

**A STUDY ON THE PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT OF
SMALL-BUDGET FILMS IN CHINA: BASED ON
THREE-DIMENSIONAL CONTROLLING
FACTORS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT**



**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy (Management)
International College,
National Institute of Development Administration
2018**

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ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation	A STUDY ON THE PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT OF SMALL-BUDGET FILMS IN CHINA: BASED ON THREE-DIMENSIONAL CONTROLLING FACTORS OF PROJECT MANAGEMENT
Author	Xiaolu Lu
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At present, the market for small-budget films in China continues to expand and the production proceeds to soar with the amount having become the most in the world. But at the same time, there are many irregularities and even chaos in production management. Based on the theory of three-dimensional controlling factors (time, quality, and cost) of project management, in-depth interviews with veterans of the industry are combined with case studies into six small-budget film crews for practical observation in this article. The uniqueness of the article is in that it firstly explains the production management of small-budget films from the perspective of project management, explores how three-dimensional controlling factors are applied in small-budget film production, and then probes into the four-dimensional controlling factor and its application according to the characteristics of small-budget films, establishes a four-dimensional controlling model for the production management of small-budget films, and expands the theoretical framework of project management in this field. This article can also be applied to the entire TV and film field to a certain extent. Moreover, this study can provide a relatively systematic production management model for managers and practitioners in this field.

Keywords: China's Small-budget Films, Production Management, Project Management, Controlling Factors

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Xiaolu Lu
May 2019

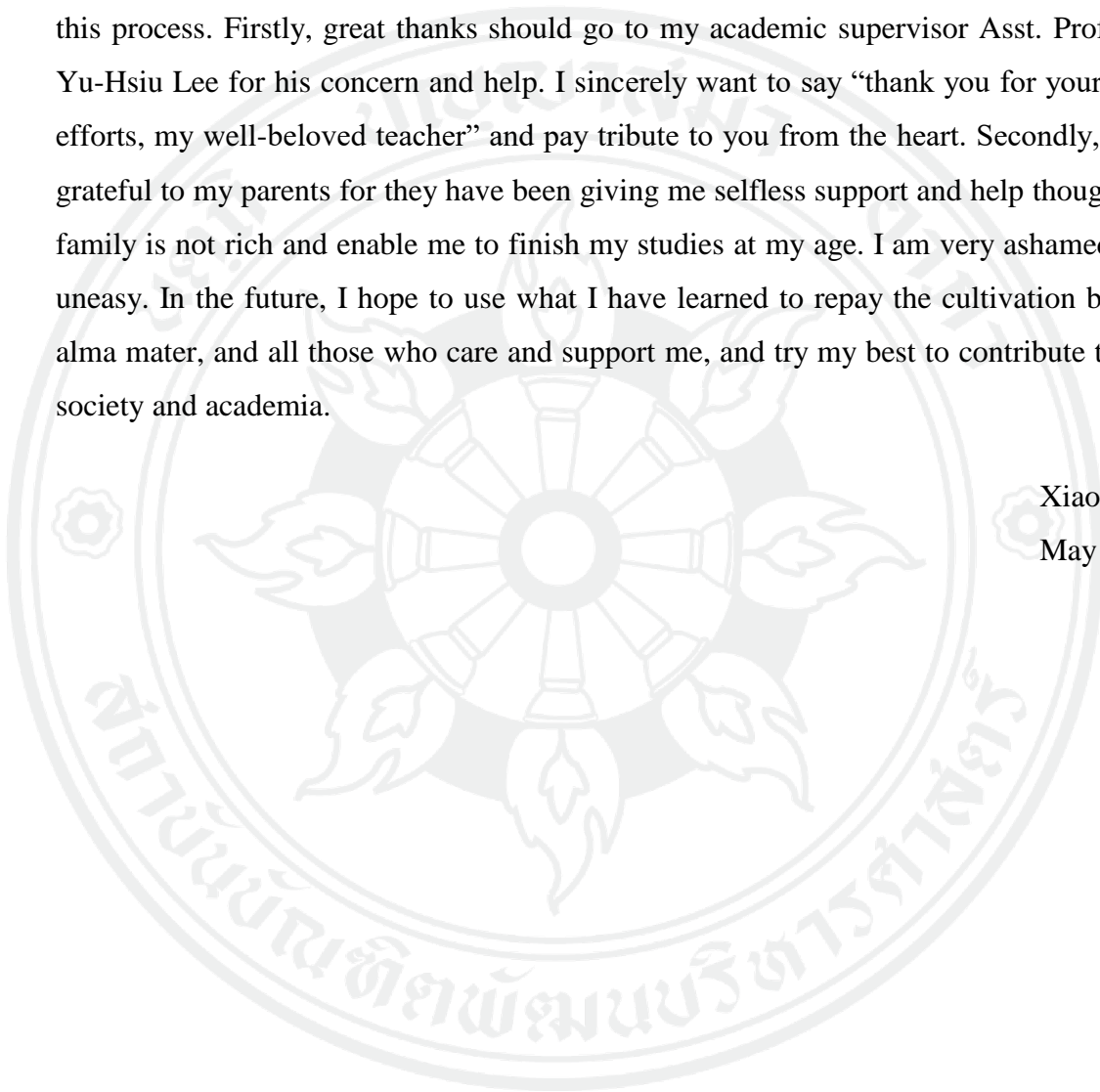
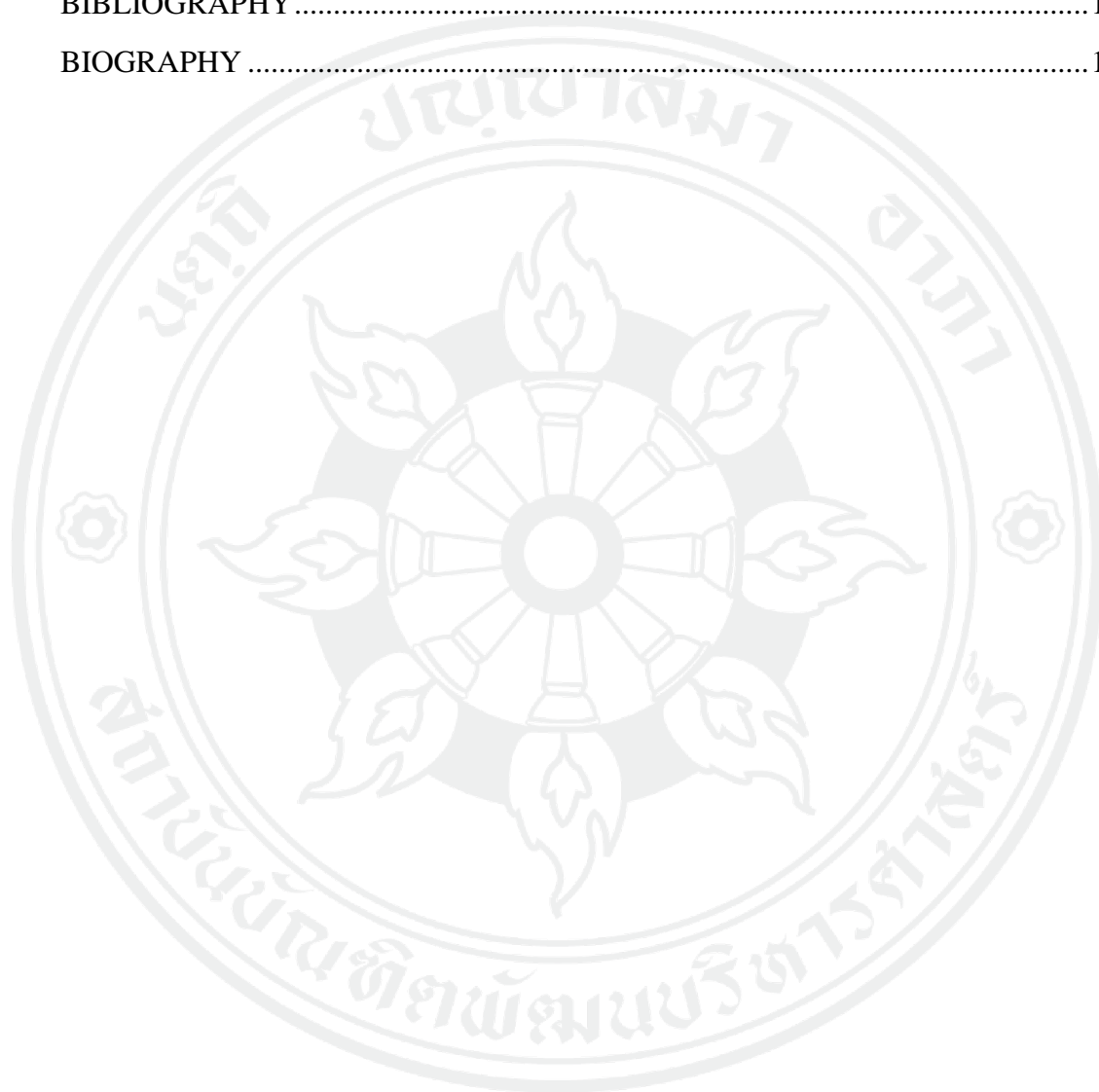


TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
LIST OF TABLES.....	vii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	viii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Research Problem.....	1
1.2 Purpose of Research.....	2
1.3 Background of the Research.....	4
CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
2.1 Research on Chinese Film Production Management.....	8
2.2 Research on Project Management.....	10
2.3 Relevant Research on the Relationship between Project Management and Chinese Film Production Management.....	14
CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY.....	17
3.1 Study Site.....	18
3.2 Research object.....	18
3.3 Data collection method.....	20
3.4 Data analysis method.....	25
CHAPTER 4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	28
4.1 Time.....	28
4.2 Quality.....	52
4.3 Cost.....	76
4.4 Actor.....	93
4.5 Discussion.....	115
CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION.....	117

5.1 Conclusion Summarizes the Whole.....	117
5.2 The Limitations of the Study	122
5.3 Applicable Objects of the Research	122
5.4 The Outlook for Follow-up Research.....	123
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	124
BIOGRAPHY	132



LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 3.1 The Study Site.....	18
Table 3.2 Research Sample.....	20
Table 3.3 Interview Content	22
Table 3.4 Data Collection Method and Role of Observer	24
Table 3.5 Data Analysis Data Coding Comparison Table.....	26
Table 4.1 Time-limit Exceeding of Six Small-budget Film Camera Crews.....	29
Table 4.2 The Remuneration Statistics Table of the Research Objects-Main Actors .83	83
Table 4.3 The Minimum Price List for Major Rental Equipment	90
Table 4.4 Statistics on the Importance of the Three Elements of Project Management and Actors	95
Table 4.5 The Relationship between the Problems Caused by Actors and the Three Factors of Project	107
Table 4.6 Information Table of the Actors in the Case Study	111

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1.1 Four Phases of Small-budget Films Project Management	2
Figure 1.2 3d control elements of small-budget film project management	3
Figure 2.1 Basic Structures of a Film Crew	9
Figure 2.2 Three Elements of Project Management	12
Figure 2.3 Literature Context.....	16
Figure 3.1 Research Flow Chart	17
Figure 3.2 Research and Analysis Framework	27
Figure 4.1 Dual-index Evaluation Chart of Schedule Control in Preparation Period..	33
Figure 4.2 Time Control Gantt Chart in Preparation Period.....	37
Figure 4.3 Flow Frame for Use of Scene	41
Figure 4.4 Critical Path Map of Time Control over Daily Workflow during the Filming Period	51
Figure 4.5 Study Objects of Project Quality Management	55
Figure 4.6 Factors Affecting Filming Quality of Small-budget Films	75
Figure 4.7 The Attributes of Cost Control in Small-budget Film Production	93
Figure 4.8 The Game Matrix Diagram of the Producer and the Actor Negotiating on Price	97
Figure 4.9 The WeChat Screen Capture of One Producer of a Crew Harassing an Actress.....	106
Figure 5.1 Four-dimensional shooting management model of Chinese small-budget film project.....	121

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Problem

At present, the market for small-budget films in China continues to expand and production proceeds to soar (W. Nie & Du, 2017). But at the same time, there are also irregularities even confusion in production management, which direct result in deterioration in the artistic and commercial quality of the films, increase in economic costs, and wastes of time resources. More seriously, some films die because of the chaotic management of the crew. Therefore, small-budget films are also a high-risk industry. It can be seen that there is no relatively mature and perfect management model in the field so far. Everyone in the actual management process is led by their intuition. As for theoretical research, there is not yet systematical study into the production management issues of small-budget films projects, which is inconsistent with the expanding market share of the industry and the rising film production.

The process of managing the production of small-budget film projects is roughly divided into four phases: (1) project development (script development, financing); (2) film production (preparation for building crew, film shooting); (3) post-production (montage editing, sound retouching); (4) promotion and film distribution (distribution channels, marketing and promotion). The article is aimed to study the second phase “film production”. (Figure 1.1) The matters involved in this phase are the most complex and cumbersome, and a large number of people are also involved; thus, this phase is the most significant for studying management compared to other phases. Overall, this article has academic research value, but lacks a certain amount of previous research.

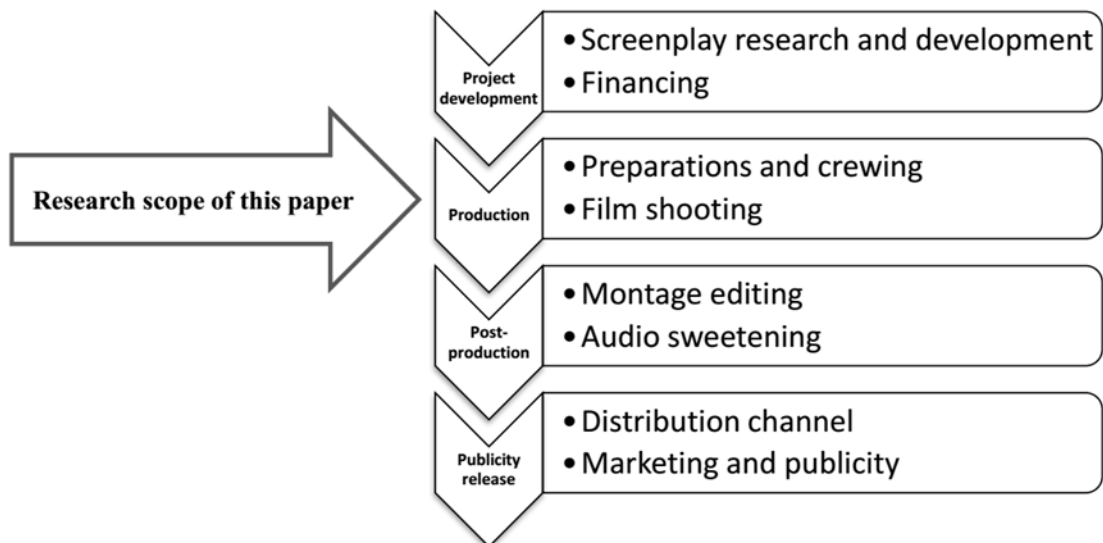


Figure 1.1 Four Phases of Small-budget Films Project Management

Source: (Gong, 2007)

1.2 Purpose of Research

Firstly, the three-dimensional controlling factors in project management: time, quality, cost (X. Y. Fang & Zhou, 2010; Kerzner, 2013; Meredith & Mantel, 2010) are combined with the responsibilities of each production department of the small-budget film crew to develop relatively systematic management model for production management departments. (Figure 1.2) Based on this, the fourth important variable, namely the fourth dimensional controlling factor that influences the film production is studied by virtue of the characteristics of the small-budget film project. The purposes of this article are to make the production management team and small-budget film management personnel have a systematic and macroscopic concept, imperceptibly affect the management methods, behaviors and choices, etc. of managers in the filming management process and design a four-dimensional controlling factor model for the small-budget film project management.

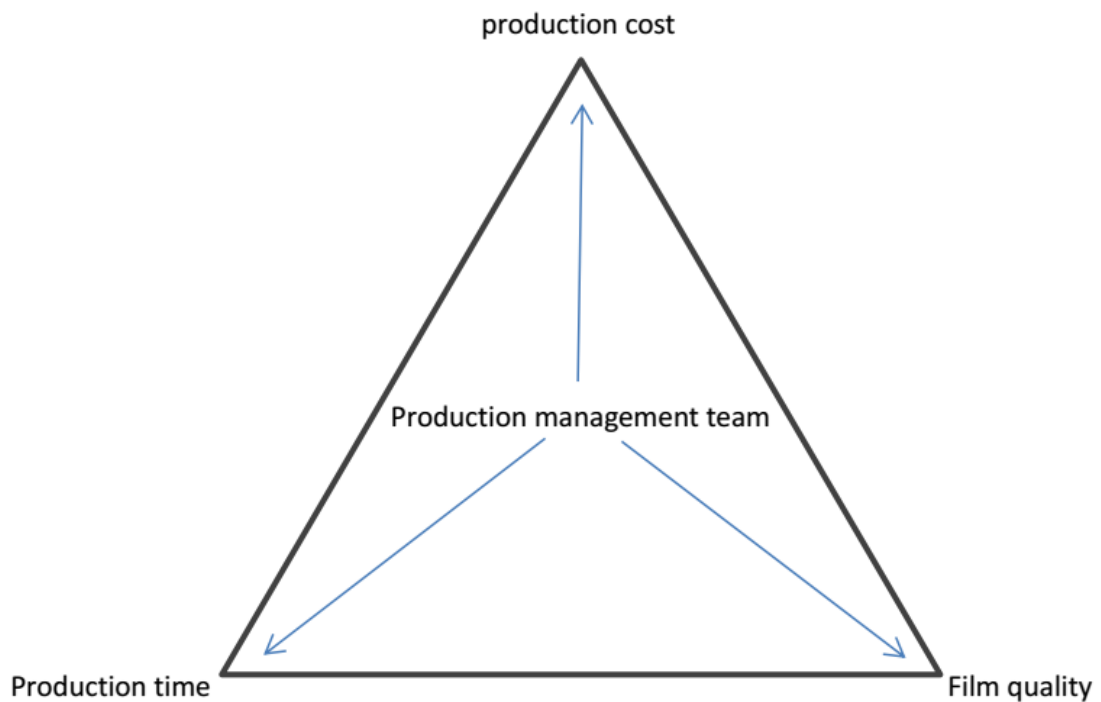


Figure 1.2 3d control elements of small-budget film project management

Source: (Kerzner, 2013)

Therefore, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to study and summarize a relatively systematic management model for practitioners and managers in this field.

This study has two innovations: (1) it is aimed to study the production management mode of small-budget film projects on the basis of many film and television management and film management research; (2) based on the three-dimensional controlling factors of project management and combined with the uniqueness and abstraction of small-budget film project, the practical application of three-dimensional controlling factors in small-budget film management are studied and the fourth variable is found out, studied and demonstrated to form the fourth-dimensional controlling factor.

Guided by the project management theory framework, this study provides answers to the following questions:

1) What is the role of the factor “time” in the project management of small-budget films in China?

2) What is the role of the factor “quality” in the project management of small-budget films in China?

3) What is the role of the factor “cost” in the project management of small-budget films in China?

4) What is the role of the factor “actors” in the project management of small-budget films in China?

1.3 Background of the Research

Unless specified, the small-budget films mentioned in the paper refer to “small-budget films in China”, and the currency mentioned in the paper is “RMB”.

Chinese film came into being in 1905. However, basically, there was no concept of commodities concerning Chinese films in the entire 20th century (Lei, 2011) With the deepening of reform and opening up, people’s demand for spiritual culture has increased, and the mode of film production and operation in the past planned economy period has been unable to meet people’s requirement. Until February 1, 2002, the new “Management Regulations on Administration of Films” had begun to be implemented. In the same year, at the 16th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, it was clearly proposed to support and improve the development of the cultural industry. The industrialization process of Chinese film was officially launched with the private capital reaching one-third of total film production (Y. Liu, 2012).

In the context of the marketing operation of the Chinese film industrialization, the film “Crazy Stone” came into being in 2016. A total of 2.6 million was invested in the film (Zheng, 2009) and more than 30 million box office was harvested (Rao, 2016), which became a big event shocking the film and television industry at that time. Many film education and research departments, such as the Beijing Film Academy, used “Crazy Stone” as a case for thematic studies and discussion, and the concept of low-budget films was born. High-budget and high-income blockbusters have been dominant in the film industry (F. Y. Zhou & Fu, 2015). The small-budget films have thrown a sprat to catch a herring, entered the mainstream market of Chinese films with the characteristic of low-input and high-income characteristic,

been recognized by many audiences and repeatedly achieved outstanding achievements in the subsequent development path (Dang, 2014; Gu, 2015; Lei, 2011). In 2015, the Chinese government has implemented the policy that “one teleplay can only be transmitted on two satellite channels”, and online big movies suddenly sprang up with a blowout type. Many private capital and TV drama production companies have invested small-budget films, which has been making the production of small-budget films increase day by day.

In some developed countries in the West, the film has become the core of the cultural industry with its operational management experience being quite mature (Cao, 2011). For example, every aspect of the film production management in Hollywood in the United States is relatively mature after years of development (Zhao & Zhao, 2010). The Chinese film industry really got off the ground in 2002, and its production management mechanism was relatively backward with a series of problems emerging in the process of production management (B. Sun, 2016). Due to the small amount of funds and the limited allocation of resources in all aspects, many problems have been highlighted in the production management process of small-budget films. At present, the project management of the small-budget films accounting for the largest proportion of the total Chinese film production is chaotic, and the management of the actors is especially in utter disorder, which has caused serious problems to the production unit in producing small-budget film. The problem has brought huge losses to the cycle, quality and cost of film production, deeply affecting the international status of Chinese film. Consequently, there exists such a situation that Chinese film production ranks first in the world with only a very small number of films profitable and most of them turning out to be with deficit. In 2017, less than 10% of all the Chinese films can be profitable, (Sohu Finance, 2018 February 7) which impresses the development of the entire cultural industry to a certain extent.

The investment amounts of each movie are various. In terms of the investment amount, the films are roughly divided into three categories: large-budget films, medium-budget films, and small-budget films (Z. Chen & Wang, 2016). Small-budget films are mainly defined by the investment amount, which includes the cost of project development, the remuneration for movie actors, the salary of the staff, the costs of

the equipment, the living scene, post-production and the publicity and so on. Few films are also defined by subject type, lineup of the chief creators, and film style (Lei, 2011) Because of the limitation on the cost of capital, the small-budget films mainly tell modern life stories with few stars or big shots to join, so most of them are realistic ones. Many scholars have different definitions of the specific investment amount of small-budget films. Among them, the most authoritative and mainstream statement is put forward by Professor Zheng (2009) as cited in Beijing Film Academy “small-budget films refer to films with an investment of less than 10 million”. Rao and Bi (2008) in researcher at Southwest University define low-budget films as films with investment amount between 4 million and 10 million and films with investment amount between 1 million and 3 million are defined as low-budget ones.” Tang (2012) an associate researcher at the China Film Art Research Center proposed that: films with the investment amount under 3 million are low-budget small-production films, and the films with the investment amount between 4 million and 10 million are defined as medium-small budget and medium-small scale films. In general, the definition of small-budget films is not completely unified in the industry and academia. This study refers to the statements of the industry and academic authorities and mainstream people and defines “small-budget films as ones with the “investment amount within 10 million”.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

First of all, according to the title of this study, the object studied in this article is the filming management of small-budget films. However, there is basically no literature related to this study among masses of literature, so the literature scope of the research object of this study is extended to the film production management. Secondly, the main bodies of this article are the project management in the management system and the application of the three-dimensional controlling factors in project management. Therefore, most of the literature in this chapter comes from the related documents of project management and its three key factors of project management. Finally, after searching for the relevant literature combining Chinese film production management and project management, a little literature is summed up to act as a visual reference basis for this study.

The structure of this chapter is as follows: 2.1 Research on Chinese Film Production Management: the theoretical background and the earliest proposed theory are provided in the first paragraph; in the second paragraph is the basic development process and contents; the research results in the past five years are concluded in the third paragraph. 2.2 Research on Project Management: the theoretical background, definition and the earliest proposed theory of project management are provided in the first paragraph; the basic development process and contents are concluded in the second paragraph; the research results in the past five years are summed up in the third paragraph. 2.3 Relevant Research on the Relationship between Project Management and Chinese Film Production Management: in the first paragraph is the previous research of the predecessors; and deficiencies of the previous research are put forwarded in the second paragraph.

2.1 Research on Chinese Film Production Management

People began to have a preliminary concept of film production management under the market economy system after the implementation of the new *Regulations on Administration of Films* since February 1, 2002 in China. Yu (2003) from Department of Management, Beijing Film Academy, firstly elaborated the practice and theory of film production management under the new system in the book *The Management of Film and Television Production*.

(1) From the perspective of management, “film production management” refers to the management behavior in the process of producing film. Its purpose is to produce films with relatively higher artistic value and commercial value with the help of limited resources.

(2) Film production management is divided into macro management and micro management. Macro management is mainly for the overall performance of the film industry development, mainly implemented by the government functional management departments in charge of the film industry, while micro management is mainly reflected in the management behavior of specific film practitioners in the film production process. The research also belongs to the micro-management category of the film.

(3) The concept of “independent producer” which firstly came from the United States is proposed. The producer has absolute rights to the production of the film and assumes all responsibility for the film, which refers to the “producer-oriented system”.

People in China often refer to films and TV dramas as the “film and television” industry because the production forms of these two industries are relatively similar and call the management behavior of the film and television industry in the production process as “film and television management”. Film and television production management is different from the production management of other general products and has its own particularity, which is determined by its dual attributes. It is a work of art and can cultivate people’s aesthetic sentiments, ideological criticism, etc. At the same time, it is also a commodity, and it also needs to conform to the laws of the market and create the market value it deserves (He, Huang, & Li, 2007).

Production management is based on the production of film, and its essence is project management (Song, 2009). The production management work is more about coordination. It is necessary for the managers to emphasize the artistic level and guarantee the quality of the film. However, the requirements put forward by the director in the actual process cannot be fully satisfied. This requires the manager to continuously weigh and consider the balance when making choices (Zhao & Zhao, 2010). Due to the size of each film, there are certain differences in personnel allocation, but usually the film production team consists of five departments: production department, directing department, camera department, recording department and art department (F. A. Gao & Song, 2011) (Figure 2.1)

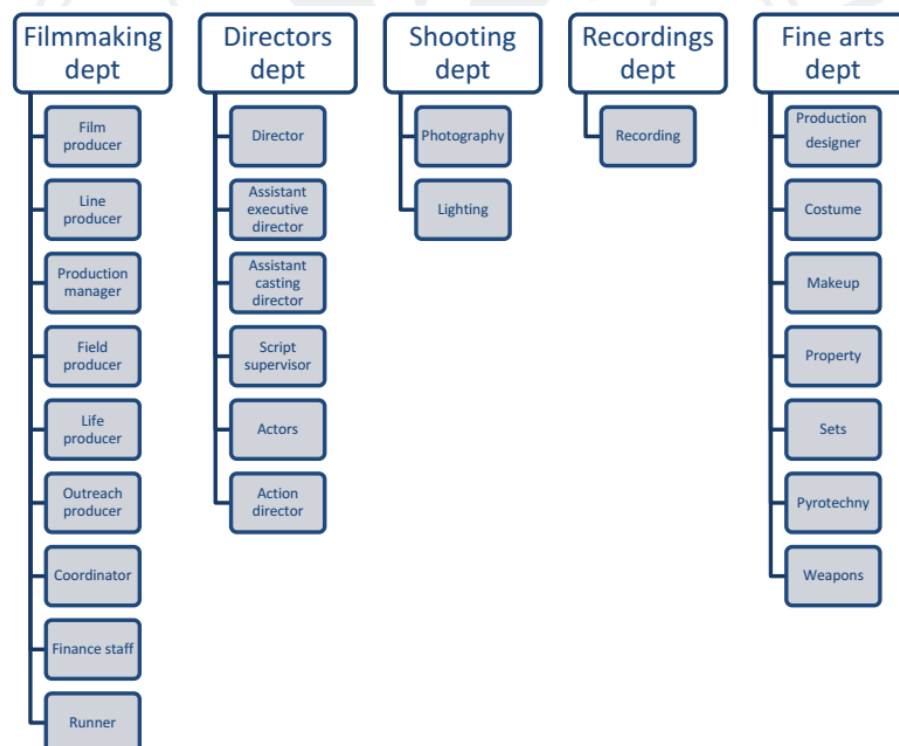


Figure 2.1 Basic Structures of a Film Crew

Source: (F. A. Gao & Song, 2011) (Xie, 2008)

Film production management consists of “generalized production management” and “narrow production management”. The general production management refers to a complete process from the initial project development of the film to the final film release. The narrow production management refers to a complete process from the preparation for the film crew to the completion of filming (Song, 2017). The object of this study refers to the narrow production management. The film crew is a temporary and short-term team with its personnel from all corners of the country. The managers must acquaint themselves with the personnel’s professional skills and morality, as well as their respective social relationships and backgrounds, and interpersonal relationships in the crew, etc. in order to decrease the troubles in the process of management, more powerfully control the situation and balance all aspects of matters (Q. Lu, 2014) As for the selection of the crew members, experienced personnel may be more mature in the artistic creation style, and newcomers may lack the experience of creation and pay more attention to details. This requires managers to consider comprehensively, and choose the most appropriate personnel according to the actual situation of the crew (Tan, 2015). The film production management is composed of the main creator team as the core and other peripheral personnel (Zhu & Wu, 2015). Professional talents of film production management are the core of film production and scarce (H. T. Nie, 2013b). The producer can almost determine the success or failure of the film (Feng, 2012). In the past years, it has been controversy that whether the producer or the director is the core the film production team, while at present, it is universal that the actor becomes the core of the film production team (Q. Lu, 2014).

