

Research on Development Strategies of British Animated Films

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Abstract: This article aims to explore the development strategies of British animated films, analyze their history, current situation, and challenges faced, and propose corresponding strategic suggestions. British animated films boast a rich and colorful history, with early paper-cutting animation and stop-motion animation forms exhibiting unique characteristics. However, in the global market, the share of British animated films is limited, and there is a certain gap compared to giants like Disney and Pixar in the United States. Nevertheless, we also see opportunities amidst the challenges. Through in-depth research and analysis of the development of the British animated film industry, we hope to contribute new ideas to the prosperity and development of this industry and provide valuable reference for relevant practitioners. Therefore, this article will focus on how to promote the British animated film industry to achieve greater scale and broader success and explore effective strategies that may be adopted to facilitate the achievement of this goal.

Keywords: British Animated Films; Development Strategies; Cultural Industry; British Film Industry; Talent Construction

1. Introduction

The British animated film industry has a long history and unique culture, but its development lags behind that of countries like the United States and Japan. In recent years, technological advancements and market changes have brought new opportunities to British animated films, but they have also been accompanied by challenges. The global animated film market is fiercely competitive, and British animated films need to formulate effective development strategies to cope with it. This study will comprehensively analyze the history, current situation, and future trends

of British animated films, and explore development strategies and paths. By reviewing history, analyzing the current situation, and looking into the future, we aim to provide useful suggestions for the British animated film industry to promote its sustained and healthy development. At the same time, it also provides references and inspirations for the animated film industries of other countries, jointly promoting the prosperity and progress of the global animation industry. As competition in the global animation market intensifies, British animated films are facing new challenges and opportunities. Therefore, it is particularly important to formulate effective development strategies.

2. History and Current Situation of British Animated Films

2.1 Historical Review

British animated films have a long history, emerging as early as the beginning of the 20th century with paper-cutting and stop-motion animation. Despite early technological breakthroughs, their development lagged behind. It was until the 1950s to 1970s that British animation entered a golden era, with works exhibiting unique cultural charm. After the Second World War, the rise of television media contributed to the revival of animation, with children's animation particularly popular. Nowadays, digital technology and the global market have brought new opportunities to British animated films, with international cooperation and independent production jointly driving the development of the industry, and their works gaining international recognition. The British animated film industry is now ushering in a new era of prosperity.

2.2 Current Situation

In the 21st century, the British animated

film industry has demonstrated a positive trajectory, with digital technology advancements and the expansion of the global market presenting new horizons for growth. The "Wallace & Gromit" series, produced by Aardman Studios, has captured the hearts of global audiences with its distinctive style, testament to the strides made by British animation in technological innovation and thematic diversity.

However, despite the noteworthy achievements of British animated films, there remains ample scope for improvement when compared to animation giants such as the United States and Japan. Specifically, in terms of market share and international influence, British animation lags behind its competitors. Additionally, British animated films often exhibit homogeneity in themes and styles, lacking the diversity and innovation that could set them apart. Therefore, the industry faces a pivotal challenge: how to further expand its market share and enhance the diversity and innovation of its works. This challenge is largely attributed to the insufficient promotion of British animated films in the international market and the dearth of globally renowned works that could spearhead the industry's growth and development. Addressing these issues is crucial for the British animated film industry to achieve greater heights in the future.

2.3 Outlook

Looking ahead, the British animated film industry holds immense potential for development as technology continues to advance and the market expands. On one hand, with the further development of digital technology, the production level and image quality of British animation are expected to be further enhanced. On the other hand, as global audiences' demand for diversified and high-quality animated content continues to increase, British animation is poised to capture a larger share of the international market. Additionally, it is crucial for British animated films to pay more attention to creativity and storytelling, attracting more viewers through innovative themes and backgrounds. Furthermore, actively collaborating and exchanging with

animation industries in other countries to jointly develop the international market represents a significant direction for the future development of British animated films. In conclusion, British animated films possess unique characteristics both in terms of their history and current status. In the future, as long as effective development strategies are formulated and implemented, British animated films have the potential to secure a place in the international market and contribute significantly to the development of global animation art.

