

Examining Chinese Audiences' Views of Hollywood Movies in the Glocal Media Landscape

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Abstract

This study uses a mixed-method, self-administered questionnaire (n=1942) gathered in 2022 using purposive and snowball sampling to examine Chinese viewers' opinions of Hollywood films within a glocal media framework. Based on media ecology, it investigates, via three study issues, the transnational and glocal convergence of cinema genres, storylines, stars, and consumption habits. Eight major themes emerge from the findings: (1) Hollywood's enduring appeal on a global scale; (2) factors influencing film choice; (3) the role of digital platforms in discovery; (4) trailer engagement; (5) the influence of ratings, reviews, and language; (6) linguistic and cultural consumption preferences; (7) satisfaction with film endings; and (8) Hollywood's impact on Chinese cinema. In an ever-changing media ecosystem, these insights provide light on audience preferences and superstar perceptions, providing crucial implications for policymakers and local and foreign filmmakers to create tailored content that increases audience engagement and movie attendance..

Key Words: American dream; audience research; Chinese cinema; Hollywood; local reception; media ecology; survey

Introduction

For a long time, there has been an unequal dynamic in the distribution of entertainment content across regions, with wealthy countries traditionally supplying media items to less developed ones. Hollywood's long-lasting impact on the worldwide film industry, especially the decades-long dominance of the U.S. film industry, is a classic example (Gomery & Pafort-Overduin, 2011; F. L. F. Lee, 2009; Shah et al., 2020; X. Zhang, 2018, p. 335). However, current patterns point to a change in the direction of a more diverse cultural production environment. The emergence of significant film industries like Bollywood, Nollywood, and Hallyuwood, which are attracting global audiences and influencing cinematic tastes, is what is causing this change (Ganghariya & Kanozia, 2020; Musa, 2019; Shao, 2019; Sunder, 2011; Thussu, 2013). In addition to broadening the range of material consumed, the growth of these sectors is upending Hollywood's long-standing hegemony and creating a more diverse and inclusive entertainment landscape.

Hollywood has expanded its worldwide reach while concentrating audience attention on a small number of blockbusters by utilising its marketing techniques and franchising expertise (McMahon,

2022; Musa, 2022). Hollywood imports have been a significant source of entertainment for Chinese viewers since China adopted economic reforms in the 1980s and subsequently put revenue-sharing procedures in place in 1994 (Gao et al., 2020; Grimm, 2015; Ho et al., 2019; Walls & McKenzie, 2012). These imports accounted for up to 75% of China's domestic box office share between the 1990s and the beginning of the twenty-first century (Su, 2016). Despite Hollywood's continued dominance over the next ten years—from 51.54% to 36% of the market prior to the pandemic (Thomala, 2023a)—the trends are changing.

Hollywood used to rule the Chinese film industry, but its power is waning. Hollywood's established market dominance is being undermined by domestic productions as well as films from South Korea, Japan, India, the United Kingdom, and France (S. Lee, 2019; Yang, 2012; Yaqoub, 2022). In addition, American studios encounter political and cultural barriers while trying to break into the Chinese market, especially in the post-pandemic period. Hollywood's presence in China has been complicated by issues like strict censorship, changing viewer preferences, the expansion of OTT platforms, the strengthening domestic film industry, trade disputes, quota restrictions, and growing nationalism (Song, 2018; Yaqoub, Jingwu, & Ambekar, 2023). Viewers are becoming more interested in a wider range of cinematic experiences rather than only Hollywood blockbusters (Hairuo & Chuyi, 2023; Yaqoub, Jingwu, & Ambekar, 2023).

The enormous box office success of Chinese films like *Wolf Warrior 2*, *Ne Zha*, *Hi, Mom*, *The Wandering Earth*, and *Dying for Survival* highlights a rising need for locally made stories and material that tackle regional socioeconomic issues. *The Eight Hundred*, *The Sacrifice*, and *The Battle at Lake Changjin*—China's highest-grossing movie to date—as well as the nation's 2021 Oscar submission, *Leap*, have all benefited from the country's quick economic recovery following COVID-19 and a rise in nationalist sentiment (Brzeski, 2021; Yaqoub, 2023). Hollywood is still present in China even if its impact has diminished. Chinese moviegoers responded favourably to films that did poorly in the United States, such *The Meg*, *Venom*, and *Aquaman*, which made US\$292 million in 2018 (Brzeski, 2023; Clark, 2019). *The Captain* (2019) earned 2.19 billion yuan, whereas *Avengers: Endgame* (2019) amassed almost 4.25 billion yuan, making it the sole foreign picture to enter China's top 10 (Thomala, 2023b).

Hollywood films continue to attract Chinese moviegoers, as seen by yearly sales, even though box office numbers have not yet reached pre-pandemic levels. In 2021, there was a lot of interest in films like *Godzilla vs. Kong* (\$188.7 million) and *F9: The Fast Saga* (\$216.94 million). *Avatar: The Way of Water* (\$245.996 million) and *Jurassic World Dominion* (\$157.62 million) showed sustained popularity the next year. *Fast & Furious 10* (\$139.55 million), *Meg 2: The Trench* (\$118.7 million), and *Transformers: Rise of the Beasts* (\$91.60 million) continued to be popular even in 2023, despite its earnings falling short of pre-pandemic levels. The persistent appeal of Hollywood blockbusters underscores Chinese consumers' continued interest in these films together with their growing excitement for domestic cinema, even as OTT platforms gain ground (Yaqoub, Jingwu, & Ambekar, 2023). *The Avengers*, *Leon: The Professional*, and *Harry Potter and the*

Sorcerer's Stone were among the most popular films in China, according to a prior research (Maoyan Entertainment, 2020).

