

**Addis Ababa University  
School of Graduate Studies**

**Analysis of the Local Amharic Movie-viewing Audiences and the  
Media**

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## **Abstract**

This study attempted to investigate what helps people to decide the movie they want to see in theatres and to what extent does that reason influence them. To answer the question common reasons that make people go the cinema to watch a certain movie like: film critiques, directors, trailers, general advertising, word of mouth, subject matter/genre, and movie stars are studied. A total of 200 surveys were collected from patrons (from teenagers to older adults 18 and above) standing in line to enter movie theaters in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. Data analysis indicated that each criterion was related to movie-viewing choice. The results revealed that the reasons that prompted respondents to watch a particular movie were basically what people talked about a particular movie (word of mouth) and general advertising of a movie when they went to the theater.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents what the study is all about. It gives background insight to the history of the Ethiopian film industry, why it is important to know what prompts people to watch a particular movie and how the problem is significant. The research questions the study has set out to answer and research objectives to be achieved are also included in this chapter.

### **1.1 Background**

The advent of film/cinema to Ethiopia goes back to 1898 during the reign of Emperor Menelik. By this time, the art was still on a cradle stage even in Europe or in the USA. It was almost soon after its invention that film become so magical to Ethiopians. The first cinema hall, Cinema Terrace, was built in the city of Addis Ababa by a Frenchman called Mr. Terrace. Nevertheless, the public then named the place ‘House of Satan’, for cinema/film was perceived as some sort of sorcery or magic.

After Emperor Menelik’s curiosity to the civilization of the other world nothing much happened with regards to film exhibition, perhaps until the invasion of the country by Italians during the Second World War. With the Italians’ occupation for about five years, Ethiopians were unguardedly exposed to Italian films of the earlier time of neocolonialism. The films were naturally meant for propaganda purpose.

Historical documents indicate that film production has almost no history in Ethiopia; perhaps, it is at its cradle stage. Scanty productions of films were made by producers from France, Britain, USA, and Canada between late 1950s and early 1960s. These productions were tailored as teaching materials for Haile Sellassie I University. Moreover, two films with the standard of motion picture [35mm black & white film] were made in late 1960s – Gumma[Agreement] and Hirut Abatua Manew. [Who is Hirut's Father]. Gumma was produced by Mitchel Papatakis. Hirut Abatua Manew was the first feature film produced in 1966 by the Ethiopian Ilala Ibsa.

Other than these, the film exhibition side began to grow as scores of movie theaters were opened in Addis Ababa, Dire Dawa, Gondar, and Jimma. As to historical sources, during the time of Emperor Haile Sellasie I were opened Ambassador Cinema, National Theater, and City Hall of Addis Ababa for film and theater shows.

With the change of the political atmosphere in 1991, the EPRDF-led government came up with free market economy and freedom of expression. It then dissolved the EFC by cabinet decision and a new guideline was implemented for film exhibition. The new guideline ordered regional states to administer their own cinema halls and assume full control of film exhibition.

Following the liberalization of the market, access and utilization of video technology and foreign films has been made possible. This gave way to the production of VHS films for home viewing purposes before 10 years. During this time, films were not viewed in cinema halls. Now local films are viewed in Ambassador, Alem, Edna Mall, Ampher, Sebastopol, and Agona cinema halls and Hager Fikir, National, and City Hall movie theaters.



.The Arts Co-ordination Division at the Information and Culture Bureau of City Administration of Addis Ababa is the only government body that can provide licenses for film makers. Mesfin Gebre Tsadik, Representative to the Arts Co-ordination Division Leader said, “Film makers should have two licenses – One for making films and the other for exhibiting them.” Until now, 98 film productions and 104 video films are accredited by the Arts Co-ordination Division.

The Arts Co-ordination Division uses three guidelines to evaluate and acknowledge films for cinema exhibition. Shiferaw Mengesha, Theater and Film Senior Expert of the Division explained, “Films should be free from pornography, ethnic and religious bias to pass our evaluation.” Amazingly, artistic qualities of films have never been assessed by the Division. This way are evaluated 8 films in 2001, 35 in 2000, 25 in 1999, 11 in 1998, 13 in 1997, 11 in 1996, and 1 in 1995.

Film makers are forced to commit mistakes of their predecessors since they have no job networks among them. Consequently, the same technical problems are being committed by newly produced films. Of course, the Ethiopian Film Makers Association (EFMA) has lived for fifteen years without meaningful contributions to the film industry. However Film production in Ethiopia has boomed within five or six years time and the film audience has amazingly started to love local films

Thirty years ago there were almost 40 cinema halls in Ethiopia. Today we have 7 working cinema halls and that only in Addis Ababa. Out these 7 halls, City Hall, Hagher Fikir, National

Theatre, Cinema Ras most of the time show dramas leaving for the public to chose between Ambassador, Ethiopia and Empire and matinee shows at National and Ras theatres.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

It's is true and universally acknowledged that over the years movies have come to take a significant amount of our time and our everyday life. Hollywood English language movies are popular however recently the local Amharic movie industry has come to be a big and lucrative business in Ethiopia mainly because many Ethiopians finally got a chance to watch good standard movies in Amharic, a language they can understand. A good movie spreads itself like a virus and people are standing in long lines of theatres to watch a newly screened movie. Most Amharic movie goers like Hollywood audiences have a hit Amharic movie lodged in their heads without really knowing why. Vale sees movies as having the ability “to keep us up to date on our changing times” (Vale 1982). But Vale also points out that analysis of movie going behavior is still “opaque” or unclear (Vale 1982).

The primary investigator strongly believes that it is essential to put oneself in the place of or state of mind of the moviegoer, to really understand the various factors that affect a moviegoers movie selection, why a particular moviegoer decides a certain movie while a dozen others are available to choose from ways and means a moviegoer selects a particular movie. Earlier researches that investigated the effect of income levels and entertainment activities on people in general were conducted. However this study is much more specific. It has set out to look at how is a moviegoer prompted to go to theatres or cinema to watch certain movie, it could be what the moviegoer heard from friends and family about the movie, what prominent movie reviewers or

critiques wrote about a movie, the moviegoer's access or exposure to various media including newspaper, radio, television, movie trailers, who directed the movie and so forth.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

The present study intends to provide answers to these major research questions:

#### **RQ1: What impact does what movie critiques have on a moviegoers' movie selection?**

This question is framed to measure the extent to which what movie critiques or movie reviewers wrote or said about a particular movie on newspapers, magazines and radio influence a respondents decision to see a movie.

