Seminar Paper

Advanced Topics In Social Network Analysis

How to use opinion leaders to optimize a marketing campaign - A case study on YouTube

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1. Abstract

The study analyzes product consumption in the gamer's community and the influence of opinion leaders on the web, specifically on YouTube videos. Researchers looked for the level of influence YouTube videos could have on the consumption behaviors of customers. There will be a profound analysis on opinion leaders and how we can use them to create marketing campaigns by understanding people's behavior online. People leave on the web many traces about their desires and the research aims to make a pattern to understand human mind decision making when buying a product. Consequently, there was found medium and positive relationship deeply detailed beneath.

2. Introduction

When making the decision to buy a product, opinion leaders play a key role by influencing consumers in order to choose or discard such goods; Opinion leaders act as role models who inspire similar impressions among those who observe their purchase and consumption behavior; Moreover, people tend to gather information from other consumers in the process of social communication, and seek advice from others who have greater knowledge and experience on the subject (Bearden and Etzel, 1982; Dichter, 1966; Hayat & Mo, 2015; Montgomery and Silk, 1971; Newman and Staelin, 1973). Research has shown that information spread via word of mouth has a greater impact on decision making to purchase a product than other marketer-dominated sources of information such as advertising (Herr, Kardes, and Kim, 1991; Price and Feick, 1984). Sometimes the influence of opinion leaders and WOM could be so large that consumers may choose to optimally ignore their own instincts and rely entirely on the information from others (e.g. Benerjee 1992, 1993; Ellison and Fudenberg 1995); due to and since the Internet's growing popularity, online reviews have become a greater knowledge source for buyers that are seeking to discover a product quality. Many recent reports acknowledge the power and pervasiveness of online product reviews. A study conducted by Ratchford, Talukdar, and Lee found that consumers are substituting time spent directly with retailers with time spent on the Internet learning about products and "a survey conducted in 2010 by comScore, an Internet marketing-research company, found that 24% of Internet users access

online reviews prior to paying for a service delivered offline” (Zhu & Zhang, 2010). Nowadays, many companies in all the field, and more specifically in the entertainment industry, had noticed and reacted to such practices and are taking advantage of online consumer reviews as a new marketing tool in order to merchandize a new product (Dellarocas 2003). The video game industry is not an exception; video games continue to be a highly popular source of entertainment. In 2003, over 239 million computer and video games were sold in the United States, and in 2014, the video game industry reported sales of over \$22.41 billion (Entertainment Software Association, 2015). The purpose of this study is to analyze the ways Video Game merchandising is promoted and what takes to become an influencer in this network and to try to find a way to optimize a marketing campaign this using the findings. In order to examine this relationship we implemented two different approaches. The first method was implementing a quantitative analysis and the second was content analysis.

3.Related Work

3.1. Theory

3.1.1. Opinion Leaders

An opinion leader is a well-known individual or organization that has the ability to influence public opinion on the subject matter for which the opinion leader is known. (Valente & Davis,1999). we tend to approach Opinion leaders or key individuals when we need an advise in a specific field. we do not approach to the same roll model when we need an advice for buying a car or when we look for a political point of view. opinion leaders can be politicians, business leaders, community leaders, journalists, educators, celebrities, sport stars etc. (Flynn, Goldsmith, & Eastman, 1996).

3.1.2. Social influence Theory

Social influence is crucial in shaping user behavior; It is defined as a powerful influence that a majority can have on an individual's perceptions, opinions and decisions; According to Kelman (1958) Social influence can take different forms, which termed compliance, identification, and internalization.

Compliance occurs when people publicly tend to agree or accept other's ideas or thoughts but retain their original opinions outside the group influence situation. Identification is what it is colloquially known as social pressure. It occurs when people accept and follows a group attitude or behaviors to establish and maintain a relationship with the group. Internalization results when people accept the majority opinion and integrate it into their belief systems. A related concept is normative versus informational influence (Deutsch and Gerard 1955). Normative influence is the tendency to conform to other's expectations, which could be due to either compliance or identification. Informational influence, which occurs when a user accepts information, obtained from other users as evidence about reality (corresponding to Kelman's internalization concept).

Reference group theory: states that individuals look for guidance from role models or from a group with appropriate expertise. Accordingly, people may acquire and grow norms and values for their behavior by referring to other's information, normative practices and value expressions (Bearden & Etzel,1982). Group influence processes: This theory proposes that due to the desire of people

to be closely identified with a particular group, Individuals attempts to adopt the behavioral norms of a particular group to enhance relationships with its members.(Goodwin,1987).

Social exchange theory: Social exchange theory views interpersonal interactions from a cost–benefit perspective (Blau, 1964) . meaning, people usually expect reciprocal benefits from others, such as personal affection and gratitude, trust, and economic return, when they act according to social norms.

3.1.3. Social Influence Online

There are several types of social influence, and people tend to behave differently depending on the circumstances that lie ahead, for example people tend to behave differently in a classroom, in a park with his or hers friends, than when navigating online. Predilection for online social interaction is characterized by the believed that one is safer, more comfortable more efficacious, and more confident, with online interpersonal social activities rather than with traditional Face to face interactions and relationships. (Crandall, Cosley, Huttenlocher, Kleinberg, & Suri, 2008) the advantage of resorting online platforms as means of communications, are not a few, since it allows a variety of avenues or means by which people can exchange information, in many cases, It fosters anonymity and confidentiality in which users don't have to reveal their identities when seeking and giving advice, and the most important aspect is that online interactions allows a sort of freedom from geographic and time constraints that make cyberspace a global community paralleling the local physical one. (Gelb & Sundaram 2002; Kiecker & Cowles 2001).

3.1.4. Merchandising Online

The unique asynchronous and interactive nature of cyberspace changed the traditional way in which people behaved in order to make a decision and opt to purchase a product, since the net gives consumers unparalleled access to information, wide product and brand choice, the ability to make price and quality comparisons as never before and the opportunity to interact with companies and with other consumers in many ways and moreover giving the possibility to create and join online communities that maintain and share a common interest (Negroponte and Maes 1996).

