Factors Influencing College Students' Cinema Visits for Animated Movies: A Case Study of Sichuan Universities in China

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Abstract

Purpose: This study explores the factors influencing college students' behavioral intention to watch animated movies in cinemas. The conceptual framework includes five independent variables and one dependent variable. **Research design, data and methodology:** The study employs the Index of Objective Consistency (IOC) for validity analysis and administers a small-scale questionnaire for testing, using Cronbach's Alpha for reliability analysis. A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted on 166 valid responses from students in Sichuan Province, China, to examine the relationships between the variables. Subsequently, an Intervention Design Experiment (IDI) was conducted with 30 college students. A paired-sample t-test was performed to compare the quantitative results before and after the IDI. **Results:** The multiple linear regression analysis revealed that attitude, perceived behavioral control, and eudaimonic motivation significantly influenced college students' intention to watch animated movies in cinemas. Finally, the paired-sample t-test results indicated significant differences between Pre-IDI and Post-IDI. **Conclusions:** This study contributes by showing that enhancing Attitude, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Eudaimonic Motivation increases university students' intention to watch animated movies in Sichuan. These findings serve as a strategic reference for film industry professionals and cinema operators in designing marketing strategies and interventions targeting university students.

Keywords: Behavior Intention, Animated Film, Influencing Factors, Consumer Behavior, Culture and Economics

JEL Classification Code: D91, M31, Z13

1. Introduction

The release of animated films in cinemas faces significant challenges, as film investment is inherently risky. A substantial portion of films fail to generate revenues that exceed their production and distribution costs. Each film is treated as an independent project, and no universally accepted model links film revenue to any specific factors (Ferrari & Rudd, 2008). Most films do not turn a profit, and neither high budgets nor star power can guarantee success. After examining factors such as budget, star power, sequels, genre, ratings, screen count, box office performance, and release year, De Vany and Walls (2004) concluded there is no formula for success in Hollywood.

Terry et al. (2004) found that critically acclaimed films generate higher revenue; however, expensive production costs can still result in losses without controlling for production budgets. Animation implies production cycles and investments above the average level (Pumares et al., 2015). Compared to live-action films, animated films are usually highly labor-intensive and have higher costs, signifying elevated investment risks (Ward, 2000).

"Animated films" or "cartoons" are a category of movies used to describe a specific type of film (Ward, 2000). Looking at the historical development of animated films,

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there have been numerous challenges in the cinema consumer market. The rise of television attracted audiences away from cinemas, serving as one significant reason for the low cinema attendance rate. Additionally, economic downturns and the impact of film quality and nature have influenced attendance rates. In the past, suggestions were made that the film industry needed new development and construction (Belson, 1958). The revenue from home movie screenings has far exceeded that from cinema screenings (Ferrari & Rudd, 2008).

This study explores the factors influencing audiences' decision to watch animated movies, determining the factors associated with the behavior of going to the cinema to watch animated movies. The ultimate goal is to provide valuable insights for film investors and distributors regarding investment themes, target audience demographics, marketing strategies, and promotional activities. This, in turn, aims to reduce the investment risk associated with animated movies and enhance the overall return on investment. Additionally, recommendations and guidance will be offered to animation film producers, specifically in story themes, plot settings, artistic styles, and understanding target audience preferences.

According to the Theory of Planned Behavior, films provide consumers with pleasurable experiences that influence their attitudes toward watching movies, leading them to view going to the theater as a positive activity (Haularizki & Rahayu, 2022). Motivation theory suggests that hedonic and eudaimonic motivations positively affect the intention to watch movies (Yu et al., 2019). Self-determination theory posits that social influence, as an external motivation, also impacts the intention to watch movies (Trabelsi & Mbarek, 2021). From a marketing perspective, electronic word of mouth has positively influenced moviegoers' purchase intentions (Joshi & Hanssens, 2009).

