network games, electronic business and logistics industry. There are many aspects of restrictions for foreign media to enter into China, including the access of capital, content standards and market coverage [1]. Foreign media groups have to determine the extent and mode of entry referring to the Chinese government's policy [2].

The strategy that foreign media chooses to enter the China's market is penetrating from periphery step by step. The paths that foreign media enter China ranges from capital operation (mergers and acquisitions, investment holding, joint stock, direct access) to content penetration (program exchange, strategic cooperation brand), and the selections of geographical areas is spreading from central cities to the whole country as well as from the cities in the west edge to cities in the middle [3]. Until now, foreign capital has evolved in almost all the departments in traditional and emerging business of China's media industries, from the distribution of traditional films, DVD, music soundtrack to theme parks, and even network games, electronic business and logistics [4].

Due to the special status of the China's media market that media has been insulated with capital market [5], there is no room for actions such as direct mergers and acquisitions which could dominate the market quickly, and expansion in the fields of traditional media industries is frequently frustrated [6].

Driven by the interests, the most profitable entertainment programs often replace serious content to occupy more radio time. For example, most of the foreign channels landed in China are entertainment TV channels, which can be specifically divided into music channels, sports channels, fashion channels and geography channels. There are few information channels (Phoenix Info News) and financial channels (BLOOMBERG and CNBC Asia Pacific), and there is seldom news channel (CNN) and integrated channel (Phoenix TV) [7]. Since 2004, the international media industry giants have begun to focus on the new media and derivative product [4, 8], in order to take a share of the profits in Chinese new media fields.

However, in those areas that investment policy has not been perfected, large investment also means high risk. It is tough for foreign media to make money out of the media market from China. For these reasons, in addition to tightening oversight by Chinese government on media industry, which is extremely difficult to be turned around in a short period of time, the cognition of Chinese audience on foreign media should also be taken into account. On one hand, the audience directly determines the survival and development of the media; on the other hand, the audience has become an important bargaining chip for media organizations to gain political and economic resources and expand social networks.

With the deepening globalization and advances in the development of international media, there is relatively a lack of research on media effects of foreign media in China and the cognitive perception of international media by

Chinese audience.

3. Media Image

There are two main points to understand about 'media image' in academic circles. Firstly, media image is the public figure of some individuals of society (public figures, social organizations, state apparatus, companies, products, brands, etc.) derived from media communication, which equals to public image in a sense. In this meaning, the media just exists as a medium for representing image rather than the body of image [9, 10]. Secondly, media image is the image of media individuals and media organizations, which can be referred to as the representation or impression of various categories of media organizations in different time and space [11]. Obviously, this research will use the second definition about media image, which is the image of media organization in the audiences.

In research related to the media image in external communication of a country, O'Gorman [12] pointed out that media image was the abstract understanding and reflection of media characters and status, which was the subjective impression of audience on media. In addition, media image was a condition related to evaluation, and the condition was the situation of attitude and public opinion of audience on media [13].

Scholars generally accept that media image is multi-dimensional. Maletzke [14] put forward the of model of mass communication process, indicating mass communication is a complicated social process in psychology that the media image in the mind makes the recipient produce certain expectations of media content and then affects the choice, the experience way and reaction mode of the recipient on the media content [15].

The most important dimension of media image is the communication capacity of the media, which refers to the general ability of media in collecting information, reporting news and having influence on the whole society [16]. The audiences evaluate the communication capacity through media content which mainly includes components of products and service [17]. Zhou [18] explains that communication capacity includes four parts of information of arrival degree, information dissemination speed, information dissemination power, and information dissemination effects.

Hjarvard [19] argued that the high prestige of media formed in audience psychology is the media popularity which consisted of prestige of hosts, famous groups of reporters, frequencies of major reports and important speeches, as well as media coverage. Popularity is the important part of brand equity, which refers to the brand awareness that how many audiences can recognize or remember the brand of a certain media [20].

Lipshultz [21] emphasized that credibility and trust have been important concept for media image. Audience perception may be influenced by variation in information

and message credibility. Compared with tradition media, resources on online media may face with the problem of credibility (pp.15-16).

