

**GIVING ANIMATION BRANDS A CHANCE: UNDERSTANDING THE
SUCCESS FACTORS FOR ANIMATED MOVIES IN A PIXAR CASE STUDY**

By

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ABSTRACT

There is a particular area of film media that has been deemed highly influential, useful and is gaining popularity in use. That area is animation (Selby, 2013). The purpose of this research paper is to uncover and investigate the various potential reasons that an animated film might be successful. The benefit of investigating this is to create a guideline for any creatives who wish to create a guaranteed success in the animation industry. This research paper will discuss the research methodology undertaken to find these success factors, the research's various elements such as objectives, paradigms, theories, concepts and questions, and a literature review. A population and sample was also be identified for a questionnaire that had to be answered and the data gathered was analyzed. Lastly, a conclusion was drawn from the information gathered. The main objective was determine information without a hypothesis or preconceived ideas about the answers. However, through questionnaires, which are helpful to identify perceptions and thoughts that people have (Picincu, 2018), some of the reasons for why people engage with animated movies were determined. These include animation quality, story and characters as well as external factors like advertising, social influences, nostalgia and entertainment needs.

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Arts in Digital Design and Bachelor of Arts Honours in Strategic Brand Communication (enrolled currently) degree to The Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another University or Higher Education Institution for degree purposes.

Signature: Date: 29/11/21



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1 INTRODUCTION

Contextualisation

This research paper is dedicated to understanding the various factors contributing to the success of animated films. This information will investigate the audiences of these films, an analysis of some of these films, an animation brand and its analysis of itself and its work. This will allow for a holistic view of the research in various contexts to aid in uncovering these success factors.

The brand is Pixar Studios, hereafter referred to as Pixar, and the films selected are the four films that compose of the Toy Story franchise. There are various considerations that need to be addressed in this essay, such as conceptualization of key terms, rationale, research problem and purpose statements, research goals, the guideline of the research methodology and its execution, understanding the issue through a literature review, data analysis and the ethical considerations of the study.

This study entails qualitative research into the success factors of animated movies and animation brands, specifically the factors that motivate consumer-brand interaction and buying decisions. This information will be gathered from experts in the industry and audiences to create a model of success for animation studios and brands for future endeavors. This research is applied research as it possesses a practical purpose (Davis, 2014).

Rationale

There are a number of reasons that this study is relevant. Animation has range and is useful in a dynamic and diverse sense, and therefore understanding it is important for aspiring creatives (Selby, 2013). Animation, especially in movies, is a communication medium that is highly influential and is becoming more frequently used (Selby, 2013). It can target a range of audiences (Scott, 2014) and can appeal to them on a profound level (Selby, 2013). Thus it is also just as important to understanding the nature of the audience (Neimand, 2018) and the fact that they change over time (Walmsley, 2014).

Narrative transportation theory describes the factors necessary for the creation of resonant stories that can change thinking and communicate effectively. This theory also states that understanding the audience is key to the success of a story (Neimand, 2018). Along with the advent of a constantly changing audience (Walmsley, 2014), there is a need to reflect on current and previous audiences so that whatever is outdated in the world of animation is minimised and whatever is most impactful is optimised in order to stay relevant (Rosing, 2016).

The relevance of understanding animation, in addition to crafting better stories for audiences (Neimand, 2018), is also to get an understanding of how to gain a competitive advantage because the animation industry is highly competitive and the stakes for producing successful content are high. Therefore having guidelines for success is necessary for animators (Grover, 2005). Also the animation industry is a complex industry of entertainment (Selby, 2013) where large studios control the animation market therefore, further creating challenges for new business penetration (Standing & Standing, 2015). Hence, Pixar is a relevant case-study due to its success and good audience reception in the industry (Fisk, 2015) and the long-lasting duration of its selected franchise.

Where this links to audiences is that people determine the success of animated films as they are the ones watching them. There is evidently debate as to what factors truly contribute to the perceptions and decisions of the audience, with regards to watching films. Many factors have been suggested but few can be definitively proven to have a strong influence on people and the choices they make (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006).

Thus, the aim of this research to definitively prove the success factors for movies, specifically animated movies. This is for the benefit of studios to keep current on the consumer trends in their industry. Brands and business should do this in order stay relevant and best communicate with their target audiences (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). To summarize the purpose is to understand why some movies fail while others succeed. Pixar will be used as a case study, as it is one of the studios dominating the market (Standing & Standing, 2015) and has historically been a continuous blockbuster success (Catmull, 2008) and is notoriously popular with audiences (Fisk, 2015).

Problem Statement

The problem is that animation has many requirements necessary for its success (Selby, 2013) and audiences have certain standards necessary for optimal engagement (Neimand, 2018) and are constantly changing (Walmsley, 2014). Therefore, understanding how these two areas affect each other is a problem in need of exploring for creating successful animated movies. This is important because there are no definitive success factors that have been identified (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006).

The research problem is about understanding the factors contributing to the success of animated films specifically. Identifying the various factors is the primary objective thus scope is more important than depth of information for the study. It is also valuable to acknowledge that there are internal and external factors at work (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). Narrowing this further, the research is directed at a South African audience and will focus on family-orientated films. The audience's decision-making and enjoyment factors as well as critics' and animation professionals' analysis of the films will be used to formulate the answer.

The primary focus is on the perceptions of the audience but the critical and professional analysis of the films will be used to find insights and core truths surrounding the information that the audiences gather. This is to avoid the likelihood of audiences' inability to adequately verbalize their perceptions.

Animation is a worthwhile area to understand for its ability to connect with and educate people (Selby, 2013). It is also an arduous (Standing & Standing, 2015), competitive (Grover, 2005) and complex industry (Selby, 2013). In order to create impactful stories (Neimand, 2018) and survive in the movie industry value has been delivered to audiences (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). However, audiences are easily lost (Yoon, 2017) and the factors owing to their engagement are not fully understood. This is a summary of the problem statement (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). The research objective of this study aims to definitely understand these factors, so that a competitive advantage strategy can be

created. Pixar, being the successful brand that it is (Scott, 2014), acts as a guideline for understanding the success factors of the industry (Corliss & Keegan, 2007). The Toy Story franchise will be investigated. This franchise has a significant role in both the industry and Pixar's brand and is therefore a useful example and a good representative film franchise for the brand and case study (Fowler III, Lanier & Rader, 2013).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this research is to better understand what factors contribute to the success of animated movies. This was done by examining Pixar as a case study and several of their movies, and determining what audiences deem favourable through a series of qualitative data collection methods, in addition to a literature review about the industry as a whole. This is for the benefit of creatives wishing to create animated movies. The objective is practical and therefore is applied research (Davis, 2014).

Research questions are open-minded and specific to the research problem and objectives and allow for answers to be found. For this study the research question will be empirical and exploratory, because it seeks to determine information (Bezuidenhout & Davis, 2014). The research questions and objectives for this study revolve around understanding the animation industry, using the brand Pixar as a case study, and the factors influencing the success of animated movies. The main research question for this study is: what factors contribute to successful animated movies? (Bezuidenhout & Davis, 2014).

Research Objectives

Sub-questions are further research that revolve around the issue of main research topic and for this research study these include: how do critics and the general public's opinions about animated movies compare?, what can be learnt from Pixar's films? and what are trends in the animated movie industry? (Bezuidenhout & Davis, 2014).

There are two types of research, applied research and basic research. Applied research is used to generate strategic and actionable information to be used practically. Basic research is used to essentially understand a subject with no practical application for the information gathered (Davis, 2014). This study's objective is to create a framework for animation brands to use in the future for the benefit of continuously generating success. It is therefore a study driven by applied research primarily. An element of basic research does exist in this study because it aims to definitively determine information regarding a subject. In this case, the information is the success factors of the animated movie industry. However, the ultimate goal is to use the information for a purpose and thus applied research is the primary type of research being used for the study. This is also informing the research decisions as well (Davis, 2014).

The research objectives revolve around understanding the success factors of animated movies and how this information can be made useful. Over the course of the research the various objectives were met. The overview of the objectives include conducting research into the animation industry, the possible factors into the success of animated brands, and the Pixar brand and its movies in the form of a literature

review. Afterwards primary research into the perceptions of the brand was conducted and the research was analyzed and a conclusion was drawn.

There are various factors that have been presented in the literature and secondary research (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). The Model of Consumer Behaviour unpacks the various likely factors that contribute to building brand's interactions with its target market. The model expresses internal and external interconnected factors for why consumers interact with something. The four factors that could potentially be applicable to the study are cultural, social, personal and psychological. These have various subcategories within them to more specifically define the brand and consumers' relationship. The various factors identified can be used to create brand equity by perpetuating the brand and consumer relationship. Brand equity is the measure of a brand's relationship with its target market and the perceptions of the brand. Thus, understanding these factors are important in delivering value and are relevant to the study. Thus this serves as an additional research objective (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). Pixar's brand was analysed against Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model, as a means of understanding the brand (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000) and content analysis was used to understand the movies and draw conclusions, with information gathered in the primary research in the data collection phase.

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Conceptualization

Concepts are interconnected, broadly defined terms that reframe the main topic's definition (Davis, 2014). The key concepts for this study include:

- Narrative
- Presentation
- Audience
- Influence
- Perception

The key terms that have been identified to be applicable to the study and the main research topic are narrative, presentation, perception, influence and audience (Davis, 2014). Conceptualizing these terms means to explore and define their meaning according to what is necessary for the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

Narrative is, in general, a structure used to create a story for information to be conveyed. The components of narrative include conflict, plot, characters, theme and setting (Nordquist, 2019). Narrative has various forms and structures, that incorporate different techniques to effectively convey a message, but an overarching quality is that narrative is driven by the characters in it (MasterClass, 2021). Animation is linked to storytelling and therefore understanding narrative is important and will be mentioned throughout the study (Selby, 2013).

Presentation, in relation to the research study, refers to the medium or platforms, in which ideas are communicated. They are plentiful and varied, and at times work together. They can be used to influence the buying decisions, ideas and perceptions. The attention levels can fluctuate quickly, if the consumer is not profoundly invested and the communication strategies are not synchronised. Engagement ensures the shareability aspect thus keeping the brand message going. It is experiential and creates emotional benefits, resonance and loyalty. This is a communication strategy that applies to advertising (see *So what is 'Integrated Advertising'?*, 2012), but could be applicable to animated movies, since animation is a communication tool as well (Selby, 2013).