Hollywood's financial success and worldwide popularity have been thoroughly examined by film experts. Numerous studies have looked at its dominance from various perspectives. Wilson (2006) and Bordwell (2002) both address narrative transparency in traditional Hollywood, with Bordwell concentrating on enhanced continuity in visual storytelling and Wilson highlighting its conventions. In the meanwhile, Zborowski (2015) offers a novel viewpoint on cinematic point of view by fusing narratology, communication studies, and philosophy. Pearson and Smith (2014) examine how screen narratives interact with production, distribution, and reception while taking technical and national factors into account. When taken as a whole, these studies provide insight into how Hollywood narrative has changed from its classical origins to modern film.

While Song (2018) examines the intricacies of Hollywood's strategic presence in the Chinese market, Zhang (2022) highlights Hollywood's ongoing attraction in China. Yuhui and Yongchun (2020) show Hollywood's influence during times of transition by contrasting China's reaction to Hollywood in the 1930s and 1990s. Fu (2019) investigates the regulatory environment Hollywood encountered in China throughout the 1990s, which was influenced by conflicting internal and foreign forces. Hollywood films continue to have a complicated connection with Chinese viewers, who use them for cultural reflection, enjoyment, and visual escape. Hollywood films frequently provoke conversations about Chinese culture and social values, demonstrating how cultural and political factors influence reception (Su, 2021).

Opinions are still split despite Hollywood's persistent influence. While some Chinese viewers support the partnership with Hollywood, others oppose its rapid business expansion (Jihong & Kraus, 2002). Chinese views of America are greatly influenced by U.S. popular culture, particularly Hollywood, and are influenced by personal exposure and inclinations (Gries et al., 2015). As China struggles with its cultural stance, the flood of Hollywood films has stoked discussions about globalisation and national identity (Su, 2011). Hollywood's involvement in cultural imperialism within globalisation has been studied by several academics (Bettinson, 2016; Y. Li, 2023; Rampal, 2007; Y. Zhang, 2012).

While there are many Chinese-language studies on how local audiences react to Hollywood films, there are still few thorough English-language studies (Su, 2021; Zhu & Christie, 2015). This study fills this knowledge vacuum by offering a more thorough comprehension of Chinese audiences' inclinations and reasons for watching Hollywood films. It investigates audience preferences in terms of genres, information sources, decision-making procedures, and cultural interpretations through in-depth study. Along with linguistic preferences (subtitles vs. dubbing) and biases toward particular movie endings, this study also takes into account the impact of trailers, reviews, and ratings.

Finally, we evaluate the audience's interest in American culture, their willingness to learn from Hollywood movies, and their opinions of well-known actors, actresses, and directors. The apparent

differences between the Chinese and Hollywood film industries are also highlighted by our research, pointing out areas in which earlier research has fallen short. We specifically look at how the Chinese audience's global imagination is changing in light of the current geopolitical environment. This study contributes to our understanding of cross-cultural cinematic consumption trends by providing insightful information about the complex mechanisms influencing Chinese choices for Hollywood films.

A media ecology perspective on changing media habits and preferences

Adopting a media ecology framework, this study investigates how Chinese audiences' media habits, tastes, and preferences shift in response to domestic and global industry trends. Media ecologists argue that communication methods function as foundational forces shaping societies and institutions (Alexander, 2006; Griffin et al., 2022; Strate, 2017). They contend that each media era and technology exert cultural determinism. The fusion of digital and visual media has established a novel communicative landscape. Within China's film-viewing sphere, globalization and localization interact in opposing yet interwoven ways. On one hand, the Chinese government actively fosters national identity, interests, and values via homegrown films and popular culture. Simultaneously, competition has intensified, with Chinese and other Asian film industries emerging as viable alternatives to Hollywood. In addition, globalization and transnational distribution contribute to cultural blending, influencing narratives, tastes, and cinematic symbols.

This study posits that, in an era of glocalization, audience segmentation based on subcultures, social demographics, and lifestyles will increasingly shape film preferences over national identity. While China continues to develop its domestic film sector and promote local stars, Hollywood's actors and directors will likely maintain their appeal. To examine these ideas, the research addresses key questions: How do subcultures within China shape individual preferences for local and global films? What sustains Hollywood celebrities' enduring popularity among Chinese audiences? In what ways does digital and visual media convergence, fueled by globalization, influence Chinese media consumption patterns?

Methods and materials

Study design

Surveys have been extensively employed in film, drama, and television studies to collect audience feedback, measure preferences, assess consumption patterns, and evaluate satisfaction levels (J. Feng, 2023; Kelly, 2019; Lu, 2022; RecordTrend, 2022; Turner, 2019; Yaqoub, 2021; Yaqoub, Jingwu, & Matusitz, 2023). As a vital tool across multiple disciplines, audience research informs decision-making, refines strategies, and enhances experiences for both creators and viewers. This cross-sectional study is part of a broader investigation into the film preferences and viewing behaviors of Chinese audiences concerning domestic productions, Hollywood, and non-Western films.

Arguing that a mixed methods approach provides a more nuanced understanding of individual perspectives, this study integrates both structured response options and open-ended insights to capture participants' sentiments more effectively. Data collection relied on self-administered electronic surveys, employing purposive and snowball sampling to explore movie preferences and viewing habits within the target demographic. Rather than aiming for broad generalizability, the methodology prioritized accuracy, authenticity, and transparency in its findings.

Research questions

This first research question (RQ1) is essential because it captures the tension between Hollywood's dominance and the rising Chinese film industry. Previous research has shown that while Hollywood films remain popular among Chinese youth due to high production values, visual appeal, and narrative innovation, there is also a growing preference for domestic films that reflect Chinese cultural identity. By exploring how young audiences negotiate these influences, this study can provide insights into the broader dynamics of cultural globalization, audience agency, and evolving film preferences in China.

