

# AUDIENCE RESEARCH

NATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO  
FOUNDATION

AUDIENCE RESEARCH ON SOUTH  
AFRICAN FILMS

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Department of Arts and Culture

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## List of abbreviations

CAGR	Compound Annual Growth Rate
EST	Electronic-Sell-Through
HCD	Human-Centred Design
NSC	National Senior Certificate

NFVF	National Film and Video Foundation
SABC	South Africa Broadcasting Corporation
VoD	Video on Demand
SVoD	Subscription Video on Demand
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
HGTV	Home & Garden Television
TNT	Home & Garden Television

## Definition of key terms

**2D Film:** Refers to objects that are rendered in two planes representing width and height.

**3D Film:** A system or effect used in a movie to include three dimensions – width, length and depth.

**Access to cinema:** The available resources an individual has at their disposal to be able to attend cinema. Factors include income, expenses and infrastructure. It also refers to the ability, right, permission, means or opportunity to reach cinemas.

**Adult:** A person of 18 years and older.

**Animation:** The process of creating the illusion of motion by creating individual frames, as opposed to filming naturally occurring action at a regular frame rate.

**Attitude:** A preconceived held notion by which audiences (in this case) respond – in varying degrees of favour, disfavour or indifference.

**Audience:** The assembled spectators at a screening/showing at an event such as a film, play, concert or meeting. The part of the general public exposed to a source of information or entertainment.

**Audience profile:** The demographic, behavioural and attitudinal characteristics, including social and economic characteristics of individuals who make up the intended target audience.

**Audience research:** Any communication research that is conducted on specific audience segments to gather information about their attitudes, knowledge, interests, preferences and behaviours with respect to market research. Segments may be based on various demographics such as race, ethnicity, age, education, and income.

**Box Office:** Generally, refers to an office or booth where tickets are sold to the public for admission to the cinema, play or event. It's also defined as a measurement of the number of tickets sold or the amount of money raised by ticket sales.

**Broadcaster:** Refers to a broadcasting organisation that's responsible for audio and video content and/or their transmission.

**Content:** Refers to something that is expressed through a medium such as writing, speech or other arts.

**Content preference:** Refers to individual preferred interests, talents or tastes with regard to some medium, either as speech, writing, or any other art.

**Culture:** The ideas, customs and social behaviour of a particular people or society. General beliefs and values that bring social solidarity in a particular society.

**Disposable income:** The propensity to spend. This refers to funds available after deductions and financial commitments are met.

**Distribution channels:** The chain of businesses or intermediaries through which goods or services pass until it reaches the end consumer. A distribution channel can include wholesalers, retailers, distributors, broadcasters and the internet.

**Documentary:** A non-fiction narrative usually without trained actors. Typically, a documentary is a journalistic record of an event, person, or place.

**Education level:** The highest level of schooling that a person attains.

**Film distribution:** The medium through which films and TV programmes are viewed is integral to any audience consumption pattern study, and the prediction of future trends within the industry, in general.

**Film entertainment industry:** This segment of the entertainment industry consists of both out-of-home and at-home components. At-home filmed entertainment refers to videos and TV programming. Home video includes rentals and the purchase of videos and DVDs, as well as paid TV subscriptions such as DSTV Box Office and access to films/video content via the internet, also accessible through PCs and mobile devices.

**Film streaming:** Accessing films directly via Smart TV, laptops and handheld devices, for example.

**Film:** Referred to interchangeably as movie. A movie or motion picture. It can be described as a series of still images which, when shown on a screen, creates the illusion of moving images (Geoff, 2002).

**Filmmakers:** A collective term used to refer to people who have a significant degree of control over the creation of a film: directors, producers, screenwriters, and editors.

**Focus group:** A focus group is a form of qualitative research in which a group of people are asked about their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, and attitudes on an issue of interest.

**Foreign film:** Films from countries other than one's own, regardless of native language.

**Free-to-air:** Denoting or relating to TV programmes broadcast on standard public or commercial networks, as opposed to satellite, cable, or digital programmes available only to subscription viewers.

**Genre:** Denoting or relating to a style or category. This is largely determined by subject, setting or plot.

**Home entertainment:** Systems that seek to reproduce a movie theatre experience and mood, with the help of video and audio equipment in, or outside, a private home.

**Local film:** Films that originate and are produced within one's own country. In this context, it refers to SA produced films and movies.

**Movie goer:** A person who attends cinema in varying degrees of frequency.

**Movie:** Used interchangeably with 'film'. Although can also be defined as a lower form of film, for instance, made-for-TV movie, where the production values and/or art form related to films and film making are not always present.

**Multimedia:** Content that uses a combination of different forms to reach the end-user.

**Online streaming:** Media streaming is a technique for transferring data, delivered as a steady and continuous 'stream' via an internet connection to the end user.

**Perception:** The way in which a product or service, in this case, is subjectively regarded, understood or interpreted.

**Platform:** May refer to physical objects, space, features and technology through which artwork and/or other objects of interest are displayed or consumed. In terms of this study, platforms refer to the different types of media people use for viewing purposes, namely, TV, DVD, social media, and so on.



**Preference:** A predilection a person has towards something, based on one's personality. Refers to interests, talents or tastes; that which 'hits the spot', 'does the trick', or suits one's fancy.

**Producer:** The chief of staff of a movie production in all matters save the creative efforts of the director, who is head of the line. They are responsible for raising funding, hiring key personnel and arranging for distributors, among other things.

**Production:** In the movie industry, this term refers to the phase of movie making during which principal photography occurs. Popularly, 'production' means the entire movie project.

**Release:** When a film is shipped to exhibitors by the distributor, it is deemed to have been released for public viewing.

**Script:** A general term for a written work detailing story, setting, and dialogue.

**Video:** An electronic medium for recording, copying, playback, broadcasting, and display of moving visual and audio media.

**Viewing platform:** The device/screen, by which films and videos are consumed, for example, TV, PC, tablets, and phones, as well as cinema.



# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The National Film and Video Foundation (NFVF) has commissioned audience research to better understand how South African audiences engage with South African films. The study aims to gain insights about audience consumption trends with specific attention to local content (South African produced content) and to use that knowledge to help films (features, documentaries, and animation projects) circulate more widely within South Africa and abroad.

This 2022 study aims to support the nurturing and development of access to the film and video industry in South Africa. It also aims to gain an understanding of the developments relevant to the consumption of South African and Global video and film content, and the findings provide insights that will inform the strategy to create content that is better consumed and sold. Understanding the film-viewing patterns of South African audiences and their socio-economic environment is a key and central component to the development of audiences who are the consumers of South African film and video. This research highlights the emerging trends and major insights in the South African film industry and also provides comparison of data from the last NFVF report of 2015 to the data collected in 2022. To compile this report, data was collected through 2 surveys namely: Audience Survey and Film Distributors / External Stakeholders Survey.

### **Methods: Audience Survey**

In February 2022, the NFVF undertook desktop research to gain an understanding of the existing research, debates and developments relevant to the consumption of South African and Global video and film content. From this in-depth desktop research, survey questions were then designed for the audiences exploring, among other topics, streaming trends in South Africa, trends of streaming's impact on film and TV consumption; as well as the impacts of COVID-19 on consumer habits and preferences.

Two thousand, three hundred and forty five (2345) people responded to the audience survey across all nine (9) provinces. The survey further collected data on age, gender, race, income and education levels as well as internet access among other psychosocial/demographic details.

## Methods: Film Distributors / External Stakeholders Survey

Surveys were also conducted with film distributors and other stakeholders within the South African Creative and Cultural Industries to understand the industry trends on distribution and marketing. The questions in this survey sought to unearth distributor and stakeholder opinions related to the state of the industry, the popular genres, the fastest growing platforms for viewing and the demand for SA film and video content compared to foreign content among others. This report presents data findings from both surveys in all sections in a way that shows the interconnections between them.

## 2. FINDINGS

### South African film consumer profile

This section provides insight into the profiles of South African TV and film consumers. In order to gain a deeper understanding of consumer preferences, survey respondents were segmented according to their entertainment preferences, targeting those who had selected watching TV shows, watching movies, watching TV and films at home, and going to the cinema as their top five entertainment choices. These respondents were further analysed within their demographic categories to produce a comprehensive understanding of the South African film and TV consumer profile. The report details the profiles according to age group, gender, economic status, marital status, level of education, location, and race.

- The largest group of film and TV-watching respondents (29%) are aged between 20-34 years, followed by 5-14 years at 24% and 35-49 years at 23%. In terms of racial group, 34% of the respondents aged between 20-34 years are Black/African while 3% are White; Asian/Indian and Coloured were 15% and 16% respectively.
- 51% of the TV and film consumer respondents were female and 49% male.
- The highest number of respondents (38%) were those who had attained a National Senior Certificate (NSC) (Grade 10-12) and were in the age group 15-19 years; in this cohort, 83% held this qualification. A high number (49%) of respondents aged 20-34 years also indicated NSC as their highest level of educational achievement.

- The majority (79%) of the film and TV consumer respondents of the audience survey were Black/African while the other races were White (9%), Coloured (9%), Indian/Asian (2%). Of the total, 95% of the respondents aged between 15-19 are Black/African and the majority (68%) of the respondents aged 65 years and above are White.
- 55% of the respondents indicated they were single while 33% indicated they were married. The rest were divorced (3%), separated (1%), widowed (2%), or cohabiting (4%).
- The province that had the largest number of respondents indicating that they watch South African films and TV was Gauteng (26%), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (20%), Western Cape (13%), Eastern Cape (12%), Limpopo (8%), Mpumalanga (8%), North-West (6%), Free State (5%) and Northern Cape (3%).

## General perceptions and attitudes towards South African film

To gain a deeper understanding of the general perceptions and attitudes towards South African film, the survey respondents were asked a variety of questions whose answers allowed a full picture of perceptions and attitudes to emerge. This section presents data on respondents' cost and price preferences and preferred languages. The respondents were asked to rate South African films along varying dimensions such as visuals/cinematography, storyline and technical production quality among others. A limited case study on the performance of South African film content is included, providing insight on Box Office and Netflix performance while also highlighting several trends emerging from the general performance of film content. Additionally, in this section, the report lays out data about the preferred platforms for film consumption and behaviour as well as barriers to accessing local content.

This report shows that the sustainability of the film industry relies on the increasing consumption of content by consumers who will pay to access relevant quality products that they wish to consume. The findings showed that some consumer habits had definitely changed over time as a large number (80%) of respondents indicated that they preferred to watch films in the comfort of their home rather than to just go out. This can be attributed to the impacts of COVID-19 which have greatly affected consumer behaviours in relation to consumption of film.

The survey also sought to understand how much the respondents were willing to pay to watch different content on different platforms. In the audience survey, 42% of the respondents said they would pay between R90-R109 to watch a standard 3D, 4DX, IMAX or DBOX movie at a cinema.

A further 30% said they would pay between R110-R129 while 15% said they would pay more than R129. The survey also asked some questions around internet access given that trends have shifted towards VoD and SVoD (subscription video on demand) services that require an internet service. Only 22% of respondents are prepared to pay more than R500 a month for the internet, while 4% said they could only pay up to R50 a month. This shows that the cost and access to the internet plays a vital role in consumer preferences when it comes to platforms. Platforms such as Netflix, Showmax, AppleTV+ etc require internet and subscriptions and the industry needs to take this into consideration in the distribution of South African film and video content. The report also gives detailed insight on other issues related to preferences such as genres, language, storylines and characters among others.

### Industry trends on distribution and marketing

The report offers an analysis of distribution and exhibition platforms for producers in South Africa. Surveys were conducted for film distributors and other external stakeholders who indicated that the fastest growing film-viewing platform in the country is internet streaming via video on demand (VoD). It further provides an analysis of audience attitudes towards advertising and marketing, laying out the South African sector's most effective advertising, marketing, and promotional strategies to-date.

The report shows the analysis of distribution and exhibition platforms for producers in South Africa. Among the distributors who responded to the survey 92.3% considered internet streaming VoD to be the fastest growing television platform in the South African viewing market while 7.7% indicated that electronic home entertainment was the fastest growing. 53% of the respondents indicated that South African audiences were not enjoying value for money on SABC, 1,2,3, eTV and DSTV, while 47% felt that the R265 TV annual licence fee was commensurate with the low standard of content aired on SABC, which they described as being of poor quality with too many repeats.

Recommendations are also proffered in this report based on the finding of the audience and distributors surveys.

## 3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations given in this report are based on the findings of three surveys that were conducted among audiences, film distributors and other stakeholders in the South African film industry. In order to improve film performance in South Africa and to meet the demands of audiences, it was important to give recommendations that incorporate systemic change, systems thinking and take into consideration the complexity that the industry exhibits in South Africa. The report recommends the enhancement of local promotion and advertising of South African film. It further recommends intensifying research as a strategy to develop uniquely South African storylines and scripts. In this regard, it recommends using the Iceberg Model as a method to provide a deeper understanding of mental models of audiences and the structural models of society in a bid to improve storylines. There is a need to strengthen the supply of local content and the report recommends that the NFVF works towards building a learning ecosystem that involves all stakeholders and players in the industry. New programmes should include all stakeholders, who might play a role in expanding content especially those who were previously excluded. Finally, the report recommends the use of a human-centred design approach to marketing for film distributors in order to improve the promotion of South African film content both locally and globally.



# AUDIENCE RESEARCH DETAILED REPORT

# **AUDIENCE RESEARCH REPORT**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The NFVF has commissioned audience research to better understand how South African audiences engage with South African films. The study aims to gain insights about audience consumption trends with specific attention to local content (South African produced content) and to use that knowledge to help films (features, documentaries, and animation projects) circulate more widely within South Africa and abroad. This information will assist the NFVF to make informed decisions about the kinds of content it chooses to support, and will encourage marketing and distribution platforms to make sure that local films are distributed as widely as possible. Overall, the primary focus is to explore and develop the ways in which the NFVF can assist filmmakers and producers to identify target markets, quantify demand, and develop marketing and distribution strategies. We approach the research with these questions in mind:

- What are the emerging trends identifying film audiences in South Africa and what is the demographic of these audiences?
- Building from the 2015 NFVF audience research, what can we learn now about South African audiences? What comparable data can we analyse to identify shifts in audience behaviours?
- What have been the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on audience behaviour? Are there indications of permanent shifts in audience consumption patterns and behaviour?
- What impact have online streaming services had on South African audiences and what are the limitations?

### **1.1. Focus and scope**

The research is aimed at enhancing an appreciation of the shifts and changes in film consumption among everyday South Africans and to better understand how South African films are consumed abroad. The research examines audience consumption trends with the following objectives:



- Who are the consumers of South African film content? This is a clear profile description looking at living standards measures (LSM), gender, age, economic status, education, region, and race.
- General perceptions and attitudes towards South African film content. This is benchmarked against data from past audience research surveys to ascertain whether there have been changes in the perceptions of South African film, with the aim of pointing to interventions that might have shifted perceptions.
- Identify audience consumption trends. This is a focus on preferred genres consumed by South African audiences, preferred languages of film content, what determines audience choice of film, and understanding the determinacy of preference, local vs international.
- The preferred platform for film consumption. A detailed analysis will be carried out to understand the impact on consumption trends flowing from the arrival of online streaming services in the South African market, how traditional platforms such as cinema houses and traditional broadcasters have adapted, and what role they play in the South African film consumption landscape.
- The performance of film content. Examine box office numbers, online streaming numbers as well as audience reports from broadcasters.
- The most substantial barriers to accessing local content. The impact of Covid-19 will be considered when assessing these barriers.
- Analysis of distribution and exhibition platforms for producers in South Africa. Attitude towards advertising and marketing and examining the most effective advertising, marketing, and promotional strategies to-date.
- Recommend audience development strategies per distribution and exhibition channels (interventions that will address failures blocking audience development).

## 1.2. Research methods

A predominantly quantitative approach was deployed for this study, with some qualitative approaches included, but to a lesser degree. This study was driven by a sincere desire to find key insights on what the data presents, with comparative analysis derived from past data drawn into consideration to identify key trends that are emerging within South African audiences. Using previous audience research documents as a benchmark, we developed strategies to gather data comparable to previous studies to enable us to form an understanding of the behavioural patterns of audio-visual consumers in South Africa. Therefore, our aim has been to develop a practical research report that not only provides insight into prevailing audiences, but also provides

predictive data, which can be used by various stakeholders and decision-makers in the South African film industry ecosystem.

The research method is defined by an in-depth document review across audience and consumer insights reports in the audio-visual sector for the purpose of benchmarking and guiding the data collection process. This included audience research developed and published by organisations at national and provincial levels as well as research commissioned by broadcasters and other private sector players. The literature review sought to reveal key aspects delineating audience profiles such as socio-economic status, previous consumption patterns, the emergence of online streaming services or VoD, barriers to accessing local content, and the distribution and exhibition platforms available for producers in South Africa to name a few. Much of the research is quantitative, driven by a large-scale survey that was undertaken across all nine provinces. The survey targeted different groups such as segmented audiences, local producers, distributors, exhibitors, and relevant stakeholders. Various strategies were implemented to ensure the survey reached far and wide, targeting representatives of primary, secondary, and under-served provinces and including participants from rural, township, and urban areas.

