The Rise of China: A Study on the Use and Satisfaction of Domestic Animation Series—— Take the domestic animated films of myth series as an example

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Abstract: Chinese animation films have been hotly debated in that their quality has improved and the market has expanded. Based on the theory of "Use and Satisfaction", this paper takes the audience of domestic animated films of myth series as the research object, and conducts research through a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews. It is found that the satisfaction degree of the audience's entertainment needs, social needs, emotional needs and cultural identity needs is positively correlated with the audience's tendency to watch the follow-up.

Keywords: Use and Satisfaction, Chinese animation films, audience research

1 Introduction

In 2022, the box office exceeded 407 million, ranking second in mainland animation. New Gods: Yang Jian has received strong attention and numerous praises from the audience since its release. In recent years, Chinese animation films is developing rapidly and have made remarkable achievements. A number of animated films such as Nezha and Legend of Deification have been launched continuously, which have become hot spots nowadays. Many contents of national culture contain the cultural symbols and elements of China's traditional culture, which enrich the imagination and creativity of Chinese culture. In addition, there are some Chinese animation films that have been loved by the audience through ingenious plot design and gorgeous and smooth art design, and have won the support of a large number of fans.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Literature review of theoretical research on Use and Satisfaction

E Katz first put forward the theory of Use and Satisfaction in his book Personal Use of Mass Communication. He summarized the media contact behavior as a causal chain process of "social factors + psychological factors → media expectation → media contact → demand

satisfaction", and put forward the basic model of the process of "Use and Satisfaction". From the standpoint of the audience, "Use and Satisfaction Theory" examines the psychological and behavioral effects of mass communication on human beings by analyzing the audience's motivation to use the media and the satisfaction of their needs. Different from the traditional idea of how information works on the audience, it emphasizes the initiative of the audience and highlights its position. This theory holds that the audience restricts the process of media communication through the active use of media, and points out that the use of media is entirely based on individual needs and wishes.[1]

This theory is widely used in various researches on films and TV series. For example, Huang Shanshan of Guangxi University published on June 1, 2014 "A Study on the Audience of China's Historical TV Series Based on Use and Satisfaction---Taking Guangxi as an Example". Based on the "Use and Satisfaction" theory of communication, this paper empirically explores the problems of China's historical TV series in meeting the audience's needs through a questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews.[2] Tian Fang of Central South University for Nationalities published on May 20th, 2018 the article "Research on the audience's Use and Satisfaction of IP TV series with costume theme", taking the audience of IP TV series with costumes as the research object. Based on the theory of "Use and Satisfaction", the audience's viewing time, viewing attitude, viewing motivation, viewing satisfaction and shortcomings were collected through a questionnaire survey.[3] Qiang Yuexin and Zhang Mingxin, School of Journalism and Communication, Wuhan University, published on October 5th, 2007 the article "Viewing TV Watching Motivation of Rural Audiences in China from the Perspective of" Use and Satisfaction Theory ", which is based on" Use and Satisfaction Theory ", trying to describe and explain the motivation and potential mechanism of TV watching of rural audiences in central China.[4]

Therefore, this theory can be used when analyzing the audience’s evaluation of Chinese animation films and how Chinese animation films meets the audience's needs.

2.2 Summary of the phenomenon of the rise of animation in China

In 2000, Chinese animation world greeted the inspiring event---"Developing animation industry" in China is firstly proposed formally as a national policy.[5] Now the original works or adapted works all learned from each other and are constantly optimized. Up to now, the industry of Chinese animation films is gradually maturing, and its painting, storyline and character-shaping have gained the recognization of fans.

