





Entrepreneurial Perspective on Customer Decisions to Watch Indonesian Movies

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Article Info

Article history:

Submission April 9, 2025

Revised June 24, 2025

Accepted October 29, 2025

Published November 19, 2025

Keywords:

Engagement

Customers

Watching

Movies

Entrepreneurial



ABSTRACT

Customer Engagement reflects the extent of interaction between audiences and film products, serving as a key element within the movie industry. Various determinants such as lead actors, movie genres, movie ratings, and online reviews affect viewers intentions to watch films in theaters. **This research** investigates how customer engagement mediates the influence of these determinants on the intention to watch Indonesian films in cinemas. **A quantitative research design** was adopted, involving a survey of 315 respondents. The data were processed using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique with the SmartPLS program to assess the relationships among variables. **The results** indicate that lead actors, film genres, movie ratings, and online reviews significantly enhanced customer engagement. Customer engagement positively and significantly affected individuals decisions to watch Indonesian movies. It was also found to significantly mediate the effect of these variables on the decisions to watch movies. **This research** contributes to relationship marketing theory by emphasizing the importance of customer engagement in developing strong and loyal consumer relationships. Additionally, it enriches consumer behavior literature by explaining the effect of customer engagement on the decisions to watch movies, offering practical implications for film marketers in formulating effective promotional and audience engagement strategies.

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.34306/att.v7i3.681>

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1. INTRODUCTION

Films are commercial products produced by the movie industry, yet the choice to view them in theaters offers a distinct and immersive experience. Going to the cinema is more than simply consuming a product, it represents a form of experiential entertainment [1]. From an entrepreneurial perspective, the film industry operates within a creative economy where innovation, risk-taking, and value creation are essential for business sustainability. Entrepreneurs in this sector continuously explore new ways to capture audiences through creative storytelling, digital distribution, and marketing innovation that enhance customer engagement and long-term profitability [2]. Although the underlying motivations of watching movies in cinema are not completely clear, the number of people choosing to watch them in cinemas has grown alongside the advancement of digital literacy and communication technologies. However, limited research has examined how Internet technologies and social media influence customer engagement and viewing decisions during early film releases [3].

Watching movies in the cinema is a frequent activity amid the grueling pace of daily life. This practice

has become a significant cultural and economic activity that influences the attitudes and behaviors of many people. From an entrepreneurial standpoint, it also creates opportunities for value co-creation between filmmakers, distributors, and audiences, emphasizing the experiential aspect of film consumption as a driver of market differentiation [4]. This is because watching movies is an experiential product that reflects certain characteristics of hedonic consumption. The assumption is that the more people watch movies, the higher the engagement of customers who are accustomed to watching films in theaters [5].

Previous research on the movie industry has largely centered on box office outcomes, especially during a film's opening week. Scholars have investigated areas such as how social media trailers affect audience interest, the relationship between film reviews and box office success, and how different movie attributes and promotional tactics shape viewers' intentions to purchase tickets [6]. Although these studies shed light on factors driving film revenue, little attention has been given to how customer engagement influences the decision to watch movies in theaters [7].

This study seeks to fill that research gap by examining customer engagement as a mediating factor between lead actors, film genres, ratings, and online reviews, and the audience's choice to watch Indonesian films in cinemas. Furthermore, by integrating an entrepreneurial lens, this study highlights how digital innovation, market responsiveness, and consumer-centric strategies contribute to the competitiveness and sustainability of the Indonesian film industry. The research also aligns with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 9 Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure by showing how entrepreneurial marketing and creative digital strategies can strengthen the industry's long-term resilience and global relevance [8, 9].

Earlier studies mainly examined first-week box office performance, overlooking how customer engagement shapes theater-going decisions. A theoretical gap remains concerning the relationship between engagement and film choice behavior. This research seeks to investigate customer engagement as a mediating factor linking lead actors, genres, ratings, and online reviews to audience decisions to watch Indonesian films in cinemas, while emphasizing the entrepreneurial drive for innovation and customer experience enhancement in the creative industry ecosystem [10].

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This study draws on relationship marketing and consumer behavior theories. Relationship marketing emphasizes building long-term customer relationships through trust, commitment, and engagement to enhance loyalty. Consumer behavior theory explains how individuals seek information, evaluate alternatives, and make decisions. In the film industry, these theories clarify how lead actors, film genres, ratings, and online reviews influence audience engagement and the decision to watch movies in theaters, positioning customer engagement as a key mediator in viewing decisions.

