



Role of Social Media for Movie Marketing in the Nepalese Film Industry

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Abstract

This study analyzes how ticket purchasing behaviour in the Nepalese film industry is influenced by Social Media Marketing Campaigns (SMMC) and Preview Analysis (PA). A survey of 173 active social media users using a descriptive, cross-sectional design shows that platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok play a central role in how audiences discover and decide on films. The study observed that trailers, reviews, influencer content, and electronic word-of-mouth were statistically significant predictors of movie-going intentions. Social media is now the main source of film information, with audiences relying on SMMC and PA before deciding to watch, revealing that Nepal's movie business is undergoing a digital transformation similar to other developing economies. The results highlight the need for organized, data-driven marketing strategies: better online campaigns and well-timed previews can boost visibility, deepen audience relationships, and raise box-office returns. These findings have major implications for filmmakers, marketers, and industry planners aiming to optimize digital promotion in a rapidly changing media landscape.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing Campaigns, Preview Analysis, Film Marketing, Ticket Purchasing Decision

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Introduction

Social media has been evolving very fast, and this trend has revolutionized the marketing of films across the world, in how viewers learn, judge, and participate in films. With digital promotion platforms gradually replacing traditional methods, the film industry in many national settings is employing social media approaches in order to get more visibility, create better interactions with audiences and impact the box office sales. It has been found that online word-of-mouth (e-WOM), influencers, preview based promotion tools, and social media marketing campaign (SMMC) have become one of the key tools of film promotion in international market (Santoso et al., 2024; Tefertiller et al., 2020). Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter have contributed to the influence of the platforms on the formation of the film consumption behavior due to their interactive, cost-effective, and high reach nature (Baker, 2016; Tejada, 2023). The literature available shows that there are several aspects of social media based film marketing. A number of studies show that social media has a direct impact on audience awareness, participation, and cinema attendance, which is possible through the formation of buzz, the development of social motivation, and the incitement of Fear of Missing Out (FoMO) (Alice, 2024; Tefertiller et al., 2020).

There are others that demonstrate that trailers, teasers, content on the basis of reviews, and influencers are the factors that motivate the purchase of tickets, particularly among the younger groups (Gupta, 2021; Shill and Dey, 2023). Other studies support the significance of social media marketing tactics in increasing brand awareness, consumer-brand, and brand affection in the film branding process (Kohli et al., 2014). Nationwide surveys, such as Russia, Iran, Pakistan, Nigeria, Poland, India, and China, among others, testify to the fact that all the data-driven marketing, e-WOM, prerelease publicity, celebrity presence, social networks, and data-driven marketing influence the survival of the film in the modern markets Gaenssle et al. (2018); Lorenzen and Täube (2008); Turkman et al. (2021). All these research works confirm that the digital shift in film promotion is strategic and unavoidable around the world. Though the evidence base is growing globally, there are still two gaps. To begin with, minimal studies have been conducted to investigate the functioning of these digital marketing dynamics in smaller film industries like Nepal, where social

media is becoming a very popular platform and digital marketing is becoming professional. Second, although there is extensive information about SMMC, e-WOM, and preview analysis in bigger markets, there is very little information about how Nepali customers react to such promotional stimuli, which media have the most impact, and the way of how these reactions affect the decision to buy tickets. Moreover, previous research has rarely merged the analytics of the audience with the constructs of persuasion, content preference, and post-purchase sharing at the influencer level in the Nepalese context.

The paper fills these gaps by empirically studying the importance of the Social Media Marketing Campaigns (SMMC) and the Preview Analysis (PA) in determining the ticket-buying decisions in the Nepalese film industry. It is based on the international evidence of Santoso et al. (2024); Baker (2016); Lyu (2024) and explores the effects of various promotional factors, such as trailers, reviews, influencers, platform choice, and e- WOM, on consumer engagement and behavior. The paper will be valuable to the literature in the following ways; (I) it will present the first integrated and data-driven evaluation of the role of social-media-based film marketing in Nepal, (II) it will determine the most effective platforms and promotional forms among the Nepalese moviegoers, and (III) it will provide evidence-based information to enhance the effectiveness of digital marketing efforts to an industry that is shifting to modern promotional activity. This paper, by placing global theoretical conceptual models in the Nepalese emerging digital context, will broaden the comparative knowledge of film marketing and provide practical suggestions that can be adopted by film makers, producers and marketers interested in maximizing audience response via social-media platforms.

