WORLD WIDE JOURNAL OF
MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH AND
DEVELOPMENT

Hang Sun
Candidate in City Graduate
School, City University,
Malaysia.

Mustaffa Halabi bin Azahari
Office of the Acting Vice
Chancellor, City University,
Malaysia.

Masri bin Abdul Lasi
Head of Graduate School, City
University, Malaysia.

An investigation of Audience's expectations of interactive movie in China

Hang Sun, Mustaffa Halabi bin Azahari, Masri bin Abdul Lasi

Abstract
This study seeks to investigate Chinese audiences' expectation on interactive movie. 353 respondents take part in the quantitative method of questionnaire. Six factors are provided for the respondent to scale their interest, which includes integrated mini-game, automony, multiple endings, interactive narratives, and the topic of the movie. The topic of the movie is considered as the most important factor that interests the audience, while the respondents show least interest in the mini-game plug-in.

Keywords: Interactive movie, audience, preference.

1. Introduction

Interactive movie is a new genre compared to traditional movie[1]. The producers have demonstrated awareness of this phenomenon, as evidenced by the provision of dedicated sections on various streaming platforms specifically designed for the launch of interactive movies or videos by users, and the interactive series of 'You vs. Wild' of Bear Grylls are continuously releases by Netflix. Popular interactive movies accessable in China includes episode 13 of 'iPartment' in Season Five in 2020, 'The Lost Caverns: The Last King of Banshan Taoist' in 2020 and 'Mysteries of Antiques: The Buhda's Head' in 2019.

Consequently, it is recommended that additional research be conducted within the domain of interactive movies to advance their understanding and refinement.

Since interactive movie provides quite individual viewing experience, audience's responses to the interactive movie diversed[1,2,3,4]. The audiences' expectations and preferences on interactive movie are important, but few research addresses on this perspective yet, especially for Chinese audience. Thus, this research attempts to fulfill this gap. Based on this, the purpose of this research is to figure out the audience's expectations on interactive movies.

2. Material and Methods

2.1 The development of Interactive movie

In 1967, 'Kinoautomat', an early example of interactive movies, allowed audiences to vote for the plot's progression. The concept has roots in interactive literary techniques like choose-your-own-adventure books, introduced in 1976. Interactive media later evolved with Netflix's child-targeted 'Puss in Book: Trapped in an Epic Tale' and the adult-oriented 'Black Mirror: Bandersnatch', where viewers influence story outcomes. Despite controversy, 'Black Mirror: Bandersnatch' won two Primetime Emmy Awards.

In the context of this study, the term "interactive movie" pertains specifically to artistic creations that are conceived and executed as movies featuring interactive components. It is important to note that video games are not encompassed within the scope of this investigation.

Deng predicts that interactive movies, offering audiences a participatory experience while maintaining cinematic immersion, have considerable business potential. This genre's unique narrative structure allows viewers to influence the storyline, suggesting it could be the future of the film medium[5].

Despite their current immature state and concerns over limited audiences and distribution

Correspondence:
Hang Sun
Candidate in City Graduate
School, City University,
Malaysia.

challenges, Zhao believes in the promising future of interactive movies, acknowledging that these factors could affect the genre's profitability[6].

Sun and Mustaffa note that while scholars generally support the development of interactive movies, the emerging genre has also drawn mixed responses and criticisms[1].

2.2 The Audience

Badiou argues that movies, as a blend of various arts, are both mass art and a private industry, emphasizing the key roles of audiences and editing. He characterizes mass art as widely appreciated works at their inception and underscores cinema's industrial nature, substantiated by significant artist participation. He contends that the cinema industry's financial aspect reveals both social conditions and inherent aspects of the film itself[6].

Yang underlines the importance of recognizing movies as mass entertainment and cultural commodities, not just pure art. With globalization and technological advancements, the film industry has seen subtle changes in financing, production, distribution, and exhibition, altering their interrelationships within the production process. It is added that for movie producers, despite their respect for the art, commercial profit remains the ultimate goal, emphasizing movies' commodity nature. Audience response, feedback, and box office revenue are crucial factors in a film's success, making it necessary to include audience perspectives in comprehensive film analysis[7].

It is pointed out that understanding the audience's opinion and preferences for is essential for future productions, marketing decisions, distribution decisions, and improvement for the movie. Especially for future movie production, the audience's preferences could be considered as a criteria for a movie that The production might aim to cater to the audience's tastes in order to generate profit[8,9,10,11].

Given the higher production costs of interactive movies due to longer footage[3], identifying target audiences' preferences and expectations before production is crucial to avoid potential profit loss.

Above all, the audience's preferences are significant for the production of movie. As interactive movies are quite immature and quite under developed, the audience's opinion, especially the preferences should never be neglected.

2.3 Questionnaire

This study adopted questionnaire to investigate the Chinese audiences' preferences on particular factors of interactive movie, including integrated mini-game, automony, interactive narratives, multiple endings, interaction design, and the topic of the movie. The sampling of the questionnaire is based on cluster sampling, distributed via "Questionnaire Star" Internet platform, with the target respondents who are aging between 18 to 45, and regular Internet user. The Likert Sclae is utilized to evaluate respondents' preferences, scaling from one to five, in which five is the highest scale. Totally 353 valid questionnaires are collected.

