

Analysing Consumer Behaviour for an Experiential Product: A Case Study of the Kantara Movie

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Abstract:

A comprehensive examination of consumer behaviour pertaining to an experiential product, the Kantara movie, is presented through this research work. This case study delves into the intricate dynamics that govern the decision-making process and subsequent actions of individuals in relation to this particular cinematic offering.

Keywords: Experiential product, Culture, Belief, Word of mouth, Hype

Introduction:

After watching the movie Kantara, Kishore sat near the window of his room, gazing at the sky in anticipation of the sunset. He pondered what it was that drew people to a movie such as Kantara. The perception of consumers toward movies has recently undergone a change. There is now a wide range of movie genres available to them. With these considerations in mind, Kishore made the decision to conduct consumer behavior research on the Kantara movie, which is an experiential product.

Experiential products are carefully crafted to elicit emotions and engage users, providing them with excitement, relaxation, fun, happiness, enjoyment, social interaction, and memorable experiences. These products are specifically designed to enhance recreational activities for consumers. The value of these products is derived from the experiences they provide rather than just their functional utility (Leon G. Schiffman et.al)¹.

Movies have always been a beloved source of entertainment, offering enjoyment, relaxation, and opportunities for social interaction. The ability of a movie to effectively tell a story and evoke a wide range of emotions makes it a truly exceptional experiential product. Streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ have greatly improved the viewing experience. They offer personalized recommendations for movies and TV shows, along with original content. Additionally, these platforms provide opportunities for social interaction through features like watch parties, ratings, and reviews. These products are designed to offer an immersive, engaging, and memorable experience that establishes an emotional connection with the consumer and often promotes social interaction. Personalized experiences have the potential to be both unique and enjoyable, ultimately resulting in increased satisfaction and loyalty.

Therefore, Kishore was curious about the reasons behind people's interest in watching the movie "Kantara" and the factors that played a role in its success. In order to find answers to his questions, Kishore made the decision to utilize both primary and secondary consumer research techniques.

History of Indian Film Industry:

The Indian film business is known for its glamour, vitality, and drama. It is one of the largest movie-making sectors in the world. The Mumbai film industry holds particular significance in this regard, as it is the birthplace and globally recognized as "Bollywood." Hindi-language cinema dominates the multi-billion-rupee film industry in terms of net worth. However, there are several film centres across the nation that are known for producing movies in regional languages such as Kannada, Tulu, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Marathi, Bhojpuri, Bengali, and many more (Cinema_of_India)².

Movie-goers return to theatres:

After the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions were lifted, Indian moviegoers enthusiastically returned to theatres. Notably, the average ticket price has reached its lowest point in over a decade. Although the number of single-screen theatres has decreased over the years, the country still maintains a few of them alongside the more modern multiplexes. The Indian moviegoer becomes a prime target for advertisements due to this.

India's film and music industries often go hand-in-hand:

Music in Indian films is not only a significant source of revenue through advertising, but it also often generates more excitement about the film than its trailers. In recent years, music distributors like T-Series and Zee Music have achieved remarkable success on YouTube. As a result, Indian music has soared to the top of the charts in terms of views and subscribers. Playback singers are highly adored and among the highest paid in the industry due to the immense success of these songs. A.R. Rahman, the Grammy-winning composer, was widely regarded as one of the most popular figures in the music industry.

Surprisingly, despite being the highest-grossing movie of 2016, Dangal did not have a soundtrack that was as popular as those of some other movies released during the same time. The film, which features Aamir Khan in the lead role, broke the records that were previously held by another film called PK, which also starred the same actor.

A paradigm shift in film production and consumption:

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has caused a significant shift in the film industry. Production, distribution, and releases have moved to the virtual world, gaining recognition in an already thriving digital industry. In this new landscape, every participant is vying for the rights to blockbuster movies. The increasing number of film releases is a clear indication that the industry is on a path of revival. The rise of OTT streaming services as the preferred way of watching movies among Indians has been instrumental in helping the film industry navigate the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cultural context:

The ancient epics of the Mahabharata and Ramayana have had a significant influence on the storylines of Indian films. Techniques such as a side narrative, backstory, and story within a story are examples of how this impact can be achieved. The narratives of popular Indian films often featured sub-plots, and this can be observed in 1993 Hindi films such as Kalnayak and Gardish.

