# Developing business trends based on the cinema movie watching preferences of Generation Z in Vietnam

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***Abstract:*** *The study investigates the factors influencing cinema movie-going behavior among Generation Z in Vietnam by integrating contextual preferences and psychological determinants within a unified analytical framework. Drawing on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), the research examines the effects of preferred movie genre, preferred movie-watching time, preferred origin of movies, social connectedness, perceived price fairness, perceived convenience and reviewer opinion influence. Surveyed data were collected from 309 Gen Z respondents through an online survey and analyzed using PLS-SEM and supplementary ANOVA and t-test procedures. The results indicate that all proposed factors significantly shape cinema attendance behavior, with perceived convenience and price fairness emerging as particularly influential. Additionally, notable differences in movie-going behavior were observed across genre preferences, viewing time preferences, and film origin categories. The study contributes to the growing body of literature on youth entertainment consumption by offering empirical insights into the dynamics of cinema engagement in an increasingly digitalized environment. Practical implications are provided for cinema operators and marketers to enhance engagement strategies tailored to Gen Z's expectations and behavioral patterns.*

**Keywords:** Cinema-going behavior; cinema movie; entertainment consumption; generation Z; movie preferences.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the Vietnamese film industry has experienced both instability and strong development, driven in large part by the contributions of young filmmakers . Evolving from its early foundation in propaganda cinema, Vietnam has now transformed into a diverse and competitive film market. Among various cultural and entertainment forms, cinema remains one of the most popular, offering audiences a distinctive sensory experience through space, sound, and lighting. According to the data of Statista in 2025, the total revenue of Vietnamese feature films reached 80.5 million USD in 2023, marking a more than 30% increase compared to the pre-pandemic level of 62.3 million USD in 2019. The market is projected to maintain steady growth from 2024 to 2029, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of approximately 4.9%, potentially reaching 110.7 million USD by 2029. However, this figure represents only about 6–8 million moviegoers, which is less than 10% of the national population. These figures indicated that Vietnam's cinema market still holds significant untapped potential for expansion.

The continued growth of Vietnam's cinema market depends not only on film quality and infrastructure but also on understanding audience behavior. Generation Z, born after 1997, is characterized by early exposure to the internet, strong social media influence, and high technological adaptability (Williams et al., 2010). Also known as the Net Generation or iGen, they engage with digital platforms more frequently than previous generations and represent the largest group of online consumers. This generation, which is shaped by distinctive socio-technological contexts, exhibits rapid information access, adaptability and a preference for instant gratification and virtual interaction (Tabassum et al., 2020).

Technology has also transformed the way this generation interacts with media, paving the way for more innovative and engaging marketing methods through the Internet, social media, mobile applications, and data analytics (Yum & Kim, 2024). Among these platforms, TikTok stands out as one of the most influential, reshaping how young users communicate and consume content. Since its launch in 2016, TikTok has become a global phenomenon with billions of downloads . Its appeal lies in its high interactivity, allowing users to engage with content on multiple levels from viewing and liking videos to commenting, sharing and creating their own (Muntinga et al., 2011). These interactive features create a vibrant ecosystem where creative content spreads rapidly and widely. Understanding these patterns of engagement and the factors influencing Gen Z's interaction with short videos is crucial for businesses, particularly within the film industry. As user preferences and media trends evolve quickly (Segarwati et al., 2023), analyzing how Gen Z engages with digital content can help firms design effective marketing strategies, attract potential audiences, and enhance campaign performance. Therefore, examining Generation Z's cinema-watching preferences and their interactions with digital media not only contributes to a deeper understanding of contemporary consumer behavior but also offers practical insights for developing innovative business strategies in Vietnam's emerging film market. The remainder of this article is structured as follows. Section 2 develops the conceptual framework and hypotheses. Section 3 explains the research methodology. Section 4 presents the results and discussion.

Section 5 concludes with theoretical contributions and practical implications, as well as the limitations and future research directions.

## 2. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

### 2.1 Cinema movie-going behavior

Cinema movie-going behavior is considered a specific form of consumer behavior, reflecting the chain of decisions of the audience from the formation of the need to watch a movie to the time of choosing the content, choosing the theater, experiencing it at the theater and evaluating it after watching. According to the approach of Han & Lee (2008), this behavior includes both cognitive and emotional factors, and is often shaped by expectations about the experience as well as the cultural and social characteristics of each group of viewers. Matzkin (1999) also emphasized that movie-going is not only a purely entertainment behavior but also an emotional choice, associated with psychological motives such as the desire to escape, pursue aesthetic pleasure or social connection. Cinema-going behavior can be seen as a multidimensional concept.

Several studies on movie-going behavior often describe the concept through several basic elements. For example, frequency and habit of watching movies are considered important indicators of the intention to continue going to the cinema in the future. Recent empirical results in Vietnam show that habit is one of the strongest predictors of movie-going intention (Hao & Duy, 2025). Movie-going motivation is also often explained based on theoretical frameworks of gratification needs, according to which audiences go to the cinema for entertainment, relaxation, socializing with friends, or seeking emotions that other forms of entertainment cannot easily replace (Tefertiller, 2017). Besides, content preferences, especially film genre and novelty, have been shown to directly influence cinema choice decisions, especially in the context of young audiences prioritizing visually and emotionally intense experiences (Batlle-Beltrán & Mateo, 2022). In addition, the experience elements at the cinema such as image quality, sound, amenities, seats or customer service are also noted to contribute to shaping satisfaction and intention to return (Gomes et al., 2023). Finally, social influence including reviews from friends, trends on social networks and viral effects, is considered a particularly important factor for young audiences, who often make decisions based on social consensus or FOMO effect (Voronin, 2025).

Both domestic and international research generally agree that movie-going behavior is the result of the interaction between intrinsic motivation and the influence of the social environment. In Asian markets such as Malaysia and South Korea, entertainment motivation, genre preference, and perceived benefits of watching movies in theaters are identified as central factors in movie-going decisions (Wang, 2019; Jung, 2021). In Vietnam, many recent studies show that the quality of the in-store experience and convenience are strong influencing factors in the choice of theaters for urban audiences (Anh, 2018). This reflects the trend of viewers increasingly prioritizing the value of the experience rather than just focusing on the film's content.

