

The Effectiveness of Film Trailers: Evidence from the College Student Market

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ABSTRACT

The film industry is a billion dollar, global industry that heavily relies on advertisements known as “film trailers” to captivate an audience’s attention and promote movies. Before a film is produced, its commerciality must be determined. Films cannot be marketed in the same way in different markets, meaning having an understanding of how groups of people throughout the world think and interact is advantageous. Through conducting primary research via surveying 154 college students at the University of Wisconsin – LA Crosse and gathering secondary data, the study’s hypothesis that film trailers effectively encourage and influence college students to pay and see the advertised film in theaters is supported.

Keywords: undergraduate research, college students, consumer behavior, film trailers

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this study is to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of film trailers in the minds of college students. Young people in the 12-24 age group represented twenty-four percent of moviegoers and thirty-one percent of tickets sold in 2012 in the US/Canada market. In 2011, frequent moviegoers in the 18-24 age group declined by nearly one million, but in 2012 there was a slight increase. More 18-24 year olds went to the movies (28.9 million) and purchased more tickets (256.5 million) than in 2011, representing thirteen percent and nineteen percent market shares, respectively. Frequent moviegoers continue to drive the movie industry (The Motion, 2012). Fluctuations in this age group can pose problems concerning the film industry’s revenue and longevity if forward thinking is not acknowledged (Kernan, 2004). Although there was an increase from 2011-2012 in frequent moviegoers among 18-24 year olds, it may be due to the cause of a longer-term trend (The Motion, 2012). Because little is known regarding how certain factors of a film trailer influence college students’ decision to pay and see the advertised movie, establishing a better understanding through conducting this study will provide valuable knowledge to film marketers and create strategies to combat and prepare for the rise and fall in the number of frequent moviegoers.

“Film trailers”, also known as “coming attractions” or “previews”, are generally considered as advertisements that provide viewers with a glimpse into what the promoted movie entails. According to Lisa Kernan, author of *Coming Attractions: Reading American Movie Trailers*, a movie trailer is, “a unique narrative of film exhibition, wherein promotional discourse and narrative pleasure are conjoined.” Dynamic and cinematic images fervently inhabit film trailers, captivating viewers while fueling capitalist realism (Kernan, 2004). The first film trailer premiered at Rye Beach, an amusement park in New York, in 1912. The term “trailer” comes from them being originally placed at the end of feature films. That practice did not last long, due to patrons leaving the theater after the films ended (Thomas, 1966). However, the name stuck and trailers are now shown before the feature film commences. Since then, film trailer marketing has dramatically changed from an era of intriguing moviegoers just enough so they have a desire to see the film to providing “tell-all” trailers (Marich, 2005). Film trailers use several tactics to persuade moviegoers and have become a significant part of the movie going experience. Before a feature film begins, many moviegoers wait in anticipation for the unveiling of new film trailers. These original and, at times, innovative film trailers have the ability to release certain emotions and stimulate motivation within viewers (Kernan, 2004). Furthermore, marketers of film trailers embrace different aspects (e.g., genre, plot, actors) to differentiate themselves from competitors and position themselves in the minds of those who appreciate the movie’s specific style (Hixson, 2005).

Throughout history, film trailers have been both praised and ridiculed by moviegoers. Each individual views the film trailer subjectively, meaning obtaining an understanding of how the ultimate consumer perceives a certain situation allows marketers to tailor their actions to fulfill the market’s needs (Kernan, 2004). In light of the fluctuations in the number of frequent moviegoers (ages 18-24 years old) in the past couple of years, I chose college students as my empirical context because this sector is of considerable economic significance. In 2012, the number of frequent moviegoers who went to the cinema once a month or more increased in nearly every age group,

including the largest frequent movie going age groups (18-24 year olds and 25-39 year olds). Frequent moviegoers who go to the cinema once a month or more continue to sustain the movie industry. Furthermore, in 2012, frequent moviegoers purchased fifty-seven percent of all the movie tickets sold (The Motion, 2012). The decision to analyze and gather data from college students was also due to the fact that I am a part of this target market and have the resources to easily reach these individuals. By focusing on a single market that I have in-depth knowledge of and personal relationships with, I am able to enhance the internal validity of the study and provide beneficial insights into an influential and dominating sector of the US economy (Joint, 2007).

The rest of the study is organized as follows: First, I provide a brief overview of the organizational learning literature and present my six research learning objectives. This is followed by the literature review emphasizing secondary support for the six learning objectives. Methodology and data and measures used in the study follows. Next, I present the results and briefly acknowledge figures that clarify and explain important details relating to the survey's findings. From there, I discuss how the results compare with secondary data, especially the theories that best explain the results being described. Finally, I discuss the limitations of the research and theoretical and managerial implications of the study to serve as a possible basis for improvements in the future.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

When consumers choose to consume an item, they go through the consumption cycle consisting of a need, want, exchange, costs and benefits, reactions, and value creation. Exchanges happen throughout the world daily, meaning every business must understand how consumers choose to make decisions and their perception of value. Value is co-created; the consumer is necessary and plays a major part in producing value. Because consumer learning begins with perception and value involves learning, changes in consumer behavior are particular and only result if the interaction between them and a stimulus produced by a marketer coincides with their perceptions. Additionally, comprehension plays a key role in the consumption process. The comprehension of a message depends on the message's characteristics (source, complexity/simplicity), the receiver's knowledge and expectations, and environmental characteristics (framing, timing). Movie marketers must take into consideration all of these factors when developing their advertising strategies and realize understanding where the product fits in the marketplace is an extensive process (Babin & Harris, 2012).

