

# Disney IP Industry Analysis and Its Economic Impact

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**Abstract**—Disney’s transformation from a small studio to an awe-inspiring business empire is mainly due to its continuously improving IP industry chain layout and comprehensive protection of intellectual property rights. Disney’s intellectual property rights cover multiple aspects such as copyrighted works, trademarks, patents, digital assets, etc. IP profit models mainly include joint marketing, copyright revenue, online or offline retail stores, etc. The Disney IP industry chain covers original creation, film and television production, advertising, theme parks and resorts, licensing and derivatives, as well as digital entertainment and streaming media, forming a complete IP ecosystem. Disney’s IP economy has created huge direct benefits. Disney promotes its brand and achieves economic benefits through diversified business operations and comprehensive intellectual property protection. Through integrated marketing and emotional marketing, it promotes the sales of IP products, strengthens the value of Disney’s content IP, and jointly promotes the development of Disney IP’s commercial value and influence. However, Disney may pay attention to the negative impact of copyright abuse in the future, as well as the use of technology and Internet distribution methods to improve consumer satisfaction.

**Keywords**—Disney, IP economy, copyright protection, integrated marketing

## I. INTRODUCTION

Disney is one of the most famous media companies in the world. Firstly, Disney has well-known Disneyland parks, including Walt Disney World Resort, Disneyland Resort, Disneyland Paris, Shanghai Disney, Hong Kong Disneyland, and Tokyo Disney Resort (Chapman, 2021). Disneyland not only brings huge profits to the Disney Company but also boosts the local economy. For example, it almost does wonders for the Florida economy (Josephson, 2023). According to a 2011 report, “The \$18.2 billion in annual economic activity generated locally by Walt Disney Parks and Resorts accounts for 2.5 percent of Florida’s gross domestic product.” In 2009, more than one person in fifty people was employed directly or indirectly by Disney World and its resorts in Floridians.

In addition, the notable IPs owned by Disney include Mickey Mouse and its Friends, The Lion King, Cinderella, Beauty and the Beast, and so on (GalvanizedStrength, 2017). Disney has at least 4,000 registered trademarks currently, which include movies, Disney characters, corporate arms, theme parks, and other commercial enterprises (Morales, 2021). In 2019, Disney saw a revenue of approximately 70 billion dollars and 66% of it is revenue generated by IP-intensive areas of its functioning. So Disney actively protects its independently developed intellectual property, such as Mickey Mouse and his friends. Furthermore, Disney also expands its intellectual property portfolio through partnerships and acquisitions with other intellectual property-intensive companies. This leads to Disney

expanding its commercial influence and further increasing the number of IPs belonging to Disney. In 1995, Disney acquired Capital Cities, combining the profitable television network and its ESPN cable service with Disney’s Hollywood film and television studios, giving Disney a significant position in the fields of film entertainment, cable television, broadcasting, and telephone lines (Desai, 2020).

Finally, with the popularization of the Internet and the development of technology, Disney has developed online businesses such as “Disney+” and extended the product industry chain to further enhance IP revenue. In terms of people’s consumption of Disney, the media network has the highest profit, bringing about 33% of the total business volume to Walt Disney Company, while the D2C platform has the fastest growth in contribution and growth rate (SS Rana & Co, 2020).

For Disney, copyright awareness is the core, so copyright protection is necessary. This has promoted the improvement of copyright laws in the United States to ensure the security of Disney IP. In 1928, Walt Disney released the first Mickey Mouse animated film. In 1976, the maximum copyright protection period for Mickey Mouse from 56 years to 75 years. Five years before the expiration of Mickey Mouse’s copyright, Congress once again changed this plan. In 1998, Congress passed the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act of 1998, which resulted in Mickey Mouse’s copyright protection not ending until 2023. It can be seen that Disney is not only the media group that pays the most attention to copyright protection but also promotes the improvement and progress of the entire American copyright system (The IP Law Blog, 2016). Disney’s financial profits depend on a strong copyright protection system. Therefore, it is representative and of historical and practical significance to take Disney as the research object to study the impact of IP on economic benefits.

This paper will explain how Disney IP impacts Disney’s development and people’s consumption of Disney, and how Disney attracts people to consume through marketing methods around IP such as hunger marketing. At the end of the article, it will analyze how Disney will combine high-tech with IP to create new products under the influence of future technology. Disney will use the Internet to analyze consumer profiles to identify audience segments. Disney then knows what kind of IP to create to attract fans and consumers.

## II. THE BASIC DESCRIPTION OF IP AND DISNEY IP

### A. The Definition of IP

In recent years, Intellectual Property (IP) has become a hot topic in the different fields of various countries and has been given various meanings. Intellectual property refers to creations of the mind, the best-known types are patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets (Wikipedia, n.d.).

Unique IP can increase the competitive advantage of the products and help establish the market position of the companies. The earliest records relating to Intellectual Property date back to the 6th century BCE, from Sybaris in Ancient Greece. It supposedly granted a yearlong exclusivity for bakers to make their culinary inventions (ABOU NAJA, 2020).

