

# ***Festival Marketing: Film Promotion Shaped by Traditional Chinese Culture***

## ***——Taking the Spring Festival Comedy Film as an Example***

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**Abstract:** In recent years, with the continuous growth of the Chinese film market and the improvement of the cultural level and consumption willingness of Chinese residents, the holiday film market has gradually developed in China. The Chinese holiday film market has sprouted since the Spring Festival, and then developed into Spring Festival movies, National Day movies, summer movies, etc. Under different schedules, it is the background of holiday culture that highlights this film market phenomenon. How to combine the cultural background of film festivals with the film industry is an important challenge that the Chinese film market needs to face. This article adopts the method of case analysis, and through the comedic elements of Spring Festival films, it can be concluded that films should adhere to content innovation, integrate patriotism, cater to the aesthetic needs of the public, achieve a balance between business and art, in order to reflect and summarize, and promote the better development of the Chinese film market.

**Keywords:** festival marketing, Chinese film, Spring Festival schedule, comedy element movies

## **1. Introduction**

Spring Festival movies are very popular in China, and their schedule is based on the traditional Chinese holiday Spring Festival, from New Year's Eve to the seventh day of the Chinese New Year. The Spring Festival itself is a time for consumption and entertainment. According to data from iMedia Consulting, 73.32% of surveyed consumers stated that they will go to the cinema to watch Spring Festival movies during the 2023 Spring Festival period [1]. Based on the competition within the film industry during the Spring Festival, the key to achieving leading box office success lies not only in the content, actors, and themes of the film itself, but also in marketing before its release. According to market research by Media Planning (MP), it has been found that the production and distribution of Chinese films have not yet been well integrated with the concept of schedules, and schedules have not been planned as part of film marketing before film production. There is still a significant gap between the theory of film schedule and the actual development status of the film market. Cinemas and cinemas rely too heavily on movies, lack marketing creativity, and rely solely on the strength of the movies themselves to generate benefits without doing more. Among the six films released during

the 2023 Spring Festival, Man Jianghong is far ahead by its own efforts. It has innovated in themes and film promotion, invisibly providing more thinking directions for the marketing methods of future Chinese film festivals. The article will also take Man Jianghong as an example to describe how to carry out unique marketing methods in the film festival schedule. In the crowded schedule of Chinese movies, whether it is creating new schedules or continuing the vitality of old schedules, content is the most important factor. By seizing the hot topics, it is possible to create popular works as scheduled, such as the 2023 Spring Festival schedule, which is a typical case [2]. In the 2023 Spring Festival (from New Year's Eve to the seventh day of the first month), there will be six films released, three of which have comedy elements, namely: Man Jianghong, Boonie Bears: Guardian Code and Life Communication. Judging from the number of films released during the Spring Festival in the past five years (due to the epidemic in 2020, there is no box office statistics for films released during the Spring Festival) (Figure 1), films with comedy elements show a stable trend, accounting for half of the total number of films released [3].

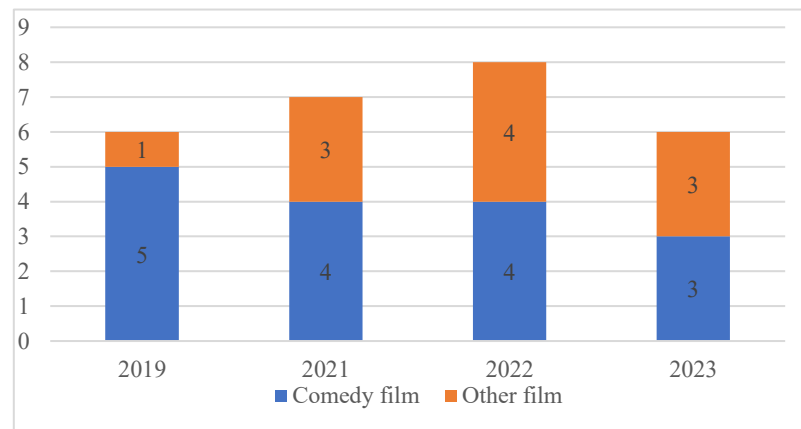


Figure 1: Number of Chinese New Year movies released from 2019 to 2023 (unit: films) [3].