### 2.2 Gen Z's entertainment trends in the cinema movie industry in Vietnam

In the booming Vietnamese entertainment market, Gen Z (born between 1997 and 2012) has become the most important customer group for the cinema industry. Their rapid access to technology, high level of integration with digital culture, and consumer trends focused on experiences make Gen Z not only a large customer base but also a force shaping new trends in the film industry.

From a market perspective, the Vietnamese film industry is showing significant recovery and expansion. In the first six months of 2025, box office revenue reached approximately VND 3,017 billion, an increase of nearly VND 270 billion compared to the same period last year (NgheAn News, 2025). It is projected that for the whole year of 2025, Vietnamese film revenue could reach approximately VND 4,000 billion, almost double that of 2024 (Du, 2025). In addition, major cinema operators are also recording impressive growth. For example, CGV's revenue in Vietnam in 2024 reached VND 3,840 billion, equivalent to VND 10.5 billion in revenue per day, demonstrating that the demand for cinema viewing remains very strong among young audiences (Vnexpress, 2025). According to Box Office Vietnam, the market currently has about 212 cinema complexes with over 1,200 screens nationwide, making access to cinema services easier for Gen Z, especially in major cities. Forecasts also suggest that the Vietnamese box office market could maintain a growth rate of approximately 4.4% per year during the 2025–2030 period, which may reflect the market's long-term potential.

Despite the dominance of digital entertainment, Gen Z hasn't abandoned movie theaters; instead, they've changed their approach to it. Recent analysis shows that Gen Z is the most addicted to digital entertainment in Vietnam, spending an average of 5–7 hours a day on short-video platforms, social media, and games. However, movie theaters have become a place where they seek unique experiences that cannot be replaced by personal screens (Thu et al., 2024). For Gen Z, going to the movies is not just about consuming content but also about socializing, meeting friends, taking photos, recording videos, and sharing them on social media. This trend of viewing movies as a social experience is evident in the way many movie theaters in Vietnam design their spaces to be social-entertainment, catering to Gen Z's check-in behavior, visual experiences, and need for interaction.

Another point is that Gen Z tends to spend purposefully, especially on personalized experiences. Recent reports show that this group is willing to spend more on entertainment from food and drinks at the theater to upgraded experiences (double seats, VIP seats, premium screening rooms). This aligns with the global trend that Gen Z prioritizes experiential value over

mere price, and is willing to pay more if the theater offers multi-sensory, comfortable, and unique experiences. Furthermore, Gen Z is strongly influenced by global cultural and entertainment trends. They are easily affected by social media effects, fandoms, K-pop, Korean dramas, and travel and dining trends inspired by movies/television. Many young people say they are willing to go to the theater to see movies that are trending on TikTok, movies with their favorite actors, or movies that are creating trends on various platforms. This shows that Gen Z's movie-watching behavior is closely tied to popular culture and digital media, creating opportunities for cinemas to leverage a coordinated strategy of multi-platform marketing and viral content. However, competition from digital platforms also poses a significant challenge for cinemas. Gen Z tends to consume content quickly, in short segments, multitasking, and easily switching between entertainment channels, which may result in less regular cinema visits compared to previous generations. Therefore, cinemas can only maintain their appeal if they create a more outstanding experience than watching movies at home.

## 2.3 Theoretical background

Research on movie-watching behavior and entertainment trends among Gen Z is based on the foundational theories of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) to explain how various factors influence the decision to watch movies in theaters.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991) suggests that people make behavioral decisions based on behavioral intentions, which are influenced by three components: attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Many studies in the entertainment field have applied TPB to explain how audiences make decisions when choosing a cinema or movie viewing method. The results show that positive attitudes toward the cinema experience, including image quality, sound, comfort, and service, have a strong impact on movie-going intentions (Simamora & Djamaludin, 2020). In addition, the influence of friends and online communities, especially among young people, is considered a form of subjective norms with significant impact. For Gen Z, subjective norms are also expressed through viral trends on social networks, movie reviews from influencers, or fandom communities. Finally, perceived behavioral control factors such as cost, accessibility to the theater, travel time, or convenient showtimes also play a significant role in this group's decision to go to the cinema.

Meanwhile, the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1973) emphasizes that individuals actively choose media to satisfy different needs, such as entertainment, social interaction, self-expression, or information seeking. The application of UGT in the cinema context shows that audiences, especially young people, go to the cinema not only for the content of the film but also for the spiritual values and experiences that this activity brings. Tefertiller (2017) found that the need for entertainment, the need for socialization, and the need for relaxation are important motivations for cinema selection behavior. For Gen Z, these needs also extend to aesthetic needs, expressiveness, and the ability to share experiences on social networks. Research by Shen & Hao (2024) shows that young people tends to appreciate personalized and visual experiences, which are considered factors that cinemas can meet better than home viewing platforms.

## 2.4  Factors influencing cinema movie-going behavior

### 2.4.1. Preferred movie genre

Preferred movie genre (action, romance, horror, or others) is treated as a categorical variable representing the dominant type of film that an individual enjoys watching, reflecting differences in emotional, cognitive, and social motivations for entertainment. Genre preference serves as a psychological indicator of personal identity, emotional needs, and lifestyle orientation, which together shape an individual's viewing behavior and patterns of cinema attendance. Previous research has demonstrated that audience preferences for specific genres are influenced by personality traits, emotional regulation strategies, and cultural values, all of which affect how individuals engage with cinematic experiences (Napolitano et al., 2021; Menon et al., 2025). For Generation Z in Vietnam, film preferences are further shaped by the integration of global media exposure, digital connectivity, and peer group dynamics. This cohort tends to express identity and emotion through entertainment choices, making genre selection not merely a form of leisure but a form of social expression. Those who prefer action and adventure films are often motivated by thrill, excitement, and immersive sensory experiences, while individuals who favor romance or comedy are drawn to emotional connection, empathy, and relational storytelling. Meanwhile, viewers of horror or psychological thrillers may seek tension, curiosity, and novel experiences that stimulate cognitive engagement. Given these distinctions, preferred movie genres are expected to generate diverse patterns of cinema attendance, influencing both the frequency and intensity of theater-going behaviors among young audiences. Based on the above agurements, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

*H1: Preferred movie genre is significantly associated with cinema movie-going behavior of Gen Z in Vietnam.*