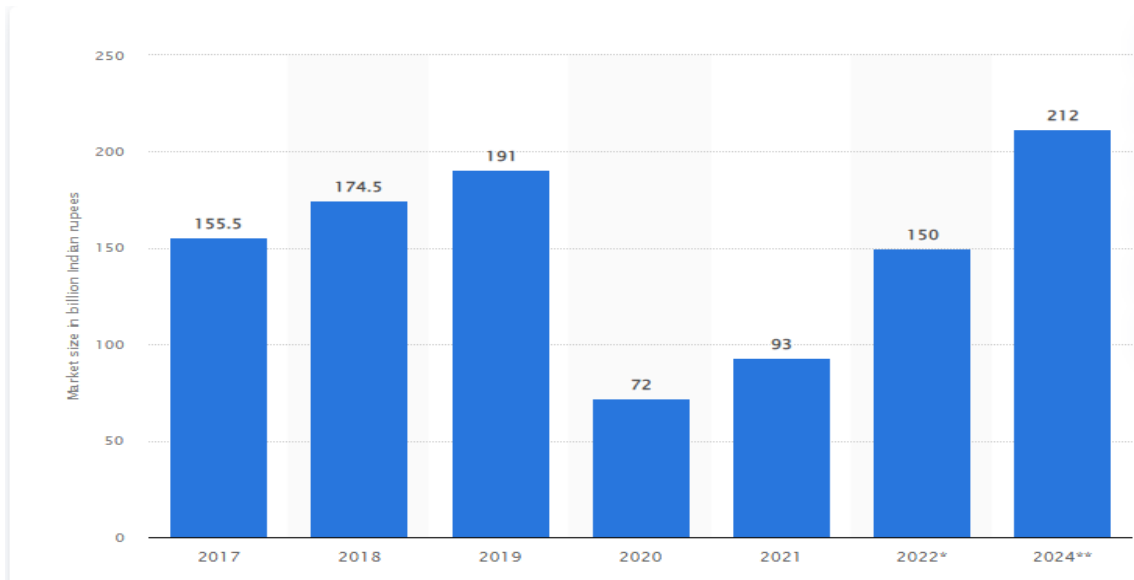
The ancient Sanskrit play is known for its emphasis on music, dance, and gesture, which come together to create a vibrant aesthetic experience. Dance and mime play a crucial role in enhancing the dramatic aspect of the performance. Natya, which is derived from the Sanskrit word nrit, meaning dance, refers to a form of theatrical performance that showcases remarkable dance-dramas. The Rasa way of performing, dating back to ancient times, is a crucial aspect that sets Indian film apart from Western cinema. The Rasa approach differs from the Western Stanislavski technique in that instead of the actor fully embodying a character, the performer in Rasa expresses emotions to the audience through empathy. The rasa approach is evident in the performances of Hindi megastars such as Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan, as well as in Hindi films like Rang De Basanti.

Traditional folk theatre became increasingly popular following the decline of Sanskrit plays in the 10th century. Some of the regional traditions in India include West Bengal's Yatra, Uttar Pradesh's Ramlila, Karnataka's Yakshagana, Andhra Pradesh's 'Chindu Natakam,' and Tamil Nadu's Terukkuttu. Parsi theatre is a unique blend of realism and imagination, incorporating elements such as humor, lyrics, music, sensationalism, and impressive stagecraft. These inspirations can be observed in Hindi masala films such as Coolie (1983) and, to a lesser extent, in more recent and critically acclaimed films like Rang De Basanti.

Musical sequences were used as a fantasy element in the song-and-dance tradition of storytelling in Indian films from the 1920s to the 1960s. These sequences were not hidden but rather openly integrated into people's daily lives, creating a complex and intriguing connection.

