

Uses and Gratifications of Movie Going among Kuwaitis^{*}

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Abstract

People can watch movies in different ways. They can rent a movie and watch it at home. They can download a movie from the internet and watch it on their computers or on TV screens. They can subscribe to movie channels and watch different kinds of movies. They can watch a movie at a movie theater. People have different options to choose how and where to watch a movie. But most of them take the hardest and the most expensive way to go to the movies. They have to dress up, find someone to go with them, drive to the movie theater, find a parking place, pay for the ticket and pay extra money for popcorn and drinks while they can stay home, without going through all the trouble of going to the movie theater, and watch the movie at their preferred time. So the question is why do people go to the movies?

This study explores the rationale behind Kuwaiti's moviegoing behaviors. It investigates how Kuwaitis select the movie theaters they go to and with whom they go. It also tries to understand the reasons why the Kuwaitis go to the movie theaters. In order to understand that, we should focus on the uses and gratifications concept which will be applied. We should also know what kind of gratifications Kuwaitis get from going to the movies.

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Introduction

In previous eras, Kuwaitis were acquainted with movies as a result of their trade travels with countries where movies were readily available, like India and Zanzibar. Attending movies was considered an entertainment for sailors and traders when their ships anchored in Indian and African ports after long voyages. It was an opportunity to experience technology which was not available at that time in Kuwait.

After the discovery of oil in Kuwait in 1938, people, especially the wealthy, started showing long narrative Arabic and foreign films in their houses by using their own projectors. Abdullah Al-Hatem (1968) says that the first cinema projector used in Kuwait was owned by the late Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah (R.I.P.) in 1936. Many people continued using these projectors even after movie theaters were opened in Kuwait. Among the most famous bodies that rented films and continued until the mid 70s were: Ahmad Shehab Al-Waheeb, Al-Shmais Films, Shraidah and Bader Al-Tkhaim Films, Al-Seraj Films, Al-Ahlam Films and Sagher Films.

Films were shown as a means of entertainment by providing a place where the neighborhood residents could sometimes gather. Movies were shown during or after wedding ceremonies and on happy occasions. Some people continued showing these films in houses even after movie theaters were opened in Kuwait. They considered them as a symbol of social stature. Additionally, it gave women a chance to watch films without going to the movie theater, Since most of them were not allowed to go to a movie theater at that time.

It is noticeable that moviegoing in Kuwait has been stimulated in recent years after a long period of repression. At the present time, great numbers of people are going to the movies. Some of them require days of advance booking for tickets. This growth increase synchronizes with the spread of satellite television channels which broadcast different kinds of movies and programs (Abu Lafi 29). Even though there is a huge increase in the availability of movies shown on television and other means of entertainment at home, many people still prefer to go to the movies. They are opting to do so in increasing numbers.

One avid of movie attendance believes that going to the movies is a unique class of entertainment. Despite the abundance of satellite television channels, watching movies in movie theaters has a special distinction. This is due to the sound effects and the huge display screen which gives the spectator a feeling of living the action in the movie (Abu-Lafi 29).

Husain Al-Khawaled, the Chairman of Kuwait Cinema Club (KCC), and

Imad Al-Nuwairi Former Chair of the Club both emphasize the significance of the increase in the numbers of moviegoers in Kuwait. Al-Nuwairi thinks this increase is not only found in Kuwait, but is also found in most countries because of an individual's increased cine-culture. Yet, another reason might simply be that moviegoing is a means of entertainment in Kuwait and not a means of cultural or intellectual contemplation (Al-Khawaled & Al-Nuwairi, 2011). Al-Nuwairi also notes that television stations are making a concerted effort to "steal" moviegoing addicts by showing the latest movies. But, it appears that this effort is fruitless, given that going to the movies has its own distinct attraction, like going on a picnic or an outing.

On the other hand, one moviegoer says that movie theaters have become an entertainment place for people to vent their cares and spend their leisure time (Fayrouz, 2012). On the other hand, Rajab (3) does not assume that the reason for going to the movies is due to admiration of the film or the movie theater itself. The real reason is that going to movies is the only thing Kuwaitis can do late at night since restaurants close at midnight and shopping centers close at ten. Movie theaters have become the only entertainment for night owls, especially at weekends (Rajab 3).

Al-Khawaled thinks that this increase is due to the role the KCC has taken in motivating people to go to the movies by modernizing and restoring the movie theaters. As well as locating them in large shopping centers and complexes (Al-Khawaled & Al-Nuwairi 2011), one reason, according to Al-Khawaled, is that Kuwaiti individuals have finally obtained an adequate amount of freedom. This latter allows them to go out and stay out until early morning without being accompanied by a family member rather than by a friend.

Adnan Al-Hanif, Former Vice Chairman of the KCC is assured that the spectators' high awareness, due to satellite television channels, which broadcast advertisements for latest movies, has helped this increase in awareness to rise even higher. The moviegoers are now aware of everything that is new at the movies and about the modernization of sound and visual effects (Abu-Lafi 29). Al-Nuwairi added that Kuwaitis travel extensively either for tourism or study. This makes them more sophisticated and more knowledgeable about movies. This, in turn, increases their propensity to watch foreign movies (Al-Khawaled & Al-Nuwairi 2011).

