

A Study on the Behavior of Public Viewing of Cantonese Opera from the Perspective of TPB using the SEM Model

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Abstract. Chinese opera, as a vital medium for inheriting the exemplary traditional Chinese culture, has Cantonese Opera as one of its integral components, renowned for its unique regional characteristics. However, Cantonese Opera currently faces challenges such as a limited and aging audience, making it difficult to attract a broader public. There's an urgent need to adopt measures to promote its dissemination and development. Grounded on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and employing the multi-group Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), this research delves deep into the mechanisms influencing public viewing behaviors towards Cantonese Opera. Additionally, through field investigations in Guangzhou and Foshan, this study explores the impact of regional cultural backgrounds on audience behaviors. Using literature analysis, research interviews, and surveys, we further discuss the issues of inheritance and innovation of Cantonese Opera culture in the modern context of Guangzhou and Foshan. This allows us to better comprehend the public's perspectives and demands for Cantonese Opera, revealing new avenues and innovative methods for public promotion. Furthermore, by offering practical suggestions, we aim to ignite the public's passion for their local culture, providing beneficial guidance for the inheritance of Cantonese Opera.

In conclusion, this research, rooted in the TPB and multi-group SEM models and combined with on-site investigations, aims to deeply explore the mechanisms influencing the public's viewing behaviors towards Cantonese Opera. Through this study, we hope to offer valuable references for the inheritance and growth of Cantonese Opera culture, contributing our bit towards the revitalization of traditional Chinese culture.

Keywords: Study of Cantonese Opera Behavior, Theory of Planned Behavior, Multi-Group Structural Equation Model (SEM)

1 Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Cantonese Opera is by no means a young art form. The academic community generally agrees that the prototype of Cantonese Opera was the "Nanxi" that entered Guangdong during the Song and Yuan dynasties. Since the turn of the century, domestic scholars

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have concentrated their studies on Cantonese Opera from perspectives like its historical background, artistic characteristics, and challenges in its inheritance. Jinyao and Lin Faqin ^[1] traced back in history, exploring the infiltration, integration, and connection of Cantonese Opera culture across different regions. They believed that as a "cultural symbol," Cantonese Opera embodies the richness of traditional Chinese culture. Li Yanxia and Zeng Yanwen ^[2] approached from a historical development perspective, sequentially delving into the evolution of the art and characteristics of Lingnan Cantonese Opera, and narrated the vital role Cantonese Opera plays as a link to overseas Cantonese communities. Panyanna ^[3] initiated research on the current state of the Cantonese Opera vocal art forms, noting the distinct yet complementary characteristics of the singing styles in Guangzhou and the Hong Kong-Macau regions. Through interviews with practitioners, folk singers, and audiences, she further captured the development trends of these vocal art forms.

The question of how to maintain the vitality of traditional Cantonese Opera culture in the era of streaming media, and how to inherit and develop opera culture, has been a deep concern for scholars in recent years. Zhang Yueman^[4] believes that with the changing social environment for opera inheritance, the role of traditional media in promoting opera has gradually weakened. Leveraging new media to disseminate traditional culture is a common consensus in academia. Indeed, the Cantonese Opera, which relies heavily on oral transmission and is centered on Guangzhou culture, has considerable limitations in terms of its reach and audience size. Consequently, Zhou Kaixuan and others ^[5] identified the challenges facing Cantonese Opera and explored new paths for its development. They argued that to achieve the innovative inheritance of Cantonese Opera in a fast-paced society, there must be an emphasis on internet platforms, aiming for a harmonious online and offline development. Yang Wei and Wen Jie [6] took the 2021 Cantonese Opera film "The Legend of the White Snake - Love" as a successful case of integrating with popular culture. They analyzed how to break the shackles of time and space to make young people accept Cantonese Opera culture, providing fresh insights for its inheritance and development.

Scholars, based on the cultural connotations of Cantonese Opera, have proposed numerous grounded ideas about dissemination forms and innovative paths. However, current research from the audience's perspective is still limited. To reflect the concept that cultural development should serve the public, exploring the behavioral mechanisms of the public watching Cantonese Opera will provide scientific suggestions for promoting Cantonese Opera in a diversified and efficient manner.

