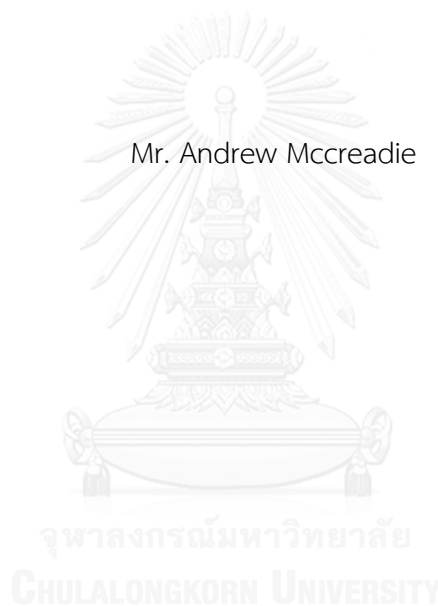MILKING THE LAUGHS : FINDING WAYS TO ALTER THEATRICAL ELEMENTS TO GARNER

BETTER WORD OF MOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA PROLIFERATION

Mr. Andrew Mccreadie

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts Program in Cultural Management

(Interdisciplinary Program)

Graduate School

Chulalongkorn University

Academic Year 2016

การเปลี่ยนองค์ประกอบของการแสดงเพื่อส่งเสริมให้มีการแนะนำปากต่อปาก
และแพร่กระจายในสื่อสังคม

นายแอนดรู แมคเครดี

Thesis Title	MILKING THE LAUGHS : FINDING WAYS TO ALTER THEATRICAL ELEMENTS TO GARNER BETTER WORD OF MOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA PROLIFERATION
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Field of Study	Cultural Management
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แอนดรู แมคเครดี : การเปลี่ยนองค์ประกอบของการแสดงเพื่อส่งเสริมให้มีการแนะนำปาก
ต่อปากและแพร่กระจายในสื่อสังคม (MILKING THE LAUGHS : FINDING WAYS TO
ALTER THEATRICAL ELEMENTS TO GARNER BETTER WORD OF MOUTH
RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA PROLIFERATION) อ.ที่ปรึกษา
วิทยานิพนธ์หลัก: ผศ. ดร.ดวงกมล ชาติประเสริฐ, 124 หน้า.

เป้าหมายหลักของการศึกษาครั้งนี้คือการวิเคราะห์แรงจูงใจของผู้เข้าร่วมการแสดงตลก
เพื่อพิจารณาแรงจูงใจของคนกลุ่มเหล่านี้ที่จะเลือกแบ่งปันกับคนอื่นๆ เกี่ยวกับประสบการณ์ความ
บันเทิงตลกของพวกเขา (ทั้งแบบออนไลน์หรือแบบอื่นๆ) และเพื่อระบุความสัมพันธ์ใดๆ ระหว่าง
แรงจูงใจทั้งสองกลุ่ม การค้นพบที่เกิดขึ้นอาจนำเสนอข้อมูลเชิงลึกที่มีคุณค่าซึ่งนักแสดงตลกสามารถ
นำมาใช้ในการตัดสินใจที่จะมุ่งเน้นความพยายาม พลัง และทรัพยากรต่างๆ ไปสู่การกระตุ้นแรงจูงใจ
ทั้งสองแบบ ซึ่งจะช่วยให้กำลังใจ ที่มีศักยภาพเข้าร่วมกิจกรรมของพวกเขาและใช้ประโยชน์จากการ
บอกปากต่อปากที่มีคุณค่า โฆษณาศักยภาพของเขาเพื่อขยายตลาดของพวกเขาต่อไป
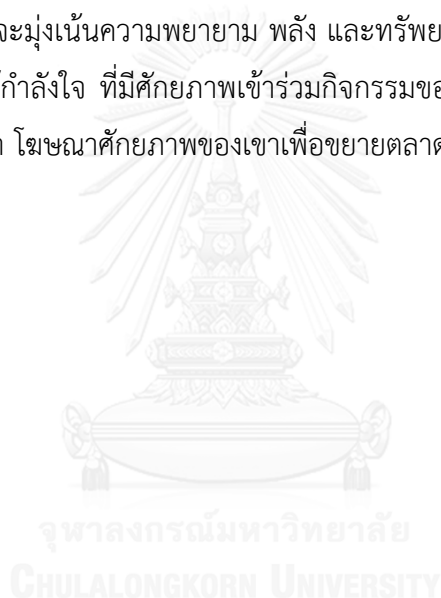
สาขาวิชา   การจัดการทางวัฒนธรรม   ลายมือชื่อนิสิต ....

ปีการศึกษา 2559   ลายมือชื่อ อ.ที่ปรึกษาหลัก ....

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ANDREW MCCREADIE: MILKING THE LAUGHS : FINDING WAYS TO ALTER THEATRICAL ELEMENTS TO GARNER BETTER WORD OF MOUTH RECOMMENDATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA PROLIFERATION. ADVISOR: ASST. PROF. DUANG-KAMOL CHARTPRASERT, Ph.D., 124 pp.

The primary goal of this study is to analyze the motivations of attendees of live comedy, to consider the motivations of the subset of those patrons who choose to share with others about their comedy entertainment experiences (either online or otherwise), and to identify any correlation between the two sets of motivations. The resulting findings may offer comedy producers valuable insight which they can use when making decisions to focus effort, energy and resources toward activating both sets of motivations, thereby encouraging potential patrons to attend their events, and simultaneously leveraging the valuable WOM (word-of-mouth) advertising potential of those patrons to further broaden their marketing outreach.

Field of Study: Cultural Management   Student's Signature ....

Academic Year: 2016   Advisor's Signature ....

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Goals

The goal of this research is to identify and correlate motivations for attending live comedy and for recommending live comedy to others.

The approach of this study is to analyze the motivations of attendees of live comedy, to consider the motivations of the subset of those patrons who choose to share with others about their comedy entertainment experiences (either online or otherwise), and to identify any correlation between the two sets of motivations (see). The resulting findings may offer comedy producers valuable insight which they can use when making decisions to focus effort, energy and resources toward activating both sets of motivations simultaneously, thereby encouraging potential patrons to attend their events while leveraging the valuable word-of-mouth (WOM) advertising potential of those patrons to further broaden their marketing outreach.

Figure 1 Purpose of Study. To find those motivations for WOM and for live comedy attendance.

This research attempts to discover what activates a desire, a motivation, and (most importantly) manifests an actual action, to spontaneously provide word-of-mouth (WOM) recommendations and/or social media recommendations (electronic word-of-mouth or eWOM) by those audience members of live comedy who choose to do so. For the purposes of this research, the specific limited scope of live comedy performances will be the focus, however the results are likely to be applicable to a wide range of theatrical endeavors.

And so, this study hopes to discover if there are any aspects of live comedy, additional to the 'quality' of the show, that can be manipulated by live comedy producers to encourage patrons to share recommendations about the show to others. It is the hypothesis of this research that by leveraging the very motivations that bring audiences to see a comedy show in the first place, a comedy producer might also be able to activate whatever it is that motivates an individual to give a recommendation. Focusing on decisions that play into these specific motivations (those that encourage attendance and inspire WOM recommendations) is likely to be the most powerful and cost effective way to increase WOM proliferation and encourage attendance.

This attempt to discover and identify the motivations of live comedy attendees was undertaken using a number of surveys (both in-person and on-line),

focus groups of attendees, and interviews of a selection of professional live comedy producers.

1.2 Background

Most live entertainment professionals understand intuitively, and from real-life experience, the importance to the financial success of any show that word-of-mouth and electronic word-of-mouth (social media) recommendations by patrons to family and friends provides, and research seems to support this experiential understanding. (Gardner, 2012) (Thomson, Purcell, & Rainie, 2013). Word-of-mouth (WOM) refers here to any discussion between one person to another, or a group of others, regarding their experience as a consumer of a product (in this case, live comedy), and particularly any recommendation that is given from one person to another to see the show. eWOM is a similar statement "about a product or company, which is made available to a multitude of people and institutions via the internet" (Hennig-Thurau, Gwinner, Walsh, & Gremler, 2004, p. 39)which often, but not always, refers to social media posts and reactions (likes, thumbs-ups etc.) to social media posts, announcements and advertising.

The financial restraints under which many producers of live performances must operate necessitates careful budgeting of all aspects of the production, from artistic decisions to marketing and promotional choices. While WOM holds the title of the most trusted form of advertising (Dichter,1966)

(WordofMouthRecommendationsRemainTheMostCredible, 2015), it is also one of the cheapest (free), and so is delightfully appealing to budget-strapped organizations such as theatres and live comedy producers. Cheap and effective; but not necessarily easy to manage.

The subjective nature of art appreciation is also uniquely appropriate for WOM, as the giver and receiver of information often have some knowledge of each other (i.e. they know each other as opposed to being complete strangers), allowing the recommendation to be framed into some context which provides for a more discerning reception, allowing the receiver to give the recommendation more worth or less worth as he/she deems appropriate based on his/her previous knowledge of the person giving the recommendation, and that person's artistic sensibilities (for example, their sense of humour).

The effectiveness of WOM comes in part from the very nature of it: namely, that the recommendation comes from someone one knows and trusts to some degree, and/or someone that one knows is not directly associated with the product; that is, someone who has no bias or financial interest in the product and therefore is not motivated to give misleading information. While this may be an illusion (as there may be benefits that the receiver of the information is unaware of – financial or otherwise), the nature of WOM and its power comes from the fact that the recommendation appears to be spontaneous and not originating from the organizer

of the event. This, of course, makes WOM difficult to manage by those who do have a bias, or financial interest or other motivation to lead in a particular direction.

However, there may be ethical ways that a producer can encourage individuals to give a positive recommendation by word-of-mouth or through social media.

This research hypothesizes that there may be something other than (or additional to) a show 'being good' that actually motivates people to share their experiences with others, and that the average patron may not even be consciously aware of this motivation. The motivation to share a recommendation is likely based on rewarding the giver of information in some way other than financially, such as socially, intellectually or emotionally. Since this researcher has read the conclusion to this study, it should be of little surprise that he will soon be proven correct.

Often the attitude of the crowd, in live theatre for example, one way or the other, is in direct opposition to the expected response by those with professional experience in such matters, such as critics and other experienced theatre professionals. Aside from the 'quality' of the performances, the ingenuity of the script, the grandeur of the sets, the details of the costumes, the authenticity of the props, the choice of music, and the effects of the lighting, there appears to be something else, perhaps the way the these elements are combined, or perhaps something else entirely, that piques the interest and appreciation of an audience.

Some shows are surprise hits. Some surprise flops. This holds true for live comedy as well as other forms of live performance.

That this is generally understood to be true by live performance professionals is evidenced by the common phrase within the live comedy industry: "You can't get 'em all," implying that it is not possible to please all audience members equally and at all times. While often used as a commiserating term from one comedy professional to another after a poorly received show, it reflects the general understanding that the 'quality' of the show is not the only thing that determines the response by an audience.

Further, and more to the point of this research, even for shows that are well appreciated, not all live performance garners the word-of-mouth praise and proliferation that one might expect for an artistically successful show, suggesting that there may be certain 'things' that activate or do not activate the impulse to recommend a show to others.

It may not just be about it being good.

1.3 Research Questions and Scope

This study will consider the following questions :

How important is WOM and eWOM to the success of live comedy?

What motivates patrons to see live comedy?

What motivates patrons to share their live comedy experience through word of mouth (WOM) and electronic word of mouth (social media)?

Are there any motivational triggers that activate both the desire to see comedy and to proliferate recommendations?

What steps can comedy producers take to encourage the activation of these motivational triggers?

This research focuses on live stand-up comedy, using The Comedy Club Bangkok as a case study, and will utilize audience members from Comedy Club Bangkok comedy shows for surveys and focus groups. This survey population was chosen for its convenience, and for the fact that members of these audiences have, by their attendance, showed at least some interest in live comedy.

For the purposes of this study, no distinction will be made between WOM and eWOM, for, as Graham et. al posit, "… the reasons we turn to the media to satisfy our communication needs are the same reasons we turn to other people, […] studies provided preliminary evidence to support the interfacing of interpersonal and mediated motives"(Graham, Barbato, & Perse, 1993, pp. 172-173), and as such, the motivations for engaging in recommendations are likely to be the same whether done face-to-face or through electronic means. While research may exist that distinguishes between electronic (eWOM) and face-to-face WOM, this paper will not address those issues. Survey participants for this study were asked 'how' the

recommendation was given (i.e. either face-to-face or electronically), but this study will consider both WOM and eWOM collectively, without addressing the distinction.

That is not to say that the choice to communicate face-to-face or through social media is not important. "Uses and gratifications scholars have long asserted that the audience is active and goal-directed in their uses of media"(Severin & Tankard, 1997)."(Kim, 2014, p. 186) and "they actively seek to satisfy their needs by turning to the media. These motives influence communication choices."(Graham et al., 1993) However, a functional analysis to determine the exact motivation can be difficult, in part because "...communication behaviour often serves more than one function. This confounds a functional scheme because it is difficult to tell which function is primary."(Rubin, Perse, & Barbato, 1988, p. 606)
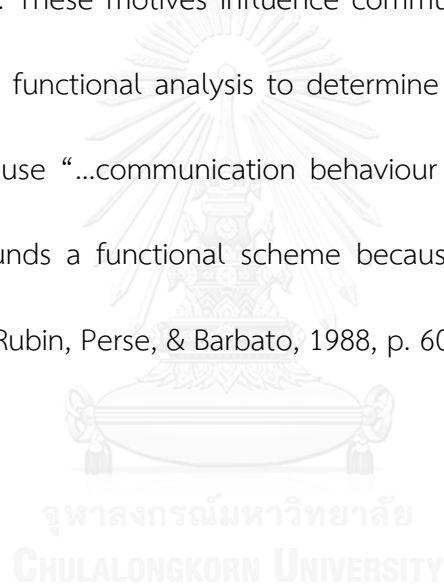
CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Two Pronged Approach

The review of literature that was undertaken for this study focused on previous research in two specific areas: firstly, the nature of WOM (and eWOM), and in particular, motivations for sharing one's recommendation or opinion on a experience or product; secondly, the motivations to see live entertainment of any kind, and to attend live comedy specifically.

2.2 Word of Mouth

There is a sizable hole in knowledge regarding word-of-mouth marketing (WOMM) specific to theatre of any kind, let alone comedy, and no research was discovered in this survey of WOM literature on the correlated connections between the content or form of performance and the likelihood of it generating a WOM recommendation, or recommendation on social media (eWOM). Little research was discovered on what motivates someone to give a recommendation to go and see a live comedy performance specifically (Lockyer & Myers' work being a important exception), and so research from other related fields needed to be considered and extrapolated to the specifics of live comedy performances.

2.3 The Importance of WOM to Live Comedy

The vital importance of WOM (and it's extension eWOM) to the success of live comedy is a long-standing belief held by many live comedy professionals throughout the world, such as Jessie Award winning Vancouver live theatre director and comedian John Murphy, Comedy Club Bangkok Artistic Director Chris Wegoda, Colleen Franklin (Social Media Marketing Director for the Vancouver TheatreSports League), Taiwan improv and stand up comedy producer Meg Anderson, Working Sparks Theatre Artistic Director and playwright Michelle Deines, and Southeast Asian live comedy producer and promoter Turner Sparks (all of whom were interviewed for this paper). While being a strongly held belief by all these professionals, the importance of WOM has not been proven directly by specific live comedy related research. However, other experiential products such as movies and live theatre can be mined for some answers, as there exists a wealth of research done on the marketing results of WOM and eWOM on these industries, which can be examined and analyzed as analogous to live comedy and WOM & eWOM.

The relationship between movies and eWOM recommendations, for example, has been conclusive, and in keeping with the expected importance that many live comedy professionals generally anticipate, namely that eWOM is very important to success. "Studies have revealed that more tickets were likely to be sold when more positive ratings had been posted about a particular movie (Duan et al., 2008; Liu,

2006)."(Kim, 2014, p. 185) The general consensus of research (including preeminent marketing researcher Earnest Dichter, widely known as the 'father of motivational research') is that WOM and (by extension) eWOM are effective marketing tools. Ditcher's work is highly regarded and often quoted and cited, but Hennig-Thurau et. al do note that he does not provide detailed information about the development of his typology.(Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004, p. 40) Dissension also exists that calls into question research into eWOM as an effective tool. "Advertisers and marketers are heavily investing in social media marketing in the hope that online engagement will lead to offline behaviours, however the likelihood of the success of this tactic is yet to be fully explored." (Alhabash, McAlister, Lou, & Hagerstrom, 2015, p. 82) However, Alhabash et. al. are greatly outnumbered by those who see a clear correlation.

And so, this research heads forward with the intent to verify the importance of WOM and eWOM to the success of live comedy.

2.4 Motivation to make WOM recommendation

Little, if any, research has been done on the specific motivations for spreading a positive WOM or eWOM recommendation for live comedy, and so one must look to more general theories and research on the motivations for engaging in WOM and eWOM.

Previous research has indicated that the motivations for engaging in WOM are multi-fold, resulting from such things as satisfaction or dissatisfaction with a product

or service, and/or the relationship between consumer and company as measured in terms of trust, commitment, length of relationship or perceived value. (Vázquez-Casielles, Suáres-Álvarez, & Del Río-Lanza, 2013) Various studies have grouped and sub-divided these various motivations into categories(Cheung & Lee, 2012), (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004) which aids in visualizing and conceptualizing the various possible motivations.

For those who recommend something without financial benefit, the rewards are most likely to be emotionally based and psychologically satisfying. Research into the type of person who is most likely to share information online, for instance, revealed that some may engage in WOM to gain attention, or project themselves as interesting or important, offering a recommendation "because they think it will be useful to others or because it will provide a basis for conversations." (Feick & Price, 1987, p. 85)

What follows is a survey of possible motivations compiled through an analysis and review of literature on motivations for engaging in WOM for a variety of industries and from a variety of disciplines which appeared relevant to this study. As in other studies, the multitude of possible motivations has been divided (if somewhat arbitrarily) under five general headings, for the purpose of clarity and understanding. These five categories of motivations are :

joy and happiness;

self expressiveness;

social connection;

status enhancing;

helpfulness.