#### **RQ2: What impact does a movie preview have on a moviegoers' movie selection?**

This question is framed to indicate the extent to which those small previews of soon to released movies seen in the theater or at home on TV affect a respondent's decision to go see a movie.

#### **RQ3: What impact does watching general advertising have on a moviegoers' movie selection?**

This question is framed to measure the extent to which ads (found in newspapers, in magazines, in posters, on the radio) influence a respondents choice of movies.

#### **RQ4: What impact do movie stars have on a moviegoers' movie selection?**

This question is posed to measure the extent to which the presence of or popularity of a certain actor or actress in a movie influences a respondents choice of movies.

**RQ5: What impact does the genre of a movie have on a moviegoers' movie selection?**

This question is formulated to measure the extent to which the genre or subject matter (elements of life the movie explores like romance, comedy, thriller...) influences a respondent's selection of movies

**RQ6: What impact does what people talk about a movie(word of mouth) have on a moviegoers' movie selection?**

This question is asked to measure what extent to which word-of-mouth, or the ideas and speech of others who saw the movie and talk about it, influences a respondent's choice of movies.

**RQ7: What impact does a movie director have on a moviegoers' movie selection?**

This question intends to ask how much the presence of a director (the success of his previous works or otherwise) influences respondents in wanting to see a movie in the theater.

## **1.4 General objective**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the factors that prompt the local Amharic moviegoer to go to theatres or cinema to watch a certain movie and to help clarify the movie-going behavior of the Amharic movie viewing public. In the current study, the researcher wishes to see what variables affect viewing choice so as to gauge what variables influence a respondent's decision the most. The researcher wants to find out what motivates people to go see a movie.

## **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The results from the present study could have various applications. Movie makers and movie theaters could learn a lot about the best and new ways to advertise their movies and attract the

Amharic movie-going public. With a significant amount of new movies being released every month to the Amharic movie industry and with new cinema houses being constructed in many parts of the city it tremendously pays to know the right and effective way to target moviegoers.

By studying why people go to the movies, the primary investigator feels that it will be possible to open up a wider array of human behavior topics that could be discussed. For example, uses and gratification theory can be analyzed as to how it applies to movie going behavior: what needs are satisfied by going to a movie and why?

It could also serve as a stepping stone for further studies in the area of film and film audience research. The study will also add some literature to the very little research available in the realm. It could further encourage other similar research initiatives and highlight the importance of getting feedback from the audience

The following chapter will discuss the history of the movie-viewing studies, related studies, relation to uses and gratifications theory, and how movie-viewing behavior will be advanced by the current study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter presents a review of previous related studies and theoretical arguments surrounding audiences and the media.

#### **2.1 Earlier related studies**

In Europe, research on movie-going began in 1914 (Austin 1989). One significant study, published in 1929, analyzed responses to questionnaires that were distributed in 1914 and 1915 to Swiss school children, ages 8 to 15. It asked the basic question: "Why do you like going to the cinema?" The 1914 study had the following results. The first was that children liked to go to the movies for education, entertainment, and because of the beauty of the film. The second result was that girls found movies more interesting than boys did.

A similar study was performed during World War II in Vienna. In this case, adults were surveyed and interviewed about their movie-going interests, but not at theaters. The important point about the Vienna study was that relaxation was the primary motive for going to the movies (Austin 1989).

The current study looks to be a more current view of the Vienna study and seeks respondents at the theaters they attend. The current study already assumes that people are going for some relaxation, but the researchers want to know beyond the idea of relaxation and look at the influence of ads, trailers, movie stars, subject matter/genre, directors, critiques, and word of mouth on movie patrons.

Another study of Soviet filmgoers in 1966 found seven reasons for movie attendance; for relaxation, to find something new, to experience a sharp plot, to see an actor's performance, to listen to music in the movie, because they had nowhere else better to spend leisure time, and to see the skill in shooting a film (Austin 1989). These reasons mention some of the variables that will be used in the current study, but they do not take into account the ideas of media use and exposure, including ads, trailers, and critiques.

In 1952, an article looked into how movies appeal to audiences because they made the real world more bearable (Austin 1989). It touched on the idea of why people go to the movies, but just barely. In 1957, the MPAA commissioned a survey to find out about Americans' movie-going behavior (Austin 1989). The resulting report was entitled, *The Public Appraises Movies*, and included interviews conducted between June and July of 1957 with individuals who were 15 years and older. Interviewees were asked to give what they thought were the main reasons people go to the movies (Austin 1989).

They were also asked about the last time they went to the movies and why they went. The majority of reasons for attending movies centered on recreation and entertainment (57%) in the 1957 study. Other reasons included passing time, habit, just because they wanted to, to see a movie they were interested in, to see a certain actor or actress, educational purposes, had read the book about a movie, had interesting advertising, had heard about the movie from someone else, to get away from everyday routine, relaxation, and because they were tired of watching television (Austin 1989).

Then two studies came in 1977. Both reported that audiences go to the movies for the aesthetic experience that movies provide, the desire to relax, the desire to be entertained, the ability of movies to provide new experiences, and the ability of movies to allow for learning (Austin 1989).

## **2.2 The 1986 American newspaper advertising bureau's research**

The American Newspaper Advertising Bureau's research conducted in 1986 showed the socio-economic statistics of who goes to the movies (including age and sex groups), how people learn about a particular movie, the effects of cable and VCR usage on the movie-going public, and activities used as an alternative to going to the movies. It was primarily designed "to promote the efficient use of the newspaper medium for the advertising and marketing needs of individual companies" (Newspaper Advertising Bureau 1986). This 1986 study is the two foundation studies of the present study.