3.1.5. Online communities

Given the technological advances of the last century, in the communication field, specifically talking about the Internet, and the ability of it, to break geographical and political boundaries and promote a much more globalized world. People who share and pursue a mutual interests or goals began to associate with one another online, creating many social networks, what is commonly known as virtual communities. (Brown, Broderick,& Lee, 2007). Many companies realized the importance of virtual communities and used these communities to gain competitive advantage, increase market share, create new businesses, and promote their wares. Rayport and Sviokla (1994) stated that businesses in spite of rearm and re-think their notions of the value proposition, competitive advantage, and marketing strategy in the "market space." They did not, notice that among the upstanding changes brought by online interactions was the potential for consumers to connect with each other in new, powerful, and flexible way, meaning the social influence and the capacity of opinion leaders to exert within a particular virtual network. Armstrong and Hagel (1996) proposed that companies should go beyond simply advertising on the Internet and try to organize online communities to suit their own purposes in order to generate strong economic returns (Armstrong and Hagel 1996).

3.2. Prior Research

Word-of-mouth or WOM communication has draw a major attention in the academic field of marketing and advertising since the 1950s, Since (WOM) has long been perceived as a key driver of consumer demand for products in which the quality of it remain uncertain before the consumption of it (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955, Nelson 1970). Earlier studies on WOM have examined personal and social influence on consumers' adoption behavior (e.g. Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955, Coleman et al. 1966), as well as the linkage between professional reviews and the demand for the products (Litman 1983, Litman and Kohl 1989, Sochay 1994).

Bruyn and Lilien (2008: 152) share the belief that research on this topic has developed since then, and it whirl around three main principles: research on the causes in which a consumer disclose, in a proactive fashion, their consumption

experience of a set of goods or brands; research on the situations in which consumers trust on WOM more than other sources of information prior the purchase of a product; and research on the reasons why the information supplied by influential people denominated as opinion leaders can have a greater impact on consumers decisions. Since the emergence of the Internet, navigating online has become an upstanding and crucial source for consumers to obtain product information and user feedback. According to Bakos 1997, Internet technologies, such as shopbots or search engines, significantly reduce search costs. These technologies accompanied with online review systems play a crucial role, since consumers tend to use feedback from other users to discover product quality. Consumers recognize that WOM as a key source in order to obtain information about a product. (Gilly, Graham, Wolfinbarger, and Yale, 1998). And even consider it more persuasive than advertising throughout mass media, since they perceive it as trustworthier than other information types (Murray, 1991; Richins, 1983). The source in which the message is issued also plays a key role for consumer's prior the consumption of a product. A survey by BizRate.com suggests that more than 50% of respondents consider consumer-generated reviews more valuable than expert reviews (Piller 1999). This is due the fact that unlike professional reviews, online reviews that are often submitted by individual consumers are more useful in examining "popular appeal" instead of "professional judgment" (Holbrook 1999).

According to Forrester Research, About 50% of young consumers that navigate online rely on WOM recommendations prior to purchase any source of goods (Godes and Mayzlin 2004; Walsh 2000). Another advantage that the internet offers is the source in which a message or information is conveyed can be originated either from the top down to bottom up sources; A top-down approach is one where an executive, decision maker, or other person or body is the one who is in charge of making the decisions; This approach is spread under their authority to lower levels in the hierarchy, who are to a greater or lesser extent, bound by them; A bottom-up approach is one that is originated from the grassroots (user generated content) meaning the message is originated and spread from a single individual or from a large number of people working together, causing a decision to arise from their joint involvement. (Dubois, 2002). Nowadays the facilities and advantages that the internet and social media platforms offers and allows that anyone can potentially share their experience with millions of Internet users and

influence their decisions through online WOM regardless of geographic boundaries (Zhang and Zhu, 2006).

As a result, one would suppose or predict that with the proliferation of online review systems, online reviews could be a major proxy for overall WOM and may notably influence the demand for experience goods. However, the effectiveness of online reviews, could be extremely limited for a couple of aspects, such as, reviewers are not selected from a random sample of the user population, their opinions may not reflect the voice of the general population. Anderson (1998) finds that customers that are more likely to initiate WOM transfers are the ones that are extremely satisfied or extremely dissatisfied for the product. Li and Hitt (2004) argue that potential bias in consumer reviews is present on early stages of the release of the product. Second, interested parties can manipulate online forums and reviews. Owners of the forums may design the Web sites to advantage their sponsors, meaning companies can anonymously post online reviews to praise their products or to increase the awareness of the products (Dellarocas forthcoming; Mayzlin 2006). Potential buyers may therefore heavily discount online reviews. Consequently, online reviews could not affect product sales. The limited empirical evidence to date has provided mixed results. For instance, studies conducted by Chevalier and Mayzlin (forthcoming)'about online book reviews, Resnick and Zeckhauser (2002)'s study on eBay's reputation profiles, and a research conducted by Zhang (2006) on online movie reviews found that online consumer ratings have a major impact on sales. However, Chen et al. (2004)'s study on online book reviews and Duan et al. (2005)'s study on online movie reviews It offers a contrary opinion and suggest that is only the amount of the reviews that matters.