Through combing the concepts of media image, it can be seen that consensus of the academic is that media image depends on impression and evaluation of audience. Therefore, this research will analyze and compare the recognition and evaluation of Chinese audiences on foreign media through three dimensions of communication capacity, popularity and credibility.

Among dozens of transnational media all over the world, only about ten of them could produce international repercussions with powerful media image, such as the Cable News Network (CNN), the New York Times (NYT), the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the Arabian Peninsula Television Station (Al Jazeera), the Japan Broadcasting Corporation (NHK) and so forth. CNN has a high prestige among the audience worldwide with good media image. There are many brand programs and well-known hosts, and CNN put much effect on reporting significant international news. It is generally reflected from the audience that the image of CNN is solemn, just and advanced. Until 2000, 90% programs of CNN International Channel are made for foreign audience rather than American audience [22]. The New York Times (NYT) is a daily newspaper published in New York with worldwide distribution and considerable influence, which is the representative of serious newspapers in the United States. NYT regards itself as a 'faithful recorder of every species of intelligence' [23], and it seldom reports an event except for the New York local news. If it firstly reports an event, then the report with high reliability is often referred as the news source by other newspapers and agencies. BBC is good at delivering news value with terse and forceful news report. As BBC used to hold rigorous news philosophy and adhered to the authentic principles, it was welcomed by audience worldwide [24]. However, the image of BBC was facing problems due to its sex scandal. Al Jazeera fully imitates the operation pattern of CNN and BBC, which applies a large number of live broadcast and front reporter connections. But Al Jazeera has a good media image among the Middle East and the third world countries because of its special reporting resources in Arab countries and other areas with hot spots [25]. NHK targets its audience as foreign audience. It has increasing international influence with increasing amounts of audience. Its media image is reflected in its reporting ability and professional spirit. Especially in the reporting of the earthquake in Japan in 2011, NHK broadcasted whole process of the tsunami in helicopter aerial image and brought great mental shock to the audience all over the world, which enhances its media image to the worldwide audience [26].

4. Audience Cognition

In mass communication research, audience refers to the

information receiver or communication target of mass media [27]. Audiences may contain any recipient of any mass media information such as readers of newspapers and magazines, listeners of radio, viewers of television and users of networks.

The social cognition theory derived from Gestalt psychology [28]. The basic points of social cognition theory include people do not passively face all sorts of things; on the contrary, they organize their perception, thoughts and beliefs into a simple and meaningful format. No matter how random and chaotic the situation seems, people will apply a certain concept to it. When accessing to media, the perception and interpretation of audiences on things influence the usage of media.

When forming the cognition on media image, there is a psychological selection process of the audience including selective exposure, selective perception and selective retention [29]. Cultural proximity put forward by Joseph Straubhaar [30] refers to that audience is inclined to accept programs close to their culture, language and customs, combining with the 'Selective Exposure' theory put forward by Klapper [31], when audience access mass media communication, instead of treating media and content indiscriminately, they are more likely to access media or content consistent with their existing positions, views or attitude, as well as avoiding the media or content opposite with their existing tendencies intentionally or unintentionally. It can be summarized in three aspects of selective attention, selective perception and selective retention.

There are several factors including political power, economic power and cultural power that can affect the media image. Different from the above three powers, public power is another special power having direct influence on media image. On one hand, public is the most important target pointing of media, and as the audience, the public directly determines the survival and development of the media; on the other hand, once converted to the audience, the public has become an important bargaining chip for media organizations to gain political resources and economic resources and widening social networks [32].

The process that media image generated in audience cognition contains two stages. One is stage of accumulating image components and the other is the stage of image modeling [33]. Audience forms the cognition of media image with obvious imprint after perceiving, understanding and modeling of the image provided by media. Audience cognition on media image generally comes from the media components which include media products, service and all kinds of behaviors and relationships in social communication [34]. Audience gained the initiative cognition of the entire media image through accessing, stitching and combining of the media components. Image modeling refers to that, after accumulating image components to a certain degree, audiences integrate the components to form their own

cognition and image of the media with obvious audience imprint [33]. The stage of accumulating image components is an integrated process in the long term [33]. Most of audiences will not judge the media image merely through a media product, an advertisement, a report or a marketing activity, which means that, media has to utilize various kinds of means to build image.