The 1986 report showed that time has changed the movie-going experience. It stated that in 1946, the average American went to the movies 29 times a year; by 1984, the average was down to five times (Newspaper Advertising Bureau 1986). This study, performed in 1985, used a sample of 1,000 respondents who were contacted by telephone using random-digit dialing techniques. One respondent was interviewed from each household called, and the sample of 1,000 was "balanced on age and sex" (Newspaper Advertising Bureau 1986).

Leo Bogart and B. Stuart Tolley came up with the design, questionnaire, analysis, and the



actual report. All of this was under the direction of the Newspaper Advertising Bureau (Newspaper Advertising Bureau 1986). The study focused on the fact that movies provide a social event for people to meet and that people would rather go to the movies with someone than go it alone (Newspaper Advertising Bureau 1986).

The 1986 study's first question dealt with "Who goes to the movies?" The answer followed after the study was performed: Our study shows that the 24% of the public who go once a month or more often represent 83% of adult movie admissions. Of these film buffs, two out of five are between 18 and 24, (an age group that makes up only 18% of all adults) and almost 70% are under 35. Being younger, nearly half of the frequent moviegoers are single, and they are also above average in education.

The 1986 study went on to examine the experience of going to the movies by looking at who goes with whom, the marital status of movie-goers, the ages, the education, income, and the sex of movie-goers as compared to the frequency of a respondent's movie-going frequency (Newspaper Advertising Bureau 1986). It also showed evidence of having thought about why people go to the movies.

The study found that "59% of those surveyed said they decided to go when they did because they wanted to see a particular film rather than because they just felt like going out" (Newspaper Advertising Bureau 1986). Some respondents showed interest in a movie because of its cast and others wanted an uplifting movie-choice. The "why" consisted of responses like "just felt like going out," "wanted to see a particular movie," and "no answer" (Newspaper Advertising Bureau

1986). It also showed if the decision to go to a movie was an independent decision, or one made by their viewing partner. The 1986 study also showed some of the reasons why people go to the movies based on reviews and advertising while not focusing on specifics like plot, actors, or type of movie:

People find out about new films from the newspapers (37% among frequent movie goers) and from television (32%). One in three (31%) finds out before the film is launched, 28% at the time of release, and 39% afterwards. A majority says they usually pay attention to movie reviews, and 36% had read reviews or commentary on the last film they saw. Of these, 54% saw them in the newspaper; 40% on TV, and 12% in a magazine.

Compared to those remembering reviews or commentaries, three out of five (61%) remember coming across advertising for the last film prior to viewing it. Most mention several sources, with equal numbers (55%) naming newspapers and TV (Most initial launch promotions rely heavily on TV.). Of those who recall advertising, about half (47%) remember something, but their recollections do not focus on any specifics like the actors, plot, or type. (Newspaper Advertising Bureau 1986)

The study did begin to touch on the question of why people go to the movies. However, it did not examine this perspective by using all forms of advertising and all reasons for wanting to go to a movie before you enter the theater. The current study will advance the ideas of advertising, previews, and reviews while taking into account the specifics of plot, actors, and type of movie.

The 1986 study did focus on what people wanted to know about a movie before they go to a theater, which did include plot, actors, the rating, and what type of film it was. In this respect, the 1986 study began incorporating some of the current study's variables, but not collectively in the same category nor in the context of deciding what movie a respondent will choose. The 1986 study also looked at categories of frequent and infrequent moviegoers in the following manner:

What are the kinds of things people want to know before they decide to go see a film? Frequent moviegoers do not differ very much from the rest of the moviegoing public in their answers to this open-ended question. Thirty-six percent want to know about the plot; 32% the actors; 22% the rating; 14% what type of film it is. Another 9% say they want to know if it is 'clean,' 'not trashy.' 13% want reassurance that the film is worth seeing, and 7% want to know what the reviews have said. The infrequent movie goers are more interested than others in comedies. (Newspaper Advertising Bureau 1986)

The 1986 study also studied what moviegoers want in ads to make a decision on a movie. This list included starting times (84%), address of the theaters (69%), film rating (67%), a plot description (53%), admission price (51%), the names of the supporting cast (44%), a picture of the leading star (29%), and the name of the director (19%) (Newspaper Advertising Bureau 1986). This was the same for infrequent and frequent moviegoers. The study documented how people first found out about a movie. It did not take into account the recent developments of the Internet and word-of-mouth, which has helped with the success of such films as *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* in 2002 (About.com 2002).

The 1986 study finished by looking at the impact of cable TV and the VCR on movie-watchers. One of the significant facts here was the following: "77% of the frequent movie-goers, compared with only 43% of the general public, prefer to go out to see a new movie rather than watch it on TV, reinforcing the point that the occasion of going out comes first and then the attraction of the specific film" (Newspaper Advertising Bureau 1986).

The current study wishes to focus on the movie-theater aspect of movie watching, since there are now so many ways to watch movies in 2003, as compared to 1986. Interestingly, VCRs did not heavily affect those who went to theaters to see their movies, even though it represented another way to see movies and/or wait for a movie to come to video without using the theater. This hinted that there is still something to be said about seeing a movie in the theater over using your VCR or cable.

After looking at this previous research and seeing the many advances that have been made since the 1986 study, there would be a definite benefit in seeing how the movie-going experience has changed since the 1986 study and focus on "why" people go the movies rather than on "whom" is going. The new study will be similar to the 1986 study in that it will look into the nature of the movie-watching experience by examining what encourages people to go the movies.

### **2.3 Bruce Austin's description of the movie selection process**

One of the closest descriptions of the current study came from Bruce Austin's own description of the movie selection process by moviegoers. It went from a wide angle of movie choice to a

narrow angle of movie choice (Austin 1989). This followed a pattern of awareness to persuasion, and then to a decision on a film that is to be seen in the theater. The factors, which influenced the change from wide angle to a narrow angle, include the following: publicity and advertising, reviews, personal influence, story type, and production elements (Austin 1989). These factors represent many of the variables in the current study with trailers included with advertising, reviews represented by critiques, story type representing subject matter and genre, and personal influence representing word-of-mouth influence. The differences between this example and the current study are the inclusions of director and actors into one element (production elements) and the fact that this description was merely a blueprint for future research.

