

Analysis of the Role of Social Media in Film Marketing

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Abstract: The significance of social media has become an essential marketing medium for attracting and retaining customers. Social media enables users to connect and interact more frequently and closely than traditional media. The data produced by users deliver invaluable resources to boost marketing outcomes. Therefore, social media marketing has become the first choice in marketing. Among many marketing strategies, online word-of-mouth has gradually become essential to consumers' brand recognition and purchasing power. This online marketing strategy plays a substantial role in the film industry. A movie portrays culture, education, leisure, and propaganda by influencing one's thoughts and feelings. However, different from physical goods, movies are intangible, and people would not know if a movie exists if there is no promotion for this movie. This is the reason that movie is more dependent on marketing strategies. Consumers often consider buying a ticket based on what others have said about a movie online. Through the analysis of social media marketing, this paper examines the impact of social media on film marketing. Collect data on the frequency of people watching movies, the methods of obtaining movie information, whether to purchase tickets before purchasing and the impact of movie marketing on people's ticket purchases through a questionnaire survey. Collect the top 20 box office data in the Chinese Mainland on the Maoyan app, and collect the number of popular searches of the top 20 films at the box office through Sina Weibo. This paper mainly analyzed the box office data and the frequency of respondents viewing online posts before buying movie tickets. The results show that social media marketing is necessary for the movie industry because it helps attract customers and increases the box office.

Keywords: social media, film marketing, microblog marketing, questionnaire investigation

1. Introduction

Social media marketing is a new field that involves marketing goods, services, information, and ideas via online networks and social media [1-4]. Social media marketing employs social media to promote brand recognition and increase revenues. It has the characteristics of connection, interaction, and customer data. Customer engagement has been one of the most important goals of social media marketing [5]. Through social media platforms, every user can become a content producer. In social media, it is not just businesses that promote products and services. Consumers can influence each other's preferences through comments that they share over social media. Their comments on social media are essential in promoting goods and services [6]. It is a common marketing method to use social media marketing to improve popularity and reputation and to promote consumers' purchase

intention and behavior [7,8]. As a kind of special cultural product, movies satisfy the higher spiritual needs of consumers, such as interests, entertainment, leisure, and so on [9]. As a time-sensitive consumer product, pre-release publicity is significant. Social media marketing can quickly increase the popularity and reputation of a movie and affect the movie line-up [10].

Social media has many classification methods, generally believed to include various forms such as Weibo, forums, and blogs. This paper selects the most influential social media as the research object. Weibo, the most popular social media in China with significant commercial value, will be the main research object in the analysis process of this paper. At the same time, since Sina Weibo has the most advanced commercial operation among microblog providers in China, this paper mainly focuses on the analysis and research of Sina Weibo. The research significance of this article has two aspects: 1) It is helpful for the film production team to know whether the impact of social media on the commercialization of movies has met expectations. 2) Helps the film production team to understand the focus of marketing and unnecessary marketing methods.

To study the influence of Sina Weibo on film marketing effect, this paper selects the top 20 films in mainland China as research samples to reflect the influence of Sina Weibo on marketing effect. The reasons for choosing Weibo as the research object are: 1) There is a high overlap between microblog users and moviegoers; 2) Actual movie box office receipts are public and easy to capture.

To study the impact of Sina Weibo on the movie box office, the author collected the impact of movie marketing on audiences through a questionnaire survey. The author collected data on the number of Weibo hot searches and box office revenue of the top 20 films in mainland China from the Maoyan app.

Collect data through a questionnaire survey. Collect the total box office number of the top 20 films in the Chinese Mainland on the Maoyan app and collect the hot search times of the top 20 films at the box office through Sina Weibo. Through analyzing the willingness and frequency of audiences to view online movie reviews on social media platforms before they buy movie tickets, this paper illustrates the significant role social media plays in movie marketing. Specifically, three conclusions have been drawn: 1) Most people only sometimes watch and obtain movie-related information online, so social media marketing is necessary. 2) The more popular Weibo marketing searches, the higher the box office. 3) False marketing could be more conducive to movie box office revenue.

2. Methods

To study the impact of Sina Weibo on the movie box office, this paper designed a comprehensive research process, as shown in Figure 1. Collect the total box office data and Weibo hot search data of the top 20 Chinese film box offices through Weibo and Maoyan apps. To collect first-hand data, a questionnaire has been adopted. The frequency of people watching movies and their opinions on movie marketing can be drawn through a questionnaire. This data collection method is advantageous in low cost and quickly attaining large samples.

