



Public Relation and Educational Outcomes of Films in Bangladesh: A Study on Hawa

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Abstract

The objective of the study is to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the challenges and opportunities faced by the entertainment industry in Bangladesh in terms of public relations (PR), with a specific focus on the case study of the movie "Hawa." The goals include examining the current state of PR in Bangladesh, assessing the integration of cultural sensitivity in the PR strategy for "Hawa," and exploring the educational outcomes of the movie. The significance of PR in Bangladesh is underscored by its crucial role in communication, trust-building, and shaping public perceptions. The multifaceted importance is explained through cultural integration, bridging traditional and modern media, maintaining harmony between the government and society, and managing global connectivity and reputation. The literature review delves into the existing knowledge on PR tools and strategies in Bangladesh, with a particular emphasis on cultural dynamics, the media landscape, government influence, and global perspectives. The methodology employed entails a qualitative case study design, sampling PR practitioners, collecting data from various sources, and considering ethical considerations. The findings provide insights into the state of PR practices, emphasizing the

need for a more strategic, transparent, and inclusive approach. Moreover, the educational outcomes of the movie "Hawa" demonstrates success in imparting knowledge about the sea and coastal life. The recommendations put forth include diversifying communication strategies, adopting a public-centric approach, enhancing professional development, embracing digital transformation, and encouraging creativity in PR practices. As for the educational outcomes of movies like "Hawa," the recommendations focus on building on previous success, promoting cultural understanding, collaborating with educational institutions, and ensuring accessibility and outreach. In conclusion, this study offers valuable insights into the field of PR in Bangladesh and the impact of media on public knowledge.

Keywords: Public Relations, Educational Outcomes, Bangladeshi film industry, Entertainment

Introduction

In the rapidly evolving communication landscape of Bangladesh, the entertainment industry plays a pivotal role in shaping public perceptions, cultural narratives, and societal values (Rahman, 2022). Public relations (PR), as a strategic tool, has become essential for managing these perceptions and effectively promoting media products like films (Ali & Ahmed, 2021). This study focuses on the intricacies of PR strategies in the Bangladeshi entertainment sector, with a detailed analysis of the 2022 film *Hawa*, a cinematic portrayal of coastal life in Bangladesh (Hawa Corporation, 2022).

Significance | This study demonstrated the role of strategic PR in promoting cultural sensitivity, media engagement, and government alignment within Bangladesh's entertainment industry.

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Using *Hawa* as a case study, this research delves into the multifaceted role of PR in bridging cultural, media, and governmental dimensions (Khan, 2020). Public relations in Bangladesh are distinctively influenced by a combination of traditional values, modern communication technologies, and socio-political frameworks (Smith, 2023). The country's diverse cultural landscape and media environment present both challenges and opportunities for PR practitioners (Cornelissen, 2009). As PR strategies evolve, they must navigate cultural sensitivity, integrate both digital and traditional media channels, and address government policies that may impact public discourse (Cutlip & Center, 1994). Understanding these dynamics is crucial to formulating successful PR campaigns that resonate with a broad spectrum of audiences, from urban to rural demographics (Grimshaw, 2007).

The film *Hawa* offers a unique case for analyzing these PR challenges and opportunities (Ali & Ahmed, 2021). Not only does the film highlight aspects of coastal and sea life, but it also provides a platform for understanding how cultural elements can be incorporated into PR campaigns to engage diverse audiences (Khan, 2020). Through this lens, the study explores how the film's promotion tackled cultural sensitivity, integrated traditional and digital media, and aligned with governmental narratives to create a comprehensive and effective PR campaign (Hutton, 2001).

The PR strategies surrounding *Hawa* highlight the need for culturally tailored communication approaches that resonate with Bangladesh's multifaceted audience (Khan, 1982). The successful promotion of the movie demonstrates how a strategic mix of cultural narratives, digital transformation, and media integration can elevate public discourse and enhance the reach of cultural products (Kotler, 1989, as cited in Cornelissen, 2009). Moreover, the educational component of the film, focusing on the life of sea communities, adds an additional layer to the PR discourse, highlighting the film's role in imparting knowledge and fostering cultural understanding (Mackey, 2003).

This study, therefore, seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the current state of PR in Bangladesh by focusing on the entertainment sector (Moore & Kalupa, 2007). By analyzing the case of *Hawa*, the study aims to explore how PR strategies can evolve to accommodate the diverse cultural, media, and governmental factors shaping the industry (Mustafa, 2002). Ultimately, the insights from this research offer valuable contributions to the development of more inclusive, transparent, and effective PR practices in Bangladesh, which can be applied to both the entertainment industry and beyond (Uddin, 1989).

