

Motivations Behind Purchasing Minions-themed Merchandise: Female Consumers Aged 30 from to 40 in Beijing

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Abstract:

With the booming cultural industry and diversified consumption patterns, the derivatives market has emerged as a vital component of cultural consumption. Since the release of *Despicable Me* in 2010, the Minions have captured the attentions of global audiences, their popularity seemingly sudden but rooted in profound market logic and audience resonance. Notably, female consumers aged 30 to 40 in Beijing have shown a marked increase in interest in purchasing Minions-themed products. Although this age group is often regarded as mature and rational shoppers, their preference for the cartoon characters seems to deviate from conventional consumer psychology. Overall, this paper employs a mixed-methods approach, combining questionnaire analysis and literature review, to delve into the key factors influencing their purchasing behavior. Through this methodology, there are four main findings: 1) the proportions that whether the respondents have purchased the Minions-themed merchandise or not have accounted for around 50%; 2) consumers prefer plush toys; 3) primary motivators include liking the characters, product design, and quality assurance; 4) emotions serve as a bridge connecting consumers to merchandise, fostering positive and sustainable impacts on personal lives, family relationships, and content innovation for IP marketing teams. Data collected through questionnaires and supplemented by focus group discussions provide insights into consumer motivations, psychology, and the influence of marketing strategies on decisions. This study not only enhances understanding of the motivations and significance behind purchasing such derivatives, but also provides valuable insights for IP operators to better capture the attention of this target audience, thereby improving brand loyalty and stickiness.

Keywords: Minions IP, Female Demographics, Merchandise Derivatives, Film and Cultural Creative Industry Marketing.

1. Introduction

In recent years, the joint marketing model of brands and IP has proliferated, primarily through IP licensing [1]. As a popular cultural icon, the Minions, with their unique design and rich personalities, offer consumers an escape from daily pressures and a return to childlike joy. Additionally, the Minions are often seen as symbols of happiness and freedom, aligning with the lifestyles pursued by many target consumer groups. From a sociocultural perspective, the popularity and acceptance of the Minions reflect modern society's thirst for lighthearted humor and the importance of collective memories and cultural resonance. Two main reasons of limiting the study to this context fall into: firstly, in Beijing, a fast-paced metropolis, 30-40-year-old women face dual pressures from work and family. Minions merchandise serves not only as a form of recreation, but also an emotional outlet and self-expression. Secondly, as the capital, Beijing boasts a more developed social economy and wider social media penetration, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of questionnaire distribution and collection. Furthermore, selecting 30-40-year-old women as participants is justified by their higher engagement with Minions compared to men and their unique position bridging youthful trends with practicality and cost-effectiveness, enabling them an ideal target group.

2. Literature Review

The booming cultural entertainment industry has made animated films and their derivatives an essential part of the consumer market. Derivative development extends the narrative of the film, targeting specific groups through design elements that enhance recognizable positions. When executed well, this can endow film IP with lasting vitality [2].

2.1 Current Status and Characteristics of the Film Derivatives Market

The film derivatives market has expanded significantly in recent years, reaching hundreds of billions of yuan in China by 2022, with the projected annual growth rates exceeding 10% in the coming years [3]. This growth stems from the film industry's prosperity, rising consumer purchasing power, and increased demand for cultural entertainment. Recent trends include: the first one is diversification and personalize, derivatives range from traditional clothing and toys to home appliances and electronics, emphasizing creativity and personalize to cater to unique consumer needs. The second is fan economy, film fans drive the derivatives market, converting emotional attachment to film content into purchasing power. The third one

is cross-industry collaboration: the film derivatives industry collaborates with fashion, art, and technology to create more appealing products, expanding market boundaries. The last one is competitive landscape, large film companies, toy manufacturers, clothing brands, and international giants like Disney and Marvel compete in this market [4].

