



AUDIENCE STUDY OF MALE PARENTING OBSERVATIONAL REALITY TV SHOWS:

A CASE STUDY OF "DADDY'S HOME"

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this study are 1) Study the socio-economic characteristics of audiences who watched the male parenting observational reality TV show “Daddy’s Home”. 2) Explore the influential relationship between exposure, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of audiences watched the reality TV show “Daddy’s Home” about male parenting.

This study is based on quantitative research. Total 400 Chinese people aged 18-45 who have watched the “Daddy’s Home” reality TV show were selected as the sample. The study also applies various research tools including questionnaires and data analysis by statistics, frequencies, percentages, means, chi-square tests, one-way ANOVA, correlation analysis, and regression analysis.

As for the results of the study: 1) The socio-economic characteristics of the audience of the male parenting observational reality TV show "Daddy's Home", the number of female audiences is higher than male audiences, aged 26-35 years old, usually with a bachelor's degree, are corporate employees, with an average monthly income of 5001-10000 RMB, are married, and have one child in the family. 2) There is no significant difference between the socio-economic characteristics of the audience and the frequency of media exposure. The frequency of audience media exposure positively influences audience perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward male parenting. The level of audience perceptions of male parenting positively influences the level of their attitudes and behaviors. The level of audience attitudes of male parenting positively influences their level of behaviors. The level of audience attitudes toward male parenting mediates the level of perceptions and behaviors.

Keywords: Audience Study, Media Exposure, Observational Reality TV Shows, Male Parenting



1. Introduction

In recent years, as a new type of reality TV show, observation-based reality TV shows are very popular among Chinese audiences. Observational reality TV shows have innovated on the format of the original reality TV shows. The recording of the show is divided into two scenes, the first scene is a 24-hour recording of the daily life of a family. The second scene is an invitation to the observer group to watch the edited clips of their lives in the studio, to observe the clips and to share their experiences. The reality TV show “Daddy's Home” focuses on the topic of male parenting, taking the background of male parenting and family division of labor in contemporary Chinese society as the backdrop, conveying the importance of male parenting and sharing the experience of family division of labor and parenting.

The traditional Chinese concept of division of labor in the family is that the male is mainly responsible for earning money outside the home, while the female stays at home to care for the children. However, with changes in China's population policy, the division of labor in many families has changed, and males have begun to participate in family parenting. However, there is still a stereotype of male parenting in society. As of November 3, 2022, the reality TV show “Daddy's Home Season 1” has accumulated 1.712 billion views. As of August 21, 2023, the reality TV show “Daddy's Home Season 2” had accumulated 2.757 billion views. The show has attracted a lot of audience's attention, especially on China's Weibo and other social media platforms, due to the humor of the guests and the parenting experience shared by parenting experts.

In nowadays Chinese society, the topic of male parenting is of vital importance to Chinese families. Male parenting observational reality TV shows can help to correctly convey the concept of male parenting to the audience, change people's stereotypes of male parenting, and urge males to actively participate in family parenting.

This study investigated the audience who watched the male parenting observational reality TV show “Daddy's Home”. It focused on the socio-economic characteristics of the audience and explored the relationship between the audience's media exposure, perceptions, attitudes and behaviors towards male parenting.

1.1 Research Objectives

- 1) Study the socio-economic characteristics of audiences who watched male parenting observational reality TV show “Daddy's Home”.
- 2) Explore the influential relationship between media exposure, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of audiences watched the reality TV show “Daddy's Home” regarding male parenting.

2. Literature Review

This section presents the concepts applied in this study and information of the reality TV show “Daddy's Home”.



2.1 Concept of Media Exposure

Media exposure refers to the amount and type of media content that an individual is exposed to, directly or indirectly. This may include television shows, movies, social media, news stories, advertisements, etc. (de Vreese & Neijens, 2016). Media can shape an individual's perception of reality, influence their behavior, and provide information and entertainment that have a significant impact on their daily lives. In most media use studies, media exposure is typically measured by asking respondents how many times (usually within a week) they use a particular media (Hollander, 2006).

2.2 Concepts of Audience Perceptions, Audience Attitudes and Audience Behaviors

Audience Perception is how audiences interpret and understand the information presented to them. It is influenced by factors such as credibility, trust, selective exposure, stereotypes, and emotional appeal. Audience attitude is the set of emotions, beliefs, and experiences that audiences have about a particular topic. It affects how audiences perceive information and can influence their behavior toward a topic or brand. Audience behavior is the attitude that influences the audience's behavior towards a brand or category. Audience behavior is influenced by their perceptions, attitudes, and other factors such as demographics, psychographics, and socio-economic status (Harris, 2017).

