

BTEC Level 2 Creative Media Production Mikhail Lulla

Contents:

- Introduction (page 3)
- Desk Research (page 4)
- Audience Research (pages 5-9)
- Production research (page 10)
- Market research (pages 11-13)
- Conclusion (page 14)
- Bibliography (page 14)

Introduction:

In this research paper, I will be conducting a research into the genre supernatural horror as I will be making a short film in this genre for Unit 4. This research paper will be broken down into the following sections:

- Desk research
- Audience research
- Production research
- Market research

Desk Research:

Desk Research -

I watched a lot of short supernatural horror films and also short scenes from other supernatural horror films and I made some notes and noted down the general techniques that are commonly seen in most of the films I watched and analysed.

Notes

Visual effects:

In the short film There comes a knocking and The moonlight man the lighting is very dim and “low key” which is a strong contrast between light and dark lighting. This lighting creates a sense of suspense and is effective in horror films as it signifies death and horror.

In many of the short supernatural horror films silhouettes were used to create tension suspense as there is foreshadowing of near-future events such as a jump scare.

The auditory effects:

A couple of auditory effects that are used in short films such as ‘the house’ and ‘the moonlight man’ are

High pitched monotone sound - this creates a sense of creepiness.

Sounds that slowly increase in volume giving the effect of tension, this is usually done with footsteps.

Other camerawork effects:

Closeups- this creates suspense as you directly engage with the character.

Jump cuts- this is used to draw attention to the cut this creates a sense of quick happening almost jumping forward in time slightly.

Quick and deliberately shaky motion from the camera.

AUDIENCE RESEARCH:

For my audience research, I used three different methods. The three methods I used were a focus group, a survey and interviews.

In terms of quantitative data, I sent out a survey to 26 people with a variety of ethnicities and a 13:13 male to female split. I got a response rate of 65% with a total of 17 people responding, from the responses I received there was nearly a 1:1 male to female split with 8 male responses and 9 female responses. There was also evident ethnic diversity in the responses.

Quantitative

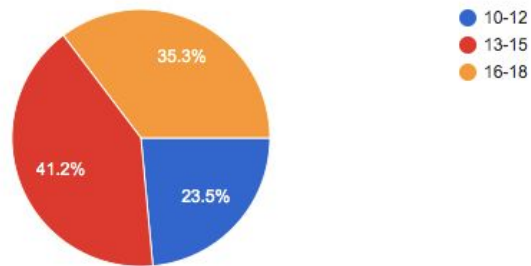
A screenshot of a Google Forms survey titled "Horror films survey". The form is displayed within a white rectangular frame with a light blue header bar. Below the title, there is a section labeled "Form description" which is currently empty. The background of the page is a solid light blue color.

Horror films survey

Form description

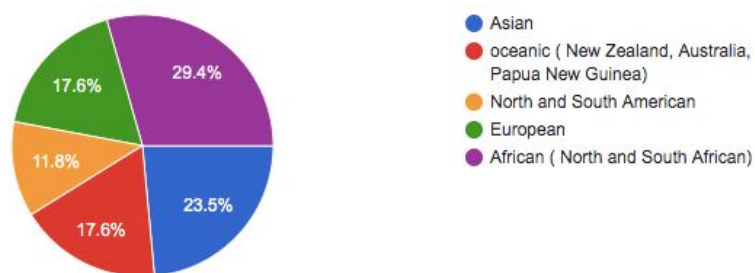
How old are you?

17 responses



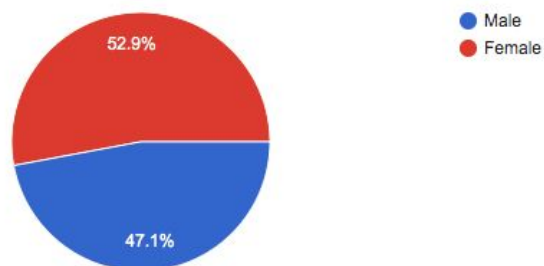
What ethnicity are you?

17 responses



What gender are you?

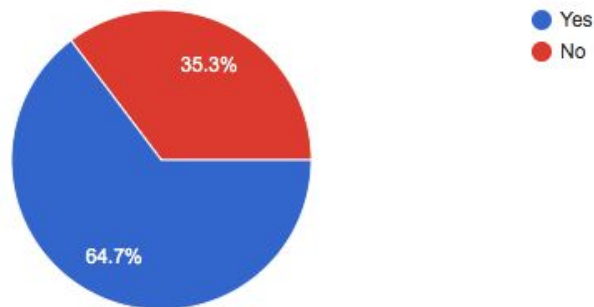
17 responses



I received data from a variety of age groups and ethnicities as shown by the graphs above. I had a very close to 1:1 gender split which shows that the data collected is not bias.

