Is social media a fortune or misfortune?  
—The art film’s dilemma and breakthrough.

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Abstract

In China, Weibo is a social software that almost everyone uses. Weibo does not only provide an arena for users to share their experiences with friends, but also offers a platform for companies to promote their products. From 2014, the distributors of the films began to use Weibo as one of their main marketing tools. Nevertheless, from the same time, Chinese art films have begun to decline, and the most direct manifestation is the downturn in the box office. At the coincidence of the two time points, the decline of art films and the Weibo seems to be linked. However, there are still a handful of art films which achieved great success on Weibo in this 3-year period. In these cases, Weibo seems to be a fortune for these art films. The first part of this study is devoted to exploring what has changed in the ways to Weibo users’ get information and communicate about films, especially art films from 2014 to 2017 by social media logic. The second part analyzes a successful case and tries to find out how the distributors of the art films could use Weibo as an online marketing tool to conduct online marketing activities by combing the social media logic with the marketing strategy for non-mainstream culture products. This study used a combination of qualitative research and quantitative research. After analyzing the collected data, it is indicated that during the three years, Weibo users have changed a lot in obtaining movie information and communicating art movies which might have an impact on Weibo users discussing about art films and purchasing tickets. Weibo can also be utilized by art films distributors using idiosyncratic marketing approach than ordinary method to attract audience's attention.

Key words: Social media, Art film, Online marketing
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1. Introduction

1.1 Introduction

On the morning of May 12th, 2016, a video was released in Weibo live-ongoing broadcast, in which a middle-aged man kneeled down and kept crying. He said, “If you [theatre managers] can give us more screenings in this weekend, I am old and willing to kneel for you.” (Rui, 2016). The fact is the middle-aged man names Li Fang, who is a famous film producer in China and he was asking the cinema managers for more screening for the movie *Song of the Phoenix*, an art film which he devoted a lot of time and effort. After the first day of the screening, the art film had only taken gained 400,000 CNY (about 60,000 USD) in box office. Compared with the *Captain America: Civil War* 1 billion CNY (about 30,000,000 USD), the Li Fang felt disappointed and he had no other way (Xianfeng, 2016). Immediately, this video had a huge impact on a large number of Weibo users. The influence of this video is huge. This video has attracted the attention of tens of thousands of netizens. After the release of the video, the movie “*Song of the Phoenix*” has gained great box office results because of this video.

This incident and this film are only the tip of the iceberg. This reflects the dilemma the Chinese art film has faced at the present stage. When an art film can only rely on the producer's unexpected behaviors rather than the content of the movie to attract attention and sympathy, it shows that art films are suffering from a heavy blow. Taking the anecdote as a reference, after investigating the box office and social media forums for art films in the past 4-5 years period, since 2014, from the box office and the audience's discussion in different platforms dimension, the art films are facing a severe decline, compared with the situation of art film itself before 2014, and the rapid development of the commercial movies. Since 2014, the data collected, which will be explained in the background part, indicated that the movie distributors began to use Weibo to conduct marketing on a large scale. Basically, all cinema movies, no matter commercial movies or art films, have established their own official Weibo accounts. Hence, in this investigation, we will first take advantage of the media logic by Van Dijck and Poell in order to find out what has changed in Weibo users’ getting information and communicating about films, especially art films from 2014 to now by social media logic.

Nevertheless, while the majority of the high-quality art films have witnessed the downturn both in box office and attention, there are still a few art films that rely on Weibo online marketing to win
siege in numerous commercial films. In the second part of this thesis, an art film, *The Dead End*, which had achieved great success in 2015, was selected as the object of the case study. Its amount of Weibo fans and discussion pertaining to this movie in Weibo was far higher than other art films and even commercial films released at the same time and achieved high box office. In order to investigate how this film's distributors use Weibo for marketing, the researcher used the combination of social media logic and marketing strategy for non-mainstream cultural products to analyze all the contents of this movie's official Weibo.

1.2 Contribution and research questions

Weibo is increasingly changing people's lives, as users spend more time on Weibo than before. When users' fragmentation time is taken over by Weibo, a large amount of information on Weibo has become an important source for users and in turn, the information will also affect these users. The change in Weibo users' behavior over the past three years can suggest the impact of Weibo’s information on users.

The existence of art films reflects to the diversity and inclusivity of the culture of a country. The art film is a channel for minority artists to vocalize, enriches the content of the national culture, and provides the audience with rich and varied choices and unique artistic experiences(Croizier, 1993). Art film is a kind of non-mainstream cultural product. The director of art films integrates his/her own ideas with the specific cultural and historical backgrounds and the works are not produced to cater to most of the audience on purpose. Hence, only a few people like or usually watch art films. The amount of audience is not so large but relatively fixed. Fabe mentioned that in many countries, there is also a gradual increase, which supports the stable development of the art films(Fabe, 2014).

Finally, from a personal perspective, I believe that any kind of cultural product has its unique value, especially art films. Although with the progress of society, the influence of science and technology on culture has deepened day by day, which has impacted many non-mainstream cultural products. However, I think that there are many non-mainstream products that are simply lacking channels of communication with users. Only by adopting the right way to communicate with users, non-mainstream cultural products would have the chance to attract the users and even rank among the mainstream products. There are two research questions:
1. How did the ways of Weibo users to get information and communicate about films change, especially art films from 2014 to 2017?

2. How could Weibo be used as an online marketing tool for art films?

1.3 Definitions

Art film

The definition of art films in academia is not clear, and the understanding of this conception in the academic fields in China is still different. As mentioned by Yue in 2005, a professor in Peking University, he argued that:

“Art films generally refer to the unique ideas, dealing with a more personal style of movie, and show special concern for the society, in addition, explore the human's in-depth characteristics deeply. The art films are totally different from commercial movies, which have clear and attractive features and actions, such as detectives, gangsters, gunshots and other external actions.”(Yue, 2003, p. 23).

The value of an art films lies in the fact that it is the exercise and extraction of life by the detractors and it will make the audience to think about their life. However, in China, the most important issue is that the government has limited the themes of the movies that are released in theaters, so the types and themes of movies that can be released in theaters are not abundant.

According to the above theories and the context of China, since the movie types in theaters are limited, there are only two movie types: commercial movies and art films. The art film was defined as the opposite of the commercial film and in this thesis and the distinction between art films and commercial films in cinema films is very clear.

With the rapid development of the commodity economy, the emergence of commercial films is to satisfy the audience's growing desire and appetite. In China, in general, exquisite visual effects, extremely famous actors, and stereotypical plots are the standard features of commercial films. Meeting these requirements is also very simple: well-founded, commercial movie stars and simple customary plot settings. The art film is another important part of the cinema which is the opposite of commercial movie. In this thesis, researcher adopted a simpler way to summarize the characteristics
of the art films. Based on this definition, the characteristics of the art films which have been summarized here are: the production cost of art films is less than 10 million Yuan (about 1.6 million USD); the actors/actresses often do not have a great reputation (actors/actress who usually only star in art films); the art films’ topics are not set deliberately to meet the taste of the most audience.

**Weibo**

Sina Weibo is a Chinese Weibo website which has been launched by Sina Corporation on 14 August 2009, it is one of the most popular social media sites in China. Sina Weibo has a large number of users and the amount is climbing year by year. Until the end of 2017, Sina Weibo has over 392 million monthly active users (“Sina Weibo,” 2018).

The function of Weibo is similar to Twitter. A user may post, mention or talk to other people using "@UserName" formatting, add hashtags with "#HashName#" formatting, follow other users to make their posts appear in one's own timeline, repost with "//@UserName" similar to Twitter's retweet function "RT @UserName". A Weibo account will be verified if the owner of the account is a celebrity. Official and third-party applications make users able to access Sina Weibo from other websites or platforms, eg some websites that sell movie tickets insert the purchasing links into Weibo. Up to nine pictures can also be inserted into Weibo, including memos. A video can also be viewed directly on a post. If no limitation is set, people can freely comment under any Weibo, and the bloggers can also reply to people's comments. Of course, people can also select the option of “reposting” while commenting, so that readers' comments on Weibo can appear in both the Weibo comment area and the reposting Weibo.

Weibo has its own recommended function, if you often view a certain content Weibo type, then Weibo will think that you like this type. Some Weibo bloggers you do not follow will appear in your Weibo timeline.

### 2. Background

This chapter mainly introduces the background of the study. First, it simply introduces the history of Chinese art films. Secondly, it explains the key starting points of 2014, when the art films started to decline and Weibo has been used for movie marketing then introduces some functions of Weibo.
2.1 The history of Chinese art movies

Recalling the history of Chinese art films over one hundred years, the art films have made brilliant achievements and won many awards both in domestic and overseas film festivals, for instance, *Farewell My Concubine* directed by Chen Kaige in 1993 was the first Chinese film which won the Palme d'Or at Cannes International Film Festival (“Farewell My Concubine”, 2017). *Red Sorghum* directed by Zhang Yimou won the Golden Bear at the 38th Berlin International Film Festival (“Red Sorghum”, 2017). Chinese art film has its unique value in the world which generated from Chinese culture and history. However, even if these art films have gained a high reputation in movie festivals abroad, most of these movie are rarely known in China.

