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A Quantitative Study on The Impact of Trailer Reaction Videos on Audience Engagement

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Abstract- Film trailers are an important way to promote movies. Today, many viewers also watch trailer reaction videos on YouTube and other platforms. This study examines how these videos relate to audience engagement and viewers' intention to watch movies. It follows Uses and Gratifications Theory to understand why viewers choose reaction videos for entertainment, information and social connection. A quantitative survey was conducted with 41 YouTube users aged 18 years and above who watch trailer reaction videos. The questionnaire asked about viewing habits, engagement, opinions of reactors and intention to watch movies. The reported answers show that most respondents enjoy reaction videos and say these videos influence their interest in movies. Since the study uses convenience sampling and self-reported answers, the findings describe the selected respondents and cannot prove that reaction videos directly cause people to watch a movie.

Keywords: Trailer reaction videos, audience engagement, intention to watch, YouTube, Uses and Gratifications Theory

I. Introduction

Films are promoted in many ways, and trailers remain one of the most important tools. A trailer is a short video that shows parts of a film, including its story, characters, music and mood. Its main purpose is to make people curious and help them decide whether they want to watch the film. Research shows that people watch trailers for information, emotional interest, cultural reasons and to understand other people's views (Johnston et al., 2016).

Today, many trailers are first released online. Viewers can watch them again, share them and read other people's opinions within minutes. This has made trailers more than advertisements; they have also become topics for discussion. Many viewers watch another person seeing a trailer for the first time. This is called a trailer reaction video. The reactor records their face and voice while watching the trailer. YouTube is one of the main platforms for these videos, and creators also share them on Facebook and Twitch. Reaction videos are a form of user-made online content (Carrel, 2022; Zhong et al., 2024).

Reaction videos are popular because they show real feelings such as surprise, excitement, fear and humor. A viewer who sees someone enjoy a trailer may feel the same emotion and feel part of a group. Earlier studies show that reaction videos can change opinions and increase the wish to buy or watch what is promoted (Edmondson et al., 2025), and that they help build communities among viewers (Okyere et al., 2026).

Audience engagement means how viewers take part in a video, such as watching, liking, commenting on or sharing it. Intention to watch means how strongly a person plans or wants to see a film. Studies on trailers show that emotions and story details can be linked with interest in a film (DeBoer, 2024; Grigore, 2025). Trailer reaction videos combine the trailer with another viewer's feelings and opinions, so they may be related to a person's decision to watch the film. Viewers may also consider whether the reactor seems honest and natural.

Although reaction videos are popular, many earlier studies focus on trailers themselves, other types of reaction videos, or students' thinking. Fewer studies examine how movie trailer reaction videos are related to audience engagement and intention to watch a film. It is therefore useful to study whether factors such as emotion, the reactor's honesty and entertainment value are linked with viewers' responses. This topic may help filmmakers

and marketers understand how audiences respond to online film promotion. The present study focuses on YouTube users aged 18 years and above who watch trailer reaction videos.

This study examines the relationship between trailer reaction videos, audience engagement, audience perception and intention to watch movies. The following sections present the literature review, theoretical framework, research objectives, methodology, findings, conclusion and limitations.

1. Review Of Literature

Seven studies on reaction videos, trailers, YouTube creators and audience engagement, published between 2021 and 2026, were reviewed. They are grouped into three themes. The table below summarizes the studies.

1.Reaction videos and online communities

Okyere et al. (2026) held 16 semi-structured interviews with regular viewers of reaction videos on YouTube, Facebook and Twitch. They asked how viewers find these videos, what values drive them and how they take part. The content ranged from movie trailers to music releases. The study shows that reaction videos create a social, community-based way of watching online. Zhong et al. (2024) surveyed 400 randomly selected university students in Tamil nadu(372 valid replies) Uses and Gratifications Theory, it analyzed the data with excel. Most students watched to gain knowledge (74.9 per cent), followed by entertainment and relaxation (34.3 per cent) and understanding pop culture (28.4 per cent). Students who watched more often were more influenced in their thinking, and their main worries were similar topics, copyright issues and lack of originality. Carrëlo (2022) studied the growth of reaction videos on YouTube in a case study, which later researchers use to show that reaction videos are a popular form of user-generated content with a worldwide audience (Zhong et al., 2024).