Audience perception, attitude, and behavior are interrelated concepts. These concepts are intricately related to each other and can influence each other in various ways. Audience attitudes toward a particular topic affect their perception of information related to that topic, which in turn affects their behavior toward that topic (Liao, 2023).

2.3 Concepts of Observational Reality TV Shows and Chinese Family and Parenting

The observational reality TV show is a type of reality TV show. Observational reality TV show refers to the way of setting up an observation room in a reality TV show that combines the behavior of observation with the recording of the real scene, establishing an association between the observer and the observed (Zheng Xianrong and Zhang Xiyu, 2019).

The traditional division of labor in Chinese families is that males are responsible for earning money outside and females are responsible for raising children at home. As a result, the role of males as fathers is relatively absent in the process of parenting. With the change in China's population policy and society's gradual attention to the issue of fatherhood, males have begun to participate in parenting, and more and more males are joining family parenting. At this stage, the whole Chinese social system has begun to try to adjust the mode of parenting and the division of labor in the family.

2.4 Information of “Daddy’s Home” Reality TV Show

“Daddy's Home” is an observational reality TV show launched by Mango TV in 2022, divided into “Daddy's Home Season 1” and “Daddy's Home Season 2”. The show focuses on the parenting phenomenon of



“full-time fathers” and records the daily life of families by observing the “documentary-style video cassette recorder (VCR). The show invites four fathers who take care of their children full-time to start a 100-day-long life.

The show uses a documentary style of filming to follow the daily lives of the males as they take care of their children. The show is filmed with hidden cameras in each room 24 hours a day, and each character is followed by a video camera to ensure the authenticity of the show and the sense of scene. The daily life of the males taking care of their children is the first scene, and the second scene consists of guests invited by the show and each family in the studio, observing the VCRs of the first scene, evaluating the parenting behavior of each family's full-time father, and rationally and objectively providing relevant parenting experience and knowledge to the families present and the audience in front of the TV.

Upon review of these related concepts, it has resulted in the development of the research framework shown in Figure 1 to study the socio-economic characteristics of the audience for the reality TV show “Daddy's Home”, and to explore the relationship between the audience's media exposure, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward male parenting.

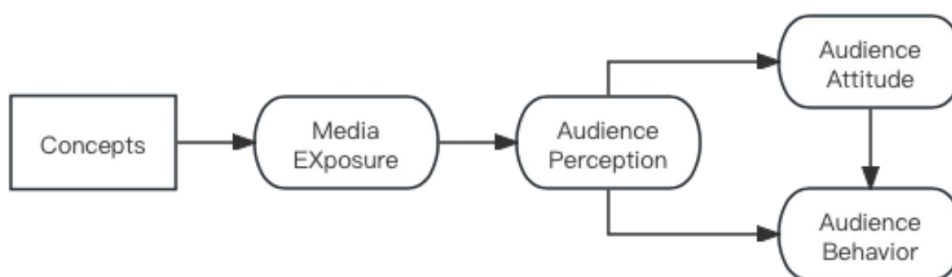


Figure 1 Research Framework

3. Research Methodology

In the process of audience study of male parenting observational reality TV shows, the quantitative research methods were applied and discussed as follows:

3.1 Research Sample

The sample for this study was 400 Chinese people aged 18-45 who had watched the “Daddy's Home” reality TV show.

Since accurate population data is not available for this study, the sample size calculation method chose a formula based on sampling theory in statistics, and inferential statistics developed away from it. Considering the use of a standard confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%, the formula for calculating the sample size

$$is: n = \frac{Z^2 \times p \times (1-p)}{E^2}$$



Of these: 1) Z is the Z-score associated with the chosen confidence level. For a 95% confidence level, the Z-score is approximately 1.96. 2) p is the predicted proportion or the expected proportion of the population with a particular characteristic. If there is no predicted proportion, 0.5 can be used to represent the maximum variability, which will result in maximizing the required sample size. 3) E is the required margin of error. In this study, the margin of error is 0.05 (a 5% margin of error).

Using these values, the sample size is calculated as follows: $n = \frac{1.96^2 \times 0.5 \times (1-0.5)}{0.05^2} = 384.16$.

