

# A Comparison of Chinese and Japanese College Promos from the Perspective of Receptive Aesthetics

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## Abstract

For many universities in our country, in the context of the deepening of globalization and the increasingly frequent cultural and educational exchanges, the image propaganda film is like a "business card" of the university, and is a self-plasticizing method for the university to publicize. This paper takes the image propaganda film of universities as the research center, based on the theory of "expectation horizon" of Jauss and the theory of "calling structure" of Izel in the theory of reception aesthetics, and through the comparative study of image propaganda articles of 6 universities in China and Japan, it is proposed that universities The production of image propaganda films must clarify the needs of the audience, control the content and duration; have a sense of innovation, and constantly innovate the presentation method; use the "blank" special effects to maximize the spread of ideas.

## Keywords

College image propaganda film; Acceptance aesthetics; HOrizon of expectation; Calling space.

## 1. University Image Promotion Film

University image propaganda film, also called university image propaganda film, university propaganda film, etc. So far, there has not been a unified standard in the academic circles for the definition of the term "campaigns". Judging from the existing research on the image of relevant colleges and universities, the author believes that college propaganda films are image propaganda films with a certain promotional nature. It uses various methods such as conception, creativity, shooting, post-editing, and packaging to produce a promotional film that can well reflect the overall image of the university. The creation of the university's image propaganda film aims to spread the university's brand image, show the university's faculty, student quality, academic atmosphere, exchanges and cooperation, etc., so that the target audience can form a good first impression of the university's strength in running schools.

## 2. Acceptance of Aesthetic Theory

### 2.1. Jauss' "Horizon of Expectation" Theory

The "Horizon of Expectation" proposed by Jauss is a kind of literary reception activity, which is "the reader's directional and potential aesthetic expectation of the way the work appears before reading. This expectation has a relatively definite space, which defines The possible limits of understanding". [1] (P.4) To put it simply, the "expected horizon" is the understanding and understanding of the artistic characteristics and aesthetic value of the work that the recipient has acquired and accumulated in the past appreciation. The recipient's "expected horizon" is not static. Every new appreciation and practice must be constrained by the original "Horizon of Expectation", but at the same time it is amending and broadening the "Horizon of Expectation." When the same work faces different "expected horizons", it will have completely different reactions and evaluations.

## 2.2. Iser's "Summoning Structure"

Iser believes that there are "meaning blanks" and "uncertainties" in literary works, and there are "vacancies" between the semantic units at all levels; once the text negates the reader's habitual horizon, it will arouse readers' psychology. The "blank" on the above, that is, the negative structure of literary works, has become the basic driving force that stimulates and induces readers to make creative filling and imaginative connection. This is the "calling structure" of the text [2] (P.215). If the reader's enthusiasm for reading is mobilized by the work, they will naturally continue to read. The summoning function of "calling structure" is embodied in two aspects: to stimulate individual readers' desire for creativity; to add to the aesthetic meaning of textual works [3] (P.56).

## 3. Introduction to the Image Propaganda Films of 6 Universities

### 3.1. The 2017 Promotional Video of the University of Tokyo

In the 2017 promotional video of the University of Tokyo, in these 2 minutes and 10 seconds, through the use of split screen means, the traditional single-screen promotional video format was changed to two screens to be played together. The beginning of the video is a split screen with left and right black and white colors. On the screen, a slogan such as "Knowledge 求めるよ知を活かせ" appeared, highlighting the learning atmosphere of the University of Tokyo. After many times of browsing, you will find that the screen on the left mainly shows theoretical research, and the screen on the right mainly shows practical innovation activities, showing that the University of Tokyo is committed to cultivating innovative talents that combine theory and practice, giving people a refreshing experience. Visual experience.

### 3.2. Keio University's 2019 Promotional Video

In Qingda's 2019 promotional film, the school used a wide range of mobile time-lapse photography. Its characteristic is that it can play back the video that was shot and recorded for a long time in a short time. Through time-lapse photography, you can understand and observe some subtle changes in the scene. In just 2 minutes and 14 seconds, the promotional video showed the Hiyoshi Campus, Shonan Fujisawa Campus, Shonan Fujisawa Open Research Forum, Science and Technology Exhibition, Yagami Campus, Shiba Kyoritsu Campus, Shinano Town Campus and The 8 parts of the Sanda campus cover the school's living environment, key subjects, teaching facilities, and after-school activities.

### 3.3. Waseda University promotional film "WHY WASEDA?"

In the promotional film "WHY WASEDA?" for foreign students in the early childhood university, I chose English, the most widely used language in the world, and adopted the form of A&Q (answer and question) to introduce the situation in Tokyo, the situation of early international students, Classroom environment, club activities, social resources, etc. In addition, the whole promotional film is strung together with animation, which is lively and interesting.

### 3.4. Minjiang College Admissions Video in 2018

In Minjiang College's 4 and a half minutes enrollment promotional video in 2018, the promotional video took into account the current popularity of smart phones in the society, and for the first time adopted the vertical screen shooting method. In this promotional video, the school uses a narrator to guide the audience to understand the school's after-school life, subject overview, and faculty, which helps the audience understand the information they need.

### 3.5. Xiamen University Admissions Video in 2018

In the 2018 admissions promotional film "I Love You See You in September", Xiamen University divided its promotional film into three parts, each of which described three aspects. The first

part uses a large number of time-lapse photography lenses to present the pleasant scenery of the four campuses of Xiamen University; the second part is to return to the traditional way of shooting promotional videos, the combination of pictures and text, showing the Xiamen University Six departments, subject characteristics, and school-running results; the third part, the film is accompanied by lively music, which reflects the rich and colorful content of the sub-curricular activities of Xiamen University.

