

The Science of Film Selection: Exploring Factors Behind Movie Preferences

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Abstract

The film industry is a thriving global entertainment sector that offers a diverse array of genres and styles to cater to a wide range of audience preferences. Understanding the factors that influence film preference is essential for filmmakers, distributors and marketers to effectively target their audience and create successful films. The aim of this study is to investigate the main factors influencing film preference among a sample of 127 participants. By conducting a comprehensive literature review, this research seeks to identify and understand the key determinants of film preference in order to provide valuable insights for the film industry, including filmmakers, distributors and marketers. Participants were given a questionnaire comprising multiple-choice and Likert scale questions. The questionnaire included items related to factors such as cast and crew, script quality, country of origin, ticket price, social influence and distribution channels. Participants were asked to rate the importance of these factors in their film preferences on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “Not Important” and 5 being “Very Important.”. Demographic data, including age and gender, were also collected to provide context for the preferences of the study participants. The data collected were subjected to statistical analysis using the software SPSS 25. The findings of this research indicate that distribution channels significantly influence film preference. The result offers valuable insights for filmmakers, distributors and marketers in tailoring their strategies to align with the factor that drives film preference among the target audience, ultimately contributing to the success of their films in a competitive industry.

1. Introduction

In the ever-evolving realm of entertainment, the film industry stands as a beacon of creativity and innovation. Its allure lies not only in its capacity

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to captivate hearts and minds but also in its power to drive colossal financial success or face crushing defeat. In an industry where a single film can amass fortunes or incur staggering losses, the stakes are undeniably high. This is why understanding the intricate web of factors that guides film preference is nothing short of paramount for the visionaries behind the silver screen - the filmmakers and studios who strive to craft cinematic experiences that resonate deeply with audiences.

The cinematic landscape, an expansive canvas of genres and styles, offers a profound diversity of choices for viewers across the globe. Yet, amidst this vast cinematic tapestry, a fundamental question persists: What is it that compels audiences to favor one film over another? This research paper embarks on a profound journey to unlock the secrets that lie within the hearts and minds of moviegoers. Through an exhaustive exploration of existing literature, we endeavor to shine a light on the elements that wield the greatest influence in shaping film preferences.

The treasure trove of knowledge unearthed through this literature review illuminates a multifaceted landscape. Here, we encounter the stars that grace the screen, the masterminds behind the scenes, the artistry of the script, the cultural tapestry of a film's origin, the economic consideration of ticket pricing, the power of social influence and the distribution channels through which films find their way to eager audiences (Lash & Zhao, 2016: 883; Hadida, 2009: 301; Tetteyfiio-Manu, Brako & Asante, 2023: 201-202; Rasheed, 2022: 85-86; Mandavia & Limbasiya, 2019: 94-95). The research uncovers the nuanced interplay of these factors and their profound implications for the film industry. With each revelation, we draw closer to a deeper understanding of what drives film preference, enabling filmmakers and studios to make informed decisions, craft compelling narratives and deliver cinematic experiences that resonate profoundly with their audiences. In an industry where success and failure hang in the balance, this quest for insight becomes an essential odyssey, one that may very well shape the future of cinema.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Cast & Crew

The choice of actors and actresses can be a crucial aspect of movie design in the motion-picture industry. The inclusion of certain stars can significantly impact a film's market success. While there is no foolproof method for determining the exact contribution of actors to a movie's success, various factors can be considered to gauge their influence (Wallace, Seigerman &

Holbrook, 1993: 4; Wallace, Seigerman & Holbrook, 1993: 23; Elberse, 2007: 118-119). The star power of actors and actresses, extends beyond their individual box office appeal. They can contribute to the market success of a film by leveraging their marketing power, which is their ability to signify the type of film and create connections with the audience's expectations and preferences. The audience's trust and familiarity with certain stars can influence their film choices, leading to increased interest and ticket sales (Albert S. , 1998: 264-265).

H1: The cast and crew of a movie positively and significantly affect consumers' purchase decision.

