

Trends in the Female-Oriented Entertainment Industry Amidst Sociocultural Transformation

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Abstract: As a significant branch of the cultural and entertainment sector, the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry has garnered considerable attention in recent years. This paper introduces the background and importance of female-oriented cultural entertainment, emphasizing its role in shaping social and cultural identities. Subsequently, an analysis of market trends, reveals the emergence of women as a rising force in the cultural entertainment market, gradually becoming a crucial consumer group that positively impacts the entertainment industry's development. The section on content characteristics delves into aspects such as character development, plot intricacies, and emotional expression in female-oriented entertainment works, which constitute the essence of this industry and attract a multitude of devoted fans. Furthermore, the section on influencing factors examines the rise of female empowerment, the influence of socio-cultural factors, and the impact of technology and platforms on this industry. The rise of female empowerment reflects a positive transformation in women's societal roles, socio-cultural factors profoundly influence content creation and consumer demands, while technology and platforms provide more entertainment choices and convenience. Finally, the paper discusses potential issues faced by the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry, including market saturation, cultural conflicts, diversity challenges, and the role of culture in shaping societal impacts. It also presents solutions such as actively guiding market diversification, promoting cultural diversity and equality, and encouraging creators to reflect on their social responsibilities.

Keywords: female-oriented entertainment, cultural entertainment industry, female empowerment

1. Introduction

As a novel cultural phenomenon, female-oriented cultural and entertainment content has profoundly impacted the landscape of today's cultural and entertainment industry. It encompasses various forms, including otome games, boys' love (BL), and growth and development narratives, among others, attracting a diverse audience, especially female users. This paper aims to delve into the influence of socio-cultural changes on the female-oriented entertainment industry by analyzing market trends, and content characteristics, and exploring the challenges and influencing factors faced by the industry, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of its development.

2. Overview of the Female-Oriented Cultural and Entertainment Industry

Cultural and entertainment consumption refers to a form of acquiring spiritual satisfaction while enjoying cultural and entertainment commodities, including the consumption of literary and artistic works, sensory pleasures, and mental entertainment. It constitutes an important direction for the development of the cultural industry. The female-oriented cultural and entertainment industry, which will be discussed in this paper, refers to the entertainment consumption field predominantly led by and involving women. Exploring the female-oriented cultural and entertainment industry reveals not only a thriving market but also a dynamic and diverse domain.

2.1. Market Trends

The current cultural and entertainment market exhibits several notable trends, some of which are particularly worthy of in-depth observation and study. Therefore, the female-oriented cultural and entertainment market is gaining prominence and attracting increasing attention.

The female-oriented cultural and entertainment market demonstrates diversity and complexity. This market encompasses various forms of entertainment content, such as games, online novels, comics, and animations, and these works cover a wide range of genres, including but not limited to otome, BL, and growth and development narratives, catering to the diverse interests and preferences of different audiences. Taking BL works as an example, which features romantic relationships between male characters, they have garnered widespread attention and discussion on a global scale. Some BL works even expand across different media platforms, from novels to games, comics, and TV dramas, gaining wide popularity. The diversity of female-oriented entertainment content extends beyond romantic themes, encompassing various themes like professions and historical narratives, conveying more diverse messages, and meeting the multifaceted demands of the audience. This flourishing market not only reflects the diversity of female audience preferences but also drives innovation and progress in the cultural and entertainment industry.

2.2. Content Characteristics

Female consumers tend to lean towards emotional expenditure when paying for the cultural and entertainment industry. Their demands for virtual characters in terms of emotions, social interactions, leisure, and visuals are particularly strong. Consequently, the content characteristics of female-oriented entertainment works have become the essence of this industry, serving as the key factors that make these works stand out in the market and attract loyal fan bases.

First and foremost, attention should be given to the profound and intricate character development. Female-oriented cultural and entertainment works are renowned for their creation of this type of character. These fictional characters' personalities, backgrounds, and growth journeys play pivotal roles throughout the entire work. Take otome games as an example; they typically revolve around distinctly diverse virtual male characters who exhibit multifaceted personality traits, including but not limited to gentleness and independence, catering to the varied interests and preferences of different female viewers. The development and interactions of these characters permeate the entire work, providing the audience with opportunities to establish emotional connections and gain deeper insights into their inner worlds. Concurrently, with the rise of fan culture, female viewers are no longer confined to the confines of the work's setting. They begin to use the "character personas" shaped by the works as foundational material, randomly combining different characters to elucidate, analyze, and create various types of intimate relationships, all while engaging with their respective fan communities. Scholar Gao Hanging regards these character pairing activities within "female-oriented" culture as a public challenge to patriarchal production in "female-oriented" spaces [1]. This

underscores the unmistakable importance of character development in female-oriented cultural and entertainment works.