The impact of Western music videos, especially MTV, on contemporary Indian films is evident in several aspects, including tempo, camera angles, dance sequences, and music. The influence became increasingly prominent during the 1990s. *Bombay*, directed by Mani Ratnam in 1995, served as an early example of this distinctive style (Cinema_of_India)².

Market size of the film industry across India from financial year 2017 to 2021, with the estimates until 2024:



The Indian film industry was expected to surpass a value of 90 billion Indian rupees in 2021. Although there were signs of improvement, the sector was still experiencing the effects of the coronavirus epidemic and also had to deal with the growing popularity of video OTT culture. Furthermore, there is a prediction that the film industry will fully recover to pre-pandemic levels by the year 2024(India-market-size-of-film-industry)³.

Movie Production companies:

The Indian film industry is home to over 1000 production companies; however, only a handful of them have achieved success. AVM Productions holds the distinction of being the oldest surviving studio in India. Some other notable production houses in the film industry are Yash Raj Films, T-Series, Lyca Productions, Madras Talkies, AGS Entertainment, Sun Pictures, Red Chillies Entertainment, Dharma Productions, Eros International, Ajay Devgn Films, Balaji Motion Pictures, UTV Motion Pictures, Raaj Kamal Films International, Aashirvad Cinemas, Wunderbar Films, Cape of Good Films, and Geetha Arts(india-market-size-of-film-industry)³.

Kannada (Sandalwood) Film Industry History:

One of the most significant discoveries in 2022 could arguably be the Kannada cinema industry. Although the film industry has a rich history spanning almost a century, its impact on Indian cinema in recent decades has been relatively insignificant. Many Hindi-speaking filmmakers, investors, and audiences often neglect to make an effort to pronounce the words of the Kannada language correctly due to the relatively low visibility of Kannada films. Currently, there are still many individuals who mispronounce Kannada as "Kannad."

Reports indicate that Kannada cinema holds the fourth position in terms of Indian film production, accounting for an 8 percent market share of the gross domestic box office receipts from January to August 2022. As of October 2022, the percentage had risen to 9%. According to reports, the top five Kannada films of 2022 have collectively earned a staggering 1800 crores within the first ten months of their release. This remarkable achievement signifies a new era for the industry, characterized by increased popularity, exceptional content, and impressive box office collections (Kannada_cinema)⁴.

About Kantara Movie:

Rishabh Shetty, the talented individual, took on multiple roles in the creation of the action thriller Kantara (Mystical Forest). He not only directed the film but also starred in it. The production of this remarkable movie was handled by Vijay Kiragandur's esteemed company, Hombale Films, in the year 2022. In the film, actor Shetty portrays the character of Shiva, a member of a tribal community. Shiva's character is seen challenging Murali, a forest officer known for his honesty (played by actor Kishore). The cast's performances, especially those of Shetty and Kishore, received high praise from critics. The direction, writing, production design, and cinematography were also commended. Additionally, the film effectively showcased the Bhoota Kola, a ritualistic art form of Tulunadu in coastal Karnataka. Critics and movie buffs worldwide greatly appreciated the action sequences, editing, soundtrack, and musical score of the movie Kantara, which was released on September 30, 2022. Due to its remarkable commercial success, the film achieved the status of being the second-highest grossing film in the history of the Kannada film industry (Kantara_(film))⁵.

Release-

The Kannada movie "Kantara" was released on September 30, 2022, in over 250 theatres across Karnataka. It was released simultaneously in countries such as the US, UK, Europe, the Middle East, and Australia.

Following the movie's success in Kannada, the producers have announced their plans to dub it in Telugu, Hindi, Tamil, and Malayalam. The Hindi version of the movie was released on October 14, 2022, while the Telugu and Tamil versions were released on October 15, 2022. Initially, it was announced that the Hindi version would be released in over 800 theatres nationwide. However, it was later reported that the film was actually released in 2,500 theatres. The movie, which was also dubbed in Tulu, the local language of coastal Karnataka, was released on December 2, 2022. It received positive reviews from viewers in Tulu Nadu. Additionally, it holds the distinction of being the first Kannada movie to have been released in Vietnam.