Edmondson et al. (2025) studied reaction videos in video game marketing. They surveyed 623 university students before and after watching a reaction video of a game trailer. After watching, purchase intention increased clearly, and the reactor's emotions, personality and honesty improved how the audience felt about the trailer. Older respondents were more negative and less responsive, while respondents more involved in video games were more likely to engage. This is the closest study to the present one, but it deals with video games and not with movies. Acikgoz and Burnaz (2021) collected data from 411 university students who often use YouTube and tested a model based on the advertising value model with structural equation modelling. Entertainment and useful information were the key factors that made sponsored content valuable, and they also shaped the attitude towards YouTube influencers.

2. Trailers, emotion and intention to watch

Grigore (2025) ran an experiment with the trailer of Past Lives (2023) to test how different soundtracks change the feeling of music fit, identification with the character, being drawn into the story and emotional response. Being drawn into the story and emotional response helped to predict the intention to watch or recommend the film, and nostalgia partly explained the link between emotion and intention. DeBoer (2024) planned an experiment in which viewers are assigned at random to one of three versions of the same trailer, which focus on story, on character or on neither, and then fill in a survey on engagement, enjoyment and intention to watch. The study expects that trailers need to reveal some story to attract viewers. Both studies deal with the trailer itself, while the present study looks at the reaction video made about the trailer.

In summary, the reviewed studies show three common points. First, emotions such as excitement and surprise are linked with engagement and with the wish to watch or buy. Second, the honesty and personality of the creator shape how the audience feels. Third, higher engagement is linked with stronger intention. These points guide the objectives and questions of this study.

Author(s)	Year	Method	Key finding
Carrel	2022	Case study of YouTube reaction videos	Reaction videos are a popular form of user-generated content worldwide
Zhong et al.	2024	Survey of students (372 valid replies), SPSS	Watched for knowledge, entertainment and pop culture; worries about copyright
Edmondson et al.	2025	Before and after survey of 623 students on game-trailer reaction videos	Purchase intention rose after the reaction video
Okyere et al.	2026	16 semi-structured interviews with viewers	Reaction videos create social, community-based viewing
Grigore	2025	Experiment with the trailer of Past Lives	Story involvement and emotion help predict intention to watch
DeBoer	2024	Planned experiment with three trailer versions	Expects trailers to need some story to attract viewers
Acikgoz & Burnaz	2021	Survey of 411 YouTube-using students, SEM	Entertainment and information shape attitude to influencers

2. *Theoretical Framework*

This study uses Uses and Gratifications Theory, developed by Blumler and Katz (1974). The theory explains that people choose media to meet their needs, such as entertainment, information and social connection. In this study, it helps explain why viewers choose trailer reaction videos and how these needs may relate to audience engagement and intention to watch movies.

The diagram below shows how Uses and Gratifications Theory guides this study.

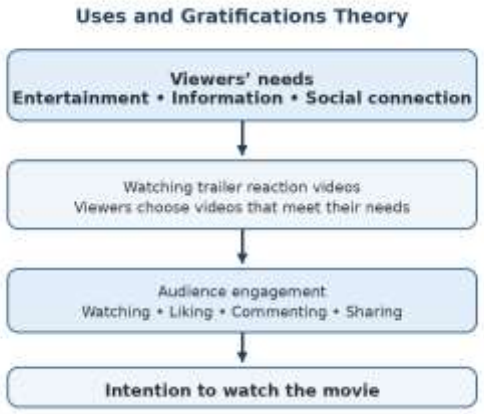


Figure 1. Uses and Gratifications Theory framework for the study

Explanation: The framework shows how viewers' needs for entertainment, information and social connection may encourage them to watch trailer reaction videos, engage with the content and develop an intention to watch the movie.

Significance of the Study

The study may help filmmakers and movie marketers understand how viewers respond to trailer reaction videos and plan online promotion. It may also help YouTube creators understand what viewers value in these videos.

The aim of the study is to examine how trailer reaction videos relate to audience engagement and viewers' intention to watch movies.

A. Objectives

1. RO1: To examine the relationship between trailer reaction videos and audience engagement.

2. RO2: To examine viewers' intention to watch movies after watching trailer reaction videos.

3. RO3: To identify factors related to audience perception of trailer reaction videos and movie-watching decisions.

B. Research Questions

1. RQ1: How do viewers engage with trailer reaction videos?

2. RQ2: What is the relationship between watching trailer reaction videos and viewers' intention to watch movies?

3. RQ3: Which factors are related to audience perception of trailer reaction videos and movie-watching decisions?

Methodology

C. Research Design

The study uses a descriptive research design with a quantitative approach. A structured questionnaire was used to collect numerical data on audience engagement, perception and intention to watch movies.