2.1. Relationship Marketing Theory

Relationship marketing theory is closely linked to the expansion of the service industry, which emphasizes long-term relationships between customers and companies, focusing on their interactions and the customer's active role in shaping service outcomes [11, 12]. This theory marks a major shift in marketing thought from transactional exchanges to relationship-oriented approaches. Scholars have explored the key factors that support and sustain these exchanges. The marketing field now recognizes the complexity of relationships and interconnected networks among multiple actors, a development driven largely by advances in information and communication technologies that enable digital interactions [13].

Fundamentally, relationship marketing theory focuses on cultivating enduring customer relationships by creating mutual value that leads to satisfaction and loyalty. Such relationships enhance customer retention, repeat purchases, and favorable word-of-mouth [14]. The theory highlights trust and commitment as essential to fostering ongoing engagement, reducing uncertainty, and encouraging long-term involvement. In the context of movie-viewing decisions, interactive tools like social media and digital platforms allow audiences to connect with films and studios. These platforms build communities where fans share insights and interact [15], increasing satisfaction and brand loyalty.

2.2. Customer Engagement

Movies function as products, entertainment services, and brands, as they convey the identity of lead actors and the film genre that attracts audiences. [15] demonstrated that customer engagement on social media both personal and interactive significantly influences movie-watching decisions, which in turn boosts box office

performance. Between 2014 and 2017, the Marketing Science Institutes (MSI) identified customer engagement as one of the key internet-related research topics [16, 17]. This line of research seeks to develop alternative strategies for fostering relationships and building communities through social media-based customer relationship management. To strengthen customer loyalty, companies are encouraged to enhance engagement through both offline and online branding efforts.

[18] explained that customer engagement behavior represents how customers connect with a brand or company beyond simple purchase actions. This engagement includes sharing content, making referrals, helping other consumers, blogging, and writing reviews activities built on trust, satisfaction, and commitment. Digital interaction through smartphones, tablets, mobile apps, and social media platforms supports continuous customer-brand relationships. [19] viewed engagement as part of service loyalty, involving satisfaction, advocacy, and retention within relationship marketing. Customer engagement strongly influences purchase decisions, as social media enhances participation through blogs, wikis, and podcasts. [20] emphasized that trust and satisfaction foster loyalty, strengthening brand evaluation and long-term relationships.

2.3. Decision to Watch Movies in the Cinema

Within the film industry, movie-watching remains one of the most popular leisure pursuits. With advances in information and communication technology, audiences can now access films easily without visiting cinemas, renting DVDs, or subscribing to online streaming services [21]. Numerous studies have examined factors influencing individuals intentions to watch movies. Understanding purchase intention helps companies identify the types of products that appeal most to their target markets. A stronger purchase intention increases the likelihood that consumers will buy a product or service. According to [22], customer engagement reflects customer behavior toward a brand beyond simple purchasing activity.

The decision to watch a film in theaters can be explained not only through consumer behavior theory by [23], which relates to purchase intention, but also through relationship marketing theory. The emergence of the digital economy has transformed how relationships are formed and maintained online. Audiences now rely on online gossip and discussions as key sources of movie information. [24] found that such online virality significantly influences purchase decisions, including cinema attendance. Online ratings and reviews generate user engagement that affects purchase behavior. Movies, as emotional products, evoke experiences such as love, joy, and fear. [25] linked viewing experiences to genre and actor quality but did not address customer engagement in cinema decisions, indicating a need for empirical models connecting engagement with relationship marketing in the film industry.

2.4. Determine

In studying customer involvement in cinema movie-watching decisions, several factors are key. The main actor influences film appeal through acting quality, characterization, popularity, and fame, especially when associated with box office success or awards [26, 27]. Film genres guide audience expectations and help them understand story structure and thematic content, influencing engagement and viewing decisions. Film assessments through ratings and online communities enable viewers to share experiences, interact in discussions, and make informed choices. Online reviews further shape behavior by providing accessible, convenient, and trustworthy information via digital platforms, reducing uncertainty and influencing intentions to watch movies [28, 29].

3. HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Lead Cast and Customer Engagement

The overall quality of a film is largely shaped by the characterization of its lead actors, developed by the writer to construct the story's narrative. Prominent actors enhance audience enjoyment, interest, and discussion about theatrical films, particularly when they achieve box office success or earn prestigious recognitions such as Academy Award nominations. Lead actors also foster customer engagement by generating influence and stimulating audience imagination regarding their on-screen appeal [30, 31]. Consequently, the stronger the audience's admiration for the main character, the greater their involvement in choosing to watch films in theaters. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H1: The main actor has a positive and significant influence on customer engagement in watching Indonesian movies in cinemas.

