

THE PORTRAYAL OF ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS IN CHINESE ROMANTIC FILMS



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Xiuzhen Huang

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Author: Miss Xiuzhen Huang

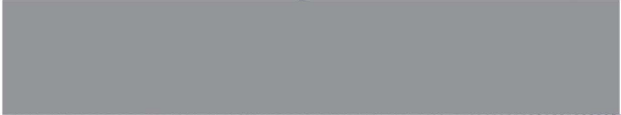
Independent Study Committee:

Advisor


.....
(Asst. Prof. Dr. Pong Wisessang)

Field Specialist


.....
(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Rosechongporn Komolsevin)


.....
(Dr. Suchada Chareanpunsirikul)

Dean of the Graduate School

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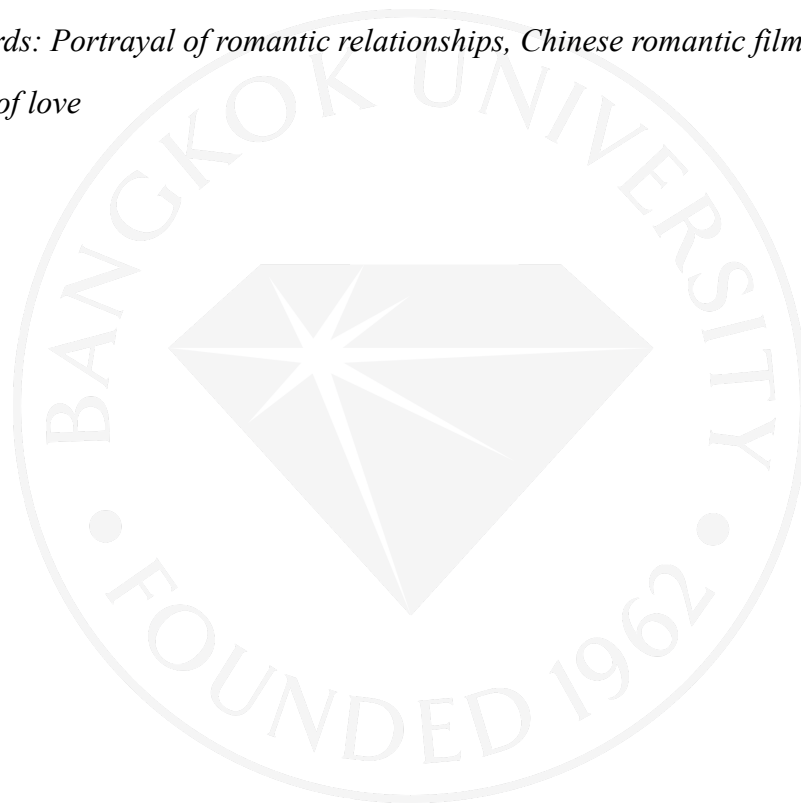
Advisor: Asst. Prof. Pong Wisessang, Ph. D.

ABSTRACT

This qualitative research aims to examine the portrayal of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films from 2010 to 2016. Ten Chinese romantic films were selected according to box office and scores on Douban.com firstly. Fourteen romantic relationships picked from these films to be the sample of this study. Then, the data, including dialogues, images, and symbolic plots were analyzed by using textual analysis approach. And the triangle theory of love is the basis of this study. The findings are revealed as follow: (1) all the three components (intimacy, passion and commitment) were contained in selected romantic relationships. The scenes which contained passion appeared in eight relationships, while the scenes of commitment appeared in seven relationships. (2) the selected romantic relationships covered four of seven types: companionate love, liking, romantic love, and consummate love. (3) the stereotypes in character aspect were found significant contrast between male and female: blue collars and white collars; rich family and poor family; positive view of love and negative view of love; expressing love in words and in actions. (4) the stereotype in visual scenes aspect were found that stories basically happened in big cities and love always was the private thing for people. (5) the persistence of true love was the main promoting element of romantic relationships, while the doubt and hesitancy of true love, the influence of social status and family background were the main impeding elements. The results show that comparing to the past, female's social status has been improved. The romantic relationships nowadays are more open in the aspect of intimate behaviors and sexual behaviors, but commitment gradually ignored by nowadays people. This causes some negative

effects such as the phenomenon of more and more young people get abortion every year. Then, comparing Chinese films with Hollywood films, conflicts of parental interference, personal development versus self-sacrifice, and different social status are similar. Big cities are regularly seen as a story background of the story which is a way to provide chances for people from different classes to meet, to build romantic relationships.

Keywords: Portrayal of romantic relationships, Chinese romantic films, Triangle theory of love



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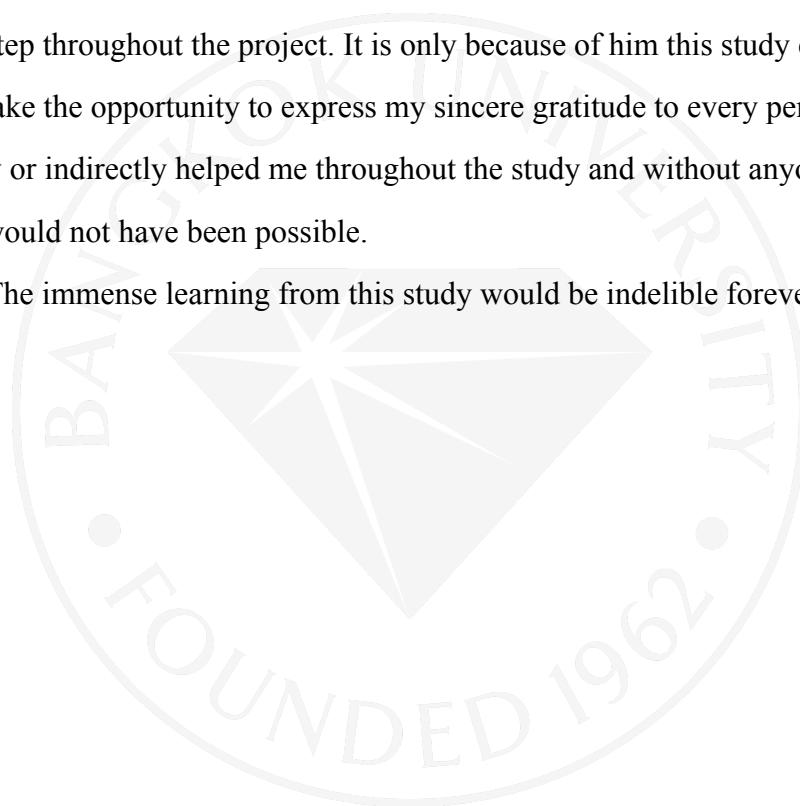


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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale and statement of problem

Film is the reflection of nowadays society and the way of filmmakers thinking about nowadays society, people, and lifestyle (Tian, 2015). Bazin (1918) proposed that the mission of film is to use the image of world to reshape the world. Film is not only the reflection of real life, it also influences people's thoughts and behaviors at the same time. For example, there was a study indicated the effects of American films on Chinese people. Feng (2017) pointed out that American films had both positive and negative effects on Chinese audience. Most researchers mainly studied film's negative influences on audience. The negative influences were usually outlined as violence, modeling, desensitization and the induction of fear. In comparison, less researches focused on effects from positive aspect, such as people who lacked experience of maintaining romantic relationships from films (Harris, Hoekstra, Scott, Sanborn, Dodds, & Brandenburg, 2004). Just like Hefner and Wilson (2013) indicated in their study: viewers may seek out those films for a similar purpose: to learn the information about dating.

Then, how these films influence audience? Filmmakers often rely on stereotypes, because they are a simple way to establish a character. The image, perspective, and behaviors may be intimated by audience through the long term exposure. For example, in American movies, foreigners are villains, blacks are gangsters and drug-dealers, Mexicans are illegal immigrants, and Arabs are shown as terrorists. When there are hundreds of movies made every year, patterns start to show up. Whether it's the characters or the ending, there isn't much in the way of originality in the movies. As time progressed, new characters have emerged, and been implemented and overused just like the old stereotypes before them. Movie

stereotypes are recycled for every generation of viewers. These changes may make audience change as well.

The effects of romantic relationships in films were studied usually from two angles: audience and portrayal of films. For example, the research of Zhan (2013), which investigated the Thai romantic films' influence on Chinese audience. He divided the study to two aspects. The first one was to study the content of Thai films, then, the second one was to do the questionnaires with several Chinese young audience. That is to say studying the content of films is the first step of learning the effects of film on audience. So the researcher of this study chose to do the first step: investigating the content of Chinese romantic films. And the content was romantic relationship.

The reason why the researcher chose romantic relationship is that this type of films is one of the most popular film types in the world. Romantic film is a type of films which has been a successful films genre ever since the cinema became popular in the early twentieth century (Hefner & Wilson, 2013). However, this term has not been defined initially. Later, with the learning of film types developing, there was a western scholar studied reactions to a related genre they called "sad films" (Oliver, 1993). Another study which written by a Chinese scholar categorized this kind of films include both "sad films" and comedies (Li, 2007).

Same with the other places of the world, the romantic films were also popular in China. The first romantic film of China named "Love of workers" which described a simple love story in the factory by director Zhang (1922). Since that, an increasing number of films in that style became more and more welcomed by Chinese audience. People like watching romantic films, but there is not any expert researched the content to figure out why they liked these films and how these films described stories to audience. Therefore, early Chinese romantic films basically have no established model either. Until mid 90s, it started the development of categorization (Li, 2007).

As time goes by, the elements which influence the development of romantic relationships in films also changed. Such as, in old times, traditional Chinese culture influence the image of romantic relationships in films. The ideology like the Confucian culture was widely accepted in Chinese people's mind. The parental interference was always the obstacle of romantic relationships. However, recent films were influenced by western culture. People were no longer think about relationship as the family business, they have rights to choose and chase true love.

1.2 Research questions

To examine the portrayal of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films, the three research questions are developed as follows:

Research Question #1: What are the types of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films?

Research Question #2: What are the stereotype of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films?

Research Question #3: What are the influential elements in the development process of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films?

1.3 Objectives of study

The general objective of this study is to examine the portrayal of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films from 2010 to 2016, and this general objective can be divided into three specific objectives as follows:

To identify types of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films base on Triangular theory of love.

To examine stereotype of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films.

To analyze elements which influence romantic relationship in Chinese romantic films.

1.4 Scope of study

Only ten Chinese romantic films between 2010 and 2016 are selected for the study: “Love” (Niu, 2012), “First time” (Han, 2012), “To our youth that is fading away” (Zhao, 2013), “A wedding invitation” (Wu, 2013), “Breakup Buddies” (Ning, 2014), “Fleet of time” (Zhang, 2014), “Goodbye Mr.Loser” (Yan & Peng, 2015), “Tiny Times 4.0” (Guo, 2015), “Beijing meets Seattle 2: The book of love” (Xie, 2016), “Yesterday once more” (Yao, 2016).

The analysis of the romantic relationships picked from the ten films is based on the Triangular theory of love.

The time period allocated for this study, in terms of data collection and analysis, is two months, from January to February of 2018.

1.5 Significance of study

According to the scope, romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films are the sample of the study. Whilst some researches focus on the type of Chinese films, no single study exists which mainly investigates the expression of romantic relationships. In addition, a plenty of researches about Chinese romantic films generally focus on the the time period of 1990s, but with the development of film industry and the influence of western culture, the topic and form of films in nowadays are partly different. Therefore, studying recent films is more practical and have more reference value.

For filmmakers, knowing the popular form of romantic relationship in films can have benefit for creations;

For supervision department, deeply knowing the content of films can provide the evidence for predicting whether the effects will be positive or negative; and

For publics, this study can lead them to have more knowledge about present films’ specific features, then have the ability of choosing suitable films to watch.

1.6 Definition of terms

1.6.1 Chinese romantic film: The type of films which mainly describe the process of male and female characters developing their romantic relationships. The plots of two main characters meet each other, fall in love with each other, and maintain their romantic relationship are the main content. In this study, Chinese romantic films which produced in China and by Chinese companies between 2010 and 2016.

1.6.2 Portrayal of romantic relationships: The presentation of characters and visual scenes in the romantic relationships.

1.6.3 Romantic relationship: The association between two people in the aspect of intimacy, passion and commitment.

1.6.4 Stereotype: The widely held view of Chinese people about romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films from 2010 to 2016, comprising the aspects of character's occupation, family background, view of love, characteristic, and location and scenes of turning point of story happens.

1.6.5 Character: Personal trait of of hero and heroine in the films, based on occupation, family background, and view of love.

1.6.6 Visual scene: The content of picture which people can see included in the film to help express the story.

1.6.7 Influential elements: The elements which promote or impede the development of romantic relationships in films.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Romantic film

Romantic film is a film genre with a long history. In the early period of silent films, French director Georges Melies made two versions of “Cinderella” in 1899 and 1912. After that, there was a large number of classic love stories adapted to the big screen, like “Romeo and Juliet” in 1936 and “Gone with the Wind” in 1939. These films were popular in society at that time because they were based on very well known folklore stories which were popular for a long time. Popular stories always attract people’s attention. During Hollywood’s golden age from the end of 1920s to 1950s, various romantic films were produced, these later became classic films with widespread reach and a far-reaching influence. During the 1980s to 1990s, at least one high-quality romantic film would be produced each year. For instance, “Ghost” (Zucker, 1990), “Sleepless in Seattle” (Ephron, 1993), “Pretty woman” (Marshall, 1990) and many other films that are still popular today.

Romantic film has a long history, but the definition of this type of film is not consistent and specific until today. Some western scholars have their own ideas about romantic films. For instance, McDonald (2007, p.9) gave a definition to romantic film, especially romantic comedy: ‘A romantic comedy is a film which has as its central narrative motor a quest for love, which portrays this quest in a lighted way and almost always to a successful conclusion’. Dixon (2000, p.227) provided a very general definition of romantic film as that film in which the ‘development of love between two main characters is the primary narrative thread, the main story line’. But he still thought this film genre could not be described and defined easily because it was hybrid, these films usually made up of different types of stories, like the growth of main characters and their family business.

After that, there was a book titled “The Typology of Film and Television” published, the author Hao (2002) stated that romantic film was one type of film which used love to be the theme of representation, and the stories usually followed an established form. The relationship of two leading characters sometimes began with the mood of hating each other because of some dramatic conflicts.

For example, in the film “Fleet of time” (Zhang, 2014) and “Yesterday once more” (Yao, 2016), the two stories were set to happen in high school. At the beginning of the first film, the heroine was an isolated girl, this motivated the curiosity of the hero. So the hero tried to make fun of the heroine. And the second story began with the hero seeing the heroine was cheating during the exam, the heroine felt afraid of him telling the teacher so she tried to bribe him.

Then, in the relationship, the challenges which came from the social status or families became the climax of most stories. Such as in the film “Tiny Time 4.0” (Guo, 2015), the father of the hero did not allow the heroine to be the girlfriend of his son because of the different family background.