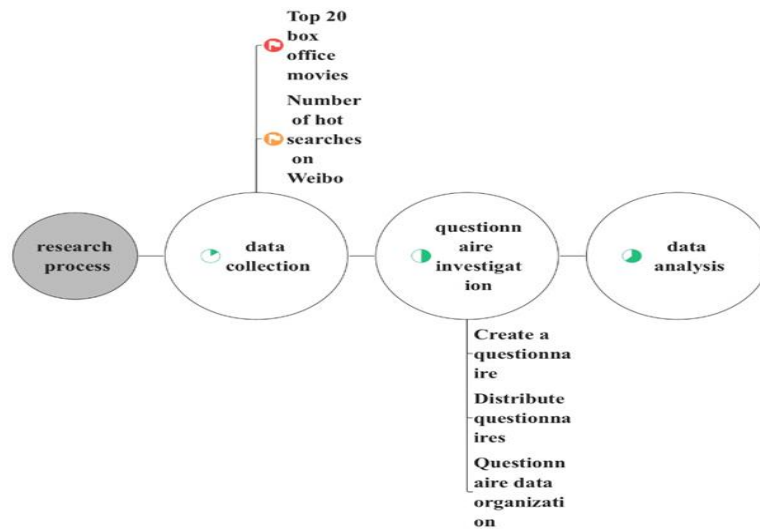


Figure 1: Research process.

The questionnaire aims to get larger samples and collect objective data. Through the questionnaire, this paper attains information about the frequency of people watching movies, where they get movie information, and the data of important information such as whether people will search for reviews on the Internet before watching movies and whether movie marketing will purchase tickets.

Table 1: Survey Questions.

Questions	Answers
What's your frequency of watching movies?	A. once a week; B. once a month; C. once every three months; D. once over three months.
In what ways do you receive movie information?	A. Online social platforms like Microblog and Douban. B. Offline posters and billboards in cinemas and shopping malls.
Do you view online movie reviews before buying a ticket?	A. Yes. B. No
Do online movie reviews affect your buying behaviors of a movie? Please score the influence from one to five	A. One; B. Two; C. Three; D. Four; E. Five.
Will you buy a movie ticket because of movie marketing?	A. Yes; B. No.
Does social media marketing affect your buying behaviors of a movie? Please score the influence from one to five	A. One; B. Two; C. Three; D. Four; E. Five.
What's your gender?	A. male; B. female.
What's your occupation?	_____
How old are you?	A. below eighteen; B. from eighteen to thirty C. from thirty-one to forty-five; D. over forty-five.

The survey questions are listed in Table 1. The previous design principle of the questionnaire is closely connected to the topic of the research because the goal is to investigate how social media

impacts movie marketing. Secondly, the answer expected to be drawn is easy to understand. The respondents only need to select the corresponding options and fill in the numbers to complete the questionnaire and collect more data. Finally, it is easy to organize and analyze the data. The questions above and below the questionnaire are related, which is easy to visualize the data.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1. Relationship Between Social Media and the Frequency of People Watching Movies

As shown in Figure 2, the frequency of people watching movies is not very high. 66.22% of people only watch movies once every three months or more, while only 5.78% of people watch movies once a week. As shown in Figure 3, 81.78% of the audience received information about the movie from social media apps online, such as its release time, schedule, and approximate content.

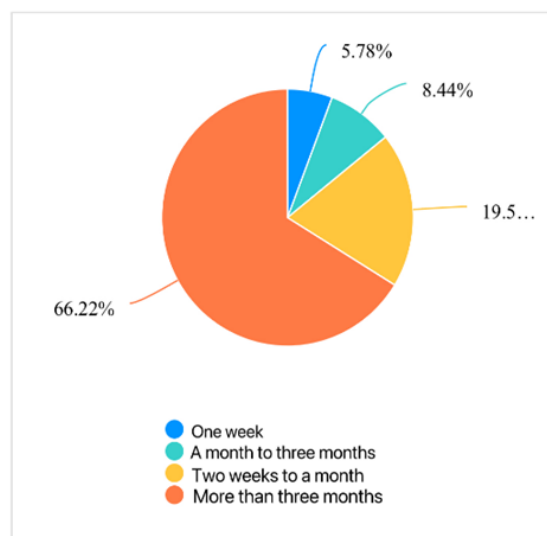


Figure 2: Frequency of Respondents Watching Movies.

From this, people only watch movies occasionally, and most people obtain movie information through social media. This finding indicates that social media is crucial for movie marketing because most people acquire movie information from social media.