5. Hypothesis

As it is mentioned in the description of media image, media content is crucial for media to strengthen its communication capacity in order to enhance its media image, the hypothesis can be put forward as:

H1: The degree of communication capacity of foreign media is positively related to the evaluation and cognition of the Chinese audience.

As media's popularity is the important part of brand equity and affects the prestige and image of media, the hypothesis can be put forward as:

H2: The degree of popularity of foreign media is positively related to the evaluation and cognition of the Chinese audience.

As audience perception may be influenced by variation in information and message credibility, the hypothesis can be put forward as:

H3: The degree of credibility of foreign media is positively related to the evaluation and cognition of the Chinese audience.

As there is a psychological selection process and cultural proximity of the audience, Chinese audience may be more likely to access Asian media rather than Western media, the hypothesis can be put forward as:

H4: Chinese audiences are more likely to access foreign media from Asian countries rather than from Western countries.

As compared with domestic media, foreign media still

occupied very small part of the audience market, not all the audience will use foreign media as their main media channel and not all the audience will contact with foreign media every day, the frequency of exposure to foreign media may influence the perception and cognition of the Chinese audience on the media image, and the hypothesis can be put forward as:

H5: The media image perception of foreign media is positively related to the frequency of accessing to foreign media of the Chinese audience.

As perception of foreign media requires certain knowledge level, especially foreign language skills, the evaluation of foreign media image may have relationship with the educational level of audience, the hypothesis can be put forward as:

H6: The media image perception of foreign media is positively related to the educational level of Chinese audience.

As audience with relatively higher level of consumption capacity (such as people living in overseas) may have opportunities to access more kinds of foreign media, the evaluation of foreign media image may have relationship with the financial ability of audience, the hypothesis can be put forward as:

H7: The media image perception of foreign media is positively related to the income level of Chinese audience.

6. Research Design

Quantitative method with survey was utilized in this research to understand and interpret the cognition and evaluation of Chinese audience on foreign media image. It can be summarized through the above literature review that media image is reflected in three dimensions of communication capacity, popularity and credibility, which the relationship is shown in Figure 1:

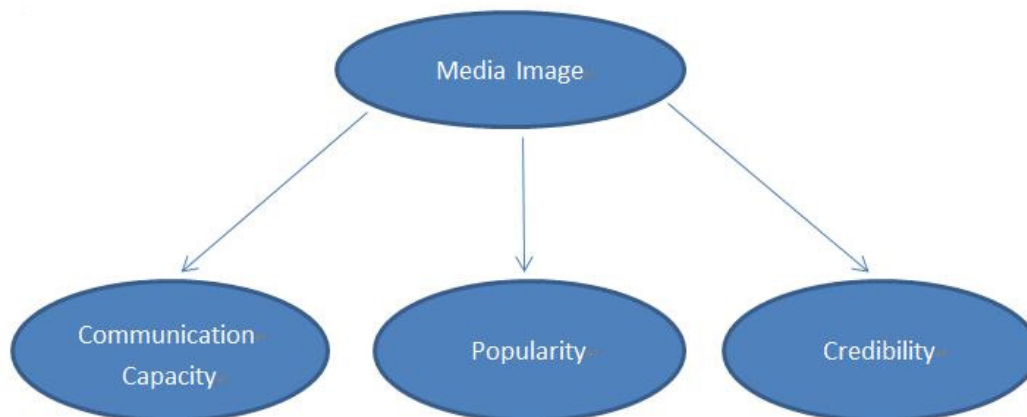


Figure 1. Model of Cognition Dimensions of Media Image

The questionnaire content includes three parts.

The first part is the demographics of the audience and their accepting patterns of foreign media including the gender, age, educational level, location area, overseas experience and income.