Respondents and sampling

The respondents were YouTube users aged 18 years and above who watch trailer reaction videos. Convenience sampling was used, so the findings are limited to the people who took part in the survey.

Analytical parameters: The study measures audience engagement, audience perception, intention to watch a movie, and basic details about the respondents.

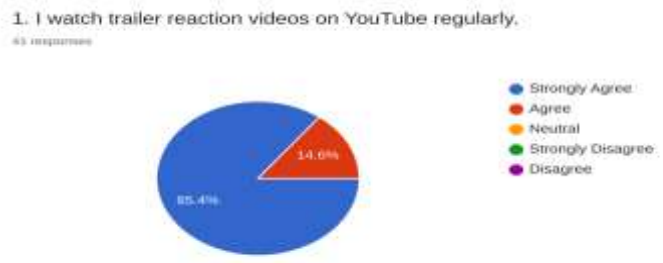


Figure 2. Respondents' regular viewing of trailer reaction videos

The findings indicate that 85.4% (n = 35) of respondents strongly agreed that they watch trailer reaction videos on YouTube regularly, while 14.6% (n = 6) agreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 100.0% (n = 41) of responses. These findings suggest that regular viewing of trailer reaction videos on YouTube is an established habit among the respondents, with a clear majority responding at the strongest level of agreement.

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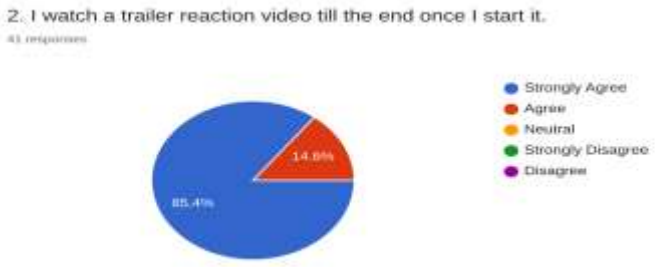


Figure 3. Respondents watching a reaction video until the end

The findings indicate that 85.4% (n = 35) of respondents strongly agreed that they watch a trailer reaction video till the end once they start it, while 14.6% (n = 6) agreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 100.0% (n = 41) of responses. These findings suggest that respondents who start a reaction video are inclined to watch it fully rather than skip through it.

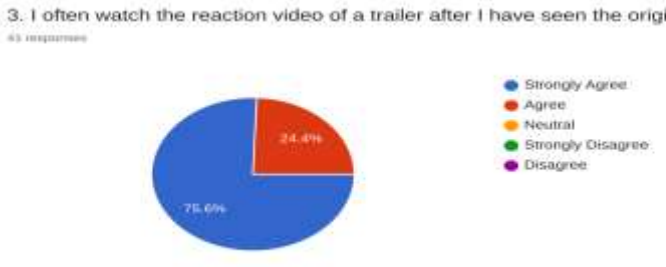


Figure 4. Watching a reaction video after viewing the original trailer

The findings indicate that 75.6% (n = 31) of respondents strongly agreed that they often watch the reaction video of a trailer after seeing the original trailer, while 24.4% (n = 10) agreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 100.0% (n = 41) of responses. These findings suggest that most respondents first watch the original trailer and then turn to a reaction video to compare their own impression with that of another viewer.

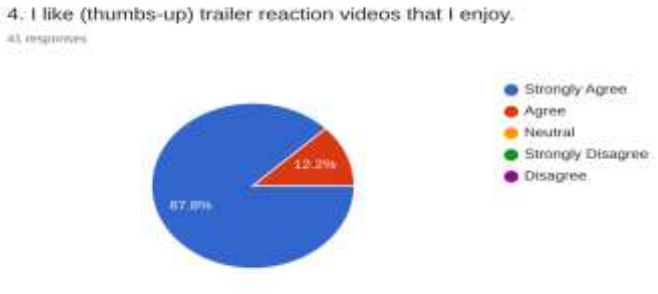


Figure 5. Liking trailer reaction videos

The findings indicate that 87.8% (n = 36) of respondents strongly agreed that they like (thumbs-up) trailer reaction videos that they enjoy, while 12.2% (n = 5) agreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 100.0% (n = 41) of responses. These findings suggest that respondents readily show their support for reaction videos they enjoy by giving.

