

To Investigate the Preferences of Audiences to Watch Gujarati Films

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Abstract: Indian cinema has evolved into a diverse ecosystem encompassing various regional industries, including Bollywood, Tollywood, Kollywood, Mollywood, and Gollywood, and others, each contributing to the cultural tapestry of the nation. Hirsch (1972) observed that “Films or movies are cultural goods defined as ‘non-material goods’ directed at public consumers for whom they generally serve an aesthetic or expressive, rather than utilitarian function”. The objectives of the research are to explore key factors that shape audience preferences for Gujarati films over other films. And another one to investigate variations in audience preferences for Gujarati films that vary across the demographic groups, and the frequency of watching Gujarati films. The research paper aims to explore the nuanced dynamics of changing audience preferences in Gujarati films, examining the factors driving these shifts, the impact on filmmaking trends, and the implications for the industry's future. The changing audience preferences in Gujarati films have had a profound impact on filmmaking trends, influencing every aspect of the creative process, from scriptwriting and casting to production design and marketing strategies. Filmmakers are constantly innovating and adapting to meet the evolving demands of audiences, striving to strike a balance between artistic integrity and commercial viability.

Key words: Gujarati Films, Audience preference, Film making, and Emerging trends.

I. Introduction

The Indian film industry, often called Bollywood, is a multifaceted and dynamic entity that stands as one of the largest and most influential entertainment industries globally. With a rich history dating back over a century, Indian cinema has evolved into a diverse ecosystem encompassing various regional industries, including Bollywood, Tollywood, Kollywood, Mollywood, and Gollywood, and others, each contributing to the cultural tapestry of the nation. Economically, the Indian film industry holds significant importance, contributing to the country's GDP, employment generation, and revenue streams through box office collections, ancillary markets, and international collaborations. Technological advancements have revolutionized Indian filmmaking, from the early days of silent films to the digital age, with visual effects, CGI (Computer-generated Imagery), and digital platforms reshaping production, distribution, and exhibition methods. The globalization of Indian cinema has expanded its reach beyond national borders, with Bollywood films garnering international acclaim and Indian talent making waves in Hollywood. Despite its global reach, the Indian film industry remains rooted in its cultural heritage, exploring diverse themes, genres, and storytelling techniques that reflect the country's rich history, legacy, social dynamics, and cultural nuances. However, the industry also faces challenges such as piracy, censorship, and talent retention, amidst opportunities for growth and innovation in emerging markets, digital platforms, and content formats. As Indian cinema continues to evolve and adapt to changing trends and technologies, its enduring legacy and global impact reaffirm its position as a powerhouse of creativity, inspiration, and cultural expression, poised to shape the future of entertainment on a worldwide scale.

Films as a Product

Hirsch (1972) observed that “Films or movies are cultural goods defined as ‘non-material good’ directed at public consumers for whom they generally serve an aesthetic or expressive, rather than utilitarian function”. Different from any other product, it is similar in some aspects, like “highly customized”. William Goldman's (1983) classic statement is that in the movie business, “nobody knows anything”. It is a highly uncertain business because there is no perfect script or winning formula. Everything depends upon the imagination of the creative script, marketing budget, and acceptance among the audience. Like any other product, important parameters include financial ratios like ROI, Price, Promotion, Target Audience, Sales, Distribution, and IPRs. Every movie is like starting a new business because the same production or the same characters may make the film hit as well as flop at different times. A successful movie is not an indicator of future success because every film is unique in its own way.

Gujarati Film Industry

The Gujarati film industry, with its rich cultural heritage and vibrant storytelling traditions, has undergone a remarkable journey of resurgence and evolution in recent years. From its humble beginnings to its current status as a burgeoning regional powerhouse, Gujarati cinema has navigated through various challenges and triumphs, shaping the cultural landscape of Gujarat and leaving an indelible mark on Indian cinema. In this comprehensive analysis, we will explore the history, growth, challenges, and prospects of the Gujarati film industry, examining its contributions to the cultural, social, and economic fabric of Gujarat and beyond.

Overview

The roots of Gujarati cinema can be traced back to the early 20th century, with the screening of silent films and stage plays in Gujarat's urban centers. The first Gujarati film, "Narsinhmehta," directed by Nanubhai Vakil, was released in 1932, marking the formal beginning of Gujarati cinema. Over the decades, Gujarati filmmakers experimented with various genres, themes, and storytelling techniques, reflecting the cultural diversity and societal dynamics of Gujarat. In the post-independence era, Gujarati cinema witnessed a golden age with the release of iconic films like "Kanku" (1969), "Upkar" (1971), and "Bhavni Bhavai" (1980), which garnered critical acclaim and commercial success. These films explored themes of social justice, rural life, and cultural identity, resonating with audiences across Gujarat and beyond. However, by the 1990s, Gujarati cinema began to face challenges such as dwindling audiences, competition from Bollywood, and a lack of investment in infrastructure and talent development.

Evolution and Resurgence of Gujarati Film industry

The resurgence of the Gujarati film industry in the 21st century can be attributed to several factors that include:

Emergence of New Talent

The influx of young filmmakers, actors, writers, and technicians injected new energy and creativity into Gujarati cinema. These individuals brought fresh perspectives, innovative ideas, and a passion for storytelling, revitalizing the industry and expanding its horizons.

