

<https://doi.org/10.70731/z2njz340>

# The Influence Mechanism and Promotion Path of The China Film Golden Rooster Awards on Xiamen's City Image

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## KEYWORDS

*The China Film Golden Rooster Awards; Xiamen, Cultural Calling Card; Film Industry*

## ABSTRACT

The Golden Rooster Awards, China's premier film accolade, has been held in Xiamen for many years, integrating the city's material, spiritual, and cultural dimensions while enhancing its aesthetic appeal. The event serves as a vital platform for showcasing and promoting Xiamen's image. Its continued presence has not only created new opportunities for the development of Xiamen's film industry but has also offered fresh perspectives on promoting and shaping the city's cultural identity, paving the way for Xiamen to gradually establish itself as a city of film. To build the City of Cinema cultural brand, it is essential to capitalize on the long-term presence of the Golden Rooster Awards in Xiamen. Efforts should be concentrated on key sectors of the film industry—such as content creation, post-production, operational management, and talent cultivation—in order to establish a new model of industrial development in which cinema drives urban growth and film festivals stimulate creative production.

## INTRODUCTION

The development of a city's cultural brand is one of the most effective means of showcasing China's image to the world (Chan, A, et al, 2021). It enriches the spiritual and cultural lives of the public and helps fulfill their aspirations for a better life. A city's cultural brand represents a distilled expression of its distinctive cultural characteristics, embodying its unique identity and charm. At present, there is no universally agreed definition among scholars regarding the concept of a city's cultural brand. However, it is generally understood as a strategy for introducing and promoting a city through regionally representative resources such as architecture, cultural events, and historical heritage (Ismagilova,

G, et al, 2015). As such, a city's cultural brand serves as both a fundamental platform and a vital medium for strengthening and enhancing cultural development. Moreover, it functions as a key driving force in advancing a city's internal growth and boosting cultural confidence. Culture constitutes the root and soul of a city, guiding its progressive development (Nas, P, J, 2011). In recent years, local governments have actively leveraged their cultural resources to cultivate distinctive city cultural brands—such as Anxi Tieguaoyin tea in Fujian, the Ancient City of Pingyao in Shanxi, and Hengdian World Studios in Zhejiang—thereby promoting both cultural vitality and socio-economic development.

Xiamen, a significant coastal city, central port, and tourist destination in southeastern China, has effectively

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strengthened its cultural influence by capitalizing on emblematic cultural assets such as Gulang Island and Xiamen University. On April 9, 2019, at a press conference for the China Film Golden Rooster Awards held in Xiamen, Chen Daoming, Chairman of the China Film Association, announced that the festival would be permanently hosted in Xiamen for the next ten years. As the host city, Xiamen has benefited from increased public and industry attention, fostering the aggregation of film industry resources. Domestically, this provides an opportunity to evaluate and enhance Xiamen's film industry infrastructure and production chain. Internationally, it helps to promote the city's favorable business environment, moving beyond its previous reputation as merely a free filming location and rebranding it as an emerging center for film production. The integration of the Golden Rooster Awards has opened new possibilities for the development of Xiamen's film industry and offers valuable insights into the promotion and shaping of the city's cultural identity and landmarks.

## THE CURRENT IMPACT OF THE GOLDEN ROOSTER AWARDS ON XIAMEN'S CULTURAL IMAGE

Film festivals, as recurring events held in urban public spaces, represent a vital form of public engagement in cultural life and play a significant role in shaping a city's unique cultural brand (Ooi, C., S., & Pedersen, J., S., 2010). Established in 1992, the China Film Golden Rooster Awards is co-hosted by the China Federation of Literary and Art Circles and the China Film Association. Held annually in various cities across mainland China, it stands as one of the country's most professional and authoritative film award events. In recent years, the Golden Rooster Awards have been hosted in Xiamen for multiple consecutive editions, integrating the city's material, spiritual, and cultural dimensions. This not only enhances Xiamen's aesthetic appeal but also provides a valuable platform for showcasing and promoting the city's image.

### Enhancing the Visibility of Xiamen's Cultural Image

The Golden Rooster Awards are highly esteemed within the film industry for their professionalism, authority, and influence. Each edition of the awards garners widespread attention from across society, generating what can be described as a massive influx of attention to the host city. Xiamen, home to prominent cultural landmarks such as Gulangyu Island, Chen Jiageng's legacy, and Xiamen University, has effectively leveraged the heightened visibility brought by the Golden Rooster Awards to elevate public recognition of its cultural assets.