IP refers to cross-media content created by individuals or businesses, disseminated through multiple media platforms, and expressed in the form of text, movies, games, etc., with a certain audience. Most popular IPs have a large fan base and are symbols of emotional connection among fans. Therefore, under the emotional sustenance of the audience, IP can often stimulate strong consumer value (Wang, 2020). From my perspective, Disney's IP refers to creative achievements centered around content copyright, including Disney characters and their background stories, etc.

### *B. Disney and Disney IP*

The Walt Disney Company, commonly known as Disney, is an American multinational mass media and entertainment conglomerate that is headquartered at the Walt Disney Studios complex in Burbank, California. Disney was founded on October 16, 1923, by brothers Walt Disney and Roy Disney as Disney Brothers Studio (Wikipedia, 2018). Disney is one of the leading companies in the global entertainment industry. It contains five business segments which include media networks, parks and resorts, studio entertainment, consumer products, and interactive media (The Walt Disney Company, 2022). The business model of media networks is to accumulate paying users and collect content service fees. Disney's media network mainly consists of two major television channels in the United States: ESPN, which focuses on sports content, and Disney Channel, which focuses on children's entertainment (Wikipedia, 2023). Disney Parks and Resorts include Disney theme parks, resort hotels, water parks, dining, conference centers, and other recreational facilities (Pereira, 2022). Film and television entertainment mainly refers to the box office of movies, as well as the royalty sharing of movies on television channels, audiovisual publications, and digital copies, as well as the income from music copyrights and concerts (Wikipedia, 2023). Its content producers include Disney Pictures, Pixar, Marvel, Touchstone, and Lucasfilm (Wikipedia, 2019). The surrounding products mainly include animated character portrait rights in Disney movies and TV dramas, revenue from children's books based on Disney characters such as LinaBell and their background stories, authorized product sales in Disney stores, and sales of Disney websites (Hannah, 2020). Interactive interaction mainly refers to games developed by Disney and operated through its intellectual property rights such as Alien Interception. Disney has numerous subsidiaries, covering almost the entire cultural industry, and has formed its own relatively complete industry chain (Johnston, 2021).

In 2019, Disney has seen revenue of approximately USD 70 Billion and 66% of it is revenue generated by IP-intensive areas of its functioning. Media Networks produce \$27.3 billion (39.2%), Parks and Resorts produce \$24.5 billion (35.2%), Studio Entertainment produces \$13.3 billion (19%) and Consumer Products produce \$4.7 billion (6.7%) (Rana,

2020). So although there are not a large amount of industries directly related to IP the consumption driven by IP accounts for over 50% of Disney's consumption.

The core success logic of Disney is: "IP accumulation, IP consumer product development capability, and overall industry chain layout (Cheng, 2017)." Disney's business logic can be simply described as that Disney has core competitiveness in home animation and live-action movies, which is due to decades of IP resource accumulation. It transforms film characters and images into consumer goods business, which is derived from consumer product development capabilities, to achieve commercial monetization and enable these assets to supplement movies or extend the film value chain (Lǔ, 2017). Disney has formed a relatively complete industrial chain around IP resources, with the five major business sectors of media networks, theme parks, film and television entertainment, peripheral products, and interactive interactions interconnected and promoting each other, promoting a positive cycle in the entire IP development chain (Kelleher, 2023).

For example, for the classic IP "Frozen" which sold well at Disney in 2014, the sales of peripheral derivatives of this IP are almost equivalent to the box office (ABC News, 2014). The same clothing which is a princess dress worn by the main protagonist in the film "Frozen" led Disney to earn about \$400 million in revenue from selling these dresses alone (Lǔ, 2017). The revenue contribution is almost consistent with the North American box office of "Frozen".

### *C. The Economic Impact of Disney IP*

There are three economic impacts which include regional economic development, peripheral sales, and copyright authorization and extension.

#### *1) Impact on surrounding areas*

As for its impacts on surrounding areas, scholars believe that its positive impact mainly lies in urban development and economic driving, but there are also some negative impacts. On the one hand, for example, Disneyland located in Anaheim, the overall visitor economy makes up 50% to 60% of Anaheim's annual tax revenue through occupancy tax, sales tax, and property tax. Mike Lyster stated that the resort provides over 35,000 direct and 44,000 indirect jobs to Anaheim and surrounding areas (Li, 2023). John E. Czarnecki (2001) studied the effect of the construction of California Disneyland on the image of Anaheim City, transforming it from a remote suburban county mainly focused on agricultural production to a tourist commercial city that integrates theme parks, hotels, shopping centers, and exhibition centers, promoting its rapid urbanization. Sandi Cain (2005) reviewed the operation of California Disneyland from 1955 to 2005 and she believed that Disneyland was not only the driving force for local tourism development, but also could drive regional economic development from various aspects such as industry driving, tax contribution, and employment provision.

