

# The Analysis of Consumer Behavior Based on SIPS Model: Taking the Avengers Series as Examples

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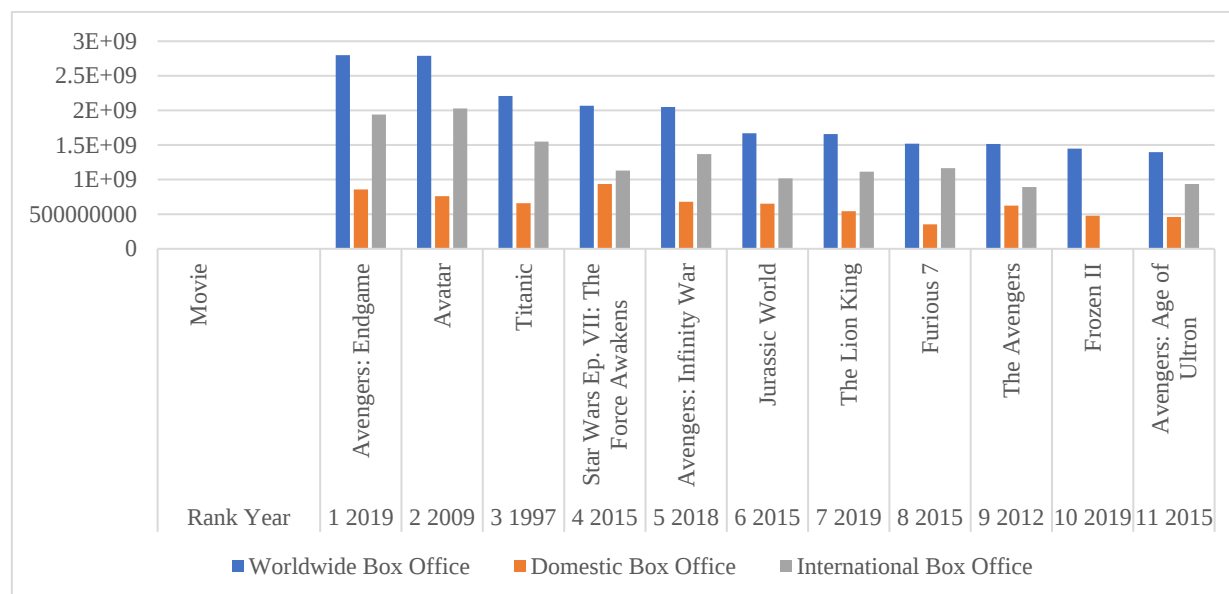
**Abstract.** Nowadays, the behavior of moviegoers is gradually changing, relying more on online platforms like social media and short video apps, which partly conducting to a greater and greater numbers of movie corporations choosing to cooperate with the Internet companies and changing their marketing strategies. And It's a common phenomenon that the movies are publicized and distributed through the online ways, while Marvel has capitalized well on the consumer craze, adapted to the new situation and stood out from the fierce competition In the context of the Internet era and Marvel's movie sales boom, this paper mainly takes the Avengers series, currently the most successful movie series of the world, as the research object, applying the "Sympathizing, Identifying, Participating and Sharing" (SIPS) model to analyze Marvel's specific approaches to accomplish these four parts of the process, and comes up with the reasons why the series has become a box office giant and draws the edification for other movies to improve marketing efficiency.

**Keywords:** Film marketing, SIPS model, marketing strategies.

## 1. Introduction

Under the background of the Internet wave, the film industry and the Internet are increasingly closely integrated. Not only has film production been shifting to the Internet, but film and television consumption has also been deeply affected. The viewing habits of viewers are imperceptibly changing: compared with the previous passive acceptance of content, the audience is currently more active in looking for resonance and interpreting content; the emergence of 4D technology and bullet screens has greatly enhanced the audience's degree of participation; cell phones and computers, and other mobile devices on the online theater of the "multi-screen play" let the audience no longer be limited by time and space to view. Watching movies becomes gradually interactive, user-oriented and networked, which also inevitably affects the marketing model: marketing is no longer limited to traditional methods like the distributing promotional videos and the producing TV advertisements, but relies to a greater extent on the promotion of digital information, especially the major video platforms and social media with huge amounts of users, due to their better depth of dissemination and lower cost demand. It can be said that the traditional marketing model of the film industry is gradually being subverted, and film marketing is gradually entering the new media era [1].

