

# Does the Popularity of Grand Female Drama Mean Gender Equality in Entertainment Industry?

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**Abstract:** In recent years, more and more gender issues have attracted extensive discussion in China. The popularity of “Little Fresh Meat” and the grand female drama, made many people believe that the environment of gender equality in entertainment industry is improving and the industry in general has a better environment of gender equality. This paper investigated the situation of gender equality in entertainment industry. The results indicated that entertainment industry lack of consciousness of gender equality and female employees in entertainment industry were treated unequally in both aspects of income and work opportunity. In addition, the popularity of hallyu reinforces the situation of gender inequality. Therefore, society, government and individuals should make joint effort to promote gender equality and remove sex discrimination together.

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, more and more gender issues have attracted extensive discussion in China; such as “leftover women”, “straight male cancer”, “anti-sexual harassment”, and so on. It is not difficult to see that, all of this issues have distinct characteristic of feminist movement. Many people believe that there is an increasing trend of the consciousness of gender equality. At the same time, this wave has brought an unprecedented change to the entertainment industry. Female customers are beginning to be seen the key factor for profit. For instance, “Little Fresh Meat” has become the new profit growth point of entertainment enterprises. Beside this, the grand female drama has become the mainstream of Chinese films and television programs. The popularity of grand female drama made many people take these actresses as the representatives of new generation independent women. At the same time, the success of these actresses made public general believes that the environment of gender equality in entertainment industry is improving and the industry in general has a better environment of gender equality.

However, it is interesting that the situation in entertainment industry seems quite different from Chinese society. According to the global gender gap report 2018, China’s situation of gender equality is getting worse. China’s ranking in 2018 is 103, compare to 2017 there was a 3 places fell [1]. Thus, this paper aims to investigate the situation of gender equality in entertainment industry, to identify whether the situation of gender equality is unique in entertainment industry and the reason behind this phenomenon.

## 2. Situation of Gender Equality in Entertainment Industry

To investigate the situation of gender equality in entertainment industry, this research takes the top 10 Chinese entertainment companies (shown as Table 1) listed in “2018 China's Entertainment Firms Ranking” as objects of study. The selected companies cover film, TV series (online drama), animation, video, music, literature, artist brokerage, drama, derivatives, live entertainment, models and other fields. This is one of the most comprehensive content groups covering the content field and

extending the industry chain longitudinally. These companies also actively promote internationalization, which integrate the world's top entertainment creative talents, explore new modes for China's entertainment industry to go overseas. Therefore, these top 10 firms could be the representatives of present Chinese entertainment industry.

Table 1. Introduce of Chinese Top 10 Entertainment Companies

No.	Company	Main Fields
1	Huayi Brothers Media Corporation	Movies Production, TV Drama Production, Artist Management, Cinema Investment, TV Shows Real Scene Tourism Project, New Media, VR Technology and its Entertainment Applications
2	Emperor Entertainment Group	Record Release, Music Copyright, Stage Musical Performance, Artist Management, Multimedia Creation
3	EE-Media	Record Release, TV Drama Production, Movies Production, TV Shows, Artist Management
4	Television Broadcasts Limited	TV Drama Production, TV Channels, Music Entertainment, New Media
5	18 Wenhua	Actor Discovery, Publicity and Public Relations, Drama Promotion, Celebrity Endorsement, Business Development
6	Qianyi Times	Talent Agent, TV Drama Production and Development
7	Enlight Media	Movie and TV Drama Production, Animation Film and Animation, Artist Management, Industrial Investment
8	Huanyu Entertainment	Screenplay, Investment, Production, Issue, Dissemination, Derivative, Talent Agent
9	Hairun Media	TV Drama Production, Talent Agent, Music
10	New Silk Road	Model Agency, Talent Agent, Fashion industry, IT services

Through the analysis of the above samples, it can be identified that unlike the public cognition, gender inequality is widespread in the industry. The main problems can be concluded into the following three aspects.