Perception is a process used by consumers to interpret and understand information to make a decision, that can differ from person to person (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). The perceptions of the audience informs their decisions when engaging with movies (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). In the research perception will be investigated through qualitative data collection methods (Nieuwenhuis, 2019).

Influence in relation to the research refers specifically to the influences affecting buying decisions. Thus, an understanding of the Model of Consumer Behaviour should be taken into consideration to aid in the identification process. According to the model the possible factors are cultural, social, personal and psychological and could potentially be a combination of these. Cultural influences are ingrained values and beliefs that inform the way that perceptions are shaped, especially when interacting with a brand. Social influences refer to the consumer adjusting their behaviour and ideas in relation to those around them, especially when they want to become more like certain people. Personal factors are characteristics that naturally change over time and affect the perceptions people have about their possessions

and activities. These include life cycle and life style amongst other things. Psychological factors refer to the various ways a person thinks and the reasons behind them (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016).

Audience refers to anyone, individual or otherwise, that the brand communicates with. The audience can vary in status, i.e. current or potential audiences, and size. Brands must understand the audiences. The communication strategies must be focused towards persuading the audience to behave in ways that help the brand achieve an outcome. It is also then wise to consider the six steps of the buyer readiness stages in relation to the target audience to fulfil any missing steps in the process. For example, in order for an audience to formulate an idea regarding the brand they need to be aware of it, therefore the strategy would be central to creating awareness (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). Animation is a communication strategy (Selby, 2013) and there are factors affecting the engagement and perception of movies (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). In the research to follow audience will be investigated through qualitative data collection methods as well (Nieuwenhuis, 2019).

Theoretical foundation

The theory being used is narrative transportation theory, which is a theory that explores the relationship between audience and story, citing factors like characterization and presentation as key for influencing media (Neimand, 2018). However, there are other factors at work in the movie industry, such as when it is released and the critical reception (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006).

Narrative transportation theory is a theory that describes the influence that stories have on people. This is used to measure a story's influence. This theory is particularly concerned with the engagement factors and how this causes audiences to change to be more like the characters. The three factors suggested are empathy, character identification and mental imagery. Empathy means making the audience understand the characters to the extent that the audiences thinks as the characters both in the story and afterwards in their own lives. Aiding in the understanding is the character identification. This means to cultivate similar qualities in characters with the qualities of the audience. Mental imagery, the art of portraying the scenarios through imagery, sound and language, is used to gain, maintain and retain attention kept on the story, so long as it is convincing (Neimand, 2018). Animation aims to use its techniques of imagery manipulation and storytelling to transport audiences and resonate with them. The very art of animation itself is targeted at making characters and ideas seem alive (Selby, 2013). Pixar, especially, wants to make stories that audiences can understand and animation that is convincing (Porter & Susman, 2000).

Additionally, narrative transportation can overlap with advancing technology in the storytelling world. Transmedia is a technological advancement that carries a story over multiple platforms. It can engage by using interactive, culturally relevant stories and narrative transportation can measure that engagement. This is relevant to the study as it has its roots in the film industry (Bourgeon-Renault, Derbaix, Jarrier & Petr, 2019) and the animated industry is concerned with advances in technology (Selby, 2013) and engaging audiences (Porter & Susman, 2000). Animation has also become transferable over multiple devices (Selby, 2013).

Literature

Literature reviews cover several areas of interest relevant to the study, such as animation in general, Pixar and the potential success factors for the industry. Literature will include animation guidelines (Selby, 2013), Pixar movies as a general case-study (Rosing, 2016), Pixar's brand (Fisk, 2015) and audience (Scott, 2014), and animation advice (Porter & Susman, 2000).

Animation

Animation is an audio-visual artform that incorporates storytelling and camera techniques to create imagery that appears active. It is creative and fluid, in that it transcends the confines of physical reality to convey a message that can potentially emotionally resonate with audiences. This also means that it can communicate ideas and information graphically and effectively. The visual nature can transcend otherwise divided perspectives, such as appealing to audiences in different countries and from different backgrounds (Selby, 2013). Animating movies is expensive but the return on investment can be worth the efforts, especially when created for the appropriate audience with the appropriate techniques, for example when an animated property is adapted for an overseas audience (Lee, 2011). It is important to note that demand and interest in the industry wavers easily (Yoon, 2017).

It also depends on the varying backgrounds of its internal community of creatives to craft the final product and message. The community is composed of disciplines such as acting, music and design amongst others. The workforce of animation goes through a rigorous, many-step process of creating an animated product. Some of the steps include crafting and pitching ideas, story planning, sound design and following the guidelines of competent animating. All these steps are contained within the three stages of development, which are production, the pre-production and post-production stages (Selby, 2013). Workmanship can also be outsourced from international parties in order to create animation (Yoon, 2017).

Another important aspect of animation is that it has a close relationship with technology and technological advances. It can also be incorporated into various other industries such as gaming, promotion, television and movies and is growing in application and usage. It can also be viewed flexibly and broadly, on different devices (Selby, 2013). Of the multiple types of animation, CGI animation is of particular interest to the case study. The term means computer graphic imagery. It uses software as part of its creative animating process and is a desired choice in multiple, global industries due to its profitability and efficiency. It has subsequently also redefined the success strategies in the animation industry. Other changes in the industry also include company mergers and expansion into potential markets, licensing and distribution policies have shifted, and international influences and co-operation are employed (Yoon, 2017).

Pixar

The brand Pixar can be understood according to the Brand Identity Planning Model, created by David Aaker. The model uses strategic brand analysis, which combines the consumer, competitor and personal analysis of the brand. Then this information is used to inform the identity of the brand. Firstly, the brand essence needs to be identified. This is the foundational qualities that permeate the rest of the brand

identity and can be used to create value for the consumers and differentiate the brand from consumers. Secondly, the brand's core identity which is a more specific and directional understanding of the brand qualities that can be translated in a communication strategy. Finally, the extended brand identity which is the disclosure of what the brand is and is not. It is also the sum of the elements of brand identity (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

From these aspects of the brand identity to consider include understanding the brand as a person, as an organization, as a product and as a symbol. Within each of these are various sub-categories, like product scope, local or global status, the consumers' relationships with the brand and the brand heritage. The next stages of the Brand Identity Planning Model, describe the functional, self-expressive and functional benefits that the brand delivers and the credibility that is awarded to it by the interactions with other brands (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

Pixar is an animation studio, that specializes in CGI animation for films of varying lengths, while using specialized software (MarketLine, 2020). Its movie Toy Story was the first CGI, full length film (Selby, 2013). It is highly regarded by its competitors (Grover, 2005), which includes DreamWorks Animation LLC, Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc. and Blue Sky Studios, Inc. Many films have been made by Pixar, such as the Toy Story sequels, Wall-E, Up and The Incredibles but the three that will be explored in detail to understand the Pixar company are Ratatouille, Inside Out and Finding Nemo (MarketLine, 2020). Pixar has had significant influence on its industry of CGI, encouraging others to use it due to their success (Porter & Susman, 2000).

Pixar's films address families and broadly defined audiences. It aims to create quality, intelligent films that are universally received (Scott, 2014). It seeks connection, communication and reaction from audiences while utilizing narrative, animation and characters (Porter & Susman, 2000). Pixar as a business aims to create an internal culture that strengthens the studio from within. It aims to create an environment where honesty, trust and communication can thrive, and develop strategies for problem solving, failure and risk aversion, as well as product delivery. The multidisciplinary structure within Pixar prioritises the employees and uses many techniques when crafting a film, such as focussing on the characters, the pacing and the visual design. Pixar also claims that the reasons for its success is the decision to make unconventional films that contradict the monotony of the industry trends (Catmull, 2008). One source argues that the narrative and visuals is the competitive advantage of the brand (Corliss & Keegan, 2007). Pixar has had a continuous success streak, when it was younger, and has a history of a high box office appeal (Scott, 2014).

They strategically create discussions around profound topics like the death and morality. They make it accessible for children to be included and unlike others, Pixar, does not allow age restriction to confine it or its messages (Scott, 2014). Finding Nemo and Finding Dory are two popular films that can be cited as being powerful and resonant for their educational potential. They are both adventure films revolving around marine biology and marine biology-related subjects and are portrayed considerably accurately. The films, to a degree, also address themes of disability. It has been proposed that these films can teach subjects related to marine biology and

conservation, in a welcomed manner (Crewe, 2018). Similarly, *Inside Out* is a film about personified emotions that can help teach young audiences about emotional management strategies. The film has been described as being able to convey the message of emotional balance in an intelligent and resonant way. It has been suggested that it could be helpful for adults to watch as well. It is an example of a Pixar film that creates discussion around a complicated idea and provokes thought (Lavery, 2017).

Pixar takes significant strides to produce quality films, especially with realistic and empathetic character designs. Informed design decisions and technical formulae were used when creating characters and their portrayal and motion. Many small details were considered from understanding the audience to characterization to environmental storytelling. The technical animation and creative decisions were strategically designed by Pixar to deliver quality (Porter & Susman, 2000).

Ratatouille is a film that highlights the visual communication elements involved in the creation process, by working around a language barrier. The film is about a rat, forming a partnership with a human, to become a great Parisian chef (Corliss & Keegan, 2007). This is evidence of Pixar's unconventional storytelling strategy at work (Catmull, 2008). The message is about wish-fulfilment despite adversary and doubt. The film began with core ideas, then conceptualized a story around them, placing emphasis on the physical communication of characters to create believable, emotional and empathetic ideas. The conceptualization process was strongly linked to the internal culture prevalent in the studio (Corliss & Keegan, 2007).

In order to narrow down the scope of the research being presented only one movie franchise has been created by Pixar will be used to explore the themes necessary for the research study. *Toy Story* was the first Pixar movie (Selby, 2013) and it continued making sequels for up to twenty-four years after the original. During that time changes, especially in technology and presentation, were utilized. This is due to a seemingly prevalent desire in the company to continuously advance. Thus, these films act as an example of Pixar's strength both as an animated movie creator and a brand. This is the relevance of the selection of this franchise (Crewe, 2019).