It has been not a long time since the movies were introduced to ordinary and families. At the beginning of this millennium, ordinary people started to go to a cinema to watch movies and in recent years, especially from around 2014, some of the young people developed gradually a habit of watching movies regularly. The history of Chinese films is too short to have enough time to develop a mature market system, thus the commercial films and art films are always keeping contending for the market share. According to Li, compared with other western countries who formulated and promulgated policies to balance these two kinds of films, although a lot of Chinese movies have high literary and artistic appreciation value and acquired the enviable reputation, they are still in a disadvantageous situation in terms of the market share and influence in China (Li, 2014). Nowadays, we noticed that this trend has been even more pronounced, from 2014.

2.2 The decline of Chinese art films from 2014

This decline is reflected in the condition that fewer and fewer people will take the initiative to concern about and discuss art films, as well as the continued sluggish box-office. The most noticeable condition is that compared to the rapid development of commercial films, Yan has mentioned that “almost we can not see the growth of art films’ ticket box form 2014 to 2017” (Yang, 2017).

As for the discussion aspect, people's discussion and attention on art films have experienced an obvious decline since 2014 to now. Actually, the attenuation of the discussion of art films is difficult to measure and quantify, because before 2014, very few movies used Weibo for marketing and information dissemination. That information is difficult to collect through the internet, but based on
the surveys conducted by some scholars, like Yue and Cao, which indicated the decline from 2014 was obvious. They also pointed out in their articles that 2014 was an essential year. For instance, Yue said that since 2014, when discussing films online, the audience tends to talk about commercial films more than art films, this trend began in 2014 and has increased since 2014, regardless of the audience’s previous habits of watching art films or commercial films before(Yue, 2017). Cao and Li also noticed the same situation based on their investigation(Cao & Li, 2017).

From the box ticket dimension, since 2014, the box office of art films has not progressed or even declined obviously. Even the most influential art films in the movie community, box-office income is still poor. The average box office of art films is 18% lower than the previous year in average which is unprecedented(Bai, 2017), for instance, according to the data collected from the official website of Golden Horse Awards(2017), *Kaili Blues* (Golden Horse Awards Best New Director in 2015) has taken only 6.5 million CNY(about 1 million USD)at the box office and the *Crosscurrent* (Golden Horse Awards for Best Photography in 2016) only gained 3.3 million CNY(about 0.5 million USD) (“Golden Horse Film Festival and Awards,” 2018). In the meantime, some commercial films gained up to 200 million at the box office. In the face of the same market, when commercial films easily imagine achieving 1 billion or 2 billion box office, however in terms of the art films, 1 million in the film box office benchmark is still "out of reach”. It seems impossible for art films to take over such amount. Some art films even could not make ends meet. People do not go to cinemas to watch and pay for art films anymore.

**2.3 Weibo has been used from 2014**

From 2014, more and more movies have started to use social media platforms for marketing. According to a survey conducted by the Chinese Film Organization, in 2014, the amount of established movie Weibo official accounts is around 200, and the figure for 2013 was less than 50. In 2015, it reached 250 approximately, and more in 2016. It can be seen from the survey that from 2014, the film distributors have noticed the power of Weibo and have begun to use Weibo for online promotion and marketing. Hence in this study, Weibo is considered to be a central time point(“China Film Distribution Association,” n.d.).

The movie, *So Young*, released at the end of 2013 seems to be a starting point, and its Weibo online marketing has achieved huge success. According to the previous research conducted by Jin, the film
So Young is the first movie using Weibo, a popular social media platforms, for marketing. Ultimately this low-budget movie had obtained 700 million box office which was much higher than other movies compared the corresponding period (Jin, 2014). Marketing via social media seems to be a good way for the Chinese movies to make promotion. Yanfan argued that the movie's popularity figure in social media platforms has a significantly positive correlation with the box office (Yanfan, 2016). Especially in the early stage of the movie release, the influence effect of the movie has an increasing trend with time.

However, some scholars put forward that under the guidance of overemphasizing "user experience” in the social media platforms, who could cater to most of the users in the social media platforms will hold the initiative and eventually overwhelm other competitors (Yanfan, 2016). As for the movie marketing, it is obvious that those commercial movies with popular actors and vulgar stories are easier to be shown on our social media pages no matter if you will want to know about them.

2.4 Weibo functions

This section mainly explains some of the Weibo functions. These functions which are also commonly used by the users when using Weibo play very important roles in the later part of the analysis. Understanding these features is very helpful for understanding analysis later.

Ranking system: Weibo has a ranking system which is updated every 24 hours. The system analyzes each of the amounts of comments and reposting and likes of each Weibo posted within the 24 hours, then finally generates a list containing dozens of Weibo.

Notification mechanism: In Weibo, there is a mechanism that once a Weibo is reposted by a verified account, all of the followers of this original Weibo account will receive a notification and in most instances, when reposting, the reposting sentence will appear under the comment.

Comment: If the reposting sentences are liked by the original author, these comments will be arranged in the front position in the comment area automatically.
3. Literature Review

In this section, the results of previous studies have been classified and summarized. In order to investigate the influence of social media on the art film. Film, marketing, and social media, these three keywords were used to search for relevant literature. The review used the Subject Guides database to search the related articles in sociology field according to the relevance in the Uppsala University Library, China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI) and Google Scholar. The languages were restricted to English and Chinese. The literature review mainly focused on the study of Weibo and art films, but it made some extension on the basis of Weibo and art films.

After studying the literature, it was found that a group number of researchers have studied Weibo's influence on movie marketing. Some research scholars believe that fan economics and word-of-mouth marketing play important roles in online film marketing. Finally, for the user's marketing, some more general literature are used. Some scholars have summarized the influence of social media on people's behaviors and attitudes when discussing social media platforms.

3.1 Weibo has led the changes in the film marketing

Weibo plays an important role in movie marketing based on its technical and communications features. According to the media context theory put forward by an American scholar Joshua Meyrowitz, the media environment which is constructed by the media is just as same important as the physical environment in which people make communication activities (Meyrowitz, 1985). Hence, we can not ignore the impact of changes in media technology on movie marketing. Meyrowitz put forward the theory of media context in the book *No Sense of Place: The Impact of Electronic Media on Social Behavior*. In the book, he developed media technology theory of McLuhan, and argued that "media is not only a tool for transferring information between people in two or more environments, but also the medias are messages themselves. The transformation of communication is an extremely significant factor in changing society (Meyrowitz, 1985, p. 13). He believes that the media conveys information to its users and the environment formed by the media will have an impact on users of the media.

Yuhe has pointed out in a research in 2017 that there are also benefits for distributors of movies by using Weibo platform. Firstly, using Weibo reduce the cost of promotion and distribution. Secondly, by the excavation of data collected from Weibo background, it is more convenient to achieve
accurate marketing. The last, the usage of Weibo will help encourage the participation of most netizens, since most of young people have their own Weibo accounts, and have the habit of viewing Weibo (Yuhe, 2017). Xiaoru has put forward that the emergence of Weibo has developed the film marketing as it not only integrated the mass media, organization communication, group communication and interpersonal communication, but also maximize the use of the visual, auditory and other sensory organs of the audience (Xiaoru, 2010). Guoming has conducted a more profound analysis of this issue that on the one hand, in terms of physical space, Weibo can achieve the construction of a "quasi-human" communication scenario that is similar to face-to-face communication by combining a variety of network symbols and technologies. On the other hand, compared with the traditional media, the "gatekeeper" does not exist any more which means Weibo information dissemination is not subject to time constraints. Overall, it provides films with a brand-new way to make communication with their target audience as well because the movie is an art which relies on visuality and auditory heavily. Through social media, the distance between audiences and films producers is shortened (Guoming, 2010).

3.2 Word of mouth marketing and fan economy

Word of mouth marketing and fan economy play an important role in online film marketing. WOW is that oral or written recommendation by a satisfied customer to the prospective customers of a good or service (“What is word of mouth marketing?” n.d.). As for the movie marketing, in the social media, the stars are the core of most of commercial movies. According to incomplete statistics, as many as 59 celebrities, including movie stars and famous writers, involved in the marketing campaign for the film So Young. These celebrities have as many as 10 million, or fewer than 1 million fans. (“So Young (film),” 2018) In a study of this movie, Jing mentioned that the fans have herd behavior, which makes those celebrities’ fame, reputation and popularity could be transformed into the influential opinions. Their fans are easily influenced by these opinions due to empathy or authoritative influence and other factors into the influence of opinion. Thus their attitudes and behavior can be changed and the marketing goal can be achieved (Jing, 2014).

Not all of the products are suitable for word-of-mouth marketing. Jidong and Zhengming mentioned that word-of-mouth marketing plays the different role in different products. A lot of products that are suitable for word-of-mouth marketing are popular fashion items, or cartoons, movies, or TV series that may produce popular buzzwords (Jidong and Zhengming, 2009).
3.3 The impact of social media on people’s choice and attitude

For the impact of social media on users’ behaviors and attitudes, scholars from China and other countries have done research on this topic. As mentioned by Chung and Austria in 2010, consumers who facilitated by social media, generate online social support for their peers and thereby establish trust in the networks used. They mentioned that this kind of reliance would encourage users to buy (Chung and Austria, 2010). His theory refers to a kind of trust relationship established between users and social media, which will stimulate users’ purchasing behaviors positively.