In a sense, the current study carries out this plan to fruition. This description does not show which element has the most influence in helping a person determine what movie to see, and the current study will get this answer by comparing responses by looking at Likert scales. The current study will look at 400 respondents and see which mean is the highest among the variables of the study.

Bruce A. Austin also did a study and essay on the film audience in 1983. He looked at film research as being a neglected at the time. He stated there was a paucity of research on the consumer, the one who watches the movies (Austin 1983). Austin also stated that the ones who produce movies have not been the most accepting of audience studies when in fact they should be. He cited Handel (1953), who in performing social science research, discovered that audience research was used in all areas of mass communication except film (Austin 1983). Now, Austin sees the research concerning audiences and film expanding as the 1986 study proved. Austin

cited that film audiences are worth looking at because of the amount of money consumers are willing to spend on film. As of 1976, Austin stated that 53.36% of U.S. amusement expenditures came from movie watching (Austin 1983). His research suggested that movie-audience research would offer the potential for "historical and behavioral explanations regarding large audiences and their interaction with a popular mass medium" (Austin 1983).

Austin examined the reasons why there had been an absence of audience research with film. It was because of the secretive nature of the movie industry. He stated some researchers in the past have been unable to gain access to box-office returns data and that there is little understanding from other sectors of life, like the government, commercial business, or other foundations. In this way, Austin meant that researchers who wished to seek such information about movie watching may find that they are on their own when it comes to funding their projects. Government, commercial business, and other foundations had not found such research to be worth their time or money. Austin went on to say that the development of TV had also taken away research interests. TV had supplanted movies in the audience research field (Austin 1983).

After describing the lack of sufficient research at the time, Austin mentioned several ideas to help change research with film audiences. His first idea would lead researchers to believe that subject matter was important in looking at what the audience liked about movies, especially in determining whether or not to see a movie (Austin 1983). Austin saw the audience as discriminating in what they chose and he wished to see the reasons behind such discrimination. He was getting at the question of why people go to the movies, the backbone of the current study. Other ideas for further audience examination concerned looked at the context in which a

movie is presented in a theater, the public's taste in movies, and to look at what moviegoers get out of going to a movie (Austin 1983). This last idea harkens back to the idea of uses and gratifications theory. Patrons will use going to the movie theater as some sort of gratification.

Austin stated that many tools could be used to look at audience behavior with film, be they quantitative or qualitative. The current study will look at both quantitative and qualitative methods by using Likert scales and written responses. Most importantly, Austin stated that researchers must get into the element of the study, a movie theater. He looked down upon telephone or mail surveys (Austin 1983). The current study will be seeking this very idea by going to a theater to obtain surveys. Respondents will be asked to fill out a survey at the theater.

## **2.4 Noel Carroll and Dr. Brain R. Johnson notion of film audiences**

While some studies focused on research paucity, other researchers focused on film's ability to influence an audience. Noel Carroll analyzed the effect of emotions that film can produce in the audience. He described audience members as wanting to identify with the characters they saw on the screen (Plantinga and Smith, 2002). Carroll saw genre as having the ability to elicit specific emotions, thus lending to the current study the idea that genre is important in analyzing movie-viewing choice.

Dr. Brain R. Johnson supports Carroll's idea of a film being able to elicit emotions. Johnson had done a dissertation on stress reactions to motion pictures and the variables that predict such reactions. Being a clinical psychologist, Johnson has even used motion pictures as a therapeutic

aid. His work points to the importance of looking at what the audience sees on the screen and why they like what they like. Johnson saw that part of being human is to feel emotion and that people will chose to feel emotions through watching a film. He saw movies as being able to elicit such emotions as fear, happiness, anger, and pain (Plantinga and Smith, 2002). Sometimes watching a movie can help ease emotional burdens. He described people who may be in constant fear and that seeing something less fearful on screen would help them relieve stress. Johnson made the following comment on the ability of movies to elicit emotions:

Cinema more than any other art form has a way of drawing viewers into a situation that, for a moment, makes them a witness and sometimes an emotional participant to what is happening on screen. (Plantinga and Smith, 2002) Johnson echoed Carroll's idea that the audience goes to see films because of the need to identify with something or someone they see on screen. He talked about living vicariously through the characters on the screen. Speaking in psychological terms, the Carroll and Johnson's ideas form reasons why people may go to see a movie in the theater, but it does not touch on why a specific movie choice was made. The current study will look at the perspective of the individual audience member's reason for choosing a certain movie based on media exposure rather than looking into their mindset for watching a movie. The current study understands that identification is a reason for going to see a certain movie, but that this is to satisfy some hidden want. The current study wishes to look at that which is not always hidden. The study wishes to look at the way a person decides what movie they will see based on what they have been exposed to through various media, not through what their inner self wants to see on the screen.



## **2.5 The 2003 study in Florida, USA**

The 2003 study conducted in USA , Florida by Sean Michael is very much related to the current study in that it takes subject matter and genre as possible prompts as to why people go to the movies. The current study looks at that aspect, but also takes into account other reasons why people go see a movie based on ideas such as what a person knows about a movie beforehand and who may be starring in or directing a movie. Sean Maxfield , discussed one subject area, while the current study wishes to take into account all subject matter and all types of movies. He also focused on the watching of a movie, while the current study wishes to focus on the after and before of watching a movie by taking surveys after and before watching the feature presentation.

## **2.6 Uses and Gratifications Theory**

In conclusion, the main theory behind the current study idea comes from the uses and gratifications approach. This theory states that "people's media consumption patterns are intended actions on the part of the viewers," and "that individuals do make conscious choices about what they see and read in the media" (Salwen and Stacks, 1996). In dealing with the current study, the researchers are looking at what helps people to decide the movie they want to see in the theater and what helps them make that decision, especially what are the top reasons for making that decision.