3.2.1 Virality and WOM

Sundaram, Mitra and Webster (1998), highlighted that people tend to be more appealing to share information about products that they feel are useful for them and their community, and people preferentially share information about certain brand or products that they feel proud to use it, or goods that consumers think that define their taste or personality. This thesis is further supported by Chung and Darke (2006) study, who argues that despite the amount and varied products that people consume on a daily basis, they only share their experiences

and thoughts about those that users think that strengthen the image that they want to project about themselves towards others. Another major factor that influence the decision to share a product is the quality of the content. A research conducted by Huang, Chen and Wang (2012: 12) support this thesis, they highlights that the quality of content is a key factor in the decision to share it, while the expected response by the recipient, and the reasons that drive them to commit such act, remains on the influence and hopes for affection or sense of belonging (ex a specific community). Eckler and Bolls (2011) argue that generating emotions is a necessary requirement for a video to be shared, however this is not the only factor, they based their research on the emotional content of viral messages, and the ability of those have to become one. They also argue that, despite viral videos are made to be more provocative than conventional TV ads, and observe the emotional tone of viral videos and their effect on the attitude and behavior of people towards the ad, the brand and their intention to share it is much needed. Eckler and Bolls (2011: 8) conclude that the emotional tone of viral video ads is directly correlated to attitudes and intentions, highlighting the fact that videos that are perceived as gratifying are more effective on creating and establishing positive attitudes towards the brand and promote people to share it than those that are perceived as disagreeable or coercive.

3.2.2 WOM and Video Games

Scarce research has been found in the field of WOM and video games. According to Bounie (2005) since most of gamers are young and have few economic resources and limited income. These individuals tend to resort to the use of online reviews in order to have reliable opinions of experienced people in the field and thus avoid bad purchases. A study conducted by Zhu & Zhang (2006) found that consumer reviews influence the product sales, even after eliminating the unobservable game-specific characteristics and controlling for possible heterogeneities in consumer tastes across the console platforms. This happens till the degree that a “one-point increase in a game’s online average rating on average leads to a 4% increase in its sales in the following month” (Zhu & Zhang, 2006:14). They came to the conclusion that the estimated impact of online ratings is even higher, for less popular games, implying that WOM plays a larger role for less popular games. The purpose of this paper is to find a way to use opinion

leaders for a marketing campaign by understanding what users like about the content posted online, how they get the products they speak about, how and if one can influence the opinion leaders to speak about a product as desired.

4. Research Question and Hypotheses

This study will be focused on proving mainly two research questions; first of all, we would like to analyze how can opinion leaders in the gamer merchandise field can be targeted to promote a new product to be used as a tool in a marketing campaign making it more cost effective. Research shows that a paid marketing campaign for a new video game can be very expensive, sometimes even reaching hundreds of millions of dollars as some video games from EA company have as stated in adage.com. An opinion leader with only one video can reach thousands if not millions of people. As talked about before it has been proven that reviews in media like YouTube have a direct impact on sales, a lot of people research before they buy a product.

Some video game companies use opinion leaders to promote their product, but if a pattern could be found or some insight to how to best target an opinion leader to promote a new video game, then there is the possibility that by the time the video game is launched, the video will have already reached an important amount of people interested in buying; Thus helping the marketing campaign with a symbolic cost compared to what other mediums for advertising would cost.

Secondly, we will focus on how the power of WOM can influence the traffic of a video online, ranking it better and increasing its virility.

Given this concerns, there was developed three hypotheses for this thesis. First of all, if the content provide on a video was created with professional tools, the more people will watch the video and share it.

Secondly, if the video review is less professional, the audience will consider it trust worthier, leading to additional sales.

Thirdly, if influential youtubers create predominantly positive reviews, more traffic on the web will be generated and the popularity of the game will raise.

5. Methodology

Our sample will look for the opinion leaders in this community specifically in YouTube. We will search for the main characteristics that makes a YouTube an opinion leader, which are number of subscribers to their YouTube channel, amount of views and comments in their videos.

Content analysis is a standard communications technique to systematically measure content (Kolbe and Burnett 1991). Researchers interested in the communication field have used this method by examining advertisements, media stories, and web sites (Kassarjian, 1977, Roznowski, 2003 and Yun et al., 2008). Content analysis is the most appropriate method in order to understand the present research, since it offers a systematic and objective way to compare the content among the opinion leader in the "Gaming" world and the way it affects the merchandising industry in a large sample.

Content analysis aids exploring the relationship between social media influencers on YouTube and the effect that opinion leader could potentially generate in the merchandising field. The interest of this research is to analyze not only the impact that opinion leaders have on consumers of Video Game merchandising but how to use this impact to a marketing campaign's advantage as well as how can a marketing company use the opinion leaders to the campaign's success and making the campaign cost lesser. Video Game products are targeted to a very specific community.

5.1. Population:

The selection process consisted in finding prominent opinion leaders from different fields of interest that are related or involved in the "Gaming" world. Intrinsically producers of video content, who share their experiences in "Gaming" or related merchandising with the purpose to help others with the same interests to make a more knowledgeable decision, whether to buy, use, recommend a product. Furthermore, those people will have to have the following qualities as being fluent English speakers and own a YouTube Channel.

5.2. Sample:

The study disseminated the most significant and popular videos from 25 opinion leaders in the Video Game field. From each producer we took a random review video, summing in overall 25 YouTube videos. Each video was analyzed by topic, source, views, subscriptions, length, engagement and audience profile.

After researching the gaming field, it was found that opinion leaders could be divided in three different groups. The first group is consisted by big review companies for example IGN or Game Spot. These companies have a lot of content ranging from videogames to movies to other "geek" content. These kinds of companies usually have high financing budget to create their videos. They also count with professional expertise in audiovisuals what makes the video content more approachable and eye catching to the viewer and they have different employees giving the reviews. They have a big impact on the gaming community and are considered as trustworthy reviewers by Gamers. Furthermore, there is scarce variety of review companies what we tried to represent on the sample by choosing only five videos produced by Review Companies.

The second group consists in individual Youtubers with no affiliation to any company, but with more professional equipment as studio, edition knowledge and budget, the budget coming mostly from money earned by the videos in YouTube.

The third group were Youtubers with fewer followers, less budget and lack of professional equipment this youtubers will create video content to transmit their experience and expertise and create enough engagement to create an impact on thousands of people without having any budget or knowledge of production.

