

A Marketing and Customer Growth Model for Cinematic Films in the Iranian Cinema Market

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted with the aim of presenting a marketing and customer growth model for cinematic films in the Iranian cinema market. The present study is applied in terms of its purpose and is based on a mixed-methods (qualitative-quantitative) research design. The statistical population of this research in the qualitative section consisted of a number of specialists (experts) who are authorities in cinematic film marketing, and in the quantitative section, it included all cinema audiences in metropolitan cities across the country. The sampling was conducted using purposive non-probability judgmental and snowball methods in the qualitative section, and a multi-stage cluster method in the quantitative section. For the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews in the qualitative section, a 3-stage process of open, axial, and selective coding was utilized. In the quantitative section, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to assess the validity of the constructs, and the ISM-MICMAC method was applied for the leveling of the variables. The research findings indicated that the indicators and dimensions of marketing and customer growth for cinematic films consist of 17 themes and foundations and 66 components. The results obtained from the grouping of the variables showed that the dependent variables include: 1- events and the general social atmosphere, 2- reviews, ratings, and awards; the independent variables include: 1- technology and media access, 2- economic conditions, 3- audience purchasing power, and 4- collective trends and norms; and the linkage variables include: 1- emotional and psychological experience, 2- audience interaction, social communication, and collective identity, 3- content and artistic features of the film, influential traditional and social factors, 4- entertainment and recreation, 5- learning and gaining experience, 6- marketing and advertising factors, digital advertising and campaigns, 7- use of influencers and popular figures, 8- audience experience and face-to-face marketing, 9- data analysis and artificial intelligence, events, and the general social atmosphere.

Keywords: Cinematic film, Customer growth, Marketing

Introduction

The global cinema industry has undergone a massive transformation in recent years, evolving from a traditional entertainment medium into a highly complex, multi-layered service industry. In this contemporary landscape, the cinematic experience is no longer solely defined by the artistic or narrative quality of the film itself, but rather by a vast array of marketing strategies, technological innovations, and socio-cultural interactions that occur long before the audience even steps into the theater. As a form of service marketing, promoting films requires a distinct approach compared to traditional product marketing, as the core offering is an intangible experience highly susceptible to subjective evaluation and emotional resonance (1). The evolution of film marketing in the digital age



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has fundamentally shifted the paradigm of how production studios and independent filmmakers reach their target demographics, moving away from static billboards and print advertisements toward dynamic, interactive, and highly targeted online campaigns (2). Consequently, understanding the intricate web of factors that drive audience attendance and customer growth has become a primary imperative for stakeholders across the entertainment sector.

The advent of the new media environment has revolutionized promotional strategies, demanding that marketers continuously adapt to emerging platforms and changing consumer behaviors. Film marketing strategies in the new media environment heavily rely on real-time data, algorithmic targeting, and multi-channel engagement to build anticipation and secure initial box office momentum (3). Research on the optimization of film marketing strategies specifically highlights the necessity of utilizing new media not merely as a broadcasting tool, but as a space for building community and cultivating a dedicated fan base (4). For instance, the promotion strategies and applications of films on short-video platforms have proven to be exceptionally effective, as these platforms leverage highly engaging, bite-sized content that can easily go viral and penetrate diverse demographic segments (5). Furthermore, the integration of advanced technologies, such as utilizing multi-task learning frameworks that combine GPT-based sentiment analysis with propagation models, allows marketers to predict movie success with unprecedented accuracy by analyzing early online discourse and audience sentiment (6). Other technological advancements, such as automatic deep learning approaches for trailer generation through large language models, demonstrate how artificial intelligence is streamlining the creative aspects of marketing, ensuring that promotional materials are tailored to maximize audience engagement (7). Even techniques like automatic naturalness recognition from acted speech using neural networks play a role in optimizing audiovisual content for maximum psychological impact on potential viewers (8). In this increasingly digitized ecosystem, the role of product placement has also evolved, offering nuanced insights from world cinema regarding how brands seamlessly integrate into narratives to drive both marketing revenue and cultural relevance (9).

Beyond digital mechanics, the sociological and psychological drivers of consumer behavior remain foundational to cinema marketing. Word-of-Mouth (WOM) and its digital counterpart, electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM), represent some of the most powerful catalysts for a film's commercial success. Determining what gets shared and why involves a deep understanding of interpersonal communication and the emotional triggers that compel individuals to recommend an experience to their peers (10). The conceptualization of the eWOM process—specifically regarding its creation, exposure, and evaluation—reveals that audiences heavily rely on the aggregated opinions of others to mitigate the financial and temporal risks associated with choosing a film (11). The development, validation, and application of scales to measure the importance of Word of Mouth underscore its critical role in shaping brand perception and driving initial sales (12). Comparative studies evaluating when Word of Mouth versus traditional marketing drives brand performance most effectively indicate that while direct marketing builds initial awareness, peer recommendations are essential for sustained customer growth and long-term box office endurance (13).

The cinematic experience extends far beyond the confines of the theater, encompassing broader cultural impacts, festival experiences, and social identity formation. Evaluating the taxonomies of video circulation and social impacts reveals that films significantly contribute to cultural development and are deeply influenced by the demographic preferences of their audiences (14). The conceptual framework of the festival customer experience further illustrates how specialized screenings and film events create unique environments that foster intense

emotional connections, brand loyalty, and heightened perceived value among attendees (15). To fully capitalize on these experiential dimensions, cinemas and distributors must adopt robust marketing mix strategies that align with their financial capabilities to ensure sustainable investment and growth within the competitive entertainment sector (16).

At the core of audience retention and customer growth is the complex relationship between perceived quality, customer satisfaction, and subsequent behavioral intentions. Evaluating the impact of functional quality, technical quality, and overall brand image on customer satisfaction across various service sectors demonstrates that tangible service elements and intangible brand prestige are heavily intertwined in the consumer's decision-making process (17). In similar experiential industries, assessing the behavioral intentions of spectators based on functional and outcome quality has proven that superior service delivery directly correlates with a higher likelihood of repeat attendance and positive recommendations (18). Investigating the impact of perceived service quality on customer loyalty further highlights that corporate image and customer satisfaction are significantly influenced by the moderating role of switching costs, meaning that cinemas must provide a consistently superior experience to prevent audiences from migrating to alternative entertainment options (19). Within the specific context of cinema marketing, behavioral intention and the concept of customer sacrifice are deeply influenced by perceived quality and audience satisfaction, dictating whether a viewer feels the experience justified the time and money spent (20). Furthermore, the analysis of the relationship between business ethics, employee customer orientation, and customer sacrifice suggests that an ethical, consumer-focused approach significantly enhances audience trust and long-term loyalty (21). The psychological engagement of the audience also plays a subtle yet profound role; for instance, ethical guides exploring how audiences honor and admire characters—even those who are morally ambiguous—reveal the deep emotional investments that drive persistent franchise loyalty and repeat viewing (22).