The examination of trailers can bring greater awareness to audiences' readings, which in turn, makes the process of market positioning easier. Because trailers have only a limited amount of time to stimulate motivation in viewers, these little stories must be constructed with carefully selected, intriguing cinematic images and comprise an exaggerated extravagance. If a trailer can align a movie audience's desire to see a given film (the one they have come to see in theaters) with a desire to see another film (the one being promoted) the audience is more likely "sold" on the promoted film (Kernan, 2004). Likewise, trailers exposed to an audience via any other medium that correlate with emotions and perceptions an audience is believed to hold induces feelings of curiosity and attraction (Amasaka et al., 2012). The time restriction of trailers compels audiences to create an imaginary (as-yet-unseen) film out of only the fragments they are exposed to. Audiences desire, or neglect, the film they ultimately imagine through visualizing the trailer, not the real film (Kernan, 2004).

Film industry executives are particularly attuned to marketing research results concerning individuals under the age of twenty-five because the youth demographic dominates the cinema-going audiences (Marich, 2005). Movie trailers are the form of advertising that most significantly impacts young people's desire to see a given film (Amasaka et al., 2012). Consequently, conducting marketing research on this demographic is imperative, because marketers gain a better insight into motives that drive their potential consumers and how to productively introduce their film to the market. Copious amounts of knowledge can be gained through market research, allowing film marketers to acquire the resources and adopt practical approaches necessary to make changes leading toward better results (Joint, 2007).

Building on this knowledge, I establish six learning objectives that can provide conclusions to and reinforce the hypothesis that film trailers effectively encourage and influence college students to pay and see the advertised film in theaters. The six learning objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Conclude whether or not film trailers effectively promote movies to college students.
2. Understand if college students' feelings toward film trailers affect their decision to pay and see the movie being promoted.
3. Identify what types of film trailer, in regards to the genre, are most successful at influencing college students to pay and see the advertised movie.
4. Comprehend whether recognizable aspects of a film trailer, including actors, music, and plot, notably affect a college student's decision to see the movie in theaters.

5. Explain if certain factors, including schoolwork, jobs, campus/community involvement, noticeably affect college students' willingness to pay and see the movie.
6. Determine how the placement of film trailers, whether they are featured in a theater, on TV, or on the Internet, influences college students' desire to pay and see the promoted movie.

Achieving the six learning objectives can help film marketers identify their college audience and successfully communicate with them in the broadest possible terms. Each objective has a particular purpose with an end goal of attaining a better understanding of what makes a film trailer effective in the minds of college students. Moreover, through acknowledging the study's objectives, the process of developing a consistent and assertive marketing mix becomes less multifaceted. Producers and marketers in the entertainment industry rely on the marketing of film trailers to reach competitive advantages and a larger market share (Hixson, 2005). The marketing objectives can guide the development of the marketing plan and be a foundation for making realistic, future-orientated decisions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Effectiveness of Film Trailers: Foundation for Success

Advertisers have used various methods of segmenting audiences to designate target audiences. Demographics have been used alone or in combination with other traits as a method of segmentation (Hixson, 2005). As stated previously, individuals under the age of twenty-five dominate the cinema-going audiences, which means understanding whether or not trailers are effective concerning this demographic is imperative (The Motion, 2012). According to Theatrical Market Statistics (2007), an average of \$1.6 million was spent per film on trailers. The average cost to produce a trailer is \$300,000 to \$600,000, and the production of trailers is a \$90 million-per-year industry (Last, 2004). Although \$1.6 million dollars may seem extraordinarily high, the amount of money that can be spent on movie advertising is currently limited, so finding ways to boost the effectiveness of each advertisement within a budget is a critical issue. The key to overcoming this challenge is creating movie trailers that are in line with viewer preferences (Hixson, 2005).

Movie trailer production is heavily reliant on subjective factors and is the most certain method of rousing moviegoers to buy tickets for a movie opening (Marich, 2005). Each objective of the study has a foundation of determining the effectiveness of movie trailers in the minds of college students. Through secondary data that has been collected, trailers have proven to be one of the most expensive and efficient ways of movie advertising as many people decide to watch a movie based on their impression of the trailer (Kernan, 2004). Films like "Juno" and "Little Miss Sunshine" are examples of independent films that exceeded their studios greatest expectations due to having excellent trailers that helped promote to mainstream audiences (AWFJ, 2007). In line with these arguments, I expect the objective of concluding whether or not film trailers effectively promote movies to college students to be achieved through the study and have a positive result.

Effectiveness of Film Trailers: The Role of Emotions

Getting individuals into movie theaters presents unique problems for movie marketers with the increasing availability of media options available to an audience including the Internet, Blu-ray, and DVRs (Callison, et al., 2011). Further complicating the issue, when consumers choose to pay and see a movie in theaters, their decision is based on a complex psychology based on the "the mood they are in" when making that selection. Feelings and emotions significantly influence whether a consumer accepts or rejects a film trailer. Mood management theory states that an individual will select media to control affective mood states that are more desirable, especially when moods are affected by outside stimuli. Individuals in specific mood states are more likely to choose stimuli that will enhance personal satisfaction or eliminate bad moods (Zillmann, 1988). Therefore, movie marketers must carefully analyze a movie trailer's representation when marketing the film. Consumers make selections based on moods, and previous experience with certain stimuli may increase or decrease the likelihood of moviegoer attendance (Callison, et al., 2011). In regards to college students, movie marketers must determine where to place movie trailers to maximize appeal and future consumption to further profit from this dominating moviegoer market.