Feng Yang, from the School of Journalism and Communication, Beijing Institute of Printing, published on October 9th, 2022 "The Construction of the Mythical Universe of Chinese animation films Movies from the Perspective of Cross-media Narration-Taking White Snake Series Movies as an Example", expounding the innovation of Chinese animation films in traditional mythological culture from a novel "cosmological" perspective. Zhu Jinyi of North University for Nationalities published on May 1, 2022, "Intertextuality Research on the Mythical Chinese animation films Films", taking the mythical Chinese animation films as the research object, comprehensively analyzed the traditional mythological narration and modernization reconstruction of Chinese animation films. Through reading the relevant literature, we further found that Chinese animation

films reconstructed the narrative plot, aesthetic form and mythological thinking of traditional myths in a way that is more in line with the context of the times.[6] In addition, Roland from the Marxist School of Nanjing University of Science and Technology made a comprehensive analysis and statement from three aspects: production practice, consumption practice and aesthetic practice in the article "The Ideographic Practice, Development Logic and Positive Construction of Chinese animation films Culture" published on July 5, 2022, which made a clear direction for the sustained prosperity and high-quality development of Chinese animation films culture. At present, our country is re-examining the splendid and excellent traditional culture from a new perspective, so that China's stories can be transformed, innovated and developed in the cultural experience.[7]

Although these studies study domestic animation films from the aspects of film and television narratology, mythology, intertextuality, production practice, consumption practice and aesthetic practice, they fail to discuss it from the perspective of the audience. Based on the theory of Use and Satisfaction, this article will study and discuss how Chinese animation films meets the needs of the audience and which needs are not met.

3.Methods

3.1Research questions

In recent years, the popularity of domestic mythical series animation films has risen sharply. Based on observation and thinking, the following research questions are put forward:

1 What is the audience's demand for watching domestic mythological series animation?

2 How does the audience's viewing demand for domestic mythical series animation affect their attitude and behavior towards domestic animation?

3.2Audience survey method

3.2.1Research hypothesis

According to the theory of "Use and Satisfaction", this paper holds that the audience's demand for domestic mythical films can be divided into four dimensions: entertainment demand, social demand, cultural identity demand and self-worth demand. According to the concept of four dimensions, a hypothesis is drawn:

H1: The greater the audience's entertainment demand for the works, the more inclined they are to watch the follow-up works.

H2: The greater the audience's social demand for the works, the more inclined they are to watch the follow-up works.

H3: The audience's emotional demand for the works is full, and the more inclined they are to watch the follow-up works.

H4: The more the audience needs the cultural identity of the works, the more inclined they are to watch the follow-up works.

To prove the hypothesis, this study adopts the questionnaire survey method. The sampling method adopted in this study is judgment sampling, because other sampling costs are high. Questionnaires were distributed in moments of WeChat, WeChat groups and other channels. The questionnaire was distributed on October 16th, 2022, and finally, 245 valid questionnaires were collected.

3.3In-depth interview

Based on the questionnaire design, in-depth interview questions involve seven questions. The design of interview questions start from the following aspects: the opportunity for interviewees to contact animation, the difference between ordinary Chinese animation films and domestic animated films of mythical series, the attitude towards domestic animated films of mythical series, and the challenges faced after the rise of Chinese animation films. From the surface problems, we first test the interviewees' attitudes towards the domestic animated films of myth series, and then lead the interviewees to reflect on the deeper reasons according to their different attitudes. Through the answers given by the interviewees, the psychological behavior and motivation of the interviewees are revealed, which provides a reasonable and powerful important basis for this study.

The specific operation of the in-depth interview is to comprehensively consider the audience's age, educational background, the number of movies watched by Chinese animation films, etc. Finally, 15 audiences who ever watch domestic animated films in myth series are screened out as interview objects. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted for 30 minutes to 1 hour respectively. Interviews are conducted in the form of one-to-one interviews, starting in October 2022 and ending in October 2022.

Matters needing attention in the interview process:

1) Pay attention to the rigor of questions in the process of in-depth interviews, to prevent the interviewees from being misled into answering wrongly.

2) When asking questions, the interviewee's attitude should be modest and gentle, to reduce the interviewee's stress response and defensive psychology.

3) In the process of questioning, in addition to giving hints to interviewees whose thinking is blocked, psychological guidance should not be given to interviewees subjectively, intentionally or unintentionally. It should be ensured that interviewees can express their true feelings to answer and maintain the rationality and objectivity of answers.

4) Pay attention to controlling the pace and time of the interview, and remind the interviewee to finish the answer appropriately and tactfully when over time.