While these universal marketing principles apply globally, they must be meticulously adapted to the unique socioeconomic, cultural, and regulatory realities of specific regional markets. The Iranian cinema industry presents a particularly distinct environment characterized by rich artistic traditions, complex regulatory frameworks, and rapidly shifting consumer demographics. Understanding the business strategies of the Iranian cinema industry, particularly the evolution of its business models during and following the unprecedented disruptions of the Corona crisis, is essential for comprehending its current trajectory toward recovery and growth (23). Modeling the relational marketing of Iranian films in the digital age requires an appreciation of how local audiences interact with both domestic storytelling and global digital trends (24). Identifying and ranking the factors affecting the purchasing decisions of Iranian cinema audiences provides critical insights into the specific localized variables—such as ticket pricing, geographical accessibility, and cultural relevance—that dictate box office success (25).

Despite a vibrant production sector, the Iranian cinema market faces significant challenges in maximizing audience attendance. Qualitative studies exploring why segments of the population refrain from going to the cinema in Iran point to a combination of economic constraints, shifting leisure preferences, and occasional disconnects between cinematic narratives and the daily realities of the general public (26). To counter these trends, filmmakers and marketers have historically employed various narrative and promotional strategies; for example, subtly breaking societal taboos has frequently emerged as one of the most important strategies to attract audiences and generate necessary public discourse in Iranian cinema (27). Concurrently, the proliferation of digital platforms has fundamentally altered promotional tactics in the country. Evaluating the factors affecting the marketing of Iranian cinematic films through social media reveals that platforms like Instagram and Telegram serve as the primary

conduits for generating hype, distributing promotional materials, and facilitating direct engagement between filmmakers and the public (28). To systematically understand this multifaceted interaction, researchers must conduct a cluster exploration and explanation of the cinema audiences' purchase journey map based on various offline and online touchpoints, detailing every step from initial awareness to post-viewing evaluation (29).

Given the intricate convergence of digital technology, consumer psychology, service marketing, and distinct regional socio-cultural factors, analyzing the Iranian cinema market requires a robust, scientifically grounded methodological approach. The utilization of comprehensive quantitative and qualitative research methods in educational and psychological sciences provides the necessary foundation for deeply examining complex human behaviors and economic decisions within this context (30). Furthermore, an introduction to qualitative and mixed research methods highlights that employing common approaches in behavioral sciences is critical for developing theoretical models that are both statistically valid and deeply contextualized within the lived experiences of the audience (31). The integration of qualitative thematic exploration with rigorous quantitative validation ensures that the resulting frameworks are not merely theoretical abstractions, but practical, actionable models capable of guiding industry professionals. A significant gap remains in the literature regarding a holistic, empirically validated model that sequentially integrates digital marketing, social influence, economic conditions, and artistic content specifically tailored to the unique parameters of the Iranian cinematic landscape. Addressing this gap is paramount for the revitalization and sustainable expansion of the market, necessitating a comprehensive study that maps the hierarchical relationships between these diverse variables. The aim of this study is to design and validate a comprehensive marketing and customer growth model for cinematic films in the Iranian cinema market using a mixed-methods approach.

Methods and Materials

In terms of purpose, this research falls into the category of applied research. The aim of this study is not only to develop theoretical knowledge in the field of cinema marketing but also to provide practical solutions to improve the effectiveness of advertising campaigns, increase audience engagement, and enhance box office performance; an issue that can lead to the efficiency of the cinema industry's activities and improve its economic productivity (Delavar, 2019). Since the present study attempts to first identify the effective factors in increasing cinematic film customers using qualitative and quantitative methods and then evaluate the validity of this model, it can be considered applied research aimed at applying scientific findings in the field of media management.

The research method in this study is an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design utilizing two qualitative and quantitative phases. This type of research design is applicable in cases where the researcher seeks to explain an emerging phenomenon, test a theory derived from qualitative findings, or construct a new measurement instrument. The statistical population of this research includes a number of specialists (experts) who are authorities in cinematic film marketing, as well as a segment of cinema audiences who have continuous experience and loyalty to cinema halls and cinematic productions. In this section, sampling was conducted using a purposive non-probability judgmental and snowball approach. Purposive sampling is considered a common and effective approach in qualitative research because its main goal is to obtain in-depth and relevant information about the research topic. In this study, a maximum variation sampling strategy was used; a strategy that seeks to include samples with the greatest possible differences in terms of personal, social, or professional characteristics so that the main themes and categories can be identified and analyzed in a broader and richer context. Therefore, the sample size in the

qualitative section of this research was determined not based on statistical criteria, but based on information adequacy and theoretical saturation.

In this research, considering the topic, research questions, and the statistical population, semi-structured interviews were used to collect qualitative data. The interview questions were designed based on the research questions and a review of similar studies, and then reviewed and revised by experts and specialists. The initial and final forms of the interview are provided in the appendix of this report.

To conduct interviews with avid cinema customers, the interviewer first introduced themselves, explained the purpose of the research, and emphasized that all responses would remain confidential and the interview duration would be approximately 30 to 45 minutes; then, the demographic section, including age, gender, marital status, education level, occupation, income range, and place of residence, was asked to determine the respondent's personal and social background. At the end, the respondent was thanked, and the formulated questions were asked of the person. This protocol was designed in a semi-structured manner to allow for follow-up questions and further explanations, and all conversations were recorded.

The questions asked of loyal customers were as follows:

- What do you think are the most important factors in attracting audiences to cinematic films in Iran?
- What are the main motivations of customers for watching cinematic films?
- Does the general public atmosphere of society affect the increase in cinematic film audiences? What factors and how?