A study featured in the 2011 edition of the *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* examined the relationship between individuals' mood (positive or negative) and trailer type (comedic or serious) and their reported appeal towards a trailer. The results showed that individuals were more willing to pay and see a more serious film in theaters after watching the trailer in a positive mood. Furthermore, respondents were more willing to pay and see a more comedic film in theaters after watching the trailer in a negative mood. Trailers are a direct form of advertising as well as a hedonic experience. An individual's mood, either positive or negative, can influence his or her desire to seek certain types of media, either serious or comedic (Callison, et al., 2011). Because individuals strive to maintain good moods and benefit from the intensity that overcomes them, movie marketers must understand how their film trailers connect with consumers' emotions to achieve a desired state (Zillmann, 1988). Given the presence of

arguments for the moderating effect of mood impact on media choice, I expect the objective of understanding if college students' feelings toward film trailers affect their decision to pay and see the movie being promoted will be achieved and have a positive outcome.

Effectiveness of Film Trailers: The Role of Genre

Previous studies have concluded that relationships exist between movie genre preferences and the expected entertainment value of the advertised movies. In film theory, "genre" refers to the method based on similarities in the narrative elements from which films are constructed (Kernan, 2004). Movie marketers continually use a variety of methods to intrigue their ultimate consumer and generate favorable responses. Because an extensive amount of factors influence the success of a film trailer, movie marketers must acknowledge the role each factor plays. Secondary data states although segmenting movie trailers based on demographics has been successful, they are not stable enough from movie to movie to use as an effective targeting method. Consequently, more movie marketers are focusing their attention on the movie trailer's genre to allow the moviegoer to receive the benefit of having their desire fulfilled (Hixson, 2005). Trailer producers' appeal to spectators' familiarity or desire for familiarity through highlighting the film's genre, which serves as the trailer's primary informative agent. Within trailer rhetoric, repetition generally functions to reinforce existing genres. Trailers are able to remind audiences of their own personal experiences and attachment to this kind of ritualized spectatorship (Kernan, 2004). Conveying a sense of genre allows for personal attachment and understanding to develop, ultimately positioning a film in the minds of moviegoers (Marich, 2005).

Through market research, movie marketers have a clear understanding of who the dominating moviegoers are, but have to dig deeper into determining how they are able to appeal to particular needs (Joint, 2007). Experts believe moviegoers rely heavily on genre labels and trailers when making a movie selection (Hixson, 2005). Focusing on these drives behind the ultimate consumer action will allow marketers to adjust their promotional strategies in regards to their film trailer's position. Moviegoers often choose a particular movie based on their genre preference, because they believe this type of film will satisfy their entertainment desire. Trailers provide moviegoers with a sample of what is to come, giving viewers a basic understanding of the story's plot and genre. Because, at times, little is known regarding the movie's central concept, consumers only have certain attributes of the trailer, including its genre, to rely on when making the purchasing decision (Hixson, 2005). The sample of the film provided to the viewer via the trailer allows the reader to decide whether or not the film can fulfill their current needs. In addition, some film genres are not suitable for certain audiences, meaning obtaining a basic realization as to how to attract college students fittingly is necessary to get the most out of this lucrative market (Marich, 2005). In line with these arguments, I expect the objective of identifying what film trailers, in regards to the genre, are most successful at influencing college students to pay and see the advertised movie will be accomplished through this study and bring valuable knowledge to light.

Effectiveness of Film Trailers: The Role of Recognition

Before a film trailer is exposed to an audience in hopes of increasing profits obtained through movie theater spectatorship, movie marketers must answer questions concerning the level of recognition of a film trailer's various aspects. Is the story intriguing and relatable? Is the music memorable and a selling point? Does the trailer's actors entice consumers to see the movie and have a favorable and desirable impression? Although not all of these questions need to be addressed painstakingly, movie marketers must identify if trailers should comprise a moderately high level of recognizable aspects, influencing the ultimate consumers' decision to pay and see the film in theaters. Demographics are persuaded distinctly from one another by factors of film trailers. Because the college demographic has a powerful representation in the moviegoer market, understanding their perceptions is advantageous for any movie marketer (The Motion, 2012). In their efforts to persuade viewers to see a film, trailers may appeal to spectators' desire for story and recollection, and emphasize a film's plot and characters, as well as notable movie stars (Kernan, 2004).

Music in trailers can heighten the sensory effect of the images being displayed. Consequently, the choice of music genre, song, and artist can substantially impact the trailer's commerciality. Determining whether or not recognizable songs effectively attract the college market to the specific trailer and create a desire within them can further enhance the success of the movie's promotional campaign. Additionally, since trailers are generally produced before the film's music is completed, they often use music from the soundtracks of other films. The strategy is derived from movie marketers wanting consumers to consciously or unconsciously recognize the soundtrack used during the trailer, creating a stronger inner force to see the film in theaters (Kernan, 2004).

Trailers greater appeal to audiences' interest when the actors being featured possess familiar and identifiable characteristics, and fulfill the desires consumers' hold. The mere representation of a star's image in a trailer

represents a promotional message about that star, encouraging trailers to draw on the rhetoric of stardom. Stardom has the most power to invoke audiences' desire, due to celebrities being able to draw audiences in for their sheer spectacular appeal. When consumers are able to relate with characteristics of the actor or character, feelings of envy and fascination evolve and a world in which they can see themselves being a part of is established. Moreover, as consumers watch a trailer, they often relate images of the star with all of their past associations of him or her (Kernan, 2004). An important concept movie marketers keep in mind when creating movie ads is that most film releases are equivalent to new product launches. Familiar elements represent marketing hooks, because the movie itself is its own brand. New brands must be positioned and promoted in the consumer marketplace, which is a difficult process. Understanding the ultimate consumer and how he or she is able to relate with specific features of the film trailer greatly depends on the amount of consumer research explored and produced (Marich, 2005).

