



THE INFLUENCE OF EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS ON THE CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOUR OF CHINA'S NEW MAINSTREAM FILM AUDIENCES

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ABSTRACT

In China, almost all the new mainstream films have gained good word-of-mouth and high box office. This paper aimed to find out the effect of external environmental factors and the mediator effect of internal factors on the consumption behavior of the new mainstream movie audiences. Based on quantitative research method, this paper adopted questionnaire survey to collect data. A total of 444 valid questionnaires were collected. AMOS software was used for structural equation model test of hypothesis. Respondents had to have experience watching new mainstream Chinese films, and the author relied on the Film and Television of Communication University and the Film Association to distribute the questionnaire.

It was found that cultural values and internal psychological factors had a direct positive impact on ticket buying behavior. When internal psychological factors were used as mediating variables, marketing mix, cultural values, group pressure and media information could all have a positive impact on ticket buying behavior. Therefore, in order to further improve the box office, filmmakers should pay special attention to the formulation of industrial policies to improve the recognition of cultural values, and the society should strengthen art education to improve the

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audience's aesthetic appreciation.

Keywords: external environmental factors, consumption behavior, china's new mainstream films audiences.

INTRODUCTION

Since 2010, China's new mainstream films have gradually become an important genre among all kinds of films, and have achieved high box office and good public praise. Box office returns, however, are a risky business, with only three or four out of ten films breaking even. Combing through box-office data from the past decade, the authors found that almost all new mainstream films were profitable. In the process of literature review, it can be found that the concept of new mainstream film in China was first put forward by Ning Ma in 2000: the real starting point of new mainstream film. (Ning, 1999 p. 3). As a popular film genre with high box office, new mainstream films have not been studied on the influencing factors of their consumption behavior. This paper will find out the factors influencing the high box office of new mainstream films in China from the perspective of audience consumption behavior. So as to provide advice for the next investment direction of film investors, so that they can get the maximum profit.

RESAERCH OBJECTIVES

1. To explore the external environmental factor on the ticket buying behavior of China's new mainstream films.
2. To study the external environmental factor on behavior of buying ticket through audience internal factor.
3. To study the degree of influence of various factors on audience's ticket buying behavior.



CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In the process of consumer behavior research, the academic field has put forward different theoretical models to explain consumer buying behavior. This paper takes Schiffman and Canuk model as the main model, and refer to Kotler model and Howard and Shays model to establish the basic theoretical research framework. This framework consists of three parts: external environmental factors, internal psychological factors and consumer behavior, which constitute independent variables, mediator variables and dependent variables respectively.

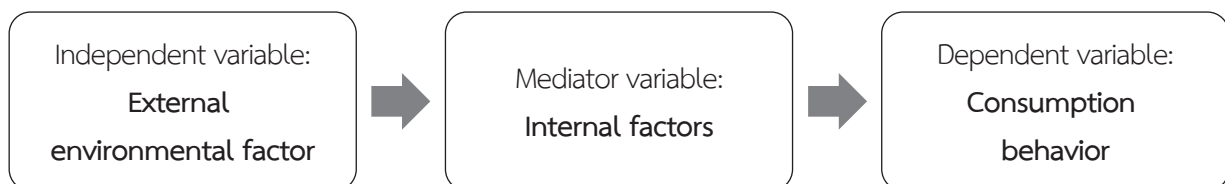


Figure 1. Main concept to modify for conceptual framework

Although the theoretical framework of consumer behavior is almost as shown in the figure above, different researchers have different sub-variables for movie ticket buying behavior. The most representative scholar to study the factors influencing box office in the world is Litman from the United States. In the article "prediction of film economic success: based on the experience of people in the 1980s", he attributed the main influencing factors to three major factors including creativity, distribution and marketing. (Litman, 1989, pp. 35-36) Gilad Mishne and Natalie Glance noticed the guiding effect of the rise of the Internet and new media on public opinion .After obtaining the audience's evaluation of the film through micro-blog, the empirical analysis method is used to find that the quantity of evaluation has a far greater impact on the box office than the quality of evaluation. (Gilad, & Natalie, 2006, pp. 2-3) Justin connor pointed out that the economic value of cultural products mainly depends on the amount of



cultural value they carry. For the film industry, its box office revenue depends on the spiritual value of the film itself and the quality of cultural connotation. Wenbin Zhang and Steven Skiena note that exposure has a positive impact on the box office. They believe that only by letting the audience know the information about a certain film can the audience's interest be aroused, especially the tidbits, posters and trailers related to the film's main creative team and the story. (Wenbin, & Steven, 2009, pp. 51-53) In the process of reading literature, the author found that there are as many as 13 kinds of film type common in the west, different influencing factors of different types of box office films. Combined with the changes of audience culture, consumers' tastes and preferences, different types of audiences have different understandings in the same film. As a result, the research conclusions of scholars on the influence of film types on box office are different and difficult to be unified. In addition, through literature review of journal articles including (Shan, 2019, pp. 40; Nannan, 2017, pp. 33-34; Liyu, 2013, p. 53; Xiaoping, 2016, p. 61; Hongdi, 2015, p. 6; Xuguang, 2017, pp. 13-21). The research framework of is obtained.