What is essential to the uses and gratifications tradition has been audience activity, which is highly correlated with the idea for the current study; to see why people want to go to the movies

(Rosengren, Wenner, and Palmgreen, 1985). According to this idea of audience activity, uses and gratifications theory suggests that there is a media dependency.

This means earlier researchers in the theory have examined the extent to which a respondent would miss a particular medium if it were not available. The current study makes this clear with question #2 in Appendix A. Results from previous studies by such researchers as Lindlof (1986), Rubin (1981), and Wenner (1982) have suggested dependence on a medium (like movies) related to the number and strength of the motives for attending that medium (Salwen and Stacks, 1996).

The current study looks at these motives by the questionnaire devised in Appendix A. This study will be examining the motives behind choosing a movie by looking at variables that the researchers will operationalize later in Chapter 3, including director influence, subject matter/genre influence, and movie-star influence. The current research will also look at motives like the appearance of a movie star or a type of subject matter that motivates a respondent to go see a movie.

To sum up, past research in uses and gratification showed that the audience will use a movie (by watching it) to gratify some aspect of themselves or to escape a feeling of boredom (Salwen and Stacks, 1996). This idea of boredom is an underlying gratification, and the current study is not dealing with boredom as a reason for going to the movies. The current study assumes people are going to a movie for more than just the escape from boredom since they made the decision to buy a ticket to a specific film. One uses and gratifications' researcher, Blumler (1979), suggested many other reasons why people would use a medium, like the movies, which include gaining

information (knowing about what the movie is like or whether the critic on a movie was right or wrong), for an escape or diversion, and to identify with the characters a respondent sees on the screen (Salwen and Stacks, 1996). These were some of the gratifications that researchers speak of when they refer to uses and gratifications theory.

For the purposes of audience activity for the current study idea, the researchers will look at the idea of movie-viewing choice and use eleven-point Likert scales to describe a person's reasons for wanting to choose a movie. Before looking at the scales, there needs to be a definition for the use of movie-viewing choice here in the current study. Movieviewing choice comes from the idea of an audience who watches the movies. It is known that the film industry depends on targeting "the maximum possible audience" and that is done through "a wide variety of market research techniques" (Blandford, Grant, and Hillier, 2001).

This indicates that the film industry uses trailers, advertising, critiques, and subject matter to influence the viewing choice of moviegoers. In the current study, the researchers wish to see what variables affect viewing choice so as to gauge what variables influence a respondent's decision. The researchers want to find out if the marketing for a movie is doing its job as well as finding out what motivates people to go see a movie.

Audience activity suggests "that media use is motivated by needs and goals that are defined by audience members themselves, and that active participation in the communication process may facilitate, limit, or otherwise influence the gratifications and effects associated with exposure" (Rosengren, Wenner, and Palmgreen, 1985). In other words, the audience is the group you need

to examine in order to designate how the media works toward satisfying an audience member's needs.

The positive aspect of previous research in uses and gratifications had indicated that continued study and experimentation "holds great promise for increasing our knowledge about the role of mass communication in human life" (Rosengren, Wenner, and Palmgreen, 1985). Performing the current study can only advance the cause of uses and gratifications theory.

The following chapter will begin with reasons for using a survey and a preview of using survey methodology. A discussion will follow to discuss the methodology for the current questionnaire (see Appendix A) to be used in this thesis.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The aim of this study is to investigate the reasons that help people make their decision in selecting the movie they see in cinema houses in .In other terms to discover which reasons for going to the movies had the highest response among the variables used in the current study. The overall research question is what the perceived exposure to the variables in this study will have on movie-viewing choice. To this end the researcher used a quantitative survey method to gather the required data to answer the research questions.

#### **3.1 Study setting, population and sampling**

This study was conducted in Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. The population for the present study will consist of all those who go to a movie theater, from teenagers to older adults (18+). Surveys will be conducted while patrons are standing in line to enter a movie theater .A total of 200 surveys were collected at theater and cinema locations in the capital city Addis Ababa namely Ambassador cinema, Cinema Ampere, Edna Mall, National theater , Alem Cinema and cinema Ethiopia.

For the purpose of saving time and money, this current study will be using a purposive sample, based on a movie patron's willingness to be at a theater (Wimmer and Dominick, 2000). A sample size of 200 surveys will be used for the current study and the following age groups are used: 18-22, 23-27, 28-32, 33-37, 38-42, 43-47, 48-52,53-57, 58-62, 63-67, 68-72, 73-77, 78-82,

83-87, Above 87 (Wimmer and Dominick,2000).This study assumes movie patrons have already made the decision to see a movie, regardless of ideas of boredom or simple entertainment.

## **3.2 Data Collection**

Permission to collect surveys had already been given to the investigator by the theater's managers of the selected theatre houses. 200 fully completed surveys, excluding surveys wrongly filled out and those filled out by respondents below the age of 18, were collected in six weeks period. A sample of the survey instrument appears in Appendix 1.

## **3.3 Data processing and movie choice analysis**

Movie-viewing choice will be judged based on a series of eleven-point scales. For each, respondents will be asked to rate, on a scale of 0-10, the extent to which the seven factors influence movie selection or their movie-viewing choice. Respondents' 0-10 "influence" scores will be utilized in comparing the effect of the seven variables on movie-viewing choice. Frequency of response, talking with fellow researchers, an analysis of the 1986 study, and the related studies in Chapter 2 were all used to judge what variables would be used: the following are the factors or variables influencing movie selection.

- 1.Critique influence
- 2.Preview Influence
- 3.General Advertising Influence
- 4.Movie-Star Influence

5.Genre/ Subject Matter Influence

6.Word-of-Mouth Influence

7.The Director Influence

The measures are designed to find out how respondents perceived movie-viewing choice to be affected by written movie critiques, watching movie trailers, looking at ads (in newspapers, magazines, radio, and posters), motivation to go see a movie based on who is starring in it, the presence of the director of a movie, word of mouth spread about a movie, and motivation to go see a movie because of the subject matter.

The current study will examine how this variables rank among the others.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. DATA RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **4.1 Data Analysis**

This chapter will discuss which variable or variables rank the highest among the others in influencing people's movie selection. The following were the results and discussions of the data obtained from the 200 surveys.