Marvel's Avengers series is undoubtedly the most popular film series in the world. As of June 2020, all four Avengers films were in the top 11 of the global box office, of which Avengers 4 ranked first (shown in Figure 1). In addition to the attraction of excellent content to the audience, the big sales of this series of movies are also inseparable from the support of the company's marketing strategy. This study will introduce the SIPS model to analyze how the Avengers series can be successfully marketed, meeting the needs of consumers in the context of the Internet era.



**Figure 1.** The global box office ranking list in 2020 (Photo credit: Original)

## 2. Case Description

The Avengers movie series is an adaption of homonymous comic strips created by Marvel Comics. By 2023, Marvel Studios has launched four movies for in the same series, namely “The Avengers”, “Avengers: Age of Ultron”, “Avengers: Infinity War”, “Avengers: End Game” [2]. The first movie gained a huge success as it landed on the theater, it was nominated by 80 awards and was the winner of 38 prizes in 2012 and 2013 [3]. Each movie has become a worldwide box office champion and has set several box office records. Among them, 2019's Avengers: Endgame was one of the highest-grossing movies of all time, earning more than \$2.9 billion at the global box office, making the movie series an unsurmountable one [4]. The box office was not the only triumph, it has also made a huge impact around the world. The series is more than just a movie, it has become a cultural phenomenon. Audiences don't just watch the movies; they immerse themselves in the story and create fan fictions of all genres on social media. Movies are the joints, it welds the obsessed fans, comic book fans, and movie lovers, a huge fan community has been built around the world. Other than that, by connecting different Marvel characters and story lines together, they create a larger and more coherent universe. This narrative has left audiences eager to see how diverse individuals interact with each other and how the story flows, while also sparking countless speculations and discussions. At the same time, new epic roles emerge, from Iron Man, Captain America, and Thor to Black Widow, Hulk, and Spider-Man, to whom audiences have developed a strong emotional connection. One of the most relishing highlights must be the stunning action scenes and special effects. These movies present a series of visually powerful battle scenes in which the superheroes demonstrate great abilities and skills. The outstanding work of the special effects team and the brilliant production design allowed audiences to experience a true visual feast on the big screen.

All those elements blend together, involve the audiences in and make them reverberate empathically to the plot. The films created a new universe and made itself one of the most influential and popular series in the history of contemporary cinema.

## 3. The SIPS Model

The Japanese have introduced a few models explicating consumers' purchasing process [5]. Among all of them, in 2011, Dentsu Inc. presented the SIPS model which clarifies the recognition and emotion process of consumers who weave social media in their lives sufficiently with four phases: Sympathize, Identify, Participate, Share and spread. Sympathize is the process of impressing your

clients and evoke their interests likewise. Identify is a stage of eradicating the trust barriers between consumers and producers, at the same time, confirming content's value. Participate segment turns the buying intention of customers into actual consumption. The last part, share and spread, encourages consumers to share spontaneously during the whole consumption progression. Being born in the new era of Internet, unlike the previous ones, the SIPS model has changed the traditional unidirectional mode of consumption, initiatively integrate target customers into the process and see the power of online communities consisting of sophisticates who are similarly-minded [6]. According to the Dentsu Inc. Open Innovation Laboratory, the process of sympathize is the key entrance of arousing consumers' interests in a time where social media are highly developed [7]. Furthermore, it is put forward by the SIPS model that crowds or enterprises disseminate and stimulate consumer behavior. Being sympathized with information, consumers experience various paths of identifying information, leading to participation and sharing, including behavior of not purchasing [8]. The article will base on the SIPS model to analyze the success of the Avengers movies series.

### 3.1. Sympathize

Not only does the content of the Avengers series resonate with the audience emotionally and cater to the audience's psychological needs, they also follow the trend of the era of the fan economy and play a brand effect.

