

Gratification of Film Viewing in Children

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to understand children's gratification of the English films 1. *Saving Private Ryan (SPR)* and 2. *E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial (ET)*. The study consisted of a sample of 93 school children of grade XI aged between 15-17 years. A film gratification instrument was designed drawing insights from the research studies conducted by Oliver and Bartsch (2010) and Teasley and Wilder (1997). The sample selected for pilot study was 40 school children taken from a government school of Shamshabad district, Telangana. For the film *ET* the statistical exploration showed that the mean score was 42 and the standard deviation was 2.2 during the first pilot testing. In the second phase of pilot test the values are: mean score 43 and standard deviation 2.1. The reliability coefficient (r) was found to be 0.74. Since the reliability coefficient (r) was found to be significant the test was finalized for the main study. For the film *SPR* during the first pilot testing the statistics calculated are: mean score 45 and standard deviation 2.7. In the second phase of pilot test the mean score was 47 and the standard deviation was 2.5. The reliability coefficient (r) was found to be 0.77. Since the reliability coefficient (r) was found to be significant the test was identified for the main study. The research study was quantitative in nature. It was found that the percentage of boys is more in the gratification of films *SPR* and *ET* in comparison to girls. The reason as to why the boys experienced high gratification in comparison to girls may be, both the films are male centric and not much of women and gender roles presented.

Keywords: film gratification, film interpretation, emotions, aesthetics, and film education

Introduction

Emotions play a major role in cognizing and interpreting the world. Their role in understanding and interpreting films is mostly disputing and contesting. Children express emotions in response to various forms of films, novels, television programmes, music videos

or computer games. In recent times, media and media entertainment has become a significant part of one's life. The interface of media and children has captured the attention of media researchers. Abundant documentations have been found in the area of media psychology and not only that, it also assists the principal function of influence in media enjoyment. In

addition, it offers logical clarifications as to why emotional encounters can be worthwhile and fruitful for the consumers of media (Bartsch, 2012). How do children enjoy and experience films? And what substance of films delights and gratifies children? These are some of the fascinating questions in the contemporary film education discourse.

Gratification is an emotional state experienced by people when their wishes and desires get fulfilled. It is a pleasurable, enjoyable and satisfying response. It is very challenging to cognize the manifestation of gratification in all pervading human existence and complex life forms. People's behaviour is determined by neurobiological, social, cultural, spiritual, political and psychological factors and these factors play a critical role in constructing and development of human behaviour. Therefore, the behaviour of gratification gets reflected in all such dimensions of human existence and life. Gratification of sexual, social, cultural, aesthetic, moral and emotional needs motivate and create space for the growth and development of human beings. In the entire journey, from birth to death, humans struggle for experiencing gratification.

Gratification is the essence of human development. People differ and choose different paths to gratify their needs, desires and wishes. Delay in gratification leads to frustration and abnormality. The need for gratification of needs, desires and wishes make human actions very complex and multidimensional. People search, explore and create new opportunities for gratifying their

cognitive needs, affective needs, personal integrative needs, social integrative needs and tension free needs and desires. People involve and participate in various activities to fulfil their needs and desires. Watching and interpreting films are such activities for gratification. In other words people use films as the medium for their own need and get satisfied when their needs are fulfilled.

Gratification theories argue that people use films and media to fulfil their needs and desires. This is very clearly evident in our everyday communication, routine and normal discourses, peer gossiping, considering characters in films as role models and symbols of modernity and fashion. Involvement of youth in damaging the images of actors and celebrities, including living in fantasy and imagination represents their gratification levels of film viewing. Films are used for communication and consumption. People interpret film images, symbols, meanings and content and also integrate them into their lives. According to the gratification theories individuals use films to fulfil other gratifications whether it's to escape or divert from everyday life, relaxation and social interactions although this will also help increase knowledge.

Cupchik (1994) stated that gratification from movies could be of two classes, which are responsive and insightful. The gratification which is responsive takes place when one watches movie for instance for the impression of recreation or nostalgia throughout the experience of media (Oliver 1993, Zillmann 1998). The insightful level of gratification can be gained by the spectators through

the process of introspection or from the opinions of creative worth (Oliver 2007). The insightful level of gratification may be stimulated through development of movie appreciation (Lee, Cha & Nam, 2015).