### 1.3. Sample size

A minimum sample of 384 was determined in 2014 based on the 2015 NFVF Audience Research report in which the sample size was based on the population of the country. The 2014 sample was calculated according to Cochran's formula for minimum sample size. This sample has been increased by the percentage increase (10.27%) in the population from 2014 to 2021. The new minimum is therefore determined as 423. To ensure greater accuracy, a larger sample size of 2800 was proposed. Below are the new targets proposed, taking into consideration the limits imposed by the pandemic on face-to-face interviews:

Province	Target				Achieved			
	5 - 14years	15 -64 years	65+ years	Total Sample	5 - 14years	15 -64 years	65+ years	Total Sample
Eastern Cape	70	180	15	265	67	119	7	193
Free State	25	90	5	120	2	55	1	58
Gauteng	115	505	40	660	57	966	39	1062
KwaZulu- Natal	115	325	25	465	68	268	10	346
Limpopo	65	155	15	235	4	92	1	97
Mpumalanga	45	140	10	195	2	56	2	60
North West	40	120	10	170	4	43	3	50
Northern Cape	10	35	5	50	4	23	0	27
Western Cape	55	220	15	290	108	312	32	452
<b>Total</b>	<b>540</b>	<b>1770</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>2450</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>1934</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>2345</b>

Table 1: Sample overview by target and achieved

Sample category	target	Achieved
Broadcasters and distributors	50	13

External Stakeholders (Associated enabling organisations including government agencies, producers, international organisations, and production companies)	120	85
<b>Total</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>98</b>

Table 2: Sample overview by category

The profile of the audience survey was varied and representative of the South African population, taking into account provincial spread, race, age, gender, educational and income levels.

The survey respondents were as follows:

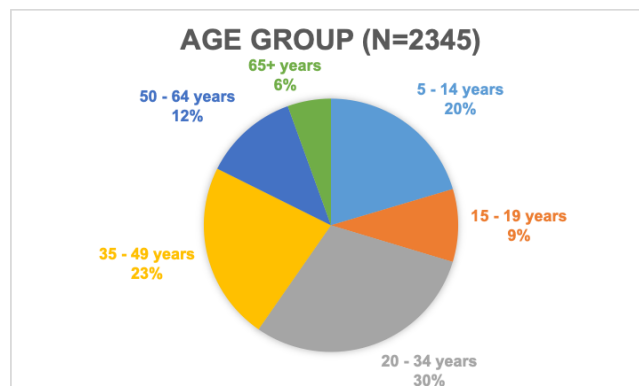


Figure 1 Age Group

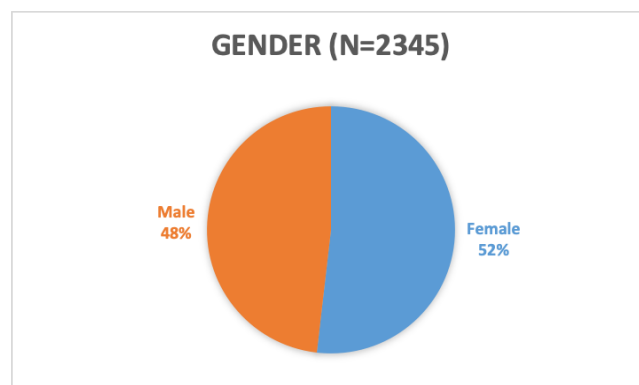


Figure 2 Gender

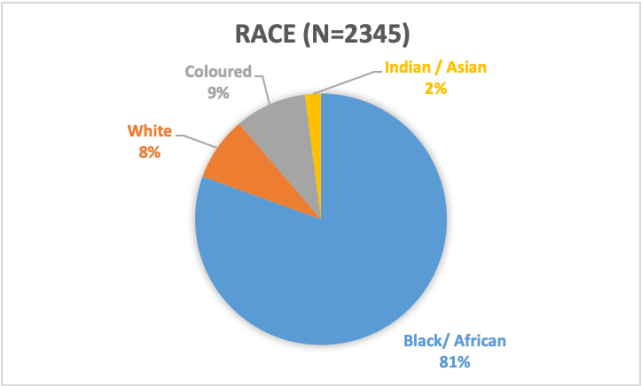


Figure 3 Race

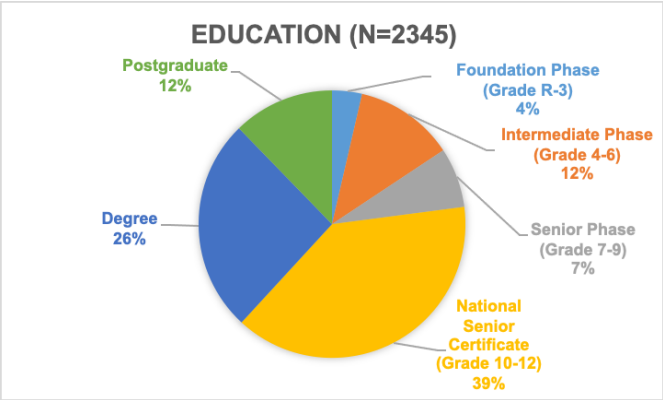


Figure 4 Education level

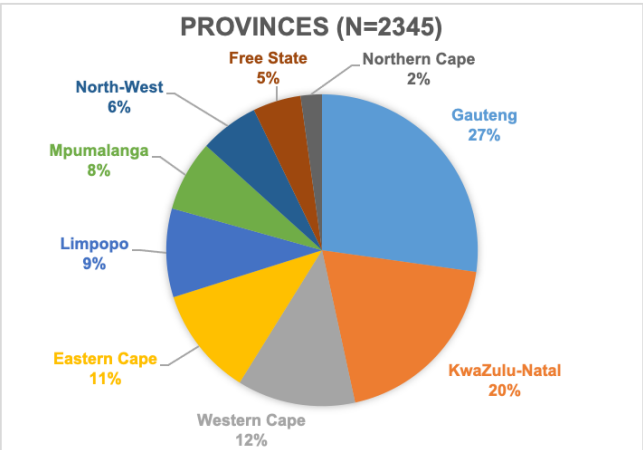
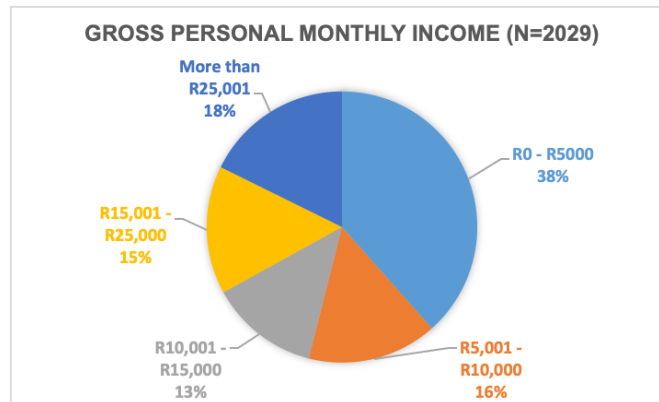


Figure 5 Provincial spread



*Figure 6 Gross personal monthly income*

As indicated in the table above, a survey was developed to understand the attitudes and contributions of other players in the sector such as distributors, enabling organisations, international stakeholders and producers.

## 1.4. Research limitations

When the research programme was underway, a number of limitations were identified, and various mitigating strategies were deployed with varied success levels:

### 1.4.1. Survey and research fatigue

There is a growing concern with survey and interview fatigue among respondents. While the minimum number of people at 423 was reached, the set-out target was not fully achieved largely as a result of general fatigue. Most surprising was the inadequate participation from local and international film and TV stakeholders. Notwithstanding various strategies including telephone and email outreach, many of the TV and film stakeholders were not available to participate in this survey. This has impacted on the ability to carry out in-depth comparative analysis of the previous report. The research fatigue can be attributed to the fact that there has been a number of research projects that have been conducted in the sector in the last couple of months.

### 1.4.2. International participation

The lack of participation among international stakeholders and distributors has placed limitations on a deeper understanding of how South African film content performed in relation to local vs international markets. The scope of research was limited to desktop review and limited international insider perspectives.





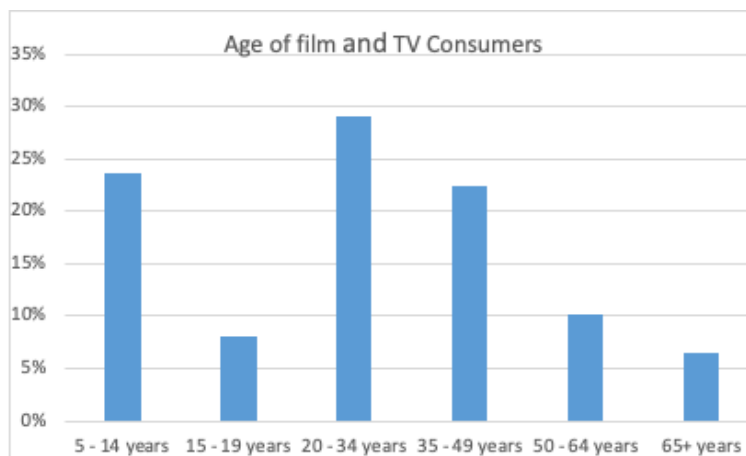
## 2. SA FILM CONSUMER PROFILE

### 2.1. TV and film consumer profiles

This section aims to unpack the findings of the audience survey to understand the consumer profiles of South African TV and film. The survey respondents were segmented according to those who had selected watching TV shows, watching movies, watching TV and films at home, and going to the cinema as their top five forms of entertainment activity. These respondents were further analysed according to their demographic categories to provide a clearer sense of the South African film and TV consumer profile using data collected from respondents who selected TV and film as one of their top five entertainment activities.

#### 2.1.1. Age group

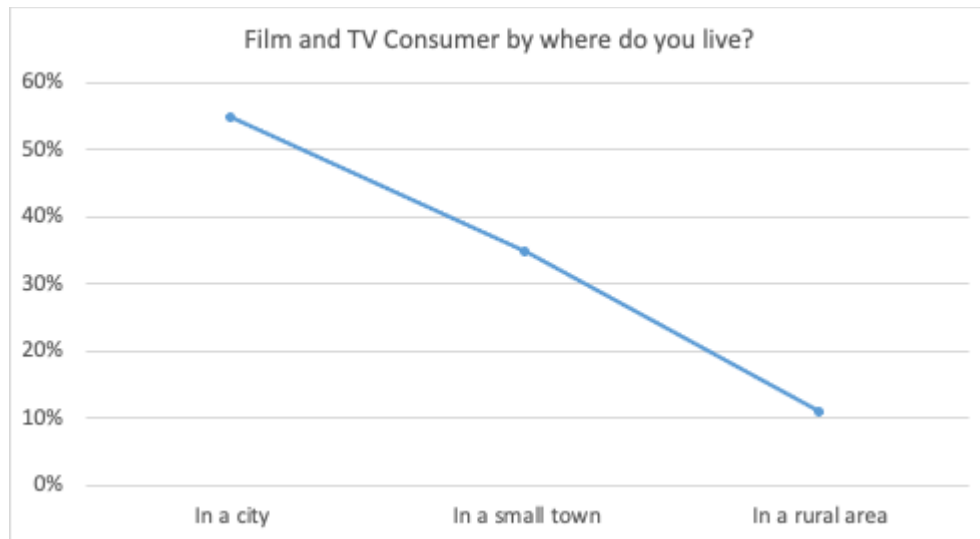
The audience survey showed that of those who selected film and TV as one of their top five entertainment activities, 1537 respondents (of the total of 2345 respondents) were consumers of South African TV movies. The largest group of respondents (29%) are aged between 20-34 years, followed by 5-14 years at 24% and 35-49 years at 23%.



*Figure 7 Film and TV consumers by age group*

In terms of racial group, 34% of the respondents aged between 20-34 years are Black/African while 3% are White; Asian/Indian and Coloured were 15% and 16% respectively. Of the respondents in the same age group, 53% indicated that they lived in cities and 36% in small towns, while 11% were based in rural areas. The age group with the largest number of

respondents living in cities was 50-64 years; the 35–49-year group had most respondents living in rural areas with 13% of them residing there.



*Figure 8 Film and TV consumers by where they stay (urban, rural)*

Noting that the age group with the most respondents was 20-34 years, it is interesting to note that the majority (49%) of the respondents in that age group earn up to R5000 indicating that they are low-income earners, while 44% of the respondents aged between 35-49 years said that they earn more than R25000.

When it comes to making a choice between watching a film at home or going to the cinema, 47% of the respondents in the 20-34 years age group indicated that they prefer going to the cinema while 36% stayed at home and 42% said they would choose both.

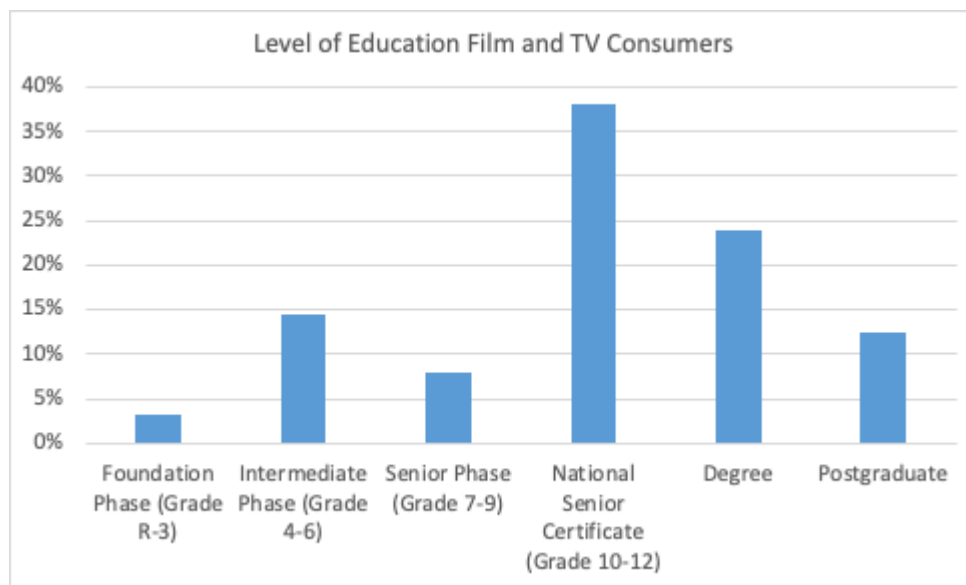
### 2.1.2. Gender

Turning to gender, 51% of the TV and film consumer respondents were female and 49% male. The age group with the highest number of respondents (ie. the 20–34-year group) consisted of 65% female while 34% are male and the assumption is that the remaining 1% is non binary. The age group of 65 years and above had most (69%) of the respondents being male. Of the respondents who indicated that they live in the city, 52% were female and 48% male. Out of the 93 respondents who live in rural areas, 45% were female and 55% were male. When asked to

make a choice between watching a movie at the cinema or staying at home, very little significance (1% difference) was noted between genders.

### 2.1.3. Level of education

The highest number of respondents (38%) were those who had attained a National Senior Certificate (NSC) (Grade 10-12) and were in the age group 15-19 years; in this cohort, 83% held this qualification. This may indicate that most of the film and TV consumer respondents are still in school. However, a high number (49%) of respondents aged 20-34 years also indicated NSC as their highest level of educational achievement. On the other end of the scale, just 3% of the respondents had completed Foundation Phase (Grade R-3) and 15% the Intermediate Phase (Grade 7-9).



*Figure 9 Education level of film and TV consumers*

Turning to tertiary education, 24% of the total number of respondents who consumed film and TV said they had attained a degree. Of these, 38% of respondents in the age group of 20-34 years had tertiary qualifications, while 50% of those aged above 65 years also had degrees. Turning to race, 7% of the Black/African respondents indicated having attained a degree as their highest level of education; of the Whites included in the survey, 24% had a degree.

Only 12% of the film and TV consumer respondents said they had attained a postgraduate qualification; in the age group 20-34 years, 13% had a postgraduate qualification. Only 11% of the Black/African respondents included in the survey indicated that their highest qualification was postgraduate compared to 21% of White respondents.

Looking at education by province, 58% of the respondents from Limpopo indicated that their highest level of education was NSC, while 16% of respondents from Limpopo and 16% from Gauteng had postgraduate qualifications.

Taking income into consideration, 69% of respondents who earn up to R5000 had an NSC qualification while 40% who earn more than R25000 had a postgraduate qualification. Further, 38% of respondents who live in a city and are South African film and TV consumers had NSC qualifications while 10% of the respondents from rural areas had a postgraduate qualification.

We take a closer look at the data-segregated respondents who 'like to stay at home only', 'go to the cinema only' and those who 'like both. In relation to education status, the data showed that out of the 923 adults who indicated that they preferred staying home only, 49% had an NSC qualification while 31% had a degree; 17% had a postgraduate qualification. When it came to the 184 who said they preferred to go to the cinema, 3% are adults who graduated Senior Phase (Grade 7-9) while the majority (47%) had attained the NSC level.

Choose both?

#### 2.1.4. Race

The majority (79%) of the film and TV consumer respondents of the audience survey were Black/African while the other races were White (9%), Coloured (9%), Indian/Asian (2%).