Technological Advancements

The advent of digital filmmaking technologies, editing software, and visual effects tools democratized the filmmaking process, making it more accessible and affordable for aspiring filmmakers. This technological revolution empowered filmmakers to produce high-quality films with limited resources, enabling them to compete with mainstream Indian cinema.

Improved Infrastructure

The development of modern production facilities, multiplexes, and digital distribution platforms provided Gujarati filmmakers with the necessary infrastructure and resources to produce, promote, and distribute their films effectively. This enhanced infrastructure raised the production values of Gujarati films and expanded their reach and visibility, attracting a wider audience base.

Changing Audience Preferences:

Evolving audience tastes, expectations, and demands played a significant role in shaping the resurgence of Gujarati cinema. Audiences today seek films that offer engaging narratives, relatable characters, and thematic depth, driving filmmakers to explore diverse genres, themes, and storytelling techniques to cater to their preferences.

Challenges and Opportunities of Gujarati Film industry

Despite the resurgence, the Gujarati film industry continues to face various challenges and opportunities that shape its growth trajectory.

Limited Screen Space. The scarcity of screens dedicated to Gujarati films in multiplexes and single-screen theatres remains a significant challenge for the industry. Competition from Bollywood and other regional industries often results in Gujarati films being marginalized or relegated to limited showtimes, hindering their ability to reach wider audiences.

Content Quality and Diversity. While the quality of Gujarati films has improved in recent years, there is still a need for greater diversity and innovation in content. Filmmakers must continue to explore diverse themes, genres, and storytelling techniques to cater to the diverse tastes and preferences of audiences.

Infrastructure Development. Despite improvements in infrastructure, there is a need for further investment in modern production facilities, post-production studios, and training institutes. Enhancing infrastructure will not only raise the production values of Gujarati films but also attract more investment and talent to the industry.

Marketing and Distribution. Effective marketing and distribution strategies are essential for the success of Gujarati films. Filmmakers must leverage digital platforms, social media, and grassroots marketing initiatives to reach audiences effectively and generate buzz around their films.

Talent Retention and Development. Nurturing and retaining talent is crucial for the long-term growth and sustainability of the Gujarati film industry. Investments in talent development, training programs, and industry initiatives are needed to foster a vibrant ecosystem of creative professionals.

Gujarati Films at glance. Gujarati cinema, often referred to as "Gollywood," has a rich history that dates back to the 1930s. While it had its ups and downs over the decades, the industry has seen a resurgence in recent years with the release of critically acclaimed and commercially successful films. Here are some notable points about Gujarati films:

Early Years: Gujarati cinema began in the 1930s with the silent film "Narsinh Mehta," directed by Nanubhai Vakil. This marked the beginning of Gujarati filmmaking.

Golden Era: The 1950s and 1960s are considered the golden era of Gujarati cinema. During this time, several classic films were made, including "Gujaratnath", "HunshiHunshilal", and "LiludiDharti".

Decline: Despite its initial success, Gujarati cinema faced a decline in the following decades due to various factors, including the popularity of Hindi cinema, lack of infrastructure, and limited audience base.

Resurgence: In recent years, there has been a resurgence in Gujarati cinema with the emergence of new talent and fresh storytelling. Films like "Chhello Divas," "Wrong Side Raju," and "Love Ni Bhavai" have received critical acclaim and performed well at the box office.

Diverse Genres: Gujarati cinema now explores a wide range of genres, including comedy, drama, romance, and social issues. Filmmakers are experimenting with storytelling techniques and production values to appeal to a broader audience.

Recognition: Gujarati films have gained recognition not only within India but also on the international stage. Some films have been selected for prestigious film festivals, garnering attention and accolades.

II. Literature Review

Drake (2008) noted that the market for Hollywood, where films operate under what economists call "asymmetric information"-incomplete information between producers and consumers, leads to difficulties in reliably predicting success or failure at box office collection, hence surprises box office "hits" and "flops". Market research assesses the opportunities and potential success of the marketing for films, which includes previewing, market analysis, and a tracking survey.

According to Tirumala (2010), Indian cinema has been one of the most dominant and distinguishing features of the subcontinent's culture for the past sixty-five years. And, as Indians continue to seek out jobs and educational opportunities worldwide, they are bringing these cultural artifacts with them. Previous research suggests that the Indian Diaspora may use these types of media products as a form of cultural maintenance. This article explores the role of Bollywood movies in constructing and maintaining the cultural identity among second-generation Indian Americans. Interestingly, the study found that though social factors such as family and peer groups have played a dominant role in constructing the Indian identity.

India is the largest producer of feature films in the world. It is estimated that between 800 and 1000 films are produced in India annually, compared to Hollywood, which produces half that number (Sridhar and Mattoo, 1997). Viewers rarely talk out loud and never engage in the overtly interactive and spontaneously expressive style of reception seen in theatres in India and with Indian audiences. Indian audiences are consequently closer to the producers and less alienated from the product compared to their Western counterparts (Srinivas, 2000).

According to Ainslie, Dreze&Zufryden (2005) claimed that the actors have a direct and directors have an indirect effect on consumer's movie choice and releasing a movie contemporaneously with other movies of the same genre adversely affects box-office performance all around, but there is a displacement effect, which leads to a less severe sales loss in the long run.

What is unlikely to succeed is the status quo, especially when so many multiplexes offer the same format as their competitors, appear to adopt a narrow definition of what business they are in, and manifest a 'one-size-fits-all' approach to customers. The industry has employed differentiation and niche marketing much less than other industries. As the extensive variety of necessary strategies cannot comprehensively be explored herein, one focuses on two new technologies from the IMAX Corporation, DMX and MPX, as an example of how a theater operator might counter audience declines (Silver & McDonnell, 2007).