As the purpose of this study is to discover motivations that also activate a desire to attend live comedy, common sense indicates the last of these (helpfulness) is least likely to also be a motivation to attend a live comedy show. However, this last motivation proved to be one that had potential as a motivation of both. But more on that later.

2.5 Joy and Happiness

Personal Satisfaction, Enjoyment, and Emotions

According to Dichter, in his seminal work on advertising in the 1960s, whatever the motivator may be, all WOM transactions are a means to a personal emotional ends. "Generally – nobody will speak about products or services unless the talking itself, or the expected action of the listener, promises satisfaction of some kind – popularly speaking, unless he 'gets something out of it.'"(Dichter, 1966, p. 148)

Interpersonal communication researchers Rubin et. al found that there are six reasons why people communicate (generally, and not specifically related to WOM), which are: pleasure, affection, inclusion, escape, relaxation, and control. (Rubin et al., 1988) Four

of these (pleasure, affection, escape, and relaxation) could be grouped together under the more general heading of 'Enjoyment.'

And so, for some, sharing a communication offers enjoyment. Other research supports the idea that communication in the form of WOM and eWOM likewise is 'enjoyable' for some. Various studies point to emotions as the single most important factor, or as marketing management researchers Crosby & Johnson simply state it, "Emotions drive customer loyalty behaviours."(Crosby & Johnson, 2007, p. 21), quantifying the affect as very significant: "the impact of emotional motivation on loyalty outweighs rational motivation by a ratio of about 5 to 3."(Crosby & Johnson, 2007, p. 23)

The sources of this emotional motivation have also been studied. Ladhari found that arousal was a significant factor in motivating WOM. "Moviegoers appear to be more likely to express their consumption experience to others to the extent that this experience induces intense affect."(Ladhari, 2007, p. 1102) His study indicated arousal and pleasure were significantly correlated to satisfaction for experiential products such as movies or theme parks and that, "Satisfaction has significant effects on the likelihood of WOM and positive WOM communications. Satisfied moviegoers participate more in WOM activities than dissatisfied moviegoers."(Ladhari, 2007, p. 1102) This finding is likely not very surprising, but good work, Ladhari, for proving it scientifically.

Reliving the Pleasurable Experience

While the underlying motivation for engaging in WOM may be somehow emotional, the specific triggers to these motivating emotions varies from person to person, and situation to situation.

Having a good experience with a product or service, unsurprisingly, may motivate people to talk about it. But why? This may be to relive the pleasure, or as a way to "dispose of the excitement aroused by the use of the product"(Dichter, 1966, p. 148). This seems particularly relevant to a live entertainment experience, wherein the memory of the event is all the customer has as a result of his/her purchase. Sharing one's thoughts on the experience can also solidify the joy of ownership of a product for the owner. "In many instances it is talk about the product which confirms for the speaker his ownership and joy in the product, or his discovery of it."(Dichter, 1966, p. 149)

2.6 Self-Expressiveness

Express Personality / Creative & Personal Outlet

A study of social recommendation system usage, by computer and human behaviour researcher Ji Won Kim, found that an opportunity for self-expression was the most significant motivating factor for individuals to click 'like' etc. and partake in a social media recommendation system. "Notably, the findings imply that users

primarily view social recommendation systems as potential expressive tools that may encourage online discussions in general."(Kim, 2014, p. 189)

Tourism management research by Hudson et. al. on WOM behaviours of music festival attendees found that those who engage in WOM for this reason create a form of emotional feedback loop, both motivated by emotion and creating emotional attachment simultaneously. "Consumers project their own personality characteristics onto the brands when describing them. Customers who project their self on brands display strong attachment with the same brand."(Hudson, Roth, Madden, & Hudson, 2015, p. 71) When the product is humour (a highly subjective and personal characteristic of an individual's personality), this attachment to the 'brand', and projection of oneself onto the 'brand' may be even stronger than with other 'products', as the projection is highly personal, subjective, and based almost entirely on personal taste (i.e. one comic cannot be proven to be 'better' quantitatively nor qualitatively than another; the patron simply likes one comic more or doesn't.)

2.7 Social Connection

Find Affiliation

Sharing a recommendation then becomes an expression of a human need to form relationships with others. Online behaviour studies by Yu-Jen Chen resulted in the

conclusion that people post online to 'affiliate' with others; that is, online social media participants are trying to find people that share something with them. (Chen, 2013)

Dichter, whose focus on advertising seems to agree that this need is a strong motivator, suggesting that this need can be utilized for marketing benefit. "The most effective Word-Of-Mouth for the advertiser is the post-decision speaker who is bent on eliminating all dissonance in his post-decision situation." (Dichter, 1966, p. 148)As such, those who share WOM are looking for others to support his or her position. "Followers are sought by the leader (speaker) so that he feels less lonely and more secure in his own product choice."(Dichter, 1966, p. 149)

Berger et. al. suggest that people do not necessarily talk about interesting things but rather things that are top of mind. "This suggests that rather than being driven by interest, what people talk about may be driven by whatever is accessible, regardless of whether it is interesting."(Berger & Schwartz, 2011, p. 870) The immediacy of social media likely amplifies this effect, and may be akin to 'small talk', the main purpose of which is simply to engage with others. A WOM or eWOM recommendation then is simply a topic that is recent, used as a tool to satisfy a need to interact with others.

Other research has found that information givers often focus attention more on what one believes other people may be interested in rather than one's own interests.(Feick & Price, 1987) In this sense, the WOM recommendation takes the form of a gift for others, or as Dichter puts it: "just as a thoughtful gift often expresses a

tacit 'recommendation.' ('Because I have had pleasure in this, I want you, too, to have it – here it is.')"(Dichter, 1966, p. 148) And so the recommendation of a live comedy experience can be seen as a gift to others, as a way of sharing what one likes as per Dichter's example above, or an expression of a 'thoughtfulness' (that, apparently is 'what counts' when gift-giving, according to mothers' collective wisdom) by talking about what one 'knows' the other person may be interested in, and, in either case, an attempt to establish an emotional connection with the person to whom one is sharing the WOM recommendation.

2.8 Status Enhancing

Influence and Power

However, this need to affiliate with others is also intertwined with a desire to influence others. This desire both motivates and helps determine the form of the recommendation.

In his dissertation , Yu-Jen Chen suggest that online posters have preconceived theories about WOM (eWOM), especially concerning the impactfulness of novelty, and choose where to post based on whether their positive or negative eWOM will be most surprising to others. They post on neutral forums rather than product/brand specific forums when their eWOM is positive because a positive eWOM recommendation would not surprise people on a product/brand specific forum (i.e. a good review on a forum dedicated to a particular brand of camera, for

example). But negative eWOM is suitable for both product/brand specific and more general, neutral forums (such as a forum dedicated to photography in general) as it will be equally surprising to readers (and will therefore be more likely to be impactful). Ultimately, Chen suggests, that the motivation is to be impactful, and therefore to influence others. (Chen, 2013)

Friestad and Wright's consumer behaviour research on persuasion appears to agree with this notion, and they suggest posters have intuitive knowledge from experience about how marketing works, and therefore, when, how, why, and what they post is based on subconscious understanding of what is likely to be most effective. (Friestad & Wright, 1994)This seems to be a response (however subconscious) to the likely attitude of the recipient of any such recommendation, as explained by Dichter's theory on how advertising messages are received. "Knowing that hundreds of highly paid brains are competing for their favour, readers and listeners have become judges and experts of advertising effectiveness."(Dichter, 1966, p. 151)

Defence Mechanism / Seeking Approval

Some studies suggest that sharing WOM is a defensive mechanism, engaged by those who need to "justify their decisions (generate approval) and achieve social status."(Cheema & Kaikati, 2010, p. 554) While this motivator may appear as motivation from a place of weakness, Dichter also suggests that others are motivated to offer WOM

as a tool for gaining power over others, "and may even serve as a sort of test to determine whether the listener really respects the speaker"(Dichter, 1966, p. 150)

Self-Presentation

According to communication expert Anne Schlosser, posters of product reviews on the internet to multiple audiences (as one does when one posts online) are anxious about looking unintelligent, and will alter their recommendations toward the negative if other negative reviews are present in an attempt to look more discriminating (and therefore intelligent). "Thus, voicing less favourable attitudes may increase one's likelihood of being admired and respected." (Schlosser, 2005, p. 261)

Not everyone agrees with Schlosser. De Angelis et. al, found the opposite to be true. "When self-enhancement motives are at play, negative WOM is less likely to be generated than positive WOM."(De Angelis, Bonezzi, Peluso, Rucker, & Costabile, 2012, p. 560) Both De Angelis and Schosser do agree that negative WOM has a greater propensity for propagation. "However, once generated, negative WOM might be spread more than positive WOM."(De Angelis et al., 2012, p. 560)

Gain Attention / Be Interesting

Being useful or interesting can also be a status-enhancer, as Fisk suggests: "Message senders may be motivated by the desire for enhanced status, ego-defence, or dissonance reduction." (Fisk, 1969, p. 119)After all, talking about something can

prove that you know a lot about it, or have refined sensibilities. (Dichter, 1966)Such individuals aim to increase their power and become valuable to those with whom they have contact. (Feick & Price, 1987) To Be Helpful

Product Involvement and The Market Maven

Feick & Price suggest that those who are more likely to engage in WOM, for example, are 'Market Mavens' who feel a sense of product involvement. They are motivated by a sense of obligation to talk, a desire to help, and a feeling of pleasure from sharing information.(Feick & Price, 1987) "In summary, consumers engage in WOM because of its social or psychological benefits."(Cheema & Kaikati, 2010, p. 554) This desire to give to or help others is not limited to 'market mavens' however. Viral marketing researchers Phelps et. al, discovered that such altruistic motivations existed across a variety of online behaviour demographics. "Desires to help someone or to do good motivated both Viral Consumers and Infrequent senders" (Phelps, Lewis, Mobilio, Perry, & Raman, 2004, p. 336)Marketing research experts Cheem & Kaikati concur, and offer this beacon of positivity: "Other findings confirm that consumers transmit information because they find it intrinsically satisfying or because they have a helpful personality." (Cheema & Kaikati, 2010, p. 554)

Multiple Possible Motivations

And so, research seems to point to a variety of self-serving, and a handful of altruistic motivations for sharing information. In every theory, the individual is

rewarded in some emotional way, offering them satisfaction on some level, whether that satisfaction takes the form of pure 'enjoyment' or the delight from being helpful, or whether it rewards the individual with power, approval, re-assurance, or some other self-serving emotional benefit.

But it is impossible to take each of the motivations separately, as there seems to be an inter-connection between each motivation. For example, it has been suggested that self-expression is done as a way of developing an emotional connection with others. A WOM recommendation as a means to express one's personality in turn creates a connection with others on an emotional level, which creates emotional satisfaction (and possibly enhanced status or sense of self-worth). "Through self-presentation, a user conveys his/her interests, likes and dislikes, and personal opinions in the hope that others will gain a better understanding of him/her, and in turn will develop a deeper relationship with him/her." (Zhu & Chen, 2015, p. 340)

2.9 Motivation to See Live Comedy

Very little research has been done on the motivations to see live comedy. However, one study does exist that considers the motivations of attendees to live comedy and the findings support the idea that the collectiveness of the experience in live comedy is one of the motivating factors for those who choose to attend; specific research on the motivations of audiences to attend comedy is led by prolific

comedy researchers Sharon Lockyer and Lynn Myers. A survey of live stand-up comedy patrons revealed five themes that seemed primary in motivating patrons to attend a live performance, those being "respecting the stand-up comedian; expecting the unexpected; proximity and intimacy; opportunities for interaction; and sharing the comic experience."(Lockyer & Myers, 2011, p. 183) From the analysis of their findings Lockyer & Myers concluded that audiences 'engage' with live comedy on both a personal level and as a member of the collective that is the audience. Their research also found surprise, (or as they titled their research "Expecting the Unexpected") to be one of the major draws and expectations of live comedy.

The literary review for this study utilizes analysis of motivations to see live theatre in general (for which there have been more studies done), and then specifically at the motivations of seeing live comedy. Tourism authorities Song and Chung make the point that "It should be emphasized that a successful theatrical performance does not depend on one attribute but rather an extensive number of them"(Song & Cheung, 2010, p. 676) Quirk takes this idea further and suggests that certain of these multiple attributes will even help to determine the composition of the audience (something of obvious importance to the success of live comedy... the makeup of the audience being of vital importance to performers, as evidenced by the old theatre adage "Know your audience!") Quirk explains it this way: "The location of the performance, the price of the tickets, the way the event was publicized and the behaviour of the box-office staff all had their effect on the

audience member. These factors were generally crucial in deciding who would come to the performance in the first place, giving a clear message to a certain section of the public that the show was for them, and to others that they were, essentially, not welcome."(Quirk, 2011, p. 232)

Using Lockyer & Myers' findings as a means to conceptually compartmentalize the various possible motives, the review of literature that follows has been divided into three main areas: theatre as an event, sharing live comedy with others; laughter (as a somewhat obvious choice); and, motivations that fall outside of the need for laughter and entertainment, namely: eudaimonic motivations.

2.10 Theatre is an "Event"

Much of the research into theatre attendance has confirmed that the experience of theatre is that of an event(Kilpatrick, 2010, p. 2), and often one that begins before even arriving at the theatre. Chinese tourist behaviour researchers Song & Cheung found that audience members "viewed a theatrical performance as an unforgettable event, comprising not just the theatrical performance product itself but the whole experience." (Song & Cheung, 2010, p. 676)"When going to the theatre, audience members carry with them a set of expectations built over time as theatregoers."(Ramos, 2015, p. 7) The anticipation of the evening becomes part of the experience. (Kilpatrick, 2010, p. 122)

Whether the evening is successful may, in great part, be a result of whether it lives up to these expectations, or as hospitality and tourism specialists Hede et. al. put it, "The result is a better-than or worse-than judgment."(Hede, Jago, & Deery, 2005, p. 38) using the Expectancy Disconfirmation Paradigm. After 'emotional experience', edutainment and escapism were found by Walmsley to be strong motivational factors for theatre attendance and that "audiences generally expect theatre to provide them with a challenging escape from their daily lives." (Walmsley, 2011, p. 349) He suggests that theatre producers "recognise the fact the audiences often want far more than simple entertainment […]; and creative teams could maximise sensual impact through show-stopping moments and the contrived use of set design, multi-media, music, sound and lighting."(Walmsley, 2011, p. 349) Traditionally, comedy, especially stand-up comedy, uses little theatrics, and so 'show-stopping' moments must be achieved either by adding such elements to the stand-up presentation, or providing the similar results through other means, such as alterations to the content, style and delivery of the humour.

2.11 Laughter and Humour

Laughing together must be a motivator to see comedy. In the past, participating in an audience was necessary for practical reasons (i.e. the traveling comedy troupe was unable to visit every cottage in the hamlet individually to give a performance), but modern media has made it possible for each of us to sit in our

own personal hermitage, pop in a DVD or surf the web to a comedy video and watch some funny-porn in solitude. And yet people still congregate to see live comedy, which suggests that laughing together has some draw that cannot be satisfied by laughing at home alone. And so, the motivation to see live comedy cannot be simply to laugh, but rather to laugh together. Such a supposition may be supported by human behaviour research. "Although apes and other animals engage in laughter, human laughter is a distinctive human trait that has been well studied. The social and contagious characteristics of human laughter have been well established, as well as the correlation between laughter and perceived satisfaction of the social interaction." (Dezecache & Dunbar, 2012, p. 775)

Laughter as a physiological function in the human body has been shown to release endorphins in a way that is similar to the effect had on primates during grooming, and it has been suggested that perhaps human laughter is an evolutionary technique for increasing the 'grooming' group size; that is, a monkey can only groom one other monkey at a time, but we human monkeys can make up to four people laugh at once in an intimate social circle. (Dezecache & Dunbar, 2012)

Benefits of Laughter and Humour

And so, one may accept that laughter, especially in a group, is a good thing; it brings people together, or as psychiatric nursing researchers Davidhizar & Bowen say

with less brevity: "Laughter is a contagious social experience that tends to show acceptance and create a common bond."(Davidhizar & Bowen, 1992, p. 135)

Telling a joke, (or, as it is described in verbose neuroscience parlance: "where one person surrounded by others captures the attention of the group and delivers the necessary cognitive structure and elements to produce a mirth response and receive the social capital that comes with it."(R. G. Franklin, Jr. & B. Adams, 2011, p. 513) is widely acknowledged as having positive psychological and physiological effects in all facets of life because "humour puts people at ease, promoting expression and the exchange of ideas."(Davidhizar & Bowen, 1992, p. 133) Physical scientific studies have shown this to be true. MRI mapping of the brains of people watching videos of stand-up comedy revealed that viewing funny video clips "elicited more activation in several brain regions involved with reward responses, including the nucleus accumbens, caudate, and putamen."(R. G. Franklin, Jr. & B. Adams, 2011, p. 508) And a happy putamen is a healthy putamen.

And so, both socially and individually, laughter is good, good for you, and actively sought out as a group activity.

2.12 Eudaimonic: Personal Expressiveness

But the pursuit of laughter may not be the only reason one attends live comedy. While laughter may be the primary motive, other possibilities potentially exist, at first unseen beneath the surface. It is in these secondary, less obvious

motivations, where the secret to why one 'good' show receives WOM buzz while another 'good' show does not, may lie waiting to be discovered. Some research on audience motivations to see comedy exists, such as Lockyer & Myers, but it evades easy discovery, and this researcher, after extensive efforts, was unable to find anything specifically addressing any correlations between audience motivation and motivation to share the experience with others through WOM recommendations.

However research of a broader scope can be mined for some answers. Research in the communications field by Oliver and Raney shows that there are many reasons why people view 'entertainment media'. 'Entertainment' is the obvious reason, but there exists the curious notion of 'enjoying' sad or disturbing media, which at first seems at odds with the pursuit of 'entertainment'. The investigation of this phenomenon of seeking out sad or disturbing media, although not specifically related to live comedy (one would hope), can be used as a starting point for considering other potential motivations, namely 'eudaimonic', for viewing 'entertainment', and by extension, live comedy.