The second part is about the media use situation of Chinese audience on foreign media, including the media channels, information categories, belonging country of media, media for accessing hard news, media for accessing entertainment information and so forth, which the questions are designed as following:

- a. Which kind of foreign media (TV, film, radio, newspaper, magazines, social media, portal website or others) do the audiences usually contact with?
- b. Which foreign countries of media (USA and Canada, UK, France, Germany and other developed European countries, Japan and Korea, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand, or others) do the audiences usually contact with?
- c. What kind of information (news, entertainment, sport, culture, custom, finance, local community, or others) do the audiences usually search on foreign media?
- d. Which foreign media (BBC, CNN, Bloomberg, NYT, Al Jazeera, FOX, CBS, NHK, KBS, or other) is the first choice when the audiences want to learn big news?
- e. Which foreign media (BBC, CNN, Bloomberg, NYT, Al Jazeera, FOX, CBS, NHK, KBS, or other) has the most objective news report?
- f. Which foreign media (BBC, CNN, Bloomberg, NYT, Al Jazeera, FOX, CBS, NHK, KBS, or other) has the deepest news report?
- g. What kind of media channels (TV, newspaper and its website, social media, radio, portal website, or others) do the audiences use when accessing foreign hard news?
- h. What kind of media channels (TV, newspaper and its website, social media, radio, portal website, or others) do the audiences use when accessing entertainment information?

The third part is the recognition and evaluation of Chinese audience on foreign media, focusing on three dimensions of communication capacity, popularity and credibility. When designing the questions related to the three dimensions, several evaluation criterions need to be clarified.

According to Zheng et al. [35], Wide Factor (WF), Deep Factor (DF), Strong Factor (SF) and Efficient Factor (EF) are the four factors to constitute the evaluation system of the communication capacity of media. WF refers to the scale and amounts of audiences, DF refers to the amounts of information that audiences actually receive, SF refers to the quality of media content and the degree of the media

content meets the demands of the audiences, and EF refers to the proportion of audiences with high consumption ability and word-of-mouth power that a certain media can reach. The preliminary questions in accordance with the standards can be designed as following:

- a Do you usually read or watch information on foreign media?
- b Is the content of foreign media is in good quality?
- c Can foreign media separate fact and opinion?
- d Do foreign media watch after readers'/viewers' interests?
- e Do foreign media care what audiences think?
- f Will you suggest other people to read or watch foreign media?

According to Yang [36], the popularity of media can be recognized mainly from several factors including brand name, brand logo, propaganda slogan, in which the brand name centers on the visualization and connotation of a brand, the brand logo emphasizes the identification and specificity of a brand, and the propaganda slogan focuses on the positioning and belief of a brand. The preliminary questions in accordance with the standards can be designed as following:

- a Does the brand of foreign media have unique connotation?
- b Is the logo of foreign media concise?
- c Is the logo of foreign media symbolic?
- d Does the propaganda slogan reflect the belief of foreign media well?
- e Is the propaganda slogan of the foreign media infectious?

Based on the Evaluation Index System developed by Gaziano and McGrath [37], the credibility of media contains 12 factors: trustworthiness, currency, bias, fairness, completeness, objectivity, honesty, up-to-date, believability, balance, accuracy, timeliness. The preliminary questions in accordance with the factors can be designed as following:

- a Are the reports of foreign media fair?
- b Are the reports of foreign media accurate?
- c Do foreign media respect people's privacy?
- d Do foreign media concern about the community's well-being?
- e Can the foreign media be trusted?
- f Do foreign media concern more about the public interest rather than about making profits?

The online questionnaire was put on Qualtrics Survey during 17th to 24th June. A snow balling was employed to select samples who were required to answer the questionnaire. 811 respondents joined the survey. To assure the quality of the survey participants in anonymous online survey, respondents whose responses were the same throughout the survey were deleted recommended by Meade and Craig [38]. A final sample of 754 respondents was obtained.

7. Results

7.1. Descriptive Statistics

Among the respondents, those with age between 18 to 30 years old occupied nearly half (45.4%, N=754) of the sample population, and those with age between 31 to 45 years old occupied about one third (37.4%, N=754) of the sample population. There were 365 (48.4%, N=754) male respondents and 389 (51.6%, N=754) female respondents.