Out of the last two groups, ten opinion leaders were chosen. Researchers based their decision on the ones that had more subscribers and more engagement (views and comments) in their videos. For the sample, we randomly selected one video of each opinion leader. Recollecting an amount of 10 videos per each group.

The research looked to understand the behaviors of the video producers and the impact it causes on the users. It was also analyzed the main characteristic performed by the owners of the channel as for example; if the opinion leaders show themselves, if they just show Gameplay (Video of the game being played), if there is any racial differences, if they directly speak or use voice overs, if they have written the description of the product discussed under the video with the appropriate links, if they say how they got the product (was it a gift, they bought it,

got it free online), if the video was released before or after the official release of the game, and other factors that may surge.

5.3. Instruments:

In order to define who is an opinion leader it will be examined the total number of videos by source author and subscriber number. The variables studied included: video topic, popularity, total number of videos from source editor, total number of views, amount of subscribers, likes, dislikes, total number of comments, total number of favorites and audience (see appendix 10.4). Moreover, YouTube provides an option to review the statistics of the videos over time. With the one we found some extra information useful to test our hypothesis.

Furthermore, the study examined the main factors that were likely to impact users opinions as: The type of video content, for example if it transmits positive or negative reviews, the length of the video, or if the language was a technical speech, humorous or subjective.

5.4. Process:

The study is interested in analyze the ways Video Game merchandising is promoted and what takes to become an influencer in this network. In order to examine this relationship we implemented two different approaches. The first method was implementing a quantitative analysis and the second was content analysis.

To determine who are this influential people on the field, researchers handpicked the accounts with most quantity of subscribers. First of all, we selected the most influential accounts.

In order to determine the impact that likes or dislikes can produce; we took a percentage of how many subscribers an account has and the amount of likes per each video. By applying this methodology we will determine how influential each an account is to their followers. Lastly, the number of views per each video is also a determining factor of its virility and accomplishment. It is important to take this in consideration because even though not everybody like or comment, they watched the video and there opinions will be influenced by the video they were exposed to.

At the same time the success of the product spoken in the videos will be taken into consideration, to correlate for example a video that gives a bad review of a product to the actual success of the product moneywise.

5.5. Advantages:

Content analysis is the most appropriate method in order to understand the present research, since it offers a systematic and objective way to compare the type of content among the opinion leader in the "gaming" world and the way it affects the merchandising industry in a large sample; since there is no actual interaction between the researchers with the samples then there is no manipulation of a variable, or room for unwanted manipulation by the researcher like for example in an interview. The researchers did not interact with the subjects and only observed the phenomenon and not interact with it.

Another advantage is that the platform studied: YouTube makes pretty simple the finding of opinion leaders unlike other social networks. There are 4 main parameters to consider when looking for an opinion leader in YouTube, which are amount of a channel's subscribers, the amount of views a video has, the amount of likes and finally comments. All this parameters aids finding the opinion leaders in a straightforward and transparent manner.

5.6. Challenges:

The purpose of this paper is to find a way to use opinion leaders for a marketing campaign by understanding what users like about the content posted online, how they get the products they speak about, how and if one can influence the opinion leaders to speak about a product as desired.

As a qualitative research it will be difficult to find patterns and characteristics that fit all the opinion leaders to generalize and get a concise result for the research. Additionally, when measuring the virility of the videos some of the owners of the channels, blocked part of their public information that was used as data for the research.

Since the researchers cannot follow the users that have viewed, liked or commented a video and see if they purchased the product spoken in the video or not, then it will be difficult to correlate if there is an actual cause and effect as a result of the video.

6. Results

In order to measure as partially as possible the factors a video contains, the researchers selected three main features. Those arguments are of much importance in determining viable trends inside video productions. To understand the trends that the videos presented, there was a control group to select the three subjects. The group consisted in watching 25 different videos that the ones used in the study to detect the possible features review videos include. The observance of those videos was vital as it provided the researchers with a wide understanding of the composition of review video games on YouTube. Finally, the main categories were divided in; sound, graphics and personal interaction. Each point has also subdivisions, which will be later illustrated. In order to recap, the three categories (sound, graphics and personal interaction) will be compared on the three types of review videos producers on YouTube [Company productions (Co.), Independent with professional videos (IPV) and Independent Homemade/Amateurs (IH)] previously detailed on the methodology section.

Sound

First of all, we are going to dive into the sound category. This item refers to every mechanical wave that stimulates the organs of hearing and produces any auditory effect in the timing of the video. Those effects could be represented as noise, vocal expression, musical pitch etc. Specifically for the study we found three main trends; the use of voiceovers, sound effects as background tune and people directly speaking. All these factors are believed to be influencers in people's opinions of not just on their judgment of the video but also to the products presented on it.

For the Co.'s the results indicated a majority of use in *Voice Overs* by a proportion of 80% of usage and the following 20% did not used that interaction on their video reviews. *Sound Effects* was used just by a minority of companies conformed by a 20%. The remaining 80% of the population did not implement the feature. Finally, the presence of a *Person Speaking* was found in a 100% of the videos.

For *IPV*, the use of *Voice Overs* is conformed by 70% of the population; the remaining 30% indicates an absence of *Voice Overs*. *Sound effect* is seen in 80% of the videos and a 20% has a non-appearance of it. Lastly, there is a manifestation of *Person Speaking* factor by a 100%.

In the IH's *Voice Overs* use was found in 70% of the videos analyzed, while the other 30% indicates and nonexistence. Sound effect did not yield any revealing conclusions, as the result showed a 50/50 equilibrium; half of the homemade video producers used sound effects on their productions, while the other half did not presented any usage of it. Ultimately, all the productions showed people speaking on their productions by an amount of 100%.

Graphics

This category is conformed by all the visual effects presented on the videos. The analysis will be done through the five main visual trends manifested by the control group: the presence of pictures, if the video game was played during the review, what did the background of the video contained; as if it was a still frame, constantly changing frame or the presence of videos related to the topic. We were looking for the presence of variation of angles compared to a still camera without movement or a background video that was not filmed by them associated to the topic. Finally, it was important to determine if it was recorded in a studio against other possible places as different parts inside homes as desks, living rooms etc. For the last feature is important to clarify that the control group did not showed any review video filmed in the outdoors.

