

NARRATIVE ENGAGEABILITY ON LEVELS OF EMPATHY AND EMOTION REGULATION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY

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Abstract

The media has a strong influence on young people, particularly moving pictures or as well as other media elements. Young adults encounter a range of emotions that can be managed by watching movies, which in turn affects empathy, also known as the ability to mimic the feelings and thought processes of another person. By watching movies, this research hopes to better understand how young adults control their emotions and how that affects their sense of empathy. The study comprised young adults, defined as those between the ages of 18 and 25. The participants were chosen using a purposive sampling technique from various educational institutions. The scales used were the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire by Gross and John, the Interpersonal Reactivity Index by Davis, and the Narrative Engageability Scale by Busselle and Bilandzic. The data are statistically analysed using parametric test (Pearson Product-Moment Correlation). The results indicated a significant correlation between Narrative Engagement and Interpersonal Reactivity. No significant correlation was identified between Narrative Engagement and Emotion Regulation. The study's implications, restrictions, and recommendations are explored in the context of the empirical data.

Keywords: Narrative Engagement, Media, Empathy, Emotion Regulation

INTRODUCTION

Stories have a predominant impact on daily life and are rooted in human existence. Stories serve as a vehicle for sharing cultural identity, spreading knowledge, exposing beliefs, boosting social ties, and providing entertainment, all of which are essential to human societies. They also serve to describe our journey through life. Emotions and perceiving others. One of the most important skills is the ability to sustain our own and other people's emotions. A unique link is formed between us and the cinema through the art of the story by the knowledge of other people's perspectives and internal expression that films bring.

Cinema is a medium that exposes us to a range of emotions and their intensities, stimulates thought, enhances our capacity for imagination, and occasionally serves as a cathartic outlet. As opposed to static visuals or imagined trauma situations, it is a source for evoking as well as producing a wide spectrum of both positive and negative feelings including happiness, wrath, empathy, etc. By depicting others in a difficult circumstance, film stimulus is utilized to gently stimulate emotions, fostering emotional participation. Due to its utilization of both aural and

visual cues, which will aid in grabbing the person's attention, it can be a great source for eliciting many types of emotions.

Young adults who are eager to laugh and have fun in life but lose the ability to express themselves and be in touch with their feelings. Moral knowledge fosters the development of empathy, and compassion results in a greater capacity for understanding other people. The combination of emotional expressiveness and empathy is what movies do through narration.

Movie and the audience

As a kind of mass communication, cinema could be viewed as a somewhat commercial endeavor. But there is a lot in this medium that is intricate and psychologically fascinating. Since the beginning of motion movies, the word “entertainment” has been used to describe them. There are serious films, uplifting films, and films that instruct and advance philosophies or beliefs. But in general, we watch movies to be delighted, amused, enthralled, and distracted from the problems of daily life.

It symbolized a “inner journey” and “an intimate journey—a journey via the emotions.” Motion pictures are made up of “emotion pictures,” which offer the psyche’s landscape for navigating emotion and “charge cinema with the’ moving’ power of emotion” (Bruno 2009, p. 191). According to Bruno, the audience will perceive the identical photograph of a face expression with various emotional reactions depending on the situation.

For instance, one might “project” grief or joy, love or hate, hunger or fulfilment onto the same expression. The successful application of cinematic techniques as “a sort of empathy” was the litmus test for a filmmaker’s capacity to connect with his audience (Bruno 2009, p. 102).

The close-up of moving pictures exposes this inner state as the mind targets a particular detail in its act of attention. With the help of the camera, the entire environment mimics the feelings that fill the mind (Munsterberg 1916, p. 21). In contrast to how it sees the real world, the mind sees the world on the screen differently. “We can see the movement, but since our mind has created it out of a series of quickly following single images, we see it as something that lacks its own independent character as an outer world process. In their plastic depth, we sense objects”.