According to Watson (2004), risk and uncertainty can make sourcing difficult for firms, particularly when there is an asymmetry of power resources between the buyer and supplier, and the paper explains how risk and uncertainty can be understood and then outlines the structure of the movie supply chain and the power regime structures within it.

According to Devany& Walls (1999), movies are complex products, and the cascade of information among film goes during the course of a film run could evolve along many paths that make it impossible to attribute the success of a movie to individual causal factors. Then, audiences make a movie a hit, and no amount of star power or marketing can alter that. So the real star is the movie.

New metrics of success are needed, and existing knowledge on marketing strategies, for example, the role of the number of opening screens on the success of the movie, needs to be re-examined (Eliashberg, Elberse, & Leenders, 2006).

To integrate these frameworks, look over the literature reviews to explain the chosen theories, link them to past studies, and show how they relate to research questions. In the methodology section also, align data collection and analysis techniques with the theoretical assumptions. In the discussion, interpret findings in light of the chosen frameworks, showing how they confirm, challenge, or expand theoretical insights.

According to Pierre Bourdieu theoretical approach examines how audiences engage with cultural products based on their social position, cultural capital, and habitus. The theories reveal that Gujarati film consumption isn't merely entertainment but a complex cultural practice that reinforces regional identity, social distinctions, and community belonging within Gujarat's diverse social landscape.

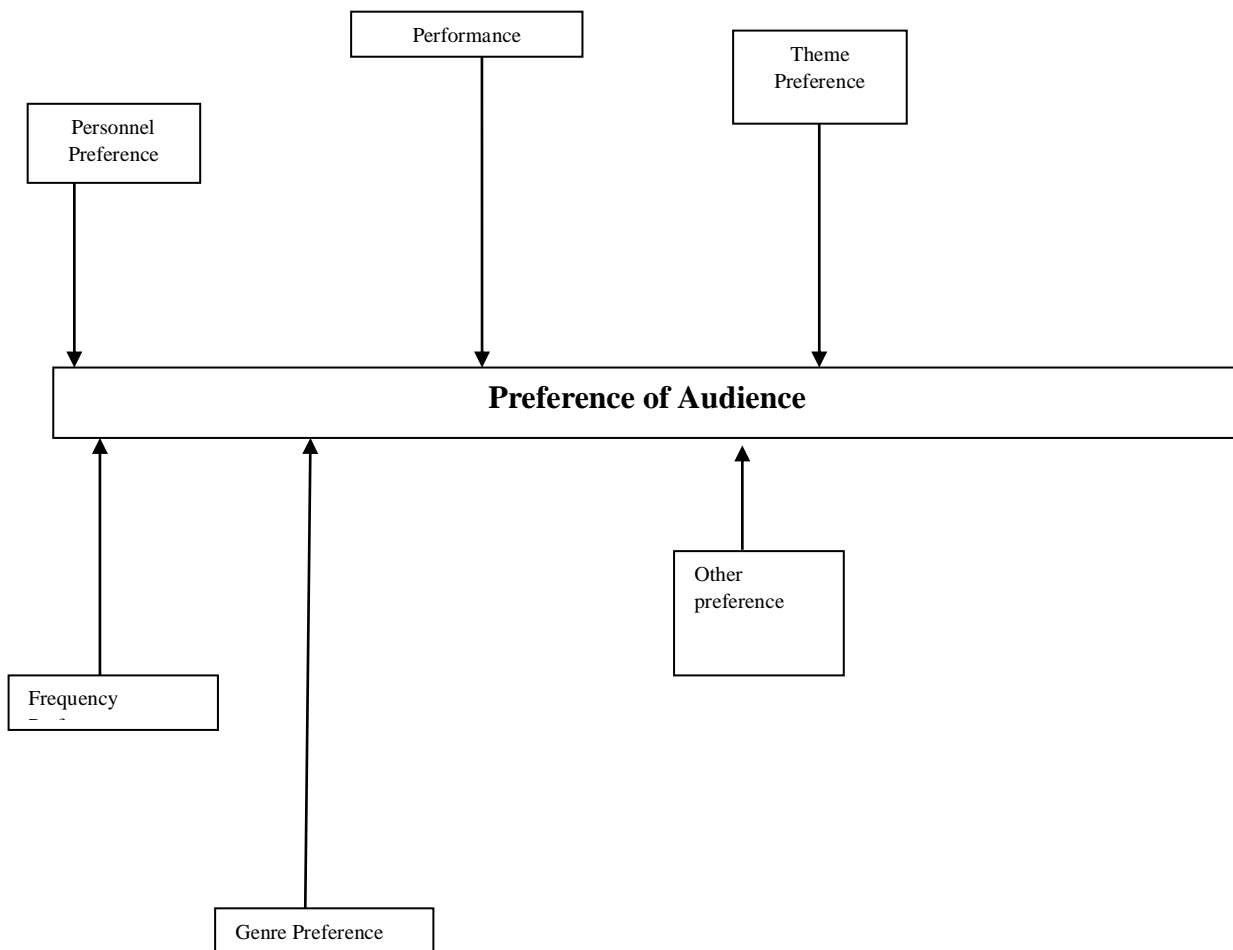
Objectives

- To explore the key factors that shape audience preferences for Gujarati films over other films.
- To investigate variations in audience preferences for Gujarati films across the demographic groups, and the frequency of watching Gujarati films.