Meanwhile, Ahmad Nasser has another reason. He believes that a movie theater now shows more than 3 movies a day, whereas in the past movie theaters used to show the same movie all day for more than two weeks (Nasser, 2012).

Yousef Al-Ghanim, the Kuwait National Cinema's (KNC) former General Manager, says "The Arab world, in general and the Kuwaiti society, in particular, consider the content of the movie as entertainment without reading the shots and enjoying their artistic value, or their intellectual value." (Arte 30). That is why many people place blame on those who think that the movie theater is a place for fun, by bringing their children and even their infants. They think this should not be done because a movie is a fine art to be tasted. Additionally, sometimes horror movies are shown. These may last until after midnight. In order to control such behavior, the KNC has provided special places for families.

Movie Theaters in Kuwait

KNC was the only company that was authorized to build and administer movie theaters in Kuwait from 1954. This is according to a franchise provided by the Government of Kuwait until the end of 2004. This franchise does not allow any other company or any individual to build or operate movie theaters (KNC, 2010).

The first movie theater in Kuwait was built in 1954 followed by a number of other theaters. Most of those theaters were destroyed during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. After the liberation, the KNC began restoring the theaters that had been destroyed.

This time, the company tried a new marketing strategy. It rented movie theaters in large commercial complexes in an attempt to reach a larger audience.

The company now owns 56 display screens in 13 sites with a seating capacity of 13,200. The latest two movie theaters which were established are 360 Mall and AlBairaq. They are situated in commercial complexes, while the old theaters are in non-commercial sites. Others are in locations adjacent to commercial complexes.

There is a plan to open more movie theaters. The company displays films from three sources: USA, Egypt and India. The first show starts at 11:00 am and the last show starts at 12:00 midnight. The movie theaters open 7 days a week.

KNC depends on several media instruments for advertising. They help in the promotion of its movies: a page on the internet, an iPhone application and a telephone call-in service, as well as some broadcasting-radio and television programs. All these preview what is being shown at the movie theaters. Also, there are several television programs interested in covering new movies in Kuwait and abroad.

Review of literature

Moviegoing in Kuwait

No scientific study has researched moviegoing trends or ventured to discover the motives behind the increase in patronage of movies in Kuwait. The only research that has been made was a few interviews with some moviegoers. Al-Qabas daily newspaper, more than any other newspaper, has conducted several studies on moviegoing, but without providing statistics about the sample size, or even identifying the researcher in these studies, although the Editor-in-Chief of Al-Qabas was the Chairman of the KNC.

One study states that the overwhelming majority of moviegoers are males while the moviegoers of the *Avenues* are mostly females. The fact that the *Avenues* is located in the *Avenues Mall*, which is a very active shopping center, might be the reason why females go to this movie theater more often than males do (Al-Qabas 10).

As for nationalities, Kuwaitis form the largest percentage of the movie-going public. *Al-Muhallab*, however, attracts the largest percentage of other Arabs because of its proximity to other areas where many non-Kuwaitis live like Hawali and Al-Salmeyyah.

Another analysis of moviegoers shows that 88% of moviegoers are between 16-40 years of age. People between 25-40 years of age form the largest percentage of the moviegoers everywhere. People over 40 years old are more likely to go to *Al-Sha'eb* movie theater. This may be because it is near their houses. Young people, on the other hand, prefer the *Avenues* and the 360 theaters because they are located in the biggest malls in Kuwait (AlQabas 10).

Media Use

For most people, media use is a very stable habit as well as an outcome of numerous specific and motivated behaviors. Some researchers (e.g., Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli & Jackson-Beek, 1979) have argued that the amount of individual "exposure" to the media is a fundamental and enduring trait, in comparison, to such demographic characteristics as age and education having as much influence on attitudes and behavior. Many international comparisons have shown that the frequency and type of media use vary a good deal from one country to another, even within a fairly similar social and economic environment, such as Western Europe and the Middle East. There are large differences in how to use the media (Hall 334).

Even if audiences were often aggregates, they were made up of scattered individuals. Their formation was shaped by forces in the social

environment that led to distinct patterns in their overall composition. The more choices that became available, the more selective people were in their attention, guided by differences of interest or need (Sears & Freedman, 1971; Zillmann & Bryant, 1985).

Whether people use the media selectively has been a fundamental question for a long time for the academic as well as industrial community. Countless studies and marketing surveys have been conducted to answer this question and have brought insights into people's viewing behaviors. However, research results are still inconclusive (West & Tuner 65).

McQuail (308) sees that the basic premise is that media use is shaped largely by certain relatively constant elements of social structure and media structures. 'Social structure' refers to "social facts:" such as education, income, gender, age, and residency. They have a strong determining influence on general outlook and behavior. 'Media structure', refers to the relatively constant array of channels, choices, and content available in a given place and time. The media system responds to pressures and to feedback from audiences. It is meant to maintain a stable, self-regulating balance between supplies and demand.