3.2. The Main Cast and the Decision to Watch the Movie

Lead actors contribute significantly to a film's appeal through their acting talent and performance skills, which influence audience intention to watch movies. The popularity and recognition of these actors motivate consumers to select films featuring them [26, 27]. This decision reflects the viewing intention toward movies as experiential products when the level of intention is high, the likelihood of consumers choosing to watch increases as well. Therefore, the greater the admiration for the lead actors, the stronger the consumer's decision to watch Indonesian films in cinemas. Based on this reasoning, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H2: The main actors of the film have a positive and significant influence on the decision to watch Indonesian films in cinemas.

3.3. Film Genre and Customer Engagement

Films are generally created based on specific genres to help audiences identify what type of movie they will watch in theaters. Genre categorization enables viewers to grasp the story structure and enhances their emotional engagement with the film. Engagement, a key concept in relationship marketing, involves connection, interaction, loyalty, and commitment. According to [32], customer engagement relies on trust and commitment, which strengthen both brand image and loyalty. This engagement allows audiences to relate more deeply to film characters, understand story concepts, and anticipate the viewing experience. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed [33, 34].

H3: The film genre has a positive and significant influence on customer engagement in watching Indonesian films in cinemas.

3.4. Movie Genres and Movie Watching Decisions

Within the film industry, movie-watching remains one of the most favored leisure activities during free time. The intention to watch films represents a form of purchase behavior, where cinema viewing is treated as an experiential product. When this purchase intention is strong, the likelihood of actually watching increases. Audiences are motivated to watch movies to experience emotions such as love, joy, sadness, grief, and fear. [35] noted that the viewing experience can be understood through a film's genre, which offers audiences a preview of what to expect. Thus, the greater the audience's preference for a particular genre, the stronger its impact on their decision to watch movies in theaters [36].

H4: The film genre has a positive and significant influence on the decision to watch Indonesian films in cinemas.

3.5. Film Ratings and Customer Engagement

Advancements in information and communication technology have encouraged users to engage with the Internet and social media to create knowledge-based content and express personal opinions. Online communities have become spaces for virtual social interaction, where film discussions shape relationships and communication among members [37, 38]. Users frequently share experiences and interact with movies, seeking inspiration and emotional stimulation from these interactions. Movie ratings serve as valuable information sources influencing viewing decisions, and favorable ratings enhance customer engagement in choosing to watch films in theaters [39, 40]. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H5: Film ratings have a positive and significant influence on customer engagement in watching Indonesian films in cinemas.

3.6. Film Ratings and Movie Watching Decisions

Information and communication technology has enabled new forms of virtual social interaction through online communities [41]. Within these digital spaces, members build social connections, communicate, and form personal relationships. Such platforms encourage users to participate actively, share film-related experiences, and engage in discussions or evaluations of movies. These interactions significantly influence individuals when making decisions about which films to watch. In digital environments, movie ratings foster user engagement and shape consumer behavior during purchasing or viewing decisions [42]. Therefore, the more favorable the online evaluations of a film, the stronger the audience's intention to watch it in theaters. Based on this rationale, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H6: Film ratings have a positive and significant influence on the decision to watch Indonesian films in cinemas.

3.7. Online Reviews and Customer Engagement

A large number of people share product-related information and opinions online, creating forms of digital word-of-mouth or online gossip. The internet promotes virality through reviews shared across blogs, forums, and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other review sites [28, 43]. Customers engage via devices like smartphones, tablets, and mobile apps, which help strengthen brand image and loyalty. Online engagement has become an essential part of the customer experience. Additionally, third-party online reviews play a vital role in evaluating films within experience-based markets. Consequently, the more positive and extensive the online reviews, the higher the customer engagement in theatrical releases.

H7: Online reviews have a positive and significant influence on customer engagement in watching Indonesian movies in cinemas.

3.8. Online Reviews and Movie Watching Decisions

Individuals share information and opinions about products through the internet, including online reviews posted on blogs, forums, and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and review websites [19, 44]. These reviews, created and accessed by many users, remain available indefinitely, serving as a valuable information source for consumers. Such online feedback influences consumer behavior, including decisions to watch specific films. Third-party reviews are essential for assessing movie quality, and positive evaluations significantly enhance theater viewing intentions. Hence, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H8: Online reviews have a positive and significant influence on the decision to watch Indonesian movies in cinemas.