2.2 Analysis of Minions-themed Merchandise Development

The Minions, as iconic characters from the *Despicable Me* franchise, enjoy immense popularity in the derivatives market. While most research focuses on 15-30-year-olds, especially female consumers in metropolises like Beijing, little is known about the motivations of 30-40-year-old women with stronger purchasing power. Based on previous literature, two primary motivations for this age group emerge:

Firstly, pursuit of individuality and fashion. The "Female Consumer Insight Report 2024" highlights the importance of individuality and fashion among young women. This age group values unique designs and styles, which Minions merchandise satisfies. Secondly, emotional resonance and nostalgia [5]. For many 15-30-year-olds, the Minions evoke childhood memories. Additionally, emotional projection occurs when consumers identify with the Minions' traits, like optimism, bravery, unity, enhancing their affection for the products. Thirdly, unique character creation by marketing teams. The Minions unconventional appearance (capsule-shaped bodies, big eyes, yellow color) has captured the hearts of consumers. Effective market insights by the creative team have capitalized on this, turning the Minions into powerful marketing elements, not just representing an image but also embodying a spirit, morality, and behavior [6].

In summary, while much research exists on younger female consumers, the motivations of 30-40-year-old women towards Minions merchandise are under-explored yet equally significant, offering valuable insights into this demographic status.

3. Research Methodology

The team employed a dual approach of survey questionnaires and literature review. During the period of two weeks, our team collected 192 questionnaires, all of which were validated; additionally, this study reviewed over ten pieces of literature and relevant online articles. Initially, the study will utilize questionnaire surveys for quantitative data collection. The design of these questionnaires will be grounded in consumer behavior theory and principles of social psychology, encompassing aspects such as consumers' personal backgrounds, purchasing motivations, frequency of purchase, and consumption preferenc-

es. The questionnaires will be distributed both online and offline to ensure diversity and representative of the sample. Online distribution channels include social media and e-commerce platforms, while offline channels comprise shopping malls, specialty stores, and community events. During the data analysis phase, quantitative data will undergo descriptive statistics and regression analysis using statistical software to uncover relationships and influences between different variables. Qualitative data will be analyzed through content analysis methods for coding and theme induction, aiming to find out key motives and behavioral patterns. Through these integrated research approaches, this study anticipates a comprehensive revelation of the psychological and behavioral characteristics of women aged 30 to 40 in Beijing regarding the purchase of Minions-related merchandise, providing a scientific basis for relevant market strategies.

4.Findings

4.1 Analysis of Age Distribution Results

This survey aimed to understand respondents’ awareness, purchasing behaviors, and motivations towards Minions-related merchandise. Through the questionnaire, this research firstly collected data on respondents’ age, occupation, familiarity with Minions, purchasing behaviors, and motivations. This data will facilitate a deeper understanding of consumer demand and preferences for Minions-related products.

Firstly, concerning age distribution, the data (Figure 1) indicates that the 30 to 34 age group is the most numerous, accounting for 72.41% of respondents, with equal percentages of 13.79% for both the 35 to 39 age group and those aged 40. Consequently, women in the relatively younger age bracket of 30 to 34 emerged as the primary subjects of study. This also suggests that the interest in the Minions IP among women under 30 is somewhat higher than that of their older counterparts, nearly constituting 50% of the total survey participants.

