
The Role of Social Media Marketing in Modern Film Promotion: An AIDA and Two-Step Flow Approach

K. P. A. Vignesh¹ and Dr. V. Ilamparithi²

1. Research Scholar, Centre for Film and Electronic Media Studies, Madurai Kamaraj University.

E-mail address: kpa.vignesheee@gmail.com

2. Director i/c & Assistant Professor, Centre for Film and Electronic Media Studies,
Madurai Kamaraj University.

E-mail address: ilamparithi.v@gmail.com

Abstract

Media is one of the major economic incomes and one of the largest consumption categories. While the media is still flourishing, the need for innovation in films increases. This lack creates a disinterest and hence, films need to be marketed after being produced. Unlike the older times where social media platforms were incompetent and film promotions were handled through radio and television, the new era brings in effective social media for promotion. Public Relations uses social media wisely and hence attracts a larger audience to promote the feature films. Without social media's role, opinion leaders or influencers are scarce which leads to a smaller number of advertisements. The optimistic side of social media is that anyone has access to become an opinion leader hence, the existence of a legion of influencers makes promotions easily possible through their social networks. AIDA Model theory in marketing recognises how a specific production gets attention, then gains interest which gives a desire to be put in action to consume a production. Through the AIDA Model theory developed by E. St. Elmo Lewis, the engagement and attention of the audience towards cinema through various marketing techniques of social media are deconstructed. The Two-Step Flow theory of communication reiterates that information cannot be passed on to someone at ease without opinion leaders and that it needs opinion leaders as influencers to reach the audience. Through the Two-Step Flow theory of communication by Paul Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz, the significant opinion leaders for Public Relations and promotions are analysed. The several ways used in marketing and promoting a film are analysed in this research. The viewpoint of the audience which determines the future of the cinema industry and its marketing is evaluated through the research. This study is also able to find out how much more social media can be used efficiently in the future.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Tamil Film Promotion, Film Promotion, Social Media.

1. Introduction

1.1. Importance of Advertising

Advertising plays a vital role in the success of any product and it is an inevitable component in modern business and trading. Film production has gained a huge success through the acts of advertising. Advertising serves as a bridge between the product and its potential customers. Whenever a product is produced, the product's quality is determined by its production and this information about the quality can only be highlighted through advertising. Hence, advertising helps shape consumer perception by differentiating with other products, by describing the unique qualities and most importantly, by building trust among the buyers. So basically, when a

product is advertised, communication is needed between the product and the consumer. Effective advertising helps communicate with the consumer about the product and influence them to purchase. Hence, effective advertising and marketing are essential for film productions.

1.2. The AIDA Model concept in Marketing

Like every product needs a closer connection and communication with the consumer, a film product should reach its audience, only with a good communicative advertisement and promotion. This is clearly proven by the AIDA Model by Elmo Lewis. This AIDA Model is a communication framework used in marketing and advertising to get attention or attraction of the consumer, then to gain their interest and desire and at last to put an action to consume the product being advertised. This model is shaped like a funnel because of the decreased size of the audience at each stage. With regard to film promotion using the prevalent techniques with social media, the first stage of advertising is acknowledged by a multitude of people. Since the information is first let out, the information doesn't have its target audience and hence many become aware of the film despite being interested in it. In this stage, films are promoted by describing its uniqueness or its need for the society. This is done through influencers who were given enough information by the producers, directors or distributors. After this stage, the information about the film keeps coming while those who are uninterested avoid them and those who are interested get more information with the help of the algorithm of social media. This stage is when the social media influencers keep talking about the film in diverse ways.

1.3. The Two-Step Flow theory of communication

Through the Two-Step Flow of Communication, movie promotions are made much easier because opinion leaders generally act as reservoirs or channels that can filter information and pass it down to the public. Also, this shows that through diverse opinion leaders, one can choose the opinion leaders who have a specific kind of target audience following them. For instance, someone who is an influencer whose target audiences are dance lovers, a trending song with a hook-step can be used for promoting the film through their trending dance step or their music and if someone is an influencer whose target audiences are youngsters, the film which could be dedicated to youngsters can be promoted and so on. Hence, opinion leaders not only decide and manage the credibility and expertise of a film promotion but also help in dividing the distribution of information to the targeted consumers.

1.4. Research Problem

Social Media is the most significant tool in marketing feature films as of now. There's nothing as impactful as Social media to promote films.

1.5. Thesis Statement

This study examines the efficiency of social media to create promotional outcomes in Tamil film industry, analysing how it influences and persuades the audience to engage in cinema consumption unlike other promoting tools.

1.6. Research Objectives

The Objectives of this study are,

1. To evaluate how social media engagement supports in promoting the films and gaining a wider audience.
2. To analyse the ways in which and tools with which social media is used for marketing and film.
3. To comprehend the extent of advertising techniques utilised to capture the attention and interest of the audience.

1.7. Research Questions

This study uses following research questions to navigate through the research problem and to answer the gaps that exist in the past research. These questions provide a clear understanding to acknowledge the methods and techniques with a deeper deconstruction.