### 2.4.2. Preferred movie-watching time

Preferred movie-watching time (morning, afternoon, evening, or night) represents an important behavioral indicator reflecting when individuals most commonly choose to engage in cinematic or video content consumption. The timing of movie-watching is closely related to users' daily routines, mood states, and energy levels, all of which influence engagement and attention patterns. Prior research has shown that the duration and temporal distribution of viewing time play a vital role in assessing user engagement, directly affecting system workload, network traffic, and overall viewing satisfaction (Dobrian et al., 2011). According to large-scale analyses of video-on-demand systems, user engagement

levels and departure rates vary significantly depending on the time of day, indicating that contextual and psychological factors strongly shape viewing habits (Hei et al., 2007). From a behavioral perspective, preferred movie-watching time can also reflect individual lifestyle rhythms and emotional tendencies. Morning viewers may prioritize informational or lighthearted content that aligns with cognitive alertness, whereas evening or nighttime viewers are often driven by relaxation needs, emotional regulation, and social connection after daily activities. Li et al. (2012) further highlighted that sustained viewing behavior depends on both content quality and emotional alignment, suggesting that the chosen time for watching movies may be influenced by genre preference and personal mood states. For Generation Z in Vietnam, who are accustomed to multitasking and high media exposure, preferred watching times may also reflect digital lifestyle patterns, balancing entertainment with study, work, and social interaction. Based on the above agurements, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

*H2: Preferred movie-watching time is significantly associated with cinema movie-going behavior of Gen Z in Vietnam.*

### 2.4.3. Preferred origin of movies

Preferred origin of movies (domestic or international) reflects the audience's inclination toward films produced within their own cultural context or those originating from foreign markets. Movies are not only forms of entertainment but also powerful carriers of cultural identity, values, and worldviews. According to the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Yang, 2019), audiences actively select media that fulfill personal, social, and cultural needs such as learning, emotional satisfaction, and social belonging. Applied to cinema, this suggests that individuals may choose domestic or international films depending on how well the content aligns with their cultural orientation, values, and aspirations. Besides, Cross-cultural communication theory by Tannen (1993) further highlights that the interpretation and appreciation of films are shaped by cultural symbols, language use, and shared meanings between audiences and filmmakers. Viewers may find domestic films more relatable due to familiar contexts, humor, and social narratives, while international films often attract audiences seeking novelty, diversity, or exposure to global perspectives. For Generation Z in Vietnam, who are simultaneously immersed in local traditions and globalized media environments, film origin preferences represent both cultural identification and cosmopolitan aspiration. Domestic films may foster a sense of national pride and social connection, whereas international films appeal to curiosity, self-expression, and cultural exploration. Consequently, the origin of movies is expected to influence the frequency and motivation behind Gen Z's cinema attendance choices. Based on the above agurements, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

*H3: Preferred origin of movies is significantly associated with cinema movie-going behavior of Gen Z in Vietnam.*

### 2.4.4. Social connectedness

Social connectedness, understood as the level of meaningful connection and interaction within a personal social network, is considered a crucial factor influencing the movie-going behavior of Gen Z in Vietnam. This generation tends to watch movies not only for personal entertainment but also to build and strengthen social relationships, demonstrated by going to the movies with friends or peers, discussing the content, and sharing experiences on social media platforms. Survey data shows a high percentage of young people choosing to go to the movies with friends or family, clearly reflecting the role of social factors in their movie-going decisions. This behavior aligns with the theory of Uses and Gratifications, in which media users seek experiences that satisfy their social and connection needs (Katz et al., 1973). Furthermore, according to the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), subjective norms, which means expectations and pressure from family and friends, influence behavioral intentions, making Gen Z easily influenced by trends or advice from their social group when deciding to go to the movies. In the Vietnamese context, social media and online communities act as bridges to enhance social connectedness, helping to form fandoms, creating a ripple effect, and promoting group movie-going behavior. This is one of the main motivations for Gen Z to maintain the habit of going to the cinema despite the development of online movie streaming platforms (Wickramaratne et al., 2022). Based on the above agurements, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

*H4: Social connectedness is significantly associated with cinema movie-going behavior of Gen Z in Vietnam.*

### 2.4.5. Perceived price fairness

Perceived price fairness refers to consumers' subjective judgment regarding whether a price or a price change is reasonable, justifiable, and consistent with social norms and expectations (Kahneman et al., 1986). Consumers develop their perceptions of fair pricing based on reference prices, which are formed through prior experiences, marketing communications, and comparisons with competitors. When actual prices align with or fall below these reference points, they are perceived as fair; conversely, prices that exceed expectations are often judged as unfair. These fairness perceptions influence not only consumers' satisfaction with the transaction but also their likelihood of repeat purchase and long-term trust in the seller. However, fairness perceptions can be fragile, particularly when firms implement price increases. Price increases are difficult for sellers to execute because they can provoke negative emotional and behavioral responses from consumers (Matsuoka, 2022). One critical factor affecting such perceptions is the transparency and source of pricing information. When companies control how price changes are communicated, whether through human or automated sources, it can shape consumer reactions (Campbell, 2007). In contrast, transparent pricing approaches have been shown to enhance fairness judgments, likely because they allow consumers to understand the rationale

behind pricing decisions (Maesen & Ang, 2025). Based on the above agurements, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

*H5: Perceived price fairness is significantly associated with cinema movie-going behavior of Gen Z in Vietnam.*

### 2.4.6. Perceived convenience

Perceived convenience refers to the level of time, place, and execution convenience that users perceive when engaging in an activity or using a service (Tekler et al., 2022). A product or service is regarded as convenient when it saves users' time and reduces their cognitive, emotional, or physical efforts. De Oliveira Santini et al. (2020) identified five key dimensions of convenience: time, place, acquisition, use, and execution, and refined this to three relevant dimensions for technology use: time, place, and execution. From the self-determination perspective, perceived convenience reflects the belief that a system or technology facilitates task completion. Previous studies have emphasized its role in influencing consumer and user behaviors. For example, Akram et al. (2021) found that convenience value significantly affected online shopping motivation, shaping users' behavioral intentions. Similarly, research on RFID (Hossain & Prybutok, 2008) and online shopping indicated that perceived convenience is an antecedent factor influencing the intention to use mobile technologies. Perceived convenience indirectly affects behavioral intention by enhancing perceived usefulness rather than acting directly on intention. In this study, perceived convenience is expected to play a crucial role in shaping young consumers' financial behaviors in the digital environment. When financial technologies are perceived as convenient, easy to access anytime and anywhere, users are more likely to adopt and sustain positive financial management practices. Based on the above agurements, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

*H6: Perceived convenience is significantly associated with cinema movie-going behavior of Gen Z in Vietnam.*