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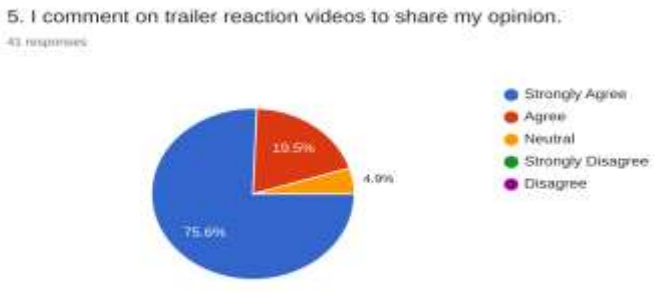


Figure 6. Commenting to share opinions

The findings indicate that 75.6% (n = 31) of respondents strongly agreed that they comment on trailer reaction videos to share their opinion, while 19.5% (n = 8) agreed and 4.9% (n = 2) remained neutral. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 95.1% (n = 39) of responses. These findings suggest that a large majority of respondents take an active part in the comment section, although a small group remained neutral.

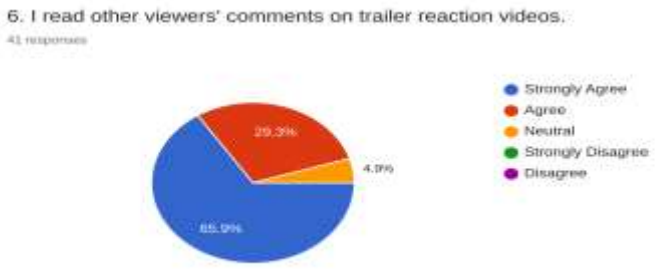


Figure 7. Reading other viewers' comments

The findings indicate that 65.9% (n = 27) of respondents strongly agreed that they read other viewers' comments on trailer reaction videos, while 29.3% (n = 12) agreed and 4.9% (n = 2) remained neutral. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 95.1% (n = 39) of responses. These findings suggest that respondents are interested in what other viewers say about the trailer, although the intensity of agreement was lower than for the other engagement items.

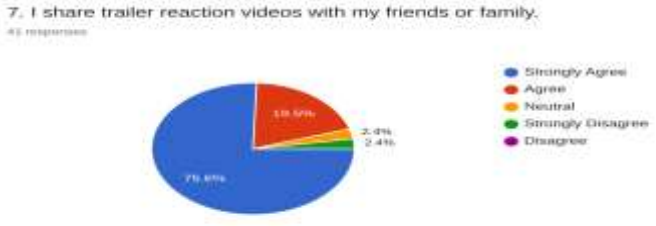


Figure 8. Sharing reaction videos with friends or family

The findings indicate that 75.6% (n = 31) of respondents strongly agreed that they share trailer reaction videos with their friends or family, while 19.5% (n = 8) agreed, 2.4% (n = 1) remained neutral and 2.4% (n = 1) strongly disagreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 95.1% (n = 39) of responses. These findings suggest that reaction videos spread through personal networks of friends and family, although a small number of respondents were neutral or strongly disagreed.

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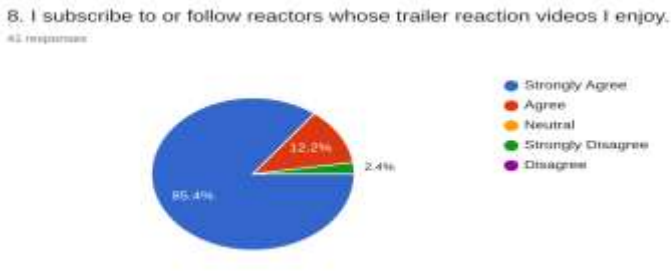


Figure 9. Following or subscribing to favourite reactors

The findings indicate that 85.4% (n = 35) of respondents strongly agreed that they subscribe to or follow reactors whose trailer reaction videos they enjoy, while 12.2% (n = 5) agreed and 2.4% (n = 1) strongly disagreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 97.6% (n = 40) of responses. These findings suggest that respondents tend to follow the reactors they enjoy and so become regular viewers of their channels.