Therefore, this study uses a random sampling method, so the final sample size is 400.

3.2 Research Instruments

This study adopted the research instrument of a questionnaire. The data collection was carried out in the month of February 2024, and 400 copies were collected. Data were collected on the audience's socio-economic characteristics, media exposure, and perceptions, attitudes, behaviors towards male parenting with screening, multiple choice, and scale questions. To ensure the quality of the study, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire were tested using SPSS software, and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the reliability test was 0.923, with a test result of more than 0.7. The KMO value of the validity test was 0.950, with the test result more than 0.8, and the significance of Bartlett's test of sphericity was less than 0.001. Therefore, the questionnaire has good consistency and stability, and the structure is effective and can be analyzed in the next step.

This study assigns scores to the options of the audience perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors scale questions (1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neither agree nor disagree, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly agree). And graded perception level, attitude level, and behavioral level. (The mean score of 1-1.5 implies a low level. The mean score of 1.6-2.5 implies lower level. The mean score of 2.6-3.5 implies a medium level. The mean score of 3.6-4.5 implies the high level. The mean score of 4.6-5 implies a higher level.)

3.3 Data Analysis

The study adopted SPSS software for data analysis. Descriptive analysis was used to count the number and percentage of socio-economic characteristics of the audience, the frequency of audience media exposure, and the number, percentage, standard deviation of the level of perceptions, attitudes, behaviors of the audience towards male parenting. Chi-square tests were applied to test the relationship between the socio-economic characteristics of the audience and frequency of media exposure. One-way ANOVA was used to test the relationship between media exposure frequencies and audience perceptions, attitudes, behaviors toward male parenting. Correlation Analysis and regression analysis were used to test the relationship between audience perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward male parenting.



4. Research Results

In this section, the results of this study are presented in terms of each of the two research objectives.

4.1 The Results of Research Objective 1

In this study, Objective 1 studied the socio-economic characteristics of the audience watching the reality TV show “Daddy's Home”. The socio-economic characteristics of the audience consisted of seven parts, which were sex, age, education level, occupation, average monthly income, marital status, and number of children. This study employed descriptive analysis using SPSS software to analyze each of them. The results are presented in Figure 2.

It can be found: 1) The female audience is 205 people (51.2%) and male audience is 195 people (48.8%). The number of female audiences is more than male audience. 2) The largest number of the audience is in the age range of 26-35 years, with 108 people (27%). 3) The education level of the audience with a bachelor's degree is the largest with 188 people (47%). 4) The most popular occupation among the audience was a corporate employee with 206 people (51.5%). 5) The average monthly income of the audience is 5001-10000 RMB, there are 150 people (37.4%). 6) The largest number of the audience is married, with 327 people (81.7%). 7) The largest number of the audience had 1 child, there are 157 people (39.3%).