Previous studies have predominantly focused on movies in general, with relatively fewer studies specifically addressing the behavioral intention to watch animated movies in theaters. Given the unique characteristics of animated movies' production processes and presentation effects, there is a need for targeted research. This study makes a distinctive contribution by specifically addressing the behavioral intention to watch animated movies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Attitude (ATT)

The term "attitude" originates from the Latin word "aptus." On one hand, it connotes "suitability" or "adaptation"; on the other hand, its derivative meaning

"ability" implies a subjective or psychological readiness to act (Allport, 1933). In sociological studies of attitudes, it is considered a personal psychological process that determines each individual's actual and potential reactions in the social world (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918). In the Theory of Planned Behavior, an individual's attitude toward a behavior refers to the extent to which they like or dislike that behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Attitude positively influences the intention to watch movies, meaning that when consumers feel happy and have a pleasurable experience, they view watching movies in theaters as a positive activity (Haularizki & Rahayu, 2022). In this study, the audience's attitude toward watching animated movies in theaters is based on their outcome expectations and beliefs regarding consumption behavior, and the research explores the extent to which these attitudes affect their intention to watch movies. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H1: Attitude has a significant influence on Intention to watch animated movies.

2.2 Subjective Norms (SN)

In the Theory of Planned Behavior, subjective norms refer to the social pressure an individual perceives when deciding whether or not to perform a behavior (Ajzen, 1991). This concept is related to the perceived social influence or pressure associated with engaging in or refraining from a specific behavior (Al-Swidi et al., 2014). Chang (1998) examined the relationship between subjective norms and attitudes in the context of consumer behavior. The behavior of consumers intending to purchase organic foods is predictable and can be further anticipated through attitudes and subjective norms. Moreover, subjective norms influence consumers' willingness to purchase organic foods via their attitudes (Tarkiainen & Sundqvist, 2005). This study examines the influence of subjective norms on college students' movie-watching behavior. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2: Subjective Norms have a significant influence on Intention to watch animated movies.

2.3 Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)

Perceived Behavioral Control refers to "an individual's belief about the ease or difficulty of performing a behavior" (Ajzen, 1985; Hill et al., 1996). Perceived Behavioral Control is based on beliefs about controllability related to factors that facilitate or hinder behavior performance. These control factors include the required skills and abilities and the availability—or lack thereof—of time, money, and other resources (Ajzen & Cote, 2008). In movie consumption, Perceived Behavioral Control plays a role in increasing the willingness to engage in movie-watching behavior

(Haularizki & Rahayu, 2022). Research on the influence of Perceived Behavioral Control on movie-watching intentions shows a positive effect, indicating that consumers view watching movies as their own decision and believe they can utilize their resources to visit theaters (Haularizki & Rahayu, 2022). Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior, this study will further examine whether Perceived Behavioral Control significantly impacts university students' intentions to watch animated movies in theaters. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H3: Perceived Behavioral Control has a significant influence on Intention to watch animated movies.

2.4 Hedonic Motivation (HM)

Hedonic motivation is defined as the pursuit of happiness (positive emotions, enjoyment) and comfort (relaxation, ease) (Braaten et al., 2019; Huta & Ryan, 2010). There are two primary ways in which people seek satisfaction: hedonic motivation (the pursuit of pleasure and comfort) and eudaimonic motivation (the pursuit of growth, excellence, and virtue) (Behzadnia & Ryan, 2018). In consumption, hedonic purchasing behavior is related to emotional and socio-psychological motives rather than cognitive or functional aspects (Chang et al., 2011). In film consumption, hedonic and eudaimonic motivations positively influence the intention to watch movies (Ribeiro, 2020). This study will further examine whether hedonic motivation significantly impacts university students' intentions to watch animated movies in theaters. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H4: Hedonic Motivation has a significant influence on Intention to watch animated movies.

2.5 Eudaimonic Motivation (EM)

Eudaimonic motivation is pursuing one's potential (Jia et al., 2022). It involves aligning one's behavior with one's values and cultivating a sense of meaning—ensuring that these actions truly have an impact (Huta & Waterman, 2014). When our behavior is driven by the active pursuit of personal excellence and the maximization of our abilities and development, it is considered to be motivated by eudaimonic factors (Huta & Ryan, 2010). Based on self-determination theory, this study examines whether eudaimonic motivation significantly impacts university students' intentions to watch animated movies in theaters. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H5: Eudaimonic Motivation has a significant influence on Intention to watch animated movies.

2.6 Social Influence (SI)

Social influence is a change in an individual's cognition, attitude, or behavior caused by another person or their actions (Raven, 1964). It is considered an external motivation, reflecting the cognitive pressure exerted on an individual by their social network (Lu et al., 2005). Social influence affects participants' willingness to watch movies (Yu et al., 2019). This study further examines whether external motivation significantly impacts university students' intentions to watch animated movies in theaters. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H6: Social Influence has a significant influence on Intention to watch animated movies.