Finally, the stories generally ended up with two persons overcoming all problems or yielding to the outside pressure, like in the film “Love” (Niu, 2012), after breaking up with the rich man who provided good quality life to her, the heroine finally chose her true love in spite of this boy did not have money. Another film “A wedding invitation” (Wu, 2013) expressed a bad ending, two leading characters cleared all the misunderstanding, but they still could not get married because the heroine got an incurable disease. The filmmakers of these films would like to use the art forms of love to attract people, they also used the conflicts and issues that happen during the process of love growing to promote the development of the story.

Harris and his partners (2000, p.259) also expressed in their study: the category “romantic films” was not been uniformly defined or extensively researched, but at least one possibly overlapping category of “women’s film” had been. Just as violent

films were stereotypical with men, romantic films were stereotypically associated with women. However, defining romantic film as women's film was one-sided, because some previous studies also proved that both male and female would like to learn the information about how to date with their partners. For example, Zurbriggen and Morgan (2006) found that watching romantic films for learning about dating and romance were not associated with gender difference. Same with another one-sided definition – “sad films” (Oliver, 1993), there was some evidence proved that there wasn't only sad stories or sad endings were described in the romantic film, some scholars also mentioned a genre called “romantic comedy”. The content of romantic films was not confined to sad stories. Romantic comedy films had been a successful films genre ever since the cinema became popular in the early twentieth century (Hefner & Wilson, 2013, p.150).

After listing opinions of scholars about the definition of romantic film, the researcher continued to read the content which those studies mainly investigated. Most of scholars chose to investigate the content of romantic films as the first step to study the effects on the audience. Such as, Henfer and Wilson (2013) conducted two studies to get information about the influence of romantic film on young people. The first study was the content analysis of ten romantic films, investigating the portrayal of romantic ideals and challenges. After that, combining the results of the second study – 335 students participating an online questionnaire, the two researchers demonstrated that there was a positive relationship between watching romantic films with the motivation to learn and endorsing romantic beliefs (Henfer & Wilson, 2013, p.171). Another research indicated the effects of Thai films on Chinese young audience also took the content analysis of Thai films as the first study (Zhan, 2013).

In general, during the long history of films, there is not any certain definition that the worldwide researchers can use. But romantic films are certainly popular for many years. This popular type of films is deserved to be examined, then the findings

can contribute to the influence on audience. Therefore, romantic films are investigated in this study.

2.2 Chinese romantic films

First of all, according to the film history of China, the earliest Chinese film to tell a story about love was “The love of workers” which directed by Zhang in 1922. Li (2007) indicated an opinion that the romantic films of China originated from “Swear by god” (Dan, 1921) and “The widow wants to remarry” (Dan, 1923) of Shanghai Film Company. After that, romantic films grew in leaps and bounds, a large number of classic films appeared, such as “Lovers Destiny” (Zhang, 1932), “Romance on Lushan Mountain” (Huang, 1980), and “Red dust” (Yan, 1990). By the mid of the 1920s, this type of film had already occupied the dominant position in the film market. Li (2007) also divided romantic films into three aspects according to the content. First one was praising the pure love, the second one was the condemning the phenomenon of not loyal to love and marriage, and the third one was attacking social evils.

Over the past decade, some researchers in this field expressed romantic films with several subtypes. Such as “urban romantic film” and “youth romantic film”.

With the development of Chinese society, people’s lives changed a lot, the differences between city and countryside became obvious. Some scholar called the films, which describe the stories about the love and marriage under the complicated society “urban romantic film”. As for the definition of urban romantic films, Chen and Huang (2011) indicated that the narrative of this type of film usually in the light of “city + love” mode, and these films all focused on shaping the fashion sense of cities; meanwhile, as the subtype of romantic film, urban romantic film had the elements of comedy, romance, and fashion as well. Under the development of consumption culture and urban culture, watching films became a modern lifestyle, it was related to

the development of urban romantic film. In this type of film, love would be strongly influenced by material life and consumption level (Chen, 2014). This was one of the most typical traits of urban romantic films that differentiated them from other types of romantic films, but there were still a number of films that described the hero and heroine overcoming challenges and finally getting their happy ending. For example, “Love” (Niu, 2012) described three couples who passed the challenge of material life gap, culture difference, and sexual infidelity.

Another subtype of romantic films in China is “youth romantic film”, which describes the love stories happen in school time, especially in high school and college. This type of romantic film became popular with the great success of “To our youth that is fading away” (Zhao) in 2013. There were many films described similar stories like this one before, for instance, “In the heat of the sun” (Jiang, 1994), “Beijing Bicycle” (Wang, 2001), and “Teeth of love” (Zhuang, 2007), but the main storyline of these films were not about love. However, most of the studies on this type of films concentrated on the time after the 1990s. Li (2014) highlighted the cultural symbols changing during past two decades. Zhang (2013) indicated the development of Chinese romantic films about youth since the 1990s. Since 2013, youth romantic film gradually became a category of films in which, their content possessed stereotypes associated with youth and love in modern China. These films often expressed the stories related to first love, the identity of characters normally were all high school students. Besides love, the sub line of these stories usually revolved around students’ experience of growth (Cao, 2016).

Besides the two types mentioned above, there also a third type which describe stories of ancient China. Because of the different historical background, this type of romantic films will not be considered in this study.

Then, after emphasizing the subtypes mainly studied in this paper, the researcher continues to read some literature to find out what research content that

Chinese researchers prefer to cover in their studies. In today's China, a large volume of published studies describing the history, stereotype, and narrative of romantic films. Comparing with the western experts who investigated films in order to understand the effects of these films on the audience, some Chinese scholars would like to focus on the contribution of romantic films on the Chinese film industry. For instance, a study about investigating romantic films, which mainly described the narrative of romantic film of youth, indicated that not only did this study contribute to understanding the changes of films then the film filmmakers could use this knowledge to create better films, but also had the value of updating people's cognition on the stereotype at different times, it was a way to improve the aesthetics standard of people (Li, 2015). Meanwhile, the study of the ethics problem in romantic films of Tian (2015) showed the view of sex in recent films. Differentiating with the traditional view of sex, the plots, and pictures of sex in nowadays films were not rejected that much by the public, the filmmakers also started to use sex to express the deep meaning of love except for the simple desire. This point rarely reflected in early Chinese films.

To sum up, comparing with scholars from other countries, Chinese researchers also have their own definition and way of categorize to romantic film for the reason of Chinese specific history and culture. And in the subtypes of Chinese romantic films mentioned above, films which mainly describe stories of nowadays society are more suitable for this study to be the first step of investigating the effects on audience.

2.3 Romantic relationships

According to Oxford dictionary, when the word "romantic" is used as an adjective, there are three definitions have been listed – the first one is "conducive to or characterized by the expression of love"; the second one is "of, characterized by, or suggestive of an idealized view of reality"; and the third one is "relating to or

denoting the movement of romanticism”. And the word “relationship” can be defined as “the way in which of two or more people or things are connected, or the state of being connected”. In summary, the romantic relationship can be described as the association between two people in the aspect of love and sex.

Then, in order to analyze the type of romantic relationship, normally there are two theories widely used in relationship studies. One is the Color wheel theory of love (Lee, 1973), which expresses the style of the romantic relationship through a color wheel so that different styles can be represented by different colors. Neto (2002, p.1303) simply described the six styles of this theory: The primary styles included Eros (passionate, romantic love), Ludus (game-playing love), and Storge (friendship-based love). Compounds of two of each of the primary love styles form the three secondary styles: Pragma (practical love, a compound of Storge and Ludus), Mania (possessive, dependent love, a compound of Eros and Ludus), and Agape (altruistic love, a compound of Eros and Storge).

Another one is the Triangular theory of love (Sternberg, 1986) which explains a topic of love in an interpersonal relationship, and the components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. According to the official website of Sternberg, intimacy refers to feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in romantic relationships; passion refers to the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena in romantic relationships; commitment refers, in the short-term, to the decision that one loves a certain other.

In concluded, the researcher chose the Triangular theory of to be the basis of this study. Because comparing with the Color wheel theory of love, this theory is more simple to understand and also more suitable for analyzing romantic relationships in films. In addition, the year of the Color wheel theory of love is earlier than the Triangular theory of love. Therefore, the Color wheel theory is too old to be the analyzing basis of nowadays relationships.

2.4 Romantic relationship of Chinese people

Earlier research studied the view of love and marriage throughout most of China's history, the result shown that love and marriage were considered family business rather than a personal matter, and marriage was conducted strictly to preserve the power and structure of the family (Zhou & Zhu, 2004, p. 23). Due to the traditional culture of China and its traditional view of love and marriage, Chinese young people tended to have the more rational and fully considered standard about love. This could be seen in the recent film "Yesterday once more" (Yao, 2016) which described a weak romantic relationship influenced by the family opposition. Traditional education taught youngsters that elders were always right due to their previous experiences in life. Therefore, kids should always listen to their parents, teachers and any other elder figure in general.

Tang and Chen (2013) also described the changes about the time when Chinese young people faced their love lives and how to deal with their romantic relationship. Generally, the changes could be divided into four aspects.

Firstly, during the period of the diversification of love's motivation, their view tended to be more rational. During this phase young people choices of partners, appearance and affection were no longer the most important conditions. A bigger amount of people starts considering more about the education background, social status, and family conditions. For example, according to the survey of Wang and Zhang (2013) which about the spouse-selection ideas of female college students in Lu Dong University, half of the participants expressed that the spouses should have the same education background with them.

Secondly, the way of love became bold and the sense about sex became open. Because of the increasing globalization of society in recent years, western culture gradually influenced Chinese young people's behaviors and perspectives. Chinese young people no longer considered the traditional views as the most important

principles to base their life on. According to the survey of college students' view of sex, the results indicated that there were more than two-thirds of participants could think premarital sex was acceptable (Wu, Zhang, & Wu, 2001).

Thirdly, the process of love became simple, and the behavior of love became optional. Recently, a new word “闪婚” (Shan Hun) appeared to describe two persons use less time from falling in love with each other to get married. “闪” in Xinhua Dictionary defined as “quick and sudden”, and “婚” means marriage. This word was used in news, such as Wei and Liang (2016) of www.Chinanews.com reported a divorce case of a couple who married after knowing each other for two months.

Fourthly, the attitude of love became avant-garde, and the sense of responsibility became weak. As people gradually caring about traditional value of love less and less, they started to accept more open view from another country especially those developed countries. They started to care their own thoughts more than others such as parents. One of the most obvious phenomena was premarital pregnancy. Statistically, the percentage of premarital pregnancy in Beijing was 25%, but until 2004, the percentage risen to 65%. Young people in China usually had sex without considering the consequences of unprotected sex it was an irresponsible behavior.

To sum up, with the changes of Chinese people think about romantic relationships, there are also some negative phenomena appears in nowadays society. The reason why these phenomena happened can be an effective way to figure out how to correct these negative effects. According to the perspective of influence of films which mentioned on the top, romantic relationships are core aspect included in this study.

2.5 Romantic relationship in Chinese romantic films

Romantic films in different times normally would follow the changing of

aesthetic taste and cultural consumption tendency (Chen, 2014), that's to say the romantic relationship in Chinese romantic films is always intimate romantic relationships in reality. Due to the opinion of Rahman (2013) which indicated that films as a social mirror, the description of the romantic relationship in romantic film also gave expression to the romantic relationship in real life. According to the opinions in the article of Tang and Chen (2013), the four characteristics of present Chinese young people's view of love could be reflected in the films as the attitude of characters to love and romantic relationship.

Firstly, about the various motivations of love and marriage, also could be described as the motivation that leads individuals to start a romantic relationship with others. Data from the study (Tang & Chen, 2013) reported the percentage of participants choosing the eight motivations, – to pursue spiritual ballast (39.64%), to find the spouse after graduation (37.34%), to motivate learning (23.85%), to enjoy the pleasure of love (22.37%), to overcome the loneliness (12.91%), to satisfy the physical needs (10.20%), to follow the general trend (2.80%), and to accumulate experience of love (1.25%). That is, the standard of young people's view of love tended to be various and cared more about the feeling of themselves. Like in the popular film "To our youth that is fading away" (Zhao, 2013), which indicated a story about a group of young people taking love differently. One of the girls was materialistic, she thought if she had to find a boyfriend during the school time, she would choose a rich man who could satisfy all aspects of her material requests. Comparing with the heroine who decided to chase a boy only because she had a favorable impression of the boy, their attitudes on the romantic relationship were opposite. And one boy in this film regard love as the game, he constantly had a relationship with girls to satisfy his physical needs and to flaunt his experience in front of his friends.

Secondly, about the way of maintaining the romantic relationship and the

attitude of sex, an increasing number of people broke the traditional concept of love like girls could not seek true love forwardly, only boys could chase girls. In most of young Chinese people's mind, the gender difference was no longer important. In the film "Love" (Niu, 2012), one of storylines mainly talked about was a girl who lived relying on her rich boyfriend for a long time suddenly fell in love with a poor guy. At the ending of this story, the girl forwardly proposed to the poor guy and she succeeded. Many films use female perspective to articulate the story, and today the plot of girls chasing boys is very recurrent. Regarding the attitude about sex, due to the strong restrictions of The State Administration of Radio, Film, and Television (SARFT), the percentage of content with sexual behavior still can not be compared with the percentage in the United States or other western countries (Brown, & et al, 2001). But with the increasing degree of people accepting sexual contents, some of the film filmmakers like to add sexual plots in the films. On the one hand, those plots can help to explain the emotion in romantic relationships; on the other hand, it is also a way to attract people's attention because most people are curious about plots of sexual behavior. For example, in the later part of the film "A wedding invitation" (Wu, 2013), two leading characters had sex after they know each others' misunderstanding above these years, the love and desire led them to do the behavior like this. This plot appeared during the climax of this film to strongly express the change of their relationship.

Thirdly, the process of love became simpler than before. The time which two persons took from love to marriage or from establishing a romantic relationship to break up became shorter and shorter. Tang and Chen (2013) indicated that due to the fusion of Chinese and western culture and the important period of young people which their behavior and perspective could be shaped at this time, in addition, there also a lack of the systematic teaching from classes or families, so they usually made decisions that lack much consideration. For instance, in the film "Breakup buddies"

(Ning, 2014), a female character which born in a mountain village was the typical character performed the view of simple and quick love. This girl got the information about romantic relationship mainly from the Internet, which according to Tang and Chen, was one of the most popular way of collecting information, so young people's view of love influenced a lot by unreliable sources of information online including a large amount of uncensored information (Tang & Chen, 2013, p.85). In the film, this girl lacked the ability to make sure whether the information was correct or not, so when she met the hero and his friend, she was quickly attracted by the hero and required the hero to build a romantic relationship with her.