New media serves as a powerful tool for introducing Xiamen to broader audiences, enhancing public aware-

ness and understanding of the city (Fuery, K., 2017). During the 33rd China Golden Rooster Awards, the Film Channel organized a multimedia livestream event titled Live Coverage of the Golden Rooster Awards. As part of the event, young actors from the Stars and Seas talent development program—such as Chen Xuedong, Zhou Dongyu, and Guan Xiaotong—visited Xiamen University to engage with veteran artists and learn about revolutionary traditions. They also toured key cultural sites, including Gulangyu Island and the Hongyanzhuang Puppet Art Museum, thereby helping to bridge the gap between performers and audiences.

Xiamen's major new media platforms provided extensive, multi-perspective coverage of the Golden Rooster Awards. These narratives not only amplified the visibility of the awards themselves but also effectively introduced the cultural richness of Xiamen to the public. In addition, television programs such as the Film Channel's China Film News and Xiamen Satellite TV's Special Zone News Square contributed to the broader promotion of Xiamen's cultural brand during the awards period.

### Enhancing Cultural Identity Among Xiamen Residents

Cultural identity refers to a sense of belonging to a cultural group and the feeling of being shaped by that group's values and traditions (Jensen, L. A., et al, 2011). This sense of belonging forms the emotional foundation that unites group members, and festivals serve as a powerful medium for cultivating such collective identity. The Golden Rooster Awards, held in Xiamen for four consecutive years, have evolved into a cultural celebration embraced by the city's residents.

On one hand, local residents actively participate in various supporting activities associated with the Golden Rooster Awards, thereby deepening their connection to film culture. For example, during the 35th China Golden Rooster Awards, the Golden Rooster Film Festival—one of its key supporting events—generated 359,000 yuan in box office revenue within just one hour of ticket sales. The screening of *Fast and Feel Love* sold out in only 34 minutes, demonstrating the strong public enthusiasm for the event. The festival has significantly increased local cinema attendance and fostered greater audience engagement. Beyond film screenings, residents also take part in film-related forums and purchase cultural and creative products inspired by cinema, further integrating film culture into daily life.

On the other hand, the Golden Rooster Awards have stimulated the development of urban cultural spaces and landscapes, reinforcing residents' sense of cultural identity and belonging to the city. During the awards period, key public and commercial areas in Xiamen—such as Zhongshan Road, Huandao Road, Garden Expo Park, and Wanxiang City—are adorned with Golden Rooster-themed decorations. These immersive cultural displays attract residents to visit, participate,

and check in, turning the city into a festive, cinema-themed space.

In this way, the continued presence of the Golden Rooster Awards has added a distinctive cinematic atmosphere to Xiamen. It has brought film culture into the everyday lives of its residents, enhancing both their appreciation for cinema and their emotional connection to Xiamen's unique cultural identity.

### **Promoting Innovation in Xiamen's Cultural Image**

The hosting of the Golden Rooster Awards and related events in Xiamen provides a fertile environment for stimulating the emergence of new cultural products and the creation of innovative cultural landmarks within this ongoing process of cultural change.

During the 35th China Golden Rooster Awards, the debut of the Golden Rooster and Hundred Flowers Starry Coast—a collaborative project between the China Film Association and the Xiamen Municipal Government—marked the addition of a new film-related cultural landmark in the city. Since the Golden Rooster Awards were established in Xiamen, the newly launched Golden Rooster Film Investment Conference has attracted numerous prominent film artists, providing a central platform for new filmmakers, investors, and producers to exchange ideas and collaborate.

The Golden Rooster Awards have also contributed to the cultivation of Xiamen's film industry, creating fertile ground for its expansion. For instance, Siming District has actively planned the development of a culture, tourism and film industrial cluster, integrating the film and cultural industries into its industrial layout and prioritizing it as one of the top ten areas for industrial upgrading. The continuous iteration of filming locations and supporting services, along with the gradual improvement of a comprehensive industrial chain, has created diverse and integrated cultural exchange platforms. As a result, the creation of a film city as Xiamen's new cultural emblem is becoming increasingly achievable.

## **XIAMEN'S DILEMMA OF BUILDING A NEW CULTURAL CARD RELYING ON THE GOLDEN ROOSTER AWARD**

As previously noted, Xiamen boasts a rich cultural heritage and a robust industrial foundation. When combined with the positive impact of the Golden Rooster Awards, these advantages make the goal of establishing Xiamen as a City of Cinema and crafting a new cultural emblem for the city increasingly attainable. However, despite these favorable conditions, Xiamen has yet to fully realize this vision. This gap can be attributed to three primary challenges: the insufficient integration of the Golden Rooster Awards with the local context, the limited influence of the awards on the city's broader

urban development, and the structural imbalance within Xiamen's film industry.