To conduct interviews with specialists and experts in the cinema industry, the interviewer first introduced themselves, explained the purpose of the research, and emphasized that all responses would remain confidential and the interview duration was approximately 45 to 60 minutes; then, the background section, including years of professional experience, area of expertise, job title, and managerial background, was asked to determine the basic and professional information of the respondent. Subsequently, the following questions were asked of the experts:

The questions asked of the specialists were as follows:

- What characteristic of cinematic films has the greatest impact on increasing sales and demand?
- What are the marketing strategies for increasing cinematic film customers from your perspective?
- To calculate the reliability of the interviews using the intra-subject agreement method, a coding researcher was requested to participate in this section. For this purpose, three interviews were randomly selected and re-coded by the coding researcher. The inter-coder reliability for the interviews conducted in this research was found to be 91%. Given that this value is greater than 60%, it can be said that the intra-subject reliability of the codings in this research is significant.

In the quantitative section, considering the main objective of the research, which is the marketing and customer growth model for cinematic films in the Iranian cinema market, all cinema audiences in metropolitan cities across the country (including Tehran, Mashhad, Isfahan, Tabriz, Shiraz, Karaj, Ahvaz, Kermanshah, Rasht, and Urmia) were considered as the statistical population. The sample size, according to Cochran's formula for statistical populations with an unknown size, was obtained as 384 individuals, and sampling in this section was conducted using a multi-stage cluster method.

In the quantitative section of the research, a researcher-made questionnaire was prepared utilizing the themes obtained in the qualitative section of the research, and based on that, the validation of the designed model was carried out. The validity and reliability of the research were confirmed.

In this research, quantitative and qualitative methods are used for data analysis. For qualitative analysis, the thematic analysis method in MAXQDA software is used. For quantitative analysis and in order to test the hypotheses with the model components and test the overall model, Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) are used, respectively. Also, to assess the model fit, indices such as CMIN/DF, GFI, IFI, NFI, CFI, and RMSEA are used. For this purpose, AMOS and SPSS software were utilized. Furthermore, to determine the type of model variables, the ISM-MICMAC method was used.

Findings and Results

Presenting the research model based on the findings obtained from the interviews: at this stage, the codes obtained from previous stages were categorized, and overlapping codes were deleted or merged.

Table 1. Final Extraction of Concepts

Row	Variable Title	Corresponding Concepts
1	Content and artistic features of the film	Film genre and subject Technical quality and visual effects Popular actors and well-known director Music and sound effects
2	Influential traditional and social factors	Release timing and screening season Reviews, ratings Nomination and receipt of domestic and international awards Culture, values, and tastes of the target audience
3	Marketing and advertising factors	Brand presence and commercial partnerships with the film In-person and online advertising campaigns Use of influencers for film promotion
4	Content and artistic features of the film	Technical quality and visual effects Popular actors and well-known director Music and sound effects
5	Entertainment and recreation	Escaping daily pressures and stress Enjoyment and happiness while watching the film Experience of excitement and suspense Spending leisure time with family and friends
6	Learning and gaining experience	Understanding other cultures and societies Increasing general and historical knowledge Learning skills or moral messages Strengthening critical thinking and social analysis
7	Social communication and collective identity	Sharing the experience with friends and family Discussing and exchanging opinions about the film Social identity and belonging to cultural groups Following trends and popular films in society
8	Emotional and psychological experience	Empathizing with characters and the story Stimulating positive and negative emotions Enhancing imagination and creativity Deep psychological and spiritual experience
9	Reviews, ratings, and awards	Positive reviews from professional critics High ratings Nomination or receipt of domestic and international awards Audience reception and positive online feedback
10	Economic conditions and audience purchasing power	Purchasing power for cinema tickets Ancillary costs associated with watching a film Cinema discounts and promotional packages Access to suitable and comfortable halls
11	Cultural conditions and social values	Alignment of the film's subject with society's culture Observance of social values and norms in the film Impacts of public attitude towards art and cinema Audience acceptance of different genres
12	Technology and media access	Expansion of social networks and digital advertising

		Possibility of watching movies online and digital streaming services
		Access to online reviews and ratings
		Use of ticket reservation applications and platforms
13	Events and general social atmosphere	Holidays and public occasions
		Cultural and artistic events in society
		Security and tranquility of the public space for going to the cinema
14	Collective trends and norms	Crowd and density of audiences in the halls
		Following cinematic trends and popular films
		Social pressure or friends' recommendations to watch a film
		Word-of-mouth advertising and social feedback
15	Digital advertising and campaigns	Collective identity and belonging to cultural groups
		Advertising on social networks
		Producing teasers and short promotional videos
		Content marketing and publishing related articles or reviews
16	Use of influencers and popular figures	Use of targeted advertising based on audience interests
		Collaborating with active influencers in cyberspace
		Film introduction by actors or recognized figures
		Viral campaigns and online challenges
17	Audience experience and face-to-face marketing	Participation of influencers in creating exclusive content
		Screening previews and cine-clubs for special audiences
		Presence in cultural and artistic events
		Creating interactive experiences in cinema halls
		Contests and entertaining activities to attract audiences

So far, two stages have been conducted to achieve the final research model. In the first stage, the researcher identified the variables related to the research topic through an extensive review of the literature and previous studies and presented an initial model that was described in the second chapter. In the second stage, the researcher conducted a qualitative study and developed the final research model using in-depth interviews with experts in cinematic film marketing.

Table 2. Final Research Model (Combination of Literature Review and Qualitative Section)

Row	Variable Title	Corresponding Concepts
1	Content and artistic features of the film	Film genre and subject Technical quality and visual effects Popular actors and well-known director Music and sound effects
2	Influential traditional and social factors	Release timing and screening season Reviews, ratings Nomination and receipt of domestic and international awards Culture, values, and tastes of the target audience
3	Marketing and advertising factors	Brand presence and commercial partnerships with the film In-person and online advertising campaigns Use of influencers for film promotion
4	Entertainment and recreation	Escaping daily pressures and stress Enjoyment and happiness while watching the film Experience of excitement and suspense Spending leisure time with family and friends
5	Learning and gaining experience	Understanding other cultures and societies Increasing general and historical knowledge Learning skills or moral messages Strengthening critical thinking and social analysis
6	Social communication and collective identity	Sharing the experience with friends and family Discussing and exchanging opinions about the film Social identity and belonging to cultural groups Following trends and popular films in society
7	Emotional and psychological experience	Empathizing with characters and the story