Fourthly, nowadays, and contrary to what the generation of their parents did, young people often lack of responsibility when engaging in a romantic relationship, such as the game-playing love without commitment. And one of the most obvious phenomena to prove this point in real life is the increasing rate of teenage abortion year by year (Tang & Chen, 2013, p.84). According to statistics, on average, there are 13 million abortions in China each year. Over twenty percent of women with premarital sexual behavior had no intention of pregnancy, and ninety percent of them choose to have the abortion (Zhou & Xiang, 2015). In romantic films about youth, the plot of abortion has appeared many times. For example, in the film "Fleet of time" (Zhang, 2014), the heroine had sex with a bad guy just because she broke up with her boyfriend, then she found out she was pregnant and she decided to have an abortion. Similarly, in the film "Love" (Niu, 2013), there was a boy that had sex with the friend of him when he complained about his girlfriend with the girl. Both the boy and the girl lacked of considering the consequence of this behavior at that time. Finally, the girl got pregnant and his girlfriend also broke up with him.

In concluded, some experts in this field examined the features of romantic relationships in films and the researcher also found evidence to prove the connection between romantic relationships in films and reality. Therefore, investigating romantic

relationships in films is meaningful for people in real world to understand their romantic relationship deeply.

2.6 Triangular theory of love

In order to better understand how Chinese romantic film portrays the romantic relationship of young people, it is important to have a theory to be the foundation of this study. The Triangular theory of love (Sternberg, 1986) has been widely used to study interpersonal relationship in the field of psychology, but there is not any study apply this theory to the study of media content, especially the romantic relationship in films.

Sternberg (1986) pointed out that there are three components of love including intimacy, passion, and commitment, and they can be used to investigate different styles of romantic relationships. The three components which together can be viewed as forming the vertices of a Triangular, then this Triangular is used with various combinations of angles to represent types of love involving different weightings of the three postulated components. For example, “fatuous love” involves passion and commitment without intimacy; “romantic love” involves intimacy and passion without commitment; “Infatuated love” involves only passion (Shaver & Hazan, 1988, p. 490-491). The following three components and seven types of romantic relationships from Sternberg’s theory will be used to identify the romantic relationships in Chinese romantic film.

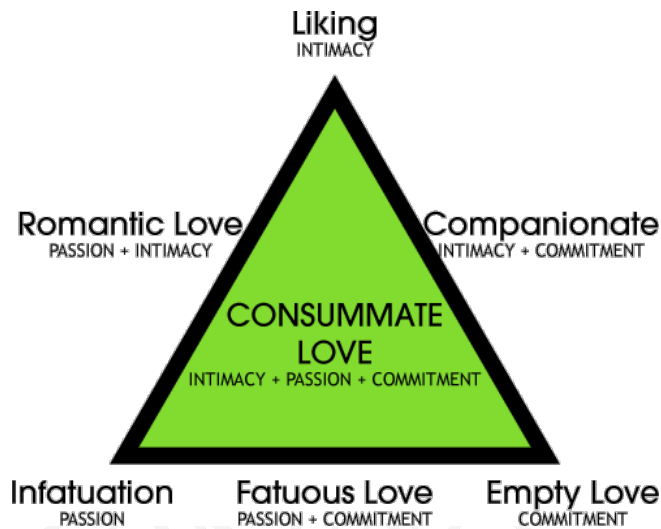


Figure 2.1: The triangular theory of love

Source: Psych, D. (2010). *The triangular theory of love*. Retrieved from

<http://psychdigest.com/what-type-of-love-do-you-have-with-your-partner/>

2.6.1 Intimacy

The intimacy component refers to feeling of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in loving relationships. It thus included within its purview those feelings that give rise, essentially, to the experience of warmth in a loving relationships.

(Sternberg, 1986, p.199)

2.6.2 Passion

The passion component refers to the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena in loving relationships. The passion component thus includes within its purview those sources of motivational and other forms of arousal that lead to the experience of passion in a loving relationship.

(Sternberg, 1986, p.119)

2.6.3 Commitment

The decision/commitment component refers to, in the short term, the decision that one loves someone else, and in the long term, the commitment to maintain that love. The decision/commitment component thus includes within its purview the

cognitive elements that are involved in decision making about the existence of and potential long-term commitment to a loving relationship. (Sternberg, 1986, p.199)

2.6.4 Liking

Liking refers to the set of feelings one experiences in relationships that can truly be characterized as friendships. One feels closeness, bondedness, and warmth toward the other, without components of passion or commitment (Sternberg, 1986, p. 123).

2.6.5 Infatuated love

Infatuated love is “Love at first sight” (Sternberg, 1986, p. 124). This type of relationships normally happens during the start of a romantic relationship, also can be described as the motivation of love. "Love as first sight" is a romantic plot usually appears in the romantic film.

2.6.6 Empty love

This kind of love emanates from the decision that one loves another and has the commitment to that love in the absence of both the intimacy and passion components of love (Sternberg, 1986, p. 124). This type seems related to the love aims at getting married. And then corresponding it to Chinese romantic film, the most common plot is the arranged marriage. Two people get married because the interference of their parents.

2.6.7 Romantic love

This kind of love is liking with an added element, namely, the arousal brought about by physical attraction and its concomitants (Sternberg, 1986, p.124). This type of relationship focuses on the process rather than the consequence.

2.6.8 Fatuous love

Fatuous love is the kind of love we sometimes associate with Hollywood, or with whirlwind courtships, in which a couple meets on Day X, gets engaged two weeks later, and marries the next month (Sternberg, 1986, p. 124). This type is similar with

one of the characters that Tang and Chen (2013) indicated in their article of Chinese young people's view of love in nowadays – the process of love is simple and quick.

2.6.9 Companionate

Companionate love is essentially a long-term, committed friendship, the kind that frequently occurs in romantic relationships in which the physical attraction (a major source of passion) has died down (Sternberg, 1986, p.124). Similar to the empty love, this type of relationship normally appears during the marriage.

2.6.10 Consummate

Consummate love results from the full combination of three components. It is a kind of love toward which many of us strive, especially in romantic relationships (Sternberg, 1986, p.124). This type of relationship can be the perfect one of these seven types, and it can be found in romantic film frequently.

To sum up, this theory categorizes romantic relationships to seven types on the basis of three components: intimacy, passion, and commitment. The dialogues, images, and plots from selected films can be coded according to these three components. After that, the type of each picked relationship can be listed clearly. Therefore, the researcher chooses this theory.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The qualitative approach and textual analysis were employed in this study to investigate the portrayal of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films. According to three research questions, types, stereotypes, and influential elements of romantic relationships were three parts of this study.

The coding schemes of types were developed based on the three components – intimacy, passion, and commitment of the Triangular theory of love (Sternberg, 1986). The researcher summarized the raw data collected from films to these three components, then, figuring out the type of each relationship according to whether the three components were included or not. The coding schemes of stereotype were divided to two main parts: character and visual scenes. While the coding schemes of influential elements were divided to promoting and impeding elements. After summarizing and categorizing all the raw data, the portrayal of romantic relationships was existed.

3.2 Sample Selection

3.2.1 Selecting films

The researcher selected ten films from 2010 to 2016, and films are listed as follows: “Love” (Niu, 2012), “First time” (Han, 2012), “To our youth that is fading away” (Zhao, 2013), “A wedding invitation” (Wu, 2013), “Breakup Buddies” (Ning, 2014), “Fleet of time” (Zhang, 2014), “Goodbye Mr.Loser” (Yan & Peng, 2015), “Tiny Times 4.0” (Guo, 2015), “Beijing meets Seattle 2: The book of love” (Xie, 2016), “Yesterday once more” (Yao, 2016).

3.2.2 Reasons of choosing the films and period of films

First of all, these films were selected according to their box offices and the scores on the popular website Douban, which is similar to IMDb in America.

The box offices represent the number of audience who watch these films. The more the box office, the higher the popularity.

The scores on Douban represent most of the Chinese audience's thoughts. The higher the score, the more popular the film in audience's mind.

Secondly, two reasons of choosing the period from 2010 to 2016 are listed as follows:

(1) A great change of film market happened in 2010. The State Department of China (SARFT) published an announcement titled "Guidance on promoting the prosperity and development of the film industry", which provided to promote Chinese film industry, especially, to encourage the private capital to enter the film market. This action made the content of Chinese films had big changes, and the quality of films also developed.

(2) Films from Korea, Japan, and western countries influenced the aesthetic of Chinese audience. Chinese films started to learn more new features from those foreign films. In order to gain more benefits through films, Chinese filmmakers intended to imitate films from other countries in stories and costumes aspects. Sometimes, they even directly invited pop stars from outside China to be the main characters in Chinese films. This was an easy way to attract a large part of Chinese audience who influenced by Korean pop culture. For instance, "So – I married my anti-fan" (Kim, 2016) which described a story of a Korean pop star and his Chinese anti-fan, and "My new sassy girl" (Cho, 2015) which was the new version of the popular Korean film "My sassy girl" (Kwak, 2001). Many changes happened in these years, but not many people have investigated them, most of the literature concentrate on the 1990s.

3.2.3 Selecting fourteen relationships

After selecting films, the researcher picked fourteen romantic relationships which are listed in table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Romantic relationships

Films	Relationships
Love	Ni & Kai Mark & Jin Xiaoye FangRouyi &Kuan
First Time	Gong Ning (Lv Xia)& Song Shiqiao
To our youth that is fading away	Chen Xiaozheng & Zheng Wei
A wedding invitation	Li Xing & He Qiaoqiao
Breakup buddies	Hao Yi & Dong Dong
Fleet of time	Chen Xun & Fang Hui
Mr. Loser	Xia Luo & Ma Dongmei Xia Luo & Qiu Ya
Tiny Times 4.0	Lin Xiao & Lu Shao (Zhou Chongquang) Gu Yuan & Gu Li
Beijing meets Seattle 2: The book of love	Daniel & Jiao Jiao
Yesterday once more	Gao Xiang & Lin Tianjiao

3.3 Research tool

The coding schemes for studying the fourteen picked romantic relationships from the selected ten films were mainly divided into three aspects, which according to the three research questions.

Firstly, for examining the type of each picked relationship, the researcher used three basic components of Sternberg's (1986) Triangular theory of love. The coding scheme of this aspect are listed as the table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Coding schemes of types

Thematic coding	Initial coding
Intimacy	people have the desire to improve material life of lover
	people feel happy when they stay with lovers
	people pay high attention to lovers
	people always look forward to lovers' help when they get some problems
	people understand each other
	people share all about themselves with lovers
	people accept lovers' support
	people support lovers
	people can communicate with lovers closely
	people care about the value of lovers in their life
passion	people kiss or have desire to kiss
	people have sex or have desire to kiss
commitment	people decide to love someone
	people decide to maintain romantic relationships with lovers

Secondly, in order to investigate the stereotype of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films, the researcher coded the content of films mainly from two

angles – character and visual scenes (Huang, 2015). The coding scheme is shown as the table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Coding schemes of stereotypes

Thematic coding	Initial coding
character	occupation
	family background
	view of love
	characteristic
visual scene	location
	scenes of turning point

Thirdly, for investigating the influential elements during the process of developing romantic relationships, researcher divided it to two opposite angles. The positive one was promoting elements, such as the persistence of love. The negative one was impeding elements, such as parental interference. The coding scheme of this aspect is shown in the table 3.5.

Table 3.4: Coding scheme of influential elements

Thematic coding	Initial coding
promoting elements (positive)	subjective elements
	objective elements
impeding elements (negative)	subjective elements
	objective elements

3.4 Data collection

Based on the selected fourteen relationships, the researcher firstly watched the ten films and recording all the plots of each romantic relationship from the start to the end. The content which had been recorded included important plots and dialogues. Then, in terms of the triangle theory of love (Sternberg, 1986) and stereotype coding scheme of Huang (2015), the researcher created the coding schemes of this study about the type, stereotype, and influential elements, which were shown in 3.3. The processes took about four weeks.

3.5 Data Analysis

In this study, three main data that were analyzed, namely the type of romantic relationships, the stereotype of romantic relationships, and the elements which influence the development of romantic relationships. The researcher utilized the approach of grounded theory (Strauss, 1967), which showed in figure 3.1, level one is the raw data. Through the conclusion and categorizing based on the coding scheme, the data became specific and theoretical level by level.

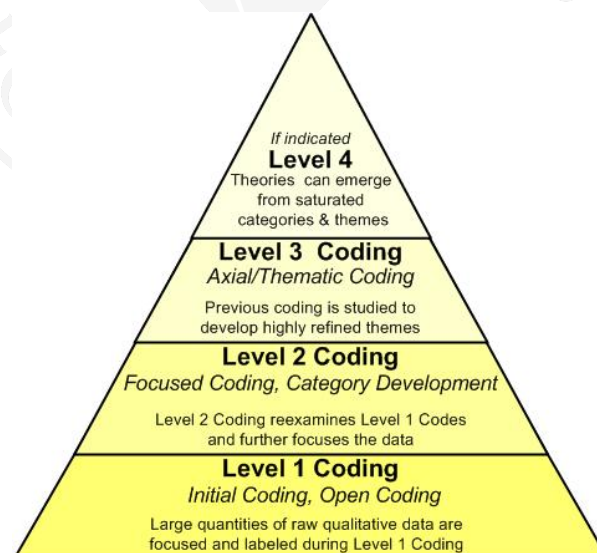


Figure 3.1: Coding process

Source: Pinterest. (2016). *Coding process*. Retrieved from www.pinterest.com/

Firstly, the type of each romantic relationship was studied on the basis of three components as table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Types of romantic relationships

	Intimacy	passion	commitment
Liking	√		
Infatuated love		√	
Empty love			√
Romantic love	√	√	
Companionate love	√		√
Fatuous love		√	√
Consummate love	√	√	√

Then, the stereotype and influential elements of each romantic relationship were summarized at the same time. The collected dialogues, symbols, and plots were analyzed according to the coding schemes indicated in last part.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1 The components of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic film

Three components (intimacy, passion, and commitment) as the fundamental to examine the types of fourteen romantic relationships of this study. After analyzed details which the researcher recorded before, the researcher found appeared components as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Components of romantic relationships

Films	Romantic relationships	Components		
		Intimacy	Passion	commitment
Love	Ni & Kai	√		√
	Mark & Jin Xiaoye	√	√	
	Fang Rouyi & Kuan	√	√	√
First time	Gong Ning& Song Shiqiao	√	√	
To our youth that is fading away	Cheng Xiaozheng & Zheng Wei	√	√	√
A wedding invitation	Li Xing & He Qiaoqiao	√	√	√
Breakup buddies	Hao Yi & Dong Dong	√	√	
Fleet of time	Chen Xun & Fang Hui	√		√

(Continued)

Table 4.1(Continued): Components of romantic relationships

Goodbye Mr.Loser	Xia Luo & Ma Dongmei	√		
	Xia Luo & Qiu Ya	√	√	
Tiny Times 4.0	Lin Xiao & Lu Shao	√	√	√
	Gu Yuan & Gu Li	√		√
Beijing meets Seattle 2: The book of love	Daniel & Jiaojiao	√		
Yesterday once more	Gao Xiang & Lin Tianjiao	√		

Apparently, the intimacy appears in all the ten films, while passion and commitment appears in some films only. The scenes of passion appeared in eight romantic relationships, and the commitment appears in seven romantic relationships.