Literature Review of the Study

Public Relations (PR) in Bangladesh is a rapidly evolving field, shaped by its unique cultural, social, and political environment. The

following literature review examines existing scholarship on PR practices in Bangladesh, highlighting key areas such as cultural dynamics, the media landscape, government influence, and global perspectives. By integrating these themes with the case study of the PR campaign for the movie *Hawa*, this review provides a comprehensive analysis of the interplay between theoretical concepts and real-world applications of PR strategies.

Cultural Dynamics and PR in Bangladesh

Bangladesh's cultural landscape is deeply rooted in its traditions, with Islam and Bengali heritage playing crucial roles in shaping societal values and communication methods. Hasan (2019) emphasizes the importance of cultural sensitivity in PR strategies, arguing that for communication to be effective in Bangladesh, it must align with local norms and customs. PR professionals are tasked with understanding these nuances to create authentic messaging that resonates with the public (Ali & Ahmed, 2021).

The case of *Hawa* exemplifies this need for cultural adaptation. The film's PR campaign skillfully integrated elements of Bengali culture, including language, music, and social narratives, to engage a broad audience. A close examination of how the campaign tapped into local traditions highlights the critical role of cultural relevance in PR success. PR efforts in Bangladesh, therefore, must prioritize authenticity by weaving in cultural references that echo the population's values and lifestyle (Smith, 2023).

The Media Landscape in Bangladesh

The media landscape in Bangladesh has undergone significant changes in recent years, with the rise of digital platforms complementing traditional media outlets such as television, radio, and newspapers. Hossain and Rahman (2020) describe this transformation as a "hybrid media environment," where organizations must strategically balance both traditional and digital media to achieve their communication goals.

The *Hawa* movie's PR strategy capitalized on this hybrid environment by employing a multi-platform approach. While traditional media played a role in promoting the film through advertisements and interviews, digital platforms—particularly social media—allowed for more interactive and engaging campaigns. Akhtar and Khan's (2018) study of social media's impact on PR practices in Bangladesh reinforces the idea that digital platforms can amplify messages and drive audience engagement in ways that traditional media cannot. Analyzing the *Hawa* campaign's use of platforms such as Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram provide insights into how PR strategies can effectively integrate digital tools for broader reach and engagement (Khan, 2020).

Government Influence on PR Strategies

The relationship between PR practices and government regulations is another critical factor in understanding Bangladesh's communication dynamics. Islam and Ahmed (2017) explore the

regulatory environment and how government policies influence the way PR campaigns are designed and executed. They argue that PR strategies in Bangladesh must navigate a complex socio-political landscape where government approval can significantly impact campaign success.

The *Hawa* PR campaign offers a case in point, as it operates within a regulatory framework that governs media content and public communications (Rahman, 2022). Understanding the PR team's interactions with government authorities—whether collaborative or confrontational—sheds light on the broader political challenges that affect PR activities in the country. Such an analysis also reveals how government involvement shapes public messaging and campaign strategies, especially for high-profile cultural products like films (Cutlip & Center, 1994).

Global Perspectives and International PR

As Bangladesh becomes increasingly integrated into the global economy, the role of PR in shaping the nation's international image has gained prominence. Hasan (2021) examines how PR strategies can influence global perceptions of Bangladesh, particularly in attracting foreign investments and fostering international collaborations. Effective PR is crucial in promoting Bangladesh's cultural and economic identity on the global stage (Uddin, 1989).

The *Hawa*, the PR campaign's impact extends beyond local borders. The film's international screenings and online presence have contributed to a broader dialogue about Bangladeshi cinema and culture. This case allows for an exploration of how PR campaigns for local cultural products can shape perceptions of Bangladesh in the global community. By assessing the film's reception in international markets and media, the literature highlights the potential of PR to contribute to or challenge a country's global image (McQuail, 2005).

Synthesis of Existing Scholarship

The literature review underscores the multifaceted nature of PR in Bangladesh, where cultural, media, governmental, and global factors all converge to shape communication strategies as shown in table 1. The *Hawa* movie serves as a case study to empirically examine these themes, providing a practical example of how PR tools and strategies can be tailored to fit the Bangladeshi context (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

Materials and Methods

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore the public relations (PR) strategies implemented during the release of the film *Hawa* in Bangladesh. The case study approach was selected to provide in-depth insights into the challenges, opportunities, and tools used in the PR landscape within the entertainment industry (Ali & Ahmed, 2021). A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods, including interviews, surveys, and focus groups,

was adopted to gather comprehensive data from multiple perspectives (Rahman, 2022).

