

An Empirical Study of the Marketing and Word-of-Mouth Phenomenon of Chinese Audience Animated Movies

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ABSTRACT. *as a core part of the cultural industry, the film industry has a great positive externality on the economy, and also occupies an increasingly important position in the national economy. Based on the collection of marketing data of Chinese animated films from 2017 to 2018, this paper conducts an empirical study, assuming that marketing and word of mouth are the two core variables, and analyzes the current acceptance of Chinese audiences to animated films from 2017 to 2018. Conclusion: as the marketing of China's animation film to make up for the shortcomings, college students also need to formulate the development strategy of domestic animation film audience group, and make clear that the middle-aged group with higher education as an important market target group of domestic animation film.*

KEYWORDS: *Audience, Animated movies, Marketing, Word of mouth*

1. Introduction

The basic data of this paper are collected from the special research on cultural consumption of Peking University, and the questionnaire survey on the content of animated films in 2017 and 2018 is sorted out. The respondents were mainly composed of Beijing residents, university students studying in Beijing and migrant workers in Beijing[1]. The specific distribution of the age of the respondents shows that the sample size of the age group of “> 50 years old” is small, which is omitted in the following analysis. In the specific analysis, we divided the respondents into three age groups: <19 years old, 19-30 years old, and 41-50 years old for data presentation and analysis.

In the animation film part of the questionnaire, 22 Chinese and foreign animation films released in 2017 and 2018 were selected, and questions were asked about their acceptance. In the questionnaire, 5 options were set for each animation film, “I have never heard of it,” “I have heard of it, but I have not seen it,” “I have seen it, but I don't think it is good,” and “I have seen it, but I think it is good”. During the study, the score of the 5-degree scale for each movie was changed into the score value of

the two measurement variables of marketing and “word of mouth”, and the score value of marketing and “word of mouth” were obtained in the closed area of [0,2]. Marketing measures whether the audience knows and watches the film, which represents the marketing promotion and promotion degree of the film, that is, whether the film marketing is successful or not.[2] The word of mouth, on the other hand, represents the overall evaluation of the film by the audience, and reflects the overall quality of the animated film. The following three assumptions are made:

Hypothesis 1: the marketing effect and word-of-mouth evaluation of animated films have nothing to do with audience gender. People of different genders may pay different attention to the oral signs and aesthetic orientation. Here, we will respectively investigate the marketing effect and word-of-mouth evaluation of animated films on men and women, so as to explore the similarities and differences between the behavioral preferences of male and female audiences.

Hypothesis 2: the marketing effect and word-of-mouth evaluation of animated films are related to the age of the audience. There are great differences in knowledge cultivation and social experience among different age groups, as well as their cultural tastes and preferences. We will examine the marketing effect and word-of-mouth evaluation of animated films for different age groups.

Hypothesis 3: the marketing effect and word-of-mouth evaluation of animated films are related to the audience identity. The difference of educational background and employment status will have a certain degree of influence on the watching behavior and aesthetic orientation of animated films. This study divides the audience into three groups based on the two indicators of education background and employment: “university a”, “practitioners with a college degree or below” and “practitioners with a college degree or above”.

2. Data Presentation and Feature Analysis

2.1 Overall Characteristics

First, we compared the marketing and word-of-mouth scores of 22 animated films in this survey with their actual box office results.[3] From the direct presentation of the marketing, word-of-mouth score and box office of the animated films in each department, the actual box office of the animated films is consistent with the overall score of marketing and word-of-mouth obtained in this survey. According to Pearson's correlation test, the marketing scores and word-of-mouth scores of the two years' research data were highly correlated with the actual box office (see table 1).

Table 1 Correlation between Marketing, Word-of-Mouth and Box Office in 2018

		box office	Marketing mean	Word of mouth
box office	Person	1	0.855**	0.879**

	correlation Distinctiveness N	11	0.001 11	0.00 11
Marketing mean	Person correlation Distinctiveness N	0.855** 0.001 11	1 11	0.899** 0.000 11
Word of mouth	Person correlation Distinctiveness N	0.878** 0.000 11	0.899** 0.000 11	1 11