### **Insufficient Integration of the Golden Rooster Awards and Xiamen**

The relationship between film festivals and their host cities is inherently symbiotic (Montal, S, 2016). Film festivals enhance a city's visibility and cultural prestige, while host cities, in turn, enrich festivals with regional characteristics and local cultural identity. However, many domestic film festivals—including the Golden Rooster Awards—tend to share similar film selections, celebrity appearances, and event formats, often lacking localized features and distinctive branding beyond conventional programming. Additionally, the quality and innovation of certain activities still leave room for improvement.

To enhance their influence, the Golden Rooster Awards must adopt a more differentiated and strategic approach that emphasizes high standards and a strong cultural identity. Xiamen, known for its pioneering spirit of exploration, innovation, and diligence, is home to a blend of vibrant cultural traditions, including Southern Fujian culture and overseas Chinese heritage. Its geographic proximity to Taiwan also provides a unique regional advantage. Nevertheless, despite having hosted the Golden Rooster Awards for an extended period, Xiamen has yet to demonstrate clear progress in fostering mutual integration, cultural complementarity, or co-development between the awards and the city's identity.

One key issue lies in the limited autonomy of the organizing committee and the weak interaction between the awards and the broader urban environment. These challenges have hindered the potential for the Golden Rooster Awards to fully embed themselves in Xiamen's cultural fabric and to grow in tandem with the city's evolving cultural and industrial landscape.

### **The Golden Rooster Awards Have Had Little Impact on the Development of Xiamen.**

Host cities of film festivals must fully leverage the opportunities presented by such events to establish enduring cultural landmarks and strengthen their cultural identity (Filipov, M, 2021). As the host city of the Golden Rooster Awards, Xiamen has undoubtedly benefited in terms of increased visibility and influence. However, due to the event's short duration and tightly packed schedule, it has struggled to generate sustained, long-term impact within the city.

For instance, the 35th China Golden Rooster Awards spanned only three days, during which the organizing committee hosted 23 events across eight major categories. This compressed timeframe led to challenges such as dispersed event locations and overlapping schedules, which negatively affected the overall coherence and accessibility of the festival experience. Moreover, the limited promotional period prior to the event curtailed its potential for generating broad public

awareness and long-lasting publicity, making it difficult to continuously reinforce Xiamen's urban image.

Public participation was also constrained. Key events such as the opening and closing ceremonies were not open to public registration, leaving citizens and tourists—many of whom had traveled specifically to attend—restricted to online engagement. This limited access dampened public enthusiasm and contributed to relatively low levels of participation, particularly in social media interactions. As a result, the festival's ability to foster a deep sense of community involvement and cultural resonance within the city remained limited.

### **Xiamen's Film Industry Structure Has Weak Links**

A city can only truly establish itself as a film city and cultivate a distinctive cultural brand by developing a comprehensive and high-quality film industry ecosystem (Medel, A, & Gossel, B, 2015). Xiamen, known for its picturesque coastal scenery and favorable climate, is often referred to as a natural soundstage due to its consistent, year-round filming conditions and minimal seasonal variation. However, despite these environmental advantages, the number of locally based or homegrown creative teams remains limited, and Xiamen continues to lag behind leading cities in terms of its overall influence on the national film industry.

From a national perspective, Xiamen's film industry ranks in the mid-to-upper tier. Nevertheless, in comparison to cities such as Beijing, Shenzhen, Hengdian, and Qingdao, it still faces significant bottlenecks in key areas such as innovation, capital, and talent.

In terms of the innovation chain, Xiamen's film sector shows deficiencies in several critical areas, including content creation, post-production, distribution and marketing, and the development of derivative products. Regarding the capital chain, the city lacks both a bank-led investment and financing system and an insurance system specifically tailored to the film industry. As for the talent chain, Xiamen suffers from a shortage of creative talent in screenwriting and filmmaking, performance artists, and technical production personnel, making it difficult to generate a clustering effect of high-quality works and star power. These limitations collectively hinder Xiamen's ability to establish a dynamic and competitive film industry ecosystem.

## **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR XIAMEN TO BUILD ITSELF INTO A CITY OF FILM CULTURAL LANDMARK**

The long-term establishment of the Golden Rooster Awards in Xiamen has created a valuable opportunity for the upgrading and transformation of the city's film industry, laying the foundation for gradually developing Xiamen's new cultural identity as a city of film. To realize this vision, it is essential to fully leverage the sus-

tained presence of the Golden Rooster Awards. Efforts should begin with strengthening core areas of the film industry, including content production, post-production, operations and management, and talent cultivation. By doing so, Xiamen can foster a new model of industrial development—one that promotes urban identity through film and stimulates industry growth through festivals.