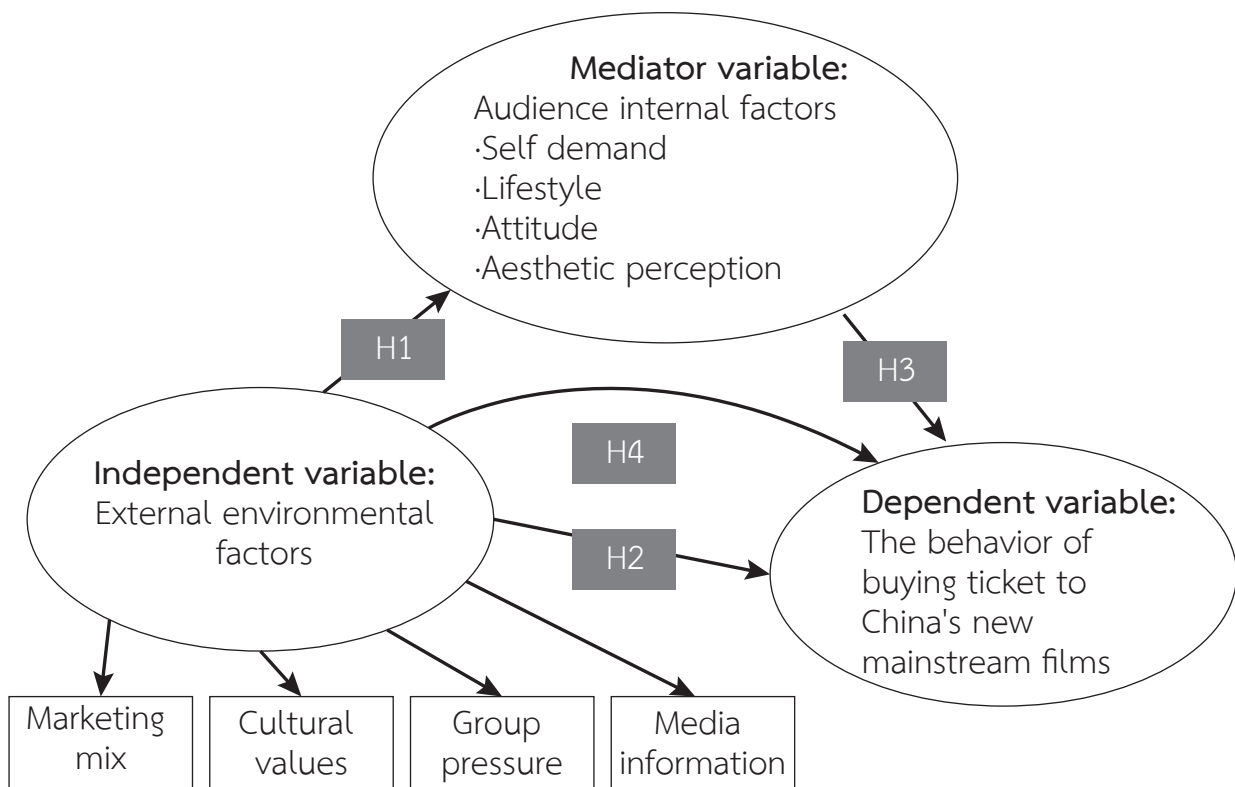


Figure 2. Conceptual framework from original study

Source: Designed by the author, the following will be represented by abbreviations in parentheses.

This paper proposes the following hypothesis 1) Assumptions about independent variables and mediator variables: Marketing mix, Cultural values, Group pressure, Media information have a positive impact on the audience's internal factors. 2) Assumptions about independent variables and dependent variables: Marketing mix, Cultural values, Group pressure, and Media information has a positive impact on ticket buying behavior. 3) Assumptions about mediator variables and dependent variables: Audience's internal factors have an impact on the ticket buying behavior. 4) Assumptions about mediator effect: Marketing mix, Cultural factors, Social pressure, and Media information has a positive impact on ticket buying behavior through audience's internal factors.