In addition to profound character development, another prominent feature of female-oriented entertainment works is the deep exploration of plotlines. These works typically emphasize emotional expression and in-depth exploration of storylines, revolving around core themes such as love, friendship, family, and personal growth. Outstanding female-oriented games can immerse players in a world filled with suspense and emotional fluctuations, allowing them to witness the emotional development between characters and make decisions on various emotional dilemmas that may determine the direction of the entire story. Scholars Wen Caiyun and Zhou Xuanren have found in their research that these works provide female viewers with the opportunity to "embody" themselves in the virtual world using role-playing, enabling them to reshape their lives, enrich their personal experiences, and realize their ideal selves [2].

Despite the occasional illogicality in the plotlines of female-oriented cultural and entertainment works, which may sometimes defy scientific rationality or even exceed the bounds of common sense in real life, this does not hinder these works from achieving immense success among the audience. This is because the charm of these works lies not in faithfully replicating real-life plot settings, but in their ability to touch the audience's emotions deeply through tumultuous and emotionally charged plot developments, evoking resonance and emotional connections. They provide a unique emotional experience while also offering a space for creation, imagination, and escapism; this is the true allure of works in this field.

Therefore, emotional expression is also a highlight of female-oriented cultural and entertainment works. Emotional empathy plays a critical role in communication, affecting interpersonal relationships between the audience and the creators, as well as influencing the formation of short-term communication effects [3]. Hence, these female-oriented cultural and entertainment works captivate the audience's heartstrings through meticulous emotional depictions and deep interactions between characters. As mentioned in the research of Bian Huilin, players in the real world cannot fully invest their emotions in real-life individuals for various reasons, but the boundless nature of cyberspace provides players with the possibility to release negative emotions endlessly [4]. Furthermore, these works often serve as intermediaries for the audience's emotions, weaving together virtual and real-life connections, creating an experience where the "real" and the "fantasy" interlace. Therefore, emotions are a crucial element in these works, allowing the audience to better understand the inner world of the characters through detailed descriptions and emotional exchanges between characters, experiencing their joys, sorrows, laughter, and tears. This emotional connection enables the audience to immerse themselves more deeply in the works, growing and experiencing emotional fluctuations alongside the characters.

In conclusion, the female-oriented cultural and entertainment industry showcases robust market trends and diverse content characteristics. With the increasing status of women in the cultural and entertainment realm, this industry is thriving in various domains, particularly in the gaming market. Its content characteristics revolve around intricate character development, carefully crafted plotlines, and nuanced emotional expressions, catering to the strong demands of female audiences for emotions, social interactions, and leisure entertainment. This industry has a promising future and exerts a positive influence on the development of the cultural and entertainment field.

3. Factors Shaping and Driving the Development of the Female-Oriented Entertainment Industry

The female-oriented cultural entertainment industry is flourishing and has become a prominent force in today's entertainment sector. Within this industry, markets targeted at women, such as the female gaming market, are showing significant growth trends, injecting vitality into the entire industry.

3.1. The Rise of Female Empowerment

Anthony Giddens once pointed out that gender differences exist in real life, and today, the pursuit of pure love is almost unattainable for women due to the pressures of sexual liberation and self-discipline. Furthermore, for a long time, the position of women in virtual works has been relatively marginalized [5]. Chen Siting pointed out that female characters are often crudely inserted into games, becoming subordinates of male "others" and essentially being used to satisfy male players' heroic fantasies [6].

Nevertheless, with the ongoing evolution of time, the internet era has emerged, enabling individuals to create an entirely novel online realm. Just as pointed out in the book "Breaking the Wall: Key Terms in Internet Culture" in 2018, after entering the Internet age, Chinese women have gained their own independent space and begun to integrate entertainment with feminist culture in the Internet public sphere [7]. Currently, the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) released The 52nd Statistical Report on Internet Development in China, indicating that the active user base of female mobile internet users has reached 48.6% [8]. In a situation where internet users are approaching saturation, the growth of female internet users is higher than that of male users, demonstrating the significant commercial potential of female internet users. In recent years, the purchasing power of women has continued to rise, and the position of women in the cultural and entertainment consumption market has gradually expanded. Women have become the main consumer group in the entertainment industry, providing strong support for its development. According to data from the Head Leopard Research Institute, in China, the proportion of women in the cultural and entertainment market continues to rise, injecting significant vitality into the industry. Especially in the streaming media sector, the proportion of female characters has exceeded half, reaching 52%, highlighting the dominant position of women in this field. Female entertainment consumption has become mainstream. Meanwhile, scholar Sun Guirong also noted that the trend of niche marketing in new media communication has allowed "female-oriented" narratives to develop in the culture of women in the new century, and innovations from communication media have become a new driving force for women's liberation. The female-oriented cultural entertainment industry is gradually emerging [9].