In China, there are a large number of surveys in relation to social media and users could be found. In an investigation conducted by Zhou and Wang in 2014, he mentioned that a group’s culture has been created by social media platforms. He noticed that the groups culture will mainly take entertainment as their theme, especially youngsters. Young people tend to combine the characteristics of social media's free participation and selectively create entertaining groups. He said that the social media will influence what people discuss in the groups and push it to be more entertaining (Zhou and Wang, 2014). Xu concerned that only social media marketing can significantly influence the actions of tourists, and cognitive attitudes and emotional attitudes which mediated the relationship between social media marketing and tourist actions, when she discussed the impact of social media on people’s purchase of travel products (Xu et al., 2015). Wang has a similar opinion that not only information on social media will influence people's decision to purchase tourism products. The same rule applies to any entertainment products. The social media marketing method is the significant factor that can significantly influence the behavior of users and their attitudes (Wang et al., 2012).

4. Theoretical Framework

The social media logic sets out from the four elements of social media and then describes the impact of these four characteristics on people which coincides with the first research question of this study. As mentioned before, the art film is a non-mainstream cultural product. Hence, this study utilized the specific marketing strategy for non-mainstream cultural products to analyze and explain a successful case.
4.1 The social media logic

Van Dijck and Poell has put forward four elements of social media logic derived from the mass media logic: programmability, popularity, connectivity and datafication in 2013(Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). In the study of Van Dijck, the impact of the utilization of social media on the films’ marketing will be explained. Prior to 2014, the movie marketing has always conducted via the very traditional medium, such as a small number of television commercials advertisement, commercial roadshows, and posters in public places. etc(Mei, 2016). Our goal is to prove that the four features of social media which will impact on social media users’ getting information and communicating about films, especially art films. This will contribute to clarifying the strong relationship between the changes of social media user's behavior and social media. For this reason, this study is relevant.

4.1.1 Programmability

Among them, the programmability contributes to steer user experiences, content, and user relations via platforms and in the same time, the reaction of users will help to shape the software or social media itself. Van Dijck and Poell thought for a social media platform, interface and algorithm will affect people's usage habits. In turn, people’s feedback would be adopted by the programmer to improve the application or platform. The authors believed that social media has been gradually improved and optimized, and it has gradually become what it is now. That is, social media platforms are basically originated from an interactive process(Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). Through this process, users and social media are gradually transforming together. Nevertheless, when conducting this research on Weibo, the researchers focused the research on the interface and algorithm of Weibo on users, since this part is most relevant to our topic.

4.1.2 Popularity

The popularity divulged a potent mechanism for pushing "likable" people to become media personalities; depending on their ability to play the media and lure crowds. As mentioned in this article, popularity boosting is thus two-way traffic: algorithms automatically assign differentiated value, but users themselves may also engage in concerted efforts to lift certain people's visibility(Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). It is believed that these two factors play an important role in the marketing of movies. Whether the algorithm of the social media platforms or the uses, they are actually promoting the famous bloggers or celebrities in a secret way. In the popularity part, a relevant theory of the power law mention in Digital Media & Society was added, since the power
law will contribute to explain the future trend. Popularity has led to people in an environment where movie-related information is unevenly distributed and people perceive different types of information about the movie, affecting the audience to discuss the movie and buy movie tickets.

4.1.3 Connectivity

As for the connectivity, Van Dijck and Poell put forward that it refers to connect content to citizens or to link advertisers to consumers(Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). Pariser and Sunstein said that social media platforms, ostensibly offer users the opportunity to pick and choose others to connect with and communicate on a personal basis. From this perspective, these media allow individuals to create their own customized social networks and communities(Pariser E and Sunstein, 2011). Rather than passively accepting or receiving the message, social media platforms allow users to freely discover and select topics of their interest through the process of connecting people and then form various groups. It could be said that social media platforms provide users a chance to transform from negative way to positive way when they search for information. Hence, the depth of information gained by people has increased and the breadth has decreased. By restricting people to groups, connectivity limits the extent to which they receive the source of movie information.

4.1.4 Datafication

Datafication mentioned that the ability of networked platforms to render into data of the world that have not been quantified before(Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). It endowed social media platforms with the potential to develop techniques for predictive and real-time analysis. One aspect of datafication used in this study is that the analysis of user behavior in the background is devoted to estimating user interests, preferences or expecting further actions, and then targeted content will be promoted. Using data collected from social media platforms, the users’ interests and actions can be predicted which is also related to the recommendation mechanism of Weibo platforms.

4.2 Marketing strategy for non-mainstream cultural products

As mentioned before, art film is recognized as a kind of non-mainstream art form in China now. Marketing strategy for non-mainstream cultural products by Sai and Yue was chosen as one of the main theories.
As mentioned before, in this thesis, the art films is considered as a kind of non-mainstream product. It is better to take advantage of the specific strategy for online marketing. The second theoretical model used in this study is to insert social media logic Van Dijck and Poell to Sai and Yuehao’s theory: marketing strategy for non-mainstream cultural products. This theory is explained in the main structure of four steps for non-mainstream cultural products.

Figure 1 A description of non-mainstream marketing strategy (Sai and Yuehao, 2016)

4.2.1 Find the specific customer groups

The first step in non-mainstream marketing strategy is to find a specific customer group. As for the most enterprises, they always adopt the traditional STP strategy when selecting the target consumers, that is, market segmentation, target market selection and positioning. However, for the non-mainstream products marketing strategy, PTS strategy (market positioning-target, market selection, market segmentation) may be more effective, that is, starting from the positioning of the product then finding the specific consumer group (Sai and Yuehao, 2016).

In the theoretical analysis, another theory in relation to the target consumers is applied in this thesis. Zenker has proposed the concept of two kinds of target consumer groups in 2009, the first is The Direct Target Group and the second is called The Wider Target Group. The Direct Target Group refers to a group of consumers who can directly establish relationships with the products, while another concept refers to a group of consumers who cannot build up a direct relationship but can connect through certain means indirectly. He also put forward that the number of The Direct Target Group is less than The Wider Target Group, but it is much easier to build up a connection with the former group than the latter group (Zenker, 2009).
4.2.2 Use a variety of channels to communicate with customers groups

After finding the specific customer group, Sai and Yuehao thought that companies should make full use of the Internet to connect with the specific target consumer groups and quickly build up a connection with them. They believed that the medium a company used and the way they communicate via the medium are the two most crucial dimensions (Sai and Yuehao, 2016). As the consumers in the target group are concentrated, it is more efficient to use one kind of content to communicate via a variety of channels with them intensively. In this process, continuous information exchanges and transactions happen. Programmability is also reflected in this step. Van Dijck and Poel said that while social media affects users’ reading habits, they can also be used by marketers to communicate with users (Van Dijck and Poell, 2013).

4.2.3 Expand the groups and penetrate more customers groups

After having a strong support from the consumer groups, the next step is to make use of these faithful advocators to influence and penetrate more consumers. The authors mentioned that the non-main stream cultural products are not unfavorable to most of the people, but they are just unknown to most people (Sai and Yuehao, 2016). Hence, in most instances, people maybe not resist once they meet the non-stream cultural products, instead, they show acceptance. In addition, the authors considered that firstly effecting the target users and then passing the information to the public can be understood as a kind of word-of-mouth communication and eventually achieve a wider penetration.

In the process of expanding the groups and penetrating more consumer s groups, popularity is used in the analysis of this part. As Van Dijck and Poell said, when a topic or an account is famous, it will become even more famous through the promotion of social media platforms and the support of fans (Van Dijck and Poell, 2013).

4.2.4 Make the additional profit

The last step of the marketing strategy for non-mainstream products is to make additional profit. Creating additional profits is based on the connection with consumers, selling derivative products services or building a broader ecosystem. For most of the cultural products, the purpose of their founders is to introduce them to the public, and a distinguished cultural product, whose core could generate value and influence more users continuously. The manufacture and distribution of products
related to the cultural products can not only increase the influence but also gain much more commercial value. Sai and Yuehao also proposed that a product related to cultural products should closely connect to the core of its culture, in terms of the form and content (Sai and Yuehao, 2016).

5 Study Design and Methodology:

5.1 The selection of the methods

The study was divided into two parts, using various methods for data collection and analysis. In order to answer the first question, how did the ways of Weibo users to get information and communicate about films change, especially art films from 2014 to 2017? Questionnaires and an easy observation survey were used to collect information in this part of the study. In this part of the study, the observation method is also adopted and the Weibo ranking list was observed for three days from 10th Feb. 2018 to 12th Feb. 2018. The researcher simply investigated the proportion of commercial movie stars and non-commercial movie stars in the Weibo ranking list, in order to analyze the influence of commercial movie stars and non-commercial movie stars on people.

And in order to answer the second question, how could Weibo be used as a marketing tool for art films online marketing? A case study is used as the main method to deal with the question. The object of this case study selected a successful art film which gains a huge success through Weibo marketing, The Dead End. Specifically, the case study analyzes the entire contents of this movie's official Weibo account. A qualitative content analysis is used to classify the content of each Weibo in the case study.

In this chapter, the rationality of choosing these mixed research methods and the pilot in-depth interview are explained firstly. The most important thing is to indicate how to use these methods to process and analyze data in this study. In the last, the limitation and ethic issues of the methodology are mentioned.