Oliver & Raney suggests that the pursuit of 'entertainment' is more than simply a desire to be 'entertained'; after all, sobbing uncontrollably while watching a 'tear-jerker' drama is not particularly 'entertaining' in the most widely accepted meaning of the word. "Yet this characterization overlooks the idea that individuals may consume this type of entertainment for reasons other than the type of affective experience that it affords."(Oliver & Raney, 2011, p. 987) Oliver & Raney's suggest

that "people consume media entertainment in the pursuit of pleasure and amusement (hedonic motivations) and as a part of their general need to search for and ponder life's meaning, truths, and purposes—motivations that we characterize as ''eudaimonic'''"(Oliver & Raney, 2011, p. 985)

Live comedy is clearly 'entertaining' (or at least aspires to be!), but also has the potential to satisfy the eudaimonic needs Oliver & Rainey describe, albeit without tears (hopefully). While comedy is unlikely 'sad' (or rarely intentionally), there are elements of comedy which can be 'disturbing', 'challenging' or otherwise described in terms that seem at odds with 'enjoyable', and are therefore difficult to explain as 'enjoyment'. (Some examples are dark humour, the tension caused by heckling and the return insults by comedians, abuse of the audience of the type that makes some patrons prefer back-row seats, sarcasm, and political and social satire.) And yet these elements of comedy are potentially important.

Social psychologist Alan Waterman postulates that happiness comes in two forms; the more commonly understood hedonic happiness, wherein one gets what one wants – and for seeing comedy this is obviously having a good laugh; and, the eudaimonia that comes from a feeling of personal expressiveness: "Feelings of personal expressiveness and self-realization are thus linked to eudaimonia, where what is considered worth desiring and having in life is the best within us or personal excellence."(Waterman, 1993, p. 679) Waterman suggests six instances where experiencing an activity can prove to be personally expressive. These include:

unusually intense involvement, a feeling of a 'special' fit, an intense sense of being alive, a feeling of being fully engaged, a sense that the activity has meaning, and a sense that the activity reveals who one really is.(Waterman, 1993, p. 679)

Attending live comedy certainly offers opportunities for some, if not all, of these conditions for patrons. For example, laughing together presents us all with a two-sided coin, one that is exhilarating and dangerous, or as University of Kent lecturer in drama and theatre, Sophie Quirk, explains it: "To produce laughter, an audience needs not only energy but also confidence. To laugh is pleasant, but can also be risky; to be caught laughing heartily when other audience members are silent could be embarrassing."(Quirk, 2011, p. 227) We've all been there, some of us more often than others.

And so, it is fair to say that membership in a comedy audience has the potential for intensity, both through energy and danger; offers the opportunity for unique instances of collectiveness that come from a group convulsing together in laughter; provides moments of full engagement and meaningfulness (as preeminent comedy researchers Lockyer and Myers discovered in their study of stand up comedy from the audiences' perspective)(Lockyer & Myers, 2011); and, unleashes unintended flashes through which one's responses to the comedy might reveal one's true self. As such, attending comedy meets the requirements for a form of self-expression according to Waterman's measures.

The Unexpected

While there is obviously a vast set of expectations for theatre, in live comedy, as Lockyer and Myers were able to establish in their study, the unexpected plays a major role in the appeal of comedy and that "even with familiar stand-up comedians spontaneity in the performance is important." (Lockyer & Myers, 2011, p. 175)And so, while satisfaction may result from the experience of achieving the expectations of various elements of the theatre-going experience, the need for an unexpected experience is also important for many attendees of live comedy, or, as Lockyer and Myers put it, the audience to live comedy expects the unexpected. Unfortunately for comedy producers this does not mean one can simply not give the audience not what they don't expect.

More Than Just for Laughs

Comedy clearly falls into the hedonic realm, as it is an obvious pursuit of laughter. However, consumers of comedy may have other needs that are being satisfied. "Recognizing that happiness may reflect both pleasure (hedonic concerns) and meaningfulness (eudaimonic concerns) has important implications in terms of understanding individuals' entertainment motivations."(Oliver & Raney, 2011, p. 988) Waterman's research findings "support Telfer's (1980) claim that eudaimonia is a sufficient, but not a necessary condition for hedonic happiness"(Waterman, 1993, p.

689), and so it is possible that eudaimonic needs are being addressed by live comedy, and that the significance of this may have been lost or undervalued due to the more obvious hedonic appeal of laughter. This may be supported by other research into theatre-goers' motivations.

Behaviour researcher Ben Walmsley's study on theatre-goer motivation found fun and entertainment were actually not the primary impetus for theatre attendance, and in fact, that "the key motivating factor for participants was the pursuit of emotional experiences and impact. This contests previous findings in other arts and leisure sectors, which prioritised escapism, learning, enhanced socialisation and fun."(Walmsley, 2011, p. 335) Walmsley found that motivation was made up of a complex combination of factors and recommends that theatre managers "invest time and money in customised motivational segmentation and in enhancing the audience experience."(Walmsley, 2011, p. 335)

2.13 Motivations Summary And Study Framework

This study will focus on the motivations of self-expression, desire for social interaction, and eudiamonic satisfaction, as the literary review above indicates a likelihood that these motivations, in one form or another, may be triggers both for comedy attendance and for spontaneous WOM recommendation sharing, having appeared in studies both of WOM and of audience behaviour and motivation. The motivation of 'entertainment' or 'enjoyment', given the nature of comedy, is likely

to prove a strong motivator for attendance, and the quality of the comedy is likely to strongly influence the desire to recommend the show (or not recommend it). However, the focus of this study is to discover if other motivations, other than these fairly obvious ones, are at play as well. Some of the studies reviewed above, (such as Walmsley's, for example) indicate that this is likely to be true. The possible motivations offered by previous research for providing a WOM recommendation, and for attending live comedy, are here listed in summarized form (see Table 1). This study aims to verify which of the motivations theorized by the existing literature do in fact trigger attendance and WOM behaviours, and specifically which, if any, trigger both. If other motivations are discovered, they will be addressed later in this study.

Table 1 Motivation Summary

WOM MOTIVATIONS	* possibly motivators for both attendance and WOM.
Joy and Happiness	Personal Satisfaction
	Enjoyment *
	Emotions *
	Reliving the Pleasurable Experience
Self-Expression	Express Personality *
	Creative & Personal Outlet *
Social Connection	Find Affiliation *
	Creating opportunities for conversation *

Status Enhancing	Influence and Power
	Defence Mechanism
	Seeking Approval
	Self-Presentation
	Gain Attention
	Be Interesting
To Be Helpful	Product Involvement
	The Market Maven (one who likes being trendsetter)
COMEDY ATTENDANCE MOTIVATIONS	
The Event	Having an experience beyond just the performance *
	Sharing the experience of comedy with others *
Laughter	Having a good laugh *
	Escapism
	Entertainment *
	Group laughter dynamic *
Eudiamonic	unusually intense involvement *
	a feeling of a 'special' fit *
	an intense sense of being alive
	a feeling of being fully engaged
	a sense that the activity has meaning *
	the activity reveals who one really is *

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Guided by an ethnographic approach, categorizing patrons based on their self-perceived motivations and self-reported WOM and eWOM behaviours, a qualitative analysis was considered most likely to produce practical results that could lead to actionable decisions by comedy producers. Quantitative methods were utilized insofar as trends taken from surveys might offer confirmation or rejection of tendencies noted through other methodologies. Rather than starting with a fully developed hypothesis to be tested on a purely binary scale of correct or not, this research took the approach to follow the trends that appeared to emerge from one set of primary research to the next, with each successive method being informed by the results of the previous, thereby providing a hypothetical and theoretical construct to be either affirmed or rejected by subsequent methodologies or research. Where a chain of affirmation developed, further investigation was conducted to offer further confirmatory validation of the emerging trend, guided throughout by a focused objective of discovering serviceable data which might lead to practical approaches for live comedy producers of maximizing the dual goals of enticing attendance while creating patron-initiated spontaneous WOM proliferation in line with marketing goals.

3.1 Primary Research

Research began with a duel-pronged approach, investigating both the producers and patrons of live comedy events. Producers of comedy, experts in their field, were interviewed with an aim to glean any generalized understanding within the industry regarding the importance of WOM. The reported methods used by comedy producers to activate and utilize this form of marketing were analyzed to uncover the perception by professionals in the comedy production field of the motivations to attend comedy of their patron; as marketing and promotions undertakings are primarily directed at motivating potential customers to purchase one's product or service, the choices a marketer makes can reveal the underlying perception held of their clientele's motivations. These interviews were then compared to the results of research on actual live comedy patrons, research that consisted of in-person and online surveys, and post-show focus group discussions.

Because of the researcher's connection with, interest in, and access to The Comedy Club Bangkok (he is co-founder and Creative Director of Improv Comedy), this organization has been selected as a case-study for the purpose of this research. The Comedy Club Bangkok is Thailand's only English language comedy venue, and the only dedicated comedy club in all of Thailand. It produces weekly shows, in English, and has been in business since September 2014, and is therefore the primary source of live English language comedy in Thailand. (TheComedyClubBangkok, 2014)Vancouver, Canada live entertainment professionals were also used due to the

researcher's familiarity with the Vancouver comedy scene, and his connections with professionals there.

3.2 The Comedy Professional Interviews

The comedy professional interviews were conducted through video conferencing using Skype over a period of several months. One interview was held in person, and a video was recorded. All interviews were recorded (with the participant's knowledge) so that the researcher, whose capacity to recall exact details has diminished due to the endless onslaught of chronological events, could accurately relate the content of these interviews for the purpose of this study. The recorded interviews were then transcribed by hand, with liberty taken to remove nonsensical vocalizations, and to piece together complete sentences from dialogue that was, you know, uhm, not like, what I mean is, structured correctly, if you know what I mean, like in proper sentences and stuff (for example), so that the sense of the answer was clearer.

Interview Questions

The interviews were semi-structured, with only a few key questions posed to each interviewee. Namely, the interviewees were asked their thoughts on what they believe motivates their clientele to attend comedy, and to share WOM recommendations. Further, as the conversation warranted, experiential examples of

tactics taken to attract patrons and to encourage WOM behaviours were solicited, as well as the interviewees' analysis of the results and effectiveness of these actions.

The interviewees were each asked some form of the following questions as a starting place from which the interview conversations were allowed to deviate as seemed appropriate at the time, and based on the responses :

How important is WOM to the success of your business?

What, in your opinion, makes people want to spread WOM about a show, either person-to-person or through social media?

Is there something other than the show being 'good' that motivates people to share their thoughts on it through WOM?

How has social media affected your business?

What have you done to try to increase WOM proliferation?

Why do you think people come to see live comedy (as opposed to watching comedy by themselves at home)?

Interviewees

The interviews consisted of four producers of live comedy events from different organizations, and the online social media marketing manager of the largest improvised comedy theatre organization in Canada, TheatreSports.

Chris Wegoda, the Creative Director of The Comedy Club Bangkok, the organization that has been selected as the major case-study for this research, has

personally witnessed the growth of the live comedy scene in Bangkok over the course of six years, being one of the founders of an open-mic night that eventually became the stepping stone to the creation of The Comedy Club Bangkok. The interview was held on April 9, 2017, and took 18 minutes and six seconds. The interview had the potential to last much longer, as the sound of Wegoda's own voice is something (apparently) that he finds quite pleasing.

John Murphy is a Canadian playwright, actor, comedian, and producer, whose work has featured both in Vancouver, Canada, and also at the world famous Edinburgh Fringe Festival. Murphy has been producing live comedy since before the modern age of social media, and has personally witnessed the growth of social media and its relationship to marketing strategies of his own, and other live comedy companies. The interview took place September 22, 2016, and lasted 12 minutes and 31 seconds.

Meg Anderson is the driving force behind the English language comedy scene in Taipei, Taiwan. Her improv theatre company Sweet Danger produces regular shows there, as well as improvised comedy workshops, and she is also the organizer of the Two Three Comedy stand-up comedy shows. The interview with Meg lasted 10 minutes and 46 seconds, and was held on March 22, 2017.

Turner Sparks is the founder of Kung Fu Comedy Club in Shanghai, China. This comedy club offers five shows a week in English and two shows a week in Chinese. The company produces live comedy in Shanghai, and approximately 10 comedy

tours a year around China. These tours feature a headliner from the west. The interview was held on October 4th, 2016, for 16 minutes and 28 seconds.

Colleen Franklin is the Marketing and Social Media Coordinator for The Vancouver TheatreSports League. The Vancouver TheatreSports League, founded in 1980, is one of the largest comedy companies in North America, producing 11 shows a week, 52 weeks of the year. The company has been awarded six International Improv Comedy Awards, a recognition of their highly respected position in the industry. The interview with Colleen was held in person in Vancouver on February 4th, 2017, and lasted 20 minutes and 10 seconds.

3.3 Comedy Patron Focus Groups

Two focus group sessions were held immediately following performances at The Comedy Club Bangkok, and were held in the club. Audience members were enticed with a promise of a free beverage to take part in a 'short, friendly, and informal' session. Participants were informed of the purpose of the focus group sessions, namely that it was part of a study for a Chulalongkorn University paper looking at the motivations for attending live comedy, and motivations for talking about their experiences at live comedy with others.

Questions

The focus groups were very informal, with participants asked their opinions on the their own online and face-to-face behaviour regarding the recommending of live comedy, as well as their perception of the motivations of others' online and face-to-face behaviour. Participants were also asked what motivated them to attend that evening's live comedy performance. Conversations were allowed to meander off topic, as patrons often seemed eager to talk about what they liked or did not like about the show they had just watched. Those who chose to answer shared their opinions and observations with the group, while those who were more reticent were not pressured to offer more information than they were comfortable with.

Only a few scripted questions were used as a starting place from which discussion was allowed to ensue. Participants were allowed to comment on other participant's answers, engage in discussion, or to simply respond to the focus group facilitator's questions. As each group became more comfortable, more discussion naturally emerged, requiring less input from the facilitator. Each focus group was asked a form of the following questions, either individually or as a general query to the group as a whole.

Where did you hear about tonight's show?

Did a friend recommend this show to you?

Are you someone who usually recommends shows you have seen?

Are you someone who uses social media as a way of recommending events?
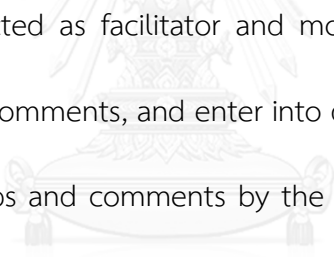
What makes you want to recommend a show to others?

Why do you think other people recommend shows?

What made you come to tonight's show?

What do you expect from a night out at live comedy?

What is it that you liked about tonight's show? Did it live up to your expectations?

This researcher acted as facilitator and moderator, allowing participants to respond to each other's comments, and enter into discussions if they so desired. The results of the focus groups and comments by the participants were jotted down at the time, with each participant confirming that the recorded comments were, in fact, an accurate summation of their opinion or position. At the conclusion of the focus group each member partook in a tasty beverage in a friendly atmosphere, and everyone had a great time, as far as this researcher could ascertain, and for which there is no empirical evidence other than the empty beverage bottles left for this researcher to clear away.

Focus Group Attendees

The first focus group session took place in The Comedy Club Bangkok immediately following the performance on December 9th, 2016. 4 males, and 5 women participated. The second group session took place on January 13, 2017, at the same location and immediately following the performance on that date. The participants consisted of 3 males and 4 females. See Table 2 for summary of focus group membership.

Table 2 Summary of Focus Group Membership

Focus Group Date	Participants
December 9, 2016	4 males, 5 females.
	German woman
	Seattle Woman
	Singapore Man
	Singapore Man (Sing2)
	Bangkok Woman
	Texas Man
	Bangkok Woman (Bang2)
	Spanish Man
	Spanish Woman

January 13, 2017	3 males, 4 females.
	Friend of comedian, male
	Friend of comedian, female (Friend2)
	Canadian Woman
	Thai Woman
	Thai Woman (Thai2)
	Canadian Man
	Israeli Man

3.4 Comedy Patron Surveys

A number of surveys were undertaken of live comedy attendees and patrons, using a convenience sampling of those who were attending or had attended live comedy shows produced by The Comedy Club Bangkok. These surveys were done by a variety of methods: patrons filled in their own questionnaires, answering a series of multiple choice questions, and a few open-ended questions; patrons were asked a series of questions by a surveyor who took note of answers (a volunteer usher who agreed to assist in this research in exchange for free admission to the show, the right to keep their usher flashlight, and the promised appreciation and admiration of the researcher, all of which were delivered); and, patrons to particular events answered an online survey using the SurveyMonkey website system (www.surveymonkey.com), with a chance to win free tickets as the incentive for participation.

The various methods were used for variety of purposes. Firstly, it was the goal of the researcher, and to meet obligations and agreements made with the producers of the events, that the research be as unobtrusive to patrons as possible. With this in mind the number of questions was kept as low as possible, and the total amount of time required to answer the questionnaire was kept to a minimum. The several surveys did not ask identical questions, as the results of one survey were used to help formulate the questions for the next.

Survey Development

The questions for the surveys were developed based on motivations initially identified in the literary review, with an initial aim to verify the importance of WOM and eWOM by determining through what channel the patron had heard about the performance. Additional demographic questions (age, sex, country of origin etc.) were also asked at the request of The Comedy Club Bangkok, and as a contingency in the case that some particularly surprising result emerged for which this demographic information could prove helpful in providing an explanation. Ultimately, the additional demographic information was not used, other than determining the fact that the vast majority of patrons were expats and not Thai nationals.

Subsequent surveys either attempted to clarify the results of the former survey, by adding specificity to the questions, or attempted to ask questions that the previous survey had not asked. These subsequent surveys were also influenced by

the ongoing professional live comedy producer interviews, and the opinions expressed by the interviewees, with the goal of testing the validity of the suppositions expressed therein. After the first two interviews, the WOM and eWOM behaviour of the respondents, and their motivations to see live comedy were ascertained using multiple choice questions, the answers to which were created by the researcher using his best guess at potential answers based on the literary review, the interviews, focus groups, personal professional experience, and the previous surveys. The option to write in an answer allowed participants to provide answers that were not listed.

Survey Methods

Roose et. al. who have conducted patron surveys of this nature (namely, surveys of patrons of a live performance at the venue), found that the best way to ensure audience members would complete a survey was to approach them directly. (OurStory,)With this in mind, and where possible and practical, a volunteer either guided the respondents through the questions, or stood close by, while respondents filled out the questionnaire themselves, to provide assistance, and to gently suggest that the respondents were being monitored to ensure compliance.