Katz, Gurevitch, and Haas (166) argue that people bend the media to their needs more readily than the media over-power them. The media has at least as many agents of diversion and entertainment as of information and influence. Moreover, they argue, the selection of media and content and the uses to which they are put are considerably influenced by social role and psychological predispositions.

Katz, et al. (1973) see the mass media as a means used by individuals to connect or disconnect themselves with others. They listed 35 needs taken from literature on the social and psychological functions of mass media and placed them into five categories of mass media functions: First, cognitive needs (the acquiring of information, knowledge and understanding). Second, affective needs (the need for emotional and aesthetic experience, love and friendship, the desire to see beautiful things). Third, personal integrative needs (the need for self-confidence, stability, status, reassurance). Fourth, social integrative needs (the need for strengthening contacts with family, friends and others). Finally, tension release needs (the need for escape and diversion).

Moviegoing is essentially a leisure activity, and participation is influenced by many diverse factors (Chilton and Butler 94). The effects of some of these factors are: film product, school holidays, television programming and weather and seasonal variations.

Uses and Gratifications

In the study of media use, the uses and gratifications paradigm assumes audiences have motivations and goals that have psychological, social or sociocultural origins when they turn to the media (Rosengren, Wenner & Palmgreen, 1985). Through exposure to certain types of media or programming, people can accomplish their ends and obtain gratifications. A plethora of investigations have been conducted in this domain. Some researchers applied this conceptualization to general television viewing (Abelman, Atkin & Rand 365; Lin, 230), others to specific program types, such as news, soap operas, and religious programs (Abelman 303; Vincent & Basil 387). Another study has been found to apply the uses and gratifications framework in the examination of rerun viewing (Furno-Lamude & Anderson 362). It was also applied to home computer use (Perse & Dunn 435), but the uses and gratification paradigm has never been employed to understand the motivations for going to the movie. Massey (238) even took a qualitative approach to this model in the investigation of audience activity during the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake disaster. The bulk of research in this approach not only has revealed the popularity of this conceptual framework in the study of media use, but has also shown the methodological flexibility and diversity of this model.

Moviegoing is not only considered as a means of entertainment by which the mind can be refreshed, but also it involves something which is of utmost significance to learn what may facilitate adjustments in practical life (Shiva Kumar 15). Shiva Kumar believes that an individual gets his or her needs satisfied and relieved of all the tensions that are the outcomes of his or her unsatisfied desires, by identifying and projecting with the characters in the movie.

Shiva Kumar (17) argues that people visit cinema theaters mostly in order to get entertainment and to kill the time. Their overall aim is to pass time and to have their minds refreshed. He also theorizes that most of the people attend the pictures for the satisfaction of their needs. They select the movies in accordance with their age and the social class to which they belong.

With the assumption of motivated and active viewers in the uses and gratifications paradigm, some researchers apply this model to the underlying motivations behind the general media use as well as specific program types (Hejab 298). Rubin ("*Ritualized and instrumental television viewing*" 70) identified two primary motivational patterns in television: ritualized and instrumental. In a recent study, a new factor-reactionary television use was found in religious programs viewing (Abelman 302). Based on gratifications items

adapted from earlier work, Lin (239) found five factors in gratifications sought and obtained. There are: informational guidance, interpersonal communication, parasocial interaction, entertainment and diversion. A recent study on news use came up with the four major motivational categories: surveillance, escape, boredom and entertainment (Vincent & Basil 385).

In an attempt to refine the theoretical framework, Palmgreen and Rayburn (569) distinguish between gratifications sought (GS) and gratifications obtained (GO). They built a model of GS on the expectancy-value model of Fishbein and Ajzen. The model focused on the relationship between gratifications sought and viewing intentions. However, the combination of expectancy-value theory and that of uses and gratifications also fell short and succumbed to skepticism. Swanson argued that "[p]roceeding in this ad hoc fashion can create confusion about what theories are being tested, what concepts are essential components of those theories, and related matters" (p. 240).

Based on earlier work, Levy and Windahl (112) propose a 3 -part heuristic typology. They incorporate two dimensions, qualitative orientation and temporal. This is meant to provide a broad framework for conceptualizing audience activity in the process of media exposure. The dimension of qualitative orientation consists of selectivity, involvement and utility. The temporal dimension takes the sequential form before, during and after exposure. According to the authors, the uses and gratifications model matches the before-exposure-selectivity cell and the after-exposure-utility cell (e.g., gratifications sought and obtained). A relatively strong correlation between selectivity in exposure seeking and post-exposure use was found in an investigation of television news viewing in Sweden (118).

Mohammad (1999) investigated the Kuwaitis' motivations for watching television. He uses the same uses and gratifications' scale that was used by (Abelman, Atkin & Rand, 1997); (Stanford & Riccomini, 1984); (Rubin, 1983); (Rubin, 1981). The respondents were asked to indicate how each of the nine statements presented as viewing motivations. They reflected their own feelings about why they watched television from "strongly agree" (coded as 1) to "strongly disagree" (coded as 5). Each statement presented a particular viewing motive. Table 1 shows the results Mohammad (117) found in relation to the uses and gratifications of watching television in Kuwait. This present study attempts to explore if there are any differences between why people in Kuwait watch television and why they go to the movie.

