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To cite this article: Michael B. Devlin , L. Todd Chambers & Coy Callison (2011) Targeting Mood: Using Comedy or Serious Movie Trailers, Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 55:4, 581-595, DOI: [10.1080/08838151.2011.620668](https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2011.620668)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2011.620668>



Published online: 01 Dec 2011.



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Targeting Mood: Using Comedy or Serious Movie Trailers

Michael B. Devlin, L. Todd Chambers, and Coy Callison

An experiment examined the effect of induced mood (positive or negative) on participants' perception of a serious or comedic movie trailer. Based on previous mood induction studies, participants were induced into positive or negative moods by viewing online content and then exposed to either serious or comedic movie trailers. They rated items such as intent to see the movie and attitude toward the movie preview. The findings suggested that an interaction between mood, trailer type, and gender exists. Men reported higher appeal and purchase intentions for trailers whose genre (serious or comedic) differed from their mood (positive or negative), while women showed a pattern of congruency. Women in negative moods responded better to serious trailers and showed dislike towards comedic trailers. However, when they were in a good mood, they responded positively to the comedic trailer.

The economics of the North American movie industry are changing as audience options for selecting movies and other forms of visual entertainment increase. Ticket sales in the United States and Canada decreased by almost 5% in 2010 and the number of films produced was down by 12% from 2008 (Theatrical Market Statistics, 2010). Getting individuals into movie theaters presents unique problems for media companies with the increasing availability of media options available to an audience caught up in the age of iPods, the Internet, Blu-ray, and DVRs. Further complicating the issue is the fact that movie consumers choose movies just like any other media product—based on a complex psychology including “the mood I’m in” when making that selection. Part of the decision-making process can be initiated by pre-promotion marketing in the form of a movie trailer. Depending on a variety of

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factors, including mood, the trailer can be accepted or rejected. This study examines how individuals in a positive or negative mood react to either a comedic or a serious movie trailer, and the consequences on appeal and purchase intent.

Literature Review

The *Theatrical Market Statistics* report issued by the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA), reported a 20% increase at the box office in 2009 when compared to 2005 (Theatrical Market Statistics, 2010). The average cost to market a film is around \$35 million (U.S. Entertainment Industry Report, 2007). This same report also highlighted a major problem for movie companies—that between 2002 and 2006, there was a 14.3% decrease in the consumption of movies at the box office. A steady decline in movie attendance since the 1940s existed until 2009, largely due to the explosive emergence of 3D films. At the same time, there have been double-digit increases in consumption of cable and satellite television, Internet, home video, in-flight entertainment, and mobile content (U.S. Entertainment Industry Report, 2007). These economic challenges create unique marketing problems for companies attempting to reach consumers living in a multi-media environment. Although new technologies such as 3D increased 25% since 2009 (Theatrical Market Statistics, 2010), in-home entertainment is catching up, posing a new problem for getting audiences into theaters.

Movie Promotion

The most specialized method of movie promotion is the movie preview, or trailer. Movie trailers are a commonly used technique to generate interest in a movie by “directly target[ing] moviegoers at a time when they have already expressed interest in attending at least one movie” (Adams & Lubbers, 2000). Trailers are the main technique used to introduce a movie to the public with the purpose of building expectations about an upcoming film by providing actual scenes (Hughes & Stapleton, 2005). Hughes and Stapleton defined a trailer as “a richly compacted, passive audio-visual montage of the movie shown prior to current release” (2005, p. 42). Previews feature short clips of the movie and are scheduled to run anywhere from weeks to months prior to the movie’s release. They are either produced by the studios themselves or specialized companies, such as The Ant Farm in Los Angeles (Wasko, 2003) and their run time is anywhere from 30 seconds to 4.5 minutes (Eastman, Bradbury, & Nemes, 1985; Wasko, 2003). 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).

Trailers are the most influential form of motion picture promotion. Moviefone, an online ticket sales agency, found that ticket buyers cited trailers as the biggest

influence on their movie choice (Wasko, 2003). Academic studies found that trailers are the biggest influence on movie selection (Faber & O'Guinn, 1984). In addition, Eastman et al. (1985) suggested that seeing a preview increased audiences' expectations of a film when compared to an audience who was not exposed to a preview.