The satisfaction that women gain from female-oriented entertainment products can be related to the Use and Gratification Theory proposed by communication scholars such as Katz, Blumler, and Tuchman. The products created by the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry can be seen as a new medium, and when female users gain satisfaction from watching, using, or playing related female-oriented entertainment products, they are more likely to continue using these products. This satisfaction deepens the immersion of female players in the world of female-oriented entertainment [10].

3.2. Analysis of the Influence of Sociocultural Factors

Sociocultural factors have a profound impact on various cultural entertainment industries, and the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry is no exception. These factors not only shape the form of work but also influence the preferences of the audience. Among them, gender perspectives play a crucial role in this influencing factor. Different gender perspectives in various societies significantly affect the portrayal of roles and expression of emotions in female-oriented entertainment works. In recent years, female-oriented works that deviate significantly from traditional role portrayals have emerged, placing greater emphasis on the independence, autonomy, and careers of female protagonists, in stark contrast to the traditional "fragile female" image, reflecting changing societal expectations for female roles.

Another significant sociocultural factor is the difference in cultural values. Different cultures and regions have different aesthetic tastes and story preferences. Certain cultures and regions determine

that their audience may prefer romantic storylines emphasizing family and traditional values, while others may favor elements of modernity and individuality. For example, in Asia, especially in Japan, traditional family values and romantic emotions are often emphasized. Otome games and manga frequently include traditional romance plotlines, such as the male protagonist making relentless efforts for the female protagonist and both overcoming difficulties together. This depth of emotion and romantic storyline is highly popular in Asian culture. In contrast, some Western regions prioritize individuality, independence, and the autonomy of female protagonists. Female-oriented entertainment works in these regions may lean toward creating diverse characters, emphasizing the freedom and resilience of female protagonists. These cultural differences are reflected in the character development, dialogue, and emotional expression within the works. Considering these cultural differences, creators and industry professionals need to strike a balance in their works to ensure appeal on a global scale.

In the era of globalization, understanding and respecting the differences in cultural values will help the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry better meet the needs of a global audience, creating more inclusive and diverse works. This is an important aspect of sociocultural influencing factors.

3.3. Discussion of Technology and Platforms

Technology platforms play a crucial role in the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry, not only changing the way works are disseminated but also providing new interactive opportunities, enriching the industry's experiences. Social media platforms such as Twitter and Weibo have become essential channels for promoting and communicating female-oriented entertainment works. Through these platforms, creators can interact directly with fans, and understand their feedback and needs. This direct interaction mechanism not only helps creators better understand audience expectations but also promotes improvements and evolution of works.

Mobile application technology has brought new business opportunities to the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry. Many otome games and novels have been successfully ported to mobile platforms, providing users with the convenience of enjoying work anytime, anywhere. This convenience significantly increases the accessibility of work, further driving market expansion. Taking "Mr. Love: Queen's Choice," launched by Paper Games in 2017, as an example, its development team cleverly integrated elements of otome games and simulation games. They first abandoned the lengthy novel-style narrative found in traditional otome AVG games and adopted a more concise chapter-by-chapter presentation format, increasing player engagement and avoiding monotony. Secondly, the game weakened the role of the female protagonist and strengthened the attractiveness of the male protagonist, making it easier for players to immerse themselves in the story. Especially through carefully designed "private messages," "phone calls," and "friend circles," the game enhanced the presence of the four male protagonists, deepening player emotional involvement. As scholar Chen Yufei pointed out, otome games induce players to immerse themselves further by using interaction modes that closely resemble players' real-life experiences [11]. On the other hand, scholars Han Yunrong and Wang Xingyu pointed out in 2020 that female players in nurturing games experience the protagonist's story while projecting their desires and concepts into the game [12]. This innovative design not only makes the game more interactive but also provides a pathway for sustained profitability, which is more attractive compared to the traditional one-time purchase model of otome AVG games. This innovative design has not only made "Love and Producer" more game-like but has also had a positive impact on the female-oriented game market. Currently, this model has become a mainstream trend in the female-oriented game market.