The respondents with educational level of bachelor or college graduate degree occupied about two thirds (69.2%, N=754), and respondents with educational level of master or above occupied 27.6% (N=754). Respondents with annual income of 50000 to 150000 RMB occupied nearly

half (48.1%, N=754) of the whole sample population, and respondents with relatively high level of annual income of 150000 RMB and above only occupied 19.1% (N=754). Moreover, respondents without overseas study and work experience occupied more than half (60.3%, N=754) of the whole sample population, and respondents with overseas study and work experience occupied 39.7% (N=754). The demographics of the sample are summarized in Table 1.

SPSS was utilized to check the Cronbach α in order to check the reliability of the factors of the three dimensions. In the research, the Cronbach α of the factors communication capacity, popularity and credibility were separately 0.791, 0.844 and 0.835, which were all good.

Table 1. Sample descriptive statistics of demographic information

Variable	n	%
Age(years)	8	1.1
Below than 18	342	45.4
18-30	282	37.4
31-45	100	13.3
45-60	22	2.9
Above 60		
Gender		
Male	365	48.4
Female	389	51.6
Education		
High school or below	24	3.2
Bachelor or college graduate	522	69.2
Master and above	208	27.6
Annual Income (RMB)		
0-20000	119	15.8
20000-50000	128	17.0
50000-150000	363	48.1
150000-300000	104	13.8
Above 300000	40	5.3
Overseas experience		
Without overseas study and work experience	455	60.3
With overseas study and work experience	299	39.7

N=754

Table 2. Sample descriptive statistics of latent variables

Variable	Mean	SD	Cronbach α
Communication Capacity	3.32	.670	0.791
Frequency			
Good Quality			
Separate fact and opinion			
Car audience interests			
Car audience needs			
Suggest others			
Popularity	3.43	.881	0.844
Unique Connotation			
Logo Concise			
Logo Symbolistic			
Slogan Reflect Belief			
Slogan Infectious			
Credibility	3.41	.717	0.835
Fair			
Accurate			
Respect Privacy			
Care community			
Trust			
Balance public interest and profits			

N=754

According to the descriptive statistical analysis, there were not very higher scores on the three factors of communication capacity ($M=3.32$, $SD=.670$), popularity ($M=3.43$, $SD=.881$), and credibility ($M=3.41$, $SD=.717$). The descriptive statistics of the sample is summarized in Table 2.

In terms of the situation of media usage, most audience accessed to information provided by foreign media through social media (66.4%, $N=754$) and also through portal website (56.5%, $N=754$). Compared with social media and the Internet website, traditional media (television 39.8%, film 38.7%, radio 32.6%, magazine 23.9%, newspaper 21.9%) were not the most commonly used channels for Chinese audience to access to information or entertainment provided by foreign media. Moreover, no matter accessing to hard news or entertainment information provided by foreign media, social media and portal website were both the most common channels that Chinese audiences chose to utilize (hard news: social media 61%, portal website 46.2%, entertainment information: social media 72.7%, portal website 48.4%).

Most of Chinese audience chose media belonging to the United States and Canada (53.6%, $N=754$) firstly rather than Asian media in getting information and entertainment. Thus, the hypothesis 4 is rejected. However, compare with media belonging to European countries (UK 27.3%, France, Germany and other developed European countries 37.4%) and Australia and New Zealand (6%, $N=754$), Chinese audience preferred media belonging to Asian countries (Japan and Korea 45.2%, Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan, 44.6%) to access information and entertainment, but not Singapore (12.2%, $N=754$).