Overall, the emergent themes that appear from the *Toy Story* franchise is anthropomorphism, relationships and idea of existence in general. Some are sceptical of the subject matter of personifying a product, more specifically toys. They believe that this contributes to the promotion of purchasing material objects to find satisfaction. The films take the product lifecycle and make it part of the narrative as well. However, the success of the films is undeniable as the third alone was, at a time, one of the most financially successful films. It earned over a billion US dollars and it reached a global scale. The franchise is considered a cultural and a historic icon. The first instalment was the first computer generated feature length film and subsequently changed the industry of animation altogether. Critical reviews and the staff that created the films cite the success factors of the films to be sophisticated narrative and the reach of broad audiences (Fowler III, Lanier & Rader, 2013).

The fourth film in the franchise, *Toy Story 4*, was considered an unnecessary addition. Many have varied opinions of this film. It had elements that were enjoyable but its very inclusion and the thematic changes that it makes to the overall story

garner strong, somewhat negative feelings. This would make it a useful control sample for the film analysis of this franchise. Since, it has mixed reviews it can be assumed to have an overall neutral reception and the other films in the franchise can be compared to it in order to highlight their positive aspects. It is particularly beneficial then that this is the last film of the series (Zacharek, 2019).

Possible Influences

It is first important to understand the nature of influences. Influences can be personal, cultural or psychological and can be affected by external factors. Thus it is important to first identify the relationship between the consumers or audience, the marketing environment and the brand or studio. Navigation of and reaction to the marketing environment is essential for brands. The macro-environment of a brand contains external, independent, positive or negative variables that can change audiences' perspectives as well as the brands communication strategies when addressing them. They can occasionally be predictable but awareness and tracking of them is important for staying relevant in a brand's respective industry. There are six but the ones most relevant to the study are demographics, economy, technology and culture (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016).

The demographic factors include age, family structure and geography and other changeable human characteristics. These factors affect the buying decision making process. Brands need to understand these in order to communicate with audiences in ways that are relevant and effective. Family structure is a highly influential factor in the decision making process, particularly if children are part of it (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). Pester power is an idea that children can influence their parents or guardians' buying decisions and decision making with threats of unhappiness. Advertising can also encourage it (Lawlor & Prothero, 2011).

Economic factors describe the fluctuation of the general flow of money and subsequently, the frugality or flexibility of consumers' spending habits. Technological factors describe the radical advancement of technology and the potential threats and opportunities that it could pose to brands and industries (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). This is related to animation because of the technological advancement that is CGI animation. It, as stated before, is a desirable, profitable and efficient change that has impacted the industry (Yoon, 2017). Pixar also has a special relationship with CGI animation (Selby, 2013). Finally, cultural factors are closely connected to the behaviour of people, posing both opportunities and threats to brands. However, occasionally, culture can change at the behest of businesses, for example through the movie and music industry (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). Another example of this includes Pixar who, evidently, created a powerful influence on the perception of audience, as there has been a subsequent rise of attention towards the fish species in the films, *Finding Nemo* and *Finding Dory* (Crewe, 2018).

There are some factors in the decision making and perceptions of audiences that have been identified and suggested. Multiple factors can overlap and work together to bring about an impact. The first set includes watching the film itself, familiarity, which means whether or not the film is an extension of a previously existing property, and social proof, which is the imitation of others that cause behaviour change. It is important to be aware that many of the following influences are debatable and inconclusive. These include critical reviews, depending on the circumstances that

they were released under, word of mouth advertising, awards, season of release, advertising and the genre of the film (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). Another source does speak of the power of word of mouth as a factor of behavioural change, citing trust between people as the reason for this (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). The controversial nature of these influences aids in understanding the importance of the study, which aims to conclusively find evidence of the success factors, but being aware of these suggestions is helpful for guiding the research (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006).

From the research gathered in the literature review it is also evident to see the conceptualized terms come forward. The terms narrative and presentation are prevalent as the core aspects of Pixar's brand and can be carried over into the Toy Story franchise (Fowler III, Lanier & Rader, 2013). The impact of the audience and the connection between them and the media they consume was also prevalent, when unpacking the various possible factors of why they perceive media the way that they do. This is also the evidence that the terms influence and perception are also dominant in the research (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). Other areas where the audience and brand relationship is key is in the understanding of the marketing macro-environment (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016).

3 METHODOLOGY

Paradigms

Paradigms or traditions are researchers' mindsets and perceptions regarding subjects, which act as guidelines for the research. Paradigms or traditions are concepts that provide a model for how interpretation and research methodology should be perceived. The research study should be reframed within the relevant paradigms to better understand the nature of the problem, for example, identifying the research questions. The paradigm being used is interpretivism, which puts forward the notion that humans are dynamic and complex. The environment that they find themselves in is the primary cause of their changing nature. Therefore interpretivism analyses the perceptions of people in relation to their environment. Interpretivism is the study of subjective human behaviour along with the factors causing certain behaviours, changing them and the process of understanding behaviour. This is applicable to the research topic because (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014) some important traits of audiences in the animation industry is their flexible levels of interest (Yoon, 2017) and the factors that aid in the decision making for engagement vary in the movie industry (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). The research study addresses the perceptions and decisions made by people in relation to animated movies. Their decisions ultimately determine the success of this industry and thus these decisions need to be understood (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). This is fitting because good storytelling is a subjective notion. It is not uniformly reviewed and received by others and the perspectives of the audience are influenced by various factors (Neimand, 2018).

The various positions of interpretivism are epistemological, ontological, metatheoretical, methodological and axiological (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). Going further, interpretivism, on an epistemological position, diagnoses niche experiences, on an ontological position, explores the factors influencing experiences and thus the data collected, on a metatheoretical position, revolves around storytelling regarding the subjects and concluding with a theory, and on an axiological position, examines the researcher as another research participant (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

Epistemology is the idea that the actions of people are based on their thinking and therefore understanding their thinking is a priority. It maintains, however, that these thoughts are specific and subjective and that is a key consideration in the research (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). As stated before there are various reasons that people engage with movies, but these reasons are many and vary, and thus are ultimately difficult to draw conclusions from (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006), therefore understanding the epistemological position of interpretivism forms the primary focus of the study (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014).

The ontological position discusses the dynamic perceptions people have in relation to their environment. Perceptions are constructs that can be changed and are innately different from each other (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). This is compatible with the foundational idea of the study, which explains the various influences acting on people's decision making when watching movies (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006) and this therefore is also an important area of consideration for the research objectives.

The metatheoretical position uses qualitative information to create a highly descriptive narrative of the participants and their circumstances. This information is then compiled into a theory that can be communicated to others (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). This is the ultimate aim of the research study that will be revisited in the conclusion of the research findings.

The methodological position of interpretivism is about gathering qualitative information and the data collection methods from participants. The researcher's perceptions can also be included to add value to the study. There is also an understanding relationship between the researcher and participants that needs to be created. The axiological position is about creating value through the synthesis of researcher and participants' perspectives on the research topic (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). The aim of the research is understanding the perspectives of the participants and this is how the methodological and axiological position of interpretivism is connected to the study.

Research Approach

A brief overview of the research design began with understanding the context of the topic of animation and the problems within the field. Then the various areas of exploration, such as the research problem, questions and objectives were formulated. Then the study used desktop research and literature reviews to form the basis of the study. The literature that was used explored areas like animation guidelines (Selby, 2013), Pixar movies as a general case-study (Rosing, 2016), Pixar's company, creative process and audience (Scott, 2014), the specific franchise and the movie landscape in general (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). Then qualitative questionnaires were sent via digital communication to recipients known to have ideal characteristics. They were asked about their thoughts on various areas relating to animation, movies and Pixar. They were asked to share the questionnaires with others with similar experiences, using the snowball sampling method (Pascoe, 2014). The ideal number of respondents were reached and ultimately thirty responses were gathered. The information gathered was analysed and further compared with the desktop and document research to verify the validity of the information and strengthen or challenge the claims put forward in the primary research. The analysis method used was content analysis. Theories and models were then be created using the conclusions from the analysis. Throughout the process the ethical considerations of the study were being observed and the validity and trustworthiness was examined before creating the final conclusion.

The methodology is based largely around integrated qualitative research methods to understand the full scope of the issue and subsequently to ensure that the core insights will be accurately determined from the information gathered. The research plan for this study is complex and broad as it seeks to understand the true nature of the perceptions of people towards animated movies and thus it would benefit the researcher to gather as much information as possible (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). This research is also inductive research and does not assume an answer, instead it seeks to find answers (Caulifield, 2021) that are somewhat unknown to the industry (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006).

Population and Sampling

The population parameters, which include scope and necessary traits, are dependent on whether the participants have interacted with Pixar, especially their movies and the total amount of people in the population cannot be determined (Pascoe, 2014). The questionnaire specified the four films in the Toy Story franchise. The age group is loosely defined as Pixar targets families, comprised of various ages (Scott, 2014) but reasonably it should fall between 18 and 40 years of age, and potentially higher. There are several reasons why this was the age group chosen. The broadness of the age group allowed for research into how different generations of audiences perceive entertainment, how media has aged over time and for older audiences speak on behalf of underaged audiences' viewership. Older audiences could also attest to the broader view of factors that determining whether a movie is watched, for example price, pester power, celebrity status etc. There is also an ethical concern when involving minors in research studies therefore asking their guardians or parents instead was used to address that concern (Field & Behrman, 2004).

The sample method for this study was non-probability snowball sampling. This was chosen because specific characteristics that are not easily identified, such as interest, investment and experience with animated movies, were necessary to the study. This method also made gathering additional participants easier to identify. This sample method also was useful as it automatically generated more participants, which will overcome the ethical limitation and possibility of having insufficient participants for the study (Pascoe, 2014).

The target population size that was proposed had ideally thirty participants at minimum. This was to ensure a sufficient number of responses to gain clear insights into the problem without reaching data saturation. For this same reason, the sample size was reduced from the originally proposed sixty respondents to thirty respondents, before the questionnaires were sent out. The questionnaire was sent via digital communication methods to the respondents to make it easier for the questions to be answered and for the information to be accessed by the researcher and collated. Additionally, the available population fell within a South African audience (Pascoe, 2014).