Narrative Engagement

Despite the fact that many people may not be familiar with the term “narrative engagement,” they almost certainly have had it. NE is frequently described as the sensation of getting “lost” in a narrative (Nell, 1988). The model of narrative comprehension and engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008) focuses on the recognition, common in psychology, that readers or viewers must construct a mental representation of the story text that exists on a page or the audiovisuals that appear on a screen (Gerrig, 1993; Oatley, 2002). In this process, readers or viewers essentially create meaning from the symbolic set offered by a story; comprehension is regarded as the prerequisite of all perceptions, evaluations, and effects of a story.

According to Busselle and Bilandzic (2008), narrative engagement occurs when viewers or readers place almost all of their attention on the process of making meaning of the story.

According to their definition, narrative engagement is flow during the process of building mental models: Any action where people strongly focus their attention, lose self-awareness, and believe the activity to be a part of themselves can cause the feeling of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Building mental models is the action under flow in stories (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2008).

Research demonstrates that NE in-Entails four distinct processes (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009): narrative understanding, Narrative presence, emotional investment, and attentional focus. Initially, a story Comprehension suggests that audience members are aware of and capable of following the story's makes sense. Second, when recipients are attentional focused, they do so. Focusing only on the events in the story, without being diverted by background sounds. Third, emotional engagement describes how viewers grow emotionally attached to characters. In order to feel a connection, one must have sensations of arousal as well as feelings of empathy for and empathy for characters.

Therefore, recipients' identification with characters has a strong bearing on emotional engagement (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Cohen, 2001). The fourth definition of narrative presence is the loss of self-awareness, the feeling that one is leaving the actual world behind, and the feeling that one is present in the story world.

Empathy

The idea of empathy is frequently associated with "putting ourselves in other people's shoes," or attempting to comprehend what another person is thinking or feeling. We occasionally use role-playing and "what if I were you" thinking to accomplish this. However, there is a wide range of literature on empathy. Empathy can be understood as either knowing another person's thoughts and feelings or as experiencing those same feelings, according to renowned social psychologist C. Daniel Batson, whose research on empathy spans over thirty years. The first is an activity that involves thinking, and the second is an emotional response. Empathy is also defined as the physical act of imitating or reflecting another person's behaviour. There isn't much conscious thought involved; this occurs subconsciously

Empathy is more specifically defined as sharing in another person's misery, i.e., experiencing their suffering. Occasionally, sympathy, compassion, pity, and concern are confused with empathy and other closely related feelings. However, although these feelings may entail empathy, they are not the same. Interpersonal empathy and social empathy are the two components use to characterize empathy as a general, all-encompassing notion. Start with the more specific instance of empathy between people. In one-on-one or small-group interactions, empathy is shown in this way. In both academic and popular contexts, it is the most frequent application of the word "empathy." People likely encountered and used this understanding of empathy in own life to relate to other people suffering. The instinctive behaviour known as "mirroring," which is unconscious, is a major foundation for the evolutionary drive for empathy. A physiological ability to duplicate another person's behaviour or feelings is called mirroring. When we watch someone else perform an action, our brain activity is almost exactly the same as it would be if we were performing the action ourselves. This phenomenon is known

as mirroring. Our minds reflect what we observe. Is empathy mirrored? No. It can be helpful to understand what another person is going through, but it cannot explain the meaning of another person's behaviour or precisely corroborate their feelings. Mirroring is significant because it can be the beginning of empathy.

Narrative Empathy

Literary theorist Suzanne Keen claims that narrative empathy is a spontaneous, vicarious sharing of emotion and point-of-view that can be sparked by seeing, hearing, reading, or imagining someone else's experience (2007: 4). Keen advises against conflating narrative empathy with character identification because it can be involved in the imaginative act of narrative composition, in story's formal and aesthetic tactics, in mental simulation, and in narrative reception. According to her, empathy involves reactions to both inanimate objects and natural aspects in addition to responses to sentient humans. It distinguishes elements of emotional contagion, motor mimicry, and the fusion of sensations from the earlier terms sympathy, "feeling for," or compassion (Keen 2013: 5). Keen's research investigates allegations that fiction is false critically. According to Keen's research, literary tales, specifically fiction, "may induce the expression of dispositional empathy or it may build the sympathetic imagination through the exercise of intrinsic role-taking talents".