2.7 External Reward (ER)

External reward refers to the external factors that motivate an individual or group to take action, such as monetary rewards, promotions, or competitive employee awards (Filimonov, 2017). Deci and Ryan (1985) introduced self-determination theory to explain the concepts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. When money is used as an external reward, intrinsic motivation declines (Deci, 1971). Deci and Ryan (1985) further introduced cognitive evaluation theory, which posits that intrinsic motivation is based on psychological needs for autonomy and competence. The impact of external rewards on intrinsic motivation depends on how the recipients perceive these rewards. In consumer behavior, promotional activities may positively impact subsequent purchasing behavior (Rothschild & Gaidis, 1981). This study further examines whether external reward significantly impacts university students' intentions to watch animated movies in theaters. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H7: External Reward has a significant influence on Intention to watch animated movies.

2.8 Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)

Electronic word of mouth (eWOM) refers to consumers uploading comments to sales websites and online media to express their opinions (Chen & Lin, 2018). Electronic word of mouth has become a primary consideration for consumers when shopping on e-commerce websites (Aslam et al., 2019). Baek et al. (2017) explored how eWOM influences movie box office revenues at different stages through various types of social media. The effect of word of mouth is crucial at different stages of consumer purchasing decisions; disseminating positive word of mouth through popular media and social platforms significantly enhances consumers' awareness, motivation, and willingness to watch movies (Yu et al., 2019). This study further examines

whether Electronic Word of Mouth significantly impacts university students' intentions to watch animated movies in theaters. Therefore, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H8: Electronic Word of Mouth has a significant influence on Intention to watch animated movies.

2.9 Intention to Watch Movies (ITWM)

The Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) posits that behavioral intention is the proximal determinant of behavior and serves as a mediator between theoretical predictors (attitude and subjective norms) and external variables (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). The intention to watch movies in theaters refers to the behavioral tendency to do so (Park, 2013). Studies have confirmed that the intention to watch movies is influenced by various emotional, environmental, and behavioral factors (Kim, 2015). Furthermore, the audience's behavioral intention to watch movies is affected by their attitude toward relevant websites (Cho & Ha, 2004).

3. Research Methods and Materials

3.1 Research Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is built on three foundational theoretical frameworks. The first theoretical framework, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), supports the significant impact of "Attitude", "Subjective Norms", and "Perceived Behavioral Control" on behavioral intention. The second theoretical framework, Self-Determination Theory (SDT), supports the influence of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (social influence, external rewards) on behavioral intention. The third theoretical framework supports "Hedonic Motivation" and "Eudaimonic Motivation", measuring the impact of happiness and pleasure motives on behavioral intention in the HEMA scale. All three theoretical frameworks support and contribute to developing the conceptual framework presented in Figure 1.
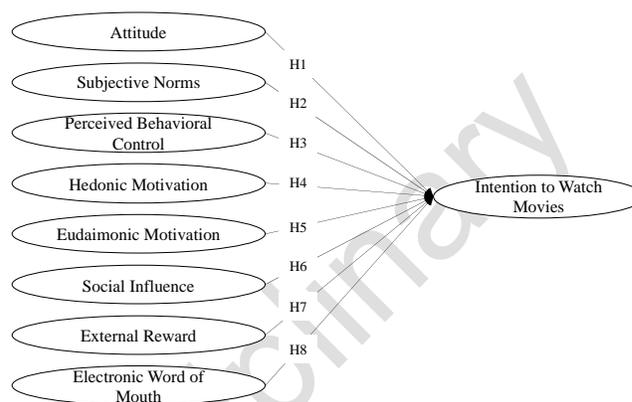
Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.2 Research Methodology

This study employed a quantitative research method and a cross-sectional study design. The research process consisted of four stages. First, a questionnaire survey (n=166) was conducted to collect data for the conceptual framework. Multiple linear regression was used to test all hypotheses, considering them statistically significant when the p-value was < 0.05. Supported hypotheses were retained, while unsupported ones were rejected.

In the second stage, a pre-IDI survey was conducted with 30 selected respondents. The third stage involved implementing an Intervention Design (IDI) with the same respondents. In the final stage, a post-IDI survey was conducted, generating data for a paired-sample t-test to compare pre-IDI and post-IDI results.