The questionnaire asked for detailed perspectives, evaluations and opinions on the Toy Story franchise as well as other movie related subject matter. Google Form was used to create a questionnaire. Email and digital messaging platforms were used to reach and communicate with the participants easily and remotely. Contacting respondents directly and personally was a limitation for the study due to the pandemic, therefore the remote digital method was chosen.

There were two sections in the questionnaire. The first one targeted the age range of 18 to 28 years and the second one targeted the age range of 29 to 40+ years. This was due to the likely differences in perceptions and interactions that the two age groups would have with the media they consume (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). The first audience would have been children at the formation of the Pixar brand (Crewe, 2019) and therefore, they would be able to attest for the aspects of the franchise that stood out and resonated with them after several years. This age group could speak to the potential lasting impression of the brand. This could account for the brand equity aspect of differentiation, especially when asked to compare these films to

others in the same industry or category (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). The second group, should they have had children, could speak to the various factors they consider when choosing movies for them to watch.

The further segmentation of the age groups in the research method was necessary as the various age groups as well as their accompanying life stages and roles inform decision making, according to the Model of Consumer Behaviour. This, therefore, justified the additional questioning of older audiences to broaden the scope and type of information gathered (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). Otherwise, the questions were largely the same for the two age groups in the questionnaires.

Data Collection

There are several data collection methods being used in the research method and there were two parts to the study. These parts are the primary and secondary research. The methods used were all qualitative research data collection methods and the ones that were applicable to this study include documents, desktop research, literature reviews and qualitative questionnaires. Literature reviews were used for identifying trends and the history of the research topic. Documents, which broadly refers to any transcribed material, were used for obtaining detailed, descriptive information (Nieuwenhuis, 2019). Forming the knowledge base for the remaining portion of the study, questionnaires which mostly contain open-ended questions were used in order to decode the inner workings of audiences' minds. Likert scales were used to quantify descriptive information easily (Maree & Pietersen, 2019). The information gathered from the participants addressed certain factors pertaining to the animation industry, such as critical reviews and their personal feedback after having watched any of the movies in the Toy Story franchise themselves (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). A potential challenge surrounding the data collection included inaccuracy, due to the context in which the information was gathered, thus additional preventative measures, like appropriate interpretation and objectivity, and follow-up questions were taken (Nieuwenhuis, 2019).

It is important to disclose that two sections in questionnaire had targeted two different age groups, with slightly adjusted questions. This was to gain a broader scope of information. The research questions for the questionnaires were informed by the research that was conducted in other parts of this research process, especially the literature review. Rough drafts of the questionnaires were created before sending them out. A link to the final unanswered online questionnaire is provided in annex B.

The rough draft of the first questionnaire aimed at ages 18-28 years:

- Age:
- Have you seen any films in the Toy Story franchise?
- When did you watch this/these film(s)?
- What was your overall impression on a scale of one to five? With one being thoroughly disliked the experience and five being thoroughly enjoyed the experience?
- Was there anything, positive or negative, that resonated with you about this/these film(s)?

- Would you watch this/these film(s) again and if so, what would motivate you to do so?
- In general, what motivates you to watch a film?
- What do you like about movies in general?

The rough draft of the second questionnaire aimed at ages 29-40+ years:

- Age:
- Do you or have you ever taken children to watch any film in the Toy Story franchise?
- Did you watch this/these film(s) with them?
- What was your overall impression on a scale of one to five? With one being thoroughly disliked the experience and five being thoroughly enjoyed the experience?
- Was there anything, positive or negative, that resonated with you about this/these film(s)?
- In general, what motivated your decision to watch this/these film(s)?
- What do you like about movies in general?

Primary research is a research method where the researcher gathers specific answers for their research questions. Questionnaires are a form of primary research. The benefits of using primary research include collecting information that is unique and is unavailable elsewhere and intended to answer a specific question. The information is more recent and reliable. The method of gathering the research provides greater control and a competitive advantage, which is helpful for a specific brand, in this case Pixar. There are also several disadvantages that presented themselves in the research process but they were ultimately overcome (Valcheva, 2021).

The form that the primary research took was a qualitative questionnaire. The reasons for using a questionnaire include easy gathering of a lot of information that can be compared, which was particularly useful to a study where gathering multiple perceptions and answers was key to solving the research objective. Anonymity is easy to maintain as well with a questionnaire, hence another reason why it was chosen for data collection (Picincu, 2018). There are different kinds of questions that could be used when creating a questionnaire, such as open-ended questions and Likert scales, both of which were included in the questionnaire of this study (Maree & Pietersen, 2019). Occasionally, close ended questions were used for gathering information that did not need to be explained further, such as the age group that the respondents fall under.

Secondary research is preexisting information that can be useful for establishing credible data. It can be gathered from a number of different sources but the ones that were used for this research include books and online sources as these yielded a lot of relevant information (Valcheva, 2021). Information from the literature review also form part of the study. Literature reviews are beneficial for gathering background information and trends and this is also how the literature review information was used in the study, providing context for the answers in the questionnaire and validating the answers provided by the respondents (Nieuwenhuis, 2019).

Data Analysis

In addition to understanding the information according to existing frameworks and models, a more specific data analysis method needed to be used. The chosen data analysis method for this research is content analysis which creates meaning through patterns and repetition within research. Words and communication artefacts are collated, interpreted and dissected. Information from the audience was compared with information from critics and animation advice to create a model or guideline and other information from the literature review (Warren, 2020). The unit of analysis for this study was thirty individual responses from the questionnaires, at its minimum.

After the information was gathered the data analysis was applied. Content analysis can involve coding electronically or manually. The way that the data is analyzed can potentially impact the researcher's mindset and there are benefits to both. Manual content analysis allows for more careful analysis while the electronic coding is easier. Ultimately, the data was coded manually, to be cautious of potential errors in the coding process that might get overlooked electronically (SAGE Publishing, 2008). However, the information was largely transcribed onto a laptop, for clearer layout, easier colour coding and table making. It was easier to rearrange information and faster to create diagrams and tables digitally.

The words and themes of the raw data, gathered from the questions were color coded and given labels that best described the types of information gathered. In order to categorize the information better, tables were made and the information was grouped. Then diagrams were created, using the model of content analysis as a guideline, to compile the themes and theorizing portion. This model can be seen in throughout annex B (SAGE Publishing, 2008).

Since content analysis identifies trends and frequency (Bhasin, 2020), the information used to abstract the raw data into a theory included the most frequent answers (SAGE Publishing, 2008). This method was used with the more quantitative questions of the questionnaire as well, but with less steps, because there is less to interpret. The categorizing and coding sections are combined and there are no subcategories. There is no abstracting of themes either (SAGE Publishing, 2008).

Pixar's brand was also plotted on a diagram of Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model. This model can be seen in annex B. This was to better understand the brand and its offerings in the context of the research (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000). The information from the secondary sources were used to describe the brand.

4 FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

Interpretation of findings

This research revolves around stories and the reasons audiences might find an animated movie engaging. There are several layers of information that needed to be addressed. Firstly, the secondary research needed to be unpacked and understood. This research incorporated narrative transportation theory, which states that a story's influence on and engagement with people is caused by empathy, the characters and the mental imagery that is invoked. The first two factors work together to ensure audiences understand and connect with the characters. The last factor considers the presentation of the story, using various tools like sound and imagery, to stimulate engagement (Neimand, 2018).

There are also different types of influences on consumer behaviour and perspective, including personal, cultural or psychological and external. Some of the external influences in the marketing environment are demographics, economy, technology and culture (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). There are also various suggested factors that motivate audience's perceptions and choice of films and subsequently, the success of the films. There can also be several different factors acting together at once, content, social influence, reviews, advertising, genre and surrounding circumstances (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006).

Where the theory and the various factors are addressed is in relation to the Pixar brand and its films. It is important to understand the extent to which Pixar is responsible for the factors at play. Pixar's success is speculated to be attributed to their unique storytelling methods as well as the strengths that are cultivated by the internal corporate culture (Catmull, 2008). The films that the company makes are considered intelligent (Scott, 2014), educational to a degree (Crewe, 2018) and emotionally profound (Lavery, 2017). There is evidence of careful consideration for the visual and story elements in the production of Pixar's movies (Corliss & Keegan, 2007), with finer details being accounted for (Porter & Susman, 2000). The first (Fandango, 2021), third (Fandango, 2021) and fourth film all have a reoccurring theme of good story writing (Zacharek, 2019). The second film's reviews discuss the quality of visuals as a positive aspect (Fandango, 2021). The reviews for the first film also mention that the characters are likeable (Fandango, 2021). The Toy Story franchise as a whole reinforces the notion of mature writing and the films are engaging, especially to a broad spectrum of people (Fowler III, Lanier & Rader, 2013).

Narrative transportation theory has proven true within the context of the research, as character and presentation proved to be resonant aspects of the films (Neimand, 2018). The visual components of the second film were said to be its strong point according to reviews (Fandango, 2021) and writing was an advantage for the series as a whole (Fowler III, Lanier & Rader, 2013). Characters that can be connected with by the audience were also mentioned in the reviews of the first film (Fandango, 2021).

Secondly, the primary research needed to be addressed. The primary research confirms aspects of the secondary research. The franchise has a history of being successful (Fowler III, Lanier & Rader, 2013) and the primary research was centered around the Toy Story franchise and how audiences felt about them and perceived

them. After analyzing the primary information, using content analysis and creating theories to conclude the analysis (SAGE Publishing, 2008), the following can be surmised from the information gathered. The majority of people enjoyed the films and the overall way that these films were made is what tends to resonate with people. This means that character, story and animation stand out. People are generally motivated to watch films in general by several factors working together, but the most common include the way the movies are made, the advertisement and the need for entertainment. The majority of people tend to watch the Toy Story films at multiple points in their life but largely during childhood. Most people would re-watch the films and the primary reason is for entertainment reasons but also for the bonding experience. Nostalgia and children were also reoccurring themes in the primary research. The content of the story is a prevalent consideration for allowing their children to watch a movie. Additionally, since the story-telling was an important aspect in the brand's success and enjoyment according to the generalized primary research, this may also reinforce the claims that the unconventional storytelling as a result of the brand's internal culture may be true as well (Catmull, 2008).

