Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication
https://ejournal.ukm.my/mjc
Volume 41(2) 2025: 319-338

From Cinemas to Streaming: Changing Viewing Preferences of Young Chinese Audiences

LU WANG
JAMALUDDIN AZIZ*
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

ABSTRACT

This study employs the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory to explore how young Chinese audiences actively choose streaming platforms to satisfy diverse personal, social, and psychological needs. Through semi-structured interviews with 15 participants from varied demographic backgrounds, including differences in age, education, gender, and occupation, this research investigates the motivations underpinning their shift from traditional cinemas to streaming media. The findings reveal that respondents predominantly prefer streaming platforms due to the gratifications of convenience, autonomy, personalized content selection, and cost-effectiveness. These platforms effectively align with respondents' fast-paced urban lifestyles and fragmented viewing habits driven by demanding work schedules and contemporary media consumption patterns. Nevertheless, traditional cinemas remain essential, as they uniquely fulfil social and emotional gratifications such as family bonding, social rituals during cultural festivals, and immersive viewing experiences. This highlights a culturally distinct hybrid consumption model, significantly different from prevalent Western patterns. Furthermore, this study emphasizes the importance of understanding how Chinese socio-cultural factors, including familial traditions, collectivist values, and state regulatory influences, shape media consumption preferences. Based on these insights, the research proposes strategic recommendations for the film industry, including flexible theatrical windowing rules, culturally tailored programming, hybrid ticketing models, and integrated distribution strategies. These approaches aim to sustainably accommodate the evolving preferences of young Chinese audiences, promoting a complementary relationship between cinemas and streaming platforms within China's distinctive media landscape.

Keywords: *Uses and Gratifications Theory, Streaming platforms, Cinema viewing habits, Audience motivations, Chinese media culture.*

INTRODUCTION

Rapid internet advances have transformed film distribution, enabling audiences to choose streaming platforms such as Netflix and Tencent Video for convenience and diverse content (Wayne, 2022). These platforms eliminate time and space constraints (Lobato, 2020), which satisfies users' need for flexibility and personalized content access (Khoo, 2023). By contrast, cinemas lack comparable convenience and affordability, requiring fixed schedules, travel, and higher costs (Hanchard et al., 2021). Consequently, streaming lures audiences seeking autonomy and instant access, accelerating online consumption and reducing cinema attendance (Susilo et al., 2024; Wittenzellner & Bustamante, 2023). The shift delivers diverse content unrestricted by geography or schedules (Zhang, 2022) and lets filmmakers explore new genres and storytelling (Ni & Coupe, 2023).

Meanwhile, the emergence of digital platforms and evolving user-driven consumption patterns in China present a model for the global industry to adapt to technological advancements (Su, 2022). Understanding transformations in China, one of the largest cinema

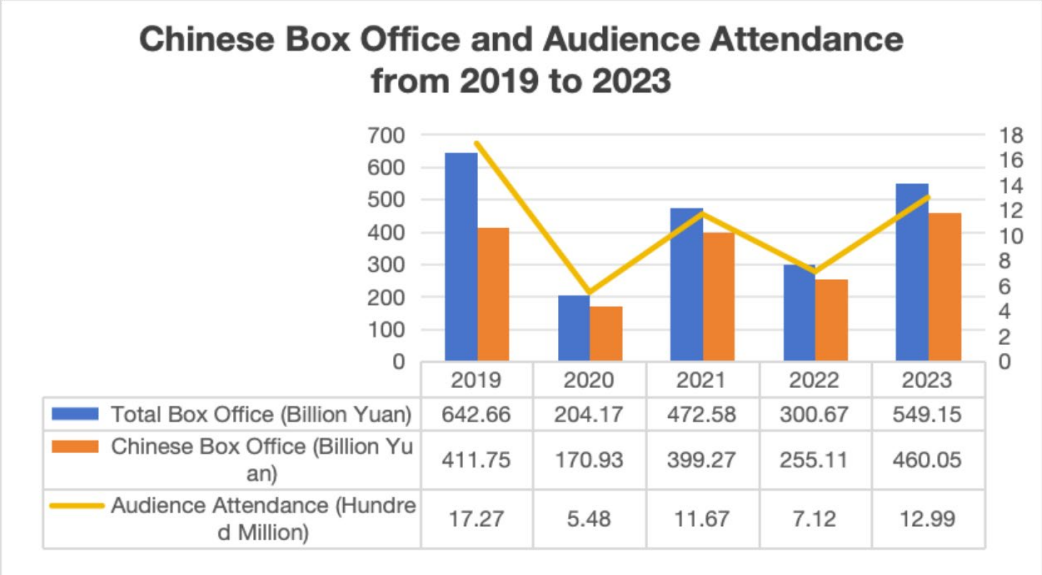
*Corresponding author: jaywalk@ukm.edu.my
E-ISSN: 2289-1528
https://doi.org/10.17576/JKMJC-2025-4102-18
Received: 14 May 2025 | Accepted: 18 June 2025 | Published: 30 June 2025

markets globally, provides valuable insights for domestic and international stakeholders (Chen & Liu, 2023). Despite the thriving streaming market, research focusing on audiences' motivations and satisfaction remains limited. Existing studies, such as Yamatsu and Lee's (2023), emphasize the economic impact of streaming but overlook how audiences actively use platforms to fulfil their needs and preferences. This highlights the need for deeper investigation into audience motivations, satisfaction, and usage patterns to effectively tailor content and strategies (Xue & Li, 2022), especially in the Chinese context. Focusing on audience motivations and usage behaviours offers a more nuanced understanding of China's film and streaming markets.

This study employs semi-structured interviews to analyse how young Chinese audiences use streaming platforms to meet various personal and contextual needs, and to explore the motivations behind shifts in their viewing habits. It addresses two questions: What personal, social, and technological motivations drive young Chinese audiences to engage with streaming platforms? How do their viewing choices reflect changing gratifications and media usage patterns in China's evolving media landscape?

Research Background and Problem Statement

Driven by the digital economy and the constraints of the COVID-19 pandemic, audiences increasingly turned to streaming platforms to fulfil their desire for more flexible, on-demand, and personalized film viewing experiences, leading to significant shifts in distribution models and consumption habits (Wang et al., 2021). According to data released by the China Film Administration in 2023 (DengTa, 2024), while the Chinese film market has been gradually recovering after the pandemic, it has not yet reached its peak level (as depicted in Figure 1).



	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total Box Office (Billion Yuan)	642.66	204.17	472.58	300.67	549.15
Chinese Box Office (Billion Yuan)	411.75	170.93	399.27	255.11	460.05
Audience Attendance (Hundred Million)	17.27	5.48	11.67	7.12	12.99

Figure 1: Chinese box office and audience numbers from 2019 to 2023 (Illustrated by the main Author)

During the period from 2019 to 2023, China witnessed a substantial surge in internet users and online video viewership (as illustrated in Figure 2). The online audiovisual industry surpassed one trillion yuan (equivalent to approximately USD $142.8 billion), indicating a growing acceptance of streaming platforms (CNNIC, 2024).