2.2 Research on Project Management

Project management came into being after World War II in the 1940s. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration applied project management in a series of military weapons research and development activities. After the 1960s, project management is widely applied in the fields of aviation, defense, construction, etc. As it develops, people have realized that project managers are the key to the success of the entire project. Until the 1990s, project management began to be widely

used, and various serviceable tools were developed for project management. (Kerzner, 2013). The basis for the birth of project management is “system management” and “preferred method” (X. Y. Fang & Zhou, 2010). The US Project Management Institute (2013) abbreviated as PMI defines a project as “temporary work for creating unique products, services, or outcomes” and defines project management as “applying knowledge, skills, tools, and technology into projects to meet the needs of the project”.

Time, cost and performance (scope) are called the three factors determining the success of project management and the project manager needs to constantly seek balance between these three factors to push the project move forward until completion (Meredith & Mantel, 2010). (Figure 2.2) The life cycle of the project is roughly divided into four phases: (1) project start-up, the managers need to confirm the problems and needs of the project, and know the success of the project fairly well and get the project authorization from the relevant aspects; (2) project plan, before the implementation of the project, a series of relevant implementation plans will be formulated around the time, quality and cost of the project to minimize the risk of project failure. (3) project implementation, a series of activities around the target are launched with the project manager as the chief commander; (4) project completion, the summary, evaluation and performance confirmation of the project are completed in this phase (Clements & Gido, 2009). The Lubuge Hydropower Station in Yunnan province built in the late 1970s was the first successful case of project management in China (X. Y. Fang & Zhou, 2010). In the early 1980s, China began to formally contact a series of methods of project management under the influence of some Western experts and the returned Chinese overseas experts, (Chi, 2009). In the process of project management, a series of project management tools are usually used to monitor and master the project. The most commonly used are: Gantt Chart, Critical Path Method, PEKT Network Analysis Method, Work Breakdown Structure Chart, Responsibility Matrix, etc. (L. C. Sun, 2012). Lewis (2011) studied a project management model called as the “Lewis Method”, which can help the project manager to circumvent some unexpected problems and some minor detailed problems in the project implementation process.



Figure 2.2 Three Elements of Project Management

Source: (Clements & Gido, 2009)

With the development of Internet technology, all walks of life have a certain degree of dependence on Internet technology. (Kerzner, 2015) in the book *Project Management 2.0* defined the past traditional project management as “PM1.0” and defined the project management based on the Web 2.0 era Internet technology as “PM2.0”. PM 2.0 has achieved success in some small project management practices, while it is still unclear whether PM 2.0 is effective in the large-scale project management. In actual operation, the project manager can freely choose the best implementation method according to the characteristics of the project itself. In fact, the development of the Internet has basically entered the era of Web 3.0 after 2015 (X. L. Lu & Ma, 2016). When the project deviates from its original goal in the implementation process, Project Portfolio Management (PPM) can be applied to manage multiple projects and optimize resources (Athayde, Elswick, Lombard, & Crawford, 2013). Project Portfolio Management (PPM) is different from the overall management of the project, which only effectively coordinates the various parts of the project and is a comprehensive process of the project (Wang, 2013). In some

complicated projects, the use of one-page project management can give the managers a clear understanding and help them master the key aspects of the project. It is a communication tool for understanding and mastering the project, but its shortcoming lies in that it may make the managers ignore the accuracy of the details to a certain extent (Campbell & Campbell, 2013). Görög (2016) proposed the conceptual basis for the maturity assessment of organizational project management, established the main determinants of organizational project management maturity, and revealed the link between the standardization of the project management process and the professionalism of the project or project team. Conforto, Amaral, Silva, Felippo, and Kamikawachi (2016) found a series of agility inconsistencies in project management (PM) and agile project management (APM) research and carried out investigation and verification for projects with different levels of innovation in 171 different fields and found that the agile structure is cohesive and useful in different project management contexts. In the process of project management, complying with the scientific process and using advanced tools and systems have little to do with the success rate of the project. Through the research on the United Arab Emirates project organization, it is found that the performance of project management is positively related to the success rate, while the project management performance has little impact on project efficiency (Mir & Pinnington, 2014). The strategic planning features of the project can also be fully integrated into the project management framework to provide effective insight into the relationship between project management behavior and the success of the final project (Papke-Shields & Boyer-Wright, 2017). The sustainable development of the project should be considered from a social perspective. Stakeholder Management Method and a triple bottom line standard are applied with adopting a value-based method to implement project management (Silvius, 2017). Sánchez (2015) developed a framework to ensure that projects are operated in a benign manner so as to meet the stakeholders' needs and target strategies. It can combine the project management with sustainability. Project Management Capability Retention (PMCR) is closely related to the success rate of the project, and the success of the project is important to the overall success of the project-oriented organization (Ekrot, Kock, & Gemünden, 2016). Floricel, Bonneau, Aubry, and Sergi (2014) constructed a toolbox with five dimensions of practice and three social theories to demonstrate some of the specific

problems encountered in project management practices based on their respective complementary strengths. The project management science has also faced a series of challenges in its development, and diversity and complexity do exist in its practice and theory. Although the premise of basic law and discipline law is institutionalized management, the complexity and diversity as the essence of project management are also full of great importance (Bresnen, 2016).

2.3 Relevant Research on the Relationship between Project Management and Chinese Film Production Management

Joyner and Stiner (1990) took the lead in applying the theoretical methods of project management into the production management of films in the article *Project Management in the Movie Industry*. As for the production management of film projects, the three factors (time, cost, performance) model in project management evolves into the production triangle with its three factors being: fine, the commercial and artistic value of the film is high; fast, the time progress of producing films is fast; economical, the production costs can be saved to a greater degree (Ryan, 2010). Gong (2007) from Department of Art Management, Beijing Film Academy combined the main theory of project management with the production management theory of film for the first time in China in the book *Management of Film and TV Production Projects* which has become a textbook for film art management major in universities. The author defined film and television production project management as follows: “The film and television production project management is a subset of the project management theory”. With the film and television industry production project as the object and combining the characteristics of the film and television production project, it makes use of specialized knowledge, skills, tools and techniques to efficiently plan, guide and control the film and television production projects in the project activities so as to achieve dynamic management of the entire process of film and television production projects and comprehensively coordinate and optimize the project objectives.” The film industry is high-risk and high-rewarding. The “film project risk identification model” can identify the risk factors that affect the film outcomes of the

film project system (Song, 2017). The managers of Chinese film and television drama production rarely have the educational background of management, and most of them implement management by perceptual experience (B. Y. Zhou, 2006). Film and television production is an independent project, and project management method can greatly improve its production efficiency and solve a series of problems in the process of film and television production management (Cheng, 2014). The process of realizing the management objectives of film and television projects is to constantly balance the time, quality and cost of film and television projects (Cao, 2011).

First of all, there are few researches on project management methods used in film production management. The existing series of research results are almost all macroscopic research in this area. According to the type, films can be roughly divided into feature films, documentaries, cartoons; according to the size, films can be roughly divided into large-budget films; medium-budget films; small-budget films. Different types of films with different scales have qualitative differences in the production management modes, and research on microscopic and specific film production project management is currently lacking. Furthermore, the existing research on related aspects mostly applies the theoretical methods of project management into the production management of films and makes explanatory explanations. Few innovations in characteristics of film production management are made within the field of project management. This study hopes to make breakthroughs in these two aspects on the basis of previous research results. Therefore, this study is aimed to make up for the lack of research on the small-budget scale in the research of Chinese film production management, supply the blank of the research on small-budget film in the category of project management, inherit the theoretical system of three-dimensional controlling factors of project management and make innovations in the type of its research object. (Figure 2.3)

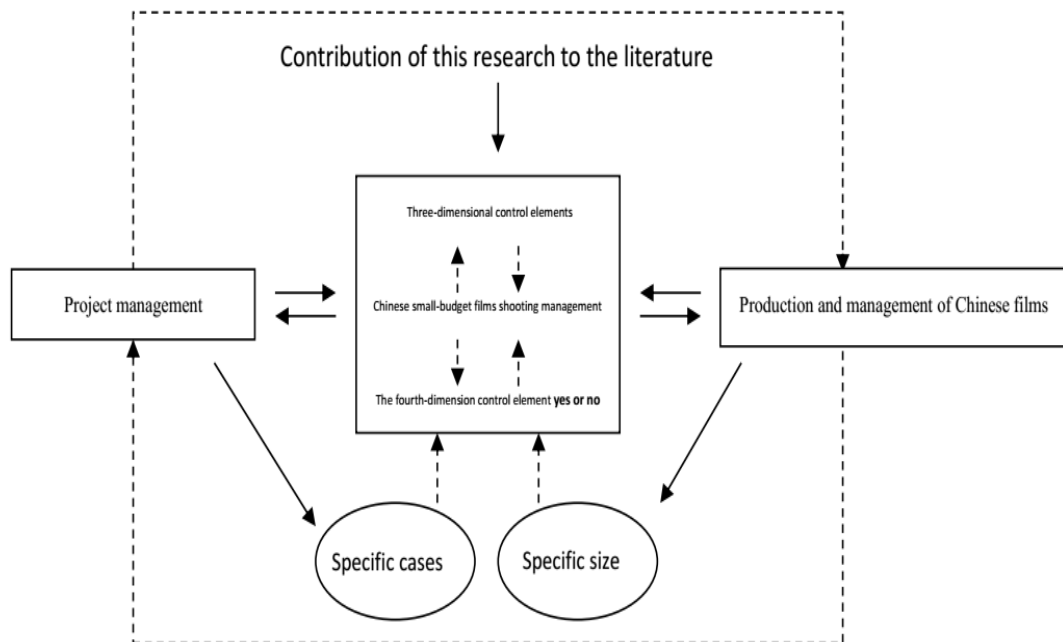


Figure 2.3 Literature Context

Source: Author's analysis

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

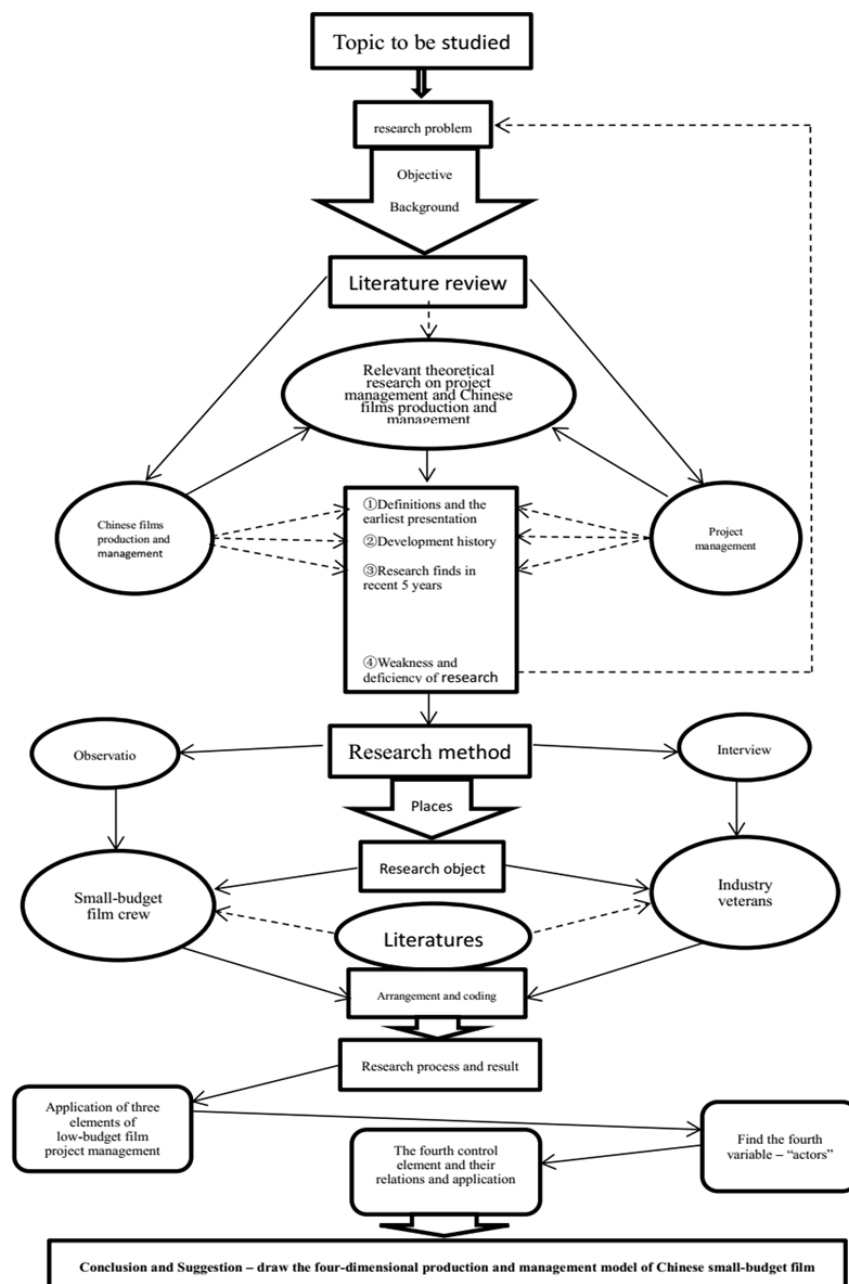


Figure 3.1 Research Flow Chart
Source: Author's analysis

3.1 Study Site

According to the actual situation of the research object, the research location of this study is the location of the six small-budget films crew and the location of the interviewees. (Table 3.1)

Table 3.1 The Study Site

	Object of study	Study sites
Small-budget film crews	“Youth hey up”	Chongqing China
	“Crazy chef”	Chongqing China
	“Kiss kiss da”	Qijiang China
	“Mama’s taste”	Jiangjin China
	“I am a good therapist for love”	Taiwan China
	“The goddess encountered the paparazzi”	Chongqing China
Interviewee	Nine veterans in the industry	Chongqing China

Source: Author’s analysis

3.2 Research object

According to the content of this study, there are two aspects about the research objects. I. A multi-case study based on replicated logic is formed with taking six small-budget film crews as examples and conducting observation and research. First, the study is to explore how the three factors (time, quality, cost) based on project management control can be systematically applied in small-budget film production, and find the fourth variable that affects it, that is, the fourth controlling factor, explore the impact of the fourth factor on other factors and its application in small-budget film production management. The two questions to be answered in this study are based on the exploratory question “how”, and the film production team to be explored in this study has great hidden characteristics and involves many hidden factors in interpersonal relationships, which requires in-depth analysis. Therefore, it is effective to conduct case studies (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 2003). The single case study is more

about studying the uniqueness of the development of the thing, and the multi-case study is supplemented by the iteration of things in different environments to make the research conclusion more stable, reliable and more general (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Therefore, some of the objects in this study are selected from six small-budget film crews for case studies. II. One-on-one in-depth interviews with veterans of several small-budget film production teams are conducted. Interviews are an intrinsic response to interpersonal relationships (Lee, 1999). The production management of the film has a great hidden color in interpersonal relationships. The conversation between two people on research-related issues will not be disturbed by the third party. Sometimes it is easy for researchers and interviewees to generate trust, which can make the response more real (G. H. Chen, 2009). The small-budget film crews who have been in the front line for a long time have an intuitive and visual feeling about the hidden characteristics of the industry and the interpersonal relationship factors. The information obtained from their interviews is more suitable for this study. Therefore, other objects of the study are a number of veterans in the small-budget film industry for carrying out in-depth interviews.

The film crews are relatively closed and niche. And there are great limitations on the choice of research objects. The choice of this research object is mainly based on three aspects: (1) the actual situation of the researcher and his or her own social resources in the industry; (2) in terms of size and personnel composition, the selected six small-budget film crews are universal and conform to the basic principles of sampling selection; (3) the interviewees have much experience in the field and their experience is the relevant experience in small-budget film crews under different environments and different backgrounds and is basically credible. The choice of research subjects has its own advantages and disadvantages. On the basis of comprehensive measurement of various lengths and weaknesses, it is the most appropriate to select the above research objects.

3.3 Data collection method

Miles and Huberman (1994) described four research strategies for qualitative research in the book *Qualitative Data Analysis*, and they are participatory observation, non-participatory observation, interview and archival research. Therefore, the literature research method, the in-depth interviewing method and the observational method (conducting observation as the participant and the non-participant) combined with the actual situation of the study are used to collect the data of the study. Among them, the observed samples are six small-budget film crews, and the interview samples are nine veterans in film industry. (Table 3.2)

Table 3.2 Research Sample

methos objects	practical investigation	in-depth interviews
A	Film 《Youth hey up》	Mr. Zhou Yi (scene filmmaker, producer) Interview time:69 minutes
B	Film 《Crazy chef》	Mrs. Zhou Yulan (producer) Interview time:69 minutes
C	Film 《Kiss kiss da》	Mr.Wu Weidong (coordination filmmaker, unit production manager) Interview time:42 minutes
D	Film 《Mama's taste》	Mr. Lei Qing (life scene filmmaker) Interview time:61 minutes
E	Film 《I am a good therapist for love》	Mr. Jin Shuang (scene filmmaker) Interview time:43 minutes
F	Film 《The goddess encountered the paparazzi》	Mr. Ma Yong (director) Interview time:61 minutes
G	-	Mr. Ma Yi (unit production manager) Interview time:61 minutes

methos objects	practical investigation	in-depth interviews
H	-	Mr. Zhou Dayan (unit production manager) Interview time:90 minutes
I	-	Mr. Yuan Ailin (planner) Interview time:45 minutes

Source: Author's analysis

3.3.1 Document retrieval

As for the qualitative research of management, the literature search based on the main content of the research questions is to sort out and collect relevant materials and make comparison and summary in combination with the actual situation. More than one hundred related literatures, mainly journals, works, books, and master's thesis and doctor's dissertation are collected in this study. According to the theme of "The Study on Small-budget Film Production Management - Based on Four-dimensional Control Factors of Project Management", a large number of "Chinese film production (production) management" and "project management" documents have been retrieved and the theoretical viewpoints suitable for this study are screened out, and finally the relevant theoretical literatures combining film production (production) management and project management" are searched and summed up. Also, the research gaps and research deficiencies in this field are compiled.

3.3.2 Depth interview

In-depth interviews help to trigger interviewees to share relevant events, their experience of successes and failures, and enable interviewees and researchers to participate in understanding the researched questions (Crabtree & Miller, 1999). In-depth interviews in management science and art are mainly used for the studies of qualitative methods. The researcher in this article will conduct face-to-face, in-depth and long-term interviews with people who have years of experience in film production management and artistic creation in small-budget film production. Among the interviewees are some authorities in the industry. The recorder has been publicly used for recording the whole interview, and then the recorded data are converted into text. The interview is carried out around the research content in this article by virtue of semi-structured and open-ended questioning methods. (Table 3.3) In addition to recording the text content of the interview, the researcher also needs to carefully watch what the interviewee is doing and saying during the interview process, and perform on-the-spot recording or brain memory on the tone, facial expression, expressions in their eyes, and speech rhythm of the interviewee, so as to summarize deeper and more implicit implication with combining the text content.

Table 3.3 Interview Content

NO.	Question	Research Content
1	What time factors are unnecessary in the production of small-budget film?	Time
2	What's the role of time in the production of film?	
3	What's the fundamental quality requirement on small-budget film?	Quality
4	Which are the key phases to improve film quality?	
5	Which are the usual phases that over-spending occurs?	Cost
6	Which are the most likely cost-saving phases?	
7	What are the relations among production period, production cost and film quality?	Project Three

NO.	Question	Research Content
8	What's the respective importance of the three elements?	elements
9	How to balance the relations among them?	
10	How important are actors / actresses for small-budget film?	Actor / actress
11	What are the factors for casting?	
12	Which factors of actor / actress will influence the work of crew?	
13	What's the best actor / actress for the production management?	

Source: Author's analysis

3.3.3 Observation method

The use of observational method is most appropriate for the studies into the interpersonal factors in management and artistic creation, as well as the existence of disputes and issues that are not easily understood by people (Waddington, Catherine, & Gillian, 1994). When observing and collecting data, the researcher usually has three roles: (1) as an observer participating; (2) as a participant observing; (3) as a non-participating observer (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The roles of the author in observing and researching process are: as a participant observing and as a non-participating observer. (Table 3.4)

Table 3.4 Data Collection Method and Role of Observer

Method	A. Participating in as an observer	B. Observing as a participant	Comment
Observing and recording descriptive information	+	+	Role A is particularly helpful in areas where interaction and emotion are monitored
Recording direct citations relating to emotion	+	+	The same as above
Unstructured interview	+	+	The structure will appear if the researcher has some skills
Structured interview outline	-	#	It is most useful for large-scale questionnaire survey (such as general survey)
Detailed interaction outline	-	-	It is most useful for group work
Interactive frequency record	+	+	It is significant in leadership research
Paper-and-pencil test	-	-	It is helpful for achieving a specific goal in a specific context
Written record	+	+	It is important for checking the reliability of observations of Role A
Radio and television report	+	+	The same as above

Not: + probably adopted; #occasionally adopted; - rarely or impossibly adopted

Source: (Lutz & Iannaccone, 1969, p. 113)

The observation of participants is not widely applied in the field of management science, while is more common in the field of art research. As a kind of action research method, it refers to that the researcher personally goes to the specific practice unit with his own research questions, and personally engages in the management of relevant aspects, so as to obtain corresponding empirical data or field notes, and convert it into text form. The researcher here has served as the casting director in the small-budget film *Youth hey up* (2016), been responsible for the recruitment of actors during the preparatory stage of the crew and the management of the actors during the filming, and has ever worked as the assistant production manager in the small-budget film *Crazy chef* (2016) and been responsible for the management of the entire crew from the preparation of the crew to the end of the filming. Through practical management operations, the researcher provides the most intuitive and experienced practical data for the questions studied in this paper.

Observations conducted by non-participants are not uncommon in qualitative research in management science and art. It refers to that the researcher personally goes deep into the specific institution with his own research questions, and experiences the whole process of management and artistic creation of others, with an aim to obtain corresponding empirical data or field notes and convert them into text form. The researcher has been actors in the small-budget films *Kiss kiss da* (2017), *Mama's taste* (2017), *I am a good therapist for love* (2016), *The goddess encountered the paparazzi* (2016) and personally observed and experienced the performance of various management and artistic creation positions in the crew, as well as various inevitable implicit and explicit industry rules. Then the researcher can transform the observation into text data through the researcher's subjective understanding of the object.

3.4 Data analysis method

First of all, all the collected literatures are sorted out, summarized and compared, and re-analyzed in the form of re-creation. Under the premise of the original conclusion, the literature is analyzed based on the characteristics of "small-budget film project management" to form corresponding academic views. Then, with

the three dimensions (time, quality and cost) and their interrelationships as the leading factor, the data collected in this study are classified. On this basis, the data collected in this study are encoded, and the processed data are compared to summarize theoretical constructs and explore the logical relationship so as to make it reflect the inheritance of the theory and the characteristics of the case. The process of collecting data continues until the end of the study.

The data collected in this study are divided into three regions for coding. (Table 3.5) The first code is O and I, which are the first letters of “Observation” and “Interview” respectively. The second code is: “observation objects A-F” representing six small-budget film crews, (1) *Cheer Up in Youth* (2) *The Crazy God of Cookery* (3) *Qinqin* (4) *Mom’s Cooking*, (5) *I Prescribe Medicine for Love*, (6) *Nymph Encounters Paparazzo*. There are nine interviewees represented by A-I. The third codes are: “the observed research content 1-5”, (1) time, (2) quality, (3) cost, (4) three controlling factors of the project, (5) actors. “The interviewed questions 1-13” are shown in Table 3.2. For example: 1. The serial number OC1 indicates the time problem observed in the film *Qinqin*, 2. The serial number IA13 indicates the question answered by the interviewee A in the interview – “What is the most ideal actor for the production management party?”.

Table 3.5 Data Analysis Data Coding Comparison Table

Code 1	Code 2	Code 3	Content
O	-	-	Mode of observation
-	A-F	-	Number of objects observed
-	-	1-5	Observation content number
I	-	-	Mode of Interview
-	A-I	-	Number of interviewees
-	-	1-13	Interview question number

Source: Author’s analysis

The analytical framework of this study is as follows. (Figure 3.2) Firstly, the application of time, quality and cost factors in the process of small-budget film production management is analyzed and summarized, and the relationship between the three factors and their interactions are summarized. Then, according to the research of the first phase, it is analyzed whether there is a fourth controlling factor. If it exists, a “four-dimensional controlling factor model for Chinese small-budget film production management” is proved and designed. If it does not exist, a “three-dimensional controlling factor model for Chinese small-budget film production management” is designed.

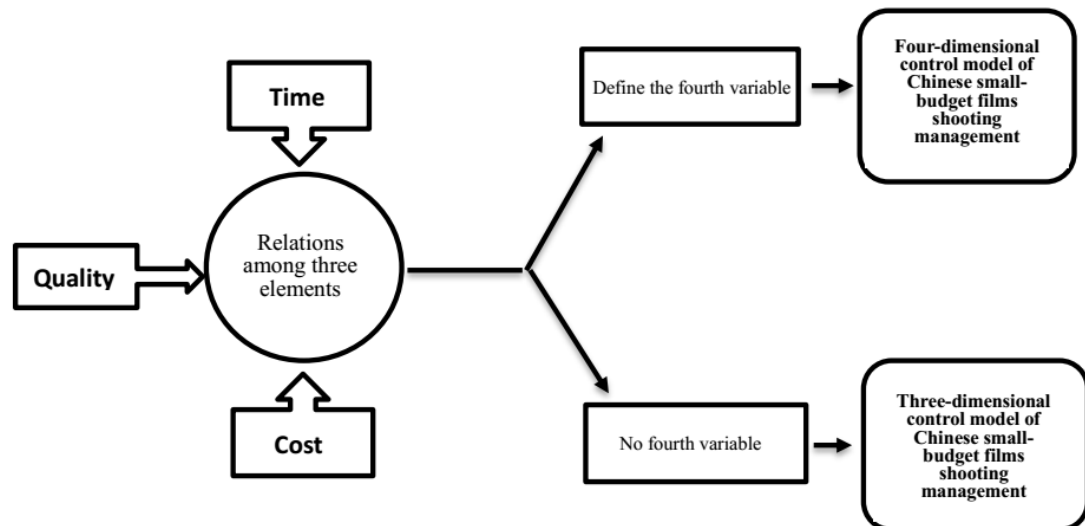


Figure 3.2 Research and Analysis Framework

Source: Author's analysis

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, answers addressing the following four questions are provided based on the collected data.

- 1) What is the role of the factor “time” in the project management of small-budget films in China?
- 2) What is the role of the factor “quality” in the project management of small-budget films in China?
- 3) What is the role of the factor “cost” in the project management of small-budget films in China?
- 4) What is the role of the factor “actors” in the project management of small-budget films in China?

4.1 Time

Effective schedule control is the key to the factor “time” in the process of project management, which means achieving the desired work goals within a predetermined time (W. Y. Chen & Yang, 2013). Reasonable arrangement of time schedules can help to make every link in the project work clear and definite, and all aspects of resource allocation can be best optimized accordingly (D. H. Li & Zhang, 2017). It not only enables us to maximize the use of resources, but also enhance the overall efficiency of the team, while also increase the success rate of the project (Fan & Yang, 2014).

