

Analysis the Young Audience's Attitude and Behavior to Classical Music in Mainland China——Changing the Audience Development Strategies for Performing Arts

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Abstract: This paper explores how to make classical music more accessible to young people. It begins with an introduction to the current classical music market in China, followed by a summary of previous research, and final proposed solution.

Keywords: Classical Music; Audience Development; China Market

1. Introduction

The percentage of people who attend the classical music concerts is plummeting every year in China. As the classical music face challenges concerning aging audiences, reaching new consumer segments has become an imperative. According to the China Association of Performing Arts' report, in 2019, the post-90s and post-00s generations have become the main force of performance consumption, accounting for more than 55 percent of the total audience. However, most of them choose pop music concert, drama and musical to watch. Contrast with other art forms, classical music, such as symphony, opera and chamber music, need to do more efforts to helping remove barriers and building bridges for audiences to access it. Some organizations have already found approaches to overcome these obstacles, but many are still struggling. As the performing arts markets which are dominated by the young generation, it is important for arts managers to understand their attitude and behavior.

This paper focuses on developing an audience development strategy to help cultivate future classical music audiences. It attempts to act as a guide for arts managers to learn the young generations' main motivations, interests, attendance, barriers and expectation, furthermore, it concludes some different strategies to attract young audience.

2. Research background

Most arts organizations throughout the world consider audience development is vital to survival. For example, in the United States, the League of American Orchestras realise that audience attendance is not only about occupying the market and increasing ticket revenue but more importantly is an approach to revitalize classical music (6). The Australian Council for the Arts conducted a survey on art event attendance and attitudes towards arts, publishing a report entitled 'Selling the Performing Arts'. This report provides some advice about how to expand the audience. In Britain, plenty of orchestras, theaters have not yet made audience development a priority. If no further action is taken, they will find the box office revenue is decreasing and may even face bankruptcy.

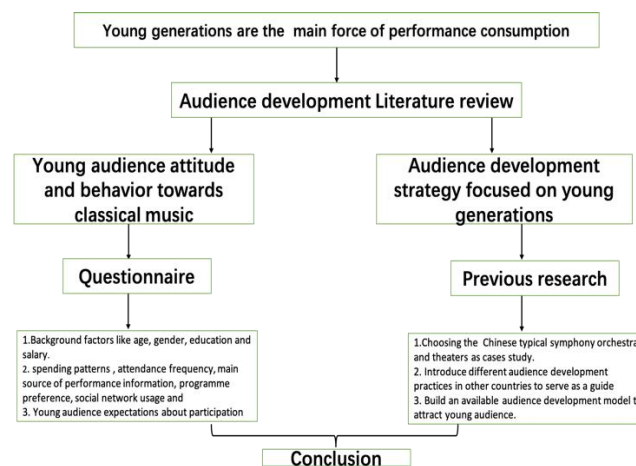
The Internet is a generation growing up post-90s and post-00s. They have a stronger awareness of 'self' and how they relate to the outside world. Hence, they prefer to behave themselves in social network, such as wechat, facebook and etc. At the same time, they also have a special label----“China's only-child”. The 90's generation audience rely not only on the Internet, but also on a variety of communities to achieve self-identity.

Recently research has shown that pricing policy, programming, education, alternative entertainments, macroeconomic and other factors has effect on the audiences' choice, yet we had little data on these. The need for this information becomes more acute when we consider the shrinking of income resources for music industry. It is argued that acquire a detailed understanding of our audiences is necessary.

3. Problem Statement

Initially, it will discuss previous theories and research, clarifying the history of audience development in China, summarizing the audience development strategies in global perspective, collating arts marketing and other related literature. Thereafter, this dissertation will collect the data to analysis the young generation's way of buy tickets, attendance frequency, main source of performance information, programme preference, social network usage and spending patterns. It will also consider the impact of their background factors like age, gender, education and salary. Next, the dissertation will demonstrate the current status of Chinese classical music industry, it will review some audience development approaches by different orchestras and theaters. Furthermore, it will explore the appropriate models for concert audience development. Many typologies of arts consumers and a number of models for expanding the audiences for the performing arts have been developed in order to identify different market segments and suggest appropriate strategies to reach them. According to the previous survey, the young generations' feature can be defined similarly to motivation in the MAO model (7) and interests in the RAND model (4). It will be concerned with these two models to find the best way to attract young audience. In general, the findings of the research highlight the need for changes in marketing strategy focused on young generations, stressing primarily the digital technology together with an emotional experience.