2.2. Script

A movie script is a written document that details the narrative, dialogue and visual elements of a film. It serves as a guiding tool throughout the production process, unifying the creative vision and facilitating collaboration among the director, producers, crew and cast (Stamm, 2022). Absolutely, the quality of the products produced by the film industry is indeed crucial for its survival and success. A well-written script serves as the foundation for any film or video production. It provides the structure, storyline, dialogue and overall vision for the project. A script helps filmmakers communicate their creative ideas effectively and ensures that the final product is cohesive and engaging (Udomisor & Tosin, 2013: 23). A movie script is the foundation and guiding force behind the entire filmmaking process. It establishes the creative vision, facilitates collaboration, provides structure, communicates ideas, aids in production planning and influences investor and distribution decisions. Without a solid script, it becomes challenging to create a cohesive and successful movie (Stamm, 2022).

H2: The script of a movie positively and significantly affects consumers' purchase decision.

2.3. The Country of Origin of Film

American movies have a significant international audience. The popularity of American films extends beyond the domestic market and they often find a large and enthusiastic viewership worldwide. In some cases, international audiences may indeed exhibit a stronger preference for American movies compared to domestic audiences (Walters, 2023). When movies from different countries arrive in Singapore, a cultural connection between the originating country and Singapore positively affects ticket sales. In other words, films that share cultural ties with Singapore tend to perform better

commercially (Fu & Lee, 2008: 24). Consumers exhibited a stronger interest in films that felt familiar to them, were geographically closer and closely resembled the cinematic styles they were accustomed to. The cinematic preferences of Spanish moviegoers underscore the significant role played by factors such as familiarity, cultural closeness and long-standing habits in influencing their film choices (Garcia-Alvarez, Filimon & Lopez-Sintas, 2007: 227)

H3: The country of origin of a movie positively and significantly affects consumers' purchase decision.

2.4. Pricing

Increasing ticket prices can be one of the reasons for the decrease in the number of cinema viewers and this trend is not limited to a single country. When we look at the US, the center of the cinema industry, the increase is also evident. According to Statista.com's data, the movie ticket price, which was 5.66 dollars in 2001, rose to 7.89 dollars in 2010 and to 9.57 dollars in 2021. In 2023, the price is over 10 dollars (Güler, 2023). Rising movie ticket and concession prices have resulted in a decline in theater attendance, with more people choosing to stay home. A survey by the American Association of Retired People found that 40% of seniors no longer attend movies due to affordability concerns. Movie executives are worried because they depend on ticket sales for profits. This trend, coupled with increased production costs, leads to higher admission prices, posing a challenge for the industry (Christensen, 2023).

Cinema attendance depends on ticket purchases, often requiring transportation due to time constraints. It's considered entertainment and a normal good, with demand rising as incomes increase. However, higher ticket prices can lead to decreased demand due to affordability concerns (Cameron, 1986: 40). Increased costs could deter people from attending theaters, as streaming movies on smartphones becomes a more appealing option. This shift away from cinemas is primarily driven by two factors: Firstly, affordability is a significant concern for individuals and families and expensive tickets can make frequent cinema visits unaffordable during times of inflation. Secondly, streaming platforms have become more convenient and accessible, making them an attractive alternative, especially given the rising ticket prices (Esther, 2022).

H4. The pricing of a movie positively and significantly affects consumers' purchase decision.

2.5. Word of Mouth/Critics

Marketing a film involves utilizing various strategies to generate buzz and promote the film effectively. While word of mouth marketing or critics can be powerful, effective and cost-free, it is not necessarily the best or only approach (Brewer, Kelley & Jozefowicz, 2009: 589). Word of mouth marketing involves individuals, including filmmakers, spreading the word about an upcoming film to a broad audience to attract viewers and encourage further sharing. While it's influential, it shouldn't be the sole focus of a film marketing campaign. Other strategies should complement it. Utilizing suitable influencers aligned with the film's target audience can greatly enhance word of mouth marketing's impact, as their opinions and endorsements can generate interest and boost viewership (Pascual, 2021; Simonton, 2009: 414-415; Chiu et al., 2019: 1018). Word of mouth marketing involves individuals, including filmmakers, spreading the word about an upcoming film to a broad audience to attract viewers and encourage further sharing. While it's influential, it shouldn't be the sole focus of a film marketing campaign. Other strategies should complement it. Utilizing suitable influencers aligned with the film's target audience can greatly enhance word of mouth marketing's impact, as their opinions and endorsements can generate interest and boost viewership (Yu et al., 2019: 1; Basurov, Chatterjee & Ravid, 2003: 115-116; Chang & Ki, 2005: 265; Eliashberg & Shugan, 1997: 75-77).

H5: WOM/Critics of a movie positively and significantly affects consumers' purchase decision.