Emotion Regulation:

The word "emotion regulation" refers to methods that people control the strength, length of time, and type of emotions they experience and do not experience, the circumstances in which they experience a particular emotion, and how and whether they express those emotions in the end (Gross, 1999, 2015). People also unconsciously control their emotions, as seen when they abruptly turn away from the site of an accident (Mauss, Bunge, & Gross, 2007). The ability to automatically regulate emotions has previously been demonstrated. Instead, by "strategies," we mean a method of emotion regulation that is in line with the possibilities, capabilities, and goals of the individual at that particular time. The cognitive, physiological, behavioral-expressive, and affective aspects of an emotion can all be impacted by the emotion regulation techniques. We then assess the effects of emotion modulation. Although controlling one's emotions may have an aim, doing so may come at a price. These expenses may include detrimental consequences on memory, relationships with others, and health.

Cognitive Reappraisal and Expression Suppression are two aspects of emotion regulation. Increased stress levels and a breakdown in interpersonal communication can come from suppressing generated emotions (Butler, Egloff, Wilhelm, Smith, Erikson & Gross, 2003). Butler et al. (2003) also discovered that suppressing the emotional. A participant's expression caused their partner's blood pressure to rise. Suppressing emotions can cause physical and mental resources to deteriorate. This proves that induced emotions have a significant impact on how we display our feelings. The degree of emotional arousal was revealed to be a major determinant of the coherence between experiencing and behavioural responses (Mauss, Levenson McCarter, Wilhelm & Gross, 2005). This study found that movies that elicited stronger feelings of amusement.

Films are the best stimulus for inducing happy and sad feelings because participants may be able to picture themselves as the protagonist (Westermann et al., 1996). Typically, participants watch a depressing or repulsive video clip while using an ER approach, and then they self-report their corresponding negative and positive affect. Along with these tasks, physiological tests are frequently used to gauge sympathetic arousal. According to five of the thirteen research, reappraisal reduces negative affect more than acceptance (Aldao & Mennin, 2011; Wolgast, Lundh, and Viborg, 2011), more than suppression (Shiota et al., 2009), and more than just watching or performing a cognitive diversion activity (Sheppes, Catran, Meiran, 2009; Shiota & Levenson, 2012).

Reappraisal, however, has limited benefit in altering emotions when presented after an emotional response has started because it is an antecedent-focused method (Aldao & Mennin, 2011). Participants who were directed to begin reappraising in the middle of a depressing film showed greater skin conductance levels in comparison to those who were told to apply cognitive diversion (Sheppes et al., 2009). These data show how ER techniques interact with the temporal progression of an emotional experience, showing that situational context is just as important as temporal context in determining how effective a strategy is.

Cinema Therapy

More than any other storytelling format, movies have the capacity to transport us into the world of their characters. However, it is also true that it is frequently simpler to keep a healthy distance or perspective when watching a movie than it is in a real-life circumstance. Healing and transformation can take place when this experience inspired by the movie is processed using psychotherapy techniques. The fundamentals of E-Motion Picture Magic, a specific sort of cinema therapy, are watching a movie with awareness and properly processing the entire experience.

Summary

Movies are often employed as a tool for coping in that they supplant negative emotional experiences with positive ones; but a number of research examples also demonstrate that movie viewers sometimes seek out content likely to create or sustain negative emotional experiences. Film express the inner expression of emotions, a best companion and a healer and a escaping time machine. Emotion regulation and empathy arise in the shades of Narrative Engageability when one must catching characters and bind with the imaginary role. Cinema is an art which has its unique quality of pulling viewers to the new world.