There are many uncertain factors in the film production management process, and these uncertain factors will hinder the managers from completing the target tasks according to the preset plan. Because the fund invested in small-budget films is limited, the process of all links is relatively simplified, which increases the

uncontrollable probability of grasping time. At present, most of small-budget films in China are found with the phenomena of overdue and overtime, which seriously causes the entire project to be aborted. In the actual filming process, most managers also advance cautiously and manage projects by their own subjective feelings. When various uncertain factors become real problems, many managers are often unable to cope, which results in failure to complete the target tasks on time. Different levels of overdue conditions exist in the six small-budget film crews observed in this study. (Table 4.1) The time control mode for film production can be roughly divided into two stages, the preparatory period and the filming period.

Table 4.1 Time-limit Exceeding of Six Small-budget Film Camera Crews

Film name	Planning / actual time for preparation	time-limit exceeding of preparation	Planning / actual shooting time	time-limit exceeding of shooting
A. Youth hey up	30 day / 33 day	3 day	21 day / 21 day	no
B. Crazy chef	30 day / 37 day	7 day	18 day / 19 day	1 day
C. Kiss kiss da	21 day / 25 day	4 day	18 day / 15 day	no
D. Mama's taste	12 day / 13 day	1 day	14 day / 13 day	no
E. I am a good therapist for love	30 day / 35 day	5 day	18 day / 20 day	2 day
F. The goddess encountered the paparazzi	30 day / 32 day	2 day	25 day / 21 day	no

Source: Author's analysis

4.1.1 Preparatory Period

During the preparatory period, each department completes their own work tasks according to the time plan after the production manager, the director and the producer jointly work out the time plan. The director, producer, and production manager control the entire time flow. The number of people involved in this phase is small, mainly involving the heads of various departments, and this period is easy to be managed when compared to the more complicated filming period. However, as the starting filming date progresses, the number of personnel involved will gradually increase. All the cast members must arrive at the day before the start-up, including the production team and all field workers, but some actors will follow their schedule and filming time to arrange their work. During this period, the director needs to have a clear idea of the overall filming plan and artistic conception, but also constantly improve and revise the literary script, and these two are mutually restrained and influenced. Any flaw in the link will increase the risk of time overdue; thus, the director is required to prepare for so many corresponding jobs before the preparation to ensure the integrity and controllability of the time.

*“To build a team, how the director thinks affects the progress the most as in the preparation stage, various departments, including the production design team and costume design team, will submit their proposals for the director’s comments. However, new ideas may come up to the director in this process that he would systematically modify the storyboards of the script. Therefore, generally the director can be fairly chaotic half a month in the preparation or site selection. That’s why we appreciate a director with fixed thinking at the initial stage of team building.” “As to myself, time may be saved in the preparation process if the team is built after the director finds a position of himself and the script, and if we can avoid unnecessary parts as far as possible except some additions in shooting, as more thinking and ideas are not absolute guarantees of a high-quality production.” “In fact, during team building, director is decisive, very decisive in time, because members from other groups, involving production design, costume design, and liaison are comparatively sophisticated and professional to the market while the director usually decides various factors. So the director shall establish his purposiveness and demands in the preparation stage before we take further action.” **IHI Section 1***

*Being an actor before, finally he ushered in his first chance to be a director. All seemed perfect. When it came to execution, things went apart that he had to modify every link again and again. Thanks to assistance from his friends, the schedule was only delayed for 7 days. **OBI Director***

*The scenarist is also the investor. His script focuses on stories in campus. However, the most critical plots and lines are nothing more than preaching, which may make the film uninteresting and dull. For this reason, the director made fairly extensive modifications to the script, but to the scenarist, those modifications impede what he tries to deliver to the audience. A game started between the director and the scenarist on the topic. With fairly abundant preparation experience, the director managed to control the delay of the preparation period within 3 days. **OAI Director and Scenarist***

The producers represent the interests of the investors. Usually, the producers are more cautious about the invested money. However, such cautiousness must be controlled. Otherwise, it will affect the progress of the previous preparations. Reasonable and orderly capital injection needs the producers to have a certain degree of film and television management expertise and a keen judgment. At present, most of the producers of small-budget film projects in China are laymen and non-professionals. They often use the habitual pattern of traditional industries to deal with the production of films. As to their working mode, they often have certain control over capital inflows. Occasionally, there are some delays which are conducive to cost savings, but the producers often do not understand the attributes and characteristics of film production, which affects the progress control during the preparatory period. Of course, mutual trust between the producer and the artistic creation team still acts in this process.

*The film is funded through crowdfunding arranged by the producer, a green hand in operation of film project. But her absolute right over the disposal of funds has saved much time for the preparation as we were almost not troubled financially. **OBI Producer***

The investor is an entrepreneur from where the film was shot. Though not named as the “producer”, he enjoys the rights of this position. In additional cash investment, he also provided us with board and lodging, and venues for shooting.

*Generally speaking, the investment is not heavy, and he followed the plan without reservation. The film started shooting only after 12 days of preparation. **ODI Investor***

*Running a film and television investment company in Taiwan, the producer was very cautious with each investment given the facts that this is a new cooperation project across the straits. Though it's human nature, his caution in investment has caused significant impediments to the control of preparation time and the schedule was delayed for 5 days as a result of many factors, not only the producer's slow provision of funds. **OEI Producer***

The producer is the boss or the investor. The production manager is equivalent to the general manager requested by the boss. Specific execution and management work is completed by the production manager, so the production manager is required to be quite familiar with each business link. More importantly, the production manager must have strong coordination capability. In many cases, the communication between the departments is coordinated by the production manager. It is also the production manager who represents the crew to sign the employment contract. Slow progress is directly related to the coordination ability of the production manager, because various tasks in the preparatory period go hand in hand. If the work of any department is slightly delayed, the total time will be delayed. In the film crew are people in various trades. How to manage the work of director, the driver and the field workers needs the production managers to coordinate one by one in order to ensure the smooth progress of the plan. The production manager has enormous work tasks every day, which requires a complete and clear arrangement of the implementation plan in his mind, otherwise the crew cannot advance the work. If it is assumed that the preparatory period is 30 days and is roughly divided into four stages: the day before the establishment of the crew, the tenth day in the preparatory period, the twentieth day in the preparatory period, and two days before the start-up. The directors need to arrange specific tasks according to the priorities of the tasks during each stage. Therefore, the production manager can effectively control the progress of the preparatory period. Of course, if the planning time of the preparatory period is longer or shorter than 30 days, specific adjustments can be made based on the proportion of the progress. (Figure 4.1)

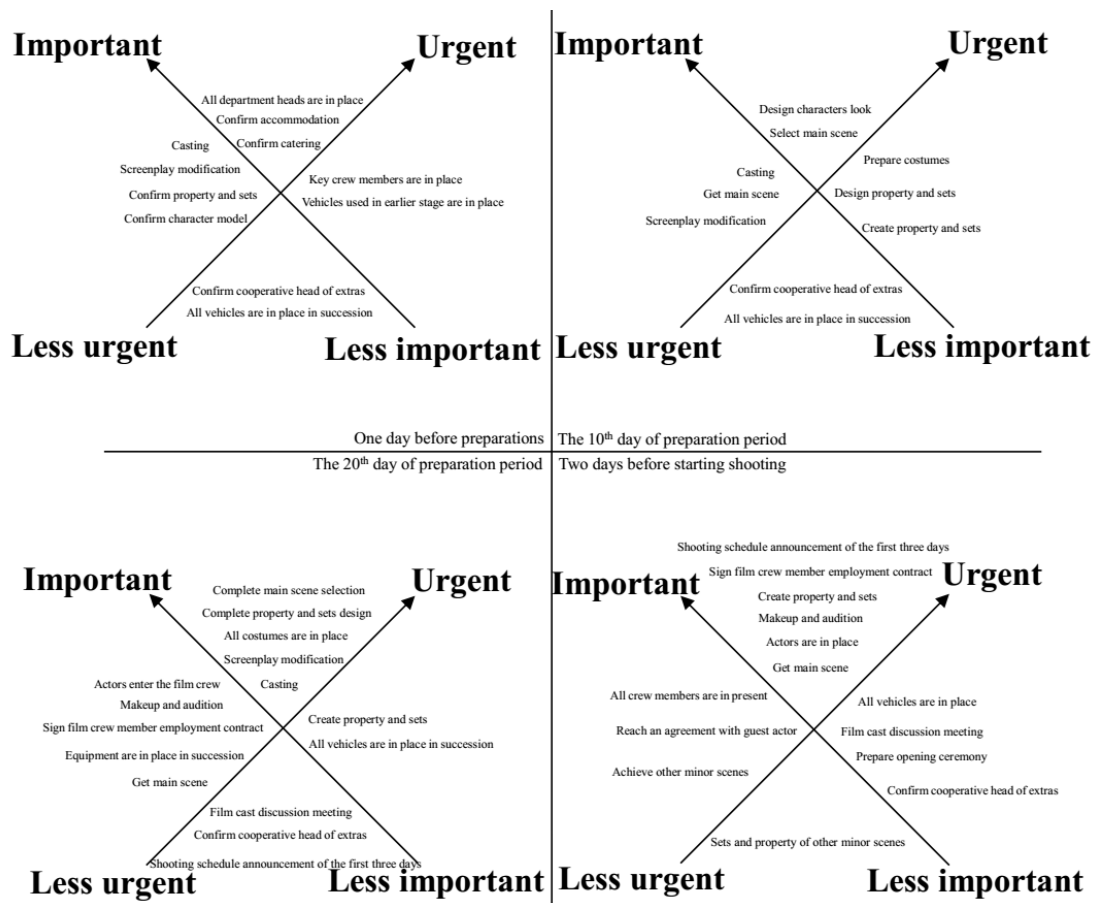


Figure 4.1 Dual-index Evaluation Chart of Schedule Control in Preparation Period

Source: Author’s analysis

With experience in lighting and field production, the production manager, for his first time to take such a position, is relatively familiar with field production, tools and devices, but totally strange in other fields. The researcher served as the vice production manager on the basis of his experience in acting. Such a partnership made full use of their advantages, but also showed deficiency in managing the work assigned to the production director. So we were almost in chaos in preparation and sometimes, it was even out of control. Economic wastes were also caused to a certain degree. OAI Production manager and vice production manager

Before starting filming, the influence of the individual factors of the actors on the progress cannot be ignored. It does not need to worry about the guest actors and

the extras too much, because the casting director can depend on the lead of the extra to seek out them. However, the leading actor and the supporting role are related to the quality or success of the film, so early selection is very crucial. Sometimes the remuneration or the schedule may delay the casting of a certain role. Usually, well-known actors ask for relatively high remuneration and their schedules are always tight. Small-budget film production will not take this kind of actors into account. As for actors who can accept the remuneration provided by the small-budget films and have tight schedules, they often have more scripts to select. Therefore, they will have priority to choose better scripts or roles with relatively higher remuneration. Actors' asking for higher remuneration while being able to guarantee the filming time indicates that they are satisfied with the remuneration, the script or the role. Usually, actors with little shooting experience or school students always ask for low remuneration but can guarantee the filming time, because they are eager to get a chance to play the leading role. Therefore, they will fully cooperate in price and time, and some even participate in filming for no remuneration. In these four cases, the first and fourth cases usually do not affect the progress of the preparatory period, while in the second and third cases, the actors need to communicate and negotiate with the film production manager and the casting director. In the end, both sides can reach a consensus on the issue of the schedule and the remuneration. During this stage, the weakness of the film crew is the limited time. The sooner the actor is determined, the better the work will be carried out, because if the actors get the script sooner, they will have more time to study the scripts and characters. Providing the plots and the characters are far from our real life, and the actors have little performance experience, the actors will be badly needed to enter the crew earlier for training and experiencing life. Thus, it is more passive to choose actors when the start-up is approaching. Finally, that the start-up is delayed due to that the actors are not determined is common.

“In respect of time, actor selection and training are the first step to be completed in preparation, and time to familiarize them with the script may be compressed. For example, instead of concentrated training, we may send the scripts to the actor in advance so that he has time to read and understand the content. In case of large-scale projects with heavier investment, actors have to be assembled for

training and dress rehearsal for several months. From this point, time may be saved. When actors are well placed, shooting starts then. That's a key point to short-term shooting." **III Section 1**

At the beginning, the director and the producer appreciated a local A-list comedian but consensus was not reached on the remuneration as neither party compromised. With all jobs done, 2 days before shooting, the director invited me to play the role. For me, it's a great chance to take such an important role. Time and payment are nothing I care about. Even though, the preparation was delayed for 2 days. **OFI Actor**

Major actors and actresses were selected by the director, and the production manager and I were responsible for communication with them on time and remuneration. Most actors and actresses were students with little experience in shooting, a lower price was acceptable to them, and time was guaranteed. The leading actor was also signed right before shooting after repeated negotiation with the brokerage firm and conclusion of conditions acceptable to both parties. But the leading actress quoted a price more than ten times higher than others. The negotiation continued for a rather long time. In consideration of her special situations and importance to us, finally, to avoid any impact on the shooting, we paid a far higher price for her. **OAI Actor, casting director and production manager**

In a sense, the director and the production manager are all managing time in the preparatory period, but the speed of the progress depends on the overall strength of the crew. The preparatory period begins at the filming. On the one hand, everyone still maintains a sense of freshness and heat. On the other hand, everyone is more cautious before signing the contract, and they are afraid of being replaced by the producer due to some mistakes. Therefore, during the preparatory period, the heads of various departments have a clear understanding of their work, and they can basically complete their work tasks on time. The producers, directors, and production managers jointly control the entire progress, and formulate specific time plan for each link and know everything very well. If it is assumed that the planned preparatory period of the crew is 30 days, the work of each link can be summarized by Gantt chart. This time ratio can also be used as a reference for the preparatory period longer or shorter than

30 days, and then according to the actual situation of the crew, the preparatory period can be adjusted so that time costs can be saved to a large extent. (Figure 4.2)

*“First, I’d like to talk about the preparation period. Highly professional members indicate shorter preparation period, vice versa. For each day lost, money is wasted.” “Professional quality determines how much time is required for preparation. A B-movie may take 2 to 3 months or even half a year for preparation. Why? All necessary elements are always not in place. Professional qualities and efficiency on various aspects are undesirable. Being highly professional, a director may analyze the script once he receives it, and the Production Design Group designs scenes, Costume Design Group prepares costumes, and Makeup Group figures out the models for each character. Then all proposals are improved based on the script further. That’s the components of preparation, a period which may be elastic in time.” **IF1 Sections 4 and 5***

*“Proper staffing in preparation brings about doubled working effect. It is based on teamwork rather than any individual.” **IG1 Section 1***

*“Compared with a blockbuster, a B-movie is short in preparation. To my knowledge, such films generally start preparation half a month or one month in advance, including scene selection.” **IC1 Section 2***

*The director put forward the program and forms for sound recording on the preparation meeting but was rebutted by the recording director on the spot that “it is a recording form adopted by people from the north, which is not appreciated in local.” He finished the words with a smell of alcohol and ignorance to the new director in eyes and language. Soon afterwards, the director notified the producer to replace the recording director. The recording director came to us for help time after time and left the film crew 3 days after. **OBI Director and recording engineer***

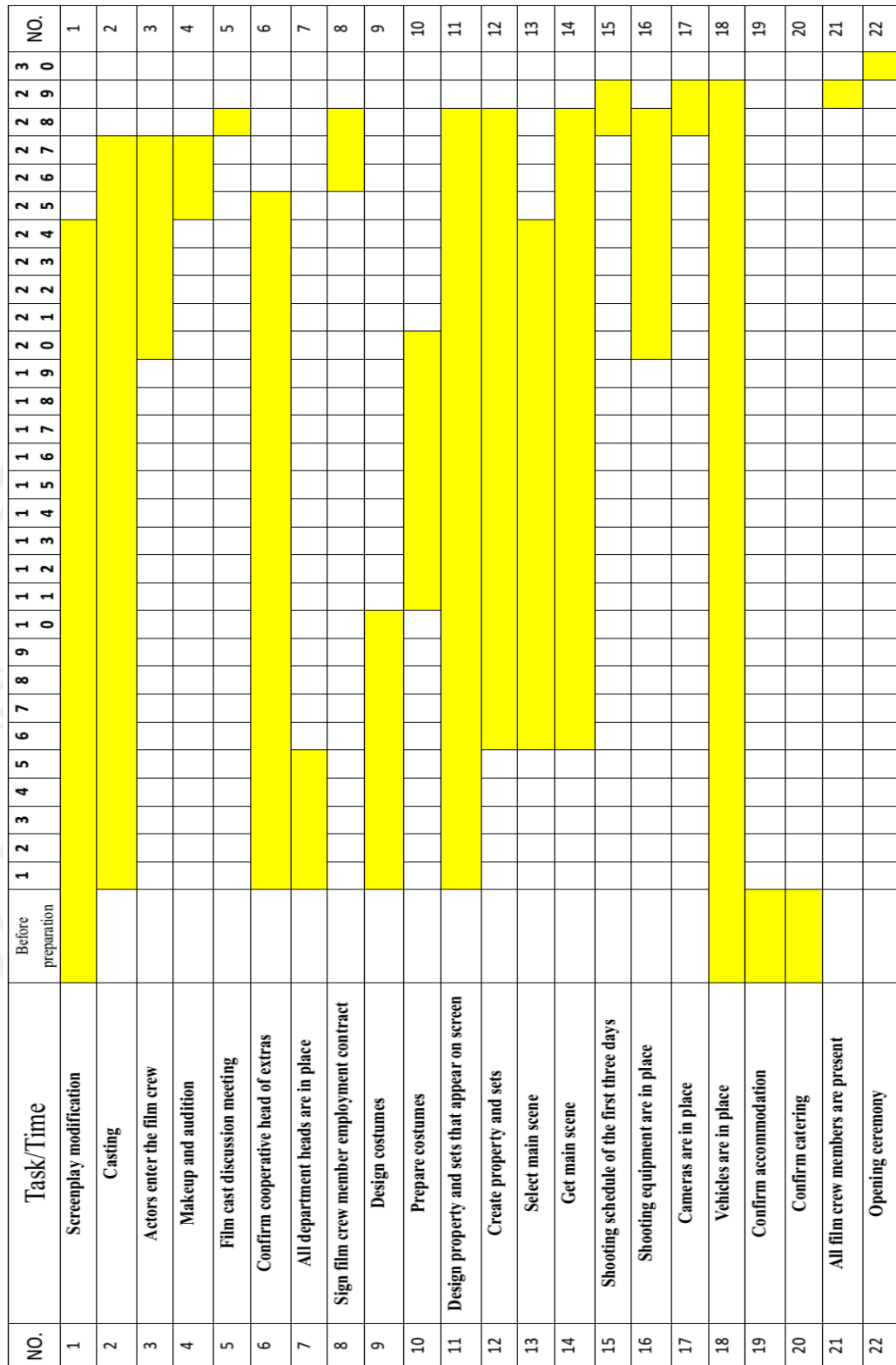


Figure 4.2 Time Control Gantt Chart in Preparation Period

Source: Author’s analysis

4.1.2 Filming Period

The control over the progress of the filming period is the most complicated. Compared with the preparatory period, the working environment during the filming period is fluid, so the existing variables are also quite large. The main manager who performs management control during the filming period is the production manager or producer. The director mainly focuses on artistic creation. At this time, the coordinator is also very important, because the daily filming plan is formulated by the coordinator. When making a daily filming plan, the coordinator will take all the possible variables into account. If there is a slight difference, the plan of a whole day may be cancelled, and there will be a series of chain reactions that will affect the subsequent filming plan. Therefore, the key person for time control in the filming period is the coordinator.

Among the many uncontrollable factors, the only factor that is not affected by humans is the weather. Usually the filming plan of a whole day is arranged at least one day in advance or a few days in advance, but the weather conditions of the filming day cannot be completely controlled. The weather forecast can only be used as a reference, and once the weather changes suddenly, there is almost no way to adjust the filming and time will be wasted. However, for experienced coordinator, the risk of weather factors can be minimized. Under the premise that the scene can be controlled, the exterior will be protected first, and then the interior scene will be taken into consideration. When planning the exterior scene, a set of non-exterior alternatives can also be retained. According to the actual situation in the local area, the coordinator can adjust the proportion of the possibility of implementing alternatives and preferred schemes. For example, in the summer in Yunnan, China or in the rainy season in Thailand, the variability of the weather is relatively large, and the coordinator needs to increase the possibility of implementing alternatives when planning. In short, experienced coordinators or production managers can largely avoid the risks brought by the weather, but the risk of weather factors cannot be completely circumvented. As a saying goes, “Man proposes, and God disposes”.

“Weather is also a factor giving rise to delay in schedule, depending on how much you can do with it.” “Weather is still a major cause paining and troubling you if no rational arrangement and planning are available. Therefore, a professional

coordinator is necessary to avoid wasting too much time as time is money.” IAI

Section 3

“As a matter of fact, weather is also a challenge to B-movies as it affects schedule, wasting time and money. Therefore, a professional coordinator is necessary, who knows well about the weather and makes plans in case of rainy or sunny days based on the comparatively accurate weather forecast of the coming next week as technology develops. Those are skills a coordinator shall have.” IC2 Section

2

*Our coordinator is a less experienced little girl. We planned to take street shoots on the next day, but snow covered all after a night, and the coordinator had no alternative plan in case of this as it is rare in local. We had to move to another place in the downtown without snow, and half a day was wasted. **OBI Coordinator***

The main filming scene must be determined before starting filming. The non-main scenes also need to be determined before starting filming. Once starting filming, all the rhythms should be determined according to the shooting cycle. It will be passive at the time, because the director and the artist pay more attention to two aspects of the best scene: one is whether the scene can be taken down; the other is how much it costs to get the scene, if the scene can be taken down, and whether the price paid for the scene is acceptable or not. If any of the conditions cannot be met, it is needed to find a new scene again. The crew is at a disadvantage if they need to seek out a new scene or take down the scene during the shooting process, because the whole shooting time is constantly going on, and it is the crew rather than the other party that is sharply anxious. Some scenes are very popular among the crews and both know the principle very well. Thus, it is difficult for the crew to successfully take down the scene. Therefore, the work of setting the scene should be completed in the preparatory period if possible, so that the crew can have more initiative. In the process of setting the scene, it needs more time to take down the best scene in the director's mind. For example, that the scene is far from the crew's residence also needs to be coordinated according to the actual situation of the crew. Even if the scene is set, there may be unexpected risks, for example, sudden weather changes in the exterior scene or interference from third parties may make the shooting impossible, etc. After these obstacles are removed, it needs to consider whether the crew continues to use

the scene to shoot and what the price of continuing to use this scene is. All these need to be considered because these problems will result in a waste of time to some extent. Therefore, the relevant personnel of the crew should be familiar with the flow framework of using the scenes (Figure 4.3). According to the actual situation of the crew, the risk of wasting time can be minimized by effective control and management allocation of time by virtue of the corresponding plan.

“Now insufficient preparation is always a case with filming, or it is just when shooting that they start looking for the scene.” **ICI Section 5**

“Take the shooting in a tube-shaped apartment as an example. Visiting each household for negotiation is impossible. The social community is our only way. However, as we start shooting, someone stand out, claiming that the payment is made to the social community rather than them. We have to solve it, coordinate through social community, and we can’t and are incapable of satisfying all conditions they propose as if we compromise at this part, we lose the whole and fail to keep up with the budget. Negotiation through government in all aspects wastes our time, delays the schedule, and contributes to the undone plans.” **IC9 Section 3**

“Another example, scene selection. Here is one scene in the acting copy, which is very beautiful. It may be artificially built or found in a forest or small park. To a B-movie, any park could be its choice as they have no need to spend much time and money on scene setting. Let’s say, we may need a scene in Guizhou while shooting in Beijing. If we go ahead to Guizhou, time is wasted.” **IDI Section 1**

The main scene was set up in a local villa found by the investor in Hualien, Taiwan. We started shooting on the agreed date. In the midway, the villa owner insisted to take the villa back for a half-day activity after our intense lobbying. Half a day was wasted then unreasonably. **OE1 Scene**

When we were shooting in an ancient town, it rained for several days intermittently. The whole crew could do nothing but wait, and the collection and arrangement of all devices consumed much time. Working efficiency was reduced to 70%. **OD1 Scene**

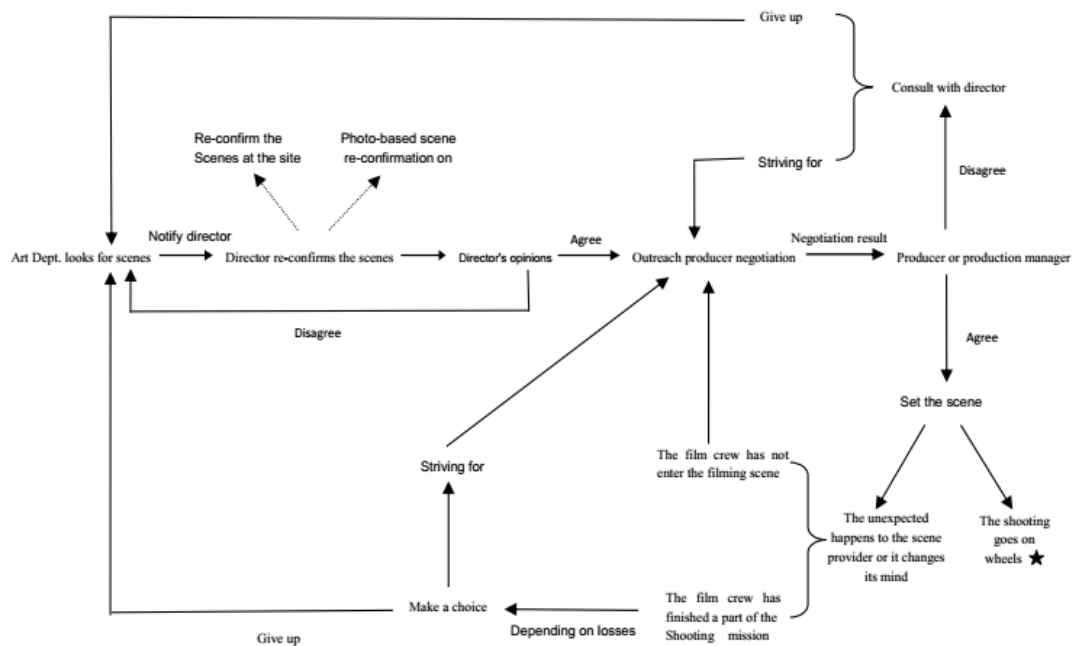


Figure 4.3 Flow Frame for Use of Scene

Source: Author's analysis

One of the greatest and most obvious factors causing man-made delays is the actors. In the small-budget film crew, there will be more or less the phenomenon of actors' putting on airs. (1) being late for filming; According to the shooting plan of the day, the whole crew should follow the planned schedule to get up, dine, and start to work on time. The shooting work of the crew on each day is pressing, but there are often actors who do not follow this time-planning and always be late for everything. In the crew, this happens almost exclusively on the actors, causing each link related to the actors to be delayed. One is makeup. Due to the delay made by the actors, it is impossible for the makeup artist to complete the makeup work of each actor in the order of planning. Consequently, it is not possible for the makeup artist to arrive at the shooting scene on time, which also brings troubles to the makeup and refining the makeup work on the filming site. Secondly, the delay may influence the work of the costume designer, because their work procedure is same to the makeup procedure. Thirdly, there may be troubles in the working lunch. The working lunch of the crew is usually ordered by the life producer according to the plan. Once ordered, and the working lunch will be delivered to the crew at the agreed time. Because the lunch

time is fixed, the work lunch will be cancelled if someone is late for it. The delay of the actors will not only affect the dining of the actor, but also affect the dining of the makeup artists, costume designer and other personnel. The most important thing is that when everything on the filming site is all ready, the delay caused by the actors at this time will result in incalculable loss. (2) The actors' character and temperament will also affect the shooting progress. During the shooting process, it is common that a NG (not good) shot fails to pass after many times of filming. The actor or the opponent actor may lead to that failure. Probably, the costume, makeup, lighting, photography, props, etc., and other objective reasons can result in such failure. Whatever the reason is, a responsible director will maximize the perfection of art without easily letting every shot go. Other personnel will comply with the arrangement even being dissatisfied. However, some actors may have an emotional outburst and strike on the filming site. At this time, the casting director or production manager will act as a guide to emotionally appease the actor. During this period, the work of all the personnel is stagnant. If the coordination fails, the play will not be filmed. It is typical loss in time progress caused by man-made time waste. This is a tip of the iceberg. Sometimes, the actors with bad temper may blame the crew and the personnel if something unpleasant happens. This will seriously affect the normal progress of the crew. (3) choosy actors; Some actors in the crew may have special requirements for their own lives. Some may complain that food is distasteful and ask the crew to cook for them separately, and the crew will take much time to prepare for the actors. Sometimes, the actors are not willing to sit a car with others and ask to ride a car alone. It is even more ridiculous to specify the brand and model of the car. It often happens that the personnel fail to meet the requirements of the actors after searching and endeavors. Sometimes, the actors may complain about tiredness after filming for a long time on the filming site and ask for a break, or put forward specific requirements for the daily shooting time. From a time perspective, this series of requirements seriously affects the overall time progress and increase the workload and work intensity of the personnel. (4) being apart and above; Some actors in the crew are very aloof and proud and rarely communicate with the personnel while wait for the personnel to communicate with them about everything. They are likely to shirk responsibility when making mistakes. Sometimes, such incidents may lead to that the

actor cannot finish filming on time. (5) playing roles in different films at the same time; Some actors always play roles in different films at the same time. As a result, repeated time adjustments make the crew unable to well control the filming time. For example, if two crews are in different cities, one in Beijing and one in Bangkok and large variables do exist due to actors' going there and back between two cities. Accordingly, the actor cannot come to the filming site for shooting according to the agreed time. Once such a situation occurs, the time loss of the crew is also huge. Of course, in a narrow sense, playing roles in different films at the same time cannot be called "putting on airs" because it does not involve personality ethics, but in a broad sense, playing roles in different films at the same time can be called "putting on airs", because this special behavior that is different from that of other actors indeed brings inconvenience for the crew and increases the risk of wasting time. The above phenomena or behaviors are defined as actors' putting on airs. Usually the actors who put on airs are suspended in midair while A-lister is highly cultured and steeped in propriety and their requirements are always explained in the contract in advance. Unknown actors do not have the qualification to "putting on airs". And there is also other kind of actors who were born with good family conditions and are accustomed to being pampered, or thinks they are influential socially. These actors are usually young, but selfish in life and have no consideration for others. Naturally, they may bring troubles to the crew. In general, the investment in small-budget films is not large. There is a big gap between the management of personnel and professional level of small-budget films and those of the large-budget films. It is precisely because of certain problems in their own crew that has increased the odds of actor's putting on airs. At this level, the crew should make a certain review and pay more attention to improving their management level and professional level. The delay phenomenon caused by the actors' putting on airs exists in all the six crew cases observed in this study.