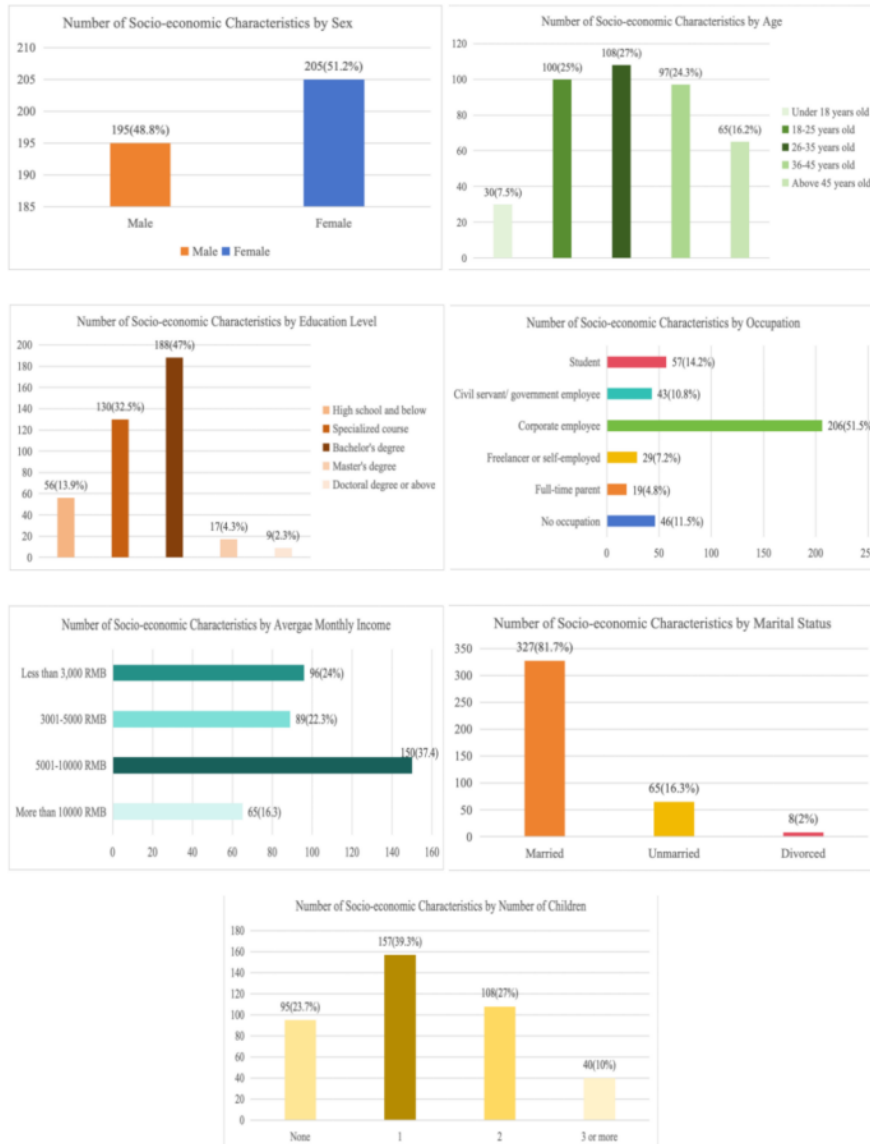


Figure 2 The results of socio-economic characteristics of the audience

4.2 The Results of Research Objective 2

In this study, Objective 2 explored the relationship between media exposure, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of the audience watching the reality TV show “Daddy's Home”. Therefore, the results of Objective 2 are divided into 1) media exposure of audience, 2) the level of audience perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, 3) the relationship between socio-economic characteristics of audience and frequency of media exposure, 4) the relationship between the frequency of media exposure and audience perceptions, attitudes, behaviors, and 5) the relationship between audience perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors. The results of research objective 2 are presented in these five sections.



4.2.1 Media Exposure of Audience

In this study, audience's media exposure was counted and analyzed in three parts: average per day, average weeks and average. They were analyzed separately in this part using descriptive analysis in SPSS software. The results are presented in Figure 3.

It can be found: the largest number of the audience watched the show on average 2-4 hours per day, with 189 people (47.3%). The largest number of the audience watched the show on average 14-28 hours per week, with 197 people (49.3%). The largest number of the audience watched the show on average for 6 months - 1 year, with 190 people (47.5%).

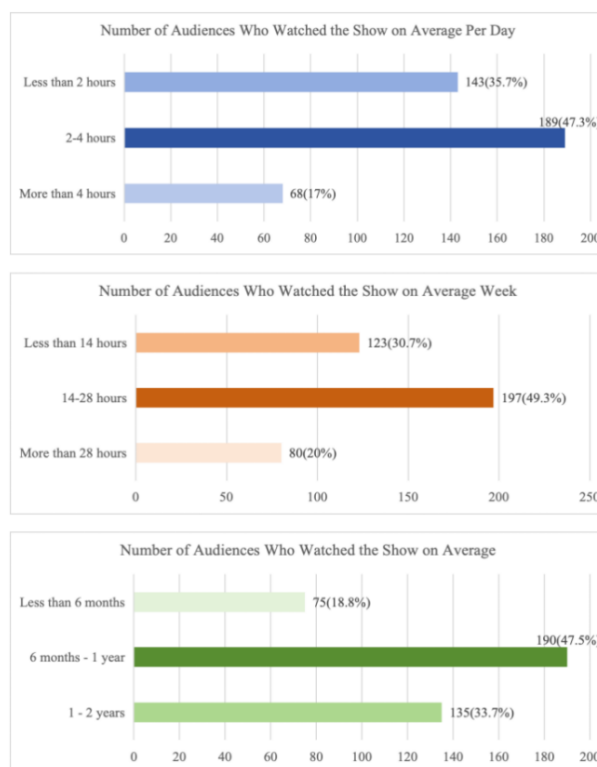


Figure 3 The results of media exposure of the audience

4.2.2 The Level of Audience Perceptions, Attitudes, and Behaviors

In this part, the levels of audience perception, attitude, and behavior were analyzed separately by descriptive analysis in SPSS software. The results are displayed in Table 1.

