



RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Impact of Specific Motivation Factor on Purchase Intentions towards AoFei Animation Derivatives among Chinese University Student

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ABSTRACT

AoFei Animation derivatives have become an indispensable part of China's animation industry. However, there is little literature on the impact of different uses and gratitude (U&G) on the purchase intention of Chinese college students in the dissemination process of anime derivatives. To fill this gap, this study is based on the U&G theory and aims to determine the relationship between specific U&G motivational factors and purchase intention among Chinese university students. To address this issue, we collected cross-sectional data from 347 Chinese university students, with specific types of media U&G motivation as independent variables (escape motivation, information seeking motivation, social sharing motivation, emotional motivation), and willingness to purchase AoFei anime derivatives as the dependent variable. The results indicate that specific types of media U&G, avoidance (ESP), information seeking (IS), and affective (AFF) are significantly positively correlated with purchase intention, while social sharing (SS) has no significant impact on the dependent variable. Related research can provide theoretical guidance for all relevant audiences of anime derivatives and contribute to UGT literature.

INTRODUCTION

Anime, in simple terms, is the synthesis and abbreviation of animation and manga. Anime products are all created based on human imagination. From character images to storylines, it is a surreal expression of people's thoughts. The global animation industry's output value had already exceeded 500 billion US dollars as early as 2005. In 2014, the total output value of animation in China exceeded 100 billion yuan. To this day, the animation industry has gradually become a pillar and new economic growth point of some countries' national economies. American animation has become the sixth largest pillar industry in the United States; The Japanese anime industry has surpassed the automobile and steel industries, becoming the third largest industry in Japan. However, in China, the anime audience is large, but the industry and research are scarce, resulting in a significant gap in the Chinese anime industry.

Animation derivatives play an important role in the development of globalisation and the digital age, and have become an important channel for cross-cultural communication in the anime industry (Luo, 2022). Animation derivatives originate from existing animation works and are produced and disseminated through diverse creative and expressive methods (Wang, 2022). At present, AoFei is the largest dissemination organization of animation derivatives in China, which not only represents the development direction of China's animation derivatives, but also gradually explores the international market (Su, 2022). In addition, some scholars have found that the college student population has become an important participant in digital media, and they are very interested in cultural phenomena such as animation derivatives (Park et al., 2023). Meanwhile, in the context of new media, the dissemination of anime derivatives has changed, and their ultimate contribution to the anime industry lies in guiding audiences to make purchases and generate benefits (Voronkova et al., 2023). As a result, some scholars have begun to focus on the role of motivations generated by audiences when using media on attitudes and behaviours, and to explore the factors that influence their ultimate purchase intentions (Apasrawirote&Yawised, 2022; Shen et al., 2022; Ermeç, 2022). However, little literature has explored the influence of different media U&G motivational factors and Chinese university students' purchase intentions of AoFei animation derivatives. To fill this gap, this study asks the following question, RQ1: What is the relationship between specific U&G motivational factors and college students' purchase intention of AoFei anime derivatives? The aim of this study is to provide useful suggestions for the audience of anime derivatives and to contribute to the existing literature on UGT.

Nowadays, the continuous development of anime has gradually attracted attention from various social classes. As a form of entertainment and leisure in modern life, anime is also expanding its consumer base. In fact, anime not only entertains the public and makes people feel comfortable and joyful, but it also has deeper significance and is aimed at conveying a kind of information and culture. This article studies the impact of specific motivational factors on the willingness of Chinese college students to purchase AoFei anime derivatives, in order to promote the development of the Chinese anime industry.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1. Why choose AoFei?

According to Zhong & Chen (2023), the animation industry is a highly dynamic emerging cultural industry and one of the industries that China has strongly supported in recent years. During the development of China's animation industry, more and more organizations are focusing on the production and dissemination of animation derivatives (Cao, 2023). In other words, animation enterprises with certain upstream and downstream resource integration capabilities can realise the amplification of IP's influence in the industry chain, such as AoFei Animation, which has the ability to develop and tap into the related business in the animation derivatives market, thus opening up brand-new derivatives dissemination channels (Ji, 2020). That is to say, the reason for choosing AoFei Animation for the research background is that it has a wider scope of dissemination, a larger audience group, and the research results are more representative.