Chinese audience usually accessed to news (67.1%, $N=754$) and entertainment information (57.8%, $N=754$) on foreign media. When Chinese audience wanted to learn big news, well-known media (BBC 49.5%, CNN 44%, NYT 40.6%) belonging to the USA and the UK were always their first choice, which these three famous foreign media were also the most objective media (BBC 36.2%, CNN 25.7%, NYT 32.5%) with deep reports (BBC 35.4%, CNN 26.1%, NYT 32.2%) compared with other foreign media in audiences' mind. The media usage situation of the sample is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Sample descriptive statistics of media usage situation (Multiple Choices)

Variable	n	%
Media Channel		
Television	300	39.8
Film	292	38.7
Radio	246	32.6
Magazine	180	23.9
Newspaper	165	21.9
Social media	501	66.4
Portal website	426	56.5
Other	17	2.3
Hard news Channel		
Television	220	29.2
Radio	187	24.8
Newspaper	321	42.6
Social media	460	61.0
Portal website	348	46.2
Other	31	4.1
Entertainment Channel		
Television	207	27.5
Radio	137	18.2
Newspaper	225	29.8
Social media	548	72.7
Portal website	365	48.4
Other	20	2.7
Countries		
USA and Canada	404	53.6
UK	206	27.3
Other developed European countries	282	37.4
Japan & Korea	341	45.2
Hong Kong & Macao & Taiwan	336	44.6
Singapore	92	12.2
Australia & New Zealand	45	6.0
Others	45	6.0
Information Categories		
News	506	67.1
Entertainment	436	57.8
Sport	316	41.9
Culture	275	36.5
Custom	261	34.6
Business	197	26.1
Community	194	25.7
Other	18	2.4
Big News Channel		
BBC	373	49.5
CNN	332	44.0
Bloomberg	205	27.2

NYT	306	40.6
AI	189	25.1
FOX	140	18.6
CBS	82	10.9
NHK	104	13.8
KBS	66	8.8
Others	87	11.5
Objective		
BBC	273	36.2
CNN	194	25.7
Bloomberg	108	14.3
NYT	245	32.5
AI	109	14.5
FOX	50	6.6
CBS	46	6.1
NHK	61	8.1
KBS	24	3.2
Others	55	7.3
Deep		
BBC	267	35.4
CNN	197	26.1
Bloomberg	87	11.5
NYT	243	32.2
AI	71	9.4
FOX	47	6.2
CBS	34	4.5
NHK	51	6.8
KBS	19	2.5
Others	50	6.6

N=754

7.2. Second-Order Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Mplus was utilized to conduct a second-order confirmatory factor analysis [39] to test the three dimensions that constitute media image. In the first step of the measurement phase, we analyzed all the measurement items of the measurement phase and checked for correlated residuals and cross-loadings, and excluded four items with high residual variances and low factor loadings in two variables. The Cronbach α of the three factors of communication capacity, popularity and credibility are 0.835, 0.844 and 0.794, which are still good. In the second step of the structural phase, we applied the final confirmatory model to test the proposed second-order confirmatory factor model. In the model fit information, the Chi-square value $X^2(62) = 451.589$, the Root Mean

Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = 0.093 < 0.10, the Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = 0.92 > 0.90, and the Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = 0.046 < 0.06, so the model produced in this study reached good data-model fits.

The factor loadings from media image to communication capacity, popularity and credibility are separately 100%, 71% and 93.1% (the factor loading from media image to communication capacity is fixed at 1 by default by Mplus). The two-tailed P value of the three factor loadings are all smaller than 0.001, so that the three factor loadings are all statistically significant, and thus the hypothesis 1, hypothesis 2 and hypothesis 3 are all supported. The second-order factor model is shown in Figure 2.

