Viewers Study of the Popular Cinema in India with Reference to Costumes

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Abstract

Films are a one of the major sources of entertainment in India and it resonates in our life in many ways. This paper is an attempt to know the influence of films on our fashion and lifestyle through the survey of viewers, specifically in the Popular Cinema. The paper is based on mixed method approach and utilises interpretive paradigm to explore the impact on the viewers. The hypotheses drawn from the survey would act as a primer for market researchers to develop further theories on the impact of films on fashion and costumes with respect to its influence on the viewers.

Key words: Fashion, Popular Cinema, Film viewer, Costume design,

Introduction

Indian Popular cinema or commonly known as Bollywood is the Indian film industry based in Mumbai, a city symbolising urban cosmopolitanism, similar to Washington DC and New York in the US (Jackson, 2004). According to Dwyer (2006), Bollywood is positioned higher as the biggest film industry worldwide in terms of the employees and the films produced. Matusitz and Payano (2011) have studied the insightful impact of Bollywood in India and Diaspora in cultural and emotional aspects. According to the FICCI-KPMG Indian Media and Entertainment Industry Report 2015, the Indian film industry is expected to touch INR 204 Billion by the end of 2019 and grow at a CAGR of 10% during 2014-2019.

Indian audience, instead of thinking of a movie as a make-believe phenomenon, can relate to it and become emotionally involved with the actors working in it. They look to Bollywood to tell them how to dress fashionably, how to talk impressively, and how to behave in social settings (Dwyer, 2002).

Literature Review

Costume and cinema is comparatively a newer area in film studies. According to Pam Cook (1996), the marginalisation of costume design by film theorists is marked enough to be diagnosed as a symptom. Costume bears a particular burden for the persuasiveness of the remake the convincing the audience of the film's supposed faithfulness to off screen sartorial conventions or historical projections (Higson, 2003;

Sprengler 2009; Street 2001 as cited in Wilkinson-Weber, 2010). Costume design is an expression of the essential nature of a character and the era he/ she inhibits (www.costumedesignersguild.com).

Methodology

The interrelatedness of the aspects of evolution, role of design facilitators and influence on viewers is explored through different research approaches. The ontological stance of the study is that the costume design in the Indian films not only helps in communicating about the characters but also extends itself to the viewers. The study adopts Interpretivism as there are multiple realities (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988) for understanding the role of design facilitators.

According to the interpretive paradigm, meanings are constructed by human beings in unique ways, depending on their context and personal frames of reference as they engage with the world they are interpreting (Crotty, 1998). The data is enquired from the human beings associated with the costume design in the Indian Hindi films which is based on the hermeneutical phenomenology. It will focus on meaning of costumes in terms of the designers, facilitators and viewers.

Cholachatpinyo (2004), used phenomenology to develop the conceptual model for fashion industry based on opinions of the fashion adopters. The evolutionary trends of recreational clothing in lower middle class were studied by Perry (2010) as an outcome of cultural phenomena. Gravestock (2011) also documented costume design practices with physicality of the performing body using drawing as the primary method under phenomenological philosophy.

Results and Findings

The influence of film on fashion and preference of the viewers were analysed using a survey. The hypothesis were derived and tested to understand the meaning of costume, recall factor, influence on fashion adoption and preferences.

Assessment of the Influence of Film on Fashion Preferences of the Viewers

The analysis of the viewers' response was done using SPSS. Delhi – NCR was chosen as it is a cosmopolitan region and inhabits a mixed population in terms of education, ethnicity and income groups. Though, the response to film viewing and its influence were not analysed in terms of religion, ethnicity and cultural aspects of the viewers.

Descriptive Statistics

Profile of the Respondents:

- Out of the total sample size of 388, 57% of the respondents were Post graduate and 43% were found to be a graduate. The age group of the respondents ranged from 25 – 45 years in which majority belonged to 25 – 30 years (39%) and 31 – 35 years (38%).