Methodology

The research design used in this study was a quantitative cross-sectional design to explore the effect of Social Media Marketing Campaigns (SMMC) and Preview Analysis (PA) on the purchasing of tickets in the Nepalese film industry. Quantitative methods have been applied mostly in the field of film marketing and audience behavior research to estimate digital activity, customer reactions, and advertising efficiency, similar to (San-Toso et al., 2024) and (Shill and Dey, 2023). Like the earlier studies,

which used structured surveys to understand the audience interaction with film marketing content, Alice (2024) and Tejada (2023), this research also used a structured questionnaire as the primary tool for data collection.

The research focused on active social media users aged 18 years and older on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and Twitter/X-platforms that were demonstrated in the previous research to impact the flow of information about the film, the interaction with an audience, and the exposure to promotions significantly (Baker, 2016; Gupta, 2021). The sample size of this study is 173. Since the study is exploratory in nature, a non-probability convenience sampling technique was employed (Pradhan, 2025). This approach is consistent with previous studies on digital audiences in Bangladesh and Indonesia, which similarly relied on online, platform-based recruitment due to its feasibility and accessibility (Shill & Dey, 2023; Santoso et al., 2024).

The questionnaire was in a structured format and was distributed electronically via Messenger, Viber, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook, and Email. This approach aligns with international film marketing literature that takes advantage of digital communication platforms to reach the respondents who have been subjected to online advertisements of films (Baker, 2016; Tejada, 2023). The tool consisted of questions on the use of social media, exposure to film-related content, interaction with promotion materials, and ticket purchase patterns, which reflect the concepts of social media-driven cinema research (Tefertiller et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2010). The collected data were coded and analyzed using R. Descriptive statistical tools, such as frequency distributions and percentages, were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and key study variables. Bar diagrams were employed to visually present the distribution patterns and facilitate easier interpretation of the results (Pradhan, 2023).

To examine the association between categorical variables, the Chi-square test of independence was applied (Pradhan and Bista, 2024). This test was used to assess whether significant relationships existed between Social Media Influence and Influencer-Based Ticket purchase, along with gender and post-purchase sharing of events. All statistical tests were conducted at a 5 percent level of significance, consistent with standard practices in social science and marketing research.

Result

The respondent profile is heavily dominated by young individuals, with approximately four-fifths falling between the ages of 18 and 24, showing that younger audiences are predominantly responsible for movie consumption and ticket purchases. The gender distribution is fairly balanced, though slightly skewed towards females. The majority of respondents reported recent movie-watching behaviour, indicating continued involvement with cinema consumption. Social media emerges as the primary source of movie information, exceeding traditional interpersonal sources and showing a shift towards digital discovery methods. Despite strong consumer interest, ticket purchases are mostly irregular or rare, implying that while awareness is high, conversions to frequent purchase are influenced by other factors such as pricing, accessibility, or content appeal.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Movie Consumption Patterns of Respondents (N = 173)

Variable	Category	Percentage (%)
Age Group	18–24	79
	25–34	16
	35–44	2
	45 and above	3
Gender	Female	56
	Male	44
	Other	0
Last Movie Watched	Within 1 month	66
	Within 6 months	22
	Within 1 year	6

	More than 1 year ago	6
Source of First Movie Information	Social media	55
	Family/Friends	39
	IMDb	6
Frequency of Ticket Purchase	Frequently (> 5 times/year)	26
	Occasionally (2–5 times/year)	36
	Rarely (≤ 1 time/year)	38

Note: Percentage may not be total 100 due to rounding.