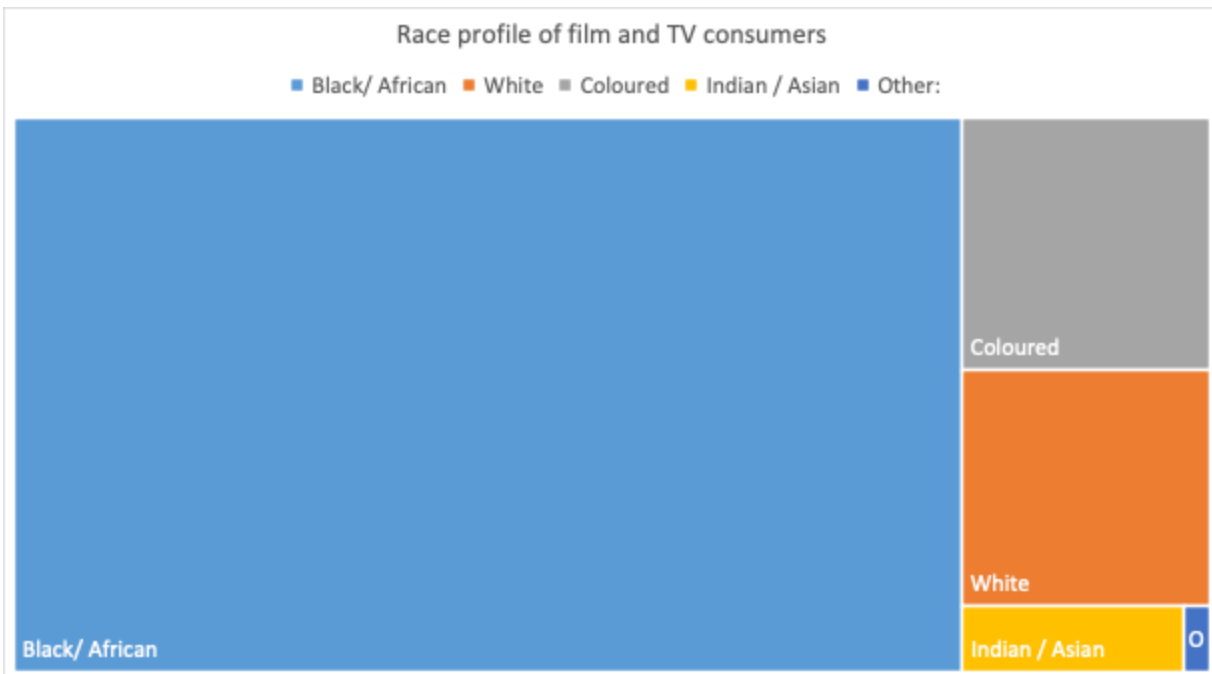


Figure 10 Race profile of film and TV consumers

Of the total, 95% of the respondents aged between 15-19 are Black/African and the majority (68%) of the respondents aged 65 years and above are White. Of the 506 respondents who are aged 20-34 years, 92% are Black/African. It is important to note that overall, the largest number of respondents came from this age group. While 9% of the respondents were White, it is also noteworthy that in the age group 20-34 where most respondents were positioned, only 1% were White. Of the 864 female respondents who consume South African TV and film, 79% are Black/African.

A total of 1296 respondents indicated that they earn up to R5000; of these 78% are Black/African and just 2% are White. On the other hand, 4% of the respondents who earn above R25000 are White while 66% are Black/African.

In relation to education status, the data showed that out of the 923 adults who indicated that they preferred staying home only, 75% are Black/African while 14% are White and the other races constituted the rest. When it came to the 184 who said they preferred to go to the cinema, 85% are Black/African adults.

### 2.1.5. Marital status

Fifty-five percent (55%) of the respondents, who are the majority of those who said they watch South African films and TV, indicated they were single while 33% indicated they were married. The rest were divorced (3%), separated (1%), widowed (2%), or cohabiting (4%). Of the 506 respondents in the 20-34 age group, 81% were single while 15% were married.

Sixty-two percent of the 735 female respondents who watch South African films and TV indicated that they were single while 26% were married, and the rest were in the categories of divorced, separated, widowed or cohabiting. A total of 557 males responded in the category of those who watch South African films and TV. Of these, 48% indicated that they were single while 41% said they were married.

By race, 65% of Black/African respondents indicated they were single, 26% were married and 2% were divorced. Only 10% of the White respondents indicated they were single while the majority (67%) were married, 11% were divorced and 3% were separated. The White widowers and cohabiters each scored 5%.

The province with the highest number of respondents was Gauteng and 51% of them were single, 33% married, 4% divorced, 2% separated, 3% widowed and 7% cohabiting. The province with the lowest number of respondents was Northern Cape with only 18 people indicating that they watch South African film and TV. Of these 18, the majority (68%) indicated that they were single and 32% were married. There were no other respondents in the other marital status categories.

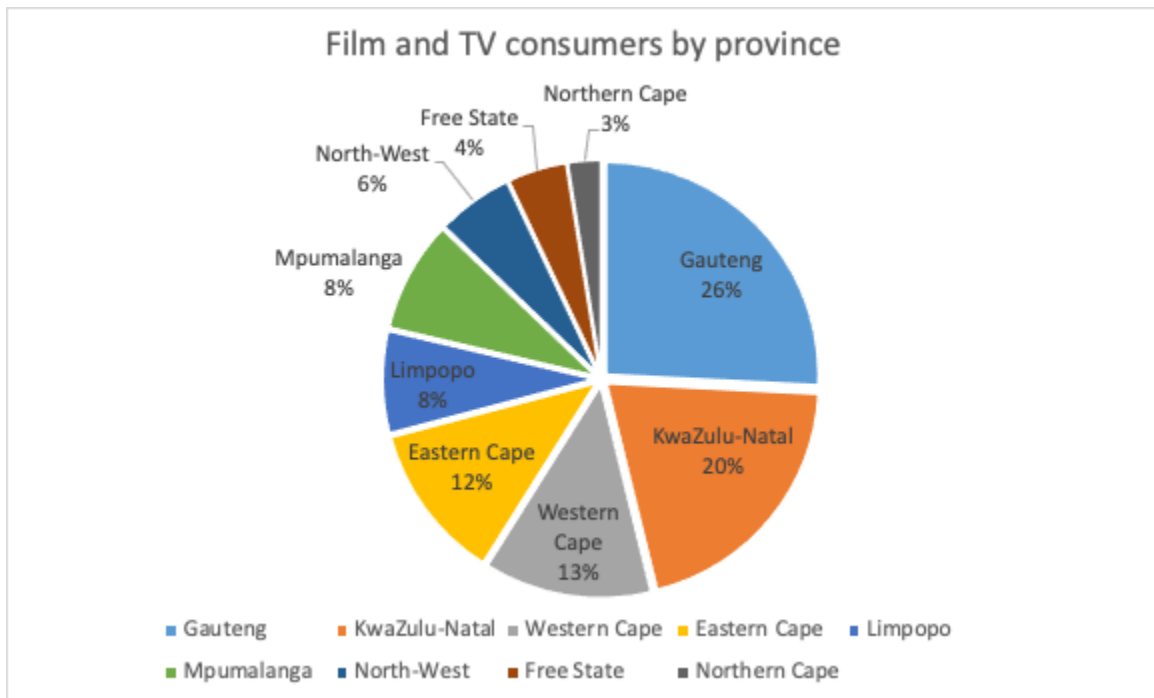
Given that the majority of respondents indicated that they were single, it followed that in all income level groups, the number of respondents who are single was also high save for the above R25000 group where only 29% of respondents were single. Turning to income levels, 78% of the respondents who earn up to R5000 indicated that they were single while 48% of those who earn between R10001 and R15000 also indicated that they were single. In the category of respondents who earn more than R25000, the majority (58%) were married people.

A high number (68%) of respondents who indicated that they preferred to go to a cinema to watch a movie were single while 25% were married. Of the 923 respondents who said they preferred to stay home only, 51% were single and 36% were married. Some respondents said they would

choose both staying at home and going to the cinema and of the 184 respondents in this category, 61% were single and 31% were married.

#### 2.1.6. Location and residence

The province that had the largest number of respondents indicating that they watch South African films and TV was Gauteng (26%), followed by KwaZulu-Natal (20%), Western Cape (13%), Eastern Cape (12%), Limpopo (8%), Mpumalanga (8%), North-West (6%), Free State (5%) and Northern Cape (3%).



*Figure 11 Film and TV consumers by province*

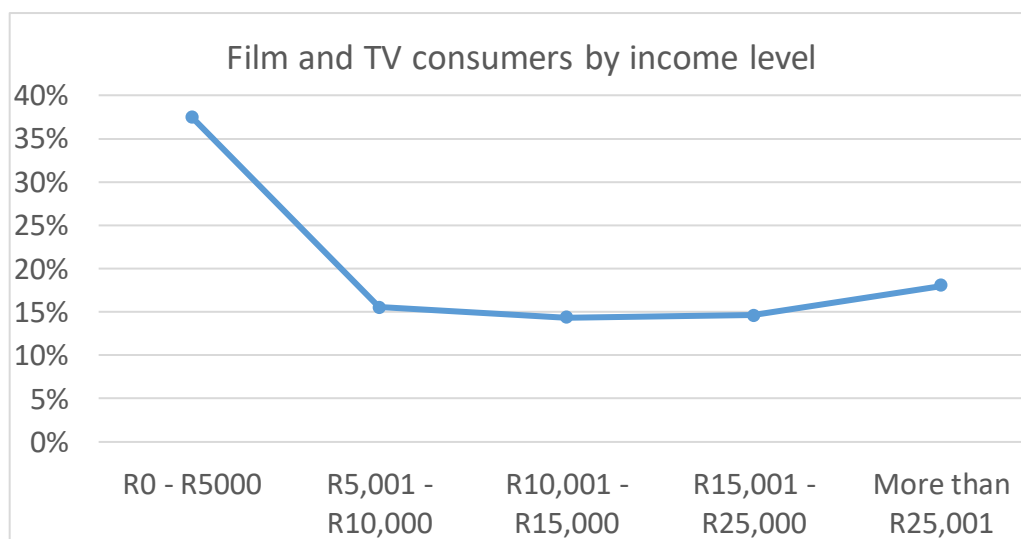
A total of 459 respondents who said they watch South African films and TV indicated that they earn up to R5000. Of these, 26% were from Gauteng, 16% from KwaZulu-Natal and 8% from the Western Cape. Of the respondents who indicated that they earn more than R25000, 37% were from Gauteng and 4% were from the Northern Cape. Turning to the urban and rural divide, 1004 respondents who watched South African film and TV indicated that they lived in cities while 440 lived in a small town and 93 in a rural area. 37% of those in cities were in Gauteng province, 25% in KwaZulu-Natal and 15% in the Western Cape.



Thirty percent (30%) of the adults who indicated that they 'preferred staying at home' were from Gauteng as were a further 30% who indicated that they 'preferred going to the cinema' to watch movies and another 30% who said they 'preferred both'. Twelve percent of the group that preferred staying home came from the Western Cape while of those who live in Limpopo only 8% said they preferred to stay home with the rest saying they either preferred going to the cinema or both.

### 2.1.7. Socio-economic status

Thirty-seven percent of the respondents indicated that they earned up to R5000 and 18% earned more than R25000 per month.

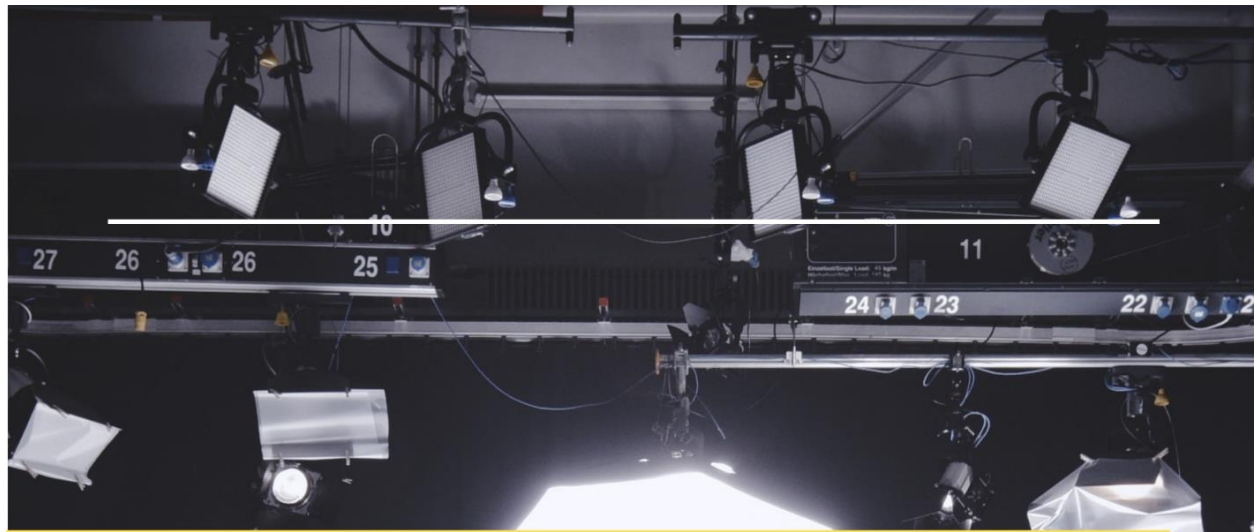


*Figure 12 Film and TV consumers by income level*

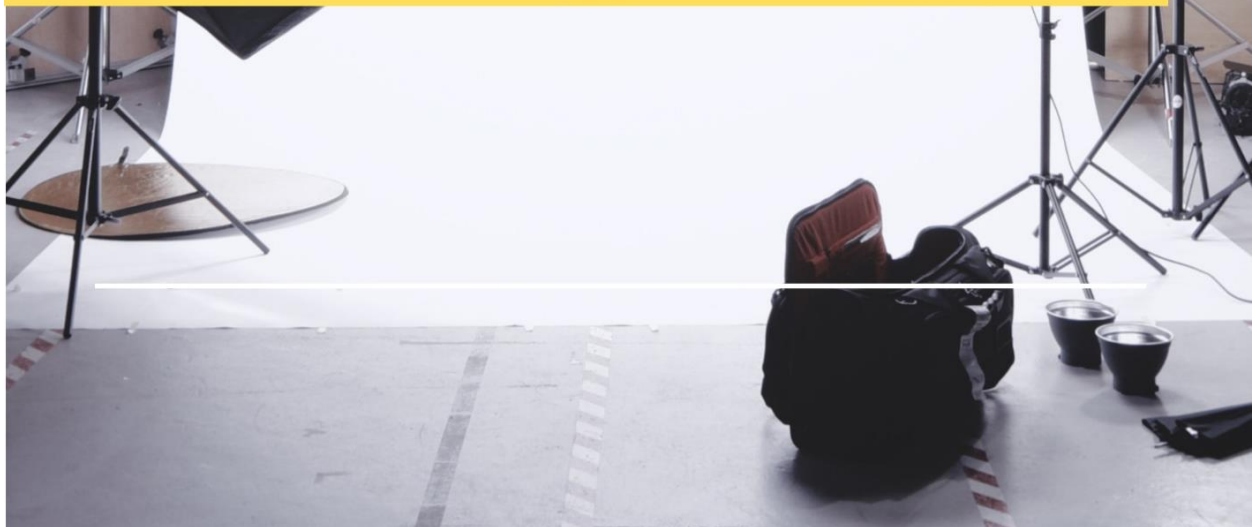
Of the respondents who earn up to R5000, 48% were aged between 20-34, which is the age group with the highest number of respondents who consume film and TV. Only 11% of respondents in the same age group earn up to R25000. In a pattern that would seem normal in view of diminished economic activity in remote areas, the majority (52%) of the respondents who earn up to R5000 reside in rural areas and only 37% of them indicated that they are film and TV consumers. In addition, the majority (81%) of the respondents who earn up to R5000 were aged 15-19 years while 48% were aged 20-34. The majority (42%) of respondents who earn up to

R5000 are Black/African while only 14% are White. Sixty-two percent of the respondents in the lowest income earning group came from the Free State while the majority (26%) of the highest earners came from the Northern Cape. Eighteen percent of the respondents indicated that they earn more than R25000 and 22% of them live in cities while 7% said they lived in a rural area. Of respondents in the high-income earning group, 15% are Black/African while 36% are White and 31% are Asian.

Of the respondents who earn up to R5000, 35% indicated that they preferred to stay home and watch TV compared to 45% who said they would prefer to go to the cinema only and 40% who preferred both staying at home and going to the cinema. For those who earn up to R25000, 15% said they would prefer to stay at home while 14% would prefer to go to the cinema only and 12% preferred both.



# GENERAL PERCEPTION AND ATTITUDE TOWARDS SA FILM CONTENT



### 3. GENERAL AUDIENCE PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES

The rationale behind this research is that the sustainability of the film industry relies on the increasing consumption of content by consumers who will pay to access relevant quality products that they wish to consume. This section gives a detailed understanding of the preferences of consumers in order to ensure that appropriate content is being produced by South African filmmakers. Content across all genres and South African historical and political content that enhances cultural and political diversity is required. However, the ability of South African filmmakers to be financially sustainable is reliant on their ability to sell their content and as such, it is critically important to have a comprehensive understanding of the preferences of consumers. The section presents data on which languages are most preferred and provides insights into emerging trends related to consumer preferences.

#### 3.1. Audience preference trends

In 2021, the industry saw continued changes from technological progress, evolving generational behaviours, and ongoing impacts from the global pandemic. This section shows that amid recurring COVID-19 surges, people sought more media and entertainment at home, while often avoiding larger in-person events. It also presents data on the trends that have emerged due to the changes highlighted above related to the cost and price preferences showing the amount of money that the survey respondents indicated that they prefer to pay for South African film. The survey also asked questions related to language preferences and the findings are presented in this section as well. In addition, the respondents were asked to rate South African films based on various aspects such as visuals/cinematography, storyline, cast and characters, performance of actors and actresses, and technical production quality among others. The data from the responses is also highlighted in this section.

##### 3.1.1. Cost and price preferences

Of the 2345 respondents in the full audience survey 42% said they would pay between R90-R109 to watch a standard 3D, 4DX, IMAX or DBOX movie at a cinema. A further 30% said they would pay between R110-R129 while 15% said they would pay more than R129. Of the 1544 respondents who live in cities, 51% indicated that they would pay between R90-R109, while 22%

said they would pay between R110-R129 and 13% said they would pay more than R129. Only 8% of those in rural areas said they would pay more than R129.