- In terms of area of work, the respondents were from mainly from teaching (18.6%), management (11.6%), and research background (9.5%). Consulting (9.3%), IT (9.0%) and marketing (8.8%) were the other popular areas. Dividing Delhi-NCR into 5 regions, 29.6% of the respondents were living in East Delhi, 25.3% in NCR, 21.4% in South Delhi which was followed by West Delhi (13.9%) and North Delhi (9.8%).

According to the ESOMAR guideline for Socio-Economic Status (SES), for the purpose of everyday research, the eight Social Grade categories can be aggregated to provide a more practical four-category classification:

AB 'managers and professionals';

C1 'well-educated non-manual and skilled workers'

C2 'skilled workers and non-manual employees'

DE 'unskilled manual workers and other less well-educated workers/employees'
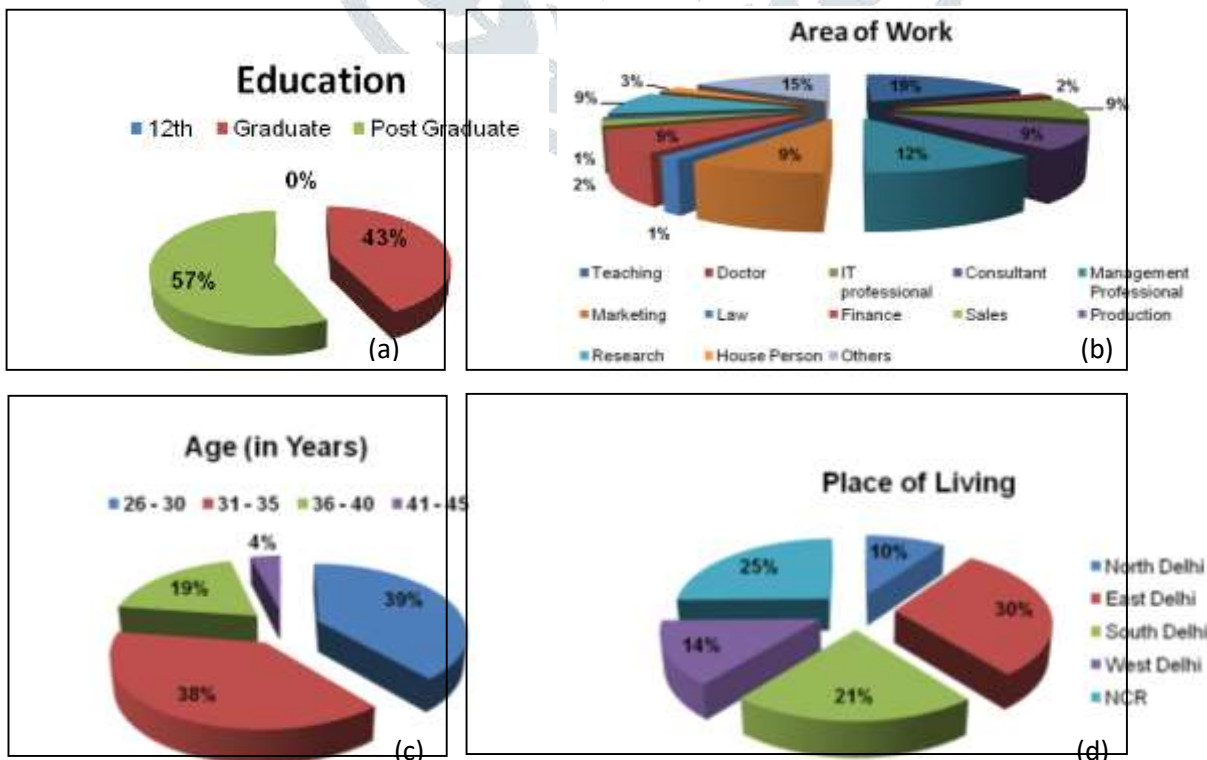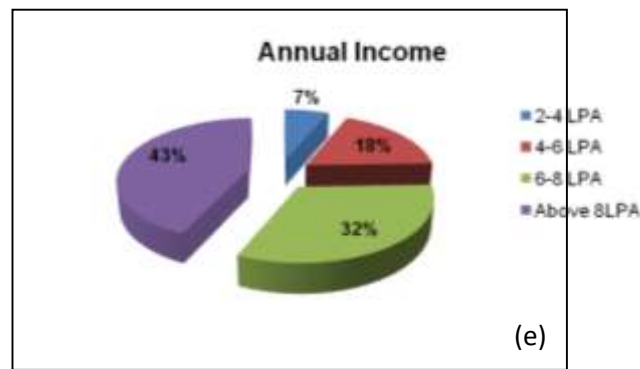
Fig: 1 Profile of the respondents