The details and examples of these three components were expressed in the following parts.

4.1.1 Intimacy

In the Triangular theory of love, the intimacy component refers to feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness in romantic relationships. It thus includes within its purview those feelings that give rise, essentially, to the experience of warmth in a loving relationship (Sternberg, 1986).

According to the article of Wang (2010), he investigated the intimacy of romantic relationships described in the book “Far away from the wadding (Hardy, 1987)”. In this study, he created a coding scheme of intimacy as follows:

People have the desire to improve material life of lover;

People feel happy when they stay with lovers;

People pay high attention to lovers;

People always look forward to lovers' help when they get some problems;
 People understand each other; people share all of themselves with lovers;
 People accept lovers' support;
 People support lovers;
 People can communicate with lovers closely; and
 People care about the value of lovers in their life.

By applying Wang's coding schemes to examine the intimacy in fourteen romantic relationships, the results showed that all of the relationships contained the intimacy. The following is two examples which indicated intimacy according to certain coding schemes.

First of all, the film "Beijing meets Seattle 2: The book of love" (Xie, 2016) mainly described the love story between a male character Daniel and a female character Jiao Jiao. They did not know each other. Once Jiao Jiao, who worked at a casino received a book from somebody she did not know. The title of this book was too ominous that Jiao Jiao thought it might bring bad luck to her gambling. She felt so angry at the sender and sent the book with a letter full of anger back to the sender. But she miswrote the address. The book went to Daniel, who worked at a real estate. He was also felt angry with the unintelligible words, and sent the book with a letter back to Jiao Jiao. That was the beginning of their long-term communication through letters. At the end of the film, they met each other at a post office, and at their first face to face communication.

In the course of their communication, there were verbal and nonverbal languages that indicated coding scheme of intimacy, according to Wang, the following are examples of scenes that show intimacy between two characters in the film.

First scene which showed "people share all about themselves with lovers" coding scheme when Daniel and Jiao Jiao got some problems at their work and in their lives but nobody nearby could understand their real thoughts, they would share

what happened and what they thought at that time with each other through letters. One time, in order to get a big house from an old couple, Daniel tried to cheat this old couple to sign the sales contract. However, the old couple found that he was lying, so they alienated Daniel. Daniel felt so sad and started to doubt whether his way of buying the house was good or bad. He chose to share this with Jiao Jiao, and Jiao Jiao suggested him to care more about relationship with customers instead of only thinking about money. In the same manner, once Jiao Jiao stole the gambling chips of her customer because she had no money to pay off her debt. She struggled whether or not to give the gambling chips back. She also asked Daniel for advice through letters. And Daniel suggested her not to do things that will make herself regret later on.

Another coding scheme “people support lovers” also appeared in the the same scenes. After Jiao Jiao knowing Daniel’s worries about whether his method of buying house was good or bad, she comforted him and suggested him to care more about the relationship with customers instead of performance and salary, which Daniel followed her suggestion. Likewise, in order to stop Jiao Jiao from doing the wrong thing (stealing customer’s gambling chips), Daniel offered his advice by using Jiao Jiao’s own words to remind her, “You once said, ‘Letters are like eyes from a thousand miles away, they can see through you.’ Whether it’s your most hidden desires or dangerous thoughts.” Daniel also said, “Something seems wonderful at first, but could end badly.” Jiao Jiao decided to give the gambling chips back to her customer. The scene mentioned also displayed “people accept lovers’ support” coding scheme.

The following images technically showed variety of closeness between Daniel and Jiao Jiao, which actually they communicated through letters. The director used their imagination to describe the dialogues between the two characters as if they communicated face to face. The first one was Daniel’s imagination. In his imagination, Jiao Jiao was good at listening. The second one was Jiao Jiao’s imagination to see Daniel was a wise man who could give her useful suggestions.



Figure 4.1: Daniel's imagination about Jiao Jiao

Source: Xue, X. (2016). *Beijing meets Seattle 2: The book of love* [Motion Picture].

China: EDKO Films Ltd.



Figure 4.2: Jiao Jiao's imagination about Daniel

Source: Xue, 2016. *Beijing meets Seattle 2: The book of love* [Motion Picture]. China:

EDKO Films Ltd.

Then film “A wedding invitation” (Wu, 2013) also contained several coding scheme of intimacy component. This film described story of Li Xing and He Qiaoqiao from the time they were high school students till they graduated from university and worked as a chef (Li Xing) and a ceramist (He Qiaoqiao). They confirmed the romantic relationship at high school time, but they broke up during university time

because He Qiaoqiao got the incurable illness which nobody else knew, and she did not want to be the obstacle of Li Xing's future life. They signed a contract that they could develop the romantic relationship again if they did not have new lovers after ten years. When the time is up to the appointed day, Li Xing lied to her that he would marry his boss's daughter to test whether He Qiaoqiao still loves him. He Qiaoqiao was upset with Li Xing's wedding invitation and decided to get him back. She also wanted to test whether Li Xing loved her or not. So she asked a male friend to pretend as her boyfriend and introduced him to Li Xing before the wedding. Li Xing was upset to see He Qiaoqiao and her "boyfriend". Then, after resolving the misunderstanding, they affirmed their love again. However, at the end of the story, He Qiaoqiao still died because of her incurable illness.

The relationship between these two characters was also filled with Wang's coding schemes of intimacy: "people have the desire to improve material life of lover", "people pay high attention to lovers", and "people support lovers".

The scene which showed "people have the desire to improve material life of lover" coding scheme when Li Xing always wanted to give He Qiaoqiao better life. For example, when He Qiaoqiao was seriously ill, Li Xing usually cooked for her. Because he knew these dishes could make her happy, and he wanted He Qiaoqiao to eat well. Besides showing "the desire to improve each other's material life" coding scheme, the scenes above also showed attention that the two gives to each other.

There were other scenes that showed the coding scheme "people pay high attention to lovers". For example, after they broke up, Li Xing and He Qiaoqiao always paid high attention to each other. He Qiaoqiao watched every cooking competition of Li Xing on TV. And Li Xing also follows He Qiaoqiao's illness by asking her male friend. Some images also show the coding schemes mentioned above. Such as "people pay high attention to lovers", the first image shows Li Xing paid high attention to He Qiaoqiao. After Li Xing knowing He Qiaoqiao's illness, he felt so sad

and worried about her. He went to the hospital immediately and saw He Qiaoqiao's pale face, he could not stop crying. The second one is that Li Xing asked He Qiaoqiao's friend to bring his dishes to her because he did not want He Qiaoqiao to see the sorrow on his face.



Figure 4.3: Li Xing cried after he knowing He Qiaoqiao's illness

Source: Wu, J. (2013). *A wedding invitation* [Motion picture]. China: China Film Group.



Figure 4.4: Li Xing asked her friend to bring his dishes to her

Source: Wu, 2013. *A wedding invitation* [Motion picture]. China: China Film Group.

The coding scheme “people support lovers” appeared in the following scenes. Because He Qiaoqiao was an orphan, she lacked of family's accompanying and

usually felt lonely. Therefore, Li Xing always supported He Qiaoqiao by saying heart-warming words. One day, Li Xing brought a lunch to her and asked her why she does not smile. He Qiaoqiao said, “I have nobody, who wants to see me smile?” Li Xing wanted to make He Qiaoqiao feel happy then he quickly answered, “Me!” Li Xing wanted He Qiaoqiao to know that he would always support her and try to be close to her.

4.1.2 Passion

Sternberg (1986) referred the component of passion to the emotion drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, sexual consummation, and related phenomena in romantic relationships. The passion thus includes within its purview those sources of motivational and other forms of arousal that lead to the experience of passion in romantic relationships. The coding scheme of investigating the content of passion was based on the emotion drives which Sternberg mentioned in the theory:

“the emotion drives that lead to romance”;

“the emotion drives that lead to physical attraction”; and

“the emotion drives that lead to sexual consummation”.

Eight romantic relationships contained certain coding schemes of the passion in films. Two examples of romantic relationships related to the passion were indicated as follows.

The first example was the film “Love” (Niu, 2012)”, which mainly described a story of the male character Kuan, who did not have a permanent job and the female character Fang Rouyi, who was a famous model. There were two strangers at first. Their first meeting happened when Fang Rouyi was having a date with a man at the hotel that Kuan was working. She saw Kuan was staring at her. She thought he was a paparazzi. She felt angry with him. The second time, they met in front of a convenient store. Kuan explained to Fang Rouyi that he stared at her in the hotel just because she was famous. Fang Rouyi accepted his explanation. After resolving the

misunderstanding, Kuan and Fang Rouyi became friends. They usually met at Kuan's home and chatted on the roof. Once they chatted on the roof after Fang Rouyi escaped from a party she did not like. Fang Rouyi hugged Kuan and told him there was a feeling of a couple between them. Then, they kissed and had sex. After that time, Kuan encouraged Fang Rouyi to give up present life which she did not like and to pursue her real dream. Fang Rouyi considered his suggestion seriously and then accepted it. At the end of the story, Fang Rouyi became a wedding planner. They met at a wedding which Kuan worked as a waiter at the wedding. Fang Rouyi proposed to Kuan.

During the time Kuan and Fang Rouyi communicating, there were several scenes contain certain coding schemes, such as "the emotion drives that lead to romance" and "the emotion drives that lead to sexual consummation".

Firstly, the coding scheme "the emotion drives that lead to romance" appeared when Fang Rouyi stayed at Kuan's home all night. In the morning, Kuan brought Fang Rouyi to the park near his home to exercise. She was very happy because she had not had feeling like that morning for a long time. She told several interesting things happened when she was young to Kuan. Kuan saw difference between the girl in front of him and the time she worked as a model. Fang Rouyi also thought he was so cute while he listening to her with the serious face. They both had positive feelings about each other. This feeling drove them to have the desire to meet again. Fang Rouyi asked Kuan, "Can we meet again just like today?" Kuan answered, "Sure." The desire of meeting again made them more than the ordinary friends, but not yet lovers.

Secondly, besides "the emotion drives that lead to romance", "the emotion drives that lead to sexual consummation" was also included in the films. Fang Rouyi escaped from a party because she saw her boyfriend flirting with another woman. She went to see Kuan. They cooked together and had a nice talk at that night. When Kuan asked Fang Rouyi to rest inside his room, Fang Rouyi hugged him and said, "Do you

think there is a feeling of the couple while I am hugging you?" After that, they kissed and had sex. "The feeling of the couple" is the passion which led to the hug, kisses and had sex.

The image below showed that the scenes about "the emotion drives that lead to sexual consummation" in this film usually happened on the roof of Kuan's home. Their communication also usually happened at this place. The roof became a symbol of privacy, seclusion, land of freedom. At this place, Kuan and Fang Rouyi can communicate and do things follow their heart. Therefore, when the emotion and feelings of passion got accumulated, the hug, kiss, and sex would happen automatically.



Figure 4.5: Fang Rouyi kissed Kuan

Source: Niu, C. (2012). *Love* [Motion picture]. China: Huayi Brothers Media Corporation.

Another example was the romantic relationship described in the film "Breakup Buddies" (Ning, 2015), the story of the male character Hao Yi (an assistant director) and the female character Dong Dong (a dancer) started from that Hao Yi brought his friend to a party to overcome the sadness of breaking up. At the party, Hao Yi was

attracted by Dong Dong's appearance. So he decided to approach her to have a one-night stand sex. She said "yes". After that incident, Dong Dong fell in love with him. But Hao Yi disappeared without telling her. Therefore, Dong Dong decided to find him. She followed Hao Yi's path by riding a motorcycle. When she found him in a club, Hao Yi told her that he did not want to build a long-term relationship with her. She felt so sad and gave the necklace which represented his "faith" back to Hao Yi. Then, she left. After Dong Dong left, Hao Yi realized how Dong Dong loved him and his real feelings about her. So he went to Dong Dong's hometown to propose to her.

The romantic relationship between them contained "the emotion drives that lead to physical attraction" and "the emotion drives that lead to sexual consummation". The scenes showed these certain coding schemes are indicated as follows.

First of all, the example of the scenes about "the emotion drives that led to physical attraction" happened at the beginning of this story, Hao Yi was not serious about love and romantic relationship. He just wanted to look for a "one-night stand partner". When he was attracted by Dong Dong's appearance at first, he chose to make up a story to attract Dong Dong. At the party, Dong Dong fainted and her clothes were ripped by accident, she was embarrassed. Hao Yi took off his jacket to cover her body, and said, "It breaks my heart to see you like this." Then, he showed a necklace to Dong Dong and told her, "Everyone should have faith." He told the story which he made up about "faith" successfully attracted Dong Dong. She fell in love with him and was willing to have sex with him. Because the actions and words made Dong Dong believe and he was a nice man with a great dream, so she was willing to build a romantic relationship with this man.

The coding scheme "the emotion drives that lead to sexual consummation" appeared throughout the story of them. For instance, after escaping from Dong Dong, Hao Yi went to a club to find a new "one-night stand" partner. Dong Dong rode a

motorcycle for hundreds of kilometers to give him the necklace which carries his faith. Dong Dong knew that Hao Yi was a man who never thought of marriage, so she chose to do something good for him, like protecting his "faith". However, Hao Yi was angry with Dong Dong and told her that he did not want a long-term romantic relationship with any woman. Dong Dong said, "I just come here to give this necklace back to you, you have ever said it carries your faith. I think it is important for you." Hao Yi was shocked and moved by her words. Dong Dong was so sad and left. Hao Yi realized his real feeling about Dong Dong, so he decided to find her back. When Hao Yi found and proposed to her, Dong Dong felt happy and moved. Then, they had sex. The feeling of finding the right person for each other drove them to have sex.

4.1.3 commitment

In the Triangular theory of love (Sternberg, 1986), the commitment component has been referred to, the short term, the decision that one loves someone else, and the long term, the commitment to maintain that love. The decision/commitment component thus includes within its purview the cognitive elements that are involved in decision making about the existence of and potential long-term commitment to a romantic relationship. That means, the coding scheme of the commitment are:

“the short term, the decision that one loves someone else”; and

“the long term, the commitment to maintain that love”

Seven romantic relationships contained both short-term commitment and long-term commitment. Two examples as follows indicated the component commitment.

The film "Fleet of time" (Zhang, 2014) described the story of the male character Chen Xun and the female character Fang Hui. It included their time from high school to university. In high school, teachers liked Fang Hui because she was not only good at learning but also obedient. Chen Xun was the opposite. He and most of his classmates did not like Fang Hui and usually made fun of her. Initially, Fang Hui just ignored his pranks. Chen Xun thought she was so boring. One time, Chen Xun led the

whole class to watch the football game at school time. The teacher was so angry and asked Fang Hui who led the class to the game. Fang Hui did not tell the teacher so that Chen Xun was not punished. Chen Xun thought Fang Hui was not the person who he thought before. Then, he started to pay more and more attention to her. When Fang Hui fainted on the playground, Chen Xun brought her to the infirmary. At the infirmary, Chen Xun asked Fang Hui to be his girlfriend. Fang Hui said “yes”. Later, they became the university students. Fang Hui was still good at learning, so she wanted Chen Xun to study with her. But Chen Xun met a girl who had the same hobby (music) with him. They had a big fight because Fang Hui felt unhappy that Chen Xun usually hung out with that girl. Then, they broke up and Fang Hui moved abroad. At the end of their story, Chen Xun realized his mistake, but he could not have Fang Hui with him.