### 2.4.7. Reviewer opinion influence

Online reviews have become a powerful form of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM), shaping consumers' perceptions and decisions across industries, including the film sector (Li et al., 2019). While traditionally assumed to reflect unbiased individual experiences, research indicates that online reviewers are socially influenced by previous ratings and opinions expressed by others . According to anchoring effects, self-presentation, and social conformity theories, individuals tend to adjust their evaluations to align with existing opinions to avoid social deviance (Adomavicius et al., 2013). In the context of movie-watching, especially among Generation Z, a cohort highly active on digital platforms such as social influence is particularly pronounced. Moviegoers may rely on the aggregated opinions of other reviewers when deciding what to watch, perceiving high-rated films as more credible or enjoyable. This conformity effect can be amplified by the visibility of prior ratings and the perceived expertise or online

status of reviewers (Moe & Schweidel, 2012). Based on the above agurements, the study proposes the following hypothesis:

*H7: Reviewer opinion influence is significantly associated with cinema movie-going behavior of Gen Z in Vietnam.*

## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Measurement of Constructs

The research employed a structured questionnaire consisting of both categorical and Likert-scale items to collect data from Generation Z respondents in Vietnam. The questionnaire was designed based on validated scales and prior empirical studies to ensure reliability and content validity. It was divided into two main sections: (1) demographic and behavioral characteristics, and (2) measurement constructs used to test the research model. All Likert-scale items were rated on a five-point scale ranging from 1 - Strongly disagree to 5 - Strongly agree.

Social connectedness (SC) was adapted from Wickramaratne et al. (2022) and included 4 items assessing the degree of social belonging and interpersonal connection. Perceived price fairness (PF) consisted of 3 items based on Maesen & Ang (2025) and Matsuoka (2022), evaluating respondents' perceptions of cinema ticket and product pricing. Perceived convenience (PC) was operationalized using four items derived from Akram et al. (2021) and de Oliveira Santini et al. (2020) focusing on accessibility, ease of use, and efficiency in movie selection and booking processes. Reviewer opinion influence (ROI) was measured through 4 items adapted from Moe & Schweidel (2012), assessing the extent to which online reviews and public ratings shape Gen Z's movie choices. Finally, cinema movie-going behavior (CB) was captured using 5 items adapted from Cuong & Khoi (2019) and Baranowski et al. (2020), reflecting both the frequency and intention of cinema attendance as well as the motivational and experiential aspects of movie consumption.

### 3.2 Sample and data collection

The study targeted Generation Z individuals in Vietnam who frequently attend cinemas or engage in movie-watching activities. Respondents were required to be between 16 and 30 years old, currently residing in Vietnam, and to have visited a cinema or watched a film within the past year. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via social media platforms, university networks, and cinema fan communities using a convenience sampling method. The survey instrument consisted of both demographic and behavioral variables. Demographic information included gender (male, female), age group (under 18 years old, 18–24 years old, 25–30 years old, and above 30 years old), education level (high school or below, college/university, and postgraduate), and monthly income (under 5 million VND, 5–10 million VND, 10–20 million VND, and above 20 million VND). Key behavioral indicators comprised preferred movie genre (action, romance, horror, or others), preferred movie-

watching time (morning, afternoon, evening, or night), and preferred origin of movies (domestic or international). Each variable was coded numerically to facilitate data analysis. Participation was voluntary, and all respondents were informed about the study's objectives and assured of anonymity and data confidentiality.

Based on the convenient sampling method, a total of 309 valid responses were collected and used for data analysis. Accordingly, the research model and hypotheses were examined using SmartPLS3 with the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This method was employed to assess construct reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, and the significance of hypothesized relationships within the structural model. PLS-SEM is particularly suitable for exploratory and prediction-oriented research, especially in behavioral and marketing studies, and is robust with small to medium sample sizes or non-normal data distributions (Hair et al., 2019). In addition, SPSS was utilized to perform independent samples t-tests and one-way ANOVA analyses to explore significant differences in movie-watching preferences and cinema attendance behavior across different demographic groups of Generation Z in Vietnam. These analyses provided practical insights into developing emerging business trends and strategies tailored to the cinema consumption patterns of Vietnamese Gen Z audiences.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Descriptive statistic results

The demographic characteristics of the 309 respondents are presented in Table 1. In terms of gender, the majority of participants were female (68.9%), while males accounted for 31.1% of the total sample. This indicates that female viewers represent a more dominant segment of cinema audiences within the Gen Z group in Vietnam. Regarding age distribution, most respondents were under 18 years old (65.4%), followed by those aged 18–24 years (24.3%), 25–30 years (8.7%), and a small proportion above 30 years old (1.6%). This pattern highlights that younger individuals, particularly students, are the most active participants in cinema activities and movie consumption.

With respect to educational background, 38.5% of respondents had completed high school or below, 50.2% held a college or university degree, and 11.3% had postgraduate qualifications. This reflects that the majority of participants possess a relatively high level of education, which may influence their media consumption choices and cultural awareness. In terms of monthly income, the largest group earned between 5–10 million VND (40.1%), followed by those earning under 5 million VND (35.9%), 10–20 million VND (17.5%), and above 20 million VND (6.5%). The dominance of low-to-medium income groups corresponds to the typical financial status of students and early-career professionals within Gen Z.

**Table 1**: Demographics of respondents

| Demographics | | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Male | 96 | 31.1 |
| | Female | 213 | 68.9 |
| Age | Under 18 years old | 202 | 65.4 |
| | 18–24 years old | 75 | 24.3 |
| | 25–30 years old | 27 | 8.7 |
| | Above 30 years old | 5 | 1.6 |
| Education level | High school or below | 119 | 38.5 |
| | College / University | 155 | 50.2 |
| | Postgraduate | 35 | 11.3 |
| Monthly income | Under 5 million VND | 111 | 35.9 |
| | 5–10 million VND | 124 | 40.1 |
| | 10–20 million VND | 54 | 17.5 |
| | Above 20 million VND | 20 | 6.5 |
| Preferred movie genre | Action | 131 | 42.4 |
| | Romance | 82 | 26.5 |
| | Horror | 60 | 19.4 |
| | Others | 36 | 11.7 |
| Preferred movie-watching time | Morning | 21 | 6.8 |
| | Afternoon | 76 | 24.6 |
| | Evening | 176 | 57.0 |
| | Night | 36 | 11.7 |
| Preferred origin of movies | Domestic (Vietnamese) | 107 | 34.6 |
| | International (foreign films) | 202 | 65.4 |
| **Total** | | **309** | **100** |