- The sample drawn from the survey mainly comprised of AB and C1 social grades who were well educated, top and middle management personnel and non-manual employees. These were well-educated, independent or self-employed professional people. To achieve this, researcher purposively distributed a questionnaire to different colleges in the University of Delhi, IT and consulting firms in Delhi – NCR, design professionals, doctors, lawyers etc.

Reliability of the Data

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
0.802	0.8	47

Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. It is considered to be a measure of scale reliability.

The alpha coefficient for the 47 items is 0.802, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency (Table 1). (Note that a reliability coefficient of 0.70 or higher is considered "acceptable" in most social science research experiments.)

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the literature review and statistical analysis of questionnaire, following hypotheses have been proposed through the survey.

Hypothesis 1: There is a relationship between the costumes used in a film to its appeal.

H_0: The costumes worn by a character in a film do not relate to the factors appealing in the film.

H_1: The costumes worn by a character in a film relate to the factors appealing in the film.

In order to test our hypothesis, the Chi square test value was calculated for finding the factors which are associated with costume to make a film appealing.

Table 2: Chi square test between appealing factors

Costume Appealing						
Factors	Chi Square Values	df	Assymp. Sig (2-sided)	Phi	Cramer'V	% of Cells with expected count less than 5
Story	226.725a	16	0	0.764	0.382	44
Actor/ Actress	160.772a	16	0	0.644	0.322	32
Costume						
Direction	209.496a	16	0	0.735	0.367	28
Cinematography	202.745a	16	0	0.723	0.361	8
Dialogues	122.381a	16	0	0.562	0.281	24
Songs	254.684a	16	0	0.81	0.405	24

In Table 2, the results from the Chi-square test between significant factors associated to make a film appealing and the costume of the actors were observed. The significant level is 0.05 will be compared with Asymp.Sig (2-sided) in the table above. The results show that all the factors have a value less than 0.05 but only direction (000), cinematography (000), Dialogues (000) and songs (000) have acceptable cell counts less than 5, the chi-square assumptions are only valid to them. It can be concluded that these 4 factors are significantly related to the costume to make a film appealing.

The Cramer's V for Direction (0.367), Cinematography (0.361), Dialogues (0.281) and songs (0.405) shows that the association between these factors and the Costume is very high to make the film more appealing. Weber (2010) and Landis (2007) have also propounded the visual appeal of the costumes worn by the actors in a film which creates an emotional relation to the characters wearing it.

Hypothesis 2: The costumes appealing in a film are an important signifier for describing a character

H0: The costumes appealing in a film do not tell about the characteristics of the wearer.

H1: The costumes appealing in a film tell about the characteristics of the wearer.

Table 3: Chi-square test between significant information associated with a costume and the importance of the costume to make a film appealing

Costume 7					
Factors	Chi Square Values	df	Assymp. Sig (2-sided)	Phi	Cramer'V	% of Cells with expected count less than 5
Age	133.084a	12	0	0.586	0.338	20
Mood	143.459a	16	0	0.608	0.304	20
Occupation	78.275a	12	0	0.449	0.259	15
Character's Performance	143.434a	16	0	0.608	0.304	28
Place of living	138.427a	16	0	0.597	0.299	24
Marital Status	125.537a	16	0	0.569	0.284	12
Education	156.871a	16	0	0.636	0.318	8
Relationship	199.243a	16	0	0.717	0.358	32
Gender	110.696a	16	0	0.534	0.267	48
Style Statement	138.491a	12	0	0.597	0.345	10
Religion	156.132a	16	0	0.634	0.317	36
Economic Status	80.174a	12	0	0.455	0.262	15
Unique personality	136.867a	16	0	0.594	0.297	20
Publicise trend	76.031a	16	0	0.443	0.221	40
Latest Fashion	69.586a	12	0	0.423	0.245	20