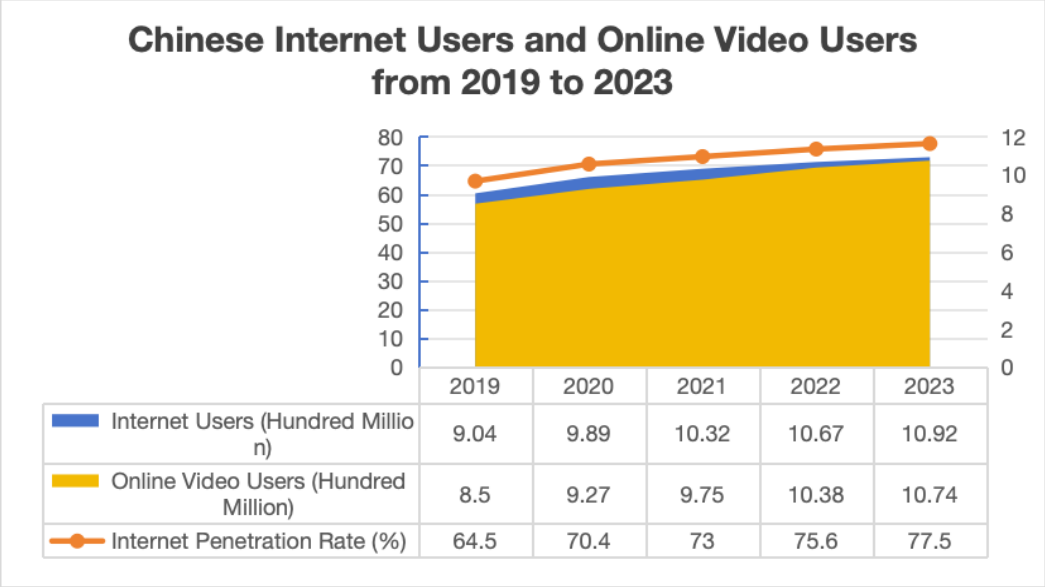


Figure 2: Statistics of Chinese internet users and online video users from 2019 to 2023 (Illustrated by the main Author)

It can be seen that from 2019 to 2023, urban cinema attendance in China declined significantly, while online video users increased markedly (CNNIC, 2024; Xinhua News Network, 2024). Although Covid-19 is one of the courses, this shift reflects audiences' increasing reliance on digital platforms to fulfil their needs for accessible, timely, and personalized viewing experiences (Yamatsu & Lee, 2023). Indeed, young audiences (aged 18 to 40) dominate the Chinese film market, accounting for about 80% of total consumption (DengTa, 2024). Against this backdrop, this study focuses on young Chinese audiences to investigate how their growing preference for streaming platforms reflects changing media consumption motivations and evolving viewing gratifications.

The Differences Between the Chinese and International Film Markets

The Chinese film market exhibits several distinctive characteristics compared to international markets, reflecting its growing global influence. In 2020–2021, China overtook North America in box-office revenue, propelled by economic growth, urbanization, rising incomes, and a leisure-rich middle class (Xinhua News Network, 2024). In contrast, mature markets like North America face slower growth due to market saturation, economic stagnation, and the rise of digital streaming (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2021; Li et al., 2020).

Audience-driven cultural preferences further differentiate the Chinese market. Chinese audiences favour domestic films with cultural or nationalist themes, reinforced by state policies promoting patriotism (Zheng & Hua-Yu, 2020; Zou, 2019). Action films, comedies, and historical dramas aligned with these values dominate the box office (Shi & Liu, 2020). In 2023, China's box office was ¥54.9 billion ($7.7 billion), roughly 23 % of the $33.9 billion global total (Mitchell, 2024). Conversely, international markets like North America and Europe display more diverse tastes, favouring Hollywood blockbusters (Cabral & Natividad, 2020; Hanchard et al., 2019).

Regulatory environments also differ significantly. In China, the China Film Administration rigorously oversees film production and distribution, mandating edits or imposing bans on content deemed inappropriate, with international films facing quota

restrictions (McMahon, 2021; Parc et al., 2022). For example, the summer vacation period in China is called "Domestic Film Protection Month". During the three-month summer vacation, a total of 139 films were released in China, but there were only 20 international films (Mao, 2024).

In addition, marketing and distribution strategies highlight additional contrasts. In China, highly digital strategies leverage platforms like WeChat, Weibo, and Douyin to engage younger audiences, while e-commerce integration with ticket sales boosts efficiency (Su, 2022; Yin, 2022). Internationally, traditional methods such as television and outdoor advertising blend with digital campaigns and film festivals, with events like Cannes and Venice pivotal in promoting independent films (Vallejo, 2020; Viswamohan & Chaudhuri, 2023). Therefore, these contrasts reflect how media ecosystems shape distinct promotional logics in China and global markets.

Moreover, streaming platforms further underscore these differences. On one hand, Chinese platforms like Tencent Video and iQIYI operate under a “membership + advertisement” model, offering ad-supported or paid ad-free content and focusing on localized content like dramas and variety shows (Fung, 2019; Nie & Gao, 2023; Wang & Lobato, 2019). On the other, international platforms like Netflix and Disney+ rely on subscription-based models without ads, emphasizing global content distribution (Cesalkova, 2024; Hennig-Thurau et al., 2021). Thus, platform design diverges: Chinese services meet local habits, whereas global giants stress ad-free, subscription-based scalability.

The Chinese film market's unique characteristics: rapid growth, culturally driven audience preferences, stringent regulatory oversight, innovative digital marketing strategies, and hybrid streaming models, distinguish it sharply from international markets such as those in the United States and Europe. Understanding these differences is essential for global filmmakers and distributors aiming to navigate China's complex and lucrative market, where cultural values and government policies play a critical role in shaping audience behaviour and industry practices.

Uses and Gratifications Theory

This study adopts Uses and Gratifications Theory (U&G), viewing audiences as active agents who deliberately choose media to satisfy specific personal, social, and psychological needs. Unlike passive models, U&G highlights goal-directed media use, a key issue in China’s varied streaming ecosystem (Ruggiero, 2000; Wang & Lobato, 2019).

U&G clarifies why audiences prefer one platform over another and how use satisfies entertainment, escapism, information seeking, and social interaction (Menon, 2022; Shao, 2009). Young Chinese audiences, for example, may use streaming services to decompress after work, to explore niche cultural content not available in cinemas, or to engage with fan communities through bullet comments and shared playlists (Tang et al., 2025; Yaqoub et al., 2022). This reflects the U&G view that media usage is shaped by individual lifestyle needs and broader socio-technological contexts.