Mood Management

Mood management theory suggests that an individual will select media or entertainment to regulate affective mood states that are more desirable, especially when moods are affected by outside stimuli (Zillmann, 1988b). Mood management theory is "based on the hedonic premise that (a) individuals strive to rid themselves of bad moods or, at least, seek to diminish the intensity of such moods, and (b) individuals strive to perpetuate good moods and seek to maintain the intensity of these moods" (Zillmann, 1988a, p. 328).

Mood management theory operates on the premise that an individual will be able to anticipate how certain stimuli will impact his/her mood. The theory assumes that external stimuli are initially arranged in random fashion. It also assumes that when individuals are exposed to stimuli that enhance gratification during positive moods or reduce noxious levels when in a bad mood, a memory trace will be made, thus increasing likelihood of selecting similar stimulus when in states of aversion to reduce or terminate negative mood states (Zillmann, 1988a, 1988b). The individual does not need to be aware of why the choice was made, but simply, an individual may recall that a certain stimuli enhanced gratification and therefore assumes relief will be provided when they are in states of aversion, thus leading to selection of that certain stimuli.

There is a correlation between the affective state of an individual, either positive or negative, and selective exposure to media according to the selective exposure theory (Zillmann & Bryant, 1985). Several studies investigated mood management and supported the idea that media can affect an individual's mood (Bower, 1981; Clark & Isen, 1982; Clore, Schwarz, & Kirsh, 1983; Forgas & Moylan, 1987; Goldberg & Gorn, 1987; Kuykendall & Keating, 1990; Wegener & Petty, 1994) and that individuals would select certain types of media based on their moods to provide relief from unpleasant moods (Cantor & Zillmann, 1973; Isen & Levin, 1972; Mead-owcraft & Zillmann, 1984; Medoff, 1982; Zillmann, 1988b; Zillmann & Bryant, 1985; Zillmann & Cantor, 1976; Zillmann, Hezel, & Medoff, 1980). These studies all show that prior stimuli can exert effects on the appreciation of selected hedonic experiences and these effects occur immediately after exposure to a stimuli rather than later.

Patterns such as under-stimulation (boredom) and over-stimulation (stress) are associated with negative moods and can be terminated through exposure to objects initiating good moods. Bad moods are also associated with unpleasant hedonic valence that is uninvolving and contains negative material. Good moods are main-

tained or enhanced with entertaining materials (Zillmann, 1988a). Entertainment can be described as anything that provides relief, such as humor, from the mundane everyday life (Vorderer & Knobloch, 2000).

While past experience with certain types of entertainment will alter the levels of pleasure or discomfort associated with the individual, there are entertainment groupings that are consistent with intended specific effects. For example, monotonous and boring stimuli will often rank least arousing while stimuli containing sex will rank as highest arousing among most individuals. In addition to incorporating arousal states into mood management, the theory also examines hedonic valence, which is separate from arousal. For example, a program may rank high in arousal, but its hedonic valence may be negative, thus requiring the individual to select media that is less arousing, but also positive in valence. Entertainment groupings for hedonic valence are also made by the individual, allowing them to make future selections based on the anticipated relief of aversion or enhancement of gratification.

A study conducted by Zillmann and colleagues (1980) induced positive or negative moods then allowed subjects to select from limited television programming. Results showed that individuals placed in negative states selected more game shows and less drama and action based shows than individuals placed in a positive mood. Those in negative moods were more inclined to avoid serious material, and people in good moods were less in need of being cheered up, and therefore, more likely to choose alternatives to comedy. The individuals that were placed in a negative state did not select as much comedy programming as game shows. Medoff (1982) followed the previous study and found that one reason people in negative states may avoid humor is because some comedy can be hostile and therefore adds to the unpleasant state of the affected individual. Medoff also concluded that individuals in a negative state might be too preoccupied with negative feelings to be easily distracted. A final test showed that a person in a positive state will watch more hostile and aggressive comedy than a person in a negative state and all people are motivated to change unpleasant states to more pleasant ones through media selection (Medoff, 1982).