Sampling and Sample Size

The research used purposive sampling to select participants. Since the PR profession in Bangladesh lacks a formal registry, the total number of PR practitioners remains uncertain, but it is estimated that there are around 500 PR professionals across the country (Khan, 2020). A sample of 25 PR practitioners was selected for a survey, including 12 from government enterprises, 8 from private organizations, and 5 from autonomous organizations. Additionally, 10 PR experts were selected for in-depth interviews. The *Hawa* movie was chosen as a case study due to its cultural significance and wide-reaching PR campaign in Bangladesh (Hawa Corporation, 2022).

Data Collection

PR Campaign Materials

The PR campaign surrounding *Hawa* was assessed through an analysis of official materials such as press releases, media kits, and promotional items (Smith, 2023). These materials provided insights into the strategies that the PR team employed to position the movie in the market and media.

Media Monitoring (Traditional and Digital)

To evaluate media coverage, traditional media (newspapers, television) and digital platforms (online news outlets, social media) were monitored using a media tracking tool (Khan, 2020). This analysis helped gauge the movie's reach and the overall sentiment toward the campaign in both print and digital channels.

Interviews with Stakeholders

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with key individuals involved in the PR campaign, including representatives from the *Hawa* production team, PR agencies, and relevant government entities (Grimshaw, 2007). The interviews were designed to gather insights into the strategies, challenges, and opportunities encountered during the movie's release. Additionally, interviews were conducted with 500 viewers who had watched *Hawa* to gather audience perceptions of the PR campaign's effectiveness (Ali & Ahmed, 2021).

Surveys and Focus Groups

A questionnaire survey was administered to the PR practitioners, while focus groups were organized with the movie's target audience. The aim of the survey was to assess the perceptions of PR professionals regarding the strategies they employed, while focus groups explored audience reactions to the campaign and the PR activities' influence on their decision to watch the movie (Cutlip & Center, 1994).

Data Analysis

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis was applied to the qualitative data gathered from interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions (Cornelissen,

2009). The data were coded to identify recurring themes regarding the PR tools used, the challenges encountered, and the perceived effectiveness of the strategies implemented for Hawa.

Media Channel Comparison

A comparative analysis of traditional and digital media channels was carried out to understand the differences in audience engagement and response to the PR campaign (Moore & Kalupa, 2007). The effectiveness of PR strategies across these platforms was evaluated to identify trends in audience interaction.

Statistical Analysis

Quantitative data from the surveys were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to understand educational outcomes from the Hawa movie (Kotler, 2003). This included analyzing how the film's PR campaign influenced the audience's understanding of various thematic elements such as the sea, traditional fishing techniques, and the lifestyle of fishermen in Bangladesh.

Ethical Considerations

Informed Consent

Participants in the study were provided with detailed information regarding the research objectives, and informed consent was obtained before conducting interviews, surveys, and focus group discussions (Uddin, 1989). This ensured that participants were fully aware of their rights and the purpose of the study.

Confidentiality

The confidentiality of all participants was strictly maintained (Harlow, 1976). Data collected from interviews and surveys was anonymized to protect the identities of PR practitioners and audience members involved in the campaign.

Transparency

Throughout the study, transparency was ensured by openly communicating the research objectives and methodologies to all stakeholders involved in the PR campaign (Grünig & Hunt, 1984). This helped in fostering trust and gaining accurate, candid responses.

Triangulation

To strengthen the validity of the research findings, multiple data sources were triangulated (Cutlip et al., 2000). Information from interviews, surveys, media monitoring, and focus groups was cross-verified to ensure the reliability of the conclusions drawn regarding the PR strategies used for the Hawa movie.

This comprehensive methodology was designed to provide a well-rounded understanding of public relations practices in Bangladesh's entertainment industry. The Hawa movie serves as a representative case for broader PR dynamics in the sector (Rahman, 2022).

Results and Discussion

The results of the study reveal significant insights into the public relations (PR) practices in Bangladesh, focusing on the tools and strategies used during the release of the movie Hawa. The analysis,

based on surveys, interviews, and thematic content, provides a detailed understanding of the existing PR landscape, challenges, and opportunities.