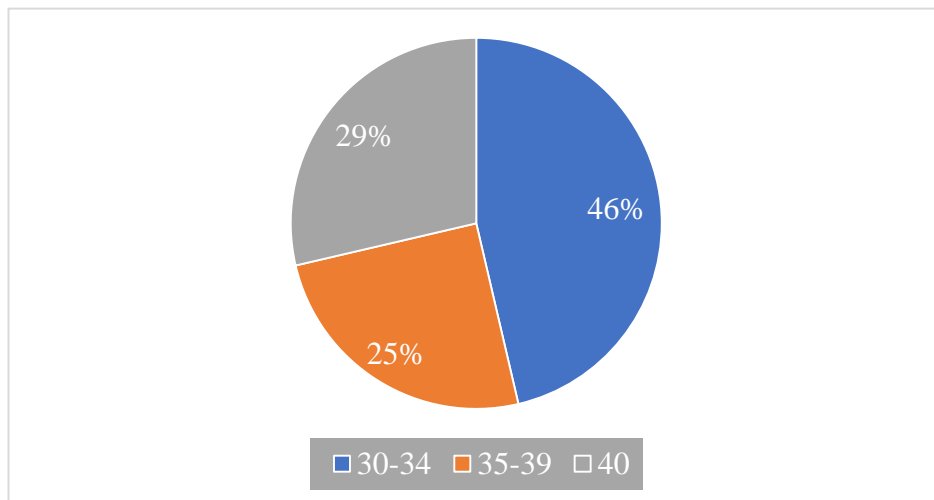


Figure 1. The proportion of different age group

4.2 Occupation

Among these participants between 30 and 40 years, freelancers have the highest representation (table 1), accounting for 41.38%, followed by professional technicians at 20.69%, and corporate managers at 18.97%. The category of computer/IT personnel makes up 6.9%, with other occupations also constituting 6.9%. The remaining professions are less prevalent, without exceeding 2%. Moreover, occupational categories such as services, agriculture/fishery/forestry, construction/engineering, hospitality/tourism, and non-profit organizations/government were not represented in the survey sample.

This indicates that freelancers generally have more personal time than those in other industries, allowing them to pursue their personal interests and hobbies. For professional technicians and corporate managers, their relatively higher incomes afford them significant advantages in purchasing power. As for the other occupations and those not included in the survey, the data is comparatively scarce, which is largely influenced by the individual networks of the respondents. Therefore, a detailed analysis of these groups is not conducted at this time.

Table 1. Occupational Distribution Proportion Diagram

Options	Subtotal	Proportion
Freelance	41	21.35%
Corporate management	30	15.63%
Other options	21	10.94%
Professional and technical personnel (e.g. teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc.)	19	9.9%
Architecture/Construction	14	7.29%
Advertising/PR	13	6.77%
Entertainment/Film industry	11	5.73%
Agriculture/Fishing/Forestry	10	5.21%
IT	10	5.21
None-profit organization/Government	8	4.17%
Hospitality(retailing, catering, etc.)	7	3.65%
Finance/Accounting	5	2.6%
Tourism	3	1.56%
The question is filled in effectively	192	

4.3 Participants' Knowledge and Familiarity of Minions and its Products

Of the 129 people who participated in the survey, 67.19% knew about Minions and 32.81% did not know about Minions (Figure 2). This shows that the marketing of Minions in Beijing is relatively successful, and they have made more than 60% of women aware of Minions, a foreign animated figure, through different marketing means, such as releasing promotional videos on social media platforms and launching co-branded products of Minions through

some well-known brands such as Uniqlo and Miniso. At the same time, this can also show that the IP publicity team can make full use of the regional advantages to promote Minions effectively. But at the same time, there are still around 30% of women do not know Minions, which shows that its marketing team needs to launch more different ways to promote Minions in the future, for this part of the people, the reason for their lack of understanding of Minions may be the difference in personal preferences, they have never paid attention to the American animated film so they do not understand Minions.