RQ1: How do young Chinese adults navigate the balance between Hollywood's global appeal and the cultural relevance of domestic films?

The second research question (RQ2) can increase our awareness of the evolving consumption habits of Chinese audiences in the digital era. It would help shed light on how streaming services, movie trailers, online reviews, and social media influence film choices, reflecting a shift in how Hollywood films reach and engage viewers. Investigating these digital consumption patterns can offer valuable insights into the impact of technology on transnational media engagement and provide a deeper understanding of the factors sustaining Hollywood's appeal in China despite increasing competition from local productions.

RQ2: What role do digital platforms and social media play in shaping young Chinese audiences' engagement with Hollywood films?

The third research question (RQ3) is crucial for understanding why Hollywood films continue to attract Chinese viewers, even as homegrown productions gain prominence. Our study highlights multiple reasons for this sustained appeal, including Hollywood's established global brand, high production values, star power, and effective marketing strategies. At the same time, it acknowledges that political, economic, and cultural shifts have made Hollywood's dominance in China less absolute. Investigating the specific factors—such as genre preferences, narrative styles, marketing strategies, and the role of digital platforms—will offer valuable insights into why Chinese audiences continue to engage with Hollywood films.

RQ3: How do shifting audience preferences, government policies, and digital media convergence impact Hollywood's market share and cultural influence in China's evolving film industry?

Taken as a whole, these three RQs can contribute to broader discussions on global cultural flows and audience agency in media consumption.

Participants and data collection

During the study's planning phase, faculty and students were engaged via QQ and WeChat across China, encouraging them to complete and share the survey link within their networks of film-watching peers. To enhance participation, the questionnaire was provided in both Chinese and English, and respondents were offered randomized online compensation of up to 5 RMB. Eligible participants had to meet specific criteria: being native Chinese speakers, having an interest in films, demonstrating a basic understanding of film content, spending at least five minutes on the survey, and being at least 17 years old. Data from 75 respondents were excluded for failing to meet these requirements, leaving 1,942 valid e-questionnaires collected between July 15 and November 20, 2022.

Measures

A thorough literature review informed the formulation of preliminary research questions (Hong, 2021; Khan et al., 2022; Lu, 2022; Pellitteri & Wong, 2021; Walmsley, 2019; Yaqoub, Jingwu, & Matusitz, 2023). To examine audience perceptions, consumption habits, and viewing patterns related to Hollywood films, the structured self-administered survey included two key sections. The first gathered demographic details such as age, gender, field of study, education level, monthly spending, use of paid streaming services, and cinema attendance. The second focused on participants' engagement with Hollywood films and U.S. culture.

Interest in Hollywood films was assessed based on participants' familiarity with film-watching. To ensure the reliability of items related to Hollywood films, Cronbach's alpha was calculated, resulting in a coefficient of 0.79 (Shah et al., 2016; Yaqoub, Matusitz, et al., 2023; Yaqoub & Shah, 2014). A statistical significance threshold of 0.05 was applied.

Overall Findings

The study examined the demographics of 1942 film enthusiasts, primarily young adults aged 18 to 25 (Thomala, 2023c). Women slightly outnumbered men, making up 51.49% of participants. A significant portion (62.62%) pursued degrees in literature, history, or the arts, with 69.88% identified as undergraduates. Nearly 60% of respondents reported a monthly personal expenditure between 1100 and 2000 RMB. Notably, two in five had over a decade of cinemagoing experience. Among them, 46.96% were active subscribers to OTT platforms, indicating a strong engagement with digital streaming services (**Table 1**).

The findings that emerged from the data were grouped into eight major categories: (1) Global cinema preferences and Hollywood's lasting influence, (2) determinants of film selection and the Hollywood appeal, (3) digital influence on movie discovery, (4) engagement with movie trailers, (5) impact of ratings, reviews, and language preferences, (6) linguistic and cultural preferences in Hollywood film consumption, (7) audience satisfaction and film endings, and (8) Hollywood's influence on the Chinese film industry.

(1) Global Cinema Preferences and Hollywood's Lasting Influence

Survey responses highlighted a widespread interest in films from various regions, with Chinese cinema emerging as the most favored at 84.35%, followed by U.S. films, which garnered 73.58% support. Indian, South Korean, British, and Japanese movies also captivated audiences, with preference rates fluctuating between 14.78% and 29.09%. In contrast, fewer participants leaned toward French, Spanish, Italian, or German productions, though some expressed a broader affinity for European cinema. Russian films secured a modest following, while a handful of respondents mentioned an interest in films from Eastern Europe, Iran, or Vietnam. Notably, 8.96% of participants selected “All of the above,” indicating an extensive appreciation for cinema worldwide. Meanwhile, 2.94% provided unique answers under the “Other” category (**Table 2**).

A particularly striking trend was the continued dominance of U.S. films, particularly Hollywood and Marvel productions, reinforcing a pattern observed in previous studies. Prior research indicates that Chinese audiences exhibit a pronounced preference for Hollywood blockbusters and renowned actors, aligning with the findings of this study.

(2) Determinants of Film Selection and the Hollywood Appeal

A variety of factors shape audience decisions when choosing movies (G. C. Feng, 2017). Topping the list, 65.19% of respondents pointed to Hollywood's visually stunning productions, emphasizing cinematography, special effects, and overall aesthetic excellence. Alongside this, 46.19% regarded compelling narratives and well-structured storytelling as key components of their viewing experience.