4.Results

4.1Description of structural analysis results

A total of 245 valid samples were collected in this questionnaire survey, among which 45.7%

of the respondents had seen 3 to 5 domestic animated films of myth series. Pearson correlation analysis shows that the audience's entertainment needs, social needs, emotional needs, and cultural identity needs are all positively correlated with their willingness to watch domestic animated films, among which entertainment needs are positively correlated with their willingness to watch domestic animated films (r=0.704, P = 0.000); Social needs are positively correlated with the willingness to watch domestic animated films of Myth series (r=0.549, P = 0.000); Emotion needs are positively correlated with the willingness to watch the domestic animated films of Myth series (r=0.587, P = 0.000); Cultural identity needs are positively correlated with the willingness to watch the domestic animated films of Myth series (r=0.612, P=0.000), which indicates that the higher the audience's entertainment demand, social demand, emotional demand and cultural identity demand for domestic animated films of myth series, the more inclined they are to pay attention to the follow-up works of domestic animated films of myth series. It is assumed that research H1, H2, H3 and H4 are all supported.

4.1.1The higher the audience's satisfaction with the entertainment needs of the works, the more inclined they are to watch the follow-up works.

According to the structural analysis results, it can be seen that people's entertainment demand for domestic animated films of myth series is closely related to people's willingness to watch domestic animated films of myth series. The more people gain a sense of happiness and decompression in the process of watching domestic animated films of myth series, the more they like watching such works. A series of mythical domestic animated films provide a source of happiness for the audience, which can be used as entertainment to enjoy or enrich their spare time.

4.1.2The higher the audience's satisfaction with the social needs of the works, the more inclined they are to watch the follow-up works.

According to the results of structural analysis, people's social demand for domestic animated films of myth series is closely related to people's willingness to watch domestic animated films of myth series. In addition to meeting people's entertainment needs, watching the mythical series of domestic animated films with friends and sharing and evaluating them with others will bring people social satisfaction, which also makes people more inclined to watch subsequent similar works.

4.1.3The higher the audience's emotional demand for the works, the more inclined they are to watch the follow-up works.

According to the results of structural analysis, people's emotional demand for domestic animated films of myth series is closely related to people's willingness to watch domestic animated films of myth series. Based on mythical characters, the characters and mythical stories created in a series of mythical domestic animated films can arouse the audience's resonance and arouse their feelings. When the audience interacts and transposes with the characters, they also

gain emotional satisfaction. At the same time, if the values expressed in the works are recognized by the audience, it will also increase the audience's tendency to watch subsequent similar works.
4.1.4The higher the audience's satisfaction with the cultural identity needs of the works, the more inclined they are to watch the follow-up works.

According to the structural analysis results, people's demand for the cultural identity of domestic animated films of myth series is closely related to people's willingness to watch domestic animated films of myth series. People have a strong sense of cultural identity for the domestic animated films of mythical series. Animation style refers to the overall artistic characteristics of art, performance, theme, meaning and music. It reflects the artist's thoughts, aesthetics, as well as cultural characteristics of a nation and an era.[9] The audience compares the mythical characters and mythical stories in the works with their own traditional Chinese cultural images, if they meet the audience's expectations for Chinese traditional culture, viewers will have a sense of cultural self-confidence and cultural identity, thus being more inclined to watch the follow-up works of domestic animated films of mythical series.

5 Discussion

5.1 Chinese animation films become an entertainment option.

This is the audience's most direct demand for Chinese animation films, which can entertain the audience, relieve stress and enrich their spare time. Nowadays, young people are generally under great pressure, and it is an excellent choice to go to the cinema in their spare time. Excellent film and television animation works should contain life, emotion and stimulate fantasy. For adults, humor and morals are exchanged for entertainment, knowing smiles and even mental impact. For teenagers, the exaggerated actions and humorous performances of movies and cartoons delight them, broaden their horizons and inspire their thinking. Humorous style is the most important form of animation design, Chinese animation production in the dissemination of traditional culture under the premise of the most important feature is to show the humorous style.[10] The movies and cartoons that entered the top 50 in Baidu search are mainly based on entertainment rather than serious preaching. Whether it is magic, action or comedy, some funny and humorous plots will be deliberately designed in the production. This is because entertainment performance relieves people's pressure: entertainment is the driving force behind the birth of animation works, and it is the essential factor for the existence and success of animation films, especially commercial animation films.[11]

