

The Potential Economic Growth by Enlarging Cultural Output

PENG QIAOYING*

Shanghai Lixin University of Accounting and Finance, China

Abstract

The paper analyzes the possibility of conducting more cultural impact in China in order to stimulate the economic development. The analysis begins with the description of the correlation between cultural output and economic growth and the reasons behind it. On account of the cultural differences between the two countries, statistics reveal that cultural inclusiveness in China can be limited to some extent, by which the proportion of imported cultural products and the profits are affected. As one of the forms of cultural output, media content can serve the purpose for bringing out profits and taking on the task of cultural exchanges. This paper takes some kinds of media content for examples. Through a large amount of data, the author shows it is a sensible choice to enhance economic development by intending to enlarge cultural output in China appropriately. Building up a more splendid cultural palace may inject the impetus into the economic growth.

Keywords: economic growth, cultural output, China

JEL Nr.: R12

Introduction

In today's world, globalization is not just about the exchange of consumer goods but the cultural output. More and more foreign cultural products can be available in China. Confucius Institutes, affiliated with the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, is a place where people can learn Chinese culture. Till December 31st, 2016, according to the official website of Confucius Institute Headquarters, the number of Confucius Institutes had reached 512 in 140 countries and regions since 2004. As a country is advancing its soft power, its cultural output, media content can serve as a tool to boost the economic development. An American movie *Captain America: Civil War* won the week crown, with \$60.11 million in a week. After 10 days that put it on a cumulative of more than \$156.89 million.^[1] In Chinese variety show market, one episode of Korean variety show can be paid for \$20,000.^[2] The intelligence property of Japanese animation productions had been purchased by Chinese major video platforms, and the profits of IP contributed 10% of GDP in 2014.^[3] In China, distinctive imported media content has huge potential to fulfill the

* **Corresponding address:** PENG QIAOYING, Shanghai Lixin University of Accounting and Finance, Shanghai, China. **Email:** 13560532032@163.com

needs of developing economy . But it is thought-provoking that those taking up a considerable proportion of the market are actually the major powers in the world even though other countries also have a diversity of culture. What can make a difference to help knock at the door to the market?

Sometimes, keeping host culture purely original may not be a sensible choice when you are meant to popularize it. Greek authorities declined the proposal of holding a fashion show of Gucci in the Parthenon Temple in Athens. A Greek Minister Lydia Koniordou, interviewed by *National Television*, contended that the government was responsible to protect the Acropolis of Athens branded with democracy and freedom. Greece has been aware of the significance of protecting their sacred culture, which are expected to be of great value. However, if we plan to enlarge the share in foreign-culture media content market in China, what we need to change is to combine little Chinese culture with local culture in the cultural productions in order to bridge the gap between original foreign culture and enduring Chinese culture.

Cultural Output Market

Today's rising growth of technology makes the power of culture even stronger. Kaifu Li, a former associate professor in Carnegie Mellon University in the United States, holds a point of view that although AI robots are possibly taking our place of doing the jobs, we are superior than robots in perceiving the culture, like arts, architecture and so on so forth. Today, AI robots are able to release our burden of housework and even the analysis of the stock market. Kaifu Li has started using AI robots as his consultants in investment for few years. But we won't give an order to a robot to go to a concert for us. "Art and culture will be more important now. Everyone will be a poet and a aesthete in the future." [4]

Since the reform and open up in China in 1978, increasing foreign cultural products are welcome to show up in Chinese market. As we are marching into an era when the state of globalization and the development of Internet are fairly mature, regional network of cultural product trade of cultural products has been built. According to a report released by *Xinhua News Agency* on 18 May 2017, in the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, representatives from Eurasian countries told the reporter that those countries can benefit from the Belt and Road Initiative, which focuses on connectivity and cooperation and cultural exchanges.

As for Chinese people, with the leap of economic development in China during the past 30 years, they expect to embrace more from foreign culture to enrich their life. According to a report from *China Daily* released on 23 May 2017, the market scale of China's media industry was 1.6 trillion RMB (\$232 billion) in 2016, up by 19.1 percent year-on-year, a new report said, making it one of the fastest growing sectors in the country. In China, a cell phone application named *Get* has gained wide popularity, as a platform where people have access to various catalogs of knowledge, from music to technology and from philosophy to economy. The application provides a program called "Five-minutes' Business School", in which wealth of information about financing and economy can be provided. From the official website of the

application, figures reveal that within three months it has managed to attract a great number of people and the number of the followers has surpass the number of all newly-admitted MBA students in China. Besides, another success is a program dedicated to classical music, which can reach more people than the best-selling classical music magazine can do. Nowadays, most Chinese people are so willing to push themselves to learn something new to their reserved knowledge that the application “Get” have a chance to take a step into the cultural products market and gradually has become a part of our life. Foreign culture is another unknown part to Chinese people, which means it has possibilities to be accepted by them in a certain way and may get a sum of money from their pockets.

