

A Study of the Relationship between New Mainstream Chinese Cinema and the Chinese Cultural Identity of the Youth in Hong Kong

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Abstract: This paper mainly explores the impact of new mainstream Chinese cinema on the Youth in Hong Kong's cultural identity. "Do Hong Kong youth deconstruct the messages conveyed by the new mainstream Chinese cinema when they watch it? Does the film medium strengthen and weaken the Youth in Hong Kong's cultural identity, and thus affect the Youth in Hong Kong's own identity?". In order to measure and analyze it, this paper constructs a model of the influence of the film medium on identity, in which we use the concept of ethnic identity salience which is highly relevant to cultural identity. Furthermore, we propose four themes (variables) that can measure ethnic identity salience, namely ethnic identity, achieving ethnic identity, ethnic practices, and orientation towards intra-ethnic membership. Under this model, the medium of film affects the four themes of ethnic identity, achievement of ethnic identity, ethnic practices, and orientation towards intra-ethnic membership simultaneously, thus influencing the degree of ethnic identity salience and hence the identity of the Youth in Hong Kong. This paper adopts an experimental method to measure people's ethnic identity salience before and after viewing the film.

Keywords: Ethnic identity, The Youth in Hong Kong, Medium.

1. Introduction

1.1. Research questions

This study focuses on exploring the impact of new mainstream Chinese cinema on the youth's cultural identity in Hong Kong. On this basis, the following basic framework model is proposed, which argues that cultural identity affects identity and that the film medium affects cultural identity. Moreover, there is a moderating variable in the degree of influence of new mainstream Chinese cinema on cultural identity: the degree of racial identity salience. Therefore, the research question is whether Hong Kong youths deconstruct the messages conveyed by the films when they watch new Chinese mainstream films. Does the film medium strengthen and weaken the Youth in Hong Kong's cultural identity and thus affect the Youth in Hong Kong's own identity?

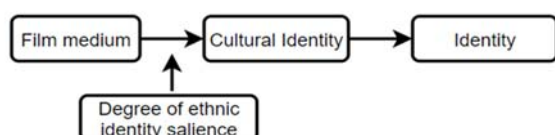


Figure 1. Media-Cultural Identity Relationship Model

1.2. Significance of the study

At present, among the youth of Hong Kong, xenophobia is on the rise, and the voice of de-Chineseisation is gradually gaining influence. This call is particularly evident in various universities. This double contradiction makes it urgent to study the cultural identity of Hong Kong youths. However, research on youth identity in Hong Kong is still preliminary, and scholars have yet to explore the psychological activities

under cultural identity. The study will help to fill this gap according to exploring the psychological mechanism of Hong Kong youths' "Hong Kong independence" and funding their identity in the whole Chinese cultural context. We can propose targeted measures and methods to solve this problem.

1.3. Group selection

In exploring the impact of China's new mainstream cinema on individual cultural identity, there is a reason why this study has chosen the Hong Kong group rather than the mainland audience, the Macau group, or overseas Chinese.

Firstly, the Youth in Hong Kong, especially the youth of Hong Kong, has a low level of national identity with China, especially after the British colonial education. However, with the construction of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Hong Kong must maintain its civic stability as an economic center.

Secondly, as an open city compared with other cities in China. People from all over the world settled here permanently, so local youth in Hong Kong face different cultures daily. So we can assume that the Youth in Hong Kong is in a multicultural environment. In such an environment, mainstream cinema always has more competitors, so its impact on the moviegoer, if any, must be able to exclude political as well other factors.

Finally, after the slowdown in economic growth, the question of whether the Youth in Hong Kong agree with the new mainstream Chinese cinema's portrayal of a developing country and a tragic national history has become a worthy subject of study.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. Identity and cultural identity

paradigms, the word comes from philosophers, especially

Freud. However, Freud did not clearly define the concept of identity; he used it as a tool to describe the concepts about the ego, the self, and the superego interacting with each other, focusing more on conscious and subconscious processes. Of course, he made some preliminary explorations on how the group makes the identity of the individual [1].