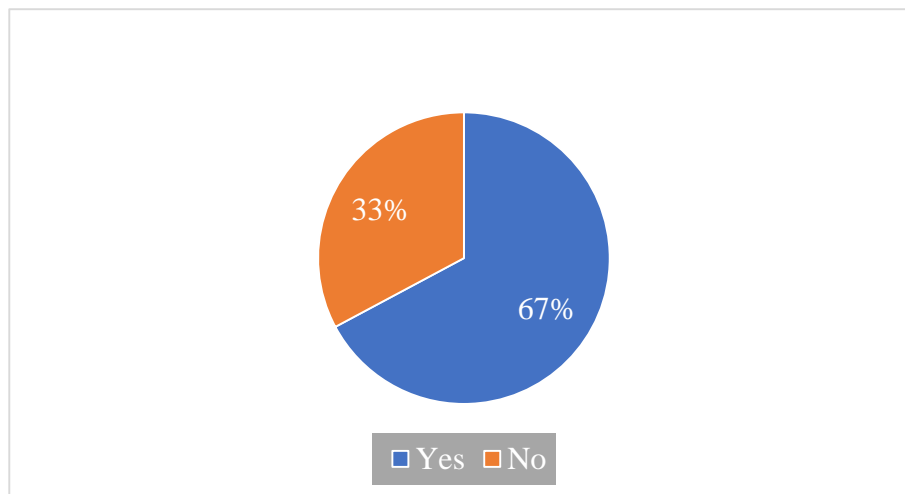


Figure 2. The proportion of whether people know about Minions

The pie chart below (Figure 3) reveals a closely matched ratio between those who have purchased Minions-related

merchandise and those who have not. This suggests that the current sales momentum for Minions merchandise has

plateaued, with the proportion of non-purchasers slightly exceeding that of purchasers. The reasons may encompass the fact that the film’s promotional phase has elapsed, leading to a diminished promotional fervor compared to earlier stages, thus redirecting consumer interest towards

other trending products. Additionally, the pricing of the merchandise tends to be higher related to other products, as the cost composition for many original items includes additional expenses such as copyright fees and tariffs.

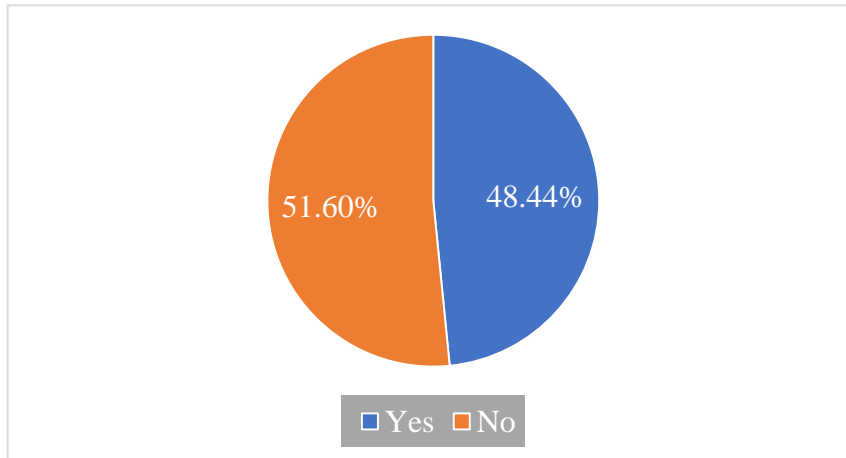


Figure 3. The Proportion of Consumers Who Have Purchased Minions-Related Merchandise

4.4 The Impact on Social Media Platforms

In this section, Table 2 shows that more than half of the respondents were informed about Minion-related products through Xiaohongshu (50%) and Douyin (55.17%), with Weibo (32.76%), cinema promotional posters (39.66%), and recommendations from family/friends (31.03%) and being prevalent methods. The impact of mall promotional activities and posters (29.31%) was relatively minor, while other channels had a negligible influence. This

suggests that women of a certain age group in the Beijing area predominantly use Xiaohongshu and Douyin as their primary sources for discovering new things. Similarly, the intensity and speed of Minion-related information dissemination on these two social media platforms are considerable, indicating that the IP marketing team has invested substantial effort into operating on these platforms, leading to the rapid popularity of Minions on Douyin and Xiaohongshu.