According to contemporary applications of U&G theory, audience motives are typically classified into several domains: cognitive needs (e.g., gaining knowledge), affective needs (e.g., emotional release), social integrative needs (e.g., maintaining social connections), and tension release (e.g., escapism or stress reduction) (Hua et al., 2023). Streaming platforms readily meet these needs via sophisticated algorithms, flexible schedules, mobile access, and abundant genre content. In China, this also includes a growing trend toward interactive

content formats, such as live commenting and interactive storytelling, which enhance user agency and personalized media experiences (Wu & Fitzgerald, 2025).

U&G theory also accommodates the dynamic interaction between user motivations and platform design. For instance, the preference for short-form or serialized content may not only reflect audience lifestyle constraints but also platform strategies that anticipate and exploit these usage patterns (Pu et al., 2023). While platform algorithms influence content discovery, the initial media selection remains primarily driven by audiences' proactive intention to fulfil specific personal or psychological needs, thus reinforcing the central premise of U&G theory that users actively seek media based on clearly defined gratifications.

Furthermore, recent scholarship in U&G research has shifted from a purely individualistic lens to consider contextual factors such as national culture, platform infrastructure, and regulatory environments. In China, state censorship and commercial content strategies shape the range of available choices (Fang, 2024), but audiences still demonstrate agency in selecting platforms and genres that align with their gratifications (He et al., 2024). This intersection of audience motivations with technological affordances and cultural values highlights the complex, negotiated nature of media consumption.

Therefore, Uses and Gratifications Theory offers a robust framework for investigating the viewing behaviours of young Chinese audiences, particularly in a hybrid environment where traditional cinemas coexist with powerful streaming ecosystems. By focusing on audience motivations and the satisfaction of evolving needs, this study aims to capture how and why users navigate between media platforms. Based on these considerations, this study poses the following specific inquiries:

Question 1: What personal, social, and technological motivations drive young Chinese audiences to engage with streaming platforms?

Question 2: How do their viewing choices reflect evolving gratifications and media usage patterns in China's media environment?

SAMPLE SELECTION

This study examines how young Chinese audiences' viewing habits shift, using U&G to probe the motivations behind their platform choices. To achieve this, purposive sampling was used, and semi-structured interviews were conducted to understand the viewing behaviours and preferences of different audience segments. The sample comprises 18–40-year-olds, China's most active streaming users (CNNIC, 2024; DengTa, 2024), chosen for demographic diversity. In China, "diversity" refers not to racial or ethnic differences, as is common in Western studies, but to regional, cultural, educational, and socioeconomic diversity (Gong et al., 2011). Although not covering every stratum, participants from urban areas with varied education and jobs provide broad representation under China's diversity definition. All respondents had watched films in cinemas and on streaming platforms, enabling exploration of motivation differences across media.

The selection criteria for gender, education level, and occupational background were based on their relevance to media usage motivations. Gender was considered due to documented differences in media preferences and emotional gratifications. Education may shape content choices, and occupation affects time and platform use, aligning with U&G goals. Based on the above criteria, the following subtypes were combined for purposive sampling:

(a) Gender Ratio: The sample consists of 9 women and 6 men, reflecting spending power trends in the Chinese film market (DengTa, 2024), and allowing potential exploration of gender-related differences in media use motivations.
(b) Education Level: Audiences with high-school, undergraduate, and postgraduate education were included to examine how schooling influences viewing motivations.
(c) Occupational Background: Students and office workers, typical urban groups, may seek different gratifications from viewing platforms (DengTa, 2024; Wang et al., 2022b).

Sample sources may include university campuses, online social platforms (such as Weibo, WeChat), companies and enterprises (especially those on the Internet and media industries), as well as cinemas.

Transcripts were thematically analysed to uncover recurring motivation and gratification patterns. The sampling objectives are adjusted based on the analysis results, and sampling ceases when the interview results reach its saturation point (Feng, 2018, p. 146). This iterative and adaptable approach ensures both representativeness and diversity of the sample. A fully representative sample is unfeasible for this small qualitative study. Instead, our focus lies in examining the evolving motivations and gratification-seeking behaviours among diverse audience groups and their implications for both streaming platforms and traditional cinemas.

The study completed data collection through 15 face-to-face interviews (see Table 1). All respondents were required to disclose their authentic identity information. The interview period spanned from early November 2023 to early May 2024, with an average duration of approximately 50 minutes per session.

Table 1: Details of those interviewed for the study

No.	Serial Number	Gender	Age	Education[b]	Occupation	Level of participation[1a]
1	A1	female	37	Postgraduate	Office worker	
2	A2	female	34	Postgraduate	Office worker	
3	A3	female	40	Postgraduate	Office worker	
4	A4	female	35	Postgraduate	Office worker	
5	A5	female	22	Undergraduate	Student	
6	A6	female	21	Undergraduate	Student	Producer of film
7	A7	female	20	Undergraduate	Student	Producer of Animation
8	A8	female	19	Undergraduate	Student	Producer of film
9	A9	female	19	Undergraduate	Student	Producer of film
10	B1	male	38	Postgraduate	Office worker	
11	B2	male	23	Bachelor's degree	Office worker	
12	B3	male	34	College diploma	Office worker	
13	B4	male	19	Undergraduate	Student	Producer of film
14	B5	male	21	Undergraduate	Student	Producer of Animation
15	B6	male	22	Undergraduate	Student	Producer of Animation

Note:
[1a] All interviewees have watched more than 1 film in traditional cinemas and have watched more than 1 film on streaming. They had also all discussed the content of the film with other viewers. All the interviewees labelled as producers are film-related producers, studying or working in film-related roles.
[b] A bachelor's degree means they have graduated, while undergraduate means they have not graduated.

Interviews were transcribed and inductively analysed (Braun & Clarke, 2006), guided by U&G to extract motivation patterns. Data were manually analysed and coded by the researchers using inductive thematic analysis without qualitative software. For example, the

theme "entertainment gratification" emerged from codes such as "want to relax" and "makes me laugh." "Social interaction" was reflected in codes like "discuss with friends online" or "*post danmu comments*." This approach allowed for flexibility in identifying gratification patterns aligned with the U&G framework. Therefore, analysis focused on how individuals from diverse social and cultural backgrounds exhibit distinct motivations and usage patterns when engaging with the same media content. Five themes matched U&G categories: viewing preference, viewing motivation, film selection, social interaction, and viewing-experience expectations.

The raw data from the interviews, initially in Mandarin, was translated into English for analysis. This translation process was carried out by bilingual professional translators with master's degrees in English and intermediate or higher professional titles. They ensured translation accuracy and cultural relevance. Translators preserved respondents' meanings and nuances, ensuring accuracy in thematic analysis.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this study, A1-A9 represent female respondents, and B1-B6 represent male respondents. Although all interview data from the 15 participants are analysed, only the most representative statements are presented due to space constraints. Here, "cinema" refers to traditional exhibition theatres, and "streaming" refers to streaming media. We describe the viewing habits and preferences of the respondents in the following five basic themes:

Viewing Preference

Respondents generally prefer streaming to cinemas, seeking entertainment - and convenience-oriented gratifications central to the U&G framework, where audiences select media to fulfil needs such as relaxation, escapism, or connection (Nee & Barker, 2020; Ruggiero, 2000). Streaming meets diverse needs, highly educated viewers favour documentaries and niche genres, whereas office staff value time savings. China's algorithm-driven, collectivist online culture further amplifies streaming's appeal.