Regarding movie preferences, action films were the most popular genre (42.4%), followed by romance (26.5%), horror

(19.4%), and other genres (11.7%). This distribution suggests that dynamic and emotionally engaging content tends to attract Gen Z audiences. In terms of movie-watching time, most respondents preferred evening sessions (57.0%), followed by afternoon (24.6%), night (11.7%), and morning (6.8%), indicating that cinema-going is primarily a leisure activity scheduled after study or work hours. Finally, when considering the preferred origin of movies, international films were chosen by 65.4% of respondents, while 34.6% preferred domestic (Vietnamese) productions. This finding reflects the globalized entertainment consumption habits of Vietnamese Gen Z, who are influenced by international trends yet still maintain a connection to local culture. Overall, these results portray a young, educated, and globally oriented audience segment, providing valuable insights for businesses in the cinema and entertainment industries seeking to develop strategies that align with Gen Z's viewing preferences and behavioral patterns.

## 4.2 Reliability and validity assessment

Table 2 presents the results of construct reliability and convergent validity assessment. All constructs demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, as indicated by Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding the threshold of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2019). Specifically, Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.832 (Perceived Price Fairness – PF) to 1.000 (Preferred Movie Genre – PMG, Preferred Movie-Watching Time – PMT, and Preferred Origin of Movies – POM), confirming strong reliability across all measurement items. Similarly, the rho_A coefficients ranged between 0.833 and 1.000, further supporting the internal consistency of the constructs.

Composite Reliability (CR) values for all constructs were also well above the minimum recommended level of 0.7, varying from 0.891 (Social Connectedness – SC) to 1.000 (PMG, PMT, and POM). This indicates that the constructs have high internal consistency and measurement stability. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded the 0.5 benchmark, ranging from 0.672 (SC) to 1.000 (PMG, PMT, and POM), confirming adequate convergent validity.

Overall, these results demonstrate that all latent constructs in the research model possess strong reliability and convergent validity. The measurement indicators effectively represent their underlying constructs, providing a solid foundation for subsequent structural model assessment. This confirms that the instrument used in this study is both statistically sound and conceptually appropriate for examining the cinema movie-watching preferences and behavioral patterns of Generation Z in Vietnam.

Table 3 and 4 presents the results of discriminant validity assessment using both the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). According to Fornell and Larcker (1981), discriminant validity is achieved when the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct (displayed on the diagonal) exceeds the correlations between that construct and other constructs (off-diagonal values). All diagonal values (ranging from 0.775 to 1.000) are greater than their corresponding inter-construct correlations, indicating that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with others, thus satisfying the Fornell–Larcker condition.

**Table 2:** Construct reliability and convergent validity

|  | Cronbach's Alpha | rho_A | Composite Reliability | Average Variance Extracted (AVE) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| CB | 0.884 | 0.893 | 0.915 | 0.684 |
| PC | 0.898 | 0.908 | 0.930 | 0.768 |
| PF | 0.832 | 0.833 | 0.899 | 0.748 |
| PMG | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| PMT | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| POM | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 |
| ROI | 0.937 | 0.939 | 0.955 | 0.841 |
| SC | 0.838 | 0.847 | 0.891 | 0.672 |

*Source: Authors' data analysis by SmartPLS3*

**Table 3:** Fornell-Larcker Criterion

|  | CB | PC | PF | PMG | PMT | POM | ROI | SC |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| CB |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PC | 0.645 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PF | 0.694 | 0.626 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| PMG | 0.100 | 0.198 | 0.138 |  |  |  |  |  |
| PMT | 0.193 | 0.089 | 0.123 | 0.775 |  |  |  |  |
| POM | 0.299 | 0.062 | 0.185 | 0.682 | 0.812 |  |  |  |
| ROI | 0.627 | 0.733 | 0.580 | 0.077 | 0.149 | 0.204 |  |  |

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---|
| SC | 0.52 2 | 0.49 8 | 0.47 7 | 0.20 5 | 0.28 4 | 0.41 2 | 0.47 5 | |

*Source: Authors' data analysis by SmartPLS3*

Furthermore, the HTMT criterion proposed by Henseler et al. (2015) was used as a more rigorous approach to assess discriminant validity. HTMT values below 0.90 indicate acceptable discriminant validity, while values below 0.85 are considered ideal (Gold et al., 2001; Henseler et al., 2015). As presented in Table 3, all HTMT values are below the 0.90 threshold, ranging from 0.062 (PC–POM) to 0.733 (PC–ROI). This finding provides additional support that the constructs are empirically distinct from one another.

**Table 4:** Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

| | CB | PC | PF | PMG | PMT | POM | ROI | SC |
|-----|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|---|
| CB | | | | | | | | |
| PC | 0.645 | | | | | | | |
| PF | 0.694 | 0.626 | | | | | | |
| PMG | 0.100 | 0.198 | 0.138 | | | | | |
| PMT | 0.193 | 0.089 | 0.123 | 0.775 | | | | |
| POM | 0.299 | 0.062 | 0.185 | 0.682 | 0.812 | | | |
| ROI | 0.627 | 0.733 | 0.580 | 0.077 | 0.149 | 0.204 | | |
| SC | 0.522 | 0.498 | 0.477 | 0.205 | 0.284 | 0.412 | 0.475 | |

*Source: Authors' data analysis by SmartPLS3*

### 4.3 Structural measurement assessment and PLS-SEM result discussion

The structural model was analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to test the hypothesized relationships. The bootstrapping procedure produced path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values, as shown in Table 4. The results indicate that all seven hypotheses (H1–H7) were statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), suggesting a robust and well-fitting model. The adjusted $R^2$ value for cinema-going behavior (CB) was 0.543, which demonstrates that approximately 54.3% of the variance in Gen Z's cinema attendance behavior can be explained by the proposed predictors. This value exceeds the minimum threshold for moderate explanatory power suggested by Hair et al. (2019), confirming that the model has strong predictive relevance and theoretical consistency in the context of entertainment consumption in Vietnam.