##### **4.1.1 Influence of movie critiques**

In question one respondent were asked to rate the influences of what movie critiques or movie reviewers wrote or said about a particular movie on newspapers, magazines and radio on their movie viewing choice. The perceived critique influence was measured by asking respondents to rate, on a scale of 0-10, the extent to which movie critiques influence movie selection. For this measure, a rating of 10 means “heavy influence” and a score of 0 means “no influence at all.”

According to the results the highest percentage of the respondents (24.8%) gave the influence of critiques question a 1 which was the highest percent from all values by all respondents who answered the question in this category, followed by . There were only a small number of respondents (1.6%) who thought that critiques had a significant influence on their movie choice and circled a 10. The lowest values came from respondents answering 9 and 10. In general the highest values came from respondents answering 0 to 4 about the influence of critiques in their movie viewing choice indicating that what movie critiques wrote about a movie do not have a



significant impact in influencing peoples movie selection.

### **4.1.2 Influence of trailers or previews**

For question two respondents were asked to rate the influences of trailers or previewes (those small clips of soon to released movies or already released movies seen in the theaters, at home on TV and on DVDs of other movies) on their movie viewing choice. Again trailer or preview influence was measured by asking respondents to rate, on a scale of 0-10, the extent to which movie previews influence movie selection. For this measure, a rating of 10 means “heavy influence” and a score of 0 means “no influence at all.”

According to the results there were 19 respondents who gave the influence of previews a 6 which was the highest percent and frequency from all values by the respondents who answered the question in this category indicating that previews or trailers have a significant influence in peoples movie selection. The lowest percent came from respondents answering 2 to this question while the highest number of respondents here was a close tie between the number 5 and 6 with 6 being the highest.

### **4.1.3 Influence of general advertising**

Question three asked about a respondent’s feelings on how ads influence their decision to choose a movie. General advertising influence was measured by asking respondents, again using a 0-10 scale, the extent to which ads (found in television, newspapers, in magazines, in posters and on the radio) influence their movie selection. For this measure, a rating of ten means “heavy

influence” and a rating of zero means “no influence at all.”

According to the results the majority of the respondents (49.6%) gave the influence of advertising question a 10 thus leading to ‘very much’. This was the highest percent and frequency from all values by the respondents who answered the question in this category .Only about 2 respondents (1.3%) said 0 or not at all, this was where the lowest value came from. The highest values came from respondents who answered 9 and 10 with 10 being the highest. This shows one of the biggest reasons why people choose movie at a theatre.

#### **4.1.4 Influence of movie stars**

Question four asked about a respondent’s feelings on how movie stars influence their decision to go to a movie theater. Movie-star influence will be measured by asking respondents, again using a 0-10 scale, the extent to which the presence of a certain popular actor or actress in a movie influences their movie selection. For this measure, a rating of ten means “heavy influence” and a rating of zero means “no influence at all.”

According of the findings only 18 respondents (6.5%) gave the influence of movie stars question a 10. The highest percent came from those respondents who answered 5 to this question while the lowest value came from those answering 10.The majority of the responses are between 5 and 6 with 5 being the highest. Only 4 respondents (2.6%) gave this question a 0.So it would appear that movie stars, though not very significantly, influence on people’s choice of movies.

### **4.1.5 Influence of genre or subject matter**

Question five of the survey asked if genre or subject matter (elements of life the movie explores like romance, comedy, thriller...) influenced their decision to go to a movie. Genre/Subject matter will be measured by asking respondents, on a scale of 0-10, the extent to which the subject matter, or type of genre of a movie, influences movie selection. For this measure, a rating of ten means “heavy influence” and a rating of zero means “no influence at all.”

According to the results the majority of the respondents (39.3%) gave the influence of advertising question a 3 thus leading to ‘very much’. This was the highest percent and frequency from all values by the respondents who answered the question in this category .Only 1 respondent (0.3%) said 10 or 'very much'. Most of the respondents answered between 3 and 4 reinforcing that genre or subject matter did not have a big influence in people's movie selection.

### **4.1.6 Influence of word of mouth**

In question six respondents were asked to rate the influences of word of mouth (or the ideas and speech of others who saw the movie and talk about it) on their movie viewing choice. The perceived word of mouth influence was measured by asking respondents to rate, on a scale of 0-10, the extent to which word of mouth influences their movie selection. For this measure again , a rating of 10 means “heavy influence” and a score of 0 means “no influence at all.”

According to the findings there were 43 respondents who gave the word of mouth question a 10, which was the highest percent and frequency from all values by all respondents who answered

the question in this category. There was also a 95 % respondent majority who thought that word of mouth was a high influence by circling a 10 on the survey. The lowest value came from respondents answering 1. The highest number for respondents here was a close tie between the number 8 and 10, with 10 being the highest. Since a majority of the responses are above the value of 8, it would appear that word of mouth have a substantial effect on a respondent's choice of movie at a theater within this study ,there is sufficient evidence from this study to indicate that word of mouth would be the highest in helping people make their decision about what movie they want to see. As a result of this study, it would appear that people pay the most attention to what people talked about a particular movie when they choose a movie at the theater.

#### **4.1.7 Influence of director**

Question 7 concerned the influence of the director on movie-viewing choice. This influence results when someone wants to see a movie in the theater because they like the director's previous work. To measure the extent to which the director influences a respondent's decision to go to see a movie in the theater, respondents will indicate, on a scale of 0-10, how much the presence of a director influences them in wanting to see a movie in the theater.

According to the findings only the majority of respondents (40) gave the answer of 0 for this question. This indicates one of the lowest reasons why respondents go to the movies according to the current study meaning the director is not a big influence on people's movie-viewing choice .People did not pay much attention to who directs a movie when they choose what they will watch at a theater.

#### **4.1.8 Influence of someone else**

Question eight on the survey was asked to establish whether it was a respondents individual choice to see movie or whether it was someone else's, it is important to note that a majority of respondents choose the movie themselves; 95 out of a valid 181 stated they chose the movie themselves.