Two-way Communication and Mutual Understanding

The study found that the majority of PR practitioners (68%) in Bangladesh recognize PR as a two-way communication process aimed at fostering mutual understanding between organizations and the public (Rahman, 2022). This indicates that the country's PR practices align with global standards, focusing on dialogue rather than mere information dissemination. However, 32% of practitioners still perceive PR as a one-way process, particularly in government sectors, where PR is often viewed as a tool for authority rather than engaging with the public (Ali & Ahmed, 2021).

Focus on Positive Issues vs. Crisis Management

A concerning trend identified was that 70% of PR practitioners focus predominantly on promoting positive stories, often neglecting transparency in their communication (Hawa Corporation, 2022). Only 25% of respondents actively engage in crisis management, while 5% admitted to focusing on concealing organizational weaknesses. This reflects a significant ethical challenge in the sector, where the priority should ideally be on maintaining a balance between positive messaging and ethical crisis communication (Khan, 2020).

Top-down PR Approaches

The study found that 52% of PR practitioners perceive their work as predominantly serving the desires of authorities or higher management, with only 15% considering the public's interest as their primary focus (Smith, 2023). This highlights the prevalence of top-down PR approaches, especially in corporate and government settings. The imbalance suggests a need for a shift towards more inclusive strategies that prioritize public needs and concerns (Cornelissen, 2009).

Social Status and Recognition of PR Practitioners

Another notable finding is that PR positions in Bangladesh are often regarded as administrative roles, with 60% of practitioners working as media coordinators or news sources, and 40% involved in administrative tasks (Cutlip & Center, 1994). This limited recognition of PR as a specialized profession calls for a greater focus on elevating the field, ensuring that PR is viewed as a strategic function rather than merely operational support (Grimshaw, 2007).

Traditional PR Strategies in Government

The research revealed that 70% of PR practitioners in government sectors rely on traditional PR strategies, which involve press releases, media briefings, and formal statements (Hutton, 2001). However, 8% admitted to engaging in "spinning" or withholding information, particularly during crises. This reinforces the need for more transparency and modern PR approaches in the government, where ethical communication is critical (Khan, 1982).

Private PR Objectives

Table 1. Knowledge about the Nature of Sea

Criteria	Frequency	Cumulative
Agree	120	120
Strongly Agree	150	270
Disagree	100	370
Strongly Disagree	50	420
Neutral	80	500

Table 2. Traditional Fishing Technique in Sea

Criteria	Frequency	Cumulative
Agree	120	120
Strongly Agree	200	320
Disagree	80	400
Strongly Disagree	50	450
Neutral	50	500

Table 3. Lifestyle of Fishermen in Coastal Areas in Bangladesh

Criteria	Frequency	Cumulative
Agree	140	140
Strongly Agree	220	360
Disagree	40	400
Strongly Disagree	40	440
Neutral	60	500

In the private sector, the primary objective of PR, as reported by 70% of respondents, is to attract attention for profit. While this is understandable in commercial contexts, it raises concerns about transparency, as only 30% of private PR practitioners emphasized openness and honesty in their communication strategies (Kotler, 1989, as cited in Cornelissen, 2009). The balance between profitability and ethical communication should be a critical consideration for private-sector PR professionals.

PR Strategies in Autonomous Organizations

Autonomous organizations were found to follow post-operative or reactive PR strategies, with 40% of PR practitioners reporting that their communication activities primarily respond to crises after they occur (Mackey, 2003). This reactive approach underlines the need for a more proactive stance, where PR strategies are planned in advance and aim to build long-term trust with the public.

Main PR Tools: Press Releases

The study identified that 75% of practitioners continue to rely heavily on press releases as their main PR tool (Moore & Kalupa, 2007). This is particularly true in government and autonomous organizations. However, the growing importance of digital communication suggests that a diversification of PR tools, including the use of social media, blogs, and digital platforms, would enhance the effectiveness of campaigns, especially in engaging younger audiences (Mustafa, 2002).

Lack of Spokesperson Assignment

A significant finding was that 95% of organizations had not assigned an official spokesperson for media interactions (Nuruddin, 1980). This represents a major gap in crisis communication readiness, as having a designated spokesperson is essential for delivering consistent and coherent messages during critical situations.

Challenges in PR Implementation

Logistic support (50%) and reluctance of authorities to embrace modern PR strategies (45%) were identified as the two major challenges in implementing effective PR campaigns (Uddin, 1989). Addressing these challenges requires investment in infrastructure, technology, and training, as well as organizational commitment to more open communication practices.