1. Is social media the most efficient tool to advertise a film?
2. What methods and techniques in social media enable the audience to be persuaded or influenced to consume a feature film?

2. Literature Review

Social Media Marketing in the Film Industry: Using Social Media to Create a Successful Marketing Campaign for the Theatrical Release of Film by Kate Baker analyses qualitatively how film industry uses social media as a marketing tool for the film yet the details for how the film is distributed to OTT platforms are not analysed since it focuses on the campaigns used for the theatrical release of the films. Baker (2016) posits, “In the ever-changing world of marketing and advertising, social media is an important,

This quantitative study proves that social media plays a vital role to acknowledge the public for anything that happens in the society. This influence is prudently used by the marketing companies for their promotions and works great for film promotions.

“Videos were sought out by 120 participants (76.92%). Pictures were wanted by 89 (57.05%) of 154 participants. Behind the scenes content had 54.49% of participants seeking this out on a social media channel” (Tejada, 2015, p.16). This proves that any video content kindles the interest of the audience with respect to films. Pictures or behind-the-scenes content were not the prime interest of the audience. Yet this study is limited to its research where the video-type content doesn't completely assert what kind of videos attract the audience.

2.1. Theoretical Framework

2.1.1. Use of AIDA concept in social media promotions

When this AIDA concept is easily applied for every product to be promoted, the most recent use of the AIDA communication model is with social media. *Strategic Use of Social Media for Small Business Based on the AIDA Model* by Hassan, Nadzim and Shiratuddin focuses on the AIDA concept is prudently used as a marketing tool with the help of social media to pass the information. Social media is the only competitive marketing weapon in the business world today. For getting attention or awareness in social media which is the first stage of AIDA concept, Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) could be managed to give an extensive reach, also by using hashtags and tagging properly, using referrals and advertising on social media sites through social media gateways. For gaining the interest of the target audience which is the second step, clear information on product features, product image, clear information on the business promoter and name of the company must be displayed.

2.1.2. The Two-Step Flow theory of communication

The Two-Step Flow theory of communication by Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld states that the information from the media does not flow directly to the public and that the opinion leaders first receive the information by paying attention and get understanding which is then passed on to the general public. These opinion leaders are just commoners who got exclusive information and spread it within their social circles. This hypothesis was made in *The Two-Step Flow of Communication: An Up-To-Date Report on a Hypothesis* in the year 1957 by Elihu Katz. Since this hypothesis was stated several decades ago, the application of the theory is based on the

information circulated in mass media. But the prevalence of mass media has diminished and the efficacy of social media has risen to a greater extent.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Study

The study was conducted by using qualitative phenomenological research techniques. Through open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, the phenomenon of promoting film productions through social media is explained. The questionnaires were structured as problem-inquiring questions and as questions emphasising the truth. Also, document analysis is done through various scholarly works or quantitative research studies related to the topic. Phenomenology seeks to describe and interpret participants' lived experiences to uncover the essence of a phenomenon. Through this approach, any prejudices and pre-judgements are set aside with the provision of valid information from interviewees, participants and documented works. This is done "in order to launch the study as far as possible free from preconceptions, beliefs and knowledge of the phenomenon from prior experience and professional studies" to be completely open and receptive (Moustakas, 1994, p.22).

3.2. Research Design

Two types of questionnaires were given to the participants. Open-ended questionnaires to get the public's subjective opinion on the promotional trends and a close-ended questionnaire with Likert scale to get a defined and objective analysis on the Hypothesis.

3.2.1. Open-ended Questionnaire

The following open-ended questions are asked to the participants online through Google forms:

1. Which is your favourite film between 2020-2024 and How did you first hear about the film? (Q1)
2. Have you seen any trailer released (like the trailer of the movie, Leo) in movie theatres or known someone who had watched it. (Q2)
3. Which recent movie between 2020-2024, you think has been promoted the most through social media platforms like Instagram or YouTube. And how? (Q3)
4. Is there any film from 2020-2024, that created an interest in you, only after seeing all the promotions of the film. If yes, list them and tell what kind of promotions created that interest. (Q4)
5. What is your opinion about the public review or movie review by reviewers? Do you think they are accountable and believable? If yes or no, why? (Q5)
6. Did you notice any memes related to a recently released movie? Did any of those memes with the hinted storyline kindle your interest to watch the movie? If yes, How. (Q6)
7. Are you interested in watching the interviews of actors in a promotion interview? If yes, what are those interviews in media such as YouTube? Why is it interesting? (Q7)
8. Do you really think promotions are necessary for a film to be a success? If yes or no, why? (Q8)
9. Which social media platform other than YouTube or Instagram do you think can be used for promoting movies? Why? (Q9)
10. From Televisions and Radios, we are here with social media to promote a movie, do you think any other tool better than social media can be used in future? If yes or no, why do you think so? (Q10)

3.2.2. Close-ended Questionnaire

The following close-ended questions with Likert scale is sent through Google forms:

1. I believe that the more promotional videos are watched, the greater the chance that the film is a hit. (Q11)
2. Before watching a film, I find out through some information on social media if it is worth watching. (Q12)
3. I tend to believe a lot of information given by an Instagram Influencer. (Q13)
4. By reading the comments of a meme depicting the story of a recent movie, I became interested in watching the movie. (Q14)
5. Personalised promotion Interviews of lead actors in YouTube are entertaining to watch. (Q15)
6. Promotions for a movie are very essential because many aren't aware of new releases. (Q16)
7. Social media cannot be replaced by some other tool to promote feature films. (Q17)
8. I am interested in criticising a movie or encouraging someone to watch a movie. (Q18)
9. Many promotions are false-facts because of paid promotions. Hence promotions shouldn't be accountable or believed. (Q19)
10. Any Hook step from a trending song, repeated on Instagram can grab my attention. (Q20)

3.3. Data Collection

These questionnaires were designed to find how influential various promotional techniques could be. Both the questionnaires took a time span of 15-20 minutes approximately to answer, conducted from August 20, 2025 till August 30, 2025. Through these answers from the participants, social media marketing of films with the digital devices could be analysed while gaining insight into the use of social media with the AIDA concept in marketing and Two-Step Flow of Communication through opinion leaders. The research data collected through the research design is documented and saved in Google sheets.

3.4. Limitations of the Research study

This study analyses the advertising techniques used to promote Tamil feature films, however there are limitations to the study based on the type of data collected and type of questionnaire. The limitations of the research study are that the promotional outcomes are traced only from Kollywood. Also, the participants are randomly selected which cannot ensure if the opinions of the audience are completely unbiased. Also, the participants' fandom is not taken into account which could create biased opinions in the questionnaires. Other than these limitations, the data collected through the research design ensures that the data is presented in the most objective and unbiased way possible.

4. Discussions and Results

4.1. Analysis of Promotional Strategies through Social Media

The study included 10 open-ended questions, each answered by 30 participants, resulting in 300 qualitative responses in total. Instead of conducting a full coding of every response, the researcher reviewed all answers and selected one or two representative or particularly insightful responses for each question.

The lowest mean score was recorded for belief in Instagram influencers (mean ≈ 2.43), indicating limited trust in promotional claims made by individual content creators. In contrast, the highest ratings appeared for the

necessity of promotion to create awareness (mean \approx 3.77) and respondents' interest in discussing or recommending films to others (mean \approx 3.77). Seeking information about a film before watching (mean \approx 3.53), enjoying personalized interviews of lead actors (mean \approx 3.63), responding to hook steps from trending songs (mean \approx 3.63), and recognizing false or paid promotions (mean \approx 3.6) also received substantial agreement. However, participants were less convinced that repeated promotions alone make a film successful (mean \approx 2.8) and showed neutrality toward the belief that social media is irreplaceable as a marketing tool (mean \approx 3.47 with 53 % neutral responses). Overall, the average score of approximately 3.4 out of 5 reflects moderate agreement that film promotion is valuable for awareness and engagement, even if the audiences are speculatively cautious about the credibility of the promotional content..

4.2. Further scope of research

This study examines the advertising strategies employed to promote Tamil feature films, but it faces certain limitations related to the nature of data collection and the questionnaire used. The findings are restricted to promotional outcomes within Kollywood alone. The participants utilised for this research are limited and are commoners. Hence, further research could be made by increasing the sample size or by discovering the truth behind the promotions through active promoters in social media.

Finally, longitudinal studies could track the changing impact of advertising techniques over time, providing a clearer understanding of evolving promotional strategies in the film industry.

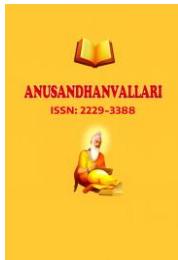
5. Conclusions

This paper has evaluated the need of social media, Artificial Intelligence and technology in order to help in promoting, marketing and advertising the films. The anticipation of the audience is easily kindled by advertising through social media which leads to grand success of the film productions. This paper critically enables the readers to comprehend the extent of Social media marketing and promotions using Public Relations (PR). Social media is a significant source of economic revenue and one of the largest categories of consumer spending. Despite the thriving state of the media, there is an increasing demand for innovation in films.

The AIDA Model is a marketing and advertising communication framework that captures consumer attention, cultivates their interest and desire, and ultimately prompts them to take action and purchase the promoted product. Concerning movie promotion through widely used social media strategies, the initial phase of marketing is recognized by many individuals. Once the information is released, it lacks a specific target audience, leading to many people discovering the film even if they are interested in it. In film marketing, this refers to the initial poster or trailers and teasers. The final step of the AIDA Model involves prompting action at the critical moment of purchase, as it represents the last opportunity to encourage them to make a purchase. Concerning films, when a movie is out and playing in cinemas, viewers who are uncertain about seeing it need extra details about the film to decide. Hence, these kinds of Marketing through AIDA concept help gain a theatrical success or OTT success of the feature.

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