(a) Preference for Streaming Platforms Over Cinemas: Respondents prefer streaming's flexibility, reserving cinemas only for select immersive films. This reflects conscious efforts to maximize control and convenience in media use, as noted in the U&G perspective (Katz et al., 1973).

> A6: I only go to the cinema for films I really like; if I don't particularly like them, I wait for them to be released on streaming […] It's more flexible and the cost is lower.

> B4: I watch films every week when I have time, but I prefer streaming since there are too few art films in cinemas […] Plus, I can pause anytime.

(b) Cinema Seen as Non-essential: 13 out of 15 respondents rarely attend cinemas, reserving visits for high-interest films. This reflects a gratification, based decision, making process, where audiences weigh the perceived benefits of cinema, such as immersion or social experience, against the convenience, flexibility, and cost, effectiveness of streaming. From a U&G perspective, these choices mix instrumental, emotional and social gratifications. In this

context, streaming better satisfies evolving lifestyle needs that prioritize autonomy and media accessibility.

> A5: When I have nothing to do and want to relax, I prefer streaming at home. The home environment is good enough; I wouldn't prioritize going to the cinema.

> B5: I rewatch films on streaming, especially while eating. Cinema is more occasional.

> A7: I usually discuss the film with friends right after watching it on streaming, sometimes in group chats or by sending memes.

(c) Streaming Cannot Fully Replace Traditional Cinemas: Respondents said cinemas remain valued for visually immersive or emotional films. However, they view streaming as a more versatile option, particularly for repeat viewing and content that demands less focused attention. This pattern reflects how different viewing modes satisfy distinct types of gratifications: cinemas fulfil hedonic and aesthetic gratifications, while streaming satisfies convenience, autonomy, and emotional comfort. This flexibility allows audiences to align their viewing method with their immediate needs and contexts, consistent with U&G's emphasis on audience agency in choosing media for specific purposes.

> B6: I value the ratings on streaming and go to the cinema for high-rated films if I have time; otherwise, I wait for them on streaming.

(d) Lack of Platform Loyalty: All respondents subscribed to multiple platforms, prioritizing content availability. Such behaviour exemplifies selective exposure, as audiences actively match platforms to evolving content needs. They switch platforms to optimize content variety and cost-effectiveness.

> A1: Most of the time I watch on whichever platform I have a membership on […] Of course, I'm not a member of just one platform.

> B1: I have membership on 3 platforms […] because the movies I like are always released on different ones.

(e) Homogeneous Viewing Attitudes: Except for three participants influenced by family or personal preferences (A5, B4, and A2), the rest relied primarily on streaming, while attending cinemas occasionally. This consistency suggests a convergence of media use motivations toward convenience, autonomy, and content accessibility, core gratifications emphasized in the U&G framework. While the cinema experience still holds aesthetic or social value, streaming better fulfils everyday media needs such as multitasking, mood regulation, and time management. This aligns with existing research that identifies a hybrid consumption model in China, where audiences alternate between platforms to optimize different forms of gratification. (Agarwal et al., 2023; Gaustad, 2019).

> A9: Recently, there haven't been good films, so I just watch old ones on streaming. It's mainly about convenience.
>
> B2: I still go to the cinema quite frequently, probably influenced by my dad, I love watching films, so I go to the cinema about 2-3 times a month […] I watch 4-5 times a week on streaming platforms, mainly classic and popular films, streaming is more flexible in terms of time and location.

This strong, globally documented preference is driven by streaming's adaptability and immediacy (Agarwal et al., 2023; Gupta et al., 2023). These patterns are more than technological; they are rooted in Chinese socio-cultural values. For instance, streaming enables multigenerational co-viewing that echoes Confucian familial intimacy (Ni, 2022). Although less frequent, cinema visits retain ritual importance during national holidays. Those with inflexible jobs rely more on mobile streaming, underscoring socio-economic effects. China thus shows a hybrid model. Streaming dominates daily viewing, whereas cinemas satisfy specific affective and social needs, particularly for blockbuster releases and shared events. Unlike Western markets, where streaming often displaces cinema, both modes coexist in China (Gaustad, 2019).

Demographic factors add further nuance to this overall preference. Female respondents balancing work and family, such as A1, A3, and A4, emphasised on-demand convenience. The convenience of on-demand access as essential for integrating media consumption into busy schedules. Male students (e.g. B4, B5) highlighted streaming's wider, niche-film catalogue, while postgraduates (e.g. A1, A2, B1) sought cognitive gratifications from documentaries; undergraduates (e.g. A5, A6, B3) valued entertainment and multitasking. Thus, gender, education and occupation jointly shape the cinema–streaming balance.

Viewing Motivations

Under U&G, audiences actively choose media to satisfy specific needs (Katz et al., 1973). Respondents prioritised streaming for two key gratifications.

(a) Convenience & Time Management: Most respondents choose streaming for its flexible, on-demand schedule. Twelve of fifteen wait for films to stream when work or family limits free time. Streaming thus fits seamlessly into busy routines. All respondents cited lower subscription costs versus cinema tickets.

> A1: It still depends on the cinema schedule and whether I have time. If I'm not free, I will wait for the film to be released on streaming platforms.
>
> A4: I used to go to the cinema frequently, but less so after having kids […] The cinema has more atmosphere and better visual effects, but streaming is more flexible.
>
> A6: I only go to the cinema for films I really like; if I don't particularly like them, I wait for them to be released on streaming […] It's more flexible and the cost is lower.

> B3: If a film is showing in the cinema and I really want to see it, I go to the cinema […] Most of the time, by the time I want to watch a film, it has already left the cinema, so I have to wait for it to be available on streaming.

By favouring streaming, young Chinese viewers actively tailor their film consumption to fit their fast-paced lives, demonstrating their agency in meeting personal viewing needs.

(b) Diverse Content and Freedom of Choice: Another driver is streaming's vast catalogue, including niche titles absent from cinemas. This wide selection allows viewers to cater to both their personal tastes and their family's needs, fulfilling the specific gratifications they seek from streaming. The freedom to choose from a vast library of titles aligns with the respondents' social roles and cultural context, enabling highly personalized viewing experiences.

> A3: I would choose to watch movies on streaming media because many films that have been taken off the shelves can be found on streaming media. […] And there are many educational programs that children can watch.

> A5: I will only go to the cinema when I have nothing to do. I prefer watching films on streaming media at home […] There are also more films to choose from on streaming media.

> B4: I prefer art films, but Chinese cinemas rarely show them […] Streaming platforms have a lot of options for art films, so I usually watch movies there.