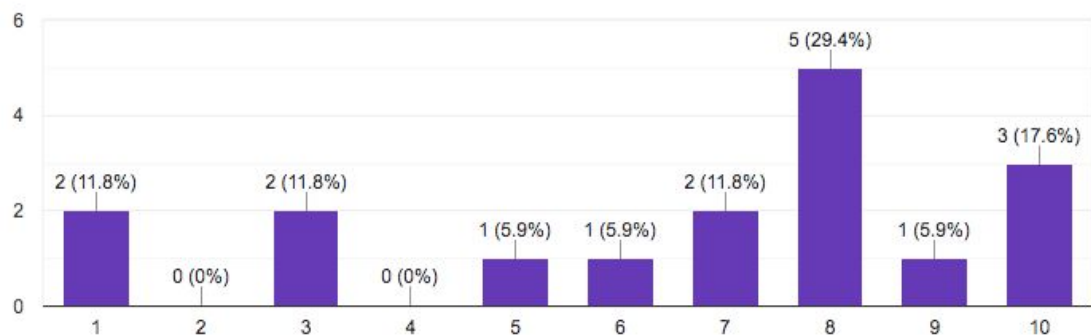
Do you enjoy watching Horror films?

17 responses



on a scale of 1-10 rate the genre Horror.

17 responses



The mode rating of the genre horror was an 8/10 this shows that most people generally enjoy the genre horror, as a majority of my respondents were aged 13-15 my target audience would likely be of those ages. 64.7% of people enjoy watching horror films.

Qualitative

In terms of qualitative data, I needed to find out what made an interesting narrative/storyline, and what were the common conventions of my target audience desired. To achieve this, I had done a lot of interviews, either over the phone or in person as well as sent a survey in which 2 of the questions were short answer questions.

In an interview with Shunka Kakegawa of KGV, she said that an engaging narrative can easily be made with good continuity. She continued to explain that a good narrative required good pacing that is not too constant in order to illustrate an effective build-up and have an engaging climax.

Moreover, in an interview with Arjun Sharma, he mentioned the things that he liked is a good narrative with a plot-twist and a storyline where the protagonist dies. Since, in many typical horror films, the "creature" torments the victim(s) up until the end of the film, where the

victim(s) find a really dumb way to kill of the monster, which is simply made by bad and boring writing. He said the narrative could be much more enjoyable if the villain had killed the victim.

the question I put in the survey was “why do/don’t you like horror films?”

I get scared and I do not enjoy getting scared, I get nightmares
nightmares
Its exciting being on my toes
The plot tends to always be the same
It scares me
Extremely exciting to watch
I GET bad dreams it scares me
The plot is usually really intriguing and it keeps me on my toes
Intriguing and exciting

This sample of 9 responses (out of 17) shows that the people who said they enjoy horror films enjoy them because they are “exciting” and they “keep them on their toes” and the people who don’t enjoy horror films don’t enjoy them because they “give them nightmares” and they “scare them”.

To develop an understanding of what an audience looks for in a short horror film I collected a group of 6 people, with 3 males and 3 females, there was ethnic diversity with the group containing 1 korean, 1 indian, 2 chinese, 1 south african and 1 nepalese. I asked question 1&2 and then showed the group a short film called “the moonlight man” and asked questions about the short film and what made it good and what could be improved.

I asked the following questions and answers from the group:

1. What do you look for in a horror movie?

The common responses were:

“I like when horror films can truly scare me as I do not get scared easily”

“A good plot that keeps me on my toes”

“Suspense”

“I like a good jumpscare”

2. Do you prefer a plot in which the “monster” or villain dies or where the main character/victims are killed.?

The responses I got were 4 of the people thought that the victims getting killed made a greater horror film whilst 2 of them preferred a plot in which the monster/villain etc. dies.

3. What staging aspects such as lighting, etc did you enjoy in the horror film ?

“The dim and dark lighting used created a very spooky atmosphere”

“The intense music created a lot of tension and suspense”

“The use of the heavy breathing created a lot of suspense and really added to the overall quality of the film”

“I liked the camera shaking as it made me feel like it really made you feel apart of the scary experience”

4. Did the use of silhouettes improve the film?

“Yes, It really added to the overall quality of the film”

“It definitely did make the film better”

-the rest of the group also said they think it made the film better-

5. How was the overall camerawork?

“The camerawork really helped make the film more intense which made the film better so overall the camerawork was pretty good”

-The rest of the group agreed with this statement and had no further elaborations-

-End of focus group discussion-

From the data I collected from these focus group questions I developed a greater understanding of what I must do when I create my short horror film, the audience seems to prefer a plot in which the main character/victim dies, the audience also seems to like the use of dim and dark lighting (Low key lighting) , the use of silhouettes, jumpscare and shaky camerawork.

When referring back to the desk research I noticed that some of the information I collected from the focus group completely compliment the notes.