Cupchik and Winston's (1992) reactive processing illuminates an addition of the composition-reaction pattern. For them it administers finest if the intention of a receiver in an artistic occurrence is to encounter enjoyment or fulfilment. The acquirer will concentrate on motivation aspects that produce enjoyment or stimulation. The receiver or recipient may choose precise linguistic patterns, which might be based on the past experiences, or on the other hand the receiver might observe properties, which collate for instance familiarity. The receivers combine stimulus configurations with pleasure and excitement through a learning process (Cupchik, 1994).

In this context Cupchik (1994) says "stimulus configurations are closely linked to bodily reactions lying along pain-pleasure and arousal dimensions. Since linkage implies association, this in turns opens the door to other learning mechanisms such as conditioning, habituation, and stimulus generalizations. Thus, if conditioning serves to make a particular stimulus feature familiar and pleasurable, then repeated exposure to the stimulus should reduce its reward value through habituation. In this manner, bodily mechanisms can modulate both every day and aesthetic experiences" (p. 184, 185). Cupchik and Winston (1992) with regard to insightful handling assume the appropriate significance-

emotional aspects of artistic exercise. The diversified landscape of the artistic labour is of vital significance. As a result, meaning is dependent on the harmony or associations among the diverse stages of bodies in the work.

Oliver and Bartsch (2010) state that the on-going work from the viewpoints of functions and fulfilments has stressed a major devotion to the intricate fulfillments that are linked through the usage of media (considering impressions, grasp Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973; Rubin, 2008; Ruggiero, 2000). The authors further go on to say that gratifications are studied in view of the pleasure-seeking wish and consideration like the usage of recreation for the objective of conquering isolation (e.g., Perse & Rubin, 1990), for breaking away with problems (e.g., Herzog, 1944), or purely frittering time away (Rubin, 1983). Nevertheless, additional fulfilments like viewing films for the objective of gaining particulars, enhancing the reputation, or civil relations (Rubin, 1983) are no more easily elucidated in pleasure-seeking agreements and are thus deliberated to decrease outside the pleasure dimension.

Oliver and Hartmann, (2010), Knobloch-Westerwick et al., (2012), Bartsch, Kalch, & Oliver, (2014), Eden, Hartmann and Reinecke (2014), studies support the view that the audience may engage with the challenges presented by the media content emotionally and cognitively. Such self-reflective experiences enable viewers to explore their own self and the world around. Unlike the hedonic perspective that concern to pleasurable media experiences, the eudaimonic

perspective focuses on very serious and heavy content. Nevertheless, the welfare perspective on media enjoyment is different from the perspective of self-indulgent hedonism, which shows the engaged role of spectators in pursuing battles for the aim of self-improvement.

The reactive type of gratification takes place when watching films for a thought of delight, enthusiasm, or melodrama in time of introduction to media (Oliver 1993, Zillmann, 1988). The audience can achieve the reasoning achievement of fulfilment through introspection or the opinions of aesthetic importance (Oliver, 2007). The insightful achievement of fulfilment can be encouraged chiefly by growth of film acknowledgement (Lee, Cha & Nam, 2015, p.87). Therefore, it can be said that the film gratification can be referred as the insightful achievement of fulfilment through introspection or the notions of aesthetic importance, which takes place through the process of film appreciation. For the reflective gratification to take place the researcher chose two films E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial (ET) and Saving Private Ryan (SPR). The researcher chose these two films as the researcher wanted to explore whether these two films gratify children or not.

The plot of the film E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial (ET)

The story is about the friendship of two people ET and Elliott. Elliott is 10 years old and is spending time with his brother, and his friends. A group of aliens visit the earth and one of them is left behind on planet earth. Elliott finds the alien and soon they begin to communicate and Elliott learns about the values of a

true friendship whereas the alien learns about the life on earth. E.T. wants to go home but if he goes Elliott will lose a friend (Lakra and Sudhakar, 2019, p. 64).