Overall, the findings indicate that young Chinese audiences value streaming for its flexibility, both in terms of time management and content choice. This pattern echoes global findings on streaming's appeal (Agarwal et al., 2023; Gupta et al., 2023). However, streaming's role in China is shaped by unique socio-cultural and technological factors. For example, the rise of domestic streaming services like Tencent Video and iQIYI, providing not only international movies but also localized series such as web dramas, caters to the tastes of Chinese youth. Moreover, high urban living costs and the intense "996" (996 is a work schedule in some companies in China, where employees work from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., six days a week) work culture drive audiences to favour on-demand streaming over time-consuming trips to the cinema. Hence, streaming reflects both convenience and cultural adaptation to China's lifestyle pressures.

While convenience dominates, subgroups reveal distinct motives: Office workers (e.g. A4, B3) used streaming to unwind during commutes or breaks, leveraging pause/resume features. Students (e.g. A5, B5) valued social aspects like co-viewing and online discussions, sharing bullet comments and memes. Higher-educated respondents (e.g. A1, B1) sought info and emotional relief through documentaries and entertainment. Streaming's rise met flexibility and affordability needs, but subgroups used it differently for personal, social, and intellectual gratifications.

Film Selection Preferences

Across our diverse sample, respondents clearly differentiate cinema and streaming selections, recognizing distinct gratifications. While participants typically reserve cinema trips for high-production-value or culturally significant films (often as special communal outings), streaming services provide greater flexibility—enabling viewers to explore a wide range of genres based on their mood and convenience needs.

(a) Selection in Cinema vs. Streaming Contexts: Respondents explained that cinema viewing choices often hinge on situational factors like family preferences or immersive experiences, while streaming choices are more casual and flexible. Uses and Gratifications theory explains this: viewers pick the medium that best meets their immediate desires, be it a shared outing or relaxed personal.

> A4: When going to the cinema with my kids, it's usually for a military-themed film they like […] On streaming, I'm less particular and go with happy themes or what's recommended.

> B3: When I go to the cinema, I prefer to choose a comedy film, but usually the genre is limited by what's being released at the time […] When watching a film alone on streaming, the genre is much more random and fluid.

> B5: For the cinema, I choose films with high production values and special effects for better immersion, especially James Cameron's films […] On streaming, I mainly watch animations and shows that are good for watching while eating.

(b) Active Decision-Making in Streaming: Streaming's on-demand library lets viewers pick content on impulse, using it for everyday entertainment while saving cinemas for special releases. Respondents like A1 and B4, with niche or art-house interests, valued streaming's access to films rarely shown locally, illustrating how audiences match each platform to specific content needs.

> A3: With my kids, I pick educational films in cinemas because of the setting and cost […] But on streaming, I go for comedies and dramas.

> B4: I only go to the cinema for new releases that interest me […] I watch art films on streaming because many art films are only available online.

Film-choice patterns balance cultural expectations and practical needs among young Chinese viewers (Sun & Wang, 2024). Under U&G, choices are context-dependent as audiences pursue distinct gratifications (Vinney, 2022). Respondents used cinemas for high-impact or family outings, but relied on streaming for personalised, on-demand viewing. This observation echoes recent research showing that cinemas meet social-entertainment motives, whereas streaming meets a wider range of needs (Jung, 2022). Contrary to Western declines, cinema remains culturally vital in China—nearly 90 % of internet users reported a

recent visit (Nissen, 2024). Our findings confirm a hybrid model: cinema and streaming coexist as complementary media in China.

Respondents' criteria for selecting films varied markedly across demographic lines and exhibition contexts. Mothers chose family or educational titles in cinemas as communal rituals (e.g. A3, A4). Male respondents preferred blockbuster spectacles (e.g. B3, B5). Postgraduates (e.g. A2, B1) sought art-house films and documentaries online, whereas undergraduates (e.g. A7, B6) made mood-driven picks, often guided by peers or algorithms. Office workers (e.g. A4, B3) alternated tent-pole cinema trips with casual streaming, while students (e.g. A5, B5) explored diverse genres between classes. Thus, gender, education, occupation, and venue mediate distinct gratifications across viewing contexts.

Social Aspect of Viewing

Respondents demonstrate cinema outings are communal social activities with family and friends. In contrast, respondents use streaming in a mostly individualistic way, enjoying an informal, private viewing experience that emphasizes convenience and personal enjoyment. This contrast highlights the dual role of cinema and streaming in the social lives of young Chinese audiences from diverse backgrounds, with each medium serving different social needs and viewing contexts. The interviews revealed 2 important characteristics of how respondents watch movies in cinemas:

(a) Purpose-Driven Viewing: Respondents visit cinemas purposefully, older participants select family friendly films, younger viewers utilize promotional deals. This goal-oriented behaviour shows how audiences actively use media to satisfy specific needs, a core idea in Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1973). For many, going to the cinema is not just about watching a movie. It is about creating a shared, meaningful experience with family or friends.

> A1: We usually go to the cinema to watch movies with our children, selecting films based on their preferences and educational value.

> A6: I mainly buy tickets online based on promotions. I don’t usually choose films spontaneously at the cinema.

(b) Social Interaction and Bonding: All respondents see cinema, going as a social bonding activity with loved ones. Notably, older participants more often highlighted family outings, whereas younger viewers talked about going with friends. For these viewers, going to the cinema is a ritual that fosters social interaction, especially during major cultural holidays like the Spring Festival. This ritualized behaviour underscores how cultural context shapes the social gratifications audiences seek from their cinema experience. In the Chinese context, cinemas provide a space for family bonding, with films often selected for their communal appeal.

> A6: During the Spring Festival, I watched a film with my parents. We often go to the cinema as a family tradition.

> B1: Watching a film with my wife in the cinema feels like a special occasion, almost like a date.

In contrast, streaming platforms are primarily used for individual viewing and lack the communal elements of the cinema experience. Respondents typically engage with streaming alone in relaxed settings. They often multitask or watch whenever it suits their schedule (for instance, during meals, as one interviewee noted). This individualized approach highlights the gratification of convenience and control that viewers seek in their media use (Ruggiero, 2000). Thus, streaming offers a flexible, private experience that fits into busy modern lifestyles. This stands in stark contrast to the communal, ritualistic nature of cinema visits.

> A7: I like to revisit classic movies on streaming, but mostly while eating. I almost never watch with friends.

> B3: When I watch films at home alone, I'm not particular about the type, but if my wife is watching, it depends on her preference.

Under U&G, these viewing differences become clearer. Young Chinese audiences visit cinemas mainly for social bonding during cultural events. By contrast, streaming supports solitary, on-demand viewing suited D'heer to fast-paced lifestyles. This contrast also highlights cultural differences: unlike international audiences who may watch streaming content together in shared spaces (D'heer & Courtois, 2016), Chinese audiences prefer solitary streaming, often on mobile devices. This underscores cinemas' continued role in family and community bonding in China (Wan, 2023).