2.2. Use and Gratification Theory

In the study of purchase intention, Use and Gratification Theory (UGT) is very applicable (Mejía-Trejo, 2021). UGT studies people's media usage behaviour from the audience's perspective. The theory changed the previous "communicator-centred" approach to audience research and shifted the direction of research towards the audience itself. UGT argues that the audience's choice of media is an active selection process based on their own needs (Camilleri& Falzon, 2021). Meanwhile, Boudkouss and Djelassi point out that audiences are seen as individuals with specific 'needs', and their media engagement activities are seen as a process of 'utilising' the medium to 'satisfy' these

needs based on specific needs and motivations. In response to these issues, UGT has been well used in research. The theory has also been recently developed. Katz & Blumler (1973) argue that a combination of social and psychological factors creates a need that motivates people to engage with a variety of sources, including mass communication. The result of media use is the fulfilment or other consequences of the need. Ractham et al. (2022) state that the satisfactions that people derive from the media generally fall into two categories, the first of which is the satisfaction of media content. People are satisfied with a particular type of message delivered by a particular media, which in turn leads to satisfaction. The second type is the satisfaction from the process of media exposure and use. Media exposure itself also brings pleasure to people. Sala et al. (2023) focused their research on the social usefulness of specific media and people's use of specific media due to social satisfaction.

1.2. Specific motivation factor

Kuar et al. (2020) argued that facilitating interpersonal communication or social network formation. In the study, a purchase intention model was developed in conjunction with UGT theory. The factors of Escape (ESP), Information Seeking (IS), Social Sharing (SS) and Affection (AFF) are included in the model. Among them, ESP refers to an individual's use of media is, looking for possibilities as an escape from reality, stress or negative emotions (Camilleri & Falzon, 2021). This motivation is related to perceived enjoyment in the context of UGT. Users are more likely to accept and use a particular media when they perceive that using it will provide them with a sense of diversion or entertainment and escape from everyday life. In addition, the escape motive in UGT explains the likelihood that users will use the media and develop a purchase intention (Croes & Bartels, 2021). That is, if users believe that the perceived motivation to use media can provide them with an enjoyable escape, they are more likely to have purchase intentions (Yang & Ha, 2021).

According to Case & Given (2016), the audience's search for information initially seeks to satisfy their curiosity and in this way learn about current events or topics of personal interest. However, Guan et al. (2022) state that audiences actively seek information from a variety of media sources for the purpose of gathering knowledge about products and services related to them. This perception of information seeking is the root cause that drives an individual's purchase intention while determining his/her understanding and needs. UGT emphasises that audiences are not passive recipients of news but actively choose media to satisfy their particular satisfaction (Igbozuruike et al., 2022). Therefore, users who are in the process of seeking information about a particular product or service, media U&G can have an impact on their purchase intention.

Dabbous & Barakat (2020) stated that with the development of ICT, social sharing has become one of the most important ways for individuals to engage with media content to facilitate interaction. Individuals can connect with others and express their identity through media. That is, individuals will involve sharing content in the form of articles, pictures or videos on social media. These are based on the fact that users will share content that they find interesting. However, Lee & Eastin (2021) argued that the relationship between social sharing motivation and users' purchase intentions may vary depending on the type of product, perceived authenticity of the content, and other factors. Although media U&G can help individuals understand the motivations and perceptions that arise when engaging in social sharing, it is not a key determinant of a user's purchase intention.

According to Lou et al. (2023), the significance of Affection refers to the fact that media U&G recognises the existence of a key influence of emotional responses in a given media consumption. In other words, Affection refers to the reactions and feelings that a user develops while using media (O'Day & Heimberg, 2021). That is, these emotions range from joy to sadness and can influence people's purchase intentions for a particular product or service to some extent.

1.3. Purchase intentions

Huo (2023) states that purchase intention is the likelihood that an audience will purchase a product or service in the near or more distant future. Meanwhile, Wu & Huang (2023) explored individuals' perceived values, such as satisfaction with product benefits and potential, as key determinants of purchase intention. In addition, Fülöp et al. (2023) argued that users' perceived motivation is an important reference point for them to consider whether a product or service fulfils a specific need or solves a problem they are currently experiencing. Therefore, the motivational factors provided by Media U&G for an individual's choice of media will have an impact on their purchase intentions (Florenthal, 2019).

1.4. Research hypothesis

In the context about communication and media U&G, the model of this study is based on UGT influenced by communication. The researcher selected four factors including Escape (ESP), Information Seeking (IS), Social Sharing (SS), and Affection (AFF). Based on the above literature study, the influencing factors were selected and the following hypotheses were made: H1, H2, and H4 represent the existence of significant positive correlation between the influencing factors and the purchase intention of AFF animation derivatives. H3 represents the absence of significant positive correlation between the influencing factors and the purchase intention of AFF animation derivatives. Based on the theoretical model of UGT, combined with related studies, the research model of college students' intention to purchase AoFei derivatives was obtained, as shown in Figure 2.1.