Based on the theory of mood management, individuals in selective mood states are more likely to choose stimuli that will enhance gratification or eliminate bad moods, therefore the representation of a movie trailer should be carefully considered when marketing a film. Understanding that individuals make selections based on moods and that previous experience with certain stimuli may increase or decrease the likelihood of moviegoer attendance when making a selection may help marketers determine where to place movie trailers to maximize appeal and future consumption.

Mood Induction

Several studies concerning selective exposure used mood induction techniques to induce altered levels of pleasure (Forgas & Moylan, 1987; Gardner & Wilhelm,

1987; Goldberg & Gorn, 1987; Gorn, Pham, & Sin, 2001; Howard & Barry, 1994; Kuykendall & Keating, 1990; Martin, 1990; Medoff, 1982; Wegener & Petty, 1994; Zillmann et al., 1980) and arousal (Bryant & Zillmann, 1984; Cantor & Zillmann, 1973; Gorn et al., 2001; Mastro, Eastin, & Tamborini, 2002; Zillmann & Bryant, 1985). It is important to understand there is a difference between affected states of pleasure and arousal and that it is not possible to induce both arousal and pleasure uniformly and simultaneously due to the nature that some people, based on their sensation-seeking habits, will either enjoy or avoid certain levels of stimulation (Goldberg & Gorn, 1987; Slater, 2003; Zuckerman, 1979). Pleasure or arousal can both be affected and induced, but not simultaneously.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

Movie trailers are unique because they are a hedonic experience (Eliashberg & Sawhney, 1994; Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982) and also a form of advertising used to promote the release of a film (Eastman et al., 1985; Hughes & Stapleton, 2005; Litman & Kohl, 1989). Several studies found that enjoyment levels of hedonic experiences (Eliashberg & Sawhney, 1994) and the effectiveness of advertisements (Howard & Barry, 1994; Gardner & Wilhelm, 1987; Gorn et al., 2001; Yang & Oliver, 2004; Yi, 1990) are more likely to influence an individual when the type of ad is congruent with the individual's mood. Individuals tend to evaluate advertisements that match their mood, either positive or negative, more appealing, thus having greater impact on future purchase decisions.

However, other studies (Bryant & Zillmann, 1984; Cantor & Zillmann, 1973; Isen & Levin, 1972; Meadowcraft & Zillmann, 1984; Medoff, 1982; Zillmann, 1988a, 1988b; Zillmann & Bryant, 1985; Zillmann & Cantor, 1976; Zillmann et al., 1980) found individuals will seek out media that alleviate unpleasantness and reinforces pleasant moods.

Previous studies indicate that trailers are a direct form of advertising as well as a hedonic experience. An individual's mood, either positive or negative, influences his/her desire to seek certain types of media, either serious or comedic. Some studies suggested an inverse relationship exists between mood and media selection and other studies show that a congruent relationship exists between mood and tone of advertisements yields better evaluations. Based on previous studies and the unique characteristics of movie trailers, the following research questions are proposed:

- RQ₁: Which combination of reported mood (positive or negative) and type of trailer (comedic or serious) will cause individuals to report the trailer most appealing?
- RQ₂: Which combination of reported mood (positive or negative) and type of trailer (comedic or serious) will cause individuals to report a higher intent to see the movie?

It appears that the pre-existing mood of individuals at the time they are exposed to an ad influences their perceptions of the ad, and that an ad is evaluated more favorably when the affective state of individuals is pleasant rather than unpleasant (Goldberg & Gorn, 1987; Gorn, Goldberg, & Basu, 1993; Gorn et al., 2001; Howard & Barry, 1994; Isen & Simmonds, 1978; Mayer, Gashke, Braverman, & Evans, 1992; Pham, 1996; Scharwz & Clore, 1988; Shimp, 1981). Because movie trailers are a form of advertisement and based on previous studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H₁: Individuals in an induced positive mood will evaluate the trailers more favorably than those in an induced negative mood.

Individuals go to particular movies in a combination of moods to satisfy various arousal and pleasure-seeking tendencies (Eliashberg & Sawhney, 1994), and the moods of individuals influence the enjoyment of hedonic consumption, which influences future emotional states (Forgas & Moylan, 1987) and future purchasing decisions (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). Movie trailers are hedonic experiences; and based on previous works that show the impact that liking has on future purchase of hedonic products, the following hypothesis is stated:

H₂: A direct correlation between the individual's attitude toward the trailer and the reported likelihood of seeing the movie in theaters will occur.