		Stimulating positive and negative emotions
		Enhancing imagination and creativity
		Deep psychological and spiritual experience
8	Reviews, ratings, and awards	Positive reviews from professional critics
		High ratings
		Nomination or receipt of domestic and international awards
9	Economic conditions and audience purchasing power	Audience reception and positive online feedback
		Purchasing power for cinema tickets
		Ancillary costs associated with watching a film
		Cinema discounts and promotional packages
10	Technology and media access	Access to suitable and comfortable halls
		Expansion of social networks and digital advertising
		Possibility of watching movies online and digital streaming services
		Access to online reviews and ratings
11	Events and general social atmosphere	Use of ticket reservation applications and platforms
		Holidays and public occasions
		Cultural and artistic events in society
		Security and tranquility of the public space for going to the cinema
12	Collective trends and norms	Crowd and density of audiences in the halls
		Following cinematic trends and popular films
		Social pressure or friends' recommendations to watch a film
		Word-of-mouth advertising and social feedback
13	Digital advertising and campaigns	Collective identity and belonging to cultural groups
		Advertising on social networks
		Producing teasers and short promotional videos
		Content marketing and publishing related articles or reviews
14	Use of influencers and popular figures	Use of targeted advertising based on audience interests
		Collaborating with active influencers in cyberspace
		Film introduction by actors or recognized figures
		Viral campaigns and online challenges
15	Audience experience and face-to-face marketing	Participation of influencers in creating exclusive content
		Screening previews and cine-clubs for special audiences
		Presence in cultural and artistic events
		Creating interactive experiences in cinema halls
16	Data analysis and artificial intelligence	Contests and entertaining activities to attract audiences
		Content personalization algorithms
		Sentiment analysis
17	Audience interaction	MTL/SIR prediction models
		Likes
		Shares
		Comments
		Hashtags
		Participation in content creation

In the demographic information section, the respondents' profiles have been separately examined in the form of the following table:

Table 3. Demographic Information of Respondents

Variable	Dimensions	Percentage (%)	Variable	Dimensions	Percentage (%)
Age	Under 20years	31	Education	Diploma and below	35
	Between 21and 30	39		Associate degree	10
	Between 31and 40	18		Bachelor's degree	40
	Over 40years	12		Master's degree and above	15
Gender	Male	46	Marital Status	Single	58
	Female	54		Married	42

Table 4. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the Questionnaire

Row	Variable Title	Question Number	Cronbach's Alpha	CR
1	Content and artistic features of the film	Questions 1to 4	0.88	0.63
2	Influential traditional and social factors	Questions 5to 8	0.84	0.65
3	Marketing and advertising factors	Questions 9to 11	0.86	0.66
4	Entertainment and recreation	Questions 12to 15	0.89	0.61
5	Learning and gaining experience	Questions 16to 19	0.86	0.62
6	Social communication and collective identity	Questions 20to 23	0.84	0.68
7	Emotional and psychological experience	Questions 24to 27	0.83	0.60
8	Reviews, ratings, and awards	Questions 28to 31	0.90	0.69
9	Economic conditions and audience purchasing power	Questions 32to 35	0.91	0.63
10	Technology and media access	Questions 36to 39	0.79	0.66
11	Events and general social atmosphere	Questions 40to 43	0.79	0.64
12	Collective trends and norms	Questions 44to 47	0.80	0.59
13	Digital advertising and campaigns	Questions 48to 51	0.83	0.58
14	Use of influencers and popular figures	Questions 52to 55	0.81	0.60
15	Audience experience and face-to-face marketing	Questions 56to 59	0.80	0.57
16	Data analysis and artificial intelligence	Questions 60to 62	0.84	0.53
17	Audience interaction	Questions 63to 66	0.85	0.58
Total	All variables	66Questions	0.81	0.61

The above table shows the reliability indices, including Cronbach's alpha coefficient and Composite Reliability (CR), for the various research variables (a total of 66items). As observed, all Cronbach's alpha values for the seventeen variables are above the permissible threshold of 0.7and range from 0.79(for technology and events) to 0.91(for economic conditions), indicating highly desirable internal consistency of the measurement instrument. Additionally, the total Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.81, and the total CR value is reported as 0.61, which confirms the acceptable reliability of the questionnaire.

Table 4. Convergent Validity Coefficients of Research Variables

Row	Variable Title	AVE
1	Content and artistic features of the film	0.69
2	Influential traditional and social factors	0.71
3	Marketing and advertising factors	0.72
4	Entertainment and recreation	0.77
5	Learning and gaining experience	0.78
6	Social communication and collective identity	0.74
7	Emotional and psychological experience	0.79
8	Reviews, ratings, and awards	0.71
9	Economic conditions and audience purchasing power	0.70
10	Technology and media access	0.69
11	Events and general social atmosphere	0.72
12	Collective trends and norms	0.77
13	Digital advertising and campaigns	0.78
14	Use of influencers and popular figures	0.74
15	Audience experience and face-to-face marketing	0.80
16	Data analysis and artificial intelligence	0.76
17	Audience interaction	0.78
Total	All variables	0.79

In this table, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values are presented to examine the convergent validity of the research constructs. The condition for establishing convergent validity is that the AVE value must be greater than 0.5. According to the table data, all variables have AVE values above this threshold; the lowest value corresponds to the variables "content features" and "technology" with 0.69, and the highest value corresponds to

“audience experience” with 0.80. The overall mean of this index is also 0.79, indicating that the constructs have well explained the variance of their respective items, thereby confirming the convergent validity of the model.

Table 5. Model Fit Indices

Index	Specific Name	Acceptable Level
Absolute Fit Indices		
Chi-square	χ^2	$2df \leq \chi^2 \leq 3df$
Goodness of Fit Index	<i>GFI</i>	Minimum 0.90
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation	<i>RMSEA</i>	Maximum 0.08
Root Mean Square Residual	<i>RMR</i>	Maximum 0.08
Incremental Fit Indices		
Tucker-Lewis Index	<i>TLI</i>	Minimum 0.9
Normed Fit Index	<i>NFI</i>	Minimum 0.9
Comparative Fit Index	<i>CFI</i>	Minimum 0.9
Parsimonious Fit Index		
Normed Chi-square	χ^2/df	$2 \leq \chi^2/df \leq 5$

The current table introduces the model fit evaluation indices in three general categories: absolute, incremental, and parsimonious indices, along with the acceptable level for each. Accordingly, to confirm the adequate fit of the model, indices such as *GFI*, *TLI*, *NFI*, and *CFI* must have values of at least 0.9. Moreover, estimation error indices such as *RMSEA* and *RMR* should be at most 0.08. Furthermore, the value of the normed chi-square (the ratio of χ^2 to the degrees of freedom) must fall within the range of 2 to 5 so that the model is confirmed in terms of economy and parsimony (parsimonious fit).