III. Methodology

It discusses the research methodology that has been adopted to conduct the study. It begins with the research gap, which is identified on the basis of the literature survey, defines the objectives of the study, and goes on to explain the selection of variables that have been done. It further discusses the research questions, hypotheses, and the research design, research methods, as well as the analytical tools that have been employed for the research. Moreover, to provide a larger context, a brief description of research and various forms of research is attempted. Multiple research tools and techniques are available to conduct research in social science that have been developed over a period of time. In a quantitative approach, survey, data collection, and its interpretation, validity and reliability of the research methodology, its limitations, and the generalizability or suitability of the method.

Diagrammatic representation to overview of Audience preference to watch films



Research Design:

The research is Descriptive Research.

Research Method followed:

Quantitative Methods

Sample size:

The sample size is 436 respondents.

Sampling approach:

The sampling approach used was Non probability convenience sampling

Data collection:

The data has been collected in the form of a Structured Questionnaire from Secondary Sources through different websites, newspapers, magazines, and journals.

Analytical tool:

Quantitative tools: Quantitative tools like Descriptive Statistics, ANOVA, and Frequency Distribution have been used when applicable.

Data Analysis and Interpretation Total Respondents: 436

From the below table It is clear that in the respondents, there are 182 Male and 254 Female respondents.

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	MALE	182	41.7	41.7	41.7
	FEMALE	254	58.3	58.3	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

Below table represents Age distribution among the respondents. Out of 436, 399 responses are from the age group between 18-24.

Age					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-24	399	91.5	91.5	91.5
	25-34	18	4.1	4.1	95.6
	45-54	19	4.4	4.4	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

As shown in below table, out of 436 respondents, 403 respondents are unmarried and 33 respondents are married.

Marital_Status					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Married	33	7.6	7.6	7.6
	Unmarried	403	92.4	92.4	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

From below table, 245 respondents are Post graduate, 146 respondents are graduate, 19 respondents are 12th pass, 13 respondents are Diploma and 13 respondents are PhD.

Educational_Level					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	12th	19	4.4	4.4	4.4
	Diploma	13	3.0	3.0	7.3
	Graduation	146	33.5	33.5	40.8

	Post-graduation	245	56.2	56.2	97.0
	PhD	13	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

From below table, 271 respondents are students, 133 respondents are employees, 12 respondents are business owner, 13 respondents are homemaker and 7 respondents are freelancer.

Occupation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Student	271	62.2	62.2	62.2
	Employee	133	30.5	30.5	92.7
	Business owner	12	2.8	2.8	95.4
	Homemaker	13	3.0	3.0	98.4
	Freelancer	7	1.6	1.6	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

From below table, 298 respondents have no work experience, 101 respondents have 1-3 years of work experience, 24 respondents have 4-6 years of experience, 13 respondents have 10 or more years of work experience.

Work_Experience					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	None	298	68.3	68.3	68.3
	1-3 years	101	23.2	23.2	91.5
	4-6 years	24	5.5	5.5	97.0
	10 or more years	13	3.0	3.0	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

From below table, out of 436 total 430 residing in India and 6 are not residing in India.

Residing in India					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	430	98.6	98.6	98.6
	No	6	1.4	1.4	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

From below table 424 respondents are from Gujarat and 12 are from outside Gujarat.

Residing in Gujarat					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	424	97.2	97.2	97.2
	No	12	2.8	2.8	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

From below table, total 348 respondents are Gujarati and 88 respondents are not Gujarati.

Are You Gujarati?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	348	79.8	79.8	79.8
	No	88	20.2	20.2	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

From below table, 410 respondents regularly watch Gujarati films, 26 respondents do not regularly watch Gujarati films.

Do You watch Gujarati films?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	410	94.0	94.0	94.0
	No	26	6.0	6.0	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

From below table, 261 respondents see the Gujarati films occasionally, 116 respondents see rarely and 59 respondents regularly watch Gujarati films.

Frequency to watch Gujarati films					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Regularly	59	13.5	13.5	13.5
	Occasionally	261	59.9	59.9	73.4
	Rarely	116	26.6	26.6	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

