# Factors of an Effective Video Game Trailer

Jimmy Cheung, Julia Gatoloai-Toilolo, Gerry Geronimo, Alexander Ortega Rivas;
University of Hawai'i West O'ahu

## Abstract

This investigation examined factors related to video game trailers. In this 2x2x2 cross-sectional design, we tested three factors: the gaming experience of the participants (gamers vs. non-gamers), the genre of the game (role playing vs. first person shooter), and the type of trailer they are watching (story vs. gameplay). The experiment surveyed 67 participants to test how likely are they to buy a game before and after watching these trailers. The experiment found a main-effect for genre, and a two-way interaction between gaming experience and genre, with the first-person shooter trailer having less of an impact in increasing the likelihood of purchasing the game for gamers.

## Introduction

Research Questions:

- What are the key factors in creating an effective video game trailer?
- How does gaming experience, game genre, and type of trailer affect changes in the likelihood of purchasing a game?

Hypotheses:

1. Those who consider themselves gamers are more likely to react positively to gameplay trailers.
2. Those who consider themselves non-gamers are more likely to act positively to story trailers.

## Research Design & Data Collection

- $N$ = 67 people participated in an online survey
- The participants were asked to rate how likely are they to buy a game on a ten-point scale before and after watching a trailer. The change/difference in their ratings was used as the main outcome variable.
- Each participant watched four trailers in a random order
- Player Factor
  o Gamer (n=15) vs. Not Gamer (n=52): Participants were asked if they considered themselves a gamer or non-gamer
- Genre Factor
  o Roleplaying vs. First Person Shooter
  o 1st game – *Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice* (Figure 1) represents roleplaying
  o 2nd game – *The Division 2* (Figure 2) represents first person shooter
- Trailer Factor
  o Story vs. Gameplay: Most video games use both types of trailer to attract different types of consumers
  o One story and one gameplay are used for each game, totaling four trailers



**Figure 1.** Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice



**Figure 2.** The Division 2

**Table 1.** Change in likelihood to purchase game based on gaming experience and genre

|  | M | SD | SE |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gamer - FPS | 0.33 | 2.56 | 0.72 |
| Gamer - RPG | 2.60 | 2.35 | 0.65 |
| Non-Gamer - FPS | 2.05 | 2.84 | 0.39 |
| Non-Gamer - RPG | 2.29 | 2.53 | 0.35 |

Note: FPS = First Person Shooter; RPG = Role Playing Game
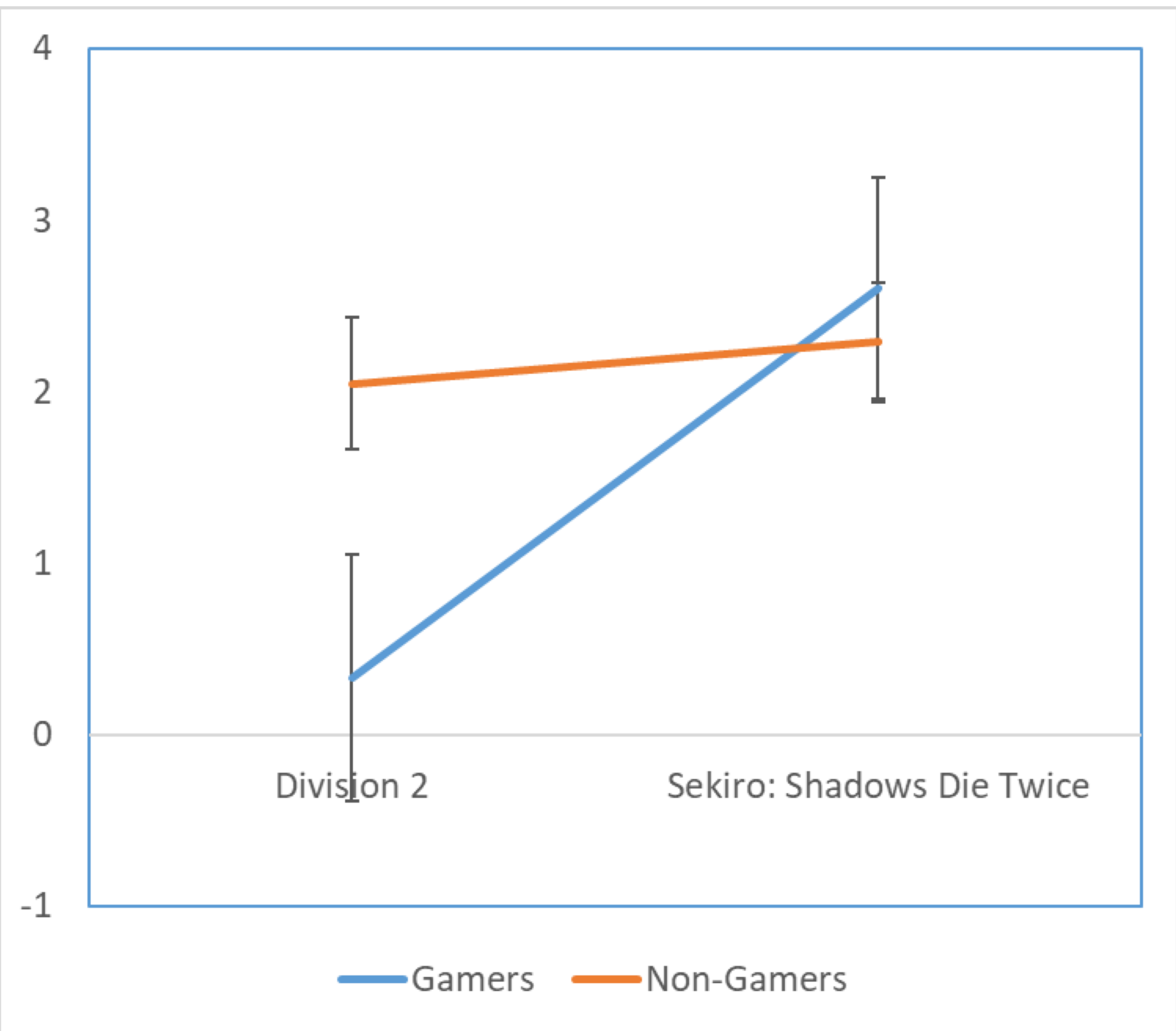