Table 6. Confirmatory Factor Analysis of Research Variables

Latent Variable	Items (Questions)	Factor Loading	Status	Acceptable Level
Content and artistic features of the film	Film genre and subject (q1)	0.83	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Technical quality and visual effects (q2)	0.83	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Popular actors and well-known director (q3)	0.61	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Music and sound effects (q4)	0.59	Confirmed	> 0.30
Influential traditional and social factors	Release timing and screening season (q5)	0.73	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Reviews, ratings (q6)	0.78	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Nomination and receipt of domestic and international awards (q7)	0.79	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Culture, values, and tastes of the target audience (q8)	0.73	Confirmed	> 0.30
Marketing and advertising factors	Brand presence and commercial partnerships with the film (q9)	0.66	Confirmed	> 0.30
	In-person and online advertising campaigns (q10)	0.83	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Use of influencers for film promotion (q11)	0.78	Confirmed	> 0.30
Entertainment and recreation	Escaping daily pressures and stress (q12)	0.74	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Enjoyment and happiness while watching the film (q13)	0.74	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Experience of excitement and suspense (q14)	0.65	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Spending leisure time with family and friends (q15)	0.78	Confirmed	> 0.30
Learning and gaining experience	Understanding other cultures and societies (q16)	0.65	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Increasing general and historical knowledge (q17)	0.85	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Learning skills or moral messages (q18)	0.48	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Strengthening critical thinking and social analysis (q19)	0.47	Confirmed	> 0.30
Social communication and collective identity	Sharing the experience with friends and family (q20)	0.54	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Discussing and exchanging opinions about the film (q21)	0.52	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Social identity and belonging to cultural groups (q22)	0.56	Confirmed	> 0.30

Emotional and psychological experience	Following trends and popular films in society (q23)	0.50	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Empathizing with characters and the story (q24)	0.81	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Stimulating positive and negative emotions (q25)	0.88	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Enhancing imagination and creativity (q26)	0.72	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Deep psychological and spiritual experience (q27)	0.92	Confirmed	> 0.30
Reviews, ratings, and awards	Positive reviews from professional critics (q28)	0.83	Confirmed	> 0.30
	High ratings (q29)	0.86	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Nomination or receipt of domestic and international awards (q30)	0.84	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Audience reception and positive online feedback (q31)	0.70	Confirmed	> 0.30
Economic conditions and audience purchasing power	Purchasing power for cinema tickets (q32)	0.96	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Ancillary costs associated with watching a film (q33)	0.88	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Cinema discounts and promotional packages (q34)	0.96	Confirmed	> 0.30
Technology and media access	Access to suitable and comfortable halls (q35)	0.89	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Expansion of social networks and digital advertising (q36)	0.58	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Possibility of watching movies online and digital streaming services (q37)	0.79	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Access to online reviews and ratings (q38)	0.61	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Use of ticket reservation applications and platforms (q39)	0.64	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Holidays and public occasions (q44)	0.50	Confirmed	> 0.30
Events and general social atmosphere	Cultural and artistic events in society (q45)	0.56	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Security and tranquility of the public space for going to the cinema (q46)	0.75	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Crowd and density of audiences in the halls (q47)	0.64	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Following cinematic trends and popular films (q44)	0.83	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Social pressure or friends' recommendations to watch a film (q45)	0.81	Confirmed	> 0.30
Collective trends and norms	Word-of-mouth advertising and social feedback (q46)	0.91	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Collective identity and belonging to cultural groups (q47)	0.80	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Advertising on social networks (q48)	0.66	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Producing teasers and short promotional videos (q49)	0.64	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Content marketing and publishing related articles or reviews (q50)	0.63	Confirmed	> 0.30
Digital advertising and campaigns	Use of targeted advertising based on audience interests (q51)	0.71	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Collaborating with active influencers in cyberspace (q52)	0.54	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Film introduction by actors or recognized figures (q53)	0.64	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Viral campaigns and online challenges (q54)	0.77	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Participation of influencers in creating exclusive content (q55)	0.82	Confirmed	> 0.30
Use of influencers and popular figures	Screening previews and cine-clubs for special audiences (q56)	0.76	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Presence in cultural and artistic events (q57)	0.79	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Creating interactive experiences in cinema halls (q58)	0.70	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Contests and entertaining activities to attract audiences (q59)	0.80	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Content personalization algorithms (q60)	0.78	Confirmed	> 0.30
Audience experience and face-to-face marketing	Sentiment analysis (q61)	0.69	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Prediction models (q62)	0.76	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Likes (q63)	0.69	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Shares (q64)	0.69	Confirmed	> 0.30
	Comments and hashtags (q65)	0.80	Confirmed	> 0.30
Data analysis and artificial intelligence	Participation in content creation (q66)	0.90	Confirmed	> 0.30
Audience interaction				

After finalizing the factor confirmation of each of the introduced related variables, to form and complete the structural self-interaction matrix, the experts introduced earlier were asked to compare the variables pairwise and determine the type of relationship between them using the letters *X*, *V*, *A*, and *O*.

Table 7: Selected Variables

Row	Variable Title
1	Content and artistic features of the film
2	Influential traditional and social factors
3	Marketing and advertising factors
4	Entertainment and recreation
5	Learning and gaining experience
6	Social communication and collective identity
7	Emotional and psychological experience
8	Reviews, ratings, and awards
9	Economic conditions and audience purchasing power
10	Technology and media access
11	Events and general social atmosphere
12	Collective trends and norms
13	Digital advertising and campaigns
14	Use of influencers and popular figures
15	Audience experience and face-to-face marketing
16	Data analysis and artificial intelligence
17	Audience interaction

Table 8. Structural Self-Interaction Matrix of the obtained variables

[illegible]

To calculate the initial reachability matrix, we proceed as follows:

If the symbol of cell ij is the letter V , the number 1 is placed in that cell and the number 0 in the symmetrical cell.