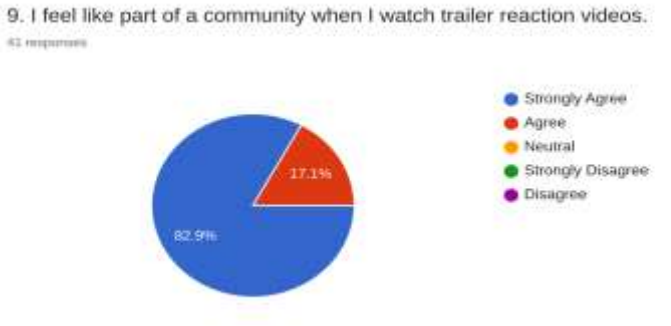


Figure 10. Feeling part of a community through reaction videos

The findings indicate that 82.9% (n = 34) of respondents strongly agreed that they feel like part of a community when they watch trailer reaction videos, while 17.1% (n = 7) agreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 100.0% (n = 41) of responses. These findings suggest that watching reaction videos gives respondents a sense of belonging with other viewers.

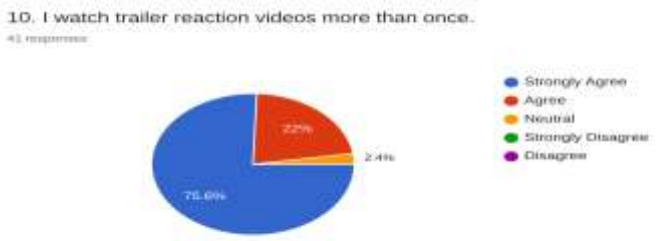


Figure 11. Watching trailer reaction videos more than once

The findings indicate that 75.6% (n = 31) of respondents strongly agreed that they watch trailer reaction videos more than once, while 22.0% (n = 9) agreed and 2.4% (n = 1) remained neutral. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 97.6% (n = 40) of responses. These findings suggest that respondents find the videos enjoyable enough to watch the same reaction video repeatedly.

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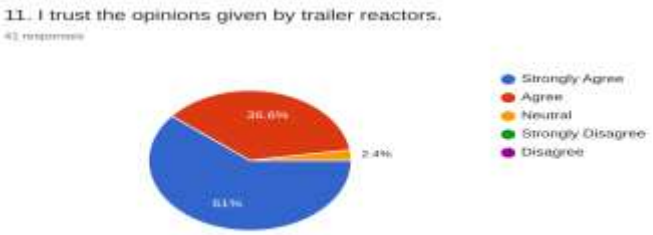


Figure 12. Trust in the opinions of trailer reactors

The findings indicate that 61.0% (n = 25) of respondents strongly agreed that they trust the opinions given by trailer reactors, while 36.6% (n = 15) agreed and 2.4% (n = 1) remained neutral. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 97.6% (n = 40) of responses. These findings suggest that respondents generally trust the opinions of reactors, although the proportion of strong agreement was the lowest among the 20 questions, with more respondents choosing "Agree".

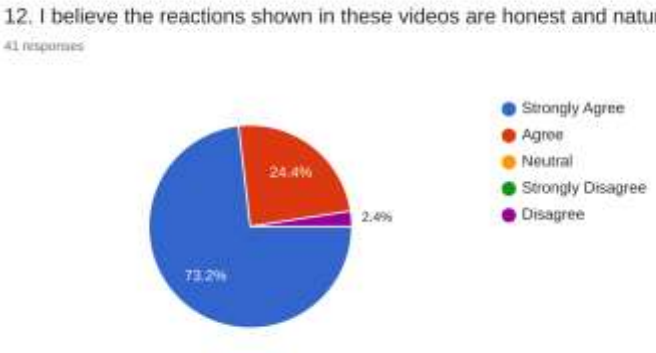


Figure 13. Perceptions of honest and natural reactions

The findings indicate that 73.2% (n = 20) of respondents strongly agreed that they believe the reactions shown in these videos are honest and natural, while 24.4% (n = 10) agreed and 2.4% (n = 1) disagreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 97.6% (n = 40) of responses. These findings suggest that most respondents regard the reactors' emotions as genuine, with only one respondent disagreeing.