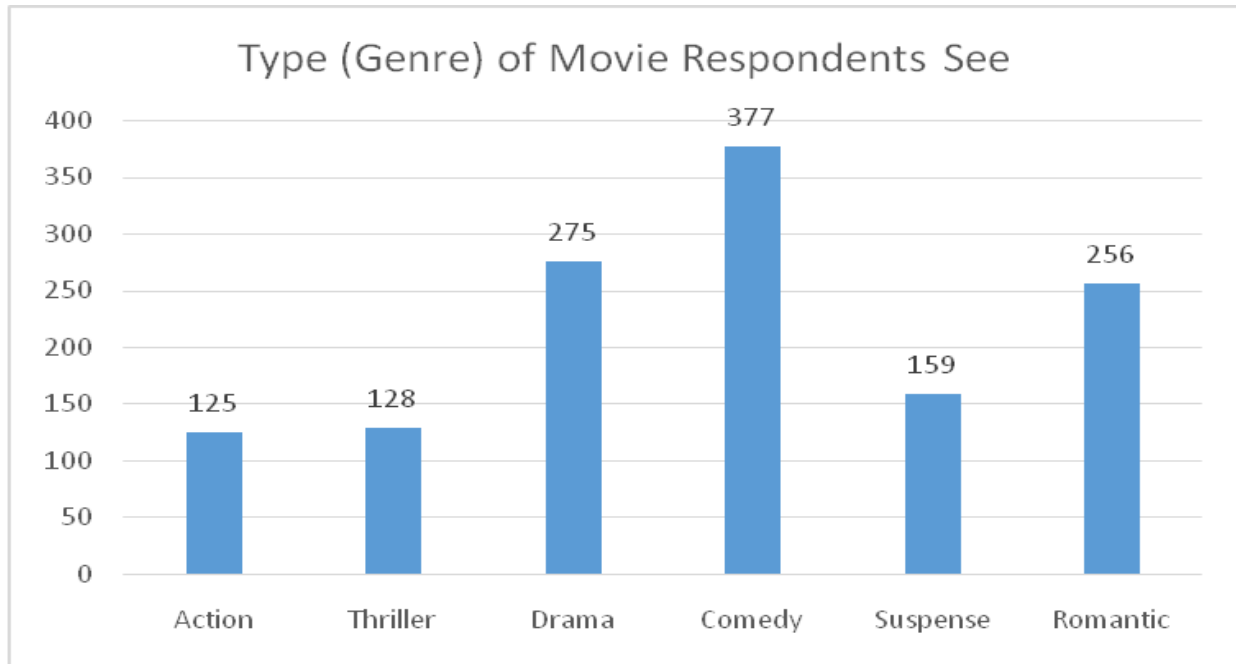
Below table shows respondents' last year watching the movie compared to previous years. More was counted 227.

Last year watching compared to previous years					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	More	227	52.1	52.1	52.1
	Fewer	127	29.1	29.1	81.2
	About the same	82	18.8	18.8	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

From below table, 377 responses are for comedy, followed by Drama 275 responses while 256 responses for Romantic Gujarati film preference.

Type (Genre) of Movie Respondent See	No. of responses	Percentage
Action	125	29
Thriller	128	29
Drama	275	63
Comedy	377	86
Suspense	159	36
Romantic	256	59
Total	436	

From below chart, 377 responses are for comedy, followed by Drama 275 responses while 256 responses for Romantic Gujarati film preference as they have multiple choice to choose.



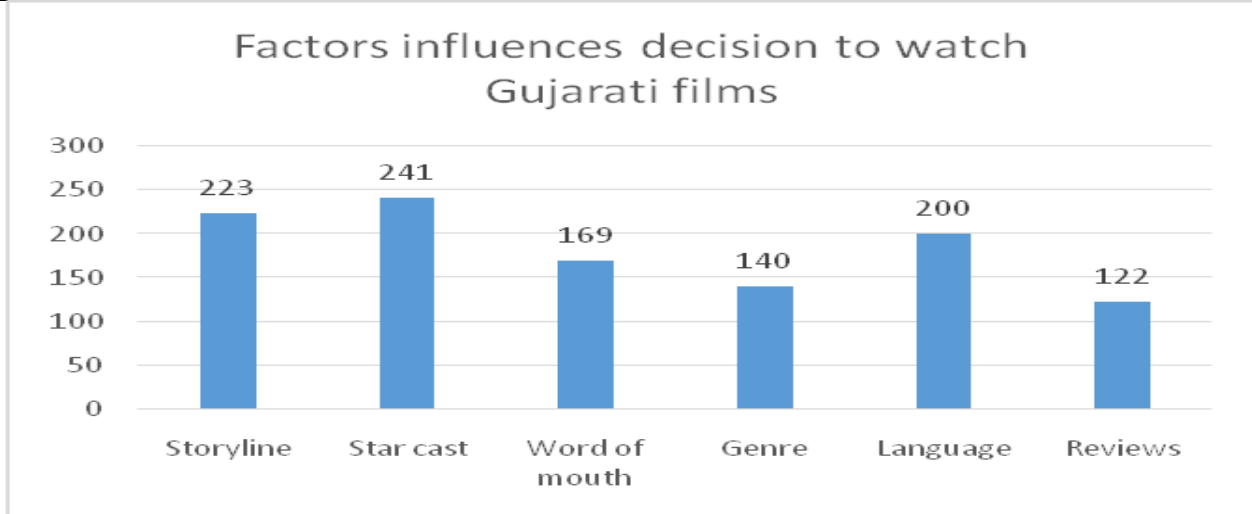
As shown below, 303 respondents like to watch Comedy Movies followed by Drama and Romantic movies.

Type (Genre) of Gujarati film like the most					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Action	19	4.4	4.4	4.4
	Thriller	14	3.2	3.2	7.6
	Drama	34	7.8	7.8	15.4
	Comedy	303	69.5	69.5	84.9
	Suspense	32	7.3	7.3	92.2
	Romantic	34	7.8	7.8	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

From below table, 241 responses for the Star cast, while 223 responses for storyline followed by language and then 169 responses for word of mouth

Factors	No. of responses	Percentage
Storyline	223	51
Star cast	241	55
Word of mouth	169	39
Genre	140	32
Language	200	46
Reviews	122	28
	436	

From below table, 241 responses for the Star cast, while 223 responses for storyline followed by language and then 169 responses for word of mouth



As shown in below table, 416 respondents like to watch Urban theme film more compared to Rural theme by 20 respondents only.