3. Challenges Faced

After decades of dynamic development and transformation, British animated films have indeed achieved notable successes in terms of technological advancement and artistic expression. However, it is undeniable that they still confront a myriad of challenges in the highly competitive global animation market. These challenges stem not only from external factors such as intense competition and rapid environmental changes but also from internal pressures related to the industry's urgent need for self-innovation and sustained development. Navigating these complexities requires a multifaceted approach that addresses both external market forces and internal industry dynamics.

3.1 Intensified International Market Competition

The animated film market is highly competitive, with animation giants like the United States and Japan dominating the market for a long time. In contrast, British animated films are relatively weak in terms of market share and brand influence, facing strong competitive pressure from these countries. These countries have significant advantages in production technology, funding, and market operations, as well as profound animation culture and creative resources, posing significant challenges to the United Kingdom. British animated films need to enhance their competitiveness to establish a foothold in the international market.

3.2 Challenges of Technological Innovation

With the rapid development of digital

technology, the production methods of animated films are constantly being updated. Traditional animation production methods are gradually being phased out, replaced by more efficient and realistic digital animation technology. For British animated films, it is necessary to keep up with new technological trends, improve production levels and efficiency, and maintain competitiveness in the international market. Keeping up with technological innovation and enhancing production levels and efficiency pose a significant challenge.

3.3 Limitations in Themes and Styles

While British animated films have indeed achieved notable breakthroughs in themes and styles in recent years, the overall scope of their innovation efforts remains insufficient. In the era of globalization, where cultural exchange and diversity are at the forefront, audiences worldwide have developed increasingly high demands for diversified and personalized animated content. British animated films, therefore, need to prioritize creativity and storytelling even further. This involves breaking out of traditional themes and style frameworks, exploring new narratives, and pushing the boundaries of artistic expression to capture the attention of a wider audience and meet the diverse tastes of modern viewers. The important goal for the UK's cultural industry, including animation, in facing the international market is to attract external investment, leverage external resources to compete internationally, while emphasizing the "Britishness" of its culture and maintaining its independence. [1]

3.4 Funding and Resource Constraints

Obtaining funding for animated shorts can be challenging. If funding is unavailable, animators may rely on advertising revenue to sustain their livelihoods. [2] The high production costs and risks associated with British animated films pose challenges in fundraising. Small and medium-sized production companies and independent animators face funding shortages that limit production scale, technological updates, and marketing efforts. Compared to the American animation industry, the United Kingdom has relatively limited funding and

resources, affecting production scale, special effects, and market expansion capabilities.

3.5 Differences in Culture and Values

Due to the inherent cultural and value differences across different regions and nations, British animated films may encounter significant challenges in being understood and accepted in the international market. It is imperative for British animated films to carefully consider how to strike a balance between maintaining their unique cultural characteristics and integrating into the global cultural context. This involves finding a way to effectively communicate their stories and messages while respecting and appealing to the cultural sensibilities and values of international audiences. By doing so, they can not only preserve their cultural identity but also expand their reach and influence in the global animation industry.

3.6 Brain Drain

Over the course of its more than a century-long development, the British film industry has periodically encountered significant talent crises. [3] These crises have been exacerbated by notable outflows of skilled professionals, leading to immense losses for the nation. Specifically, within the British animated film industry, the problem of talent loss has become increasingly apparent due to intense global competition and relatively low salary levels. Despite maintaining a high standard in technology and artistry, the industry has struggled with a shortage of skilled individuals, thereby affecting its international competitiveness. Many excellent animation talents are drawn to countries offering higher salaries and more lucrative development opportunities, posing a significant challenge to the British animated film industry. Therefore, emphasizing talent development and implementing effective strategies to prevent talent loss are paramount for ensuring the sustainable development of the British animated film industry.

3.7 Market Positioning

Despite their long history and rich experience, British animated films lack a

clear positioning and distinctiveness in the current global animation market, which has, to some extent, affected their competitiveness and influence. Therefore, it is crucial for British animated films to have a clearer understanding of their unique features and target audience groups.