2.1.1 Marketing

In 2018, the boxes of domestic animation films were significantly longer, with a certain increase in the overall level. The minimum value was also higher than 0.4, the first quartile was about 0.5, the median was about 0.6, the third quartile was about 0.75, the maximum value was more than 0.85, and the overall span reached about 0.45. This shows that the marketing effect of domestic films in different groups has appeared a certain degree of differentiation. Different from the changes in the box length and overall level improvement of domestic animation films, the marketing of imported animation films has completely opposite changes. The minimum value and the first quartile were all about 0.85, the median was about 0.95, the third quartile and the maximum value were both about 1.05 and 1.10, and the overall span was reduced to about 0.2. It can be seen that the differentiation degree of propaganda of imported animated films among different groups of people becomes smaller, and the overall level drops to a large extent.[4]

2.1.2 Word of Mouth

In 2018, the boxes of domestic animated films were also significantly longer, but the overall level was somewhat lower. The minimum value is about 0.87, the first quartile is about 0.88, the median is about 1.0, the third quartile is about 1.03, and the maximum value is about 1.08. The overall span exceeds 0.2, which is four times that of 2017. This shows that domestic animation film in different populations of reputation evaluation appeared a certain degree of differentiation, but different from imported animation film, domestic animation film in the area of low dispersion degree is much higher than the high partition, this shows that domestic animation film snobs than supporters in the audience, the quality of the domestic animation film remains to be improved. In terms of imported animation films, the minimum and first quartile of public praise are both around 1.15, with the median around 1.28. The third quartile is the same as the maximum value, which is close to 1.40. On the one hand, the box becomes shorter, that is, the overall span of the word of mouth evaluation is reduced; On the other hand, the overall level has declined. However, the imported animated films still maintain the characteristics of high partition and high degree of differentiation.

2.2 Audience Differences

Considering the difference between the audience gender and the score of the animated films in the past two years, the gender factor is very weak in the marketing and word-of-mouth marketing of the animated films (see table 2). Only in terms of the marketing of domestic animated films in 2018 and the word-of-mouth of imported animated films in 2018, the female audience gives a slightly higher score than the male audience. In general, the gender difference in the acceptance of animated films is not obvious, which to some extent indicates that whether imported or domestic animated films, from topic selection to marketing, gender is not considered as a factor in the focus market.

Table 2 Correlation Test Between Gender and Word-of-Mouth in Domestic Animated Movies in 2018

	value	df	Progressive Sig.
Person chi-square	59.628	50	0.166
Likelihood ratio	71.122	50	0.027
Linear and linear combinations	11.970	1	0.001
Valid case N	876		

2.3 The Age

2.3.1 Marketing

There is a negative correlation between the score of imported animated films and the age, that is, the marketing effect decreases with the increase of the age of the audience. Domestic animated films show the opposite trend, that is, with the increase of the age of the audience, the marketing effect also increases, but the degree of differentiation is not as big as imported animated films. The above data show that the younger the group is, the more attention they pay to overseas culture, while the younger group pays less attention to domestic animated films than the older group. On the one hand, this reflects the subjective preference of the audience; on the other hand, it also objectively shows that the marketing methods of domestic animation films need to be improved to win the attention of the young audience.

2.3.2 Word of Mouth

There is a negative correlation between the word-of-mouth value of imported animated films and the age of the audience, which indicates that the younger the group is, the higher the acceptance of imported animated films will be. In general, people in the older age group have lower ratings for animated films, and they are more critical of films as they grow older. On the one hand, the rich life experience may make people with higher education more strict. On the other hand, it may also be the result of today's animation films that deliberately cater to the tastes of young audiences.

3. Discuss

First, marketing is a major weakness of domestic animation films. The average box office revenue of imported animated films in our data is almost 2 times higher than that of domestic animated films. The huge gap in the box office shows the absolute strong position of imported animated films in the market operation, and also shows the great weakness of domestic animated films. If the marketing strategy can be effectively supplemented and the quality of the film is steadily improved, the box office of domestic animated films will usher in a stable growth period of box office.

Second, as far as the characteristics of the audience are concerned, identity and age have little influence on the acceptance of animated films, while gender has little influence. Considering the current development of domestic animation, gender should not be considered too much in the process of animation film creation and market operation.

Third, the audience group with high age and higher education level should be regarded as an important target audience of domestic animation films. This group is the most critical to the quality of the content of animated films. Although they are critical, they are relatively fair in the evaluation of Chinese and foreign animated films. Therefore, solid improvement of quality and improvement of marketing methods, especially the borrowing of traditional marketing methods for the audience of high age groups, are the direction of efforts of domestic animation films.

References

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