Cinema remains a social focal point: Female participants (e.g. A1, A4) viewed festival cinema trips as intergenerational rituals. Male office workers (e.g. B2, B3) framed weekend IMAX outings as organised peer events. Students (e.g. A5, B5) mainly streamed alone, interacting virtually through bullet comments and social media. Postgraduates (e.g. A2, B1) mixed online and offline viewing, hosting home watch-parties and continuing discussion online. In sum, both medias serve social needs, but engagement mode and intensity vary by gender, occupation, education.

Expectations for Viewing Experience

Respondents expressed higher expectations for cinemas, seeking emotional immersion and social rituals rooted in Chinese collectivist values. In contrast, streaming satisfies utilitarian gratifications such as convenience and time flexibility, enabling viewers to control their pace of engagement, especially in busy urban lifestyles.

All 15 participants acknowledged cinemas' appeal, especially for visual, emotional, and social gratifications, though their motivations varied based on region, occupation, and lifestyle. They are:

(a) The Impact of Atmosphere and Social Resonance: Some respondents attend cinemas to fulfil emotional and social needs, enhanced by the shared atmosphere. However, such gratifications can be hindered by uncivil behaviour from other audience members, reducing satisfaction. From the U&G perspective, audiences seek immersive environments to satisfy needs for escapism and emotional engagement, which cinemas are uniquely positioned to fulfil.

> A3: For cinemas, the experience is particularly important […] The atmosphere of the cinema has a significant impact.
>
> B4: The cinema experience is better, but uncivil behaviour has a big impact.
>
> B5: If a film has good special effects and I have time, I'll go to the cinema with friends […] The cinema immersion is strong.

(b) Ritual and Companionship: Respondents emphasized cinema-going's social and ritualistic gratifications in Chinese culture. For these participants, cinema-going satisfies social integration needs, reinforcing familial and communal ties, particularly valued in Chinese collectivist culture. This illustrates how media choices are actively made to fulfil social gratifications, consistent with U&G theory.

> A5: I often go to the cinema based on friends' recommendations for good films […] It's more important to watch it with friends.
>
> B1: I watch films in the cinema with my wife to relax; The on-site atmosphere affects my feelings about the film.

In contrast, participants used streaming to fulfil functional needs like convenience, multitasking, and fragmented time use. Streaming fulfils functional needs by offering control, convenience, and time flexibility. This informal mode of viewing reflects how streaming caters to lifestyle-based gratifications like multitasking and mood regulation.

> A7: On streaming, I first check Douban ratings and then deliberately look for films. Watching in segments on streaming doesn't affect me much.
>
> B1: On streaming, it mainly depends on my time and mood.

Findings show a dichotomy: cinemas meet emotional-social needs, whereas streaming meets practical, time-based ones. Thus, audiences balance communal ritual with modern autonomy, evident in festival-driven cinema spikes (DengTa, 2024). This pattern confirms context-sensitive gratifications (2019) and counters Western reports of cinema decline (Gaustad, 2019). Cinema-going still anchors family cohesion, as festival box-office peaks show (DengTa, 2024). Overall, a hybrid media model reflects enduring Chinese cultural values.

Expectations vary by demographic. Females (e.g. A3, A5) and postgraduates (e.g. A1, B1) sought immersive cinemas yet demanded HD, interactive streaming. Male undergraduates (e.g. B4, B5) valued streaming tech features, whereas office workers (e.g. A4) prioritized seamless cross-device access. In sum, audio-visual, interactive, and convenience expectations vary by gender, education, job guiding targeted service design.

DISCUSSION

Drawing on interviews with 15 diverse participants of different age groups and occupations, this study applies the Uses and Gratifications Theory to reveal how young Chinese audiences make viewing choices based on their needs for convenience, social connection, and entertainment. Streaming platforms are primarily selected to fulfil gratifications related to

accessibility, time efficiency, and personalization - core motivations for digital-native audiences facing fragmented routines. The on-demand nature of streaming enables users to manage viewing around fragmented daily life, satisfying their desire for autonomy and control (Agarwal et al., 2023). Moreover, cost sensitive users, especially students and lower income viewers, find streaming a financially accessible alternative.

While streaming satisfies practical and entertainment needs, it falls short in delivering social and emotional gratifications tied to collective rituals and physical immersion (Vandenberg & Berghman, 2024). In Chinese culture, where family and community activities hold significant importance, cinemas continue to serve as vital spaces for reinforcing social bonds, especially during festivals and social gatherings. This paradoxical behaviour underscores the tension between modern convenience and cultural tradition, with audiences valuing the personalized experience of streaming but reluctant to abandon the social significance of cinema outings (Fröber & Thomaschke, 2019).

The global decline in cinema attendance, driven by the rise of streaming services, is evident in China. However, traditional cinemas remain relevant due to their cultural role (Gaustad, 2019; Wang et al., 2022a). The expansion of exclusive streaming content has redefined viewing habits and posed significant challenges to theatrical releases. The coexistence of cinema and streaming reflects a hybrid consumption model shaped by local cultural values, distinguishing Chinese audiences from Western consumers (Ren, 2023).

In conclusion, this study suggests that to meet diverse audience gratifications, stakeholders should adopt hybrid strategies, such as flexible windowing rules, small-theatre subsidies, and hybrid ticket models, while also aligning with state cultural policies like protection months and content quotas.

CONCLUSION

This study applies the Uses and Gratifications Theory to explore how young Chinese audiences actively select between cinemas and streaming platforms based on varied psychological, social, and functional needs. The findings reveal that streaming fulfils needs for convenience and autonomy, while cinemas continue to serve audiences seeking immersion, ritual, and shared emotional experiences. Young audiences demonstrate hybrid media consumption patterns, blending individual gratifications with culturally shaped desires for group-based film rituals, especially during holidays and family gatherings. Such choices reflect pragmatic considerations, such as time, affordability, and control. They also reflect symbolic needs tied to identity, memory, and sociocultural continuity. This balancing act exemplifies how gratification-seeking is shaped not only by platform affordances but also by sociocultural meanings attached to communal viewing.

Implications for the Film Industry

To address the evolving viewing habits of young audiences, the film industry must make strategic adjustments:

(a) Enhance cinema offerings by creating flexible small theatres, culturally themed screenings, and upgraded audio-visual technologies. Audience segmentation should be refined using feedback loops and city-tier data.

(b) Develop integrated release strategies that synchronize theatrical windows and streaming rollouts. Regulators can support this hybrid ecosystem through incentives like windowing rules, hybrid ticketing, and content diversity quotas.

By implementing these strategies, the film industry can better align with the evolving and segmented needs of young Chinese audiences, facilitating a balanced ecosystem where streaming platforms and cinemas complement rather than compete. Such integration, when supported by regulatory incentives and culturally responsive programming, may contribute to the long-term vitality of China's film culture.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

While this study provides meaningful insights into young Chinese audiences' viewing habits, several limitations should be acknowledged. While the sample was purposively selected, it included varied participants from different regions, age groups, genders, and occupations, which provides a foundational basis for demographic comparison. The relatively small and purposively selected sample may not fully represent the diversity of audience preferences and behaviours across broader demographic variables. However, self-reported preferences may be influenced by individual media exposure or accessibility, particularly for respondents in third-tier cities or non-office jobs.