3.9. Customer Engagement and Decision to Watch Indonesian Movies in Cinemas

Customer engagement reflects behavioral responses toward a brand that extend beyond simple purchasing actions [45]. Engagement activities include sharing content virally, offering recommendations, assisting other consumers, writing blogs, and submitting reviews. These behaviors stem from relationship marketing principles grounded in trust, satisfaction, and commitment, encompassing connection, interaction, retention, loyalty, and advocacy. Personal and interactive engagement fosters deeper involvement and can motivate individuals to make purchasing decisions [46]. In the context of cinema viewing, such decisions are driven by the intention to experience films as experiential products. When purchase intention is strong, the likelihood of watching movies in theaters also increases. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H9: Customer engagement has a positive and significant influence on the decision to watch Indonesian films in cinemas.

3.10. Customer Engagement in the Influence of Lead Actors on Movie Viewing Decisions

A film's overall quality is often shaped by its lead actors, particularly through the characterization developed by the writer. The fame and popularity of leading actors strongly influence consumer preferences and movie selection [47]. Their presence becomes even more impactful when they achieve box office success or receive prestigious recognitions such as Academy Award nominations. Lead actors play a crucial role in shaping audience perception, creating influence, and sparking imagination about their appeal [48]. Customer engagement with admired movie stars tends to increase, encouraging audiences to watch films in theaters [49]. Hence, the greater the admiration for the lead actors, the higher the engagement level and the stronger the decision to watch in cinemas.

H10: Customer engagement mediates the positive and significant influence of the main actor factor on the decision to watch Indonesian films in cinemas.

3.11. Customer Engagement in the Influence of Film Genres on Movie Viewing Decisions

Films are typically produced based on specific genres to help audiences anticipate the type of story and experience they will encounter [50]. Genres allow viewers to identify content, shape preferences, and influence their decisions to watch. Loyal audiences often seek information related to their preferred genres, which enhances their engagement with films. Genre-related information plays a crucial role in theater viewing decisions. As experiential products, movie-watching intentions are strongly affected by genre [51]. This study examines how the decision to watch Indonesian films during their initial release is influenced by both genre and customer engagement [52]. Therefore, the greater the audience's preference for a specific genre, the higher their engagement and viewing intention.

H11: Customer engagement mediates the influence of film genres on the decision to watch Indonesian films in cinemas.

3.12. Customer Engagement in the Influence of Film-Judging on Movie Viewing Decisions

The Internet and social media represent major advancements in information technology, transforming how users access, share, and create opinion-based content. Online communities, particularly those formed by movie enthusiasts, promote discussions and evaluations that shape audience perceptions and behavior. Film ratings shared on blogs, social networks, and forums serve as vital references in viewers decision-making processes. Positive ratings on social media platforms enhance audience engagement and viewing interest, often facilitated through digital devices such as smartphones and tablets. Consequently, favorable ratings strengthen customer involvement and increase the likelihood of watching movies in theaters. Thus, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H12: Customer engagement mediates the influence of film ratings on the decision to watch Indonesian films in cinemas.

3.13. Customer Engagement in the Influence of Online Reviews on Movie Viewing Decisions

People share product-related information and opinions online, which functions as a modern form of digital word-of-mouth or online gossip. Reviews are distributed through various platforms such as blogs, forums, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, serving as essential channels for consumers seeking information and shaping their purchasing behavior. Before making a purchase, individuals rely on these online reviews to gain insights into product quality. Such reviews also affect consumers' movie-watching intentions and play a significant role in evaluating film quality within experience-driven markets. The credibility of these reviews strongly impacts theater-viewing decisions. Therefore, greater interaction with online reviews enhances engagement and strengthens the decision to watch films in theaters.

H13: Customer engagement mediates the influence of online reviews on the decision to watch Indonesian movies in cinemas.

4. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a deductive approach and quantitative methodology to describe, predict, and identify causal relationships. The research was carried out across cinemas located on Java Island, specifically in DKI Jakarta, West Java, Banten, Central Java & DI Yogyakarta, and East Java regions recognized for having the highest concentration of modern cinema establishments. This research was conducted between September and November 2023 every time there is a release of the first film from various genres in the cinema.

This study examines six variables in the decision model to watch movies in theaters, including Lead Actor (PU) (X1), Film Genre (GF) (X2), Film Rating (PF) (X3) and Online Review (UO) (X4) as independent variables, Customer Engagement (Z) as a mediating variable, and decision to watch movies in theaters (KMF) (Y) as bound variables.