### **3.6. Sun Yat-sen University's 2017 International Student Admissions Video**

CUHK's 2017 international student admissions promotional video lasts 10 minutes and uses the more traditional form of a Chinese admissions promotional video—a commentary-led promotional video. But compared with most of the same type of promotional videos, in this promotional film, CUHK does not blindly explain the university of CUHK. It has included interviews with several international students in the promotional film. From this, we can also learn about the faculty of CUHK, the results of running the school, and the campus environment.

## **4. A comparative Analysis Based on Jaus's "Horizon of Expectation" theory and Iser's "Summoning Structure"**

### **4.1. Appropriate Duration**

Among the six promotional films analyzed above, the control of the time length of the three promotional films in Japan is limited to less than 3 minutes, which is a relatively effective time period. For the other three promotional videos of Chinese universities, the duration of the video is at least 4 and a half minutes, while most of the Chinese admissions videos are more than 7 minutes, and some of the videos are even longer than 10 minutes. As mentioned earlier, the length of the promotional video that most people can accept is 5 minutes. For promotional videos longer than 5 minutes, the effect of their dissemination has decreased.

### **4.2. Appropriate Presentation Methods and Changes in Presentation Methods**

Propaganda films of many domestic colleges and universities have a serious phenomenon of templated narrative methods, which are basically the school's history, geographical environment, teaching staff, campus environment + symphony and blunt narration. The promotional film of Xiamen University uses this kind of template, which lacks story and logic, and many messages do not exceed the audience's "pre-understanding". Although it conveys the information, it is difficult to attract the audience to appreciate it in depth.

The presentation methods of the promotional films of Japanese universities are rich in creativity, and some promotional films have used professional photography techniques. The split screen of Dongda University, the time-lapse photography of Kyungda University, and the question and answer of Waseda University. The use of these techniques reflects the breakthrough in the production of college propaganda films, conforms to the audience's "expected vision" in the way of presentation, and can stimulate the audience's expectations. The awareness of "calling structure" can capture the audience's attention and effectively express the content.

### **4.3. Appropriate content**

Appropriate content requires the promotional film to present the content that the audience is most concerned about to the maximum extent within a limited space. The content presentation of my country's college propaganda films has a high degree of completion. What needs to be improved lies in the focus on the content presented, so as to have the main and the second, so as to better highlight the characteristics.

Japanese colleges and universities are better to be audience-centered in terms of time control and presentation methods; however, in terms of presentation content, many of them use visual

language to convey information, which is too concise and insufficiently explanatory. Such a promotional film is more suitable for audiences with a certain "pre-understanding". For audiences with insufficient background knowledge, it is easy to make it difficult for them to understand the deep narrative.

#### **4.4. Moderate Uncertainty**

There is a certain degree of uncertainty in the creation of the promotional film, that is, "blank", which can be used for the audience to imagine and mobilize the enthusiasm. Dongda has put a lot of effort into the "blank" of the promotional film. Every frame of information in the film is the language of the screen, and there is no narration to promote it. This leaves enough room for the audience to re-create and increase the appeal of the promotional film. .

In contrast, domestic propaganda films cannot maintain a certain degree of uncertainty. What you see is what you get. This is the advantage and disadvantage of domestic propaganda films. Because plain promotional films are difficult to mobilize the enthusiasm of the audience, the audience is prone to become tired of such films.

### **5. Enlightenment to My Country's University Image Propaganda Film**

The creative process of a promotional film is just like literary creation. If a promotional film is not well accepted by the audience, then it cannot be considered as completed. "So the principle of reception aesthetics should not correspond to literature and art in the narrow sense, but should correspond to all 'texts'-symbol codes as information carriers." [4] (P.2001) This article uses Jaus in the field of reception aesthetics. The "Horizon of Expectation" theory and Iser's "Summoning Structure" theory have analyzed and compared the image propaganda films of six universities in China and Japan, and have drawn the following enlightenment:

#### **5.1. Clear Audience Needs, Control Content and Duration**

When making a promotional film, we should clarify the audience of the film. According to the needs of different groups, the filmed promotional film is also more targeted. When considering the audience, we should also pay attention to the issue of controlling the length of the image promo. The image propaganda film of colleges and universities should control the duration to about 5 minutes.

#### **5.2. Have A Sense of Innovation and Continue to Innovate Presentation Methods**

If we just apply the traditional narrative model to the propaganda film, we will propagate the audience in a "speaking style", which will easily cause aesthetic fatigue. Therefore, the design of the image propaganda film should pay attention to the narrative in the content and form, and at the same time appropriately exceed the audience's "expected vision". In terms of presentation methods, more professional shooting techniques and informatization methods should be used for reference. In addition to the audience's "pre-intention", a new visual experience is given to the audience through novel film formats. This requires designers to pay attention to audience research, actively follow up with the audience's ever-changing "expectation horizon", and constantly innovate in form.

#### **5.3. Use Special Effects of "Blank" to Maximize the Effect of Dissemination**

In the "calling structure", a certain text "blank" can arouse the enthusiasm of readers. Readers can participate in the creation of works through imagination. Compared with the template-style propaganda film that is comprehensive in terms of content, propaganda films designed with the awareness of "blank" can cause viewers to actively recreate and reinterpret, so as to better achieve the purpose of propaganda.

Of course, the "blank" of the text is a double-edged sword. If the film sets too much "blank", the audience will be limited, the content will be difficult to understand, and it will be counterproductive. In this regard, when colleges and universities use the effect of "blank", they should clearly identify the target audience, and grasp the degree of use of the film on the basis of full research in order to maximize the effect.

## Acknowledgments

[Fund Project]: 2020 Minjiang University College Student Innovation Training Program Project, project number: S202010395047.

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