1.2 Research Objectives

With the globalization of economy and culture, the world has become closely connected, allowing for the widespread dissemination and exchange of materials and culture. However, to some extent, this phenomenon has compromised the living environment of China's traditional cultural heritage. Presently, the audience for Cantonese opera in China is diminishing, and its fan base is significantly aging. For the younger generation, Cantonese opera is perceived as outdated in both repertoire and performance style. The concepts it portrays no longer resonate with contemporary times, and it fails to meet their cultural expectations. This has resulted in a declining presence and diminishing appreciation for Cantonese opera on the modern stage.

Our team, after reviewing policies and relevant literature, discovered that although current national and local measures are in place to preserve Cantonese opera, and have to some extent promoted its development, there is a lack of audience-oriented guidance in these policies and researches. The broader public's perception of Cantonese opera, their willingness to engage, and various factors influencing their appreciation have not been thoroughly explored. As a result, the opera is not widely appreciated, and the challenges facing its development remain unresolved.

Hence, our team aims to explore the mechanisms influencing the general public's viewing of Cantonese opera, with the goal of effectively promoting the long-term and stable development of this art form.

1.3 Research Approach

The main objective of this study is to explore the mechanisms influencing the general public's engagement with Cantonese opera, aiming to effectively promote its long-term and stable development. This research is based on the "Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)." Utilizing preliminary survey results, we break down the public's behavioral intentions towards Cantonese opera, propose research hypotheses, and collect data through questionnaires distributed to residents in Guangzhou and Foshan. We then establish and refine a structural equation model for Cantonese opera listening behavior, exploring the pathways leading to these behaviors. Tools such as one-way ANOVA, t-tests, and logistic regression will be employed to delve into the varying impact factors based on different demographic characteristics and regional users. Ultimately, an extended TPB model for Cantonese opera listening will be developed.

Our team plans to conduct field visits in Guangzhou and Foshan, holding in-depth interviews with a subset of residents from these cities to gain deeper insights into the quantitative findings. Finally, combining the results of the questionnaire analysis, we will suggest policy recommendations focusing on a collaborative "co-building" approach. We aim to spotlight Cantonese opera within the cultural heritage of the "Greater Bay Area" through a combined effort of the government, individuals (students), schools, and society (media).

The research process of this project primarily includes the following four sections:1. Questionnaire Design, 2. Research Proposal, 3. Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), 4. Research Methodology. (As shown in Figure 1):



Fig. 1. Basic ideas of project research

The specific process of quantitative analysis is as follows (as shown in Figure 2):

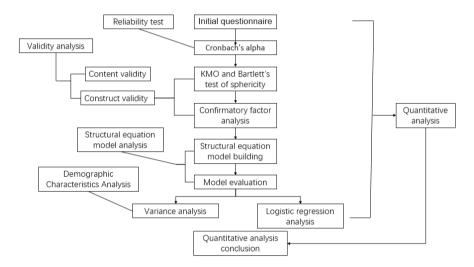


Fig. 2. Quantitative analysis route flow chart

2 Dataset Introduction

This study utilized a random questionnaire distribution method for data collection. The survey was conducted from July 3, 2023, to July 7, 2023. The questionnaire comprises 37 questions, primarily aimed at assessing the general public's familiarity with, appreciation for, and perceptions of the significance of Cantonese opera. A total of 688 valid questionnaires were collected for this study.

Based on the data from these 688 questionnaires and using the TPB (Theory of Planned Behavior) model as the theoretical framework, we employed the SPSS and Amos software packages to test and analyze the collected data. Our goal is to investigate the mechanisms that influence the general public's engagement with Cantonese opera.

3 Reliability and Validity Test

3.1 Reliability Test

Reliability testing focuses on assessing the accuracy of responses in quantitative research. The Cronbach's Alpha^[7] coefficient is a widely used method for reliability testing, which evaluates the internal consistency among items in questionnaire data. A higher value of the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient indicates stronger correlation among the items in the questionnaire, meaning the questionnaire measures the same concept or theme, and the measurement results are more reliable.