The relationship between preferred movie genre (PMG) and cinema attendance behavior (CB) was found to be negative and significant ($\beta$ = –0.331, t = 3.626, p = 0.000), thus supporting H1. This indicates that preferred movie genres are significantly associated with Gen Z's decision to attend cinemas, but the relationship is inverse. The negative coefficient suggests that individuals with highly specific or limited genre preferences tend to visit cinemas less frequently than those open to multiple genres. This pattern reflects a growing fragmentation in viewing interests, where audiences gravitate toward niche or personalized content that may not always be available in cinemas. Contrary to Menon et al. (2025), who found that stronger genre attachment enhances audience engagement and encourages theater attendance, this study reveals an opposite trend among Vietnamese Gen Z audiences. This difference may stem from the influence of digital streaming platforms, which allow viewers to explore various genres without relying on cinema screenings. Consequently, Gen Z consumers in Vietnam have become more selective, attending cinemas only for films they consider truly "cinema-worthy." From a managerial perspective, cinema operators and distributors should therefore diversify their programming schedules and design mixed-genre promotions to attract a wider segment of Gen Z moviegoers.

**Table 5:** Structural equation modelling results

| | Original Sample (O) | Sample Mean (M) | Standard Deviation (STDEV) | T Statistics (\|O/ STDEV\|) | P Values |
|------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| PC -> CB | 0.258 | 0.269 | 0.076 | 3.394 | 0.001 |
| PF -> CB | 0.246 | 0.240 | 0.065 | 3.798 | 0.000 |
| PMG -> CB | -0.331 | -0.318 | 0.091 | 3.626 | 0.000 |
| PMT -> CB | 0.209 | 0.208 | 0.093 | 2.242 | 0.025 |
| POM -> CB | 0.220 | 0.208 | 0.077 | 2.846 | 0.005 |
| ROI -> CB | 0.138 | 0.141 | 0.069 | 1.998 | 0.046 |
| SC -> CB | 0.097 | 0.096 | 0.047 | 2.060 | 0.040 |
| Adjusted $R^2$ : CB = 0.543 | | | | | |

*Source: Authors' data analysis by SmartPLS3*

Preferred movie-watching time (PMT) exhibited a positive and significant influence on cinema attendance ($\beta = 0.209$, $t = 2.242$, $p = 0.025$), supporting H2. This result indicates that Gen Z's cinema-going behavior is closely shaped by their preferred viewing schedules. Younger consumers, particularly those in urban Vietnam, often prefer evening or late-night screenings that fit their social and leisure routines after school or work. This finding is consistent with Li et al. (2012), who emphasized that flexible and accessible viewing times play a crucial role in shaping audience participation in both online and offline entertainment contexts. The ability to attend screenings at convenient times enhances the perceived value of the cinema experience, especially for younger demographics who highly value autonomy and time efficiency in their entertainment choices. In Vietnam's current cinema market, where Gen Z audiences are increasingly active but also time-constrained, convenience in scheduling emerges as a critical determinant of attendance. Theaters that adapt to these patterns by diversifying showtimes, offering midnight or weekend marathons, or implementing flexible ticket options are more likely to attract this segment. Beyond that, integrating advanced digital ticketing systems with personalized recommendations based on viewing history and preferred time slots could further strengthen engagement. By leveraging data-driven scheduling and targeted promotions, cinema operators can effectively align movie showing times with the dynamic and technology-oriented lifestyles of Vietnamese Gen Z, ultimately fostering higher attendance frequency and customer loyalty.

The path coefficient between preferred origin of movies (POM) and cinema attendance behavior was positive and significant ($\beta = 0.220$, $t = 2.846$, $p = 0.005$), confirming H3. This finding highlights that the origin of a film, whether domestic or international, substantially shapes Gen Z's cinema-going decisions in Vietnam. The result suggests that audiences' cultural proximity, identity connection, and perceived authenticity influence their engagement with particular types of movies. In line with Dodd et al. (2022), domestic films often evoke emotional resonance through familiar settings, local humor, and shared social values, while international films attract viewers with their advanced storytelling techniques, global stars, and superior production quality. This duality in film preferences reflects Gen Z's hybrid cultural identity, rooted in national pride yet open to global influences, which has become a defining characteristic of this generation's media consumption. Within the Vietnamese cinema landscape, the coexistence of local and foreign productions presents both challenges and opportunities for the film industry. While Hollywood blockbusters continue to dominate the box office, the growing popularity of Vietnamese films, particularly those that address contemporary youth issues or reinterpret traditional culture, indicates a strong shift toward local engagement. This trend suggests that cultural authenticity can serve as a key competitive advantage for domestic producers. To capitalize on this, theaters and film distributors should design marketing strategies that balance global attraction with local relevance, for example by featuring Vietnamese-language promotions, organizing cultural film festivals, or hosting interactive events that connect audiences with filmmakers. By fostering a sense of cultural belonging and creative pride, the Vietnamese cinema industry can strengthen its relationship with Gen Z audiences, encouraging them to see local films not just as entertainment but as expressions of modern Vietnamese identity.