Because, for the most part, film trailers lack depth and plot specificities, consumers construct an imaginary full-length plot cued by the trailers' images of attraction. Viewers only have past experiences or perceptions to rely on in terms of evaluating the movie's potential value (Kernan, 2004). Analyzing the level of familiarity of the trailer's storyline that is needed to make the process of stimulating motivation easier can shed new light on the college market. Less well-informed consumers of a film's plot and storyline are more likely to base their expectations on the fast paced, visual images trailers entail. In opposition, knowledgeable consumers compare and contrast the information obtained through the trailer with their previous experiences and understandings (Marich, 2005).

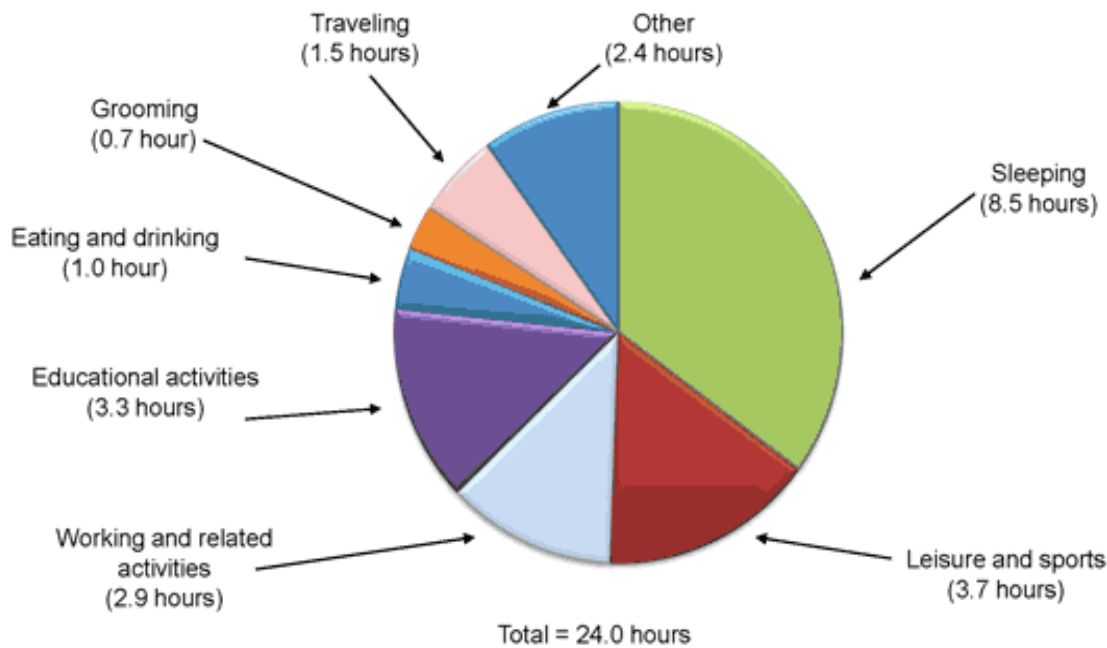
Getting high-quality and compelling images is perhaps the most important objective for trailer marketing during principal photography. Implementing high quality shots that create a sense of arousal are powerful marketing tools that have helped some of the smallest films get attention (Marich, 2005). Gaining a better insight into how movie trailer recognition impacts college students' decision to pay and see the film in theaters will aid in the process of strategic formulation and implementation. In line with these arguments, I expect the proposed objective of comprehending whether recognizable aspects of a film trailer, including its actors, music, and plot, notably affect a college student's decision to see the movie in theaters to be realized through this study.

Effectiveness of Film Trailers: The Role of External Factors

Exchanges happen throughout the world daily, meaning every business must understand how consumers choose to make decisions and their perception of value. Several factors influence a consumer's purchase decision including internal influences (his or her psychology and personality) and external influences (social environments and situational influences) (Babin & Harris, 2012). Numerous external factors can effect college students' decision to pay and see a film in theaters including cost, homework, jobs, and extra curricular activities. Understanding whether these external factors significantly affect college students' purchasing decisions can help movie marketers better identify how they can position their film trailers around these impediments. The typical college students' schedule is overwhelming full, meaning the amount of time they can spend on engaging in a form of entertainment is limited (Figure 1). Therefore, movie marketers must find ways in creating film trailers that create enough value to outweigh the dominance presented by the external factors.

Movie marketers must also compete for student's money and support against other sources of entertainment. In terms of cost, although college students exemplify the demographic dominating the number of frequent moviegoers and forty percent of their spending comes from purchasing discretionary items, like going to the movies, their average income is about \$1,200 per month. College students are far from the most cautious consumers, but because considerable amounts of entertainment exist in the world today, the money they do choose to spend goes to a variety of businesses and industries (Nationwide, 2013). Theater attendance has dropped by ten percent since 1999, but theater owners are not particularly worried. In turn, ticket prices have risen steadily, easily outpacing inflation, presenting challenges concerning marketing toward the college market (Tuttle, 2011).

According to the Bureau of Statistics, American Time Use Survey (Figure 1), college students typically use 3.7 hours (15%) out of a 24-hour weekday on leisure and sports activities. The average length of a featured film is roughly under two hours, meaning consumers who pay and see of a film on during the week day typically have to allocate their time sufficiently beforehand (Marich, 2005). External factors play an even bigger role in regards to how consumers are exposed to a film trailer. With sleeping and work/educational activities taking up 14.7 hours (61%) of the typical college student's weekday, movie markets do not have substantial amounts of time to create an inner



NOTE: Data include individuals, ages 15 to 49, who were enrolled full time at a university or college. Data include non-holiday weekdays and are averages for 2007-11.