The coding scheme indicated the short-term commitment because Chen Xun met another girl and Fang Hui moved abroad at the end of story.

They both tended to have long-term commitment before they broke up, but they failed. At their graduation part with high school class, Fang Hui asked Chen Xun, "Will we stay together forever?", Chen Xun said yes; Fang Hui asked, "Will we get married?", Chen Xun said yes; Fang Hui asked, "Will we have children?", Chen Xun said yes; and Fang Hui asked, "Will we have our own home? Can we cook and wash dishes together?", Chen Xun said yes. The long-term commitment of Fang Hui was failed when she chose to moved abroad. For Chen Xun, when he faced Fang Hui's love, he chose to use a song to represent his long-term commitment. The lyrics are: "I love you. It is a faith that is clear and strong. I love you. It is a strength that bears warmth and courage." The long-term commitment of Chen Xun was failed when he met another girl and ignored Fang Hui. And fter Fang Hui moved abroad, there were coding scheme indicated the long-term commitment that Chen Xun wanted to have with Fang Hui. However, it never happened.

Another example was the romantic relationship between the male character Gu Yuan and the female character Gu Li in the film "Tiny Times 4.0" (Guo, 2015) which contained the long-term commitment. This film is the fourth part of the series of Tiny Times, the romantic relationship between Gu Yuan and Gu Li established in the first three parts. So in the beginning of this film, Gu Yuan and Gu Li were lovers. After Gu Li's father died, her family were quickly in trouble. Gu Yuan's mother did not want her son to be the boyfriend of a woman with debt, so she tried to do everything to break them up. Such as finding new girlfriends for Gu Yuan. But Gu Yuan rejected all of these girls. Besides the obstacle of Gu Yuan's mother, Gu Li was found to be suffering from cancer. When Gu Yuan knew of her illness, he determined to stay with Gu Li forever. At the end of their story, Gu Li's illness got better. And Gu Yuan's mother also accepted her.

Firstly, the coding scheme of the long-term commitment was shown in the scenes as follows. Gu Yuan always cared about Gu Li very much. He was willing to do various daily things for Gu Li without complaining. For example, one time in the office of Gu Li, Gu Yuan was massaging her. Gu Yuan said he would massage her forever. It was a little thing, but when Gu Yuan said the word "forever", that meant he was prepared to be with her in the rest of their lives.

The dialogue between Gu Yuan and his mother also expressed the long-term commitment. When Gu Yuan's mother doubted the love between Gu Li and him, she thought that Gu Li liked Gu Yuan was only because of his money. However, Gu Yuan said, "You don't know about love. No matter how much you hate her, but don't you forget that she is the woman I love most in this world. I do not need anything you give me anymore; I will stay with her from now on."

And the following image showed Gu Yuan is signing the critical condition notice of Gu Li in the hospital. Gu Yuan lied to the doctor he is the husband of Gu Li. That means Gu Yuan planned to marry with Gu Li, he wanted to maintain the

romantic relationship between them forever. It is the long-term commitment.



Figure 4.6: Gu Yuan said he was Gu Li's husband

Source: Guo, J. (2015). *Tiny Times 4.0* [Motion picture]. China: Zhejiang Huace Film & TV Co., Ltd.

4.2 The types of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films

Based on the results showed in last part, the researcher found love types as shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Types of romantic relationships

Films	Romantic relationships	Type
Love	Ni & Kai	Companionate love
	Mark & Jin Xiaoye	Romantic love
	Fang Rouyi & Kuan	Consummate love
First time	Gong Ning & Song Shiqiao	Romantic love

(Continued)

Table 4.2(Continued): Types of romantic relationships

To our youth that is fading away	Cheng Xiaozheng & Zheng Wei	Consummate love
A wedding invitation	Li Xing & He Qiaoqiao	Consummate love
Breakup buddies	Hao Yi & Dong Dong	Romantic love
Fleet of time	Chen Xun & Fang Hui	Companionate love
Goodbye Mr.Loser	Xia Luo & Ma Dongmei	Liking
	Xia Luo & Qiu Ya	Romantic love
Tiny Times 4.0	Lin Xiao & Lu Shao	Consummate love
	Gu Yuan & Gu Li	companionate love
Beijing meets Seattle 2: The book of love	Daniel & Jiaojiao	Liking
Yesterday once more	Gao Xiang & Lin Tianjiao	Liking

As the results shown above, the fourteen romantic relationships cover four of all seven types of Triangular theory of love (Sternberg, 1986). Three out of fourteen relationships contained relationship components that fitted the characteristics of *companionate love*, and other three fitted the characteristics of *liking*. While relationship components in four relationships fitted characteristics of *romantic love*, and the other four fitted characteristics of *consummate love*.

The following parts were the examples of the four types covered in the selected romantic relationships in details.

4.2.1 Companionate love

Companionate love is essentially a long-term, committed friendship, the kind that frequently occurs in romantic relationships in which the physical attraction (a major source of passion) has died down (Sternberg, 1986, p.124). This love type

included the components of intimacy and commitment.

For example, the romantic relationship between the male character Kai and the female character Ni in the film *Love* (Niu, 2012) was companionate love. Kai and Ni were both university students but with different family background. Ni had a rich father who always treated her like a princess, so she was sometimes careless about Kai. Kai came from a general family, and he usually did part-time job to support his family. In the beginning of the story, they both complained with their friend that they did not love each other enough. Once Kai drunk while he was complaining with his female friend, he had sex with this girl. After that, the girl was pregnant, and she told Ni. Then, Ni broke up with Kai. But Kai said having sex with that girl was just a drunken mistake, there was nothing about love between him and that girl. When Ni felt both angry and sad, she realized that she loved Kai so much and struggled in whether she forgave Kai or not. Kai tried his best to apologized to Ni, such as punishing himself in front of the school. At the end of the story, Ni forgave him.

The scenes indicated intimacy in their romantic relationship appeared after Ni knew that he had sex with another girl and texted Kai to break up. He felt regretful. In order to beg her forgiveness, he tried to apologize in front of all the schoolmates. He did wrong things, but he did not want to make their romantic relationship end up. This action shown how Kai cared about the value of Ni in his life. He always thought he could not lose Ni. After they broke up, Ni still pay attention to Kai. She usually checked his condition through social media account of him and people around him. Once she saw the girl who had sex with Kai posted a sentence “the sound of love” on Facebook, she thought Kai gave her up and built romantic relationship with that girl. She felt so sad and could not stop crying.

The scenes indicated commitment in their romantic relationship appeared at the end of the story. Kai went to Ni’s art exhibition to apologize to her. He said that he and that girl would just be the parents of the baby, there would not the romantic

relationship built between them, because the person he really loved was Ni. Ni forgave him and accepted his plan about the baby. Then, they determined to have the long-term romantic relationship.

4.2.2 Liking

Liking refers to the set of feelings one experiences in relationships that can truly be characterized as friendships. One feels closeness, bondedness, and warmth toward the other, without the components of passion and commitment (Sternberg, 1986, p. 123).

The film “Yesterday once more” (Yao, 2016) included a romantic relationship which was liking. The story of the male character Gao Xiang and the female character Lin Tianjiao happened during their high school time. Gao Xiang came from a broken family and he grew up with his grandfather. In school, he was the naughty student that both teachers and classmates did not like him. Lin Tianjiao was a good student who had chance to go to the best university of China. Her parents were always strict with her study but actually she felt tired. In order to achieve the hope of parents, Lin Tianjiao cheated in an exam. Gao Xiang saw it. Lin Tianjiao tried to prevent Gao Xiang telling this to teachers by apple-polishing him. She went to his home and they talked about life, study, and dream of future. She found that Gao Xiang was a good person that she had not knew before. They became friends and usually hung out together after school. However, Lin Tianjiao’s parents knew the relationship between them. They did not allow her to meet him anymore. Later, Gao Xiang dropped out. Before he left the school, he painted the starry sky on the ceiling to show his love and told her to chase her real dream bravely. After that, they never met each other again.

In the romantic relationship between these two characters, there were only the scenes of intimacy appeared. For instance, Lin Tianjiao’s dream was to be an astronomer. But her parents thought it would be hard to be an astronomer. So they hoped their daughter could learn economics, then she could find a job and earn much

money. When Gao Xiang knew her real dream, he thought only to pursue the real dream that Lin Tianjiao would be happy. Therefore, he encouraged her to follow her heart and bought her the ticket of astronomy exhibition. Same with Gao Xiang, Lin Tianjiao also worried about his life and future. When Gao Xiang was forced to drop out of school because he exposed the improper behavior of school leaders to the education bureau, Lin Tianjiao tried to persuade him to admit defeated to school leaders. She thought staying at school and studying hard could gave them the good future, if not, his life could be messed up.

4.2.3 Romantic love

This kind of love is liking with an added element, namely, the arousal brought about by physical attraction and its concomitants (Sternberg, 1986, p.124). In the relationships of romantic love, the intimacy and passion components are indicated.

For example, the romantic relationship between the male character Gong Ning (the leader of a band) and the female character Song Shiqiao (university student) in the film “First time” (Han, 2012) was the type of romantic love. In the begaining of this film, Song Shiqiao’s mother hired Gong Ning to pretend as Song Shiqiao’s first love (her real first love died). Because Song Shiqiao got seriously sick and the end was coming. In the course of dating, Gong Ning brought her to many interesting places to make she felt happy, such as the place where he played music and the place where was full of school memory. Song Shiqiao helped him to relax the tense relationship with his father. Then, Gong Ning realized that he fell in love with her. He did not want to make her unhappy, so he chose not to tell her the truth. Later, Song Shiqiao died. After Gong Ning saw the gift from her, he found that she knew that he was not her real first love all the time.

The scenes indicated the intimacy component appeared when Song Shiqiao said one of the most important wish before she died was to see the snow, because she had never went out her hometown which was a city would never snow. In order to make

her happy, Gong Ning artificially did snow for her on the roof of her home. She was moved by it. Just like Gong Ning always tried his best to make her happy, Song Shiqiao also tried to help him to resolve his problem. Gong Ning's mother died in a car accident when he was young. Since that accident happened, his father despaired, started to spend much time on drinking every day, and ignored his son's growth. Gong Ning could not understand his father, so the relationship between them was so bad. Song Shiqiao told him to understand his father and brought him to the place where the accident happened. He saw his father was directing the traffic to avoid the tragedy happen again. Then, he started to understand what his father thought and felt. They both cared about each other and tried to support each other.

The scenes indicated the passion component appeared when Gong Ning brought Song Shiqiao to the beach for a date. Song Shiqiao told him that she kept what she wanted to tell her first love into the tape recorder all these years. Gong Ning could feel the love of her, he was just pretending as her first love, so he kissed her cheek. Then, Song Shiqiao gave him some candies, Gong Ning chose the orange flavor. She said, "It will help you remember this moment, the moment we became a couple." At that time, she had already knew Gong Ning was not her first love. But she thought she fell in love with him, so she was willing to build romantic relationship with him. She wanted to pursue the true love bravely before she died. Then, they kissed each other.

4.2.4 Consummate love

Consummate love results from the full combination of three components. It is a kind of love toward which many of us strive, especially in romantic relationships (Sternberg, 1986, p.124).

In the film "To our youth that is fading away" (Zhao, 2013), the romantic relationship between the male character Cheng Xiaozheng and female character Zheng Wei was consummate love. Chen Xiaozheng came from a poor family. He

always tried to be the best student, then he could get the chance of studying abroad. He thought it is the only way that could help him change his life. Zheng Wei came from a happy family. She always focused on what she like and rarely considered about the future. Once Zheng Wei broke Chen Xiaozheng's building model. Chen Xiaozheng was so angry because it is the work to earn money. During their fighting, He pushed her by accident. Zheng Wei also felt angry. After that, Zheng Wei started to play tricks on him in revenge. But Chen Xiaozheng just ignored her every time. Gradually, she found what she did become the actions for his attention. Her friends told her that she fell in love with him. Then, she tried to build the romantic relationship with him. Chen Xiaozheng accepted. However, after they graduated, Chen Xiaozheng got a chance to go abroad. He did not tell her. He chose to go abroad and gave up their relationship. At the end of story, Chen Xiaozheng came back, and met Zheng Wei again. He told her that he still loved her, she also said that she had not forgot him yet.

The romantic relationship of them included all the three components. Firstly, the scenes of intimacy were indicated as follows. One day, Zheng Wei went to library to find Chen Xiaozheng because of his birthday. She said she wanted to give a birthday gift to him, and she hoped they could meet at the park after night class. He rejected. After class, Chen Xiaozheng went back to the dormitory, but he could not stop thinking whether Zheng Wei could wait for him or not. He worried about her. Therefore, he went to the park and met her. This action shown Cheng Xiaozheng paid attention of Zheng Wei. Zheng Wei also paid attention of Cheng Xiaozheng all the time. At her birthday party, her friends gave a lot of expensive gifts to her. But Chen Xiaozheng just prepared a gift made by himself. He kept it instead of giving it to her because he did not want her friends to think he was poor. Zheng Wei saw his embarrassed face, then she brought him outside the party place, and told him that she only wanted to celebrate birthday with him.

Secondly, the scenes of passion component happened after they left Zheng Wei's birthday party. Zheng Wei found the gift in Chen Xiaozheng's pocket. It is a handmade little dragon, he made it because her nickname was "little dragon". She liked the gift so much, and thought it was more meaningful than other gifts. Then, they had a conversation as follows. Zheng Wei wanted Chen Xiaozheng to make a promise that he would not leave her in the future, he said, "Why is it that when we are all individuals one person can fall so much in love with another?" Zheng Wei said, "If changed places, even for just one day, you would understand what I mean." And Chen Xiaozheng said, "Since I've been with you, I am no longer myself before." They both realized how much they love each other, and changed for each other since they built the romantic relationship, so they kissed each other after these words.

Thirdly, the commitment component appeared when Chen Xiaozheng brought Zheng Wei to the dolphin show. After the show, Zheng Wei said that he wanted to touch dolphin. In order to satisfy her wish, Chen Xiaozheng told the staff, "I want to propose to my girlfriend today, but I do not have the ring now, can you just let her touch the dolphin?" This scene shown the long-term commitment of their romantic relationship.

4.3 Stereotype of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films

After investigating the love types of each romantic relationships in the selected Chinese romantic films, the stereotypes were also analyzed from the following aspects – characters and visual scenes. The results of these three aspects were tabulated in table 4.3, table 4.4, table 4.5, and table 4.6. And the examples in details were indicated follow these table.