Theme parks contribute to the economic sustainability of destinations. Ady Milman (2022) pointed out that new theme parks can improve the image of a destination, increase the development of tourism which causes economic benefits for the local community, and provide the opportunity of education and entertainment opportunities to the public. They

can further contribute to the sustainability of a destination by providing an opportunity for employment for all segments of the labor market. For example, the US amusement park industry provides jobs for approximately 500,000 year-round and seasonal employees

On the other hand, Amy Davis and Gar Smith (Optiz, 2002) showed the negative impact of Disneyland on the surrounding environment, such as frequent fireworks performances bringing acidic smoke, heavy metal precipitation, and parade performances causing noise pollution. Amy Davis and Gar Smith also raised environmental issues in their article in the *Earth Island Journal*. "In mild weather, the heavy metals traveled 100 km downwind over two days," they report, polluting the air and local watersheds (Optiz, 2002). They also pointed out that due to Disney's contribution to the local economy and taxation, the government does not regulate it, thus exploring the relationship between the government, enterprises, and resident's welfare in tourism development.

To conclude, Disney has driven the development of surrounding economies such as tourism.

### *2) The impact of Disney IP derivatives*

When it comes to IP derivatives, Disney has a wide variety of derivatives. In the traditional derivatives business, Disney collaborates with many licensors, such as Uniqlo and LEGO, to design and develop some products together. However, in Disneyland, derivatives are closely related to each park. For example, in Shanghai Disneyland which included a place called Exploration Island, various derivatives sold in this area, such as Mickey and Minnie's dolls, will have some adventure elements in their design (Theme Park 101, 2021). IP derivatives are product forms of goods and services that are developed and produced by using IPs with a certain fan base and after intellectual property rights such as trademarks, brands, and images are licensed.

IP derivatives have spiritual value which means they will make people feel a sense of belonging, showcase their style, and shape their image (Gu & He, 2021). For example, Disney amplifies its cute and enthusiastic image by hiring employees to play LinaBell in Disneyland and interact with tourists, enhancing interaction with consumers, and using social media marketing to sell Lingna Belle's peripheral products, sparking fan frenzy and bringing high fan economic benefits (Fleischner, 2013). Therefore, this paper also believes that Disney is more of an emotional consumption for people. The practical use of this object has weakened, but more emotional and spiritual satisfaction is needed to comfort the tired mind.

### *3) Copyright authorization and extension*

For the IP copyright and license, Disney places great emphasis on IP protection and sales. Merchandising is common at Disney, which refers to the promotion of goods in the form of or bearing copyright images and logos, including such products made under license (Morales, 2022). Chmielewski and Richwine (2024) have suggested that about half of the Disney studio's profits were attributable to merchandise. The reason why the product sells well is because it has Disney's exclusive IP copyright. Smeg collaborates with Disney to launch a limited edition refrigerator. In this joint branding event, Disney authorized Mickey Mouse to Smeg for printing on refrigerators and

selling to cartoon and Disney fans (SMEG, 2019). Due to Disney's emphasis on copyright, people call it a copyright maniac.

In summary, this paper believes that Disney's copyright value exceeds its practical value, therefore Disney's sign value far exceeds its real value.

## **III. DISNEY'S IP INDUSTRY AND ITS ECONOMIC IMPACT**

### *A. Disney's IP Industry and Its Economic Impact*

#### *1) Disney's IP industry map*

In 2020, the total revenue of Disney's four major industries which included film and television works, hotels and resorts, media networks, and various consumer goods, reached 6.5 billion US dollars. Nearly 60% of the Disney industry chain is driven by IP, including theme parks (30.8%), film and television entertainment (14%), consumer goods (8.6%), and interactive media (2.2%) (Zhao, 2022). IP contributes a lot to the revenue of Disney. The following text will introduce the business and development experience of each sector.

#### **Film and television works**

Disney is famous for its film-studio division Walt Disney Studios, which includes Walt Disney Pictures, Walt Disney Animation Studios, Pixar, Marvel Studios, Lucas Film, 20th Century Studios, 20th Century Animation, and Searchlight Pictures. Some of them are the important companies or studios which has been acquired by Disney. At the film production level, Disney has begun to use classic animated adaptations or remakes of live-action films which are also referred to as "live-action animated films" as the creative subject and has used this IP derivative model as an important operational strategy in the past decade to consolidate public discourse power, extend the industry chain, and strengthen brand value (Sun & Gao, 2022).

The main revenue of this part is as follows: In terms of the profit source of film and television works, there are mainly franchise fees, subscription fees, advertising revenue, Television or SVOD distribution revenue, Cinema distribution revenue, home entertainment fees, and other content sales/authorization income. IP plays an important role in this process. In addition to advertising costs, Disney films and television productions can receive distribution revenue regardless of how they are distributed. Some exhibitors, such as cable TV and Cinema, pay Disney for the right to deliver content to their customers. These mainly report on content sales/licensing. Besides, music authorization income, stage performance ticket sales income, and intellectual property license fees for stage plays are also copyright-based revenue.

#### **Amusement park**

The amusement park contains all the Disneyland which is located in California, Orlando, Tokyo, Paris, Hong Kong, China, and Shanghai, China (Mouse Hacking, 2018). For instance, in the Orlando Disneyland, since 2010, there has been an expansion that caused up to 700 construction jobs have been created in the Central Florida area. In addition, 800 jobs opened up in 2014 as new amusement facilities opened to guests. Disneyland also employs a lot of cast members to provide guest services for those staying at the resort (The Walt Disney Company, 2012). Not only did Disneyland reduce unemployment, but it also made a significant

contribution to taxation. Disneyland in Southern California generated \$509.6 million in state and local taxes during 2018. Popp pointed out that “The city of Anaheim’s General Fund alone receives more than \$160 million in tax revenue from the resort.”