3.3 Research Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Procedures

3.3.1 Research Population

This study focused on students from four universities in Sichuan Province, China: Chengdu University of Arts and Sciences, Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Sichuan Film and Television University, and Sichuan University of Culture and Arts. The participants were exclusively students who had watched animated movies in cinemas.

A stratified random sampling method was applied, resulting in a sample of 65 students from Chengdu University of Arts and Sciences, 36 from Sichuan Conservatory of Music, 48 from Sichuan Film and Television University, and 52 from Sichuan University of Culture and Arts. After verification, 166 responses met the conditions for further research.

3.3.2 Sample Size

Hair (2009) argued that each variable should have at least 10 observed values in regression analysis. According to this study, there are eight independent variables, one dependent variable, at least 110 total samples, 166 samples for the multiple linear regression test, and 30 samples for the reliability test.

In the IDI phase, 30 students are selected as participants in implementing IDI.

3.3.3 Sampling Procedure

This study adopts purposive sampling. The sampling subjects are students who have studied in four universities, Chengdu University of Arts and Sciences, Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Sichuan Film and Television University, and Sichuan University of Culture and Arts, and have watched animated films in the cinema. The questionnaire was sent to students in the four universities online and offline. The questionnaire was distributed online through Wenjuanxing (www.wjx.com). A total of 221 students were sent questionnaires. After verification, 166 questionnaires met the conditions for further research.

In the pre-IDI stage, 30 students from the Chengdu University of Arts and Sciences were selected as participants through purposive sampling. These students are all interested in watching animated films in the cinema. They come from different grades. In the post-IDI stage, the questionnaire was distributed again to the same 30 students as in the re-IDI stage to evaluate the results of the IDI.

3.4 Research Instruments

3.4.1 Questionnaire Design

The researcher followed three steps to design the survey questionnaire:

Step 1: Identified the sources of the questionnaire from three published studies: Haularizki and Rahayu (2022), Ribeiro (2020), and Yu et al. (2019).

Step 2: Adapted and designed the questionnaire, finalizing the movie-watching intention survey with 42 items, including eight independent variables and one dependent variable.

Step 3: Validated all questionnaire items using the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC).

3.4.2 Questionnaire Components

The questionnaire consists of three parts. First, it includes demographic questions. Second, it addresses the independent variables that influence the intention to go to the cinema to watch animated movies. Finally, it focuses on behavioral intentions to watch movies.

3.4.3 IOC Results

IOC requires at least three experts' evaluation opinions. In this study, two professors and doctoral supervisors in the fields of management and education were invited, and the other was a professor of art education and a master's supervisor. This helped to review the questionnaire from an organizational and development perspective. There were 42 items in this IOC evaluation, and 41 items were retained.

3.4.4 Reliability and Validity

In this study, Cronbach's Alpha (CA) reliability test research technique was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire. This technique was first proposed by Cronbach (1951). Cronbach's α result is between 0 and 1 (Heale & Twycross, 2015). Acceptable values should have an alpha coefficient of 0.60 or greater (Sekaran, 2016).

This study distributed a questionnaire containing 41 questions to 30 respondents for reliability testing. One item (SN2) in the Subjective Norms was removed, and the remaining 40 items were retained after the reliability test. The test results and correlation are shown in the following table. All items of this research tool passed the reliability test above 0.6 points, including Attitude 0.899, Subjective Norms 0.625, Perceived Behavioral Control 0.7, Hedonic Motivation 0.842, Eudaimonic Motivation 0.903, Social Influence 0.736, External Reward 0.835, Electronic Word of Mouth 0.785, Intention to Watch Movies 0.744.

Table 1: Pilot Test Result

Variable	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Strength of Association
Attitude (ATT)	4	0.899	Good
Subjective Norms (SN)	5	0.625	Questionable
Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC)	4	0.700	Acceptable
Hedonic Motivation (HM)	6	0.842	Good
Eudaimonic Motivation (EM)	6	0.903	Excellent
Social Influence (SI)	3	0.736	Acceptable
External Reward (ER)	3	0.835	Good
Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM)	3	0.785	Acceptable
Intention to Watch Movies (ITWM)	6	0.744	Acceptable

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Demographic Profile

The subjects of this study were students from four universities in Sichuan Province, China: Chengdu University of Arts and Sciences, Sichuan Conservatory of Music, Sichuan Film and Television University, and Sichuan

University of Culture and Arts. Only students who had watched animated movies in cinemas were included in the study.