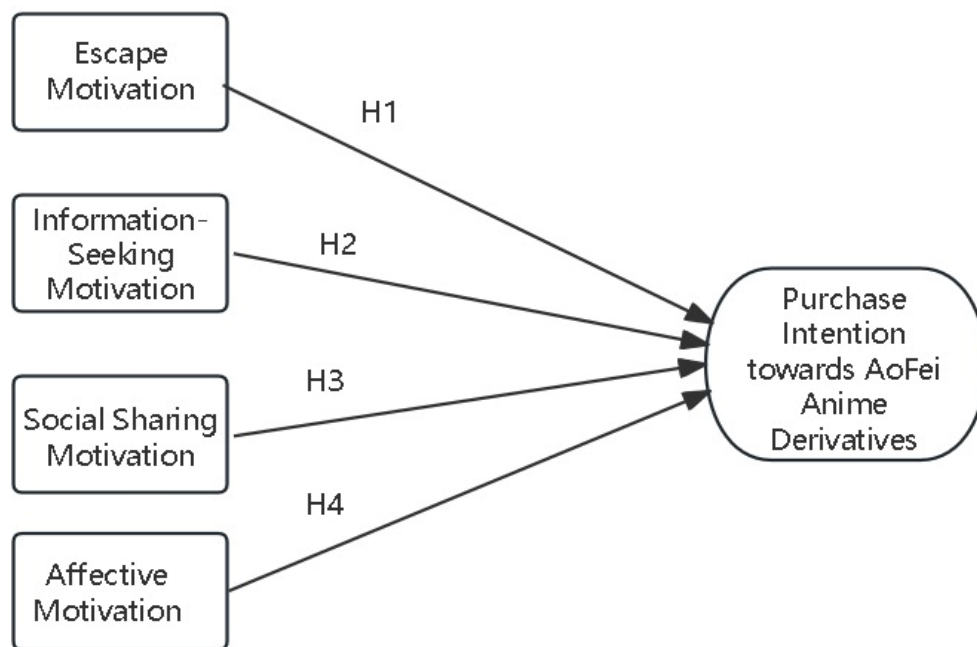


Figure 2.1. Research Model

3. METHODOLOGY

This study used a cross-sectional quantitative design with questionnaires (Mayer et al., 2019). The questionnaire was designed in the following three stages. Firstly, through reviewing the literature, the factors influencing college students' intention to purchase animation derivatives were

summarised, so as to construct a theoretical framework model of college students' intention to purchase animation derivatives. Secondly, the rationality and feasibility of the questionnaire were ensured through the survey. Finally, by collecting reliable data and analysing the data, explanations were provided to achieve the research objectives and test the hypotheses.

Through a review of past literature, the questionnaire was eventually divided into the following three sections. The first part is a demographic survey that focuses on the personal information of college students. The second part uses a five-point Likert scale to rate each question in the survey. The third part is the college students' intention to purchase AoFei anime derivatives. The questionnaire was distributed in a mixed mode of online and offline.

The locations of the study were seven universities located in Northwest China, led by Xi'an Jiaotong University in China. The study population was 210,000 college students enrolled in these universities, and according to Kang (2021), the sample size needed is 383 when the confidence level is 95% and the confidence interval is 5%. Finally, 347 valid questionnaires were collected. In the study group, 60% were male and 40% were female, and most of them were born in the 1990s. Among them, 72% were very fond of anime and 51% had the intention to buy anime derivatives. Regarding the design of relevant questions for this group, the questionnaire questions were designed based on existing literature and relevant factors were extracted (Hsu et al., 2015 ; Dhir et al., 2017).

The researcher conducted a pilot test before formal data collection and a total of 45 people participated in this survey. The aim was to determine the reliability of the questionnaire using Cronbach's Alpha. The results of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient showed that the four impact factors were 0.8800, 0.8271, 0.751, and 0.8743, and that according to Sheng & Ke (2021), when the reliability test is in the range of 0.7-0.8, the data is reliable. Therefore, the variables and design of this study are in accordance with the requirements. Based on the current results, the data are usable. The reliability test is shown by Table 3.1. Based on the reliability test, the data provided by the questionnaire on purchase intention of anime derivatives is generally reliable, but a validity analysis is needed to determine whether there are significant differences between the actual data factors and variables in the questionnaire. In this study, factors between multiple variables tended to be correlated, and correlations between variables also existed, but not as well as correlations within variables (Flora & Curran, 2004). Then, through Harman's one-factor test, it was found that the main component of the first key factor in this study was 31.38%, which is less than the required 40%. Therefore, this questionnaire has authenticity.