Furthermore, personal, psychological and external reasons did present themselves in the primary research. The external factors in particular included demographic and technology. Demographic is closely linked to age (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016) and most respondents said that they were young when they watched the films and would watch them again for nostalgia related reasons and for their children. Also, special consideration for the content of the films was given when considering films for children. These would be considered personal and psychological reasons. Technology became a relevant factor (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016) when respondents mentioned that the way that the films were animated was important to them. The latter point reinforced the enthusiasm for the production value in the reviews of the second film (Fandango, 2021).

The primary research also found that people have multiple reasons for watching a film. The main ones include advertising, entertainment needs and the overall production of the film, with the story and character aspects being mentioned the most often. The majority said that they had watched the films at different ages, mostly during childhood, however and would re-watch the films for entertainment, bonding, nostalgia and for their children. This reinforces the statement that the films are engaging for a broad range of audiences (Fowler III, Lanier & Rader, 2013). The content of the story is a prevalent consideration for allowing their children to watch a movie, according to the primary research. This confirms that several factors can work together to drive people's decisions and perceptions with regards to films, which in this case were content, social influence, advertising, genre and the surrounding circumstances (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). Overall, the information from primary and secondary research was consistent and a clear link between them could be found.

Findings in Context

The research objective of the study revolves around understanding the success factors of animated movies. Therefore, the theory that the study works with is narrative transportation theory, which describes the factors that makes people engage with stories (Neimand, 2018) and so the questions asked in the questionnaire were to assess if these factors are true and accurate to a real life

example. Questions were left open for the audience to freely state what their connections with films and the Toy Story franchise were and as stated earlier, the theory was proven true for the context of this research. The study also used Toy Story as a case study which means that the results of the study act more as a representative which can potentially be applied to larger bodies of animated work.

The trustworthiness of the research was enhanced by exploring various research tools and data collection methods to gather as much data as possible and create a stronger argument that is confirmed by various sources. Gathering Big Data is a strategy that is utilized by brands to understand consumers and gain insight into catering the brand deliverables as best as possible to them. It incorporates as many data gathering methods as possible and that are available. Therefore, inspiration was taken from this method of research gathering and was ultimately helpful (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016). This was done to ensure the minimization of ethical concerns, thus making the research, analysis and conclusion more trustworthy.

However, the context of the research may also be connected with ethical concerns. These need to be disclosed and considered when formulating the conclusion of the research. Firstly, there were only 30 respondents to the questionnaires and while this was a sufficient amount of people to avoid data saturation, the sampling method however, which was snowball sampling, is not easy to expand to a broader population. The nature of snowball sampling involves gathering information from recommended respondents which were made to participate by other respondents, thus there was a degree of chance and bias taken in the study, particularly in the data collection (Pascoe, 2014). This potentially harms the overall goal of the study and that is why initially, a higher number of participants was considered to reduce biased results. However, the information gathered could be used to encourage further research that may be more accurate for the research objective. Additionally, the available population fits within a South African context which means that the data gathered is true for this region and further research can possibly expand into new areas and more accurate results can be determined for an international model of research. The potential issues with the results of the primary research, i.e. potentially biased results (Pascoe, 2014), were addressed when they were compared with the secondary research, as claims were relatively consistent across the two areas of research. Therefore, a conclusion can still be drawn but to ensure ethical and accurate results and interpretation, the conclusion should be treated as a suggestion.

5 CONCLUSION

Research Question, Problem, Hypothesis/Objectives Addressed

The conclusions drawn from the research answers the research questions and fulfill the research objectives to a degree. The research question is: what are the factors that contribute to the success of animated movies?. The objective was to uncover these factors (Bezuidenhout & Davis, 2014). The sub-questions to the study are: how do critics and the general publics' opinions about animated movies compare?, what can be learnt from Pixar's films? And what are the trends in the animated movie industry? (Bezuidenhout & Davis, 2014). With the information gathered a guideline for creating a successful story can be created for studios to use to gain a competitive advantage.

Firstly, the sub-questions were answered, as it was revealed that the critics and general publics' opinions of the films were similar and created a clearer understanding of the main reasons that people watched animated films, at least within the context of this research. The general consensus was that animation, story and characters are a priority when planning a film. Secondly, the sub-question regarding animation trends has changed slightly over the course of the research as a more relevant question to ask would be: what are the trends in viewership with regards to watching films? The answer to this question includes considering factors like content, social influence, reviews, advertising, the film genre and the external circumstances (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). Thirdly, the answer to the sub-question regarding what can be learnt from Pixar, includes understanding that there is an internal company culture that influences the nature of their stories (Catmull, 2008) and that their films are well written (Scott, 2014) and well-made visually (Corliss & Keegan, 2007). As the success of the Toy Story franchise was reflected in secondary research (Fowler III, Lanier & Rader, 2013) and in primary research, it is recommended that more studios learn from Pixar.

Overall, the main research question was answered, by considering what critics and the public stated about the films and using this information and a media square format a model of success can be made to fulfil the research objective. A media square is a diagram that is used to rationalise a budget by assessing the various considerations in media planning and how much they contribute to the success of the campaign. Using this as inspiration, a diagram or table for the success factors of an animated film can be drawn up (Bishop, 2017).

Areas to invest in	Areas to consider
Animation, character and story	Entertainment needs
Advertising	The influence of children
Creating social Influence	Nostalgia
	Social Influence

Ethical Considerations

Various ethics needed continuous adherence to for moral, legal and reliable research. The ones that are especially applicable to this study include respondents' consent, bias nullification, accurate interpretation, authenticity and transparency (Louw, 2014). To address these concerns in the research, participation consent was asked for, researcher's bias was continuously examined to ensure it was not

influencing the results (Louw, 2014), and detailed information pertinent to the participants' wellbeing was disclosed upfront. Challenges surrounding the data collection included inaccuracy, due to the context in which the information was gathered, thus additional preventative measures, like appropriate interpretation and objectivity, and follow-up questions needed to be taken (Nieuwenhuis, 2019). The steps for addressing inaccurate interpretation include reevaluating the aims of the research, then creating categories for the information and then have additional parties verify conclusions and interpretations (McNamara, s.a.). As previously stated, the risk of underage participation is minimised by targeting their more informed guardians directly (Field & Behrman, 2004).

There are various models, frameworks and guideline that are being used in the study were used to help improve the credibility and accuracy of the findings. A summary of these include the Model of Consumer Behaviour (Armstrong & Kotler, 2016), Aaker's Brand Identity Model (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000) and possible existing success factors for movies that have been identified in the literature review.

The limitations of the study include the fact that a pandemic made data collection difficult and limited communication channels. Therefore the respondents had to be contacted digitally. This proved beneficially in the end because the questionnaires could be distributed easily and recording written responses was also easy. However, it was difficult to create a relationship with the respondents which limits the methodological position of interpretivism, therefore some research value may have been lost in the process (Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014). The other limitation is identifying the sample as the characteristics needed are not easy to identify without prior knowledge. However the way that this is addressed is through the snowball sampling method. This method, while helpful, may have caused the information gathered to be biased and therefore prohibiting a definitive conclusion from being drawn from the research (Pascoe, 2014).

In conclusion, using the research gathered over the course of this study, the main factors for the success of animated movies are overall speculated to be the animation quality, story and characters as well as external factors like advertising, social influences, nostalgia and entertainment needs. This is due to the fact that people determine the success of films, and these factors drive their motivations to watch films and their overall engagement (Hennig-Thurau, Houston & Walsh, 2006). To gather this information Pixar and the Toy Story franchise were used as a case study. In future others should learn from the films and studio. The advertising and social influence are a factor that can be propagated (Hayes, 2021). Finally factors that brands cannot control like nostalgia and the entertainment needs of the audience. Brands can take these into consideration when releasing films and crafting a message for advertising, however. It is important to note that further research into this topic is advised as the answers gathered are limited to a South African audience and the conclusion should be treated as a suggestion.

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Research Purpose/Objective	The objective is to uncover about what makes animated movies successful to create a guideline for creating higher quality movies consistently as a competitive advantage.
Research Problem	To create continuously high-quality content for audiences and to give a competitive advantage to animation brands and definitively determine how.
Primary Research Question	What factors contribute to the success of animated movies?
Research Rationale	Animation has an effect on people and therefore is important to better understand it (Selby, 2013). The industry is also highly competitive (Grover, 2005).
Seminal Authors/Sources	Hennig-Thurau, T., Houston, M. and Walsh, G. 2006. Determinants of Motion Picture Box Office and Profitability: An Interrelationship Approach. <i>Review of Managerial Science</i> . [Online]. Available at: https://www.marketingcenter.de/sites/mcm/files/downloads/research/lmm/literature/hennig-thurau_et_al_2007_rms_determinants_of_motion_picture_box_office_and_profitability_an_interrelationship_approach.pdf [Accessed 28 November 2021]. Selby, A. 2013. Animation. London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd. [eBook]. Available on EBSCOhost at: https://ezproxy.iielearn.ac.za/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xww&AN=910069&site=ehost-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_2 [Accessed 28 November 2021].
Literature Review – Conceptual Framework	Theme 1: Audience/Subcultures/language/communication Theme 2: Technology and innovation Theme 3: Social innovation and social entrepreneurship
Paradigm	Interpretivism
Approach	Qualitative
Data Collection Method(s)	Qualitative questionnaires, documents and desktop research.
Ethics	Consent was an ethical concern, which was fixed by asking for consent. Transparency was another; it was fixed by making intentions and relevant information known to respondents. Accuracy was ensured by finding as much information as possible.
Key findings	There are several reasons that people watch animated movies that work together. Some include animation, story, character, entertainment, social influence and advertisement
References	Selby, A. 2013. Animation. London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd. [eBook]. Available on EBSCOhost at: https://ezproxy.iielearn.ac.za/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xww&AN=910069&site=ehost-live&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_2 [Accessed 28 November 2021]. Neimand, A. 2018. Science of story building: Narrative transportation, 10 May 2018. [Online]. Available at: https://medium.com/science-of-story-building/science-of-story-building-narrative-transportation-923b2701e286 [Accessed 28 November 2021]. Hennig-Thurau, T., Houston, M. and Walsh, G. 2006. Determinants of Motion Picture Box Office and Profitability: An Interrelationship Approach. <i>Review of Managerial Science</i> . [Online]. Available at: https://www.marketingcenter.de/sites/mcm/files/downloads/research/lmm/literature/hennig-thurau_et_al_2007_rms_determinants_of_motion_picture_box_office_and_profitability_an_interrelationship_approach.pdf [Accessed 28 November 2021].
Population	The population is between the ages of 18-40+ and the common characteristic is their engagement with Pixar's movies. Two sets of age groups 18-28 and 29-40+ years.
Sampling	Non-probability snowball sampling for approximately 30 respondents
Data Analysis Method(s)	The data analysis method is content analysis and the unit of analysis is qualitative perceptions gathered from 30 respondents
Limitations	A potentially inaccessible target population may limit sufficient information from being gathered and the pandemic limited research and communication methods
Contributions	Help understand the audiences of the animation industry better in order to craft a model of success for better movies that can be reused for future endeavours.
Key Theories	Narrative transportation theory
Key Concepts	Narrative Presentation Audience Influence Perception
Recommendations	In conclusion, more research should be conducted because there was a limited sample so the conclusion was specific to one context.
Secondary Questions/Hypotheses/Objectives	How do critics and the general publics' opinions about animated movies compare? What can be learnt from Pixar's films? What are trends in the animated movie industry?

