

**To:** Hank High-Score Henderson

**From:** Iliana Booth

**Re:** Evidence-Based Analysis of Video Game Trailers

**Situation Summary:**

*Think Fast Gaming* is preparing to launch several new games this season and needs to plan and produce trailers to promote them effectively. We must understand how various elements in a trailer, including color, music, sounds, and language, shape consumer perceptions of a video game. Although our focus is on targeting younger age groups, it is essential to incorporate the perspectives of other age groups because parents and grandparents are likely to purchase the games. I was requested to analyze three different video game trailers and assess how the elements they use shape consumers' attention and interpretation.

**Conclusion:**

After analyzing the video game trailers for *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe*, *LEGO City Undercover*, and *Star Wars Jedi Fallen Order*, I conclude that energetic or intense fast-tempo music evokes excitement and heightens emotional arousal and purchase intent. Carefully synchronized sound effects create a cohesive immersive experience that enhances viewer engagement. Deliberately paced, dramatic spoken narratives build anticipation while incorporating credible reviews fosters consumer trust. The strategic employment of humor can establish emotional connections that resonate with children and adults, boosting purchase intent. Vibrant colors and contrasting visuals increase attention and make trailers visually appealing. Lastly, rapid, action-packed sequences maintain excitement and engagement, ensuring consumers stay captivated throughout the trailer.

**Discussion:**

***Mario Kart 8 Deluxe Trailer***

The *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* trailer utilizes energetic and playful music, vibrant colors, synchronized sound effects, and intense non-stop gameplay to engage consumers, especially young children. The fast-paced, playful soundtrack evokes excitement and anticipation, effectively encouraging children to get excited about the prospect of playing the game. A study on background music tempo demonstrates that fast-tempo music evokes feelings of happiness

and excitement and increases people's emotional arousal.<sup>1</sup> The cheerful, light-hearted tone of the music reinforces Mario Kart's family-friendly nature, which contributes to persuading adults to purchase the game for their child or grandchild. The trailer suits the targeted group of children aged 5 to 7 because it is light-hearted and appropriate for them, without any depictions of violence or other mature content. The portrayal of the game as appropriate for young children helps to promote it to parents and grandparents looking for an innocent video game for a child. The trailer depicts action-packed gameplay in bright colors, effectively increasing both attention and excitement. Vibrant colors are a strategic choice because the intensity of a stimulus increases attention, and brighter colors are more arousing than dull colors (pp. 293, 295).<sup>2</sup> In addition to the music, the trailer also features various sound effects synchronized with visual elements. A study on video game sound design effects on user experience finds that the execution of careful synchronization between audio and visual elements creates a cohesive and realistic gameplay experience.<sup>3</sup> The study concludes that heightened audio-visual synchronicity is associated with an enhanced user experience. The light-hearted and fun tone of the trailer communicates to consumers of all ages that playing the game would be a fun and uplifting experience.

The sound effects throughout the *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* trailer further immerse consumers in the gameplay to increase their engagement with the advertisement. There is no narrative present in the trailer, allowing the trailer's visuals and sounds to speak for themselves in demonstrating the fun of the game. The trailer is action-packed, with non-stop, rapid-paced cinematic gameplay edited with jump cuts demonstrating the dynamic possibilities that playing Mario Kart holds. The fast-tempo music complements the rapid-paced gameplay throughout the trailer. The action in the trailer is likely effective at keeping viewers engaged and building excitement for the prospect of playing the game and can appeal to both new and returning players of Mario Kart. The combination of energetic and playful music, vibrant colors, well-synchronized sound effects, and rapid cinematic gameplay works together to persuade both young and old consumers to purchase the game.

### ***LEGO City Undercover* Trailer**

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<sup>1</sup> Sun, Wenwen, et al.

<sup>2</sup> Mothersbaugh, David L., et al.

<sup>3</sup> Cao, Zijiang, et al.