Continuing Freud's exploration of identity, Erikson presents identity as an essential and worthwhile concept to be studied. In order to explore the dynamic evolution of identity over time, Erikson purposefully subdivides the concept of identity into identity synthesis and identity. He also interprets it from a psychological perspective. Erikson argues that developing and revising one's identity is an essential task from adolescence to adulthood. If someone can categorize potentially existing values in adulthood and then select one or more of them without conflict as one's norm to commit to, then one has accomplished an excellent identity synthesis. In contrast, the opposite is true for identity confusion[2].

Identity, as a term constructed in a Western context, has been studied as far back as the ancient Greek period. At a time when the disciplines could not stand on their own because they did not have their research, how exactly is 'identity' formed in this process of development and revision of self-identity? Although Erikson explains the outcome of identity in terms of identity synthesis and identity confusion and recognizes that it is a continuous process of subjective perception, he does not pay more attention to the details of the processes. Inheriting Erikson's premise, Marcia, therefore, adds to this deficit by suggesting that there are four ways of forming identity: choosing one's identity and committing to it after self-exploration, in which identity is in a state of accomplishment; committing to it without early exploration, in which identity is in a state of suspension; and active The identity formed in this way is a state of achievement; the identity formed without early exploration but with commitment is a state of the moratorium; the identity formed by active exploration without commitment is a state of foreclosure, and the identity formed without exploration and commitment is a state of diffusion [3]. Continuing with Marcia's model, more scholars have discussed the details of it, leading to a clearer understanding of identity's whole process and outcome.

With the development of a comprehensive understanding of both the process and the outcome of identity, more research has focused on what influences the whole process of 'exploration - identity formation - commitment. "If a man decides not to explore his identity, what keeps him from doing so? Scholars introduce The concept of cultural identity into the whole process of identity. Specifically, defining oneself according to culture represents promoting one's identity. The more one identifies with a particular set of cultures. The more one can consolidate one's identity [4].

Usually, cultural identity has two components. The first is a sense of identification and exploration of the people who claim to have a historical heritage. The second includes, but is not limited to, nationality, gender, class, and sexual orientation. In a narrow sense, cultural identity refers only to identifying and exploring people with a historical heritage[5]. Because it is closely related to identity, cultural identity is also a dynamic process. Two key psychological factors play an essential role in this dynamic process: the first is identity alternation, which assumes that individuals in a bicultural environment will always change their behavior, such as dressing, grooming, and language, in order to highlight or

weaken Because the influence of identity alternation is always appeared on behavior, this factor is more prominent in interpersonal interactions[6]. The second is the degree of ethnic identity salience, precisely the 'awareness' and 'importance' of one's ethnicity and the culture it possesses [7]. These two psychological factors are the most complex and diverse, as awareness of ethnic identity and identity alternation change according to the social context, i.e., the interaction between people and their environment causes these two psychological factors to fluctuate.

We argue that Hong Kong's environment is bicultural as a typical city. Youth is often influenced by a complex and diverse social environment in which people grow up with alternate or ethnic identities to raise or lower their cultural identity, thus forming an identity as "Chinese" or "the Youth in Hong Kong ."We will explore the influence of the media in their social environment, which is limited to the new Chinese mainstream cinema.

2.2. Degree of ethnic identity salience

Racial identity is often variable, and this variability is known as salience, meaning that individuals in it can sometimes be aware of their racial identity and sometimes not [8]. Several studies on this are based on qualitative research, such as interviews with groups of young people in the United States, asking them whether they clearly perceive their racial identity in their daily lives [9]. However, several quantitative studies conceptualize the degree of ethnic is as a kind of attitude, emotion, or perception of belonging to a particular racial group [10], this kind of conceptualization is also used in this study.

Under this concept, some scholars use four measurable themes to describe the salience of ethnic identity [11]. These are ethnic identity , achieving ethnic identity , ethnic practices, and orientation towards members within the nation. Ethnic identity is a strong identification with the nation to which one belongs. Achieving ethnic identity is an active search for knowledge that allows one to carry out ethnic identity. Ethnic practices are participation in ethnic activities, and the orientation towards members within the nation is a kind of feeling and attitude towards other people within the nation. Following this line of thought, we argue that the film medium will impact the four components of the audience and, thus, the cultural identity of the Hong Kong audience.