5.2 The pilot interview

Before spreading the online questionnaire and pilot interviews with two respondents was made. Teijlingen and Hundley summarized that the pilot interview has two main roles (Teijlingen and Hundley, 2001). On the one hand, it can refer to so-called feasibility studies which are “small-scale version[s], or trial run[s], done in preparation for the major study” (Polit et al., 2001). On the other hand, a pilot study can also be the pre-testing or ‘trying out’ of a particular research instrument.
(Baker, 1994). The two characteristics of pilot interviews were used in this thesis. In December 2017, two one-hour pilot interviews with two respondents were conducted. These pilot interviews provided guidance for the formulation of a formal questionnaire in the next stage. More specifically, the pilot interviews determined the scopes of some questions’ options. For instance, when doing pilot in-depth interviews, the researcher asked the respondents about the proportion of art films in all of the movies they watch in theaters. Both two respondents told that for them, the proportion of art films is only about 10%. The option is set around 10%(the options ranges from less than 10% to 40%). It turns out that no one really chooses more than 40% of the options afterward. In the questionnaire, the numbers in the options for question 3, question 6, question 7, question 9, question 11 and question 13 were set on the basis of pilot in-depth interview.

5.3 Data selection

5.3.1 Online questionnaire

Janice and Martyn mentioned that the questionnaire survey method is particularly available for surveys which need to investigate the purpose of users, the utilization of behavioral habits, their attitudes and perspectives, such demographic information(Janice and Martyn C, 2007). The questionnaire survey was mainly used to investigate respondents' habits of using Weibo and watching movies in this study. The purpose of the online questionnaire is to have a direct understanding of the Weibo user's habits of watching movie and to observe the changes happened over the 3 years that the discussion of movies and ticketing decisions, also including to analyses people’s opinions of art films, to collect the data in relation to people’s habits of using social media, to investigate people’s attitudes towards the content of both commercial movies and art films.

The total amount of the respondents is 200 approximately, by using the Questionnaire Star, an online questionnaire collection software always used to carry on online information collection. 2 criteria or filter questions have been set that they should be older than 25 years old, and have been used Weibo longer than 3 years. That is because, for most of the young people in China at the present stage, they graduated from college at 22 years old and cannot become financially independent before graduation. It will also affect the decision-making process for them to buy movie tickets. It is crucial to exclude the economic interfere in the three-year period. Hence, the 25 has been set as the minimum age, which can guarantee that the respondents were financially
independent from 2014. The reason for the criteria of using Weibo for longer than 3 years is to ensure that respondents have used Weibo from 2014.

The method of sampling is snowball sampling. Firstly, the researcher found some of her friends and asked them to ask their friends to spread the link and fill out the online questionnaire. When the number of respondents reaches 200 approximately, the online questionnaire was closed. After comprehensively considering the time and energy of the researcher, the number of respondents was set at 200 which is the maximum amount. The 200 respondents is the maximum amount for researchers to spread questionnaires and collect information. The total number of valid questionnaires was 203 in final.

5.3.2 Case study
The second part is how could Weibo be used as a marketing tool for art films’ online marketing. The method of the case study is adopted. According to Yin, a case study design should be considered when the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions and the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context (Yin, 2003). The purpose of the case study is to combine it with the non-mainstream product marketing strategy to analyzes how the Weibo manager of this movie pushes the art film into people's sights and eventually achieved the box office success step by step.

The reason why choosing the movie, The Dead End, as an object is that it is a really successful art film. As shown by data, the box office of this movie was much higher than other art films in the same year (“The Dead End,” 2018). The number of fans on its Weibo official account is also well above the average. High box office and high fan amounts have research value. This study will analyze all Weibo posted by The Dead End Weibo official account, including the number of likes and comments below during the period from 2015.5.27 to 2017.9.5 from the first to the last Weibo. Until now, The Dead End Weibo account is followed by 20,897 people. The number of Weibo is 1018 in total, including 15 articles.

5.3.3 Qualitative content analysis
Weber mentioned in 1990 that qualitative content analysis goes beyond merely counting words to examining language intensely for the purpose of classifying large amounts of text into an efficient
number of categories that represent similar meanings (Weber, 1990). In this thesis, the qualitative content analysis is mainly used in the case study. Researcher summarizes the main content of each Weibo, and combines the amounts Weibo’s comments, likes and reposting with content for analysis. The purpose of the qualitative content analysis is to find out the common points of Weibo that can attract people's attention and summarize these factors.

5.4 The embedment of study in methodological literature
The article mainly adopts three main research methods: questionnaire, case study, and qualitative content analysis. The questionnaire and case study are mainly used to collect data thoroughly. In the formulation of the questionnaire, the content of the questionnaire is devoted to investigating Weibo users' habits changes of using Weibo in the past three years. The questionnaire asks the respondents to answer the questions about their perception of the changes from all aspects while ensuring that the questionnaire does not make the interviewee bored. In the analysis section, part of the questionnaire results will be presented to support the researcher’s point of views.

Careful consideration was also given to the selection of cases, and the reasons for choosing the film were explained first in the analysis part. All Weibo posted on this movie's official account was considered as a part of case study. Each of Weibo’s data (reposting quantity, number of likes, etc.) and content have been analyzed. The content of each Weibo is summarized and categorized in a qualitative way.

5.5 Limitation
Although it is believed that the research design is able to answer the research questions, there are still some limitations. Firstly, due to the time limitation, this study only selected about 200 respondents to do the online questionnaire. Due to the limitation of researcher’s time and energy, there is still a risk that it can not generalize all of the Chinese people. Secondly, for the case study, the Weibo was collected recently, so some reposting, commenting and liking might not occur during the marketing period of the movie, which may affect the results of the study. Due to the tremendous amount of information and the active updating speed, only a few people would concern a Weibo which has been posted for a couple days, in this research the impact of this is minimal.
5.6 Ethical issues
Weibo is an open source platform, which means the content on it is not password protected and is available to everyone. Thus, there should be no concerns about privacy issues. As for the questionnaire and in-depth interviews, every respondent is anonymous and their private information will be protected. The data collected from the research will only be used to this research and not be released.

6 Analysis 1: How did the ways of Weibo users to get information and communicate about films change, especially art films from 2014 to 2017?
In this chapter, to make the analysis more readable, parts of the questionnaire used are inserted in the analysis section (the whole questionnaire will be displayed in the appendix section). The results of all the questionnaires will be displayed in the appendix section. The sequence of the analysis sections follows the four parts of the social media logic theory.

6.1 Connectivity
According to Van Dijck and Poell’s theory, connectivity is a significant element of social media logic. They put forward a notion “the power of platform agency” denotes that the social media platform expedite connections between individuals (Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). In social media platforms, users are not connected randomly, instead of through some of the same features or nodes, in this sense that social media platform is more of a tool connecting people who have common traits and preferences, then exchanging experiences or communicating (Kelly et al., 2010). Hence, the foundation for connectivity in social media logic is these common features or topics. Around particular topics, users are arranged into various size of loose groups by social platforms, in which people express their opinions around these particular topics.

Since Weibo became a vital tool for movie online marketing in 2014, gradually the users who show interest in movies gathered into groups. For instance, if an actor/actress posts a Weibo in relation to his/her forthcoming movie, his/her followers will start a discussion and make up a loose group about the movie and the actor. In this sense, the movie and actors become the central topics of the group. As the questionnaire data shows, during the three years, Weibo users spend more and more time on Weibo and Weibo has become the only one main information recourses of movie that most Weibo users perceived since 56.16% respondents think 61-80% information about movie comes from Weibo.
Before 2014 when the movie distributors applied Weibo for movie marketing, the ways people gain information in relation to a movie are traditional and passive due to the unidirectional nature of traditional media. At that time, they lacked the convenient channel to get information actively, hence they could only receive the information passively without the initiative to choose both the type and quantity of information. The users can't decide what content they are getting from. As mentioned above, the adoption of Weibo renders users the initiative, according to their different topics which they are interested in and they are divided into different loose groups. As the table
shows, 56% of respondents think 61% to 80% movie information come from Weibo. For the vast majority of respondents, Weibo is the main source of movie news and information.

With Weibo as the main source of movie information for Weibo users, the negative impact of the changes in discussion venue and sources of information of art films lies in the decreasing of social media exposure. In comparison with the non-art films, art films and the art films directors tend to express non-mainstream topics most of which lack attractive selling points as commercial films, the love between a prince and a poor girl, or a superhero who save the world. As is stated above, the art films directors mostly do not regard the performers as the selling point, hence most of the actors or actresses who take part in the art films lack significant commercial value and of course their followers’ groups in Weibo are relatively small.

The extension of Weibo has limited the channels of people accessing information related to the movie and further reduces the media exposure of art films in Weibo. According to the results of the questionnaire survey, users perceive that there are fewer and fewer pieces of information or content about art films that appear on Weibo. The following tables show that of all the information related to movies in Weibo, more than 90% of respondents perceive that the proportion of information about art films is less than 20%. Nearly 50% of respondents believe that this ratio is lower than three years ago.

Table 4 The proportion of the information of art film in Weibo the respondents perceived

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20%</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>43.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 40%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5 Changes in the information of art films from 2014 to now

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>42.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>48.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In fact, this is the people's own preferences and choices, blocking other information sources, Weibo is just a platform supporting people making choices of their own preferences, but at the same time to a certain extent reduce the exposure of art films.

6.2 Programmability
As mentioned by Van Dijck and Poell, programmability can be defined as the ability of a social media platform to trigger and steer users' creative or communicative contributions, while users, through their interaction with these technological environments, may influence the flow of communication and information activated by such a platform (Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). In the article, the authors mentioned a two-way relationship between the social media platforms and their users, where the platform can affect the user in many aspects and in turn the user's performance and behavior can also provide feedback to the platforms so that contributes to the improvement of platforms themselves. In this research, the first half part of the theory has been chosen to elaborate and explain pertaining the impact of social media on users and this impact is multifaceted. David Beer said that programmers steer user experiences, content, and user relation via platforms (Beer, 2009).