The online questionnaires were completely voluntary and based on an email mailing list supplied by The Comedy Club Bangkok of patrons who had purchased tickets online to the shows in question. The results of the survey were shared with

The Comedy Club Bangkok as a condition of being given access to this mailing list, and all respondents were informed of the dual purpose of the information that was being collected. A free ticket give-away to a future show was offered as an incentive to completing the survey.

The results of the surveys, whether done by the patrons, taken by surveyor assistants, or done online, were all entered into the SurveyMonkey website system which can generate charts, graphs and statistical data useful for analysis. This system was used to produce the resulting charts and statistics, saving the researcher valuable time, and diminishing the mental stress and frustration on the researcher and those in his close proximity.

The surveys that were undertaken are as follows :

The Comedy Club Bangkok

An online survey was performed of attendees to The Comedy Club Bangkok, taken November 8th, 2015. An email mailing list of ticket purchasers, supplied by The Comedy Club Bangkok, was used, inviting past attendees of live comedy to take part in the survey. Additionally, a link to the survey was posted on The Comedy Club Bangkok website (www.ComedyClubBangkok.com). Therefore, people who had not attended live comedy were also free to participate in the survey, but due to the location of the link (i.e. on a comedy website), even for those who had not seen a show, there is likely a bias toward those who are interested in live comedy. There

were 72 respondents to the survey (42 of them in response to the email invitation, the remainder from the link on the website). 232 survey invitations were emailed out.

This survey asked patrons :

Where did you hear about The Comedy Club Bangkok? Facebook? Twitter? TripAdvisor? Google? Online "What's on"? Newspapers? Other?

What did you like about the show? Open answer.

What did you not like about the show? Open answer.

What could we do to make it better next time? Open answer.

Several other questions were included on the survey that were not used in the analysis for this research including demographic questions such as sex, age, nationality and how long they had lived in Thailand, and questions regarding the perceived topics of the humour.

Pre-Show Jimmy Carr

A pre-show survey was undertaken of attendees to Jimmy Carr Funny Business at The Westin Grande Sukhumvit, in Bangkok, Thailand, September 14th, 2016. Patrons were asked to fill in their survey by a friendly, attractive ticketing agent at the time they purchased, or picked up previously purchased tickets. No incentive was offered, and patrons were free to decline. There were 81 respondents to the survey.

This survey asked patrons :

Where did you hear about the show? Facebook? One Place Events? Internet other than Facebook or One Place Events? Print ads/posters? Newspapers/Magazines? Friends?

Did a friend recommend this show to you personally and/or share it on social media? No? Yes, personally? Yes, shared it on social media?

Did you share about this event on social media? If so, where?

Will you likely make a posting about this show after it? No? I might if it is good? I might if it is bad? Yes, probably?

Are you someone who usually shares/posts about events you have attended? If so, why?

Several other questions were included on the survey that were not used in the analysis for this research.

Post-Show Jimmy Carr

A post-show online survey of attendees of the Jimmy Carr Funny Business at The Westin Grande Sukhumvit, September 14th, 2016 was also undertaken. This online survey taking place from September 15, 2016 until September 17th, 2016. An email mailing list of attendees who had purchased their tickets online was supplied by The Comedy Club Bangkok. Attendees were invited to fill in the survey, with the

chance to win free tickets to a future Comedy Club Bangkok show as an incentive.

604 invites were emailed out and 179 people responded to the request.

This survey asked patrons:

How did you enjoy the show overall? Scale from 1 to 5.

Do you have any suggestions? Comments? Complaints? Open answer.

Where did you hear about the event? Facebook? One Place Events? Internet other than Facebook or One Place Events? Print ads/posters? Newspapers/Magazines? Friends? Other, if so, where?

Did you tell others about the show before it happened? Nope. Yes, personally. Yes, I shared the event online through social media. Can't remember.

Did you tell anyone about the show after the event? Nope. Yes, personally. Yes, I posted about it publicly in social media. Can't remember.

Do you usually share on social media about events you attend?

What makes you recommend a show to a friend, or to post or 'share' on social media? Multi-answers allowed.

The show must be really really good.

The show must be really really bad.

The show must be something unique or different.

The show must be already popular.

I must have heard about the show before, or seen others' post about it.

I must not have heard about the show before or never seen posts about it.

The show must be controversial.

The show must not be controversial.

The show must have given me a strong emotional reaction.

I want others to see the show because I know they will like it.

I want others to see the show because it will challenge them or upset them.

I want others to see the show because they will learn something from it.

I want others to see the show because I want them to know what kind of things I like.

I want to influence others.

I want to show others that I agree with their recommendations.

Other (please specify.)

Is there anything else you can tell us about what you think makes you want to share something? What does the show need?

Several other questions were included on the survey that were not used in the analysis for this research.

Pre-Show Eddie Izzard

A pre-show survey of attendees to Eddie Izzard Force Majure at The PIC-Ganesha Theatre, Bangkok, February 28th, 2017 was also carried out, and the results were entered into the SurveyMonkey system. Volunteer ushers approached attendees in the lobby area before entering the performance, and recorded their answers to a series of questions. 168 patrons took part in the survey, with the volunteers informally reporting back that this represented almost everyone that they had time to approach.

This survey asked patrons:

Where did you hear about the show? Facebook? One Place Events? Showbookings.com? Internet (other than Facebook, One Place, Showbookings)? Print ad/ Posters? Newspapers/Magazines? Friend told me? BK Magazine Online? Other, if so, where?

Did a friend recommend this show to you?

Did you share about this event online?

Will you likely share or make a posting about this show after the event?

Are you someone who usually shares/posts online about events?

What makes you want to post about comedy shows?

If it is very good.

If it is very bad.

To make others jealous/envious.

To let others know what I am doing.

To let others (back home) know what I am doing.

To tell/recommend it to others

Because this type of show does not happen often in Bangkok.

Because it is Eddie Izzard.

Other, please specify.

Several other questions were included on the survey that were not used in the analysis for this research.

Magner's International Comedy Festival 2017, Thailand

Attendees who purchased their tickets online to the Magner's International Comedy Festival, an annual festival hosted by The Comedy Club Bangkok in Thailand, were invited by email to participate in a post-festival survey. The survey opened March 31, 2017 (approximately a week after the festival closed), with a second group invited (later, due to technical issues getting the email addresses) on April 4th, 2017. A total of 225 invitations were emailed out, with 71 people choosing to participate. No incentive was offered for participation.

This survey asked patrons:

Where did you hear about the show? Facebook? One Place Events? Showbookings.com? Meet-up groups? Twitter? Internet (other)? Print ads/posters? Newspapers/magazines? Friend told me? BK Magazine Online? Other, please specify?

Did a friend recommend this show to you? Yes, face to face? Yes, via email or messenger, WeChat, WhatsApp etc.? Yes, they shared a post on Facebook or Instagram etc.

Did you share about this event online before the show?

Did you post anything about the show after the event?

Are you someone who usually shares/posts online about events?

What makes you want to post about comedy?

> If it is very good.
>
> If it is very good or very bad
>
> To make others jealous/envious
>
> To let local friends know what I am doing
>
> To let others back home know what I am doing
>
> To tell/recommend to others.
>
> Because this type of show does not happen often in Bangkok
>
> Because I am a fan of comedy
>
> Because people look to me for advice
>
> Other, please specify

How did you enjoy the show in general? Scale 1 to 5

Is there anything that can be done to improve the festival? Open answer

What are your motivations to see like comedy?

Need a good laugh

Escape from my day

Social aspect
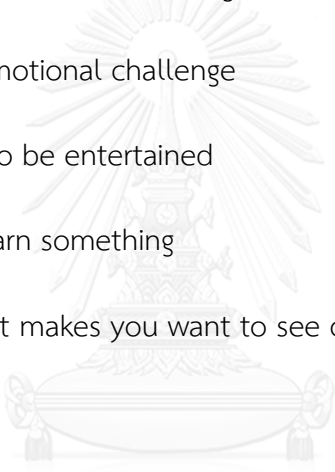
Want an intellectual challenge

Want an emotional challenge

Just want to be entertained

Want to learn something

Other. What makes you want to see comedy?

Several other questions were included on the survey that were not used in the analysis for this research.

Survey Summary

The following chart summarizes the surveys that were taken for this research (see Table 3)

Table 3 Summary of Surveys

SURVEY NAME	DATE	TYPE OF SURVEY	RESPONDENTS
The Comedy Club Bangkok	Nov. 8, 2015	Online survey from previous comedy attendee mailing list.	72 from 232 invites
Pre-Show Jimmy Carr	Sept. 14, 2016	Respondents filled in survey manually prior to entering show.	81
Post Show Jimmy Carr	Sept 14-15, 2016	Online survey from email mailing list of ticket purchasers to the Jimmy Carr show	179 from 604 invites
Pre-Show Eddie Izzard	Feb. 28, 2017	Guided survey by volunteers, prior to entering show.	168
The Magners International Comedy Festival 2017	Mar. 31- Apr. 4, 2017	Online survey from email mailing list of ticket purchasers of to the Magners International Comedy Festival.	71 from 225 invites

3.5 Secondary Research

Lockyer and Myers paper, "It's About Expecting the Unexpected": Live Stand-up Comedy from the Audiences' Perspective, is directly related to the research undertaken in this study, and so the findings therein were used as the primary source

of secondary research. Their research studied why people went to live stand-up comedy, whether they went alone or in groups, as well as other factors that influenced their decisions to attend a live performance. Their semi-structured interviews provide a plethora of insights into the motivations of stand-up comedy patrons, and were very useful in structuring the focus group conversations for this study. Several findings in their report were tested and confirmed by this research.

Lockyer and Myers' study concluded that stand-up comedy attendance motivations featured five themes.(Roose, De Lange, Agneessens, & Waege, 2002, p. 183) Each of these themes was used to formulate some of the questions in the interviews, focus groups and surveys.

3.6 Limitations

No news is bad news.

For the purposes of this study, although survey participants were asked how they shared recommendations (WOM or eWOM) no distinction was made (when considering the results) between face to face WOM and on-line (eWOM) behaviour. To do so would broaden the scope of the research beyond that which is feasible for a study of this size.

Gender and Age Not Considered

Due to limitations in scope, time, and researcher patience, the gender and ages of the survey participants was not analyzed, although their genders and ages were recorded. The results were taken as a whole.

Survey Limitations

Various surveys were taken at different events. In general the results heavily bias in favour of those who like and attend comedy. Those who do not attend comedy were completely unrepresented, making it impossible to determine motivations for not attending, or to determine if those who do not attend comedy lack the motivations that those who did attend seemed to have. Additionally, it is possible that some people were surveyed multiple times at the different venues and different performances, which would skew the results towards their answers. This is almost unavoidable. However, since the participants were those who actually went to see a live comedy performance, their views are still relevant to this study, and general trends can be identified, even it exact percentages need to be given some statistical leeway.

Trusting the Respondents

No attempts were made to verify the statements of respondents regarding their reported online behaviour. The results of this study are based entirely upon the

respondents' self-reported behaviours and motivations, and they could be a pack of liars. Sometimes science demands faith. (Faith could do with a bit of science as well.)

Focus Group Very Informal

The focus groups were made up of those who chose to attend, were very informal, and the researcher only jotted down observations that appeared relevant to him at the time. This was done due to the fact that these participants were clientele of The Comedy Club Bangkok out for a night of entertainment, and it was not appropriate for any academic research to 'kill the buzz' of their evening's enjoyment. The focus groups cannot be taken as a statistical representation of any larger population, but rather as a collection of individuals at that particular time and place who were willing to share their particular views on the evening's entertainment that they had just witnessed. Focus group members were offered a free beverage for their participation, and so the results may be skewed due to some participants potentially feeling pressure to offer an opinion to justify receiving a free drink, when in fact their silence may have been equally useful, and often preferable.

Selected Analysis

Several questions on the surveys were not used for analysis in this research but were included at the request of The Comedy Club Bangkok who sought the information for their marketing purposes. Attendees were informed of the dual purpose of the surveys.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Importance of WOM

Interviews

Comedy professional interviewees were each asked about the importance of WOM. Without exception all comedy professionals interviewed for this study indicated that WOM was vital to the success of their business, supporting the similar findings in the reviewed literature.

Wegoda said, "I think word-of-mouth is very very important. Basically, first or second in importance [with social media]" (Lockyer & Myers, 2011)

The appeal of WOM for theatre producer and comedian John Murphy was financial. "WOM is something that is good for us because we can get it for free." (Wegoda, 2017)

TheatreSports' Franklin indicated that eWOM, specifically, was essential to business success: "I think its imperative to the shows' success. It's more and more you see the social platforms growing, and people being engaged more on them, so I think you have to get onboard with the digital trends or it is not going to succeed"(John Murphy, 2016)

In China, where Facebook is blocked, comedy promoter Turner Sparks uses WeChat, another social media platform, and suggests that most of their promotion comes from the eWOM generated through patrons sharing his events. (C. Franklin, 2017)

In Vancouver, Canada, theatre professional Michele Deines insists that WOM generates the core of her audience: "I would probably say that WOM is the most important because that's where we get the core of people that we know are going to come." (Sparks, 2016)

And Meg Anderson in Taipei affirmed: "Without WOM and eWOM it would be very difficult for us to get audiences to sit in chairs."(Deines, 2017)

Surveys

The results of the surveys support the opinions of these comedy and theatre professionals that WOM represents a significant marketing channel. Table 4 shows the results in each survey to the question of where the participant heard about the show they attended. The numbers represent the percentage of the total population of each survey that indicated they heard it from Facebook, or from a friend. In all cases Facebook was the number one answer (on average representing over 55%), with 'friends' taking the second highest position (averaging 30%).

It is impossible to determine how much of 'Facebook' was pure eWOM (i.e. spontaneous recommendations or 'sharing' of an event by one Facebook user to their network of 'friends') and how much of it was due to advertising that was

purchased on the Facebook platform. According to Wegoda, Facebook advertising represented almost the entire advertising budget of The Comedy Club Bangkok for all of these shows, and represented the major focus of time and effort in the promotional campaigns. The percentage of people who heard 'from Facebook' will likely include some people who were the receiver of eWOM through this platform in addition to the targeted advertising, however it is impossible to determine to what degree. And so, 'scientifically' it is only possible to assert that participants received information through WOM and eWOM to the extent that they answered, "friends told me", but with the knowledge that this is possibly (if not probably) higher as a result of friends 'telling them about the show' through sharing the event with them on Facebook's social media platform. Even so, the survey results are in line with the opinions of those professionals who indicated that WOM was of major importance to their outreach.

Table 4 Percentage of responses that indicated the respondent heard about the show from Facebook or from a Friend (by Survey)

Survey	Facebook	Friends
Comedy Club Bangkok	26.39%	38.89%
Jimmy Carr Pre-Show	65.00%	17.50%
Jimmy Carr Post Show	70.06%	22.16%
Eddie Izzard Show	62.65%	33.13%
Magner's International Comedy Festival	51.61%	38.71%
AVERAGE	55.14%	30.07%

Focus Groups

Focus group attendees also appeared to agree that WOM and online social media were important sources for finding out about live events. However, one German woman, and a woman from Bangkok both preferred hearing about a show directly from a friend, and one male from Texas made a point of stressing that he does not share things online, but prefers telling people face-to-face. He made this point rather strongly, as it was a point of pride with him, perhaps somewhat of a backlash against the popularity of social media. Another man from Singapore also made it clear he only gives recommendations when asked. With the above noted exceptions, all focus group members indicated that they either heard about the show they had just attended through social media or directly from a friend or both, and when asked about the their perception of the importance of online recommendations (eWOM) the general consensus was that social media was now the single most important source for information of this kind.

4.1 Motivation to Share WOM and eWOM

Live Comedy Professionals

The comedy professionals interviewed for this research expressed a variety of opinions on why they believed their audience might share a recommendation, either about an upcoming show, or a show that they have seen.

Friends, Family, and Fans

Anderson, Deines, Murphy, and Franklin all divided patrons conceptually into two categories based on their motivations to share recommendations about a show (and did so without prompting by the interviewer): the first category being people involved in the show in some way or supporting others that they know personally who are involved with the show; and the second, the general populous.

"I think if they know someone in it, they will do it out of support." (Anderson, 2017)

"Usually if I see someone share an event I assume that that person is part of the event or part of the venue in some way."(John Murphy, 2016)

"There's the theatre people that are involved in our company or are friends of people that are involved in our company. They share stuff because they want to show their friends that they know these people or that they are part of this company."(Anderson, 2017)

This reasoning seems to correlate with the theorized motivation of 'being helpful' from the literary review. The theatre professionals identified this as a motivation for their patrons for sharing WOM, and also for attending a show, indicating that this motivation is likely a candidate for consideration as one that motivates both simultaneously.

The second group of people identified by the theatre professionals is those who are not personally connected to the show. "And then there are the people who are strictly just our audience and fans."(C. Franklin, 2017) Anderson also uses this

term to describe those unconnected with the show. "However, we do have some fans that share the event, and that is priceless."(C. Franklin, 2017)

For these 'fans', as Franklin and Anderson call them, opinions varied amongst the interviewees on what motivates these individuals to share a recommendation.

Social Interaction

Franklin suggests the motivation is to generate social outings. "Usually it is just 'Hey, we should go to this.' They do it because they want to make plans with friends."(Anderson, 2017)

Emotionally Affected

Murphy and Deines both feel that the affect the show has had on someone is the reason a show is recommended by those unconnected with the show. "My sense has been that, with each show that I've produced, there have been people that (I think) genuinely liked the show and they've helped to promote it, because it affected them somehow, or whatever... whatever that is."(C. Franklin, 2017)

Murphy concurs: "The thing that is really going to make people post about something is if they loved the show, if they thought it was amazing."(Deines, 2017)

Sharing as a Social Interaction

Wegoda and Anderson both felt that the social aspect of sharing information was a driving motivation.

Anderson felt that the act of sharing information itself was rewarding. "I think there is something about the comradery, and wanting to share the experience with other people." (John Murphy, 2016)

Wegoda believes that a desire to help others (by providing information one believes others will find useful), and a desire to provide information about one's own life, particularly on social media, were the strongest motivators. "Mostly because they think their friends will be interested. Obviously, with social media there may be an element of showing people what they're doing with their life, which is a big aspect of social media. So a mix of those two." (Anderson, 2017)

Self-Expression

Sparks opinion seems to align itself with that of Wegoda's insofar as he believes that whatever motivates people, it ultimately has to do with some sort of self-promotion or self-projection of the individual outward.