Table 1
Uses and gratifications of watching television

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agree
Passing Time	396	2.04	0.98	84%
Information	395	1.95	0.89	83%
Habit	395	2.15	0.91	78%
Arousal	396	2.54	1.13	66%
Entertainment	394	2.2	0.98	65%
Relaxation	393	2.52	1.05	64%
Escape	397	2.84	1.21	49%
Companionship	395	3.21	1.16	35%
Social Interaction	395	3.22	1.18	33%

Research Questions and Hypothesis

- R1.** What are the uses and gratifications of moviegoing in Kuwait?
- R2.** How do the uses and gratifications of movie going differ from those of watching television found in Mohammad, 1999?
- R3.** Which movie theaters do Kuwaitis go to most often? And why?
- H1.** There is a significant correlation between location of a movie theater and frequency of moviegoing.
- H2.** There is a relationship between age and the reason people go to a specific movie theater.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study is to explore the rationale behind Kuwaiti's moviegoing behavior. It investigates the uses and gratifications of going to the movies and provides a composite picture of Kuwaiti moviegoers. The sample population is all viewers over 15 years of age. In order to increase validity and generalizability of the result, a systematic random sample was selected. The researcher counted every fifth person who entered a theater and interviewed that person face-to-face. The interviews were conducted in the lobbies of movie theaters. The data collection lasted four months. It started on 6-2012

and ended on 10-2012. Seven hundred questionnaires were successfully completed.

The reason why the research spanned four months was in order to collect the most valid data. Most Kuwaitis travel outside the country in summer. Also, Kuwaitis who stay in the country go out in summer more often than during any other season. Additionally, the best movies are shown in the fall. So, the research was extended to cover more than one season. In this way, the researcher could be confident that the sample is representative of moviegoers in Kuwait.

The questionnaire was written in Arabic. It was divided into three sections. The first section examined the method which moviegoers utilized to learn about the movies they wanted to watch. For instance, the most common days they chose to go to the movies, their choice of companions, their preferred movie language, the number of movies they watch on a monthly average and the types of movies they watch most often.

The second section examines the uses and gratifications of the movie-going experience. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with nine provided reasons for going to the movies. The nine statements were adapted from prior research of uses and gratifications (Abelman, Atkin & Rand, 1997); (Stanford & Riccomini, 1984); (Rubin, 1983); (Rubin, 1981). A five-point scale was used, ranging from 1 (Strongly agree) to 5 (Strongly disagree).

The second section examined the motive for the recent increase in moviegoing by the Kuwaiti public. It also addressed the movie theaters Kuwaitis frequent most often, and the reasons for frequenting those particular theaters. The last section examined the demographic characteristics of the viewers in order to create a composite.

RESULTS

Sample Characteristics

Among all the 700 surveyed participants, 60% of them were males and 40% were females. 59% of the moviegoers were between 15-25 years of age, 17% were between 26-30 years of age, 7% were between 36-40 years of age, 4% were between 41-45 years of age and 0.6% of the moviegoers were older than 46 years. More than half of the moviegoers (54%) were either enrolled at the university or had a university degree.

The study discovered that 49% of the moviegoers learned about the movies through the home page of the KNC on the internet, 35% by using an iPhone application. Another 12% by going to the movie theaters and 4% by talking with

other people. The results also revealed that the majority of the people in Kuwait (59%) go to the movies at the weekends (Thursday, Friday and Saturday), 32% go to the movies on Mondays and 9 % on weekdays. Additionally, only 5% of the respondents go to the movies by themselves. The rest go either with friends or family. The study further found that there are statistically significant differences ($n = 700$, $\chi^2 = 114.230$, $df = 3$, $p = .000$) between gender and moviegoers; choice of company to the movies (see table 2).

Table 2
Who the moviegoers go to the movie theater with and gender

		Gender				Total	
		Male		Female			
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Who the movie-goers go with	Alone	26	6.2%	6	2.1%	32	4.6%
	Family	111	26.6%	191	67.3%	302	43.1%
	Friends	267	64.0%	84	29.6%	351	50.1%
	Others	13	3.1%	3	1.1%	15	2.3%
Total		417	100.0%	284	100.0%	700	100.0%

87% choose English as the preferred language for movies, while only 6% of the respondents choose to go to Arabic movies and with the same percentage for watching Indian movies. 64% of moviegoers in Kuwait watch action/adventure movies while 13% of them watch family type movies. The rest watch comedy, historical and/or science fiction movies in an equal distribution. The data also revealed that there are statistically significant differences ($n = 700$, $\chi^2 = 61.777$, $df = 5$, $p = .000$) between gender and type of movies Kuwaitis watch (see table 3).

Table 3
Type of movie and gender

		Gender				Total	
		Male		Female			
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Type of Movie	Action	303	72.8%	143	50.4%	446	63.7%
	Family	23	5.5%	69	24.3%	92	13.1%
	Historical	33	7.9%	21	7.4%	54	7.7%
	Science Fiction	31	7.5%	23	8.1%	54	7.7%
	Comedy	24	5.8%	25	8.8%	49	7%
	Cartoons	2	.5%	3	1.1%	5	.7%
Total		416	100.0%	284	100.0%	700	100.0%

Research Questions

The first research question asks, ***“What are the uses and gratifications of moviegoing in Kuwait?”*** This study found that the uses and gratifications of moviegoing in Kuwait are as shown in table 4.