It can be found, that the mean value of the audience perceptions is 3.81. The mean value of the audience attitudes is 3.95. The mean value of the audience behaviors is 3.76. According to the grade of the level of perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors, it is found that audiences of the reality TV show “Daddy's Home” have a high level of perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards male parenting.



Table 1 The level of audience perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors about male parenting

	Mean	Test Results
Audience Perceptions	3.81	High
Audience Attitudes	3.95	High
Audience Behaviors	3.76	High

4.2.3 The Relationship between Socio-economic Characteristics of Audience and Frequency of Media Exposure

In this part, the relationship between socio-economic characteristics of audience and frequency of media exposure was explored through chi-square tests in SPSS software. The results are displayed in Table 2.

It can be found, that the significance between all the seven socio-economic characteristics of the audience and the frequency of media exposure is more than 0.05. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the socio-economic characteristics of the audience and the frequency of media exposure.

Table 2 Results between audience socio-economic characteristics and frequency of media exposure

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Sig.	Test Results
Socio-economic Characteristics	Frequency of Media Exposure	All > 0.05	No Significant Difference

4.2.4 The Relationship between Frequency of Media Exposure and Audience Perceptions, Attitudes, Behaviors

In this part, the relationship between frequency of media exposure and audience perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors was explored through one-way ANOVA in SPSS software. The results are displayed in Table 3.

It can be found, that the significance between the frequency of media exposure and the audience's perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards male parenting are less than 0.05. Therefore, the frequency of media exposure of the audience positively influences the audience perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors towards male parenting.

Table 3 Results between media exposure and audience perceptions, attitudes, behaviors

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Sig.	Test Results
Frequency of Media Exposure	Audience Perceptions, Attitudes, Behaviors	All < 0.05	Positively Influences



4.2.5 The Relationship between Audience Perceptions, Attitudes and Behaviors

In this part, the relationship between audience perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors was explored through correlation and regressive analysis in SPSS software. The results are displayed in Table 4.

It can be found, that the significance between the audience perceptions and attitudes, behaviors is less than 0.001. The significance between the audience attitudes and behaviors is less than 0.001. The significance between perceptions and behaviors is still less than 0.001 when the audience attitude is used as a mediator variable, perception is used as an independent variable, and behavior is used as a dependent variable. Therefore, the level of the audience perceptions about male parenting positively influences the level of their attitudes and behaviors. The level of audience attitudes toward male parenting positively influences their level of behaviors. The level of audience attitudes towards male parenting has a mediating effect on their level of perceptions and behaviors.

Table 4 Results between audience perceptions, attitudes, behaviors

Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Sig.	Test Results
Audience Perceptions	Audience Attitudes	< 0.001	Positively Influences
Audience Perceptions	Audience Behaviors	< 0.001	Positively Influences
Audience Attitudes	Audience Behaviors	< 0.001	Positively Influences
Audience Perceptions	Audience Behaviors	< 0.001	Audience Attitudes Play a Mediating Role

5. Conclusion and Discussion

This section presents conclusions and discussions through the two research objectives.

5.1 Conclusion and Discussion of Research Objective 1

Conclusion of research objective 1: The socio-economic characteristics of the audience of the male parenting observational reality TV show "Daddy's Home", the number of female audiences is higher than male audiences, aged 26-35 years old, usually with a bachelor's degree, are corporate employees, with an average monthly income of 5001-10000 RMB, are married, and have one child in the family.

Discussion of research objective 1: The socio-economic characteristics of the audience in this study are basically consistent with the results of Baidu Data (2023), which showed that the audience of the reality TV show "Daddy's Home Season 2" is predominantly female, and most of them are aged 20-29 years old. Moreover, the education level of the audience of the reality TV show "Daddy's Home" is generally above a bachelor's degree, which indicates that most of the audience has received higher education, and this group of people is more likely to understand and accept male parenting. In their daily lives, they are more receptive to information, whether it is obtained actively or through interpersonal communication. The audience is generally characterized as corporate



employees with an average monthly income of 5001-10000 RMB, which shows that the audience has stable jobs and higher income. The marital status and the number of children in the audience show that the audience who are married and have one child in the family are the most numerous, so it can be seen that most of the audience have a stable family structure.

