IMPACT OF HORROR MOVIE VIEWERSHIP ON THE REAL-LIFE PERSONAL EXPERIENCES OF VIEWERS

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ABSTRACT: This study aims at finding out the impact of the horror genre on Pakistani young viewers in their personal 'real world' routine experiences. This study uses the 'hypodermic needle theory' and the 'protective frame theory' to develop a theoretical framework for ascertaining the type of impact on horror movie viewers. It uses mixed method approach: survey and in-depth interviews to answer the research questions. The researchers collected data from 300 movie goers in Lahore through the survey questionnaire and conducted in-depth interviews of twelve horror movie fans residing in Lahore, Pakistan. The results of quantitative survey revealed that the Pakistani movie viewers do not like to watch horror movies. While the interview based qualitative study revealed that horror movies leave deep impact on the real-lives and personal experiences of the Pakistani horror movie viewers. Horror film industry is at an evolutionary stage in Pakistan; the 'movie makers', students of 'film studies' can benefit from this study as they can steer their knowledge to create the content which is not harmful for the audience by keeping in mind the existing content and its impacts.

Keywords: Horror Movie, Horror Movie Viewers, Real-life Personal Experiences, Hypodermic Needle Theory, Protective Frame Theory, Mixed Method Approach

I. INTRODUCTION

The horror films generally intend to make the audience feel scared and panicked. Though they portray our worst fears and make us believe in the horror of the story, they also fulfill the gratification needs of the viewers. The way individuals utilize or choose 'film' and 'television' content greatly determines their positive or negative outcomes or effects on them as important and convenient sources of information and entertainment (Ruffer, 2014). Certain types of genres and content such as violent and negative portrayal of real life or mysterious events can induce more harm than good and can imprint destructive ideas on immature minds of young viewers. If the viewer fails to discern the reality and threat through the quality of the content, he may fall prey to harmful content. The situation may be worsening for the horror film fans as an abundant supply of content/media messages are available at ease in the current age of digital technology (Buckingham, 2007). Due to industrialization, media organizations are producing more and more sensationalized and violent content in order to become prominent among the audience, increase ratings of the programs, and generate heaps of revenue. The industrialization and competition have left dire consequences, as the horror genre movies enjoy a huge market and great popularity among different publics despite their hyper-negativism, violence and soul-rendering content. Horror films affect the social behavior (Anderson, 2008), psychological condition (Andrews, 2015) and cognitive patterns (Brewer, 2009) of their viewers.

Though multiple movies genres are popular among the viewers, the 'horror' is attributed with the 'extreme' form of pleasure and entertainment (Bartsch et al, 2010; Gregson, 2003). It evokes emotions of fear and suspense that distinguish horror genre from other genres. These fears are much deeper, personal and psychological and the viewers are confronted with their own morality (Worland, 2007) for choosing the experience and joy in the type of content. The horror genre focuses on breeding, inducing and aggravating 'emotions of dread and tensions' (Noel, 2003; Prohaszkova, 2012).

Every movie genre has particular features that distinguish it from the rest of the film forms and attract noticeably specific viewers. Horror genre is popular due to its grotesque nature. Any film that frightens its viewers, makes them shiver, tremble, sicken or scream in fear can be termed as a horror film (Cherry, 2009). Horror film is intense in graphic scenery, frightening visuals and rich and horrific sound effects that never fail to test the capacity of endurance and patience of the viewers. It addresses and depicts those fears and imaginations that are culturally, socially and universally considered taboos (Grant, 2010). The better, the more horrific, is primarily the thematic approach of for directors and creators of horror films (Gregson, 2003).

Horror genre is paradoxical in nature (Prohaszkova, 2012) as it entertains through the form of art that is disgusting, grotesque and frightening in routine life. Any such situation usually horrifies people in their normal life, yet they enjoy the imagery of such art behind the barriers of cinema and television screens. The horror movie genre can be attributed pessimistic, evil, terrifying, stress-inducing, heart rendering and increasingly too unpleasant features to watch. Nevertheless, Edwards (1982) reveals that the horror film creators have consistently been earning loads of commercial success (Gregson, 2003) because the genre enjoys huge fan following.

Chamberlain (2008), Palmer (2008) and Prohaszkova (2012) say fear is one of the strongest emotions realized since the primitive eras of human evolution. It always breeds out of uncertainty and establishes supernatural figures, faiths, ghosts (Fu, 2016), and numerous others characters as the human brainchild. Though human minds have discovered the reality and logic of a number of mysteries and shed off the fears of uncertain to a great level due to the development of scientific and cognitive sciences, the imagination leads humans to depict mysterious creatures in multiple art forms, amongst which horror genre is one. According to Prohaszkova (2012), 'science fiction, horror and fantasy' are the three genres that enrich each other by making up the 'fantastic triangle', and intermingling and encapsulating the constituents of fear and imagination together.