Need for the study

This Research seeks to find the gap between film exposure and the perceptions that lead to individual emotional expression towards self and others. A Narratively immersive and emotionally unraveling journey that helps us to create a world with the unique concept of regulating our emotions in adverse situations. Inevitable transition of everyday life depends upon something to hold, something to uplift or something that must be a driving force to either enjoy or survive the days. Cinema gives positivity, emotional space and visual treat. Emotional

connection and understanding other's perspective views the world we live in different way. Many stories and roles that we choose, already chose our emotion and idea of ourselves along with personal identification. A sense of belongingness flourish in every little clips. Narration is a mental expression of emotions. Thus, this study helps to build a bridge between the untapped ways of perceiving emotions across film genres.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Bhatia (2022) investigated study on "Impact on Cinema on levels of Empathy and Emotional regulation in Artists and Non Artists". The sample size of the study is total of 94 individual comprising 47 Artists, 47 Non Artists between the age of 19-35 years. The tool used were 16 item Narrative Engageability Scale, 28item interpersonal Reactivity index and 10 item Emotional Regulation questionnaire. The coded and tabulated Data was analysed using Correlation and t-test. Cross sectional Survey design was used for this study. Results revealed that levels of Empathy and emotional regulation significant with Narrative Engageability.

Schndl and Bilandzic (2019) investigated study on "Television stories and the cultivation of Moral Reasoning: The Role of Genre exposure and Narrative Engageability". The sample size of the study is total of 121 individuals between the age of 18-30 years. The tool used were Narrative Engageability scale (Bilandzic et al 2017 b) (12 items) and DIT (Rest et al 1999) (12 items). Video materials consist of 79 Episodes of Nine different television series, with three different genre such as, Crime drama, Medical drama and Sitcom drama are included. The Coded and tabulated data was analysed using ANOVA. Prolonged exposure experimental design was used in this study. Results revealed that, taking into account individual's predisposition to become engaged in narratives, exposure to crime drama had no influence, Medical drama raised maintaining norms reasoning and lowered Post Conventional reasoning, and Comedy raised post conventional reasoning. Narrative Engageability emerged as a strong predictor, showing that the propensity to become engaged in narratives is positively related to post conventional reasoning and negatively related to maintain norms reasoning.

Kamalesh et al (2019) investigated study on "Influence of movie genre preference on empathy among emerging adults". The sample size of the study is the total of 120 age ranged from 18-21 years. The tool used was 35 item Murthy Empathy scale. The coded and tabulated data was analysed using two way ANOVA. 4*2 factorial design was used for this study. Results revealed that the role of movie genre preferences significantly influencing empathy levels and this opens up the possibility of understanding how movie genres that are preferred largely are influencing the society at large.

Richardson et al (2018) investigated study on "Measuring Narrative Engagement The heart tells the story". The sample size of the study is total of 102 individuals 41 males and 61 females between the age of 18 – 55 years. The tool used were Electro dermal activity (EDA), Empatica E4 wrist sensor and Narrative Engageability scale developed by Busselle and Bilandzic(2009). The coded and tabulated data was analysed using traditional ANOVA Analysis Experimental design was used in this study. Results Revealed that physiological evidence that the stories were more cognitively and emotionally engaging when presented in a n audio format. This may

be because listening to a story is a more active process of co-creation than watching a video.

M.Collins (2017) investigated a study on “The Relationship between Social Media and Empathy”. The sample included 204 Participants age ranged from 19 to 39. The tools used was 28 item The Interpersonal Reactivity index (IRI), 8 item The Facebook Intensity scale (FBI) and 16 item The Social Activity and Emotional Reactivity scale. The coded and tabulated data was analysed using Descriptive and Pearson’s correlation. A Regression analysis revealed that Facebook did not improve prediction of empathetic concern as Movie depiction beyond that of the control variables.