According to connectivity section, the time people spending on using Weibo is longer and longer since 2014. Spontaneously, Weibo also gradually changes people's communication habit. Nowadays, Weibo has become the primary forum for people to discuss movies. The most straightforward influence lies in the extension of people’s discussion style and the enrichment of content online. This is related to the surface and function of Weibo as most of Weibo consist of both text and images, and sometimes even videos which are much more clear than directly typing and talking. The influence has changed users’ communication not only from monotonous text or words to the combination of words and image, but also from static to dynamic. The movie is a kind of art of video and audio, so visual expressions are much more powerful and persuasive than words and languages (Xiaorong, 2016). In this sense, Weibo is like a huge database of most of the movie-related content which people could take advantage to discuss about movies. Not only the Weibo links, some of the memes, animation or facial expression can also be used directly by users when they chatting. Some users said that they deliberately collected these expressions when they browse Weibo. A wide variety of expression styles and forms have enriched people's chatting content and gradually supersede the monotonous text. From this point, it is indicated that Weibo has changed people's habit of discussing movies to some extent.
Dong has raised an idea that more and more people are suffering from the explosion of information while enjoying the delight from Weibo. Confronting the turbulent information flow, people spend less time reading each Weibo (Dong, 2012). However, as the amount of information on Weibo surge, normal pictures have been completely unable to stimulate the users. Only the images with visual impact could allow users to stop and then click. The longer a user stays on a Weibo, the more likely it is to memorize the content of the Weibo (Xiaorong, 2016). Therefore, in general, the content and form of Weibo will, to a large extent, affect users’ concerns and attention.

6.3 Popularity
Van Dijck and Poell mentioned that “mass media logic already divulged a potent mechanism for pushing ‘likeable’ people to become media personalities; depending on their ability to play the media and lure crowds, a variety of actors, from politicians to entertainers, accumulated mass attention, often achieving the status of celebrity.” (Van Dijck and Poell, 2013, p. 7), which is in line with the theory of Altheide and Snow already raised. Altheide and Snow considered that mass media’s ability to shape public opinion by filtering out influential voices and assigning some expressions more weight, attested to its power (Altheide and Snow, 1979). In social media, this mechanism exists as well, however, based on the Van Dijck and Poell’s theory, the boosting force of this mechanism is two-way traffic: algorithms automatically assign differentiated value, but users themselves may also engage in concerted efforts to lift certain people's visibility (Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). The algorithms elaborate that the social media platforms background calculates a value, representing the accounts or user's popularity according to the accounts’ dynamic (by counting the number of fans and likes they received). For those more "likable" or endearing accounts or users, their content will be placed in recommendation places, which have a greater chance of being noticed compared with the normal users. In addition, users in social media platforms would contribute to the emergence of these “superusers”. As mentioned by Hajli, the stars exist not because of some cliquish preference for one another but owe to the preference of hundreds of others pointing to them (Hajli, 2014). Since these accounts placed in the recommended positions would be seen more easily, users are more likely to notice, click even comment and repost. All these actions will increase their “likable” levels, hence this is like a loop or a circulation, the popular accounts will be more and more prevailing. Thus, as Lindgren said, the power law revealed in the social media platforms that we often say the vast majority of resources are grasped in the hands of a very small group number of users (Lindgren, 2017). On account of the rich-get-richer logic which mentions that the people who have more resources tend to get more in future, as for the very few
accounts, the amount of their fans will be increased and their resources will be richer and richer (Lindgren, 2017). With the concentration of resources, a phenomenon occurs that accounts or users who possess most of the resources in and fans on the social platform will also dominate the dissemination of information.

As same as most other social media platforms, popularity has an impact on Weibo users. Weibo has a ranking system which updates every 24 hours. The system analyzes each of the amount of comments and reposting and likes of each Weibo released within the 24 hours, then finally generates a list containing dozens of Weibo. After 3-day observation from 10th Feb. 2018 to 12th Feb. 2018, the Weibo's list of public changed three times, a total of 30 Weibo and 22 of them posted from commercial movie stars, which denotes nearly 80% of the top 10 Weibo that make up the list are commercial movie stars and 5 of the 22 are the movie stars are promoting their upcoming film during the Spring Festival period. Compared to the art films actors and actresses, commercial film actor is characterized by higher commercial value, higher paid and having a larger group of fans in Weibo. In order to do marketing, the Weibo managers of these commercial movie stars will post Weibo films before the movies they starred in for promotion. According to the questionnaire data, a large group of respondents thinks, since 2014 when movie distributors have been using Weibo for marketing, the number and proportion of Weibo movie bloggers (including movie stars) they followed in Weibo has been increased, and of course, the content related to movies seen have been increased. These people are the stars on the Weibo, and Weibo is promoting these already famous commercial movie stars to become even more famous. In fact, the information about these star users will be displayed on most users’ Weibo page regardless of whether the user follows he/she. Since the time each user spends on Weibo is limited and these stars become more and more popular, the share of art films witnesses a decline. Combining the change of discussion topics from the movie itself to movie actors, it could be deduced that the content in relation to the commercial films and commercial movie actors/actresses occupy a large part of the Weibo sphere. These famous commercial stars who have a larger discourse power compared with ordinary users (Dongxiao, 2010). What they posted will not only make these Weibo visible to more people but also affect their discussion content. Despite some people do not take the initiative to follow the stars of these commercial films, the movie stars and the Weibo they participated in the movie may still be in a prominent position. Most of Weibo users are exposed to the environment filled with many of the Weibo posted by the commercial stars. To conclude, in this part, what the users discuss has been inclined to more about commercial movie stars in Weibo.
6.4 Datafication

In Van Dijck and Poell’s theory, the notion, datafication, endowed social media platforms with the potential to develop techniques for predictive and real-time analytics (Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). Specifically, by observing each user's behavior on Weibo, the background of Weibo collects and manages real-time data of every user. These data include but are not limited to the bloggers followed by a user and the Weibo commented by him/her. A user's preferences and habits will be significantly reflected in these data. For instance, a user followed a large group of beauty bloggers in a short time, she/he might have the greatest possibility of practicing makeup recently. They mentioned in the article, the principle of datafication can be used to predict user taste and insert personalized ads (Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). In actual use, these data will be taken advantage to serve target users rationally in order to keep the users’ loyalty. In Weibo, the definition of advertising becomes broader, not only refers to obtain commercial profits by advisers, but also to provide users with more information they like, and enhance the user experience. In Weibo, users often receive something that does not come from the bloggers they follow but from the similar bloggers they are not following. This is a Weibo's measure to improve users' experience with Weibo.

Back to the movie's Weibo marketing, according to the data collected through the questionnaire, almost every respondent is following more than one commercial movie star. Moreover, in these three years, the quantity of commercial movie stars they follow has shown a gradual upward trend. This may be due to the fact that Weibo users were recommended to follow several commercial stars when they register Weibo in the beginning, then followed by a snowballing growth due to the Weibo recommendation mechanism. For instance, for users who like the art films, of course, they will follow the Weibo accounts of some art films and art film actors/actresses, but at the same time, the commercial movie stars are in their following list. Weibo's system monitors their following on these movie stars and naturally recommends content both for commercial and art films as well as celebrities. For those who are not interested in the art film, there is no intersection between the Weibo bloggers they follow and art films, since they will not deliberately look for and follow the actors/actresses of art films, Weibo background naturally will not provide them with the message about the art films. To conclude, Weibo recommends users with similar accounts by analyzing the user's list of following. Since most people are following commercial movie stars, most of the users will be recommended commercial films, and people who do not like art films will not be recommended art films. Such a situation leads to the same conclusion as the previous part. Users’
habits have been gradually inclined towards commercial movie stars through the Weibo recommendation mechanism.

7 Analysis 2: How could Weibo be used as a marketing tool for online marketing of art films?
This chapter aims to answer the second question, how could Weibo be used as a marketing tool to do for art films marketing, by dissecting the Weibo official account of The Dead End. The first section gives a brief introduction to the movie, The Dead End and its original work, Sunspot. Then, all Weibo are classified in terms of content and form. Based on the data collected and the classification, the rest of the section takes the theory as a clue and conducts an in-depth analysis of the case.

7.1 “The Dead End” and “Sunspot”

The Dead End
The Dead End is a 2015 Chinese crime drama art film adapted from Xu Yigua's novel Sunspot. It is also an art film. The film is directed by Cao Baoping, starring Deng Chao, Duan Yihong, Guo Tao, and Wang Luodan. The film was released on August 27, 2015. The film received positive reviews in regard to its performance and cinematography (“The Dead End,” 2018). The Dead End has received a lot of awards, including the best director and best actor in 18th Shanghai International Film Festival and the best actor in 31st Golden Rooster Awards which are very heavy weight awards in China. The production cost of this movie is only about 30 million CNY (about 4.7 million USD). Until now, The Dead End has 300 million CNY (about 47 million USD) much higher than other art films in the same period. Cao Baoping is the director of this movie. There are 3 leading men in this movie, Deng Chao, Guo Tao and Duan Yihong who often star in art films and they are widely acclaimed by professional movie experts. Before the first debut, the film distributor made a testing screening which lasted about 3 weeks from June 19th, 2015 to July 12th, 2015.