Asianet in Malayalam, Star Suvarna in Kannada, Star Vijay in Tamil, Star Maa in Telugu, and Sony Max in Hindi all acquired the film's satellite rights. On November 24th, 2022, the Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, and Tamil versions of the film became available for internet streaming. The acquisition of the film's digital rights by Amazon Prime Video made this possible. Netflix began streaming the Hindi version on December 9, 2022. The English dub of the movie was released in January 2023(Kantara_(film))⁵.

Box office collection:

According to reports, the collections for the first week ranged between 38 and 50 crores. In the first week of its release, the movie was estimated to have been watched by over 1.9 million people across Karnataka. The movie achieved the milestone of 100 crore rupees in just 15 days, and it surpassed the 150 crore rupees mark within 18 days. The movie achieved a significant milestone by becoming the first Kannada film to earn 1 million US dollars in North America. Additionally, it also performed exceptionally well in the UK, generating revenue of £1.06 million. In less than four weeks, the movie produced by Hombale Films became the most watched film in Karnataka, with a total of 77 lakh people attending.

Within just one month of its release, the film achieved a remarkable milestone by crossing the 250-crore mark worldwide. The total domestic net collections for all versions reached Rs. 200 crores within a span of 30 days. The movie reached a significant milestone of Rs. 300 crores in gross receipts within just 33 days. According to reports, the film has earned a total of 360 crores within a span of 44 days. It was reported that the film's theatrical run lasted for 50 days and generated a revenue of approximately 370 to 377 crores. The global gross collections crossed the 400-crore mark in just 53 days. According to reports, the movie achieved the third-highest domestic box office performance in 2022 (Kantara_(film))⁵.

Government response:

The Karnataka State Government has announced a monthly retirement payment of Rs. 2000 for Bhoota Kola artists who are over 60 years old. This decision comes in response to the tremendous success of the movie (Kantara_(film))⁵.
Scope of the Research:

The scope of this study was to analyze and understand the consumer behavior patterns related to an experiential product, the Kantara Movie.

Research Objective:

To identify the factors which attracted respondents to watch Kantara movie.

1. To establish relationship between the cultural aspect in movie and real life.
2. To understand what motivated respondents to watch movie more than once.

Research Methodology:

1. Primary research using Qualitative Method
 - i) Survey method -A sample of 150 respondents were selected from North, South, East, and Western part of India.
 - ii) Focus Group Interview-Two panels formed with 8 members each from different regions of India i.e., North, South, East and West.
2. Secondary research conducted through Print, Television, Internet, YouTube, IMDB, Instagram and other social media sources.

Summary of Secondary Research:

Important citations from the viewers for the question “what made them to watch the movie?”

“Watching Kantara (2022) for the third time. Quite an **addiction** now. It's not every day you get to enjoy such an electrifying climax, not to forget the cultural epicenes. Goosebumps alert. Don't miss it for anything. - Shakti Shetty (@Shakti_Shetty) October 16, 2022”- twitter⁹

Word of mouth pushes the movie to grow across other regions. People have found multiple reasons to watch the kantara movie more than once. Prabhas, Anil Kumble, and I all watched it twice. It's as if people are addicted to watching the movie because **every time you watch it, you learn a new lesson or experience a new mentos moment**. “Back to Kantara experienceforthesecondtimewith@anilkumble1074, @MahathiVP5, @hombalefilms, @shetty_rishab-vijayprakash (@rvijayprakash) October 10, 2022”- twitter⁹

After hearing so much about this movie, went in even without watching the trailer. “**Went in for the hype**, came out with GOOSEBUMPS” – IMDB(User-submitted review of "Kantara")⁶

What made me watch is that the culture depicted in Kantara had **similarity with that from Punjabi, Himachali, Kashmiri cultures**, which I am deeply rooted with – Youtube⁸

Being a Native of Mangalore, I can't express my excitement this trailer brings in me. Having experienced the Naga Pooje and Daiva Aradhane, **I feel more connected to watch this movie** – Youtube⁸.