Rural/Urban					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rural	20	4.6	4.6	4.6
	Urban	416	95.4	95.4	100.0
	Total	436	100.0	100.0	

Developing and Testing of Hypothesis

To know the factor influences to watch Gujarati films, One Way ANOVA test have been performed. Below is the SPSS output for ANOVA Test.

H0: There is no significant difference in the respondents’ response towards various factors in watching Gujarati films.

Ha: There is significant difference in the respondents’ response towards various factors in watching Gujarati films.

Here p value is 0.000, when we check with significance level 0.01 then it is less than alpha. So null hypothesis rejected.

So, one can say that there is significant difference in responses towards various factors influence them to watch Gujarati films.

ANOVA					
rating for factors influence					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	171.348	7	24.478	17.504	.000
Within Groups	4866.654	3480	1.398		
Total	5038.002	3487			

To identify whose comments influence them the most for that LSD test have been performed. Below is the output of LSD Test.

From the below table one can conclude that Actor (3.69 rating) are the most important to watch Gujarati films. Then on Second Award Winning Character (3.62) and then Actress (3.58) & Script Writer (3.48).

Multiple Comparisons					
rating for factors influence					
LSD					

(I) Factors influence to watch Gujarati films	(J) Factors influence to watch Gujarati films	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Actor	Actress	.108	.080	.178	-.05	.26
	Supporting Actor/Actress	.225*	.080	.005	.07	.38
	Director	.312*	.080	.000	.15	.47
	Producer	.690*	.080	.000	.53	.85
	Script Writer	.211*	.080	.008	.05	.37
	Production House	.530*	.080	.000	.37	.69
	Award Winning Character	.064	.080	.423	-.09	.22
Actress	Actor	-.108	.080	.178	-.26	.05
	Supporting Actor/Actress	.117	.080	.144	-.04	.27
	Director	.204*	.080	.011	.05	.36
	Producer	.583*	.080	.000	.43	.74
	Script Writer	.103	.080	.198	-.05	.26
	Production House	.422*	.080	.000	.26	.58
	Award Winning Character	-.044	.080	.586	-.20	.11
Supporting Actor/Actress	Actor	-.225*	.080	.005	-.38	-.07
	Actress	-.117	.080	.144	-.27	.04
	Director	.087	.080	.277	-.07	.24
	Producer	.466*	.080	.000	.31	.62
	Script Writer	-.014	.080	.864	-.17	.14
	Production House	.305*	.080	.000	.15	.46
	Award Winning Character	-.161*	.080	.045	-.32	.00
Director	Actor	-.312*	.080	.000	-.47	-.15
	Actress	-.204*	.080	.011	-.36	-.05
	Supporting Actor/Actress	-.087	.080	.277	-.24	.07
	Producer	.378*	.080	.000	.22	.54
	Script Writer	-.101	.080	.208	-.26	.06
	Production House	.218*	.080	.007	.06	.37
	Award Winning Character	-.248*	.080	.002	-.40	-.09
Producer	Actor	-.690*	.080	.000	-.85	-.53
	Actress	-.583*	.080	.000	-.74	-.43

	Supporting Actor/Actress	-.466*	.080	.000	-.62	-.31
	Director	-.378*	.080	.000	-.54	-.22
	Script Writer	-.479*	.080	.000	-.64	-.32
	Production House	-.161*	.080	.045	-.32	.00
	Award Winning Character	-.626*	.080	.000	-.78	-.47
Script Writer	Actor	-.211*	.080	.008	-.37	-.05
	Actress	-.103	.080	.198	-.26	.05
	Supporting Actor/Actress	.014	.080	.864	-.14	.17
	Director	.101	.080	.208	-.06	.26
	Producer	.479*	.080	.000	.32	.64
	Production House	.319*	.080	.000	.16	.48
	Award Winning Character	-.147	.080	.067	-.30	.01
Production House	Actor	-.530*	.080	.000	-.69	-.37
	Actress	-.422*	.080	.000	-.58	-.26
	Supporting Actor/Actress	-.305*	.080	.000	-.46	-.15
	Director	-.218*	.080	.007	-.37	-.06
	Producer	.161*	.080	.045	.00	.32
	Script Writer	-.319*	.080	.000	-.48	-.16
	Award Winning Character	-.466*	.080	.000	-.62	-.31
Award Winning Character	Actor	-.064	.080	.423	-.22	.09
	Actress	.044	.080	.586	-.11	.20
	Supporting Actor/Actress	.161*	.080	.045	.00	.32
	Director	.248*	.080	.002	.09	.40
	Producer	.626*	.080	.000	.47	.78
	Script Writer	.147	.080	.067	-.01	.30
	Production House	.466*	.080	.000	.31	.62
*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.						

Descriptives								
rating for factors influence								
	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
Actor	436	3.69	1.306	.063	3.57	3.81	1	5

Actress	436	3.58	1.239	.059	3.46	3.70	1	5
Supporting Actor/Actress	436	3.46	1.215	.058	3.35	3.58	1	5
Director	436	3.38	1.070	.051	3.28	3.48	1	5
Producer	436	3.00	1.173	.056	2.89	3.11	1	5
Script Writer	436	3.48	1.153	.055	3.37	3.59	1	5
Production House	436	3.16	1.106	.053	3.05	3.26	1	5
Award Winning Character	436	3.62	1.181	.057	3.51	3.73	1	5
Total	3488	3.42	1.202	.020	3.38	3.46	1	5

IV. Conclusion

The evolution of audience preferences plays a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of any film industry. In the context of Gujarati cinema, understanding the shifting tastes, expectations, and demands of audiences is paramount for filmmakers and industry stakeholders. Over the years, the audience preferences in Gujarati films have undergone significant transformations, influenced by socio-cultural factors, technological advancements, and changing demographics. This aims to explore the nuanced dynamics of changing audience preferences in Gujarati films, examining the factors driving these shifts, the impact on filmmaking trends, and the implications for the industry's future.