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Population and sample size

The population for the study is for all Chinese audiences who like watching movies. Only the audiences who often go to the cinema can make a correct judgment and evaluation on the new mainstream films in China more objectively. According to the 2021 China film market report, the country's mainstream movie-goers made 11.67 million visits in 2021. (China film bureau, Online, 2021) China has a population of 1.4 billion, which is too large for the data collection of this study. In this paper, the Cochran formula is chosen for research. According to the formula, the sample number is 384.

Research tool and quality

Likert's scale was adopted to set five options from "totally disagree" to "totally agree", and a score of 1 to 5 was given to measure. 30 pretest questionnaires were distributed and recovered through the Questionnaire star APP. The audience of Chinese new mainstream films living in Taiyuan, Shanxi Province is selected as the research object. Because Taiyuan can represent most of China's provincial capitals. The respondents are limited to the consumers who like movies and have watched movies in the cinema in the past year. A total of 502 questionnaires were issued, 58 invalid questionnaires were removed, and a total of 444 valid questionnaires were collected.

Data analysis

This chapter mainly studies hypothesis testing. On the basis of questionnaire recovery, SPSS23.00 was used to conduct descriptive statistics, Variance analysis, reliability test, exploratory factor analysis and correlation analysis for each variable. The confirmatory factor analysis was performed using AMOS and the hypotheses were tested using structural equations.



RESEARCH RESULTS

Structural equation model

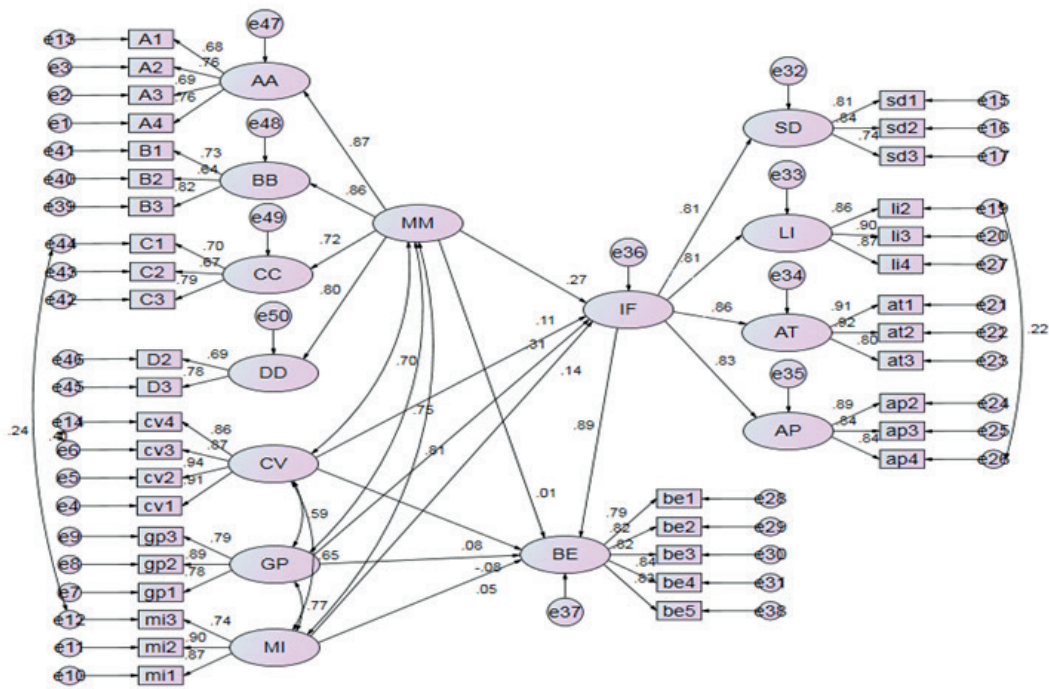


Figure 3. Structural of equation model of fitting degree index

Table 1. Model parameters of data analysis

			Nonstandard parameter	S.E.	Standard parameters	C.R.	<i>p</i>
IF	<---	MM	0.424	0.169	0.274	2.515	0.012*
IF	<---	CV	0.119	0.067	0.110	1.776	0.076
IF	<---	GP	0.343	0.091	0.308	3.771	0.000***
IF	<---	MI	0.143	0.098	0.135	2.548	0.011*
BE	<---	MI	0.048	0.064	0.053	0.748	0.454
BE	<---	GP	-0.071	0.06	-0.075	-1.182	0.237
BE	<---	CV	0.074	0.044	0.081	3.161	0.000***
BE	<---	MM	0.01	0.109	0.008	0.094	0.925



Table 1. (Contitued)

			Nonstandard parameter	S.E.	Standard parameters	C.R.	<i>p</i>
BE	<---	IF	0.753	0.053	0.887	14.336	0.000***
SD	<---	IF	0.712	0.046	0.806	15.474	0.000***
AT	<---	IF	0.775	0.04	0.857	19.296	0.000***
AP	<---	IF	0.912	0.042	0.833	21.549	0.000***
LI	<---	IF	1		0.805		

* $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$

As can be seen from the table

1. Marketing mix, Group pressure and Media information all had significant influence on internal factors ($p < .05$), with regression coefficients of 0.274, 0.308 and 0.135, respectively; Culture value has a weak influence on internal factors, only reaching the significance level of .001.