Around the world, development of economy and technology is always a heated topic. The more the technology occupies our life, the more attention should be paid to the perception and reception of culture around us. With the inspired curiosity, most Chinese people are never only satisfied with the mainstream foreign cultural output in a form of media content like the American movies, Korean variety shows and soap operas and Japanese animation productions. There is a gap that other imported foreign cultural products is welcome to fill in.

Cultural inclusiveness

It is widely noted that Chinese people tend to adopt more and more foreign cultural elements in their life, but the capacity of acceptance and inclusion of another culture is always limited. People have been exposed to enough of foreign culture but they actually have not disclose the cultural meaning behind what has been thrown to them. Since 1980s, most Chinese people had known about Christmas without realizing the religious meaning behind it till the late 2000s.^[5]

While expecting something new, Chinese people are shown to have more empathy to foreign culture which contains the roots of the Chinese one. As one of the China’s neighbor, Korea and China have something in common to some extent, which can be the reason why Korean variety shows and soap operas are so prevailing that they can be purchased by Chinese video platform giants at such a high price(one episode of Korean variety show can be paid for 20,000 dollars). *Running Man* is a hit variety show, which originated from Korea. The Chinese version of it reached 4.2% of Chinese people on 9 Jan. 2015, which stood at a record high. A famous actor Yongzai Kim believed that Chinese people will laugh when Korean people laugh. Moreover, in the Korean variety show, the important values advocated by Confucius can be reflected, giving the audiences cultural identity so that they may be more likely to be impressed. If culture exporters want a bigger success, they need to infuse foreign cultural products with the host cultural elements. In China’s box office, an American movie *Kung Fu Panda 3* collected 370 million RMB within three days. There were quantities of Chinese elements in the movie. The film was about the relationship between fathers and children, which was the heated topic among folks in China at that time. What was also eye-catching in the movie could be the Chinese traditional

architecture, such as the temples, the palaces and the pagodas, whose details of the buildings had a ring of enduring Chinese history.

However, inserting Chinese culture cannot guarantee a satisfying result. Another American movie *Now You See Me 2* failed to work out fine as the same as *Kung Fu Panda 3*. The film maker invited Jay Chow, a household pop singer in China, to star in the movie and to compose a theme song for the movie. A Chinese pop singer and a Chinese song cannot be equivalent of Chinese culture. Without in-depth explorations of Chinese culture, there will not be a win. This is profitable to export media content to China if they somehow adopt few Chinese elements in it instead of being purely original. And importantly, these Chinese elements are required to contain authentic Chinese spirit.

Conclusions

As a positive impact on the audiences's preference, the importance of cultural proximity has been widely proved.^[6] The imported cultural products diversify the options Chinese people have. More importantly, they push forward the expansion of cultural impact. The soft power of a country can form a person's initial preferences through the mechanism of attractiveness.^[7] Consumers tend to purchase the products of those countries whose culture can be frequently perceived in daily life. As reported on *Entgroup*, a leading research center of Chinese entertainment industry, China has again taken its place as the world's second largest movie market, a position it has held since 2012, accounting for 10 percent of the world's total box office. Furthermore, till May 2016, as estimated by American National Association of Theater Owners, the number of movie screens in the United States had been exceeded by the one in China where there were the most movie screens in the world. Though the increase of screens cannot ensure the flourishing growth of the movie industry, it shows to the world that China has huge potential to enrich its media content by importing foreign productions. Applying something common rooted deeply in the culture of both sides to the media content are considered to be a kind of tactic to bridge the gap of the differences between two kinds of civilization, which makes the foreign cultural products a kind of catalyst in developing economy, the reinforcement in expanding cultural impact.

References

- [1] *Entgroup* (A Leading Research Center of Chinese Entertainment Industry), Insights, 18 May 2016
- [2] CSM (A Leading Research Center of Chinese Broadcast and Television Industry), 5 Feb. 2016
- [3] *Asahi Shimbun* (Famous Newspaper in Japan), 1 Aug. 2014
- [4] Eero Paloheimo, (2015) *Belief, culture, education, the future of Europe*, Southeast University Press
- [5] Lv Wenpeng, "Post-modern Understanding of Christmas Celebration in Chinese way", *Journal of Northwest Normal University(Social Sciences)*, Vol.53 No.2,

Mar.

2016(http://www.nssd.org/articles/article_read.aspx?id=688668368201602021)

- [6] Keane M, Fung AYH and Moran A. ,(2007) *New Television, Globalization, and the East Asian Cultural Imagination*, Hong Kong University Press
- [7] Xu Jing, Han Xiaomei, “Nation Branding Strategy and Improve China’s Cultural Impact Internationally”, Diplomatic Remarks, DOI:10.13569/j.cnki.far., 2016.03.045