Annexure A: Final Research Report Summary

Title: Giving Animation Brands A Chance: Understanding The Success Factors For Animated Movies In A Pixar Case Study

Annex B: Analysis Applied

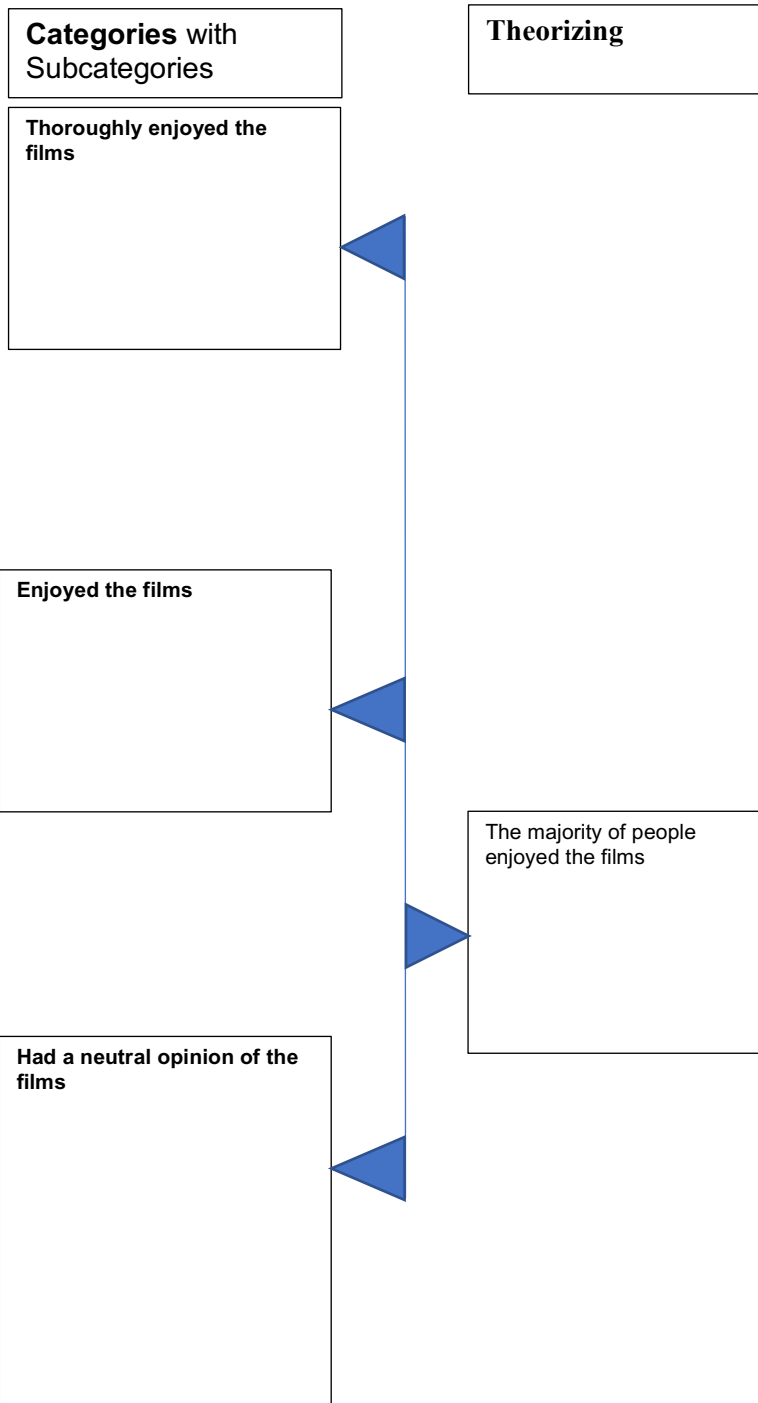
Access to the example survey:

<https://forms.gle/kdxYdj8uxCxF6uTW8>

These are the questionnaire answers that needed analysis and the brand analysis.

Overall impression and Tally

5	12 answers
4	13 answers
3	4 answers



In general, what motivates you to watch a film in general (any film)?

1. Boredom	Boredom/needing entertainment
2. Entertainment	Boredom/needing entertainment
3. The storyline and genre	The production
4. The trailer	The advertising (by the brand)
5. The film ratings motivate me as well as word of mouth	The advertising (by others)
6. My kids	Children
7. The story must be intriguing	The production
8. The genre, the story line, the actors, sometimes the concept of the entire movie if it's an animation	The production
9. Actors, interesting trailers, storyline	The production and The advertising (by the brand)
10. Cold weather, free time, good distraction	Boredom/needing entertainment, Misc.
11. It depends on the movie, but generally it must be clean no searing, sex and extreme violence. Something funny and well written is always welcome.	The production
12. The actors starring in it	The production
13. Recommendations	The advertising (by others)
14. Storyline	The production
15. A journey that isnt my own, I look forward to witnessing another's adventure/story.	The production
16. story and visuals	The production
17. Buzz light year toys	Misc.
18. Generally because I'm looking for a good source of entertainment	Boredom/needing entertainment
19. Because I'm board	Boredom/needing entertainment
20. If the the flim is interesting or atvleasyvshown to be interning ie. A trailer. Or it's a movie I have been waiting for	The production and The advertising (by the brand)
21. Action and adventure, mostly	The production

Categories with Subcategories

Themes

Theorizing

Entertainment Needs:

- Boredom and entertainment needs

Advertising:

- Trailers
- From Others

The Production:

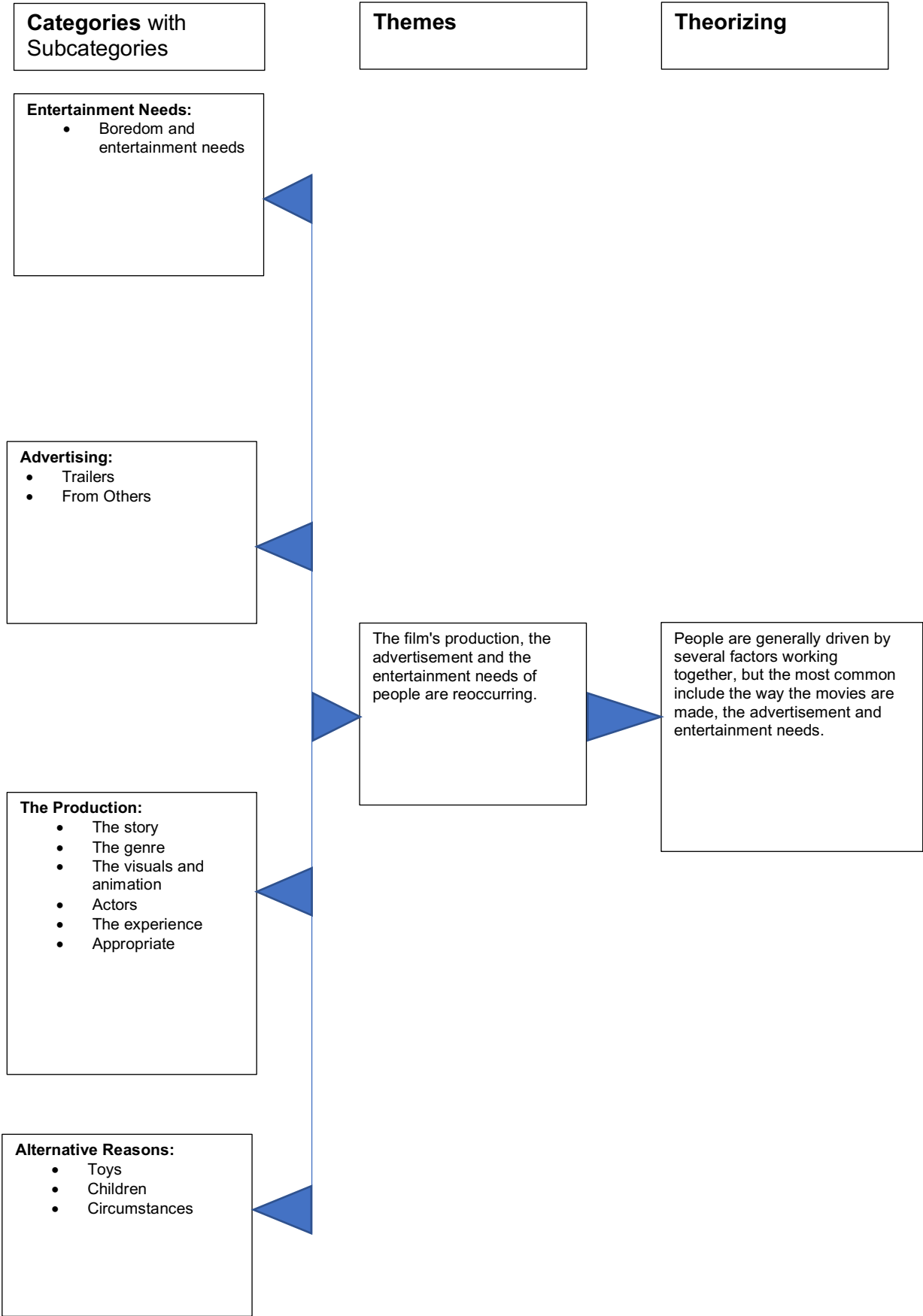
- The story
- The genre
- The visuals and animation
- Actors
- The experience
- Appropriate

Alternative Reasons:

- Toys
- Children
- Circumstances

The film's production, the advertisement and the entertainment needs of people are reoccurring.

