

And The Survey Says...

YA Hotline Young Adult Film Survey, April 2007

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No one knows young adult film preferences better than teens themselves so for this issue of YA Hotline, we went straight to the source. In April 2007, we asked a class of 19 Grade 11 students from a rural Nova Scotia high school for their opinions on films and library film collections. We distributed a short survey to the students during class time.

Since it was conducted during class time, we had a 100% response rate. However, since we used such a small sample size (9 young men and 10 young women), this survey does not claim to be representative of all teens. While it can not be extrapolated, it does give us some insight into the film preferences of one group of young adults in Nova Scotia.

So what films and genres do they like?

Film reviews and circulation statistics can tell us something about what films teens are watching but sometimes it's best to ask teens themselves. We asked respondents to indicate their favourite movie genres.

According to our survey, the students liked "Comedies" the best (8 out of 19), followed by "Horror" (4) and "Romance" (4). Two students preferred "Action" and one liked "Science Fiction." Interestingly, no students chose anime,

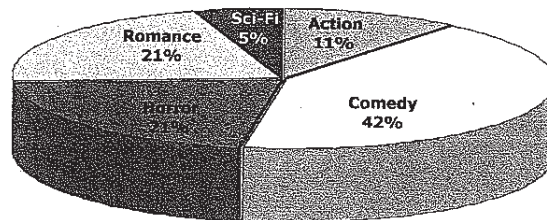
drama, fantasy, or documentaries as their favourite types of movies.

When asked to indicate their favourite movies, students responded with

movies from various genres. Their responses included:

- Titanic (3 students)
- Ice Age
- Liar Liar
- National Security
- Don't be a menace to South Central while drinking your juice in the hood
- Blades of Glory
- Barber Shop
- The Guardian
- Scarface
- The Fast and the Furious
- Devil's Pond
- Alexander
- Are We There Yet?

What is your favourite genre?



- The Notebook
- Any horror movie (2 students)
- Any kind of romantic comedy (2 students)

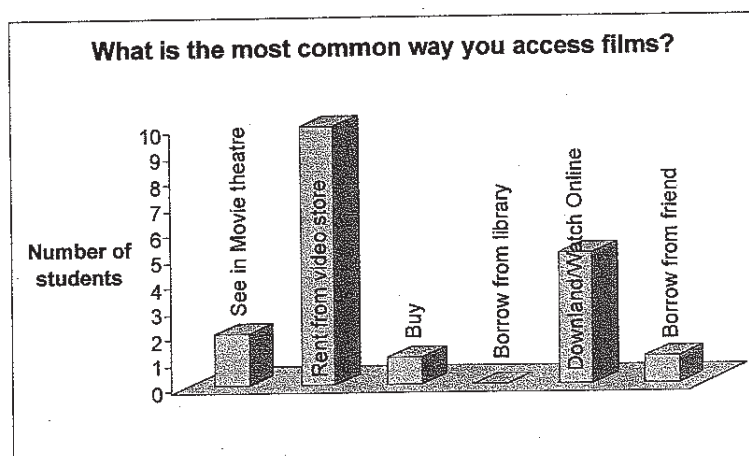
Their least favourite movies were nearly as varied as their favourites, although many of their most hated were children's or "family" movies (e.g. Disney movies). Interestingly, three students despised the Harry Potter movies. Their least favourite movies included:

- Harry Potter (any) (3 students)
- Lion King (3 students)
- Pulse (2 students)
- Star Wars (2 students)
- Dance Movies (2 students)
- Aladdin
- Shrek
- Pokemon movies
- Nacho Libre
- Remember the Titans
- The Grudge
- Cop movies

How do teens access movies? Do they use the library's collection?

Not only were we interested in learning what kinds of movies young adults like, but we also wanted to know how they most commonly access these films and whether they use their local library's film collection.

The students indicated that, most often, they rent their movies from the video store (10/19 students). The second most common way to access movies was either to watch them online or download them (5 students). Other means of access included: watching them at the movie theatre (2), buying them (1), and borrowing them from a friend (1). Sadly, no students indicated that they most often access films by borrowing them from the library.



While respondents may not use the library as their primary access point for films, almost half (8 of 19) have borrowed movies from their local library. The most common reason cited for not borrowing movies is that the library doesn't have the movies the students are interested in (8 people), followed by the library's movies being out of date (4 people), the library is at an inconvenient location (2 people) and finally, the respondent didn't know that the library had movies (1 person).

What can the library do to encourage teens to borrow films?

The students also offered some advice for libraries wishing to encourage them to borrow films. Not surprisingly, they wanted the library to include more new movies in its collection (9 people) and more movies they are interested in (5 people).

What was surprising, however, was that three teens surveyed wanted the library to include more educational documentaries and movies. While no respondents selected documentaries as their favourite, some still see their value in a library collection.

Two people also recognized the need for more advertising, claiming that they would be encouraged to borrow films from their library if there were more interesting posters and ads.

Implications

Since this survey only involved a small sample, it is difficult to draw broad conclusions. However, it is obvious that young adults' film interests are as varied as teens themselves. I also don't think it would be a stretch to conclude that most young

adults don't use libraries as their primary source of films. Clearly, the main reason for this is that the newer films have multiple holds and so aren't readily available like they are at the local Blockbuster. This poses a challenge since collecting enough feature films to meet the demand is not financially feasible for most libraries – especially since demand for the multiple copies of new releases wears off quickly.

It's also interesting that respondents stated that the library doesn't have the films they're interested in. A future study could further explore this to determine whether it's related to the fact that the library doesn't have enough copies of new feature films or if the library needs to arrange more input from its local teens.

Reasons for not borrowing films from the library

1. The library doesn't have movies I'm interested in
2. The library's movies are out of date
3. The library's location is inconvenient
4. I didn't know the library had movies