The valid responses represented the entire research population (n=166), comprising 54 students from Chengdu University of Arts and Sciences, 28 from Sichuan Conservatory of Music, 39 from Sichuan Film and Television University, and 45 from Sichuan University of Culture and Arts.

4.2 Multiple Linear Regression

The relationship between the independent variables and the intention to watch movies was analyzed using SPSS, and the results are presented in Table 2. The regression results indicated that the eight predictors explained 40.1 percent of the variance, as shown by the R-squared (R^2) value. The hypothesis is deemed statistically significant when the p-value is less than 0.05. In addition, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values less than 5 indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern (Hair et al., 1995).

Table 2: Multivariate Linear Results of Eight Independent Variables on Intention to Watch Animated Movies

Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta Value (β)	t-value	p-value	VIF	R^2
ATT	0.274	3.508	<0.001*	1.69	
SN	0.033	0.453	0.651	1.54	
PBC	0.237	3.061	0.003*	1.65	
HM	0.101	1.303	0.194	1.67	0.401
EM	0.238	3.064	0.003*	1.66	
SI	-0.019	-0.257	0.797	1.55	
ER	0.077	1.123	0.263	1.28	
eWOM	-0.060	-0.765	0.446	1.69	

Note: p-value <0.05*

The analysis results in Table 2 can be summarized as follows:

H1 is supported, indicating that Attitude has a significant influence on the Intention to Watch Animated Movies (β > 0, p-value < 0.05).

H2 is rejected, indicating that Subjective Norms has no significant influence on the Intention to Watch Animated Movies (β > 0, p-value > 0.05).

H3 is supported, indicating that Perceived Behavioral Control has a significant influence on the Intention to Watch Animated Movies (β > 0, p-value < 0.05).

H4 is rejected, indicating that Hedonic Motivation has no significant influence on the Intention to Watch Animated Movies (β > 0, p-value > 0.05).

H5 is supported, indicating that Eudaimonic Motivation has a significant influence on the Intention to Watch Animated Movies (β > 0, p-value < 0.05).

H6 is rejected, indicating that Social Influence has no significant influence on the Intention to Watch Animated Movies (β < 0, p-value > 0.05).

H7 is rejected, indicating that External Reward has no significant influence on the Intention to Watch Animated Movies (β > 0, p-value > 0.05).

4.3 IDI Intervention Stage

The detailed design of the IDI phase spans 16 weeks. The IDI plan includes the time and place, participants, intervention objectives and tools, and specific activities, as illustrated in Figure 2.
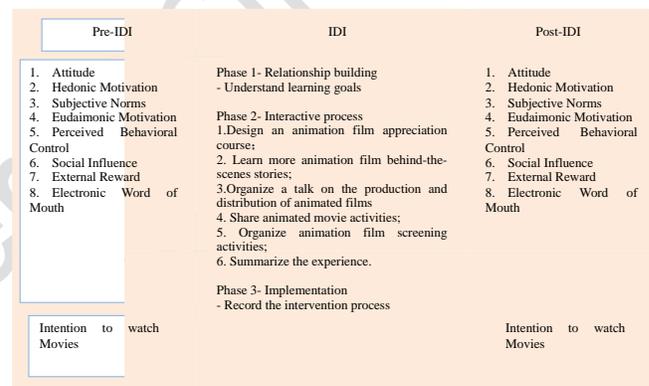
Figure 2: IDI Activities

4.4 Results Comparison between Pre-IDI and Post-IDI

A paired-sample t-test was performed on nine variables to determine whether there was a difference between the pre-IDI and post-IDI stages. The following table presents the paired-sample t-test analysis for these variables.

Table 3: Paired-sample T-test Results

Variable	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Attitude				
Pre-ATT	3.86	0.756	-3.507	0.001
Post-ATT	4.55	0.690		
Subjective Norms				
Pre-SN	3.47	0.711	-3.959	<0.001
Post-SN	3.60	0.770		
Perceived Behavioral Control				
Pre-PBC	3.75	0.722	-3.018	0.005
Post-PBC	4.26	0.733		
Hedonic Motivation				
Pre-HM	3.73	0.567	-3.572	0.001
Post-HM	4.29	0.565		
Eudaimonic Motivation				
Pre-EM	3.78	0.675	-2.514	0.018
Post-EM	4.23	0.617		
Social Influence				
Pre-SI	3.36	0.574	-0.805	0.427