In 2022, the total revenue from Disney Parks, Experiences, and Products is \$28,705 million. There is an increase of 73% compared to last year. However, the service costs increased by 19%, or \$7.8 billion, to \$49 billion, due to higher costs on planning and production which increased the production of theme parks and resorts.

### Media Networks

This segment includes cable and broadcast television networks, television production and distribution operations, domestic television stations, and radio networks and stations. Significant properties include ABC Television Network (ABC News, 2014), ESPN and its multiple iterations, like ESPN2 and ESPN+, and the Disney Channels (admin, 2023).

According to Disney’s main self-media software, Disney+. Subscribers can watch over 400 movies, 25 original dramas, and 7500 episodes of programs at the beginning of Disney+’s launch. Disney itself estimates that the number of subscribed users will reach 60 to 90 million in 2024, with one-third of them being American users and two-thirds being international users (Brown, 2019). The total revenue of linear networks in 2022 is \$ 28,346 million which is 1% better than 2021.

Disney attracts consumers to watch their IP movies through the internet, which are films with intellectual property rights. This not only enhances the brand’s reputation but also causes Disney to gain more profits because subscribing to their software requires paying subscription fees.

### Derivatives

Disney animated derivative products are a series of various products derived from Disney, including toys, clothing, food, books, music, etc. Derivatives, or brand-authorized products, account for only 10% of Disney’s vast industrial value chain, but the risks are not significant and profits are relatively stable, steadily advancing in the entire IP operation system. The company creates, distributes, and publishes products which include children’s books and comic books in different countries and languages based on its brand franchise rights.

There are three reasons for the success of Disney’s derivatives. The first is early launch, the second is differentiation, and the third is the brand effect of cooperation with other brands. Most companies treat derivatives as one-time consumption and only put them into the market after the movie is released. However, derivative products have a lifecycle, and only if the popularity and reputation of movies continue can derivatives maintain their appeal to consumers. However, from the beginning of film creation to the release of the film, Disney began to propose various ideas about derivatives, then communicated and cooperated with relevant manufacturers, and finally put derivatives into production. Six weeks before the official release of the movie, Disney began to promote and market derivatives extensively, causing the popularity of derivatives to continue from the beginning of the movie to a period after its release, which extended the lifecycle of derivatives. Secondly, the differentiation in the design of Disney derivatives lies in two

aspects. On the one hand, the differentiation lies in the derivatives within Disneyland and the derivatives within Disney flagship stores. The derivatives of Disneyland are often exclusive products that conform to the experience of Disneyland, and the derivatives within Disney flagship stores are often related to the animated films being released by Disney. On the other hand, differentiation lies in the original derivatives of Disney’s internal team and authorized cooperative derivatives, which are products designed and developed jointly by both parties to reflect the brand tone of both parties. This differentiation has led to diversified forms of Disney derivatives, further enhancing consumption. Disney fans can purchase unique Disney derivatives while visiting Disneyland, as well as conveniently and quickly purchase Disney derivatives in physical and online flagship stores outside the park. They can also purchase cooperative Disney derivatives in other brand stores. Thirdly, Disney has also collaborated with many fashion brands, such as Mickey and Valentino, and Mickey has also collaborated with fast fashion brands such as H&M. These products cater to the needs of consumers with various purchasing power. In addition to clothing brands, Midea Air Conditioning has also collaborated with Disney’s classic IP to launch “Mickey” children’s air conditioners and other products.

These derivatives not only bring direct profits to Disney but also serve as an indirect form of advertising, as people are likely to give Disney dolls as gifts, which will increase Disney’s popularity and potential customers.

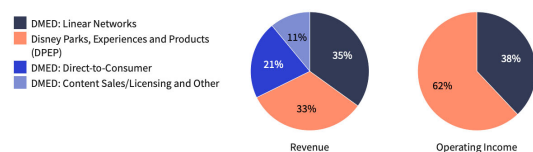
### B. The Economic Impact of Disney’s IP Industry

#### 1) Direct economic income

As of October 1, 2022, Walt Disney’s total revenue exceeded \$82.7 billion (Statista, 2022). During the three months ended January 1, 2022, Disney’s net income was \$1.2 billion, 64 times that of the same period last year. The revenue of the linear network department in the first quarter of fiscal year 2022 was \$7.7 billion, higher than the same period last year. Operating revenue decreased by 13.3% year-on-year to \$1.5 billion. This department accounts for approximately 35% of Disney’s total revenue and 38% of its total operating revenue. The Disney Parks, Experiences, and Products (DPEP) department reported revenue of \$7.2 billion in the first quarter of fiscal year 2022, an increase of 101.6% compared to the same period last year. The department achieved a revenue of \$2.5 billion, accounting for approximately 33% of Disney’s total revenue and approximately 62% of its total revenue (Washington, 2020). Other specific income is shown in Fig. 1:

#### Disney Segment Breakdown

Based on Disney’s Q1 FY 2022 ended Jan. 1, 2022



DMED stands for Disney Media and Entertainment Distribution

Fig. 1. Disney segment breakdown.