The data showed in Co.'s the presence still pictures by an amount of 100%. The actual game that was being reviewed played in 80% of the videos and was absent in the other 30%. The background composition consisted an 80% of videos related to the topic and a 30% of still frames of the reviewers talking. The videos in their majority had many angles represented by an 80% in comparison to a 30% of videos that just had one angle. Finally all the videos were filmed in professional studios y a percentage of a 100.

Furthermore IPV result showed that 90% did not used pictures in their videos even though another 10% did use them. For the video game playing the results displayed as a 50% of producers that showed on their videos sections of the videogames as they played them and also showed shooting of them speaking and interacting with the product. Other 40% where reviews composed by only videos of the video games and the other 10% did not contain any video. For the background there was a 60% that used many different backgrounds, 30% that used only videos of the background and a 10% that used videos related to the topic as background. The quantity of angles showed that 80% used many angles

in comparison to 20% that only use one angle in their shootings. Finally, 90% of the videos were produced in a studio and 10% in a diverse ambient.

Additionally, the IH's videos did not use pictures by a 90% and only a 10% did use pictures. 60% of the videos showed only the game they were referring to in the screen and 40% showed videos of the game and also the people that were speaking. For the background there were 10% with many types of backgrounds as video, pictures, films of themselves and a 90% had only videos related to the topic. For the angles there was found that the majority by a 70% has many angles and a 30% had only one still angle. Lastly, 90% of the videos were not filmed in studios and just a 10% was.

Personal Interaction

This section addresses all the factors that can be altered by the storyteller of the video. The presence of the producer is an influential element that has to be taken into account to understand the likeness of the video and its potential. The notions measured were: if the narrator said his or her opinion in regards to the product and their level of objectiveness. Linked to openly expressing their personal experience. How explicit were their emotions or personal opinion towards the game. For example, a company could share less or more opinions for personal interests as selling more a videogame and gaining commissions. Also it is important to evaluate the type of language they use to communicate with their followers. Some options could be expressing them in first person as peer to peer talking or being more professional by using plurals or third persons pronouns. It was also important to determine how the storytellers portrayed the videogame (good or bad). The way they presented the game to other future players could influence their consumption judgment. Furthermore, the researchers tried to measure the possible bias of the videos looking for clues as if they bought the video or someone gave it to them as a present and if they give any advice on where or how to find the game. Moreover, we wanted to measure if comedy reviews were more popular inside this field. A very common method in this field is to rate the video games usually from one to ten, so the experimenters looked to who was more important to rate. Also we analyzed the length of the videos to understand the trend the timing of the review is a very decisive factor. If the review was created before the official release of the game it will cause more furor between fans rather than later reviews. The dates of the reviews were analyzing in

order to find if there are some privilege people in this industry that could possibly have the game before time. Finally, the quantity of people that were in the review video is an influential factor. Many people could cause an impression as the game is really fun to play with colleagues and will encourage players to do the same. As for a personal review could be perceived differently by the respective gamers.

First of all, the analysis would be focus on the professional review companies. The data collection showed that 80% of the videos openly expressed their opinions and the other 20% maintained their view unspecified. Likewise 60% shared their personal experience and emotions towards the game; the following 40% left a gap on their judgments. Furthermore all the videos were filmed in first person by an amount of 100%. Consequently, the actors talked 40% balanced opinions between the advantages and disadvantages of the games, 40% spoke specifically positive and the following 20% expressed mostly negative in the review. The Co's completely stated from where they received the game expressed in all the videos. 60% advised the gamers to buy the product mentioned in the review, and the other 40% did not argued the topic. Furthermore none of the reviews seemed to have comedy or funny aspects in their productions forming a 100%. Additionally, 60% gave ratings about the product meanwhile the other 20% did not mention anything. The length of the videos varied 40% were videos that lasted 0-5 minutes, another 40% were videos from 5-15 and the correspondent 20% was longer than 15 minutes. The reviews studied in their majority were released before the dates the game should be published; 60% was release before the due date and the other 40% after it appearance to the public. Finally the quantity of people on each video varied with a tendency of one person in 80% of the cases. Contrary, the other 20% had involved in their videos 2 or more people.

In the case of IPV, the opinions of the videogames expressed in their review were distributed in three; 50% belongs to strong opinions shared by the producers, 40% were balanced in their opinions providing with enough information so the public can create their own opinions and 10% did not mention anything about their believes. Following, the producers shared great experiences when trying the games by 80% and 20% was considered equalized. Subsequently, the emotions towards the game were affirmed by 70% of the video makers as positive and another 30% had a neutral opinion. The grammatical style of language spoken was also in first person by an amount of 90%. Likewise a majoritarian percentage

communicated positive outcomes from the game, specifically 70%. The following 30% rest had highlighted several positive and negative aspects of the videogame. Some of the amateurs specifically a 10% bought the videogame, another 10% got the product by a company and the rest 80% did not mention on the list of contents argued how they obtained the game. These reviews showed a lot of enthusiasm and 80% of the videos had involved some comedy in it; another 20% created a more serious or professional environment. Furthermore, 80% of the videos evaluated the game and other 20% did not think of its importance. The majority of the videos lasted between 5 to 15 minutes by 80%. The other 20% was divided by either short videos from 0 to 5 minutes to considered long videos of more than 15 minutes. The 80% of the videos were released after the game was published and 20% found a way to produce their reviews before time. Finally, the amount of people participating in this kind of videos was 80% with only one person and 20% with the presence of many others.