Table 1. Variables, Dimensions, Indicators and Scale of the Research

No.	Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Scale
1	Main Cast	a. Popularity	a. Often film actors become main actors	Ordinal
			b. The main cast often appears on TV	
		b. Expertise	a. The good acting skills of the main actor	
			b. Typical and interesting acting skills	
		c. Idol characters	a. The appearance of the main cast as an idol	
			b. The acting style of the main actor is liked	
2	Genre: Film	a. Trend genre	a. The length of time people talk about the film genre	Ordinal
			b. The suitability of the film genre with interests	
		b. Attraction	a. Curiosity about certain film genres	
			b. The fun of watching themed movies	
		c. Favorite	a. The audience's response to the genre is good	
			b. Interestingly, The story theme that the audience likes	

3	Film Rating	a. Story Value	a. The movie story is good and arouses curiosity b. The story of the movie arouses curiosity to watch	Ordinal
		b. Theme Value	a. Interesting movie theme and has been liked for a long time b. Movie themes motivate to watch	
		c. Entertainment Value	a. Movies are entertaining and liked by many viewers b. Movies are better watched with friends or family	
		d. Leisure Value	a. Watched during spare time b. Movies reduce fatigue after work/college	
4	Online Reviews	a. <i>Box office</i>	a. Many reviews show the movie is unique and worth watching b. Many reviews indicate potential to <i>be at the box office</i>	Ordinal
		b. Enthusiasts	a. Many movie enthusiasts review online/social media b. Niche enthusiasts engage in reviews	
		c. Spread	a. The film has been widely reviewed on social media b. Good reviews are spread on the Internet	
		d. Attendance	a. Many reviews mean many enjoy watching b. Positive testimonials after watching the trailer	
5	Customer Engagement	a. Interaction	a. Knowing the activities of actors and actresses related to films they want to release b. Follow movie news and reviews before watching	Ordinal
		b. Loyalty	a. Always wanted to watch long-loved movie stars b. Curious about the latest and upcoming productions	
		c. Proactivity	a. Strong push to find news about film releases b. Often spend time watching first releases	
6	Decision to Watch Indonesian Movies in the Cinema	a. Related to the main cast	a. Watching movies because the movie star is the main actor of his idol	Ordinal
		b. Related to film genres	b. Watching movies because they like the style and theme of movies for a long time	
		c. Regarding film judging	c. Watching movies because on the Internet there are many ratings of good movies	
		d. Related online reviews	d. Watching movies because you read online movie reviews first	
		e. Regarding customer engagement	e. Watching movies because I have been a connoisseur of Indonesian films in the cinema for a long time	

Researchers tested the decision to watch movies in cinemas from moviegoers in major cities on the island of Java as a population. The sample of this study was selected through stratified proportional sampling according to the rules in the condition that the total number of spectator population is not clearly known. To illustrate the distribution of cinemas across provinces that served as the sampling frame, Figure 1 presents the number of cinemas in each major region of Java. The sample size in this study followed the rule of thumb commonly applied in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Using the Maximum Likelihood (ML) estimation method, five respondents were assigned to each observed variable. Since the research involved six factors, 24 dimensions, and 43 indicators, the minimum required sample size was $43 \times 5 = 215$ respondents. To anticipate incomplete or invalid responses, the researcher distributed questionnaires to 344 respondents (43×7) across cinemas located in several major cities throughout Java, ensuring adequate data collection for statistical reliability and model accuracy.