Like other genres, horror movies also follow the 'order-violation-reorder' setting (Prohaszkova, 2012). Here a negative creature violates the order whether it is some sort of 'monster' (witch, ghost, alien, zombie, etc.), or a 'monstrous creature' (like an evil person that intends to disturb the harmony) (Pieto, 2003). Horror is predominantly fictional because real life happenings lack (fiercely behaving) monsters. Though evil beings exist, most storylines are largely fictional. Cherry (2009) says that horror genre is not a single entity but it has several sub-genres depending upon the behavior and type of characters (monsters, creatures, or people) involved and the structured storyline (plot, subject, etc) that include: 'slashers, gore, thriller, sadomasochism, cannibalism, torture-porn, etc.' On the question of what inspires horror film makers to generate such content, Cherry (2009) elaborated that horror genre lurks into the fears of the society and people by addressing them openly and exaggerating them with fierce imagery. Therefore, horror is ready to adapt to change and evolution in the culture of societies in different periods as a dynamic art form (as new characters can be created as and when needed) (Prohaszkova, 2012). It has the capacity to incorporate differences across societal and national borders due to its flexible nature.

Predominantly attracting younger audience, the horror movie industry has proved to be highly profitable whether it is due to a high budget production or low investment film. The odds to make huge profits have remarkably remained high if the content succeeds in attracting the viewers to pay for getting terrified. In his worthy study on the form and function of horror genre, Cherry (2009) gave a detailed description of the success of horror, stating that historically, 'The Exorcist' emerged as the most successful amongst the horror films by bagging $193 million from its domestic release in 1973 and $441 million in its lifetime earned monetary value. Whereas, the budget utilized to create it was only $12 million back in 1973.Another blockbuster from 1992 was 'Scream 2' which was produced in $24 million and earned over $172 million in worldwide lifetime grosses. However, not only high budget films earned loads but the low-budget films also left high statured marks in the history of horror industry, like 1983's 'The Evil Dead' produced in $350,000 grossed over $11 million worldwide after its re-release in 2005. Similarly, 'The Blare Witch Project' gathered $249 million worldwide with a production budget of only $60,000.

The feelings, moods, emotions, perceptual experiences and bodily sensations (also known as phenomenal states of consciousness) experienced by a person can be termed as the 'real-life personal experiences' of that person. These experiences can be influenced, affected and impacted by various internal and external factors to which a person comes across, either intentionally or unintentionally. The effects garnered by those factors can be short term or long term depending upon their kind, extent, severity and nature.

1.1 Problem Statement: According to Bywater and Sobchack (1989), the messages, information or stories told in films create a stimulus which is more 'powerful' than those created in other media (Peel, 2011). It is so because watching and hearing enhance understanding of content and help retain information at ease. Movies leave lasting cognitive imprints in the subconscious of the viewers as they use multiple senses (such as sight, hearing, and thinking skills simultaneously to absorb the information) that bind the audience to the screens. The visual and audio effects further pronounce value of the media message and make it more impactful. Media messages are absorbed as bullets in minds of the passive audience in one-way communication by the movie, a powerful medium. Horror movie genre combines the grotesque, repulsive and violent content together, provides a thrilling experience of predominantly anti-social and horrific content to its fans. The exposure to such fierce, highly imaginative, and hyper-negative content leaves negative effects on audience who are most commonly youth. Young minds are raw and easy to tame because they lack the ability to think with maturity (Hassan, 2009). This study aims to qualitatively ascertain the impact of horror movie viewership on the personal experiences of young Pakistani viewers and conducts in-depth analysis of the severity of the experienced impacts, subjectively and a survey.

1.2 Research Objectives: The objectives of this study are;

a. To examine the trends of movie viewership among Pakistani viewers.
b. To ascertain the impact of horror movies on real-life of Pakistani viewers.
c. To analyze the types of impact of horror movies on real-life experiences of Pakistani viewers.