SOURCE: Bureau of Labor Statistics, American Time Use Survey

Figure 1. Time use on an average weekday for full-time university and college

desire and drive within them (Figure 1). Therefore, understanding whether or not external factors considerably impact the level of enticement college students receive to pay and see the advertised film in theaters is substantial in developing movie marketing strategies.

Films are largely defined by their creative message in movie trailers because most moviegoers have not seen the films yet. Once films have been in theaters for a week, advertisers are forced to rely on promotional tools that are out of their control, like letting word of mouth take over as moviegoers spread their opinions about movies to peers (Marich, 2005). If movie marketers attentively work to understand their college market, uncover what the future entails, and embrace strategic decisions that have the potential to stimulate motivation in consumers for many years to come, acquiring more control and establishing a noticeable and favorable presence is feasible (Hixson, 2005). Given the existence of these arguments, I expect a conclusion to my objective of explaining if certain factors, including schoolwork, jobs, campus/community involvement, noticeably affect college students' willingness to pay and see the movie will transpire.

Effectiveness of Film Trailers: The Role of Film Trailer Placement

Movie trailers are broadcast on TV, on the Internet, and in theaters, and all can present the fascination of movies through their pictures (Amasaka et al., 2012). Once a movie trailer is developed, analyzing where the target market is most likely to be exposed to it is the next step. Film trailers provide "free samples" of what the advertised movie entails to consumers and for them to be successful, consumers should not have to go out of their way to watch them. Film spectatorship has been related to the activity of window-shopping, and the correlation between the two is quite strong. Consumers base their decision to see a film (or in terms of window shopping "enter a store") on whether or not they perceive the imagery presented before them to be appealing within a short time frame. As with window-shopping where featured products aim to make a statement and are visually noticeable, marketing film trailers takes on similar objectives. Consumers are not exposed to every film trailer on the market, meaning movie marketers understanding how to magnetize and preserve the attention of their target audience is essential for box-office success. Today the role of trailers is ever broader as they flourish in new types of display formats in the consumer market (Kernan, 2004).

The expansion of the Internet has shaped the marketing of movies profoundly throughout the past couple of years. The Internet represents an enormous opportunity for movie marketers to reach large audiences efficiently. Websites are eager for new, innovative entertainment content and are able to post complete movie trailers and other promotional materials in high-quality video and pictures. Of the ten billion videos watched online annually, movie trailers continue to be devoured aggressively and rank third, after news and user-created video (AWFJ, 2007). The

IT revolution and modern age allows film marketers to reach geographically scattered, special interest audiences at a low-cost, saving constructive resources that can be geared elsewhere. Additionally, the number of U.S. households with high-speed Internet connections continues to rise, which reinforces movie markets decision to jump on the bandwagon and use the Internet to its fullest potential (Marich, 2005).

Producers that choose to employ Internet-based marketing strategies are also able to promise greater interactivity with their fans. Aforementioned, more movie marketers believe that controlled media sources are becoming more important than letting word of mouth ‘buzz’ spread. The structure of the Internet allows movie markets to evaluate and maintain their promotional content, and better create the desired image and effects (Hixson, 2005). The Internet provides a unique atmosphere, letting consumers seek trailers or be involuntarily exposed to them through various pop-ups and social media sites (Callison, et al., 2011).

Because moviegoers must be more active in attending a movie than watching television, they are more alert and their demands and expectations are heightened (Hixson, 2005). Watching film trailers presented in theaters before the feature film begins has become an essential part of the movie going experience. Consumers wait in eagerness, wondering what new trailer will come before them. They only have roughly two minutes to take in as much as possible and establish whether the advertised film is worthwhile to pay and see in the near future (Kernan, 2004). Although film trailers displayed in movie theaters have the least potential to reach a large audience efficiently, when compared with online trailers and television trailers, movie marketers using this medium can feel more comfortable with their ability to capture the attention of those present in the theater (Marich, 2005).

Table 1. Top ad media in entertainment marketing campaigns

Rank	Media	Usage
1	Internet	93%
2	Consumer Magazines	67%
3	Cable television	67%
4	Radio	67%
5	In-theater	53%
6	Newspapers	47%
7	Network television	47%
8	Trade publications	27%
9	Outdoor billboards	20%

Trailers displayed on television are second in line as the most watched, the first being online (AWFJ, 2007). As displayed above in Table 1, sixty-seven percent of top ad media in entertainment marketing campaigns is geared towards cable television (Marich, 2005). Although in recent years marketers have been shifting their focus from the television medium to online mediums, television trailers in the past have proven to be the most effective in selling movies to consumers. In analyzing results, movie marketers must understand the pros and cons to each medium available and learn which ads play well with specific audience segments. Television is demographic specific and if marketers believe investing in television trailers will have a quick ROI and effectively attract the target market, competitive advantages can emerge. Television commercials offer flexibility and are subject to the most revisions because they can be run on short notice, unlike an ad in a monthly magazine. In contrast, trailers in theaters play to small audiences over a period of months (Marich, 2005). However, with as many as twenty-five movies advertised on television weekly, a cluttered media environment has developed for movie advertisers (Hixson, 2005). Segmenting audiences to target advertising messages is a timely process that requires identifying audience member characteristics. In response to the preceding arguments, I expect my objective of determining how the placement of film trailers, whether they are featured in a theater, on TV, or on the Internet, influences college students’ desire to pay and see the promoted movie will to be completed, bringing relevant market information to surface.