2. Culture value and internal factors had significant influence on buying ticket behavior ($p < .05$). The regression coefficient was 0.081 and 0.887, while Marketing mix, Group pressure and Media information had no significant influence on BE ($p > .05$).

3. Marketing mix, culture values, group pressure, media information, self-demand, lifestyle, attitude, aesthetic perception and buying ticket behavior, all the variables reached the significance level of .05, indicating that they all made significant contributions to the model.



Table 2. Bootstrap of mediating effect analysis

The path	Effect	Effect estimates	90% confidence interval		p	Judgment
			The path	The path		
MM-IF-BE	Total	0.251	0.074	0.403	0.021	Complete mediation model
	Direct	0.008	-0.161	0.144	0.985	
	Indirect	0.243	0.145	0.369	0.001	
CV -IF-BE	Total	0.178	0.076	0.268	0.004	Complete mediation model
	Direct	0.081	-0.008	0.179	0.134	
	Indirect	0.097	0.004	0.193	0.084	
GP -IF-BE	Total	0.198	0.061	0.333	0.024	Complete mediation model
	Direct	-0.075	-0.228	0.057	0.298	
	Indirect	0.273	0.182	0.399	0.000	
MI-IF-BE	Total	0.173	0.036	0.325	0.040	Complete mediation model
	Direct	0.053	-0.072	0.212	0.477	
	Indirect	0.120	0.008	0.226	0.078	

The Bootstrap analysis results showed that the 90% confidence interval of indirect effects did not include 0, indicating the existence of indirect effects. The 90% confidence interval for direct effects includes 0, indicating that direct effects do not exist. Indirect effects exist and direct effects do not exist, indicating a complete mediation model in this study.

1. As external environmental, marketing mix, group pressure and media information have a positive impact on internal psychological factors. Cultural values and internal psychological factors have a direct positive impact on ticket buying behavior.

2. When internal psychological factors are used as mediating variables, marketing mix, cultural values, group pressure and media information all have a positive impact on ticket purchasing behavior.



3. According to the regression coefficient, indicating that group pressure has the greatest impact on individual psychological factors in the external environment, followed by marketing mix and media information. Cultural values and internal psychological factors have a direct positive impact on ticket buying behavior, and the regression coefficient is 0.081 and 0.887 respectively, indicating that internal psychological factors have the greatest impact on ticket buying behavior. When internal psychological factors are used as mediating variables, the influence of audience attitude as a mediating variable is the largest.

DISCUSSION

China's new mainstream films have excellent internal and external qualities. The characters portrayed in the films are different from the perfect images in the previous theme films, but choose a new human perspective to interpret the values and mainstream spirit of the theme films. Both its excellent production quality and its firm collectivism and patriotism are the core selling points of differentiation from other theme films.

1. According to the research results, cultural values are the only environmental factor that directly affects the audience's ticket buying behavior, so it is very important to create an identity concept of cultural values. In the future, new mainstream films should continue to build Bridges between mainstream values and the audience, so that the audience can gain a sense of honor and mission from the exquisite and closed story experience. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen the implementation of film industry policies and improve their effectiveness.

Many countries in the world guide audience values through film industry policies. In Hollywood of America, movies are not pure entertainment as some people understand, but "national propaganda". In a memo to the White House in the 1920s, the motion picture association of America made it clear: "movies can be the best way to conduct national propaganda at a



minimal or even zero cost. (Jinghua, 2004, p. 11) In Bollywood of India, India's film industry has long been a strength as a powerhouse producing more than 1,000 films a year. (Mihir, 2018, p. 39) In Britain, France, Japan and other countries also spare no effort to promote the development of cultural industry through government plans. Since 1997, Britain has made the development of creative industries a national strategy. In the 1990s, the Japanese government put forward the slogan of "Anime diplomacy" and quickly gained a leading position in the global market in the field of anime mainly consumed by teenagers, which greatly improving the image of Japan. (Dan, 2015, p. 87) The film Industry Promotion Law, the first law on the film industry, was enacted in 2017, which should be taken as an opportunity to enhance the effectiveness of film industry policies. In the process of formulating film industry policies, we should start from the feasibility of policy implementation, clarify the specific content of the policy and strengthen the implementation of the policy.