In this study, the reliability of the survey questionnaire is high, suggesting a strong correlation among the various questions(as shown in Table 1),. This means it can measure various factors related to Cantonese opera culture more reliably, such as people's attitudes towards Cantonese opera, viewing habits, and cultural identification. Such questionnaire data can be used for in-depth analysis of various characteristics and influencing factors of Cantonese opera culture. It also provides a reference basis and decision-making support for the protection and inheritance of related cultural heritage.

variable	Number of questions	Cronbach's Alpha
Related preferences	3	0.925
behavioral attitude	9	0.986
perceived behavioral control	6	0.984
subjective norms	6	0.988
Willingness to act	11	0.962
Questionnaire as a whole	35	0.989

Table 1. Reliability Test

The test results indicate that the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for all latent variables are greater than 0, suggesting that the data from the scale demonstrates good consistency and stability. Therefore, it is suitable for further analysis.

3.2 Validity Test

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test is a method used to assess the adequacy of a factor analysis model. This method can determine whether the data is suitable for factor analysis and ascertain the number of factors to extract. The result of the KMO test is a value between 0 and 1, with values closer to 1 indicating that the data is more suitable for factor analysis. The provided KMO test results are as follows (as shown in Table 2):

КМО		0.786
Bartlett's test of sphericity	Approximate chi-square	640.015
	df	595
	Р	0.000

Table 2. KMO test and Bartlett's test

Based on the KMO^[8] value, the KMO test (KMO>0.6) indicates that there exists a correlation between the item variables, meeting the requirements for factor analysis. Simultaneously, through the Bartlett's test: P<0.05, which is significant, factor analysis can be performed.

Generally, it's believed that when the factor explains the variable's contribution rate and reaches an eigenvalue below 1, the number of principal components expressed in the table is above 80%. This means that there's a strong association between the research items and the factor, and the factor can effectively extract information. Moreover, based on the factor analysis, the factors align with the research items and roughly match the expected results. In conclusion, the questionnaire data is valid.

4 TPB Model

The TPB model ^[9] offers a robust explanatory power for the influencing mechanism of the public's viewing behavior towards Cantonese opera and aligns with the classic TPB model. The attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control of the public significantly influence their viewing behavior of Cantonese opera, and these factors exhibit interrelated effects. Among the factors influencing the public's viewing behavior of Cantonese opera, the attitude has the most substantial impact, followed by perceived behavioral control, and lastly, subjective norms. The predominant influence of attitude indicates that the public's understanding of Cantonese opera is the primary reason for viewing. The impact arising from perceived behavioral control suggests that the public's viewing behavior originates from their immediate environment. Subjective norms also influence the viewing of Cantonese opera, implying that interpersonal relations in the viewer's surroundings impact their decision to watch Cantonese opera.

This research, grounded in the TPB framework, selected four latent variables: Attitudinal Behavior (AB), Subjective Norms (SN), Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), and Behavioral Intention (BI). Since latent variables are hard to observe directly in terms of the public's psychological traits, a multi-indicator description was utilized across various dimensions to characterize them (as shown in Figure 3).

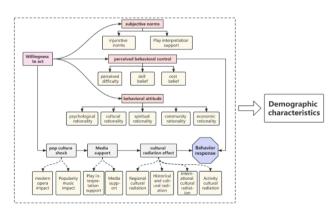


Fig. 3. TPB questionnaire design diagram

Subsequently, the analysis was conducted from four perspectives: Attitudinal Behavior, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Behavioral Intention:

4.1 Attitudinal Behavior

serial number	variable name	Mean	Std	Var
AB1	Through watching Cantonese opera, I believe I can find emo- tional solace.	3.148	1.132	1.282
AB2	Through watching Cantonese opera, I believe I can shape my character.	3.733	0.988	0.976
AB3	Through watching Cantonese opera, I believe I can enhance my cultural literacy.		1.029	1.059
AB4	Through watching Cantonese opera, I believe my ability to ap- preciate drama can be improved.	3.798	1.012	1.023
AB5	Through watching Cantonese opera, I believe I can achieve self-worth fulfillment.	3.022	1.341	1.797
AB6	Through watching Cantonese opera, I believe my interests and hobbies can be enriched.	3.327	1.026	1.053
AB7	Watching Cantonese opera helps me find common topics to discuss with others.	3.076	1.153	1.331
AB8	Watching Cantonese opera helps me make more friends.	3.31	1.366	1.865
AB9	Watching Cantonese opera helps me gain economic benefits.	2.401	1.265	1.6