### **Focus on Three Areas of Innovation To Create High-Quality Films**

First, innovate content production. Film production companies should be encouraged to draw upon Xiamen's rich historical and cultural resources to tell compelling stories about the city through the medium of film. Xiamen boasts a diverse cultural heritage, including Min Nan culture and overseas Chinese traditions, as well as iconic landmarks such as Gulang Island, Xiamen University, and the legacy of Chen Jiageng—offering abundant, high-quality resources for both script development and on-location filming. A long-term mechanism should be established to track, guide, and evaluate film projects, with the aim of fostering innovation from the early stages of project development. Moreover, a film project evaluation system tailored to Xiamen's unique context should be developed to identify and support projects that are innovative, ideologically grounded, and artistically excellent, through targeted policy incentives and financial backing.

Second, innovate resource development. Efforts should be made to fully leverage Xiamen's existing strengths by developing film-related merchandise, enhancing filming location tourism, and optimizing supporting activities associated with the Golden Rooster Awards. Xiamen's reputation as a natural film studio—due to its year-round mild climate and minimal seasonal variation—has already attracted numerous film productions, including *The Dead End*, *The Left Ear*, and *Ping Pong: The Triumph*. Film companies should be encouraged to focus on intellectual property (IP) development during the promotion and distribution phases, integrating Xiamen's cultural elements into the design of derivative products. This includes creating postcards, figurines, souvenirs, and other merchandise that align with both public aesthetic preferences and the thematic values of the films. Furthermore, filming locations should be transformed into tourist attractions, with producers collaborating with tourism platforms to develop popular film tourism routes. Greater emphasis should also be placed on the supporting activities of the Golden Rooster Awards, with a focus on local cultural characteristics and cross-strait themes. These activities should serve as platforms for multi-stakeholder exchange and collaboration, ultimately contributing to the creation of high-quality cinematic works.

Third, innovate talent cultivation. A collaborative innovation mechanism for talent development should be established through partnerships among enterprises, universities, and research institutions, ensuring a

steady supply of high-quality film professionals for Xiamen. Local film and television companies—such as Xiamen Hengye Film Co., Ltd., Migu Animation Co., Ltd., and Huaqiang Fantawild Film Co., Ltd.—should be encouraged to work with universities in setting up practical training bases and pilot targeted talent development programs. These initiatives should prioritize the cultivation of technically skilled professionals currently in short supply, thereby addressing gaps in the talent chain and laying a solid foundation for the sustainable development of Xiamen's film industry.

### **Leveraging the Platform To Empower Industrial Development**

First, fully leverage existing platforms. To empower the development of Xiamen's film and television industry, it is essential to make full use of existing platforms such as the China Golden Rooster Awards, the Straits Forum Straits Film and Television Season, the China (Xiamen) Intelligent Audio-Visual Industry Base, and the Xiamen Film and Television Shooting Base. These award ceremonies, exhibitions, and industry bases provide strategic opportunities to enhance industry visibility, attract investment, and facilitate collaboration. Stronger connections should be fostered between film and television enterprises and the organizers of major events to maximize the potential of these platforms in driving business growth. Efforts should also be made to streamline the process for companies to establish operations within these industry bases and parks. Leading film and television companies should be incentivized to settle in Xiamen through favorable policies, including assessment and reward systems based on performance indicators such as job creation, taxable income generated in the city, and the production of high-quality film and television works. Simultaneously, support should be extended to start-ups and technology-driven enterprises through measures such as rent reductions, tax incentives, and access to investment and financing services, fostering a dynamic and diversified industry environment.

Second, build the White Egret Film and Television Center. To strengthen collaboration within the industry, Xiamen should promote the integration of resources from institutions such as the Xiamen Film and Television Industry Service Center and the Huijing Strait Film and Television Service Center. By consolidating talent databases, technology databases, and resource databases into unified cloud-based platforms, the White Egret Film and Television Center can be developed as a comprehensive hub encompassing all facets of the industry—from planning and production to post-production, promotion, talent training, and investment and financing. Participation from regional film bases, such as the Taining Film Base and the Pingtan Film Base, should also be encouraged to build a collaborative regional film network. Strategic coordination among the three film bases will enhance industrial synergy, en-

abling each base to leverage its unique cultural and geographical advantages while receiving tailored support to optimize their contribution to the broader development of the film and television sector.