The movie tells a story about a crime. Seven years ago, there was a massacre. The death of a family of five caused great shock in the society. However, the three suspects Yang, Xin and Chen are still at large. They adopted the little girl who survived the massacre and lived together. One day, Xin’s superiors noticed Xin’s strange actions and start a private investigation of Xin. Then, the three guys people fled.
Compared with other movies which take crime as a theme, director Cao abandoned the routine of keeping killing and gangsters, although both of them are the normal features of most crime movies. There are no standard undercover and gunfight elements in the film. He used the camera language - flashbacks repeatedly interspersed throughout the story. A movie critic said that *The Dead End* has a unique style of crime film and art film which paid more attention to human issues (Cao, 2015).

**Sunspot**

*Sunspot* is a popular novel which focuses on the description of fugitives psychology whose first version has been published in 2010. Crime and secular life are the main themes of popular novels. *Sunspot* is written by Xu Yigua, a famous Chinese writer, whose won the 2003 most promising new media Chinese writer. Her novels won the annual award of the people's literature. Her novels are known for its delicate writing style and *Sunspot* was her first novel (“Sunspot Baidu,” n.d.).

### 7.2 Description of data

The main focus of the case study is the form/type of Weibo (original Weibo and reposting Weibo) as well as the sources of the reposting Weibo. After analyzing all of the 1018 Weibo, it is perceived that there are very obvious differences between the pre-release and the post-release of the movie in terms of the form and the content of the Weibo, hence in this thesis, the whole period was divided into two separate parts. The debut was in August 27th, 2015. These two periods are named as Period I and Period II.

**Period I: May 27th, 2015 to August 27th, 2015**

**Period II: August 27th, 2015 to September 5th, 2017**

In this chapter, all Weibo are mainly divided into two categories, original Weibo and reposting Weibo based on the form of the Weibo. The original Weibo specifically refers to the Weibo written by the Weibo bloggers. The reposting Weibo means the Weibo is reposted from another Weibo blogger with permission. Depending on the identity of the reposting accounts, there are four main kinds of reposting Weibo in this study: Reposting from verified account (Weibo user who has been verified and has more than 10,000 followers), Repost from general person (Weibo user without verified who has less than 10,000 followers), Reposting from actor/actress (the actor and actress’s Weibo account who stared in *The Dead End*) and Reposting from the original writer. In the Period I, this thesis makes a simple classification of the original Weibo and divided Weibo which get more attention into three subcategories based on the content of original Weibo: **Weibo contains**
open questions and games, Weibo refers to the extension of the movie (for instance, movie trailer) and Weibo contains posters. By categorizing the content of Weibo, the study tries to find the effective ways to communicate the Weibo account with the target users.

Figure 2 Classification of Weibo

(A verified account: with a blue ‘V’)                     (An actor Duan’s account: with a yellow ‘V’)

(An ordinary account: with nothing)                        (The original writer Xu’s account: with a yellow ‘V’)
Combining the case study with the 4 steps of non-mainstream marketing strategy, the Period I correspond to the first 3 stages: Identify the first target customer group, Find an appropriate way to communicate with the target group and Communicate with the target group. The Period II correspond to the last stage: Penetrate more customers and make additional profit.

7.3 Identify the first target customer group

In the Period I, it is clear that the target consumers consists of two levels groups and are defined as The Direct Target Group and The Wider Target Group. In a Weibo posted in the beginning, the writer mentioned that “The Dead End is a gift for all of the fans of Sunspot and all of the people who love crime novels, the movie is also for the loyal audiences who like Deng, Guo, Duan and Wang, and who like art films.” In this Weibo, Deng, Guo, Duan, Wang, and Xu was mentioned. The Direct Target Group is the fans of both the original novel and the actors and actresses because they could be affected directly and easily. As mentioned before, The Dead End was adapted by Sunspot which has been published for 4 years before the release of the movie. As for Xu, the writer of the book, who already have a reputation among the people who like the crime novels and has more than 60,000 followers in Weibo. Apart from the original book, the followers of the actors and actresses of the movie were also considered as The Direct Target Group. Leading actors and actress, Deng, Guo, Wang and Duan, all have more than 100,000 followers in Weibo respectively. These followers both of the original writer and the movie actors/actress have the possibility to be attracted by the movie as their interests were in relation to the movie. They will show interest to all of the new information about what they are interested in. Hence, the followers or fans of the Sunspot and Xu were recognized as The Direct Target Group who could easily respond to the new information and are willing to spread it.

However, the number of people The Direct Target Group is still too small, and their contribution to the income of the box office is insufficient to cover the costs of the film. The scope of The Wider Target Group is more extensive, and in this case, The Wider Target Group refers to those people who love crime novels and art films. Because these people are not fans of particular actors or the novel, they are only relatively interested in art films or crime novels, and the number of people in The Wider Target Group is far more numerous than The Direct Target Group. However, they are less sensitive to the movie and take a longer time to respond to it.
Based on this case, the first step to find the specific customers is to identify the target customer
group. As for the art films, we can know that in this period, the movie account did not have any
follower and in order to affect as many users as possible, it is significant to find the factors which
could link the movie with audience closely and identify them and link these factors or topics with
users. Due to they have a love for these actors or writers, these people are easily attracted, thus
become target users. In addition, these fanatic fans are also happy to recommend this movie to their
friends. The distributors of an art film should carefully analyze every element in relation to the
movie and pick up the group of people who are easily effected.

The process of defining target user groups is a process of searching for “topics.” According to Van
Dijck and Poel in social media logic, social media platforms users gather together into loose groups.
In each group, users will discuss a topic (Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). In this case, the topics related
to the movie *The Dead End*, for instance, actor Deng and the keyword “crime” are considered as the
topics discussed by groups of users. Users who are interested in these topics and participate in
discussions are treated as target users.

### 7.4 Find an appropriate way to communicate with the target group

The account adopted main two forms to communicate with the target group, reposting Weibo from
actors and original writer and posting original Weibo. According to the data above, in the Period I,
we can infer that before the release of this movie, the official accounts posted 514 Weibo, 26.5%
Weibo referred to Xu and *Sunspot* and 35.4% Weibo referred to the four leading actors.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>63.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repost</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>36.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>678</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 The proportion of two types of Weibo in Period I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Verified account</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Normal person account</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>22.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 The proportion of four types of reposting Weibo in Period I
7.4.1 Reposting Weibo from actors and original writer

In this period, the account reposted 246 Weibo, represent 36.2% of the total. There were 96 reposts mentioned the four leading actors and 72 mentioned the original writer, Xu, which accounted for 39.0% and 29.2% in all reposts separately. In Weibo, there is a mechanism that once a Weibo is reposted by a verified account, all of the followers of this original Weibo account will receive a notification and in most instances, when reposting, the reposting sentence will appear under the comment. In this case, *The Dead End* account have two ways to let them know that the Weibo accounts they follow are reposted by someone: from the notifications they receive and by browsing the comment area. In addition, if the reposting sentences are liked by the original author of the Weibo, these comments will be arranged in the front position in the comment area automatically. This function greatly increases the possibility of the reposting Weibo being seen. For most followers, the same message appears twice which will deepen their memory of the message. If a user misses the notification or does not want to click on it, they could still know it through another way. The more times a message appears, the more people will remember. Hence, reposting Weibo from actors and original writer are able to pass on information or message in relation to the movie to the vast majority of The Direct Target Group successfully.

7.4.2 Posting original Weibo

Compared with reposting Weibo, there is no limitation on the number of words of the original Weibo, which means each original Weibo contains more information compared with reposting Weibo. Obviously, most of the original Weibo was related to the factors in relations to the movie, including crime, art films, etc. The original Weibo can approach The Wider Target Group by using the searching button. In Weibo, if you type a certain word or phrase in the search box then click the button, you will get a page which includes many Weibo and each Weibo contains the word you search. It is also noticeable that this is sorted by relevance and the most relative Weibo will be put in the first place. In this case, for The Wider Target Group, if some of them search for “crime”, or “art films”, they will see the original Weibo posted by *The Dead End* official Weibo account probably. This is a good way to attract people in The Wider Target Group since just as Ruggiero

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor/actress account</th>
<th>96</th>
<th>39.0%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Original Writer</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>29.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
said, people search initiatively with expectation and if their expectation is met, they will be more satisfied and impressed (Ruggiero, 2000). To this degree, the original Weibo is equivalent to a filter and people belong to The Wider Target Group could be automatically filtered out.

How to find the right way to communicate with the target user which is essentially involved the interface and function of Weibo. As mentioned above, reposting Weibo from actors and original writer and posting original Weibo, both of these methods are used as two effective methods of communicating with the target users. Distributors chose these two methods, partly because of Weibo's interface and functions. Van Dijck and Poel said that the features and interface of social media platforms will affect the social media users’ habits and extend to those who use social media for marketing activities (Van Dijck and Poell, 2013). When the distributors are looking for ways to arouse the interest of the target users, searching button, notification, all of these Weibo program settings are taken into consideration at this stage.

7.5 Communicate with the target group
As mentioned above, in this period, on average, each Weibo has been reposted 20 times, commented and liked by 6 and 31 people respectively. By analyzing the quantity of comment, like and reposts of each Weibo, it has been found that that Weibo which have been reposted, commented and liked more than the average quantity have a lot in common. In this part, these Weibo are classified into three categories and analyzed the pattern separately.