#### 2) Regional economic growth

In 2022, Disney’s going concern income tax is \$1732

million which contributes a lot to government revenue. As of October 1, 2022, Disney employed approximately 220000 people, of which approximately 166000 were employed in the United States and approximately 54000 were employed internationally.

In addition, local government and residents would benefit from the external effects of the success of the theme park using increased tax revenues and work opportunities. So the government can use this additional income to improve infrastructure and provide better healthcare and education to residents.

### *3) Promote copyright protection*

Disney believes that the success of its businesses is highly dependent on the existence and maintenance of intellectual property rights in the entertainment products and services they create. Disney's businesses throughout the world are affected by its ability to exploit and protect against infringement of its IP, including trademarks, trade names, copyrights, patents, and trade secrets. Important IP includes rights in the content of motion pictures, television programs, electronic games, sound recordings, character likenesses, theme park attractions, books and magazines, and merchandise. Disney has gone through many infringement cases, and Copyright has protected Disney's rights, which also caused the improvement of the Copyright protection law system of America.

In 2020, Disney won a lawsuit against Florida retailer Mouseprint Media, which was sued for using copyrighted images from Disney movies such as Star Wars. Disney claims that the infringement caused significant harm, chaos, and unfair competition. Disney stated that this leads people to believe that Mouseprint has a connection with Disney, but this is not the case. The court further pointed out that this has led to the dilution and infringement of Disney's intellectual property rights, and has damaged the related goodwill. The court also ordered the transfer of the website to Disney. Therefore, this is a victory for Disney as it can successfully prevent the abuse of its intellectual property rights and enhance its associated goodwill (Bose, 2021).

Disney has been using the law to protect its property rights to prevent others from stealing its ideas. One reason may be that if others use Disney's IP at will, it may weaken people's impression of Disney's brand and reduce Disney's profits as a result, as consumers may choose cheaper products such as pirated Lina Bell dolls instead of Disney's products.

### *4) Innovative development of the economic system*

Disney has also played a leading role in economic innovation. Joseph Alois Schumpeter (Ziemnowicz, 2013) contributes the innovative development of the economic system to five combinations between raw materials and production factors, Disney's IP has demonstrated significant innovative achievements in three aspects.

(1) Introduce new production methods, such as new methods of handling goods by relevant manufacturing departments.

According to Disney, Disney's live-action remake of the original animated work IP belongs to this innovative approach to commodity production, which involves using a new production method to process existing works completely. For example, beauty and beasts.

(2) Conquer or control the supply sources of raw materials or semi-finished products, whether such sources already exist or have been created for the first time.

Disney has acquired numerous companies such as Marvel, Lucas, etc., which has resulted in Disney owning almost half of the copyright of the world's popular IPs, the entire Marvel universe, and countless classic anime copyrights. After being acquired by Disney, these studios and film companies have also launched many high box office products, including acclaimed works such as Avengers 4 and Star Wars.

(3) Implement new organizations, such as creating a monopoly or breaking a monopoly.

Disney needs an online platform to collaborate on promoting its products, so it chose to sign a contract with Netflix. However, due to Disney's ownership of Hotstar, HULU, and Disney+, as well as its monopoly on the IP resources it already owns. That means that Disney does not need to renew its contract with Netflix since the expiration of its contract in 2019. Disney has completed a closed-loop process from content construction to content output and has a copyright advantage that all streaming media companies do not have. Disney thus formed a new monopoly. From this, it can be seen that IP is the core, and owning IP has raw materials and discourse power.

### *5) The negative impact of IP monopoly*

While Disney's IP economy has done well, it has also brought some negative effects, chief among which is IP abuse.

In October 2022, Diece Lisa Industries sued Disney for strawberry bear infringement. Given that Disney has been actively marketing and selling Strawberry Bears in recent years, this has had a significant impact on the trademark authorization business of the plaintiff, Diece Lisa Industries in this case. Diece Lisa Industries also pointed out that Disney intentionally infringed on their trademark knowing that the "Lot of Hugs" trademark belonged to them, which is a knowingly committed offense. In early June 2023, the United States Supreme Court overturned the Circuit Court's ruling in the Strawberry Bear case and demanded a retrial (Jane, 2023). This kind of copyright abuse and copyright monopoly may bring harm to other original companies, so that they have no way to create freely, and even face the risk of intellectual property rights being registered by Disney.

### *C. Disney's IP Operations and Marketing Model*

#### *1) IP operation based on integrated marketing*

In the era of pan entertainment, what sets Disney apart from other authorized brands is that this celebrity IP has a huge operating system and strong marketing network, which can quickly form a huge linkage effect. In addition to the advertising agencies affiliated with the group itself, including television channels, internet websites, publishing institutions, theme parks, toy stores, and so on. Strategic cooperation is carried out with multiple channels, including cinemas, global fast food chains, and world-renowned catering brands, to expand the advertising campaign. In the process of global brand promotion, Disney focuses on collaborating with different companies in different countries and regions, striving to achieve the optimal combination of globalization and localization in the context of pan entertainment.