Method

This study used an experimental design to test the hypotheses and answer the research questions that examined the interaction effect among variables. Participants from a large southwestern university were instructed that the purpose of the study was to evaluate Web sites and movie trailers. Participants were randomly divided into four conditions. They were placed at a computer and shown a Web site intended to induce either a positive or a negative mood and were then shown two trailers that were comedic or two trailers that were serious.

Participants were asked to view a Web site about children dying of cancer to induce negative moods, or David Letterman's *Top Ten List* to induce positive moods. The Web sites used were downloaded onto each computer and all external links were sanitized from the Web page being viewed to prohibit participants from viewing uncontrolled material.

Subjects were then asked to view either the serious trailers or the comedic trailers. The serious trailers were for the films *Perfect Stranger* and *The Kingdom*. The comedic trailers were *Mr. Woodcock* and *Knocked Up*. Web pages with the trailers were downloaded from the Internet and viewed on the computer screen using *QuickTime Player*. Participants were isolated from one another for the duration of the experiment by dividers between computers, and by wearing headphones to

prevent others from affecting a person's level of enjoyment as recommended by previous studies (Zillmann, Weaver, Mundorf, & Aust, 1986). Pretests for mood induction and trailer appeal confirmed appropriateness for positive/negative and serious/comedic.

Participants answered three sets of questions using the Mehrabian Russell Mood Scale (1974) throughout the experiment. The Mehrabian Russell Mood Scale features items for both pleasure and arousal, and only the items used to indicate levels of pleasure were used. The first questionnaire was a manipulation check for induced mood following the Web sites. Next, participants were asked to evaluate the Web site, and then finally asked to evaluate the movie trailer and its effectiveness in influencing intent to see the film in theaters (purchase intent).

Participants were exposed to a trailer by clicking on an icon located on the computer that opened a Web page that featured the trailer, which was either serious or comedic. They were asked to fill out a questionnaire using a Likert scale to measure attitude towards the trailer and intent to see the film. Participants were then shown the second trailer, which was the same tone as the previous trailer shown and asked to fill out another questionnaire about the trailer including basic demographic information such as age, gender, movie theater attendance habits, and Internet usage. Participants were then debriefed and dismissed from the study.

Results

The majority of participants were female (68%), and were either juniors or seniors (73%). A little more than one-third of respondents reported seeing 2–3 movies per month. Just over one-half (50.6%) of the participants reported that trailers were the main influence on their decision to see a movie in the theater, while 25.3% stated their friends' comments had the biggest influence, 11.0% indicated television ads were the main influence, 7.1% said critics and 5.2% replied multiple factors influenced their decision to see a movie in the theaters. Finally, 49.4% of participants reported that they preferred watching movies in the theater, 50.0% reported they preferred watching movie at home and 0.6% did not report.

Of the participants, 89 (57.8%) watched mainly comedy, 23 (14.9%) watched mainly drama, 19 (12.3%) watched mainly action, 10 (6.5%) watched romance. Two (1.3%) watched mainly horror, 2 (1.3%) watched documentary, 2 (1.3%) watched fantasy, and 2 (1.3%) mainly watched other types of movies. Four (2.6%) reported they watched multiple genres. One (0.6%) did not report which genre was watched most frequently.

Data Reduction

Ratings on the 11 adjective scales were submitted to factor analysis to provide multiple-item measures of key constructs. Two factors were measured. The

first factor, *trailer appeal*, accounted for 52.4% of the total variance and showed high loading on five positive traits (like = .86; entertaining = .86; exciting = .84; enjoyment = .93; effectiveness = .80) and on three negative traits (unpleasant = -.68; worthlessness = -.81; bad = -.84). After reverse-scoring of the rating of the items with negative loadings, the ratings showed a high degree of inter-item consistency ($F1 \alpha = .93$). The second factor, *trailer seriousness*, accounted for 20.44% of the total variance and showed high loadings on two traits (seriousness = .95; funny = -.92). After a reverse-scoring was done on the item with negative loadings, the ratings showed a high degree of inter-item consistency ($F2 \alpha = .93$).