Thirdly, the IH's or amateurs gave prominent statement about their opinions, that was found on 60% of the reviews and 40% was conformed by unilateral opinions. Likewise 60% expressed their joy of playing the game, 30% was very balanced stating their experience and 10% did not enjoy the game and claimed it on the video. The emotions got from the game by these reviewers were 60% strong and 40% balanced. Also, all of the participants communicated in first person allowing them to express better their opinions, half of their beliefs were positive (50%), 40% were neutral and 10% claimed negative opinions of the game. The homemade videos commonly did not mention how they obtained the games (70%). Although 20% said they got them from companies and the other 10% openly expressed their investment. 60% recommended to buy the video games and the other 40% said to do not purchase the game or did not mention anything. 40% of the videos were funny and with a great sense of humor and the other 60% was the complete opposite. Moreover, 70% shared their ratings to the game and other 30% did not express the rankings they would personally give. The lengths of the videos were mainly between 5 to 15 minutes by 70%, 20% lasted more than that and 10% was only 5 minutes long. A significant part of the videos were created after the release of the products (80%) and the other 20% had access to the game before its publication. Lastly, it was demonstrated that all participants did their videos alone by an amount of 100% of the videos.

Finally, there will be shown the results of the three hypothesis given on chapter 4. The first hypothesis tested if the use of professional tools would have any effect on the popularity of the video. The popularity of the video was determined by the amount of views and shares the video produced (see in appendix). Data showed the higher values on videos created by IP; by an amount of 2,720,242 views and 4,223 shares. The second highest group was IH by an amount of 1,686,531 views and 1,716 shares. Lastly, we had professional companies with 1,359,572 views and 657 shares.

For the second hypothesis researchers tested, if less professional videos could possibly create an more trustworthy ambient. The concern was measured by the top amount of likes obtained by each of the groups in the video with highest total (see in appendix). Charts showed that IPV were the cluster with more quantity of likes by an amount of 101,605. Subsequently, there was IH with 30,957 likes and finally Co. with 23,101.

Thirdly, it was measured if positive reviews will increase the popularity of the video. It was measured by looking at the amounts of total interaction on YouTube that a video had. An also looking if the video has more positive or negative opinions in it. The analysis revealed that 100% of the videos with higher interaction had positive reviews and 83% of the first two videos (see in appendix). Furthermore the highest positive reviews were from professional companies by an amount of 6,611,350; secondly, IPV by 1,913,778 amount of interaction, being 29% less and finally there is IH by 11% less.

7. Discussion

The research tries to find the trends in the merchandise field to create more productive advertising campaigns. We found some trends that every type of reviews producers does. Every video has people directly speaking to a camera; they usually try to use more shots and angles to make the video more visually interactive. Even though they like to constantly change the background to further attract attention, the use of pictures is limited. Which has lead to a creation of a new tendency. Showing the video games in action as if the viewer is playing with them. But they don't usually just play the video, this producers use voice-overs in order to continue their storytelling process. In the reviews people tend to appear alone to create a stronger bond with their viewers. In that way people will mainly identify the reviewer and follow specifically them and not a company. Inside review companies we can appreciate different videos from each of the reviewers so people can decide their most appealing person. Moreover, all the creators provide their viewers with advices about the decisions to buy or not a game. Reviewers highly express their opinions during the videos what can be explained by the use of first person when dialoguing. This grammatical form allows the reviewer to talk in a more personal manner by using pronouns as "I, me, my, mine" or in plural "we, us, our, ours". The use of these pronouns aids the connectivity between broadcasters and the public. Even though the reviewers speak openly about their opinions, the majority prefers not to rank the video games by numbers.

Professional companies and homemade videos have also been following the same rules. They have created reviews in that would only show the screen of someone playing the videogame. Likewise, both have selected specific backgrounds for the complete video. Contrasting to the independent professional videos who in their style have decide to combine sectors of the video game with shots of them speaking combining different backgrounds in one video. Furthermore, it is very interesting that one group is acting in complete controversial manner. The independent producers with professional videos are also generating videos with humor, a mechanism that has not been present in others. They have also applied the use of sound effects on their creations; adding drama, suspense, thrill or excitement to further communicates

their emotions. IPV has a particularity shared with the professional companies; they both implement the use of studios to film their review videos. Furthermore, the professional companies are specifically known for having the privilege of acquiring the videogames before its release date. Which allows them to create their review beforehand and places them with higher advantage. What is confirmed by the average number of traffic they cause on the web, as it is higher than any the other (see appendix # 10.4). Additionally, all Co.'s mentioned where did they receive the games for, while the majority of others did not hesitate to mention. Another characteristic aspect of the Co.'s is that they were the ones with most equilibrated judgments when providing negative or positive opinions about the game. Which provides them the perfect equilibrium to be nominated as the least bias producers. Furthermore, they were the also the ones with the most negatives comments on the field in contrast to IPV and IH which mostly communicated positive aspects of the video games. Finally, there was found another affinity between and IPV and IH in the length of their videos. The majority of their productions were standardized between 5 to 15 minutes each.

We analyzed the virility of the videos by the amount of times people shared the video in other social medias. When the content is expanded on the web it chances to reach more viewers increase and the virility process begins. Between the videos studied, we analyzed the one with more amount of shares to get a closer insights of their behavior so that further producers can copy this interactions. The video with most amounts of shares belonged to the Independent creators with professional videos. This video scored the highest quantity in each factor but the main relevance is in the things that the video was slightly differing to others. That video was mostly a film of the original game while the producer was playing it. Over the video he had his microphone on to explain every step he was making. He was had a great sense of humor and changed his tone of voice to catch more attention. He admitted a company has provided him with the videogame. He received the game before the release date because of the time it was published, what provides him with a great advantage. Furthermore the video was between the perfect time ranks. The review lasted 15 minutes so it was on the top of the scale we created that was between 5 to 15 minutes long. Finally the creator did not lose any time on giving

extra details of his opinion as for example the ratings. He was very straight to the point and strictly presented all the new features of the game.