4.3.1 Characters

First of all, to examine the characters of each picked romantic relationship, the study developed from three angles. The first one was the occupation and family

background, the second one was the view of love, and the third one was the characteristics.

Table 4.3: Occupation and family background

Romantic relationships	Occupation		Family background	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Kai & Ni	college Student	college Student	poor family happy family	rich family broken family
Mark & Jin Xiaoye	businessman	real estate agent of a small company	rich family broken family	poor family broken family
Kuan & Fang Rouyi	temporary worker	model	poor family happy family	poor family broken family
Gong Ning & Song Shiqiao	lead singer of an underground band	college student	poor family broken family	rich family broken family
Chen Xiaozheng & Zheng Wei	college student	college student	poor family broken family	rich family happy family
Li Xing & He Qiaoqiao	chef	pottery artist	rich family happy family	rich family, broken family
Hao Yi & Dong Dong	film producer	dancer	rich family happy family	poor family broken family
Chen Xun & Fang Hui	student	student	rich family happy family	rich family happy family

(Continued)

Table 4.3(Continued): Occupation and family background

Xia Luo & Ma Dongmei	famous singer	masseur	rich family broken family	poor family happy family
Xia Luo & Qiu Ya	famous singer	manager	rich family broken family	rich family happy family
Lin Xiao & Lu Shao	secretary	model	poor family happy family	rich family broken family
Gu Yuan & Gu Li	Financial Controller	Financial Controller	rich family, broken family	rich family, broken family
Daniel & Jiao Jiao	real estate agent of an international company	casino dealer	rich family broken family	poor family broken family
Gao Xiang & Lin Tianjiao	student	student	poor family broken family	rich family happy family

The occupations of these characters were various, like student, property agent, and businessman. Comparing the social status and salary of each occupation, the results showed that the occupation could be differentiated from white collar and blue collar. Such as the occupation of Mark and Jin Xiaoye from the film "Love" (Niu, 2012), the male character Mark was a businessman with high salary and good social status, so his occupation was a good work. But the female character Jin Xiaoye worked in a small real estate agency with unstable salary and low social status, so her occupation was the low work.

Then, comparing the family background of each character, the results showed that most people in romantic relationships came from opposite types of families, such as poor and rich family, happy and broken family.

For example, in the film “Love” (Niu, 2012), the female character Ni came from a rich but broken family. She could never worry about tuition and living, but she still felt unhappy with her broken family. She could not understand why her father always had new girlfriends who were much younger than her father.

On the contrary, the male character Kai, the boyfriend of Ni grew up in a poor family, so he had to do several part-time job to earn tuition and living. But he still felt happy with his complete family. His family always support his dream, so that he could fight for his dream freely.

Table 4.4: Characters’ the view of love

Romantic relationships	View of love	
	Male	Female
Kai & Ni	believe in true love, be willing to pay anything for love	have a doubtful attitude about true love, never accept love easily
Mark & Jin Xiaoye	have a doubtful attitude about love, never accept love easily	believe in in true love, pursue true love bravely
Kuan & Fang Rouyi	believe in true love, pursue true love bravely	believe in true love, pursue true love bravely
Gong Ning & Song Shiqiao	have a doubtful attitude about love	believe in true love, pursue true love bravely
Chen Xiaozheng & Zheng Wei	have a doubtful attitude about love, considering love built on the economic foundation	believe in true love, pursue true love bravely, be willing to pay anything for love
Li Xing & He Qiaoqiao	believe in true love, be willing to pay anything for love	believe in true love, pursue true love bravely

(Continued)

Table 4.4(Continued): Characters' the view of love

Hao Yi & Dong Dong	have a doubtful attitude about love, treat love as game	believe in true love, be willing to pay anything for love
Chen Xun & Fang Hui	believe in true love, pursue freedom in the relationship	believe in true love, be willing to pay anything for love
Xia Luo & Ma Dongmei	have a doubtful attitude about love, treat love as game	believe in true love, be willing to pay anything for love
Xia Luo & Qiu Ya	have a doubtful attitude about love, treat love as game	have a doubtful attitude about love, treat love as game
Lin Xiao & Lu Shao	believe in true love, be willing to pay anything for love	have a doubtful attitude about true love, but can not figure out the importance of love and family
Gu Yuan & Gu Li	believe in true love, be willing to pay anything for love	believe in true love, be willing to pay anything for love
Daniel & Jiao Jiao	have a doubtful attitude about love, treat love as game	believe in true love, be willing to pay anything for love
Gao Xiang & Lin Tianjiao	believe in true love, be willing to pay anything for love	have a doubtful attitude about true love, but can not figure out the importance of love and family

In the fourteen romantic relationships, there were seventeen out of twenty-eight characters believe in true love (positive view). They were always willing to pay anything themselves for their true love. And the rest eleven characters had doubtful attitude about true love (negative view). Generally, it was hard for them to accept someone's love, or usually struggled with love and other things during building

romantic relationships. In addition, in nine romantic relationships, male and female characters had opposite view of love. When male character believes in true love, the female character had doubtful attitude, and vice versa. Only in small part of romantic relationships (five), male and female characters had similar view of love, and the view was basically positive.

In the film “Breakup Buddies” (Ning, 2014), the male character Hao Yi and the female character Dong Dong showed opposite views of love. Hao Yi was a man who came from a rich family and worked as a film producer. He thought sex was important than love in his life so that he usually performed like a playboy who could easily had sex with women. This point was the coding scheme that he had a doubtful attitude about true love and he always treated love as game. So, when Dong Dong was serious in relationship, he felt annoyed and said, "We are the one-night stand, we have no future about getting married." The female character Dong Dong was a pure girl from the countryside. She could easily be attracted by others and fell in love with the person who made her moved. This point fitted the coding scheme that she always believe in in true love. And she was willing to do anything for the true love she thought appeared in the scene that she was willing to leave hometown for Hao Yi.

Table 4.5: Characteristic

Romantic relationships	Characteristic	
	Male	Female
Ni & Kai	simple, direct, usually appears words such as “love” and “romance”	stubborn, sharp, do not say love on her own
Mark & Jin Xiaoye	stubborn, sharp, do not say love on his own	simple, direct, usually appears words such as “love” and “romance”

(Continued)

Table 4.5(Continued): Characteristic

Fang Rouyi & Kuan	simple, direct, usually appears words such as “love” and “romance”	open, simple, direct, usually appears words such as “love” and “romance”
Gong Ning & Song Shiqiao	tender and considerate, do not say love on his own	tender and considerate, keep the love in her mind but do not perform it
Cheng Xiaozheng & Zheng Wei	stubborn, sharp, do not say love on his own	simple, direct, usually appears words such as “love” and “romance”
Li Xing & He Qiaoqiao	simple usually appears words such as “love” and “romance”	direct usually appears words such as "love" and "romance"
Hao Yi & Dong Dong	direct, humorous, usually say "one-night stand."	tender and considerate, keep the love in her mind
Chen Xun & Fang Hui	simple, direct, usually appears words such as “love” and “romance”	stubborn, silent, keep the love in her mind
Xia Luo & Ma Dongmei	simple, direct, keep the love in his mind	simple, direct, usually appears words such as “love” and “romance”
Xia Luo & Qiu Ya	simple, direct, usually appears words such as “love” and “romance”	
Lin Xiao & Lu Shao	tender and considerate, usually appears words such as “love” and “romance”	simple, direct, usually appears words such as “love” and “romance”

(Continued)

Table 4.5(Coninued): Characteristic

Gu Yuan & Gu Li	simple, direct, usually appears words such as “love” and “romance”	stubborn, sharp, do not say love on her own
Daniel & Jiao Jiao	tender and considerate, do not say love on his own	simple, direct, but do not tell love on her own
Gao Xiang & Lin Tianjiao	tender and considerate, do not say love on his own	stubborn, sharp, do not say love on her own

The table above showed how characters in the selected films expressed love. Thirteen characters usually uttered words such as “love” and “romance” quite often in the relationship, while the rest fifteen characters hid the feeling of love inside instead of speaking out. In the fourteen romantic relationships, there were ten relationships that at least one character was the person who always spoke the word “love” out.

For example, in the film “Tiny Times 4.0” (Guo, 2015), Gu Li and Gu Yuan was a couple with opposite feature about performing their love. Gu Yuan always spoke out his love, such as “I love you”, “I will always be with you”, and when his mother did not allow him to have relationship with Gu Li, he said, “You could not know how much I love Gu Li”.

On the contrary, Gu Li rarely spoke her love out. When she found that she was seriously sick, she intended to undertake it instead of telling Gu Yuan. Because she loved Gu Yuan so much, she cared about his future. She did not think that telling Gu Yuan the truth could change her terrible condition, but the truth might affect his life. So she asked one of her male friend to pretend to have sex with her. She thought it was the best way to keep Gu Yuan away from her and having a better life. She intended to perform her love in her actions instead of in words.

4.3.2 Visual Scenes

Table 4.6: Stereotype in visual aspect

Romantic relationships	Location	Scenes of turning point
Ni & Kai	Taipei (big city of Taiwan)	Mostly happened in public places, many people witness their turning point of romantic relationships
Mark & Jin Xiaoye	Beijing (capital of China)	Happened in both private places and public places, but without many people's witnesses
Fang Rouyi & Kuan	Taipei (big city of Taiwan)	Happened in both private places and public places, but without many people's witnesses
Gong Ning & Song Shiqiao	Xiamen (coastal city of China, famous for its landscape)	Happened in both private places and public places, but without many people's witnesses
Cheng Xiaozheng & Zheng Wei	Nanjing (big city of China, famous for its history)	Happened in both private places and public places, but without many people's witnesses
Li Xing & He Qiaoqiao	Beijing (capital of China), Shanghai (big city, developed economy)	Mostly happened in public places, many people witness their turning point of romantic relationships
Hao Yi & Dong Dong	Beijing (capital of China), Dali (small city, famous for its landscape)	Happened in both private places and public places, but without many people's witnesses

(Continued)

Table 4.6(Continued): Stereotype in visual aspect

Chen Xun & Fang Hui	Beijing (capital of China)	Happened in both private places and public places, but without many people's witnesses
Xia Luo & Ma Dongmei	Dalian (coastal city, important port of China)	Happened in both private places and public places, but without many people's witnesses
Xia Luo & Qiu Ya	Dalian (coastal city, important port of China)	Mostly happened in public places, many people witness their turning point of romantic relationship
Lin Xiao & Lu Shao	Shanghai (big city, developed economy)	Happened in both private places and public places, but without many people's witnesses
Gu Yuan & Gu Li	Shanghai (big city, developed economy)	Happened in both private places and public places, but without many people's witnesses
Daniel & Jiao Jiao	Macon (developed tourism), California (famous city of America)	
Gao Xiang & Lin Tianjiao	Xiamen (coastal city of China, famous for its landscape)	Mostly happened in public places, many people witness their turning point of romantic relationships

According to the results shown in the table 4.3, the romantic relationships described in the selected films mostly happened in big cities and coastal cities, such as Beijing the capital of China, Xiamen and Dalian the city which famous for its

landscape, and Shanghai the city which is well developed. In these big cities, the difference between people's classes is more visible, sometimes the comparison between the development level of the whole city and the individual's condition is apparent. Investigating the location of each film is also a way to examine these apparent differences.

For example, “Tiny Times 4.0” (Guo, 2015) described stories in Shanghai. Shanghai was the most developed city in China, so there were a plenty of images about high-rise buildings and modern lives. Lu Shao and Lin Xiao came from different stratum. After they fell in love with each other, every time they went on a date, the places were all emphasizing the feature of the developed and modern city. Such as the the figure 4.14, during the new year countdown, Lu Shao brought Lin Xiao to the Bund with the Oriental Pearl Tower in the background.



Figure 4.7: The Bund of Shanghai

Source: Guo, J. (2015). *Tiny Times 4.0* [Motion picture]. China: Zhejiang Huace Film & TV Co., Ltd.

Another example was the film “First time” (Han, 2012). The story of Gong Ning and Song Shiqiao happened in Xiamen, which was a coastal city famous for the beautiful landscape. In this film, many essential plots of this romantic relationship occurred on the beach, such as their first kiss and the time they decided to build a

romantic relationship. The following image was the scene that Song Shiqiao determined to start the romantic relationship with Gong Ning.



Figure 4.8: Beach of Xiamen

Source: Han, Y. (2012). *First time* [Motion picture]. China: BDI Film.

The results also showed the interpretation of romantic relationships as both the private and public things. There are only four of the fourteen picked romantic relationships describe scenes of the turning point in public places with many people witness. Except for the relationship between Daniel and Jiaojiao (because they keep their relationship by sending letters), the rest nine relationships are all described scenes of turning points in private places or public places without many people's witness.

For the result of describing love as a public thing, the film "Love" (Niu, 2012) gave example of this point. When the female character Ni was angry with the male character Kai for betraying her, in order to apologize to Ni, Kai chose to do it in front of the university. He thought that the more people saw his apology, the sincerer he became. Kai treats their relationship as a public thing. The following image showed him use a loud-speaker to apologize Ni in front of many students.



Figure 4.9: Kai apologized to Ni

Source: Niu, C. (2012). *Love* [Motion picture]. China: Huayi Brothers Media Corporation.



Figure 4.10: Xia Luo and Ma Dongmei was chatting privately

Source: Yan, F., & Peng, D. (2015). *Goodbye Mr. Loser* [Motion picture]. China: Happy Mahua Pictures.

In the film “Goodbye Mr. Loser” (Yan & Peng, 2015), the romantic relationship between Xia Luo and Ma Dongmei described with the communication mostly happened in private places and public places without many people’s witness. The scene that Ma Dongmei asked Xia Luo whether he likes her or not, and Xia Luo admitted happened in an old building with anybody around (see figure 4.10).

4.4 The influential elements in romantic relationships

To make stories complete and attractive, two characters in romantic relationship frequently face obstacles which impede the development of their relationship. At the same time, the promoting elements also appear to challenge the obstacles. Therefore, in this study, the influential elements of the fourteen romantic relationships were examined from two angles – the elements which promoted the development of relationships and the elements which impeded the development of relationships. The results showed in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Influential elements

Romantic relationships	Promoting development	Impeding development
Kai & Ni	Kai's persistence of true love	Ni's doubtful attitude in the relationship, and the third person involved in their relationship
Mark & Jin Xiaoye	Jin Xiaoye's desire of having a complete family	the hesitancy of love result from Mark's previous unsuccessful experience
Fang Rouyi & Kuan	Both two characters' desire of having new life	the gap of social status and family background
Gong Ning & Song Shiqiao	Regularly understand each other's advantages while pretending lovers	Song Shiqiao's incurable disease
Cheng Xiaozheng & Zheng Wei	Zheng Wei's persistence of true love	the gap of social status and family background

(Continued)

Table 4.7(Continued): Influential elements

Li Xing & He Qiaoqiao	Both two characters' persistence of true love	He Qiaoqiao's incurable disease
Hao Yi & Dong Dong	Dong Dong's persistence of true love	the different attitude of love
Chen Xun & Fang Hui	both two characters' desire of getting together with people who they love	the different attitude of love
Xia Luo & Ma Dongmei	Ma Dongmei's persistence of true love	the gap of social status and family background
Xia Luo & Qiu Ya	interest-driven	the different attitude of love
Lin Xiao & Lu Shao	both two characters' persistence of true love	the gap of social status and family background
Gu Yuan & Gu Li	both two characters' persistence of true love	interference of parents incurable disease
Daniel & Jiao Jiao	Constantly understand each other's advantages during communicating	Daniel's doubtful attitude in the relationship and the hesitancy of love Jiao Jiao focuses on wrong person
Gao Xiang & Lin Tianjiao	Constantly get each other's advantages in communication	interference of parents

4.4.1 The elements promoting development

As shown in the table 4.5, all of the elements which promoted the development

of romantic relationships were the subjective reasons. The characters' persistence of true love was the main reason to make their relationships continue. And the desire of building the new life and the feeling which came from the gradually formed understanding of each other were the secondary elements to develop romantic relationships.