3. Result

The analysis is based on the descriptive analysis and the result One-Sample T test to investigating the respondents' preferences, utilizing SPSS software. Among all the 353 repondents, 45 percent are male (N=159) and 55 percent are female (N=194), aging between 18 to 45 years old (M=26.73, SD=6.478). 125 respondents (35.4%) are university students, 192 respondents (54.4%) are regular employees, 27 respondents are free-lancer (7.6%) and 9 unemployed (2.5%).

Table 1: The common way of movie watching.

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
Ways to watch movie *a*	Cinema	277	40.60%	78.50%
	Internet	304	44.60%	86.10%
	TV	101	14.80%	28.60%
Total		682	100.00%	193.20%
a Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.				

86.1% of the respondents choose to usually watch movies via Internet, but also 78.5% of them watch movie in cinema, and 28.6% of them choose TV as well.

Table 2: Preferences on the factor of interactive movie.

	Mean	SD	t	P
Integrated Mini-Game	3.39	1.14	6.43	<.001
Automony	3.93	0.95	18.39	<.001
Multiple Endings	3.97	0.98	18.78	<.001
Interactive Narratives	3.95	0.97	18.35	<.001
Interaction Design	3.95	0.90	19.74	<.001
Topic of the Movie	4.13	0.91	23.4	<.001

As Table 2 demonstrated, the mean of each factor is all significantly exceeded 3 points, which is identified as Nuetral in this Likert Scale. The factor with the highest mean rating is the 'Topic of the Movie' (4.13), suggesting that it is the most important factor to viewers. 'Autonomy', 'Multiple Endings', 'Interactive Narratives', and 'Interaction Design' also have high mean scores, suggesting they are also important to viewers. 'Integrated Mini-Game' has a lower mean score, suggesting it's less important. All factors have p-values less than 0.001, indicating that these mean scores are statistically significant, and not due to chance.

4. Discussion

It could be noticed from the result of the questionnaire that the respondents consider the topic of the movie is the most significant factor to influence their interests in the interactive movie, while the integration of the mini-game is the least important factor they care about.

As the determination between video game with narrative and game-ish interactive movie remains ambiguous, respondents in this study shows relatively lower interests of the mini-game plug-in in interactive movie. In this way, it might be infered that the audience have their own way to differentiate the differences between video game with narratives and the game-ish interactive movie, which can be explored in future study. On the other hand, the respondents show general interests on this factor of interactive movie, that the positive attitude toward the interactive movie could be observed.

Above all, while all these factors are statistically significant in influencing viewers' experiences or preferences, the 'Topic of the Movie', 'Multiple Endings', 'Autonomy', 'Interactive Narratives', and 'Interaction Design' seem to have a stronger impact than 'Integrated Mini-Game'

5. Conclusion

This study tries to figure out what interest Chinese audiences hold in interactive movie. With the quantitative method to conducted questionnaire and analysis of the 353 data from the respondents, the audiences are interested in the topic of the movie mostly, and shows least interest in the mini-game plug-in, while the other factors of interaction design, multiple endingss, automony and interactive narratives also attract the audience, with slight extent of differentiation. Therefore, the suggestion is given that for future interactive movie production, the integration of the mini-game should not be taking high proportion. However, few issue and limitation of this study should be paid attention to that further studies could be conducted to address on the other factors in interactive movie, as well as on particular interactive movie as case study.

References

1. Sun H, Azahri M. Interactive movie in digital era: A systematic literature review. City University eJournal of Academical Research, 2023; 5(1).
2. Daly K. Cinema 3.0: How Digital and Computer Technologies are Changing Cinema. Columbia University. 2008
3. Zhao Z. An analysis of the characteristics Interactives Movie from Movie Production Perspective. Art Panorama. 2020
4. Sun L J, Liu Y J. The Investigation and exploration of the Third Generation of Movie in Digital Interactive Era. Journal of Beijing Film Academy. 2011
5. Deng Y C. An Exploration on the Future Development of Cinematography from Interactive Movie Perspective. Journal of News Research. 2019
6. Badiou A. Cinema. Polity Press. 2014
7. Yang Y Y. The Introduction of Film. Beijing United Publishing Co., Ltd. 2017
8. Austin B. Immediate Seating: A Look at Movie Audience. Wadsworth Pub Co.1989
9. Einav L, Anand B, Bergman N, Cantillon E, Caruana G, Caves R, Corts K, Eilat Y, Mortimer J, Nevo A, Rysman M, Shachar R, Song M, Trajtenberg M. Seasonality and competition in time: An empirical analysis of release date decisions in the US motion picture industry. 2002
10. Eliashberg J, Elberse A, Leenders M. The Motion Picture Industry: Critical Issues in Practice, Current Research, and New Research Direction. Marketing Science, 25(6), 638-6612006
11. Hennig-Thurau T, Walsh G, Wruck O. An Investigation into the Factors Determining the Success of Service Innovations: The Case of Motion Pictures. Academy of Marketing Science Review, 2001(6).