METHOD

Data and Measures

The empirical context for the study is the college student market. I assembled primary data through administering a survey to college students. The survey was created through Qualtrics, a web based survey software that the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse currently uses and was personally emailed by me to a random sample of students attending the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse. The sample is representative; the surveyed individuals signify the demographic dominating the number of frequent moviegoers (The Motion, 2012). Consequently, by contributing to what is already known, I become an effectual member of the entertainment industry and bring applicable knowledge to light. The survey was sent to 1000 students at the University of Wisconsin – La Crosse and it achieved a response rate percentage of 15.4%. My faculty sponsor provided the 1000 random student sample to me. The response rate percentage is viewed as satisfactory due to it obtaining a reasonable amount of respondents despite University of Wisconsin – La Crosse students being frequently bombarded with emails consisting of surveys, which can be heavily tiresome.

The process of market positioning relies on market segmentation and targeting, which are not possible without primary research. Primary data was gathered specifically for the research and involved quantitative research. I used a quantitative design due to having more experience with this type of research approach, knowledge of the Qualtrics software, and ability to reach a variety of UW-L college students quickly and resourcefully. The quantitative method of administering a survey placed great reliance on representing my developments numerically. In doing so, the survey's results are represented in the form of graphs and charts, enabling the flow of communication and comprehension to transpire in a well-timed style. The structured questions were predetermined and I specifically chose which questions to feature in the survey. The intent was to make the process of creating associations with the secondary data obtained and acknowledging my objectives easier. Moreover, numerical data is extremely useful in thinking about longer-term developing as well as presenting forethought results, representing qualities of the study's purpose (Joint, 2007).

The survey consisted of twenty-one questions focusing on features of film trailers and how these correlate with college students' eagerness to pay and see the promoted film in theaters. The survey was meticulously created to ensure the established six learning objectives were recognized, creating a more clear representation of college students and an underlying of their needs and perceptions. Through the administered survey, students were inquired to express how their feelings toward a film trailer, including its genre, actors, music, plot, and where it was being viewed, affected its level of effectiveness and attractiveness. Additionally, students were asked to answer demographic questions, helping me create a more accurate picture of the group of surveyed students. Finally, students were asked to answer lifestyle questions, allowing me to uncover the external factors that impact college students' decision and desire to pay and see a film in theaters.

RESULTS

The majority of the 154 respondents were female (77%), and were among the 20-23 year old age group (72%). Forty percent, the majority, of the respondents were in the College of Science and Health at UW-L and forty-two percent had a senior level or higher status. Finally, the majority of respondents (53%) spent at least four hours per week being involved with sports or extracurricular activities (See Appendix A for complete survey questions and results).

In regards to questions focusing on film trailers and effectiveness levels, 99% of respondents stated they had seen a film trailer before and 96% of the respondents believed film trailers were effective movie-marketing tools. According to Figure 2, approximately 76% of the respondents stated they saw four to ten plus movies in the last year.

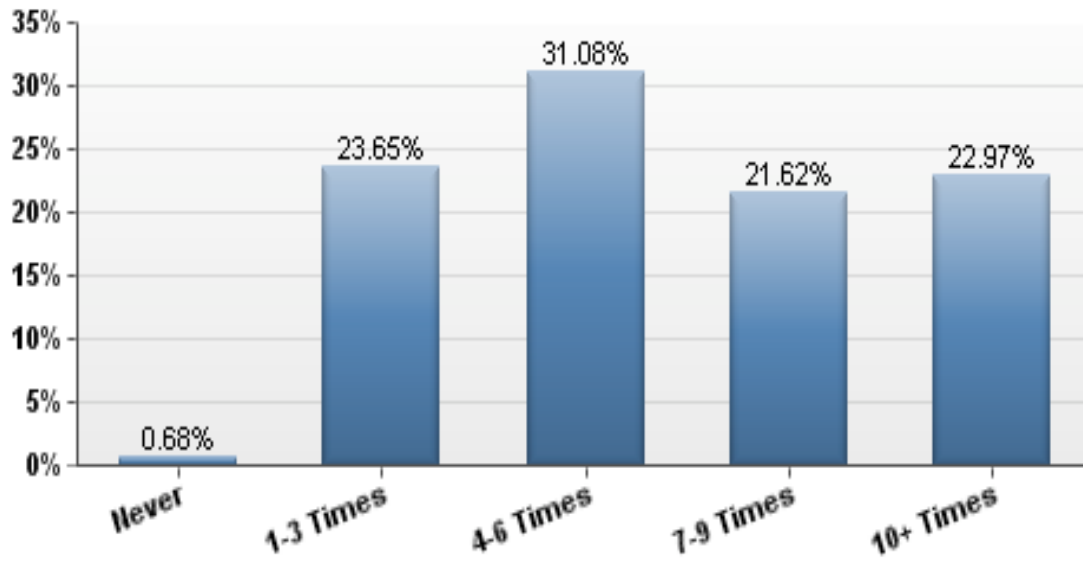


Figure 2. Number of movie watched in theaters (2012)

Pertaining to the likeliness of feelings toward a film trailer affecting their decision to see the promoted film in theaters, the majority of respondents (77%) answered very likely or completely likely. Figure 3 illustrates the survey's results regarding the question how likely mood (e.g., happy, sad) influenced the type of movie genre consumers

decided to see in theaters. The majority of respondents (50%) stated their mood only somewhat likely influenced the type of movie they would pay and see in theaters.