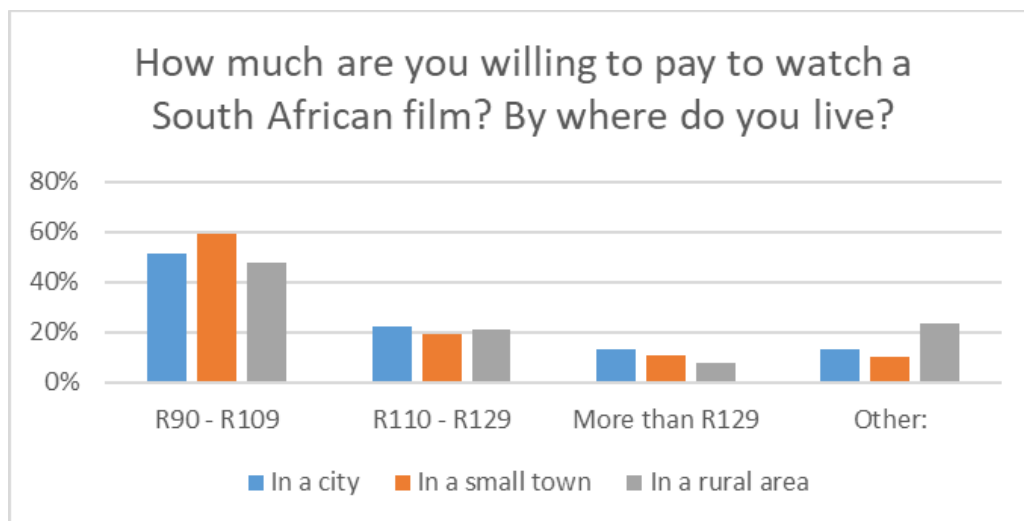


Figure 13 How much consumers are willing to pay, by where they live (urban/rural)

Most respondents earning up to R5000 said they would be willing to pay between R90-R109 for a standard movie while in the category of those earning more than R25000, 48% were willing to pay the same amount and 14% were willing to pay more than R129.

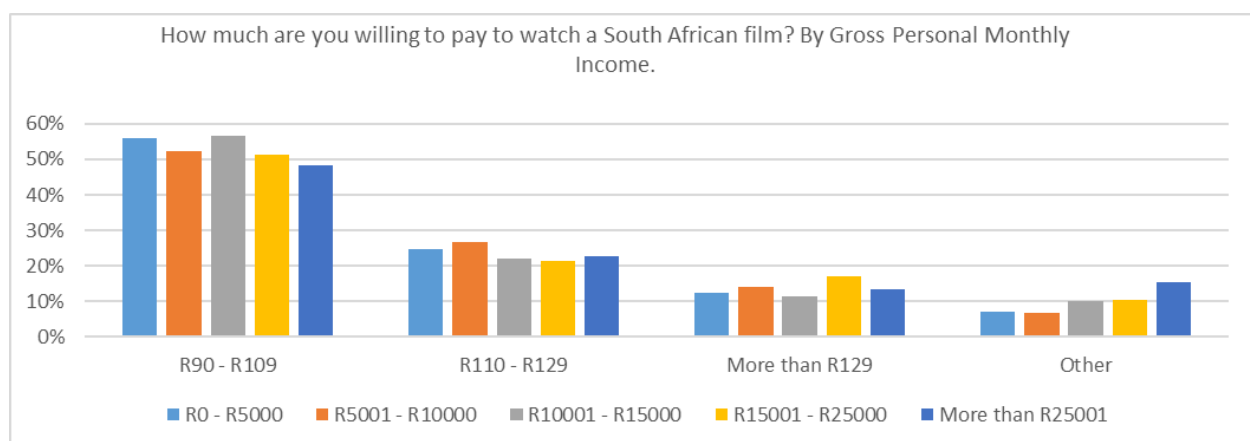


Figure 14 How much consumers are willing to pay, by gross monthly income

Comparing film and TV consumers against non-consumers, the survey revealed that 53% of film and TV consumers were willing to pay between R90-R109 against 55% of non-consumers willing to pay the same amount.

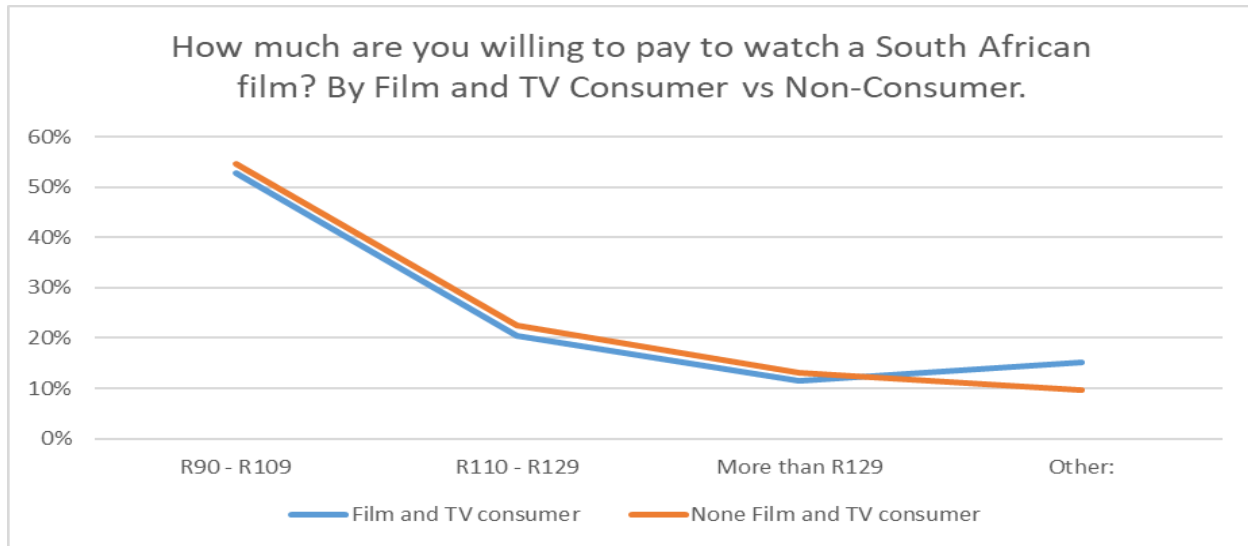


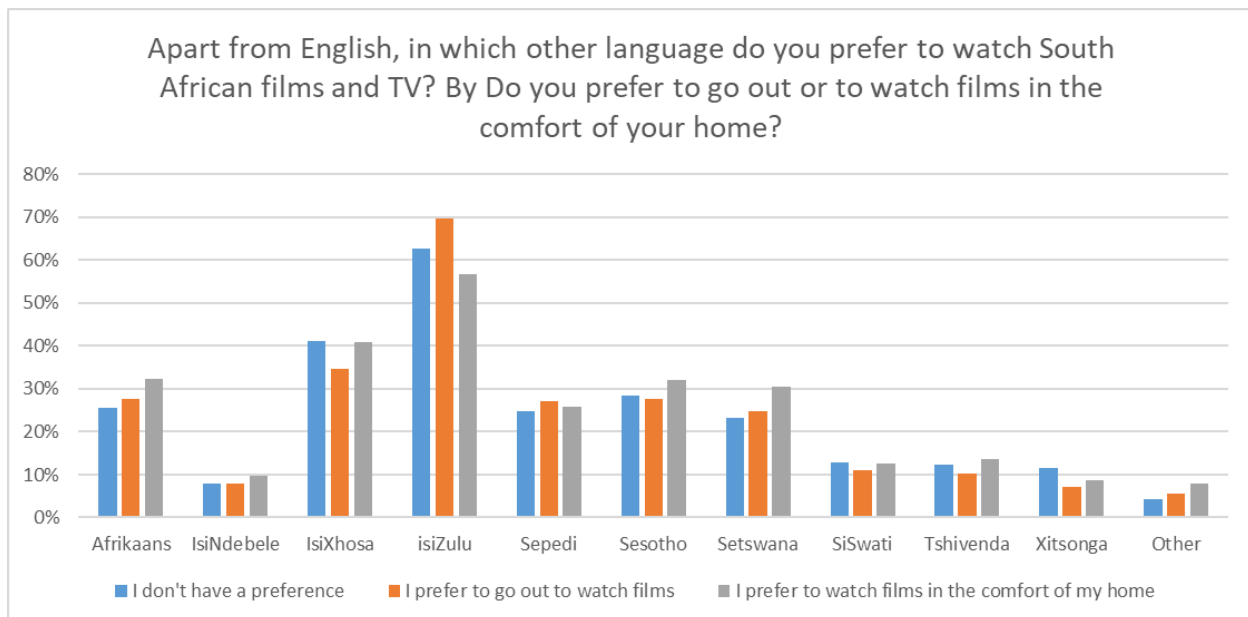
Figure 15 How much consumers are willing to pay in comparison to non-consumers

For the respondents who still prefer going to the cinema to watch a movie, 62% stated that they are prepared to pay between R90 and R109 to watch a standard 2D movie whereas in the 2015 report, 37% of the same respondents were prepared to pay between R50 and R89. However, in the same breath, 53% of the respondents indicated that to watch a South African film, they are prepared to pay between R90 and R109 while 53% also indicated that they would pay the same for an international film. This indicates that the respondents view the quality and value of South African film to be at par with international standards. Ten percent of the respondents said they would pay more than R129 for an international film while 12% said they would pay more than R129 for a South African film.

### 3.1.2. Preferred languages audience choice determinations

Apart from English, most respondents preferred isiZulu as a language for watching films with 60% indicating that they prefer it. This is so because isiZulu is the primary language in the country with speakers accounting for 22.7% of the population.<sup>1</sup> Afrikaans, isiXhosa, Sepedi, Setswana and Sesotho follow, in that order. The least preferred languages were XiTsonga, Tshivenda, SiSwati and IsiNdebele. In addition, 79% of the respondents indicated that they would watch films with subtitles showing that they are open to consuming films in languages other than the ones they speak or understand.

<sup>1</sup> [SA-Venues](#)



*Figure 16 Consumer language preferences, by where they prefer to consume*

This trend corresponds with the 2015 report where the findings revealed that besides English, a greater proportion of respondents indicated that they preferred isiZulu as a language to watch films in, followed by Afrikaans, isiXhosa, Sepedi, Setswana and Sesotho, in that order. The least preferred languages were XiTsonga, Tshivenda, SiSwati and IsiNdebele.

Apart from English, most respondents preferred isiZulu as a language in which to watch South African films and TV on the preferred TV platform of consumption as shown in the graph below. This is followed by isiXhosa and Afrikaans.



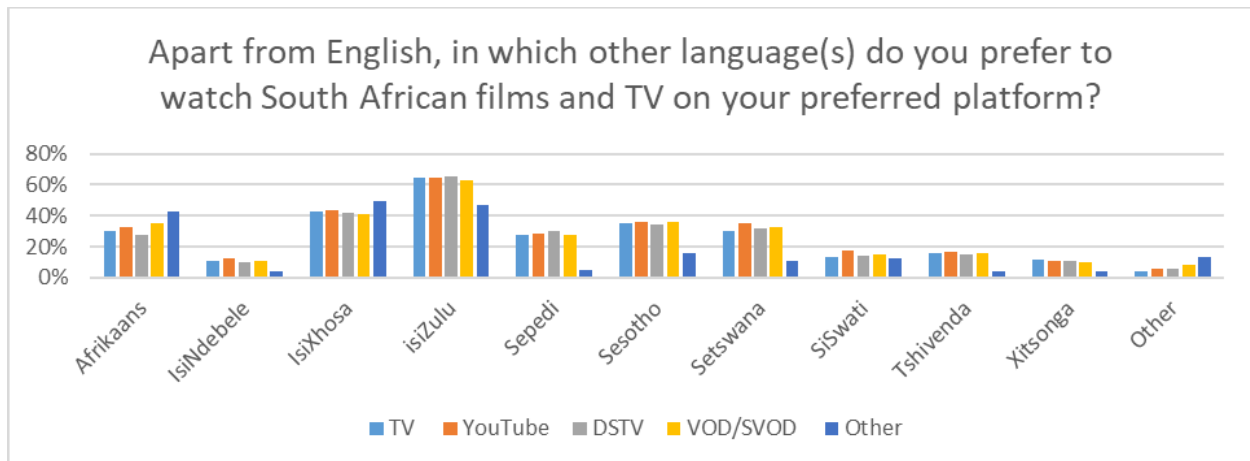


Figure 17 Consumer language preference by preferred platform

Across all genres, the data indicated that respondents preferred to watch movies in IsiZulu. Each genre scored between 59% and 73% while other languages like XiTsonga scored between 10% and 17% across all genres. The graph below shows the top five genres, namely Action, Comedy, Drama, Reality Shows and Romance, and the top five languages, isiZulu, isiXhosa, Sesotho, Setswana and Afrikaans.

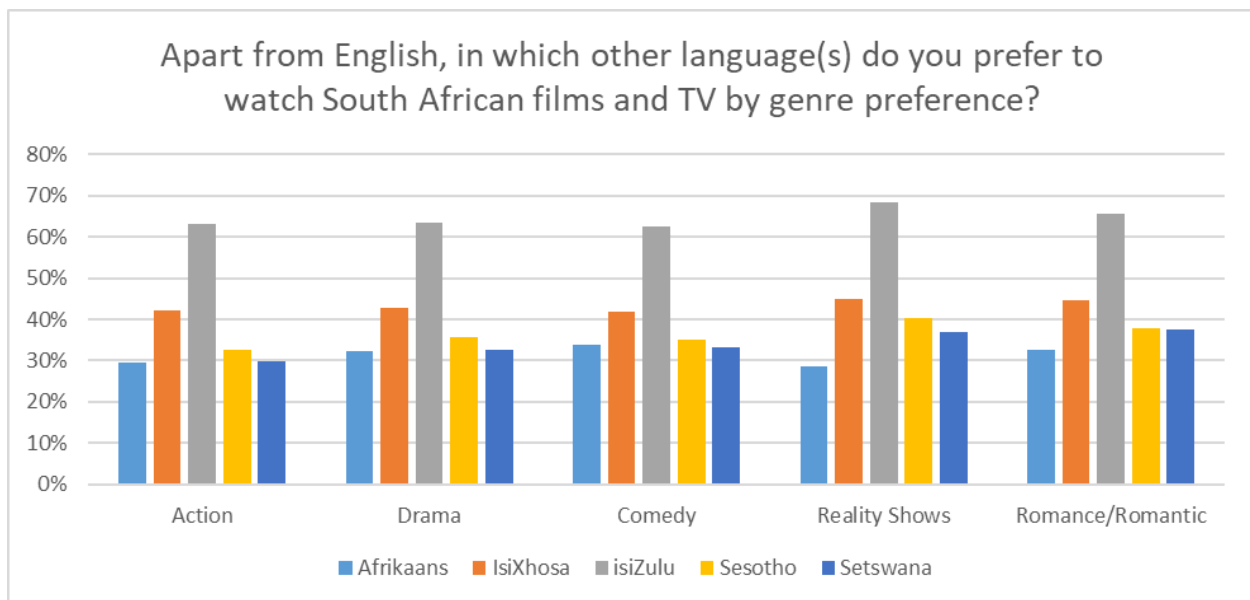


Figure 18 Consumer language preference, by preferred genre

### 3.1.3. Local vs international film

The survey gave the respondents an opportunity to rank South African film in relation to various contexts such as storyline, cast performance, and technical production quality among others. Seventeen percent of the respondents said that the visual and cinematography standard of South African film was excellent while 2% said it was very bad and 36% said it was good. When it came to the inclusion of local content, language, and culture, 23% of respondents said local film was excellent in that area while 31% said it was good and another 2% said it was very bad. For the storylines, 35% of respondents indicated that storylines were good and only 14% said they were excellent. Twenty-six percent of the respondents indicated that the technical production quality was very good and a small percentage (2%) said it was very bad.

When asked what they found most likeable about South African films, 65% of respondents indicated that it was because they featured characters they could relate to. This corresponds well with the data collected about preferred languages. The fact that the majority of respondents like films because of characters they can relate to shows that they like to watch films featuring actors who speak their language and understand their culture, making them familiar and easy to identify with. When it comes to television shows, respondents indicated that what they liked most (60%) about the shows were the actors and actresses they featured; 51% said these were characters they could relate to and identify with while 50% said they liked content that is specific to South Africa. The rest of the respondents said what they found most likeable were the images and landscapes as well as content in general. When asked what they did not like about South African films, 31% said it was the general production quality while 17% said it was the content in general. For South African television 30% said that they did not like the general production quality and 30% said they did not like the social commentary featured in South African television.

The survey did not ask respondents what their preferences were in relation to international films except for questions related to the cost of watching films at cinemas, which shows that 53% of respondents are prepared to pay between R90 and R109 to watch international films compared to the same percentage being prepared to pay the same amount to watch South African films at cinemas. However, in addition to the audience survey, an external stakeholders survey was conducted. One of the questions asked was for respondents' opinions on the demand for South African film and video content in relation to foreign content. The majority (47,4%) of the external stakeholders believed that there is less demand for South African film and video compared to

foreign content. This data matched the responses from the distributors survey, which indicated that 61,5% of the respondents said there is less demand for South African films.

### 3.1.4. Rating South African films

In the audience survey, the respondents were asked to rate South African films based on various aspects such as visuals/cinematography, storyline, cast and characters, performance of actors and actresses, and technical production quality among others. Of the respondents who indicated that they preferred watching movies at home, only 1% said the visuals/cinematography was very bad while 18% said it was excellent. Of the same group of respondents 27% said that South African film storylines were very good and 28% of those who like to go to the cinema agreed that storylines were very good. Thirty-four percent of those who like watching movies at home said the technical production quality of South African films was very good and just 1% said it was very bad.