Table 4
Uses and gratifications of going to the movies

	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Agree
Relaxation	700	1.89	0.89	46%
Companionship	700	2.13	1.12	40%
Passing Time	700	1.62	0.89	34%
Escape	700	2.08	1.20	33%
Information	700	2.88	1.29	31%
Arousal	700	1.57	0.82	30%
Social Interaction	700	2.94	1.24	29%
Entertainment	700	1.32	0.59	25%
Habit	700	4.14	1.13	9.6%

The data also shows that age statistically ($n = 700$, $\chi^2 = 50.365$, $df = 24$, $p = .001$) correlates with habitual movie-going (see table 5). Respondents at higher age brackets are more prone to attend movie theaters on habitual bases. In addition to female respondents, there were statistically significant differences ($n = 700$, $\chi^2 = 16.209$, $df = 4$, $p = .003$) found between the gender of the moviegoers and the act of going to the movies for companionship (see table 6).

Table 5
Habit and age

		Age							Total
		15-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	
Habit	Strongly Agree	4.6%	3.1%	1.7%	2.1%	6.4%	7.7%		3.6%
	Agree	6.9%	8.7%	10.1%	11.7%	17.0%	11.5%	25.0%	9.6%
	Neutral	9.3%	5.6%	11.8%	6.4%	6.4%		50.0%	8.0%
	Disagree	32.9%	33.8%	22.7%	12.8%	23.4%	15.4%		27.2%
	Strongly Disagree	46.3%	48.7%	53.8%	67.0%	46.8%	65.4%	25.0%	51.6%
Total		100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 6
Companionship and gender

		Gender				Total	
		Male		Female			
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Companionship	Strongly Agree	120	28.8%	112	39.4%	232	33.1%
	Agree	163	39.1%	116	40.8%	278	39.8%
	Neutral	57	13.7%	27	9.5%	84	12.0%
	Disagree	57	13.7%	20	7.0%	77	11.0%
	Strongly Disagree	20	4.8%	9	3.2%	29	4.1%
Total		417	100.0%	284	100.0%	700	100.0%

The second research question, ***“What are the uses and gratifications for the moviegoing experience of Kuwaitis compared to the uses and gratifications found in Mohammad’s 1999 study and the uses and gratification found in this study?”*** Table 7 illustrates the differences between the uses and gratifications for watching television found in Mohammad’s 1999 study and the uses and gratifications for going to the movies found by this study.

Table 7
Uses and gratification of watching television and of going to the movie

Order	Watching television	Going to the movie	Order
1	Passing Time	Relaxation	1
2	Information	Companionship	2
3	Habit	Passing Time	3
4	Arousal	Escape	4
5	Entertainment	Information	5
6	Relaxation	Arousal	6
7	Escape	Social Interaction	7
8	Companionship	Entertainment	8
9	Social Interaction	Habit	9

As demonstrated in Table 7, the reasons for people watching television in Kuwait as found in Mohammad’s 1999 study are almost the opposite of the reasons provided by the people in Kuwait for going to the movies. In Mohammad, 1999, the study found that the two least likely reasons Kuwaitis gave for watching television were companionship and social interaction. But, the present study found that the vast majority of the people in Kuwait go to the movies for relaxation and companionship.

Passing time was the third highest reason provided for going to the movies. However, in Mohammad, 1999, it was the most common reason for watching television. People in Kuwait watch television for educational and informational purposes. But, moviegoing doesn’t appear to provide them with this type of input. Kuwaitis also perceive themselves as watching television out of habit. But, they do not perceive moviegoing mainly as a habit.

Essentially, the motivations for watching television are not the same as the motivations for going to the movies.

The third research question, “*Which movie theaters do Kuwaitis go to most often?*” investigates which movie theaters the people in Kuwait go to most often. It also explores the reasons for these choices. Table 8 shows the rankings of the movie theaters.

Table 8
Movie theater people go to

	Theater	N	Percent
1	The Avenues	263	37.5%
2	The 360 Mall	181	26%
3	Marina	76	11%
4	AlSharqiya	62	9%
5	Al-Bairaq	38	5%
6	Al-Muhallab	20	3%
7	Al-Kout	15	2%
8	Al-Fanar	14	2%
9	Ajial	11	1.5%
10	Plaza	7	1%
11	Metro	6	1%
12	Granada	5	0.7%
13	Laila Gallery	2	0.3%
Total		700	%100

The data in Table 8 shows that *The Avenues* and the *360 Mall* movie theaters are the most attractive theaters that people frequent. These movie theaters are situated in the largest shopping center. *Marina* movie theater is the third most frequented movie theater. It is also in the third largest shopping mall.