Finally, we are going to demonstrate the result of the three hypotheses given. The first hypothesis is partially supported as the group with more amounts of views and shares where the IPV. That people have partly access to professional equipment and to the use of film studios, therefore they create a visually more professional content. Even though, not all the videos from IPV showed the use of these tools. The second most popular group was independent homemade producers, even before professional companies reviews that have complete access to professional tools.

The second hypothesis looked to prove if less professional reviews were considered more trustful and it was also partially proved. The results showed that the medium professional videos where the more liked by people. Secondly it was shown the IH as trust worthier than Co.

Thirdly, researchers looked it positive reviews will create more interaction on the web towards the game. The hypothesis was supported by the research results. It was found that Co. were the ones with most videos with positive reviews and also got the higher amount of interaction on the web.

7.1 Future work

Our research could have been improved if we have taken it one step further and analyzing different factors as devices used, places, demographics of the people who is watching the videos etc. All those factors would give more information about the user and would be useful for advertising purposes, which will lead to more people to access the video. All this insights could have provide us with more revealing data to understand our population and further analyze their behaviors so we can tackle them more efficiently.

Besides, it is really important to understand that on the web all the information is in constant change. Because of that, there is a possibility that the data we provided may actually change by the time of its review. In addition, these concepts should be also studied in other social media platforms to get more insights of people's behaviors and create multiplatform marketing campaigns.

For this paper we could only use the public data available, which was partially limited. We could not find better analytics that the ones used, if people

could get more data of each video producer it could improve the targeting system. Therefore, discovering simpler ways to target the viewers could optimize the video success. The success in a YouTube channel is determinate by the amount of views, likes or subscriptions (data that we had access to).

New questions that our research could raise may be finding better advertising methods without the direct use of YouTube. Our research does not directly touches the marketing of advertising methods on YouTube what could leave a gap for new researchers in the future to develop. We encourage continuing this research by analyzing which could be the best social media to advertise the YouTube channels.

8. Conclusion

The research searched for the importance of opinion leaders on the field of gaming merchandising. It was key to analyze this specific group as they play an influential role in molding people's opinions towards the consumerism of its products. The study was focused in the social media platform dedicated for videos; YouTube. The entertainment videos were analyzed from three different populations present on this field professional companies, Independent video producers and independent homemade producers. The information given on reviews have a large impact on the sales the game gets, it is a form of modern advertising that would provide cheaper marketing campaigns for the future. This group of opinion leaders on the field provide with advice to hundreds of people on the web and it is more powerful than self advertising because it is spread by word of mouth, people tend to trust more in other professionals opinions than the same product promoting itself.

The study analyzed a cheaper way to create marketing campaigns by identifying the opinion leaders on the field and targeting through them. The three hypotheses were analyzed and two of them were partially right and the third resulted true. The methodology used to prove the hypothesis was content analysis. Furthermore, the researchers looked for the 25 more influential and popular videos created by opinion leaders on YouTube. They collected, analyzed and interpreted the data finding the trends producers should follow to have more success on their videos. As a conclusion it is important to understand that following the steps provided could lead to more traffic towards the video but there are other influential factors as the release date of the product that will be more important. Furthermore, we encourage future research to keep digging more into the subject.

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10. Appendices

10.1. Videos Analyzed:

1. Company (Co.)

- 1.1. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKy1dAqELo0zrOtPkf0eTMw>
- 1.2. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbu2SsF-Or3Rsn3NxqODImw>
- 1.3. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcMTZY1rFXO3Rj44D5VMYiw>
- 1.4. <https://www.youtube.com/user/gametrailers>
- 1.5. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChDyKjO7PB_QuqTTFKKR9lw

2. Independent with professional videos (IPV)

- 2.1. <https://www.youtube.com/user/AngryJoeShow>
- 2.2. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSOkex4abVI14cZ4tLyUYzw>
- 2.3. <https://www.youtube.com/user/OfficialNerdCubed>
- 2.4. <https://www.youtube.com/user/ThatOneVideoGamer>
- 2.5. <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheEscapistMagazine>
- 2.6. <https://www.youtube.com/user/JonTronShow>
- 2.7. <https://www.youtube.com/user/TotalHalibut>
- 2.8. <https://www.youtube.com/user/JeremyJahns>
- 2.9. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b3_HaGV3p0I
- 2.10. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IsMtN_xvSuU

3. Independent homemade (IH)

- 3.1. <https://www.youtube.com/user/boogie2988>
- 3.2. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCCbfB3cQtkEAIKfdRQnfQvw_
- 3.3. <https://www.youtube.com/user/JimSterling>
- 3.4. <https://www.youtube.com/user/DMJared>
- 3.5. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcH2DkQQ1g25Cq9c4V2rUFg>
- 3.6. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xm3XEzst1dk>
- 3.7. <https://www.youtube.com/user/BlackNerdComedy>
- 3.8. https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmXH6CX_juGwNFTj3PESdoA
- 3.9. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUiaBD_r-jM
- 3.10. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCLx053rWZxCiYWsbETgdKrQ>

10.2. Data Collection chart:

TYPES			
Link to Video			
Sound			
Voice Overs	Yes (1)	No (2)	
Sound Effects	Yes	No	
Person Speaking	Yes	No	
Graphics			
Pictures	Yes	No	
Video of the Game	only gameplay 1	no gameplay 2	gameplay and person
Background	1 (1)	Many (2)	Video related to topic (3)
Angles (shots)	1	Many	
Studio	Yes	No	
Personal Interaction			
Opinion	A lot (1)	Balanced (2)	No (3)
Shared their personal experience	Good	Balanced	bad
Emotions towards the game	A lot	Balanced	No
First person	Yes	No	
Negative or Positive Opinions	negative (1)	positive (2)	both (3)
Ways they got the game	bought	got it from the company	didn't say
advised to buy the game	buy	don't buy	didn't say (3)
Comedy in the video	yes	no	
Ratings provided	rating	no (2)	
Lenght of video	0-5m (1)	5-15m (2)	More (3)
Release timing	yes (1)	no (2)	
Quantity of people	1 (1)	Many (2)	