## *2) Key points of integrated marketing*

1. Integrated products: the connection and interaction between products, and the cross-integration of different product lines

Disney is an example of a vertically and horizontally integrated company. Its expansion into film distribution and streaming services demonstrates how the business is vertically integrated. Its acquisitions of other entertainment companies such as Pixar and Marvel Studios demonstrate the company's utilization of horizontal integration. The company has acquired entertainment companies with additional profits such as 21st Century Fox and Star Wars, which is another example of Disney's adoption of horizontal integration strategy. These acquisitions have increased Disney's production of a large number of animations and movies. The expansion of television and streaming services helps the company control how its animations and movies attract customers. These indicate that Disney has adopted vertical and horizontal integration strategies in its operations. For example, Disney's vertical integration through the Entertainment and Sports Program Network (ESPN). This was achieved through Disney's acquisition of Capital Cities or ABC Inc. This acquisition allows Disney to access the cable networks of ABC and ESPN, further enhancing their ability to provide products, including programs, movies, and animations, to a wider audience. Disney's forward and backward vertical integration examples help strengthen the company's operations in variable industries and improve overall revenue and profitability (Titus, 2023).

2. Integrate promotional channels: a combination of various promotional methods

Disney advertises in various ways. The most famous is Emotional Advertising. Disney's marketing activities often utilize universal emotions such as joy, love, and nostalgia to evoke beautiful memories and establish emotional connections with the audience. For example, Disney's "Dream Big, Princess" event empowers young girls and motivates children and parents by showcasing the power and potential of female characters. By evoking emotional resonance, Disney not only enhances brand affinity but also increases engagement and generates positive brand associations (Barber, 2016).

## *3) Analysis of Marketing Model Based on 4P Theory*

**Product: Consume-centric IP images and product types**

On one hand, the image and personality of IP are constantly changing based on consumer needs, and new IP characters, character clothing, etc. are constantly being introduced. For example, on September 29, 2021, Disney launched a new character named LinaBell at Shanghai Disney (Charlie, 2021).

On the other hand, the variety of products is rich and diverse, covering various aspects of life. Disney includes an increasing number of product lines, including Film and television product lines (movies, music, stage plays...), Media networks (TV interviews, variety shows, radio...), Amusement parks and resort hotels (Disneyland, Disney-themed hotels...), Books and magazines (comics, games...), Peripheral dolls (keychain, hairpin, clothes, candy...). A wide variety of products can maximize the value

of IP and enhance the income brought by IP.

**Place: Disney's offline franchise combined with e-commerce**

1) Online and offline channels.

Disney is constantly experimenting with new sales venues, and it has opened new retailers and continued to experiment. Afterward, Disney developed online shopping. Jimmy Pitaro said, "No one can create an experience like Disney, and our pilot store will become a testing ground for interactive features that will make Disney's shopping experience stand out in the constantly changing retail environment." In 2017, Disney tested new prototype store designs in Shanghai, Japan, Nagoya, and other cities in the United States and Europe.

At the same time, Disney has improved its online experience by launching ShopDisney.com, which reportedly offers unparalleled Disney, Pixar, Star Wars, and Marvel products, covering categories such as fashion, accessories, toys, and home furnishings. It sells "first-class brands" as well as authentic products from Disneyland and Disney stores (Retailing, 2017).

On August 10, 2022, Disney's flagship fashion store officially entered Tmall, providing a convenient channel for Disney fans to purchase fashion items such as clothing, shoes, hats, luggage, and more (Li, 2022). At this point, Disney's official flagship store, Disney's fashion flagship store, Shanghai Disney Resort's official flagship store, and Hong Kong Disneyland flagship store have all been launched on Tmall.

In summary, Disney is increasingly emphasizing online sales, continuously expanding its online channels, and adopting a global strategy to make product sales as unrestricted as possible by region.

**Price: High price strategy based on high copyright investment and licensing fees**

1) The product price is high, with the value of IP.

Due to scarcity and hunger marketing, certain Disney products may only be sold at specific times and locations, or only in limited quantities, which leads to higher prices. In August 2021, the Star Delu Mid Autumn Festival limited dolls were sold out for 3 days, with an original price of 359 yuan. This far exceeds the cost of making a doll.

2) The cost of creation, production, and innovation of IP is high, with excellent production and high IP authorization fees.

In 2009, Disney acquired Marvel Entertainment and its 5000 characters for \$4 billion (Katz, 2020a). Three years later, former Disney CEO Bob Iger acquired Lucas Pictures, the company behind Massive Star Wars Empire, from George Lucas for \$4 billion (Katz, 2020b). Disney has also successively spent a lot of money to acquire many companies such as Pixar, Hulu, and so on to obtain various IPs. So for Disney, the cost of creating or acquiring a new IP is enormous. So Disney's products and services are also priced higher.

3) Product prices are relatively stable and there are few price reduction strategies.