At the same time, the interactive nature of social media and the convenience of mobile applications make it easier for female-oriented entertainment works to spread globally without time or location

constraints. This further drives market expansion, attracting more investment and creativity. Therefore, technology platforms play an indispensable role in the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry, offering significant potential for its future development.

In summary, the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry is rapidly evolving, continuously adapting to societal and cultural changes, and expanding its influence through technological platforms. This not only provides opportunities for creators and industry professionals but also offers audiences a more diverse and enriching entertainment experience.

4. Potential Issues and Solutions

Despite the significant progress and success achieved by the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry, it still faces a range of potential issues, including market saturation, cultural conflicts, diversity challenges, and the shaping of culture and societal impact on multiple levels. Addressing these issues is crucial to ensuring the sustainability and further development of this industry.

4.1. Market Saturation Issue

Market saturation is a significant concern within the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry. The rapid growth and diversification of the industry have led to increasingly fierce market competition. The emergence of numerous female-oriented works and brands has diversified audience choices, but it has also presented a challenge: audience fragmentation, making it difficult for individual works or brands to stand out. The key to addressing the market saturation issue lies in market segmentation and innovative strategies.

Market segmentation is a method of dividing a broad market into more specific and niche audience segments. This approach aims to gain a deeper understanding of the needs, interests, and preferences of different audiences to provide works that better align with their tastes. In the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry, market segmentation can be based on various factors such as age, hobbies, and cultural backgrounds. For example, younger female viewers may prefer straightforward romance and "sugar-sweet" plotlines, while older audiences may lean towards more substantial themes. Therefore, creators and brands can create different types of works to meet the needs of various segmented markets based on different age groups. Furthermore, market segmentation based on audience interests, such as music, fashion, or science fiction, can better capture audience preferences.

On the other hand, innovation is crucial in addressing market saturation issues. In a highly competitive market, creators and industry professionals need to continuously explore new creative ideas and media formats to capture the audience's attention. Cross-media collaborations are an effective strategy that can expand female-oriented works to different media platforms, such as movies, television, novels, and games, attracting a broader audience and increasing brand recognition. Additionally, the flexible use of new technologies like virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) can provide audiences with entirely new entertainment experiences. These technologies can be used to create immersive storylines, allowing audiences to feel like they are part of the narrative, and increasing user engagement.

4.2. Cultural Conflicts and Diversity Challenges

The diversity and global nature of the female-oriented cultural entertainment market have led to cultural conflicts and diversity challenges, involving differences in demands and values among different cultures. This is a complex and critical issue for the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry. To address this challenge, strategies for cultural conflict management and cultural adaptation are needed to ensure that works can be widely recognized and accepted globally.

Cultural conflict management aims to actively understand the needs of audiences from different cultural backgrounds and to respect and reflect these differences in works to avoid potential conflicts and misunderstandings. This strategy includes the following core points:

Firstly, different cultures may have stereotypes and biases regarding aspects such as gender, sexual orientation, and family structure. Therefore, during the creative process, creators and industry professionals should avoid using stereotypes and prejudices, making efforts to reduce reliance on such stereotypes to create more inclusive and diverse characters and plots. Secondly, respecting the values of different cultures is crucial. Different cultures may have different views on morals, ethics, and social issues. Therefore, these differences should be considered in the plot and character development to avoid offending or alienating the audience. Finally, ensuring universality in work is also part of cultural conflict management. This may require a certain level of abstraction and universality in the works, so they are not limited to specific cultural details, making them understandable and appreciated in different cultural backgrounds.

Cultural adaptation is another key strategy aimed at ensuring that works can be understood and accepted in different cultures. This may involve localization efforts, including several aspects:

Firstly, language localization is essential. When creators aim to globalize their works, the first step is to translate the works into different languages and consider local idiomatic expressions to make the works more easily understood by local audiences. Secondly, localized character settings are necessary. This means modifying character settings in different cultures to align with local cultural expectations and values. This may involve adjustments in personality, appearance, and habits, among other aspects. Finally, adapting the way emotions are expressed is also part of cultural adaptation. Different cultures may have different preferences for expressing emotions. For example, in the more reserved Japanese culture, expressions like "The night sky is beautiful tonight" can subtly convey affection, while in Western culture, direct expressions of affection are more common. Therefore, the way emotions are expressed in works may need adjustment to align with local cultural norms.

