Impact of Marketing Strategies on Consumer Buying Behaviour with Specific Reference to Movies as a Medium

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Abstract

The research aims to investigate how film promoters' social media activities and other factors influence public decision-making regarding watching films in theatres. Specifically focusing on film audiences in Tamil Nadu, the study evaluates public perceptions and social media engagement. Limited research has explored variables like promotional campaigns, social media engagement, reviews, and decision-making regarding movie-watching. The study surveyed 300 individuals from Tamil Nadu who had watched films and by using SPSS, statistical analysis has been done to compare results and identify significant relationships influencing consumer decisions. The research highlights the importance of promotional campaigns, social media engagement, and reviews in influencing audiences' movie choices. Social media references can enhance audience enjoyment of recommended films, with social awareness also impacting video screening standards. The findings indicate that social networks play a significant role in influencing movie-watching behaviour. Overall, a combination of factors is necessary to encourage audiences to watch movies, and further exploration of strategies is essential to boost theatre attendance.

Keywords: Social media, Reviews, Decision-making, Promotional programs, Entertainment industry

1. Introduction

In contemporary filmmaking, a significant shift towards leveraging social media for promotional purposes has been observed, with filmmakers actively endorsing films to enhance audience comprehension [13]. Existing literature has explored various variables, including promotional programs, social media activities, reviews, and the decision-making process related to movie consumption [25]. Research indicates that potential viewers often seek information about movies through avenues such as magazine previews, online browsing, and recommendations from friends or family before deciding to watch a film [24, 26]. Individuals are more likely to choose to watch a movie in theatres after engaging with the film's official social media page [20].

Additionally, platforms like Facebook and Twitter contribute to audience engagement through conversations and content sharing, ultimately influencing decision-making [14, 8]. The interactive nature of social media fosters increased audience interaction with films, contributing to increased confidence and emotional engagement [23, 16]. Utilizing the use and enjoyment theory, this research explores how audience motivations, social and psychological characteristics, and media usage influence the decision to watch movies [19]. The web blurs the lines between mass media and casual communication, shaping audience perceptions and behaviours [23]. The study focuses on understanding the decision-making processes of film watchers, emphasizing the impact of variables

such as promotional programs, social media activities, and public and professional reviews. This study seeks to assess the role and significance of these variables, drawing from existing literature to analyze the mean differences among them. By delving into the social media practices of film viewers and examining the factors influencing audience decision-making regarding watching films in theatres, the research aims to identify the most influential variables in the decision-making process [19, 29].

2. Literature Review

2.1 Promotional Programs

Promotional programs stand out as a paramount element in the realm of movies, whether undertaken individually or collectively. They serve as a crucial communication tool, directly and indirectly, in disseminating information and persuading audiences to engage with films [1]. Promotional campaigns are meticulously crafted to enhance public awareness of a film [13]. The film trailer is an integral part of these campaigns, recognized for its effectiveness in conveying essential details about the original work. The digital medium is frequently employed to showcase trailers, accompanied by engaging music, as a strategy to promote and display key scenes [18]. In the contemporary digital landscape, the internet and social media platforms play a pivotal role in promoting films, aligning with the surge in information technology [11]. Leveraging social media for film promotion facilitates rapid access to new releases, contributing to a heightened viewership experience [22]. The other way of promoting a campaign is word-of-mouth promotion. Word-of-mouth (WOM) refers to informal, non-commercial communication between consumers regarding their experiences with goods or services, including movies [30]. It is widely perceived as more credible and trustworthy by consumers compared to traditional advertising methods [31]. Two key measures of WOM, volume and valence, exert different influences on consumer behavior. The volume of WOM primarily serves an informative role by enhancing consumer awareness, ultimately leading to increased sales, as greater awareness correlates with higher sales figures [31]. Conversely, the valence of WOM, due to its positive or negative nature, operates more persuasively by influencing consumer attitudes toward the product or service being discussed [31]. Positive WOM tends to cultivate favorable consumer attitudes, while negative WOM can have the opposite effect. Thus, both volume and valence of WOM play significant roles in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviours. Television advertisements for films typically range from 10 to 20 seconds in duration, although longer commercials are also an option, albeit at a higher cost for airplay [28]. These movie ads on TV are typically aired 5 to 10 days before the movie's release date, aiming to generate anticipation and attract audiences [32]. Notably, at least 40% of advertising budgets are allocated to television advertising, with particular emphasis placed on the 2 to 3 days leading up to the film's opening [35]. This strategic allocation of resources reflects the importance of television advertising in promoting film releases and maximizing audience reach during critical pre-release periods. The cumulative impact of promotional programs extends to influencing audience decisions regarding where and how to watch a film, whether online or in traditional cinema settings [17].