Nineteen people went above what the question asked and said they wanted to see it as well as someone else. From this analysis, it appears that people will go to a movie at a theater because of someone else or just go because they themselves are interested in a particular movie. This will not be focused on in this study as it was not a primary goal and was used to gauge respondents' reasons for going to the movies on their own.

#### **4.1.9 Influences of several media**

Concerning the results of question nine, a question where respondents were asked to rate ,on a scale of 1 to 7 , effectiveness of several media in getting people to go a movie theater , the highest number of the respondents (69%) circled 7 to word of mouth and TV ads. The sources least used here were radio, and magazines by the respondents in this study. Newspapers and movie theatres were somewhere in-between. This question was not as essential to the primary research questions asked in this study but the responses indicate that it would be in the best interest of movie makers and theater owners to carry out ad campaigns on television than the other media. They could also take advantage of the fact that more of the population has access to only one TV station

#### **4.1.10 Times per month**

Question ten on the survey was asked to find out how many times a person goes to a movie. The question was used to establish frequency for the study .Nearly 50% of the respondents reported that they went to the movies either once each month (22.5%) or twice each month (26.5%). A significant portion of the respondents also reported that they attended three times per month (17.5%) while 15.3% said they attended four times a month. Less than 10% of the sample reported that they attended more than four times each month. So the selected sample of respondents are suitable enough to base conclusions on as more than half of the respondents go to theatres at least once a month..

#### **4.1.11 Age range and gender of respondents**

Question eleven and twelve were asked to get a frame of reference for all respondents without giving names and for age and sex comparison. While looking at the age bracket question of this study, the highest percentage 52 of the respondents circled on the 23-27 year old bracket. The second highest age bracket for the survey came from the 28-32 year old category. There were no respondents above the age of 68. So there is sufficient evidence to conclude that the majority of Amharic movie goers are young adults (23-32). Almost 60% the respondents ,120 out of 200, were female.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **5. CONCLUSION**

Analysis of the findings of this study bring one to the conclusion that the most important prompts in influencing Amharic movie goers choice of movie selection appears to be word of mouth (what people told the movie patron about a certain movie) and general advertising. The results also indicate that there are relations between choice movie selection and the other variables of the research namely movie stars, previews, genre and ads, though not as strong as the influence of word of mouth and general advertising. The director of a movie had the least influence in prompting movie patrons to see a movie.

The current study considers word of mouth and general advertising as major prompts for going to the cinema. However there are obvious limitations to this study. There are a wide range of other factors that come into play in influencing people's choice of movies that need to be considered for future research. There is a debate on human behavior that has been going on for a long time about whether people could accurately express their feeling (their prompts for going to the cinema in this study) .So studies that deeply explore this aspect of human behavior and it's influence on movie patron's attendance of a movie are a necessity. This study does not take into account reasons that could affect movie selection like respondents childhood experiences, behaviors, occupation, income and level of happiness.

After looking at this study and seeing it's limitation, further advances would be a definite benefit in looking at more and relatively accurate prompts of the movie-watching experience. This study might have touched on why a specific movie choice was made but further study that will look at

how demographics like levels of education and levels of income influence an individuals choice of a certain movie needs to be researched. The current study wishes to see how inability of people to accurately point out their reasons affecting movie-viewing choice and hopes that this study will lead others to do similar studies concerning human behavior and the movie-going audience.



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## APPENDIX A QUESTIONNAIRE

### Sample Movie Interest Survey

1. On a scale of 0-10 , with 0 not at all and 10 meaning very much how much do movie critiques in the newspaper, magazines, on TV, etc. make you want to go to a movie theater to watch a movie?

Circle the number below which best represents your opinion:

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

NOT AT ALL

VERY MUCH

Note: The next few questions will use the same 0-10 scale.

2. How much do trailers/ previews on television and in the theater make you want to go to a movie theater to watch a movie?

Circle the number below which best represents your opinion:

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

NOT AT ALL

VERY MUCH

3. How much do ads on television, newspapers, magazines, radio, and the Internet (For example: movie posters) make you want to go to a movie theater to watch a movie?

Circle the number below which best represents your opinion:

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**

NOT AT ALL

VERY MUCH

4. How much do stars (particular actors/ actresses) in a movie make you want to go to a movie theater to watch a movie?

Circle the number below which best represents your opinion:

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**  
NOT AT ALL VERY MUCH

5. How much does subject matter/genre (ex. action, comedy, horror, and science fiction) of a movie make you want to go to a movie theater to watch a movie?

Circle the number below which best represents your opinion:

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**  
NOT AT ALL VERY MUCH

6. How much does word of mouth entice you to go see a movie in the theater?

Circle the number below which best represents your opinion:

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**  
NOT AT ALL VERY MUCH

7. How much does the director of a movie make you want to go see a movie in the theater?

Circle the number below which best represents your opinion:

**0      1      2      3      4      5      6      7      8      9      10**  
NOT AT ALL VERY MUCH

8. Are you seeing a movie today because you wanted to see it or because of someone else? If someone else, who (just give titles not names, for example-Husband, friend, boyfriend, sister, brother, etc.)?

---

9. Using the list below, please rate each of the seven mediums on a scale of 1-7, with seven meaning you use the medium quite often and 1 meaning you seldom if ever use it to find out about movies coming to theaters in your area?