4. Suggestions on Development Strategies

The development of the British animated film industry necessitates concerted efforts and support from the government, enterprises, and various sectors of society. By strengthening technological innovation, deepening cross-media and cross-industry collaboration, and emphasizing diversification and inclusivity, we can drive the continuous development and prosperity of the British animated film industry.

4.1 Increasing Capital Investment

Animation shorts often encounter significant funding challenges, making it difficult for animators to sustain their creative endeavors without external support. In the absence of grants or traditional funding mechanisms, British animators must actively seek alternative sources of capital to finance their projects. One such avenue is engaging in advertising production, which, despite the intense competition within the industry, offers a reliable source of income. This not only allows animators to hone their skills and expand their creative horizons but also accumulates valuable experience that can be leveraged for future projects. By engaging in advertising production, British animators are able to bridge the funding gap and continue to create captivating, animated works that contribute to the growth and diversity of the animation industry.

4.2 Talent Cultivation and Introduction

Talent is the key to the sustained development of the British animated film industry. Universities and training institutions should strengthen animation education, cultivating talents with innovative capabilities and an international perspective, while attracting outstanding overseas animators. Simultaneously, the industry must adopt measures to address talent loss, such as raising salary levels,

enhancing talent development, and optimizing the work environment to attract and retain talent, ensuring the continued prosperity and development of the industry. These strategies will inject new vitality into the British animated film industry and enhance its international competitiveness.

4.3 Deepening International Cooperation and Exchange

Strong industry associations are conducive to safeguarding the interests of members, promoting mutual cooperation, and enhancing the industry's voice in shaping public policies. [4] By establishing cooperation relationships with international animation production companies, universities, and research institutions, we can jointly cultivate and introduce excellent animation talents. This will allow the British animated film industry to introduce more creativity, technology, and resources, thereby enhancing its competitiveness. Furthermore, participation in international animation exhibitions and exchange activities can showcase the charm of British animated films and attract more international collaboration opportunities. The research on national cinema has "never been inherent or self-contained" but needs to be considered within a "specific social and historical context". [5]

4.4 Clarifying Market Positioning

The British animation industry faces both challenges and opportunities in external cooperation and competition. For instance, Hollywood is both a major competitor and a potential partner, while the European Union and other regions are also significant. British animation should deeply understand the international market demand, create and promote works suitable for the international market, tap into local cultural elements, and build distinctive animation brands. Simultaneously, analyzing unique features such as humor and cultural heritage can be the focus of marketing efforts to expand the international market and strengthen international collaboration.

The gentlemen, who are a blend of European culture and the essence of all classes in Britain, play a significant role in the process of British modernization.

Gentlemen are not only the promoters of economic development and institutional reform, the maintainers of social stability, the defenders and administrators of the country, but also the leading force in the global expansion of the British Empire. [6]

4.5 Targeting Audience Groups

British animated films need to more clearly define their unique characteristics and target audience groups to form differentiated competition in the global market. For example, animation works catering to different age groups like children, adolescents, or adults can be launched. Additionally, animated works with universal values can be introduced to attract a broader audience and better position the unique characteristics and target audience groups of British animated films in the global market. While British animated films possess unique local characteristics, this does not mean they can only appeal to domestic audiences. Through clever storytelling and themes with universal value, they can also captivate international audiences. As a cultural product, animated films often have scenes, characters, and plots that are closely related to regional culture. [7]

4.6 Improving Production Standards and Efficiency

In the pursuit of artistic integrity, it is imperative to actively embrace advanced technologies that enhance animation effects. By leveraging these technologies, we can cater to the ever-growing demands of the audience for high-quality animated works. The British animated film industry, renowned for its unique advantages and characteristics in the global animation market, stands at a pivotal moment. By more precisely defining its distinctive features and identifying target audience groups, strengthening its international market research, and continuously enhancing production standards, the industry is poised to achieve greater success and influence on the global stage. This concerted effort not only elevates the quality of British animated films but also solidifies their position as leaders in the animation industry, setting new benchmarks

for creativity and technical excellence. The spirit of independent and experimental animation lies in exploring one's true self, maintaining curiosity about the world, and discovering more possibilities through experimental expressions. [8]