Hofes et al (2015) investigated study on “Age Differences in Emotional Regulation during a Distressing film Scene”. The Sample size of the study is total of 207, Older adults 99 and 108 younger adults age ranged from 18 -28 years. Stimulus used was highly distracted scene (5 min) of the movie ‘Dancer in the Dark’. The tools used were Differential Emotion Scale. The coded and tabulated data was analysed using mixed ANOVA Analysis. Between subject and within subject design was used in this study. Results revealed older adults reported higher scores in medially and suppression than young adults. No differences were found concerning distraction and rumination.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

The main aim of the study is to find relationship between Narrative Engageability, Empathy and Emotional regulation.

Objectives

- To study the relationship between Narrative Engageability and Empathy
- To study the relationship between Narrative Engageability and Emotional regulation.

Hypotheses

- There is no significant relationship between Narrative Engageability and Emotional regulation.
- There is a significant relationship between Narrative Engageability and their mothers.

Definitions

Narrative Engagement

Narrative - Depicting a single event or a sequence of related events.

Narrative Engageability is the immersion of one’s perspective World into the world of stories. It is the experience of being “drawn in” by the world of the narrative while simultaneously losing our own awareness. (Busselle 2019)

Empathy

Empathy is awareness of other's feelings, needs and concerns (Daniel Goleman). A Definition by Hoffman (1982) is that empathy is awareness of the emotions of others and the vicarious process of experiencing those emotions. It is the phenomena of experiencing emotions that are not directed toward self, or simply shared emotions. Empathy, or course, is experienced as part of real world relationships and has been studied as a mechanism for explaining pro-social, altruistic behavior (Hoffman, 2000).

Emotion Regulation

"Emotion Regulation consists of the extrinsic and intrinsic processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating and modifying emotional reactions, especially their intensive and temporal features, to accomplish one's goals".(Thompson 1994). According to APA (2020), Emotion Regulation can be defined as the ability of an individual through which they modulate their emotion or a set of emotions.

Research Design

Exploratory research design was used in this study.

Sample

In this study, the Purposive sampling technique will be followed as this technique permits the researchers to specify characteristics that need for sample. Participants whose age ranged between 18 to 25 years is the prior condition for selection of sample. Statistical Analysis was analysed using normality of distribution. The data was collected from both male and female from various educational institutions. The sample size was 107 after rejecting the incomplete Questionnaire.

Instruments

Three measures were used in this study,

1. Narrative Engageability Scale (Busselle and Bilandzic (2009))

Narrative Engagement was measured using the 12-item scale. It is composed of the four subscales Narrative understanding, Attentional focus, Narrative presence and Emotional Engagement. The participants were asked to mark on the 7 point Likert scale –Strongly agree (7) to strongly disagree (1). Cronbach's alpha total of .82 to .87

2. Interpersonal Reactivity Index: (Davis, 1980)

IRI is a 28-item questionnaire Answered on a 5-point Likert scale which ranges from "Does not describe me well" to "Describes me very well". It has 4 subscales, made up of 7 different items each. These subscales are Perspective Taking – a tendency to adopt another persons' point of view. Fantasy – to measure the extent of how individuals can transpose themselves into the emotions of other fictional characters. Empathic Concern measures the capacity to feel and be concerned for others. Personal Distress measures "self-oriented" feelings of anxiety in individuals' situations and a sense of unease in distressful situations. Internal consistency of

coefficient range from .68 to .79.

3. Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) (Gross & John, 2003):

ERQ is a 10-item scale designed to measure respondents' tendency to regulate their emotions in two ways: (1) Cognitive Reappraisal and (2) Expressive Suppression. Respondents answer on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 i.e, strongly disagree to 7 i.e. strongly. Cronbach's alpha was .79

Statistical analysis

SPSS 20.0v was used for analysing the data. Pearson product- moment method of correlation was used to find the relationship between the variables

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Table 1: Correlations between Narrative Engageability, Empathy and Emotion Regulation