2. According to the data analysis, aesthetic perception, as one of the mediating factors, is an important psychological factor that affects the audience's behavioral intention to purchase tickets. Jauss, one of the researchers of reception aesthetics, put forward the concept of "horizon of expectation" in reception aesthetics. "Horizon of expectations" is a kind of literature acceptance activity, which is "readers' directional and potential aesthetic expectation of works before reading and understanding, and this expectation has a relatively certain space. (Jauss, 1987, p. 155) The choice of such grand themes does conform to the cultural genes and value appeals of the new mainstream films. However, whether such films can continue to bring aesthetic expectations and fresh experiences to the audience, will largely determine the development trend of new mainstream films in the future.

Wolfgang Iser also believes that the summoning structure is the essential feature of any text. The more uncertainty and white space there are in the text, the richer the meaning and connotation given by the text



will be. (Wolfgong, 1969, p. 11) Only when the reader's reading activity is given play can the reader be attracted by the work. So, readers are encouraged to keep up with the author's thinking and adjust their aesthetic expectations accordingly, so that they can grow in reading, and finally the work is sublimated, and the intrinsic meaning and artistic value of the text can be realized. However, if the text inserts too much white space, beyond the reader's "horizon of expectation" wild, the reader feels difficult to grasp, will end the reading of the work. Therefore, the author must lay appropriate "blanks" and "uncertainties" within the scope of satisfying the reader's "horizon of expectations". The movie-going needs of moviegoers are diversified. Therefore, for the new mainstream films in China, it is necessary to strengthen the grasp of the movie-going psychology in the production process. To stimulate the consumption demand and increase the vitality of film consumption by satisfying the needs of different film audience.

3. Through the empirical research results, it can be found that the product, price, channel and promotion in marketing will influence the ticket buying behavior of the audience through their psychological factors, and the product is the sub-factor with the highest degree of influence. In 1960, McCarthy, an American marketing expert E. J. Professor Macarthy creatively put forward the famous 4P marketing mix theory, namely Product, Price, Place and Promotion. (William, 2004, p. 97) According to the research results, the quality of the product is the most important thing for the audience in the film marketing. Audiences have high requirements on "plot content", "audiovisual technology", "actor selection" and "genre degree". In the future, new mainstream films in China should first continue the new changes presented by new mainstream films in narration, that is, the unification of individual value and macro consciousness should be reflected, it also reflects the harmonious relationship between the state and the individual, which makes the narration of the new mainstream film have humanistic concern and make the audience obtain some illusory sense of heroism and achievement through the film narration. Combined with the questionnaire



on the data analysis results can be found on the level of marketing, marketing strategy matrix mean value of 3.7, and the score is relatively uniform, visible "film narrative and audio-visual", "promotion", "the ticket price", "place" marketing is to the audience to watch the new mainstream Chinese film a larger impact on behavior choice. Therefore, it is suggested that China's new mainstream films in the future can be as follows: First, based on the film product itself, improve the film quality. Secondly, integrate marketing tools to improve the communication effect. Whether through traditional marketing methods or online communication using Internet technology, we should give full consideration to the actual situation of film products and carry out accurate marketing in combination with the positioning of films and target audiences. At last. Develop IP industry chain, so that the development of film products from scripts to derivatives can achieve revenue, to form a more loyal fan group to contribute to the film IP consumption.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation in research in use

1. Researchers find out the key factors influencing China's new mainstream box office in this paper and fill in some gaps in the study of film consumption behavior. Filmmakers should pay special attention to the formulation of industrial policies to improve the recognition of cultural values, and the society should strengthen art education to improve the audience's aesthetic appreciation.

2. Suggestions can be provided for the next investment direction, so as to maximize the profits of film investors and promote the prosperity of film industry. New mainstream Chinese films remain one of the genres filmmakers can invest in.

Recommendations in research in future

1. In terms of influencing factors of audience behavior, researchers



can compare the influencing factors of the behavior of new mainstream movie audiences in China with those of other types of movies.

2. The future research on the influencing factors of ticket buying behavior of new mainstream films in China can focus on the audience's internal psychological factors, and separate independent variables of self demand, lifestyle, attitude and aesthetic perception can be incorporated into the structural equation model.

3. The film industry has been greatly affected by the global spread of COVID-19, with cinemas sometimes closed and audiences' ticketing behavior affected by the epidemic prevention and control policies. Future research can focus on online film screening according to the actual situation of the latest film industry.

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