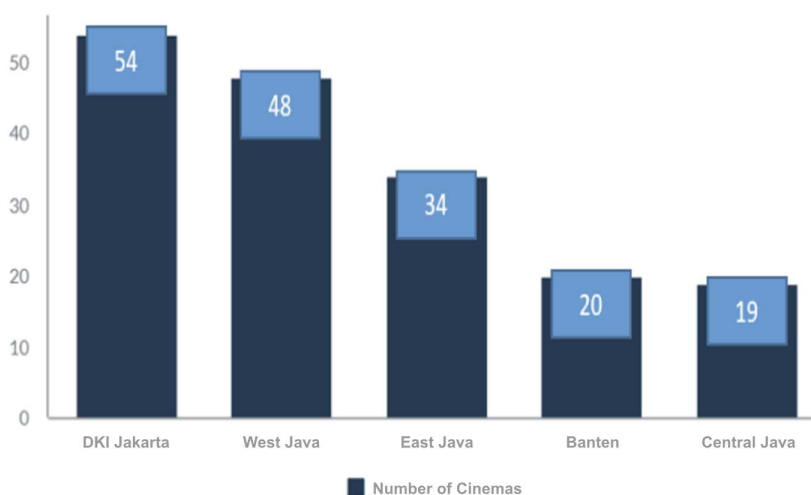


Figure 1. Province with the Highest Number of Cinemas

Table 2 presents the distribution proportion of questionnaires administered to respondents in cinemas across several major cities on Java Island. Given the constraints of funding, time, and human resources, the researcher acknowledged that it was not feasible to conduct the study across all 175 cinemas in these cities. Therefore, a proportional sampling rate of 25.7 percent was established for each province, with an average of 7-8 respondents per cinema. Using a stratified proportional approach, data were collected from 45 cinemas out of 175 (25.7 percent), totaling 344 respondents distributed across approximately 25 percent of cinemas in each major city. Primary data were obtained through questionnaires targeting audiences of Indonesian films. A five-point Likert scale was used to measure respondents' perceptions: Strongly Agree (SS = 5), Agree (S = 4), Neutral (N = 3), Disagree (TS = 2), and Strongly Disagree (STS = 1).

Table 2. Proportion of Questionnaire Distribution in Cinemas in Major Cities

No.	Provincial Territory	Cinema	Propose	25% (@5–6 people)	Respond
1.	Banten	20	11.43%	5 cinemas	39 (11.43%)
2.	Jakarta	54	30.86%	14 cinemas	106 (30.86%)
3.	West Java	48	27.43%	12 cinemas	94 (27.43%)
4.	Central Java & DIY	19	10.86%	5 cinemas	37 (10.86%)
5.	East Java	34	19.43%	9 cinemas	67 (19.43%)
Total		175	100%	45 cinemas (25.7%)	344 (100%)

Source: Processed from field data (2023)

This analysis includes an inferential statistical analysis used to test the study's hypotheses. The inferential analysis employed the Partial Least Squares (PLS) technique to estimate the path analysis model. Prior to hypothesis testing, validity and reliability assessments were conducted. Within SmartPLS, several outer model

evaluations were performed, including convergent validity (> 0.5), discriminant validity, composite reliability (> 0.7), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) (> 0.5). Reliability was further verified using Cronbach's Alpha, which was required to exceed 0.7 for all constructs. The outcomes of these tests were then expressed through structural equation modeling.

$$KP = b1.X1 + b2.X2 + b3.X3 + b4.X4 + e$$

$$KMFIB = b1.X1 + b2.X2 + b3.X3 + b4.X4 + bKP.XKP + e$$

Information:

X1 = Main Cast

X3 = Film Rating

X2 = Genre Film

X4 = Online Reviews

KP = Customer Engagement

KMFIB = Decision to Watch Indonesian Movies in Cinemas

and e = Error

5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research respondents were spread across various large urban areas on the island of Java, including Banten, DKI Jakarta, West Java, Central Java and DI Yogyakarta, as well as East Java. This data is crucial for understanding how the geographical distribution of respondents affects their preferences and behaviors as film audiences, particularly in their level of engagement and decision-making when choosing to watch Indonesian movies in theaters.

5.1. Model Fit Test (Goodness of Fit)

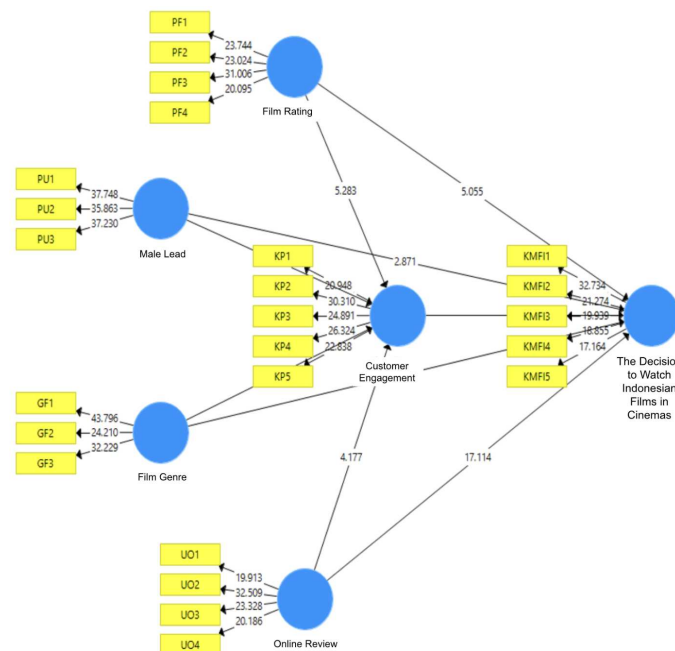


Figure 2. Inner Model Research

Figure 2 illustrates the structural model of the study, showing how lead actors, movie genre, movie ratings, and online review influence customer engagement, which in turn mediates their effect on the decision to watch Indonesian movies in cinemas. The blue circles represent latent variables, yellow boxes show indicators,

and the connecting lines indicate the strength and significance of relationships. The model highlights the central role of customer engagement in translating movie attributes and online feedback into actual watching decisions.