5.2 Conclusion and Discussion of Research Objective 2

Conclusion of research objective 2: There is no significant difference between the socio-economic characteristics of the audience and the frequency of media exposure. The frequency of audience media exposure positively influences audience perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors toward male parenting. The level of audience perceptions of male parenting positively influences the level of their attitudes and behaviors. The level of audience attitudes of male parenting positively influences their level of behavior. The level of audience attitudes toward male parenting mediates the level of perceptions and behaviors.

Discussion of research objective 2: The results of this study are consistent with the concept of media exposure, which can shape individuals' perceptions of reality and influence their behavior (de Vreese & Neijens, 2016). Also, similar to Yanshu and Guo's (2014) findings, they found that other types of media content, including reality TV shows, promote certain behaviors in those who are repeatedly exposed to such content. In a study by Mazzeo, Trace, Mitchell and Walker (2007), the authors concluded that televised reality plastic surgery shows may contribute to eating disorder attitudes and behaviors in young women. Audiences who watch the reality TV show "Daddy's Home" repeat the show because of its entertainment and the sharing of parenting experiences, thus changing their perceptions of male parenting, thereby changing their attitudes toward male parenting and reducing stereotypes. Moreover, by repeating the show, audiences also imitate or learn the behavior and mentality of fathers who take care of their children in the show in their daily life.

Liao (2023) presents a consistent view that audiences' attitudes toward a particular topic affect their perception of information related to that topic, which in turn affects their behavior toward that topic. The authors argue that attitudes mediate the relationship between mass media gratification perceptions and altruistic behaviors. Audiences chose to watch reality TV shows not only for entertainment purposes, but also to learn about the attitudes and ways of male parenting that are correctly treated. As a result, audience perceptions of male parenting would change, and thus attitudes toward male parenting would change. Then, under the influence of perception and attitude, the audience behavior would change. When audiences watch the knowledge and insights about male parenting provided in the show, most of them develop new perceptions about male parenting, change their stereotypes about male parenting, and apply the knowledge about parenting and the attitude that males need to join the family's division of parenting that they have learned in the show in their lives or share it with people around them.



Like the point made by Wrench, Goding, Johnson and Attias (2011), audience behavior is influenced by other factors such as their perceptions, attitudes, etc. The results of Apuke's (2016) study suggest that students are influenced by television shows to change their perceptions and attitudes towards dress and hairstyles and to imitate TV shows in their dress code. The results of this study suggest that audience perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors are affected by the frequency of media exposure, which means that they are affected by the show. Combined with the topic of the division of childcare and male parenting in Chinese families at this stage, most Chinese families of the younger generation have a confusing division of parenting due to the dual pressures of family and work, resulting in the absence of males from the division of parenting. The reality TV show "Daddy's Home", which features celebrities with parenting experience and professional parenting experts, can be said to have conveyed to Chinese families the correct division of labor and the importance of males' participation in parenting. Therefore, most of the audiences who watch the show can change their perception of male parenting and the stereotype of male parenting because of the concepts conveyed by the show, and apply the parenting knowledge learned in the show to their lives.

6. Limitations and Suggestions

6.1 Limitations

1) This study adopts a quantitative research method, only relying on the collected data for analysis, which is unable to understand the complexity and deep-seated motivation behind the behavior of the audience watching the reality TV show "Daddy's Home", and is unable to provide an in-depth understanding of the subject of the study.

2) In order to ensure the wide distribution of the research data, the questionnaire is distributed on the Questionnaire Star platform and WeChat, but there is no deliberate distinction between the data of different platforms, so the results of the questionnaire cannot be carefully targeted at different platforms.

6.2 Suggestions

1) Future research can incorporate qualitative methods to further investigate the relationship between exposure, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of audiences who have watched the male parenting observational reality TV show "Daddy's Home". Through content analysis, the study is subdivided into other social media platforms in China, such as WeChat, TikTok, QQ, and Xiaohongshu, etc., and the topics of male parenting on these platforms are analyzed.

2) Conduct one-on-one interviews with audiences of different sexes, ages, and education levels to further understand the relationship between the exposure, perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of those who have watched the reality TV show "Daddy's Home" on male parenting.

3) To focus on the meaning, motivation and cultural background behind the audience's exposure, perception, attitude and behavior. This will provide a broader perspective on the topic of male parenting in the Chinese media and social environment.



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