Of the participants, 40% were most likely to watch movie trailer via the Internet, 39% via television, and 21% via movie theaters. When asked where they believed film trailers were most effective regarding their

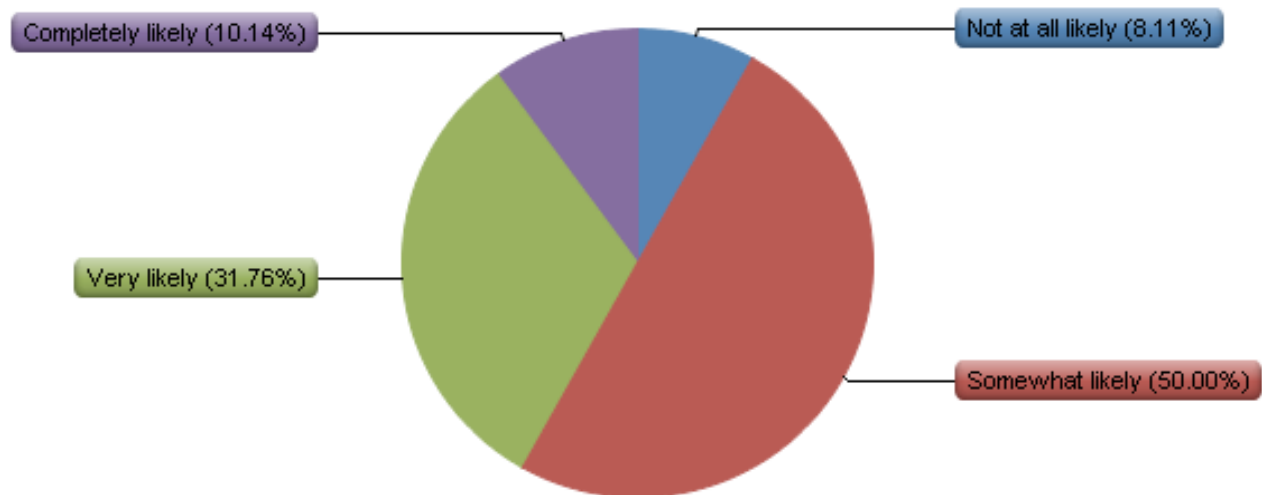


Figure 3. Influence of mood on movie decision

placement, the majority (48%) said the television, followed by movie theaters (38%) and then the Internet (14%). Finally, when asked where they were most likely exposed to film trailers, the majority stated television (57%), followed by Internet (22%) and then movie theaters (20%).

Concerning different internal and external factors surrounding the marketing of film trailers, the majority of

respondents (76%) agreed that the more familiar they were with a film trailer's factors (e.g., actors, music, plot), the more likely they were to see the promoted film in theaters. The factor of film trailers that most likely persuaded the majority (79%) to pay and see the film in theaters was its plot, actors (13%) significantly followed behind. Figure 4 depicts the outside factors that affected respondents' decision to see a film in theaters. The respondents were allowed to check all that applied and cost (92%), homework (75%), and job (55%) represented the top three factors.

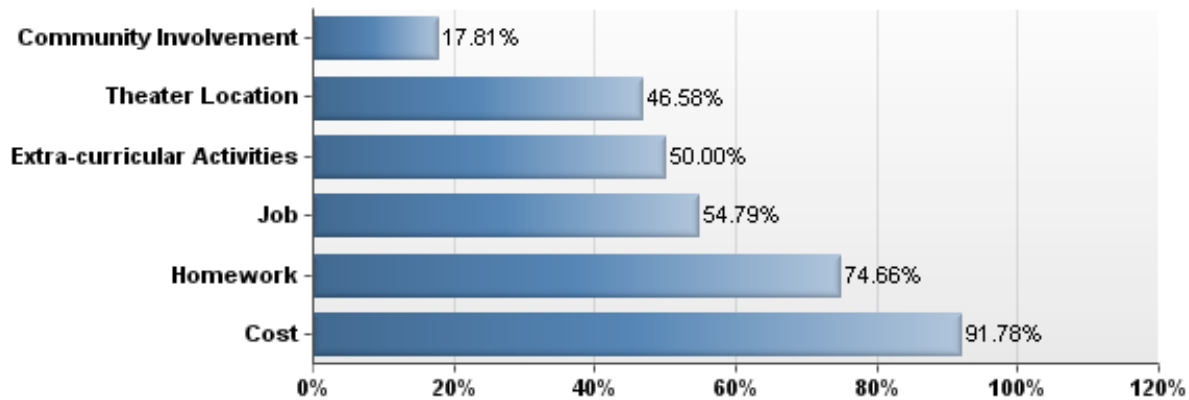


Figure 4. Factors affecting respondents' movie theater consumption

DISCUSSION

The focus of this study was to determine whether or not film trailers were perceived as being effective in the minds of college students and provide movie marketers with new knowledge serving to better understand this target market. College students represent the majority of frequent moviegoers (The Motion, 2012). Because of their noticeable attendance, the need to uncover new ways in fulfilling their desires should constantly be in the forefront of movie marketers' current and future goals. The study emphasized six distinctive objectives, stressing internal and external factors of a film trailer and college students that motivate or impede the movie going consumption process.

Secondary data permitted me to collect and analyze valuable information, helping me come to conclusions regarding the six objectives. Performing secondary research was considerably advantageous, because this knowledge made interpreting information obtained through primary research easier. Specific literature and publications utilized to complete this study contained invaluable information. While some articles focused on the correlation between the theory of mood management and the representation of a movie trailer, others examined the level of appreciation consumers have for film trailers and how factors affects viewership.

I attribute the preceding demographic data to senior level college students having a greater realization of the importance of taking student-administered surveys. Through maturing academically, upperclassmen grasp that fact that their peers rely on these surveys to pass their capstone courses, which have intentions to propel them into their future careers. Additionally, UW-L is known throughout the Midwest for its programs associated with the college of Science and Health, attracting several students to attend the university each year and making the majority of respondents coming from this college a realistic occurrence. Future studies could analyze demographics more precisely within the college market and consider how certain factors (e.g., gender) affect the effectiveness of film trailers.