If the symbol of cell ij is the letter A , the number 0 is placed in that cell and the number 1 in the symmetrical cell.

If the symbol of cell ij is the letter X , the number 1 is placed in that cell and the number 1 in the symmetrical cell.

If the symbol of cell ij is the letter O , the number 0 is placed in that cell and the number 0 in the symmetrical cell.

Table 10. Initial Reachability Matrix of primary variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1
2	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	0	1
3	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	0
4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
5	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1
6	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	1
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

In this stage, the matrix has been adapted and the Final Reachability Matrix (FRM) has been created. In the initial reachability matrix, the following rule is checked, and if the rule does not hold, the described rule is applied. If criterion A has a relationship with criterion B, and criterion B also has a relationship with criterion C, then criterion A must also have a relationship with criterion C. After identifying the criteria, those criteria that had a value of zero (0), upon meeting the above condition, now receive a value of one (1) and are displayed as 1*.

Table 11. Initial Reachability Matrix of Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	Driving Power
1	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1	17
2	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1*	1	1	1*	1*	1*	1	17
3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1	1*	17
4	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1*	17
5	1	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1*	1	1	17
6	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1*	1	1	12
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1	10
8	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	1*	0	1*	1	1	1	1	9
9	0	0	0	0	0	1*	1	1	1	1	1*	1	1*	1*	1	1	0	11
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1*	0	1	1	1	6
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1*	0	1	1*	1	6
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1*	1*	1	0	0	0	1	1	5
13	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1*	0	1*	1*	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1*	0	1*	1	1*	1	1	1	1	1	10
15	0	0	0	0	0	1*	0	0	0	1*	1	1*	1	1*	1	1	1	9
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1*	1*	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	1*	1*	0	1	5
Dependence	5	5	5	5	5	6	12	11	7	17	17	12	14	12	15	17	17	

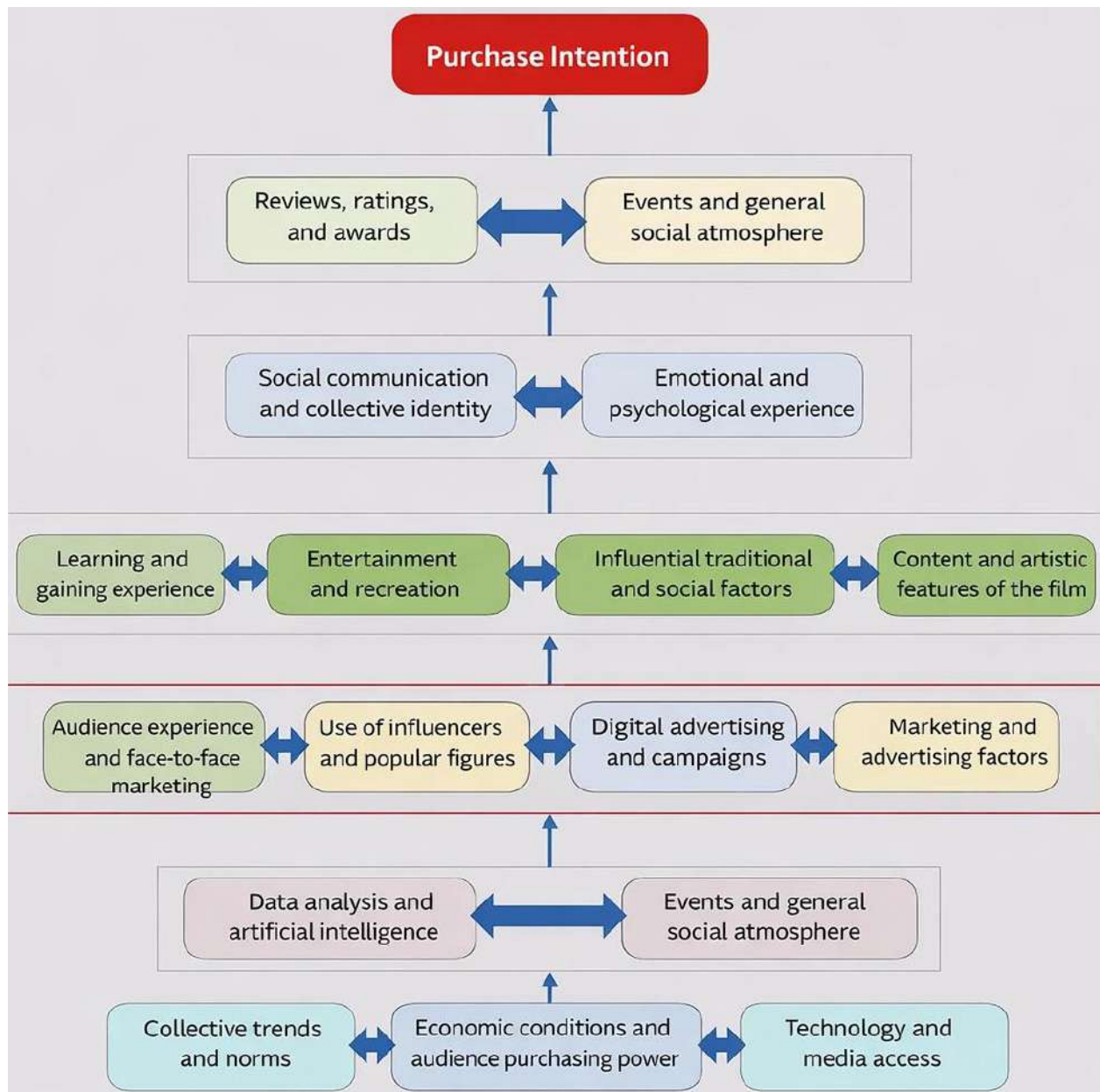
In this stage, the affecting and affected criteria are determined. Three sets are defined: reachability, antecedent, and intersection. The variables for which the obtained intersection is identical to their reachability set are considered top-level factors in the ISM hierarchy, meaning these factors have less (or no) effect on other variables. After identifying the top-level factors, those factors are eliminated from the list. This iteration continues until all variables are determined. The identified levels will be used in constructing the final ISM model.