I am from Belgium and **was checking IMBD, after seeing the 9/10 score** for this movie I'm gonna watch this, I got zero expectations I'm all in for it! Let's Go!! – Youtube⁸.

I saw this movie **more than 10 times**.... Every time I felt fresh feel and new point of view in this movie.... Ultimate movie I think, no one can direct and act in this movie better than Rishabh sir.....These types of movies will give good inspiration and they teach about our culture and traditions – Youtube⁸.

Summary of the observations made for “what made the viewers watch the movie?”

1. Connection with their own culture and Tradition
2. Mind-blowing cinematography.
3. Soulful music.
4. IMBD ratings
5. Greatly appreciated by the critics.

6. Influenced by theatre experiences and direction standards shared by peers.
7. Influenced by previous movies directed by Rishabh Shetty
8. Re-purchase as a result of addiction
9. Intrigued by the hype that was created around the movie.

Primary Research:

1. Survey Method: The survey questionnaire, as shown in Annexure 1, was designed, and administered to 150 respondents. The responses provided by the participants were then analyzed.

1. Findings from the Survey responses:

1. 83% of the respondents saw Kantara in Movie theatre and out of them 67% were aged between 21-25.
2. Out of the total respondents who saw the movie in theatre, 62% were from southern part of India.
3. 43 respondents went to watch Kantara because of the Hype about the movie.
4. 38 respondents went because of an emotional connect with culture and tradition.
5. 37 respondents were influenced by the Ratings of the movie.
6. Factor which made Respondents watch Kantara in Different parts of the country were:
 - North India - Movie Rating (IMDb, Rotten Tomatoes)
 - South India - Culture and Belief portrayed in Movie & Hype about the movie.
 - East India - Movie Rating (IMDb, Rotten Tomatoes) & Hype about the movie
 - Western India - Hype about the movie
7. Out of the 6 respondents of age 50 and above, 5 of them stated Culture and Belief portrayed in the movie as the reason for watching Kantara.
8. 101 respondents out of 150 belonged to 21-25 age group and highest number of respondents stated that Hype about the movie was the reason to watch Kantara.
9. Out of the 150 respondents, 42 saw the movie twice, 10 stated that, Acting being the reason for them to watch 2nd time whereas few stated Cinematography as the reason.
10. The respondents who watched the movie more than three times said Acting, Direction, cinematography and Climax were few of the reasons to watch Kantara repeatedly.
11. Out of the total 71 female respondents, 25 stated Culture and Belief portrayed in movie and 23 said Hype about Kantara made them to watch the movie.
12. 26 male respondents stated Movie rating whereas 20 of them said Hype about the movie influenced them to watch Kantara.
13. Among the total respondents, 74 of them stated that they have a similar tradition in their native place, 25 of them stated that Culture and Belief portrayed in the movie as the reason why they watched Kantara movie.
14. Few of the similar traditions stated by the 74 respondents are as follows:
 - Chhau folk dance
 - Diwali
 - Karag
 - Daivas kola and Agelu Seve
 - We have in our locality karaga dance performance and believed that god comes to their body and they dance.
 - Bhootaradhane
 - Nagaradhane, Naga mandala
 - Kambala and Suggi that was shown in the movie.
 - Thayam, Agori, yakshagana, kathakali
 - Shiva Nritya
15. However, the 76 respondents said that they do not have any similar tradition/culture in their native place but the Hype about the movie was the reason to watch Kantara.
16. 111 respondents i.e., 74% of total respondents said that they have previously watched a movie directed/acted by Rishabh Shetty and 84 among them responded that Rishabh Shetty's performance in his previous movies were the reasons why they watched Kantara.