By way of example he explains, "Early on we would have a photographer taking pictures of the show, and taking pictures (kinda) of the audience. And if we brought a headliner in, the headliner would hang out after and we would get people to take pictures with the headliner, at the bar after, or whatever. Then we would put all of those online and tag as many of those people as we could. And they would therefore have a picture of themselves at the show that they could share."(Wegoda, 2017)

Franklin also speaks to this when she says, "I feel like: social media, people use it like an arm of who they are as a person. So what they share is who they are. People sharing improv comedy, they are the go-to person in that industry."(Sparks, 2016)

Franklin offers her own anecdote: She believes the success of the TheatreSports show "OK, Tinder" had to do, at least in part, with the 'buzz' that it received on social media, a buzz that was directly related to the significance of the show to people's lives. "They saw the name. They thought it was a show about dating in Vancouver, and I guess it was relevant to their lives, and so they didn't even have to see the show for them to be excited about sharing it." (C. Franklin, 2017)

This belief was later supported by TheatreSports' own research, says Franklin. "We were hitting our budget and exceeding our budget and we were all like, 'Ok?' And through audience surveys it was because it was so 'relatable'." (C. Franklin, 2017)

Focus Groups Thoughts

Members of the focus groups offered their opinions on why they and others might share a recommendation. A Seattle woman said "if the comedy really affected her more than typical", and gave the example, "if she was still thinking about it the next day." A man from Spain agreed, saying he would recommend a show that "sticks in his head." A Bangkok woman indicated that she believed it was an emotional decision to share online, and depended upon the emotional experience she had had at the show.

Others, like one man from Singapore (Sing2) felt that something new was the most important factor, an opinion shared by a woman from Bangkok. They both agreed that they felt comfortable talking or sharing about something to others if it was somehow 'new'.

In general the focus group members indicated that they believed their reasons for sharing a recommendation were typical, and they expected that the general public would use similar criteria when making the decisions whether to share a recommendation or not.

Survey

As a result of the comedy professionals' interviews and the focus group discussions, different questions were asked on the various surveys that were intended to reveal patrons' motivations for sharing information about shows to friends and acquaintances, either face-to-face or online.

Questions regarding WOM motivation were asked on the Post Jimmy Carr Show Survey, the Eddie Izzard Show survey, and the Magners International Comedy Festival Survey. The Comedy Club Bangkok survey, and the Pre-show Jimmy Carr survey asked no questions about WOM motivation.

Post Jimmy Carr Show Survey

The post Jimmy Carr show survey asked participants (52 males, 29 females) "What makes you recommend a show to a friend, or post a public comment or 'share' on social media?" Fifteen options were offered as well as an 'other' (which offered the opportunity for participants to enter their own reason). Figure 2 shows the results of this survey question.

Figure 2 Results to the question: "What makes you recommend a show to a friend, or to post a public comment or 'share' on social media?" More than one answer was possible.
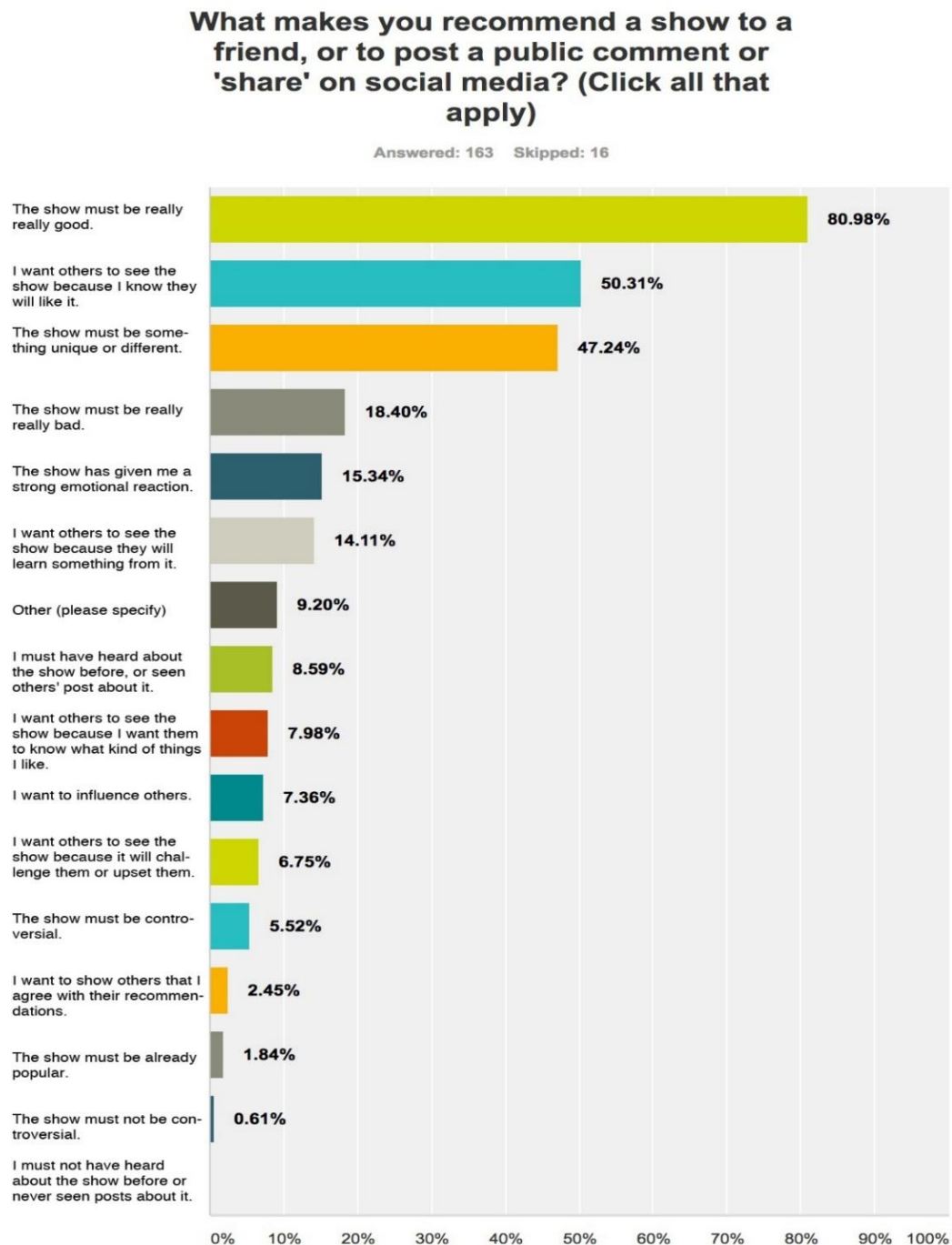
Unsurprisingly, the quality of the show ranked highest as participants' self-reported motivational triggers, and by a significant margin (80.98% of respondents chose this as one of their motivations), with the next most popular response (I want others to see the show because I know they will like it) being chosen 50.31% of the time. Uniqueness of the show ranked high at 47.24%, and the show being really really bad the next most popular response at 18.4%

Write-in responses (which accounted for 9.2%) provided some interesting surprises. Some of these unexpected responses were utilized in subsequent surveys, and were added to the list of possible answers. Some write-in answers appeared to fit with the approach Sparks took at his theatre, namely providing opportunities for patrons to 'promote' or 'present' themselves outwardly on social media.

Some responses were :

"I don't usually share that much on social media. If we had photo ops, VIP passes, or some kind of cool souvenir or gimmick that was worth sharing perhaps I might have."

"Only if I happen to take a picture that looks really nice, but I usually prefer to just enjoy the evening."

"A 'poster' or show and tell corner where those who attend can go crazy with selfies or group photos!"

Another response fit with Wegoda's theory that patrons want to share their life experiences with others :

"I want to tell my friends about the good shit in my life."

One motivation that Deines predicted, "I also just like to promote cool activities — this is good for everyone and costs me nothing" also appeared.

There were those that focused on the altruistic:

"Everyone needs to laugh, even if it challenges one's perceptions, and I'm a firm believer in the shared gift of happiness that is laughter,"

And less altruistic and more self-serving :

"I want to support such shows / gigs / theatre etc. so that they come to Bangkok or include Bangkok on their circuit next time. Bangkok often gets overlooked in favour of Singapore and Hong Kong."

Two responses proved to be a significant motivator in a later survey where the answer (because it appeared as a write-in answer on this survey) was offered as an option, namely to generate envy :

"I want to make all my friends jealous" and "Want others to feel a sense of loss."

Eddie Izzard Survey

One hundred and three men, fifty-nine women, and two who identified themselves as 'other' took part in this survey. Figure 3 shows the results to the question "What makes you want to post about comedy shows?"

Figure 3 Results of the question: "What makes you want to post about comedy shows?"

What makes you want to post about comedy shows?

Answered: 114   Skipped: 54

Option	Percentage
If it is very good	14.91%
If it is very good or very bad	26.32%
To make others jealous/envious.	23.68%
To let others know what I am doing	10.53%
To let others (back home) know what I am doing	6.14%
To tell / recommend it to others.	7.89%
Because this type of show does not happen often in Bangkok	11.40%
Because it is Eddie Izzard	10.53%
Other	8.77%
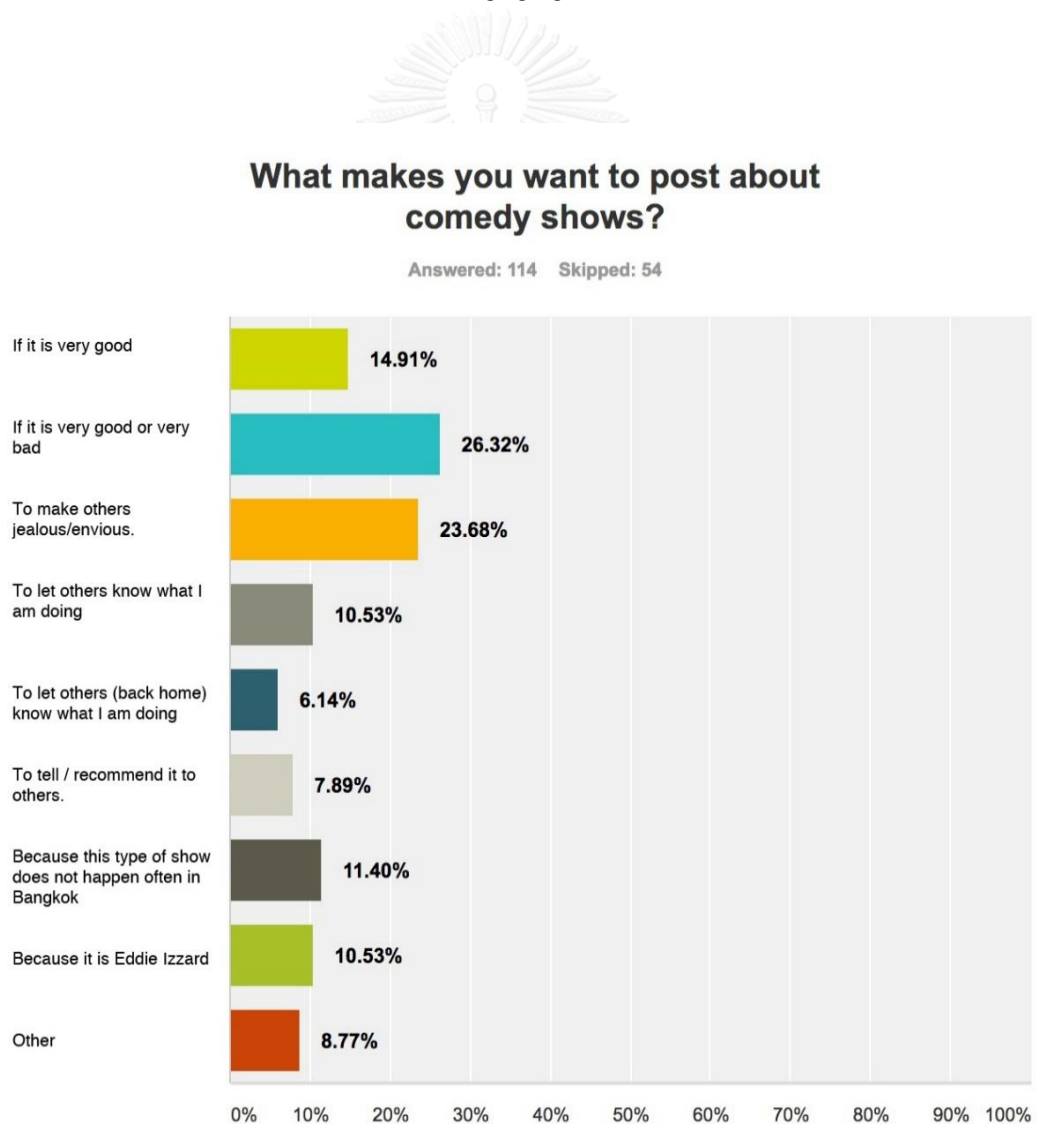
In this survey "If it is very good or very bad" scored highest (26.32%), with the next highest response being "To make others jealous / envious" at (23.68%). "If the show is very good" was the third most popular answer at 14.91%

It should be noted that the volunteers taking these survey answers were instructed to inform participants to select either "If the show is very good" or "If the show was very good or very bad" in the case where they selected either. And so, the response 'If the show is very good or very bad' as an aggregate of both responses totals 41.23% (with 14.91% indicating ONLY if the show was very good).

The specific celebrity of Eddie Izzard was selected as a motivation factor 10.54% of the time, while the unique nature of the show was selected 11.40%.

The 8.77% of those who chose 'other' indicated a variety of reasons. One patron indicated he 'shared' events online to make an online record for himself of what he had done. Two others were event organizers, two did it as part of their responsibilities at work (one indicated she was a journalist), one because others might be interested, two to share a common experience with others and one because he had never seen comedy in Bangkok before. One claimed they would only post online if they won money. They won nothing.

Of the 152 who answered the question 96 respondents thought they were likely to post about the show online after the event, while only 66 claimed to have shared about the event online prior to the show. 95 respondents (almost exactly the same number who said they were likely to post about the show online after the

event) indicated that they "are someone who usually shares / posts online about events". However, of the 96 who indicated they were likely to post about the show, 83 said they usually share or post online, and 10 indicated that they do not usually do so. See Figure 4

Figure 4 Results of the question: "Are you someone who usually shares / posts online about events?" of the 96 who indicated that they felt they were likely to share something about the Eddie Izzard show after the event.
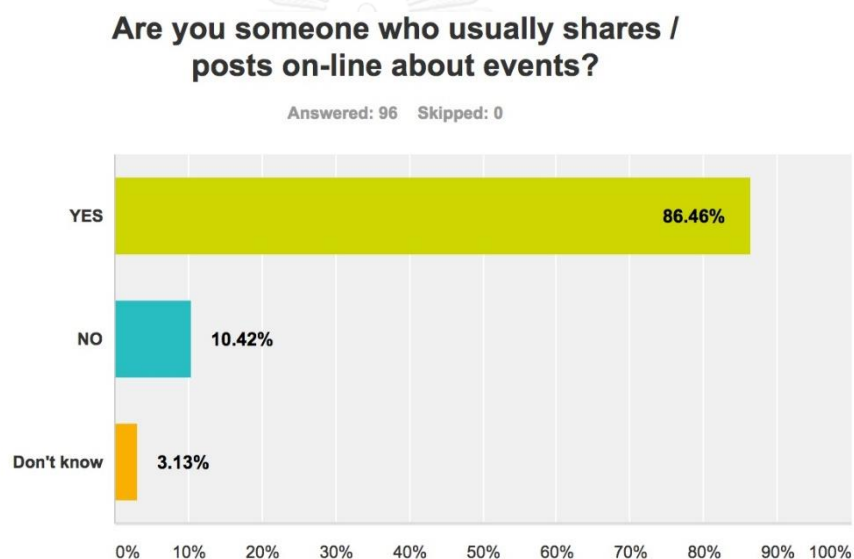
Magner's International Comedy Festival Survey

Forty men and thirty-one women took part in the survey of their experiences at The Magner's International Comedy Festival. The festival consisted of 9 shows, held in Bangkok, Hua Hin, and Phuket Thailand over the course of three days in March, 2017. As the final survey of this study, the questions regarding online behaviour of the participants and their friends were more detailed than in the

previous surveys and were based on some of the results from previous surveys, focus groups and interviews.

Figure 6 shows the results of the question of whether the respondent had been the recipient of a recommendation from a friend, and if so, how so. When asked if a friend recommended the show to them 42.62% (n=26) indicated 'NO'. 29.51% (n=18) answered that a friend had recommended the show to them face-to-face, while 27.87% (n=17) responded 'Yes, by email, messenger, WeChat, Line or WhatsApp' (i.e. as a direct personal message), and 16.39% (n=10) replied that a friend had 'shared' the event with them as a post on Facebook, Instagram, or another social media platform.

Figure 5 Results to the question: "Did a friend recommend this show to you?" Multiple answers were allowed.
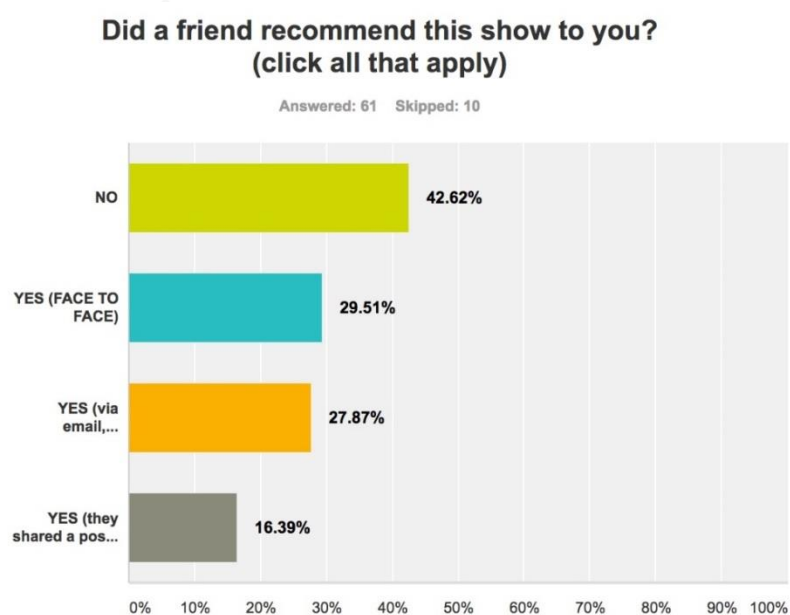
When asked about their own online behaviour, 72.58% (n=45) of respondents indicated that they had not shared information about the festival with others online before the event, while 24.19% (n=15) said they had, and 2 (3.23%) respondents answered that they didn't know (Figure 7).