Table 2. The proportion of each platform people get to know about Minions

Choices	Subtotal	Proportion
Weibo	92	47.92%
Little Red Book	101	52.6%
Douyin	99	51.56%
Cinema promotional posters	97	50.52%
Shopping mall marketing events and posters	86	44.79%
Recommendations from family/friends	67	34.9%
Others	17	8.85%
Number of valid entries for this question	192	

4.5 Consumers’ Purchase Tendencies for Minions Merchandise

According to the data analysis (Figure 4), when it comes to Small Minions merchandise, consumers are more inclined to purchase plush toys (58.62%), bags (44.83%), accessories (41.38%), and decorative shells (43.1%). In

comparison, the willingness to purchase daily necessities (43.1%) and clothing (29.31%) is slightly lower, while the willingness to purchase branded co-branded products (25.86%) is the lowest. This indicates that plush toys have greater collectible value. Women in this age group have either given birth or are not married or pregnant.

Therefore, when mothers with children purchase plush toys, they not only purchase them based on their personal preferences, but also consider their children's interests and hobbies. Bags, accessories, and decorative shells were once more practical. Then, for mature women in this age group, they place greater emphasis on practicality rather

than fashion trends, so they will purchase these products. In terms of daily necessities and clothing, if there is a co-branded product, the price is usually higher, and the products have special elements that may not be suitable for certain occasions. Therefore, when comparing with others, they have lower purchase intentions.

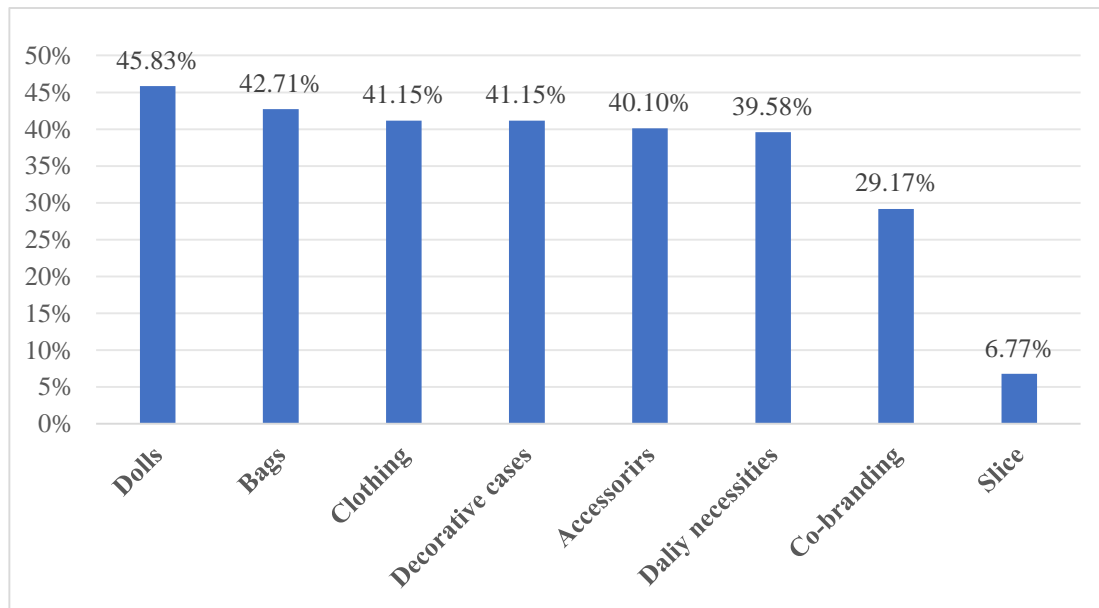


Figure 4. The proportion of Minion products people intend to buy

4.6 Motivations for Target Consumers to Purchase Merchandise Related to Minions

4.6.1 Current Purchase Motivations

The main motivations for purchasing related products include the design of product appearance (46.55%) and affection for the character (53.45%) and emotional resonance (24.14%). Compared with that, product quality assurance (18.97%), limited edition/collectible value (18.97%), reasonable price (18.97%) and gift-giving needs (17.24%) have less impact (Figure 5). The 30-40-year-old female group in Beijing is mostly at the stable stage of career or the mature stage of family, with strong economic strength and independent consumption concepts. This group not

only pays attention to the practicality of products when consuming, but also attaches great importance to product quality, brand and the emotional experience brought about. This age group has a high interest and preference for cultural and entertainment consumption. They are willing to pay extra fees for the cultural products they like, such as movies, music, animation, in order to obtain richer entertainment experiences and emotional resonance. The Minions, a beloved animated character, naturally become an important choice for their derivative products. Being women in the mature stage of family, they will also consider the needs and preferences of family members when purchasing Minions derivative peripherals. Buying Minions merchandise is not only for their own use, but also for sharing the joy with their family members [7].