Until the early 1980s, the prices of Disney products and tickets remained stable but relatively low. The price of a one-day ticket in 2003 was \$50. In 2013, it was \$95. Based on a 90% increase from 2003 to 2013, the estimated price for next year will reach \$180. The current price of a one-day



ticket on the Disney World website is \$109–\$159 per day (AJ and the DFB Team, 2022). So in fact, Disney's ticket price increase was expected and lower than the predicted price. But since its surge in the early 1980s, Disney's price increases have consistently exceeded inflation, and the gap is still widening (CNN, 2022). This has stimulated people's consumption, because people know that Disney ticket prices have always been higher than inflation, buying now will be more cost-effective than buying in the future. This has led to Disney gaining a lot of profits due to a unit price increase.

### Promotion

#### 1) Social media promotion

Disney has been promoting through social media. Because social media has attracted countless customers and traffic to Disney. In 2022, Disney's total user base, including Disney+, Hulu, and ESPN+, was 221 million, surpassing Netflix for the first time.

Disney is proficient in using Facebook and has 267 pages, including a separate page for Disney consumer products. They constantly post and chat with consumers. These Facebook pages are created for people from different countries, mainly targeting individuals aged 13 and above. The Disney Consumer Products team is responsible for operating most of the pages, as they are in an endless sales cycle and need to advertise and endorse their products throughout the year, whether it's new or old. Their social media engagement plan is based on two key principles. The first is to reach out to Disney enthusiasts and encourage them to share content, which can attract potential customers around them, possibly their friends, netizens, and so on. The second is to ask customers to discuss content beyond the official promotion of Disney products, to increase authenticity. Having a strong social media influence is crucial for any modern enterprise, as it provides growth opportunities and ensures that consumers can communicate and convey relevant information to friends, family, and colleagues (Fleischner, 2013).

Besides, through online channels, for instance, TikTok collaborates with Disney to launch the 100th anniversary event. This is very beneficial for establishing connections with young fans and connecting the next generation with Disney's expanded intellectual property (Andrew, 2023).

#### 2) Celebrity effect

Disney is good at using celebrities to promote their IP image. Firstly, the official will send the limited edition Lina Bell dolls to celebrities such as Jin Chen, Zhao Lusi, Bai Lu, Zhou Yutong, and other celebrity influences. In their interaction with the dolls, they will use the social media traffic that the celebrities and influences already have for secondary dissemination, creating a hot topic between "Disney female celebrities" and female celebrities in the entertainment industry. Secondly, many videos of celebrities interacting with Lina Bell in the park have also been reposted multiple times on various short video platforms, including the officially invited celebrity Mao Xiaotong, who played the role of Kuira in the classic Disney animation "101 Spotted Dogs" and interacted with Lina Bell, which has also made her popular on Weibo searches; In addition, interactive videos by volleyball player Zhang Changning and others have also been disseminated on social media.

### 4) Reasons for Disney IP success

#### 1. Creating excellent IP

Disney has many high-quality IPs. Disney has brought value by cultivating doll idols in East Asia. In September 2021, Shanghai Disneyland launched a pink fox called Lina Bell, which quickly became popular online. On large online shopping websites, the original 99 yuan pendant is priced at 500 yuan, while the official 200 yuan doll from the scalpers is priced at over 1000 yuan. Compared to classic IPs such as Mickey Mouse and Snow White, Lina Bell is an IP that doesn't have a background story, which means she hasn't appeared in any anime or live-action movies. However, it also leads to product premiums related to it, so she is a perfect IP. She has become a fan-oriented virtual cartoon idol, with personality as the main selling point.

#### 2. Improve the copyright system and focus on intellectual property protection

The Disney Company can be regarded as a model of all-round protection of intellectual property rights, with comprehensive coverage of patent, trademark, and copyright protection, mainly copyright and trademark protection (Yuan, 2019). Disney has registered its trademarks worldwide and regularly updates and maintains registration information to ensure the validity and full protection of the trademarks.

Disney has long trademarked all of its animated characters, and Disney is committed to protecting its IP by law, constantly extending copyright terms. Fig. 2 shows the "Mickey Mouse Curve," which includes how copyright duration has changed close to each time the Disney copyright for Mickey Mouse was about to expire (Schlackman, 2014). Through two lobbying campaigns in the 1970s and 1990s, Disney pushed for a bill in Congress that extended the company's copyright term from 56 to 75 years and then to 95 years. This has led to a continuous increase in Disney's copyright period for the famous IP Mickey Mouse, avoiding the loss of revenue caused by IP being purchased and abused by other merchants.

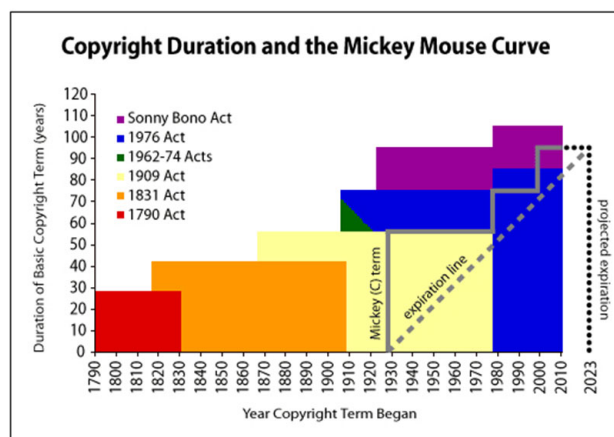


Fig. 2. Copyright duration and the Mickey Mouse curve.

