

Opportunities and Challenges: Hollywoodisation and Asian Cinema's Ascent

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Abstract. With the drive towards globalisation, Hollywood has had a profound impact on Asian films, including their production methods, storytelling, and film presentation. This paper delves into the multilayered impact of Hollywood on Asian cinema, analysing its origins, consequences, and potential impact. In addition, this research examines the positive aspects of Hollywood's influence, such as raising the international profile of Asian cinema, fostering cross-cultural collaboration, and enriching global cinematic diversity. Simultaneously, it also discusses potential challenges, including the risk of cultural homogenisation and the impact of Hollywood's commercial hegemony on the local film industry. In short, the development of the Asian film industry under the influence of Hollywood is a complex story of opportunities and challenges. By actively embracing openness, innovation, and cultural diversity, Asian cinema can continue to play a unique role on the global stage, presenting engaging and diverse cinematic experiences.

Keywords: Globalization, Hollywood, homogenization, Asian film industry.

1. Introduction

In the context of today's globalisation, the Asian film industry has undergone a revolutionary transformation that not only reshaped Asian cinema but also significantly influenced its relationship with Hollywood. With the globalisation of information, media, and culture, the Asian film industry is gradually emerging from the shadows of the international market to become a major player in the global film industry. This development has not only driven the commercialisation and internationalisation of Asian cinema but has also influenced a series of changes at the level of creation, production, and presentation. Existing literature demonstrates that this shift has brought numerous commercial advantages to the Asian film industry [1]. However, from a cultural perspective, many scholars argue that it represents a form of modern cultural colonization [2]. They contend that Hollywood's transnational influence has led to cultural homogenization and the erosion of national cultures and values in many countries. This article seeks to summarize scholars' perspectives on these arguments through a comprehensive review of relevant literature. It is evident that while many films today are adapted to their local cultures, their core remains heavily influenced by Hollywood culture. Japanese scholar Yoshimoto, for instance, posits that breaking away from the Hollywood standard is a challenging task for Asian cinema [3]. The subsequent sections of this article will show the current state of Hollywood and its transnational transmission and influence. Moreover, this research will uncover its potential implications for Asian culture and the film industry.

2. The Film Industry in a Global Age

2.1. The Emergence of Cultural Colonisation

The emergence of cultural colonization can be traced back to the mid-1920s when British colonizers began to explore the use of new broadcasting and communication media in Kenya, which could affect their colonization process. Soon the effects of films seemed to replace that of radio due to their visual effects and representations, leaving an unprecedented impression on the people. J. Russell Orr once argued that a successful movie reaches a wider audience than any newspaper or book, except for the Bible. Considering this perspective, the colonizers regarded film as the most

influential tool for global communication, capable of exerting immeasurable moral and emotional influence on individuals of all ages [4]. In the mid-twentieth century, as countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America gained their independence, they began to explore their own cultural identities in the pursuit of freedom, equality, and independence. However, because of the long period of colonization, many colonies are still under the influence of colonialism. This is especially true in terms of cultural expressions, including literature, art, film, music, fashion, and other areas, which are also known as post-colonial culture. Among them, the cultural colonization of film has been widely noticed. In the past few decades, due to the development of technology and globalization, the film industry of developed countries has become increasingly influential globally. This has made the films of some developed countries become global hits, loved and sought after by a large number of viewers.

2.2. Transnational Dissemination of Contemporary Film

However, as these films spread globally, the cultural values and lifestyles of developed countries were also introduced to other countries. This spread of cultural values and lifestyles often impacts and changes the original culture, leading to the phenomenon of cultural homogenization. This phenomenon is known as cultural colonization of film, as it is similar to the impact and change of colonialism on culture. Consider Edward Said's reference to the concept of 'cultural imperialism' in his book *Culture and Imperialism*, where he states that the Westerners had a misconception regarding the influence of imperial conquest on the formation of their cultures; they continued to believe in the superiority of their own culture over others [4]. It has been argued that the global film industry is now largely influenced by the American film industry and that American foreign policy is a democracy that spreads Western culture [5]. At the same time, some scholars say that for non-Western countries, exposure to Western media is often the beginning of the loss of traditional values and cultural identity [6, 7]. For example, a study by Nigerian scholars shows that although the concept of cultural colonization had not received mainstream academic attention at the time, films from the United States and other foreign countries were more popular in Nigeria than locally produced films [7]. Babli Sinha, an Indian scholar, points out that the history of colonization in the Third World countries is one of the foundations of cultural colonization [8].

2.3. The Phenomenon of Hollywoodisation

Nowadays, the film industry is a globalised medium in which the audience receives information from films either actively or passively. Throughout the global film industry, Hollywood in the United States has almost monopolised most of the market on a global scale since the mid to late 20th century. American Hollywood seems to be the first choice for global audiences. Although there is a reverse export of films from all over the world to the United States, it pales in comparison to the films Hollywood produces around the world [9].

From a business perspective, Hollywood dominates the majority of the worldwide film revenue [10]. The trend towards the Hollywoodisation of global cinema, both in terms of production content and market or audience habits, is reflected in a number of ways. Firstly, Hollywood boasts some of the largest and most influential studios in the world, producing a range of large-scale productions that have captivated audiences globally with their impressive budgets and visual effects. These films are often made with a high degree of professionalism and production quality, setting a standard that has also had a global impact. Producers and directors in other countries struggled to catch up with Hollywood's production levels, leading to a trend of standardisation and homogenisation in the global film industry.

Secondly, Hollywood films have become increasingly influential in the international market. Hollywood studios have adopted a globalised marketing strategy, releasing their films simultaneously around the world, with almost simultaneous releases around the globe. This strategy not only increases the popularity of a film but also creates a massive global audience, which is crucial to a film's box office performance. Simultaneously, Hollywood films have gained widespread recognition

at film festivals and received many awards worldwide, which further strengthens their international reach.