TYPES				Companies (Co.)				Independent with professional videos (IPV)				Independent, nonmaker Analyses (IN)											
Link to Video				https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...
Sound																							
Voice Overs	Yes (1)	No (2)		1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1
Sound Effects	Yes	No		2	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	1
Person Speaking	Yes	No		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Graphics																							
Pictures	Yes	No		2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Video of the Game	only gameplay 1	no gameplay 2	gameplay and person	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	1	3	2	1	1	3	1	3	1	1	3	3	1
Background	1 (1)	Many (2)	Video related to topic (3)	3	3	3	3	1	2	1	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3
Angles (shots)	1	Many		2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Studio	Yes	No		1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	2
Personal Interaction																							
Opinion	A lot (1)	Balanced (2)	No (3)	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	3	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
Shared their personal experience	Good	Balanced	bad	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	1	1
Emotions towards the game	A lot	Balanced	No	2	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
First person	Yes	No		1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Negative or Positive Opinions	negative (1)	positive (2)	both (3)	2	1	2	3	3	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	2
Ways they got the game	bought	got it from the company	didn't say	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	1	3	3	3	1	1	3	3	2	3	3
advised to buy the game	buy	don't buy	didn't say (3)	1	3	3	1	1	1	3	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	3	1	1	1
Comedy in the video	yes	no		2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	2	1	2	2	1	2	2
Ratings provided	yes (1)	no (2)	More (3)	3	2	10	8	1	2	3	2	2	10	2	2	2	2	2	4	1	2	2	2
Lenght of video	0-5m (1)	5-15m (2)	More (3)	1	1	2	2	3	2	2	2	3	1	2	2	2	2	3	3	2	1	2	2
Release timing	yes (1)	no (2)		2	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2	2	2	1	2	2
Quantity of people	1 (1)	Many (2)		1	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

10.3. Results Chart

TYPES			Co.				IPV			IH		
Sound	Voice Overs	1	4	1	0	7	3	0	7	3	0	
	Sound Effects	2	1	4	0	8	2	0	5	5	0	
	Person Speacking	3	5	0	0	10	0	0	10	0	0	
Graphics	Pictures	1	0	5	0	1	9	0	1	9	0	
	Video of the Game	2	4	0	1	4	1	5	6	0	4	
	Background	3	1	0	4	1	6	3	0	1	9	
	Angles (shots)	4	1	4	0	2	8	0	3	7	0	
	Studio	5	5	0	0	9	1	0	1	9	0	
Personal Interaction	Opinion	1	4	1	0	5	4	1	6	4	0	
	Shared their personal experience	2	3	2	0	8	2	0	6	3	1	
	Emotions towards the game	3	3	2	0	7	3	0	6	4	0	
	First Person	4	5	0	0	9	1	0	10	0	0	
	Negative or Positive Opinions	5	1	2	2	0	7	3	1	5	4	
	Ways they got the game	6	5	0	0	1	1	8	1	2	7	
	Advised to buy the game	7	3	0	2	6	0	4	6	2	2	
	Comedy in the video	8	0	5	0	8	2	0	4	6	0	
	Ratings Provided	9	3	2	0	7	3	0	0	8	2	
	Lenght of video	10	2	2	1	1	8	1	1	7	2	
	Release timing	11	3	2	0	2	8	0	2	8	0	
	Quantity of people	12	4	1	0	8	2	0	10	0	0	

10.4. Virallity Chart

TYPES	Companies (Co.)				
Link to video	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www
Amount of Likes	4,341	2,017	23,101	3,963	460
Amount of Dislikes	175	318	535	1,125	26
Amount of Views	316,806	155,018	1,359,572	552,458	25,636
Amount of Subscribers	7,672,015	2,486,868	12,696,407	281,039	23,661
Shares	248	194	657	590	35
Total interaction on the We	3,897,813	1,273,754	6,611,350	249,785	16,799
Average					2,409,900

Independent homemade/ Amateurs (IH)									
https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www
2,080	30,957	2,211	17,829	131	819	3,791	861	7,836	4,938
31	1,152	40	586	8	256	56	78	226	124
43,507	1,574,957	97,319	1,686,531	10,211	17,086	146,259	24,191	349,778	161,415
292,820	890,747	398,984	822,442	48,363	445,252	533,124	282,643	151,782	414,275
Non visible	1,716	43	250	12	28	Non visible	17	210	Non visible
313,534	749,240	218,102	741,537	26,180	225,712	604,358	145,821	142,858	492,514
									365,985

Independent with professional videos (IPV)									
https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www	https://www
72,898	2,951	44,564	11,766	16,478	101,605	11,716	16,592	12,922	14,774
5,432	109	1,305	251	329	1,835	321	194	224	239
1,934,418	114,088	3,126,889	443,202	1,633,874	2,720,242	354,404	393,617	513,104	450,827
2,626,706	1,399,524	2,494,992	642,157	915,372	2,814,370	2,248,513	185,835	2,663,453	1,205,836
2,821	Non visible	4,223	192	271	4,213	368	493	272	178
1,672,791	1,455,093	1,858,296	405,141	778,054	1,913,778	1,190,713	165,379	1,429,374	687,292
									1,155,591

10.5. YouTube Insights

10.6. Hypothesis Testing Charts

Hypothesis # 1				
	Vid #	Views	Vid #	Shares
Co.	3	1,359,572	3	657
IPV	6	2,720,242	3	4,223
			6	4,213
IH	4	1,686,531	2	1,716
Hypothesis # 2				
	Vid #	Likes		
Co.	3	23,101		
IPV	6	101,605		
IH	2	30,957		
Hypothesis # 3				
Interaction	Vid #	#1	Vid #	#2
Co.	3	6,611,350	1	3,897,813
IPV	6	1,913,778	3	1,858,296
IH	2	749,240	4	741,537