Table 3 describes the results from Chi-square test between significant information associated to a costume and the importance of the costume to make a film appealing. The significant level is 0.05 and will be compared with Asymp. Sig (2-sided) in the table above. The results show that all the factors have value less than 0.05 but only Age (000), mood (000), marital status (000), occupation (000), Education (000), style statement (000), unique personality (000) and latest fashion (000) have acceptable cell counts less than 5, the

chi-square assumptions are only valid to them. It can be concluded that these 8 factors are significantly related to the costume to make a film appealing.

According to Maeder (1987), costumes are playing a very important part in the portrayal of characters and Landis (2003) stated that costumes add essential information to the moment of a scene, of a story, to help achieve the visual and the narrative goal of the film maker. Bruzzi (1997) and Street (2001) have also advocated the hidden meanings of dress in the films.

The results show that the factors mood and education have a very strong association based on the Cramer's V and the factors Age, marital status, occupation, Education, style statement, unique personality and latest fashion are moderately associated with the costume of the actor to make the film more appealing. It is concluded that these factors need to be considered while choosing a costume for the actor or actress to increase the interest of viewers in the film because it helps in character portrayal.

The questions were asked related to the particular dresses in three films and the recall factor of the respondents was recorded. As seen in Fig 2, the number of people who could recall the films in all the cases is too high as compared to those who could not which clearly indicate that the people are able to remember the films on the basis of dresses worn in it.
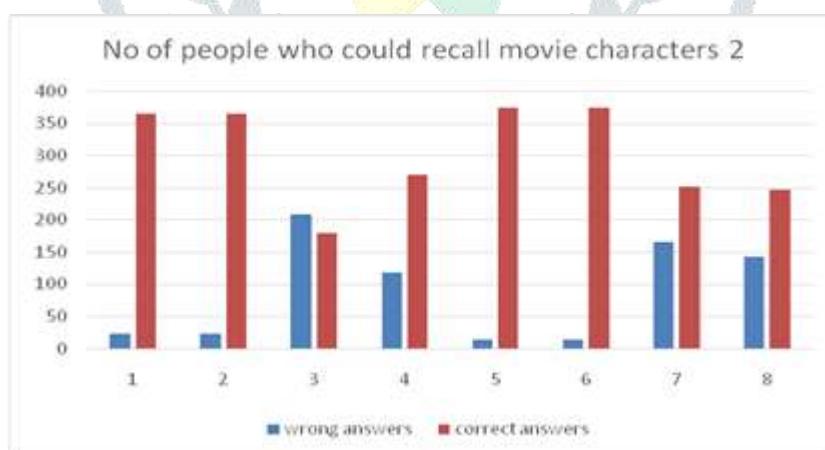

Fig. 2 Graph to represent the responses to the recall factor of costumes and the actors associated in the film

Also, the respondents were asked to identify the film as well as actor associated in four films. As seen in Fig 2, the number of people who could recall the films as well as the actors associated is high in three cases as compared to those who could not. It strongly indicates that the costumes used in film create an identity of the actor which the viewers are able to recall. The strong relation of costume and identity was also explored

by Bruzzi (1997) while comparing the spectacle of different films. Thus, it is proposed that the costume has a role to play in the identity of the characters.

Conclusion

In India, the films act as one of the popular forms of mass media with unqualified admiration for the commercial films as stated by Sarkar (1975). Therefore, the study attempted to assess the influence of films on the preference, adoption and recall factor through a survey of the viewers. The key findings are as follows:

- Costumes worn by a character is one of the important factors that bring realism in a film after story and direction being the most important one.

- Story, costume and direction are the most important factors to bring realism in a film and make it more appealing.

- The costumes which are appealing in a film are important signifier for the whereabouts of the character and tell about its age, marital status, occupation and education.

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