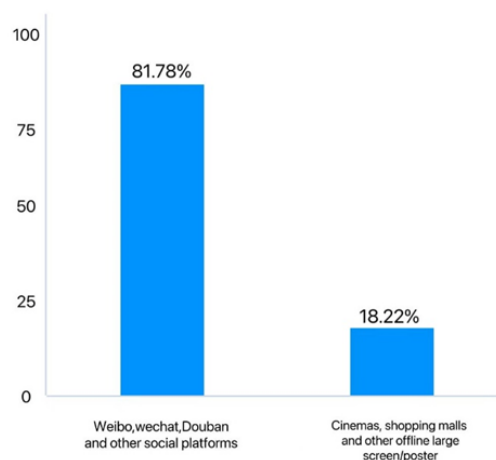


Figure 3: Social Platforms that Respondents Received Movie Information.

3.2. Relationship Between Hot Searches and Total Box Office

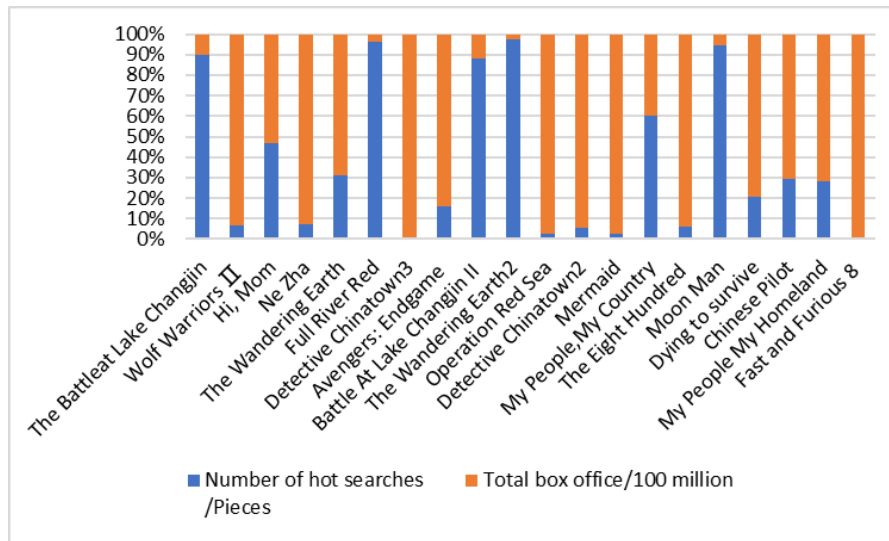


Figure 4: Relationship between Hot Searches and Total Box Office.

Microblog marketing influences movie marketing both positively and negatively. To illustrate the positive relationship between hot searches and total box office, a percentage stacked bar chart is drawn, as shown in Figure 4. Figure 4 proposes that the more popular movies gain on Weibo, the higher the box office revenue is. Therefore, film brokers frequently use hot searches in the movie promotion process. It has been proven that Weibo marketing is a necessary condition for promoting a movie, and it is beneficial to the rapid increase of the box office.

However, given the distinctiveness and openness of Weibo, social media marketing is more likely to amplify the problems hidden behind the films. It will risk the movie's reputation and hurt the movie itself. For instance, "Full River Red", "Wandering the Earth 2", and "Walking Alone on the Moon" has more popular searches on Weibo than in other films. However, box office revenue could be more prominent in the list. With the big box office sales of the film, "Full River Red" has been questioned by the "ghost market," box office theft, plagiarism, buying, and capital manipulation. Since its release, in particular, a few days ago, the official announcement of the prosecution of four "rumormongers" in "Full River Red" ignited the crowd's enthusiasm. On the third day of the Lunar New Year on January 24, the box office of "Full River Red" surpassed that of "Wandering Earth 2", and various doubts followed.

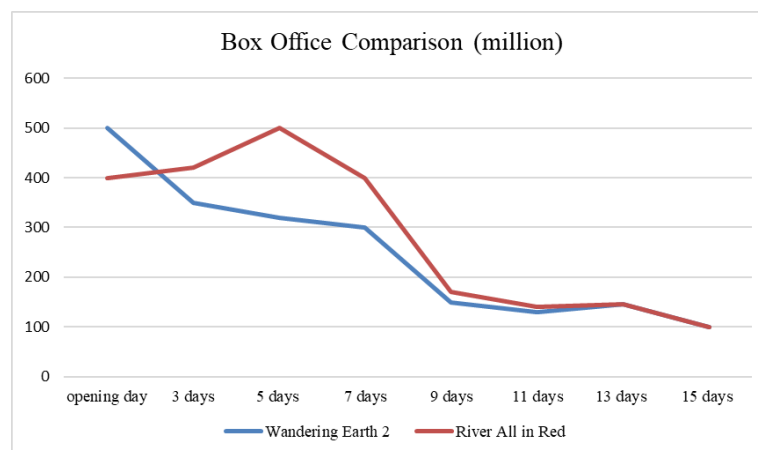


Figure 5: Everyday box office of "Wandering Earth 2" and "Full River Red".