The plot of the film Saving Private Ryan (SPR)

The film is based on World War II, June 1944. A mission is ordered to Captain Miller to find Private James Ryan and bring him back home as he has lost all his siblings in the war. Captain Miller and his company are given the task to get him from the war zone and bring him home (Lakra and Sudhakar, 2019, p. 64).

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study is to investigate children's gratification of viewing the English films E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial (ET) and Saving Private Ryan (SPR).

Methodology

The study is carried out in Shamshabad district of Telangana. The sample comprised of 93 children aged between 15-17 years of age from standard XI. Purposive sampling method was adopted to select the sample of the study. The approach of this study is based on a descriptive research design to obtain information about children's film gratification. The film gratification instrument is designed drawing insights from Oliver and Bartsch (2010) and Teasley and Wilder (1997) studies. Children are shown the films E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial (ET) and Saving Private Ryan (SPR) and their responses are collected on a five-point scale. The

score 5 indicates “very highly agree”, 4 indicates “highly agree”, 3 indicates “moderately agree”, 2 indicates “less agree”, and 1 indicates “do not agree” on the scale. The minimum score is 32 and the maximum score is 160. The sample selected for pilot study was 40 school children taken from a government school of Shamshabad district, Telangana. The films ET and SPR were pilot tested.

Data Presentation and Interpretation

For the film ET the statistical analysis showed that the mean score was 42 and the standard deviation was 2.2 during

the first pilot testing. In the second time of pilot test mean score was 43 and standard deviation was 2.1. The reliability coefficient (r) was found to be 0.74. Since the reliability coefficient (r) was found to be significant the test was kept aside for the main study. For the film SPR the statistical exploration showed that the mean score was 45 and the standard deviation was 2.7 during the first pilot testing. In the second time of pilot test mean score was 47 and the standard deviation was 2.5. The reliability coefficient (r) was found to be 0.77. Since the reliability coefficient (r) was found to be significant the test was set aside for the main study.

Table- 1: Distribution of children with respect to their gratification of films SPR and ET

Gratification of films for SPR and ET									
Gender		Gratification of films for SPR and ET				Gratification of the film ET			
		Low	Moderate	High	Total	Low	Moderate	High	Total
Boys	Count % within Gender	5	17	24	46	5	18	23	46
		10.9%	37.0%	52.2%	100.0%	10.9%	39.1%	50.0%	100.0%
Girls	Count % within Gender	6	28	13	47	6	30	11	47
		12.8%	59.6%	27.7%	100.0%	12.8%	63.8%	23.4%	100.0%
Total	Count % within Gende	11	45	37	93	11	48	34	93
		11.8%	48.4%	39.8%	100.0%	11.8%	51.6%	36.6%	100.0%

From the table 1 it is observed that 11.8 percent of children expressed low level of gratification in the film SPR, 48.4 percent of children expressed moderate level and 39.8 percent of children expressed high level of gratification of the film SPR. For the film ET, the data reveals that

11.8 percent of children expressed low level of gratification in the film ET, 51.6 percent of children expressed moderate level of gratification, and 36.6 percent of children expressed high level of gratification of the film ET.

The gender wise analysis of data in relation to the levels of gratification of the films SPR and ET is as follows:

Among boys 10.9percent of them expressed low level of gratification in the film SPR, 37percent of them expressed moderate level and 52.2percent of them expressed high level of gratification in the film SPR. Among the girls 12.8percent who expressed low level of gratification in the film SPR, 59.6percent expressed moderate level and 27.7percent of them expressed high level of gratification in the film SPR. With respect to the film ET 10.9percent of boys expressed low level of gratification, 39.1percent of expressed moderate level of gratification and 50percent of them expressed high level of gratification. Whereas 12.8percent of girls expressed low level of gratification, 63.8percent expressed moderate level of gratification and 23.4percent of them expressed high level of gratification of the film ET.