Equally significant, 40.73% valued Hollywood's willingness to explore diverse themes and storytelling approaches, while 39.24% praised its technical mastery, including cinematography, sound design, and artistic direction. A notable 37.23% gravitated toward Hollywood's ability to deliver original and unconventional narratives, underscoring the importance of fresh storytelling. Meanwhile, 28.42% highlighted its immersive entertainment experience as a major draw. Actors also played a pivotal role in shaping audience preferences, with 20.7% citing both their performances and physical appeal as deciding factors (Han & Ravid, 2020; Kwak & Zhang, 2011). Likewise, 17.87% appreciated the relatability of values depicted in Hollywood films, whereas 16.48% gravitated toward narratives exploring the emotional complexities of everyday life.

Star power exerted its influence as well, with 10.09% choosing Hollywood films due to celebrity culture (Nelson & Glotfelty, 2012; Kang et al., 2022; Kang & Peng, 2023). Similarly, 10.04% acknowledged the significance of film titles in shaping their choices (Bae & Kim, 2019). Curiosity also factored in, as 4.17% watched Hollywood films out of general interest, while 4.12% did so simply due to the industry's global reputation. Interestingly, 7.78% had no specific reason, treating their Hollywood viewing as a casual habit. A small fraction—0.98%—offered unique motivations. On the whole, audience perspectives varied widely. While many praised Hollywood for its production quality and storytelling, others criticized its perceived lack of originality or

depth. These findings illustrate the complex and multifaceted nature of movie preferences, highlighting both admiration and skepticism toward Hollywood cinema (Table 3).

(3) Digital Influence on Movie Discovery

The increasing prominence of social media has reshaped how individuals discover films, with online recommendations playing a pivotal role. Fu et al. (2018) found that as social networking platforms gain traction, users rely more on digital word-of-mouth when deciding which movies to watch. Notably, personal recommendations remain highly influential, with 68.59% of respondents turning to friends or peers for film suggestions (Guangpei, 2018; Maoyan Entertainment, 2020). Simultaneously, 69% of participants consult social media platforms like WeChat and Weibo for movie insights, while video-sharing websites and mobile apps collectively attract 61.12% of moviegoers searching for new films (**Table 4**).

Traditional media, on the other hand, wields significantly less influence. Only 32.85% of participants rely on cinema visits, while a mere 15.04% turn to conventional media sources such as television, radio, and newspapers. A minor fraction (1.96%) indicated “Other” sources, demonstrating the diverse ways audiences discover films. These findings reflect a shift towards digital platforms and interpersonal networks as dominant influences in contemporary movie consumption. Moreover, they align with the notion that subcultures, rather than national cultures, shape cinematic preferences.

(4) Engagement with Movie Trailers

The way audiences engage with promotional content has similarly evolved, with digital platforms serving as the primary space for viewing trailers. A substantial 73.12% of respondents watch trailers on video-sharing sites, while social media follows closely at 71.01%. These online avenues allow users to actively seek and engage with previews, reinforcing their role in modern movie marketing. Conversely, search engines and trailers shown in public transit spaces exert considerably less impact, with 35.07% and 13.49% of participants, respectively, accessing trailers through these means. By extension, 5.92% indicated they do not watch movie trailers at all (**Table 5**).

Subjective responses further highlight a wide range of additional channels beyond those commonly reported. Mobile applications such as Alipay, Douban, and Meituan’s movie ticket platforms serve as alternative sources, alongside in-theater previews and digital screens in shopping malls and subway stations. Some participants even expressed disinterest in trailers due to concerns about spoilers or a lack of inclination to seek out promotional content. These insights emphasize the individualized nature of movie trailer consumption and the growing dominance of digital platforms in film promotion.

(5) Impact of Ratings, Reviews, and Language Preferences

The influence of movie trailers extends beyond initial engagement, shaping audience expectations and influencing decisions at the box office. Research by Hamel (2012), Karray and Debernitz (2017), and Suvattanadilok (2021) illustrates that trailers, driven by creative and

emotional elements, significantly impact audience perceptions. Statistical analyses further reveal a gender-based difference in trailer influence. While both males and females acknowledged their impact, a higher percentage of female viewers (484 out of 1,000) reported trailers as a major deciding factor compared to males (442 out of 942). Meanwhile, 154 individuals across genders noted that trailers had little effect on their film choices (**Figure 1**).

Beyond trailers, ratings and reviews play a substantial role in shaping movie preferences, though their influence varies across demographics. Studies indicate that 80.7% of participants consider reviews when selecting films, with variations based on monthly expenditure (Coonan, 2013; G. C. Feng, 2018). For instance, 74.6% of individuals spending less than 1000 RMB per month consider reviews, while the percentage rises to 84.2% for those in the 2100~3000 RMB range. In contrast, 8.8% of respondents claimed that reviews did not affect their movie choices. A chi-square test confirmed a statistically significant correlation ($\chi^2(6) = 15.407, p < 0.017$) between spending patterns and review reliance, suggesting that individuals' financial habits shape their susceptibility to external opinions (**Table 6**).

Finally, language presentation significantly impacts audience preferences, particularly among Chinese-speaking viewers. While subtitles and dubbing can alter a movie's comedic essence (Malenova, 2015), a notable 75.93% of respondents preferred watching Hollywood films with Chinese subtitles, whereas only 1.75% favored dubbing. An additional 15.12% expressed a preference for both subtitles and dubbing, while 5.46% remained indifferent. A small minority (1.75%) opted for alternative viewing methods (**Figure 2**). These preferences highlight the importance of accessibility and cultural adaptation in shaping international film consumption.

(6) Linguistic and Cultural Preferences in Hollywood Film Consumption

Audience responses revealed a diverse range of preferences regarding language and subtitles. Many viewers strongly favored Chinese subtitles over alternative options, with some preferring bilingual subtitles or original audio with foreign-language subtitles. A chi-square analysis indicated a marginally significant correlation ($p = .051$) between demographic factors and language choices, suggesting that various attributes may influence viewing habits. Given these findings, adopting a multilingual approach in Hollywood films could better accommodate audience preferences.