Figure 5 shows the daily box office of "Wandering Earth 2" and "Full River Red". There are many rumors on the Internet that "Full River Red" stole the film, stole the box office, and bought the box office. Some netizens even targeted the leading actor, Jackson Yee. For example, this netizen bought a ticket for "Wandering Earth 2" at 21:25 on January 24; but could not watch it due to equipment failure. At the same time, it showed that "Full River Red" was still playing usually. So, this paper suspects that "Full River Red" has stolen the box office. Under this microblog, many netizens said they had similar experiences, and the overall trend was to hold "Wandering Earth 2" and step on "Full River Red". When producing the movie, "Full River Red" also suffered equipment failures. Objectively speaking, this is the fault of cinemas instead of the "Full River Red". Faced with rumors and disturbances that will not cause substantial damage to the film's reputation, it is more appropriate for the film's official to remain silent. However, "Full River Red" adopted a different approach. It sent several high-profile microblogs, one by one, to fight back various queries on the network. This approach triggered the anger of netizens significantly. Microblog marketing is an essential part of film marketing. However, it has its strengths and weaknesses. A movie must rely highly on Microblog marketing to be effective. Multiple marketing strategies are necessary.

False marketing should be forbidden in the digital age due to social media. "Long Day's Journey into Night" is a typical case of false marketing in movies in recent years. Before the movie was released, 370,000 people wanted the Taopiaopiao app, and 280,000 wanted the Maoyan app. On the first day, the box office grossed 250 million yuan, with the pre-sale box office exceeding 150 million yuan. Only the Spring Festival season's "Monster Hunt 2" and "Detective Chinatown2" and the summer season's Apartment of Love ranked fourth on the 2018 domestic box office pre-sale list. Figure 6 shows the daily box office of the movie.

The main creators personally stepped down and packaged a niche literary film with a full dialect, obscure plot, and strong personal style into a romantic romance film that combines science fiction elements. The film is aimed at the audience mainly consisting of couples and is heavily marketed as the "New Year Kiss." This kind of fraudulent marketing involving selling dog meat with a sheep's head and kidnapping caused a sharp decline in the movie's reputation one day after its release.

At the same time, it is also a heavy blow to the creation of Chinese literary films. From this, false marketing is not advisable. When marketing and promoting a movie, it is necessary to follow a truthful and objective promotional approach related to the movie's content. Otherwise, even if a considerable box office performance is achieved compared to the cost of the movie, it will only be limited to this film, which will impact the reputation of the creative team.

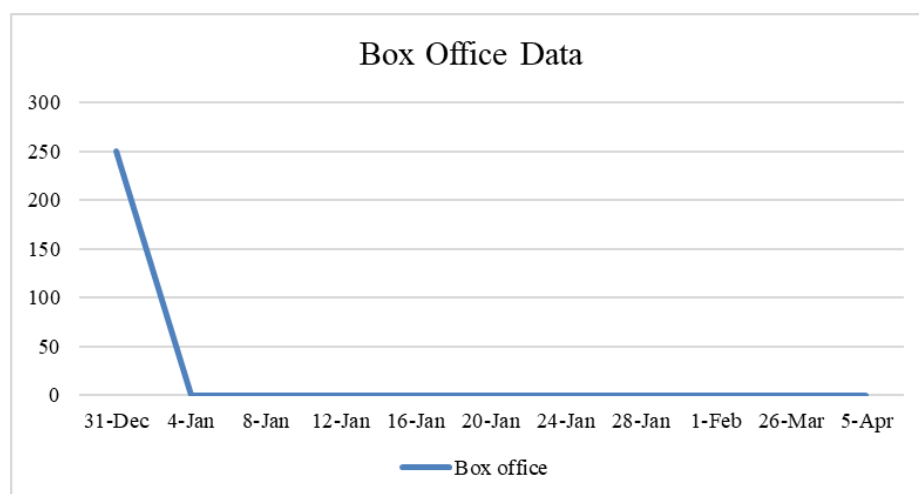


Figure 6: Box office data of the Long Day's Journey into Night.