RQ₁ examined the relationship between individuals' mood (positive or negative) and trailer type (comedic or serious) and their reported appeal towards a trailer. As indicated in Table 1, the reported means of appeal for both trailers in each group were averaged together and used for the trailer type. No significant results occurred between the individual's mood, trailer type, gender and his/her reported appeal. A significant difference was found between the positive and negative mood groups when data were collapsed, yielding $F(1, 152) = 8.11, p < .05$, as shown in Table 1. Further analysis was done using only the trailer that was reported as being the most serious and the most comedic. A *t*-test was performed yielding significant results between the reported levels of seriousness between the trailers, $t(76) = 3.21, p < .01$, and levels of comedy between the trailers, $t(77) = 2.74, p < .01$, showing that the trailer that was reported as being the most serious was *The Kingdom* ($M = 8.75, SD = .12$), and the trailer reported as being the most comedic (or least serious) was *Mr. Woodcock* ($M = 1.61, SD = .13$).

Table 1
Overall Appeal

Mood	Participant	Overall Genre		
		Comedy	Serious	Collapsed
Negative	Female	7.25	7.60	7.44
	Male	7.70	6.45	7.16
	Collapsed	7.37	7.38	7.38
Positive	Female	8.03	8.10	8.07
	Male	7.91	7.83	7.87
	Collapsed	7.99	7.99	7.38
Collapsed	Female	7.69	7.86	7.78
	Male	7.84	7.49	7.66
	Collapsed	7.74	7.74	7.74

Note: Appeal was measured on an 11-point scale with "0" being least appealing and "10" being most appealing.

In Table 2, the trailers that were the most serious and most comedic showed a significant interaction between mood, trailer type, gender, and their reported appeal, $F(1, 151) = 4.50$, $p < .05$. Further analysis of the data showed that males in a positive mood rate serious trailers more appealing ($M = 8.52$, $SD = 1.14$) than when males are in a negative mood ($M = 6.42$, $SD = 2.49$) and higher than women who are in a positive mood ($M = 7.93$, $SD = 1.55$). It also revealed that males find comedic trailers slightly more appealing when they are in a negative mood ($M = 7.88$, $SD = 1.41$) than when they are in a positive mood ($M = 7.81$, $SD = 1.02$). Comedic trailers are more appealing to women in a positive mood ($M = 8.16$, $SD = 1.27$) than men in a positive mood. However, women find comedic trailers much less appealing when they are in a negative mood ($M = 6.87$, $SD = 1.80$). Women in negative moods report serious trailers ($M = 6.95$, $SD = 1.90$) slightly more appealing than comedic trailers, but much less than men in negative moods.

RQ₂ examined the relationship between individuals' mood (positive or negative) and trailer type (comedic or serious) and their intent to see the film based on the trailer, and found no significant results. As reported in Table 3, the reported means of intent to see for both trailers in each group were averaged together and used for the trailer type. Using only the intent to see the film of the trailers that were the

Table 2
Best Movies Appeal

Mood	Participant	Overall Genre		
		Comedy	Serious	Collapsed
Negative	Female	6.87 ¹	6.95 ¹	6.91
	Male	7.88	6.42	7.25
	Collapsed	7.14	6.85	6.99
Positive	Female	8.16 ²	7.93 ²	8.05
	Male	7.81 ^{A2}	8.52 ^{B2}	8.18
	Collapsed	8.04	8.16	8.10
Collapsed	Female	7.61	7.45	7.52
	Male	7.83	7.99	7.91
	Collapsed	7.68	7.62	7.65

Note: Appeal was measured on an 11-point scale with "0" being least appealing and "10" being most appealing. By measure, values in vertical rows not sharing a similar-form superscript are significantly different at $p < .05$.

By measure, values in horizontal rows not sharing an uppercase superscript are significantly different at $p < .05$.

Comparisons not sharing a superscript number vary at $p < .05$ vertically within genre. Comparisons not sharing a superscript letter vary at $p < .05$ horizontally within participant gender.