4.3. Culture Shaping and Societal Impact

The female-oriented cultural entertainment industry is not just a form of cultural expression; it is also a significant shaper of societal beliefs and cultural identities. The values conveyed by this industry not only reflect the current cultural identity of society but also have a profound influence on the societal perspectives of the younger generation. Effectively addressing this challenge requires a focus on societal education and the role of creators in social responsibility.

In this regard, there are both positive and negative aspects. In community-based communication, female users may identify with the common identity assigned by the game, strengthening their sense of belonging in the community and, in turn, influencing their behavior. For example, some female users of the game "Love and Producer" once rented the LED screen of the Shanghai Bund building to celebrate the birthday of one of the game's male protagonists, Li Zeyan, and made charitable donations to support hearing-impaired children in his name [13]. However, at the same time, scholars Han Yunrong and Wang Xingyu pointed out in 2020 that the immersive experience of virtual romantic interaction in otome games creates a quasi-social relationship that fulfills psychological needs but avoids the complexities and troubles of real-life romantic relationships [12]. While it relieves the need for real-life romance, it may not address the issue of female singleness, presenting a potential pitfall in female-oriented games. Scholars Wu Yue, Sun Yuannan, Zhu Ning, and others (2020) also discussed the impact of one-sided intimate relationships and marriage values in otome games on players' real-world social relationships and romantic orientations [14].

Societal education has a profound influence on shaping the societal perspectives and values of the audience. Therefore, the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry can actively cooperate to promote the discussion and education of social issues such as gender equality, diversity, inclusivity,

and social justice. By introducing relevant content and activities within entertainment products, the younger generation can gain a more comprehensive understanding and analysis of these important issues, fostering inclusive and egalitarian values.

In this developmental field, creators play a crucial role in the process, and their sense of social responsibility is paramount. Because their works are not just a part of the cultural entertainment industry but also a medium for the dissemination of societal perspectives and cultural identity, they should recognize the significance of their works in society and actively pursue the goal of promoting positive societal perspectives. Furthermore, creators should actively consider societal perspectives in their creative processes and strive to avoid reinforcing stereotypes, gender discrimination, or other forms of inequality. This can be achieved by shaping multidimensional characters and plots that reflect the diversity and inclusivity of modern society. Additionally, creators can actively explore societal issues, conveying their desire for social change through their works, sparking audience contemplation and discussion.

In conclusion, despite significant progress in the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry, issues such as market saturation, cultural conflicts, diversity challenges, and the shaping of culture and societal impact still exist. Addressing these issues requires adopting strategies such as market segmentation and innovation to ensure industry sustainability. Additionally, approaches like cultural conflict management and cultural adaptation should be employed to deal with diversity and global challenges, promoting understanding and respect between cultures. Creators also play a crucial role in societal education and shaping societal perspectives, requiring them to focus on social responsibility, facilitate discussions on social issues, and convey positive societal perspectives.

5. Conclusions

The female-oriented cultural entertainment industry has emerged as a significant branch within the field of cultural entertainment, possessing tremendous market potential and influence. In analyzing market trends, there has been an observation of the gradual elevation in the status of women as a significant consumer demographic within the cultural entertainment market. Simultaneously, the rapid development of the internet has provided opportunities for the growth of female users. In terms of content diversity, female-oriented entertainment offers a wide range of forms, including games, novels, comics, and various genres such as otome, yaoi, and simulation, catering to the diverse needs of different audiences.

Among the influencing factors, the empowerment of women is a key driver. The increasing participation and influence of women in the entertainment industry have propelled the development of female-oriented cultural entertainment. Social and cultural factors also play significant roles, with societal attention on gender equality and diversity driving the presentation of related themes in entertainment works. Technological advancements and platforms have facilitated content dissemination and user interaction, contributing to the industry's prosperity.

However, it is essential to acknowledge the existence of potential challenges. Market saturation can lead to intense competition and varying levels of work quality, necessitating the exploration of differentiation and innovative solutions. Cultural conflicts and diversity challenges require the industry to sensitively address conflicts arising from different cultural backgrounds and values. Finally, in terms of culture shaping and societal impact, the dissemination of entertainment works can have a profound influence on the societal perspectives of the younger generation. Therefore, creators and platforms bear the responsibility of actively guiding and shaping positive societal perspectives.

In conclusion, the female-oriented cultural entertainment industry continues to grow and evolve, but it is not without its challenges. By acquiring a more profound comprehension of market trends, content attributes, influencing elements, and potential concerns, and by suggesting remedies, it is possible to more effectively confront these challenges, advance the industry's sustainable growth, and

make a positive contribution to the richness and inclusivity of societal viewpoints and cultural identities.

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