A similar question was asked about online sharing after the event. A parallel result of 24.19% (n=15) said they had shared online post-event, with 75.78% (n=47) saying that they had not. Of those who said they had shared with someone online before the show, more than half (53.33%, n=8) did not share anything after the show, meaning that a slight majority of pre-show and post show online sharing was done by different individuals. See Figure 7, Figure 8, and Figure 9 below.

Figure 6 Result to the question: "Did you share about this event online before the show?"

Did you share about this event on-line before the show?

Answered: 62   Skipped: 9

YES	24.19%
NO	72.58%
Don't Know	3.23%

0% 10% 20% 30% 40% 50% 60% 70% 80% 90% 100%
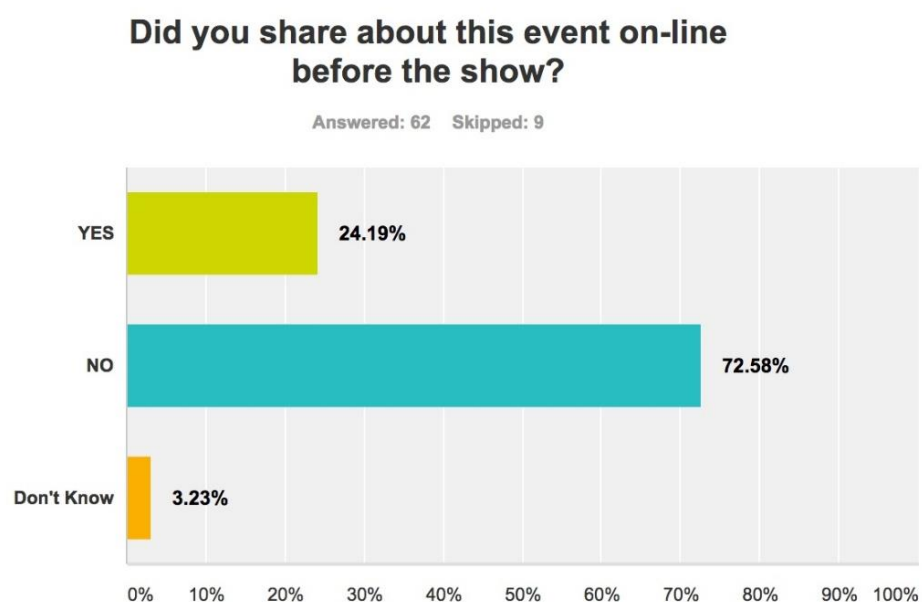
Figure 7 Result to the question: "Did you post anything about this show after the
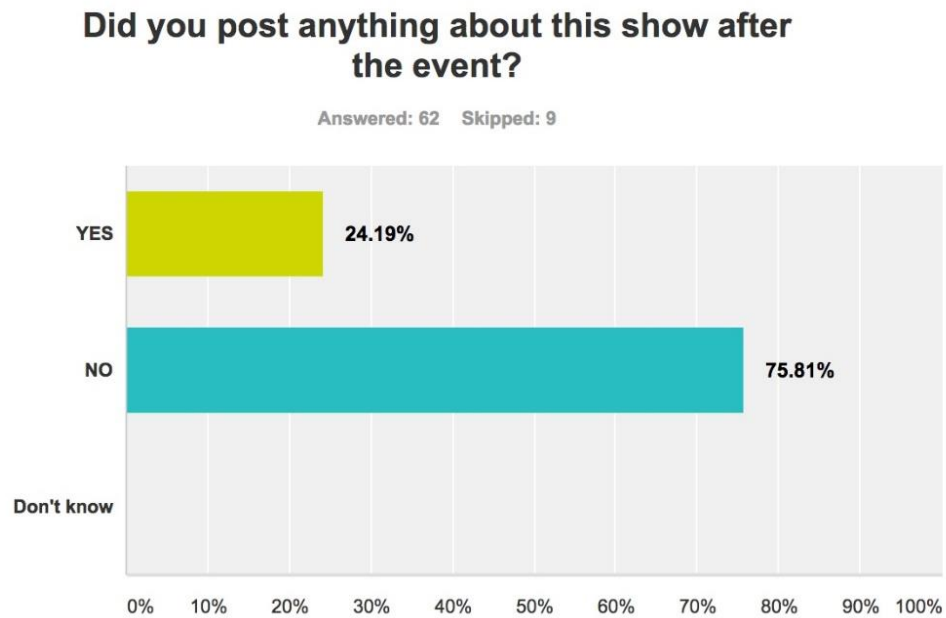
event?"

Figure 8 Of those who indicated YES, they had shared something about the event before the show, the results to the question: "Did you post anything about this show after the event?"
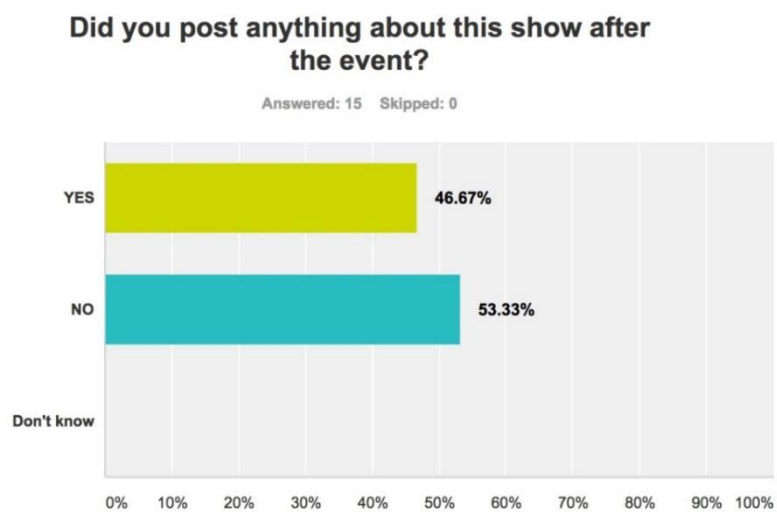
When asked about their typical online behaviour, only 25.81% (n=16) considered themselves regular online posters. (70.97% (n=44) replied they were not regular posters online and 3.23% (n=2) replied 'Don't know'. See Figure 10.

Figure 9 Results to the question: "Are you someone who usually shares / posts online about events?"
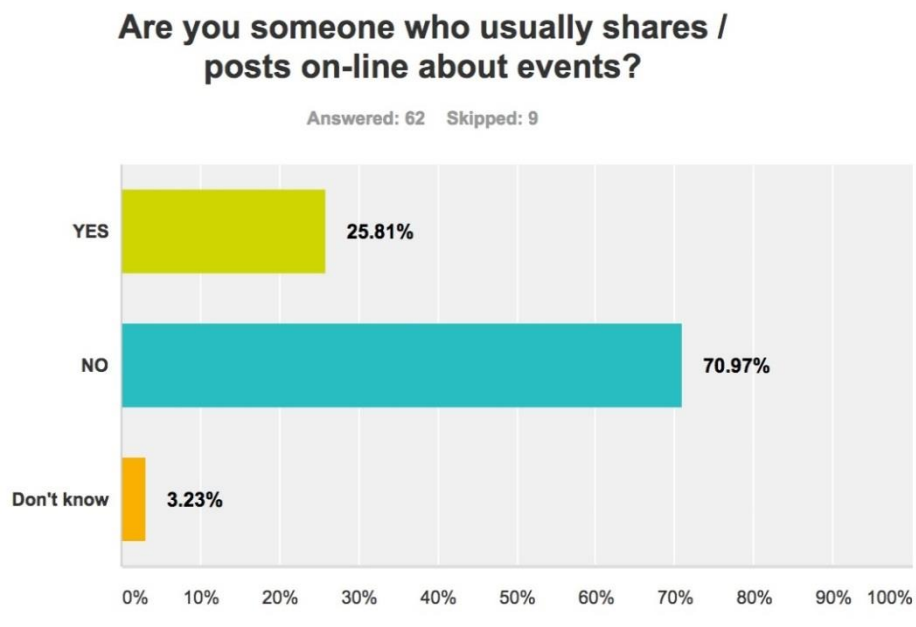
Respondents were also asked to report their motivations for posting about comedy shows. The distribution of responses matched the previous survey in some areas, and deviated in others.

The most popular answer was 'If the show was very good' (36.36%), with 'To tell / recommend it to others' a close second (31.82%) (Figure 11). The uniqueness of the festival to Bangkok in this case was the third most frequent response (25%).

Because the audience to shows at this festival are primarily expats (only 10.77% of respondents were Thai (n=7)), two options were offered as possible answers for 'To let others know what I am doing': one added the phrase (back home), one specified 'local friends'. Together these two answers totaled over 38%, but some respondents (n=3) answered yes to both these questions. 'To make others envious / jealous', which had scored high in the Eddie Izzard show survey, was only selected by one respondent in this survey.

Figure 10 Results to the question: "What makes you post about comedy shows?"

What makes you want to post about comedy shows?

Answered: 44   Skipped: 27

Answer	%
If it is very good.	36.36%
If it is very good OR very...	13.64%
To make others jealous/envi...	2.27%
To let local friends know...	18.18%
To let others (back home k...	20.45%
To tell / recommend it...	31.82%
Because this type of show...	25.00%
Because I am a fan of comedy	18.18%
Because people look to me f...	2.27%
Other (please specify)	9.09%
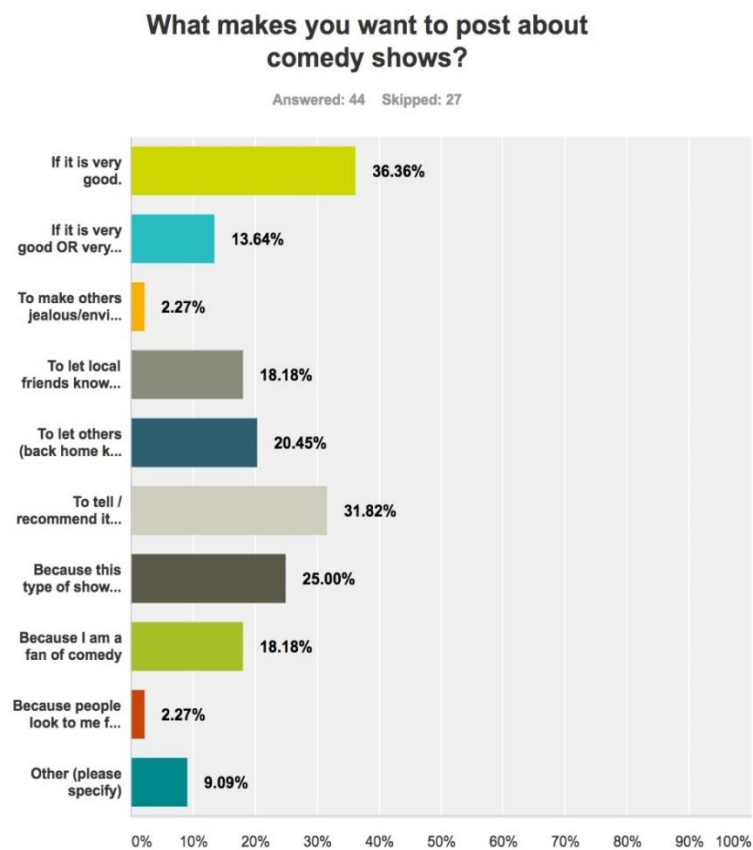
Respondents were offered the opportunity to write in why they would want to post about comedy. One person wrote that shows of this type did not happen often (an answer already provided as a choice), while all three others took the opportunity to explain why they didn't post on line, for example, one participant responded: "People who talk about things online are the modern equivalent of guys with imaginary girlfriends they tell their classmates about. She's from Canada, which is why you don't know her. From the Niagara Falls region." A "I do not post online" option was not offered, which was an oversight of the researcher, but one that the respondents helped correct by writing it in.

The survey also asked how participants would rate the show on a scale from 1 to 5 (see Figure 12). 11.67% (n=7) considered it "Mind Blowing", the highest rating available, with 48.33% (n=29) finding the show to be "Really good!"

Figure 11 Results of the question: "How did you enjoy the shows you saw in general?
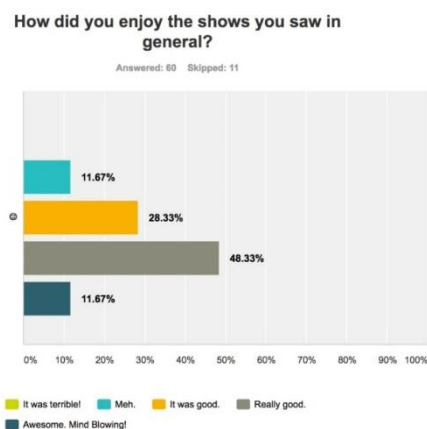
Of the total of the two responses "Mind Blowing" and "Really good" (60%, n=36), 14 responded that they post if the show is 'really good', and 11 reported that they actually did (see Table 5), indicating that the quality of the show was not a guarantee of a eWOM recommendation, even for those who self-report that it is.

Table 5 For those who indicated that the show they attended was "Mind Blowing" or "Really Good", a comparison of those who self-reported reason for posting online was a 'very good show' vs. their actual self-reported behaviour.

Respondents who rated the show "Mind blowing" or really good.	Those who indicated that they post if a show is really good.	Those who indicated they actually posted.
36	14	11

4.2 Motivations to See Live Comeedy Professionals Interviews

This study also aimed to determine if there are particular motivations to see live comedy, and in particular how those motivations related to the motivations to share WOM, if they do. The live comedy professionals interviewed for this study shared their thoughts on what they believe motivates their patrons.

Group Dynamic

Wegoda believes the experience of seeing live comedy is incomparable to watching recorded performances. "You can not compare the group dynamic experience of watching live comedy, in an audience for anything from fifty to a thousand people (or plus plus plus)... anyone who has been to comedy knows it is a very different experience. It's a group shared mind experience." (C. Franklin, 2017)

This sentiment is shared by other comedy professionals, such as Taipei's Anderson: "I think people come to see live comedy because there is something about being in the moment in the show, there is something about being surrounded by others of similar interests. Live comedy is always going to feel different than comedy that is recorded. If you watch comedy on TV or listen to it on a podcast or something, it's funny and you'll laugh, but your laugh is never as hearty as being in the moment with other strangers laughing at the same thing." (Wegoda, 2017)

Deines agrees with Anderson. "I think you laugh more when you are with other people than when you are by yourself."(Anderson, 2017), and Wegoda would add "the more people the better." (Deines, 2017)

Research by Lockyer and Myers into audience motivations discovered findings that would support the professional opinions expressed by those interviewed for this study. Lockyer and Myers found that "attending live stand-up comedy resulted in a shared or collective experience of being in the same environment, sharing the

comedic experience or being 'in the moment'. These were experiences that most respondents sought and valued."(Wegoda, 2017, p. 181)

Deines sees that shared experience as something important to the live comedy patrons. "You are having this shared experience together watching this performance that has this element of spontaneity, unknown and danger." (Lockyer & Myers, 2011)She describes the experience of being in a group of people laughing in simple terms: "I think there is something fun about being in a big group of people laughing."(Deines, 2017)

Entertainment and Laughter

Deines and Wegoda see laughter and having a good time as the prime motivators of comedy attendees.

"I think because they want to laugh; they want to have a good time. I think that is the number one thing, because it is so fun to laugh! It makes life better."(Deines, 2017)

"For people who have seen live comedy they obviously know that it is very entertaining, it should obviously be very funny, and they just simply have a great time, their endorphins kick in, they feel good about themselves." (Deines, 2017)

The Danger of the Unknown

But Deines identifies other motivators, particularly for the 'live' aspect of the performance when she talks about the uniqueness of a live show and the danger that comes with live performance, the artistic equivalent of a rollercoaster's 'danger'.

"I think that one thing that is particular about comedy, with a live performance, is the element of the unknown. You would be there live, and see something that no other performance will see. Like improv, for example, you know that when you go you will see a show that is unique. Even if they are running for a week, the next night the show people will see won't be the same. I think that is something that live performance has: it has that element that something could go wrong. And audiences love that: when something unexpected happens."(Wegoda, 2017)

She believes that the audience, in seeking a live, 'dangerous' experience, becomes part of the experience for others. "The audiences reaction to what the performers are doing is part of the performance."(Deines, 2017)

Lockyer and Myers' results from interviewing stand-up comedy patrons would seem to support Deines' supposition, as patrons described "the appeal of live stand-up comedy in terms of its unexpected and unpredictable potential. This related to both the stand-up comedian's actions, the content of their performance and the ways in which the stand-up comedian responds to the dynamics of the specific audience."(Deines, 2017, p. 175)

Nostalgia and Uniqueness

Chris Wegoda, who runs a comedy club in Bangkok that caters primarily to expats, also sees additional motivations for people to see live comedy, having something to do with his audiences' status as expats living in a foreign country.

"For the likes of Jimmy Carr, Eddie Izzard, Gina Yashere and Tom Rhodes, people are seeing someone who they often would have seen in their own country where they've come from. So there's that taste of home. The idea of seeing Eddie Izzard in Bangkok was quite an odd thing and a lot of people would have gone for the nostalgic aspect."(Lockyer & Myers, 2011)

This nostalgia, as Wegoda calls it, may also be mixed with curiosity if patrons see the comedy event as a unique experience, "If you've never seen live comedy, or if you have never seen live comedy in Thailand or Bangkok, there is obviously the curiosity factor."(Wegoda, 2017)

Proximity and Intimacy

Wegoda believes, especially with a comedian of some fame, the proximity to the celebrity is a motivator for some patrons.