17. 101 respondents stated that the cultural aspect shown in Kantara reminded them of something back in their memories. Some of the aspects stated are as follows-

- Devakad - Sacred Groves in Coorg and stories rolled over there.
- Culture of coastal area
- Karaga(Mysore) & Jallikattu (Tamil Nadu)
- Tulunad Culture especially Bootha Kola
- Tulunada Vaibhava
- Theyyam in Kannur district of Kerala
- It reminded me about various things but to keep it precise, it made me realize to keep up with our roots in my perspective or that's what I have consumed from the movie.
- It reminded me of old folktales told by grandparents when we were younger.

2. Focus Group discussions:

Focus Group-Panel 1 Summary

It is observed that most of the panel members watched the movie because of reviews. The most fascinating element of the movie was portrayal of the cultural aspect, acting and cinematography. Few of them rewatched the movie because of the deep connection felt to the culture portrayed. It was observed that the representatives of Karnataka in the focus group panel, especially the ones from Mangalore were able to connect to the culture more. Hence, it can be comprehended that the cultural connect of the movie was the one which attracted everyone's attention.



Figure 1. Focus group Interview Panel 1

Focus Group-Panel 2- Summary

It is observed that most of members of panel 2 watched the movie because of the cultural portrayal. The IMDB rating and word of mouth also influenced them to watch the movie. Majority of them watched the movie in theatres and the most people felt that the movie was strong representation of culture, beliefs, and rituals deep-rooted in every pocket of India. Most of the panel members could connect with the movie as they have been familiar with similar kind of cultural practices in their region. They believed that the movie should be watched as it spreads the awareness of culture, the rituals and belief system prevalent in India. Also, they opined that the people from religious specific regions can connect to the culture more. It is observed that most of them watched Kantara because of reviews which aroused curiosity about the culture, the way it is portrayed, acting and the cinematography.



Figure 1. Focus group Interview Panel 2

Region wise Focus Group Findings:

South India: Mainly people of the coastal region of Karnataka where happy about the movie that they were able to connect to their roots. North Karnataka people were able to connect with the movie because of commonality of the cultural aspect. Other people watched because of the popularity of hero in lead role and word of mouth. People from other states of **South India** were watching the movie mainly because of word of mouth, social media, technical aspects, etc.

North India: Culture, IMDB rating and Word of mouth and Hype.

East India: Family influence, IMDB rating and word of mouth.

Western India: Culture, Word of Mouth

Other than the above findings, many people watched the movie because of the technical aspects of the movie and acting. Hence it can be concluded that, the word of mouth and hype about the movie has also influenced people to watch the movie in addition to the cultural aspect.

Conclusion:

Based on the findings of **secondary research**, it was determined that several key factors influenced people's decision to watch the movie "Kantara." These factors included elements such as culture, tradition, soulful music, cinematography, direction, acting, critics' ratings, IMDB ratings, hype, word of mouth, and social media buzz.

Based on a **primary research** interview conducted with 150 respondents, it was discovered that several key factors influenced people's decision to watch the Kantara movie. These factors included emotional connection to culture and tradition, the quality of acting, direction, music, and cinematography, ratings by critics, as well as ratings on platforms such as IMDB and Rotten Tomatoes. Additionally, factors such as hype, word of mouth, and reviews from YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, and other social media networks also played a significant role in influencing viewership. Some respondents mentioned that they watched the movie because it reminded them of similar cultural practices in their native place. The respondents provided several reasons for why they chose to watch a movie more than once. These reasons included the acting, direction, cinematography, and climax.

During the **focus group** discussions, several panelists expressed that they were able to connect with their roots due to the shared cultural aspects. Others mentioned that they decided to watch the movie based on various factors, such as the hype surrounding it, positive reviews from critics, and high ratings on IMDB. Additionally, word of mouth, social media buzz, and the quality of the acting, music, direction, and cinematography also played a role in their decision.

Based on the findings from both **secondary and primary research**, Kishore concludes that the movie Kantara achieved tremendous success not only because of its cultural elements but also due to the significant impact of word of mouth and the hype generated by the media and the public.

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