Social connectedness (SC) was positively and significantly associated with cinema attendance behavior ($\beta = 0.097$, $t = 2.060$, $p = 0.040$), supporting H4. This finding confirms that Gen Z's motivation to visit cinemas extends beyond personal entertainment; it is also a means of fostering social interaction and belonging. As Wickramaratne et al. (2022) noted, individuals with stronger social ties are more likely to engage in shared recreational experiences that reinforce emotional bonds and collective enjoyment. In this context, the act of watching a movie together serves as both a leisure pursuit and a social ritual, strengthening peer connections and affirming group identity. For Gen Z, who often navigate both digital and real-world social spaces, cinema-going provides a valuable opportunity for offline connection and shared cultural expression, particularly after extended periods of virtual interaction. This insight highlights the pivotal role of social dynamics in shaping entertainment consumption behavior among young audiences. Vietnamese cinemas can leverage this tendency by adopting social-oriented marketing strategies that position the movie theater as a vibrant social destination rather than merely a screening venue. Initiatives such as group ticket bundles, student movie nights, or interactive fan events can create a sense of community and shared excitement. Additionally, integrating social media engagement such as photo zones, live posts, or influencer-hosted screenings can bridge online and offline interactions, appealing directly to Gen Z's digitally connected lifestyles. By framing cinema attendance as a socially rewarding experience, theater operators can cultivate stronger emotional loyalty and increase repeat visitation among this socially active and experience-seeking generation.
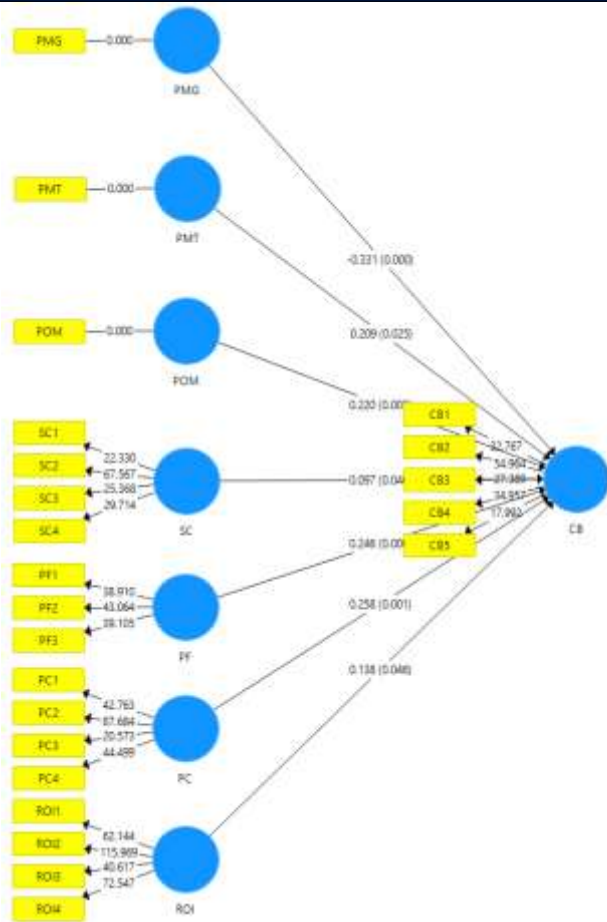
**Figure 1:** PLS bootstrapping model

Perceived price fairness (PF) showed a positive and significant impact on cinema attendance behavior (β = 0.246, t = 3.798, p = 0.000), supporting H5. This result suggests that Gen Z consumers are more likely to attend theaters when they perceive ticket prices, combo deals, and membership benefits as reasonable, transparent, and aligned with the value they receive. This finding aligns with Maesen & Ang (2025) and Matsuoka (2022), who emphasized that when consumers perceive fairness in pricing, it enhances perceived value, strengthens trust, and promotes behavioral loyalty across entertainment and service industries. In the cinema context, fairness perceptions not only influence the decision to attend but also shape broader evaluations of brand credibility and satisfaction. For a generation that values transparency and tends to compare options online before making purchasing decisions, perceived fairness acts as a strong psychological motivator for continued engagement. In Vietnam's rapidly evolving cinema industry, where streaming platforms and digital entertainment pose increasing competition, maintaining a perception of fair pricing is essential to sustain audience interest. Implementing tiered pricing systems based on seat type or showtime can create more perceived options and flexibility for customers. Additionally, offering dynamic discounts during non-peak hours, student promotions, or value combo packages can appeal directly to Gen Z's price-

sensitive yet experience-driven mindset. Clear communication about ticket pricing structures and benefits through mobile apps or social media can further reinforce transparency and trust. Finally, integrating loyalty programs that reward consistent attendance or referrals with tangible incentives such as free tickets or exclusive previews can foster a stronger sense of reciprocity and emotional connection, encouraging Gen Z audiences to view the cinema not only as entertainment but also as a fair and rewarding experience.

Perceived convenience (PC) had a strong positive and significant relationship with cinema attendance behavior (β = 0.258, t = 3.394, p = 0.001), thus supporting H6. This demonstrates that accessibility, ease of booking, and service efficiency play crucial roles in Gen Z's decision to go to the cinema. In the digital era, convenience not only refers to physical proximity but also includes mobile app usability, payment flexibility, and seat selection systems. Akram et al. (2021) and de Oliveira Santini et al. (2020) similarly found that digital convenience strongly predicts engagement and satisfaction in both retail and entertainment contexts. From a managerial perspective, cinema operators in Vietnam should prioritize digital transformation initiatives such as integrating AI-based booking assistants, self-check-in kiosks, and seamless online payment systems to optimize user convenience. Expanding the availability of multiple digital touchpoints like chatbots for quick support or personalized movie recommendations can also enhance perceived efficiency and comfort. By creating a hassle-free and tech-friendly cinema experience, businesses can appeal to Gen Z's fast-paced lifestyle and foster stronger emotional and behavioral loyalty toward cinema-going.

Reviewer opinion influence (ROI) was found to be positive and significant (β = 0.138, t = 1.998, p = 0.046), supporting H7. This result highlights the growing impact of online word-of-mouth and peer reviews on Gen Z's entertainment decisions. In line with Moe & Schweidel (2012), digital reviews serve as a cognitive shortcut that helps audiences evaluate movie quality and reduce uncertainty before purchasing tickets. Given that Gen Z consumers are highly engaged with digital platforms, online opinions often shape their initial awareness, perceived credibility, and eventual behavioral choices. This finding reflects a broader shift toward information-driven consumption, where Gen Z heavily relies on online communities, social networks, and influencer commentary to guide entertainment decisions. Cinema operators in Vietnam can leverage this trend by developing integrated digital marketing strategies that emphasize authentic storytelling, reviewer engagement, and audience interaction. Collaborating with micro-influencers or popular film reviewers can enhance credibility and extend reach among younger audiences. Furthermore, incorporating user-generated content, such as rating systems or comment-based feedback loops, can cultivate a participatory culture that strengthens trust, loyalty, and attendance intention. In an age where social proof heavily dictates consumer preferences, nurturing an active and positive online presence becomes a

vital component of sustaining long-term competitiveness in the cinema industry.

To further investigate the control effects of the variables such as preferred movie genre, preferred movie-watching time, and preferred origin of movies on cinema-going behavior of Gen Z in Vietnam, the study used SPSS 27 with ANOVA technique for Preferred movie genre and Preferred movie-watching time, while the T-test was used for Preferred origin of movies. The specific criteria for these three characteristics are listed in Table 1 above.