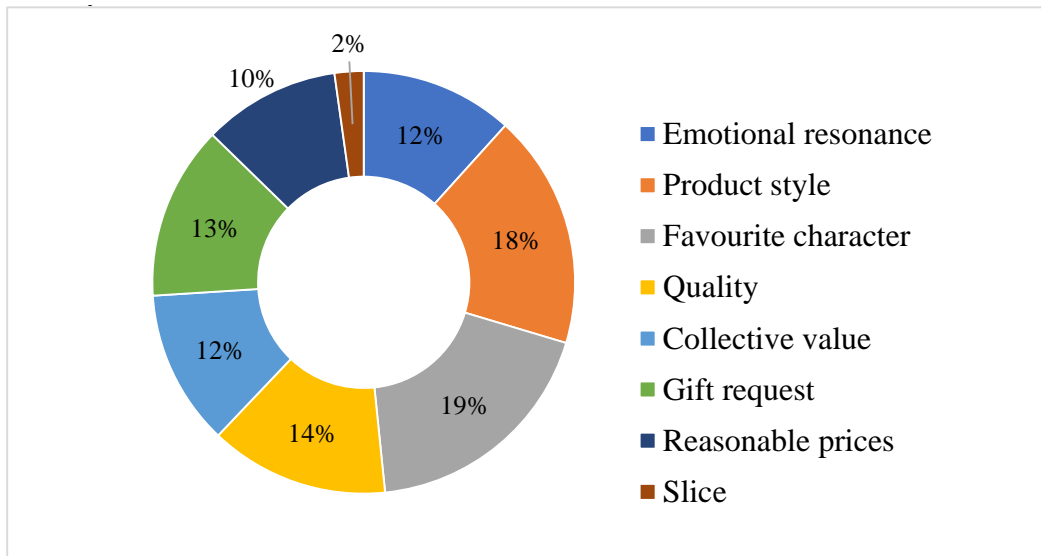


Figure 5. The proportion of the reason people choose to buy products

4.6.2 Factors Affecting Future Purchases

The data shown in Figure 6 indicates that, among consumers who have not yet purchased but may do so in the future, the most important factor influencing their purchase decision is a product's conformance to their personal aesthetic or style (53.13%), followed by its uniqueness or innovation (50%). Promotional discounts (38.54%), recommendations from friends/family (38.02%), and pop-

ular topics or influence recommendations on social media (42.19%) are also factors considered by some consumers, but have a relatively smaller impact. Practicality and functionality (32.81%) also play a certain role in consumer decision-making. Moreover, the proportion of consumers who did not fill in the other option is 6.77%, indicating that the given options already include most of the factors that may influence purchase decisions.