Social media usage among respondents was nearly universal, with most engaging on a daily basis. Digital platforms have become the primary channel for movie-related communication, and Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram were the clear favorites, while Twitter/X played only a minor role. Respondents strongly viewed social media as the most effective medium for film promotion, with trailers standing out as the most persuasive form of content. Exposure to ticket promotions was widespread, and engagement levels were high, as shown by strong click-through behavior.

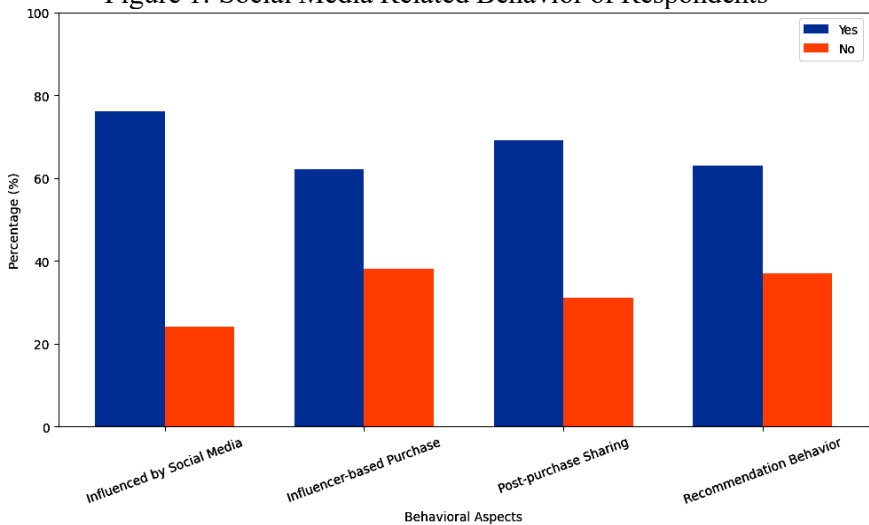
Table 2: Social Media Usage, Promotional Influence, and Post Purchase Behavior

Variable	Category	Percentage / Count
Frequency of Social Media Use	Daily	90%
	Weekly or less	10%
Platforms Used for Movie Content	Facebook	95 respondents
	YouTube	95 respondents
	Instagram	90 respondents
	TikTok	63 respondents
	Twitter/X	12 respondents
Belief: <u>Social Media</u> Best for Promotion	Yes	96%
	No	4%
Preferred Promotional Content	Trailer	54%
	Song	19%
	Reviews	12%
	Teaser	6%
	Behind the scenes	5%
	Actor's first look	4%
Exposure to Ticket Promotions	Very often	23%
	Sometimes	40%
	Rarely/Never	37%
Engagement with Ticket Ads	Clicked on ads	68%
	Did not click	32%
Key Influencing Factor	Reviews & testimonials	Highest
	Friends' posts/shares	14%
	Influencers/discounts	9% each

Note. Multi-response categories (Platforms) may not have a total 100%.

Social media significantly influences ticket purchasing decisions for the majority of respondents, primarily through peer-generated reviews and testimonials rather than direct promotional incentives alone. Post-purchase behavior further strengthens the promotional cycle, with a large proportion of respondents sharing event details and recommending movies to others. These findings highlight social media’s dual significance as a marketing and promotion strategy in influencing movie-going behaviour.

Figure 1: Social Media Related Behavior of Respondents



Social Media Influence and Influencer-Based Ticket Purchases

With the rapid growth of social media marketing, influencers have become important intermediaries between movie producers and audiences. To test the strength of this influence, a chi-square analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between social media engagement and influencer-driven ticket purchases. The results indicate a statistically significant association between social media influence and influencer-

based ticket purchases ($\chi^2 = 10.684$, $p = 0.004786$). This indicates that social media engagement significantly translates into purchasing behavior.