3.3. The Correlation Between Film Marketing and Consumer Ticket Buying

Nowadays, social media has changed people's lives a lot. Different from traditional media, social media can spread at a quicker pace and to a greater extent. In this case, word-of-mouth reputation is more important in film marketing. For instance, as shown in Figure 7, 56.89% of the audience will choose to purchase tickets to watch movies due to film marketing. Therefore, film marketing is essential for box office revenue. 85.78% of viewers search online for movie reviews before buying movie tickets, as indicated in Figure 8. It shows that people nowadays have a high dependence on social media. When a movie has varying reviews, audiences will choose whether to buy tickets based on their interests. When a movie has high ratings online, people often buy a ticket to watch it. Social media marketing is therefore critical to a film's word of mouth. Of course, the most important thing is the movie itself. Suppose the quality of the movie itself could be better, and people are often disappointed after watching it. In that case, they tend to post their feedback on social media platforms, which will reduce box office revenue. Although it is intangible, a movie is a product, too. If the quality of the product itself is not up to standard, then no matter how it is treated.

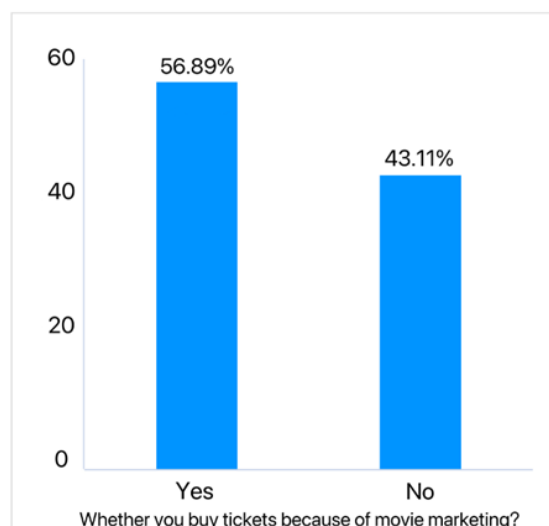


Figure 7: Willingness of purchasing tickets for film promotion.

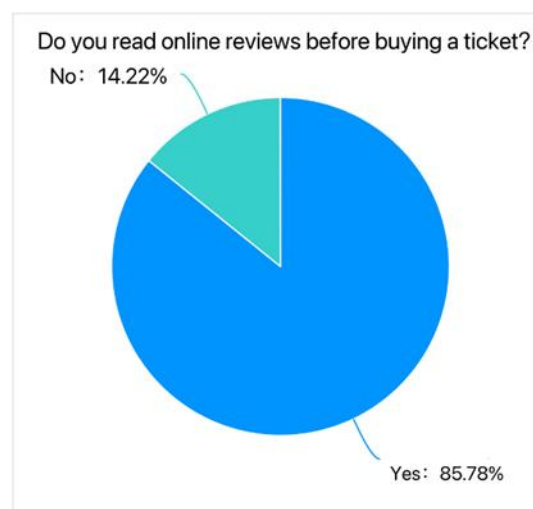


Figure 8: Buying behaviors of people before purchasing tickets.

At present, the distribution and promotion process is undoubtedly crucial for a movie. It is becoming increasingly important, but good movies are not released but are shot. They are facing foreign universities. Film what Chinese filmmakers need to do is face reality, find gaps, improve technology, and explore innovation, which is the first attitude and strategy to adopt when competing with foreign movies; The key is to improve the quality of one's films and fully leverage the local advantages of domestic films in the process of learning from experience and reflecting on oneself. The key is to fully leverage domestic films' local advantages in learning from experience and reflecting on oneself.

4. Conclusion

This paper uses Sina Weibo as the research object to conduct a data organization and analysis on the effectiveness of social media in movie marketing. Based on the data and conclusions of this study, the future author will conduct further data mining to deepen the research on the factors that influence the effectiveness of social media in movie marketing. On the other hand, the author will conduct further research on how movie producers can attract other audiences through marketing and achieve precise marketing. By using a survey questionnaire to collect data on people's frequency of watching movies and their marketing towards movies and combining it with marketing data from the top 20 Chinese box office rankings, the following conclusions can be drawn: 1. Most people only sometimes watch movies and obtain movie-related information online, so social media marketing is necessary. 2. The more popular Weibo marketing searches, the higher the box office. 3. False marketing could be more conducive to movie box office revenue.

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