Table 3.1: Reliability analysis of questionnaire

Items	Cronbach's Alpha
ESP	0.8800
IS	0.8271
SS	0.8743
AFF	0.7510
PI	0.8151

(Notes: ESP represents Escape, IS represents Information Seeking, SS represents Social Sharing, AFF represents Affection, PI represents Purchase intentions)

4. DATA ANALYSIS

As can be seen in Table 4.1, the correlation between the five items was investigated using correlation analysis. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to indicate the strength of the correlation. The results show that the values of correlation coefficient are 0.2387, 0.3307, 0.3642 and 0.3204

respectively. Correlation coefficient greater than 0 indicates positive correlation and less than 0 indicates negative correlation.

Table 4.1 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

	Mean Value	Standard deviation	ESP	IS	SS	AFF	PI
ESP	3.2388	0.9657	1				
IS	3.2706	1.0399	0.3216	1			
SS	3.2252	1.0103	0.3089	0.3571	1		
AFF	3.2314	0.9504	0.3543	0.3578	0.3558	1	
PI	3.2493	1.1188	0.2387	0.3307	0.3642	0.3204	1

This study identifies the results of the 4 significant p-values for the variables of interest. The results of the study showed that the p-values for paths 1, 2, and 4 were less than 0.05, indicating that these influences had a significant positive effect on purchase intention. On the other hand, the p-value of path 3 is more than 0.05 indicating that the influencing factors do not have a significant positive effect on purchase intention.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study found that Escape (ESP) was significantly and positively related to Chinese college students' purchase intention of AoFei anime derivatives. This is inconsistent with the results of some previous studies (Kaur et al., 2020). The possible reason for this situation is that the AoFei anime derivatives in this study are not consistent with the context of the previous MIM community, and the target population of the respondents is different. Therefore, ESP is useful for a specific population of Chinese university students who wish to temporarily escape from real-life dilemmas by taking on this approach (Sharabati et al., 2022). In addition, information seeking (IS) is also a prioritised motivational factor for college students in media U&G. However, Liao et al. (2021) found that information seeking only indirectly influences purchase intention through satisfaction. The reason for this inconsistency is that previous studies have focused more on the perceived risk of online shopping. Instead, the focus of this study was to measure whether AoFei anime derivatives could inform individuals' knowledge seeking in the media. In addition, Affection (AFF) is a motivational factor that should not be overlooked. This is because anime derivatives are both materially and emotionally satisfying for individuals. This is consistent with some previous findings (Jin et al., 2023; Wang et al., 2023). Therefore, anime derivatives are to some extent more able to display their spiritual world for others (Harvey, 2014). Finally, social sharing (SS) is the fourth important factor. In terms of design, anime prototypes accurately locate audience groups at the early stage of development, and design according to the audience group portrait and market demand (Galbraith, 2014). College students want to find a common language, share information, and exist interaction in the society through anime. And make friends in this way. This emotion of sharing and interaction is necessary, but cannot be the main factor influencing the purchase intention. This is similar to the findings of McClure and Seock (2020). Therefore, although social gratification is a key gratification in media communication (Li et al., 2019), it still cannot have a direct impact on purchase intention.

6. Limitations of the study

The limitation of this paper is that, based on the existing literature and scales, only four variables were objectively selected for the questionnaire survey, and there are limitations in terms of influencing factors and question settings. The locations selected are a representative sample of colleges and universities in Northwest China, which is not comprehensive for the results of the study,

as there are many countries and regions that have not been considered. In addition, the respondents of the study were all from college students in China, and the study population has specific age and cultural tendencies, which has an impact on the results of the study. Meanwhile, as an emerging force in the animation industry, the factors affecting the realisation of the communication value of animation derivatives have yet to be explored and researched.

7. CONCLUSION

Animation culture has become a global trend (Daliot-Bul, 2020). AoFei Animation, as an important player, has released and disseminated derivatives that have been influential across multiple age groups, including university students. Based on quantitative data collection and organisation, this study examines the influence of specific motivational factors on Chinese university students' intention to purchase AoFei Animation derivatives based on the use and gratification theory. Not only provides insights into the media consumption of AoFei Animation derivatives for the academic community, but also extends the UGT literature more specifically. Subsequent research could attempt to uncover more potential motivational factors and explore how these factors play out across different social and cultural dimensions.

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