The survey asked film consumers and non-consumers to rate South African films. In this regard, 28% of film and TV consumers rated film characters as very good while 29% of non-consumers rated them the same. Looking at the historical and political content of South African films based on the ratings of film and TV consumers, only 2% said it was very bad while 25% said it was very good. Of the non-consumers 27% rated local content in relation to language and culture to be very good. When it came to rating South African films in terms of entertainment value, both consumers and non-consumers rated the films as very good with scores of 24% and 28% respectively.

Fifteen percent of the respondents who prefer Comedy as a genre rated the storylines of SA films to be excellent while 12% of those who preferred Animation also rated storylines as excellent. Only 1% of the respondents who preferred Drama rated the storylines of South African films as very bad and another 1% of those who prefer Action also rated it as very bad. Cast performances were rated excellent by scores of between 19% and 27% across all genres.

There were significant shifts in the ratings of South African films by comparison with data from the 2015 report. In 2015 the report aggregated the 'excellent', 'very good' and 'good' ratings in the context of South African films as follows:

- Actors and actress performance – 75%
- Entertainment value – 72%
- Film characters – 71%
- Local content representative of South African languages and culture – 71%
- Storylines – 70%
- Visuals/Cinematography – 70%
- Historical and political content – 66%
- Availability in other official languages beside English – 65%
- Technical production quality – 65%
- Local content representative of South Africa's natural environment and wildlife – 63%

### 3.1.5. Key insights on audience preference trends

Since 2015 when NFVF released its previous Audience Development Research report, there have been many significant changes in the general social and economic environment, which have had an impact on perceptions and attitudes towards South African film. In 2015 survey, a greater proportion of adults (27%) said that locally made films should be cheaper, followed by 26% who said that foreign-made films should be cheaper. In 2022, the data shows that respondents believe that both local and international content can be price matched. This was shown by the amount of money respondents preferred to spend to watch either a South African or an international film. Some respondents indicated that they would be prepared to pay more than R129 for both local and international films alike.

Notwithstanding the rise in inflation during the years between 2015 and 2022, the data indicate that respondents increasingly consider South African films to be of sound production and content quality, thus encouraging consumers to accommodate rising prices as they feel the products are worth it. On the other hand, in the 2015 report, the findings revealed that a larger proportion (45%) of respondents were willing to pay less than R50, followed by 24% who indicated that they were willing to pay between R50-R100 to watch a film. Around 12% said they were not willing to pay anything and 11% said they were willing to pay 'whatever it costs as long as they like the film'. Once again, the data show the rise in inflation and cost of living between 2015 and 2022 while also indicating that some respondents cared more about whether they liked the film or not than about the cost of watching it. From the 2015 report, 25% of respondents were of the opinion that

they preferred the content of locally produced films, and 18% said they preferred the content of foreign films. The 2022 survey did not ask questions related to this.

Turning to premium broadcast services, the 2015 report indicated that most adults in the survey (64%) said they did not watch films on premium TV, while only 36% of respondents said they did. The 2022 survey indicated that 81% of respondents were subscribers to premium channels. However, the percentage of respondents who watch films on premium services, namely DSTV Box Office, was 41%. This means that although many respondents have subscriptions to premium services, they prefer to watch films on platforms such as Netflix, Showmax, YouTube and others. Given that trends have shifted towards VoD and SVoD (subscription video on demand) services that require an internet service, the 2022 survey revealed that only 22% of respondents are prepared to pay more than R500 a month for internet, while only 4% said they could pay up to R50 a month.

Both reports revealed that there are a number of aspects that inform audiences' choices. In the 2015 report, a larger proportion of the adults (19%) said it was the type of film (genre, format, quality, and storyline) that influenced their choice. In the 2022 survey, a greater proportion (59%) of respondents indicated that their choice of film was dependent on their mood while 44% said it depended on a recommendation or word of mouth. This shows that people follow prevailing trends and tend to watch what others are watching or have enjoyed. There is a significant difference in the findings from the 2015 survey where just 17% of adults indicated that their mood informed their choices with 13% saying they were swayed by award nominations. What both reports suggest is that there are several ingredients that inform audiences in making film choices; it should be taken into consideration that all these factors are key in designing an audience development strategy.

## 3.2. Consumption Contexts and Access to SA Film and TV

From pre-production to distribution, the film industry plays an important role in the economy of the country. It generates substantial employment, stimulates growth, brings in valuable foreign exchange and it is one of the ways through which technology is transferred and the South African skill base is upgraded. The film industry is also one of the best forms of promotion for the country. This section presents data on the performance of South African film content on different platforms and the highest earning genres. Data related to Box Office revenues and the market share of South African film content is also presented. It also presents the fastest growing platforms where South African film has been aired as well as the impact of COVID-19 on performance of South African film content. Streaming video on-demand (SVOD) services have successfully unbundled video, lowered costs to consumers, and ignited fierce competition among providers. Streamers and studios are challenged to attract and retain younger generations who have grown up with smartphones, social media, and video games, which deliver finely tuned experiences that are social, interactive, and immersive. This section also provides insights into the respondents preferred platforms for film consumption and habits.

### 3.2.1. Overview of performance of film content

According to the NFVF South Africa Box Office Report 2020, revenues for the year 2020 amounted to R214 million, a decline from R1.2 billion when compared to 2019. In 2020, South Africa released 96 films at the box office, six of which were locally produced. These locally produced films earned a total of R7,6 million in box office revenues. The market share of locally produced films in 2020 was 3.5% and the highest-grossing films in South Africa were:

- Bad Boys for Life (grossing more than R51.5 million).
- The Croods: A New Age (at R12.5 million).
- Dolittle (at R10.6 million).

The highest earning genres were Action/Comedy/Crime followed by Animation, and thereafter Action/Adventure.

In 2020, there was a national lockdown that commenced in March in response to the surge in infections as the Covid-19 pandemic expanded across South Africa. Cinema chains such as Ster-Kinekor, Nu Metro, Cine Centre and other independent cinemas closed. This had a severe impact on the performance of theatrical films as their lifespan on circuit was cut short. The analysis given in the 2020 NFVF report included films that were released in South Africa between January and March 2020 as well as in August and December 2020 and excluded the 5 months when cinemas were closed.

NFVF research suggests that South Africa's film industry created 31 444 full-time equivalent jobs prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, but this declined to just 12 775 jobs in 2020-2021.<sup>2</sup> South Africa was the first African country to have its content streamed on Netflix, with the premiering of *Shadow*, a South African thriller series, in March 2019.<sup>3</sup> In January 2020, Netflix premiered the series *Queen Sono*. Since then, Netflix has partnered with local production houses to create shows such as the Reality TV series *Young, Famous & African*. The company has invested more than R2-billion in South Africa, creating jobs for about 1 900 people over the past five years.<sup>4</sup>

When it comes to viewing, the contemporary digitally connected world is driving profound changes in the way audiences rent, purchase, and watch films. The NFVF's 2015 report assessed audience attitudes and behaviours in the rapidly evolving media environment. Respondents were asked to indicate if they watch films via VoD or DSTV Box Office. Of the 1 694 participants surveyed, only 21,25% indicated that they watched films on VoD or DSTV Box Office. There are three fee-based business models determining how consumers access: firstly, rentals as a single transaction or pay-per-view (transactional-VoD or TVoD); second, rentals as subscription-based services (subscription-VoD or SVoD); and third, digital purchases via download or permanent cloud-storage (video downloads, also known as electronic-sell-through or EST).<sup>5</sup> Data released by Statista<sup>6</sup> in November 2021 provide essential context to understanding consumption trends for VoD in South Africa. These data show that revenue in the VoD segment is projected to reach US\$240m in 2022; the number of users is expected to amount to 13.4m by 2026. Revenue is expected to show an annual growth rate (Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) 2022-2026) of

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<sup>2</sup> [Mail & Guardian, March 2022](#)

<sup>3</sup> [OkayAfrica](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Mail & Guardian, March 2022](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Market definition, Statista](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Market definition, Statista](#)

9.05%, resulting in a projected market volume of US\$339m by 2026. The largest segment is subscription video streaming (SVoD) with a market volume of US\$228m in 2022. According to the same data, user penetration will be 19.8% in 2022 and is expected to hit 21.1% by 2026.

In 2021 NFVF reported that a total of 104 locally (South African) and internationally produced films were released in South Africa between January and September 2021, generating total gross box office earnings of R126.6 million. Of the full universe of films released, there were only nine South African films with gross box office revenue reaching R1.4 million. Of these nine movies, four were independently released while three were State Theatre productions. These three were later released at selected Ster-Kinekor theatres as a result of the strategic partnership between the South African State Theatre and Ster-Kinekor Theatres aimed at screening theatre productions in cinemas. The remaining two films were released by Indigenous Film Distribution and Filmfinity.

Covid-19 delivered a shock to the market share of local films flowing from the halts in production work and the closure of cinemas. As a result, the market share of South African produced films fell to 1% in 2021 from 3% in 2018 and 4% in 2017.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, the trend shows that Netflix is committed to South Africa for the long term and is investing in talent both in front of and behind the camera. Since Netflix launched in 2016 in South Africa, it has been working with South African creators and distributors to bring high-quality stories that showcase the best of South Africa's creativity and talent to a global audience.

### 3.2.2. Preferred platform for film consumption and habits

A sizable 81% of respondents indicated that they paid a subscription for premium broadcasting services such as provided by M-Net. Only 11% said they did not pay any subscription for TV services. This tracks the group of respondents who either have low incomes, are unemployed, or do not have a device from which to watch such content. Fifty-seven percent of respondents said their preferred platform for consuming content was via broadcast TV (SABC or eTV). This corresponds with data showing that 96% of respondents had one or more TV sets in their households. However, the data also show that respondents consume films via various platforms

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<sup>7</sup> [NFVF FAQs](#)



such as YouTube (42%), VoD/SVoD such as Netflix and Showmax (46%), and DSTV (41%). There is evidence that the use of the internet to access film content increased substantially as YouTube and VoD/SVoD services require an internet service to facilitate access. By contrast, 31% of respondents indicated that they preferred going out to the cinema to watch films while 3% said they preferred platforms other than those referred to in the questionnaire. In addition, the data showed that 71% of respondents owned a computer and apart from watching films via a TV set, people used their laptops. Furthermore, 53% of respondents said they owned a DVD player suggesting that some viewers continue to consume films via DVD.

Data from the survey showed that 50% of respondents prefer watching broadcast TV (SABC, eTV). This response may be attributed to the issue of affordability and the fact that broadcast TV content is accessible after paying just the annual TV licence fee of R265 which is within the budget of many. On the other hand, MultiChoice's DSTV Premium and DSTV Compact Plus subscriber numbers have been declining as a result of its shift in focus to offer an enhanced value proposition to mass-market customers through lower-tiered DSTV bouquets.<sup>8</sup> Sixty-eight percent of respondents indicated that they preferred watching DSTV while 41% said they preferred watching TV on Netflix, Showmax and other VoD platforms. A further 37% stated that YouTube was their preferred platform for watching TV. This is attributed to expanding content publishing on YouTube including by mainstream media channels covering news and entertainment broadcasting. Moreover, YouTube TV allows streaming of live and local sports, news, programming from 85+ mainstream or cable channels including CBS, FOX, NBC, HGTV, TNT, and more.

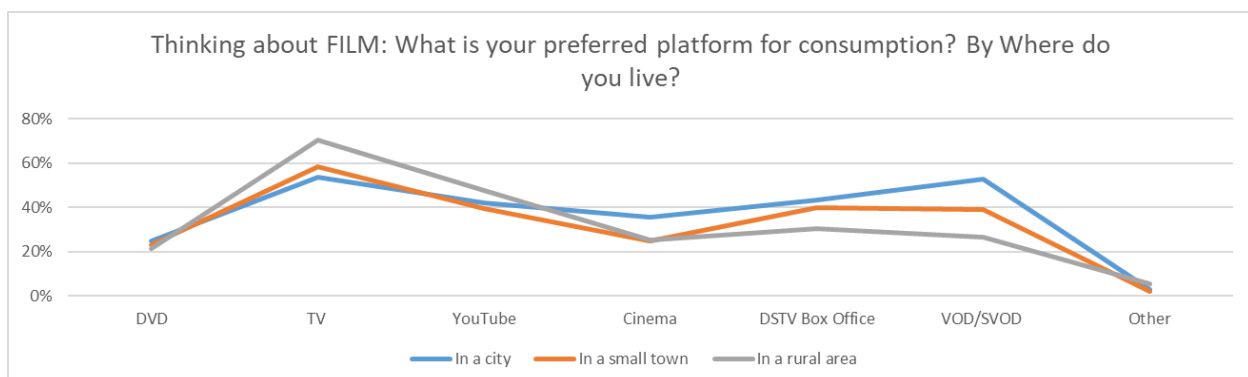
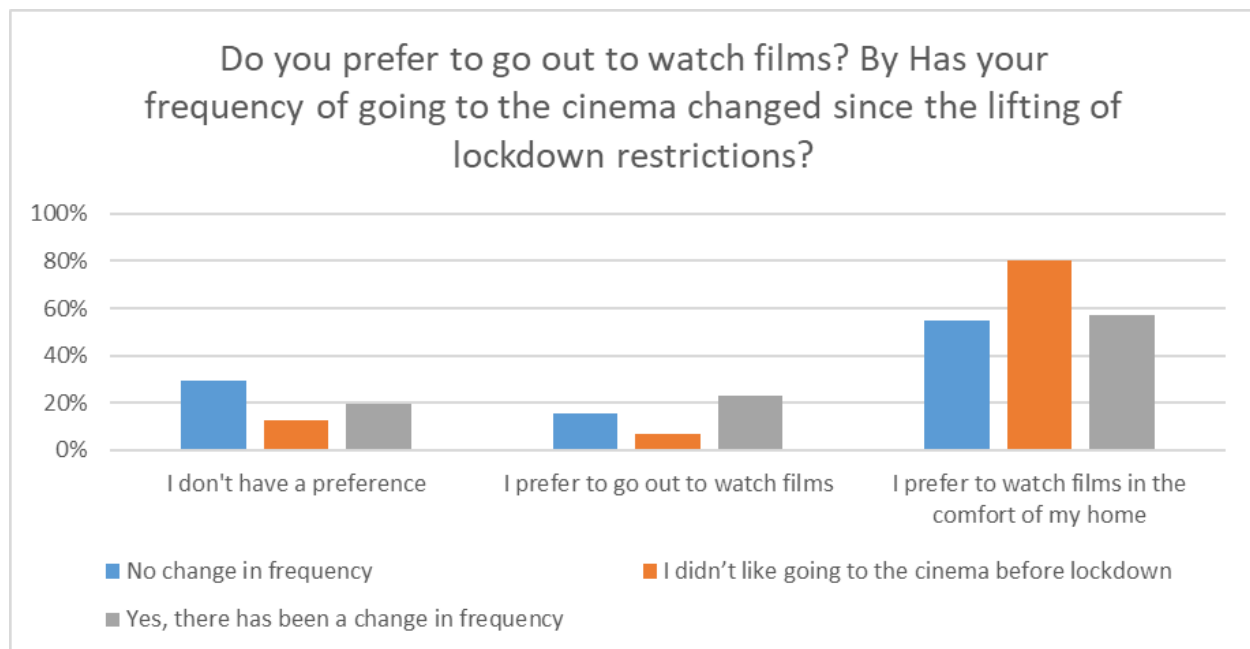


Figure 19 Film consumer platform preferences by where they live

<sup>8</sup> [Channel 24](#)

### 3.2.3. Consumption habits of South African audiences

Of the 2345 participants in the survey, a sample of 1460 respondents were asked to indicate if they preferred to go out, or to watch films in the comfort of their home. They were also asked to say whether their frequency of going to the cinema had changed since the lifting of lockdown restrictions. A large number (61%) reported that they preferred to watch films in the comfort of their homes. However, it is instructive to consider what the data reveal about those who did not have a preference and about those who preferred to go out. Of this sample, 775 respondents indicated that there was no change in their frequency of going out to watch movies at cinemas. Twenty-nine percent of those indicated that they did not have preference while 16% indicated that they preferred to go out to watch films.



*Figure 20 Cinema versus home viewing preferences and impact of the covid pandemic*

Another sample of 1504 respondents were asked to indicate what else they do when they go to the cinema. Twenty-eight percent reported that they participate in other entertainment, 27% consume food and drinks sold by the cinema, 25% do shopping and 24% enjoy a meal at a restaurant near the cinema.

To the question about how often they go to the cinema, a sample of 1029 respondents from the total number (2345) were surveyed. Of those, 52% reported that they go weekly; 40% go more

than once a month; 29% go daily and 24% go once a month. Another sample of 1515 respondents from the total number (2345) were asked to indicate when they prefer to go to the cinema. Of those, 26% reported that they go on weekends; 25% go on public holidays and 24% go during the week.