## 2.1 Entertainment Industry Lacks of Consciousness of Gender Equality

To identify the situation of gender equality of the selected entertainment enterprises, the research takes the corporate social responsibility reports (CSR report) as the main source of research. In recent years, beside the economic benefit, investors more and more pay attention on enterprises' social benefit. Thus, there is an increasing demand on enterprises to publish CSR report. In addition, Chinese government as one of the most important stakeholder highly encourages the improvement of enterprises' CSR initiatives. For instance, first comprehensive CSR report guideline in China was launched in year of 2006 which provided the recommended standards and practices to Chinese enterprises in all industry for references [2]. After that a serious of CSR report guideline has been published. Presently, the latest and the most authoritative guideline is CASS-CSR 3.0. At the same time, gender equality information as one of the component of corporate social responsibility should be published in the CSR reports [3]. Thus, there is reason to believe that the CSR report is the best channel to obtain related information. That is to say, the disclosure of corporate social responsibility reports of these companies would reveal situation in entertainment industry of China. The following

table (Table 2.) presents the overall situation of Chinese leading entertainment enterprises' CSR related information disclosure.

Table 2. Summary of Guideline Application of Chinese Top 10 Entertainment Firms' CSR Reports

No	Company	CSR Report in 2014	CSR Report in 2015	CSR Report in 2016	CSR Report in 2017
1	Huayi Brothers Media Corporation	No Report	No Report	General Standard Disclosures (G4-1, G4-3, G4-3, G4-4, G4-6, G4-15, G4-26, G4-27), Environmental (G4-EN6, G4-EN7, G4-EN9), Labor (G4-LA2, G4-LA10, G4-LA13), Human Rights(G4-HR2), Society (G4-SO2).	General Standard Disclosures (G4-1, G4-3, G4-3, G4-4, G4-6, G4-15, G4-26, G4-27), Environmental (G4-EN6, G4-EN7, G4-EN9), Labor (G4-LA2, G4-LA10, G4-LA13), Human Rights(G4-HR2), Society (G4-SO2).
2	Emperor Entertainment Group	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
3	EE-Media	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
4	Television Broadcasts Limited	Annual Report(G4)	Annual Report(G4)	Annual Report(G4)	Annual Report(G4)
5	18 Wenhua	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
6	Qianyi Times	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
7	Enlight Media	No Report	General Standard Disclosures (G4-3, G4-4, G4-8, G4-20, G4-26, G4-27, G4-34, G4-51), Labor (G4-LA8, G4-LA10), Society (G4-SO2), Product Responsibility (G4-PR6).	General Standard Disclosures (G4-3, G4-4, G4-8, G4-20, G4-26, G4-27, G4-34, G4-51), Labor (G4-LA8, G4-LA10, G4-LA11, G4-LA12), Society(G4-SO2), Product Responsibility (G4-PR6).	General Standard Disclosures (G4-2, G4-3, G4-4, G4-8, G4-20, G4-26, G4-27, G4-34, G4-51), Labor (G4-LA8, G4-LA10, G4-LA11, G4-LA12), Society (G4-SO2), Product Responsibility (G4-PR3, G4-PR6).
8	Huanyu Entertainment	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
9	Hairun Media	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report

10	New Silk Road	No Report	No Report	No Report	No Report
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As shown in the table above, about 70 percent of the top ten entertainment firms in China do not supply independent CSR reports for public. This is a large proportion and the phenomenon displays some issues in this fast developing country. In addition, for those companies with CSR reports, most of them did not release their social responsibilities as the Global Report Initiative (GRI) guidelines. For instance, the content of CSR was shown in the annual reports of TVB which focus on financial fields. The responsibilities on environment, labors, society were not described in these reports. Furthermore, as the top one entertainment firm in China, Huayi Brothers Media Corporation only released two years' CSR reports without GRI guidelines. Many general standards were not disclosed in their reports such as total number of employees, stakeholder groups and governance structure.

Specific analyzing the content of CSR report, it can be concluded that these CSR reports focus on responsibilities for employees and society. Almost every report has mentioned employees' training programs and various activities for employees' career development. However, in specific to see the aspect gender equality, none of selected company has published any related information. It is obvious that, the Chinese entertainment industry in general lack of consciousness of gender equality.