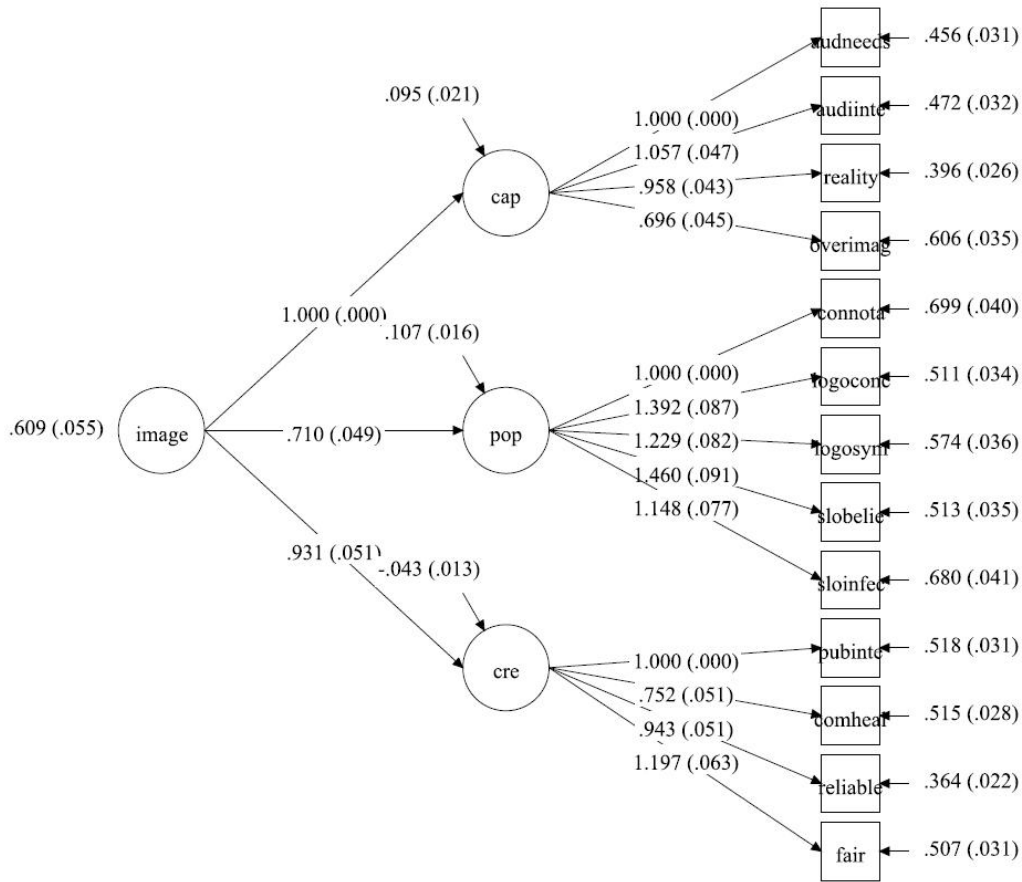


Figure 2. The second-order confirmatory factor model

Table 4. Linear Regression analysis

Variable	β	R ²
Media image		
Education level	-.039	0.001
Income	.049*	0.005
Frequency	.412***	0.161

*p<0.05, **P<0.01, ***P<0.001.

7.3. Regression Analysis

In addition to the analysis of the three dimensions that constitute media image, two other factors of educational level and income of the audiences and their relationships with media image were tested by utilizing linear regression of SPSS. The mean of the three factors of communication capacity, popularity and credibility was used as the value of the factor of media image (M=3.39, SD=.693).

The results shows that the regression of media image on educational level is not statistically significant ($\beta= -.039$, $p=.459>0.5$, $R^2=0.001$). The regression of media image on

income level is statistically significant ($\beta=0.049$, $p=.049<.05$, $R^2=0.005$). However, the R² value (0.005) is relatively too small, which means that only 0.5% of the variation of media image is explained by the variation of income level. Therefore, the hypothesis 6 is rejected and hypothesis 7 cannot be supported well.

The result shows that the regression of media image on frequency of accessing to foreign media is statistically significant ($\beta= .412$, $p=<.001$, $R^2=0.161$), and thus the hypothesis 5 is supported that Chinese audience who access to foreign media with higher frequency have relatively higher cognition and evaluation on the media image of foreign media. The linear regression results are

shown in Table 4.

8. Discussion

The majority of foreign media are restricted in the mainland of the China. Almost all of the audience living in the mainland of China cannot access to the foreign mass media such as television, radio and newspapers except for the foreign website and social media that some Chinese audience could access to through circumvention. Thus, social media and portal website are the most common used channels and paths for Chinese audience to getting information provided by foreign media.