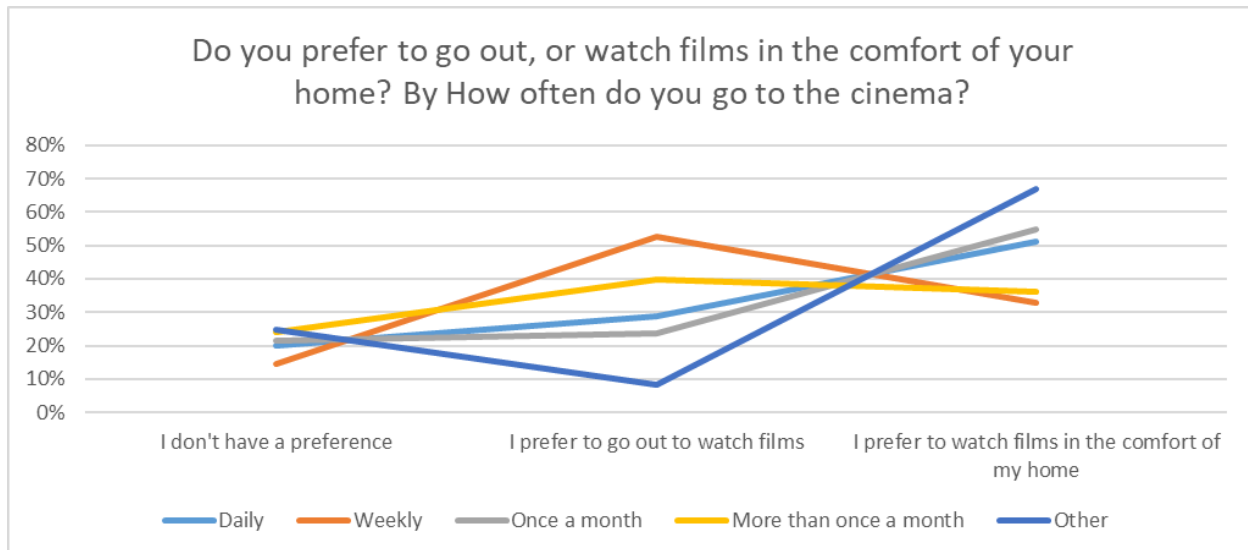


Figure 21 Cinema versus home preferences by frequency of film consumption

### 3.2.4. Barriers to accessing local content

Twenty-seven percent of the total 2345 respondents indicated that they had no access to cinemas at all while 28% said a cinema was within a radius of 10km-30km. This is a limitation for those audiences who would like to go to the cinema as they either cannot access the cinema at all, or they are compelled to spend additional money to access it. The prices of movie tickets have spiked as a result of general inflation in the country, and this may have an impact on access to local content. In addition, the data shows that people undertake other activities such as shopping or eating at a nearby restaurant when they go out to the movies. With the increase in prices of most services and commodities, this can be a barrier for audiences to access local content.

While the majority (87%) of the respondents indicated that they have access to the internet, 13% said they did not. For those who can access the internet, the costs involved means that many still find themselves unable to access local content.

Audience respondents were asked questions about what they liked and did not like about South Africa films. They were given a wide range of factors to select and were asked to pick all aspects that were applicable to them. Thirty percent of the respondents indicated that they did not like the

general production quality and another 30% indicated that they did not like the social commentary. These are elements that can seriously impact access to local content if not addressed.

Covid-19 had a significant impact on both access to and performance of local content. Its eruption led to the closing of cinemas for at least five months from March to August 2020. Forty-six percent of respondents indicated that they used to go to cinemas before the lockdown while 44% said that there had been a change in their frequency of going to the cinema even after restrictions were lifted. This shows that some people continue to feel unsafe in large crowds for fear of contracting Covid-19. Among those respondents who still prefer going to the cinema, 62% stated that they are prepared to pay between R90 and R109 to watch a standard 2D movie whereas before the lockdown, 37% were prepared to pay between R50 and R89. This corresponds with the broader price increases of goods and services and is evidenced by the increase in inflation from 3.27% in 2020 to 4.48% in 2022.<sup>9</sup> However, in the same breath, 53% of respondents indicated that to watch a South African film they are prepared to pay between R90 and R109 while 53% also indicated that they would pay the same for an international film. This suggests that respondents view the quality and value of South African films to be at par with international standards. Ten percent of respondents said they would pay more than R129 for an international film while 12% said they would pay more than R129 for a South African film.

### 3.2.5. Key insights and emerging trends in consumption and access

The impacts of Covid – 19 has had server impact on the film and TV industry. Both from a local production and audience behaviour perspective. The decline in number of local productions produced has impacted the market share of locally produced films. However, through the easing of lock down restrictions the industry is showing positive recovery signs. The introduction of VoDs into the South Africa market has greatly impacted the industry, allowing local producers to produce more local content. It has become clear that there is a strong link between internet usage and video/film consumption. The roll out of fast internet services has resulted in significant behaviour shifts in the way audiences access film content. Studies show that the four fastest growing services of 2020 were Netflix, Amazon, Apple TV+, Disney+ and Showmax. Digital TV Research forecasts 15.06 million paying SVoD subscriptions in Africa by 2026, three times the 5.11 million viewers expected by the end of 2021. South Africa and Nigeria will each supply 2.3

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<sup>9</sup> [Statista](#)

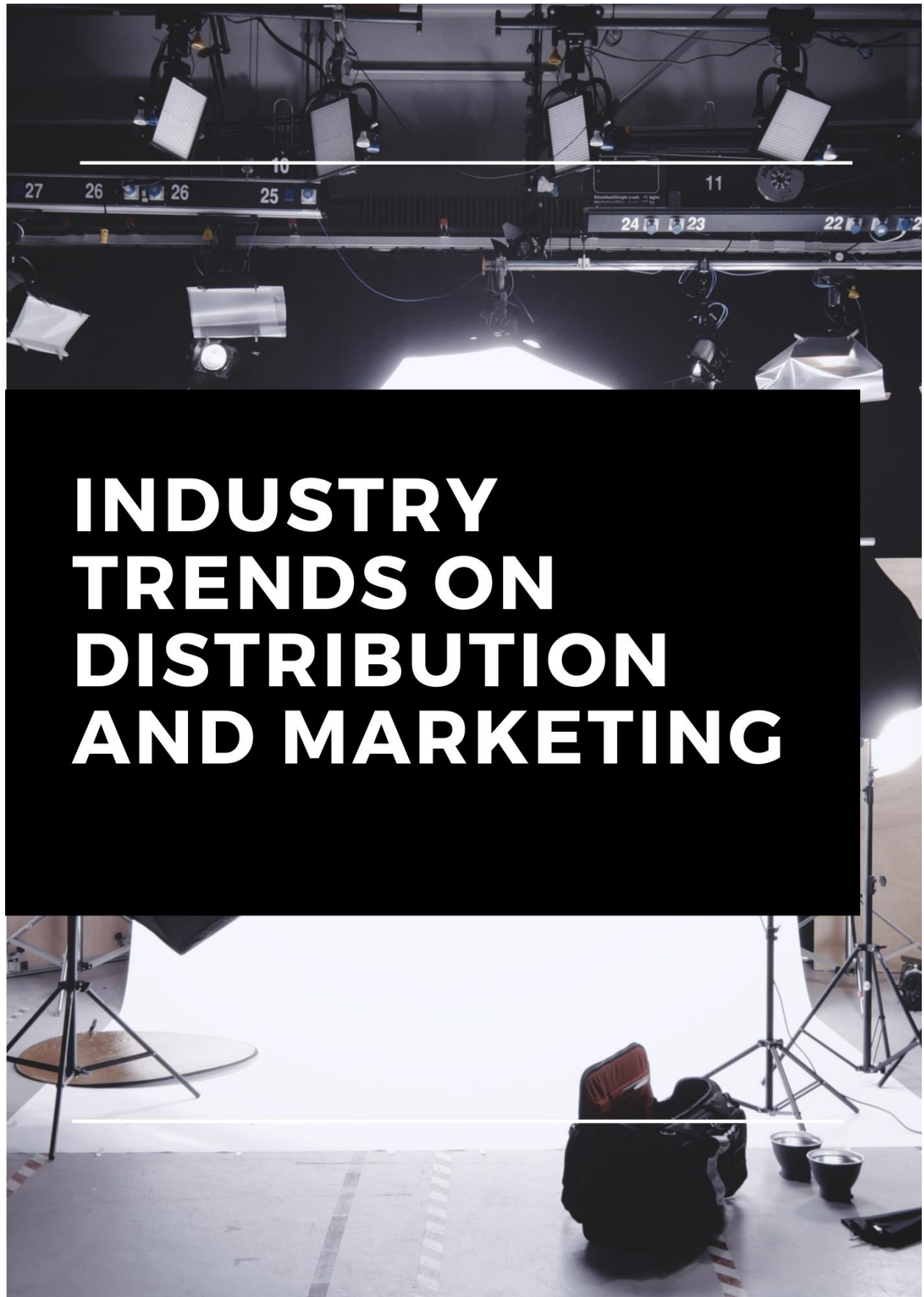
million viewers to the projected 10 million addition. These two nations will be the only African countries with more than 1 million subscribers.<sup>10</sup> Changes in timing require different strategies to be implemented to enhance understanding of audience behaviours and needs and to reach consumers effectively based on their preferences.

A large majority of the population, specifically in rural areas and small towns, still prefer to watch film and TV content mostly on broadcast TV more than on VoD platforms. This can be attributed to low internet access due to high data costs. In South Africa, low-income earning families still do not have equal access to data as they are affected by the poverty premium. The poverty premium refers to the fact that poor people pay more than wealthier people for data. This happens in two ways. Firstly, prepaid data in South Africa costs way more than post-paid or contract data per megabyte. Logically the price for it should be lower because it's being paid up front, but it isn't. Secondly, the price of low-volume, small-value bundles, typically purchased by poor people, compared with the high-volume packages, usually purchased by wealthier users, are highly discounted.<sup>11</sup> As internet access becomes more affordable, one can predict there will be an increase in subscribers of VoD platforms. The rise of VoD and the impacts of COVID- 19 pandemic has further impacted habits of SA film audiences, a large percentage preferring to watch film in the comfort of their homes.

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<sup>10</sup> [Digital TV Research. August 2021](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Digital equality: South Africa still has a long way to go. March 3, 2020](#)



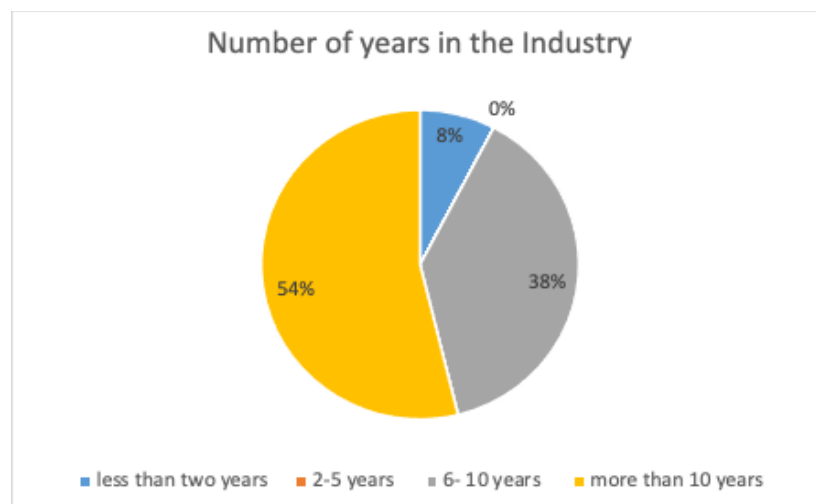
# INDUSTRY TRENDS ON DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING

## 4. INDUSTRY TRENDS ON DISTRIBUTION AND MARKETING

The broader socioeconomic dynamics that are characterising the modern age appear to be intersecting with technology and amplifying change. This is driving more innovation and competition while also putting pressure on the South African film industry to keep up with changing behaviours. The industry is riding a wave of tremendous opportunity amid the turbulence that attends times of significant change like the one we're in. Streaming videos is increasingly becoming the most preferred way to access content not just in South Africa but globally. The COVID-19 pandemic also brought a new set of new habits as more consumers have resorted to their own living rooms for entertainment. This section outlines the industry trends on distribution and marketing of South African film and video content. It analyses the distribution and exhibition platforms for producers. This section also shows the data from the distributors ranking of South African film and video output in terms of development and vibrancy when compared with India, Nigeria and the US.

### 4.1. The voice of distributors and external stakeholder on SA film content and industry

Among film and video distributors participating in the survey, 54% of respondents were established entities in existence for more than 10 years while 8% were established within two years or less of the survey date.



*Figure 22 Number of years operating as a distributor*

All the distributors indicated that they are not part of a franchise. Most (61.5%) of the distributors operate from Gauteng while the rest are based in the Free State, Mpumalanga, and the Eastern Cape. A larger group (61.5%) of distributors indicated that the majority of their clients were people of all age groups. They added that 23.1% of their clients belong to the age group of 21-30 and these data align with findings from the audience research, which indicated that 20% of respondents were between the ages of 5-14 years old and 9% were between 15 and 24 years old. These minor discrepancies could be attributed to the differences in aggregation of the age groups in the two surveys. The survey for distributors also indicated that 15.4% belong to the 41-50 age group and the audience research showed that 23% of the respondents were aged between 25 and 49. The distributors survey showed no individualised data for the age groups 51-66 and above.

#### 4.1.1. Views of distributors on SA film industry, content and preferred genres

Of the distributors, 62% indicated that their clients came from all age groups while 23.1% said most of their clients are Black/African. When asked about the current state of the South African film industry 77% of the respondents indicated that it needed development while 8% said it was poor.

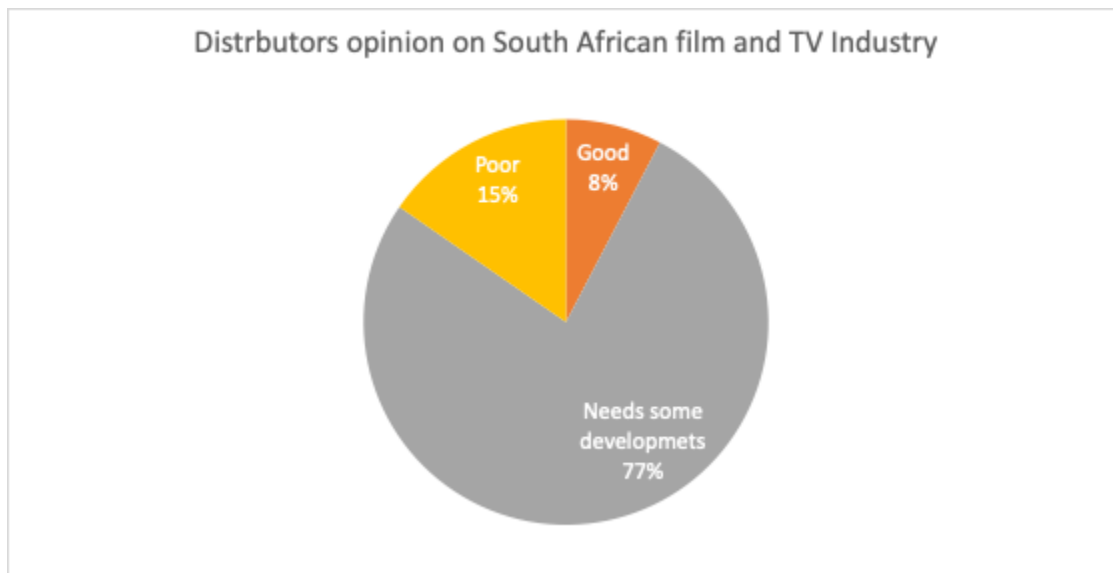


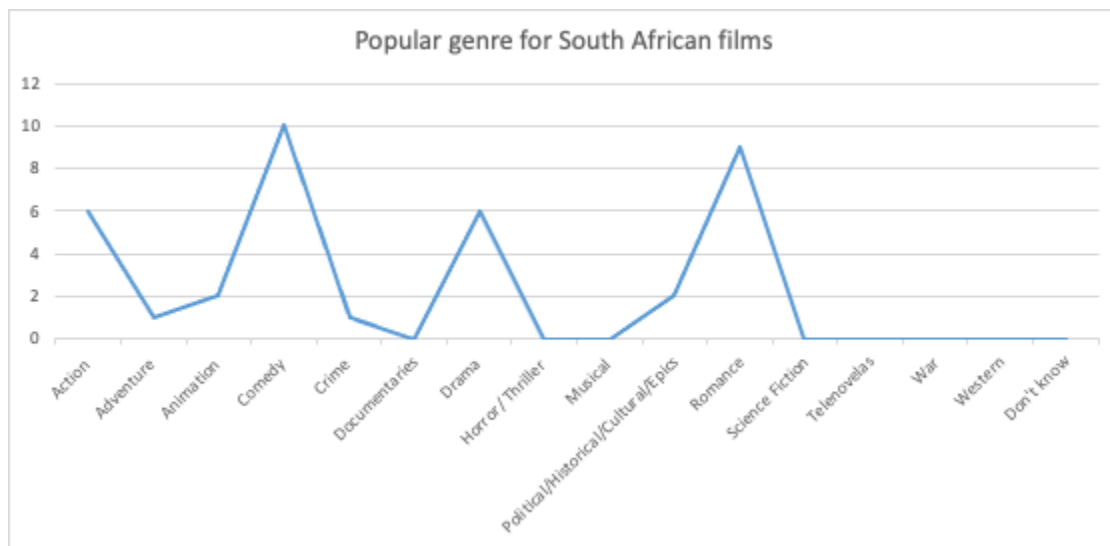
Figure 23 Opinion of distributors on strength of SA film and television industry



In the 2015 report, 37% of respondents viewed the South African film industry's prevailing state as good followed by 35% who thought it needed some development and 22% who were of the view that it was excellent. It is interesting to note the percentage of those who feel the industry needs development is higher in 2022 than it was in 2015 suggesting that there might be scope to investigate circumstances that could be causing a deterioration in industry standards.

Furthermore, the survey sought to find out which South African film the distributors felt was most successful and what they attributed the success to. A larger group of respondents (84.6%) expressed the opinion that Kandasamys: The Wedding was the most successful South African film. The second most successful was Happiness Ever After (76.9%). The respondents attributed the success of these films to the storyline and direction or production quality more than any other element. However, a few respondents attributed the success of the films to other factors such as marketing and promotion and good acting.

When it came to genres, of the distributors who took the survey, 76.9% indicated that comedy was the most popular genre of successful South African films. This aligns with the audience research data, which indicated the same.