Fig.1 Conceptual Framework



4. Literature review

4.1 Audience segmentation

In their early practices, arts marketers placed more attention on 'soft' targets (those who were inclined to attend arts events or had participated before), so most researchers ignored the non-existing audience when defining audience groups at that time. John Pick (5), according to the relationship between marketing and audiences, points out 4 kinds of audience groups: 'Potential audience, Occasional audience, Regular audience and Inward audience'. The potential audience refers to people who are interested and may be involved in arts activities, but do not undertake real actions. The occasional audience concerns people who do not have strong motivation to attend arts events and only occasionally get involved. The regular audience means people who attend arts activities frequently and have gained different experiences. The inward audience refers to people who commit themselves to performing arts and regularly participate in arts activities. Kolb (3) describes different types of audiences, predicated on the stages of audience involvement. There are five audience groups: 'Culture consumer, Culture fan, Culture cultist, Culture enthusiast and Culture petty producer'. Culture consumers are those who perhaps participate in a cultural activity but do not have any preference. Fans of culture are those who are always attending exhibitions or performances for a specific cultural institution. Culture cultists are those who know about one certain art form well. Enthusiasts of culture are familiar with art forms in general and consider that attending cultural activities is an important part of their lives. Culture petty producers create or collect arts themselves.

4.2 Current status of audience development

Kawashima (2) demonstrates that there are four factors in audience development: 'Extended Marketing, Taste Cultivation, Audience Education and Outreach'. Kawashima explains the different targets, forms and purposes for each type of audience development. Extended Marketing targets people interested in the arts but who have no opportunities to attend. Arts organisations can establish customer incentive programmes to expand this potential audience. Taste Cultivation and audience education are for the existing audience. Taste Cultivation aims to broaden their appreciation of the art form, such as offering the audience a short ballet performance before a concert. Audience Education is designed to enrich the audience experience of the arts, offer them a chance to study the specific art forms in depth. This can cultivate consumer loyalty. Outreach refers to taking performances or exhibitions outside the institution, taking the arts into places usually hard to access, such as taking live chamber music to a care home. This type of audience development is more related to cultural policies. In Britain, social goals usually take priority over aesthetics. Outreach is a unique existence in British social inclusion policy.

Barlow and Shibli (1) show that the Ansoff Matrix, a marketing planning tool, is the principle that can apply to audience development. The table below displays that the Ansoff Matrix is aimed at either existing or new audiences. Arts organisations tend to use the Ansoff Matrix to increase market penetration rather than market development strategies. A diversification strategy is the most adventurous of these four strategies because it concerns producing new performances for new audiences and requires significant investment, so is rarely used in the arts market. In this paper, authors carried out the research in 'Chamber Music Touring Project', which featured 10 different tours around the UK. The paper according to audience characteristics in 10 different concert venues, chose different audience development strategies in matrix. For example, one of the venue was located in an area with no existing chamber music provision and therefore this venue started a brand new programme which in theory takes a high-risk strategic approach involving market development and diversification.

5. Finding

5.1 Music education

The purpose of audience development is to build and maintain a stable audience base for art organizations, so that they can operate and generate profits, thereby driving the development of the entire art industry and boosting the economy. According to China's policy of promoting aesthetic education, art education is expected to become the main means of promoting audience development, including the introduction of art on campuses and the provision of internship opportunities by local art institutions.

5.2 Devise new ways of publicity and promotion.

The publicity for concerts is generally planned in advance of the performance, and some companies start the promotion a few years before the event. This will help to attract an audience and gain popularity for the official performance. Currently, the Internet plays an increasingly significant role in people's lives, and online promotion has gradually become mainstream.

5.3 Explore online performance during prolonged epidemics

Since 2020, the Covid-19 has had a devastating impact on the performing arts industry, and many offline performances have had to be cancelled. In such a situation, some performing arts organizations have turned to the Internet to draw attention to their shows by online or shooting rehearsal short films. This has also caused the industry to start thinking about how to integrate its activities with the Internet and explore new paths for development. It is predicted that the performing arts will become more and more interconnected with the Internet in the future. Therefore, it will be more appealing to young people.

Arts organizations that want to reach young audiences must observe their concerns and cultivate a subtle influence, which is really cultivating a potential market. For example, held the 'opening day', the rehearsal site or theater is open to the audience, and the backstage is open to tourists, who can observe the rehearsal and learn about what happens on

backstage. Additionally, the classical orchestra can host a "Young Person Night" where young people can watch symphony performances for free and to get involved in the concert hall activities.

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