H1: Promotional programs like trailers, word-of-mouth recommendation by friends, and television ads notably impact the decision on whether to watch online or in traditional cinema*.*

2.2 Reviews

Film reviews also wield significant influence, aiding audiences in evaluating movies. Through various outlets such as magazines, television programs, and social media, critics play a crucial role in shaping perceptions before and after a film's release [29, 15]. Online reviews emerge as a significant driver for consumer decisions, whether purchasing products or watching movies [7].

H2: Reviews in magazines, television programs, and social media play a significant role in influencing the decision of whether it would be in

purchasing products or choosing to watch movies.

2.3 Social media platforms

Word of mouth serves as a valuable social networking activity, particularly beneficial for independent film enthusiasts and narratives with substantial depth [15]. Additionally, Chu and Choi [6, 9] assert that word of mouth significantly influences public perceptions. Through various film review platforms, consumers make decisions to watch movies online based on the impact and relationships cultivated by word of mouth [4]. The realm of Social Media Platform Activities encompasses key information networks and incorporates the enduring influence of word of mouth, playing a pivotal role in the decision-making process for films [2]. With the pervasive influence of the internet, word of mouth has seamlessly integrated into all social media platforms, including Facebook, where users are prompted to "like" sites and connect with friends, fostering an environment of shared recommendations [20]. Platforms like YouTube extend beyond conventional trailers, providing opportunities to establish channels for the official promotion of specific films [3, 10].

H3: Social media platforms similarly hold substantial influence in shaping the decision to embark on a cinema trip and watch a film

3. Method

Primary data collection was collected by circulating a questionnaire created using Google Forms. A five-level Likert scale is used to design the questionnaire, and the variables were obtained from previous studies with similar variables. The target audience for this research was the people of Tamil Nadu, India especially youngsters, and the data were collected from 300 individuals to understand their perception of this topic and make this study/research successful.

3.1 Conceptual Model

The conceptual model for this study was developed based on the theoretical framework established in previous research: Chakravarty [5] delved into the persuasive impact of online reviews, or word-of-mouth, and film critics' opinions in assessing

upcoming films by filmmakers. Their study revealed that online word of mouth has a more compelling effect on individuals unfamiliar with the film, particularly when it is negative. The influence of word-of-mouth and critical assessments is asymmetric, with a greater impact on occasional moviegoers compared to regular film viewers. The relationship between the internet, social media, and film sales commentary, noting that various social media platforms impact product sales differently [12]. The study found that social media comments' favorability and popularity (volume of comments) significantly influence the reception of published film lists. Additionally, reviews were observed to impact readers more through textual content rather than numerical scores. Youth films' characteristics and promotional strategies based on their attributes. The study identified eight advertising tactics that describe the correlation between the quality of a film and its features, highlighting diverse promotional strategies for youth movies [36]

Weaving [27, 21] in Australia explored interdisciplinary opportunities to understand the "customer journey" and its implications in informing film audience decision-making. The study aimed to uncover a broad spectrum of social and material influences shaping the decision-making process of film audiences as shown in Figure 1.
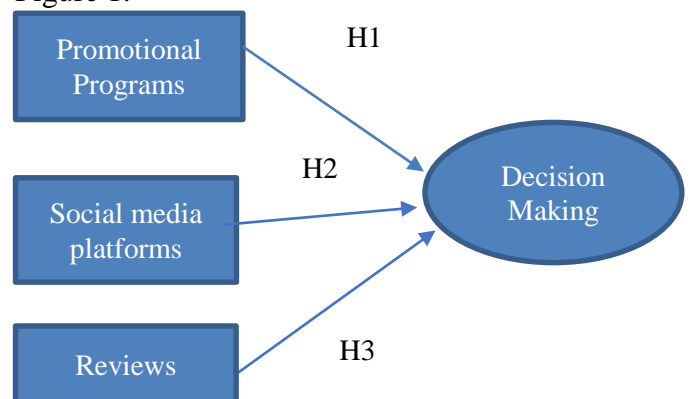

Figure 1 Study Model

4. Results

4.1 Correlation

Age (r = 0.046, p < 0.01) suggests that there is a weak positive association between age and relying

on recommendations when deciding on movies. This means that, as age increases slightly, there is a small tendency to rely more on recommendations. Information sources relied on to decide on movies (e.g., recommendations, trailers, reviews) ($r = 0.539$, $p < 0.01$) suggests a moderate positive association between relying on recommendations and using reviews when deciding on movies. People who rely more on recommendations also tend to use reviews more. Information source used when considering plot, cast, and reviews ($r = 0.242$, $p < 0.01$) suggests a weak positive association between using trailers and using reviews when considering movie aspects like plot, cast, and reviews. People who use trailers more also tend to use reviews more. Qualification ($r = 0.141$, $p < 0.01$) suggests a weak positive association between qualification and relying on recommendations when deciding on movies. People with higher qualifications tend to rely slightly more on recommendations. Gender ($r = 0.030$, $p < 0.01$) suggests a very weak positive association between

gender and relying on recommendations when deciding on movies. The direction of this association is unclear without further analysis. Reviews (R) ($r = -0.067$, $p < 0.01$) suggests a very weak negative association between relying on reviews and decision-making (DM). People who rely more on reviews might have a slightly weaker association with decision-making processes. However, the magnitude of this association is very small. Social Media (SM) ($r = 0.242$, $p < 0.01$) suggests a weak positive association between using social media and using trailers when considering movie aspects like plot, cast, and reviews. People who use social media more also tend to use trailers more. Promotion (PP) ($r = -0.044$, $p < 0.01$) suggests a very weak negative association between relying on promotions and decision-making (DM). People who rely more on promotions might have a slightly weaker association with decision-making processes. However, the magnitude of this association is very small, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1 Correlation