*Figure 24 Distributors opinion on popular film genres*

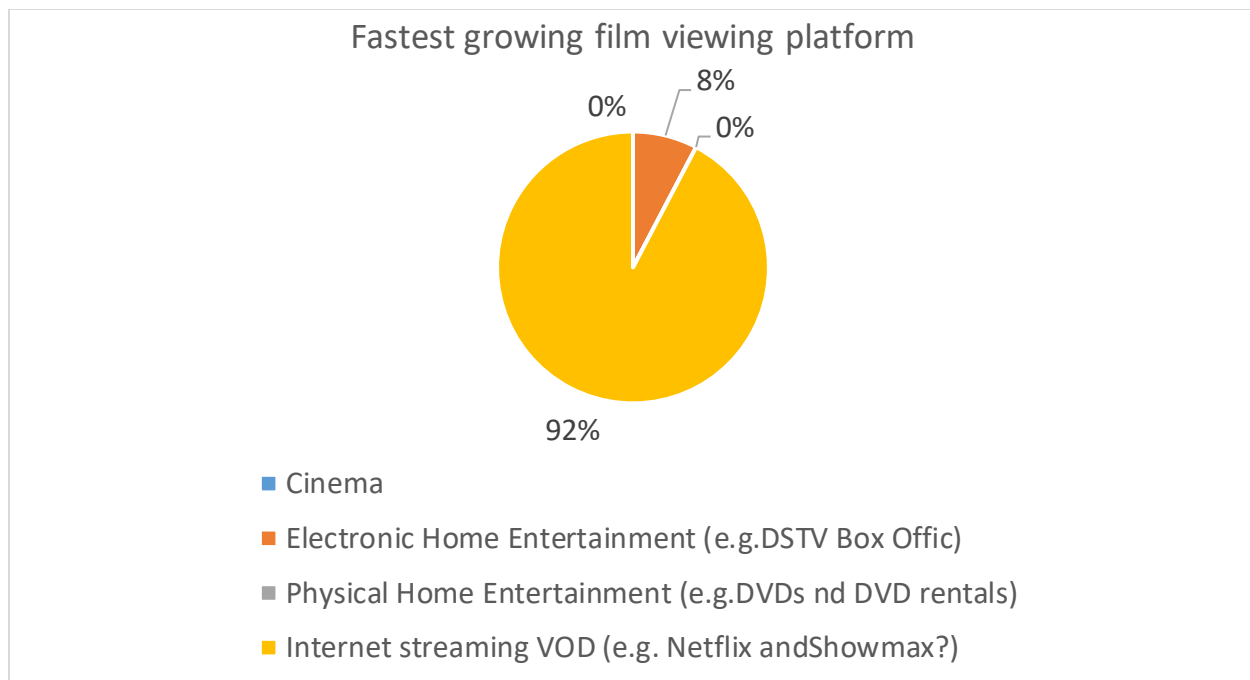
However, while the distributors ranked romance second, the audience research indicated that the second most preferred genre was action. However, genre preferences differed across different

age groups and genders. The distributors indicated that the third most preferred genre was romance and action, each of which scored 46.2%. The distributors were asked to specify the top three popular genres in South African TV; they named telenovelas as the most popular category followed by drama (53.8%) and comedy (38.5%) with crime also at 38.5%.

Of the respondents to the distributor survey, 61.5% said they feel that what audiences like about South African films is the portrayal of characters they can relate to. This aligns with the audience opinion as 65% gave the same response. A film or story would have served its purpose well if the audiences are able to relate to the characters presented. This speaks to the quality and relevance of the content of South African film to local audiences. These findings show that audiences are easily able to identify themselves in the films as they find a resonance with the characters. In addition, given that the South African film industry has made the effort to produce films in all 11 official languages, it becomes even easier for audiences to relate to the characters shown. Furthermore, these data show that the films display cultural and social worlds that resonate with the audiences. Respondents ranked characters that audiences can relate to as the most likeable attribute of South African television, with 61.5% sharing the same sentiment. Performances of actors/actresses and cultural content followed with 53.8% and 46.2% of respondents respectively ranking these as their most likeable attributes. However, the 2015 report showed different findings when this same question was put to distributors. In this survey, the highest ranked likeable attribute of South African films was actors/actresses, followed by cultural content and characters they can relate to.

#### 4.1.2. Viewing platforms and cost preferences

When it comes to viewing, respondents in the distributors survey indicated that the fastest growing platform for films is internet streaming VoD. This aligns with the audience research results, which suggest there are growing numbers of devices per household, greater numbers of people accessing the internet and rising numbers of subscribers to online streaming platforms such as Netflix, Showmax and YouTube. Among the distributors who responded to the survey 92.3% considered internet streaming VoD to be the fastest growing television platform in the South African viewing market while 7.7% indicated that electronic home entertainment was the fastest growing.

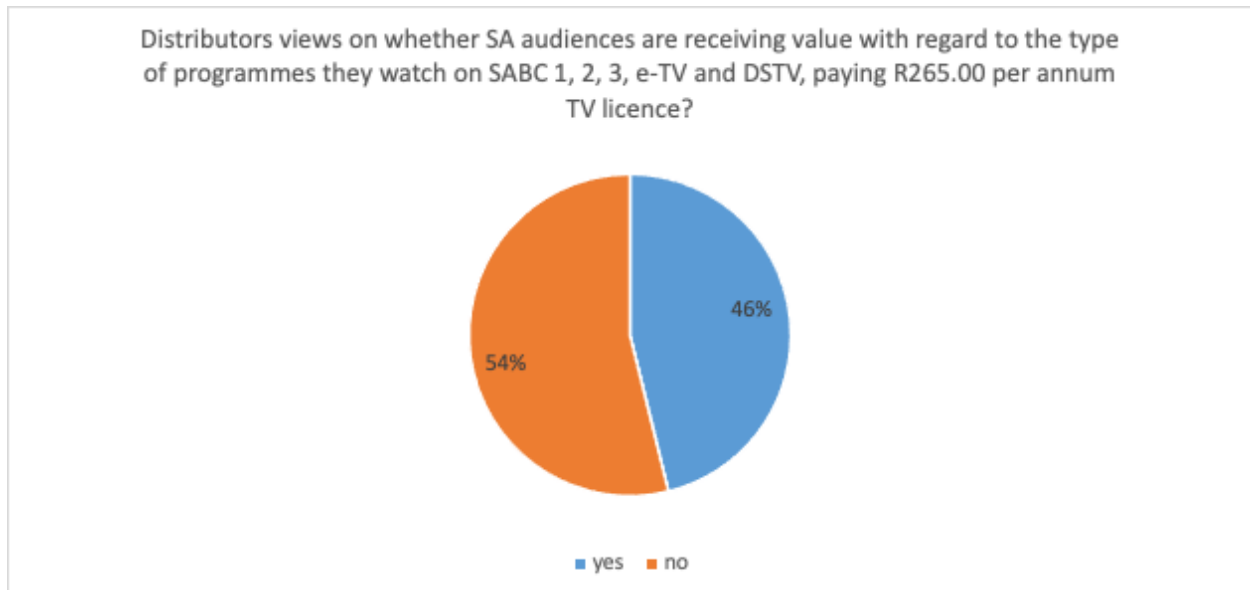


*Figure 25 Fastest growing film viewing platforms according to distributors*

This aligns with the audience data with respondents in that research indicating that 68% preferred to access TV via DSTV. In the 2015 report, respondents also regarded internet streaming and downloading of films as the fastest growing viewing platform for films, followed by electronic, physical visits to the cinema, and home entertainment respectively. This shows that the trends in technology continue moving in the same direction with internet use rising consistently as the primary means of accessing film.

Corresponding to the distributors' survey responses, external stakeholders (93.4%) considered internet streaming as the fastest growing film viewing platform in the South African film market. Research has indicated that in the past few years, both mobile operators and technology companies have made investments in fibre technology infrastructure, which has accelerated internet access to South African homes. This expanded access to the internet and the escalation in its use for reaching audiences corroborates with the surge in availability of internet streaming platforms such as Netflix, Showmax, BritBox, AppleTV+ and others. Similarly for the South African TV market, respondents indicated that internet streaming was the fastest growing TV viewing platform with a score of 71,1%. Other respondents felt that the fastest growing platforms for TV viewing were via internet downloads, broadcast TV, physical home entertainment and YouTube.

When it came to value for money from programming on SABC, 1,2,3, eTV and DSTV, 54% of the respondents indicated that South African audiences were not enjoying value for money while 46% felt that the R265 TV licence fee was commensurate with the low standard of content aired on SABC, which they described as of poor quality with too many repeats.



*Figure 26 Distributors opinions on the value of SABC, eTV and DSTV content*

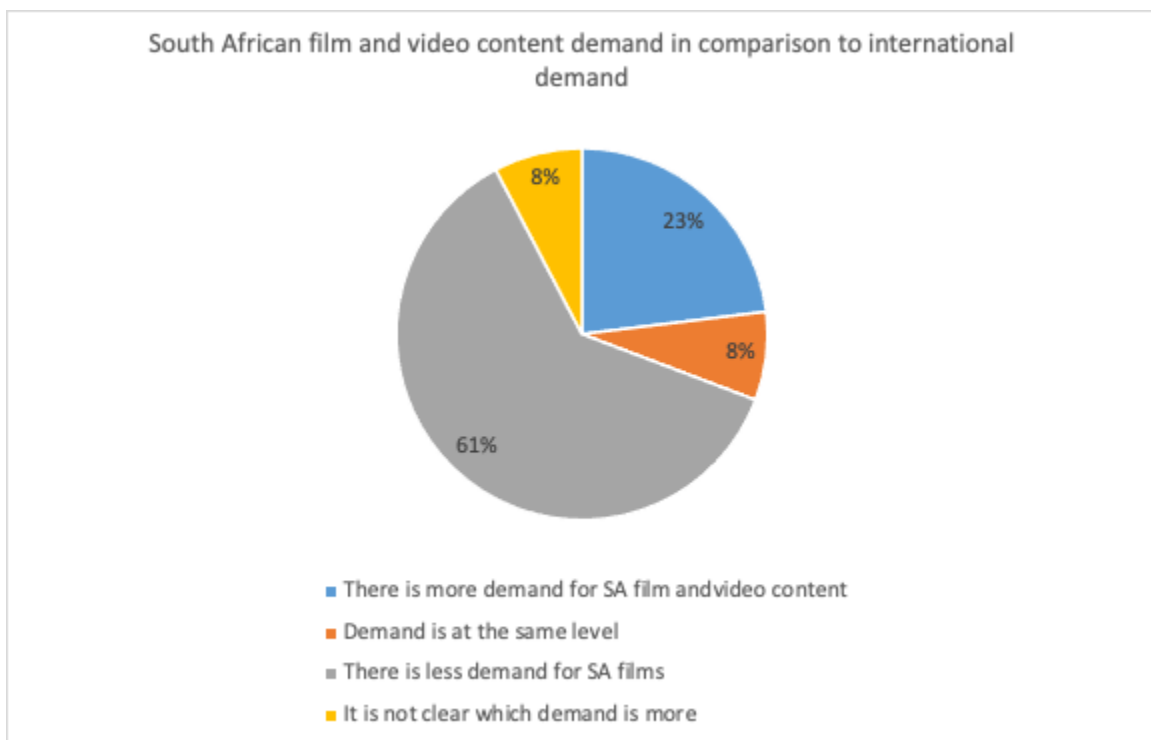
In 2015, the findings revealed that most (75%) respondents thought that South African audiences did not receive value for money from the programmes they were shown in return for paying their TV licence fees; on the other hand 25% of respondents said that South African audiences were experiencing value for money.

The respondents were asked how much they thought audiences were prepared to pay to watch a foreign-made film and 53.8% indicated that people would pay between R50 and R100 while for a locally-made film 61.5% would pay the same amount. This aligns with the audience research where 53% of respondents said they would pay between R90 and R109 for both foreign-made and local films. The respondents indicated that the platforms they believed to be the best value for money for South African film audiences was internet streaming via VoD. Most households pay for the internet, which they use for a range of activities including work and school as well as entertainment, making streaming an affordable way to access films since the cost is already covered. In addition, the monthly subscription of platforms like Netflix is just R100 per month compared to DSTV where bouquets can go up to R799 per month for the premium package. For

premium TV broadcasting, 53.8% believed that SVoD (Netflix, Showmax and so on) offered the best value for money for television viewing while 15.4% believed that DSTV offered the best value for money. The audience research survey did not cover this area.

#### 4.1.3. Local vs international films

The survey asked the respondents how they thought the demand for film and video content made in South Africa performs compared to foreign-made film and video content. More than half (61.5%) of respondents thought there is greater demand for foreign content while 21.3% believed the opposite. A smaller percentage (7.7%) indicated that it was difficult to determine while the rest thought that the level of demand is the same for local and foreign film and video content.



*Figure 27 Distributors opinions on local versus international demand*

In 2015, most of the distribution channels surveyed (58%) said they thought there was less demand for South African film and video content compared to foreign produced content, followed by 17% who thought there was more demand for South African films. The findings showed that a

small proportion of respondents (10%) think the demand is the same while 15% said it was not clear which demand was more. Looking at both reports in this regard it shows that distributors still hold the opinion that there is more demand for foreign film and video content than for local content.

Distributors who were surveyed were asked to state the areas that they felt needed improvement in the South African film industry. A larger proportion of respondents (84.6%) said that storylines and scripts needed to improve while 53.8% indicated that performance (acting) needed to improve while another 53.8% earmarked directing and production quality and still others felt that music and visual effects needed improvement. The table below visualises the responses on this question.

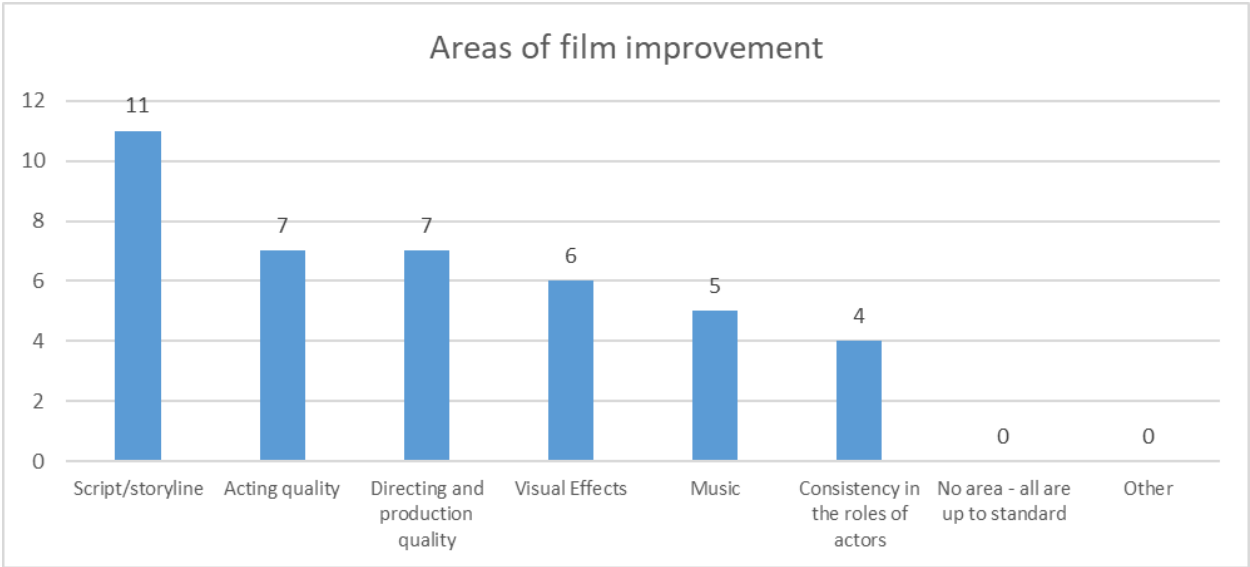


Figure 28 Distributors opinions on areas of improvement

The survey asked distributors what aspects they considered to be most limiting to the growth of the South African film and video industry. A large group of respondents (61.5%) indicated that the general feeling that foreign films were better was a constraint on growth. This can be attributed to inadequate marketing of South African content. The other limiting aspect that respondents identified was the lack of good local content. In this regard, 46.2% of respondents think there is a requirement to boost local content to develop the industry. Continuing improvement of the industry has emerged as an area for attention, noting that the data showed that 76.9% of distributors indicated that the South African film industry needed further development.

In addition to the distributors' survey, the external stakeholder survey of the 85 respondents, 28.9% indicated that they had been in the industry for more than 10 years while 18.4% had just one to two years' experience in the sector. They were asked how they thought South African film and video output ranked in terms of development and vibrancy when compared with India, Nigeria and the US. Most respondents (43,4%) said it was not up to standard although they believed it was improving. A further 21.1% indicated that South African output was competing favourably while 11.8% thought it was actually declining in performance. The majority of the respondents (51.3%) regarded the outlook of South African film and video as promising while 32.9% said that it was very promising. The rest of the respondents either thought that it was not promising, had a poor outlook or were undecided.

#### 4.1.4. Views on SA Audiences

A large number of the distributors in the survey (76.9%) indicated that socio-economic circumstances limit the ability of South African audiences to access local film and video content. These are issues related to unemployment and low levels of household income, which speak to the affordability of either devices and/or subscriptions to the various platforms where South African films are available. A further 30.8% of respondents believe that inadequate distribution affects access to film while another 30.8% said that access was limited due to insufficient supply of local production. Finally, 46.2% of the distributors surveyed said that access to the internet was one of the factors constraining audiences.