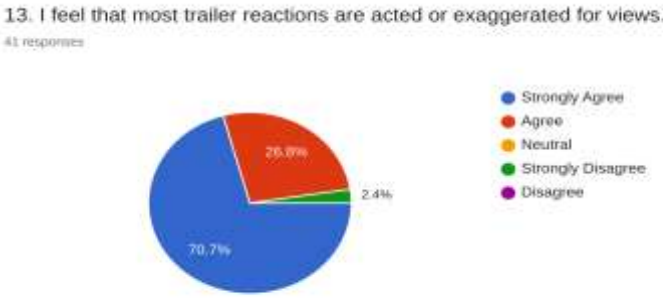


Figure 14. Perceptions that reactions are acted or exaggerated

The findings indicate that 70.7% (n = 29) of respondents strongly agreed that most trailer reactions are acted or exaggerated for views, while 26.8% (n = 11) agreed and 2.4% (n = 1)

strongly disagreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 97.6% (n = 40) of responses. These findings suggest that respondents are aware that many reactions may be exaggerated to gain views, even though they also report regular viewing of such videos.

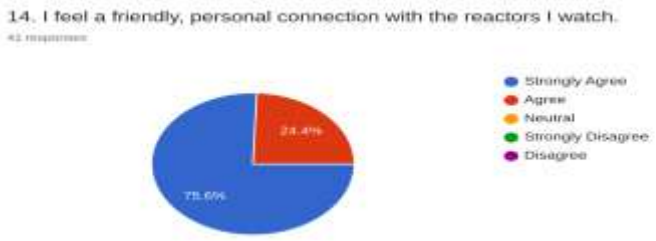


Figure 15. Feeling a personal connection with reactors

The findings indicate that 75.6% (n = 31) of respondents strongly agreed that they feel a friendly, personal connection with the reactors they watch, while 24.4% (n = 10) agreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 100.0% (n = 41) of responses. These findings suggest that respondents form a one-sided friendly bond with reactors, in line with para-social interaction.

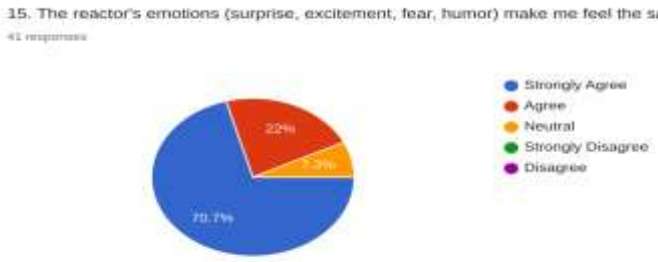


Figure 16. Sharing the emotions shown by reactors

The findings indicate that 70.7% (n = 29) of respondents strongly agreed that the reactor's emotions (surprise, excitement, fear, humor) make them feel the same emotions, while 22.0% (n = 9) agreed and 7.3% (n = 3) remained neutral. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 92.7% (n = 38) of responses. These findings suggest that the emotions of reactors are easily passed on to viewers, who tend to feel the same emotions while watching.

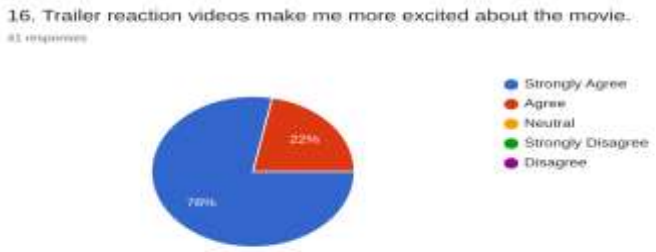


Figure 17. Feeling more excited about a movie after watching a reaction

The findings indicate that 78.0% (n = 32) of respondents strongly agreed that trailer reaction videos make them more excited about the movie, while 22.0% (n = 9) agreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 100.0% (n = 41) of

responses. These findings suggest that reaction videos raise respondents' excitement about the movie, with no neutral or negative responses recorded.

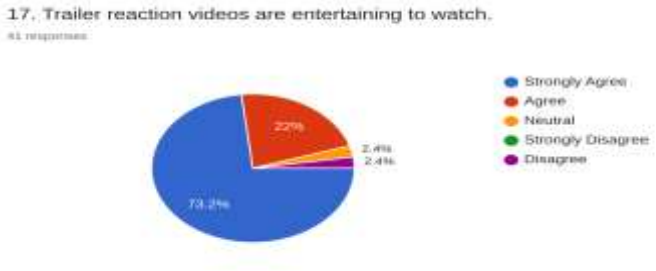


Figure 18. Entertainment value of trailer reaction videos

The findings indicate that 73.2% (n = 20) of respondents strongly agreed that trailer reaction videos are entertaining to watch, while 22.0% (n = 9) agreed, 2.4% (n = 1) remained neutral and 2.4% (n = 1) disagreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 95.1% (n = 39) of responses. These findings suggest that respondents mostly watch trailer reaction videos as entertainment.