**Figure 3.** Average increase in the likelihood of purchasing game.
Gamer $n$ = 15 participants
Non Gamer $n$ = 52 participants

## Results

- We initially conducted a 2x2x2 mixed-design ANOVA, but none of the terms involving the trailer type (story and gameplay) factor were significant, so we conducted a 2x2 ANOVA between gaming experience and genre
- The main effect of Genre was significant ($F(1,65)=13.28$, $p = .001$), and the Genre by Gamer interaction was significant, $F(1,65)=8.67$, $p = .004$.
- Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice (role playing) produced the greatest increase in likelihood of purchase for both gamers and non gamers by at least 2 points (Figure 1 and Table 1)
- Gamers have a higher increase in likelihood of purchase for Sekiro: Shadows Die Twice but a non-significant increase for The Division 2 (Figure 1)

## Discussion and Conclusion

- Our hypotheses were not supported by the data
  - None of the terms including the Trailer Type factor were significant
  - This changed our initial design of 2x2x2 to a 2x2 design, which compared only the Player and Genre factors
- Non-gamers increased their likelihood to purchase both games after viewing all trailers.
- Gamers are more likely to purchase the RPG but not the FPS game
- The lack of statistical significance may have been due to the small sample size {15-Gamers; 52-Non-gamers}.
- Limitations and Future Directions
  - The trailer type (story vs. gameplay) factor was not statistically significant. Future studies could examine more trailers to represent genres along with a larger sample.
  - Genre type (first person shooter and role playing) can be improved by selecting more games in the specific genre. Future studies could also examine other genres.
  - Experience (gamer and non gamer) was measured with a yes or no self-report question. Alternative operational definitions--such as the amount of hours they play per week—could be used.
  - The results reflected mainly non-gamers with only 15 gamers compared to 52 non-gamers. More gamers are needed for better results.
  - Story and gameplay trailers need to be furthered studied

## Contact

Jimmy Cheung – jimmyjc@hawaii.edu
Julia Gatoloai-Toilolo - gatoloai@hawaii.edu
Gerry Geronimo - gerryger@hawaii.edu
Alexander Ortega Rivas - ortegari@hawaii.edu

## References

FromSoftware, Inc. (2019). Sekiro™ Shadows Die Twice. Retrieved from https://www.sekirothegame.com/

Ubisoft Entertainment. (2018). Tom Clancy's The Division 2 - Xbox One, PS4, & PC | Ubisoft (US). Retrieved from https://tomclancy-thedivision.ubisoft.com/game/en-us/home