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Narrative Understanding	1	-.275**	.675**	-.045	-.064	-.319**	-.319**	-.074	-.128	-.046
Narrative Presence		1	-.3626**	.561**	-.186	-.155	-.155	-.249*	.067	.132
Attention Focus			1	-.250**	-.039	-.140	-.140	.101	-.174	-.015
Emotional Engagement				1	-.294**	-.228*	-.228*	-.421**	.058	.044
Perspective Taking					1	.282*	.282*	.419*	-.183	-.346**
Fantasy						1	1.000*	.304**	-.096	-.072
Empathetic concern							1	.304**	-.096	-.072
Personal Distress								1	.028	-.041
Expressive Suppression									1	.559**
Cognitive Reappraisal										1

The plot's actions and results could be appealing to both the audience and the characters (Tan, 2011). Understanding a character allows the audience to potentially develop empathy for them. According to Smith (2011), developing empathy for a character involves a complex imaginative process in which a viewer simulates the character's situated psychological states, such as the character's beliefs, emotions, and desires, by imagining the experiences from the character's point of view while maintaining a distinct sense of self and other. This study results on the basis of parametric pearson correlation product moment reveals that there is a significant positive correlation between Narrative Engagement and Interpersonal Reactivity index. Particularly, it depicts positive relationship between Emotion Engagement of Narrative

Engageability and Empathetic concern of Interpersonal Reactivity index. This indicates the acceptance of hypothesis stating that "There will be a significant correlation between Narrative Engagement and Empathy". This suggests that watching movies may have a greater impact on viewers' empathic concerns than other forms of entertainment.

Many have found it easier to use the same skill in real-life situations by cognitively and emotionally understanding the perspectives of several characters. There was no significant correlation found between Narrative Engagement and Emotional Regulation. Therefore the hypothesis 'There will be no significant correlation between Narrative Engagement and Emotion Regulation' according previous research accepted. Apart from this perspective Taking subscale of Interpersonal Reactivity index is positively correlated with Cognitive Reappraisal which is the subscale of Emotion Regulation. According to Goldie (1999), in most situations, adopting another person's perspective requires bringing a characterization of the target individual to bear on one's creative process. This characterization should include information about the target person's personality, emotions, moods, dispositional tendencies, and life experiences. Goldie (2002: 195) emphasises narrative context in addition to characterization since understanding the other's condition is necessary for us to empathise. Reconfiguring the event in a way that alters its emotional impact is referred to as cognitive Reappraisal. Both perspective taking and cognitive Reappraisal which gives the space for understanding the situation and adopting the perspectives.

Limitation and Future Implication

This research had limitations like smaller study sample, self-report Questionnaire which may lack insights into emotion regulation of participants, huge factors like genre preference, individual personality, situational outcome and intermediating factors may influenced study result, controlling these variables could help in better understanding with objective responses. Despite the shortcomings of the present study it can be studied along with exposing to film clips for a consistent duration, Extensive Questionnaire and inclusion of large sample to understand the prolonged effects of cinema

CONCLUSION

The research aimed to understand the relationship between Narrative Engageability, levels of Empathy and Emotion Regulation. A significant correlation between Narrative Engagement and Empathy was found but there is no apparent relationship between Emotion Regulation and Narrative Engagement. The study gives insight on Cinema and Empathy which becomes our part of day to day life which paved a way for the emergence of Psychocinematics. The foundation of psychocinematics is a scientific examination of how we react visually to films. Aesthetics can be seen of as a hedonic response, which is just a preference or liking judgement, in its essence. Better study on this topic can help us to navigate new way for Cinema therapy by developing greater ability to understand emotions and the healing process through movies.

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Data availability: All data generated or analysed during this study are included in this article's supplementary information files.

Declaration

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Ethical Statement

This exploratory study was not overseen by any institutional review board or an ethical committee. Participation in this project involved no risks that went beyond the risks of normal life

Conflict of Interests: The author declared no conflict of interests.

Informed Consent: Statement Participants in this research received information about the study and its purpose and participated voluntarily.

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