Respondents were also asked to indicate why they patronize the movie theater they chose. The location of a movie theater plays a major role in deciding which movie theater Kuwaitis patronize. Thirty-nine percent of the

respondents said that they go to a movie theater based on the location of that theater (see Table 9). Another 17.5% said that they frequent that particular theater because of the kind of people who patronize it. Another 13% of the respondents said that the picture and the sound quality are the decision factors in the movie theater choice. Ten percent chose their theater because of the type of movie being played at that theater. Another 9% because of the movie time schedules at that theater. Only 4% said that they go to a particular theater because there are parking spaces available at that theater. The data also shows that there are statistically significant differences ($n = 700$, $\chi^2 = 297.076$, $df = 91$, $p = .000$) between the movie theater Kuwaitis go to and the reasons for going to that theater (see table 10)

Table 9
Reasons for going to a specific movie theater

Reasons	N	Percent
Because of the location of the theater	272	39%
Because of the kind of people who go to that theater	122	17.5%
Because of the quality of picture and sound of that theater	90	13%
Because of the type of movies played in that theater	71	10%
Because of the time of the movies played in that theater	65	9%
Because of the furniture in that theater	43	6%
Because of the availability of parking spaces in that theater	29	4%
Other	8	1%
Total	700	100%

Table 10
Movie theater gone to and reasons for going to that theater

		Reasons																	
		Location		Type of Movies played		Sound & Picture		Kind of People		Furniture		Parking Spaces		Timing		Others		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Theaters	Avenues	127	46.7%	19	26.8%	31	34.4%	46	37.4%	10	23.3%	6	20.7%	23	35.4%	1	12.5%	263	37.5%
	Sharqia	27	9.9%	3	4.2%	12	13.3%	11	8.9%	2	4.7%	1	3.4%	6	9.2%	0		62	8.8%
	Marina	32	11.8%	10	14.1%	6	6.7%	3	2.4%	1	2.3%	9	27.6%	11	16.9%	5	62.5%	76	10.8%
	360	47	17.3%	17	23.9%	27	30.0%	47	38.2%	22	51.2%	4	13.8%	16	24.6%	1	12.5%	181	25.8%
	Laila Giry	1	.4%	1	1.4%	0		0		0		0		0		0		2	.3%
	Metro	0		1	1.4%	1	1.1%	1	.8%	1	2.3%	2	6.9%	0		0		6	.9%
	AlBairq	16	5.9%	4	5.6%	6	6.7%	2	1.6%	5	11.6%	3	10.3%	2	3.1%	0		38	5.4%
	Ajial	6	2.2%	0		2	2.2%	1	.8%	0		0		1	1.5%	1	12.5%	11	1.6%
	AlKout	2	.7%	4	5.6%	1	1.1%	3	2.4%	0		4	13.8%	1	1.5%	0		15	2.1%
	AlFanar	1	.4%	12	16.9%	1	1.1%	0		0		0		0		0		14	2.0%
	Granada	4	1.5%	0		0		1	.8%	0		0		0		0		5	.7%
	Plaza	6	2.2%	0		0		1	.8%	0		0		0		0		7	1.0%
	Muhallab	3	1.1%	0		3	3.3%	7	5.7%	2	4.7%	0		5	7.7%	0		20	2.9%
Total		272	100.0%	71	100.0%	90	100.0%	122	100.0%	43	100.0%	29	100.0%	65	100.0%	8	100.0%	700	100.0%

Hypotheses

The first hypothesis: “*There is a significant correlation between location of a movie theater and frequency of moviegoing*” is not supported. There is a correlation between location of a movie theater and frequency of moviegoing but this correlation is not significant. Respondents were asked if they thought that there had been a recent increase in moviegoing. Those who believed that there was an increase, were asked to choose from a list the cause which was responsible for that increase. 98% of the respondents thought that there was an increase in moviegoing and Table 11 summarizes the reasons.

Table 11
Reasons for increase in moviegoing

Results	N	Percent
Movie theaters are located in shopping centers	126	18%
People now have more knowledge about the movies before they are shown	123	18%
The quality of sound, picture and furniture are better now than before	99	14%
More movie theaters now than before	78	11%
More variety of timing	70	10%
The movies now are better than before	69	10%
More advertisements about the movies in the media than before	62	9%
Less entertainment facilities than before	40	6%
The image of a person who goes to the movie has changed	24	3.5%
Total	691¹	100%

Table 11 shows that 18% of Kuwaitis think that the reason for the increase in moviegoing is that movie theaters are located in shopping centers. Table 11 also shows the second most popular reason for the increase. Kuwaitis are now more aware about the movies which are shown in theaters or which will be shown in theaters. Another reason for the increase is the improvement in the quality of sound and pictures in movie theaters.

The last hypothesis: “*There is a relationship between age and the reason people go to a specific movie theater*” is not supported. Table 12

1 There are 10 missing answers.

shows that the relationship between age and the reason people frequent a specific movie theater which is not significant ($t = 56.268$, $df = 42$, $p = 0.069$). Moviegoers in Kuwait share the same reasons for going to a specific movie theater regardless of age or gender.