4.7 Promoting Technological Innovation

Encouraging animation enterprises to pioneer and develop novel technologies and processes holds paramount importance in elevating both the efficiency and quality of animation production. Collaborative efforts with technology companies are vital in harnessing the latest technological advancements and integrating them into the animation production process. To thrive in the fiercely competitive global animation market, the British animated film industry must embrace a proactive approach in introducing and fostering the development of these cutting-edge technologies. This not only enhances the efficiency and quality of animation production but also positions the industry at the forefront of technological innovation.

Moreover, exploring the potential of emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR), and artificial intelligence (AI) can revolutionize the animation industry. These technologies offer immense opportunities to create more immersive and interactive viewing experiences for audiences, setting new standards in animation storytelling and engagement. By leveraging these technologies, the British animated film industry can differentiate itself from its global competitors and capture the imaginations of a wider audience. Traditional film and television animation mainly presents and describes various types of stories. The application of digital media art in such animation creation can broaden the singularity of story expression, such as interactive storytelling and comprehensive story representation with multiple artistic elements. Even in terms of storytelling methods, due to the intervention of digital media art technology, it is possible to explore and express more possibilities under the premise of traditional story structure. [9]

4.8 Strengthening Policy Support and Funding Assistance

Promoting the professionalization of public fund management is crucial to ensuring effective utilization of funds and driving the development of related industries. Based on national conditions, introducing a systematic evaluation system for public funds and refining the types of financial support can significantly enhance the targeted use and efficiency of funds.

The government should increase its support for the animation industry, providing preferential policies in areas such as funding, taxation, and legal matters to encourage animation production companies to engage in more innovation and research and development. Additionally, establishing specialized funds for the development of the animation industry can provide financial support to animation production companies and promote their healthy development. While relevant policy incentives are important, the source of motivation for the animation industry to go abroad is the marginal profit brought by seizing international market share. [10]

4.9 Emphasizing Cultural Inheritance and Innovation

In its ongoing development, the British animated film industry must place utmost importance on inheriting and promoting its own rich and diverse cultural heritage, while simultaneously maintaining an open and receptive attitude towards absorbing and integrating advanced cultural elements from the international sphere. This harmonious blend of traditional and contemporary, domestic, and global, will enable the creation of animated works that possess a unique charm, resonating deeply with diverse audiences worldwide. Through continuous innovation, experimentation, and bold breakthroughs, the British animated film industry can secure a prominent and enduring place in the global market, establishing itself as a leader in the realm of animation and a purveyor of cultural excellence.

4.10 Enhancing Copyright Protection

A meticulous exploration of the policies and regulatory frameworks established by the

British government specifically for the animation industry is imperative in order to grasp their influence and catalyzing role in driving the industry's growth. This examination is not only limited to domestic policies but must also extend to the policy and regulatory landscapes present in the international animation market, providing crucial insights and guidance for the strategic expansion of British animated films globally. Concurrently, it is vital to refine and strengthen the copyright legal system, ensuring that it is robust and effective in safeguarding the creative works of the industry. This includes intensifying efforts to combat infringing behaviors, ensuring that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions. Furthermore, elevating public awareness regarding the importance of copyright protection is paramount, fostering a cultural and legal environment that nurtures creativity and respects the intellectual property rights of animators and creators. By taking these comprehensive measures, we can establish a solid foundation for the sustainable development of the British animation industry.

5. Conclusions

Despite its ups and downs, the British animated film industry has consistently pursued artistic and technological excellence, delivering numerous outstanding works to global audiences. Facing the opportunities and challenges brought by digital technology, the industry has responded actively by increasing investment, cultivating talent, clarifying positioning, promoting innovation, and enhancing copyright protection to ensure sustained and healthy development. Looking ahead, with technological advancements and market expansion, British animated films will maintain their unique charm and influence, demonstrating diverse creative strengths and writing a new chapter. Their profound cultural heritage and vast development space bode well for a brilliant future for British animated films in the global animation landscape.

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