2.6. Distribution Channels

The digitization of the film industry has reduced production costs, allowing filmmakers to work with smaller budgets and explore creative ideas. New distribution channels like streaming services and video on demand have emerged, offering cost-effective ways to reach global audiences, bypassing traditional theatrical releases. This shift has fostered the growth of independent and low-budget films, often known as "indie films." These films can now target niche audiences through digital distribution, relying on targeted marketing, social media and online platforms instead of extensive marketing campaigns or wide theatrical releases. This transformation places a greater emphasis on artistic merit over box office success (Benner & Waldfoegel, 2023: 264-265; Wiles & Danielova, 2009: 59). With the rise of streaming platforms, video-on-demand and digital distribution, alternative revenue streams have emerged. Studios may choose to distribute movies

through these channels and the effectiveness of these strategies can impact revenues (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Sridhar, 2006: 217-218). The researchers discovered that factors such as an attractive big city location and positive newspaper critics have a positive correlation with a movie's success and its ability to remain in theaters. These factors contribute to movie performance beyond the known elements that already affect it (Ciciretti, Hasan & Waisman, 2015: 187).

H6: The distribution channels of a movie positively and significantly affect consumers' purchase decision.

3. Methodology

The research methodology used in this paper is a comprehensive review of literature and analysis of survey. A review of literature was conducted to gather information from previous studies that have investigated the factors influencing film preference. The proposed model is shown in Figure 1. A survey approach was used to collect the data to test the proposed model. The survey was based on multiple-item measurement scales taken from the researches (Chang & Ki, 2005: 254; Finsterwalder, Kuppelwieser & De Villers, 2012: 591; Holbrook, 1999: 151; Hong & Wyer, 1989: 175; Eliashberg et al., 2000: 230). The items were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The research focuses on moviegoers, but the sample size of 384 people could not be reached, which is a limitation of our research due to the small number of participants.

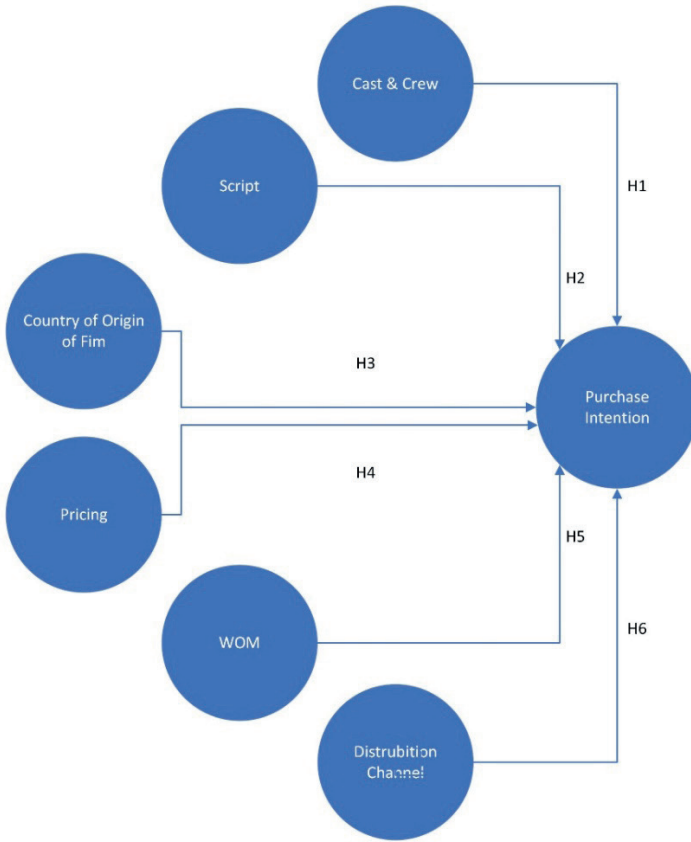


Figure 1. Model of The Study

Table 1 clearly shows that a significant portion of the participants, specifically 77.2 percent, belong to Generation Z, indicating that the majority of the sample consists of individuals born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s. Furthermore, 59.1 percent of the participants are female, indicating a slight majority of female participants in the sample. These demographic characteristics are essential for interpreting and generalizing the research results. However, it's worth noting that the findings may be more representative of Generation Z individuals and may not fully encompass the perspectives of other generations or genders.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

AGE	Frequency	Percent
18-26	98	77.2
>26	29	22.8
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>100,0</i>
GENDER	Frequency	Percent
Female	75	59.1
Male	52	40.9
<i>TOTAL</i>	<i>127</i>	<i>100.0</i>

The research aims to uncover the underlying factor structure of statements representing variables in a scale translated from one language to another. To achieve this, “Exploratory Factor Analysis” was chosen as the factor analysis method. Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test was used to assess the strength of partial correlations between variables, with a KMO value of 0.648, which was considered acceptable. Additionally, the Bartlett Sphericity test showed a significant value of 0.00 ($p < 0.05$), indicating that the data were suitable for factor analysis. (Table 2).