The result of Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was satisfied (Sig. = 0.433 > 0.05), confirming that the variability across preferred movie genre groups was consistent. Subsequently, the ANOVA result revealed a statistically significant difference in cinema attendance behavior among Gen Z groups with different movie genre preferences (F = 18.744, Sig. < 0.001). The robustness of this finding was further supported by the Welch test (F = 17.502, Sig. < 0.001), confirming the reliability of the results even if variances were unequal. These outcomes indicate that preferred movie genre significantly influences Gen Z's cinema attendance behavior in Vietnam. In particular, individuals who favor specific genres such as action, romance, or horror tend to exhibit varying levels of motivation and frequency in attending cinemas. This aligns with prior research suggesting that genre preference reflects emotional needs, aesthetic orientation, and identity expression among young audiences. From a managerial perspective, these findings highlight the need for cinema operators to segment their offerings and marketing strategies according to genre-based audience clusters, for instance, organizing thematic screening events, genre festivals, or personalized promotional campaigns.

For preferred movie-watching time, the result of Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was not violated (Sig. = 0.054 > 0.05), suggesting that the variability in cinema attendance behavior was consistent across groups with different preferred movie-watching times. The ANOVA analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in cinema attendance among Gen Z respondents with varying time preferences (F = 15.567, Sig. < 0.001). The Welch test (F = 25.773, Sig. < 0.001) further confirmed the robustness of these results, reinforcing that the differences observed were reliable even when potential variance disparities were considered.
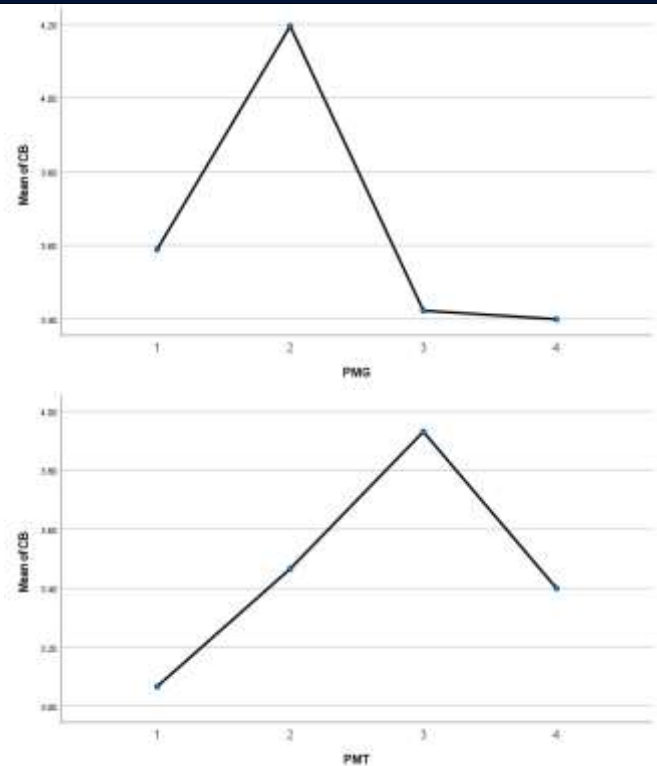


**Figure 2:** Mean plots of preferred movie genre and preferred movie-watching time

For preferred origin of movies, the result of Levene's test indicated that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was met (Sig. = 0.529 > 0.05), suggesting that the variance in cinema attendance behavior was consistent between groups based on their preferred origin of movies. The independent samples t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in cinema attendance between respondents who preferred domestic films and those who preferred international films (t = -5.144, df = 307, p < 0.001). The mean difference (-0.4639) indicates that individuals favoring international films reported higher levels of cinema attendance behavior compared to those preferring domestic movies.

## 5. IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the existing literature on cinema consumption behavior by integrating both contextual preference variables (preferred genre, preferred watching time, preferred origin) and psychological determinants (social connectedness, perceived price fairness, perceived convenience, and reviewer opinion influence) into a unified PLS-SEM framework. While previous studies have often examined these factors separately, the present research demonstrates their simultaneous and significant effects on Gen Z's cinema-going behavior in Vietnam. The findings extend the applicability of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) to contemporary entertainment settings, illustrating how utilitarian, hedonic, and social motivations jointly shape

movie-watching decisions in the digital era. Moreover, the study enriches regional scholarship by offering empirical evidence from an emerging market, where hybrid cultural identities and rapid digital adoption make Gen Z's behavior particularly distinctive.

The results of this study provide several actionable insights for cinema operators, film distributors, and marketers seeking to better engage Gen Z audiences in Vietnam. Firstly, the significant influence of preferred movie genres and origins suggests that programming strategies should be diversified and data-driven. Cinemas can benefit from tailoring screening schedules to genre-based audience clusters, organizing thematic weeks, and balancing domestic and international titles to appeal to Gen Z's hybrid cultural orientation. Highlighting the cultural relevance of Vietnamese films while leveraging the global appeal of international productions may help broaden attendance and strengthen long-term loyalty.

Secondly, preferred movie-watching time was shown to strongly shape cinema-going behavior, indicating that scheduling flexibility is essential. Evening and late-night screenings remain dominant for Gen Z, but offering dynamic showtimes such as student afternoons, weekend marathons, or midnight launches may accommodate different lifestyle rhythms. Personalized reminders and time-specific promotions delivered through mobile apps can further strengthen engagement.

Thirdly, perceived price fairness emerged as a key driver of attendance, underscoring the importance of transparent and value-based pricing strategies. Cinemas should consider implementing tiered pricing, off-peak discounts, bundled packages, and loyalty programs that offer tangible rewards. Clear communication of pricing structures through digital platforms can reinforce trust and reduce the perception of unfairness, especially among price-conscious younger consumers.

Fourthly, enhancing perceived convenience is critical in an era where Gen Z places high value on speed and ease of access. Improving app usability, streamlining online ticketing, offering multiple payment options, and integrating digital kiosks can reduce friction and elevate the overall experience. Features such as personalized recommendations, real-time seat availability, and customer support chatbots can further enhance satisfaction and foster habitual attendance.

Finally, the influence of reviewer opinion highlights the growing role of online engagement and social proof. Cinemas and distributors should actively collaborate with film reviewers, micro-influencers, and content creators to strengthen visibility and credibility. Encouraging user-generated content through rating systems, social media hashtags, and interactive events can help amplify authentic digital word-of-mouth. Creating a community-oriented digital ecosystem not only supports promotional effectiveness but also aligns with the socially connected nature of Gen Z audiences.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. The use of convenience sampling and self-reported data may limit the generalizability of the findings, and the cross-sectional design does not capture potential changes in behavior over time. Future research could employ longitudinal designs or probability sampling to enhance representativeness. Additionally, expanding the model to include emotional drivers, personality factors, or the influence of streaming platforms may offer deeper insights into the evolving entertainment preferences of young audiences.

## 6. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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