Table 12. Calculation of Dependence and Driving Power of variables

Element P(i)	Reachability Set	Antecedent Set	Intersection Set $R(P_i) \cap A(P_i)$	Levels
1	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11 -12-13-14-15 -16-17	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	
2	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11 -12-13-14-15 -16-17	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	
3	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11 -12-13-14-15 -16-17	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	
4	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11 -12-13-14-15 -16-17	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	
5	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11 -12-13-14-15 -16-17	1-2-3-4-5	1-2-3-4-5	
6	6-7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14 -15-16-17	1-2-3-4-5-6	6	
7	7-8-10-11-12-13-14-15-16 -17	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-13 -14-15	7-8-13-14-15	
8	7-8-10-11-12-13-14-15-16 -17	7-8-13-14	7-8-13-14-15	
9	7-8-9-10-11-12-13-14-15 -16-17	1-2-3-4-5-6-9	9	
10	10-11-13-15-16-17	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 -11-12-13-14 -15-16-17	10-11-13-15 -16-17	
11	10-11-13-15-16-17	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 -11-12-13-14 -15-16-17	10-11-13-15 -16-17	
12	10-11-12-16-17	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-12 -13-14-15	12	
13	7-8-10-11-12-13-14-15-16 -17	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 -11-12-13-14 -15	7-8-10-11-13 -14-15	
14	7-8-10-11-12-13-14-15-16 -17	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-13 -14-15	7-8-13-14-15	
15	7-10-11-12-13-14-15-16-17	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 -11-12-13-14 -15-17	7-10-11-13-14 -15-17	
16	10-11-16-17	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 -11-12-13-14 -15-16-17	10-11-16-17	
17	10-11-15-16-17	1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 -11-12-13-14 -15-16-17	10-11-15-16 -17	

Table 13. Classification of variables

Level	Factors
1	Final behavioral consequence
2	Events and general social atmosphere, reviews, ratings, and awards
3	Emotional and psychological experience, audience interaction, and social communication and collective identity
4	Content and artistic features of the film, influential traditional and social factors, entertainment and recreation, learning and gaining experience
5	Marketing and advertising factors, digital advertising and campaigns, use of influencers and popular figures, audience experience and face-to-face marketing
6	Data analysis and artificial intelligence, events and general social atmosphere
7	Technology and media access, economic conditions and audience purchasing power
	Collective trends and norms

**Figure 1: Hierarchical ISM-based model for the obtained variables**

The model based on Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) for the variables of the marketing model and increasing cinema film audiences in the Iranian cinema market in Figure (1) also shows that these variables are categorized into 7 levels, and those variables located at the lowest level have the highest driving power, and respectively, as we step upwards, the driving power decreases and the dependence power increases. As observed in Figure (1), technology and media access, economic conditions and audience purchasing power, and collective trends and norms have the highest driving power. If these factors are enhanced, naturally, the probability of the occurrence of other factors will also increase. In this way, if the level seven factors increase, consequently the probability of the occurrence of level six factors, namely data analysis and artificial intelligence, and events and general social atmosphere, increases. As a result of the increase in level six factors, level five factors [increase], and similarly up to higher levels, to level two, and ultimately level one, which has the highest dependence power, the probability of the occurrence of the factors increases. Thus, the probability of increasing cinema film audiences in the cinema market becomes greater.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to design and validate a comprehensive marketing and customer growth model for cinematic films in the Iranian cinema market using a rigorous mixed-methods approach. Through an exploratory sequential design, the qualitative phase identified 17 core variables encompassing 66 components, which were subsequently validated through Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) demonstrating high reliability and convergent validity. Furthermore, the Interpretive Structural Modeling (ISM) and MICMAC analysis successfully organized these 17 variables into a seven-level hierarchical structure. This hierarchy delineates the complex pathway from highly independent, driving macro-environmental factors down to the ultimate dependent variable of audience purchase intention. The configuration of this model confirms that cinematic success is not an isolated event but a sequential chain of technological, economic, marketing, and psychological triggers. Analyzing these results provides a deeply contextualized understanding of the Iranian cinema industry, highlighting how foundational elements systematically drive audience behavior.

At the base of the hierarchical model (Level 7), characterized by the highest driving power and lowest dependence, are “Technology and media access,” “Economic conditions and audience purchasing power,” and “Collective trends and norms.” The positioning of these variables suggests that before any marketing message can resonate or artistic content can be appreciated, fundamental structural and societal criteria must be met. The critical role of economic conditions aligns with qualitative investigations into why segments of the Iranian population avoid the cinema, identifying financial constraints and shifting purchasing power as primary barriers to entry (26). Recognizing these economic realities is vital when ranking the factors affecting the purchasing decision of Iranian cinema audiences, as basic affordability supersedes artistic preference (25). Concurrently, technology and media access dictate how audiences interface with cinematic content in the modern era. The evolution of film marketing in the digital age requires audiences to have seamless access to digital platforms where movie awareness is generated (2). Furthermore, collective trends and norms serve as the cultural bedrock that dictates what type of content is socially acceptable or desirable, reinforcing the notion that services marketing in the entertainment sector is inherently different from standard consumer goods due to its deep reliance on collective social identity (1).

Moving upward in the hierarchy, Level 6 introduces “Data analysis and artificial intelligence” alongside “Events and general social atmosphere.” The foundation of technology and media access (Level 7) directly enables the

extraction and utilization of big data. The significance of data analysis and AI in predicting and shaping audience behavior is strongly supported by recent technological advancements in the field. For instance, predicting movie success through multi-task learning frameworks that combine GPT-based sentiment analysis with propagation models relies entirely on the data generated by the digital media access of the masses (6). Similarly, employing automatic deep learning approaches for trailer generation through large language models allows studios to tailor promotional materials to the exact specifications derived from data analytics (7). Even techniques like automatic naturalness recognition from acted speech using neural networks play a role in optimizing content (8). These analytical tools allow marketers to accurately read the general social atmosphere, ensuring that upcoming promotional efforts are contextually relevant to the current societal mood.

Level 5 represents the actionable promotional strategies: “Marketing and advertising factors,” “Digital advertising and campaigns,” “Use of influencers and popular figures,” and “Audience experience and face-to-face marketing.” Driven by the analytical insights of Level 6, these factors dictate how a film is actively pushed into the public consciousness. Research on the optimization of film marketing strategy prominently features the transition toward new media, emphasizing that targeted digital campaigns are now the primary vehicle for audience acquisition (4). Film marketing strategies in the new media environment thrive on multi-channel engagement, utilizing influencers to bridge the gap between corporate advertising and authentic peer recommendations (3). The application of short-video platforms for promotional strategies has proven particularly effective, capturing the fragmented attention spans of modern audiences through highly engaging, viral content (5). In the specific context of Iran, evaluating the factors affecting the marketing of cinematic films through social media confirms that platforms like Instagram are indispensable for executing these digital campaigns and leveraging influencer reach (28). Furthermore, modeling the relational marketing of Iranian films in the digital age underscores the necessity of combining digital outreach with high-quality audience experiences to build lasting relationships (24).