Hollywood's cultural impact extends beyond entertainment, influencing global perceptions of the U.S. lifestyle. Exposure to these films fosters fascination with the *American Dream*, affecting areas such as music, fashion, and daily life, particularly among younger audiences (Ibbi, 2013; Yanhong, 2012; Yu, 2022). Crosstabulation analysis highlighted distinct gender-based variations in cultural curiosity post-viewing. Female respondents reported a greater increase in interest, with 26.3% expressing heightened concern, compared to 13.6% of males. The chi-square test further underscored this gender disparity (Pearson Chi-Square = 45.182, $df = 5, p < .001$), demonstrating the role of Hollywood in shaping international cultural awareness (**Table 8**).

(7) Audience Satisfaction and Film Endings

Viewers expressed high satisfaction with Hollywood films, with 75.44% reporting positive experiences. Dissatisfaction was notably low, with only 2.63% expressing discontent. The mean satisfaction score of 2.19 reaffirmed the audience's generally favorable perception of Hollywood productions. Movie-ending preferences also reflected distinct patterns, particularly along gender lines. While both male and female viewers gravitated toward perfect endings (50.85% and 58.2%, respectively), males were more inclined to favor implicit conclusions (34.39%) than their female counterparts (24.7%) (**Figure 3**). The chi-square analysis identified a significant correlation between gender and preferred movie endings ($\chi^2 = 29.881$, $p < .000$). Moreover, open-ended responses provided deeper insight into audience expectations, with some prioritizing logical and meaningful resolutions while others remained open to various conclusion styles.

(8) Hollywood's Influence on the Chinese Film Industry

Survey responses highlighted areas where China's film industry could benefit from Hollywood's expertise. Participants identified special effects (61.38%), narrative structure (39.7%), cinematography (45.98%), and acting techniques (30.84%) as key areas for improvement. These findings indicate that adopting Hollywood's strengths could enhance Chinese cinema's global competitiveness (**Figure 4**).

Star power also emerged as a significant factor influencing audience preferences. Leonardo DiCaprio was the most frequently mentioned favorite actor (263 mentions), followed by Robert Downey Jr. (191 mentions) and Dwayne Johnson (140 mentions). Other prominent figures included Jason Statham, Scarlett Johansson, and Tom Hanks, illustrating a tiered hierarchy of popularity. Similarly, Hollywood directors garnered notable recognition. Christopher Nolan led as the most frequently cited favorite, followed by Steven Spielberg, Quentin Tarantino, James Cameron, and David Fincher. The responses demonstrated a broad spectrum of cinematic appreciation, spanning various directorial styles and genres (**Table 7**).

Respondents further delineated perceived differences between Hollywood and Chinese films. Many highlighted disparities in ideological themes, narrative structures, and technical execution. Some critiques centered on casting decisions, script coherence, and commercialization's influence on Chinese cinema. Collectively, these perspectives underscore the need for industry advancements in storytelling, acting, and production quality to meet evolving audience expectations (**Table 9**).

The media ecology perspective

The study's findings can also be analyzed through the lens of media ecology, which considers how communication environments shape human perception, behavior, and cultural engagement. The increasing reliance on OTT platforms and digital media highlights a shift in the media ecosystem, where digital streaming services function as dominant channels for film consumption. This shift signifies a transition from traditional cinemagoing to a more decentralized and algorithm-driven film experience, altering audience decision-making processes.

The engagement with trailers, reviews, and ratings further illustrates the influence of digital media in shaping audience preferences, reinforcing the role of participatory culture in contemporary media consumption. Additionally, the study's demographic trends suggest that younger audiences, particularly students in humanities and arts disciplines, are embedded in an evolving media environment that blends local and global influences. Hollywood's continued impact reflects the interconnected nature of media ecosystems, where technological advancements and cultural narratives intersect to shape film consumption patterns in China.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research examines how young Chinese adults perceive Hollywood films, aligning with prior studies on Chinese audience preferences (L. Li, 2008; Rosen, 2009; Su, 2021). Previous research on Chinese youth has shown the complexity of their attitudes toward international cinema, covering Hollywood, South Korean, and Indian films (Chen & Liu, 2023; Jirattikorn, 2021; Kim & Wang, 2012; S. Lee, 2019; Yaqoub, Jingwu, & Matusitz, 2023). These findings resonate with earlier work on the reception of Hollywood films and U.S. culture.

Earlier studies have revealed a range of audience preferences for cinematic themes, actors, directors, and technological innovations. These differences reflect diverse interests—some audiences embrace global interconnectedness and technological progress, while others focus on preserving cultural values and heritage. The portrayal of themes in Hollywood films, alongside the influence of directors and actors, highlights the variety of tastes within this audience, showing how individuals are drawn to specific genres, narratives, and technologies in Hollywood cinema.

The popularity of international films among Chinese viewers highlights the strong influence of globalization on their attitudes toward foreign cinema. From 2020 to 2023, the majority of Chinese watched more movies, with online streaming growing during the COVID-19 pandemic, showing a marked interest in films (Maoyan Entertainment, 2020; Yaqoub, Jingwu, & Ambekar, 2023). Hollywood's Chinese audience, along with box office earnings, further indicate the widespread appeal of Hollywood films in China (L. Li, 2008; Rosen, 2009; Shah et al., 2020, 2021). The influence of Hollywood on the worldview and values of Chinese youth is substantial (Su, 2021). Our research offers valuable insights into the preferences of Chinese audiences regarding Hollywood movies, covering motivations, information sources, trailer impact, language choices, genre satisfaction, cultural interest after viewing, and evolving global perceptions amid current geopolitical changes, addressing gaps in previous research.

