

THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE CINEMATOGRAPHY MARKET

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Abstract

In times of dynamic development of digital technologies (Olejniczuk-Merta, 2015), emerging trends and opportunities of Web 2.0, 3.0, 4.0 and 5.0, organisations are trying to select proper ways to effectively reach their audiences, also in the digital zone (Kotler, Kartajaya, Setiwan, 2017). At the same time, it is the customer and his or her needs that are at the centre of the digital transformation (Mazurek, 2018), and social media (SM, SoMe) is one of its components. New digital technologies are also important in the cinema market. This is indicated by the evolution of media and changes related to the creation of audience communication. Experts increasingly recognise and use activities based on film marketing in social media (Gębicka, 2019, Shao, et al., 2016). However, this topic is not yet often studied and described in the literature.

The area of the paper concerns the importance of social media in the cinema market. There is an overview of the perspective about the evolution of marketing. The authors identify various milestones at different stages. The first concern the formalisation of fundamental concepts, the next the further development, and finally in the second half of the 20th century - bring changes, new elaborations and ways of defining marketing, followed by the fragmentation of the mainstream. The 21st century probably opens a new chapter in the history of marketing. This is due to the significant impact of the digital technologies today (Mazurek, 2017), which bring a wide variety of innovations.

The main technology that revolutionised the entire marketing industry became personal computers and the Internet (Russel, Lane, 2000), which triggered the emergence of a whole group of new media (Bajdak, 2017). As the years went by, the gap between time spent on traditional media and digital media grew. It is estimated that time spent on traditional media will decrease, while new forms using the internet, including social media, will see an increase.

Both marketing activities within SM and digital marketing in general can be and are used in the cultural market (Wolny, 2018, Peltoniemi, 2015). Among the most

relevant areas within it are considered visual and multimedia arts, audiovisual arts, and advertising. Indeed, we have seen significant growth in the cinematography market.

Social media marketing brings unique benefits in the context of the film industry. Among other things, social media platforms allow to gather an audience even before a film is released, while once the film is in theatres, they allow to generate awareness through engaged fans (Marich, 2013). Furthermore, Finney (2010) identifies social networks as one of the motivators for purchasing a cinema ticket through building awareness of the title, interest in it, and the use of eWOM.

The aim of this dissertation is to identify the relationship between the quality of marketing activities conducted through social media and the outcome of film productions. The research hypothesis defined is: There is a relationship between the quality of social media marketing activities and the revenue of a film. After an analysis of the literature, the film's revenue (box office) was selected as the film production outcome. The quality of SM marketing activities, was defined as social media results in terms of awareness - number of followers on Facebook (FB), Instagram (IG), total followers Meta (FB+IG), engagement - FB and IG support index, FB and IG activity, Total Meta activity, FB and IG participation in discussion, FB virality Index, FB and IG Interactivity Index FB, FB Positive feedback index and content in a dynamic format on Facebook and Instagram.

In order to achieve the stated objective and verify the hypothesis, a four-stage research process was planned, and it included: a literature analysis and synthesis, a qualitative study in the form of IDI interviews with nine marketing experts, a quantitative study in the form of statistical analysis of the correlation between SM indicators and film production revenues and estimation of a regression model, a qualitative study in the form of IDI interviews with six cinema experts.

Among the main conclusions of the first phase of research are the following:

- social media marketing is important and, according to experts, influences filmmaking results;
- there are key indicators for social media marketing in the film industry indicating the quality of social media activities;
- social media quality verification based on the analysis of social media marketing results for film productions should include a large sample size, a two-month scope during the

period of the film's release and the generation of results by a dedicated, practitioner-tested tool.

The result of the above stage was, above all, the construction of a complete methodology and verification of the tools for the further part of the research: the selection of elements - SM indicators for the quantitative survey and tools for their measurement leading, in particular, to the final version of the model subjected to statistical analysis.

In the next stage of the research, the quantitative one, a sample of 387 films distributed between 2017 and 2019 was tested. The analysis included online data: qualitative (social media marketing results, budget and revenue of the film) provided in a dedicated report of the SoTrender tool and compiled from the IMDB Pro database, as well as qualitative (data on the company, series continuity, awards received and film genre) compiled from the IMDB Pro database.

Statistical analysis showed statistically significant correlations between revenue and marketing performance variables. Most indicators showed a high correlation, some showed an average correlation, while the only weak correlation was shown by the use of dynamic formats on Instagram. There was a particularly high correlation between revenue and Meta activity. This agrees with the predictions of the experts taking part in the interviews. According to them, marketing activities should highly engage the audience. The correlation study conducted did not provide any basis for rejecting the hypotheses.

The following variables were selected for the regression model: the film's budget in USD, Meta activity, total Meta Followers, production and distribution company, awards received. The result of the coefficient of determination is 0.636. This means that the estimated model can explain 63.6% of the development of sales revenue (box office). This indicates a very good fit of the model within the sample and very good predictive properties of the model. All model parameters are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). The results obtained make it possible to conclude, for instance, that Meta activity significantly affects film revenues. 1 activity increase will result in an increase in revenue of USD 28.19. With reference to the regression model, it is also estimated that an increase of 1 Meta follower will result in an increase in revenue of USD 4.72.

The conclusions of the fourth stage of the research, interviews with cinema experts, were:

- there is great potential for the use of social media in the cinematography market,
- it is necessary to use the potential of social media marketing on the Polish cinematography market,
- there is a high potential for the model developed in this dissertation, in particular the elements related to social media. However, there are additional variables that need to be adapted to the Polish market.

Following the research conducted, various directions for future exploration can be suggested. These include exploring the relationship between the number of brand mentions and the revenue of a film, the importance of other SM platforms, as well as exploring social media in terms of personal branding for filmmakers.