As audiences are drawn in by marketing efforts, Level 4 outlines the core product attributes and social resonance: “Content and artistic features of the film,” “Influential traditional and social factors,” “Entertainment and recreation,” and “Learning and gaining experience.” This level demonstrates that marketing merely initiates contact; the film’s intrinsic qualities must sustain the engagement. For Iranian cinema, subtly breaking taboos has frequently emerged as the most important strategy to attract audiences, providing content that is culturally poignant and socially relevant (27). Evaluating the taxonomies of video circulation and social impacts reveals that films serve not only as entertainment but as tools for cultural development and learning (14). The strategic use of product placement within this content also bridges the gap between digital marketing revenue and cinematic realism, seamlessly integrating brands into the entertainment experience (9).

The consumption of this content directly triggers Level 3 variables: “Emotional and psychological experience” and “Audience interaction and Social communication and collective identity.” The artistic and entertainment values foster deep psychological engagement. The conceptual framework of the festival customer experience highlights how cinematic events cultivate intense emotional connections and communal identities among attendees (15). The psychological complexity of this engagement is evident when examining how audiences process narratives, such as honoring and admiring immoral or complex characters, which requires profound psychological investment (22). The intersection of these emotional experiences with perceived technical and functional quality ultimately dictates customer satisfaction, as seen in parallel experiential service industries (17).

The emotional and psychological outcomes naturally evolve into Level 2: “Reviews, ratings, and awards.” Highly satisfied or highly dissatisfied audiences are compelled to share their experiences. Determining what gets shared and why through interpersonal communication underscores that intense emotional arousal—cultivated in Level 3—is the primary driver of Word of Mouth (10). The conceptualization of the electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) process dictates that these online reviews and ratings become crucial informational assets for subsequent potential viewers (11). The development and application of scales to measure the importance of Word of Mouth confirm its outsized impact on brand perception and trust (12). Comparative analyses of when Word of Mouth versus traditional marketing drives brand performance most effectively reveal that while initial marketing (Level 5) generates early awareness, reviews and WOM (Level 2) are responsible for sustained box office momentum (13).

Finally, the entire hierarchical system culminates in Level 1: “Final behavioral consequence,” which encompasses the ultimate purchase intention and customer growth. This is the most dependent variable in the ISM model. Within cinema marketing, behavioral intention and customer sacrifice are deeply influenced by the preceding cascade of perceived quality, marketing touchpoints, and audience satisfaction (20). By conducting a cluster exploration and explanation of the cinema audiences’ purchase journey map, it becomes evident that the final decision to purchase a ticket is the sum of digital, social, and psychological interactions (29). Evaluating behavioral intentions based on outcome quality across sports and entertainment confirms that superior, ethically delivered experiences directly correlate with positive financial outcomes and loyalty (18). Furthermore, addressing business ethics and employee customer orientation minimizes customer sacrifice, ensuring the final behavioral consequence is positive (21). Maintaining this loyalty is heavily influenced by the moderating role of switching costs and corporate image, requiring cinemas to consistently deliver value across all hierarchical levels (19). Successfully navigating this complex model is essential for modernizing the business strategies of the Iranian cinema industry, especially when recovering from systemic shocks like the Corona crisis (23), and aligns with the necessity of deploying effective marketing mix strategies tailored to financial capabilities (16). Utilizing robust quantitative and qualitative research methods ensures this model remains both statistically valid and practically applicable (30, 31).

Despite the rigorous mixed-methods approach and the comprehensive nature of the developed hierarchical model, this study is subject to several limitations. First, the quantitative phase of the research relied on a cross-sectional survey design, which captures audience perceptions and behavioral intentions at a single point in time. Because the cinema market and societal trends are highly dynamic, this limits the ability to establish definitive long-term causal relationships between the identified variables. Second, while the sample was drawn from multiple major metropolitan areas in Iran to ensure diversity, the findings may still be heavily influenced by the specific socio-cultural, economic, and regulatory constraints unique to the Iranian context. Consequently, generalizing these results to international cinema markets with different regulatory environments and economic stabilities should be done with caution. Finally, relying on self-reported data for behavioral intentions and psychological experiences introduces the potential for response bias, where participants might provide socially desirable answers rather than reflecting their true consumer behaviors.

Based on the findings and limitations of the current study, several avenues for future research are recommended. Future studies should consider employing longitudinal research designs to track how shifting economic conditions and evolving technological access over time directly impact the hierarchical flow of the proposed model, particularly affecting the transition from marketing exposure to final purchase intention. Additionally, conducting comparative cross-cultural studies would be highly beneficial to determine which variables in the model are universally applicable

and which are strictly localized to the Iranian market. Researchers could also deeply investigate the Level 6 variables by practically applying machine learning algorithms to actual Iranian box office data and social media sentiment, testing the predictive validity of the model's data analysis component. Exploring the precise mechanisms of how different genres of Iranian film interact distinctly with the identified marketing and psychological factors would also yield more granular, genre-specific marketing frameworks.

For industry practitioners, filmmakers, and cinema managers, the findings of this study offer actionable strategic guidelines. Because economic conditions and technology access serve as the ultimate driving forces, cinemas must adopt dynamic and flexible pricing models, such as discounted family packages or off-peak pricing, to mitigate economic barriers and increase affordability. Furthermore, marketing budgets should be heavily reallocated toward data-driven digital campaigns and influencer partnerships, as these are proven to be the critical intermediary steps that bridge societal trends with the film's artistic content. Studios must also recognize that marketing does not end upon release; they should actively facilitate and monitor post-viewing audience interactions, leveraging user-generated content, online reviews, and interactive social media campaigns to stimulate positive electronic Word of Mouth. By treating the cinema visit as a holistic psychological and social event rather than a mere transaction, practitioners can cultivate sustained customer loyalty and drive long-term box office growth.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

All ethical principles were adhered in conducting and writing this article.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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