PRODUCTION RESEARCH:

Planning:

Equipment-

From the films that I watched and analysed for desk research I started thinking about what equipment I may need to create a similar quality film, the equipment I believe I may need for creating my film will be:

- A gimbal- for smooth, professional tracking shots.
- An H2N sound recorder with a wind muffler- this will help me get good sound quality thus improving the quality of my film
- A 4k video recording camera such as a DSLR- this is to record an HD quality video

Skills-

I will develop my filmmaking skills such as my hand stability, tracking and my selecting of camera angles. This will allow me to make the best quality film I possibly can. I will need to learn how to create the Mollus Eye Effect for a character that I will use in the film I create.

Software-

I will use the software 'Final Cut Pro X' to edit my film and I will use 'Adobe After Effects' to create the effects needed.

Actors and locations-

I will determine how many actors I need for my short film, I will also have to decide on a couple of locations that I can use for my film, these locations will have to be a relatively low populated area and will have to be in an area with not a lot of lighting as I will attempt to use artificial lighting.

Length-

The Ideal length of the film would be around 4-7 minutes, I wouldn't want the film to be any longer than that as I can easier maintain the feeling of suspense throughout the 4-7 minutes but it would be harder to maintain the suspense for longer.

MARKET RESEARCH:

There has been a lot of films in the supernatural horror genre that have been extremely successful, 3 successful films were IT, The Exorcist and The Shining.

IT



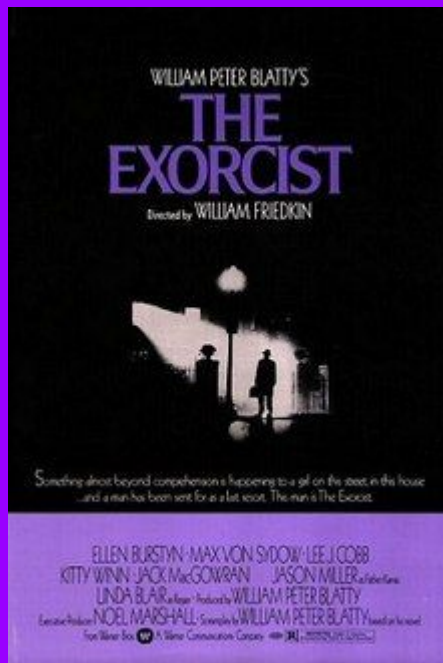
The movie **IT** released in the U.S in September 8th of 2017, IT has received a 7.3/10 rating from IMDB with 404,005 people rating it, a rating of 69/100 from Metacritic based on 49 professional critics opinions.

700.4 million USD



A Box office revenue of 700.4 million USD shows that the film has been extremely successful financially. IT has also won awards such as IGN Summer Movie Awards and Golden Trailer Awards.

THE EXORCIST



The movie 'The Exorcist' was released in the U.S in December 26th 1973. The movie got a rating of 8.0/10 from IMDB with a total of 341,200 people rating the movie, a metascore of 81 by metacritic from a total of 21 professional critics opinions.

441.3 million USD



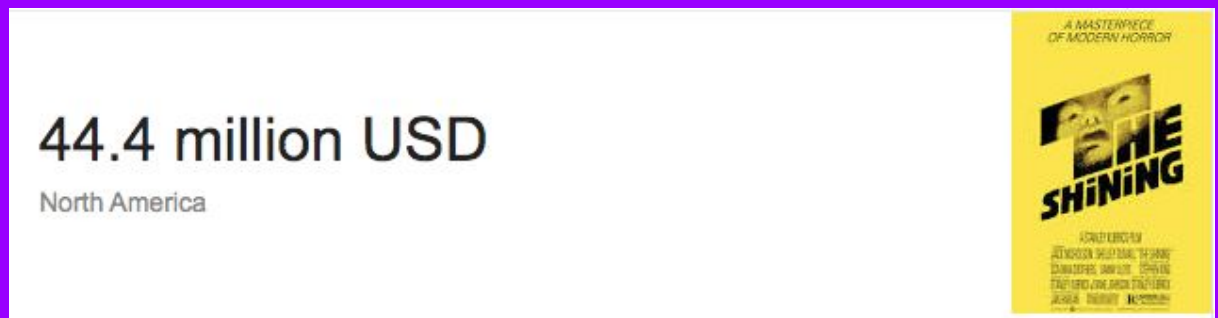
A Box office revenue of 441.3 million USD shows that the film was also quite financially successful. However after being adjusted for inflation it is shown to be THE most financially successful supernatural horror film of all time. The

Exorcist had won an Oscar for the best writing, screenplay based on material from another medium and best sound. The Exorcist also won many other awards such as 4 golden globe awards.

The Shining



The movie 'The Shining' was released in the U.S in May 23, 1980. The movie got a rating of 8.4/10 on IMDB with a total of 807,500 people rating the movie, a metascore of 66 on metacritic from a total of 26 professional critics opinions.



A Box office revenue of 44.4 million USD suggests that this film was not as successful financially as the other movies. 'The Shining' has won a series of 'Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy & Horror Films, USA' Awards.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, I believe that creating this film may be quite difficult but I should be able to overcome any difficulties that may come my way by practicing, more specifically by practicing more varieties of camera angles and other skills I may require to achieve a quality film.

Bibliography:

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