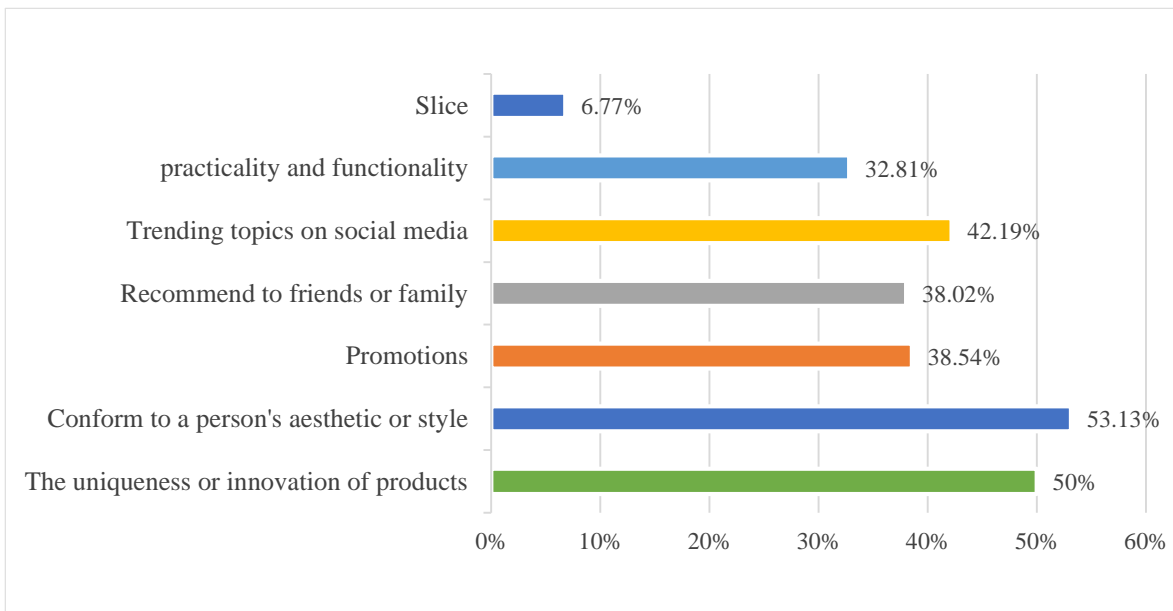


Figure 6. The proportion of factors that will push consumers to make a decision

4.6.3 Future Purchases and Recommendation Rate

According to the survey results (Figure 7), 41.38% of the respondents expressed a willingness to purchase Minions merchandise, while 32.76% indicated a strong willingness

to do so. All in all, most buyers have a positive attitude towards continuing to buy products around Minions. Regarding the recommendation level, the survey results in Figure 7 show that 36.21% of the respondents are willing

to recommend the Minions merchandise, while 31.03% are very willing to do so. Overall, a considerable number of respondents are willing to recommend Minions merchandise to their friends, family, classmates, colleagues, acquaintances. As for their willingness to participate in Minions-related events and purchase products, 34.48%

of the respondents said they would like to attend and purchase products, while 27.59% said they were generally willing to do so. Overall, most respondents have a positive attitude towards attending Minions-related events and purchasing products.