According to research data from iMedia Consulting, comedy films, science fiction films, action films, and romance films are the most popular types of Spring Festival movies that consumers surveyed want to watch, accounting for 54.83%, 41.15%, 39.01%, and 35.66%, respectively. The supply of comedy elements in movies is relatively stable, which to some extent reflects the impact of the happy atmosphere of the whole family during the Spring Festival on the consumption demand of the consumer group. Comedy movies are synonymous with joy and reunion, and lively festivals such as the Spring Festival inevitably require corresponding film products to fill in. According to the box office numbers of comedic films (Figure 2) [4].

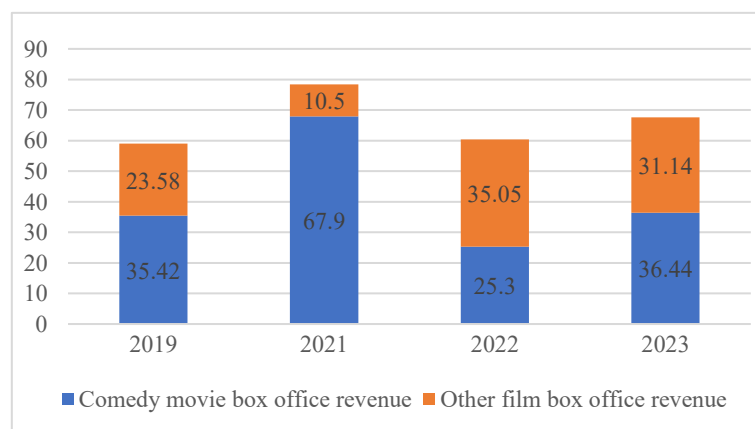


Figure 2: Number of Spring Festival movie tickets from 2019 to 2023 (Unit: 100 million yuan).

It can be seen that comedic films dominate the box office in the Spring Festival film market. Looking back at the release types and box office of Spring Festival films from 2019 to 2023, a total of 6 films were released with comedy elements, accounting for 5 films and 60% of the box office. In 2021, 7 films were released with comedy elements, accounting for 4 films and 79.2% of the box office. In 2022, 8 films were released with comedy elements, accounting for 4 films and 50% of the box office. In 2023, 6 films were released with comedy elements, accounting for 3 films and 54% of the box office. From the above data, it can be seen that during the Spring Festival season, comedic films outperform other types of films and have their own unique style, and have long occupied the high box office of the Spring Festival season. This to some extent reflects the symbiosis between the Spring Festival season and comedic films. Looking at the box office earnings of comedy element films in 2023 (Figure 3) [5]. From the analysis, it can be concluded that Man Jianghong is in the leading position in the other two comedy element films.

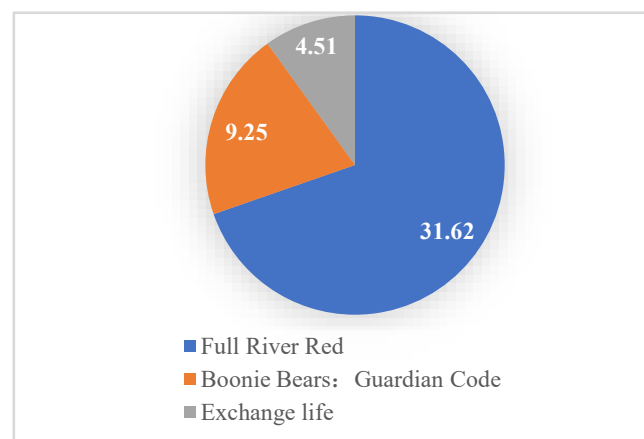


Figure 3: Box Office Revenue of Three Comedy Elements Films in the 2023 Spring Festival Season (Unit: 100 million yuan).