"But this is the case with Chinese actors. What can you do? Take more care of management and preparation. Parts assigned to an actor may be shot in several days. For some more famous actors, we shall be well prepared to arrange their working hours per day and reduce their time on waiting. Do what you should, that's

all. Poser is a common problem found on most actors. Unable to change them, you have to make your work well arranged. IA10 Section 5

“Management and profession are also related. Some actors may be angry because of unprofessional management of your team. It’s your problem in management and profession. For example, a notice is sent to the actor for starting shooting at 9 o’clock, but the schedule delays to 3 o’clock in the afternoon. Would he be angry? He may just think that why can’t I go there at 12 o’clock, and wait for only 3h. If you start shooting at 10 o’clock, just 1h after the schedule, how couldn’t he accept this?” IA12 Section 4

“This is a problem of an actor/actress’s morality. Most actors from Hong Kong and Taiwan are dedicated, regardless of their fame. That’s why they are more in-demand.” “Once we cooperated with an actress surnamed Liu from Chongqing, whose mother worked in an opera. Joining the crew, she never talked to anyone or conjectured the roles in modern opera or joined us for meals. Only in breakfast time she would show up.” IB10 Sections 4 and 6

“The biggest problem with a B-movie is an actor who accepts more than one role at the same time. Maybe he has to leave for another film for 3 days, and is unable to return on time due to weather, causing us incompetent of keeping up with the plan. So a director or a mightier producer of a B-movie would never allow his actors accepting more roles at the same time, as they have no qualification to be a poser.” IC12 Section 1

“Actors may come late. This’s not rare. It affects the whole progress, wastes time and money as everyone has to wait. Moreover, poor acting also consumes much time on repetition.” IE12 Section 2

“It pains me to say that some actors are arrogant despite of his little fame. That’s common in China, especially those who rank at the B, C or even D lines or some young actors built by his fans with defective acting. Many experienced and aged actors at the A line are more amicable and gentle.” “Once in the public, Andy Lau and Jackie Chan commented some young actors as ‘without professional ethnics’. It is relevant to an actor’s self accomplishments.” “Of course, some artificial factors may also be involved. The actors may be emotionally out of control when cooperating with unprofessional workers for a B-movie. It is a mutual process. When we were

shooting in Taiwan, some colleagues from Hong Kong and Taiwan said that some actors had been spoiled by us. That's the truth." **IG12 Section 1**

"Accepting the invitation, he should be well prepared inwardly, organizationally, emotionally and behaviorally to be a whole with the rest. It troubles us the most if he is ill-adapted to the collective except standing in front of the camera. It may cause disconnection with the organization and affect the completion of the mission." "Henceforth, it is our wish that all actors, regardless of their line, could comply with the organization management." "Other factors, such as the actor's impression on others and his privity with the director, will also have influence on crew work." **III2 Section 1**

Once we were taking outdoor scenes on an old street. The actor was required to laugh excitedly. But after several tries, he denied further cooperation because of exhaustion no matter how hard we tried. Time passed by little by little. Everyone was burning with anxiety except him. At the end, we had to give up. The actor often left without any indication during shooting, and never cared about how much time we've spent on waiting for him. Anyone who tried to remind him would be his hostile. Memory came to me that on the last day when we were going to finish the filming, he lay down on the job in the morning and wasted time purposely, a threat to the crew for settlement of balance payment. Though the contract stipulated that the balance payment shall be settled as the filming is finished, each minute was so valuable to us that we had to satisfy his unreasonable demands. **OBI Actor**

On the way back to the residence after filming in an ancient town for a whole day, an actress suddenly got off the car and demanded a separate vehicle because the car was carrying prop boxes and other workers. She was disgusted with such a crowded feeling. The crew rejected her demand immediately but, at the end, had to compromise with another car as deadlock was never a solution and time is valuable. **ODI Actor**

The extras are the least valued group in the crew because this group is large in number, get low income and do not have professional skills. If a scene involves dozens of extras or more, poor management will bring big challenges to the control of schedule. Such a large number of extras required by the drama group are usually contacted through the head of extras and brought to the filming scene at the agreed

time and place. The two parties agree on the shooting time, usually eight to ten hours a day. In addition to the salary, the crew also needs to provide working lunch at the meal time. The crew firstly needs to inform the head of extras about the time to start work, the age and gender of the extras needed in the film, but in many cases the extras that are recruited by the head have a discrepancy with the situation agreed in advance. If the crew needs the extras urgently, while the extras image under the shot is quite different from the frame requested by the director, it will be troublesome to make adjustment at this time. How to call the extras together in a short time will become a serious challenge for the crew. Time goes on. The arrangement and preparation of a large scene is time-consuming and labor-intensive. No filming may cause huge loss to the crew. Providing the problem is solved on the site, half a day may be wasted. There are still more deadly troubles. Some extras in the play want to drop out the filming halfway or they do not want to continue the filming the next day. This situation may lead to the lack of connection between the shots taken before and after. Effective communication between personnel and the extras is particularly important, but in the process, the crew has to stop to wait. If the communication is unsuccessful, there are only two solutions: one is to remove the previous frames and re-shoot. This may result in a certain amount of time wastage; another solution is to take out the relevant frames when editing the film, which may cause a good picture to be removed. Usually it needs the director as the controller of the whole situation to make a decision when this happens. The two methods are combined to deal with this situation. The ratio of applying the two methods is determined according to the specific situation. However, the director still wants to guarantee the quality of the frame first. The extras are not only low-paid, but also are impossible to make the so-called artistic achievements. Many people come to be the extras just for fun, experience, the feeling of freshness and satisfying curiosity. As soon as they get the filming experience, they may do not want to continue playing any more. At this time, that if the crew despises them or is indifferent to them may increase their chances of interrupting the filming. The extras that seem to be undervalued play a decisive role in the control over the crew's shooting period. Although the extras may not lead to the crew's losing control over schedule as other factors, they still can cause serious waste of time once the above situation happens in the crew.

*It was a film about campus and youth shot in the University City with about 50 students, mostly from university, as figurants. The filming continued in the classroom for 3 days without interruption. Many students flinched because of terrible food, some even left on the day, regardless of our tactful words. As a result, 1/4 of the shots cannot be used, otherwise, there may be mistakes. We had to spend more than half a day on pickup. **OAI Figurant***

*It was tentatively decided to take a grant scene with figurants on the next day. We had a discussion with their leader that evening and told him the age structure we preferred. However, we found almost 1/3 of the figurants older than expectation. The schedule was delayed several hours when we tried to find replacements from somewhere else. Another case was an evening performance which demanded some girls with better looks. I received them politely as they came. But for busy work, I didn't have much talk to them afterward. Possibly for two reasons, tiredness after long-playing filming and hypothetical ignorance (as we know, beautiful girls were used to the attention from others wherever they are. How could they tolerate being ignored?), those girls requested to leave as time was up. Everyone stopped and waited. I tried my best to persuade them but failed. The director just shouted in anger: "No more nonsense, and remake!" **OBI Figurant***

During the filming period, the work links of various departments are interlocking and that any link cannot keep up with the overall process may delay the whole schedule. In addition to the big factors of weather, scenes, and actors, the control of other factors should be paid attention to, for example: props and scenes must be well prepared before the filming and meet the director's requirements; the costumes and apparel modeling in consecutive plays cannot result in goofs. For instance, the costume in the film was muddy yesterday, while the play to be filmed today requires the costume to be clean, then the costume designer should well deal with the costume; also, the actor's make-up style should be consistent with and conform to the character image. The coordinator shall take each objective link in the announcement plan into consideration and the vehicles shall be on time and in place during the delivery process; the on-site producer shall guarantee the fluency of on-site scheduling and controlling, while the life producer shall provide comfortable or reasonable logistical supports for everyone to avoid waste of time and so on. On the

contrary, it is the least possible for the more professional photography, recording, and lighting departments to cause delay of filming in addition to equipment failure and these three departments are also tools to directly reflect the art of the director. In general, the time control over the shooting period is closely related to the quality and the professional skills of the entire team. The risk of time control will be reduced with the comprehensive capability improved.

“If all departments are well connected by active communication and preparation, time will be saved. For example, we may check the notice for the next day as the day’s work is finished, and we may find some problems which could be communicated with corresponding departments for a solution. In this way, we won’t have to dispute over trifles on the spot and delay the schedule.” **IE1 Section 4**

“A reasonable arrangement for jobs to be done today and tomorrow, proper coordination with the actors’ schedule to decide his working hours, it requires the Arts Group with the corresponding scenes and the actors fully prepared for the script analysis. Including creativity, photography, arts, setting, props, costumes, makeup, recording and lighting shall be in the right places, in order to shorten the shooting cycle, That is the problem of time.” **IF1 Section 5**

During makeup, I found the beard they made for me very unnatural and somewhat incompatible with the previous performance. I asked them immediately. Both makeup artists denied any problem. I was still not relieved that I confirmed with them three times again. The answer was still no problem. Finally, the whole play ended and the director watched the playback. The problem was found. The moustache was so exaggerated that the shot was unsatisfactory. Then the whole crew had to devote one more day to looking for and making up the scenes. **OC1 Makeup and actor**

The crew makes every minute and second count every day during the filming period, and even the daily working hours are arranged to the limit. According to the work experience of peers, friends, and classmates in the small-budget film crews, and the daily work of the six cases in this study, their working hours are about 15 hours a day. However, this does not mean that all departments and personnel all keep working. The remaining nine hours for rest include sleep time and other private spaces. This time proportion is based on normal work schedules excluding night

scenes or situations in which the crew rushes for progress. Based on the fifteen hours of daily work, the “Critical Path Map of Time Control over Daily Workflow during the Filming Period” is designed according to the main daily work links (Figure 4.4) so as to help improve the productivity of daily shooting, draw a clear distinction between the primary and the secondary during the production time and more effectively control over time. The block in the figure represents one task link. The text in the middle of the block represents the content of the link. The upper left digit represents the earliest start time; the upper right digit represents the earliest finish time; the upper middle digit represents the duration; and the lower left digit represents the latest start time. The lower right digit represents the latest finish time; the lower middle digit represents the difference between the earliest start and finish time and the latest start and finish time. The specific start and finish time of the filming depends on the filming conditions of the previous day. For example, if the work is completed before 10:00 pm the previous night, the working personnel and actors are required to get up at 7:00 the next day. If the filming work is completed until midnight, the work may begin at noon the next day. Under normal circumstances, the get-up is at 6 to 7 o'clock in the morning and the time-out is at 9 to 10 in the evening. It needs half an hour to have all get up and the breakfast time may last for twenty minutes. Then the crew personnel and actors leave to the film scene. The process may take about 20 minutes, depending on the actual situation. Usually, the scene of small-budget films is not far from the residents. After reaching the filming scene, each department prepares the work and arranges the scene. The actors first need to have the make-up artists make up themselves after getting up in the morning. Usually, it takes half an hour for two makeup artists to complete the makeup for all the actors, and the time needed varies depending on the number of actors and the complex makeup requirements of the day. After finishing the makeup and dining, personnel involved leave for the film scene. Some actors can have the make-up later after arriving at the filming scene if they do not have part in the first plays in the day, so the overall time is more abundant. After the arrangement of the scene is finished and the actors are in place, the filming will be started. According to the specific progress of the shooting, the director decides when to transfer to other scenes and eat. As to the issue of working lunch, the on-site producer always closely follows the director's rhythm and

communicates with the life producers at the appropriate time. Then the food will be delivered to the scene on time. One problem in the connection of this link may cause the crew to wait for food, which will eventually delay the shooting progress on the day. After completing the shooting plan for the day, the crew returns to their place of residence. During this period, they will be waiting for the announcement on the next day. All departments should be aware of the work on the next day and well prepare for it in advance. For example, the photographer should consider how to appropriately film and set the camera stand tomorrow; the actor should be familiar with the lines of tomorrow and the performance of the characters. After the above work is completed, personnel involved in tomorrow shooting can have a rest and are free to dominate it. After the breakfast, the outreach and the art designers begin to find the scene. After the completion, the personnel of the two departments return to the place of residence and report the situation to the director. The director comprehensively analyzes various factors and formulates the plan on the next day. After the scene is determined, corresponding props and landscapes will be made according to other specific conditions of the scene. The record can be seen from the entire path map. The digits below the paths 1, 3, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15 are all displayed as “0”, indicating that there is no time difference. Therefore, this path is called “critical path” and the time labeled on this critical path must be strictly controlled. Paths 1, 2, 4, 8, and 9 indicate the flow of that the actors get up and then start shooting, and 20 minutes during this process is flexible for control. Five hundred minutes on the paths 1, 3, 5, 10, and 13 are free to take control of. In fact, it also takes a lot of time for the outreach and the art designers to find and negotiate on scenes. The time displayed on the path map means that the tasks on the day must be completed during the specified time, while the completion of this task is based on the preparation and payment of a large amount of time before. It is not possible to find a suitable scene and take down the right to use it immediately, so most of their work is done in 500 minutes in a day. The time of paths 1, 3, 5, 10, 11, and 15 is the most flexible. According to the final set scene and the coordinated announcement, the scene and the props needed on the second day should be guaranteed to be prepared. This may take about one hour to complete. Like the work of the outreach and the art designers, sufficient work must be done in advance, and then the remaining time can be controlled freely. Sometimes the coordinator may

bring out an announcement for more than one day, but this can only be used as a reference. Most of the announcement will be adjusted to a certain extent according to the actual situation, and sometimes the announcement is completely overturned, so the most reliable announcement is that brought out in the evening for the next day. The daily work flow during the filming period is to strictly control the “critical path” first, and other paths can be adjusted according to the current priorities so as to ensure the control over the overall time period.

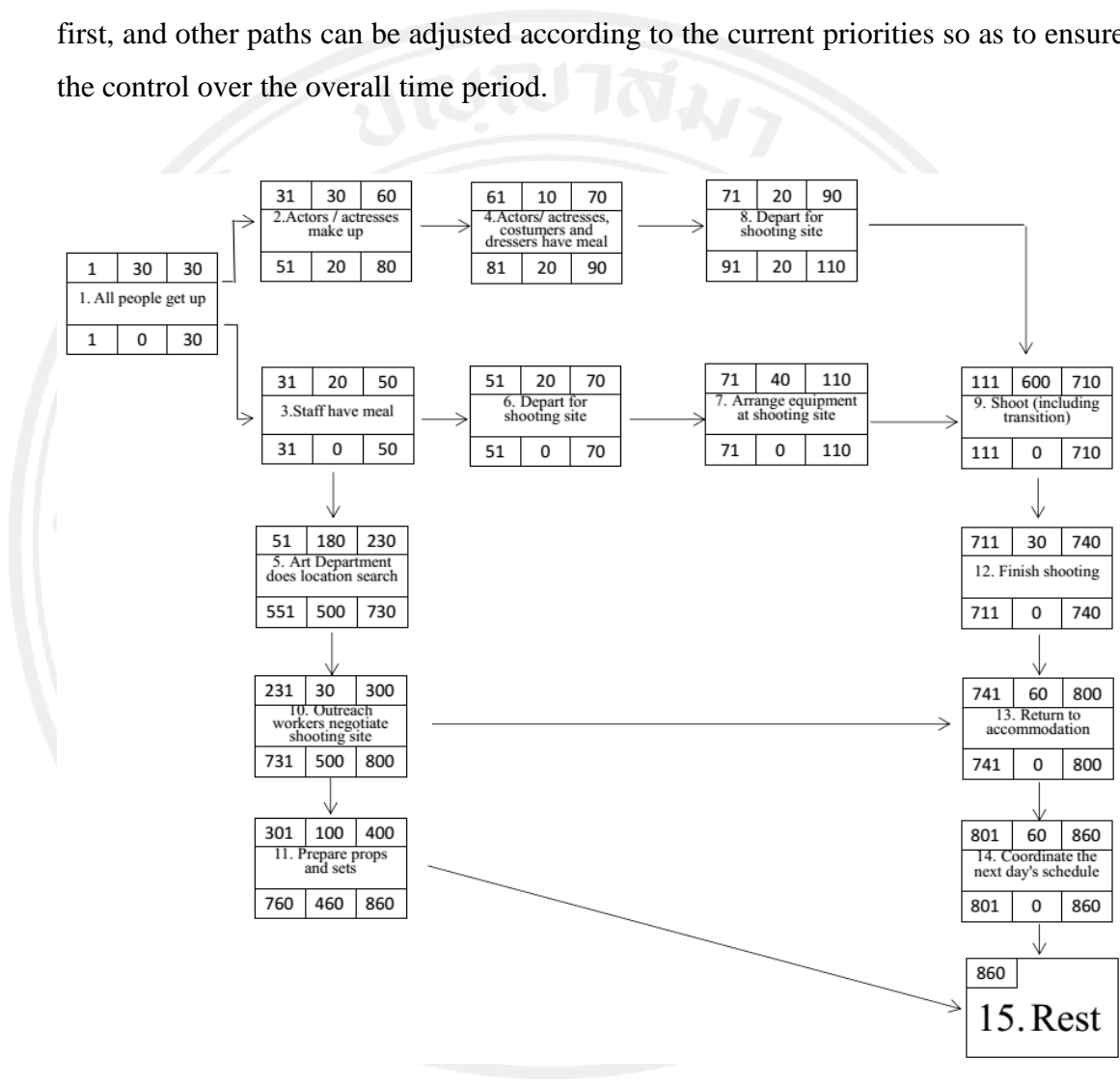


Figure 4.4 Critical Path Map of Time Control over Daily Workflow during the Filming Period

Source: Author’s analysis

4.2 Quality

Project quality management plays a key role in the survival of the entire project organization in this highly competitive social environment (Gvozdencovic, Miljanovic, Jegdic, & Crnogoric, 2008). The standards for project quality management are not necessarily the same internationally, but the ultimate goal is to meet or exceed consumer expectations (Drob, 2013).

The quality of the film determines its commercial value and artistic value. Films belong to the spiritual and cultural consumer products. The judgment on the quality of films is generally abstract and implicit, which is mainly based on that whether the film content is genuine and believable to the audience, can touch the audience or not, make the audience aesthetically pleased in the process of viewing, and have a certain reflection on the philosophy of life after watching, thus subtly affect the way of thinking and behavioral pattern of the audience. The quality of the film should be viewed from several aspects. First and foremost, the national policies and regulations have to be taken into consideration. The State Administration of Radio and Television has clear regulations on the basic quality conditions of the films that are displayed in the cinema, for example, what kind of frame, sound and color modulation requirements must be met. There are a series of related basic requirements for the online blockbuster. However, the requirements for online blockbusters are lower than those for cinema films. The requirements for films are mainly determined by the conditions of equipment. As for this, the production of large-budget, medium-budget and small-budget films need to follow this rule. Then, the script is also decisive in the quality of the films. To some extent, the quality of the script is the most critical factor in determining the quality of the film and the success or failure of the film. The script is also the storyline, which can also be regarded as the innate condition of the film. It's relatively easy to succeed with high quality of the innate script. Small-budget films are relatively simplified in the production process, let alone the use of high-tech or big-budget production. The uppermost thing of small-budget films is to tell stories, especially to achieve excellent story-telling. Thus, the importance of scripts is even more prominent. It can be said that the script is a guarantee of the quality of the film. Among the two factors, the macro regulation is

the basic standard that every film crew must abide by. The script is determined during the project financing development, and the other is the quality control during the film production. The quality control on small-budget films is relatively simple, which has a great impact on the overall quality of the film. The project quality management in this article is also carried out from this level. The main quality control over production management mainly refers to setting up the crew, making plans, and controlling the quality of the filming process (C. Zhou, 2010).

“First of all, I think the quality is relevant to a decent script. No decent script, no quality! Only with proper stories and script, a professional team works.” For example, small dramatic troupes would never do a well job no matter how decent the script is. Take Wolf Warrior as an example. If it was made by another crew, it does not necessarily have such a high achievement.” “I think the script and the creative team should be parallel under the premise of a decent script. Even Zhang Yimou has no ability to save a bad script. It's meaningless to hype up popularity. The combination of a decent script and a professional team would never let us down. I think the script is first and foremost condition for the basic quality of a film.” **IA3 Sections 1, 2 and 3**

“As we just mentioned, the keys to quality lie in a decent script and a professional team, including the creators in chief. Generally it is believed that actors shall be the creators in chief. In fact, directors, photographers, composers, and artists also play such a role. Their accomplishments determine the quality of a film in respect of sound, screen and picture quality.” **IB3 Section 4**

“Being more general, you have to comply with SARFT’s requirements on film projection, for example, HD 4K. Online project is also regulated. It never works only with a cell phone. You have to consider distortion or such other problems.” **IE3 Section 1**

“National and SARFT standards apply no matter how much you invest. For example, sound (5.1), color and screen, all shall satisfy basic requirements.” “Despite of its low investment, a B-movie equals with masterpieces in respect of equipment, in order to meet the basic requirements of projection in China, including 5.1 track and picture quality above 80.” **IG3 Sections 2 and 4**

In the film production process, the quality control on the film is divided into two levels. One is the artistic expression level. For example, various application of the lens and presentation of the scenes in a play will bring different visual feelings to the audience; moreover, different expression forms of the dialogue in lines will result in different performances. For example, if the dialogue needs to be expressed in sad form, then how to grasp the degree of sadness depends on the actors' or directors' understanding and interpretation of the artistic works; the application, expression and selecting of light in a scene are also important. The bright or dark light will have different expressions of the environment and atmosphere in the scene. These issues belong to those of artistic creation thinking. Its quality judgment is abstract and perceptual. There is no unified quality standard, but the final artistic quality still exists objectively. Whether the audience accepts and approves is the main reference and evaluation criterion, however, this can only be a reference criterion, because the artistic quality cannot be completely determined by the audience. The other level comes to be the responsibility of each department in the production process. The problems at this level are visual and obvious and also are what the crew managers are mainly concerned with. In this article, these problems are the main research object concerning quality management in small-budget films. (Figure 4.5)

“In fact, quality of a film depends much on many factors. First of all, fastidious audiences. With different habitats, some audiences may prefer a topic while others another. But quality is the essence of a script on the basis of the scenarist and the director. A script decides the appreciation of audiences, and a director decides the artistic quality of the film, who transforms literature and words into a 3D film for explanation and modeling. So, basically, the quality of a B-movie is subject to the director-centered system developed in the Soviet Union, or producer-centered system in the United States. Now we return to both systems as they are inseparable. The director decides the artistic quality of a film, and plays a core role, possibly the soul, in this regard. The direction of the literary script and its artistic quality, all are subject to the decision of the director, including expression in film language, structuring by montage, psychological description by stream of consciousness. The actor shall get control over the role on the basis of the director's presentation, and the photographing sector structures screens and expresses by lens. Intrinsic tension,

role dispatching, lighting, arts, scene control, figure modeling, sound recording (ethereal), and environment control decide the artistic quality of a film. So, the quality of a B-movie is generally at the decision of the director. A director's accomplishments are the key to the success of a film. Of course, the foundation still lies in script. The director is responsible for its visualization, and 3D expressions of the literary content by film language. When I was a student for directing, my teacher Zhou Chuanji always stressed that the art of film was visual. Visualization is to tell a story, not still pictures. Why a film is often related to a 5D space, and time-space relationship, why with the same topic, different directors create different results? Professionalism, way of thinking and artistic accomplishments decide a film. Therefore, a B-movie shall never be too high or too far-reaching. We must combine what the common people care about and tell stories well. The most classic thing is to tell stories." **IF3 Section 1**

"In fact, your sincerity is also required. Zhang Yimou once said that a director shall fall in love with his script, so that he may open it, read it, and think over it. How much efforts a director has made is the key factor to the quality of the film. In return, accomplishments vary from directors. Some are well grounded on literary, some think in advance with some ability in thinking. What to do with this? Teamwork is the key." **IF4 Section 1**

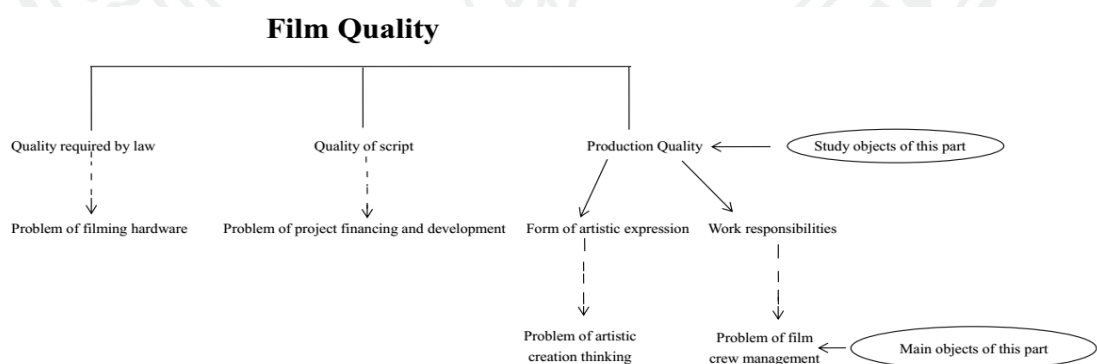


Figure 4.5 Study Objects of Project Quality Management

Source: Author's analysis

As one of the non-verbal communications means of film, costume plays a great role in the whole film. It not only can locate the identity background of the characters, but also highlight the disposition of the characters, create a unique atmosphere of the times, control the orderly rhythm of the whole film and promote the development of the film plot. The management of the costume must be strictly controlled to ensure the relevance of the character image and the suitability of the occasion, etc. The final film under rational costume management can help the audience trigger emotion resonance and real rich aesthetic taste (Huang, 2011). Film costume is an important part of fashion design. Different from general clothing, its design should be subject to the specific time, environment, and plot and role identity of the drama. Film costume management is an indispensable part in film production. Rational costume management is closely related to the quality of the entire film (Y. F. Liu, 1992).