Future studies should utilize randomized sampling and mixed methods, including quantitative measures, to validate motivational typologies across broader Chinese demographics.

Future Research Directions

To build upon this study, the following research areas are recommended:

(a) Conduct longitudinal studies to assess how the interplay of gratification needs and technology evolution affects long-term cinema-going behaviour.

(b) Examine how digital word-of-mouth and social feedback loops shape gratification seeking and film choices on social media platforms such as Douban and Xiaohongshu.

(c) Future comparative research should avoid binary East-West framings and instead explore media motivations in nuanced cultural contexts across Asia, Latin America, and Africa.

BIODATA

Lu Wang is a PhD candidate in Center For Research in Media and Communication for Media and Communication Studies, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi, Selangor. His research focuses on film, new media, and AIGC applications. His latest edited book is "Film and Television Post-Editing Textbook", published by Communication University of China Press. Email: p117219@siswa.ukm.edu.my

Jamaluddin Bin Aziz, PhD is an Associate Professor Dr. of the Critical Media Studies at the Center for Research in Media and Communication, 43600 Bangi, Selangor. His research pivots around the media, film, gender, discourse, digital humanities, culture and critical theory. Email: jaywalk@ukm.edu.my

REFERENCE

Agarwal, R., Mehrotra, A., Sharma, V., Papa, A., & Malibari, A. (2023). Over-the-top (OTT) retailing in the post-pandemic world: Unveiling consumer drivers and barriers using a qualitative study. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 75*, 103529. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2023.103529

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77–101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Cabral, L., & Natividad, G. (2020). Movie release strategy: Theory and evidence from international distribution. *Journal of Economics & Management Strategy, 29*(2), 276–288. https://doi.org/10.1111/jems.12344

Cesalkova, L. (2024). Film heritage on demand? Curation and discoverability of "classic movies" on Netflix. *Television & New Media, 25*(3), 287–305. https://doi.org/ptkr

Chen, R., & Liu, Y. (2023). A study on Chinese audience's receptive behavior towards Chinese and Western cultural hybridity films based on grounded theory—Taking Disney's animated film *Turning Red* as an example. *Behavioral Sciences, 13*(2), 135.

China Internet Network Information Center. (2024). The 53rd statistical report on China's internet development (Issue 53).

DengTa. (2024). 2023 annual review report of the Chinese film market. *China Film Administration.* https://www.chinafilm.gov.cn/xwzx/gzdt/202401/t20240102_825148.html

D'heer, E., & Courtois, C. (2016). The changing dynamics of television consumption in the multimedia living room. *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies, 22*(1), 3–17. https://doi.org/10.1177/1354856514543451

Fang, J. (2024). The culture of censorship: State intervention and complicit creativity in global film production. *American Sociological Review, 89*, 488–517. https://doi.org/ptks

Feng, X. (2018). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Renmin University of China Press.

Fröber, K., & Thomaschke, R. (2019). In the dark cube: Movie theater context enhances the valuation and aesthetic experience of watching films. *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts, 15*(3), 528–544. https://doi.org/10.1037/aca0000295

Fung, A. Y. (2019). Fandomization of online video or television in China. *Media, Culture & Society, 41*(7), 995–1010. https://doi.org/10.1177/0163443719863353

Gaustad, T. (2019). How streaming services make cinema more important. *Nordic Journal of Media Studies, 1*(1), 67–84. https://doi.org/10.2478/njms-2019-0005

Gong, Y., Chow, I. H., & Ahlstrom, D. (2011). Cultural diversity in China: Dialect, job embeddedness, and turnover. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management, 28*(2), 221–238. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10490-010-9232-6

Gupta, S., Shrivastava, P., & Gupta-Rawal, S. (2023). More the merrier! Understanding the effect of available content choices over willingness to pay for over-the-top subscriptions. *Psychology & Marketing, 40*(12), 2612–2626. https://doi.org/ptkt

Hanchard, M., Merrington, P., & Wessels, B. (2021). Screen choice: The relations, interactions and articulations of watching film. *Open Screens, 4*(1), 6. https://doi.org/gkf5zf

He, K., Eldridge Ii, S. A., & Broersma, M. (2024). Tactics of disconnection: How netizens navigate China's censorship system. *Media and Communication*, *12*, 8670. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.8670

Hennig-Thurau, T., Ravid, S. A., & Sorenson, O. (2021). The economics of filmed entertainment in the digital era. *Journal of Cultural Economics*, *45*(2), 157–170. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10824-021-09407-6

Hua, Y.-T., Liu, K.-Y., Huang, H.-C., Rotherham, I. D., & Ma, S.-C. (2023). Testing variation in eSports spectators' motivations in relation to consumption behaviour. *Sustainability*, *15*(3), 2028. https://doi.org/10.3390/su15032028

Jung, D. O. (2022). *Why do we go to the cinema?-A qualitative study of cinema attendance motivation in Sweden and Korea* [Master thesis, Lund University]. http://lup.lub.lu.se/student-papers/record/9099500

Katz, E., Blumler, J. G., & Gurevitch, M. (1973). Uses and gratifications research. *The Public Opinion Quarterly*, *37*(4), 509–523. https://doi.org/10.1086/268109

Khoo, O. (2023). Picturing diversity: Netflix's inclusion strategy and the Netflix Recommender Algorithm (NRA). *Television & New Media*, *24*(3), 281–297. https://doi.org/gss25r

Li, Q., Guan, Y., & Lu, H. (2020). *Development of the global film industry: Industrial competition and cooperation in the context of globalization* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003051503

Lobato, R. (2020). *Netflix nations: The geography of digital distribution*. New York University Press. https://doi.org/10.18574/nyu/9781479882281.001.0001

McMahon, J. (2021). Selling Hollywood to China. *Forum for Social Economics*, *50*(4), 414–431. https://doi.org/10.1080/07360932.2020.1800500

Menon, D. (2022). Purchase and continuation intentions of over -the -top (OTT) video streaming platform subscriptions: A uses and gratification theory perspective. *Telematics and Informatics Reports*, *5*, 100006. https://doi.org/gq6wm5

Mitchell, R. (2024, January 4). Gower Street Analytics estimates 2023 global box office hit $33.9 billion. *Gower Street Analytics*. https://gower.st/articles/gower-street-analytics-estimates-2023-global-box-office-hit-33-9-billion/

Nee, R. C., & Barker, V. (2020). Co-viewing virtually: Social outcomes of second screening with televised and streamed content. *Television & New Media*, *21*(7), 712–729. https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476419853450

Ni, P. (2022). The Confucian way of family under the Gongfu 功夫 perspective – A re-description (I). *Journal of Chinese Philosophy, 49*. https://doi.org/10.1163/15406253-12340049

Ni, W., & Coupe, C. (2023). Time-synchronic comments on video streaming website reveal core structures of audience engagement in movie viewing. *Frontiers in Psychology*, *13*, 1040755. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1040755

Nie, C., & Gao, J. (2023). *China internet audiovisual development research report (2023)*. China Online Audiovisual Program Service Association.