Table 8 The three categories of Weibo in Period I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Like</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Reposting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Open questions and games</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extension of the movie</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Posters</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.5.1 Open questions and interactive games get more comments
In all of Weibo, there are 150 Weibo which contain the information about open questions and interactive games which has been reposted 21 times, commented and liked by 40 and 28 people respectively which are much higher than the average. The reason why these two characteristics, open question and, game, are put together is both of these ways are interacting with target audiences and hoping to receive a response and many games often contain questions. For example, in a Weibo
in 17th Sept., The Dead End official Weibo account posted a picture and a question. The picture showed an old gun with a lot of fingerprints and the question is “Guess whose gun is this?” This is a question that only people who have read the Sunspot know the answer. Apparently, this question was prepared to entertain the Sunspot reader, the people in The Direct Target Group. This Weibo received 42 comments. There are still many other Weibo that were “designed” to please The Wider Target Group. For example, The Dead End official Weibo account release a crossword in 10th Oct. 2014. This Weibo received 50 comments. Most of them express the joy of cracking the puzzle. And the answer to this crossword is the actor's name. People who like to read criminal novels are inherently interested in puzzle games. In this way, the answer can also deepen their impression of the movie and the movie actors. Compared to transmit information directly, Ang said that asking questions can, to a certain extent, enhance the interaction and he also referred that comment is an interaction between the person who post and the person who comment, and under normal circumstances, comments will make the interaction between the two closer(Ang et al., 2005). This means this form, asking questions, was proved as a very effective way of attracting comments. Comments are very effective in enhancing relationships. Poell concluded that comments are meaningful, and they are a kind of social behaviors that require time and emotional energy(Poell et al., 2014). In sum, there are 25 containing-question Weibo, and they received 12 comments on average which is twice as much as the average quantity. Furthermore, the content of Weibo can be improved in future by observing people's comments. At this time, the Weibo have more comments will provide the more information.

(A Weibo contains an open question: How many eyes can you recognize in this movie?)
7.5.2 The extension of the movie gain a lot of reposting

After analyzing all of the Weibo in the period, it has been found there were 102 Weibo gained 55 reposting on average which is much higher than average of all of Weibo obviously. In terms of the content of those Weibo, they have one thing in common, that is their content contains the extension of the movie content. For example, in 27th Sept., The Dead End official Weibo account posted an article which narrated some stories about the production of the movie. This Weibo obtained 60 reposting. And in 30th Sept., a clip of all of the actors was released. It records some scenes of the actors during the filming process. By 2nd Feb. 2018, it has been reposted 63 times. It can be seen that for the target audience, a strategy of combining “known” and “unknown” has been taken. For the second Weibo mentioned above, for the target group, the known thing is the actors or actresses and the unknown thing is what they did in filming. Basically, each of the 17 Weibo chose a direction to extend the movie: from the film's script creation to the actors. Asur and Huberman put forward that people tend to share and repost the content which basically conforms to their conception, cognition, and attitude, helps them to complement and perfect their own inherent beliefs and knowledge (Asur and Huberman, 2010). On the one hand, reposting is a kind of agreement, on the other hand, it is also an expression. The target group could feel a sense of agreement from the known content because this is considered as a recognition of the knowledge of what they already have and know. And unknown content will stimulate them to express because this will allow them to gain approval from others.

(A Weibo contains the extension of the movie: The Making of 'The Dead End'
7.5.3 Movie posters get a lot of likes

By analyzing all of 678 Weibo, I noticed the movie's stills and posters were posted in 108 Weibo, with 502 posters on the 108 Weibo in total, obtaining 64 likes on average. For example, the Weibo posted on 19th Sept. 2014 contained 6 official posters with red and black. This Weibo had 71 likes. Lipsman mentioned that liking is a more unconscious behavior than commenting and reposting, since the action of liking is easier—just need a simple click, liking requires less time to think than commenting and reposting which consists of a series of more complicated behaviors (Lipsman et al., 2012). The first impression is one of the most important factors influencing people's impulsive behaviors. It has been proved that pictures help to make a profound first impression more than words and sentences, then triggering people’s impulsive behaviors (Waroquier et al., 2010). *The Dead End* film's movie posters and stills have visual impact and aesthetic appreciation value. The poster shows a contrast between red and black which not only shows the tone of the film but also has the power to seize the audiences' eyes. Hence, posting stills and posters for the movie contribute to attracting people's attention and raising the number of like.

![A poster of *The Dead End*](image)

There was a Weibo combined all of the three characteristics above, which received the highest number of comments, the quantity of reposting and likes respectively. A Weibo posted in 16th Sept. 2014, received 1100 comments, be reposted 1500 times and liked by 482 people. This Weibo posted a movie clip of the four leading actors with 9 pictures in GIF which recorded the actors in the movie process of the tidbits. This Weibo also raised a question “Do you remember Deng’s look in the other
movies? Do you know what is the difference between this movie and other movies?” This shows that these three characteristics are not independent of each other. In practical applications, using these characteristics together may achieve “1+1>2” results.

7.6 Penetrate more Weibo users and make additional profit

According to the non-mainstream product promotion strategy, the third and fourth steps for promotion is to penetrate more customers and make additional profit.

As mentioned in the non-mainstream cultural product promotion strategy, after building up communication with the target group successfully, the distributors should approach more audiences who did not belong to the target group originally. However, the premise of penetrating more Weibo users is to keep in touch with the target population persistently, and excessively catering non-target consumers will only cause the loss of the original target consumers, which outweigh the benefits. Compared with the Period I, there are two figures of significant increase, that is the proportion of reposting Weibo from verified people account and Weibo from general people account. Through these two increases, we can see that in order to keep in touch with the target group and penetrate more people, the measurements were done by *The Dead End* official Weibo account.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 9 The two types of Weibo in Period II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Repost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 10 The three types of repost Weibo in Period II</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verified account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average person account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actor/actress account</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original Writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7.6.1 Keep in touch with the target group

The release of the movie is a crucial time point. On the one hand, the revenue of the initial movie box office can test the success of the pre-release marketing on this day. On the other hand, audiences’ feedback for the movie can be utilized to achieve more value. It is noteworthy that, after the release of the movie, number and proportion of the reposting of the verified Weibo account have increased. These verified Weibo accounts are from different fields and all of those reposted Weibo content referred to the positive comments for the movie from their respective domain. For instance, a Weibo from Hubei Province Public Security reposted in 9th July 2015, mentioned that “For my job, the movie reflects the life of contemporary Chinese police and lets me start thinking about how to be a good policeman.” (The Dead End Weibo account, n.d.). This Weibo received 116 likes, 15 comments, and reposted by 16 times.

As mentioned before, one of the mechanisms of Weibo is that a follower will receive a notification from the account they follow, if the account’s Weibo is reposted. This Weibo is in constant communication with the target audiences who love the subject of police and crime. There were 35 Weibo reposted from the verified accounts which accounted for 57.4% in all reposting Weibo. Although those verified Weibo account come from different fields, they all have contact with target audiences. Some of them are art-film-related, for example, daxian2014 is a verified movie account with 30,000 followers and he explored the artistic achievements of the film in the Weibo which was reposted. Some of them are actor-related, the Duan Yihong's Broadcast Station is a verified official fan account for the actor Duan, and mentioned Duan’s contribution to the movie in the Weibo which was reposted. Non-mainstream product marketing is a very targeted marketing approach. Its
purpose is to reach as many target users as possible and let the target audiences to buy the products. Hence in this case, even if the movie has been released, it still needs to focus on the target audiences and keep close contact with them in order to keep consistent development.

7.6.2 Penetrate more ordinary users

The word of mouth marketing should be the spontaneous dissemination from the audiences, the audience is the real main force of film communication and publicity. In the word of mouth marketing process, person is the most fundamental part. Of course, the quality of movie content is the prerequisite and guarantee of word of mouth marketing. As Liu said that if the film is of poor quality, no matter what the theme of the film, actors or actresses, plot logic, picture music, camera clips and other basic evaluation criteria, the movie quality cannot meet the needs of the audiences and box office of a movie cannot grow through word-of-mouth marketing (Liu, 2006). Even if the word of mouth marketing initiative belongs to the customers, the word of mouth can still be guided to penetrate more non-target audiences (Duan et al., 2008). In this case, after the release of the movie, the ordinary person's positive evaluation for the movie are reposted 22 times by The Dead End official Weibo account which takes up 36.1% in all the reposting Weibo. Compared to the previous period, this figure has been significantly increased. Most of the reposting Weibo are common audiences’ positive evaluation and can be read or understood without professional knowledge. On the one hand, being reposted by the verified account can be recognized as a kind of approval, which increases the probability that they will recommend the movie to people around them. On the other hand, the evaluation made by ordinary people are more straightforward and more realistic for people to understand and accept by the professional accounts. In 5th Sept. 2015, a Weibo by lululoujay, a normal user who have only 222 followers, was reposted by the The Dead End official Weibo account, in this Weibo, lululoujay said that:

“Last night I saw a movie in a movie theater at random. It looks good. Combining cops, robbers, criminals, and reasoning together, the picture is beautiful, and it tells a story without missing a single circumstance, which is too rare for Chinese films. I strongly recommend that you go to the cinema to enjoy it.”(lululoujay Weibo account, n.d.)

This Weibo received 8 comments and 90 likes and be reposted 19 times. For non-mainstream cultural products, its main purpose is to approach as many as target users or audiences, attracting
non-target users is just a bonus or an addition. In this case, due to the successful Weibo marketing strategy in the early period, the film has attracted a large number of target audiences, and on this basis, the marketing of non-target users is meaningful.