Table 3
Overall Purchase Intention

Mood	Participant	Overall Genre		
		Comedy	Serious	Collapsed
Negative	Female	6.38	7.57	7.02
	Male	7.26	5.96	6.70
	Collapsed	6.61	7.27	6.95
Positive	Female	7.87	7.93	7.90
	Male	7.45	6.93	7.17
	Collapsed	7.72	7.53	7.62
Collapsed	Female	7.61	7.45	7.52
	Male	7.83	7.99	7.91
	Collapsed	7.68	7.62	7.65

Note: Appeal was measured on an 11-point scale with "0" being least appealing and "10" being most appealing.

most serious and most comedic showed a significant interaction between mood, trailer type, gender, and their reported appeal, $F(1, 151) = 4.10$, $p < .05$.

Further analysis of the data, illustrated in Table 4, showed that males in positive mood have a much higher intent to purchase a serious movie after seeing its trailer ($M = 8.00$, $SD = 2.14$) than when they are in a negative mood ($M = 5.16$, $SD = 4.31$), and more than women who are in a positive mood ($M = 7.44$, $SD = 2.36$).

Analysis also revealed that males show higher purchase intentions of comedic trailers when they are in a negative mood ($M = 7.00$, $SD = 2.62$) than when they are in a positive mood ($M = 6.88$, $SD = 1.54$). Comedic trailers have a higher intent to purchase on women in a positive mood ($M = 7.83$, $SD = 1.95$) than men in a positive mood. However, women are much less likely to see a comedic film if they are in a negative mood ($M = 5.13$, $SD = 3.34$). Women in negative moods show higher intent to purchase a serious film ($M = 5.80$, $SD = 3.23$) than men in negative moods and more than comedic films based on the trailer.

Hypotheses Testing

H_1 examined the relationship mood had on appeal of trailers and predicted that individuals in positive moods would find trailers more appealing than individuals in negative moods. Analysis of variance was conducted to examine the relationship between moods and H_1 was supported, $F(1, 152) = 8.11$, $p < .01$. Individuals in positive moods evaluated comedic trailers ($M = 7.99$, $SD = 1.23$) significantly more appealing than individuals in negative moods ($M = 7.34$, $SD = 1.50$). Individuals

Table 4
Best Movie Purchase Intention

Mood	Participant	Overall Genre		
		Comedy	Serious	Collapsed
Negative	Female	5.14 ¹	5.81 ¹	5.50
	Male	7.00 ^A	5.17 ^{B1}	6.21
	Collapsed	5.63	5.68	5.66
Positive	Female	7.82 ²	7.44	7.64
	Male	6.88 ^A	8.00 ^{B2}	7.47
	Collapsed	7.72	7.53	7.58
Collapsed	Female	6.67	6.64	6.65
	Male	6.91	7.29	7.10
	Collapsed	6.84	6.75	6.80

Note: Appeal was measured on an 11-point scale with "0" being least appealing and "10" being most appealing. By measure, values in vertical rows not sharing a similar-form superscript are significantly different at $p < .05$.

By measure, values in horizontal rows not sharing an uppercase superscript are significantly different at $p < .05$.

in positive moods also evaluated serious trailers ($M = 8.00$, $SD = 1.31$) more appealing than when they reported negative moods ($M = 7.38$, $SD = 1.52$) as reported in Table 5. Females reported a higher level of appeal towards trailers when they reported being in a positive mood ($M = 8.07$, $SD = 1.28$) when compared to males in positive moods ($M = 7.87$, $SD = 1.10$).

H₂ predicted that a correlation would exist between individual's reported appeal toward a trailer and the likelihood of seeing the film in theaters. As hypothesized,

Table 5
Genre and Appeal

Type of Trailer	Positive			Negative		
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Serious	45	8.00 ^A	1.31	32	7.38 ^B	1.55
Comedic	45	7.99 ^A	1.13	31	7.34 ^B	1.50
Collapsed	90	7.99	1.22	63	7.38	1.52

Note: Appeal was measured on an 11-point scale with 0 being least appealing and 10 being most appealing.

By measure, values in horizontal rows not sharing an uppercase superscript are significantly different at $p < .05$.

there was a significant correlation between individuals' appeal and intent to purchase a ticket, $r(153) = .788$, $p < .01$. Individuals who found the trailers appealing reported they were significantly more likely to see the film in theaters.