Gender and Post-Purchase Sharing of Event Details on Social Media

To explore whether post-purchase sharing on social media varied by gender, a chi-square test of independence was conducted. It was found that there is no statistically significant association between gender and sharing event details on social media after ticket purchase ($\chi^2 = 0.0236$, $p = 0.8779$). This suggests that both male and female respondents were equally likely to share their movie experiences online.

Discussion

This study shows that Social Media Marketing Campaigns (SMMC) and Preview Analysis (PA) are highly effective tools that influence ticket purchases in Nepal. Additionally, the results of the studies show that film promotion has become digital worldwide, as also seen in Baker (2016) and Tejada (2023). Nepali audiences, like those in Indonesia and Bangladesh, heavily rely on trailers, reviews, and influencer content on Facebook and YouTube, which are known to influence film-related awareness and engagement (San-toso2024; Shill2023). The high impact of e-WOM in this context is consistent with the evidence that online reviews, pre-release publicity, and social cues have a strong impact on cinema attendance in any market, as found in Bhattacharjee et al. (2017), Tefertiller et al. (2020), and Wang et al. (2010).

Nepal's growing reliance on influencers and celebrity promotions aligns with evidence from Russia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Poland, suggesting that digital marketing approaches enhance brand visibility and popularity (Adeyeye and Nwaoboli, 2024; Ahmed, 2024; Gaenssle et al., 2018). In line with earlier research, the findings suggest that social media plays a key role in shaping emotional connections and relational bonds between audiences and films (Kohli et al., 2014). Frequent social media use among the respondents is high, reflecting global shifts toward digital-first film promotion strategies, which can also be seen in Lyu (2024) and Wang et al. (2010).

Unlike some international studies that report significant gender differences in audience engagement (Kon- tolatou, 2025), this study found no significant gender differences in post-purchase behaviour in Nepal, highlighting more uniform participation across male and female audiences. In general, this study confirms that social media has emerged as one of the most important factors influencing film visibility, audience reception, and ticket purchases in Nepal. Strategic use of SMMC, content quality, and data-driven digital marketing frameworks, as proposed globally, will be critical in the development of Nepal's film industry. At the same time, Nepal's film industry genuinely struggles with weak dialogue and repetitive plots, which frustrate audiences even when marketing campaigns succeed. Yet some films break this mold with genuine creativity, showing the industry's real potential. Combining stronger storytelling with smart digital promotion will result in long-term audience trust.

Conclusion

This study has presented clear empirical evidence that SMMC and PA play a pivotal role in the ticket purchasing decisions of customers within the Nepalese film industry. As with most emerging and developed film markets worldwide, social media platforms have become useful promotional tools, determining how audiences engage with film content, build expectations, and make choices about what to watch. The significant influence that trailer previews, reviews, influencer recommendations, and electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) had in this study supports the increasing body of research that indicates digital interactions are now the main factors that determine a film's visibility and commercial success.

The results indicate that Nepali moviegoers, particularly those who are active on social media, rely heavily on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram to learn about upcoming releases and form opinions. In this regard, Nepal ranks alongside most other countries where digital media has increasingly replaced traditional promotional channels. Furthermore, the high engagement, sharing, and online discussion rates highlight the increasing relevance of participatory culture in film marketing, given that one can actually observe audience conversations meaningfully contributing to creating hype and box-office results. These findings highlight the critical

need for Nepal's film industry to establish structured, data-driven digital marketing practices. Strengthening SMMC strategies, improving the quality and timing of promotional content, and leveraging influencers and targeted campaigns can significantly boost their competitive advantage. As global studies show, such approaches not only increase reach but also foster long-term audience film relationships, which shape loyalty and brand value. Overall, this study concludes that social media has evolved from a supplementary promotional tool to the primary means by which Nepali films can successfully reach their target audience. Tapping into this shift through strategic and professionalised digital marketing will be critical for the industry's continued growth and, ultimately, increasing Nepali cinema's commercial potential in an ever-changing digital landscape.

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