7= "Most Often Used" 1= "Seldom If Ever Used"

\_\_\_ TV

\_\_\_ Radio

\_\_\_ Magazines

\_\_\_ Newspapers

\_\_\_ Movie Theaters

\_\_\_ Word of Mouth

10. About how many times per month do you go to an actual movie theater to see a movie?

---

11. Circle the age bracket below that you most closely fit into:

<b>Below 18 ,</b>	<b>18-22</b>	<b>23-27</b>	<b>28-32</b>	<b>33-37</b>	<b>38-42</b>
<b>43-47</b>	<b>48-52</b>	<b>53-57</b>	<b>58-62</b>	<b>63-67</b>	<b>68-72</b>
<b>73-77</b>	<b>78-82</b>	<b>83-87</b>	<b>Above 87</b>		

12. What is your sex? Circle one below:

MALE      FEMALE

## መጠይቅ

ወደ ሲኒማ ገብተን አንድን የአማርኛ ፊልም እንድንመለከት የሚገፋፋንን ምክንያቶች ለማጥናት የተዘጋጀ መጠይቅ

1. ከ0-10 ያለውን ሚዛን በመጠቀም በጋዜጣ ፣ በመጽሔቶች ወይም ቴሌቭዥን ወ.ዘ.ተ ላይ ያሉ የአማርኛ ፊልም ገምጋሚዎችና አስተያየት ሰጪዎች የሚሰጡት ግምገማና አስተያየት ፊልሙን ለማየት ወደ ሲኒማ ቤት እንዲሄዱ ምን ያህል ይገፋፋዎታል?

አስተያየትዎን የሚወክለውን ቁጥር ከዚህ በታች ያክብቡ

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
በፍጹም										እጅግ በጣም

2. በኢትዮጵያ ቴሌቭዥን፣ በሲኒማ ቤት ፊልም ከመጀመሩ በፊት እና በአማርኛ ፊልም ካሴቶችና ሲዲዎች የሚመለከቱአቸው አጫጭም የአማርኛ ፊልም ማስተዋወቂያዎች ሲኒማ ቤት ገብተው ፊልሙን እንዲመለከቱ ምን ያህል ይገፋፋዎታል?

አስተያየትዎን የሚወክለውን ቁጥር ከዚህ በታች ያክብቡ

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
በፍጹም										እጅግ በጣም

3. ቴሌቭዥን ጋዜጣዎች መጽሔቶች ራዲዮና የአማርኛ ፊልም ፖስተሮች ሲኒማ ቤት ገብተው ፊልሙን እንዲመለከቱ ምን ያህል ይገፋፋዎታል?

አስተያየትዎን የሚወክለውን ቁጥር ከዚህ በታች ያክብቡ



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

በፍጹም

እጅግ በጣም

4. የአማርኛ ፊልም ተወናኞች ወይም አክተሮች ታዋቂነት ወይም ማንነት ወደ ሲኒማ ቤት ገብተው ፊልሙን እንዲመለከቱ ምን ያህል ይገፋፋዎታል?

አስተያየትዎን የሚወክለውን ቁጥር ከዚህ በታች ያክብቡ

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

በፍጹም

እጅግ በጣም

5. ሰለአንድ የአማርኛ ፊልም በሰው በሰው የሰሙት አስተያየት ሲኒማ ቤት ገብተው ፊልሙን እንዲመለከቱ ምን ያህል ይገፋፋዎታል?

አስተያየትዎን የሚወክለውን ቁጥር ከዚህ በታች ያክብቡ

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

በፍጹም

እጅግ በጣም

6. የአማርኛ ፊልም ዳይሬክተር ማንነት ሲኒማ ቤት ገብተው ፊልሙን እንዲመለከቱ ምን ያህል ይገፋፋዎታል? አስተያየትዎን የሚወክለውን ቁጥር ከዚህ በታች ያክብቡ

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

በፍጹም

እጅግ በጣም

7. የአማርኛው ፊልም አይነት ማለትም (ኮሜዲ፣ አክሽን አሳዛኝ አስፈሪ ሳይንሳዊ ልብ ወለድ

ወይም ልብ ሰቃይ መሆኑ) ሲኒማ ቤት ገብተው ፊልሙን እንዲመለከቱ ምን ያህል ይገፋፋዎታል? አስተያየትዎን የሚወክለውን ቁጥር ከዚህ በታች ያክብቡ

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

በፍጹም

እጅግ በጣም

8. ዛሬ የአማርኛ ፊልም ለማየት ወደ ሲኒማ የመጡት ፊልሙን ለማየት ስለፈለጉ ነው ወይስ በሌላ ምክንያት ተገፋፍተው ነው? የገፋፋዎት ሰው ከሆነ ማን? (ማንነት ያለስም ይጥቀሱ፣ ለምሳሌ ባለቤት ፣ ጓደኛ ፣ ወንድ ጓደኛ ፣ እህት ፣ ወንድም ወ.ዘ.ተ ) ?

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9. በሚያዘውትሩበት ሲኒማ ቤት አዳዲስ የአማርኛ ፊልሞች መታየት መጀመራቸውንና አለመጀመራቸውን ለማወቅ የሚጠቀሙበትን ሚዲያ ከዚህ በታች የተዘረዘሩትን ይምረጡ ከ1-7 ያለውን ሚዛን ይጠቀሙ። 7 ማለት ሚዲያውን በአብዛኛው ይጠቀሙበታል 1 ማለት ሚዲያውን አልፎ አልፎ ይጠቀሙበታል

\_\_\_ቴሌቭዥን

\_\_\_ራዲዮ

\_\_\_ መጽሐፍት

\_\_\_ ጋዜጦች

\_\_\_ ሲኒማ ቤቶች እና በመነገድ ዳር የሚለጠፉ ማስታወቂያዎችና ፖስተሮች

\_\_\_ በሰው በሰው

10. በአንድ ወር ውስጥ ለምን ያህል ጊዜ የአማርኛ ፊልም ለማየት ወደ ሲኒማ ቤት ይሄዳሉ?

\_\_\_\_\_ -

11. እርስዎ የሚገኙበትን እድሜ የያዘውን የእድሜ ቡድን ያክብቡ

ከ18 ዓመት በታች ፣	18-22 ፣	23-27 ፣	28-32፣	33-37፣	
38-42 ፣	43-47፣	48-52 ፣	53-57፣	58-62፣	63-67፣
68-72፣	73-77 ፣	78-82፣	83-87፣	ከ87 በላይ	

12. ጾታዎ ምንድን ነው? ከዚህ በታች ያለውን አንዱን ያክብቡ

ወንድ                      ሴት

## **Declaration**

**I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my original work and all the sourced of materials used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.**

**Name Temesgen Gebru**

**Signature \_\_\_\_\_**

**Date of Submission November 10, 2008**

**Place of Submission Addis Ababa**