People are generally driven by several factors working together, but the most common include the way the movies are made, the advertisement and entertainment needs.



At what age did you watch these films?

Child	Teen	Adult	Vague
10	18	30	9-12
10	16	21	9-12
10	Teen years		From around 4 years old
8			From around 4 years old
8			8-12
12			From the age of 6/7 until now.
5			Younger than 10 to current day
			Between 5-18 years old
			Between 10 and 20
			Up to 15 I would say
			Frist time was 10
			A few years ago
			5-20
			between 8&9
			Can't recall but probably before 12
			Not sure, probably late teen or early 20, I really don't remember.

Categories with Subcategories

Themes

Theorizing

Child Years

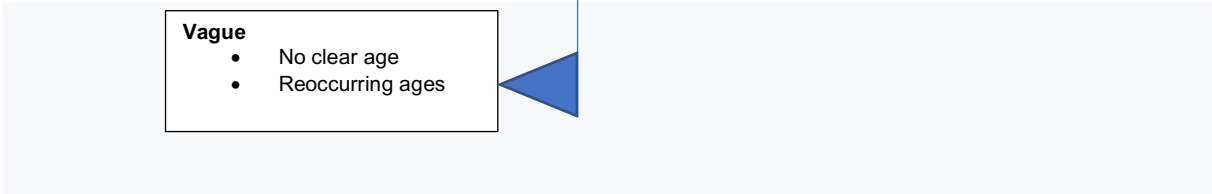
Teen Years

Adult Years

- Vague**
- No clear age
 - Reoccurring ages

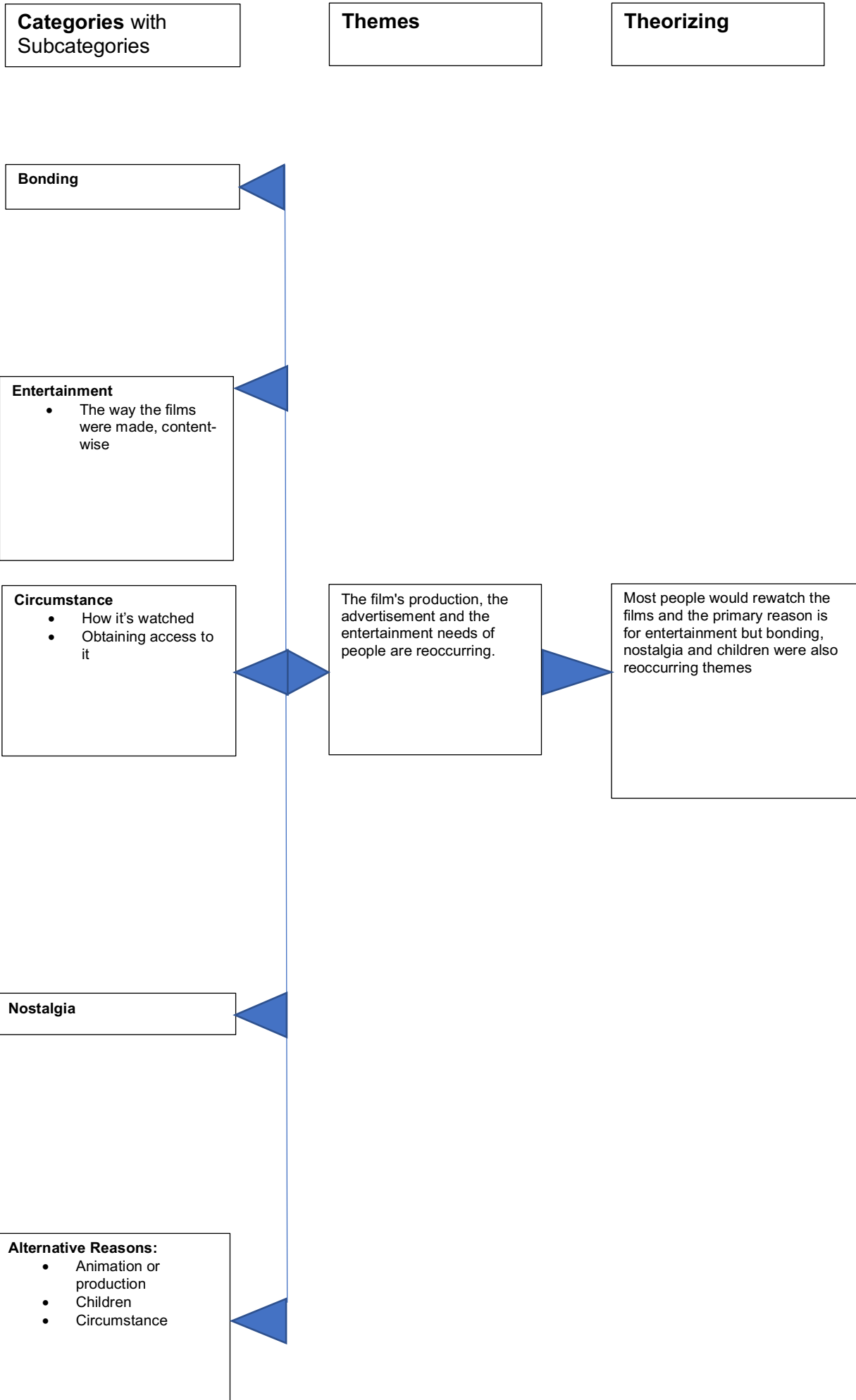
No single point or age for watching the films

The majority of people tend to watch the films at multiple points in their life but largely during childhood



Would you watch these films again and what would motivate you to do so?

Bonding	Entertainment	Circumstance	Alternative	Nostalgia
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes def . Downtime with my daughter. • Yes, If I have company to watch it • If im honest no I wouldn't watch them unless a friend wants too . I don't find them very engaging • Yes I would it's good family fun 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes I would watch these films again. I would watch them again because of enjoyment • Yes. The humor • Definitely! Because I like them and they're light hearted • No, I've already seen them and they weren't that exciting • Yes! I would watch them anyday because of the fact that they have been made for both adults and kids to enjoy. • Yes, very fun to watch • Yes! I love them and have not watched them for a while now 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes if it was a marathon • Yes.. I just need to download then again to watch them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No • Only to see some of my favorite scenes • Nope, the animation style was not to my liking. • Yes • I would watch again - I love animation and the childish element of the movies • Yes! I love them and have not watched them for a while now • Yes i would because of my children • Yes when I have kids one day • Yes, my kid 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes - nostalgia • yes to relive ny childhood • Yes, to relive childhood or for nostalgic memories • Yes, for nostalgia



In general, what motivates your decision to let your child watch a film (any film)?

1. The storyline & education	Story/Characters Education
2. If its a clean movie with no innuendos	Age appropriate
3. To teach them something	Education
4. Don't have children	N/A
5. To pass down the memory	Memory
6. Don't have a child	N/A
7. It must be interesting , well animated , have a good story line . Since I have girls I watch lots of princess things	Animation/make Story/Characters Other
8. I personally preview all films before I let my children watch it	Other
9. NA	N/A
10. Entertainment	Story/Characters
11. The genre	Story/Characters
12. story and how appropriate it is for him	Story/Characters Age appropriate
13. Don't have any children *	N/A
14. I don't have any children but it would either be to keep them busy or because if it's something I enjoyed then I'd have more to talk to them about	N/A, Other Memory Hypothetical
15. Don't have a child, if I did it's to keep them entertained	N/A, Other Hypothetical
16. Well I don't have a child but I did babysit , I would let then watch a flim that A. Was market at kids and B. Has a good story and one I know they can take away from like onward or luca.	N/A Age appropriate Story/Characters Hypothetical
17. If the movie is actually appropriate for their age group. As some movies that are made for children aren't children friendly.	Age appropriate
18. Educational value	Education
19. The contents	Story/Characters