5.2 Chinese animation films help audiences to position their social roles.

Young people are keen to share their feelings on social media after watching movies. What's more, they often recreate the animation content in a wild way, producing cartoon emoticons, pictures and short videos with strong communication for showing their "interesting" personality

characteristics. The cartoon emoticon pack has become an indispensable personalized language symbol in online social interaction, mapping one's personality and preferences, especially Bilibili, as a gathering square for young people, where people discuss the plot and express their opinions by commenting on the barrage, and form their interesting group; Douban has gathered many film reviews. Some professionals give praise and suggestions to mirror-moving, art-making, dubbing, etc., and some anime lovers evaluate the sensory experience brought by Chinese animation films. In the interaction, the audience can get to know the "quadratic element" who have common interests with themselves and find a sense of belonging.

For some teenagers, the role of Chinese animation films does not stop there. China's animation narrative generally follows the theory of binary opposition, the conflict in the main line, in an attempt to confront the plot to create the audience to judge the value of good and evil. [12] Teenagers' physical and mental development is still not perfect, and they urgently need to seek life examples that they can emulate. The prominent characters at the leading edge can easily affect their growth. There are many movies and TV programs that promote patriotism and heroism, which have aroused strong solidarity among teenagers. Some glorious characters on the silver screen have become their efforts. During their growing up, they began to pay attention to cultivating the qualities of courage, vigilance, self-sacrifice, tenacious struggle and hard work, and they have a strong sense of ownership and responsibility. In social activities, they will put themselves in other people's shoes and consider the overall situation.[13] Kindness and bravery in Chinese animation films' role will also help teenagers grow up.

5.3 Chinese animation films stimulate the audience's collective memory

Collective memory is a kind of social behavior. People get collective memory from society and communicate with other individuals or groups in society. These collective memories are recognized. This concept originated from the "collective consciousness" theory of French sociologist Emile Durkheim. He believed that the collective can form a kind of spiritual cohesion by sharing memories, which to some extent regulates the values and moral norms of group members and plays an important role in maintaining social order. [14] It is easy to find out that the classic cartoons produced by Shanghai Animation Film Studio have features in common that focus on the spirit of the time, with a depth of thought and national sentiment, reflecting the common spirit pursuit of human beings. The older generation of animators follow the coordinates of a cultural spirit, they trace the history accumulation of the past five thousand years and docks with the current culture, to lead the audience to rebuild their beautiful hope through the cartoon spirit. [15]

"Flowers are similar every year, but people are different every year." Man's former audience is just a child. They wait in front of the TV every afternoon, complaining about how long the advertisement is, and they are immersed in a new episode of animation again. Times have changed, and the former Chinese Boy, Black Cat Sheriff and other national cultures have been replaced by many new things. When the audience is no longer the child who waits for cartoons in front of the TV, the childhood "highlight moment" of Chinese animation films, which has no

popular online dramas and rampant video games, and only plays on time every day, will never come back. Re-building Chinese animation films IP will stimulate the audience's collective memory, recall the animation time that was eagerly awaited, start that childhood exclusive memory, start a carnival that can only be relived in the cinema, and become a permanent spiritual comfort.

6 Conclusion

A truly excellent national culture can not only have an important influence on a person's growth, affecting one generation or even several generations, but also make traditional culture full of vitality and vitality by means of popular forms, which shows the inheritance of national culture. The Chinese nation propagandizes the traditional culture of China and enhances cultural self-confidence and cultural identity through the spread of the country. However, we must "flexibly use" the traditional fairy tales of China instead of simply listing and piling them up.

Compared with that the Chinese animated school has “reached the world's first-class level and forming a unique Chinese school of art style” in the 1950s to 1980s, what is the problem Chinese animated films lack in the 21st century, although have achieved both huge box office and public praise with several representative works, is by no means as simple as the lack of talents reserve.[16]

Due to the limited cost, this study chose judgment sampling in the sampling method of the audience survey, so the experience and subjective judgment of researchers may bring a small deviation to the research results.

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