Discussion

The focus of this study was to examine how motion picture trailers were evaluated after consumption of online content which induced positive or negative moods. This study is based on mood management and selective exposure theories. Some studies (Bryant & Zillmann, 1984; Cantor & Zillmann, 1973; Isen & Levin, 1972; Meadowcraft & Zillmann, 1984; Medoff, 1982; Zillmann, 1988a, 1988b; Zillmann & Bryant, 1985; Zillmann & Cantor, 1976; Zillmann et al., 1980) show that people will select media that is not congruent with their mood to alleviate unpleasantness, while other studies (Goldberg & Gorn, 1987; Gorn et al., 1993, 2001; Howard & Barry, 1994; Isen & Simmonds, 1978; Mayer et al., 1992; Pham, 1996; Scharwz & Clore, 1988; Shimp, 1981) show that an advertisement is most effective when its tone is congruent with an individual's mood.

Trailers were used because they are a hedonic experience as well as an advertisement. The results of this experiment support that an interaction between mood, trailer type, and gender exists. Furthermore, the results suggested that the college students in this study reported movie trailers as their main source of influence when making a purchase decision about a movie. This finding supports previous research in the area of movie promotion and marketing (Wasko, 2003). What makes the findings in this study different than previous studies of movie trailers is that online trailers were examined. Future studies in the area should examine the use of microblogs, social networks, and other forms of social media in movie promotion strategy.

In conclusion, the current study showed an interaction effect occurred between mood, trailer type, and gender, but only when the most serious and the most comedic movies were included in the analysis. This study supports the previous literature cited in this article that stated media selection is used to alleviate discomfort, and media will be selected that is congruent with an individual's mood. Each instance occurred when using gender as a variable in the study. While past studies generalized audiences by grouping men and women together in analysis, this study examined how mood affected gender's appeal and purchase intention. Men reported higher purchase intentions and higher levels of appeal for trailers whose genre (serious or comedic) differed from their mood (positive or negative), while women showed a pattern of congruency. Women in negative moods responded better to serious trailers and showed dislike towards comedic trailers. However, when they were in a good mood, they responded positively to the comedic trailer. Overall, mood affected an individual's evaluation and purchase intention of trailers. When looking at the whole audience rather than a specific gender, participants in negative moods were less likely to find a trailer appealing than if they were in a

positive mood. Although the mean differences are statistically significant, some of the differences between the means are rather small in comparison especially when taking into account that data were collected on 11-point scales. Future research in the area may benefit from including a broader set of measures that may allow for the identification of the unique constructs driving the differences in the scales used in the current study.

This study reinforced the fact trailers remain the main source of influencing initial purchase decision among college students. This supports previous research despite technological advances in media and the development of different trends among users since those studies were published. What makes the findings in this study different from previous research was the use of on-line trailers.

This study was limited because it only examined how the dimension of pleasure would affect evaluations of on-line trailers. Future research should be conducted to extend this area of research by examining how the dimension of arousal can effect the evaluation on online movie trailers. The Internet's unique environment provides opportunities of passive environment and active environments that can effect arousal. Future studies could also examine if online trailers are more effective than trailers featured on television or movie screens and also across different age groups.

As is, this area of research is ripe for continued investigation. There are sufficient amounts of literature that examine mood management, but as generations and technologies change, this theory should be revisited. This study examined the pleasure dimension of positive and negative moods. Moods are typically broad and less explanatory, whereas emotions are much more specific, such as anger, sadness, and boredom. Future studies should isolate emotions when replicating this study. The stimulus used to induce negative moods focused on prompting a feeling of sadness. Future studies should modify the stimulus to induce emotions such as anger or boredom to fully understand mood manipulation and persuasion.

The Internet provides a unique atmosphere because in a real-life setting, users can seek and select trailers, or they can be involuntarily exposed to them through pop-ups or banner ads. Previous selective exposure theory examined how audiences select media after being placed into certain moods. In light of the trends of media consumers seeking out alternative entertainment options, using strategic placement of targeted mood elements in trailers might help influence movie consumers. Although the use of mood manipulation techniques will not guarantee box-office success, understanding how promoting gender differences based on mood manipulation could help increase segmented audience interest and provide a more efficient and effective promotional tool.

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