Categories with Subcategories

Themes

Theorizing

Story and Characters

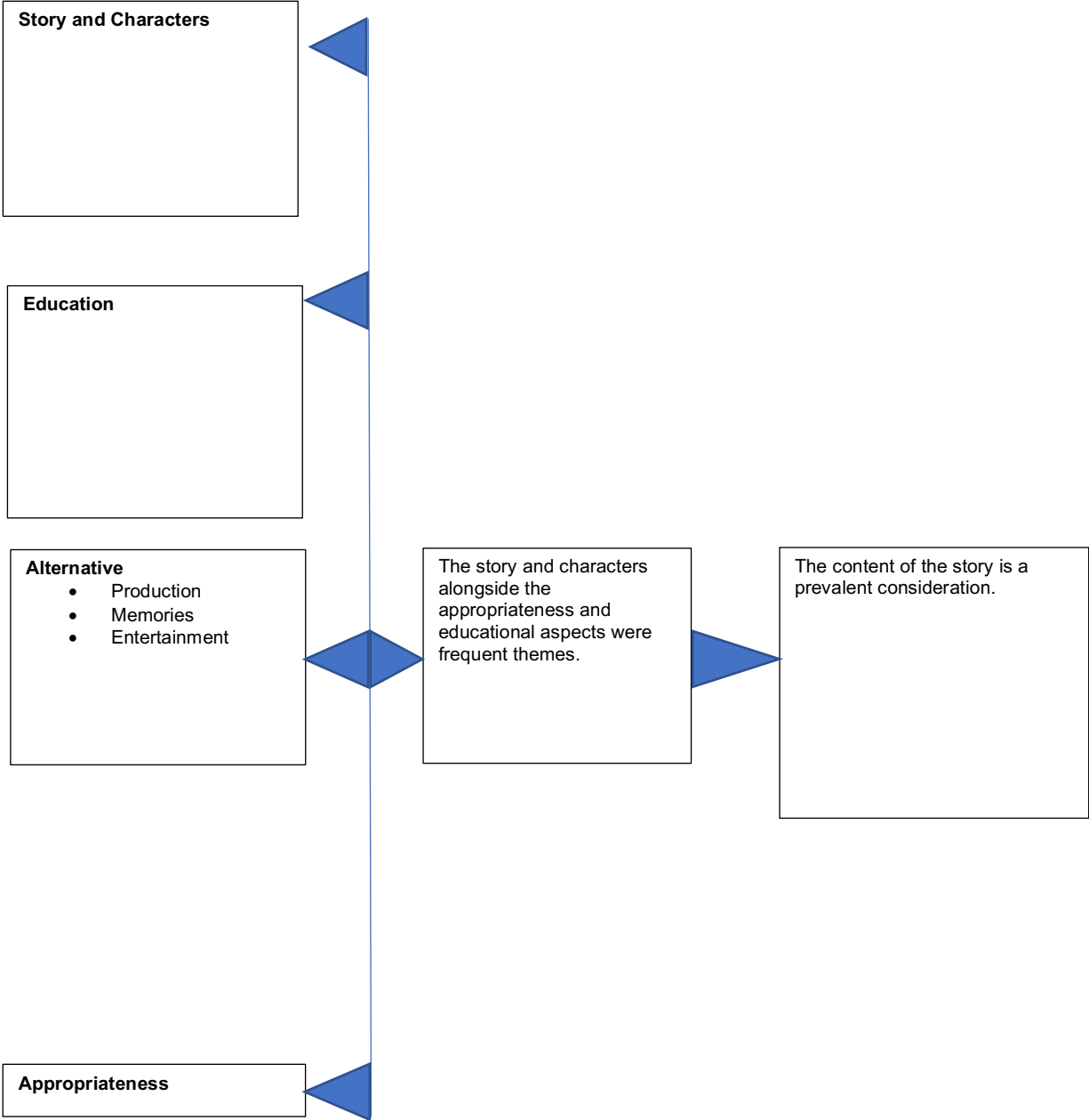
Education

- Alternative**
- Production
 - Memories
 - Entertainment

Appropriateness

The story and characters alongside the appropriateness and educational aspects were frequent themes.

The content of the story is a prevalent consideration.



Was there anything that resonated with you about these films?

1. Friendship and loyalty. Yes. Trust and loyalty	Character and story
2. Very good story line & animation The storyline	Character and story Animation
3. I love how detailed the designs of the characters are, I also like how with animation everything is "clean". Like nothing that's on screen hasn't been thought of and placed well	Animation
4. So I didn't appreciate the film in my younger years infact I found it very boring . But growing up I can appreciate the message behind them . The thing that I would say that resonates is the idea that you will always have a purpose in life even if the purpose changes , accept the change . As i said in question six it was embrace change	Character and story
5. No	
6. No. The sentimental value of toys	Merchandise
7. No	
8. That having friends and family in your life is important That they stucked together as a family	Character and story
9. The message, the hidden Easter eggs, the storyline and how well each character has been developed through the story and animated. Also how it is different when you watch it through the eyes of a child versus as an adult.	Character and story Animation experience
10. They were fun, lighthearted, humorous	Character and story
11. The toys	Merchandise
12. friendship and how strong it is	Character and story
13. The theme of friendship. Friendship	Character and story
14. Not really	
15. Friendship	Character and story
16. The animation style	Animation
17. Family oriented. The test of friendship	Character and story
18. No I don't think so. No	
19. They were fun, lighthearted, humorous	Character and story
20. Friendship values and being there for people	Character and story
21. A strong sense of friendship and loyalty Certain life lessons like loyalty and friendship can be taught and appreciated at any age	Character and story experience
22. Very good story line & animation The storyline	Character and story Animation
23. The animation was good and the storylines were clever	Character and story Animation
24. The team work is what resonated with me	Character and story
25. No	
26. The animation was good and the storylines were clever	Character and story Animation
27. I didn't like it all that much hey. The story is cool, I guess it's about friendship. Not interested enough to repeat though.	Character and story
28. The strong friendship bonds Its a different view from the toys perspective	Character and story experience
29. Yes the idea of helping a friend in need. Friendship	Character and story
30. My love for my toys that helped me through hard times	Merchandise

Categories with Subcategories

Themes

Theorizing

Animation

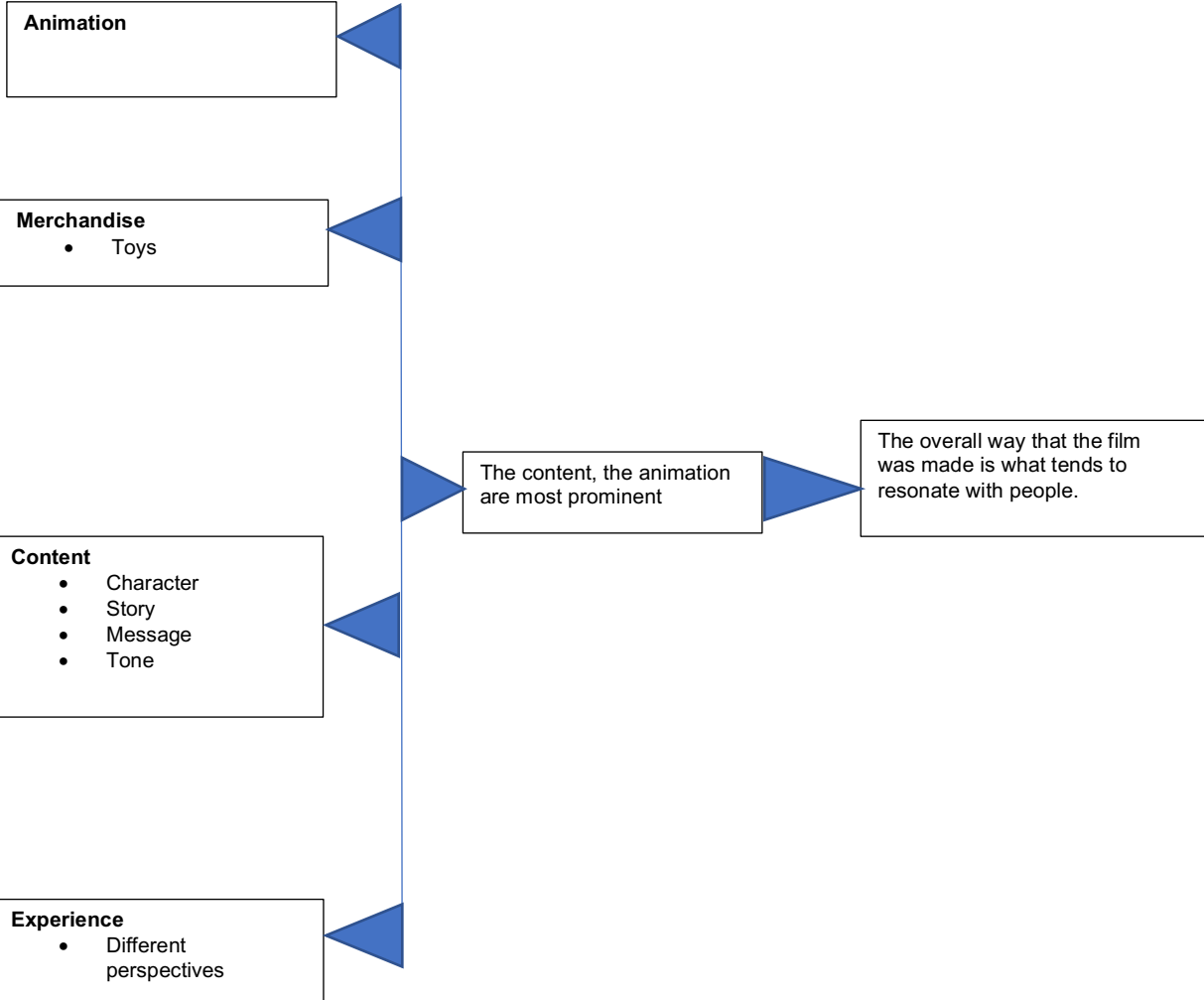
Merchandise
• Toys

Content
• Character
• Story
• Message
• Tone

Experience
• Different perspectives

The content, the animation are most prominent

The overall way that the film was made is what tends to resonate with people.



Brand Identity Model: Pixar

Core identity (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000):
Quality, creativity (Porter & Susman, 2000) and exploration (Catmull, 2008).

Extended identity (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000):
Studio for animated movies (MarketLine, 2020).

Brand as a product (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000):

- Multiple CGI animated films (MarketLine, 2020).
- Their films are intelligent and family orientated (Scott, 2014).
- The studio produces high quality films (Scott, 2014).
- The uses of the films include entertainment and education (Scott, 2014).
- The users are broadly defined and include families (Scott, 2014).

Brand as a symbol (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000):

- The brands' heritage is in CGI animation, which it maintains (MarketLine, 2020).
- The visual imagery of the brand includes the characters from the films and the studio employees working (Catmull, 2008).

Brand as a person (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000):

- The personality of the brand is intelligent (Scott, 2014), unconventional (Catmull, 2008), considerate (Porter & Susman, 2000) and mature (Lavery, 2017).
- The consumers' relationship with the brand is positive as the brand is successful (Fisk, 2015).

Brand as an organization (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000):

- The brand is global (MarketLine, 2020).
- The attributes include considerate, multidisciplinary, strategic and having an internal culture (Catmull, 2008).

The functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000).

- Functionally, the brand creates CGI animated films, with special software (MarketLine, 2020).
- Emotionally, the brand delivers intelligent films (Scott, 2014), that aim to connect with the audience (Porter & Susman, 2000).
- Self-expression comes from Pixar's unconventional, diverse (Catmull, 2008) and thought-provoking themes (Lavery, 2017).

The brand-consumer relationship (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000):

The consumers' relationship with the brand is positive (Fisk, 2015).