The above table indicates that there

are differences between the responses of boys and girls with respect to their gratification of the films SPR& ET. In order to know whether boys and girls differ statistically with respect to their levels of gratification of the films SPR & ET, it was felt desirable to examine the difference between boys and girls by applying appropriate statistical test. For this purpose, the following hypothesis is formulated.

H1: Boys and girls differ significantly with respect to their levels of gratification of the films E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial (ET) and Saving Private Ryan (SPR).

To test this hypothesis the following null hypothesis is formulated.

HO: Boys and girls do not differ significantly with respect to their levels of gratification of films E.T.: The Extra Terrestrial (ET) and Saving Private Ryan (SPR).

The above null hypothesis was tested with Mann-Whitney non-parametric statistical test. The results are furnished below.

Table- 2: Distribution of Children’s Mean Ranks & Mann-Whitney U with respect to Gratification of the films SPR & ET

Distribution of Mean Ranks & Mann-Whitney U of SPR & ET					
Gender	N	G-SPR Mean Rank	G-SPR Sum of Ranks	G-ET Mean Ranks	G-ET Sum of Ranks
Boys	46	52.35	2408.00	52.79	2428.50
Girls	47	41.77	1963.00	41.33	1942.50

	G-SPR	G-ET
Mann-Whitney U	835.000	814.500
Wilcoxon W	1963.000	1942.500
Z	-2.085	-2.272
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	.023

G-SPR: Gratification of film SPR

G-ET: Gratification of film ET

From table-2, it is observed that the mean ranks of boys for the films SPR and ET 52.35 and 52.79, respectively. The mean rank of girls for the film SPR is 41.77 and for the film ET is 41.33. From the Mann-Whitney statistical test it is found that the U values for the films SPR and ET are 835 and 814.500 respectively. The Z score is -2.085 for the film SPR and -2.272 for the film ET. The p value is 0.037 for the film SPR and 0.023 for the film ET. The p value is a measure of the strength of the evidence of data against the null hypothesis. The smaller the p value the stronger the sample evidence for rejecting null hypothesis. The p value indicates that there are only 3.7percent and 2.3percent of chances that the null hypothesis is correct. Hence, the results of the sample are not consistent with the null hypothesis. Since the p value is small enough it is concluded that the sample is so incompatible with the null hypothesis that one can reject the null for the entire population. Hence, it can be inferred that boys and girls differ significantly with respect to their gratification of films of SPR& ET. In other words on the basis of the strong evidence (p value <0.05 i.e. .0.037, 0.023) the null hypothesis is rejected and alternative hypothesis is accepted therefore, it is concluded that the difference between boys and girls with respect to the gratification of films SPR & ET is statistically significant.

Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1973) in their study initiated that in extension to consuming media for the purpose of enjoyment and leisure, people further expressed consuming media as

a process of encountering inspiration and establishing self-confidence. In the same way Tesser, Millar, and Wu (1988) researched on movie gratifications, they pinpointed motivations similar to pleasure-seeking involvement (e.g., breakfree, enjoyment) and further found a supplementary inspiration, which they described as personal growth. It is evident in this study the boys expressed high levels of gratification in viewing both SPR & ET films in comparison to girls .

Conclusions

This study shows that compared to girls the boys expressed high gratification in viewing SPR and ET films. Why the boys expressed high levels gratification in comparison to girls may be attributed to the reason that both because both the films were male centric and there is no much representations of women. Boys enjoy and experience happiness when they watch adventurous, risk-taking, and exploratory films. By watching such films they gratify their hidden desires and masculine power. Since these two films are of explorative type, boys might have showed relatively higher levels of gratification compared to girls.

As discussed above the focus of this study is not on the pleasure-seeking needs and concerns of children. Its focus is not on the use of entertainment for the drive of overcoming loneliness for escape from difficulties or for just for the sake of passing time or for the purpose of information, status enhancement, or social interaction. The primary concern of this research study is on children's film gratification experiences and measurement of it. Future research

may focus on pleasure seeking needs and concerns of children and with more attention on the drives of overcoming loneliness, status enhancement and social interaction. The current limitation in this study is that it did not embrace college students, university students, diverse sample of cultures and age ranges. Future research studies may focus on such dimensions in designing

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