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett Test Results

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy		.648
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	887.372
	df	190
	Sig.	.000

The factor analysis results indicate that the scale consists of seven factors, collectively explaining 70.12% of the variance in the variables. Additionally, the reliability analysis, referred to as item analysis, affirms that the scale's variables are reliable. Table 3 shows the specific details regarding the factor and reliability analyses.

Table 3. Factor Analysis

Variables	Factor items	1	2	3	4	5	6		Cronbach's Alpha
Cast & Crew	Actor/actress in the film is important in my film preferences	.509							0.722
	Director of the film is important in my film preferences	.533							
Script	Film based on a novel is important in my film preferences		.489						0.707
	Film based on a real story is important in my film preferences		.408						
Country of Origin	Being domestic or foreign of a film is important in my film preferences			.508					0.775
	Film's country of origin is important in my film preferences			.648					
Pricing	Bargain matinee is important in my film preferences				.563				0.855
	Reduced prices in morning sessions are important in my film preferences				.520				
	Ticket promotion campaigns of GSM companies (Turkcell, Vodafone, etc.) are important in my film preferences				.505				
Word of Mouth	Critic reviews are important in my film preferences					.875			0.709
	Audience reviews are important in my film preferences					.839			
	My friends' suggestions are important in my film preferences					.800			
	Reviews in social media are important in my film preferences					.599			

Distribution Channels	Variety of distribution channels are important in my film preferences						.755		0.742
	Screening of a film in many movie theatres is important in my film preferences						.674		
	Accessibility to a film by pay-per-view, cable channels, etc. is important in my film preferences						.527		
	Accessibility to the movies via internet (download, movie watch channels) is important in my film preferences						.485		
Purchase	I intend to watch such a film						.863		0.835
	I plan to watch such a film						.907		
	I want to watch such a film						.839		

Based on the normality test results presented in Table 4, it appears that our data are normally distributed. This conclusion is supported by the fact that the skewness and kurtosis values fall within the range of +1.5 to -1.5, which is often considered an indicator of approximate normality in the data distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Table 4. Normality test

Cast & Crew	Statistic	Origin	Statistic
Skewness	-.706	-Skewness	-.101
Kurtosis	-.099	Kurtosis	-.720
Script		Pricing	
Skewness	-.289	Skewness	.479
Kurtosis	-.533	Kurtosis	-.678
WOM		Distribution	
Skewness	-.290	Skewness	-.116
Kurtosis	-.212	Kurtosis	-.375
Purchase			
Skewness	-1.136		
Kurtosis	1.319		

The t-test results in Table 5 demonstrate a significant difference in the variable WOM (Word of Mouth) related to film purchase decisions between genders. More specifically, the findings suggest that females displayed a higher susceptibility to Word of Mouth influence compared to males, as detailed in Table 6.

Table 5. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Word of Mouth	Equal variances assumed	.857	.356	2,313	125	.022
	Equal variances not assumed			2.263	101.115	.026

Table 6. Group Statistics

	Gender	N	Mean
Word of Mouth	Female	75	3.8667
	Male	52	3.5673

The t-test results in Table 7 indicate a significant difference in movie purchase intention among various age groups. Specifically, it appears that Generation Z has a notably higher inclination to purchase movies compared to other age groups, as shown in Table 8.

Table 7. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Purchase Intention	Equal variances assumed	.089	.766	2.136	125	.035
	Equal variances not assumed			1.957	40.765	.057

Table 8. Group Statistics

	Age group	N	Mean
Purchase Intention	18-26	98	4.4286
	>26	29	4.1149

Collinearity indeed refers to a linear association between two predictors, signifying that they are correlated in a straightforward manner. Multicollinearity, in contrast, arises when there is a high degree of linear relationship among two or more predictors. When evaluating multicollinearity, researchers frequently use the correlation coefficient. An absolute correlation coefficient exceeding 0.7 between two or more predictors is commonly regarded as an indicator of multicollinearity (Rekha, 2019). The analysis of the correlation results, as shown in Table 9, indicates that none of the variables have an absolute correlation coefficient exceeding 0.7. Consequently, it has been determined that there is no issue with multicollinearity among the variables.