First of all, the movie marketing should be based on the audience psychology design emotional selling point, leveraging targeted selection of movie clips, original lines, theme songs and other materials to enhance the user's viewing experience in multiple dimensions, arousing empathy [9]. The hero movie series can arouse people's inner hero complex: superheroes have superior ability, mysterious weapons and equipment as well as extremely high popularity, so everyone inevitably worships heroes and aspires to be like them. The scenes of superheroes joining hands to fight always make the audience's blood boil, and the production of special effects and the use of stunts in the movie amplify the sense of tension and excitement, stimulating the audience to a greater extent. Therefore, Marvel mainly highlights the selling points of its fight scenes and special effects when Marvel released their short videos.

Secondly, before the launch of the Avengers series, Marvel had already owned the comics as well as a series of heroes' individual movies, forming its own cultural IP and laying a solid fan base. And this series of movies that collects the major superheroes satisfies the emotional needs of any one of these groups of Marvel fans, and reaches marketing through the whimsy of the fans. It is worth mentioning the short promotional videos of Avengers 3 and 4, in which Marvel showed the sacrifices of several superheroes, arousing the sadness of their fans, generating heated discussion on the Internet and achieving the purpose of emotional marketing.

### 3.2. Identity

The Avengers movie series is marketed primarily to the fan mass that has already received previous products, as a result, the question of how to increase fan bonding is extremely critical. Marvel has made a lot of efforts to address this issue, most commonly the superhero actors often dress up in their character costumes to hold fan meetings and interact with fans to promote the newly launched movies and attract audiences. In addition, the potential audience for Marvel's movies is primarily young people, who also happen to be the most economically dynamic consumer and internet user demographic. Marvel has utilized the consumer behavior of many young groups for cross-border marketing, such as cooperating with Uniqlo to produce T-shirt with superheroes images, launching a variety of Limited-edition items like PVC figure toys or dolls, etc., in order to expand the fan base with the mutual drive between the brands [10]. Besides, they also set up theme parks, theme hotels, and other buildings to increase brand awareness.

### 3.3. Participation

Marvel has been aware of the power of consumers at a time when their only product was comic books. With the experiences gained before, the company attaches great importance to the feeling of audience, involvement in particular. The crew settled down to diffuse movie information in various channels in an effort to immerse the audience as much as possible in the Marvel universe that the movie creates. The results of this effort are evident to all, as the audience truly believes that the universe visualized in the movie do exists in a certain dimension and proudly regard the movie as a grand long-term project, they pour heart and soul into. Thus, when movies are released, the sense of accomplishment prompts many people willing to show up in the cinema with costumes, buy a movie ticket, pay a high price for a coke bottle in the shape of Iron Man or other characters and be seated in front of the screen for two to three hours to enjoy the movie. For example, before the shooting of the first film of the series, Marvel arranged a cast show-up simultaneously an announcement of the filming at San Diego Comic Con, the most prestigious feast for comic enthusiasts who would likely to be their clients, magnetize massive attention and make expectants feel involved from the very beginning.

### 3.4. Sharing and Dissemination

Every individual can be considered as a message source in their social circle, as a creature that contacts and collaborates based on speech as its fundamental way of communication, it is challenging to avoid sharing with surrounding families and friends. When a community constructed by individuals who share same interest of a certain size is brought together by a high-quality work, new ideas break out constantly in a lively discussion, some re-creation posts are easily to go viral due to their creativities. In dissemination, these fan works attract passers-by out of the loop and show them into the community, the process repeats, based on the depth and the exquisite level of production, it never ends, making the Avengers series a classic hard to surpass.

## 4. Conclusion

Based on SIPS model to analyze the consumer purchasing behavior, it can be drawn that the Avengers movie series adapts to the current digital and networked marketing requirements, and not only satisfies the user's consumption experience of the product information from resonance to sharing, but also facilitates the movie to realize the depth of dissemination from the content to the word of mouth, enhances perception and influence, continues to strengthen the film series as a gold-lettered signboard of Marvel and comic strips adapted movie.

## Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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