"Seeing them live, if you know them, you know you are going to be much closer to them."(Wegoda, 2017)

Lockyer and Myers discovered that the patrons they interviewed valued the close distance between them and the performer. "Although this reduced distance is

important in all live performances, closeness and intimacy are especially important in stand-up comedy." (Wegoda, 2017, p. 177)

Some of those interviewed for Lockyer and Myers' study spoke of the feeling of personal connection that the proximity to the performer created, as if the performer was talking directly (and specifically) to that individual audience member. Lockyer and Myers found a "preference for smaller and medium-sized venues"(Lockyer & Myers, 2011, p. 178) by patrons due to a value placed on this proximity and intimacy.

Social Interaction

In addition to the motivation that comes from the collective artistic experience, there are social interactive motivators, according to Wegoda: "And they [audience members] also know they can get to meet other people, so there is a social aspect to that."(Lockyer & Myers, 2011)

Wegoda suggests that this social experience can only really happen in a live performance setting.

"No one is inviting their friends over to watch comedy on YouTube or Netflix.... I mean, they might, but it is a very different experience."(Wegoda, 2017)

Lockyer and Myers found that only 4% of those surveyed for their study attended live comedy alone, suggesting that attendance at live comedy "is regarded by many as a social event." (Wegoda, 2017, p. 173)

4.3 Focus Group

Many of the professional opinions above were confirmed by members of the focus group regarding their motivations to attend live comedy. Focus group members spoke of unpredictability of stand-up comedy, of the intimacy of seeing a performer live, of the immediacy of the event, the newness and uniqueness of the experience, and the atmosphere of the room as all being draws for attending live comedy.

A German woman indicated that unpredictability was a draw for her. She enjoyed that 'every show was different', a view shared by a Spanish woman.

A Singaporean man (Sing2) agreed, suggesting that current news topics could be addressed by stand-up comedy in a way that other live entertainment could not, while a woman from Bangkok valued the 'relatability' of the stand-up comedy to her personal life.

A second Bangkok woman (Bk2) enjoyed the newness that she found with stand-up comedy.

Another Singaporean man enjoyed the 'personal touch' he got from seeing live comedy in a small, intimate venue, as did the man from Texas, who made special note of the character of the room, namely the dark setting and the performer in a spotlight. Something about the intimacy made live comedy worth attending for him.

Another focus group participant, who identified himself as 'a friend of the comedian', also indicated that the atmosphere, and in particular the dark room, was

something that he expected from live comedy, while a Canadian man described the atmosphere he expected and enjoyed as 'seedy and dark.'

All participants in the focus group agreed that there was 'something' about live comedy that they could not get from other forms of live entertainment, nor other non-live forms of comedy. The experience of attending live comedy, and a desire to experience an event, appeared to be (at least from members of these focus groups) the most important motivator for attending live comedy. The 'quality' of the show was seen more as a sub-set motivator, that is to say, the expected quality of the show was the primary motivator for deciding when they would go to see live comedy and which live comedy show they chose to attend (a comedian they recognized or who had won recognition in some way, for example.)

It should be noted that with the exception of two Spanish participants and one woman from Bangkok, all the participants indicated that they were regular attendees to comedy. This may have a marked effect on the motivations, as these are people who 'like' live comedy and the experience surrounding it. Those unfamiliar with this experience or who do not attend regularly may have other motivations for attending.

In general, the focus group members indicated that they had a certain set of expectations regarding a night of live comedy, a set that included a good performance, but also included aspects of social interaction, intimacy, and emotional experience, and even expectations regarding the atmosphere of the room. If these

expectations were met, then the show was considered a success, and they believed the likelihood of recommending it to others increased.

4.4 Surveys

The Comedy Club Bangkok survey and the Magners International Comedy Festival survey were used to gather information regarding patrons' motivations for seeing comedy.

Comedy Club Bangkok Survey

The write-in answers from the Comedy Club Bangkok survey provided some insight into the motivations of patrons, and often matched the expected motivations of the live comedy professionals interviewed. Respondents were asked what they liked about the show.

"It makes me laugh. It's interactive. It's laid back and a lot of fun", wrote one respondent.

"Fun, intimate, easy for audience to participate," replied another.

"Something different," answered two others.

One respondent was very succinct: "I came to laugh."

Several responded that they enjoyed things other than the performance. "The price" and "Price and free drink" was a motivator for some patrons.

Several others indicated the intimacy of the event as being something that they enjoyed about live comedy, with answers such as: "the atmosphere", "cozy environment", "cozy atmosphere of venue, quick pace", "the intimate atmosphere", "interaction with the people", "the crowd and the atmosphere".

One patron liked everything about their evening out (a producer's dream):

"I really like the set up, the room, the diversity in the acts, the quick pace, the cheap drinks, the 3-minute slots, and how the audience can put a joke in during half-time for free tickets to the next show."

Magner's International Comedy Festival Survey

Participants in the survey were asked their motivations to see comedy, with seven options provided and the opportunity to select 'other' and provide a write-in answer. See Figure 13.

Figure 12 Results to the question: "What motivates you to see live comedy?" Multiple answers were allowed.
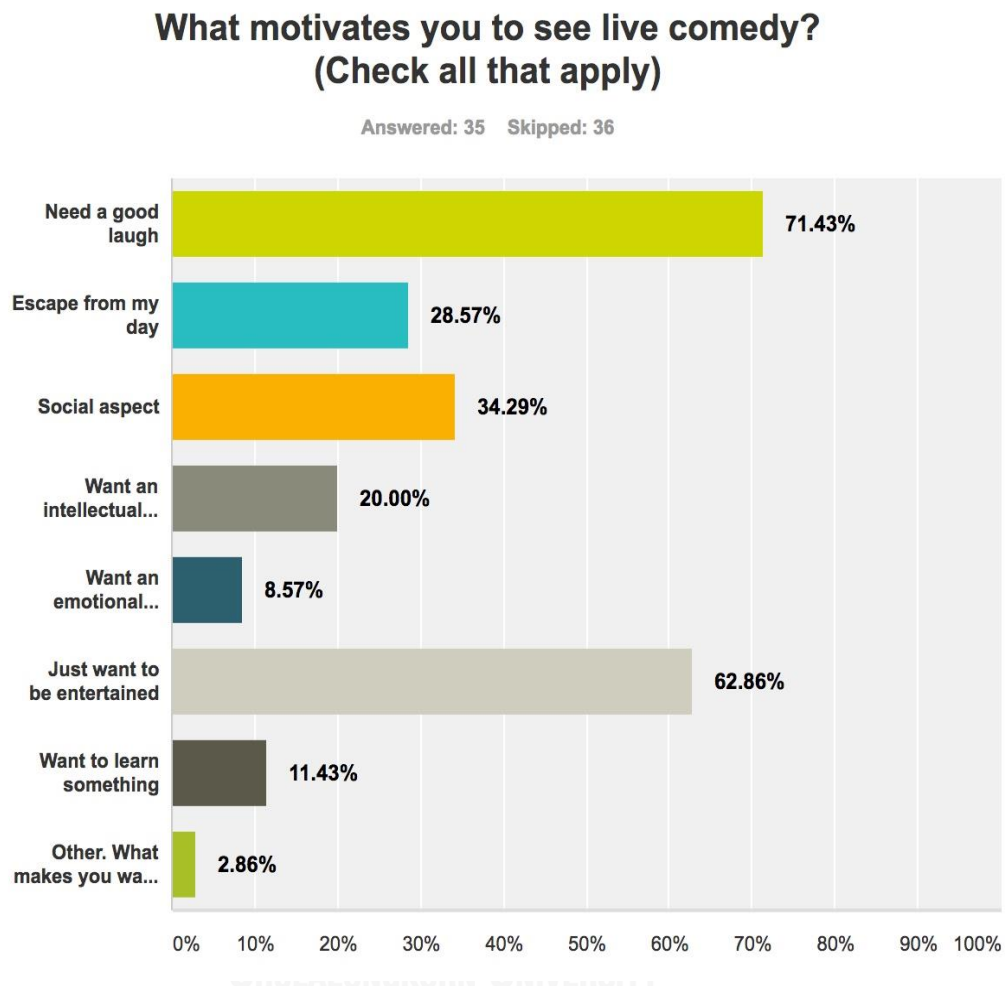
The most popular response at 71.43% (n=25) was "Need a good laugh", with 'Just want to be entertained' being selected by 62.86% of the respondents (n=22). The next most popular response was "social aspect" with 34.29% (n=12) selecting that response. Lowest of the provided answers was "want an emotional challenge" at 8.57% (n=3).

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

The results of this study have confirmed some suppositions, while leaving

other questions tantalizingly unanswered, but offering some trends that are worth

investigation by comedy professionals wishing to increase WOM proliferation. The

variety of venues, show types, celebrity level of the performers, audience sizes,

cities, countries, and other factors related to the shows about which survey

respondents answered, makes it impossible to control all the independent variables,

placing the analysis of the findings more into the world of art than science, just as it

should be, considering that the subject of the study is art.

WOM Importance Confirmed

From Vancouver, to Bangkok , to Taipei, to Shanghai, all the live comedy-

producing professionals agreed that WOM was vital to the business and marketing

success of their respective companies. Given the nature of comedy, namely the

visceral live experience shared by the members of the audience, which these

comedy professionals repeatedly referred to, the artistic success of live comedy also

relies to a great degree on having a large audience, and so WOM has direct

importance to artistic success in addition to marketing success.

Much of the existing research into WOM, and word-of-mouth marketing (WOMM), has to do with the effect that such recommendations have on the receiver of a product recommendation, and most specifically on whether the purchasing behaviour of the receiver of information is somehow altered, and if so in what direction and by how much. (Alhabash, McAlister, Lou, & Hagerstrom, 2015; Cheema & Kaikati, 2010; Ciceo, 2012; Dichter, 1966; Fisk, 1969; Friestad & Wright, 1994; Graham, Barbato, & Perse, 1993; Hudson, Roth, Madden, & Hudson, 2015; Kim, 2014; Ladhari, 2007; Pincus, 2004; Vázquez-Casielles, Suáres-Álvarez, & Del Río-Lanza, 2013; Zhu & Chen, 2015) The overall results from these studies point to the conclusion that WOM is highly effective in swaying the opinions of others, has a positive impact on marketing and sales goals, and is a valuable tool for convincing, cajoling, manipulating or otherwise causing consumers to consume more of whatever consumable it is that is being offered for consumption.

The results of the patron surveys for this study also confirms the importance of WOM, as self reported acknowledgment by patrons of WOM as a channel for hearing about a show ranked high in the survey results (30%). Social media increases the effect of WOM, as the ability for one person to easily share information with many others has been greatly increased by this technology.

Potential for Abuse

Of course, there is a potential negative aspect to eWOM, insofar as social media platforms do offer the potential for people to 'fake' WOM by creating artificial recommendations from fake profiles that actually originate from the producer or other biased party. Facebook reported in 2012 that an estimated 83 million user profiles on their platform were fake, (Lockyer & Myers, 2011)and so, the possibility that a recommendation is coming from someone with a vested interest in the success of a show does exist, and may be harder to recognize than in more personal interactions. This one unethical option, besides from being deceitful, is not recommended, as it could backfire horribly if discovered. And as a receiver of eWOM, in a world of 'fake news' and 'alternative facts', one must accept eWOM recommendations only after a modicum of due diligence and with the knowledge that these recommendations may not be coming from a disinterested source.

Increased Importance of eWOM

With the recognized importance of WOM as the most trusted form of 'advertising' according to internationally recognized pollsters, The Neilsen Company(2012), the emergence of social media and its focus on posts being shared, the reach of WOM – now in the ubiquitous eWOM form of social media 'likes' and 'shares' – makes this form of marketing and promotion even more valuable to

theatre producers, who, as Murphy stated, are looking for cost-effective (i.e. free) methods of promotion.

The identification of certain content choices or marketing strategies that are more likely to receive social media interest (in addition to traditional face-to-face WOM) is worthy of serious investigative effort, as it may offer live comedy managers the opportunity to make decisions that can increase the likelihood of voluntary recommendations being given by patrons to family and friends.

It is interesting to note that with the exception of The Comedy Club Bangkok survey, respondents indicated that Facebook was the prime source of information about each performance. The Comedy Club Bangkok show was the only one that did not feature a celebrity, and the only one in which 'Friends' scored higher than Facebook. This may indicate that without the draw of celebrity, WOM becomes even more valuable.

Posters Post Most

The fact that almost exactly the same number of respondents in the Eddie Izzard survey who said they were likely to post about the show online, also indicated that they usually post about events on-line may indicate that in general only those who are regular posters will likely post again in the future. Only 10 of the 96 who said they were likely to post about the show also said they don't usually do so. Converting non-posters into posters may be a difficult task for live comedy

promoters. Focusing on those who regularly post may be a better expenditure of marketing and promotion time and resources.

The members of the focus groups generally agreed with the importance of WOM, and confirmed the assertion that it is the most trusted form of 'promotion.' Most of the participants engaged regularly in social media, and indicated it was a major source of information for them. The one participant that did not use social media was proud of his technology philistinia, and, while in the minority, it is worth recognizing that not everyone is 'online', nor a fan of social media.

Multiple Criteria for 'Good', and 'Good' is not everything

The first approach for any producer must always be to provide a product that people like. The findings of this study indicated that patrons considered the quality of the show (being 'good', 'mind-blowing' etc.) was the most important motivator for them to recommend the show to others. So, produce good shows. This is not an easy task, and also offers no guarantee of success, nor a guarantee that the show will be recommended to others. (Being a 'bad' show was also a high motivator for some, and so, for those who believe 'No publicity is bad publicity', this could also be leveraged for marketing purposes.)

It is worth noting that focus group members did not mention the quality of the show, nor mention how 'funny' the show needed to be, but rather spoke about the show being 'good' in terms of it satisfying their expectations, expectations which

included things outside of the 'quality' of the performance or the funniness of the material. The feeling of attending an event, that they were connected or engaged somehow seemed of greater interest.

This is art, after all, and 'quality' of this product – more than other industries – is highly subjective. A live performance is more difficult to quantitatively rate as 'good' or 'bad' than a product such as a smart-phone, which can be rated on measurable criteria such as battery life, signal strength, and processing speed. This research, therefore, also assumes that every producer strives to produce a 'good' show, whatever that means, and that there is possibly something above and beyond this goal that can be done to motivate more attendees to discuss the show and provide recommendations. That is to say, given two 'good' shows, it is possible that one may receive more WOM 'buzz' that the other. If so, why so? One may be 'good' and shocking, and the other 'good' and thought-provoking, and any difference in WOM proliferation might then be reasonably ascribed to the level of 'shock' or 'thought-provocation' a given show creates in its audience as a whole. One show may get good reviews because the seats were comfy, whereas, as University of Kent lecture Quirk (2011) discovered, another show may be more successful if patrons' comfort is ignored to some degree, and they are packed in tightly together like laughing sardines. Whatever the case, Quirk is confident that: "The nature and set-up of a venue can have a profound impact upon the success of the stand-up event."(WordofMouthRecommendationsRemainTheMostCredible, 2015, p. 224)

And so, being 'good' is not the only reason people will recommend a show, and the quality of the art is not the only thing that makes a show 'good'.

Social Aspect

This study was able to confirm that the artistic quality of a performance was not the only motivator, and therefore, live comedy producers would be ill advised to ignore the other motivations that trigger patrons to recommend the show to friends.

The social aspect of a night out for live comedy was identified by the theatre professionals as an important motivator to attend comedy, and the surveys, with 35% indicating 'social aspect' as a motivator (Magners International Comedy Festival Survey), and over 50% saying they recommend a show because they want others to see it (Jimmy Carr Post Show), suggests that patrons are motivated to attend comedy and recommend comedy for 'social aspect' reasons. Lockyer and Myers also found that few patrons attend live comedy alone (Quirk, 2011).

Live comedy is a social activity, as is social media (it's called 'social', after all). The results of this study seem to indicate that 'social interaction' is one of the motivators that 'over-lap', being an impetus both to see comedy and to talk about or recommend it. Rewarding and satisfying the need for social interaction could be a successful tactic in activating a motivation that achieves both an attendance and WOM objective.

Focus Group Members Have Many Motivations

Focus group members listed a number of motivations for attending live comedy, and none of them spoke about wanting to see 'something really good'. Newness, the social aspect, the experience that comes with group interaction, and the intimacy that comes from the live nature of comedy were all mentioned as motivations for seeing comedy. This researcher took it as a given that all participants wanted the show to be 'good', but it was interesting that no one directly spoke about the artistic value of the show. No one said, "I come to live comedy because I want to see something really good, or really funny." However, the quality of the overall experience was mentioned as a motivator for recommending the show to others.

Self-Expression and Ownership

According to Dichter, talking about a product can confirm the enjoyment of ownership. Obviously, when the product is an experiential one, such as a comedy show, Dichter's 'ownership' takes on a less literal meaning and takes on more of a sense that the product (the comedy show) is a reflection of the personality of the individual: 'owning it', as in, recognizing and acknowledging one's affinity to it. One enjoyed the comedy product because it appealed to one's sense of humour.

As such, attending comedy and recommending it to others becomes a form of self-expression according to Waterman's measures of eudaimonia that comes

from a feeling of personal expressiveness (intense involvement, feeling a special fit, sense of being alive, feeling fully engaged, sense that the activity has meaning, and/or a sense that it reveals who one really is). This type of happiness (eudaimonia) correlates to the need to express oneself by recommending entertainment that one has enjoyed.

The self-expressiveness of attending live comedy that meets Waterman's criteria may also activate Ditcher's desire to continue or extend the self-expression through sharing WOM with others. While hedonic considerations are likely primary for patrons (and supported by this study's survey results, namely: having a good laugh is the most popular motivator), eudaimonic considerations may be more important for live comedy producers than hedonic as effective motivators for both WOM proliferation and attendance.

Consider how the previously discussed 'social aspect' of the live comedy experience has the potential to increase or intensify Waterman's criteria, and the case for focusing on eudaimonicly sensitive triggers is strengthened. Patrons who are feeling a sense of enjoyment through self-expression while attending live comedy, are likely (if Dichter is to be believed) to want to continue this experience through the enjoyment confirmative act of recommending their eudaimonic experience to others. Or to put it more simply: seeing comedy is an act of self-expression, as is expressing oneself about one's act of self-expression.