In our study, about 74% of participants expressed a preference for U.S. films, a higher percentage compared to an earlier study (Zhang, 2022), with 40% reporting over 10 years of film-watching experience. Visual appeal, high production quality, and innovative themes are key motivators, emphasizing the importance of aesthetics, storytelling, and narrative creativity in Hollywood's global appeal. These findings also highlight the role of personal recommendations and digital platforms in shaping movie consumption, reflecting the changes in film distribution and consumption in the digital age (Maoyan Entertainment, 2020). Participants showed a strong

preference for watching movie trailers on video sites and social media platforms, with these trailers significantly influencing their movie choices. Additionally, movie reviews and ratings played an important role in their decision-making.

A surprising finding was that most respondents who preferred American/Hollywood films wanted to watch them with Chinese subtitles, showing a clear preference for original audio or foreign language subtitles over Chinese dubbing. Both male and female viewers favored movies with conclusive endings, particularly those that provide perfect resolutions followed by implicit conclusions. The respondents expressed overall satisfaction with Hollywood films across various genres, particularly appreciating their viewing experiences. The audience wishes for the Chinese film industry to adopt more techniques from Hollywood, especially in visual effects (VFX) and cinematography (Xie, 2022).

The distribution of preferences revealed clear patterns, such as the strong appeal of specific Hollywood actors and actresses like Leonardo DiCaprio, Robert Downey Jr., and Dwayne Johnson, reflecting their continued popularity with the Chinese audience. There was also a noticeable preference for directors, with Christopher Nolan emerging as a popular choice, followed by Steven Spielberg, Quentin Tarantino, James Cameron, and David Fincher, illustrating diverse tastes across cinematic styles. These findings highlight a significant recognition of Hollywood actors and actresses, in contrast to directors, pointing to a greater familiarity with the former. This supports earlier research on audience preferences for actors but challenges established views about the influence of directors on audience choices (Kwak & Zhang, 2011).

Additionally, the research highlights the differences between Hollywood and Chinese films, providing insights into the cultural, artistic, technical, and commercial factors shaping these industries. These findings are relevant for international and domestic producers, directors, and investors who aim to tailor their market strategies to the preferences of the Chinese audience, thereby enhancing both the commercial success and cultural relevance of their films. Despite Hollywood's global dominance, the growing Chinese film industry presents significant competition (McDonnell & Silver, 2009; Shah et al., 2021). This study provides a foundation for future research on the factors driving Hollywood's popularity in China. This study, primarily quantitative, suggests further qualitative research in the future.

While acknowledging the limitations of generalizing from self-reported data in this study, which focused on a specific sample, it offers valuable insights into the consumption habits of Chinese audiences concerning foreign films, particularly Hollywood productions. Future research into the factors influencing these preferences could offer deeper understanding for the film industry to cater to diverse linguistic and cultural audiences. The varied responses demonstrate the complexity of movie endings, with preferences ranging from closure-driven conclusions to more open-ended resolutions.

This study emphasizes the importance for the Chinese film industry to adopt Hollywood's expertise, especially in areas such as special effects, narrative structure, cinematography, and

character development. These findings suggest the potential for future collaboration between Hollywood and China to strengthen the global competitiveness of both industries (Herring, 2021). These insights are crucial not only for industry professionals but also for researchers studying the dynamics of film consumption, consumer behavior, and the broader trends shaping entertainment in the evolving media landscape.

Furthermore, this research contributes to the broader discourse on global media consumption by highlighting how geopolitical, technological, and cultural dynamics influence audience preferences. Unlike previous works that focus solely on Hollywood's dominance (e.g., Alford, 2010) or China's emerging film industry (Lin, 2010), this study bridges these perspectives, offering a more nuanced understanding of cross-cultural media engagement. By expanding on the motivations behind film preferences, our findings highlight the evolving nature of global cinema consumption. The preference for digital platforms and social media for film discovery underscores the increasing role of technology in shaping audience behavior.

The study also raises questions about how Hollywood can continue to appeal to international audiences in the face of growing competition from local film industries. The increasing preference for original audio and foreign language subtitles suggests a shift toward authenticity in film-watching experiences, challenging traditional localization strategies. This study offers a significant step in understanding audience dynamics but also calls for longitudinal studies to explore how these preferences evolve over time. The findings emphasize the need for future research to examine the interplay between Hollywood's global strategies and China's domestic film policies, ultimately contributing to a richer understanding of transnational film engagement.

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Table 1. Audience and their characteristics.

Characteristic	Percentage (n) or Mean (SD)
<i>AGE OF AUDIENCE</i>	22.65 (SD=3.81)
<i>Gender (female)</i>	51.49% (n=1000)
<i>AREA OF STUDY</i>	
Literature and History	38.21% (n=742)
Science and Engineering	28.58% (n=555)
Arts Comprehensive	24.41% (n=474)
Other	8.81% (n=171)
<i>ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION</i>	
Master/PhD	26.42% (n=513)
Undergraduate	69.88% (n=1357)
Senior high school or under	3.71% (n=72)
<i>AVERAGE MONTHLY PERSONAL CONSUMPTION</i>	
Below 1000 RMB	8.7% (n=169)
1100~2000 RMB	59.37% (n=1153)
2100~3000 RMB	19.93% (n=387)
Over 3000 RMB	12% (n=233)
<i>ACTIVE PAID VIDEO SITE/APP USERS</i>	46.96% (n=912)
<i>CINEMAGOING EXPERIENCE</i>	
>10 years	40.94% (n=795)
4~10 years	40.52% (n=787)
<4 years	18.53% (n=360)

SD = standard deviation; n = number

Table 2. Preferred countries for watching movies.

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
China	1638	84.35%
America	1429	73.58%
India	287	14.78%
South Korea	602	31%
U. K	525	27.03%

Japan	565	29.09%
Thailand	86	4.43%
All of the above	174	8.96%
Other, please specify	57	2.94%

Table 3. Motivations and reasons behind the consumption of Hollywood films.