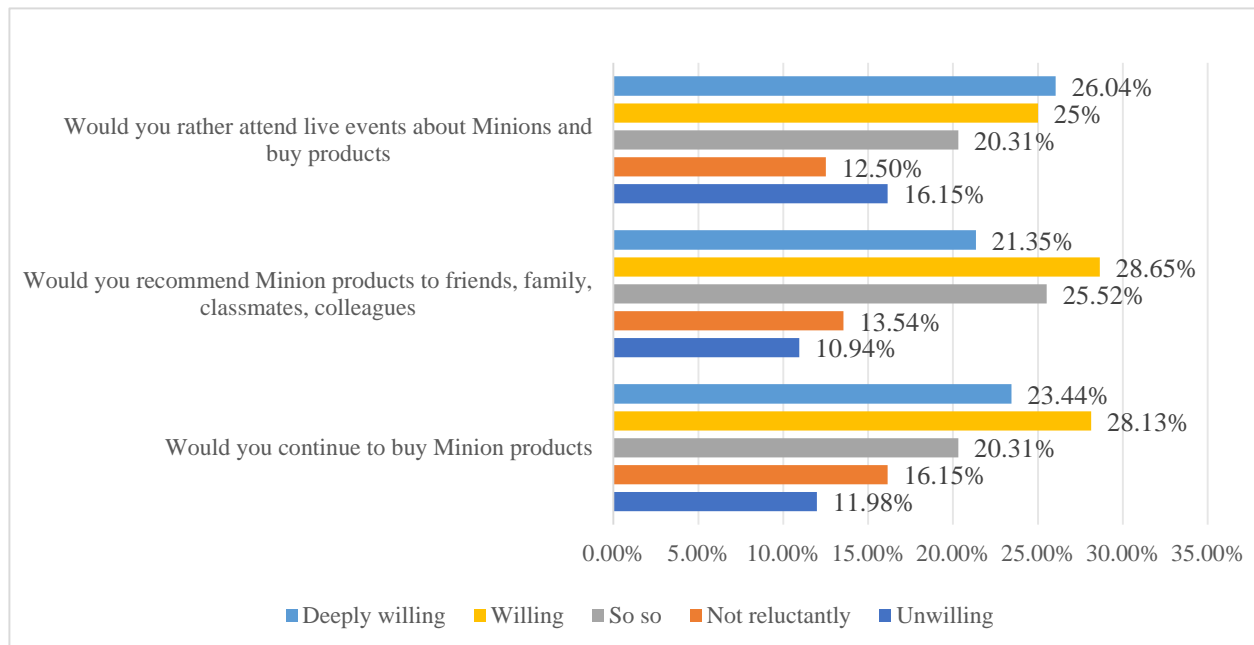


Figure 7. The proportion of factors that will push consumers make decision

The key to IP marketing is to find the core values of both brands involved in the collaboration and create products that can hit the itch points and demand points of the target audience. Then, with the super traffic power of IP, the products can be IP-branded, and IP can empower the products, thus redefining the value of the products [8]. Therefore, the merchandise based on the Minions has a high level of recognition and purchase intent among the target audience. Factors such as product design, character appeal, and price are key to influencing purchases. Through these data, it can also be learned that Minions have a special sentiment among women aged 30 to 40.

One of the reason is that women in this age group are more mature and stable, with clear goals and the ability to execute their plans based on reality, but they have not completely lost the characteristics of their youth [9]. Meanwhile, Minions embody both of these qualities, as their life goal has always been to find the most evil villain, which is a testament to their persistence and determination, which aligns more with women in this age group [10]. Additionally, Minions do not need to be saved by anyone, which resonates with women in this stage who are loyal to themselves, their families, and society, and who are able to achieve their goals through their own abilities. There-

fore, in this regard, these women can establish a new emotional connection with Minions and, as mentioned in *“The Brand Construction Analysis of American Animated Movie Characters-Taking Minions as an Example,”* *“They have emotions, which can adapt to real needs and see future development. It is a complex thinking process with independent and forward-looking characteristics, bringing audiences a new visual experience and respecting the psychological needs of every audience member [6].”* Through merchandise to express their attitude, Minions have become one of the symbols for women in this age group [11].

Another reason why women in this age group buy Minions merchandise is that it can bring better integration to their families [12]. The first point is that women in this age group consider not only their own interests but also the wishes of their children when purchasing products. Because most of them have already formed their own families and have children, the main reason for stimulating their consumption is attributed to family [13]. One of the reasons why it is Minions rather than other animated characters is that Minions are both independent individual images and part of Gru’s family and the entire Minions group. The appearance of family factors and the film’s

family-friendly atmosphere also make Minions distinguish itself from other animated characters, ultimately enhancing the family connections between Minions and the target group [14]. Also, its highly infectious nature prompts the group to buy Minions merchandise, thereby forming strong brand loyalty.

5. Conclusion

This paper analyzes the multiple motivations and psychological mechanisms of female consumers aged 30 to 40 in Beijing who purchase merchandise related to Minions, and also provides a new perspective on the relationship between cartoon characters and adult consumer behavior in contemporary consumer culture.

The consumption behavior of 30-40-year-old women in Beijing towards the merchandise of Minions is a multidimensional social and cultural phenomenon that involves personal emotions, cultural identity, and social interaction at multiple levels. This finding suggests that when designing marketing strategies for such consumer groups, people should consider cultural and emotional factors more and leverage the IP's powerful influence to create more opportunities for emotional resonance with consumers.

Authors Contribution

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

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