Decisions, artistic, promotional, logistical or otherwise, that help to enable patrons' self-expressions are likely to motivate both attendance and WOM simultaneously. Sparks' 'selfie opportunities for patrons', opportunities to interact with performers during and after performances (audience interaction, talk-back sessions, meet-and-greets, autograph/photos with the performer sessions), posting photos of audiences wherein patrons may be able to spot and 'tag' themselves on social media, are all examples of opportunities to leverage the desire for self-expression for marketing purposes.

It is interesting, with this in mind, to note that the live entertainment professionals interviewed for this study specifically identified people connected to the show (part of the production, or close friends and family) as those who are most likely to share online promotional posts, or other recommendations, as an act of support for the production and those in it. For these people the connection to the show is direct and personal, and so recommendations of the show are a direct reflection of who they are (i.e. they are someone involved with this project, or they are someone who is involved with someone who is.) The second group of people that the live entertainment professionals identified as those likely to share recommendations were those who where 'unconnected' in this direct way to the production or the people in it, but who where somehow 'moved' by the experience (e.g. 'really liked the show' (Deines), 'thinking it was amazing' (Lockyer & Myers)). Perhaps the emotional experience creates this same sense of connection, making it

easier and more likely that recommending the show becomes a 'reflection' of who one is, and thereby self-expressive.

Celebrity and Fame

Two shows used as case studies for this research featured comedians who have significant celebrity status: Jimmy Carr, one of Britain's most popular comedians, having appeared on radio and television programs, hosting television quiz shows, and performing to sold out houses (,); and Eddie Izzard, the Emmy Award winning stand-up, television and movie actor, and political activist (,). Other shows included comedians, whose celebrity status is significantly less (i.e. you have never heard of them.)

The use of celebrities in live productions in major centers such as The West End and Broadway, certainly seems to indicate that the producers of those shows see celebrity casting as a valuable marketing tool, and research backs up this inferred thinking. A study of the effects of celebrity casting on ticket sales was undertaken by arts marketing researcher Niall Caldwell. Unsurprisingly, he found that: "Celebrities with a background in theatre and film were seen to strongly draw audiences to the theatre..."(J. Murphy, 2016, p. 149) The audience size for the Jimmy Carr and Eddie Izzard shows supports this conclusion, with both shows each selling more tickets than all three days of the Magners International Comedy Festival shows combined (IMDBJimmyCarr,).

Some of the responses on surveys for shows featuring a celebrity differed significantly from those for the shows with lesser-known comedians. Eddie Izzard's patrons, in particular, expressed a desire to 'make others envious' as a motivation for sharing or recommending their experience of attending the show (23.69%). Izzard, in addition to being famous, can be polarizing. Anecdotally, comedy producer Wegoda reported that the comments on the Facebook postings for the Izzard show were unlike anything he had experienced before, with many "angry, hateful" comments, but a majority of people who "you know, love him!"(Wikipedia:JimmyCarr,) Izzard is known for his political activism as well as his comedy, and he is also a cross-dresser, which for many who are not his fans, elicits a 'passionate' response (and by 'passionate', this researcher means: bigoted, hateful, and often aggressive). His supporters, as the survey seems to show, are equally fervent in their adoration of him, and the desire to make others 'envious' or 'jealous' appears to be a reflection of this admiration, and the sharing of the experience through recommendation an act of self-expression verging on defiance.

In short, Izzard appears to be a 'love him or hate him' performer, and those who 'love him' are proud of their fondness, and for 23.69% of them, at least, expressing this became a motivational factor. This would appear to support the above findings that live comedy attendance and recommendations thereof can both be strongly motivated by a desire for self-expression.

5.1 Conclusions

The existence of a multitude of motivators for attending live comedy and for recommending it to others revealed themselves through this study. Hedonic motivations for attendance were expected given the 'entertaining' nature of comedy, but several eudaimonic motivations, those that strive to satisfy a need for a feeling of fulfilled purpose and engagement, were also predicted by live entertainment professionals, and acknowledged by patrons through survey results and focus group discussions. Personal expressiveness, emotional, and social motivations appeared to be in play as triggers both for attending live comedy and also for recommending it to others.

Don't Do Bad Shows

The results of the interviews of live comedy producing professionals, and of the surveys of live comedy attendees, confirms that the quality of the show as the highest motivating factor for recommendations, and the need for 'a good laugh' or to be entertained ranked highest as the motivator for attendance. To that end, live comedy producers should continue to strive to produce quality shows that deliver the 'laughs' that an evening of live comedy directly or indirectly implies, and avoid producing unentertaining shows. Naturally, this is easier said than done, and it is taken as a given that this is, and has always been, the aim of live comedy producers.

Personal Expressiveness

However, the focus of this study was to uncover motivators other than this fairly obvious one. Economist Andreea Ciceo suggests that marketers recognize that performing arts as a product has aspects in addition to the actual performance, and is an experience sought for the needs it can satisfy. (Wikipedia:EddieIzzard,)Likewise, the motivations for attending live comedy and for recommending it extend beyond simply the specifics of the performance, as the Lockyer and Myers study revealed.

The results of this current study suggest that both patrons and producers agree that to some degree the experience of live comedy is of great value, and this experience can be one of self-expression for patrons. This was evident in several ways, such as: patrons whose pride in their decision to attend a show revealed itself in the desire to incite envy in others; patrons often recommended shows as a way to tell others about what is happening in their lives (something one can assume they would not do if they were ashamed of the activity); successful marketing methods by some producers included activities which highlighted the individual audience members (tagging pictures on social media, providing opportunities to take 'selfies' on-stage or with a performer, etc.); and, not unsurprisingly, the need for a good laugh or escape from the 'every-day' aims to satisfy a personal need for mental 'down-time.'

Social Aspect

This study also found that the social aspect of live comedy was a motivator both for attendance (as Lockyer and Myers found) and for recommendation, and as such, may be something upon which live comedy producers may wish to focus. The experience of live comedy, by its very nature, is a social one. Marketing focused on the social interaction, ticket packaging/bundling that encourages group purchases, and audience seating layouts that organize groups together at tables cabaret-style, for example, could each address this motivator by offering patrons something that appeals to those interested in 'a night out with friends'.

There is a certain expectation of interaction between audience and performer, which, for some, can enhance the social experience. As Quirk notes, "Most live stand-up takes place in the environment of nerve-racking intimacy"(IMDB:EddieIzzard, p. 221) The intimacy of the venue is likely to increase this sensation, especially, as Wegoda spoke to, if the patron is familiar with the performer's work but has never seen them live before, the sudden intimacy of having this person (the performer) in the same room creates an immediate sense of social connection. (Caldwell, 2014)

Promotions that use the word 'meet' rather than 'see' a given performer, for example, could utilize this motivation. Promotions that focus on 'live', stressing somehow 'in the same room', or a seating and stage arrangement that heighten the intimacy, such as a thrust stage, could be worth investigating. Focus group members

spoke of the intimacy of a dark, small, cozy room, as an expectation of attending live comedy, indicating perhaps that special attention by live comedy producers to creating an atmosphere that heightens the sense of intimacy is likely to provide satisfaction to the expectation of live comedy patrons, resulting in repeat attendance, and higher WOM proliferation. An intimate show of middling quality may prove to be more successful than a more artistically skillful performance that lacks a sense of intimacy.

The Experience

The personal expressiveness potential, and the social aspect of live comedy, taken together can be generally understood as the experience of attending live comedy. This experience of live comedy is something that those who have had it and enjoy it find important. Those familiar with live comedy, as this study has discovered, generally agree that this experience is central to the value of live comedy. Marketing and promotions that focus on this may reap results in enticing return customers. The process of laughing together, or sharing the unique, never-to-be-repeated moment of live performance are vital to the experience of live comedy, and attempts to highlight this in promotional material may prove beneficial.

Explaining this experience to those who have yet to personally partake in it, such as those targeted as potential new patrons, may requires specific marketing efforts. Explaining to a regular patron of comedic movies, for example, why live

comedy is different and better may need a focus on other motivational triggers, in the first instance, perhaps by focusing on 'the social aspect', which uninitiated live comedy patrons may be able to understand and extrapolate from other group/social experiences that they have had.

Get more Family and Friends

The live entertainment professionals noted that family and friends of those directly associated with a performance were the most likely to attend and to recommend a show to others. While this may be unsurprising, the underlying reason for this may be because of an intense rendering of the social and personal experience discussed above (friends and family are, after all, personally and socially connected).

And so, it may be worthwhile for live comedy producers to consider finding themselves more 'friends and family.' Marketing actions and strategies that strive to make patrons feel 'like part of the family', or give patrons the sense that they are valued as a friend to the comedy company, may be able to leverage the social aspect and personal experience motivators discussed above, with a intensity valence moving toward that which friends and family experience; even if it falls short of the intensity felt by actual friends and family, it is likely to be a greater motivation than feeling completely unconnected and unvalued, and merely a consumer of the

comedy product. Opportunities for patrons to meet not only the comedians, but the staff an management of the venue may increase this sense of 'family.'

Focus on those who post online already.

This study indicates that those most likely to share a recommendation about a live comedy performance are those who already do so regularly, and therefore focusing efforts on encouraging these individuals (Feick & Price's market mavens) to recommend a show, rather than attempting to entice those who do not usually do so, would appear to be a strategy for those who want to maximize results, especially if time or budget are limited (which is often the case with live entertainment). Developing a list of social media mavens who have posted about a show in the past could allow for a more targeted marketing program.

Other Elements

Other elements of the overall experience of a night out at live comedy were mentioned in both the focus groups and the write-in answers on some of the surveys. The drink prices and specials, and the ticket prices, and the 'room', for example, were all mentioned. And it is true that the venue itself can have a weighty affect.

"The nature and set-up of a venue can have a profound impact upon the success of the stand-up event." (Wegoda, 2017, p. 224)

"Theater operators should also maintain venue facilities to a high standard, and address security and seating issues."(Wegoda, 2017, p. 676)

The focus group discussions for this study seemed to indicate that these concerns were only important as motivations not to come when absent or lacking, that is to say, a good venue will not necessarily motivate people to attend, but a bad venue will motivate people not to come back. For example, one Canadian woman mentioned the closeness of the venue to the BTS (Bangkok's monorail public transit system) as a positive factor in her decision to attend, but to suggest that the public transit system is a motivation to see comedy would be somewhat absurd. However, a venue far from public transit is likely to 'motivate' people not to come.

Personal and Social are Key

However important these other elements may be, and they should not be ignored, it is the conclusion of this researcher that it is most important to connect all elements to the social and personal expressive experience of live comedy.

This study has identified a number of motivations for attending live comedy and for recommending it, and has discovered some motivations that appear to do both, especially those related to the social and self-expressiveness potential of the experience. Ultimately, audience satisfaction is related to both hedonic and eudiamonic considerations, and decisions made to highlight the social potential of a night out at live comedy, the group dynamic of the shared experience, and the

emotional and intellectual engagement potential seems likely to increase attendance and WOM.

With this knowledge in hand, artistic and managerial decisions can be made by live comedy producers to simultaneously satisfy these specific motivations and thereby increase the likelihood of attendance and probability patrons will give spontaneous WOM recommendations.

5.2 Recommended Strategy

It is the opinion of this researcher, who has poured over this study ad nauseam, that a focus by live comedy producers on satisfying the eudaimonic motivations of patrons and potential patrons will likely result in increased attendance and WOM proliferation.

This is in part due to the fact that appealing to the more obvious hedonic motivators puts one in direct competition, in regard to attendance, with similar approaches by a great variety of entertainment options, all promoting how 'entertaining' their offering is. And, as far as WOM proliferation is concerned, the 'pleasure' (in a hedonic sense) one receives by sharing a recommendation seems limited to a particular group of people, that is to say: sharing a recommendation is only 'fun' for a particular group of people.

And so, while appealing to hedonic motivations may be important, it is recommended that rather than taking steps to increase an appeal to these

motivations (in an attempt to increase attendance or recommendation proliferation), adding or shifting some of the focus and energy of production efforts and promotions to addressing eudaimonic motivations may provide an additional, less encumbered avenue for influencing patrons and potential patrons.

But more importantly, all the live comedy professionals interviewed for this study agree that those who are directly associated with the production, and their immediate friends and family, were the most reliable and active group in regard to both attendance an recommendation sharing. It is the belief of this researcher that this is due to the profoundly strong feelings of eudaimonic satisfaction that friends and family can obtain due to their personal and social connection to the event.

Leveraging this potential for strong feelings of eudaimonic satisfaction can be achieved by taking actions that increase the likelihood that a patron feels connected to the performance in a similar way to friends and family of those involved with the event: that is to say, that there is a particular intense 'fit', and that attendance and recommendation sharing becomes an expression of the patron's 'self' or who they are.

And so, offering opportunities for patrons to feel involved in a way that is above and beyond their role as 'consumer' of the comedy product is essential to building a base of committed and devoted clientele that will provide repeat business and spontaneous recommendations and encouragement for others to attend.

Allowing patrons to feel 'special' by offering opportunities for them to become personally involved (even if briefly, and somewhat superficially) with the

performers, the venue, the staff, the programming choices, and the promotional campaigns may increase a sense of belonging for patrons. To this end, live comedy producers should consider the following: allow the patron to meet the performer, in a 'meet in greet', or 'selfie' opportunity; allow the patron onto the 'magic space' of the stage, or the backstage area, after the show, permitting them to take pictures of themselves in this unique and special environment; allow the patron to meet the staff, and get to know them by name; take photos of the audience, collect their names and 'tag' them on pictures online; allow the patron to make suggestions on who to have perform, what kind of performances to program, and even when to have performances; take suggestions from patrons on promotions, special deals, and offers that may entice them and their friends to attend; ask patrons personally to share information about the club with friends face-to-face or online; commenting or giving a 'thumbs up', from the 'official' club account, on online social media posts by patrons, connecting with, and promoting the patron publicly to the patron's network as an important person (and/or 'friend') in the eyes of the comedy organization.

Additionally, offering VIP cards or other 'customer loyalty' programs, especially in an arts-related field such as comedy, becomes an opportunity for a patron to 'express' themselves, as their membership in this 'club' of regular attendees becomes an expression of an important part of their personality, namely,

their sense of humour, and not just simply a way for them to 'save money', which may be the motivation for customer loyalty membership in other industries.

Efforts to increase the intimacy of the performance venue, allowing patrons closer access to the performer and each other is also likely to increase the special feeling that comes from satisfaction of the expectations of a eudaimonic experience.

5.3 Suggestions for Further Studies

Segmentation of Motivations

The several motivations that may exist that trigger both live comedy attendance, and engagement in WOM and eWOM activities, could be subject to further study, and in particular, it may be of some value to attempt to segment these various motivations individually. Naturally this would require developing a system to help identify patrons by the nature of their motivations, which this study suggests is an area of further research that would be valuable.

The ability to segment the population of live comedy attendees by the predominant motivation would allow for a more accurate targeting of these motivations to encourage WOM and eWOM proliferation. Each motivation may require a separate and specific approach by live comedy producers to fully leverage the benefits of targeting and triggering these particular motivations. Those who have chosen to attend a live comedy performance for reason 'X' may respond better to particular decisions by a live comedy producer with regard to promoting WOM

behaviour post-show, where as the attendee who was motivated by 'Y' may require some different stimulus to encourage their own WOM proliferation.

Likewise, segmentation of WOM and eWOM participants by their motivations to engage in this activity could allow live comedy producers to provide specific and targeted engagement for these identified segments at the performance, to encourage attendance, or to heighten the sense of satisfaction during attendance in line with the motivations identified.

Cross-Cultural Analysis

It may also be of interest to live comedy producers to consider cultural influences on the motivations of attendees and WOM participants. This study used a primarily expat community in Bangkok, Thailand, as the source of patron feedback. There is a distinct possibility that cultural factors could influence the motivations of attendees and WOM proliferators, at least in ranking the primary or predominant motivations, but possibly even in adding new motivations not identified in this study or excluding, for some cultural groups, some motivations that have been herein identified.

Age and Gender

Likewise, age and gender were not analyzed for this study, and more in-depth research may result in actionable findings based on these demographic groupings.

Male and female online behaviour, and attendance patterns at live comedy could differ significantly (the data collected, but not used for this study, did indicate a significantly greater number of males attending compared to females, for example). Age could also play an important factor, particularly in eWOM proliferation, as different age groups are likely to have different experience and aptitude with technology. The ability to develop approaches to target different demographic subgroups could result from findings of studies of this nature.

Element by Element Research

This research has identified a variety of potential factors that could influence patrons and WOM participants. There is significant room for study to target a particular element of the live comedy experience individually, and focus on the specific effect any alteration to this individual element has on attendance and WOM proliferation. While the nature of this business (or any art-related industry) makes it difficult to create a laboratory situation wherein all parameters remain constant other than the dependant variable being examined, it may be possible to test the results of, for example, different seating arrangements with regard to the sense of 'group dynamic' that is created. Likewise, different advertising and promotional campaigns that target a particular motivation specifically could be analyzed to determine which approach proved to be most successful.

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APPENDIX

VITA

Drew is an award-winning Canadian improvisor, comedian, actor and playwright. He has performed with some of the best improvisors in the world as a member of the world famous Vancouver Theatresports League, award winning corporate improv company Rock-Paper-Scissors, Chicago based international sketch and improv powerhouse The Second City Boatco, and multiple comedy award-winning improv troupe Urban Improv. Drew has performed across Canada, and around the world, including Bangkok, Kabul Afghanistan, and Europe. He co-wrote and performed Canuxploitation in Leicester Square with Canadian Content, Time-Out London's 'pick of the week' for 5 consecutive weeks. He is the winner of Best Male Improvisor in Canada at the Canadian Comedy Awards. His film The Valet won Best Director for a Canadian Short Film at The Vancouver International Film Festival, and Best Foreign Comedy Short at the Illinois International Film Festival. His play The Cat Who Ate Her Husband won 5 Jessie Richardson Awards including Best New Play and The Sydney Risk Playwrighting Award, and his farce Hotel Bethlehem had a three season run in Vancouver, Burnaby and Cawston British Columbia. He is a contributing writer for The Big Chilli Magazine in Bangkok Thailand, and the Co-Creative Director of The Comedy Club Bangkok. Drew received his Bachelor degree in English and Theatre from The University of Western Ontario.