We live in a world dominated by entertainment. It is one the largest global industries and has a prevailing presence that has shaped a magnitude of economies. Evidently, the survey's results proved the majority of respondents had seen a movie trailer at least once during their life. More specifically, the majority of respondents (73%) were exposed to a movie trailer approximately one to ten times per week. Furthermore, the majority of respondents (96%) believed movie trailers were effective means of movie marketing, which associated with secondary data. Movie trailers are not only advertisements, but as well as hedonic experiences (Callison, et al., 2011). They arouse emotions in viewers and have proven both through this study and secondary research to be successful at motivating consumers, college students in particular, to pay and see the film in theaters. Consequently, the first objective of this study in determining whether or not film trailers effectively promote movies to college students proves to have positive connotation.

As aforementioned, feelings and emotions impact whether a consumer accepts or rejects a film trailer (Zillmann, 1988). In comparison with the survey's results, seventy-seven of the respondents felt similar. Although this response could be higher, it may contribute to college student's having other interests (e.g., going to a movie due to the actor(s) involved) that overshadow their feelings toward the trailer. This assumption is an area future

research should regard when analyzing the college market. Nevertheless, we do as human beings often base our decisions on the experience we receive through even the shortest interaction (Babin & Harris, 2012).

When targeting college students, movie marketers need to take into consideration the types of movie trailers that will create the greatest, most positive reaction. For example, according to the survey, thirty-seven percent of respondents stated action film trailers best captured their attention, followed by thirty-three percent stating comedy film trailers did. Action and comedy also ranked as the top two favorite movie genres, respectively. Employing these film trailer genres to create optimistic emotions and a dominating position within college students will only help movie marketers achieve larger profits. In conclusion to objectives two and three, which are supported by both primary and secondary data, college students' feelings toward film trailers do affect their decision to pay and see the movie being promoted and the film trailer genres action and comedy are most successful at influencing college students to pay and see the advertised movie.

Supported by secondary research, trailers appeal more to audiences' interest when they comprise relatable characteristics and fulfill the desires consumers' hold (Kernan, 2004). According to the primary data gathered through the administered survey, respondents (76%) agreed, believing that the more familiar they were with a film trailer's factors (e.g., actors, music, plot), the more likely there were to see the promoted film in theaters. The survey also concluded that the majority (79%) felt the trailer's plot played that largest role in influencing their consumption decision. This differed from secondary data stating stardom had the most power to invoke audiences' desire to see a film (Kernan, 2004). Future research could go more in-depth concerning the relationship between plot and actors. Even so, movie marketers must incorporate aspects of the film trailer that are relevant and that college students can comprehend and make comparisons with, bringing a conclusion to objective four. The world is constantly changing, with new demands and desires coming and going. Marketers who fail to sufficiently adjust their business strategies will face an arduous journey, causing them to be conquered by competition and other economical and technological factors.

The study reinforced the fact that certain factors, including schoolwork, jobs, campus/community involvement, noticeably affect college students' willingness to pay and see the movie in theaters, reaching objective five. The world is coming more and more cautious in regards to spending money, contributing to the ninety-one percent of college students saying costs affect their movie consumption decision. Supported by secondary data, the average college student earns roughly \$1,200 a month. With so many sources of entertainment inhabiting society, students are bombarded with options while having only limited amounts of money to spend each month (Nationwide, 2013). Job and schoolwork also impact the movie going consumption process, with college students spending 6.2 hours out of a 24-hour weekday (Figure 1). Taking all of this into consideration, future studies could examine how movie trailers outweigh the value of seeing the movie in theaters from the external factors that face college students' daily. Dealing with external factors is extremely difficult for movie marketers because they are out of their control, and this will continue to be hurdles that need to be defeated in the future.

The sixth and final objective had the most discrepancies between the primary and secondary research. The Internet is becoming a more influential and utilized medium for the entertainment industry. Movie marketers are able to establish more personal relationships with their ultimate consumers through having an online presence. Furthermore, the Internet offers flexibility and greater user-control than advertising via television or movie theaters (AWFJ, 2007). Conversely, the majority of respondents of the survey (48%) said television trailers were most effective and stated they were most likely to be exposed to film trailers via television (57%). This information is significantly valuable for movie marketers. Until recently, television trailers were most effective in selling movies to consumers. Movie marketers have begun focusing more of their resources on implementing Internet-based marketing strategies, but through the primary data, television advertising still seems to be more valid and effective. Future studies should consider the reasoning behind why college students perceive television advertising to be more effective than the Internet, despite the technological advancements and clutter that exists. Additionally, movie marketers that acknowledge the survey's findings can see the importance of continuing to use television trailers as a driving force of targeting the college market.

LIMITATIONS

The study was limited because it did not consider how the college market differed from other age groups. There was no supporting information backing up whether college students' feelings and perceptions considerably differ from younger or older generations. By analyzing different demographics, movie marketers can better understand how to capture the attention of the dominant moviegoers. This area of research is suitable for further investigation. The survey used to complete the primary research of the study did not have a supporting foundation. I developed the structure and questions of the survey, in hopes of achieving all six objectives simultaneously and efficiently. Future movie marketers should implement survey questions proven to be valid, strengthening the

survey's results and credibility.

As generations and technological continue to alter, examining theories like mood management and the impact of genre preference should be continually revisited. Fashion and different styles are not static, so further research on these topics could be extremely beneficial. There are generous amounts of secondary data that can be explored and this will only amplify as time progresses.

The study did not dig relatively deep into the types of music, actors, or plot that are most likely to motivate college students to see the film. Additionally, clutter is a huge factor affecting film trailers, but the study did not significantly mention this problem. There were many objectives that were achieved through this study, but due to time restraints, not every question concerning film trailer effectiveness could be answered. As a result, movie marketers should be encouraged to continue expanding their minds and uncovering new knowledge that helps the entertainment industry grow and thrive.

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