Table 3. Behavior attitude analysis table

According to Table 3, the above are questions from the TPB model used to determine the public's behavioral attitudes. These attitudes encompass five categories: psychological rationality, cultural rationality, spiritual rationality, community rationality, and economic rationality. As can be seen from the table, the average and median values both hover around 3, and the variance is around 1. Therefore, it can be concluded that the general public's attitude towards Cantonese opera is mostly neutral in terms of behavioral attitudes.

4.2 Perceived Behavioral Control

serial number	variable name	Mean	Std	Var
PBC1	Getting a way to watch Cantonese opera for me	2.725	1.053	1.108
PBC2	Basic knowledge related to Cantonese opera for me	3.34	1.113	1.238
PBC3	Understanding Cantonese Opera Performance for Me	3.176	1.607	2.582

Table 4. Perceived Behavioral Control Analysis Form

PBC4	The impact of time cost on my choice to watch Can- tonese opera	2.385	1.26	1.588
PBC5	The impact of financial cost on my choice to watch Cantonese opera	2.467	1.117	1.248
PBC6	The impact of energy cost on my choice to watch Cantonese opera	2.817	1.044	3

According to Table 4, the aforementioned is a matter regarding the perception of behavioral control in the TBP model. It encompasses three types of perceived behavioral controls: perceived difficulty, belief in skills, and cost belief. As evidenced by the table above, the average and median values for questions 16-17 related to perceived difficulty and belief in skills are generally between 3 and 4, with a relatively small variance. Therefore, the public's attitude towards perceived difficulty and skill beliefs in perceived behavioral control mainly ranges from neutral to agreeable. For cost beliefs, questions 18-20 have average and median values essentially between 2 and 3 with a relatively small variance, indicating that the public mostly perceives this aspect of behavioral control as rather straightforward.

4.3 Subjective norms

serial number	variable name	Mean	Std	Var
SN1	My friends and family believe that 'people should watch Cantonese opera more often.	3.363	1.296	1.679
SN2	The active promotion of Cantonese opera culture by the troupes around me increases my desire to watch Canton- ese opera	3.198	1.159	1.344
SN3	The active promotion of Cantonese opera culture by my local government/drama institute will increase my willing- ness to watch Cantonese opera	3.318	1.022	1.044
SN4	Friends and family actively watching Cantonese opera will increase my willingness to watch Cantonese opera	3.333	1.09	1.189
SN5	The theater troupe's dissemination of Cantonese opera culture will increase my willingness to watch Cantonese opera	3.622	1.142	1.304
SN6	The promotion of Cantonese opera culture by my local government/drama institute will increase my willingness to watch Cantonese opera	3.265	1.076	1.158

Table 5. Subjective norm analysis table

According to Table 5, the above concerns the assessment of the public's subjective norms in the TBP model. This includes two types of subjective norms: injunctive norms and descriptive norms. The average and median values for questions 21-23 regarding injunctive norms are close to 3, and the variance is near 1. Thus, in the Cantonese

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opera's subjective norms, the impact of injunctive norms on the public's attitude is predominantly moderate. For descriptive norms, questions 24-26 have average and median values between 3 and 4, with a variance nearing 1, indicating that the majority of the public's attitude towards descriptive norms in subjective norms ranges from neutral to agreeable.