This article will take Full River Red as an example to discuss how Chinese films will adapt to the festival schedule and develop better. According to the results of the "Chinese Film Audience Satisfaction Survey · 2023 Spring Festival Survey", "Full River Red" ranked sixth in the satisfaction of all 397 films in the historical survey with 88.4 points [6]. The film chooses a mixed theme that combines various elements such as suspense, costume, and comedy, creating a fast-paced and strongly reversed historical plot. It not only embodies the mainstream values of eradicating evil and eliminating evil, but also balances the expression of commercial and artistic aspects. It is a relatively successful Spring Festival film.

## 2. Case Analysis

### 2.1. Festival Theme in Art Creation

First of all, from the perspective of the theme of creation, Full River Red combines a variety of elements to cater to the Spring Festival holiday. The Spring Festival is a happy day for the whole family. The film uses more comedy symbols to set off the atmosphere of the festival. For example, the background music, comedy performers, lines with accent, comedy baggage and other elements in the film gradually accumulate to promote the "laughing point". After the "laughter point", the director actually arranged for the origin of the "tears point" to be influenced by the genre of the film. The film also has a lot of suspense, reversal, and the setting of the overall situation and the middle situation. This interlocking process can transform the "laughter point" into the "tears point" and sublimate it to

the main theme of the film, triggering emotional resonance among the audience. Secondly, in terms of narrative, suspense is used to transform the film's setting, with large suspense and small suspense wrapped around medium suspense. There are also small suspense, where the core conflict and main storyline are connected together to create a great sense of compulsion for the audience. Medium suspense and small suspense are repeated within the large suspense, which continuously accumulates the audience's curiosity. In terms of creation, the director and screenwriter constantly innovate to maximize the "attractions" of the film. Continuous creative innovation is also aimed at bringing a new look to the audience and bringing the latest film works into their sight. This innovation is not only for the better presentation of the film itself, but also to cater to the atmosphere of the Spring Festival to a certain extent, and meet the audience's demand for the film works. Finally, there is the gamification setting of the film, which brings the gaming experience into the film. The entire film revolves around secret messages, and the audience is constantly searching for this item to influence the narrative rhythm of the entire film, bringing them into the game of "treasure hunting" [7].

## 2.2. Audience Oriented Holiday Strategies

The ultimate goal of a film work is to satisfy the audience. "Full River Red" has a certain degree of affinity when it is released in the Spring Festival. It tries to meet the aesthetic needs of the public in terms of the creation concept, content and character selection. First of all, in the actor setting of Full River Red, the use of the traffic passwords of representative characters such as famous directors, comedians, famous actors and historical celebrities will be one of the factors that attract audiences to watch movies. In terms of the selection of characters in the film's content, the setting of small characters is bound to be loved by the general public. Small characters in desperate situations achieve great success through their own spirit of sacrificing themselves for justice, which is the content that the general audience hopes to see. The joys and sorrows, struggles, and desperate struggles of a small person can evoke resonance and empathy among all living beings. The positive images in Full River Red, such as Zhang Da, the coachman Liu Xi, and the dancer Yao Qin, are basically small potatoes [8]. The film also revolves around the narrative of these positive little characters. It is the actions of these small characters that support the entire story, and it is from these that the audience below is moved and shocked by the small characters in the film, in order to resonate with the audience. Secondly, in the content setting of the film, Full River Red boldly adapted and created the historical story of Yue Fei and Qin Hui as the background. This historical story is well-known in China and is a symbol of a nation and a country. It not only conveys the national conditions of the family, but also integrates with commercial values to achieve the highest value [9]. Both children and the elderly have heard the story of Yue Fei, which to some extent reduces the audience's acceptance psychology. As the audience knows this story, they are more willing to accept and watch it in the selection of the film. The selection of the story expands the audience and reduces the difficulty of watching. This kind of story is suitable for all ages and can be accepted by everyone. So in terms of the audience's acceptance psychology, Full River Red has made "concessions" to prepare for its own festival box office.