There is one notable difference illustrated in Table 13 which analyses the reasons for going to a specific movie theater by each age group. For moviegoers who were between 15 and 20 years of age were more likely to select the movie theater based on the time and type of movies played in that theater. Moviegoers who were between 21 and 25 year of age selected the movie theater based on the comfort of the furniture in the movie theater and the time schedules of movies playing in that theater, whereas moviegoers who were between 26 and 35 years old selected the movie theater they wanted to patronize based on whether that theater had parking spaces or not. But, moviegoers who were between 36 and 40 years old and who were between 46 and 50 years old also selected the movie theater based on the furniture in that movie theater. Finally, those moviegoers who were between 41 and 45 years old selected the movie theater based on the type of movies playing in that theater.

Table 12
Reasons for going to a specific movie theater and age

	Age							
	15-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	Total
Because of the location of the theater	41%	39%	32%	43%	51%	54%	25%	39%
Because of the type people who go to that theater	16%	18%	24%	18%	8%	12%	25%	17.5%
Because of the quality of picture and sound	13%	13%	15%	8%	15%	12%		13%
Because of the type of movies playing in that theater	11%	10%	6%	11%	8%	23%	25%	10%
Because of the time of the movies playing in that theater	12%	12%	8%	6%	4%			9%
Because of the furniture in that theater	3%	9%	8%	4%	8%		25%	6%
Because that movie theater has parking spaces	2%	4%	7%	9%	4%			4%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 13
Age and reasons for going to a specific movie theater

	Age							
	15-20	21-25	26-30	31-35	36-40	41-45	46-50	Total
Because of the location of the theater	33%	24%	14%	15%	9%	5%	0.4%	100%
Because of the type of people who go to that theater	28%	29%	24%	14%	3%	2%	1%	100%
Because of the quality of picture and sound	32%	28%	20%	9%	8%	3%		100%
Because of the type of movies playing in that theater	34%	27%	10%	14%	6%	8%	1%	100%
Because of the time of the movies playing in that theater	39%	35%	14%	9%	3%			100%
Because of the furniture in that theater	16%	40%	23%	9%	9%	2%		100%
Because that movie theater has parking spaces	14%	24%	28%	28%	7%			100%
Total	31%	28%	17%	13%	7%	4%	0.6%	100%

Discussion

This study examines moviegoing in Kuwait. It investigates the reasons for the increase in moviegoing and analyzes the uses and gratifications of going to the movies. The study demonstrates that almost all Kuwaitis perceive an increase in moviegoing. A variety of reasons are provided for this increase. The main reason is that movie theaters are now more frequently located in shopping centers. This makes them more convenient, thereby, increasing the number of Kuwaitis who patronize those theaters located in shopping centers such as The Avenues, The 360 Mall and the Marina.

Another reason for this increase is that Kuwaitis are more knowledgeable about their play schedules and future feature listings, because of the Internet and programs on television that show the latest movies around the world.

Along with an increase in advertising about movies, the Kuwaiti public has become more aware of current and future movie availability.

Furthermore, increased renovations of some theaters and the building of more theaters have attracted more people to the movies. The KNC made a strategic decision to attract more moviegoers and to increase moviegoing. Prior to this decision, movies were played three times a day: at 3 pm, 6 pm and 9 pm. However, due to an improved timing schedule, at one location, there are now more than five movies playing at different starting times: from 11 am until 12:30 am. Movies are now being played almost every half hour.

As was illustrated earlier, most moviegoers go to the movies at weekends to watch action/adventure movies. From these, male viewers are more likely to go to the movies with their friends while female viewers are more likely to go with their families.

The researcher speculates that this discrepancy is due to the fact that Kuwaiti females have less freedom to go out by themselves or with their friends than Kuwaiti males. Thus, when females go out, especially at night, they are more likely to be accompanied by a family member.

There are several movie theaters in Kuwait. Some of them are in shopping centers or close to shopping centers. With all of these available options, the research has shown that the most commonly frequented theaters are those located in shopping centers such as The Avenues, The 360 Mall, The Marina and Al-Shargeyyah. The rest, the old movie theaters and those located outside the capital, Al-Assemah governate, are less popular.

The Avenues movie theater is located in the largest shopping center. It has easy access to get to. It has many parking places and it is in the biggest shopping mall in Kuwait. It has 11 screens with 2 VIP screens with a seating capacity of 1,700 seats. It is the most popular among the theaters.

The second most popular movie theater is The 360 Mall. It is located in the newest shopping malls. The movie theater is close to a residential area. There are lots of parking places and it is easy to get to the Mall. It is the largest movie theater in Kuwait with a total number of 15 screens with 2 VIP screens. The total seating capacity is 3000 seats.

The third most popular theater is The Marina movie theater. This movie theater is located in shopping malls by the beach in Kuwait. There is an abundance of shopping centers close to it. This is a very attractive area for teenagers and young people. It is a popular teenage hangout where teens interact until well after midnight. This theater has three screens and a seating capacity of 900.

There are many elements that determine the moviegoers' decision in the

movie theater choice process. The most important factor in the decision process is the location of the theater they frequent. This is very clear from the fact that the most attractive theaters are located in highly desirable areas. Additionally, there are other shopping centers and attractive areas close to these shopping centers. So, when moviegoers go to the movies, they probably do some shopping and participate in other activities.