4.4 Willingness to act

serial number	variable name	Mean	Std	Var
BI1	I think new media means can help the audience understand Cantonese opera performances and Cantonese opera related knowledge.	3.35	1.042	1.087
BI2	I think new media means can enrich the promotion methods of Cantonese opera	3.75	1.101	1.213
BI3	I think new media means can promote the diversification of ways to watch Cantonese opera.	3.847	1.126	1.268
BI4	Compared to Cantonese opera, I prefer the performance form of modern opera	3.448	1.087	1.182
BI5	Compared to Cantonese opera, I prefer the performance con- tent of modern opera	3.116	1.13	1.276
BI6	Compared to Cantonese opera, I prefer the performance form of pop music	3.137	1.116	1.245
BI7	Compared to Cantonese opera, I prefer pop music perfor- mances	2.842	1.425	2.032
BI8	I listen to Cantonese opera because Cantonese opera is the characteristic culture of the southeast region	3.706	1.069	1.142
BI9	I listen to Cantonese opera because Cantonese opera has a rich historical heritage	3.311	0.994	0.989
BI10	I listen to Cantonese opera because Cantonese opera plays an important role in the Belt and Road culture going global.	3.388	1.015	1.03
BI11	My listening to Cantonese opera was influenced by activities such as temple fairs and cultural countryside visits.	3.08	1.114	1.241

Table 6. behavioral intention analysis table

According to Table 6, The above addresses issues related to the public's behavioral intention in the TBP model. This encompasses three types of behavioral intentions: support for new media, the impact of popular culture, and the cultural radiation effect. Based on the table's average, median, and variance values, it can be discerned that the majority of the public's attitude towards the aforementioned three behavioral intentions ranges from neutral to agreeable, and they carry a certain influence.

5 SEM model

The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is a statistical analysis method^[10] designed to assess complex relationships between variables. It aids researchers in exploring and validating theoretical models, understanding causal relationships between variables, mechanisms of influence, and more.

The SEM model usually consists of two main components:

Measurement Model: This describes the relationship between observed variables (measurement items) and the underlying latent variables (factors). In the measurement model, various observed variables are combined into latent factors through methods such as factor analysis or confirmatory factor analysis, thereby reducing the impact of measurement errors.

Structural Model: This portrays the causal relationships and interactions between latent variables. Within the structural model, path coefficients can be defined between different latent variables, representing their direct or indirect influence on each other.

Drawing from the TPB model, one can identify latent variables (e.g., attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control) and their relationship with the behavior of watching Cantonese opera. Each latent variable is then correlated with its related observed variables (measurement items). Relationships can be validated using factor analysis or confirmatory factor analysis. Once the measurement and structural models are constructed, SEM software tools such as AMOS, LISREL, or Mplus can be employed for data analysis. This will enable the calculation of path coefficients, variance explained, standard errors, and other metrics, Table 7 shows the details.

latent variable	behavioral attitude	perceived behavioral control	subjective norms	Willingness to act
variable	AB	PBC	SN	BI

Table 7. Latent variables and variable settings

This study utilized SPSS software to perform parameter estimation for the questionnaire data and the behavioral theory model, calculating the path coefficients.

In SEM, path coefficients are used to analyze the degree of influence between variables. Table 8 shows the specific data.

latent variable \rightarrow observed variable	Path coefficient	standard error
$AB \rightarrow PBC$	0.418	0.08
$AB \rightarrow SN$	0.632	0.06
$AB \rightarrow BI$	0.387	0.03
$PBC \rightarrow AB$	0.692	0.03
$PBC \rightarrow BI$	0.548	0.05
$SN \rightarrow AB$	0.315	0.07
$SN \rightarrow PBC$	0.433	0.04
$SN \rightarrow BI$	0.471	0.05

Based on the simulation results table, the following path analysis diagram can be obtained (as shown in Figure 4), leading to the conclusions:

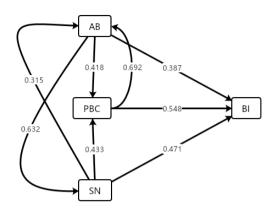


Fig. 4. Path analysis diagram

(1) Impact of Attitude on Watching Cantonese Opera Behavior: In the simulation, a standard error less than 0.1 indicates the validity of the path. Combined with the size of the path coefficient, the degree of influence of this path can be analyzed. Based on this influence, different scientific and practical opinions can be proposed.