At the same time, other scholars have proposed four-factor instruments to assess the dimensions of racial/cultural identity salience on these four themes: identification with one's own culture, assimilation from other powerful cultures, lack of willingness to interact, and feelings of marginalization [12]. This four-factor instrument further deepens the explanation of Phinney's model of racial identity salience. However, as this model focuses on cultural hegemony and interpersonal interaction, this model does not apply to this study.

As can be seen, there currently needs to be more international scholarly inquiry into how media affects racial identity salience. The focus of scholarly attention is always on interpersonal communication and cultural interaction, so this thesis makes a connection between racial and cultural salience and the film medium to point out how racial and cultural salience affects cultural identity, and therefore identity, in a more macro perspective.

3. Research Hypothesis

We hypothesize that the content in the new mainstream films can deepen or diminish the four dimensions. Include ethnic identity, the realization of ethnic identity, ethnic practices, and orientation towards insider membership, and ultimately lead to a higher degree of ethnic identity salience, thus enabling the new mainstream films to deepen the cultural identity of Hong Kong youth.

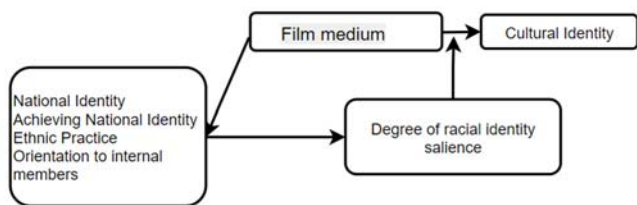


Figure 2. Refinement Model of Media-Cultural Identity Relationship

4. Research Methodology and Possible Findings

According to an experimental approach, this study selected some people from the Youth in Hong Kong who had little exposure to the new mainstream films. We used a questionnaire to measure their sense of national identity, the realization of national identity, national practices, and orientation towards insider membership before viewing the films. We continued to measure the four dimensions afterward using the scale after allowing them to watch the selected new

mainstream films. The questionnaire design used in this study was informed by the Cultural Identity Salience Scale developed by Ting-Toomey in 2000.

In order to avoid errors caused by using the same scale to measure subjects before and after the film, the post-viewing test used a separate questionnaire that explored the same questions as the pre-viewing questionnaire, except that the questions used and the verbal expressions differed.

Suppose the total score of the four dimensions before viewing is lower than the total after viewing and shows a significant change. In that case, there is a significant positive correlation between the medium and ethnicity. Moreover, we can conclude that new mainstream cinema has a strengthening effect on cultural identity. Suppose the total score of the four dimensions before viewing is higher than the total after viewing, and there is a significant change. In that case, we can conclude a significant negative correlation between the new mainstream cinema and ethnicity. Therefore it can be concluded that the new mainstream cinema harms the viewers' cultural identity.

5. Research Findings

A total of 110 interview questionnaires were distributed before the film. Furthermore, 89 valid questionnaires were received after the film. We also delivered 89 questionnaires to the people one month later and received 71 valid questionnaires. Resulting in 71 valid counts, of which the mean scores of the 71 people added up before the film are shown in the table

Table 1. Pre-viewing index

Ethnic belonging	Lack of interaction	Fringe	Assimilation	average
16.77	13.28	7.11	6.01	10.793

A further measurement was taken after the viewing and the

summed scores for each are shown in the table below.

Table 2. Post-Viewing Index

Ethnic belonging	Lack of interaction	Fringe	Assimilation	average
19.17	16.45	5.67	7.12	16.31

As we can see after viewing the film, although the total score has increased, the increase is not high and is mainly concentrated on Ethnic belonging and Lack of interaction. In contrast, the other items have even decreased, so we can assume that melodramatic films generally have a weak correlation in promoting the cultural identity of Hong Kong youth. In some dimensions, they also have a negative impact. That may be because Chinese melodramatic films are mainly directed at young people from mainland China. Without a 'red culture, it may be a matter for all filmmakers to consider how to promote family sentiment among them.

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