Another factor that influences the viewers' decision in choosing which movie theater to patronize is the kind of people who frequent the theater. Most of the people who go to The Avenue and 360 Mall theaters are young.

This study also shows the changes the Kuwaiti society has been going through for the past few years in terms of being exposed to foreign movies and media. Kuwaitis have become more aware of film arts and techniques. This brings to mind the following question: what effect will that have on the society? For the past few years, Kuwait has witnessed a large amount of short film productions made by young people and that could be the effect of watching a lot of movies. But until now, movie productions in Kuwait have not reached professionalism since all productions are made by amateurs.

This study also investigates the uses and gratifications of the moviegoing experience in Kuwait and compares these uses and gratifications to those of watching television. Moviegoers in Kuwait go to the movie for relaxation, for companionship, to pass the time, to escape from daily routines and to search to a limited extent for information.

This study shows that the uses and gratifications of going to the movies are not the same as those for watching television. The most likely gratifications the viewers achieve from watching television are the least likely gratifications the viewers achieve from going to the movies. Moviegoing provides Kuwaitis with relaxation and companionship. It's a way to pass time and an escape from their daily routines and problems.

On the other hand, watching television is more of a tool for passing time, gaining information, and a means for gaining arousal. Television viewers in Kuwait tend to watch television out of habit. When they switch on their television sets, they do it out of habit and without planning. But moviegoers in Kuwait don't go to the movies out of habit. They take an active role by planning and seeking out someone to accompany them. Moviegoing in Kuwait is perceived as a means for unwinding and giving rest and relaxation.

Most Kuwaitis believe that going to the movies is a relaxing experience and a social occasion. Movie-going has become one of Kuwait's most important social and cultural activities. Most of those who stated that they go to the movies for relaxation watch family movies. Female viewers tend to go

to the movies for companionship more often than their male counterparts. As stated before, this is probably a result of the cultural values of the society where females have less freedom to go out unaccompanied than males. Thus, when they go to the movies, they are usually escorted by a family member. As a result, they see the activity as a social one. The study did not find any female viewer who goes to the movies by herself. It further found that only 5% of the moviegoers in general do go to the movies by themselves and these are all males.

This study shows clearly that going to the movies is not exclusive to those who are in love with cinematic and film arts. Moviegoing in Kuwait is a leisure time and a social activity. Going to the movies has become part of the Kuwaiti social life style. Because of hot weather dominating the climate in their country, Kuwaiti families get away from the heat by going to shopping malls, where they can spend great times dining, shopping and going to the movies. Parents feel content given that their children are in a secure and safe place.

This study helps us to draw a picture of Kuwaitis' social life. It also reflects the cultural changes the GCC countries in general and Kuwait in particular are going through. The study of movie-going in Kuwait and why people go to the movies helps understand the reasons why Kuwait has been witnessing more film productions and more and more production companies in the past few years.

Conclusion

Kuwait National Cinema Company has been highly successful in finding and attracting an audience. Its plan, which included building additional theaters in crowded and attractive areas, worked well and managed to attract more viewers. The plan tremendously increased the moviegoing audience. This increase is most obvious in the newest movie theaters, which are located in shopping centers.

Other elements that affect moviegoing in Kuwait and shape this activity are social and media structures. As previously discussed, the social factor that most affects moviegoing is the gender of the moviegoer. Because of the culture and traditions in Kuwait where females have less freedom to go out unaccompanied, they stay home more than males. Females tend to have different patterns and motivations than males. The result of this is that they tend to leave home seeking something that will gratify their needs and provide them with social interaction. They go to the movies and have someone to accompany them to gratify their companionship needs. They go to the movies to connect with other people and most of the time those people are members of their family.

On the other hand, male moviegoers have more freedom to go out by themselves and stay out late. They don't go to the movies to gratify their companionship needs as much as they go to relax and pass the time. They would rather take a friend with them.

The media structure also affects moviegoing in Kuwait. In this research, media structure is defined as the number of movie theaters available to the public, the play schedules and the increase in movie advertising. Media structure also refers to the choices that people have and the recent increase in those choices. Moviegoers have become more sophisticated and aware of current and future releases. Unlike before, current moviegoers can go shopping, walk on the beach, have something to eat at a restaurant and then watch a movie. All of this can now be accomplished in one location.

Going to the movies is not like watching television. People can watch television at any time and most people do it out of habit. They don't need to make plans for watching television. On the other hand, going to the movies requires some form of active planning and arrangement. People need to free themselves for a few hours. They need to check the movie schedules and learn when the movie they want to watch will start. Most of the time, they need to find someone to accompany them. That is why most of the people go to the movies at weekends, as opposed to weekdays. In Kuwait, they don't go to the movies out of habit. But, they do watch television out of habit. Television is accessible. People can switch it on at any time, but going to the movies is something that people can't do with the same ease.

Moviegoing in Kuwait is increasing and KNC is looking for more people and building more theaters at shopping centers. Many questions remain: "at what point would this increase stop?" "Will moviegoers get bored and look for other activities to fill their time?" "Will Kuwaitis search for something else to gratify their needs?" In sum, "when will the KNC reach its saturation point?" These questions are open for future investigations.

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