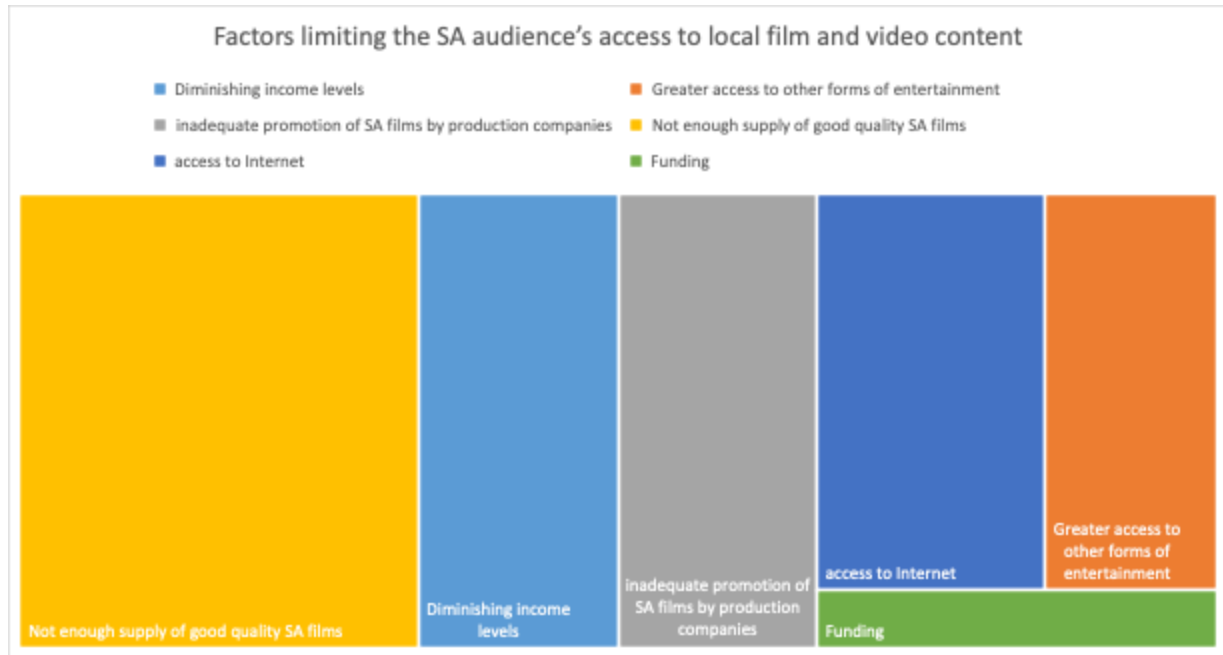


Figure 29 Factors limiting access to local film and TV

This aligns with data collected from the audience surveys, which indicated that at least 40% of respondents can only pay up to R250 per month for internet access. This amount would not allow many people access to online streaming of films on platforms like Netflix and Showmax. Additionally, a further 4% indicated that they do not have access to the internet at all, making the number of people who are limited to accessing films through the internet even higher.

#### 4.1.5. Challenges faced by distributors

The distributors were asked to highlight the obstacles they face in relation to expanding their businesses to reach a wider audience base for South African films. A high number (61.5%) of the respondents bemoaned the lack of good quality local content as the most challenging factor that affects the growth of their audiences. Some respondents noted competition from other distributors as one of the challenges that limited their ability to grow their client bases. However, this suggests that distributors need to work on their marketing strategies in order to attract viewers. They could consider investing in market research especially using new techniques such as human-centred design (HCD), a scientific approach for studying people's behaviour, needs and wishes while they consume products or services. This approach employs an open dialogue and cooperation



between the business, people in research and development, and end-users or customers, including a willingness and ability to change the product based on the findings. Applying this kind of holistic approach to content distribution of South African film will not only enhance marketing strategies but will also ensure that the issues related to quality of content are addressed in a bid to attract larger audiences.

#### 4.1.6. Key Insights on distribution and marketing

The fact that a larger proportion of the distributors asked about the demand of SA film and video compared to foreign content believed that foreign content was more in demand shows that there is still some work to be done on SA content for it to be attractive to SA viewers. Although we are living in a world where globalisation contributes in atrophying identities and destroying local cultural traditions and practices, diluting, even eliminating the uniqueness of national cultures, and establishing a homogenised world culture, it is crucial for the SA film industry to play a role in preserving local cultural traditions and practices.

The distributors who responded to the survey attributed the success of the successful SA films to the storyline and direction or production quality more than any other element. However, a few respondents attributed the success of the films to other factors such as marketing and promotion and good acting. This shows that even for the films that may be rated successful, there is still room for improving them in different areas.

It is undeniable that socio-economic circumstances limit the ability of South African audiences to access local film and video content. The country faces high unemployment levels and low household income and these factors affect the affordability of either devices and/or subscriptions to the various platforms where South African films are available. This creates an inequality among citizens as low income earners who are also mostly historically disadvantaged groups, continue to be sidelined from most aspects of the economy including film. While the distributors also indicated that the fastest growing platform for films is internet streaming VoD, there is also the issue of the cost of internet. From the survey, 40% of the audience respondents indicated they can afford internet of up to R250 per month which does give them the possibility to stream on platforms like Netflix, Showmax etc.

The industry is also faced with issues of poor distribution and insufficient supply of local content. On the other hand, distributors bemoan the lack of good quality local content as the most challenging factor that affects the growth of their audiences. Competition among distributors is also very high causing some distributors to fail to reach their target audience.

## 4.2. Attitude towards advertising and marketing and the most effective advertising, marketing, and promotional strategies to date

This section addresses the questions around the attitudes of consumers towards advertising and marketing and looks at the effective promotional strategies that have been used in the South African film industry. It also shows data on how film adverts or previews influenced consumers' decisions on viewing films in the future.

### 4.2.1. Effective marketing strategies for SA film content

A total number of 2345 participants were asked to indicate to what degree film adverts or previews influenced their decision-making about which films to watch in future. Of the total, 27% of participants indicated that film adverts or previews influenced them heavily; 25% said they were significantly influenced; 24% indicated that film adverts or previews influenced them slightly; 12% said it influenced them very slightly and 12% indicated that film adverts or previews did not influence them at all. The same participants were asked to say whether they think South African content (film and TV) is well marketed. Of those, 46% think that South African content (film and TV) is not well-marketed; 36% think that it is well marketed; 18% said that they did not know whether South African content was or was not well marketed.

A total of 2345 participants were interviewed to share their opinions on their choice of film viewership. Fifty-nine percent reported that their choice is informed by their mood while 56% reported that it is about the type of film. For 47% of respondents, it is about the choice of actors or actresses featured while 44% reported that it is about word-of-mouth or recommendation. The same trend is revealed in relation to choice of TV content viewership with 57% of respondents reporting that their choice is informed by their mood and 50% saying it is about the type of film.

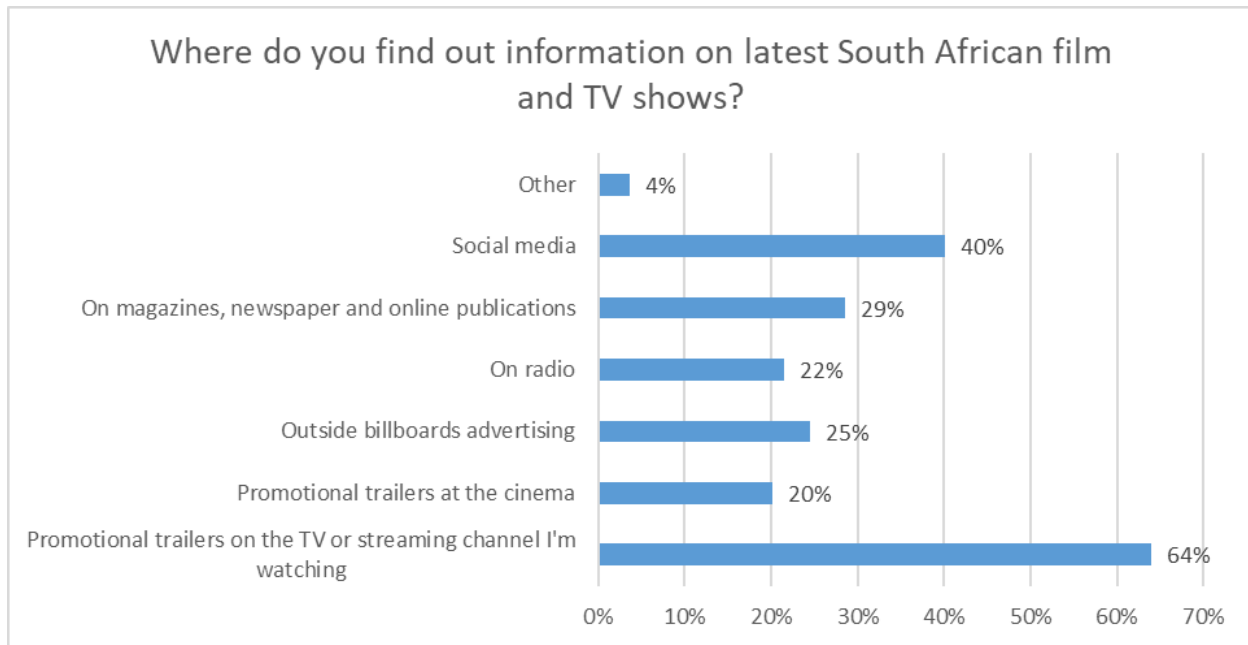
Thirty-one percent reported that social media informed their choice about TV content and film viewership.

To the question about the degree to which film adverts or previews influenced their decision on viewing films in the future, 29% of respondents reported that they were very heavily influenced by this. Only 11% reported that adverts or previews did not influence them at all and another 11% reported that adverts or previews very slightly influenced them. Twenty-five percent reported that adverts or previews significantly influenced them.

Compared with the 2015 NFVF report, which showed that the choice of film viewership was associated with variables such as age, social class, language, lifestyle, and so on, the 2022 survey results show a slight influence of advertising and marketing. In 2022, 36% of respondents believe that South African content (film and TV) is well marketed and 44% believe that it is not well marketed. Twenty-one percent responded that they did not know.

#### 4.2.2. Audience source of information for SA film content

A total of 2035 respondents were interviewed to share where they find information about the latest South African film and TV show releases. Sixty-four percent said that they find such information through promotional trailers on TV or streaming channels; 40% reported finding it through social media; 29% through magazines, newspapers and online publications; 25% through advertising on outdoor billboards; 22% heard via radio. Only 20% reported finding such information through promotional trailers shown at the cinema.



*Figure 30 Where consumers access information on South African film and TV*

The expansion of social media usage in the past seven years has had a significant impact on film and TV content viewership as shown in the graph above. The evolving context requires a clear understanding of consumer behaviour in relation to film and video consumption, and the development of strategies to adjust to new conditions. The surveys show that the key insights and trends emerging in terms of changes in marketing impacts include not only how films are marketed, but also – and more importantly – the type of content as well as the general production quality of the product. The digitally connected environment of today is promoting competition in terms of content, image, landscape, and other production aspects, and this is influencing viewer choice of film and TV content.

#### 4.2.3. Key Insights towards advertising and marketing

Advertising and marketing is key to the success of film. Film Marketing moved past the era of posters and board signs that were used to promote movies and plays. This era demands film marketing through new technology involving the digital world. Film marketing becomes the main selling point of the entire project, without which the movie can easily be a total failure. The research showed that distributors should give more attention to marketing because most of the audience survey respondents indicated that they are either influenced heavily or

significantly by film adverts. It is clear that adverts have an important role to play for audiences to make choices. At the same time, some of the audience respondents also indicated that they think that South African content (film and TV) is not well-marketed. Although 36% of the audience respondents said that it is well marketed, there is need for film distributors to increase the number and quality of film adverts. This will in turn increase their client base.



## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This report shows the emerging trends identifying film audiences in South Africa and the demographic of these audiences. It also built on the 2015 NFVF audience research to learn about South African audiences in this new era after the advent of COVID-19 while also gaining understanding on the consumption patterns and behaviours including indications of permanent shifts as consequences of the pandemic. It also compared data that was analysed to identify shifts in audience behaviours. Given that the research indicated that there has been a shift towards online streaming services, the report also highlighted the impacts this has had on South African audiences and the limitations thereof.

There were interesting alignments that came from the data of both the audience and distributors survey. It was apparent that online streaming services are the epitome of the future of the South African film industry, and it is a good thing that a global market is also readily available due to these services. Opportunities exist for the South African film industry to be competitive on the global scene through platforms like Netflix and Showmax among others.

Based on findings from both surveys, the following recommendations are proffered to improve the quality of SA film, increase its supply, market it competitively and build an ecosystem that can enhance the SA film industry as a whole.

<b>Recommendation 1</b>	Enhancement of local promotion and adverts of SA film
<b>Responsible parties</b>	NFVF and Film commission
<b>Other key role players</b>	Broadcasters and distributors
<b>Recommendation detail</b>	<p>This research reveals that distributors believe that South African film is not adequately advertised either globally or locally, and that this is stunting the growth of the industry. More needs to be done to take advantage of new media and technologies to create and expand awareness of South African film production. Given that the current research noted a growth in internet usage since 2015 when the last report was released, it is important to take advantage of the opportunities that this epoch brings. The industry needs to invest substantially in market research to understand where audiences spend most of their time when online and to target adverts for local content such as movies and videos. Traditional methods such as SMS, billboards, TV and radio remain relatively useful and can be developed to enhance the promotion of South African film. Radio can be used not only to advertise but also to engage in conversation about films or to conduct surveys via telephone or WhatsApp. Distributors can, in addition, invest in competitions with prizes in order to make such radio programmes attractive to more people.</p>
<b>Key considerations</b>	There needs to be an increase in financial support for filmmakers. Government entities that are tasked with the



	promotion and development of film could look at developing a South African film marketing fund
<b>Timeframe</b>	Short term

<b>Recommendation 2</b>	Deepen research to develop uniquely South African storylines and scripts
<b>Responsible parties</b>	NFVF, Filmmakers, distributors, actors/actresses, external experts and selected audiences
<b>Other key role players</b>	Film commissions, film schools
<b>Recommendation detail</b>	<p>The present research indicates that audiences believe that the storylines of South African films are not strong. Thus, an opportunity presents itself to develop high quality storylines and scripts through deepening research to generate uniquely South African productions. Deeper research can be done using systems thinking tools such as the Iceberg Model. Most storylines are based on events, imagined or real. The Iceberg Model is a tool that helps in research to discover the patterns of behaviour, supporting structures, and mental models that underlie particular events. Exploring these submerged patterns will enable a profound awareness of the causes and effects of the event to emerge, thereby enhancing the ability of plots, storylines and scripts to evoke empathic responses among audiences. As with an iceberg, only its tip is visible, while the bulk of it is below the water's surface, i.e., invisible.</p> <p>In addition, it is known that storylines and scripts have the ability to communicate various messages to different</p>

	<p>individuals. This research has indicated that most people like South African films because they are able to relate to and recognise the characters presented. By enhancing storylines and presenting characters that audiences are sympathetic to and can identify with, the South African film industry has the opportunity to disseminate important information that can spark urgency among individuals to contribute to dealing with social, environmental, or economic challenges that the country faces.</p>
<b>Key considerations</b>	<p>This needs to be done in a series of workshops where conversations will be facilitated using the iceberg model with the various stakeholders. A detailed report will be produced to guide filmmakers, producers and actors/actresses in developing storylines that are attractive to the audience.</p>
<b>Timeframe</b>	<p>Short term</p>

<b>Recommendation 3</b>	<p>Increase supply of local content</p>
<b>Responsible parties</b>	<p>NFVF, government departments such as Basic Education and Arts and Culture, private companies, film distributors, performers, artists and designers.</p>
<b>Other key role players</b>	

<b>Recommendation detail</b>	The findings suggest that there is insufficient supply of local productions. In order to increase local content, NFVF should invest in building a learning ecosystem that supports the development of local talent to promote innovation in the South African film industry. A learning ecosystem is a symbiotic environment where people interact with the content, technologies, and data that surround them to facilitate and deliver learning experiences based on the governance guardrails set by the organisation. A learning ecosystem can be broad, open, and accessible to anyone. NFVF can work on understanding how they can build an organisation-specific ecosystem that embraces diversity of content, access, and types of learning. That kind of ecosystem fosters innovation and is more resilient to change than a closed and rigid ecosystem.
<b>Key considerations</b>	To build a learning ecosystem, the focus should be on five building blocks: people, content, technology, data, and governance.
<b>Timeframe</b>	Long Term

<b>Recommendation 4</b>	Human-centred design approach to marketing for film distributors
<b>Responsible parties</b>	NFVF, Film Distributors, Producers
<b>Other key role players</b>	

<b>Recommendation detail</b>	<p>Film distributors interviewed in the research said that competition from other distributors is one of the obstacles that limits their ability to grow their client/audience bases. A solution would be for distributors to invest more aggressively in market research especially using new techniques such as human-centred design (HCD). HCD is a scientific approach that applies a comprehensive view on humans to studying behaviours, needs and wishes while consumers use products or services. The approach employs an open dialogue and cooperation between the business, people in research and development, and end-users or customers, including a willingness and ability to change the product based on the findings. Applying this holistic approach will not only improve marketing but will also ensure that the issues related to quality of content are addressed in a bid to ensure that more audiences are attracted to the content. Although there is no evidence of specific market research that has been done for marketing of film using HCD, many businesses have used it to create solutions for their clients based on their own unique needs. When people have their needs met, they feel good. So, by focusing on consumers, businesses can facilitate meaningful encounters with them, both satisfying their needs and prompting positive brand perceptions from them that translate into greater profitability.</p>
<b>Key considerations</b>	<p>The first port of call will be a series of workshops with the stated stakeholders followed by a design of interview and survey questions based on HCD to gain a better understanding of the consumers, their needs and how those needs can be met.</p>
<b>Timeframe</b>	<p>Short term</p>

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