Table 3. Value of R^2 Inner Model Structural Model

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Decision to Watch Indonesian Movies in the Cinema	0.971	0.970
Customer Engagement	0.979	0.979

Table 3 indicates that the R^2 value for the decision to watch Indonesian films in theaters is 0.971, while the R^2 value for customer engagement is 0.979, both categorized as strong influences (>0.67). Therefore, the variables tested lead actors, film genre, movie rating, and online reviews collectively explain 97.9 percent of customer engagement and 97.1 percent of the decision to watch movies in cinemas.

Table 4. Model Fit Value (*Goodness of Fit*)

Indicator	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.072	0.072
d-ULS	1.545	1.545
d-G	3.407	3.407
Chi-Square	3155.585	3155.585
NFI	0.580	0.580

Table 4 illustrates that the structural model's fit is indicated by the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value of 0.072. This result demonstrates a good model fit, as the acceptable theoretical range for SRMR is between 0.05 and 0.08, confirming that the model meets the required standards.

Table 5. Statistical T Value of Direct (Partial) Influence

Relationship	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Statistics	P-Values
Lead actor – Customer Engagement	-0.079	0.080	0.026	2.979	0.003
Main actor – Decision to Watch Indonesian Movies in Cinemas	-0.095	-0.099	0.032	2.949	0.003
Movie Genre – Customer Engagement	0.692	0.660	0.114	6.046	0.000
Film Genre – Decision to Watch Indonesian Movies in Cinemas	0.207	0.204	0.090	2.307	0.021
Film Ratings – Customer Engagement	0.547	0.572	0.100	5.477	0.000
Film Rating – Decision to Watch Indonesian Movies in Cinemas	-0.578	-0.543	0.115	5.005	0.000
Online Reviews – Customer Engagement	-0.178	-0.172	0.043	4.152	0.000
Online Reviews – Decision to Watch Indonesian Movies in Cinemas	0.874	0.873	0.053	16.617	0.000
Customer Engagement – Decision to Watch Indonesian Movies in Cinemas	0.584	0.556	0.082	7.088	0.000

Table 5 indicates that the effects of lead actors ($t=2.979$), film genre ($t=6.046$), film ratings ($t=5.477$), and online reviews ($t=4.152$) on customer engagement in deciding to watch Indonesian movies in theaters are positive and statistically significant ($p<0.05$). In addition, the influence of the main players ($t=2.949$), film genre ($t=2.307$), film ratings ($t=5.005$) and online reviews ($t=16.617$) on the decision to watch Indonesian films in cinemas was also positive and significant ($p<0.05$). So, it can be understood that all of the hypotheses of this

research are empirically proven with positive and significant values, so that the first to ninth research objectives can be said to have been achieved.

Table 6. T Value of Indirect Influence Statistics (Mediation)

Relationship	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Film Cast – Customer Engagement – Indonesian Movie Watching Decisions	-0.046	-0.044	0.015	3.114	0.002
Film Genre – Customer Engagement – Indonesian Movie Watching Decisions	0.404	0.367	0.100	4.055	0.000
Film Ratings – Customer Engagement – Indonesian Movie Watching Decisions	0.319	0.312	0.061	5.244	0.000
Online Reviews – Customer Engagement – Indonesian Movie Watching Decisions	-0.104	-0.094	0.031	3.336	0.001

Table 6 demonstrates that customer engagement serves as a positive and significant mediator in the relationship between lead actors ($t = 3.114$), film genre ($t = 4.055$), film ratings ($t = 5.244$), and online reviews ($t = 3.336$) on the decision to watch Indonesian films in theaters ($p < 0.05$). Thus, all mediation hypotheses proposed in this research are confirmed, showing a significant and positive mediating effect.

5.2. Discussion

Films are cultural and experimental products that can influence consumer behavior even before their release in theaters. Pre-release information, such as the main cast, film genre, ratings, and online reviews, significantly impacts customer engagement and the decision to watch movies. From an entrepreneurial perspective, these factors act as strategic tools for filmmakers and producers to create market differentiation and enhance audience value propositions. In a competitive creative economy, innovation in pre-release marketing and digital engagement serves as a form of entrepreneurial creativity that fosters stronger customer relationships and drives revenue growth.