	Correlations								
	Age	What sources of information do you rely on when deciding to watch a movie?	What source of information do you use when deciding to watch a movie, considering aspects like plot, cast, and reviews?	Qualification	Gender	R	SM	PP	DM
Age	1								
What sources of information do you rely on when deciding to watch a movie?	.046	1							
What source of information do you use when deciding to watch a movie, considering aspects like plot, cast, and reviews?	.086	.539**	1						
Qualification	.267**	.141*	.080	1					
Gender	-.091	.030	.007	.114*	1				
R	.164**	.063	.175**	.140*	-.003	1			
SM	.060	.042	.242**	.094	.187**	.455**	1		
PP	.003	-.014	-.044	.133*	.013	.312**	.260**	1	
DM	.139*	-.058	-.067	.142*	-.017	.331**	.283**	.550**	1

4.2 SEM analysis

From Table 2, we can find out that the positive estimate of 0.157 (Standard Error = 0.054, Critical Ratio = 2.918, $p = 0.004$) indicates a significant positive relationship between Decision Making (DM) and Review (R). This suggests that as the level of decision-making increases, so does the tendency for reviews to be influenced positively.

The positive estimate of 0.116 (Standard Error = 0.057, Critical Ratio = 2.015, $p = 0.044$) shows a significant positive relationship between Decision Making (DM) and Social Media (SM). This implies that higher levels of decision making are associated with increased activity or influence on social media platforms. The positive estimate of 0.573 (Standard Error = 0.056, Critical Ratio = 10.251, $p < 0.001$)

indicates a highly significant positive relationship between Decision Making (DM) and Promotion (PP). This suggests that as decision-making increases, so does the likelihood of promotion, with a strong level of statistical significance, as shown in Figure 2.

Table 2 SEM Analysis

		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
DM <---	R	.157	.054	2.918	.004	par_1
DM <---	SM	.116	.057	2.015	.044	par_2
DM <---	PP	.573	.056	10.251	***	par_3
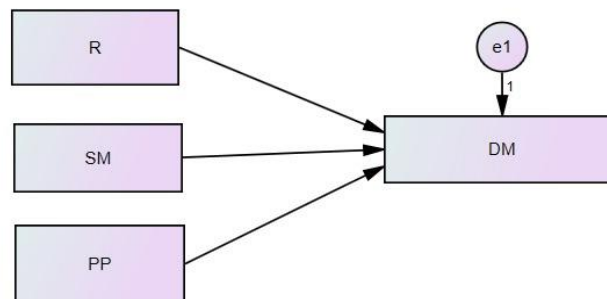
Figure 2 Study Result

5. Discussion

In this study, we found that promotion tools like trailers, word of mouth, and television ads influence individuals' decisions to watch a movie in a theatre than other variables that have been used in the study. The evolution of trailers as promotional entities across diverse industries reflects significant shifts in technology, linguistics, and economics, particularly evident from 1990 to 2010 [33, 34]. This period saw trailers being used to advertise a wide array of products, marking a departure from their historical association primarily with the film industry. Word of mouth (WOM) emerges as a crucial factor influencing audience behaviour in cinema attendance. WOM, driven by recommendations from friends, remains a powerful influencer in attracting audiences to theatres. Television ads before a film's release stimulate public opinion.

6. Limitation

One limitation of this study is its potential lack of generalizability, as it may have focused on a specific city in India. Additionally, the subjectivity of audience responses is collected from only 300 individuals. Finally, the research's reliance on a limited number of social media platforms means that the findings may not capture the full spectrum of audience decision-making on various social media channels. Addressing these limitations in future research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing individuals' decisions to watch movies in theatres.

Conclusion

The primary aim of film marketing is to foster audience engagement by enticing viewers to enjoy films in theatres. Many cinemas endeavour to establish enduring audience bases across various tiers. Similarly, numerous companies and film industries prioritize the promotion of their products to ensure broad visibility and audience engagement. Promotion tools such as trailers, word

of mouth, and television ads have evolved in their application within the film industry. This evolution has been accompanied by marketing strategies to raise awareness and drive audiences to theatres. Additionally, a synergy of various factors is necessary to encourage viewership. A strategic approach is required to fulfil market demand and sustain the viability of film-viewing experiences.

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