When watching the film, what the audience firstly focuses on is the costumes of the actors, and the suitability of the costumes has a certain impact on the quality of the films. The costume is mainly in the charge of the costume designer. Major questions about the costumes are as following:

(1) unsuitable size; In addition to the costumes in modern urban plays which can be replaced by the actors' own clothing, and the other two cases are that the costume designers purchase the costumes, or they design the needed clothing themselves. The purchase of costumes involves many actors. In addition to the leading and supporting roles, sometimes special actors and even extras are also involved. The costume crew in small-budget films is usually composed of two or three people. They first collect clothing size data, which can be gained through measuring the actors on the spot or come from the prepared sizes reported by some actors. Then the costume crew purchases or makes costume according to the size data. Thus, the costume designers have to be more careful. In purchasing costumes, the peers can be the best choice for the actors. The costume designers of the small-budget film crew are mostly college students or less experienced costumers. Personally-made costumes will inevitably lead to mistakes caused by lack of skill; it is difficult for some special costumes to achieve the expected standard of clothing styling, and

costume designers make do with some finished products that fail to reach the expectation.

(2) unsuitable style; The style problems mostly occur in the communication between the director and the costumer, because the style is originally emotional, and each person has different understanding of the same style or role, so there are inevitable differences of opinion in the process of communication. In addition, same with the size issue, the costumer must be careful about the styles when purchasing costumes, and it is not pleasing when dealing with the costume style that requires more special requirements.

(3) differences in costumes before and after filming, for example, the cleanliness of the same set of costume is different on the scene of the coal kiln on the previous day and on the scene of a banquet on the next day. The costume designers should clean or adjust the state of costumes based on the filming schedule and completely mastering the script. If the costume designer is inattentive in the process or lacks understanding of the script, it is very likely to cause differences in the front and latter frames and even goof.

(4) inadequate hygiene management of the costumes; During the filming process, the costumes will experience the same filming process with the actors, such as being splashed, falling, etc. If a set of costume is used frequently in the film and fails to be cleaned due to limited time, then the costume will emit an odor, which will affect the beauty of the frame as well as the performance state of the actor. Therefore, as far as this case happens, the ability of the costumer to meet and handle the emergency is presented.

(5) poor quality of costumes; Costumes with poor quality will affect the effect on the mirror and the lifespan of the costumes. Sometimes it is difficult to find the same if the costume is damaged; sometimes the costume designers cannot find high-quality costume, and such circumstances are inevitable. However, it is not to be overlooked that whether the costume designer has the possibility of encroaching on funds in the process.

I had a more modern brown belt for the role I played, but one day when I was filming in the morning, the dressmaker suddenly told me that the belt was placed at somewhere far away because of his omission. He had prepared me a more old-

fashioned black one, which differed from the brown one in size, style, cleanliness and quality. He asked me to make do with it. The differences led to the cut of all the mid-shot and panoramic scenes of the play, because the belt was not allowed to show up in the shots. As a result, only close shots and shots in which the belt was invisible were kept, which caused loss to myself and the quality of the whole film. **OE2**

Costume

The dressmaker of the film came from Hong Kong. She took several of our main actors to buy clothes in the shopping mall. However, because of the improper communication with the director, the cloths differed from the style orientation set by the director that 50% of the costumes were not used, and 30% used with compromise.

OF2 Costume

Film makeup modeling which can also be called character modeling is a kind of artistic makeup modeling. Film makeup modeling is to shape the film characters according to the needs of the plot, and rational and appropriate makeup can greatly improve the quality of the film (B. F. Wang, 2017). The makeup artists are mainly responsible for shaping the facial image of the character. It should be said that the work of the makeup artist is also to create the film language, which is one of the main performances of the film art. Accurate makeup is a realistic consideration for makeup management. The failure in makeup management will directly lead to a decline in the quality of the film (Lin, 2010).

In the quality management process of small-budget film production, makeup is relatively simple compared to costume. In many cases, these two departments are all combined to work together. In terms of quality control, the problems existing in these two departments have similarities.

(1) Poor quality of the cosmetics will cause the actors' skin color to fail to be photogenic, as well as great damage to the skin, like allergies and itching, which will interfere with the performance of the actors. The makeup artists know much about the quality of the cosmetics. There are only two possibilities for bad cosmetics. First, the crew approves the use of this inferior cosmetic in order to save money, but this kind of possibility is small, because the cost of cosmetic input is not large. Secondly, the makeup artist wants to take the remaining cost for itself with

saving costs of cosmetics. All members in the crew are laymen about the cosmetics except the makeup artists.

(2) The makeup does not match the style of the role. In short, there is a gap between the makeup and the director's positioning of the role. This situation is resulted from the makeup artist's competence. But what's important is that the makeup artist and the director have biased understanding of the role. When such a situation occurs, the makeup artist should communicate with the director.

(3) The makeup is too rough, which directly affects the beauty of the frame, resulting in fake frame. Two situations will cause rough makeup, namely, the lack of makeup artist's competence and the makeup artist's ill attitude toward work.

(4) There are differences in makeup before and after filming. This will cause inconsistencies in the status of the characters, which is also equivalent to wearing a gang. For example, the makeup of the role just getting up in the room in the morning is obviously distinct from that of the role coming out of the forest. That the makeup in two frames is opposite or the makeup is unacceptable can be explained as the occurrence of previous costume problem. Carelessness, ill attitude toward the work and less studies into the script and the production plan by the makeup artist will give rise to such results.

*Once I found the beard the make-up artist made for me was quite fictitious and somehow incompatible with shots taken before. I questioned it, but they didn't take it seriously. As a result, we had to reshoot, but the new ones were still not compatible with the previous shots. We had to cut some off. The director felt quite regret when the film was nominated. **OC2 Makeup***

*My face flushed each time after cleansing and itched with makeup, which made me uncomfortable and distracted. I heard some talks between the two make-up artists in the makeup room. The makeup assistant said: "How poor those cosmetics are in quality". The make-up artist replied: "fund is limited. We have to compromise." **OF2 Makeup***

Performing art is inseparable from props. This requires the management and design of props to strive to be accurate in geography and location and correct in the background of the era. Based on the plot, characters, environment and the actors' movements, the props should help the actors to portray the character image,

psychological character, and create a specific atmosphere (Ouyang, 2008). The control over the setting-ups in the film is very important. Inappropriate setting-ups will lead fake effect of the film. Sometimes, the setting-up does not match the current environment. Therefore, the setting-up in the film is a heavy and complicated task (Y. T. Wu, 2002). Props and setting-ups are the cornerstone of film and television works and the basis of forming unique style and modeling of the film (Zhang, 2013).

Props and set-ups in small-budget films are usually completed by one department. The arrangement in the whole filming location is called “set-up”. During the performance, the items passing through the actors’ hands are called “props”. The props and the set-ups are all designed to bring the audience into a real story situation. If these two aspects are not in place, the audience cannot be brought into a credible story. The following problems may occur in the process.

(1) Props or set-up is not suitable to meet of the director’s requirements of the style and gradation. In addition to the ill work attitude of the property manager and the art director, insufficient communication between them and the director can best explain the generating the situation.

(2) Props or set-ups look too fake, which can be also resulted from ill work attitude. Mostly, the professional competence of the art director can lead to such a situation, because many props, especially the set-ups need the props property manager and the art director to make personally, which requires competitive craftsmanship and skill level. Sometimes, it is impossible to find particularly suitable props and set-ups which are difficult to be made. Under such a condition, close-up of the props will expose them to be too artificial to the audience at a glance.

(3) Poor quality of props or set-ups. Poor quality of props and scenery will be unaesthetic in frame and also easy to be damaged during the shooting process. It is very troublesome to restore them after the damage, which will cause a big threat to the quality of the film. The property manager and the art director know much about the quality of the props and set-ups. Such questions can be brought about by insufficient funding of the crew and difficulties in find the props or set-ups. However, the biggest factor leading to this is that the property manager and the art director want to take the remaining cost for themselves with saving costs on props and set-ups.

(4) differences of props or set-ups before and after filming; Mismatched props or set-ups in two cuttings can be resulted from their ill attitude toward the work and less studies into the script, which is same as the previous costumes and make-up. In addition to the property manager and the art director, there are script girls in charge of checking and recording the set-ups and props and record the relevant situation. In this link, there may be incorrectness led by the negligence of the script girl.

“A real prop presents better effects, taking a bronze tripod as an example. It creates different visual effects as compared with a fake one.” **ID3 Section 1**

Once we were taking a shot with fake hundred notes as the prop. They looked so fake in close-up that the producer immediately allocated hundreds of cashes to make the shots real. **OA2 Prop**

In another case, I forgot my pendant, so did the script holder. Only after shooting, the scene was found mismatching. We had no way but to blur the position of the pendant at the sacrifice of screen quality, in order to keep such a wonderful scene.

OF2 Prop

There was a scene taken in a rural house. Sometime after the film, I encountered a review expert of the film, who pointed out a major problem of that scene that rural houses never had so white walls. That's the omission of the scene setter, even the director did not notice it. The whole film was marked down. **OC2 Scene setting**

The scene is an indispensable part of film art creation. Its status and role are irreplaceable. As one of the essential elements of film art, it also relates to the artistic quality of film works. Although the developing speed of science and technology is accelerating, the scene as the basic element is still a necessary element of film and a guarantee of quality (X. Wu, 2017). Putting up scenes is affected by many factors. The problems in putting up scenes are related to each link of the crew. Therefore, the control over the scenes is also an important part in the film production management (Dai, 2010).

Usually, the scenes in small-budget films are relatively concentrated, and large and frequent transitions are rarely involved. It is precisely because of limited conditions in this respect that the quality of small-budget films is limited to be

improved to a certain extent. Effective quality control on the scenes under limited conditions can also keep the quality of the films becoming worse in this link, which is also an important part of the overall quality control. The following problems should be avoided in the process:

(1) unsuitable scenes for the film; It means that the scene that the artist finds does not meet the requirements of the play. In this case, the artist is required to study the script again, or communicate with the director again. In addition to these two cases, that the artist is not suitable for this position can account for the unsuitable scene.

(2) imperfect scene; It means that the scene meets the requirements of the script and the plot, and also conforms to the logic of the story development, while cannot bring a shocking visual experience to the audience, so that the film cannot have a high degree of viewing evaluation from the audience. It is the most common in almost all kinds of small-budget films, and this is also the core difference between small-budget films and blockbusters. First of all, the artists' work competence and work attitude play a great role in it, because the artist with strong competence is naturally rich in experience, accordingly, the scene will not be too low in quality. The artist with good work attitude and attentive trait will have strong sense of responsibility and will repeatedly searching and comparing until he or she is satisfied with the scene. Some scenes recommended by acquaintance are applied as long as they are almost appropriate, and such scenes are almost all without charged any fees. Moreover, there are some individuals or units that provide their scenes for the film crew to promote themselves. In this case, the film crew can decrease the costs of the scene at least, or even get advertising revenue. In addition to these factors, the biggest problem of the scenes in small-budget films is time and cost, because the crew of small-budget films cannot spend a lot of time and a large amount of money to change the scenes like that of a blockbuster. In the film *Red Cliff*, it took three days to complete the empty shot with the length of only 5 seconds. In the empty shot was grassland, on which the crew had stayed for three days with the camera propped on the grassland to wait for the wanted skylight in that moment. In such a skylight, the whole scene was perfect for the director.

(3) limited filming time; The scene party sometimes limits the filming time of the crew, or intervenes in the daily filming time, which will speed up the whole crew's filming rhythm. Accordingly, the best artistic effect cannot be guaranteed. The existing problems are: force majeure factors and the objective reasons like observing the government regulation. That the outreach producer cannot be agreed with the scene party due to the interest when negotiating with the scene party may be resulted from the poor competence of the outreach producer. For various reasons, that the schedule of the crew cannot be adjusted is due to the overall arrangement of the crew.

(4) limited filming conditions; It refers to that the scene party proposes certain restrictions during the filming process. For example, some areas of the scene cannot be photographed; a large number of people or equipment cannot enter some areas; and great sounds or strong lights cannot appear in some areas. All of these put restrictions on the filming, thus affecting the final frame quality. In addition to the objective factors of the "limited filming time" and the negotiation skills of the outreach producer, the coordination between the crew and the scene party on the filming site also play a role, which depends on the coordination competence of the production director and the producer on the scene.

"First of all, a properly arrange scene improves the quality of a film fundamentally. Both scene selection and setting are important. For example, taking a scene of prosperous city in a small town makes no sense, and it depends on the capacity of the artists and scene setting department. So, to improve quality during filming, arts matter a lot." **IA4 Section 2**

"Another example, scene selection. Here is one scene in the acting copy, which is very beautiful. It may be artificially built or found in a forest or small park. To a B-movie, any park could be its choice as they have no need to spend much time and money on scene setting. Let's say, we may need a scene in Guizhou while shooting in Beijing. If we go ahead to Guizhou, time is wasted." **ID1 Section 1**

"In fact, in a properly set scene with proper lighting effects, no matter where the cameras are arranged, the results would be satisfactory." **ID3 Section 3**

There was a scene in bedroom. According to the script, it should be large one decorated formally. However, pressed by conditions and time, the artist failed to find

such a room that he reluctantly prepared a small and simple one as substitution, which eventually led to deviations in the relationship between the characters and the plot. OE2 Scene

The object of film production management is the whole process of film production. The internal and external environment of film production should be taken into account and the work of various departments should be coordinated in order to achieve the purpose of improving the efficiency and quality of film production. Film production management includes life issues, outreach issue, on-site issue, co-ordination issue, finance issue, and vehicle issue, etc. Film production management plays a planning, commanding, and controlling role in the whole process of film production. The specialization degree of film production management personnel determines the quality of the entire film (H. T. Nie, 2013a).

Among the many factors encroaching on the production management quality of small-budget film, the influence of production factors is the most indirect. The problems and shortcomings in production work will decrease the enthusiasm of the overall team. That most people are in a negative state must deeply affect the quality of production. Specifically:

(1) living issues; The most basic requirement for accommodation is cleanness and the bathing is convenient. On this basis, pleasing hotel service and environment can increase the accommodation comfort. It shall be ensured that everyone has enough food to eat and the food quality is also necessary to reach the corresponding standard. The standard price of each meal shall range from 15 to 20 RMB per meal, and the standard price of breakfast shall range from 10 to 15 RMB. Rich dishes will also increase the comfort. In short, the accommodation is fundamental, and the life producer should try to be considerate in this regard, because thoughtlessness will affect the fundamentals of the filming work. In addition, life producer should pay more attention to the crew and give “humanistic care” to the members, such as: considering giving everyone an additional meal when the filming continues too late; If the weather is too cold or hot, the crew should consider measures to protect the cold and relieve the heat, and pay more attention to people who are sick and injured. Otherwise, once someone brings negative emotions into the work, this

negative emotion will spread in the team, because life issues involve the interests of all.

(2) the outreach issues; Outreach negotiations of scenes are aimed to be reached fast with high success rate, which can make the overall shooting plan more proactive, because a large number of comprehensive factors should be taken into the consideration of developing daily shooting plans. Efficiency in the setting the scenes will help to make a more rational shooting plan.

(3) on-the-scene problems; On-the-scene producer should grasp the rhythm of dining and transition according to the shooting plan of the day. Unlike the regular enterprises or project teams that always determine the meal time in advance, the meal time of the film crew is based on the shooting progress. In addition, reasonable rhythm arrangement can save time and expenses, but also effectively mobilize everyone's enthusiasm, so that all can devote themselves into the shooting with the best state. Mobilization of staff is also very important, which especially significant for the actors. Keeping the actors waiting for a long time with wearing makeup in the studio, but not entering the filming will lead to poor state of the actors after long-term physical exertion. When the crew arrives at the shooting scene, the on-the-scene producer must control the rhythm from the preparation of all departments to the shooting so as to avoid being overwhelmed by the hurry. Emergency on the scene mainly occurs in the intense shooting. Unpredictable people or things suddenly getting involved in the shooting will force the filming to pause. Then the on-the-scene producer should coordinate the two aspects of work at the same time. On one hand, the on-the-scene producer should try their utmost to ensure the filming continues, because once the filming stops, losses in all aspects are not to be estimated. On the other hand, the parties involved in the emergency should be brought out of the shooting scene for communication and coordination. At this time, the outreach producers should also play their role, because the outreach producers are mostly locals and their communication will be more convenient. All departments should make every effort to ensure that the shooting is not interrupted.

(4) co-ordination issues; Reasonable and integrated arrangement can make the overall shooting work smoother and more convenient. The daily integrated planning will be made out as soon as possible so as to enable all departments to

prepare for the next day's work and rest early to ensure adequate energy for the work on the next day.

(5) financial issues; The salary of the crew members is usually paid in phases, which is common in many crews. Overdue salary will cause all staff to feel depressed, which is same to submitting an expense account in the result. When the process of submitting an expense account is finished, the actual reimbursement will also be dragged backwards. The former affects everyone's emotions, while the latter also influences the actual work in addition to affecting the emotions, because some department heads will not be able to carry out the following work for having no financial support. Therefore, the financial staff should be cautious on these two issues.

(6) vehicle issues; In comparison, the drivers serving the crew usually have a lot of social habits, and they are not like other professional performers or managers who have ideal, career, belief and other factors as supports for work in addition to income, and have received a certain amount of education mostly. Most of the drivers are less-educated and do not have fixed jobs. They have no ideal or belief in the film industry. What they want is to spend the least time to complete every day's work with the least energy. When the work that can be done at one time is divided into more times, the drivers will be dissatisfied and have other bad emotions. Sometimes when they need to drive to coordinate with the crew for other reasons, some of them will stop at the place in the name of having no prior agreement. When the shooting time of the crew lasts too long, the drivers will have complaints even if they have no assignment but wait on the scene. Of course, not all drivers of the crews act like this, but there are such drivers in the six small-budget film crews in this study. Communication with the peers has attested that such people are common and in majority in the crews.

*To control budget, meal standard was set up at RMB 8 per meal. Each time a lot of food was left over. It came to me afterwards that the food was terrible that no one was willing to take it. In response, I adjusted the standard to RMB 30. In an evening performance, according to my arrangement, each staff was offered two steamed buns with a bowl of soybean milk. However, someone expressed dissatisfaction on the site that they would rather to buy snacks by themselves. **OB2***
Deputy Director of Production

*It was summer when we were shooting in the University City. High temperature upset everyone inside. Taking someone's advice, the life producer prepared some iced mung bean soup which solved a major problem by improving everyone's status at a low cost. **OA2 Life producer***

*Once in a night performance, actor Wen Xiang, at the invitation of the Site Producer, was made up and waited on the site. But after a night of waiting, only a small part of scenes related to him were taken. The crew demanded him working on the next day, but he rejected. **OB2 Actor***

*The coordinator was a university student who joined a crew for the first time. Though he had tried his best, problems came one after another, for instance, night performance arranged in daytime; daytime performance arranged in night; separation of performances with the same scene, which wasted much time, efforts and material for transferring. Staffs on the site found it funny and annoying. **OE2 Coordinator***

*There were some performances taken in the night. All drivers had to wait on the site. Some complained to me as time came to 12 o'clock. I had no time and vigor to deal with such, as every minute is to be contested. As a result, some drivers resorted to the fleet leader who, in return, transferred the pressure to the crew. **OB2 Fleet***

*As actors were arranged for shooting at different time, to ensure their enough rest for better performance, we required the driver to pick up and send the actors in batches. The driver thought that it increased his workload and complained in the team, which affected everyone's work. Again, in order to take a follow-up shot, we need his cooperation, but the driver replied that it was none of his business as he was only responsible for actors. On another occasion, a worker from the lighting sector intended to get a lift, but was told to get off. This was not the first time. Finally, a physical conflict broke out between the two sides. **OA2 Fleet***

"To achieve better quality, the whole crew is related." "For example, if daily life is ensured that everyone is satisfied, they would perform well at the best status."

ID3 Section 5 and 6

When it comes to the management level the actors, the performance ability of the actors, namely, whether they have received professional education, etc., should be

specifically differentiated. The personality and characteristics of the actors and roles must be matched. In the management the actors, it is noticed that the actors' shaping and grasping of the characters is the embodiment of their acting skill, also the demonstration of basic training. The image and the morality and artistic cultivation of the actor are crucial to the management of actors in film creation (Xiao, 2001). Not all actors can succeed in performing arts and excellent actors are always well self-cultivated. Each successful actor must have their own characteristics and own charm to attract the audience in front of the screen. Excellent actors should have their own understanding of the role and should repeatedly simulate the psychological activities of the role to play according to the situation and strive to be the most natural, appropriate so as to ensure the quality of the film. This requires the management and selection of actors to be professional and rational (J. Gao, 2014).

Contrary to the production factors, the actor factor is the most direct in the quality control on small-budget projects. The audience first comes into contact with the actors in the play, and even most viewers choose to watch a film based on the main or the only one standard of the cast. Thus, the actor factor is the most important and direct for the control on quality. Usually, A-list or big names rarely participate in small-budget films. With the actor's popularity factor set aside, the actor's influence on production quality is also relatively straightforward in terms of management.

(1) Actors' acting skill need to be improved. It refers to that the competence of the actor to create characters is weak. Usually, this is resulted from that the actors do not have professional learning experience in colleges or universities, and are short of theory or practice, so it is difficult for them to create a true and natural character image. Then, there is also a big difference between the performance style of the actor and the style of the character in the play. For example, if Arnold Schwarzenegger is invited to play the role of Jack in *Titanic*, the character he performs in the film won't be believed by the audience although his professional competence is unquestionable. Some actor may have excellent professional competence and is able to play many types of roles, but if his or her understanding of the character is different from that of the director and the writer, it is also impossible to interpret the character perfectly.

(2) The image of the actor is not suitable for the character. It mainly refers to that there is a gap between the appearance and the physique of the actor and those of the character in the play. The difference here is slightly the same as the difference in the previous talks, but the two are different concepts. The former refers to the difference in performance style, and the latter is the difference between the actor and the character to be played. For example, if Chow Yun-fat is invited to act the previous president Deng Xiaoping, the desired effect on the screen won't be achieved because of the great difference in their appearance.

(3) poor score of the actor in appearance. Good-looking actors having high score in appearance can satisfy the aesthetic needs of the audience, which is determined by the characteristics of human aesthetic emotion tendency. Generally, score in appearance including the score of facial appearance, figure and temperament. Narrowly, score in appearance refers only to the score in facial appearance. The score in appearance here mainly refers to the narrow sense. On the basis of the narrow sense, a certain degree of "general" score in appearance is also contained. As to the actor, the so-called "score in appearance" mainly refers to the good-looking quality and personal characteristics. Among the two, the main measure of the actress is whether she is beautiful, and the main measure of the actor is whether he has personal characteristics. Stars like Tom Cruise and Sun Honglei are all outstanding actors with personal characteristics. Although Sun Honglei is not the best-looking one, he is called "Yan Wang" (meaning having highest score in appearance) by the audience because of his personal characteristics. Of course, some of the actors are called "handsome young boys" for their good-looking appearance, which is not analyzed here.

(4) artistic ethics; Artistic ethics is an important criterion for selecting actors. The actor with problems in ethics will bring great trouble to the filming work of the crew, which will cause a certain degree of challenge and loss to the quality of the film due to negative effect on the shooting work and the performance of the actors themselves. The most common problem is actors' putting on airs. These actors usually have some experience in shooting performances, but do not reach a certain level. Usually they are self-righteous and consider themselves to be superior. They are eager to get distinctive respect and treatment in the crew. Naturally, they always look down

upon others. To satisfy their desire and vanity, the crew has to pay more manpower and material resources to accommodate them. When the crew is dissatisfied with a shot, they cannot arbitrarily criticize the actor putting on air. Secondly, the discipline problems are serious. The actors putting on airs are always late for shooting and let the whole crew wait; sometimes, they go out without asking for leave. Drinking and playing cards, etc., lead to dark circles and poor performance on the next day, which accordingly results in poor shooting effect or unusable shot. The private life of the actors may also cause serious interference to the overall shooting of the crew, and even seriously hinder the shooting. Such incidents happen occasionally, which results in that the parties do not perform well in shooting.

*An actress played the main role in a film as recommended by leaders. She was neither beautiful nor professional, and satisfied our requirements on image grudgingly. As a result, the film was unanimously criticized by insiders and audiences. Another young actress once complained the high temperature in the dressing room and asked the makeup artist to fan her. Hearing the request, the nearly seventy-year-old makeup artist was so angry that his hands shook. The actress even lived with an actor later. At last, both cared little about shooting, causing a headache to the crew. **OA2 Actor***

*The leading actor of the play was supposed to be youthful and handsome, and the play also focused on the theme of youth and love. However, a man in his forties assumed the role, who was not handsome, not satisfactory in image and not professionally trained. Neither fish nor flesh. **OE2 Actor***

*The leading actress of the play was neither professionally trained nor capable of understanding the role she played properly. But feeling good about herself, she often required special care in work, and directed other professional actors. As an actor, I felt too hard with her. **OD2 Actor***

“First of all, from appearance to performance, including the actor's understanding of the role, his degree of dedication and so on, it is very important. For example, when producing the film “Yang Angong”, we were only funded RMB 1 million to introduce his short life in such an play under the background of the Republic of China. We had to transfer from scene to scene. What kind of actor can we expect with limited funds? We followed the practice of nationwide recruitment

because it was a biography of character, which, first of all, required similarity in shape. At the end, we selected Zhang Duo, the Younger, not the older one of the same name I recommended because of his heavy drama tone. Facts proved our right choice. Many people went to see it when we filmed in Tongnan. They all said that he looked quite like Yang Angong, even the older generation, evidenced by a very big statue of him in the Yang's Memorial Hall. The second factor is the degree of specialization of the actor himself. Zhang Duo also brought an assistant when he first came, and we were not used to it. An assistant is never necessary for such a B-movie. We considered him a poser. However, he was energized seeing our professionalism through continuity after signing of contract that he and his team paid much attention despite of our low budget. Soon he integrated into our team, and studied the script day by day. Then what troubled us? It is a bibliography about Yang Shangkun who once served as the national president. His younger brother Yang Baibing was still alive then, under whose leadership, the whole Yang's family, including the elder generation, the younger generation, the one who worked as the deputy GM of the Poly Group and even a professional film critic, attended the film reviewing. Some workers in the Propaganda Department said that there would be a lot of opinions on the film if it was reviewed by them. But surprisingly, the film was recognized. At that time, I called Zhang Duo and asked him to Beijing for a meeting with the Yang's family in person. Seeing Zhang Duo, they were all shocked and said, "He looks so alike our brother". As a result, the review was less stressed and completed. Soon, Yang Baibing signed the agreement. So to choose actors, especially such kind of biography, excellent likeness is the first preconditions as most B-movies are subject to some main lines. Devotion of the actor or actress comes the second. He/she shall necessarily try to figure out the characters themselves. Of course, as long as you have learned how to perform, it is not a problem in terms of acting. The key is whether you have the diligence or efforts to figure out the roles, which is the most important. Therefore, when choosing actors, professionalism, devotion and ability of understanding the works and the roles are our criteria over his popularity. **IB10 Section 1**

"This is the problem of an actor/actress's morality. Poser or drinking in the evening would never happen on professional actors, who shall also have his morality in such an identity. Then, what's an actor/actress's morality, for example, you ask

him to be present at 10 o'clock, he arrives at 11 o'clock, that's a problem. Generally, actors with professionalism and morality do not have such a problem. It is often a case on young guys who may possibly play the whole night that they can't get up the next day, or they just forget the schedule." **IA12 Section 1**

"Most posers are young guys. It's a rare case on more sophisticated actors."

IA3 Section 3

"As to me, morality is the most important element to an actor/actress despite of his performing capacity." **IB13 Section 2**

"That's right. Some actors/actresses may put on air on the site, what a pity, while some would cooperate with the producer actively and never come late." **ID11 Section 11**

"We are always the passive side, in particular, making a B-movie. Generally an actor with some fame would never have his eyes on B-movie. We have to give in to him. Let him go whenever he wants." "Another problem is performing skills. Some actors may be found of defective in performance after we start shooting for days. We have to find someone as his replacement, and restart again." **ID12 Sections 2 and 3**

"Speaking of character image, we shall learn more about the actor/actress's personalities, and get a general direction through his/her words. That's the preconditions. An ideal actor/actress shall be gentle and capable. That works with us." **ID13 Section 2**

"An actor/actress is important to each play. His/her professionalism or conducts matter a lot. Some actors/actresses are quite annoying. They may hold themselves high before becoming a super star, which may upset some workers." **IE10 Section 1**

"Professionalism is also important to an actor/actress of a B-movie. We need someone who graduate from regular universities after study in performance. As to those non-professional actors/actress, we have no time to culture him/her though he/she is gifted, because of the time control to produce a film we have mentioned before. We would never spend time inspiring and inducing an actor/actress to shape the character. So the actor/actress matters so much. He/she must comply with the role, be professional, and be qualified. To tell you the truth, such problems may also be found on directors, not an exception with me. We work emotionally. We may help

someone who comply with the conditions and desire of the role. But, in fact, it's dangerous to us if he doesn't work hard. I do believe that a B-movie shall be performed by professional actors who shall comply with the design and basic qualities of the character and be experienced. That's the importance of actor/actress. If the decision is not wise and objective enough, problems come sooner or later."