## 2.3. Marketing Caters to the Festive Atmosphere

As a commodity, the ultimate value of movies needs to be reflected in economic benefits. The box office in the Chinese film market is the most intuitive manifestation of economic benefits. How to market its own film works directly affects the box office earnings. Full River Red has made some innovations in the film promotion but also adhered to some traditional marketing strategies. On the pre-sale day of the movie, the team conducted a wave of differentiated marketing, transforming the character introductions in the movie into character cards in the game, and providing small dubbing for the main characters in the movie. For example, when the audience selects seats, a small fireworks

display appears on the screen of the characters in the movie and the corresponding actors' pinyin is played. This visual and auditory satisfaction allows the audience to feel a festive atmosphere before watching the movie, bringing joy to the audience while catering to the Spring Festival. Then before and after the film was released, the team played the "emotion card". During offline activities, the team recited the word "Full River Red" together, which affected the audience's emotion to a large extent, and would also trigger the emotional resonance of the audience and promote more audiences to enter the theater and make contributions to the box office. Full River Red has also carried out media integration publicity, creating official microblog, Xiaohongshu, TikTok and other platform accounts to attract more audiences. In the poster, the eight big characters "Laugh until the end, suspense enough" make the audience curious. Because the film has suspense elements, at the beginning of its release, he set up character cards with each character having its own character card. Viewers can explore the development direction of the characters based on their interests through short videos, and there are also game elements on the character cards. Each character's card should have corresponding character combat power, which allows the audience to distinguish the weight of the characters in the film. This innovative design, which is unique to Full River Red, also adds color to the film itself.

### 3. Suggestion

From the perspective of audience psychology, different audiences have different needs. Audiences enter cinemas to cater to their aesthetic needs and emotional values. In the festive atmosphere, they are influenced by factors such as the content of the movie itself, the atmosphere of the festival, and their own psychological needs [10]. The first thing to do for a successful film and television work is its own content. It is necessary to improve the quality of the film and promote mainstream values, while also emphasizing innovation and using elements from the festival to attract the audience's attention and cater to the audience's holiday psychology, so that the audience can have a certain emotional resonance and surprise before watching the film, and bring a better viewing experience to the audience. Secondly, in the promotion of movies, it is necessary to closely adhere to the text of the movie, and maximize the extension of the movie text beyond the film to inject new product development into the film market. Thirdly, in terms of publicity and distribution, it is not limited to media integration and integrated marketing methods. It is important to actively explore the unique promotion path of movies, and closely connect with the festive atmosphere to innovate in traditional marketing methods [11].

### 4. Conclusion

The 2023 Man Jianghong, a Spring Festival film with comedy elements, analyzed in this paper has certain market insight. It can meet the audience's needs for film culture and aesthetics during the Spring Festival, meet the audience's needs for the festival atmosphere, and balance business and art. However, the analysis of marketing methods is not deep enough, there is still significant room for future research. In summary, on the one hand, the cultural background of festivals has already contributed to the development of films and can drive box office growth. To promote the promotion of films through festivals, directors need to grasp the essence of the film itself and the festival itself, allowing each other to take care of each other. On the other hand, in the early stages of the festival, film promotion should also be planned in advance according to the atmosphere, and attract audiences in innovative ways to lay the foundation for the film's release. In future research, in-depth exploration of marketing methods can be conducted on this basis to explore unique marketing methods that belong to the Chinese film industry. There is still significant room for development in the Chinese film schedule market, which requires the joint efforts of directors and promotional teams to promote the development of Chinese film schedules.

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