In this study, customer engagement was positively and significantly influenced by all these factors, with film genres and movie ratings showing the strongest impact on engagement. These findings support previous research indicating that audience interest and interaction with movie content on digital platforms play a critical role in driving box office performance. This also illustrates how entrepreneurial marketing and audience analytics can be leveraged to anticipate consumer preferences and optimize film positioning in the market.

The decision to watch movies in theaters is significantly affected by several factors, including lead actors, film genres, movie ratings, online reviews, and the level of customer engagement. Online reviews had the greatest effect, reflecting their role in reducing consumer uncertainty and providing social validation. Positive and widely shared reviews enhance engagement and ultimately motivate viewers to attend cinemas. These results align with prior studies emphasizing the importance of social media and digital platforms in shaping consumer decisions and film performance. From an entrepreneurial lens, such online interactions demonstrate how digital ecosystems can generate co-created value between film producers and audiences, turning viewers into active brand advocates.

Customer engagement was found to mediate the effects of the main cast, film genre, film ratings, and online reviews on movie-watching decisions. The strongest mediation was observed in film ratings and genres, indicating that engagement amplifies the influence of content quality and genre preferences on audience decisions. This supports relationship marketing theory, which highlights the role of trust, satisfaction, and interaction in building long-term consumer relationships. From an entrepreneurial innovation standpoint, engagement serves as a value creation process where emotional connections and social experiences transform consumer intention into tangible market outcomes.

Finally, these findings contribute to consumer behavior and marketing theory. The lead actors, genre, ratings, and reviews guide audience information search, alternative evaluation, and decision-making, while cus-

tomers engagement ensures sustained loyalty and satisfaction. For marketers and film producers, understanding these dynamics allows for more effective promotional strategies, leveraging digital and social media platforms to increase viewer participation and community building. Integrating these insights can enhance the long-term growth and sustainability of the Indonesian film industry, fostering stronger engagement, audience retention, and entrepreneurial competitiveness within the creative economy.

6. MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study provide actionable insights for film producers and marketers to enhance audience engagement and increase cinema attendance. Emphasizing popular lead actors and carefully selecting film genres that align with audience preferences can strengthen consumer engagement, making potential viewers more likely to watch the movie in theaters. Positive film ratings and online reviews should be actively encouraged and monitored, as they significantly influence audience decisions. Marketing strategies can leverage social media platforms to share trailers, reviews, and interactive content, fostering a community of engaged moviegoers and amplifying word-of-mouth promotion.

Additionally, cinema managers and film distributors can use these insights to optimize promotional timing, particularly during the critical first week of release, by tailoring campaigns that emphasize engagement-driven content. Building long-term relationships with audiences through personalized interactions, loyalty programs, and consistent communication can enhance trust and satisfaction, ultimately driving repeat attendance. By integrating these strategies, the Indonesian film industry can strengthen its competitive position, sustain box office performance, and promote the growth of local films through improved customer engagement and retention.

7. CONCLUSION

This study confirms that factors such as lead actors, film genres, movie ratings, and online reviews significantly influence customer engagement, which in turn strongly affects the decision to watch Indonesian movies in cinemas. The results are consistent with the expectations outlined in the Introduction, showing that customer engagement mediates the relationship between these factors and movie-watching decisions. Film genres and ratings were found to have the greatest impact on engagement, while online reviews and customer engagement themselves most strongly influence the actual decision to attend cinemas. These findings highlight the crucial role of engagement in converting audience intention into real behavior and enhancing the overall cinema experience.


For future research, broader geographical coverage could reveal cultural variations in cinema-going behavior. Other variables, such as marketing campaigns, cinema amenities, and pricing strategies, may provide deeper insight into audience decision-making. Longitudinal studies are recommended to examine how engagement develops over time and affects long-term loyalty.

From a managerial standpoint, producers and marketers can employ these insights to design engagement-driven strategies highlighting popular actors, tailoring film genres to audience preferences, encouraging positive reviews, and fostering interaction through digital platforms and loyalty programs. These approaches can enhance trust, satisfaction, and retention while driving box office growth and competitiveness.


8. DECLARATIONS

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Conceptualization: MF; Methodology: MF; Software: MF; Validation: MF and DJ; Formal Analysis: RA and DA; Investigation: MF; Resources: MF; Data Curation: MF; Writing Original Draft Preparation: MF;

Writing Review and Editing: DJ, RA, and DA; Visualization: MF; All authors, MF, DJ, RA, and DA, have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

8.3. Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author.

8.4. Funding

The authors received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

8.5. Declaration of Conflicting Interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest, known competing financial interests, or personal relationships that could have influenced the work reported in this paper.

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