IF10 Section 1

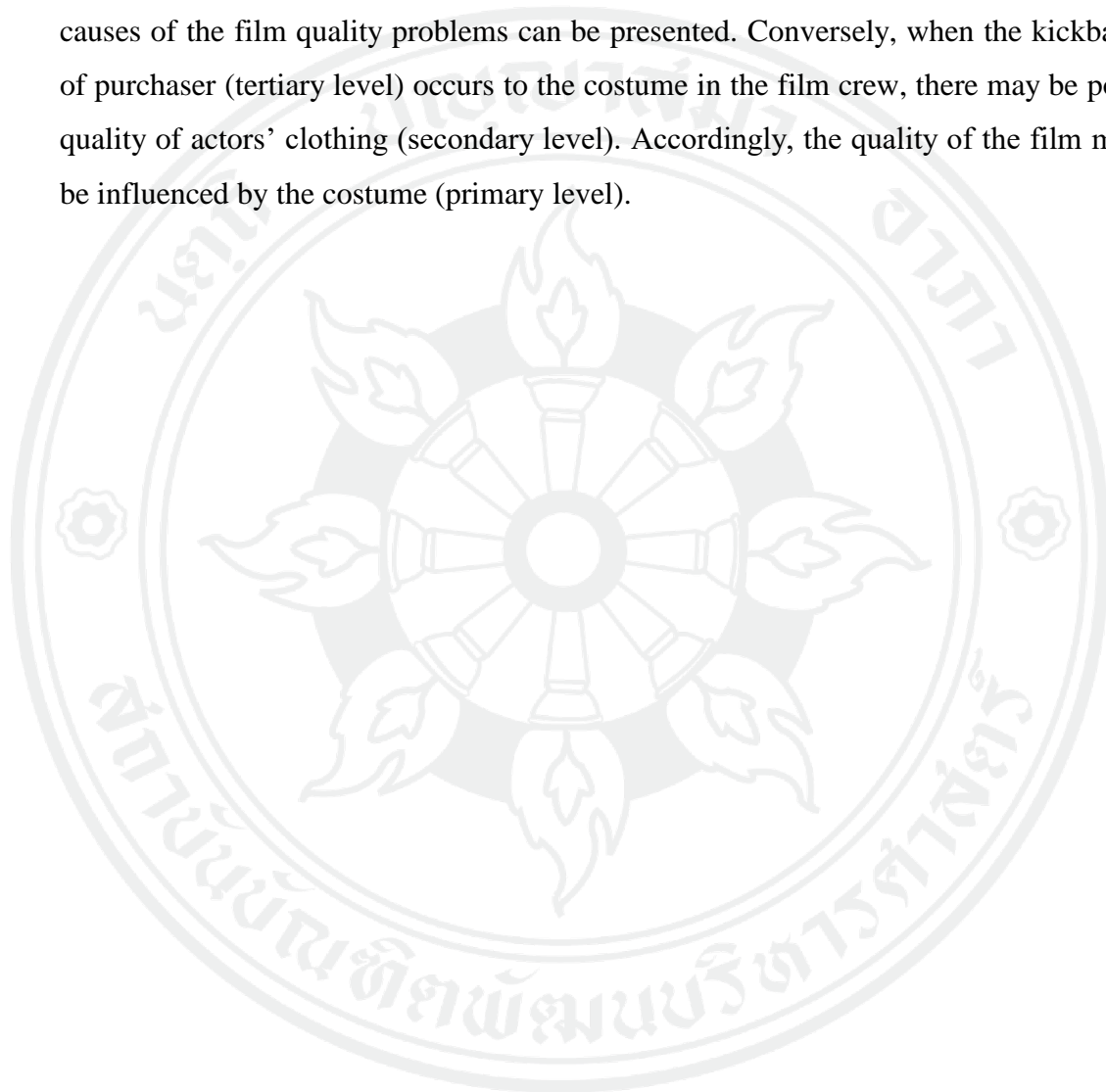
"Here's the thing. The actor/actress is selected according to the character in the script, including his/her characters, qualities and personalities, and the whole background. If you are sure that the actor/actress's ideological quality and performance could bring the character to life, you choose him/her and require him/her to break in overall creativity to understand the character more. We choose actor/actress based on two conditions, similarity in appearance with image compliant with the character, and similarity in spirit, as well as his basic qualities and connotation. But, all those conditions are based on the precondition of professionalism. Actors/actress are tested by performance without physical substance and investigated for background and work experience before he/she is selected."

IF11 Section 2

"For example, if he has a relationship with the director or producer, we may be affected indirectly. That explains the rule of "never fall in love with your colleague" in western industry or no couple in the crew. When things go wrong with one, the other may be affected. Though no problems occur, their relationship may also cause some negative influence. The more people, the more talk. Someone may be upset and blame others for his mistakes. This is in fact not right, and it indirectly affects many workers' mental and working status." **IH12 Section 2**

With the analysis of the production quality control on small-budget films, the fishbone diagram (Figure 4.6) invented by Japanese management master Kaoru Ishikawa (1915-1989) is used to systematically summarize the causes influencing quality and trace the causes and problems to the third level, which helps the organization managers to think and reflect on the quality issues so as to develop corresponding measures to more effectively control on the quality. The film quality management has helped to attest that the factors influencing the quality of small-budget film production are mainly in six aspects (primary level): costumes, makeup,

props and setting-ups, scenes, production and actors. The impact of actors on the film quality is divided into four aspects (secondary level): bad performance, unsuitable appearance, ordinary appearance, and artists' morality problems. The impact caused by artists' morality on quality is divided into three aspects (tertiary level): unjustifiable man and woman relationship, fussy, indiscipline. Therefore, the root causes of the film quality problems can be presented. Conversely, when the kickback of purchaser (tertiary level) occurs to the costume in the film crew, there may be poor quality of actors' clothing (secondary level). Accordingly, the quality of the film may be influenced by the costume (primary level).



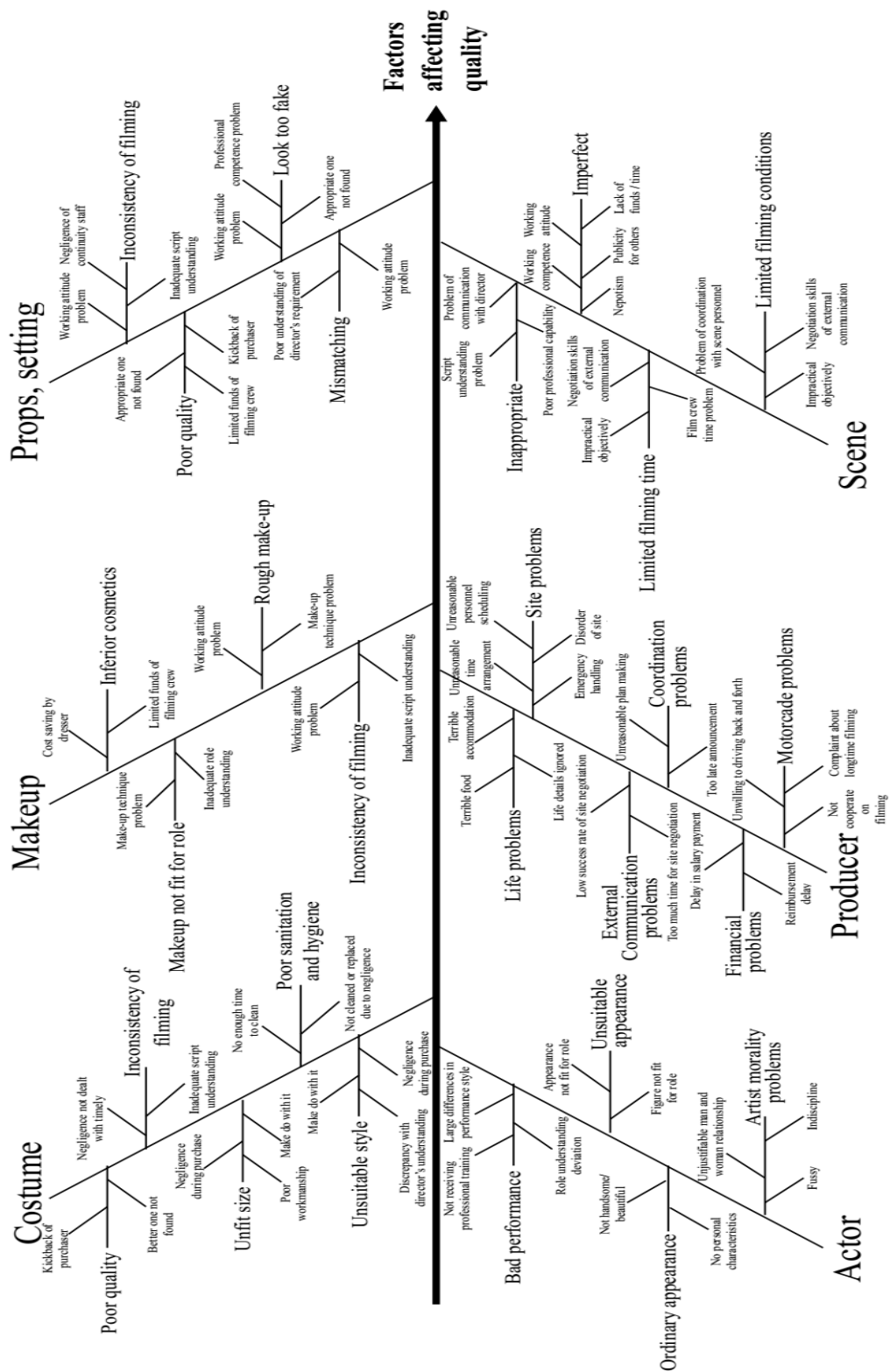


Figure 4.6 Factors Affecting Filming Quality of Small-budget Films
 Source: The above figure is drawn from the discovery of the author

The study in this article can help the producers to promptly remedy the film quality problem so as to avoid the quality loss and also summarize lessons to prevent similar situations according to the findings of this study. On the other hand, certain phenomena appearing in the filming crew are likely to lead to a decline in the quality of the film according to the law found in this study. At this time, the production management team can take corresponding measures in advance to ensure the quality of the film.

4.3 Cost

Project management originated from the US military and mostly referred to defense project management, and the project managers or directors did not involve direct financial interests. Therefore, cost control and management seemed insignificant for quality and time. With the passage of time, the concept of project management has gradually been accepted by the business community. It was first applied in the construction industry. Since then, the importance of cost has gradually been increased and has been called as the three elements of project management together with time and quality. In most projects, cost overrun is a long-standing problem, and the participation of many stakeholders in project production inevitably leads to project overruns (Doloi, 2011). The determination of the production scope has a great impact on the cost control. That the scope of the project is unchanged will help to control the cost more favorably. The final cost will increase if the production rhythm of the project is changed because of certain factors (Jackson, 2003).

At present, there is no perfect and effective cost control system for film production in China. Therefore, the problems in the control on cost emerge in an endless stream. The main contradiction lies in the lack of a sound cost control system, namely, horizontal responsibility system should be implemented from the production director to the various departments of the crew, and the vertical responsibility system should be implemented from the production director to all the staff; the objects of cost control should be standardized to meet the requirements of the cost control and filming characteristics of the film crew, as well as the organization characteristics of the film crew; appropriate cost control method should be selected according to the

characteristics of the film crew (Si, 2014). The film cost control in China is still in its infancy, and there are certain problems in all aspects. In particular, cost control personnel should shift from the role of single financial accountant to the role of management accountant (G. Z. Chen, 2018). Producers and film crew financiers need to understand the characteristics of film projects and be aware of the impact of cost management on film production. Appropriate cost control can help to improve the overall level of the film in addition to reducing project costs (X. H. Wang, 2017). The cost management method in project management can effectively help to control the cost management of film projects, which makes the crew resources more optimized and helps to improve the quality and profit of the film (F. J. Li, 2018). The combination and interaction of activity-based costing and budgetary control can help to achieve a significant degree of target control over film production costs (Long, 2015). The development of the Chinese film industry will continue to be advanced in the future, and the favorable accounting of costs will also affect the correct decision-making of film producers (Y. C. Li, 2016).

Based on a clear investment quota, the film project begins to formulate a production plan. Once the production plan is determined, detailed planning is required for the use and distribution of funds throughout the film-producing period (L. Fang, 2007). As far as small-budget films are concerned, there are still many management deficiencies in the process of producing films, which leads to waste of funds, especially the waste of funds caused by many human factors, and ultimately results in unnecessary cost overruns. In this article, the author studies, concludes and summarizes the cost overruns and cost savings involved in the production process of small-budget film from the perspective of cost control with an aim to help managers avoid unnecessary expenditures, contain unnecessary losses and successfully complete the film production on the basis of saving funds. In the film production, much consumption is abstract. High costs do not necessarily bring about high benefit, and low costs do not necessarily lead to low quality. For example, providing there are two similar films in scale with their production cost varying greatly, the problems are impossible to be penetrated for investors and managers lack of experience. As a matter of fact, laymen are involved in investing and managing most of the current small-budget films. In the production process of the film, the five main aspects

involved in the costs are: personnel expenses; material costs, digital photography costs, equipment rental expenses, and other living expenses (Bu, 2012). Among them, small-budget films' demand for digital photography cost including special effects, film trick and other expenses is small. In addition, the digital photography link belongs to the category of post-production, which is beyond the scope of this article. Therefore, the author will discuss and analyze the personnel expenses, material costs, equipment rental expenses and other living expenses in this paper.

In the production of small-budget films, the personnel expenses account for a large proportion. The investment in the personnel accounts for about 35% of the total investment in the absence of big-name actors, while the investment cannot be accurately estimated if there are big-name actors in the film and the maximum can account for 60% of the total investment. The personnel are divided into actors and staff, and their ideas about wage income are completely different. The wage income of all staff is hardly flexible, because the personnel are in want of making money. Among the staff, the personnel in the bottom of strata pay more attention to the income, for example, the field workers and grips almost rely on manual labor to create value. Basically, their jobs do not involve professional skills or management skills and making money is the only goal and motivation to them. Also, their income is relatively low with wage between 150 and 200 RMB per person per day. Therefore, the cost investment into them is relatively fixed and there is no accommodation. Professional and technical staff and general management personnel have to take the career prospects and interpersonal relationship maintenance into consideration in addition to making money; therefore, there is a small space of so-called favor price out of gratitude for them. The scope of favor price depends on the specific interest relationship and human relationship between the party and the film crew. The flexible favor price between the two is roughly between 20% and 50% of the party's own pricing. The pricing of the party is determined by his or her own professional ability and working experience. High pricing is determined by excellent professional ability and rich working experience. On the contrary, the pricing of the newly debuted personnel is usually low due to their limited experience and ability, because the most needed for them is to accumulate industry experience. Accordingly, the film crew selects appropriate personnel based on their own cost investment and social network.

In general, the cost investment in personnel is relatively fixed, and there is no excessive cost savings, while there is a lot of room for the actor's remuneration income. In this study, the actors are divided into two categories, the main actors (the lead, the supporting actors) and non-main actors (the guest actors, the extras). The remuneration of the extras and some guest actors is relatively fixed. Generally speaking, the film crew usually contacts the lead of the extras and recruits the actors through the lead. Their price is roughly 80 to 120 RMB per day. The actors with good-looking appearance and excellent acting skills can be invited as guest actors with the remuneration generally no more than 300 RMB per day. As for them, it is also a privilege to be selected as guest actors and they may not care much about the remuneration. The film crew pays the remuneration to the lead of the extras, and then the latter allocates the remuneration according to the distribution ratio agreed with the actors in advance. Since the right to choose the lead of the extras and the guest actors is controlled by the casting directors, there are many casting directors who use the right to exchange interests with the lead of the extras. Therefore, it is possible to breed corruption and other issues, and due to the downward shift of right, there may be two consequences: the actors' remuneration is reduced, which leads to decrease in working enthusiasm or low quality of the actors; In addition, the increased overall cost will put pressure on the funding of the film crew. For example, the casting director will draw a percentage of 20 RMB from an extra actor; providing there are 80 extras per day and the shooting duration lasts for five days, then the total percentage drawn from the sum of money is $20 \times 80 \times 5 = 8000$ RMB. The gray income is equivalent to the salary income of the casting director. However, the commission fee of the guest actor is not included. The author has firstly tried being the casting director in the research of this study, and the salary was 5,000 RMB. Rare stars or big names are invited to be the main actors in the small-budget films, because the production cost limits the cast, and the price of the ordinary professional actors is more flexible. The purpose of professional actors is different from that of the general staff in the film crew. The former usually go after artistic achievements and are not entirely for making money. In general, they hope to become famous, so if there are good roles for them, they may not put the amount of remuneration in the first place. The more experienced the actor is, the higher the remuneration is. Compared to the experienced

actors, the remuneration of the newcomers is more uncertain. However, as for selecting the film actors, an experienced actor may not have an advantage over the newcomer, and it is possible that the newcomer with the temperament being more suitable for the role designed in the film is more likely to be liked and recognized by the audience. Therefore, it is needed to be more careful in selecting the actors with high remuneration when producing small-budget films. Many students in colleges and universities or actors who have just graduated from school always have professional foundation and skills, but lack practical experience. Thus, it is more likely to invite them to participate in the shooting with less remuneration. It is more advantageous to invite newcomers if they are suitable for the designed roles. As to the price of a same role, the pricing of the newcomer may be 2000 RMB, while the experienced actor may make an offer of 100,000 RMB, so the difference in remuneration will cause the film crew to prefer new actors. In fact, other unknown actors in addition to the stars and big names make no difference in hearts of the vast majority of viewers. In the choice of the leading actors, the casting director has certain recommendation rights. Some casting directors will recommend a number of actors to the director or producer and privately agree with the actors on that the latter will return to the casting directors a certain proportion of the recommendation as referral fee if they are selected by the film crew. This method greatly increases the cost of the cast for the film crew. In the process of shooting, some actors will gradually show their dissatisfaction with the recommendation, which will seriously affect the normal shooting and result in more production cost by the crew. And it is imaginable that shooting effect is not as good as people wishes. In addition to the previous percentage of the heads of the extras, the gray income of the casting director ranges from a few thousand to over ten thousands. This is not a small amount for small-budget films. In terms of the choice of the leading actors, some actors may choose to invest in the film crew for themselves or their children in order to get a chance on camera. The film crew will consider the conditions and investment amount of the actors and other factors. After weighing the pros and cons, the film crew makes the final decision of whether to accept or not. As for small-budget films, right actors should be chosen for the roles rather than actors blindly paid at high prices. The statistics of the leading actors' remuneration in the six cases of this study are as follows (Table 4.2). In order to ensure the privacy of the

parties, the lowercase English letters are used instead of the specific actors' names. It is able to see that the income of the actors selected through the colleges and universities is generally low; relatively speaking, the income of the actors selected through the agent company is relatively high, because the agents will take about 50% of the remuneration. Recommended professional actors refer to professional actors who are recommended to join the shooting. Recommended social actors refer to social actors who are recommended to join shooting. The table shows that the cost of the professional actors and that of non-professional actors are actually about the same. Professional actors recommended due to gratitude or other interests are usually paid at a low price in addition to some exceptional cases. The non-professional actors who are recommended to join the shooting are also low-paying, and some even act for no remuneration. However, there exist special cases in which non-professional actors can get high remuneration, and most of the people who can bring in the investment are children actors.

“The biggest problem in a Chinese film is that about 60-70% of the funds are spent on actors/actress. What can we do with the remaining 30%?” IA2 Section 2

“So we need someone more professional, more capable, not more expensive.”

IA4 Section 4

“This is so called “Eliminate Lousy Film”. Allow me to give you an example. The fund allocated to actors/actress is RMB 3 million, and I sign someone who values only RMB 30,000. That’s not right. It may reduce the film quality progressively until it is beyond our control.” “Once you decide that university students are required for the film, you go and look for them. You may offer at RMB 80,000 or RMB 60,000 when the cap acceptable to you is RMB 100,000. But things come different if your budget is RMB 3 million. You can’t sign a university student to fool the investors. They are not fools, right?” IA6 Section 7 and 9

“Such a case also happens to the casting director. The broker may come to me and promise any “gifts” if I recommend the actor/actress he/she operates. I may report to the production manager that the actor/actress requires RMB 100,000Yuan, and only pay RMB 70,000 to the broker. The money left is mine.” ID6 Section 4

“Rookies are cheaper. Though there are many actors/actresses who are capable in performance at a lower price. But in consideration of the cost, we dare not

to use them because they have no appealing to fans. Then the cost is exceeded significantly, as the payment to a famous actor/actress accounts for 80%-90% of your budget.” **IE6 Section 3**

“We won’t sign any agreement with unimportant roles or figurants. Instead, we communicate with their leader. Then, personal quality matters a lot on this regard. How to control the number, how the director cooperates with the production manager. For example, we may need 30 figurants today, but the leader comes with 80 for more money. Calculated based on the number at a price of RMB 80 to RMB 100 per capita, the cost becomes extremely high and varies from play to play. In such a process, cost control is required.” **IF6 Section 1**

“Actually, one of the most prone over-expenditure problems in filming is the cost of actors/actresses. It happens easily. According to the development of Chinese film, 40% to 60% of the total investment of a film flows into the actor/actress’s pocket. At present, Chinese actors/actresses ask too high a price, which may also be affected by many unpredictable factors. “This requires an actor/actress’s ability, so the cost we pay for such an actor will naturally rise. Although he will have some communication with the director and producer and lower the price, he would never break his baseline.” **IG5 Section 1**

“Most actors/actresses in a B-movie are Rockies or of little fame, and in the stage of rising. Their quotation is generally affordable.” **IG10 Section 1**

During preparation, a supporting actor was still undetermined. I contacted one of my brothers, who offered a quotation of RMB 20,000. The lowest price for my sake was RMB 6,000 on the conditions of single room and a round trip ticket. At the end, the quotation was not accepted by the producer. I asked my friend to recommend one of his students in university, who required only RMB 500. Without special conditions on reimbursement of airfare and accommodation, the actor was excellent in front of the lens, which exceeded everyone’s expectations. **OB3 Actor**

During preparation, the crew planned to invite a local star to play a major role in the play, who, however, quoted a higher price. Just three days before the start of filming, the director contacted me and gave me the role at a price of only RMB 2,000. I was very contented, and worked hard. The director and some review experts were amazed by the final effect. **OF3 Actor**

During preparation, an actress offered a quotation of RMB 220,000 through recommendation of social relationship. The production manager asked her to think about it, but never contacted her again. Finally, she took the initiative to contact the production manager three times for the role, and reduced the quotation to RMB 20,000. OA3 Actor

Table 4.2 The Remuneration Statistics Table of the Research Objects-Main Actors

Film	Actor	Remuneration	Remarks	Film	Actor	Remuneration	Remarks
A	a	30000	from the agent company	D	a	2000	recommended social actor
	b	3000	recommended social actor		b	2000	recommended professional actor
	c	5000	recommended professional actor		c	2000	recommended professional actor
	d	3000	recommended social actor		d	-100000	child actor for bringing in investment
	e	2000	selected from the colleges or universities	E	a	0	recommended social actor
	f	2000	selected from the colleges or universities		b	0	recommended by the investor party
	g	3000	selected from the		c	0	recommended by the

Fil m	Acto r	Remuneratio n	Remarks	Fil m	Acto r	Remuneratio n	Remarks
	h	5000	colleges or universities selected from the		d	0	investor party recommende d social actor
	i	5000	colleges or universities recommende d		e	10000	recommende d
	j	3000	professional actor recommende d social actor		f	16000	professional actor from the agent company
	k	20000	recommende d social actor		g	3000	selected from the colleges or universities
	l	20000	recommende d professional actor		h	2000	selected from the social actors
B	a	20000	recommende d professional actor	F	a	0	recommende d by the investor party
	b	15000	recommende d professional actor		b	10000	recommende d professional actor
	c	0	director as the shareholder		c	10000	recommende d professional

Film	Actor	Remuneration	Remarks	Film	Actor	Remuneration	Remarks
							actor
	d	0	producer as the shareholder	d		5000	selected from the social actors
	e	6000	recommended professional actor	e		5000	selected from the social actors
	f	500	recommended social actor	f		2000	recommended professional actor
C	a	0	recommended children actor	g		3000	recommended professional actor
	b	2000	recommended professional actor			-	-
	c	2000	recommended professional actor			-	-

Source: from the production units in six small-budget film cases in this study

Material costs mainly include expenses of scenes, clothing, makeup, props, and scenery. Small-budget films are mostly modern or contemporary ones, so their cost in this area is small. The scenes are basically ready-made, and there is almost no need to set up scenes specially. Therefore, the film crew should use their own resources and connections to try to use the free scenes; thus, the outreach producers here are quite crucial. The outreach producers are mostly locals. Lots of outreach producers collude with the scene party and raise the price of the original free scenes when making offers for the film crew, accordingly they appropriate the gains to themselves. Sometimes, they reach agreement with the scene party, raise the original price to a higher price and then make that offer to the film crew. Finally, the outreach producer and the scene party divide the money proportionally. Most of the regular clothing is brought into the film crew by the actors themselves. Even if they buy or have others make it, there will be no big difference in cost. However, there will be great flexible space for the cost when there are special requirements for clothing. That's because this type of clothing is often tailored or rented, which involves the local costume market. Actually, the costumers are quite familiar with this field and usually have several long-term fixed cooperation objects. Many costumers customize or rent clothing at the lowest cost, and make an offer for the film crew at a high price. What is more, they often make the offer for the film crew just before the filming with an aim to leave the film crew no time to examine the cost of clothing. The most important thing about make-up is the quality of cosmetics. The cosmetics used in producing films are different from the cosmetics used in life. At present, almost all the cosmetics in Chinese film crews are sold by a shop at the entrance of Beijing Film Studio, and they are all international famous brands. The generally used cosmetics are easy to cause skin allergies. If something happens to the actors, the consequences are unimaginable, which will not only affect the shooting progress, but also result in compensation paid to the actors. Usually, the cost of a small-budget film is about 6,000 to 10,000 RMB. Especially, the actress's makeup consumes a lot of cosmetics. Many make-up men accumulate some cosmetics that have not been used by other film crews. When the crew invites the make-up man, the make-up man can also bring his or her own cosmetics into the film crew and the film crew only needs to pay about 50% of the cost. The cost of cosmetics is great, and if there are many characters, the cost of

cosmetics will be higher. The most worrying thing is that the make-up man has the fluke mind to buy low-quality cosmetics at a high price and make profit from it. In the small-budget films, the props and the scenery are usually completed by the arts designer. According to the actual situation, the arts designer chooses to buy the ready-made material or self-made material. Both methods involve the purchase cost. Sometimes, the cost of some props and scenery is quite high, and many arts designers gain extra income from this and the amount is astonishing.