The *LEGO City Undercover* trailer utilizes energetic music, humor, vibrant colors, synchronized sound effects, credible positive reviews, and exciting, fast-paced animation with an intriguing storyline. A study on background music tempo demonstrates that fast-tempo music evokes feelings of happiness and excitement and increases people's emotional arousal.<sup>4</sup> Similar to the *Mario Kart 8 Deluxe* trailer, the upbeat and thrilling fast-tempo music in this trailer evokes excitement and anticipation. The sound effects are carefully synchronized with the visuals for a cohesive and immersive viewing experience.<sup>5</sup> The *LEGO City Undercover* trailer suits the target of children ages 9 to 12 because it contains subtle edginess and humor. A study on the impact of humor in advertising concluded that using humor in marketing communications can draw in consumers, break through the clutter, and establish emotional connections that can increase brand equity and generate buzz.<sup>6</sup> The humor in this trailer extends beyond targeting children by including a joke written for adults to discern a separate meaning. A Lego police officer is seen questioning a man on how many coffees he has had, to which he replies, "Oh yeah, I know what you're thinking. Did I have six shots, or only five?" and the officer says, "Okay, you've had enough." Adults can discern a different meaning from this clip referring to alcohol use. The situation doesn't make sense with coffee, and this clip represents the use of incongruity humor.<sup>7</sup> This trailer communicates subtle humor to adults from the resolution of the incongruous stimuli by perceiving it as a covert reference to alcohol. Children would most likely not be able to pick up on this. This strategic choice can capture adults' attention, leading to a greater likelihood of purchase consideration, which is important because adults are typically the ones to purchase video games for children.

The trailer depicts exaggerated and brightly colored action-packed cinematic gameplay. The use of vibrant colors is strategic because the intensity of a stimulus increases attention, and brighter colors are more arousing than dull colors (pp. 293, 295).<sup>8</sup> The action-packed, fast-changing scenes effectively engage consumers in line with the adaptation level theory, which suggests that if a stimulus doesn't change, an individual adapts to it and notices it less (p. 297).<sup>9</sup> The trailer opens with many positive reviews on screen from credible sources, enhancing the

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<sup>4</sup> Sun, Wenwen, et al.

<sup>5</sup> Cao, Zijiang, et al.

<sup>6</sup> Goswami, Sushnata.

<sup>7</sup> Neuendorf, Kimberly A., et al.

<sup>8</sup> Mothersbaugh, David L., et al.

<sup>9</sup> Mothersbaugh, David L., et al.

quality of Lego's perceived brand image. The narrative in the trailer introduces a compelling storyline that is likely to capture consumers' attention because it is both interesting and entertaining, which are both features of advertisements that consumers are more likely to watch in full (p. 297).<sup>10</sup> The trailer's fun and upbeat tone implies that playing the game would be a fun and family-friendly experience.

### ***Star Wars Jedi Fallen Order Trailer***

The *Star Wars Jedi Fallen Order* trailer utilizes dramatic music, high-quality synchronized sound effects, contrasting colors, captivating action, and an intense spoken narrative. The dramatic color scheme of the visuals creates contrast, a visual element consumers pay more attention to because of its unexpected nature (p. 297).<sup>11</sup> The recurring use of black screens with white text between the intense visuals also uses the element of contrast to capture consumers' attention. The dramatic music in the trailer is likely to increase emotional arousal, brand attitude, and purchase intention, which is in line with a study on the effect of background music because music can have very powerful influences on consumer perceptions.<sup>12</sup> The sound effects are high-quality and carefully synchronized with the visuals for a cohesive and immersive viewing experience.<sup>13</sup> The trailer's depiction of captivating Star Wars action is edited with black screens to create contrast and emphasis, enhancing the scenes' dramatic effect. The visuals imply that playing the video game would be an intense and immersive experience. The action combines an intriguing and intense spoken narrative that is somewhat poetic and builds consumer anticipation with its slow and deliberate pace. A study on the impact of storytelling in advertising concludes that effective narrative techniques should involve a positive sensory and affective experience.<sup>14</sup> The *Star Wars Jedi Fallen Order* trailer portrays a positive sensory and affective experience by engaging multiple senses simultaneously with a strategic combination of intense visuals, audio, and a compelling spoken narrative. The trailer's intense tone communicates that playing the game would be an intense and thrilling experience, and it effectively appeals to teens and young adults who enjoy playing thrilling, action-packed video games, whether they are new or returning players of Star Wars games.

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<sup>10</sup> Mothersbaugh, David L., et al.

<sup>11</sup> Mothersbaugh, David L., et al.

<sup>12</sup> Uhm, Jun-Phil, et al.

<sup>13</sup> Cao, Zijiang, et al.

<sup>14</sup> Teraiya, Vibhu, et al.

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