Educational level and income level are not significant factors that influence the audience's evaluation and cognition on the media image of foreign media, although audience with high educational level and income level may have more opportunities to contact with foreign media, which indicates that the evaluation and cognition of media image may not directly influenced by the situation of the audience.

Frequent exposure to foreign media may enhance the favorability of Chinese audience on the media image, which the reason may be that more frequent exposure increases the understanding and familiarity of audience on media and thus lead to the deeper cognition and higher evaluation of the media image.

Compared with media from Asian countries such as Japan and Korea, media from the North America are the first choice when Chinese audiences want to getting information and entertainment, which indicates that although Chinese audience may be more familiar with media from Asian countries due to cultural proximity, they may still choose media from the first big country of the United States. The reason may be that media from North America especially from the USA reports the news and events worldwide and represents the voice of the world to certain extent, while media from Asia focus on local news and events.

However, it does not mean that cultural proximity has no influence on the media selection of Chinese audience, as compared with media from other developed western countries except for the USA, Asian media are still preferred by the Chinese audience. The reason may be that European media are not as much representative as USA media in reporting the events worldwide and cultural proximity has influence on the Chinese audience to make them choose the media in the slimier cultural contexts.

Moreover, when Chinese audiences want to get hard news and big events, they prefer to choose the well-known media such as BBC, CNN and NYT which are objective and deep in their mind, which indicates that the objectiveness and deepness of media would influence its scale and amounts of audiences.

Media image transmission is a media image – building process, which is the interaction process between media

and audience through media content and communication means [40]. The purpose of media image-building is to make the media image deeply rooted in the minds of audience. Media image can be explained and reflected by the three factors of communication capacity, popularity and credibility well and these three factors reflect three different dimensions contribute to the building of media image.

Audience cognition on media image is built on the comprehensive judgment of kinds of media components. In terms of the communication capacity, besides the quality of the content provided by media, whether the media content reflects the interests and needs of audiences is also the core element that influences the communication capacity of media. In terms of the credibility, in addition to the accuracy of the media content and fairness of the reporting attitude, the purpose of making balance between public interest and getting profits is also an important aspect that affects audiences' evaluation on the credibility of media. In terms of popularity, besides the design of the visual image brand logo and slogan, the connotation and personality reflected in the brand logo and slogan should also be paid attention in order to impress the audience.

9. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Firstly, as it is not convenient for most Chinese audience, especially audience living in the mainland China to access to foreign media, the cognition and evaluation of sample population on image of foreign media may not represent the overall impression of the Chinese audience.

Secondly, as there is no detailed measure scales for each dimension especially the factor of communication capacity in previous studies, the items comprising the factors need to be tested and improved in order to make the research more accurate and reliable.

Thirdly, as media in different countries have images with various personalities and styles, the comparison of media image of foreign media among different countries and areas are worthy of study in the future for getting the specific and deep understanding of the components of media image.

Fourthly, as knowledge gap may affect the exposure to foreign media, although in this research the influence of the educational level and income on cognition of media image were not significant, more factors contribute to knowledge gap should be taken into consideration in the future study.

Fifthly, as foreign media will still be restricted in mainland China in a long period in the future, the information or reports provided by Chinese media though agenda setting, which sometimes are in opposite reporting attitude to the information provided by foreign media, may influence the cognition of Chinese audience on

information or news about foreign countries as well as their evaluation on foreign media image. Thus, the future study may take the political situation or nationalism of Chinese audience into consideration.

10. Conclusions

In facing the increasingly discerning tastes of audiences, coupled with the fierce market competition, media need to constantly adjust communication strategies in order to win the audiences' choices. Media image is not the visual impression of the media but also the ability and capacity of the media reflecting in media content and reporting attitude. Communication capacity, popularity and credibility are three main factors contribute to the media image building, in which communication capacity focuses on the quality of media content and its consideration of the audience interests, popularity focuses on the personality and infectant power of the brand and slogan, and credibility focuses on the accuracy, ethics and balance between public interests and making profits. Taking into consideration of the three factors is helpful for foreign media to develop a better strategy in improving media image and further winning more audience.

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