Variable	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Post-SI	3.52	0.891		
External Reward				
Pre -ER	2.97	0.859	-0.216	0.830
Post-ER	3.02	0.934		
Electronic Word of Mouth				
Pre-eWOM	3.56	0.789	-0.814	0.422
Post-eWOM	3.73	0.894		
Intention to Watch Movies				
Pre-ITWM	3.64	0.461	-3.039	0.005
Post-ITWM	3.91	0.614		

The results of the paired-sample t-test are presented in Table 3, providing a comparative analysis of Pre-IDI and Post-IDI, as follows:

There was a significant difference in **Attitude** between pre-IDI (M=3.86, SD=0.756) and post-IDI (M=4.55, SD=0.690); t (29) =-3.507, p < 0.05, and the mean difference was 0.6917.

There was a significant difference in **Subjective Norms** between pre-IDI (M=3.47, SD=0.711) and post-IDI (M=3.60, SD=0.770); t (29) =-3.959, p < 0.05, and the mean difference was 0.1333.

There was a significant difference in **Perceived Behavioral Control** between pre-IDI (M=3.75, SD=0.722) and post-IDI (M=4.26, SD=0.733); t (29) =-3.018, p < 0.05, and the mean difference was 0.5083.

There was a significant difference in **Hedonic Motivation** between pre-IDI (M=3.73, SD=0.567) and post-IDI (M=4.29, SD=0.565); t (29) =-3.572, p < 0.05, and the mean difference was 0.5611.

There was a significant difference in **Eudaimonic Motivation** between pre-IDI (M=3.78, SD=0.675) and post-IDI (M=4.23, SD=0.617); t (29) =-2.514, p < 0.05, and the mean difference was 0.444.

There was no significant difference in **Social Influence** between pre-IDI (M=3.36, SD=0.574) and post-IDI (M=3.52, SD=0.891); t (29) =-0.805, p > 0.05, and the mean difference was 0.1667.

There was no significant difference in **External Reward** between pre-IDI (M=2.97, SD=0.859) and post-IDI (M=3.02, SD=0.934); t (29) =-0.216, p > 0.05, and the mean difference was 0.0556.

There was no significant difference in **Electronic Word of Mouth** between pre-IDI (M=3.56, SD=0.789) and post-IDI (M=3.73, SD=0.894); t (29) =-0.814, p > 0.05, and the mean difference was 0.1778.

There was a significant difference in **Intention to Watch Movies** between pre-IDI (M=3.64, SD=0.461) and post-IDI (M=3.91, SD=0.614); t (29) =-3.039, p < 0.05, and the mean difference was 0.2667.

The findings indicate that university students' Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, Hedonic Motivation, Eudaimonic Motivation, and Intention to Watch Movies all significantly increased from the Pre-IDI to the Post-IDI stage. However, Social Influence, External Reward, and Electronic Word of Mouth did not increase significantly from the Pre-IDI to the Post-IDI stage.

5. Conclusions and Recommendation

5.1 Conclusions

This study examined eight independent variables—Attitude, Eudaimonic Motivation, Social Influence, Perceived Behavioral Control, Hedonic Motivation, Subjective Norms, External Reward, and Electronic Word of Mouth—and one dependent variable, the intention to go to the cinema to watch animated movies. The study employed a comprehensive research design, data collection process, and methodology, leading to the final conclusions.

In the multiple linear regression analysis, the study found that Attitude, Eudaimonic Motivation, and Perceived Behavioral Control had a significant impact on university students' intention to watch animated movies in theaters. However, Subjective Norms, Hedonic Motivation, Social Influence, External Reward, and Electronic Word of Mouth did not have a statistically significant influence.

Notably, the results of the paired-sample t-test comparison revealed a significant difference between the Pre-IDI and Post-IDI stages in terms of Attitude, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, Hedonic Motivation, Eudaimonic Motivation, and Intention to Watch Movies. This indicates that the 16-week IDI intervention had a positive and statistically significant effect on participants across almost all variables—even those that were not significant in the regression model.

These findings suggest that although certain factors may not independently predict behavioral intention in a regression context, they can be meaningfully influenced through structured interventions, such as those implemented in the IDI activities. The improvements observed post-intervention demonstrate the potential to enhance students' motivation, control, and perception, which in turn can contribute to increased intention to watch animated movies.