Thirdly, audience tastes and expectations are being shaped by Hollywood films. American films usually feature visual effects, action sequences, stars, and the English language as their main selling points. These elements have appealed to global audiences. Audiences are becoming accustomed to these elements, leading to a decline in demand for other types of films. This has also pushed the global film industry in a more commercial and mainstream direction in an attempt to meet audience expectations. The trend towards Hollywoodisation of the global film industry is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon. While it has led to some homogenisation and commercialisation, it has also provided opportunities for the globalisation of the film industry. This trend will continue shaping the future of the film industry, influencing the relationship between audiences, producers, and culture.

3. Asian Cinema under the Influence of Hollywood

3.1. The Adoption of Hollywood's Strategies

In general, the value of film as a form of artistic expression should depend on authenticity, creativity, and originality. However, In the contemporary cultural landscape, foreign films frequently take inspiration from Hollywood movies, resulting in adaptations and reinterpretations. Despite being adapted to the local culture, these films frequently fail to encapsulate their own cultural essence, instead, reflecting a core deeply rooted in American values [4]. In Asia, notable parallels emerge, with India's film industry famously known as "Bollywood," Hong Kong's as "the Hollywood of the East," and South Korea's as "Hallyuwood." In recent years, these Asian film industries have followed the institutional and aesthetic patterns established by Hollywood in terms of production, distribution, and viewership [1].

Firstly, one of the similarities between the Bollywood, East Asian film industries, and Hollywood is their dedication to high-quality film production. Hollywood is known for its professional production teams and high-tech visual and sound effects. Bollywood and East Asian film industries have invested a great deal of resources to match these standards. Bollywood studios often have state-of-the-art production facilities to provide visually and aurally stunning experiences. Scholars Hasan and Nike have stated that the emergence of Bollywood cinema in India represents a notable instance where the film industry successfully combined its indigenous cultural elements with influences from Western cultural imperialism, marking it as a triumph. Despite its shared narrative themes, artists, and global settings with Hollywood, Bollywood distinguishes itself by incorporating Indian elements such as indigenous songs and dances that echo the values of Indian family culture within its films [11]. Similarly, Korean and Chinese films have made great strides in terms of technology and production quality. This commitment to high-quality production has not only drawn international audiences but has also elevated Bollywood and Asian cinema to global recognition.

Secondly, the similarities in film content and subject matter are also remarkable. While Bollywood, East Asian cinema, and Hollywood all have their own unique cultural elements, they also share some generic themes and plots. For example, romantic love, action-adventure, and comedy themes are prevalent in films from these regions. In addition, some international films explore global social issues such as environmental protection, gender equality, and cultural diversity. These shared themes and narratives facilitate a deeper connection with international audiences.

Thirdly, conceptual marketing strategies are also shared between Bollywood, East Asian cinema, and Hollywood. Hollywood has always used conceptual promotional strategies in the international market, including simultaneous worldwide releases, collaborations with international distributors, and extensive advertising campaigns. Similarly, Bollywood and East Asian film studios have used similar strategies to market their films internationally and build a wide audience base. This conceptual marketing strategy has helped Bollywood and Asian films to succeed in the international market and expand their international market share. Also, star culture is a common thread between Bollywood, East Asian cinema, and Hollywood. All these film industries have some well-known stars who have

wide recognition in the international arena. Hollywood has many international stars such as Tom Cruise and Angelina Jolie. Bollywood has Khan Khan and Aamir Khan. The Korean film industry also boasts some highly popular stars such as Lee Byung-hun and Jun Ji-hyun. The involvement of these stars not only attracts an international audience but also increases the popularity and appeal of the films.

3.2. Asian Cinema's Ascent

As Asia continues to rise economically and politically, and Asian cinema has influenced Western cinema at international film festivals, scholars have argued that Asian cinema can be seen as a unified force capable of replacing Hollywood. Japanese scholar Mitsuhiro Yoshimoto notices that Hollywood is taken as the standard for classic cinema, with all other films bouncing back from Hollywood and adopting Hollywood's standards. He suggests that that the core of Asian cinema should not revolve around Hollywood, let alone be a derivative of him [3]. However, Yoshimoto also admits that it is not easy to completely get rid of this standard and reconceptualize Asian cinema. The reason lies not only in Hollywood's economic model but also in the nature of cinema. As a cultural force, Hollywood has demonstrated a strong ability to capture emotions [1]. Therefore, Hollywood represents not just an economic powerhouse but also an intrinsic and assimilated component of the national culture and popular imagination in most nations where cinema has firmly taken root as a form of entertainment [12].

4. Summary

To sum up, in the wave of globalisation, Hollywood's influence on the Asian film industry is not a one-way cultural export; rather, it represents a two-way interactive process in which both sides contribute to shaping the future of cinema. The influence of Hollywood, coupled with the rise of Asian cinema constitute a new chapter in the history of the film industry. This article has outlined the advantages of Hollywood and its global impact. As Asian cinema emerges in the international market, more diverse stories and cultural elements appear on the screen, and the creativity and talent of Asian filmmakers are recognized globally.

However, it is also important to be wary of some of the possible negative impacts of the trend towards Hollywoodisation, including the erosion of commercialism, the risk of cultural homogenization, and the pressure placed on the local film industry. Throughout this process, preserving and promoting the distinctive cultural characteristics of Asian cinema is of paramount importance. While this paper categorizes and summarizes the viewpoints of existing scholars, it is essential to acknowledge that further research is needed to provide empirical data that can substantiate these findings.

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