Factors	Percentage (n)
Novel theme	37.23% (n=723)
Hollywood movies exhibit a natural openness	40.73% (n=791)
The visual impact of Hollywood movies	65.19% (n=1266)
High degree of completion (full content and well-made)	46.19% (n=897)
The values and outlook on life shown in Hollywood movies are closer to real-life	17.87% (n=347)
Pay more attention to the emotional world of small people	16.48% (n=320)
Hollywood films are more captivating	28.42% (n=552)
Like Hollywood stars	10.09% (n=196)
Movie title	10.04% (n=195)
Actor's appearance and acting skills	20.7% (n=402)
Production technology such as photography, sound, art, etc.	39.24% (n=762)
An interest in Hollywood	4.17% (n=81)
Because it's a Hollywood movie	4.12% (n=80)
No special reason	7.78% (n=151)

Factors	Percentage (n)
Did not watch	3.09% (n=60)
Other, please specify	0.98% (n=19)

n = number

Table 4. Typically sources of information for a new movie discovery.

Options	Percentage (n)
In the mouth of others/ peer-recommended	68.59% (n=1332)
WeChat, Weibo etc.	69% (n=1340)
Video sites/ APP platform, etc.	61.12% (n=1187)
Watch in cinema at the cinema	32.85% (n=638)
TV, radio, newspapers	15.04% (n=292)
Others, please specify	1.96% (n=38)

Table 5. Common channels for viewing movie trailers.

Options	Percentage (n)
Video site	73.12% (n=1420)
Search by search engine	35.07% (n=681)
Trailer playing in the car (bus/ subway)	13.49% (n=262)
Social media platforms (such as WeChat, Weibo, Tick Tok, etc.)	71.01% (n=1379)
Never watch the trailer	5.92% (n=115)
Others, please specify	1.49% (n=29)

n, number; %, percentage

Table 6. Crosstabulation of movie review/rating influence on movie choices and average monthly consumption.

		a	B	c	d	Total
		n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Does the movie review/ rating affect your movie choices?	Yes	126(74.6)	936(81.2)	326(84.2)	179(76.8)	1567(80.7)
	No	17(10.1)	108(9.4)	20(5.2)	26(11.2)	171(8.8)
	It doesn't matter	26(15.4)	109(9.5)	41(10.6)	28(12.0)	204(10.5)
	Total	169(100.0)	1153(100.0)	387(100.0)	233(100.0)	

Average monthly consumption: ^a Below 1000 RMB; ^b 1100~2000 RMB; ^c 2100~3000 RMB; ^d Over 3000 RMB

Model fit: $\chi^2 (6) = 15.407$, $p < 0.017$ n, number; %, percentage

Table 7. Satisfaction levels in movie viewing across genres.

	Very satisfied	Basically satisfied	General Somewhat	Basically dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Don't know
Hollywood films	22.97%	52.47%	17.2%	1.75%	0.88%	4.74%

Mean= 2.19; Std. Deviation=1.128

Table 8. Interest in American culture post-viewing Hollywood films.

	Very concerned	More concerned	Somewhat concerned	Not much concerned	No attention at all	Did not watch/ No comments
Male	128(13.6%)	312(33.1%)	294(31.2%)	131(13.9%)	35(3.7%)	42(4.5%)
Female	77(7.7%)	263(26.3%)	374(37.4%)	208(20.8%)	25(2.5%)	53(5.3%)

Pearson Chi-Square = 45.182, df = 5, $p < .001$

Table 9. Perceived differences between Hollywood and Chinese movies.

Options	Percentage (n)
Openness difference	59.42% (1154)
Subject difference	61.59% (1196)
Differences in ideas	63.54% (1234)
Technical difference	41.04% (797)
Differences in shooting techniques	35.53% (690)
Others, please specify	2.47% (48)

n = number

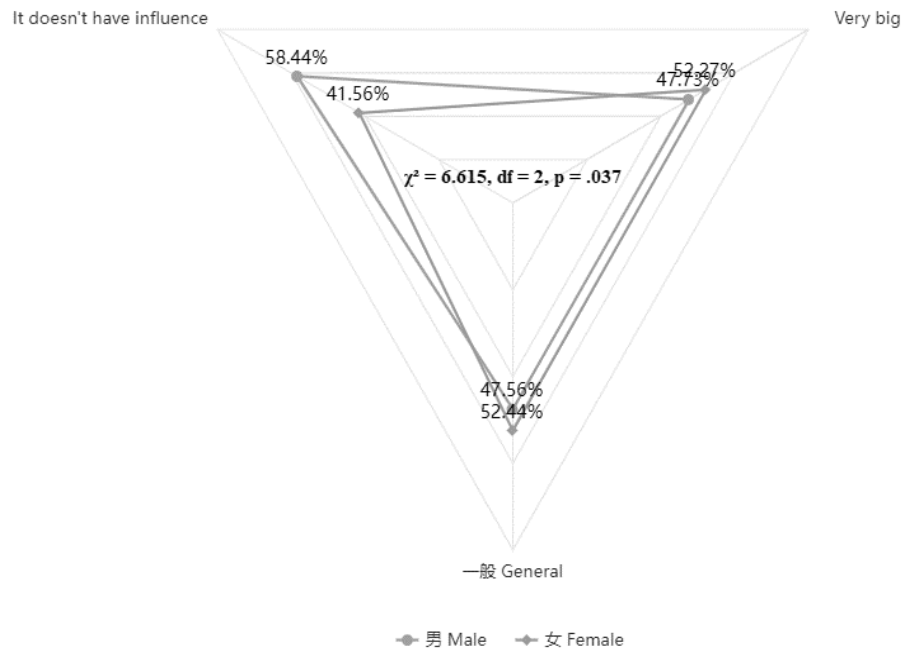


Figure 1. Impact of movie trailers on viewer film selection preferences.