The study revealed that, in the context of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), Attitude and Perceived Behavioral Control significantly influenced university students' intention to watch animated movies in theaters. Using the Hedonic and Eudaimonic Motives for Activities (HEMA) scale, the findings also showed that Eudaimonic Motivation had a more pronounced influence on students' movie-watching behavior. This indicates that these variables play a critical role in shaping university students' decisions to watch animated films in theaters.

However, while Subjective Norms, Hedonic Motivation, Social Influence, External Reward, and Electronic Word of

Mouth did not show a direct significant impact in the MLR, the positive change observed post-intervention suggests that these factors remain relevant and influenceable through strategic efforts. This reinforces the importance of not overlooking seemingly non-significant factors, as their potential can be unlocked through targeted interventions.

For animation industry professionals, strategic efforts should focus on enhancing audience attitudes toward animated films, improving Perceived Behavioral Control, and fostering Eudaimonic Motivation to attract more university students to theaters. At the same time, well-designed interventions like the IDI program can activate and strengthen other supporting factors, contributing to a more holistic influence on audience behavior.

This study made a valuable contribution by demonstrating that enhancing Attitude, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Eudaimonic Motivation could increase university students' intention to watch animated movies in Sichuan. The study's methodology, comprehensive analysis, and findings provide empirical evidence on the factors that can encourage students to visit cinemas for animated films. These findings can serve as a strategic reference for film industry professionals and cinema operators in designing marketing strategies and interventions targeting university students. Ultimately, the study offers practical insights for animation film selection, production, and distribution, helping industry stakeholders navigate the increasingly competitive and innovative entertainment market.

5.2 Recommendations

This study highlights the importance of Attitude, Eudaimonic Motivation, and Perceived Behavioral Control in influencing university students' intention to watch animated movies in theaters in Sichuan, China. Based on the findings, several key recommendations are proposed for animators, film distributors, and cinema operators. First, enhancing students' Attitude toward animated films is essential. This can be achieved by improving the overall quality, depth, and relevance of animated content to create stronger emotional and cultural connections with university audiences. Films that emphasize compelling storytelling, artistic merit, and meaningful themes are more likely to foster a positive perception and increase willingness to watch animated films in theaters.

Second, increasing Perceived Behavioral Control can significantly reduce barriers to moviegoing. Ensuring accessibility through student discounts, convenient showtimes, and a wider selection of animated films in local cinemas can help students feel more empowered in their decision to attend. Additionally, simplifying the ticket booking process and offering loyalty incentives can further enhance their sense of control and motivation.

Third, aligning animated film content with Eudaimonic Motivation can deepen student engagement. University students are particularly responsive to themes that promote self-reflection, emotional growth, and personal meaning. Creating films that explore these themes can make animated content more appealing to mature and introspective viewers, ultimately strengthening their intention to attend screenings.

Moreover, while certain factors such as Subjective Norms, Hedonic Motivation, Social Influence, External Reward, and Electronic Word of Mouth were not statistically significant in the regression model, the post-intervention analysis revealed that these variables can still be positively influenced. Structured programs like the IDI intervention demonstrated that well-designed educational and experiential activities can enhance these factors over time. Therefore, future strategies should consider incorporating interventions that foster social interaction, promote positive word-of-mouth, and highlight shared viewing experiences to build a supportive and influential environment around animated films.

By addressing both the directly significant predictors and the influenceable surrounding factors, industry stakeholders can more effectively attract university students to cinemas and cultivate long-term interest in animated films. This multifaceted approach not only supports the growth of the animated film industry but also provides practical guidance for developing targeted marketing strategies and audience engagement initiatives.

5.3 Limitation and Further Study

First limitation of this study is the sample size and demographics, as it included only 166 university students from four universities in Sichuan Province, China. Differences in survey scope and sample size may affect the results. Expanding the sample size and including students from diverse locations in future research could enhance generalizability.

Another limitation is the selection of variables. This study examined eight independent variables and one dependent variable based on multiple theoretical models. Future research could explore additional variables and interactions to better understand the factors influencing college students' decisions to watch animated films in theaters.

Lastly, the study used a specific intervention design. Future research could consider alternative or improved intervention approaches to enhance variable testing and obtain more robust findings. Refining methodologies may strengthen the validity and applicability of the results, contributing to a deeper understanding of university students' movie-watching behavior.

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