Nissen, K. (2024, February 29). Global cinema attendance is rebounding but not back to historic levels. *S&P Global Market Intelligence*. https://www.spglobal.com/market-intelligence/en/news-insights/research/global-cinema-attendance-is-rebounding-but-not-back-to-historic-levels

Parc, J., Messerlin, P., & Kim, K. (2022). The impact of protectionism on cultural industries: The effect of China's film policies on imported films. *Journal of Media Economics*, *34*(2), 117–133. https://doi.org/10.1080/08997764.2022.2074024

Pu, J., Hou, J., Wei, L., & Sun, Y. (2023). The analysis of marketing strategy of short video platforms—Taking Douyin as example. *Advances in Economics, Management and Political Sciences, 9,* 356-361. https://doi.org/10.54254/2754-1169/9/20230410

Ren, J. (2023). Exploring Chinese and Western audiences reception regarding international communication of entertainment: Take Squid Game and Hellbound (2022) as cases. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media, 7,* 429-435. https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/7/20221037

Ruggiero, T. E. (2000). Uses and Gratifications Theory in the 21st century. *Mass Communication and Society*, *3*(1), 3–37. https://doi.org/cnkf55

Shao, G. (2009). Understanding the appeal of user-generated media: A uses and gratification perspective. *Internet Research*, *19*(1), 7–25. https://doi.org/dhvhkh

Shi, W., & Liu, S.-D. (2020). Pride as structure of feeling: Wolf Warrior II and the national subject of the Chinese Dream. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, *13*(3), 329–343. https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2019.1635509

Su, W. (2022). The platformization of China's film distribution in a pandemic era. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, *15*(1), 95–114. https://doi.org/g77j27

Sun, J., & Wang, J. (2024, February 24). Spring Festival movies chart new, inspiring cultural trends. *China Daily*. https://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202402/24/WS65d93f20a31082fc043b8dd4.html

Susilo, D., Hidayat, E., Winarko, H. B., & Dalangin, J. J. G. (2024). Impact of over-the-top video providers on viewing satisfaction and its effect on watching a movie in cinema: Bridging preferences and challenges. *Edelweiss Applied Science and Technology*, *8*(5), 1434-1444. https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v8i5.1846

Tang, Q., Liu, L., & Liu, Z. (2025). Understanding how the Chinese youth engages with virtual streamers in digital era: An approach of affordance. *International Communication of Chinese Culture*, *12*(1), 17–35. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40636-025-00318-1

Vallejo, A. (2020). Rethinking the canon: The role of film festivals in shaping film history. *Studies in European Cinema*, *17*(2), 155–169. https://doi.org/gqjvww

Vandenberg, F., & Berghman, M. (2024). The show must go on(line): Livestreamed concerts and the hyper-ritualisation of genre conventions. *Poetics*, *103*, 101782. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.poetic.2023.101782

Vinney, C. (2022, March 6). Uses and Gratification Theory in media psychology: How and why we make our choices for media consumption. *VeryWell Mind.* https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-uses-and-gratifications-theory-in-media-psychology-5217572

Viswamohan, A. I., & Chaudhuri, S. B. (2023). Traversing boundaries: Contemporary Hindi cinema at international film festivals. *South Asian Popular Culture*, *21*(1), 89–103. https://doi.org/10.1080/14746689.2022.2115736

Wan, L. (2023). Expanding the cross cultural communication strategy of Chinese animation movies: Drawing on Japanese experience. *Advances in Education, Humanities and Social Science Research*, *6*(1), 198-201. https://doi.org/10.56028/aehssr.6.1.198.2023

Wang, C., Kerry, L., & Marta, R. F. (2021). Film distribution by video streaming platforms across Southeast Asia during COVID-19. *Media, Culture & Society*, *43*(8), 1542–1552. https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437211045350

Wang, M., Tan, Z., Liu, J., & Chen, J. (2022a). Analyzing the impact of Fukushima nuclear wastewater discharge on seafood trade with gravity model. *Ocean & Coastal Management*, *230*, 106302. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ocecoaman.2022.106302

Wang, P., Cui, H., & Ye, L. (Eds.). (2022b). *China population census yearbook 2020*. China Statistics Press Co., Ltd.

Wang, W. Y., & Lobato, R. (2019). Chinese video streaming services in the context of global platform studies. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, *12*(3), 356–371. https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2019.1584119

Wayne, M. L. (2022). Netflix audience data, streaming industry discourse, and the emerging realities of 'popular' television. *Media, Culture & Society*, *44*(2), 193–209. https://doi.org/10.1177/01634437211022723

Wittenzellner, H., & Bustamante, R. C. V. (2023). Cinema visit or home theatre: The threat of video-on-demand for German cinemas. *Economy & Business, 17*(1), 146–165. https://doi.org/10.62991/EB1996196510

Wu, X., & Fitzgerald, R. (2025). The danmu discourse of user engagement with cross-posted broadcast interviews in Chinese social media. *Journalism*, *26*(3), 733–751. https://doi.org/10.1177/14648849241253900

Xinhua News Network. (2024). 2023 China film market annual stocktaking report released. http://www1.xinhuanet.com/fortune/20240102/e25e5a8494fb4d0daeb64f99a5f820e6/c.html

Xue, N., & Li, L. (2022). Audience composition and aesthetic preferences—Based on the analysis of the "China film audience satisfaction survey." *Contemporary Cinema*, *3*, 4–16.

Yamatsu, T., & Lee, S. (2023). Multiple relationships between streaming and linear TV: Examining media substitution theory using big data. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 67*(4), 442–465. https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2023.2250039

Yaqoub, M., Jingwu, Z., Xuyao, Z., & Firdous, R. (2022). Future of video streaming platforms and mainstream cinema: A case study of Fujian Province, China. *Journal of Peace, Development & Communication*, *6*(2), 1–21. https://doi.org/ptkv

Yin Y. (2022). On the transition of film and television entertainment industry in the era of digital media. *Contemporary Cinema*, *3*, 39–45.

Zhang, S. (2022). Exploring how Chinese TV dramas reach global audiences via Viki in the transnational flow of TV content. *Journal of Transcultural Communication*, *2*(1), 69–89. https://doi.org/10.1515/jtc-2022-0014

Zheng, H., & Hua-Yu, S. C. (2020). State-led Chinese nationalism: An analysis of primary school textbooks. *China: An International Journal*, *18*, 27–48. https://doi.org/ptkw

Zou, S. (2019). When nationalism meets hip-hop: Aestheticized politics of ideotainment in China. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies, 16*(3), 178–195. https://doi.org/10.1080/14791420.2019.1637008