#### 3. Creating emotional connection and attracting consumers

Disney pays attention to the emotional interaction between IP images or characters and consumers and forms a stable emotional connection. For example, Lina Bell, most of his fans purchase a large number of derivatives due to their love for her. Because Lina Bell is an IP without a story background, which means people can place any emotion on

Lina Bell and create any story personality. When people place emotions on Lina Bell, they have emotional connections with it (Chen, 2022). The active participation of fans has become a key factor, and interaction and secondary creation of consumers have become a huge driving force for diffusion.

Disney's positioning strategy revolves around the brand prototype of "Magician". The company showcases a charismatic, magical, and innovative image that inspires audiences. Disney's brand positioning statement is: "Disney provides unique entertainment for consumers seeking magical experiences and memories. Disney leads the competition by providing every aspect of related products and services to the world and appealing to people of all ages (Hodgson, n.d.)." With its unique intellectual property and stories, Disney distinguishes itself from other competitors in the animation, film, and entertainment industries.

4. Media integration promotion, expanding communication channels

Disney's content strategy utilizes integration and cross-promotion to maximize the impact and influence of its content. For example, when a new Disney movie is released, Disney will also simultaneously launch derivatives, theme parks, and media promotion content, creating a cohesive and immersive brand experience. This integration enables Disney to extend the lifecycle of its content and drive participation across multiple channels. In addition, Disney's cross-promotion work ensures that its various business segments complement and promote each other. The success of Disney movies can increase the interest and number of visitors to theme parks, and theme park attractions can trigger heated discussions and expectations for upcoming movies. This strategic approach amplifies the influence of Disney's content and enhances its brand influence (Urrutia, 2023).

#### *D. Suggestions for the Development of Disney's IP Economy*

Disney has invested heavily in its streaming business in the past two years, but its production capabilities seem to be unable to keep up with the rapid development of streaming media. Among the more than 50 new works released by Disney, less than ten have been able to make it to Disney+. At the same time, over 90% of the existing works on Disney+ are based on existing IPs. So far, the only original content supporting Disney+ is the Star Wars spin-off drama "Mandalorians" and the musical film "Hamilton". The innovation and survival of IP have always been at the core of Disney's vast universe. Although Disney has successively acquired several well-known animation studios in the past decade, it has been slow to take action in its IP innovation and has been relying on sequels to attract viewers. It should be noted that the growth of Disney+ users is partly due to the increase in the number of people living at home during the epidemic. With the resumption of work and production, and the orderly recovery of social operations, how Disney+ can continue to attract more users while maintaining its existing users is a question worth considering.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study set out to find out why Disney's IP has developed rapidly and how Disney has grown and profited

through IP. Against the backdrop of rapid development of the IP economy, this article takes Disney's IP economy as an example to study Disney's IP industry chain, IP operation and marketing models, IP characteristics, and methods of copyright protection. The purpose of this study is to summarize how Disney has developed and profited from IP and to provide recommendations for the future development of Disney IP.

The main conclusions can be drawn from this work, as follows:

(1) Disney's IP industry landscape includes film and television, amusement parks, social media, and derivatives

(2) The economic impact of Disney's IP industry includes direct economic income; economic growth in the surrounding areas, such as increased employment; improved cultural industry chain; sound IP copyright system; innovative development of the economic system.

(3) There are downsides to Disney's IP economic model, which is copyright abuse caused by IP monopoly

(4) Disney's IP Operations are based on integrated marketing and Marketing models. Through analyzing the Marketing Model which is based on the 4P Theory: Product, Price, Place, and Promotion.

(5) Reasons for Disney IP's success, which contained six reasons. Creating IP, improving the copyright system, producing emotional connections, ensuring Disney's position and the way to attract consumers. Media integration promotion, expanding communication channels enriching the IP matrix, and promoting the development of multi-disciplinary business. Finally, based on these analyses, suggestions were put forward for the development of Disney's IP economy, including focusing on developing Disney + to attract online customers and creating new IPs to prevent audiences from like previous IPs, resulting in Disney becoming outdated and losing its consumers.

The findings from this study make several contributions to the global economy. In terms of profit model design, Disney has constructed a unique round of revenue profit models based on the layout of the entire industry chain. Disney's business model is to obtain network traffic through original creation and acquisition of IP (content), and then achieve multi-level value realization through diversified online platforms, offline amusement parks (offline experiences), and peripheral products (derivative consumption). Firstly, Disney has actively injected Chinese elements into Shanghai Disneyland to attract tourists, including Mickey Minnie dolls in traditional Chinese costumes, Dim Sum packaged in ancient Chinese food boxes, etc. So if other countries and regions want to develop the IP economy, they can also combine IP with local culture or history to attract consumers. Secondly, various regions can learn from Disney's entire industry chain operation process around IP to improve copyright revenue. For example, creating movies or products related to IP to attract consumers.

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author has claimed that no conflict of interest exists.

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