“For example, the costume budget is RMB 3 million, but the production director believes RMB 2 million is enough. He will communicate with the costume dealer and finally get all costumes required at a price of RMB 2.51 million. In fact, it is clear to him that it is possible with RMB 2 million. He wants to make money.”
“When preparing the accounts, he would try his best to cover the money without trace.” **ID6 Sections 2 and 3**

“For scenes. For example, today we plan to shoot in the home of Lei Qing. Surely we have to find the home according to the script. The quotation may vary from RMB 1,000 to RMB 2,000. Now the Public Relations Department starts working. A capable PR may save money for us if he has relationship with the boss of the scene. We may attach his name after the film to prove his sponsorship. An inexperienced PR may encounter more difficulties in budget and time on this regard. Once the director is fond of the scene, you have to pay for it.” **IE6 Section 2**

There is also financial problem with costume and makeup. In the early preparatory process, the actor's clothes are not enough, we need to buy in case of modern drama or make-to-order for play under the background of the Republic of China, which costs a lot. Moreover, props spend a lot of money, and in a modern drama, over-expenditure in this respect happens seldom. It is more often in a play under the background of the Republic of China and the cost is invisible. **IG5 Section 3**

“In the process of filming a PR has been accustomed to spending a lot of money where they go. Sometimes, I may pay for shooting on the street. But in fact, it is not the case. After working for so many years, we all know the secrets in it. It is not charged at all. This is where we are most likely to save money, as long as we get the government approval and support. But a PR may have other considerations for his

own interests. It is also the same case with arts sector, who may make more settings for more money as all items for the setting are purchased by himself.” IH6 Section 3

*In the last two days we needed some Qing Dynasty costumes. The dresser reported the budget to the crew two days before starting shooting. It was RMB 6,000 a day but she could get a price of RMB 9,000 for two days. With doubts about the price, I went to the clothing market for any investigation with the financial manager, and found that the clothes satisfying our demands only required a rental of RMB 900 to RMB 1,500 per day, based on their qualities. **OB3 Costume***

Three departments mainly involve the equipment rental: production unit, lighting unit, recording unit, and vehicles for various departments. The forms of rental are divided into several types. The rental forms can be divided into daily rental, weekly rental, and monthly rental, etc., in terms of time and can be divided into single-piece rental and multi-package rental. The small-budget film shooting is mostly packaged and rented according to the planned period. Among the rented equipment, the equipment of the production unit is the most complicated. The camera used in the small-budget films put on in the cinema is “ALEXA” or “ALEXA mini”. “5D2” can be used for producing the film only broadcasted on the network. The price of the former model times that of the latter model. The most important thing about the camera is the lens. The ALEXA camera is usually equipped with a UP lens and the price of the substitute CP lens is slightly lower, while the price of the LEICA lens will be higher. Accessories such as tripods, monitors, etc. are equipped with the above lens. In addition, there is a crew member following the equipment. Other accessories are rocker arm, track, Steadicam, aerial photography aircraft, etc. There is usually a lower package price for camera, rocker arm and track, and only one operator is responsible for all packaged accessories. Aerial cameras can be divided into large aerial photography aircraft and small aerial photography aircraft based on the shooting situation. The size and clarity of the scenes shot by them are completely different, and the prices of them are naturally very different. The aerial photography aircraft are usually equipped with two operators. All photographic equipment prices are generally calculated on a daily basis. All items including lighting equipment are packaged and rented together. If the production duration lasts for less than 7 days, the total rental expense is calculated on a daily basis; if the duration lasts for more than 7

days and less than one month, then the rental expenses are certain. It is impossible to complete the production within seven days. Recording equipment is usually accompanied by the crew of the recording unit. The price is also calculated based on the equipment and the crew together, usually a recording engineer and two recording assistants. The vehicles needed in the film crew usually involve power-generating cars, buses, commercial vehicles, small trucks, and the price of vehicles are all calculated with the drivers. The most used brands for commercial vehicles are Ruifeng and Jinbei, and the small trucks are used to install various equipment, clothing and props, etc. This series of equipment and vehicles for small-budget films are almost all rented. In the rental process, it is difficult to have a uniform market price standard. The price of the same equipment rented to different people varies, and there may be a multiple of the difference in price. The experience, status and social connections of the producer in the industry influence the rental expense. If a layman or a newcomer engages in related management work, the cost of investing in this area will increase a lot due to their lack of experience and social connections. By virtue of the observation of the six cases and the comparison of the prices of the main rental equipment, the lowest prices of all main equipment are sorted out (Table 4.3). If calculated according to the 20-day shooting cycle, the basic equipment rental expenses will be calculated according to the lowest price. Among them, the expenses of renting Ruifeng, Jinbei and mini-trucks are calculated based on two vehicles, and the basic necessary equipment in the photographic equipment only includes packaged equipment with the total price being 205,800 RMB. The application of Steadicam or aerial photography aircraft will increase the total expense. If a layman or a newcomer is in charge of the production management, the expenses of this series of equipment cannot be estimated, and may be over 400,000 RMB. In addition, the management party should also rationalize the rental management of these equipment and vehicles according to the needs of the shooting and the production cycle so as to minimize the unnecessary expenditure.

“Problems may also arise from rational use of equipment and vehicle. For example, the vehicles are booked for 15 days but in fact, only in 7 to 8 days they are used. This is also the case with auxiliary equipment. Each day they are placed in the crew, we pay for it.” IF6 Section 1

Table 4.3 The Minimum Price List for Major Rental Equipment

Department	Description	Expense	Remarks
The production unit	5D2	300/day	-
	ALEXA	2000/day	including the costs of monitors, UP lens, 1 operator
	ALEXAmini	3000/day	including the costs of monitors, UP lens, 1 operator
	large rocker arm	500/day	
	small rocker arm	150/day	
	track	300/day	
	Steadicam	500/day	including the cost of 1 operator
	large aerial photography	8000/day	
	large aerial photography	2000/day	
the lighting unit	a whole set of lightings	25000/month	-
the recording unit	a whole set of recorders	2500/day	three persons
vehicles	power-generating cars	400/day	including the costs of 1 driver and
	buses	800/day	including the cost of
	commercial vehicle (Ruifeng)	280/day	including the cost of 1 driver
	commercial vehicle (Jinbei)	240/day	including the cost of 1 driver
	small truck	350/day	including the cost of

Source: from the production units in six small-budget film cases in this study

The food and accommodations expenses account for a large proportion of the total cost of the film crew. Local consumption levels of different shooting venues also have different degrees of disparity. The film crew should try to use their own resources to seek sponsorship, and try to reduce or exempt the food and living expenses as much as possible. For example, the film crew can provide the hotel with naming right or use the hotel as production venue to make product placement for advertising the hotel. In addition, the life producers should try to seek food and accommodations themselves instead of depending on the intermediary to avoid the risk of increased expenses. The most noteworthy part of the living expenses is the vehicle oil expense. The situation of drivers stealing oil exists in every film crew more or less, which has become the unspoken rule of the industry. Many experienced managers have already known about this but have no direct evidence to blame the drivers. Therefore, as long as the drivers restrain themselves, most of the production directors generally do not easily disclose them. The driver's salary in the film crew is usually 80 to 100 RMB per day; and that of the bus driver is generally 150 RMB, and the power-generating cars driver's salary ranges generally from 150 to 200 RMB. Their income is not high, so many of them rely on other means to supplement their income. If calculated according to a 20-day production period, the oil expense can amount up to 4,000 RMB, thus increasing the pressure on the funds of the film crew. However, the oil expense of a car can be controlled within 1000 RMB, with an average of 50 RMB per day. In this case, the production director will not interfere too much. There are still many unpredictable costs in life, such as the cost of public relations and film crew dinners, the cost of purchasing insurance, the medical expenses for sickness and injury, etc. These are unpredictable costs but exist objectively to a certain degree.

*“Money may also be saved in food, accommodation and transportation with local supports in the form of discounts offered by hotels or preferences from local government, or consuming less oil.” **IB6 Section 2***

“As the fleet manager, I'm responsible for vehicle arrangement. The drivers may bribe me and in return, I have to pay them back. They make profits by selling oil. For example, with my permission, he gets his car refueled at 50 points to prepare for movement between scenes tomorrow. A single trip is about 100km, and a round trip

200km. Every 100km consumes 10 points, and in total, 20 points are consumed. The rest is sold by them.” “Generally a B-movie requires 20 cars. According to my estimate, a driver may make RMB 6,000 with each car in a month by such an operation. It adds up to RMB 100,000 in case of 20 cars.” “Being a producer for such a long time, I can find it out easily by having a clear understanding on the car’s fuel consumption of 100km based on its type. How could you consume 50 points of oil after a ride of 200km. It’s impossible. Then the problem is exposed. A Rookie who knows little about the car may pay as the driver claims. He just thinks it is probably the time to refuel when informed the mileage of 200km. But I won’t allow them to do this. “For the first time, the driver receives a warning, and for the second time, he is fired. In another case, we directly transfer the case to the fleet leader and leave the problem to him.” **ID5 Sections 4, 5, 7 and 8**

Once I worked for a play, in which, the budget for life was exceeded. That's a very small chance. Take *My War* as an example. Many famous actors, such as Zhang Ziyi and Li Xiaolu joined the crew half way. We had to pay their living expenses every month, which were not included in the budget. We also had to make special meals for them, including coffee and fruit. **ID5 Section 12**

The budget allocated to per capita was RMB 100 to RMB 120 each day, covering food and accommodation. But, in specific process, accommodation is separated out. As a team, I can’t arrange them into terrible hotels. A general commercial hotel charges RMB 120 per room, which is quite affordable. If two persons share a room, the budget reduces to RMB 60 per capita, and the rest is for food. **IG5 Section 3**

The prop crew leader often came to me with invoices for reimbursement of the fuel expenses of vehicles. I felt some wrong, so reported to the producer. The producer responded that we should take the overall situation into consideration, and not care too much about the trifles. **OB3 Vehicles the prop crew**

In general, the main costs of small-budget films in film production are roughly divided into three categories according to the control attributes (Figure 4.7). Among them, actors and scene producers only consider whether this price is acceptable or not and it is difficult for them to control the real value of the selected party. The real value refers to the price actually obtained by the selected party or the actual market value.

The producer can control the costs invested in personnel, costumes, make-up, props and scenes, equipment rental, vehicle rental, food and accommodation, vehicle refueling, public relations and dinners within a certain range and estimate their prices within certain limits; for example, the costs of insurance and medical care are more specific, which can be fully controlled by the producer and every expenditure can be clearly grasped.

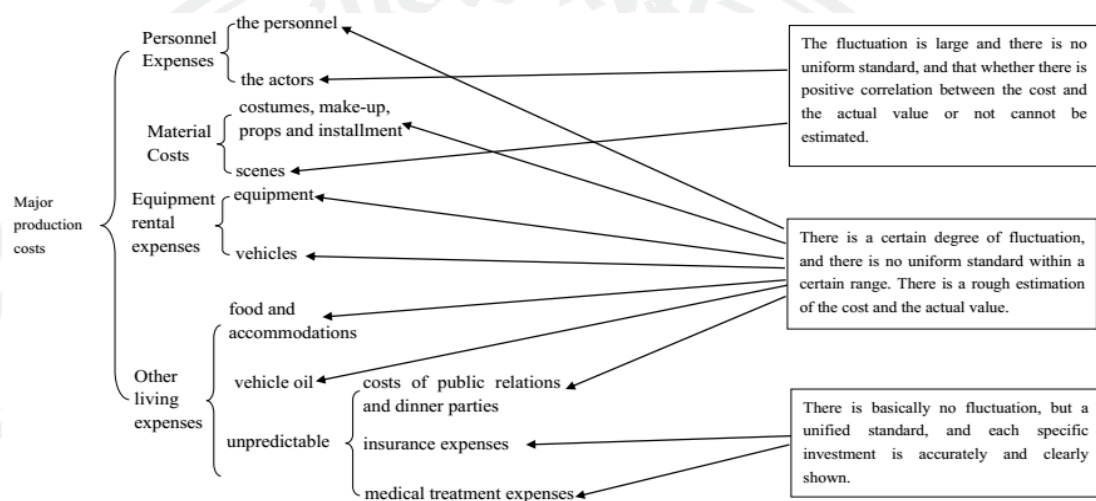


Figure 4.7 The Attributes of Cost Control in Small-budget Film Production

Source: The above figure is drawn from the discovery of the author

4.4 Actor

From a macroscopic perspective, the most intuitive expression of a film in front of the audience is the performance of the actors. The actors rely on their own performance style, appearance, personality, artistic creativity, etc. to attract and touch the audience. In other words, the audience chooses a film mostly because of their favorite actors first, and then directors and screenwriters and rare people go to a cinema because of certain staff. Those who can attract the audience into the cinema are known as “box office actors”, while those who can attract the audience to watch films on the Internet are called as “flow actors”. Therefore, in many cases, more than 50% of the total investment in a film was pocketed by the actors. Specifically, in this

study, the issues of actors in the process of producing and managing the small-budget films have a serious impact on the time, quality and cost of production, and the management is quite difficult for the producers. There are several reasons: (1) the remuneration in small-budget films can not be too high for the movie actors, so many actors always hold that “I am here for low-cost”; (2) When the films start to be shot, the staff who disobey the management can be replaced, but if the actor were replaced, all the previous shots have to be retaken. Actually, it is less likely to change the actors at the end of shooting; (3) Small-budget film crews are mostly less competitive and less well-known production management teams, so some actors who are somewhat qualified or self-righteous are not worried about their future development or re-cooperation. Therefore, the management method and attitude of the producer toward the actors are completely different from those toward the staff. The actors are divided into the leads (leading roles, supporting roles) and non-main actors (the contributing, figurant). The above-mentioned issues in this study are related to the leads (leading roles, supporting roles), and non-main actors are not able to meet the above conditions macroscopically in specific production processes. Therefore, the objects in this study are the leads (leading roles, supporting roles).

“The biggest problem in a Chinese film is that about 60-70% of the funds are spent on actors/actress. What can we do with the remaining 30%?” IA2 Section 2

“Actually, one of the most prone over-expenditure problems in filming is the cost of actors/actresses. It happens easily. According to the development of Chinese film, 40% to 60% of the total investment of a film flows into the actor/actress’s pocket. At present, Chinese actors/actresses ask too high a price, which may also be affected by many unpredictable factors. IG5 Section 1

Seven veterans among those participating in the in-depth interview of this study have ranked the three-dimensional controlling factors (time, quality and cost) of project and the actor factor according to their respective importance, among which six seniors have made the importance ranking accurate to the percentage (Table 4.4). The rankings show that six seniors agree that actors should be ranked second in terms of the importance, while one veteran believes that actors should be ranked third, and the average percentage of importance is 26.17% (with two decimal points kept).

Table 4.4 Statistics on the Importance of the Three Elements of Project Management and Actors

Interviewee	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Time	2	4	4	3	4	3	4
		10%	10%	20%	15%	20%	10%
Quality	4	1	3	1	3	4	1
		50%	20%	35%	23%	15%	40%
Cost	1	3	1	4	1	1	3
		15%	50%	15%	35%	40%	20%
Actor	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
		25%	20%	30%	27%	25%	30%

Source: In-depth interview

During the preparation of the crew, the director group select actors who suit the characters in the script through various channels. When the crew contact the actors with the intention to play the roles, the two parties will come down to repeated price negotiations. Usually, the actor will first give a quotation, and the producer will then abate a price based on the quotation and information of the other party. Thereby a negotiation game between the two parties is launched. In this process, both parties must inquire about each other's information, so that they can know each other in order to gain an advantage in the negotiation game. Providing the actor quotes 100,000 RMB and the crew abates a price of 20,000 RMB (Figure 4.8). If both parties feel outrageous toward the price and will not give in, or both parties are waiting for the other party to give in first and will hold their tongues, then in the end, no one will give in, then the producers have to change the actors and the actors have to give up the opportunity to participate. That one party makes a concession means this party consents to meet the other party's request. In most cases, both parties make their own concessions on a certain level, and the proportion of their respective concessions is the main game process between the two parties. In the process of the game, it is crucial to master the other party's information. The actors will understand the specific

strength of the other party, including the investment situation of the other party, the cast, the strength of the director, the screenwriter and the producer, etc. Competitive creators in chief will be greatly helpful for the actor's own career, and their requirements of remuneration may not be so high. The investment amount is also a measure of the actor's quotation, and all the crews declare that their own budget is small to all the cast members; the actor will verify that if the other party has alternative actors, and the alternative actors are back-up if the deal with the preferred actors fail. Alternative actors will affect the quotation and negotiation of the preferred actor. The preferred actors will also grasp the specific strength, acting skill, appearance, origin, influence of the alternative actors, and their conformity with the characters in the script, etc., and assess the overall gap between them. The size of the gap affects the quotation and negotiation of the actor; the nearer the shooting time is, the more favorable the quotation and negotiation situation for the actor is, because the cost and risk of changing the plan will be greater when the shooting time gets nearer. The crews need to understand the acting experience of the actors firstly. The remuneration of actors with more works are usually high; that whether the actors have cooperated with well-known actors, directors, screenwriters, producers, etc. is also a standard to pre-estimate the actors' worth; the actors' recent schedule plays the most important role. If there are multiple crews currently in contact with the actor, then the actor will have multiple choices, and the producer will be in a passive situation during the negotiation. If not, the producer will become proactive in the negotiation process, because most actors will not easily give up shooting and let their schedule be vacant; the origin of the actor mainly refers to whether he or she graduated from a specialized institution. The level of the institution is very important for new entrants or unknown actors and will greatly affect the psychological pricing of the actor by the producers. Currently, the four specialized performance institutions with the highest level and the greatest influence in China are the Central Academy of Drama, Beijing Film Academy, Shanghai Theatre Academy, and the PLA Art Academy. As a result, some actors will falsely report their graduate institutions in the process of negotiation. The producers and actors understand each other through the Internet and the in-group source. Therefore, if the producers are not deeply involved, the channels for obtaining the other party's information will be limited, which will affect the negotiation results.

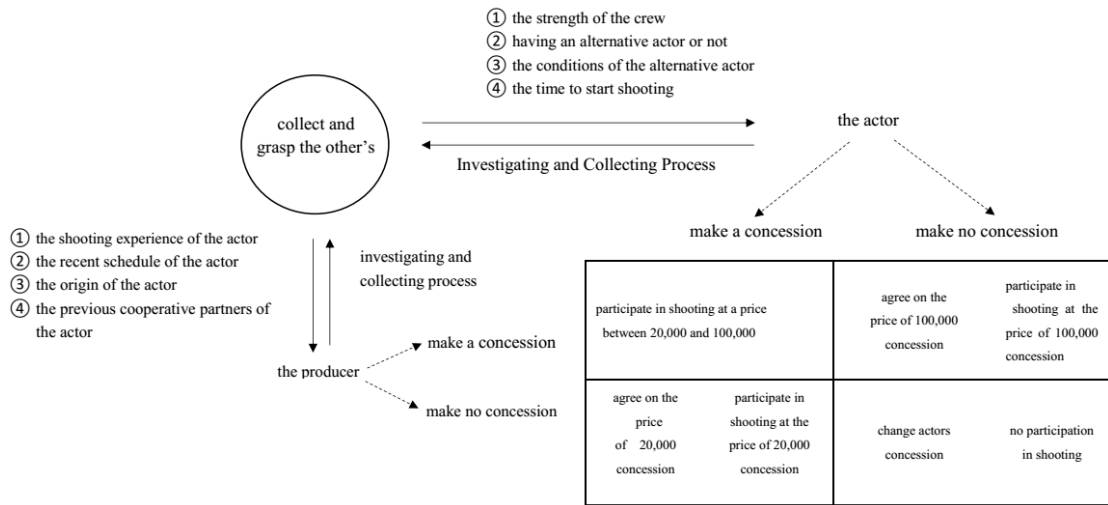


Figure 4.8 The Game Matrix Diagram of the Producer and the Actor Negotiating on Price

Source: Author's analysis

In the production and filming of small-budget film, the discipline problems of actors are troublesome for the management team, such as drinking, playing cards, being late for filming, staying out all night, and going out to act in other play arbitrarily. Especially, the above-mentioned situations of the young actors are more obvious. The senior actors are mainly drinking and playing cards. Most big crews are more rigorous in discipline management, while the problems are very common in small-budget film crews. The reasons are various: the number of production management teams of small-budget film is limited, and some personnel even have dual responsibilities in two departments, while there are multiple managers in one department in the big crews. The actors are not always at the scene. When the actors have no shooting, they should be in the place of residence. Due to that there are few personnel in the management party, it is less likely for them to frequently travel to and from between the scene and the residence place, which gives the actors space for lots of activities. The casting director is responsible for the actors, and the production director will also participate in the management of the actor to a certain extent. However, the production director and casting director are inseparable from the

shooting scene. In the big film crews, there are one or two assistants responsible for the two positions of the production director and the casting director, and there are some filmmakers. In the crews, the income and status gap of the actors and staff are very huge, and the management party of the small-budget film crew is mostly composed of laymen or newcomers. They are quite unconfident in the management of the actors and many people are instead contained by the actors. Thus, they usually adopt appeasement, compromise and accommodation in managing actors. For ordinary managers, the producer party will firstly replace the management personnel rather than the actor if things get worse even though there is nothing wrong with the employee, because the producers only consider the gains and losses of the interests instead of the right and wrong. Many young actors are less self-disciplined. The students who choose to study performance usually have such commonalities: first, their family conditions are relatively superior; moreover, some have bad results in school, and some are mischievous; third, some are self-sufficiency and are fond of the limelight. Based on such characteristics, they will inevitably be arrogant in the face of management personnel with little experience and insufficient strength.

The actor performed unsatisfactorily that the director asked me to talk with him. However, on the second day, I was blamed for the reasons that I had been too strict. The producer asked me to apologize but I rejected. **OA4 Casting director and production manager**

“This is the problem of an actor/actress’s morality. Poser or drinking in the evening would never happen on professional actors, who shall also have his morality in such an identity. Then, what’s an actor/actress’s morality, for example, you ask him to be present at 10 o'clock, he arrives at 11 o'clock, that’s a problem. Generally, actors with professionalism and morality do not have such a problem. It is often a case on young guys who may possible play the whole night that they can't get up the next day, or they just forget the schedule.” **IA12 Section 1**

“As to me, morality is the most important element to an actor/actress despite of his performing capacity.” **IB13 Section 2**

“Personality is also a problem in filming, which is related to working attitude, for example, coming late often.” **ID12 Section 7**

“Actors may come late. This’s not rare. It affects the whole progress, wastes time and money as everyone has to wait.” IE12 Section 2

The actors’ putting on air behaviors are mainly manifested as requiring the crew to provide special treatment for them in shooting and life, for example, requiring the crew to provide them with better meals, a designated and dedicated vehicle, better accommodations, and staff to serve themselves at all times. In short, the posers among actors want to be different from and superior to other people everywhere. What’s more serious is that the posers even require modifying the script, directing others’ performances and even directors’ creation, etc. in addition to disobeying the management by the crew. These phenomena are common in the crews and are more common in small-budget film crews. The root causes are the impetuosity, the comparing with the higher, the face-assertion, and the self-righteousness in the inner heart. They think that they have superiority in economic conditions, social background and appearance, and thus are eager to obtain much more respect. These behaviors of non-focusing on the overall situation, being regardless of other people’s feelings, trampling on the dignity of others and increasing the burden of the crews just for satisfying their own vanity are resulted from selfishness and bad morality. Actors with such psychology or behaviors are usually ones with less education and low professional capability. Highly educational or capable artists seldom put on air. But it is undeniable that there are such posers in almost all the film crews.

“An actor/actress who put on air would be resisted by all crews in the country.” IB10 Section 6

“Before gaining any fame, you shall integrate yourself into the crew. We move from crew to crew every day. Public praise is very important.” “So, in the crew, you have to keep a good relationship with others, and then you may have a chance to be recommended to another crew.” IA10 Sections 7 and 9

“But now some younger actors/actresses have held them high in the sky, with assistants and strict requirements on hotel and transportation. They even sometime put forward unreasonable demands, because they believe that those are elements to support them, to help them grow up. That’s not the case.” IC12 Section 1

“Some actors/actresses may put on air on the site, what a pity, while some would cooperate with the producer actively and never come late.” ID11 Section 11

“An actor/actress is important to each play. His/her professionalism or conducts matter a lot. Some actors/actresses are quite annoying. They may hold themselves high before becoming a super star, which may upset some workers.” **IE10 Section 1**

“It pains me to say that some actors are arrogant despite of his little fame. That’s common in China, especially those who rank at the B, C or even D lines or some young actors built by his fans with defective acting. Many experienced and aged actors at the A line are more amicable and gentle.” *“Once in the public, Andy Lau and Jackie Chan commented some young actors as ‘without professional ethnics’. It is relevant to an actor’s self accomplishments.”* **IG12 Section 1**

“Once an actor's broker told me directly that his actor requires at least a dedicated Buick car of a certain model or four-star suite. Some actors/actresses even come with two or four assistants. Moreover, they follow an eight-hour working system, starting from entering the makeup room, and working at about 10 or 11 o'clock. You may consult with the crew to control your time, rather than inclusion of those harsh requirements as contractual clauses. What I mean by obedience is that he could communicate with the film department and obey the management system. It never makes sense that I make some unreasonable demands and require actors’ agreement. We are equal. We may communicate to solve the problems. Of course, an actor/actress may have a taste requirement. I'm a northerner who is not used to Southern cuisine. Can you give me some special care? I think this is completely within our capacity. It is not an unreasonable requirement but the normal requirement of everyone. But in a B-movie crew, it is very difficult for the production department to satisfy your unreasonable demands beyond their capacity. That’s all.” **IG13 Section 2**

“Last time, we invited a C-line actor of Heroes of the Marshes through recommendation from the director, which is quite famous and adaptable to our character. But knowing little about him (as the production manager, I was supposed to learn more about him), we found him defective in personalities as once he arrived, he proposed to the director to change the plot or dialogue. I sensed something wrong and talked to the director if he could suppress him on hearing the actor saying that “we may design this action in this way.” The director said no problem because they

were classmates and brothers in the university and both in their forties. However, I found remarkable changes of the script one day before starting shooting. The director said he had no choice but to follow his pace, otherwise, the actor rejected to act, and he had no proper candidate to replace him. On the next day, with the coordination table generated, he was arranged for the first play. We had to replace him at a sacrifice of RMB 20,000 as the deposit which was not refunded, because he did have interfered with our work. We found another actor from Beijing, who arrived in the noon. The substitution has caused significant influence. Many actors may have some problems in personalities on the site. Regardless of your level, none is perfect despite of comments online.” **IHI2 Section 3**

*In a play for gambling, the director was discussing with the photographers for deployment of telecameras. The actor put forward his suggestion on the site directly and embarrassed the director a lot. It is also a general case that the whole crew waited for him. He may also reject cooperation in case of repeated taking for the same shot. **OB4 Actor and Director***

For the actors, the performance level is the most important and critical issue among all the issues, because what the film finally present to the audience is the performance of the actors on the screen. This issue needs to be analyzed from two levels: one is the actor’s own advantage to the character; the other is the actor’s acting skill. The advantages of actors can be divided into two levels: (1) the actor conforms to the character in the play in terms of his or her own image, temperament, character, style, every movement, etc., sometimes the former is even more interesting, and it can be said that the actor is exactly the character; (2) The actor interprets a character that is completely different from the pre-conceived one thanks to his or her unique personality and style, which instead amazes everyone and makes the character become more impressive and interesting. The acting skill depends on the talent of the actor, the study situation in the special institution, the endeavors, the character and hobbies and so on. A director or a producer needs to take these two aspects into consideration when selecting roles, but in fact, their own advantages often play greater roles than the advantages of their acting skills in addition to the factor of popularity. The reasons are as following. First of all, the purpose of most audience watching films is to relax and watch the story as well as the fate of the characters. A

small number of audience watch the movie mainly to judge the artistic level of the film. Moreover, it does not mean that the actors who have their own advantages have no acting skills. Professional actors always possess a certain degree of acting skill. It can be understood in this way: if 100 points are used to judge the acting skill, the acting skill with 60 points can be qualified, then there will be a certain difference between the acting skill with 60 points and the acting skill with 90 points, but this is not important, and the most important is still their own advantages. At university, author performance in the class has not been very well. The class leader Li has always ranked the top of performance among the boys in the class. In the final graduation drama performance, The author assigned to play the same character with him. In the drama “Monkey Folk”, The researcher and Li have played the character of Kang Gonghou which is a tall, hale and hearty and rude officer. The image of the character is almost exactly in line with researcher conditions, but totally different from Li’s own conditions. In the end, each of author and Li had two performances. Actually, the audience gave author more applause for the performance, but reacted very flat to his performance. In fact, his acting skills were much better than researcher. Therefore, the acting skill is the foundation for this film and the key is the actor’s own advantages. However, from the perspective of the development of actors, the advantage of acting skill is the key, because the actor’s own advantage is only for the current film, whose happening possibility is small, and the advantage of acting skill is the embodiment of the actors’ ability which lasts longer and is stable. Small-budget film crews do not take into account the factors of actors’ popularity. The key is to tell the story well. To some extent, it will be easier to choose the actors who can best perform the character than producing blockbusters. And the key lies in the insight of the director or the producer in selecting the actors.