(2) Behavioral Attitude (AB) to Behavioral Intention (BI): A causal relationship exists, with a path coefficient of 0.387. This implies that by changing the public's attitude towards Cantonese opera, it helps in altering their intention to watch. Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC) to Behavioral Intention (BI) also demonstrates a causal relationship, with a path coefficient of 0.548. This suggests that by enhancing the content that the public can obtain from Cantonese opera, their enthusiasm for watching can be heightened. Subjective Norms (SN) to Behavioral Intention (BI) also have a causal relationship, with a path coefficient of 0.471. This means that influencing the way the public receives Cantonese opera can boost their intention to watch.

(3) Furthermore, the relationship between Behavioral Attitude (AB) and Perceived Behavioral Control (PBC), as well as Subjective Norms (SN), shows mutual influences. Improving one of the three can also enhance the other two. From a logical perspective, all three must be elevated simultaneously; otherwise, any single weak point would significantly impact the public's intention to watch Cantonese opera. The study suggests that the development of Cantonese opera should not solely focus on strengthening one aspect, which might divert from some of its actual effects. The progress of Cantonese opera isn't only about improving the quality of its practitioners; there's a need to increase the quality of its aficionados as well. Empowering a new generation of Cantonese opera scriptwriters suited for modern times is indispensable.

6 Summary

The attitude and subjective norms of the general public towards watching Cantonese opera have a significant positive impact on their behavioral intention, reflecting the important role of public perception in watching Cantonese opera performances. Therefore, when promoting Cantonese opera, emphasis should be placed on the effectiveness of publicity, enhancing the public's own understanding of Cantonese opera culture. When promoting Cantonese opera culture, attention should be paid to the subjective desires and demands of the public, guiding them to appreciate the historical and cultural value of Cantonese opera and its significance in modern society. By holding lectures and cultural activities, we can enhance the public's understanding and interest in Cantonese opera, thereby increasing their participation and the heritage of the art form. Through performances and advertising promotions, outstanding Cantonese opera works should be prominently promoted to foster the intrinsic motivation of the public to engage in viewing.

The audience's perceived vulnerability and perceived severity can have a positive impact on their intention to watch Cantonese opera. This conclusion supplements and improves existing research results and has certain implications. As advocates and implementers of promoting Cantonese opera culture, it's essential to strengthen the audience's awareness and understanding of the cultural inheritance of Cantonese opera. When promoting Cantonese opera culture, reliance should not only be on traditional artistic performance forms. Instead, the advantages of the internet can be utilized to establish online Cantonese opera performance platforms and social media accounts. Showcasing the charm and historical value of Cantonese opera culture through images, videos, etc., can enhance the audience's perception and understanding. At the same time, online interactions and social sharing can guide the audience to delve deeper into the spiritual connotations and cultural backgrounds conveyed by Cantonese opera works, influencing their behavioral intentions.

The government can provide support and encouragement in the inheritance of Cantonese opera culture. By using attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, the audience's trust and support for the government (subjective norms) can indirectly influence their attitude towards Cantonese opera. Concerning skill beliefs, the government can offer relevant training and education to enhance the audience's understanding and interest in Cantonese opera. For example, by holding Cantonese opera appreciation courses, actor lectures, and practical activities, the audience can be assisted in understanding and learning about the performance techniques, musical rhythms, and plots of Cantonese opera, enhancing their appreciation ability and interest. Moreover, the government can also encourage and support schools, communities, and cultural institutions to carry out Cantonese opera education and promotion activities to nurture more enthusiasts and inheritors.

Regarding cost beliefs, the government can reduce the economic cost of watching Cantonese opera, such as introducing discounted ticket policies and providing venue and equipment support, to attract more audiences to watch Cantonese opera. Additionally, the government can strengthen support and protection for Cantonese opera practitioners (perceived behavioral control), raise their income and social status, and motivate 802 C. Cheng et al.

them to create and perform better Cantonese opera works, promoting its inheritance and development. Cantonese opera is a public activity with cultural and social value that requires extensive societal participation and support to ensure its continuation and growth.

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