Table 9. Correlations and Descriptive Statistics

Factor	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Purchase Intention	4.3570	.70421	1.00						
2. Cast & Crew	3.8465	.85336	.052	1.00					
3. Script	3.2362	.94244	-.040	.053	1.00				
4. Country of Origin	3.2165	1.07014	.002	.321	.153	1.00*			
5. Pricing	2.7060	1.14597	.135	.087	.234	.066	1.00		
6. WOM	3.7441	.72953	.112	.029	.071	.139	.156	1.00	
7. Distribution Channels	3.4206	.71431	.405	.184	.128	.121	.218	.211	1.00

The results of the regression analysis, as presented in Table 10, suggest that factors such as people, script, origin, pricing and word of mouth did not have a significant impact on the purchase intention for films. However, it was found that distribution channels had a significant and positive effect on film purchase intention. This implies that the choice of distribution channel plays a crucial role in influencing consumers’ intentions to purchase films.

Table 10. Regression Analysis Results

Factor	Unstandardized Beta	t	Sig.	VIF
Cast & Crew	-.010	-.133	.895	1.148
Script	-.078	-1.212	.228	1.085
Country of Origin of Film	-.024	-.403	.688	1.159
Pricing	.044	.812	.419	1.115
Word of Mouth	.028	.337	.737	1.078
Distribution Channels	.397	4.596	.000	1.125
F=4.376	Adjusted R Square= 0.139		Sig=0.000	

4. Conclusion

Understanding the factors that influence film preference can indeed provide valuable insights for filmmakers and studios in making informed

decisions about film production and marketing strategies. By identifying and analyzing these factors, filmmakers can better understand the audience's preferences and tailor their offerings accordingly, increasing the chances of success in a highly competitive industry.

Considering our first analysis which is a T-test result, there is a significant difference in the variable "social influence" between genders. The results suggest that females, as a group, showed a higher level of susceptibility to social influence in the context of film purchase decisions compared to males. This finding implies that when it comes to deciding on purchasing films, females tend to be more influenced by WOM such as recommendations from friends, family, or online communities. On the other hand, males may be less affected by social opinions or recommendations when making film-related purchase decisions.

According to the results of our second analysis, which is another t-test, there is a significant difference in movie purchase behavior across different age groups, specifically indicating that Generation Z demonstrates a higher propensity for movie purchases compared to other age groups. This finding implies that individuals belonging to Generation Z, typically born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, showed a greater inclination to purchase movies compared to other age cohorts, such as Millennials, Generation X, or Baby Boomers. It suggests that Generation Z may have a higher level of engagement or interest in movies, leading them to be more likely to make movie purchases.

According to the results, it appears that factors such as people (actors or celebrities involved), script, origin (country or production background), pricing and word of mouth (referrals or recommendations from others) did not show a significant impact on purchase intention for films. In other words, these factors did not significantly influence the decision of potential viewers to purchase or watch a film. However, distribution channels can play a crucial role in making films accessible to potential viewers. Effective distribution strategies ensure that a film reaches its target audience through various channels such as theaters, online platforms, DVD releases, or television broadcasts. If a film is widely available and easily accessible to the audience, it can increase their intention to purchase or watch it.

Understanding these factors can provide valuable insights to filmmakers, distributors and marketers, enabling them to make informed decisions regarding casting choices, script development, pricing strategies, marketing campaigns and distribution methods to effectively target and appeal to their desired audience. Moreover, this research contributes to the existing literature

on film preference by consolidating and synthesizing the current knowledge in this field, providing a foundation for future studies and industry practices

The limitation of this research is the small number of participants. Another limitation is regarding the participant sample being predominantly from Generation Z is an important consideration. Understanding film preferences across different generations can provide a more comprehensive view of the factors that influence audience preferences. Different generations may have distinct preferences, tastes and cultural backgrounds that influence their film choices. When conducting future research, it would be beneficial to include participants from a broader range of age groups to ensure a more representative sample. This would allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that influence film preference across different generations.

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