For example, the romantic relationships between Hao Yi and Dong Dong in the film "Breakup Buddies" (Ning, 2014). The element which made their romantic relationship continue was the persistence of the female character Dong Dong. Based on the results shown in 4.1 and 4.2, we can see the characteristic and view of love between them were totally opposite, it was the reason why their romantic relationship had obstacles. However, they still got married at the end of story. Dong Dong's behavior made Hao Yi moved. Such as, in order to keep Hao Yi's belief, she even left her hometown where she had not left before for him. The romantic relationship between them could not be continued without Dong Dong's persistence.

In the film "A wedding invitation" (Wu, 2013), the reason that made the male character Li Xing and the female character He Qiaoqiao's romantic relationships prosperous was their persistence of true love. After they broke up when they were college students, in order to get together with Li Xing again, He Qiaoqiao took a part in the treatment actively. Also, in order to gain Li Xing's back, He Qiaoqiao asked her male friend to pretend as her boyfriend to test his love. Later, when He Qiaoqiao got seriously sick again, Li Xing did not mind whether He Qiaoqiao could be with him for a long time or not, so he still proposed to her and chose to give her support at the end of her life. He Qiaoqiao died at the end of story, but their persistence of true love gave them a happy ending – He Qiaoqiao died without regret, and her death could not destroy Li Xing's future life because he thought she would be in his heart forever.

4.3.2 The elements impeding development

The elements which impeded the development of romantic relationships in the

selected films could be both subjective and objective. Subjectively, people always felt confusing or sometimes even did not believe in true love. Objectively, the influence of society and family, including extraneous love affairs, different social status, parental interference, and incurable disease are the obstacles of romantic relationships.

The most common subjective element was the different attitude of love. The different views of love usually lead to a lot of conflicts in the romantic relationships. And the happening and settling of those conflicts make stories more attractive. For example, in the film “Fleet of time” (Zhang, 2014), the male character Chen Xun and the female character Fang Hui had very different views of love, Chen Xun needed a girlfriend who could support and shared his dream. But Fang Hui usually considered the practical aspect, so she usually played a role of managing her boyfriend. The actions which Fang Hui did to manage him made him felt uncomfortable. Therefore, their romantic relationship was beset with a crisis.

Then, incurable disease is an element which is widely used in recently Chinese romantic film to cause conflicts in romantic relationships. Three out of fourteen selected films also caused the incurable disease as the beginning cause of unhappy romantic relationships – “First time” (Han, 2012), “A wedding invitation” (Wu, 2013), and “Tiny Times 4.0” (Guo, 2015). The female characters in these three films all had incurable disease, two of them finally died.

Another objective element which impeded the development of the romantic relationship was the parental interference. This element is showed in a lot of films as the primary or secondary obstacle in the romantic relationships. The film “Tiny Times 4.0” (Guo, 2015) for example, Gu Yuan’s mother did not allow her son to have a romantic relationship with Gu Li because Gu Li’s family went bankrupt. And in the film “Yesterday once more” (Yao, 2016), when the two main characters fell in love with each other, parent of the heroine Lin Tianjiao knew and requested her not to talk with Gao Xiang anymore. Because her parents wanted her to care about study only.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1 Summary of findings

This study examines the portrayal of romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films in recent years. The findings are summarized from components, types, stereotype, and influential elements aspects as follows.

5.1.1 Components of romantic relationships

In the fourteen romantic relationships from ten selected Chinese romantic films, the researcher found all three components (intimacy, passion and commitment) as mentioned in the Triangular theory of love (Sternberg, 1986). And the scenes which contained the characteristics of passion component appeared in eight relationships, while the scenes of commitment component appeared in seven relationships.

5.1.2 Types of romantic relationships

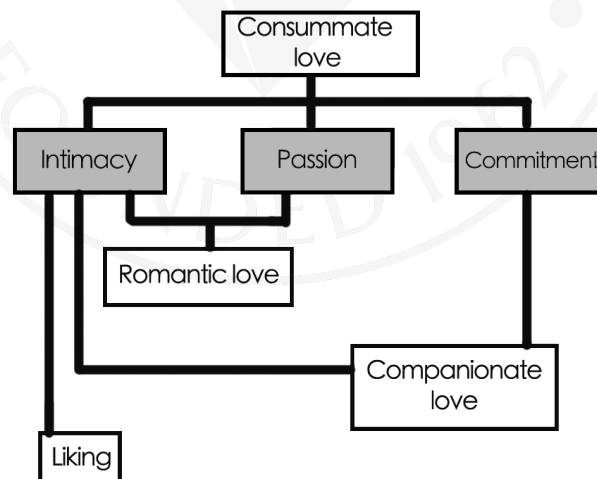


Figure 5.1: Types of romantic relationships

After figuring out the content of three components in the romantic films, the researcher examined the types of romantic relationships in these films. As figure 5.1

showed, four out of seven types, companionate love, liking, romantic love, and consummate love, were included in the fourteen romantic relationships.

Three romantic relationships were companionate love which contained intimacy and commitment components. Other three romantic relationships were liking which contained only intimacy component. While four romantic relationships were romantic love which contained intimacy and passion components. And other four romantic relationships were consummate love which contained all the three components.

5.1.3 Stereotype of romantic relationships

5.1.3.1 characters

For the stereotype of romantic relationships, the researcher firstly considered about characters. The findings were summarized from four aspects: occupation, family background, view of love, and characteristic.

Firstly, a couple in each of the fourteen relationships had different occupations, which mainly indicated contrast of social status, between the blue collars and white collars.

Secondly, the family background of these characters was also indicated significant contrast, between the rich and the poor.

Thirdly, view of love of each character in the romantic relationships tended to be opposite. If one character possessed positive view of love, another character tended to possessed negative view of love.

Lastly, the way of characters expressing the word “love” was also opposite. If one character described as a person who always mentioned the word “love”, another character tended to express his or her “love” in actions instead of speaking it out.

5.1.3.2 Visual scenes

5.1.3.2.1 Location

The romantic relationships mostly occurred in big cities of China, such as

Beijing, the capital of China; Shanghai, the most well-developed city of China; Xiamen and Dalian, the coastal cities which all famous for the beautiful landscape. These cities provided social diversity, people from different social classes had an opportunity to meet.

5.1.3.2.2 Eyewitness

The findings showed that the scenes of turning point in ten out of fourteen romantic relationships happened without witnesses.

5.1.4 Influential elements of romantic relationships

The influential elements were examined from both subjective and objective aspects. Subjectively, internal reasons of characters were influential causes of the relationships. Objectively, the family and social status were external reasons that were influential to romantic relationships.

5.1.4.1 Promoting elements

The findings showed that the character's persistence of true love, the desire of building the new life, constantly understand each other's advantages, and interest-driven were subjective elements which promote the romantic relationships. Objective reason was not found to be a promoting elements in the study.

5.1.4.2 Impeding elements

The findings showed the subjective element were the doubt and hesitancy of true love, while influence of social status and family were objective elements which mainly impede the romantic relationships.

5.2 Discussion

After summarizing the findings of this study, several significances can be seen obviously. The researcher mainly discusses four points as follows.

5.2.1 Female have higher status in nowadays society

The Confucian culture influences Chinese society and people for two thousand

years. Confucianism emphasizes three cardinal guides in the aspect of Chinese people's relationships: ruler guides subject, father guides son, husband guides wife. The ideology like this is widely accepted in Chinese people's mind. Especially the third one shows the gender difference in romantic relationships, female always have lower status in the romantic relationship in past years ("The view of love in Chinese traditional culture", 2010).

However, romantic films from 2010 to 2016 shows that in nowadays society, female have higher status than before. Traditional thoughts of romantic relationships are partly changed. Female are not forced to have marriage, and they can have their own perspective about love and romantic relationships. This leads to the phenomenon that female past their marriageable age but still do not want to find a partner. At present, there are nearly 200 million singles in China. The number shows the male singles are 33.66 million more than female singles nationwide, but in urban China, especially in big cities, the number of female singles is larger than male singles. For example, the number of male singles in Shanghai is only one-fourth of female singles. (Gao, 2017) Most nowadays female are highly educated and have higher salary, so they can be independent, confident and free to decide whether they should build romantic relationships or not and how to build relationships.

5.2.2 Open relationships in nowadays Chinese society

According to the findings, there is a significance that all the three components appear in selected films, especially the intimacy component, which appears in all the romantic relationships. The intimacy and passion appear more than commitment in films.

5.2.2.1 Intimacy

Nowadays, people can easily have intimate relationships with anyone they like. This point is opposite to the perspective in Chinese traditional culture. In old times, there is an old saying indicates the essential conditions of building romantic

relationships: 父母之命,媒妁之言, if two people want to build the romantic relationship, they should have dictates of parents and words of matchmakers firstly. Therefore, the phenomenon of two strangers getting married without any emotional foundation usually happen at those times.

Romantic relationships are no longer depend on parents and matchmakers. Building romantic relationships become easier, and people who in relationships usually live together but do not want to form a family. In Korea, which has the similar culture with China, the romantic relationships are also as open as in China. With a large number of young Korean people go to the United States to study, they are gradually deepened by the influence of American culture. Intimate relationship is also acceptable for them without considering marriage (“Korean’s view of love”, 2011).

5.2.2.2 Passion

Passion becomes the main component of romantic relationships. Sex is not sacred behavior anymore. For example, in Guangzhou, as many as 80% of premarital sex and nearly 70% in Shanghai. Chinese attitudes toward sex tend to be open, and concept such as virginity change greatly. Li Yinhe, a famous sociologist said that in terms of sex, the most humane arrangement should be sought. Nowadays love should be the free-style love, and it should be recognized as pluralism (Xu, 2015).

This point is similar in South Korea. Nowadays, high school students kissing in the bus station or subway is a normal phenomenon. Sexual experience before marriage is common among young people and one-night stands are considered as innocuous things. The more common phenomenon is that young people and friends can drink all night, then, some of them will naturally have one-night stand with other people (“Korean’s view of love”, 2011).

5.2.2.3 Commitment

The study of Li, Shen and Yang (2008, p.173) emphasizes the importance of

commitment in Chinese traditional view of love. People who intend to have the romantic relationship with others should commit to each other firstly. Then, they should take responsible for their marriage and family, and they both have duty to maintain the relationship.

However, the commitment is no longer the most important component in romantic relationships. Just like the results of Tang and Chen's (2013, p.84) research, Chinese people nowadays always have short processes of romantic relationships from strangers to lovers, and they do not care whether their behaviors are socially suitable or not anymore, they only do what they want to do in romantic relationships. Marriage becoming unnecessary in people's mind is one of the evidences. China is now experiencing the decline of newly registered marriage rate from 9.1% in 2013 to 6.3% in 2014. This is accompanied by a delay in the average age of marriage (Li, 2015).

In South Korea, the number of young people who choose to have marriage is also experiencing the decline. In 2014, 305,500 new couples were married, declined 5.4% from the previous year. But the reason is not the same with China. According to the Central Daily news of South Korea, the reason is the problem of youth unemployment. Among the graduates of Korean universities in 2014, two of every five graduates are temporary workers. In the first half of 2015, the number of unemployed youth aged 20 to 29 reached 410,000. The instability of work directly led to young people can not love and afraid to get married (Wang, 2015).

5.2.3 The functions of setting up the story background in Chinese big cities

Nowadays, Chinese filmmakers like to set up the story background in several big cities of China. There are two reasons for this phenomenon.

Firstly, big cities can provide social diversity. In big cities, people from different classes can meet each other easier than in small towns. Because more and more people from small towns and countryside intend to find opportunities of jobs

and lives. In 2017, the number of external population of four big cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen are 8.07 million, 9.8 million, 5.33 million, and 8.06 million (Lin, 2017). When two people have a big gap of social status, the romantic relationship between them will be full of conflicts. These conflicts make the story more interesting. The tough life of these characters are in sharp contrast to the luxuriant city background. This is also a way to attract audience's attention.

Secondly, setting up the story background in big cities is benefit for Chinese romantic films export. Film is one of the products that are widely accepted by worldwide audience throughout the cultural transmission. Therefore, it should play an important role in the foreign cultural trade (Daisy, 2016). According to the report about the total revenue of overseas distribution from 2010 to 2016 (Gu, 2016), the results are showed in the table 5.1.

Table 5.1: Total revenue of overseas distribution

Years	Total revenue of overseas distribution (yuan)
2010	3517 million
2011	2024 million
2012	1063 million
2013	1414 million
2014	1870 million
2015	2770 million
2016	3825 million

In order to keep the film export prosper, filmmakers have to cater to worldwide audience. The famous viewpoints are used as location of the important scenes. It is one way to attract attention of foreign audience.

5.2.4 The similarities of conflicts between romantic relationships in Chinese

romantic films and Hollywood romantic films

Western style romantic relationships in Chinese films is another factor that can boost the export. Because the film industry of Hollywood is the most well-developed for a long time, and audience from all over the world are familiar with Hollywood format. According to results of Grindon (2010), which mainly examined format of Hollywood films, the researcher found three conflicts were similar to Chinese films: parental interference, personal development versus self-sacrifice, and different social status.

Parental interference is the first similar conflict. Parents, particularly fathers, represent the established order, reasoned judgment as opposed to the passion of lovers. In *Meet the parents* (Roach, 2010), Greg, the male character endures the torments of his girlfriend's family before he can realize his engagement. The father, former CIA interrogator, turns his professional skills on the innocent young man and almost sabotages the romance. This conflict significantly appears in Chinese romantic films. For example, the relationships in the film *"Yesterday once more"* (Yao, 2016) and *"Tiny times 4.0"* (Guo, 2014) suffered the same problems. Lin Tianjiao's parents and Lu Shao's father did not allow them to have romantic relationships with the person he and she like in the beginning of these two films.