Urbanization and Globalization

The rapid urbanization and globalization have had a profound impact on audience preferences in Gujarati films. Urban audiences, exposed to a wide array of content from across the globe, have become more discerning and demanding in their cinematic choices. They seek films that reflect contemporary urban lifestyles, address topical issues, and offer narratives with universal appeal. As a result, filmmakers have been compelled to adapt their storytelling techniques and thematic content to cater to this evolving audience segment.

Changing Demographics

The changing demographics of Gujarat, characterized by a youthful population, urban migration, and increasing disposable incomes, have reshaped audience preferences in Gujarati films. Younger audiences, more tech-savvy and cosmopolitan in their outlook, gravitate towards films that offer entertainment value, relatable characters, and contemporary narratives. Filmmakers are increasingly targeting this demographic cohort, leveraging social media, influencer marketing, and digital promotions to connect with them effectively.

Align Film Genre with Audience Demand and Trends

One of the clearest signals from audience behavior is a strong inclination toward specific genres, particularly those offering escapism, emotional resonance, or high entertainment value such as action, comedy, romance, and thrillers. Filmmakers and producers should routinely engage in audience analytics and social listening to track evolving genre preferences. This data should inform greenlighting decisions, script development, and thematic focus. Moreover, for regional or niche cinema, there is a growing appreciation for content that blends traditional storytelling with contemporary themes—suggesting that hybrid genre films can be a commercially and critically successful route.

Utilize Star Power Strategically

The influence of star power on audience interest and film performance remains significant. Audiences continue to be drawn to familiar faces, especially when those stars are perceived as authentic, socially relevant, or versatile in their roles. Filmmakers should leverage this by casting actors whose public persona aligns with the film's tone and values. However, reliance solely on stardom is no longer sufficient. Stars must be integrated meaningfully into well-developed narratives rather than used as superficial selling points. Additionally, emerging stars and influencers with digital clout offer cost-effective casting alternatives that can bring in younger or digital-first audiences.

Innovate Marketing Strategies for Maximum Reach and Recall

The marketing landscape has evolved dramatically with the dominance of digital and social media. Traditional promotional methods must now be integrated with interactive, real-time digital campaigns that engage audiences before, during, and after a film's release. Content teasers, behind-the-scenes footage, viral challenges, and influencer collaborations can significantly enhance audience anticipation. Producers and marketing teams should also consider micro-targeted promotions, using

demographic and psychographic data to tailor messages for specific audience segments. Timing of the marketing push is also crucial—building a sustained campaign that peaks near release increases both awareness and box office footfall.

Cinema Distributors Should Embrace Flexible and Data-Driven Release Models

Distributors must evolve beyond static, geography-based release strategies. Real-time audience data can inform dynamic release planning, such as staggered releases based on regional interest, genre affinity, or even viewer income levels. With hybrid distribution models becoming the norm (theatrical + OTT), decisions on platform prioritization should be audience-led. Smaller films with strong niche appeal might perform better on OTT platforms, while star-driven spectacles are better suited for theatrical releases.

Emerging Trends in Audience Preferences

Genre Diversification One of the prominent trends in audience preferences is the diversification of genres in Gujarati cinema. While traditional genres like family dramas and romantic comedies continue to have their appeal, audiences are increasingly gravitating towards niche genres such as suspense thrillers, crime dramas, and coming-of-age stories. Filmmakers are exploring new thematic territories and experimenting with unconventional narrative structures to cater to this demand for diverse content.

Realism and Authenticity Audiences today crave realism and authenticity in storytelling, seeking narratives that reflect their lived experiences and societal realities. Films that offer a glimpse into the everyday struggles, triumphs, and aspirations of Gujarati people resonate deeply with audiences, forging an emotional connection and fostering empathy. Filmmakers are embracing this trend by grounding their narratives in authenticity, eschewing melodrama for subtlety and nuance.

Socially Relevant Themes In line with the global trend of socially conscious cinema, Gujarati audiences are increasingly drawn to films that tackle pressing social issues and provoke thought-provoking discussions. Topics such as gender equality, LGBTQ+ rights, environmental conservation, and mental health awareness have found resonance with audiences, reflecting their growing social awareness and activism. Filmmakers are leveraging cinema as a powerful tool for social change, using storytelling to challenge stereotypes, shatter taboos, and advocate for progressive values.

Global Influences and Cross-Cultural Exchanges As Gujarat becomes increasingly interconnected with the global community, audiences are exposed to diverse cultural influences, cinematic styles, and storytelling conventions from around the world. This exposure to global cinema has broadened their horizons, fueling a demand for films that offer cross-cultural perspectives, eclectic aesthetics, and innovative narratives. Filmmakers are embracing this trend by incorporating elements of international cinema into their storytelling, fostering cross-cultural exchanges, and pushing the boundaries of Gujarati filmmaking.