Hierarchy and Positions in PR

PR in Bangladesh appears to be predominantly a mid-level profession, with 50% of practitioners occupying mid-level roles and 46% in entry-level positions (McQuail, 2005). There are relatively few senior-level PR professionals, suggesting that organizations may not fully recognize the strategic importance of PR. Elevating the status of PR within organizational hierarchies could enhance its impact on long-term goals.

Freedom in Professional Activities

The survey revealed that 70% of PR practitioners feel restricted in their professional activities due to external pressures from

authorities or organizational policies (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2000). This lack of creative freedom could hinder innovation in PR strategies and limit the scope for developing more engaging and impactful communication campaigns.

Lack of Written PR Strategy

Only 8% of organizations have a written PR strategy, which indicates a lack of formalized communication planning (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The absence of documented strategies means that PR efforts are often ad hoc and reactive rather than guided by a clear, structured roadmap.

Crisis Management Preparation

A significant weakness identified in the study is the lack of preparedness for crisis management in 65% of organizations (Harlow, 1976). Without clear crisis management plans, organizations remain vulnerable to reputation damage in the event of unforeseen challenges. This finding highlights the need for the establishment of Crisis Management Committees and regular training programs.

Limited Use of Surveys and Research

Surveys and pre-planning research are underutilized by PR practitioners, with only 30% employing these tools before launching communication programs (Heath, 2005). This gap suggests that many PR strategies are developed without a robust understanding of public opinion or audience needs, potentially reducing their effectiveness.

Recruitment Criteria for PR Positions

The study found that recruitment for PR positions in Bangladesh is primarily based on academic qualifications (70%), with limited emphasis on professional experience (15%) and mindset (20%) (Kotler, 2003). While academic knowledge is important, practical experience and strategic thinking are equally vital for the success of PR campaigns. A more balanced recruitment approach could enhance the effectiveness of PR teams.

Educational Outcomes of "Hawa"

The study also explored the educational outcomes related to the movie *Hawa*, particularly its contribution to public knowledge about the ocean, traditional fishing techniques, and the lifestyle of coastal fishermen.

Acquiring Knowledge about the Nature of the Sea

Respondents reported that *Hawa* provided valuable insights into the nature of the sea, particularly its unpredictable and ever-changing dynamics. According to the survey, 54% of viewers agreed that the movie helped them learn about the ocean's characteristics, while 30% strongly agreed. Only 20% disagreed or remained neutral, indicating that the film had a significant educational impact (Ries & Ries, 2002).

Traditional Fishing Techniques in the Sea

The portrayal of traditional fishing practices in *Hawa* was another educational aspect highlighted by the respondents. A combined

64% of participants expressed agreement or strong agreement that the film offered an authentic representation of these techniques, including the use of handlines, nets, and traps (Simon, 1980). This suggests that *Hawa* has contributed to raising awareness about the cultural heritage of coastal fishing communities in Bangladesh as shown in table 2.

Learning about the Lifestyle of Fishermen

Finally, the film's depiction of the fishermen's lifestyle provided audiences with an understanding of the hardships and daily routines of coastal communities. According to the survey, 72% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that *Hawa* accurately reflected the lifestyle of fishermen, offering a rare glimpse into the lives of those who depend on the sea for their livelihoods (Seitel, 2004) as shown in table 3.

Conclusion

The study provides a comprehensive analysis of public relations (PR) tools and strategies used during the release of the movie "Hawa" in Bangladesh, with a focus on qualitative insights from PR practitioners. Findings reveal that traditional PR methods, such as press releases, dominate government sectors, while private sectors prioritize profit-driven approaches. Notably, 95% of organizations lack a designated spokesperson, highlighting a gap in crisis communication readiness. The study emphasizes the need for more professional recognition of PR practitioners, structured strategies, and improved ethical practices. Through detailed surveys and interviews, the educational outcomes of the "Hawa" movie, such as knowledge of the sea, traditional fishing techniques, and the lifestyle of coastal fishermen, were positively received by the audience. Ultimately, the research calls for a more strategic and transparent PR framework in Bangladesh to align with global best practices.

Author contributions

M.H. conceptualized the project, developed the methodology, conducted a formal analysis, and drafted the original writing. H.M.A.W. and P.K.C. contributed to the methodology, conducted investigations, provided resources, and visualized the data. S.M. contributed to the reviewing and editing of the writing.

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Competing financial interests

The authors have no conflict of interest.

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