## 2.2 Female Practitioners' Glass Ceiling

Specific analyzing the workplace living environment of this industry, it is clear that there is a glass ceiling for female practitioners. First of all, although women are becoming more independent in society with increasing incomes and social status and more Chinese TV dramas of independent heroine, these entertainment firms still neglect the equal treatment for women and men. For instance, the "2017 China Celebrity Income Ranking" [4] indicated that among the top 100 income celebrities, female celebrities take up only 35. It is clearly that, for the entertainment industry there is a significant income gap between different genders.

In addition, female practitioners also have been treated inequality in the aspect of vocational development. Females are always treated unequally because of their age factor when they seek for working opportunities. In fact, compared with male celebrities, more female celebrities choose to take the responsibilities of looking after family and taking care of kids after they get married rather than continuing their careers.

There is no doubt that in entertainment industry, female employees still do not have equal opportunities and treatment.

## 2.3 "Hallyu" Reinforces Gender Inequality

Korean Wave (Hallyu) as the symbol of Korea, has made a significant achievement around the world. A numerous of huge fans are enthusiastic with Korean Wave especially among Asian countries with analogous cultural background. There is no doubt that Chinese entertainment industry was also significantly affected by Hallyu. Numerous of Korean entertainment shows were introduced to Chinese market with whole models and systems and attracted a great deal of passionate audience and young people in these shows become known widely rapidly. For instance, the show named idol producer in 2018 was a successful example of Korean introducing show which came from a popular program called Produce 101. The entertainment companies pay more attentions to trainees because of this show such as Huayi Brothers and Emperor Entertainment in the top 10 Chinese entertainment company list. Because of hallyu influence, the trainee system, idol culture and fan economy boosted entertainment development in China.

However, the introduction of Korean working mode also reinforces Chinese entertainment industry's gender inequality. Women in Korean society have improved their status but they are still underrepresented in managerial positions in Korean companies. The percentage of Korean women in the board of directors is less than one per cent and it is extremely small which is much below that in the USA and Europe 15% and 17% respectively [5]. The phenomenon of gender issues of hallyu could also influence Chinese entertainment industry's female consciousness [6]. In addition, because of gender stereotyping, women always play a role of sex objects in advertisement of makeup,

perfume, cars or virtual games [7]. This effect of sexual objectifications is direct and damaging. Therefore, the Korean entertainment industry environment would bring negative effects for gender equality implementation.

### 3. Removing the Gender Gap

To remove the gender gap, it requires the joint efforts of the society, the government and individual. Some of the suggestions in this area are:

Firstly, educational system should help individuals establish correct value of gender equality. In educational system, students could be educated to be independent from kindergarten to university. Parents should provide equal educational opportunities for boys and girls. But this will take a long time to strengthen individuals' awareness of gender equality.

Secondly, legislation should be strengthened. Legislation for equal employment opportunities is an urgent demand in China. For example, the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests and the Labor Law should be refined to specify the system of punishment and compensation for sex discrimination in employment. In addition, the training programs and employees' development opportunities should be provided equally for everyone. The Anti-Employment Discrimination Law should be promulgated as soon as possible by government department to establish the legal principles of prohibiting sex discrimination in employment.

Lastly, female employees should face up to reality and change their concepts for self-reliance and self-improvement. In order to constantly improve their high-level practical working ability and comprehensive quality, females should enhance employment competitiveness and skills, strengthen social adaptability and improve employment success rate during occupational interviews. Females could be independent in monetary and mental factors. In result, females could take advantage of women's abilities and complete the transformation from self-awareness to the social identity.

### 4. Conclusion

To sum up, this paper discussed the gender equality issue in the entertainment industry. The CSR reports of top 10 Chinese entertainment firms became the sample for analyzing the phenomenon in real society. The results showed that entertainment industry lack of consciousness of gender equality. For female practitioners, the glass ceiling is universal. Generally speaking, female employees in entertainment industry were treated unequally in both aspects of income and work opportunity. In addition, the popularity of hallyu reinforces gender inequality since Korean idol culture and fan economy influenced Chinese entertainment market deeply including their gender attitudes. Therefore, society, government and individuals should make joint effort to promote gender equality and remove sex discrimination together.

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