Once the movie has a certain popularity among target users, it is not so difficult to attract more users since it already has a group of fans. On the one hand, loyal fans will take the initiative to promote, on the other hand, Weibo programmers will “conclude” that information about the movie is interesting (because there are a certain number of people involved in the discussion), hence the Weibo about this movie will be placed to the recommendation of Weibo. As a result, more and more users will notice this movie, and this effect is growing like a water wave.

7.6.3 Make the additional profit
In line with non-mainstream products marketing strategy, the additional profit is the last step in the strategy ecosystem. In general, this film also makes the same mistake as other domestic art films: the lack of awareness and funding for the production and promotion of movie-related products led that the film did not make additional profits. For movies, the main extra profit comes from the sale of movies and the definition of the related products refers to the film and television, derived from the film a variety of entertainment products. And in comparison with the US profit model, Chinese profit model is still imperfect. Specifically, few art film would produce movie-related products. The main reason for this situation is the lack of awareness of the related movies products production and funds(Yeh and Davis, 2008). For *The Dead End* this movie, there is only one book written by the director around it, mainly from the director's point of view of the film and added the director's personal experience. This is an excellent work from a purely literary point of view and a Book Review Website site, Douban, received a score of 8.1/10 which proves that the content of the book gained recognition by many people. However, it is found that after the release of the film, only five Weibo mentioned the contents of the book, and the number of respondents was even less. This shows that the movie did not work hard to promote movie-related products.

The reason may be that this art film has achieved more than expected and did not make preparation for the movie-related products. Therefore, the marketing of movie related products may not have been added to the original marketing plan in advance, and after the movie has achieved great success, the official account only posted a few Weibo about the movie related products hurriedly. As
a result, it appears that the marketing of movie-related products should be incorporated into the movie's marketing strategy in advance, as an important means of profit.

8 Conclusion

8.1 How did the ways of Weibo users to get information and communicate about films change, especially art films from 2014 to 2017?

This study examined 4 aspects that how did the ways of Weibo users to get information and communicate about films change, especially art films from 2014 to 2017. Firstly, in the research, it is believed that in the 3-year-period, Weibo has gradually become the main source of information related to film that respondents perceived and the extension of Weibo has limited the channels of most Weibo users accessing information related to movie which is caused by their own preferences and choices, blocking other information sources. Secondly, this study indicated that Weibo’s functions extend the Weibo users discussion styles and enrich the discussion content. This is not only a shift from monotonous text to the combination of word and image but also a shift from a static to dynamic change. This study also reached a conclusion that the animation, memes, movie clips, posters and all the things mentioned about the visual manifestations became the focus of attention. Thirdly, after analyzing the data collected from the respondents, it has been found that Weibo made the commercial movie stars more and more influential, allowing them to occupy most of the social media sphere. Finally, Weibo recommends users with similar accounts by analyzing the user's list of following. As in the previous section, Weibo’s recommendation mechanism will increasingly push users’ content about commercial movie stars. In terms of what users perceived, the content of commercial movie stars has gradually increased over the past three years.

In short, this part analyzes the influence of Weibo on the habit of Weibo users receiving movie-related information. In the process, it is found that while social media platforms influence users, it also affects the entertainment industry, for instance, movie industry, more or less. In this study, the in-depth impact of commercial films and the huge capital consortium behind them needs to be considered. Their control of public opinion in social media and the manipulation of information sources are beyond other factors.
8.2 How could Weibo be used to do for online marketing of art films?

The second part of this research focuses on a successful case, *The Dead End*, in which Weibo has been used for art film marketing. The first step is to Identify the first target customer group, including The Direct Target Group and The Wider Target Group. In order to affect as many people as possible, it is significant to find the factors which could link the movie with audience closely and identify them. The second step is to find an appropriate way to communicate with the target group. Reposting Weibo from actors and original writer is to build up a connection with The Direct Target Group. Posting original Weibo containing the “keywords” is to establish a relationship with The Wider Target Group. The third step is to communicate with the target group. It has been found in this research that there are three types of content in Weibo that will make communication with users effective: Open questions and interactive games will get more comments, Extension of the movie gain a lot of reposting and Movie posters get a lot of likes. In the last stage, 2 measurements have been made in order to keep in touch with the target group and penetrate more customers, those measurements are: Reposting from verified accounts and Reposting from normal people accounts. However, in terms of movie-related products, this film did not do so well. Obviously, this movie did not make efforts to promote movie related products due to the financial constraints.

Even though the overall environment and trends of social media are disadvantageous for the online marketing of art films. However, this does not mean that the art film has lost all opportunities on social media platforms. The inspiration from this case is that non-mainstream products such as art films are not unacceptable to the general public. They could adopt a staged which is the opposite of mainstream cultural products: starting from small, making progress while maintaining stability, and cultivating loyal customers instead of impulsive customers gradually.

8.3 Combination of RQs

Looking back at the two research questions, it is indicated that both research questions focus on social media and movies (mainly art films). The first part is to analyze the influence of social media on users receiving movie information, while the second part focuses on the strategy of taking advantage of Weibo for art film marketing. In theory, the two parts adopted the social media logic theory, which lays the theoretical foundation of the article and endows the analysis partial with continuity.
In the analysis parts, the convergence of the two parts is quite clear. The first part examines the negative influence that Weibo may have on the promotion of art films by analyzing the influence of social media on users, and the second part proposes a new method of art film online marketing by using Weibo. The two parts correspond exactly to the thesis title “fortune or misfortune” and Put forward a new way of thinking about social media dialectically.

8.4 Limitation and Further research

The study examined the impact of Weibo on users habits and selected a successful case for analysis. The object of study are the Chinese art films and a China's social media platform, Weibo and it is a research based in China. Nevertheless, it lacks connection with the socialist background with Chinese characteristics. Cultural products are closely related to the cultural environment. It might not a good idea to independently separate cultural products from cultural context for research. However, China’s contemporary culture is a huge subject. Due to the short nature of the master’s thesis, it is impossible to conduct an in-depth study of culture.

For further study, I suggest the prospective study to combine the research with China’s cultural background and to add the culture to the study as an important element that influences people’s watching movies habits. Moreover, Weibo is just a vital marketing tool and a movie cannot completely rely on Weibo to achieve the desired marketing result. An effective movie marketing is the result of integrated marketing communication. Therefore, research on media combinations tends to be more significant than studies on individual media.
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Appendix

Display of questionnaire and results

1. How long have you been using Weibo?
   A. <3 years (you do not need to answer the questions below)
   B. >=3 years

2. How old are you?
   A. <25 (you do not need to answer the questions below)
   B. >=25

3. In all of the movies you watch in cinema now, the proportion of art films is
   A. less than 10%
   B. 10-20%
   C. 20-30%
   D. 30-40%
   E. more than 40%
   G. I don’t know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10%</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>70.44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-20 %</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>16.75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-30%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-40 %</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 40%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Compared to three years ago (2014), the proportion of art films you watch has been
   A. increased
   B. the same
   C. decreased
   D. I don’t know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>21.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>134</td>
<td>66.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5. Are you ever following bloggers in relation to movies? (including movie actors)
   A. Yes
   B. No
   C. I don’t know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>94.09%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. If you are following these bloggers, how many bloggers you are following?

   A. less than 15
   B. 15-30
   C. 31-45
   D. 46-60
   E. more than 60
   G. I don’t know

7. What is the percentage of the bloggers in relation to movies in your account?

   A. less than 15%
   B. 15-30%
   C. 31-45%
   D. 46-60%
   E. more than 60%
   G. I don’t know

8. Compared to three years ago (2014), the number of movie-related bloggers who you follow has
   been

   A. increased
   B. the same
   C. decreased
   D. I don’t know

9. How long are you spending on reading Weibo every day?

   A. less than 30min
   B. 30-90min
   C. 91-150min
   D. 151-210min
   E. more than 211min
   G. I don’t know
10. Compared to three years ago (2014), the time you spend in reading Weibo has been
A. increased
B. the same
C. decreased
D. I don’t know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>151</td>
<td>74.38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. What is the proportion you spending in reading the movie-related content?
A. less than 15%
B. 15-30 %
C. 31-45%
D. 46-60 %
E. more than 60%
G. I don’t know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 15%</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>15.27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-30 %</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>43.35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-45%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46-60 %</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 60%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Compared to three years ago (2014), this figure has been
A. increased
B. the same
C. decreased
D. I don’t know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>56.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>29.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13. On average, how much of the a movie's information you know comes from Weibo?
A. less than 20%
B. 21-40%
C. 41-60%
D. 61-80 %
E. more than 80%
G. I don’t know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 20%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-40%</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-60%</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>19.70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61-80 %</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>56.16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 80%</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.99%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. To what extend, this information from Weibo will affect your choice of purchasing movie tickets?
(1 to 5 means Little to Very much)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>35.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>27.59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15. Compared to three years ago (2014), this figure has been

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>24.63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreased</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

16. In Weibo among all of the content related to movies, what is the proportion of art movies you perceived? (more specifically, the number of the Weibo)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10%</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>49.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20%</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>43.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 40%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17. Compared to three years ago (2014), the proportion of art movies has been

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>increased</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the same</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>42.36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>decreased</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>48.77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.94%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18. Compared to three years ago (2014), what is the change in the proportion of your purchasing art movie tickets?

A. increasing
B. the same
C. decreasing
D. I don’t know

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increasing</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The same</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>28.08%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decreasing</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>66.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I don’t know</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2.96%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>203</td>
<td>100.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>