In the contemporary media landscape, audiences play a pivotal role in shaping the production of films. Far from being passive consumers, today's audiences actively influence creative and business decisions made by filmmakers and studios at nearly every stage of the film production process.

Firstly, audience preferences and tastes serve as a foundation for the kind of stories that are told. Filmmakers and producers conduct extensive market research, surveys, and test screenings to understand what genres, themes, and formats resonate with target demographics. Audience demand helps determine whether a film will be an action blockbuster, a romantic comedy, or a socially conscious drama. This input often guides script development, character design, and even casting choices. For instance, popular stars with a strong fan base are more likely to be cast to maximize appeal and box office draw.

Secondly, the rise of digital platforms and social media has given the audience a louder voice. Feedback loops are shorter and more visible; audiences now express opinions through online reviews, YouTube reactions, fan forums, and social platforms like Twitter and Instagram. Studios monitor this discourse closely, often tweaking marketing strategies—or in some cases, reshooting parts of films—to align better with audience expectations.

Audiences also shape film production through box office performance and streaming analytics. Ticket sales, viewership metrics, and user ratings influence greenlighting of sequels, spin-offs, or even franchise extensions. A film that performs well commercially validates the studio's approach and may lead to the replication of similar content.

Furthermore, the diversity and representation debates have pushed producers to become more inclusive, thanks to vocal audience advocacy. Demands for authentic storytelling and cultural accuracy are reshaping narratives, leading to films that reflect varied social realities and identities.

Finally, in the age of participatory culture, audiences often become co-creators, especially in fan-driven genres like science fiction or superhero films. Through fan art, fiction, and theories, they contribute to the broader narrative universe, which in turn influences the direction of future content.

In essence, the audience is no longer a distant viewer but an active stakeholder in film production. Their tastes, voices, and behaviors significantly impact creative and commercial decisions, making them a central force in the film industry ecosystem.

V. Discussion on impact of audience's preferences on recent Filmmaking

The changing audience preferences in Gujarati films have had a profound impact on filmmaking trends, influencing every aspect of the creative process, from scriptwriting and casting to production design and marketing strategies. Filmmakers are constantly innovating and adapting to meet the evolving demands of audiences, striving to strike a balance between artistic integrity and commercial viability.

Story-driven Cinema With audiences gravitating towards narrative-driven cinema, filmmakers are placing greater emphasis on storytelling, character development, and thematic depth. Compelling narratives, well-defined characters, and engaging plotlines have become the hallmarks of successful Gujarati films, driving audience engagement and critical acclaim.

Emphasis on Quality Production Audiences today have high expectations when it comes to production values, expecting films to meet international standards in terms of cinematography, editing, sound design, and visual effects. Filmmakers are investing in state-of-the-art equipment, hiring skilled technicians, and adopting best practices in production and post-production to deliver high-quality cinematic experiences that rival those of mainstream Indian and international cinema.

Collaboration and Cross-Pollination In response to the demand for diverse content and fresh perspectives, filmmakers are increasingly collaborating with talent from diverse backgrounds, genres, and industries. Collaborative efforts between Gujarati filmmakers, writers, actors, and technicians, as well as cross-cultural exchanges with filmmakers from other regional industries, are fostering creativity, innovation, and experimentation in Gujarati cinema.

Digital Marketing and Audience Engagement In the age of digital media and social networking, filmmakers are leveraging digital marketing strategies, social media platforms, and online communities to engage with audiences, generate buzz, and build anticipation for their films. From teaser trailers and behind-the-scenes videos to interactive quizzes and live Q&A sessions, filmmakers are harnessing the power of digital technology to create immersive and interactive marketing campaigns that resonate with audiences.

Similarly, genre preferences revealed by the research can be mapped onto content development strategies, encouraging filmmakers to explore hybrid genres or revive underrepresented genres based on audience demand. On the marketing front, the discussion should move beyond general suggestions and provide granular recommendations, such as utilizing data analytics to segment target audiences, designing customized digital campaigns across platforms like Instagram, YouTube, or OTT homepages, and integrating real-time feedback loops from audience reactions into campaign adjustments. Influencer marketing, user-generated content, and gamified promotions can also be discussed as innovative tools to create buzz and increase engagement. Furthermore, marketing strategies should be aligned with the content type—for example, action-packed films can benefit from teaser-based promotions while narrative-driven dramas might require emotionally resonant trailers or behind-the-scenes storytelling. The discussion must also consider the evolving distribution landscape, advising industry stakeholders on when to choose theatrical, OTT, or hybrid release strategies based on film scale, audience accessibility, and regional preferences. For instance, films with niche appeal or regional language content might perform better with targeted OTT releases, while blockbuster films with major stars can maximize returns through traditional theatrical launches supported by aggressive pre-release marketing. Practical examples from the industry, such as the marketing success of low-budget films that utilized grassroots promotion or the impact of regional content marketed through culturally relevant channels, can further enhance the depth and credibility of the discussion. Integrating a dedicated section within the discussion—titled “Implications for the Film Industry”—and organizing it into sub-themes such as content creation, marketing strategy, and distribution planning can help improve clarity and relevance. This not only demonstrates a strong grasp of theoretical insights but also ensures that the research has practical value for stakeholders across the film value chain, thereby strengthening both academic rigor and industry impact. Ultimately, enriching the discussion in this way will allow the manuscript to bridge the gap between theory and practice, meeting scholarly expectations while offering meaningful contributions to content and marketing strategists in the dynamic and competitive film industry.

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