Personal development versus self-sacrifice to relationships is the second similar conflict. In many cases, personal growth involves achieving career goals, and if people want to achieve the goals, he or she need to give up something important to them, such as the chance to stay with lovers forever. As Lord Arthur Goring tells Mrs. Laura Cheveley in the Hollywood film *"An ideal husband"* (Parker, 1999), "Love cannot be bought, it can only be given. To give and not expect return that is what lies at the heart of love." And Kristine Brounovska Karnick, another role in this film explained, "Both partners must make some sacrifice to reach the correct balance between professionals and personal concerns." In Chinese film *"To our youth that is*

fading away” (Zhao, 2013), Chen Xiaozheng met this conflict in his romantic relationship. When he faced the option between his girlfriend and the opportunity of studying abroad, he feels so struggle. The opportunity of studying abroad was his personal development because he came from a poor family and always had strong desire to break away from the poor situation. Finally, he chose to achieve his personal development because he thought his future was more important than his love.

Different social status between two characters is another similar conflict. Social status has effects on believe and behavior, and it is difficult to change. Whenever a person is forced to change, the person will feel unhappy. For example, the Hollywood film “Notting hill” (Michell, 1993) describe a story of a simple bookstore owner fell in love with the most famous film star. The social status of two main characters were different. Since they built a romantic relationship, they suffered the pressure from media. And the thinking and behaviors of them facing this problem is also different. Jolanda Jetten, professor of social psychology at the University of Queensland said, “As people get richer, they start to feel satisfied, but at some stage, the satisfaction will not increase.” And she also said there are many high-income people can not stop pursuing the wealth, so they might spend more time making money but not family and individual spiritual life. However, people living in poverty are used to find ways to improve their life satisfaction and well-being without being confined to money and materialism. Such as, they spend more time with family. to These differences usually make them attract each other in the beginning, but as the time goes by, they will become obstacle of relationship (Savage, 2017). In Chinese film “Breakup buddies” (Ning, 2013), Hao Yi was a rich man but lack of happiness in his life, and he treat love as game. Dong Dong came from a poor family, but she was always simple and pure. She always believed in true love and pursue it bravely. Therefore, during the process of they building relationship, the obstacle of social status appeared.

5.2.5 Negative effects of films

The romantic relationships of Hollywood style make Chinese romantic films accepted by both Chinese audience and foreign audience. However, these films also start to lack Chinese cultural features. For example, relating to the top part, passion becomes an important component which frequently appeared in nowadays Chinese romantic films. When Chinese teenagers watch these scenes, they may blindly imitate the sexual behaviors in films. This may lead to the rate of abortion increase. Before 1979, the number of abortions was less than five million annually. Until 1981, numbers were rising due to the country's family planning policy. Later, as the policy relaxed, the number of abortion declined. However, by 2000, the figure started to rise again. In 2007, it rose to 7.6 million and in 2008, it rose to 9.2 million. In 2013, 13 abortions were conducted each year, and the ages of people who get abortions became younger and younger (Li, 2015). The Science and Technology Institute of the State Health and Family Planning Commission conducted a nationwide survey of large-scale induced abortion. The results showed that in all abortion women, the proportion of women under the age of 25 is 47.5%, and the first pregnancy in the proportion of abortion reaches 35.8% ("Concept of sexuality in China is increasingly diversified and open", 2015).

And in these films, most female characters are from low social status. After meeting the male character who is rich, then, her life starts to change. This format may give young girls wrong information that if they meet a rich boy, their lives will be changed. If they blindly believe in this mode, there also will be bad influences appear in their lives. Women want to look for money more than love. The dowry for a marriage is one of the most obvious evidence. The male has to give money to the female, or the female may not marry with him. In recent years, the dowry in Gansu province ranging from 80000 yuan to 200000 yuan. Some people even think that the dowry represents the price of woman (Wang, Y., 2018). If the dowry is lower than they want, they would rather give up their love. And nowadays, if a single man wants

to find a partner, he should firstly have his own property (Li, 2012).

5.3 Limitations

After summarizing and discussing the findings, the limitations appeared during the process of examining Chinese romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films are indicated as follows from two aspects.

5.3.1 Reliability limitation

The reliability limitation is the first limitation of this study. This limitation exists because the researcher is a beginner of academic researches, and she can only do the research by herself without any team member. Therefore, the researcher built the coding scheme based on her knowledge and interpretation which may raise question of credibility. However, the researcher tried her best with integrity.

5.3.2 Theory limitation

The fundamental theory the researcher uses is another limitation. This limitation exists because of the Triangular theory of love is a theory that Sternberg published in 1986 in America, but the romantic relationships described in the selected romantic films are from the time period between 2010 to 2016 in China. Therefore, the differences of research times and places cause that the main direction of study has limitation. The Triangular theory of love points that the romantic relationship makes up by three components – intimacy, passion, and commitment. The researcher follows this perspective and applied it to examine the types of Chinese romantic relationships. However, Chinese romantic relationships may have their own features, and these features may make new types except the seven types included in the theory.

5.4 Recommendation for future application

According to the perspective of media influencing audience mentioned in chapter one, the stakeholders of this research which show the portrayal of Chinese

romantic relationships in Chinese romantic films are in two aspects: the side of making influences and the side of receiving influences.

5.4.1 For Chinese filmmakers

The side of making influences is Chinese filmmakers. As shown in the discussion part, we can learn that Chinese romantic films in nowadays are so similar with Hollywood. It is a phenomenon shows that Chinese romantic films become more international in recent years, but there is also a trend about blindly imitating films of other countries. Therefore, finding the balance between the internationalize of Chinese films and keeping positive Chinese culture elements is the most important thing that Chinese filmmakers should consider first.

5.4.2 For Chinese audience

The side of receiving influences is Chinese audiences. Chinese audience needs to enhance the ability to figure out the information which Chinese film transfer to them is good or not. According to the findings and discussion part, most romantic relationships describe in nowadays Chinese romantic films are like the "Cinderella" mode, usually at the beginning of the film, one side especially the female side of the romantic relationship is a normal girl came from a poor family and has an unfavorable work. This girl usually meets a handsome boy came from a rich family and has a great salary. From the positive side, we can say stories like this is encouraging people to believe in true love. But actually, from the negative side, some audience, especially youth will focus on the wrong point, like poor girls can have a better life by building romantic relationships with rich boys. It is not a good way to help youth shape the good perspective about love.

5.5 Recommendations for future research

In terms of the recommendation for future researchers who interest in romantic films or romantic relationships, the researcher of this study provides several

recommendations as follows.

5.5.1 Recommendations in direction of study

For the direction of future study, the researcher recommends to examine the films from another time period. Because this study only covers the films between 2010 and 2016, but during in the time of society developing, films in different time periods show different features of society at that time. For example, investigating the film from 1980s to 1990s is a good direction for future researchers. Films in these years are full of diversity, because three generations of Chinese representative directors made high quality films, films of each generations reflect their different life experiences and thoughts. Therefore, films of the time from 1980s to 1990s are worth to be examined.

Then, the samples of this study are selected from the film-rating website which called Douban, similar to IMDb. The box office and scores of films are both the standard of sample selection, the researcher select films both have high box office and high scores. However, there are some films have high box office but low scores. So the researcher also recommends to examine films with high box office but low scores.

5.5.2 Recommendations in methodology

For the methodology of future researchers, if the time is enough, researchers can choose to increase the number of samples. Then, the results of their studies may become more accurate.

Besides changing the number of samples, the type of sample can be changed as well. For example, this study focuses on the romantic relationships in Chinese films, future researchers can choose films of other countries. And if the paper will be presented in English, the films in English can be a good choice to avoid the problems caused by translation. It is also another way to make researches more accurate. In this study, the researcher chooses to do the qualitative research, and for future researches, she recommends to do the quantitative research. Because the quantitative

research can make the results more objective and directly perceived through the senses. Initially, this study mentioned the films influence audience's perspective and behaviors. If the future researchers choose quantitative research, they can expand the content of the study, to make the research not only study the portrayal but also study the influence of the portrayal on the audience.



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APPENDIX

Synopsis of Ten Chinese Romantic Films

1. Goodbye Mr. Loser

Release time: 30.09.2015

Box office: 1,441,860,000 yuan

Douban score: 7.4

Synopsis: In the real world, Xia Luo is a man who never success. One day he went to a wedding of his first love, he drunk and destroyed the wedding. After that, he through the time and space to his high school time. With the knowledge from the present world, he changed everything. Later, he becomes a famous singer, married to his first love, but his present wife married to his friends. Finally, he felt void and loss, the successful dream wakes up.

2. Tiny Times 4.0

Release time: 09.07.2015

Box office: 488,570,000 yuan

Douban score: 4.6

Synopsis: It's a story about love, friendship, and business of 4 girls. In this movies, the love relationship of these 4 girls constantly influenced by material life, family reasons and may other elements. And this story shows the audience the darkness of upper classes.

3. Breakup Buddies

Release time: 30.09.2014

Box office: 1,170,020,000 yuan

Douban score: 7.0

Synopsis: A man called Geng Hao divorced with his wife then he felt frustrated and decided to go to Dali (a city of Yunnan province which known as a place for healing the pain of heart) with his best friend. During the way to Dali, he met many kinds of girls and have some exciting experience with them. Finally, he arrived Dali, those experience heal his pain of heart and determined to restart his life as well.

4. Fleet of Time

Release time: 05.12.2014

Box office: 588,820,000 yuan

Douban score: 5.3

Synopsis: This love story happened in 90s China, all the main characters were high school students at that time. During the process of growing up, their love have been forbidden by parents, schools and even the society, but they still tried to do what they want to do, but it is a pity that finally their persistence have been defeated by the reality. (The pain of youth)

5. To our youth that is fading away

Release time: 26.04.2013

Box office: 719,210,000 yuan

Douban score: 6.6

Synopsis: The story happened in 80s China, and it's a love story of a group of college students which have different family status and personalities. A boy Chen Xiaozheng gave up his first love and chose to study abroad, his lover Zheng Wei chose married to a rich man. A girl chose to be the mistress of a man just because of the true love she thinks. Just like the last movie, it is also a story about the pain of youth.

6. A wedding invitation

Release time: 12.04.2013

Box office: 192,840,000

Douban score: 5.7

Synopsis: When the two main characters were students, they make a decision about that if they still haven't married after 5 years, they can stay together, can be a couple. After 5 years, the girl prepared for fulfilling their commitment, but the boy has already engaged with another girl. She felt very sad and decided to recover the relationship with them. With the help of her best friend, she finally finds the boy's love back.

7. Love

Release time: 13.02.2012

Box office: 136,730,000 yuan

Douban score: 7.0

Synopsis: This movie indicates a love story of 3 couples who are from Beijing and Taipei. This movie shows the elements which influence their love, for example, the different culture of Beijing and Taipei, the different financial situation, and many others which make the story more complicated.

8. First time

Release time: 08.06.2012

Box office: 35,800,000 yuan

Douban score: 6.2

Synopsis: Song Shiqiao is a girl who is seriously sick and the medicine she takes would lead to memory deterioration. So she records all the words she wants to talk to her first love Gong Ning. Then her mother hired a boy to pretend Gong Ning. Later,

both Song and Gong fall in love with each other, but Gong feels guilty about his lie and he also thinks that he is not the person Song really love. Finally, Song died. Through the records, Gong understands Song has already known his lie long time ago.

9. Beijing meets Seattle 2: The book of love

Release time: 29.04.2016

Box office: 786,550,000 yuan

Douban score: 6.5

Synopsis: The woman Jiao Jiao is a Casino or who always have problems in her love life, she cannot deal with the relationship with 3 men. The man Luo Daniu is a successful land agent. The two persons didn't know each other before, but start to communicate by email because of a book. Through the process of communication, they help each other to solve problems in their lives and finally find they fall in love with each other.

10. Yesterday once more

Release time: 22.04.2016

Box office: 179,870,000 yuan

Douban score: 6.4

Synopsis: This love story is about a girl who is the best student in the high school, everyone like her but actually she isn't happy because she thinks she has to be the best student for her mother, for schools, for everyone in her life, but not for herself and the boy who only has a father in jail and a blind grandpa of his family. He is totally a bad student in most people's mind, but he doesn't care about what people think about him. The boy encouraged the girl to have her own dream and try best to achieve. However, the boy left the school because he exposed the truth of this school. Since that, they never meet each other again, the love between them has been kept in their deep heart.

BIODATA

Name-Surname: Xiuzhen Huang

Sex: Female

Nationality: Chinese

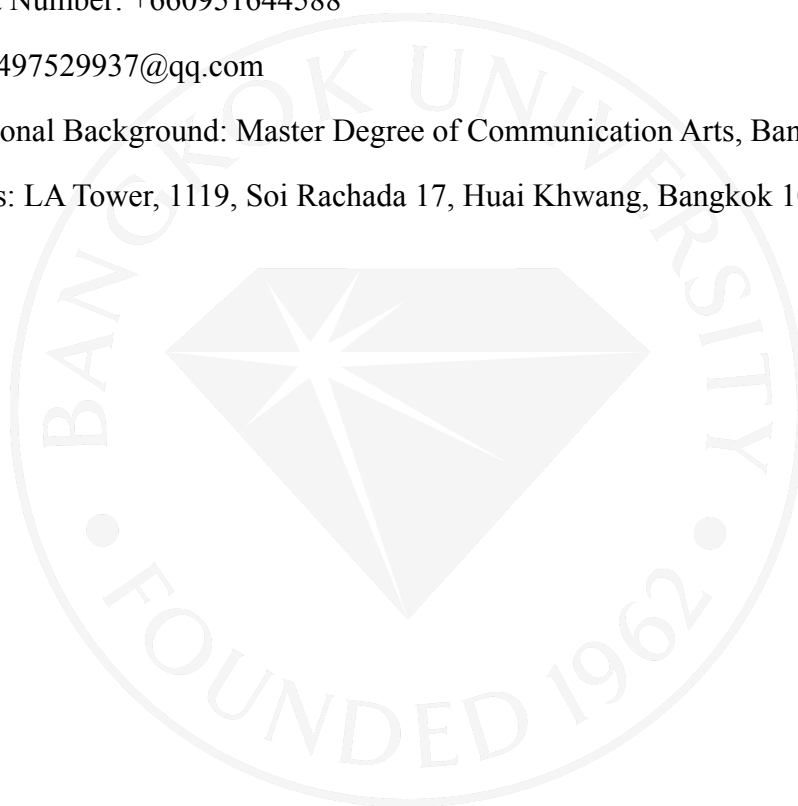
Date of Birth: 2nd August 1992

Contact Number: +660951644588

Email: 497529937@qq.com

Educational Background: Master Degree of Communication Arts, Bangkok University

Address: LA Tower, 1119, Soi Rachada 17, Huai Khwang, Bangkok 10900



Bangkok University

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Mr./Mrs./Ms Xiuzhen Huang now living at Bangkok
Soi 48 Street Sukumvit
Sub-district Phra Khanong District Khlong Toei
Province Bangkok Postal Code 10100 being a Bangkok
University student, student ID 7580301542
Degree level ☐ Bachelor ☒ Master ☐ Doctorate
Program M. Com. Arts Department - School Graduate School
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