Third, establish investment and innovation platforms. It is imperative to develop dedicated platforms for film and television investment and financing, as well as for technological integration and innovation. On the financial front, tailored policies should be introduced to broaden access to funding for both domestic and international enterprises. This includes reducing taxes on film copyrights and advertising revenues, incentivizing commercial banks to extend loans to film investors, and encouraging diverse financing channels such as equity investment, online crowdfunding, and venture capital. In terms of technology, Xiamen should capitalize on trends such as internet and smart to pursue deep-level integration of technology within the core processes of film production. This strategy will help secure a competitive edge in the evolving digital media landscape. At the same time, the city should work to attract high-level innovation talent, integrate existing technological resources, and cultivate a favorable ecosystem for innovation and entrepreneurship. Through these efforts, innovation can serve as the primary driver for the comprehensive upgrading and long-term development of Xiamen's film and television industry.

### **Promote Industrial Integration and Achieve Mutual Promotion and Win-Win Results**

First, promote the deep integration of the film and television industry with scientific and technological innovation. In alignment with the national cultural digitization strategy, Xiamen should fully leverage the advantages of the Digital Fujian initiative and harness cutting-edge technologies such as the metaverse, artificial intelligence, and indigenous innovations to strengthen the foundational infrastructure of its film and television industry. By cultivating emerging digital sectors and capitalizing on Xiamen's strengths in mobile internet and digital cultural creativity, the city can comprehensively upgrade the intelligence and digitalization levels of its film industry chain and ecosystem, ultimately establishing itself as a leading hub for the digital film and television industry in Southeast China. Furthermore, enhanced data governance in the film and television sector is essential to ensure the authenticity and reliability of industry data and to facilitate effective regulatory oversight. Digital upgrades should be promoted in areas including data retrieval, matching and transaction services, and settlement and payment systems. Film and television enterprises should be encouraged to increase their investments in scientific and technological innovation, and financial incentives should be provided to entities or individuals who receive invention patents, earn science and technology progress awards, or are recognized as gazelle enterprises or other technology-focused enterprises.

Second, promote the deep integration of the film and television industry with the financial sector. The China Golden Rooster Awards present a strategic opportunity to deepen the connection between the film industry and financial institutions. More banks and financial entities should be encouraged to participate in the Golden Rooster Film Investment Conference, where they can offer specialized investment and financing support for films produced in Xiamen. A pilot implementation of a film completion guarantee system should also be introduced to promote cooperation between film enterprises and insurance providers, encouraging the provision of comprehensive guarantees for film content, products, and services. Simultaneously, the development and application of film and television technologies should be emphasized as a means of enhancing risk management within the financial supply chain. Technological innovations in this area can help address risk governance challenges more effectively and contribute to the formation of a virtuous financial cycle for the industry.

Third, promote the deep integration of the film and television industry with the tourism sector. Adhering to the principle of promoting tourism through culture and highlighting culture through tourism, Xiamen should further capitalize on its identity as a natural film studio and a world-class filming destination. Selected popular film and television production sites should be preserved, with recreated film scenes and themed tourism maps developed to attract visitors. The continued hosting of the Golden Rooster Awards in Xiamen provides an excellent opportunity to enhance the city's profile as a film and television cultural tourism destination. In addition, leveraging the influence of film and television celebrities can promote drama-driven tourism, linking local attractions and production bases to create new tourism routes centered around cinematic experiences. Efforts should also be made to strengthen online marketing strategies, with particular focus on cultivating the city's digital image. A multimedia communication matrix—led by major outlets such as Xiamen Daily and Xiamen Broadcasting & Television—should be established in collaboration with local MCN (multi-channel network) institutions to broaden marketing outreach. Influential social media personalities accounts should also be engaged to further amplify the city's positive urban image and cultural appeal.

## CONCLUSION

Film festivals not only function as platforms for the integration of cultural production, but also carry the important responsibility of disseminating both national and urban culture (Finkel, R., & Platt, L., 2020). The Golden Rooster Awards offer a valuable opportunity to showcase and promote the image of Xiamen. Leveraging the long-term hosting of the Golden Rooster Awards to cultivate the city of film cultural brand represents a strate-

gic approach to enhancing the visibility and influence of Xiamen's film and television industry. All stakeholders should be guided by new development paradigms and actively explore innovative pathways for integrating the Golden Rooster Awards with Xiamen's broader cultural sector—particularly its film and television industry—to advance the industry's high-quality development. In parallel with efforts to establish the city of film brand, Xiamen should also strive to position itself as a leading hub for the film and television industry in Southeast China. Achieving this dual goal requires a coordinated approach in which the development of the film and television industry progresses in tandem with urban growth, mutually reinforcing the city's brand identity and cultural appeal. This integrated development model is essential for strengthening Xiamen's overall image, brand value, and cultural identity.

**Conflicts of Interest** The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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