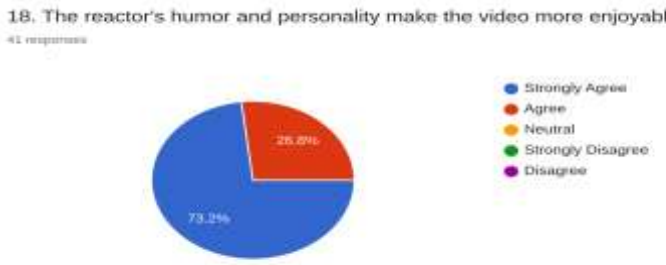


Figure 19. Influence of a reactor's humour and personality

The findings indicate that 73.2% (n = 20) of respondents strongly agreed that the reactor's humor and personality make the video more enjoyable, while 26.8% (n = 11) agreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 100.0% (n = 41) of responses. These findings suggest that the style and sense of humor of the reactor add to the enjoyment of the video.

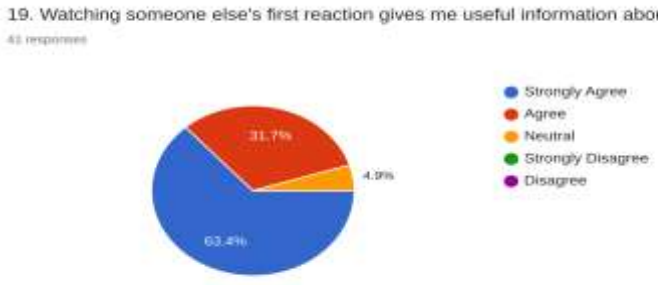


Figure 20. Information gained from another person's first reaction

The findings indicate that 63.4% (n = 26) of respondents strongly agreed that watching someone else's first reaction gives them useful information about the trailer, while 31.7% (n = 13) agreed and 4.9% (n = 2) remained neutral. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 95.1% (n = 39) of responses. These findings suggest

that respondents use another viewer's first reaction to judge the trailer, although a small group remained neutral.

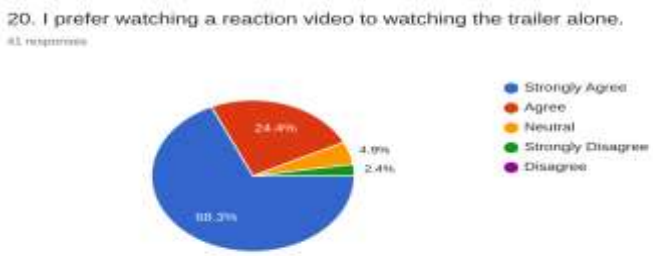


Figure 21. Preference for reaction videos over watching a trailer alone

The findings indicate that 68.3% (n = 28) of respondents strongly agreed that they prefer watching a reaction video to watching the trailer alone, while 24.4% (n = 10) agreed, 4.9% (n = 2) remained neutral and 2.4% (n = 1) strongly disagreed. Overall, positive responses ("Agree" and "Strongly Agree") accounted for 92.7% (n = 38) of responses. These findings suggest that most respondents prefer to watch a trailer together with a reactor rather than alone

Data collection and analysis

Primary data were collected through a structured online questionnaire using Google Forms. Secondary information was drawn from books, journals, research papers, websites and industry reports. The responses were summarised using percentages. Correlation may be used only if the respondent-level data are available and the analysis is carried out. YouTube Analytics is not treated as a source of survey results in this paper.

II. Conclusion

This study examined how trailer reaction videos relate to audience engagement and intention to watch movies. The responses from 41 participants show that most respondents reported watching, enjoying and sharing reaction videos, and many said these videos were related to their interest in movies. These results describe the selected respondents and do not prove that reaction videos directly cause people to watch a film. Further research with a larger and more varied sample can explore these relationships in more detail.

A. Limitations And Suggestions

Because convenience sampling was used, the results cannot be applied to all audiences. The study focuses on YouTube users aged 18 years and above who watch trailer reaction videos, and the answers are self-reported. Future studies can include a larger and more varied sample, study other platforms such as Youtube and Facebook and compare viewers before and after they watch a reaction video.

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