“Whatever I shot is high quality. But if the actor is poor in performance that he fails to present the scenarist’s intention, it would be meaningless.” ID10 Section 5

“Another problem is performing skills. Some actors may be found of defective in performance after we start shooting for days. We have to find someone as his replacement, and restart again.” ID12 Section 3

“Decided internally, he can’t act truly, which affected our work. A shot may be negated several times until we all compromise.” IH12 Section 2

“An actor’s acting skills decide if he could bring us into the film, and improve the film’s quality.” ID3 Section 4

“An actor’s performance helps a lot to the better quality of a film.” IE4 Section 1

In shooting, the supporting male actor was generally recognized as the one with the most defective performance. His performance was negated times during shooting. But as a matter of fact, his personal conditions comply with the character the most, and thanks to a special appearance, many audiences were attracted by him through my investigation of friends who have watched the film. OA4 Actor

The leading character was prepared for another actor according to plan. But both sides failed to reach a consensus on price. As a result, the chance was given to me. At the beginning, I was underestimated on the basis of my general acting skills, and the significant gap between my conditions and the character in the script. Only the director trusted me. Without thinking too much, I played the role according to my understanding, completely turned it over, and changed its style. Even professional judges positively commended my performance. OF4 Actor

When mentioning the entertainment industry, most common people are likely to use two words to describe it: “hidden rules” and “chaos”. The broad meaning here refers to the entire industry, involving every department of the crew, as well as a variety of implicit behaviors and transactions. The narrow meaning here mainly refers to the relation between two sexes in the crew. Through the practice and observation of the six cases in this study, the relation between actors and actresses exists to a certain extent, and there are two kinds of occurrences: one is that the actors or actresses have intimate association with some management personnel in the crew in order to achieve the purpose of shooting; the other is that in the filming process, the actors keep short-term romantic interaction with other actors or staff of the crew out of loneliness and fun psychology, thus, the relationship is over as soon as the film shooting film is completed. In both cases, the former is more applicable to the definition of “hidden rules” and the latter is more applicable to the definition of “chaos”. In terms of hidden rules, actors who have a relationship with the high ranking of the crew are more likely to be recommended to play the main roles. The high ranking usually refer to the investor, the producer, the director, etc., and the actors who are related to the

production director and the casting director can be recommended as guest actors at least and some with better condition are possible to play supporting roles with recommendation. Even some other staff members keeping good connections in the crew can also recommend their own people to be guest actors. An ordinary film production management personnel of a crew wants to use his personal connections in the crew to harass the figurant in the crew and hope that the other party will submit to himself (Figure 4.9). That is to say, according to the status in the crew, the level of personnel implementing the hidden rules is also different. In terms of proportion, minor high-ranking personnel in the crew implement the hidden rule, while most casting directors, production directors and the following staff implement the hidden rule. Because the performance level of the guest actors has little effect on the quality of the whole film, and it is easy to recommend them because the high ranking care less about the selection of actors. The supporting roles are likely to cause the attention of the high ranking of the crew and it is difficult to make successful recommendation. The protagonist will not be recommended by the staff at this level. This phenomenon is actually a naked exchange of rights and interests. As far as chaos is concerned, there is still a certain law in the choice of the other side. For the actor, the targets may be female employees of the costume and makeup crew in addition to the actresses, because the costumer and makeup crew are closely serving the actors in the work. For the actress, their targets may be casting directors, production directors and higher ranking personnel in addition to the actors. To put it simply, the main attraction for the actor is the appearance of the other side, while the main attraction for the actress is the appearance and status of the other side. In fact, the abnormal relationship between two sexes exists in many environments, but is particularly prominent in the entertainment business or the actors group, and is most easily talked about by the common people. The general reasons are as follows: (1) People are curious about the image of the actors in life after the audience engender awe, sympathy, hatred, etc. when watching the characters shaped by the actors in the film. Therefore, the audience are more concerned about the actors' lives and the actors' privacy turn into the topics for people to chat about; (2) most actors have a relatively advantageous image and temperament in life, a high probability of being admired by the opposite sex, and are in a lot of temptations in life. Therefore, the probability of falling into

temptation is also too large; (3) in the process of receiving professional performance training, actors' open-mindedness toward the relation between men and women is more greater than that of ordinary people, and this kind of open-mindedness can be encouraged and appreciated in the professional environment under the support of artistic ideals or sacred artistic thoughts; (4) due to the lack of uprightness in the industry and the serious ethos of advocating money worship, most of the actors put becoming popular and making money in the first place, while few actors revere toward the sacred art. In the crew, they put benefits in the first place and indulge themselves. Actors in small-budget films are rarely well-known, so they do not have too much scruple about their behavior.

“Someone may suspect that an actress is selected because the director is fond of her. At present, such a case is of little chance. But in this changing world, everything is possible. The casting director fails to make good on his promise after sexual relationship with the actress because of the director. The case may be known to the whole world.” IF11 Section 2

“Hidden rules are also a problem, which severely affect the work of other sectors in the screw. We may be influenced if the actress has any sexual relationship with the director or the procedure. “Actors may also bring in problems on this regard if they often flirt with the costume or makeup girls in the crew.” IH12 Section 2

Once in a film, the actor and the actress lived together in the later stage. The production manager and I talked to them repeatedly, and they agreed in words but never act. Their relationship ended upon the filming was finished. OA4 Actor

With little acting skill or professional quality in performance, the actor dated with the senior management of the crew and had affairs with many members, which finally won her a major role. OC4 Actor

One day morning, a staff of the production department saw a major actress leaving the room of an investor with her hair in chaos. The actress requested the staff to keep it a secret. Days later, the investor harassed another young actress through message. She showed me the content and asked for my suggestion. OE4 Actor and Investor



The man: I miss you very much, Qianqian, could you give me some warmth?

The woman: I am chatting with you.

The man: I know that. You know both you and me have the natural instincts of man. What I need is that kind of warmth.

The man: Qianqian, why do you keep silence?

The man: I know you won't care about me anymore.

The man: What are you doing, Qianqian?

The man: That's fine. Qianqian, you know I have the natural instincts of man. I am in need of you.

The man: Do you feel my state of mind?

The woman: Sorry, I've got married.

The man: I know your husband is good. Do you have sympathy for me?

The man: Are you averse to my words, Qianqian?

The woman: I do not know how to reply to you.

The man: Qianqian, we both human with sentiments. You are so considerate. You can tell out your aspirations directly.

Figure 4.9 The WeChat Screen Capture of One Producer of a Crew Harassing an Actress

Source: The moments of Zhu, the head of the gang, crew A

Through the observation and study of the six cases in this study, it is found that actors have five types of problems in the filming process of small-budget films: electing actors and negotiating on the remuneration for the actor; discipline issue; putting on air issue; performance issue and men and women relation issue. Each issue is closely linked to the three-dimensional controlling factors of the project management (Table 4.5).

Table 4.5 The Relationship between the Problems Caused by Actors and the Three Factors of Project

The problems caused by actors	Three controlling factors	Negative influence
Electing actors and negotiating on the remuneration for the actor	Time	That the actors cannot be determined as soon as possible will have an impact on the preparatory time and start-up time, and even affect the entire shooting cycle. Moreover, the time process of the original plan will be affected and will be advanced or delayed.
	Quality	That the actors cannot be determined as soon as possible will influence the work of other departments, especially the work of the costume department. The choice of costume is determined by the individual conditions of the actors. In the end, the details of the costume may be ignored if the actors are determined in a hasty manner, which accordingly affects the quality of the frames. Moreover, insufficient preparatory time of the actors will also affect the quality of the performance.

The problems caused by actors	Three controlling factors	Negative influence
	Cost	It does not mean that an actor paid at a high remuneration can give better performance. Once the actor is found to be unsuitable for the role after the start-up, the loss of cost is inestimable. Therefore, in the process of selecting the actor, a principle: "Choose the right one rather than the expensive one" shall be complied by.
Discipline issue	Time	It is common for an actor to be late for various reasons, which will result in the inability of the entire crew to start work, and eventually lead to an overall timeout.
	Quality	That the actors' mental state and performance are not in place due to problems such as drinking, playing cards, and not returning at night will seriously affect the quality of the film.
	Cost	The waste of time will increase the costs of labor, scenes and equipment. That if the spirit and performance of the actors are not spot on will also increase the costs.
Putting on air issue	Time	It will cost the crew personnel more time to meet the special requirements of the actors, which may also delay the overall progress. If these requirements are not met, the two sides may be deadlocked, and the shooting time of the crew cannot be afforded.

The problems caused by actors	Three controlling factors	Negative influence
Performance issue	Quality	That the actors put forward excessive demands or arbitrarily give directions to the artistic creators will not only affect the work of the relevant departments, but also affects the creation of art professionals, accordingly, the quality of art is unable to meet the expectation of the artistic creators.
	Cost	Meeting some of the actors' unreasonable and special requirements will also increase more expenses, and these costs are not included in the budget.
	Time	If the performance of the actors is not spot on, the number of shooting will be increased, which will accordingly cause the waste of time. Repeated shooting of one shot will result in unpredictable waste of time.
	Quality	The most intuitive consequence of actors' poor performance will affect the artistic quality of the film.
Men and women relation issue	Cost	The actors' poor performance and repeated shooting also need some professionals to give guidance to them in addition to increasing the fixed cost. This is an extra-budgetary cost. It will also affect the final theater box office returns or online viewing.
	Time	The filming time of the crew is short and rapid. It is the most unfortunate and most helpless for the actors to influence the

The problems caused by actors	Three controlling factors	Negative influence
	<p data-bbox="544 680 644 712">Quality</p>	<p data-bbox="751 456 1390 658">shooting progress because of the relationship between men and women. The main performance is being late for shooting and being absent-minded in shooting.</p> <p data-bbox="751 680 1390 1653">Actors have the greatest impact on the film quality due to the relationship between men and women. (1) Completely poor state in performance will make the quality of shots declined; (2) Both the involved man and the woman have poor working state. (3) The gossip may make the crew bubbling with noise and affect the work of each department and the reputation of the crew. (4) In this process, that the following love triangular problem and the jealousy problem cause fights is very common. If the actors are injured, it is unable to continue shooting. (5) If there is a sexual relationship and the purpose of one party is not met, especially the actress, the whole crew will be unable to work regularly and have to face the pressure of public opinion.</p>
	<p data-bbox="544 1675 612 1706">Cost</p>	<p data-bbox="751 1675 1390 1827">The crew has to bear the additional expenses incurred by the direct or indirect problems in the relationship between men and women.</p>

Source: Author's analysis

According to the main content of the actor elements, the relevant information of the majority of the main actors, a total of 36 people, are collected in the practical observation of the six cases (Table 4.6), of which the professional origin refers to the background of the performance specialty learning; the quotation is the offer of the actor. If there is no offer, the actor is directly priced by the crew; the execution price refers to the remuneration finally negotiated by the crew and actor; the disciplinary situation is the actors keeping discipline performance of the in the crew, which is divided into four grades of very well, well, general and poor; the situations of putting on air are divided into three grades of serious, yes, no; the performance levels are divided into four grades of excellent, good, general and poor; the relationship types between two sexes is divided into three cases of romantic relationship behavior, ambiguous relationship, no ambiguous relationship. Among them, the disciplinary situation, the putting on air situation and the performance level are three subjective judgments based on the situation of on-site observation. Other items are objective judgments based on their facts. To protect the privacy of the parties, all actors' names are replaced by 36 numbers from 1 to 36, and all names are sorted in an irregular order.

Table 4.6 Information Table of the Actors in the Case Study

NO	professional Background	quoted price	strike price	keeping discipline	behavior of putting on air	performance level	keep relation with the other sex
1	first-class specialized institution	80000	30000	very well	no	excellent	no
2	non-professional	no	3000	general	no	general	yes
3	general specialized institution	no	5000	well	no	excellent	no

NO	professional Background	quoted price	strike price	keeping discipline	behavior of putting on air	performance level	keep relation with the other sex
4	general specialized institution	no	3000	general	no	general	no
5	general specialized institution	no	2000	well	no	good	no
6	music major	no	2000	poor	no	general	no
7	general specialized institution	no	3000	poor	yes	general	yes
8	general specialized institution	no	5000	well	no	good	no
9	first-class specialized institution	10000	5000	well	no	good	no
10	non-professional	no	3000	poor	no	general	no
11	hosting specialty	120000	20000	general	no	general	Ambiguous relationship
12	troupe training class	30000	20000	general	yes	excellent	no
13	music	50000	20000	poor	serious	good	Ambiguous

NO	professional Background	quoted price	strike price	keeping discipline	behavior of putting on air	performance level	keep relation with the other sex
	major						s relationships
14	general specialized institution	30000	15000	well	no	good	no
15	troupe training class	no	shareholder	general	no	general	no
16	first-class specialized institution	no	shareholder	well	no	good	no
17	television station training class	20000	6000	poor	serious	good	no
18	social performance training class	no	500	well	no	good	no
19	child actor	no	no	well	no	good	no
20	first-class specialized institution	no	10000	well	no	good	no
21	non-professional	no	2000	poor	serious	general	yes
22	first-class	no	2000	well	no	good	no

NO	professional Background	quoted price	strike price	keeping discipline	behavior of putting on air	performance level	keep relation with the other sex
	specialized institution						
23	child actor	no	-100000	general	no	general	no
24	non-professional	no	no	general	yes	general	no
25	first-class specialized institution	no	no	well	no	good	no
26	general training class	no	no	general	yes	good	yes
27	non-professional	no	no	well	no	poor	no
28	general training class	50000	16000	well	no	good	no
29	general specialized institution	no	3000	general	yes	good	no
30	non-professional	no	2000	well	no	general	no
31	non-professional	no	2000	well	no	general	no
32	non-	no	no	poor	serious	general	no

NO	professional Background	quoted price	strike price	keeping discipline	behavior of putting on air	performance level	keep relation with the other sex
	professional						
33	first-class specialized institution	30000	10000	well	no	good	no
34	model	15000	5000	well	no	general	no
35	model	15000	5000	well	no	general	no
36	first-class specialized institution	no	3000	general	no	good	no

Source: Author's analysis

4.5 Discussion

With the exploration into the three factors of project management and the actor factor in the small-budget film, it is found that: (1) the managers of small-budget film projects rarely have the educational background of management, and many of the investors or producers are laymen and rely on his own management experience in other fields to manage the crew, which is consistent with the research of B. Y. Zhou (2006); (2) using project management to effectively control the three factors of the project not only can help to improve the efficiency of small-budget film production, but also help to find and solve specific problems encountered in the production process, which is consistent with the research of Cheng (2014); (3) time, quality, and cost are interlocking and inseparable in the process of small-budget film production. Each problem is not independent but resulted from two or three factors at the same time. Therefore, managers need to balance the various factors to manage the while

process and achieve the purpose of management, which is consistent with the research of Cao (2011).

Ryan (2010) produced the production triangle rate of production management through the three factors of project management, which is different from the four factors found in this study (ie, three factors of project management and the actor factor). There are three reasons: (1) production triangle is under the background of film and television production management, which is a relatively macroscopic category. The uniqueness of small-budget films is not taken into micro-consideration; (2) in 2010, the small-budget film was not really developed, and it began to gradually grow after 2012; (3) Chinese small-budget film production management model and its existing problems are formed under the socialist economic and cultural system with Chinese characteristics.

On the whole, there is no literature on the application of project management into small-budget film production management. There are three reasons accounting for this: (1) the practice and theoretical research of project management is mostly used in major physical fields such as architecture, science and technology, and national defense and is rarely applied into cultural and spiritual products such as film and television art, and small-budget films belong to a subdivision of many types of film and television art; (2) all universities in China that offer film and television art management major classify it into the media study or the art theory rather than the management. The methods of researching and analyzing problems of different fields of expertise are quite different for researchers, while project management belongs to the standard management field; (3) the most critical point is that the concept of the small-budget film just emerges for a short time and it has been developing rapidly in China. It is a newborn thing from the perspective of academic research

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This study discusses the problems and influencing factors in the film management of small-budget film production from the perspective of time, quality and cost in the framework of three-dimensional controlling factors of project management through the cases of six small-budget film crews and explains the chaos in the production management of current small-budget films, as well as the causes and laws of a series of problems. On this basis and combined with the unique attributes and characteristics of small-budget film production, the fourth variable, the actor factor is found and its existing problems and influencing factors are discussed. It is found that the relationship between the actor factor and the three-dimensional controlling factors is closely related and inseparable. According to the data analysis of many aspects of this study, it is equally and even more important and critical to other the three factors. Therefore, it constitutes the fourth dimensional controlling factor in the production management of small-budget film projects.

5.1 Conclusion Summarizes the Whole

The time control over the preparatory period of the small-budget film project is relatively flexible and is mainly in the charge of the director. Producers can have different degrees of impact on capital injection, and the professionalism of producers has a great impact on the judgment of capital injection. The production director plays a particularly important role in the efficient coordination between various departments which controls and promotes the shooting progress. Selecting actors is full of risks and the start-up of shooting is probably affected by the personal factors of the actors. The progress of the preparatory period depends on the comprehensive strength of the team. During this period, the crew members of each department have positive attitude,

are in high spirits and the number of team members is small. The director, producer and actors are the key factors for how to effectively control the time. The time control over the filming period is relatively complicated, and the coordinator plays a greater role in this period. Firstly, the weather variation has artificially uncontrollable characteristics. At this time, the decision-making and judgment of the coordinator are particularly important; the selection and determination of the scenes have a certain degree of uncontrollable factors, and the emerging problems usually have sudden characteristics. It is difficult to control the sudden problems; the artificial time delay is mainly caused by the actors' personal reasons; and it is more difficult for the film crew to control the time when the extras participate in shooting big scenes, and the time loss caused by the sudden problem is also large. The key to this is the management, organization and coordination of the extras by their head. During the filming period, the work fluency of other departments affects the control of time to a certain extent. In contrast, the work of the technical department is more stable. The film crew draws the "critical path map" for the intraday work according to the daily shooting plan, which can help to control the time more efficiently.

The quality control on the production process of small-budget films is divided into the control on the means of artistic expression and the control on management. The control on management is the focus in this study. In terms of quality, management control is mainly concentrated in six aspects: costumes, makeup, props and set-ups, scenes, production and actors. Among them, costumes, makeup, props and set-ups are specifically presented in the frames. Their quality directly affects the sense of reality of the plot and the perfection of the frames. Moreover, the quality of these three aspects is artificially controllable. Although the scenes are also presented in the frame, the evaluation criteria of them are abstract, and sometimes the quality of the scenes is unstable and uncontrolled within manpower. The work of the production department is not directly reflected in the frame, but the quality of the production directly influencing the emotions of each individual and the production conditions of the crew, and indirectly affects the quality of the film. The influence of the actors on the quality of the film is the greatest, because the main body of the film is the performance of the actors. The control over production quality is more about the work attitude and moral quality of the staff. If everyone only thinks about dredging for

money or work negatively, the quality of the film is bound to come down. As for the actors, the control of production quality involves many complicated factors which include the actors' own behavior, the managers' choice and improper implementation. However, the performance of the actors is much important and is the most direct one among the involved factors.

The investors and producers of small-budget films are mostly laymen, which is an important reason for the increase in cost during the production process. The costs of personnel account for the largest proportion of investment. Among them, in terms of the costs of personnel, there are certain fluctuations due to human favors. As for the total costs of the entire staff, the cost fluctuation of personnel at lower strata is less influenced by human favors. However, the overall cost of personnel is relatively fixed, while the cost disparity of the main actors is more huge. Sometimes, the price is not proportional to the quality. Thus, a principle should be grasped in choosing the main actors: "right actors should be chosen rather than expensive ones. The cost of the non-main actors is relatively fixed. In addition, the casting director's taking "kickback" phenomenon which leads to an increase in the cost of the film crew should be prevented in choosing actors,. Most of the costs invested in materials can be estimated, because the damage caused by human factors is very small, and the producers should actively communicate with the parties or departments. Only the cost of the scenes is more abstract and unpredictable. Also, the crossing-border behavior of outreach producers in the scenes should also be prevented to avoid an increase in the cost of the film crew. The equipment rental requires the producer to have a certain personal relationship so as to rent the required equipment at a low price. In addition, a reasonable plan for the rented equipment in the use period should be formulated to avoid unnecessary waste. It needs to be taken into consideration that whether the living costs can be changed with the film crew's own resources firstly. The living costs should be appropriate and reasonable and should not be too economical, but the crossing-border behavior of drivers should be paid more attention to. Generally speaking, there is no need to worry too much about fully controlling the cost. To control the cost to a certain degree, the producers should communicate with the parties more and more to arouse attention of the latter, and the producers must establish certain prestige in the other party's mind. The uncontrolled and abstract

costs are judged and determined according to the experience and the keen social insight of the producer.

In the production management process of small-budget film, it is difficult to managing the main actors, and the problems caused by the actors are inseparable from the three factors of time, quality and cost. The actor factor is not less important than other three factors. The process of the producer and the actor negotiating on the price game is actually a process in which both sides sound out, understand and inquiry about each other secretly. For the actors, the biggest factor determining the price is the shooting experience of the actor, and then the appearance conditions, professional origin, performance level, etc. In the process of the game, most actors will disguise and raise their own conditions to a certain extent. For those actors with limited conditions and vacant schedules, they will not easily refuse the shooting opportunity. In the crew, young actors who violate discipline have a greater impact on the crew than older actors, because senior actors have a sense of grasping the scale. The main reason for the poor management of actors due to that the status, income, influence, and importance of managers in the crew are much lower than those of actors. The behavior of an actor putting on air is a manifestation of self-righteousness and self-interest, and is the embodiment of the comprehensive quality and upbringing of the actor. The performance of the actor is the core issue. The reasons are multi-faceted, such as the professional skills and innate conditions. The performance problem should be the main responsibility of the inviter inviting the actor to participate in the shooting. It is common that actors have an unfair relationship or are promiscuous in sex relationship in the crew. There are such persons in almost all crews and their purpose is to obtain a chance to participate in the shooting or indulge themselves. This is a moral problem. But the harm caused by it is very large, including the harm to the internal management of the crew, the quality of the film, the external reputation of the crew, the industry image and social responsibility. Generally speaking, higher degree of education and higher specialization level of the actors will ensure stronger self-discipline of the actors, less negative effect on all aspects and lower risks of inviting the actors to participate in the shooting.

This study shows that the process of filming and managing small-budget film projects is actually a process in which time, quality, cost, and actors are balanced and

controlled. Therefore, a “four-dimensional controlling factor model for the filming management of Chinese small-budget film projects” is established based on the content of this study (Figure 5.1). (1) the idea of designing the model content: it is found that the four factors are interlocking, interconnected, and inseparable through the studies into the roles played by each of the four dimensions from different perspectives; (2) the idea of designing the model shape; The three factors model of the original project management is mostly triangular or cubic with distinct edges and corners, which reflects the individuality, independence, and firm style of Western thinking. The four-dimensional controlling factor model of this study reflects Chinese modest, round, and flexible thinking. Therefore, the overall shape is a circular arc blade shape.

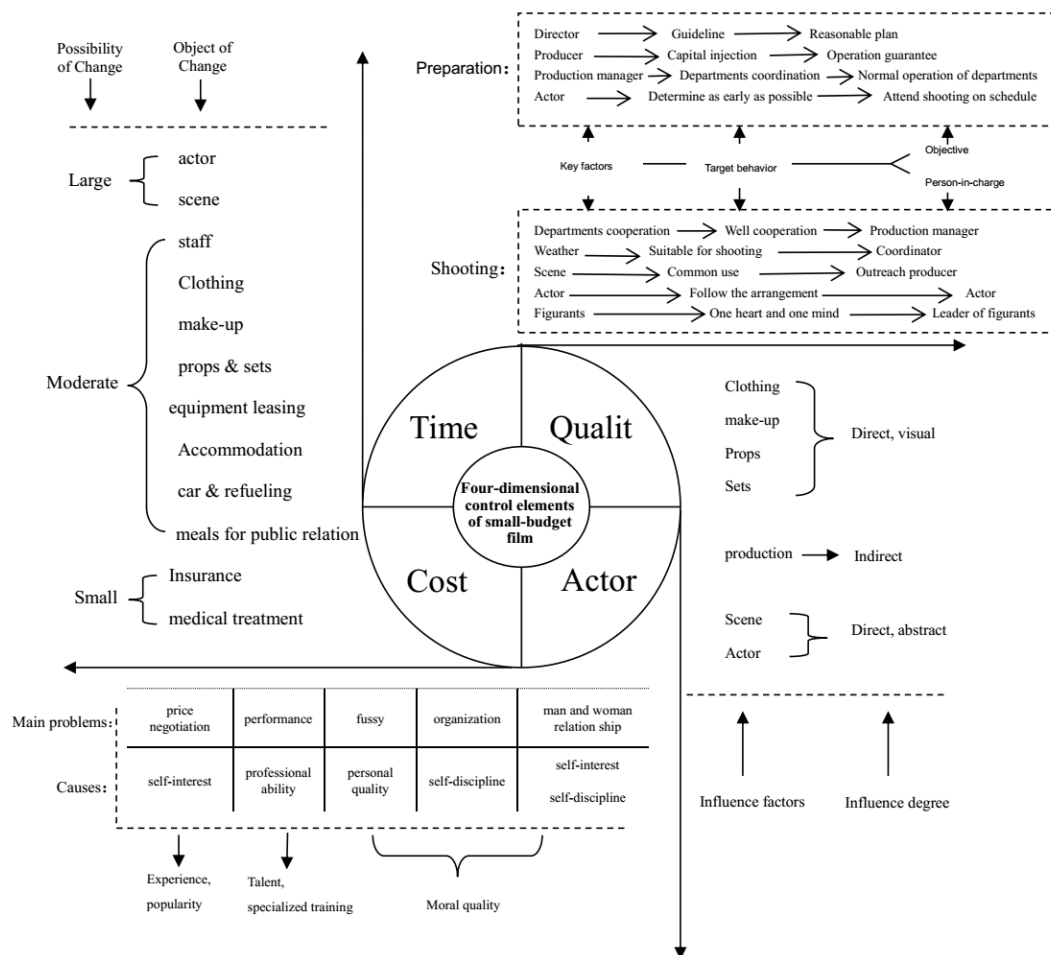


Figure 5.1 Four-dimensional shooting management model of Chinese small-budget film project

Source: Results of researchers

5.2 The Limitations of the Study

The case data collected in this study are reminiscent narrative. Although the data deriving from the personal experience of the author are true and reliable, there is no further analysis on the cause and effect of the incidents.

The veterans interviewed in this study are involved in some sensitive topics and inevitably have some reservations. In particular, there may be no objective judgments on the specific related work issues that the parties are engaged in. Some negative problems may involve the parties themselves, and the other party may avoid making any reply, or just make a reply with non-authentic phenomena.

Since the object of this study “China’s small-budget film” is a newly emerging thing in recent years, there are very few documents on the research of related issues. Therefore, the data applied in this study are mostly two types of data: practice observation and in-depth interview and literature data is rarely applied.

The research questions are supported by multiple data as much as possible in order to greatly increase the reliability and validity of the study and subjective insights of the researcher in the research process still exist inevitably.

5.3 Applicable Objects of the Research

This study provides a theoretical standardization model for the management of production and filming of small-budget film crews in China today, which can help to solve the chaos in management to a certain extent. This study can be the reference for all the film crews, TV drama crews, variety show crews, etc. in the production of film management and can prevent the investors and producers of small-budget films from being deceived or making meaningless investment when making choices in investment and management. This study can also help to restrain and spur on the behavior of actors in the crew to a certain degree.

5.4 The Outlook for Follow-up Research

This study is an exploratory study in which “analytical induction” from cases to theory (Yin, 2002) and micro in-depth investigations into the production of small-budget films are conducted. Future researchers can further investigate and collect statistics through samples, verify the conclusions and models of this study and conduct studies into the small-budget film industry from a macro perspective.

In the classification of films, blockbusters (large-budget films) with opposite meanings to small-budget films are completely different in management and employment. They are characterized by numerous personnel, long cycle, high quality, and large investment, which is in line with large projects in terms with the constitutive factors. It is hoped that more researchers can make studies into the constitutive factors from the perspective of project management.

In the course of this study, the famous Chinese host Cui Yongyuan exposed the tax evasion and yin and yang contract issues in the film and television industry, which caused uproar. Therefore, the Chinese government has conducted a thorough investigation of the financial problems of the crew, and many film and television production organizations have suspended their operations and are staying on the sidelines. In fact, the financial chaos of the film and television crews has always been an open secret, and there is no rare previous research of the predecessors. Thus, it is hoped that researchers will conduct research in this aspect.

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