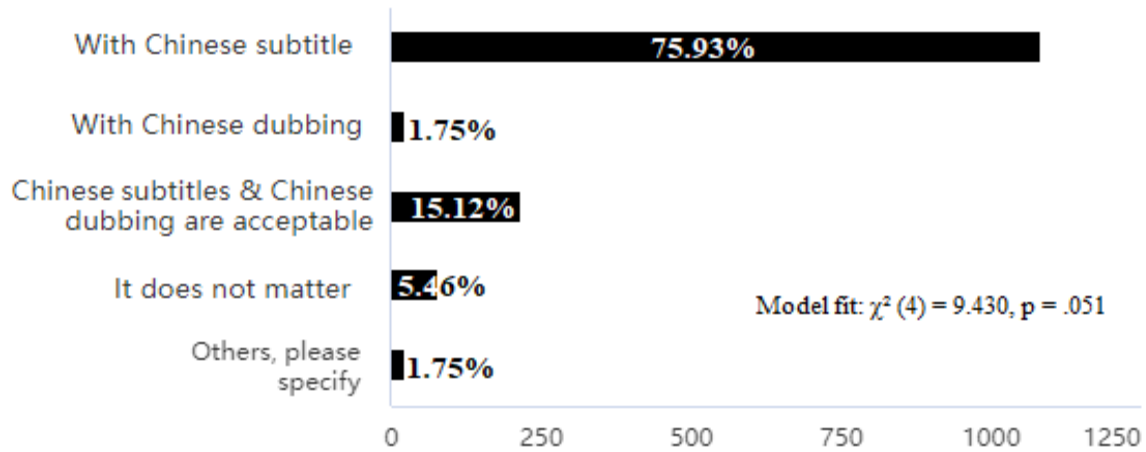


Figure 2. Language preference distribution for Hollywood movies among Chinese-speaking audience.

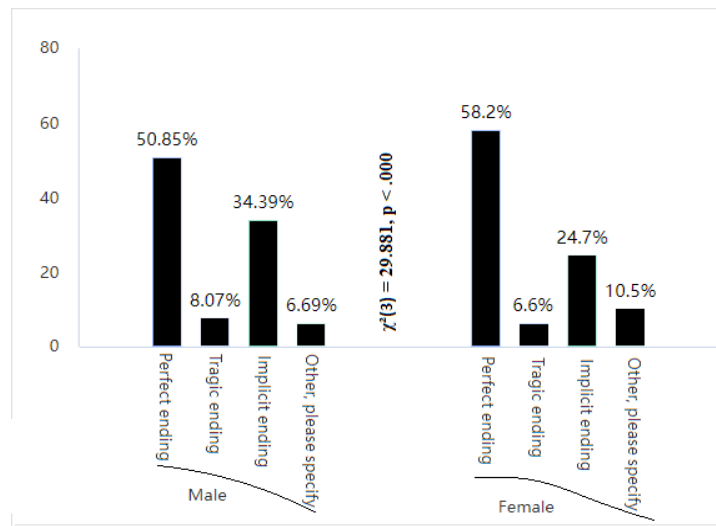


Figure 3. Gender-based preferences for movie endings.

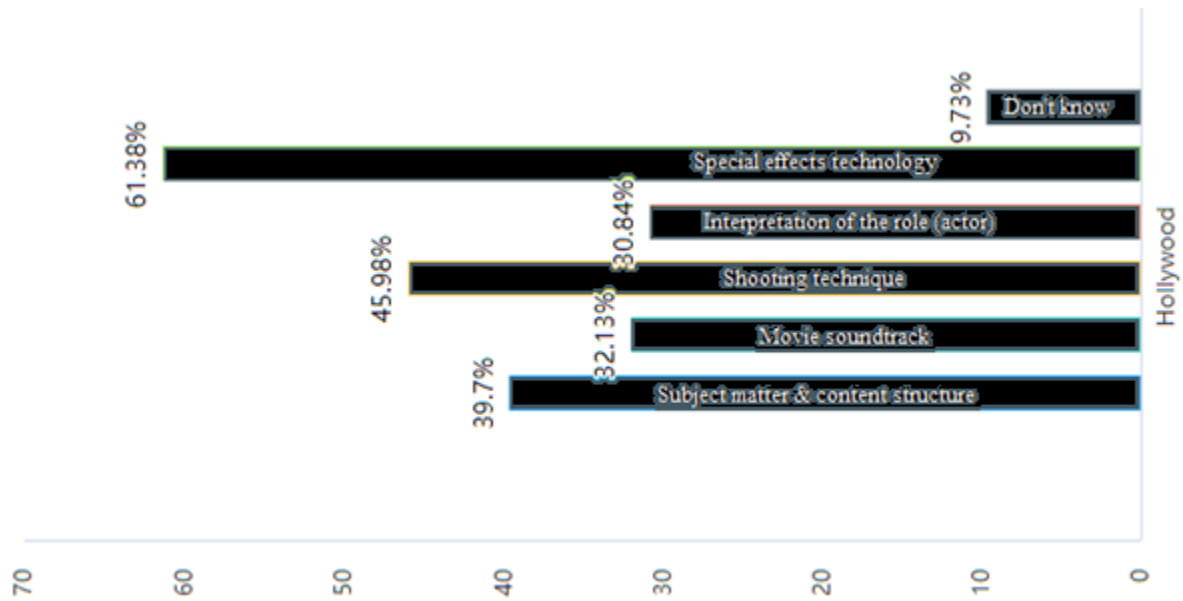


Figure 4. Learning opportunities for the Chinese film industry from Hollywood