1.3 Significance of the Study: Mass media—either print or electronic— has the undisputed power to garner cognitive effects on its audience. They can be short or long term effects as proven by multiple theorists by using a triangulation of testing methods. This study aims to find out the impact of the horror film genre on the Pakistani youth in their 'personal' or 'real world' routine experiences. This study tries to ascertain whether horror content leaves an impact on the viewers or not; what are the types of personal experiences of the horror viewers. This study is important as it extracts the required data from the personal (autobiographical) narratives of the horror film viewers through in-depth interviews, and deeply studies the impact of horror genre on the youth in a subjective manner. The in-depth interviews allowed critical analysis of the severity of experienced impact. This data gathered through the survey of movie watching population helps in validating results and provides a statistical account of the viewing preferences and habits of Pakistani youth irrespective of their genre choices. The review of previous researches shows that horror films are replete with anti-social, violent and hyper-negative content. Mass media exposure has 'dose-response' effect on its viewers, which implies that the extent of exposure to media determines the extent of impact or effects experienced by the viewers.

This study highlights the trends of horror viewership in Pakistan and also pronounces the types and severity of its impact on the viewers. Horror film industry is in its infancy stage in Pakistan. The movie makers, scholars and students of film studies can benefit from this study. They can steer their knowledge to create better and not so harmful content for the audience by keeping in mind the impact of the existing content on the audience. The study is important as the horror genre is prominent and attracts millions of viewers to generally repulsive and negative content. It examines the cognitive, social and psychological impact experienced by Pakistani youth by exposure to horror movies. It is equally valuable for leisure readers, scholars and think tanks for further researches.

II.   LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Impacts of One Way Communication and Media Genres: Communication is a vital tool for humans to interact and develop understanding about each other. Whether communication fails or succeeds in achieving the desired outcome, it all depends upon effective communication skills as suggested by Adler and Towne (1978) in their study namely, 'Looking Out/Looking In'. Maslow (1970) also states that communication aids the achievement of personal needs and the inability to articulate your interests through effective communication results in failure and dismay.

One-way communication is a process, which requires at least two people to articulate the message that is intended to be communicated. The communication process begins from the mind of the sender, when the messages as mental images (ideas, pictures, emotions, etc.) arise. Sender is the one who wants to communicate while the receiver is the person to whom the sender intends to communicate. The sender

translates the mental images into symbols which can often be pictures, sounds, verbal delivery or sensory information that reach the receiver through a process called 'encoding'. The encoded message needs a transmission channel to reach the receiver. Face to face meeting, visual media, audio or printed media, touch, body language, gestures, etc., serve as a communication (transmission) channel between sender and receiver. The receiver then decodes the transmitted message and tries to understand the communicated message (Adler & Towne, 1978). However, the receiver decodes the message under influence of certain noises (distortion in delivery, lack of contextual understanding, past experiences, psychological and physical forces) which affect the comprehension of the original message that seldom takes place as intended by the sender. Noise distorts the message in one-way communication, and the receiver is unable to understand the message fully through back and forth communication.

Television and film media are used to deliver 'direct' visual messages accompanied with audio to viewers (Baillie, 1996). These are the best forms of one way communication because the receiver does not respond back to the sender, due to the barrier of the screen. This process points to the ability of mass media exposure to leave imprints on the real live experiences of people (Anderson, 2003). It can raise the expectations of viewers higher to an imaginative level which is difficult to meet in the real world. Television and film are two most popular electronic media genres that noticeably affect their viewers through the influx of media messages.

Human mind easily comprehends information presented in the visual form by observing the body language and the facial expressions of the presenter, which together help the movie viewers, retain the story of the film in their minds for long durations (Barzaa, 2008). The audio and visual presentation involves the usage of multiple senses, which make movie watching an enthralling and entertaining practice for the viewers that psychologically indulge in the presented form of media (Hanich, 2018). Mostly movie viewers fall prey to a certain movie genre and enjoy watching it the most, while ignoring the other genres, completely. For example, the fans of action or thriller movie genre will never to watch a comedy film even if it is a blockbuster because it will lack the entertaining element for them and vice versa. Eerolainen (2016) exclaims that genre fandom leads the viewers to maintain high expectation from the directors to create increasingly entertaining and alluring content every other time. He, though, remarks 'genre' is a curse that confines art under a categorical limitation, also attributes to it features of a promising art form that attracts fans to expect improvement and growth out of it to remain loyal to their choice.

Some popular genres of the film industry are action, adventure, comedy, crime, drama, epic, horror, sci-fi and war (Galloway, 2013). Action genre portrays a film, which is usually high budget and includes spectacular stunts, escapes, and fights. Adventure genre usually includes depiction of exciting experiences in exotic places. Comedy genre is themed to provide amusement and laughter to the viewers. The crime genre portrays a plot developed around illegal actions of criminals; such films often present mysterious stories. The largest amongst the film genres is 'drama' that usually anchors serious stories revolving around intense characters with a realistic touch of normal life situations. This genre focuses on plot and character development as well as the interaction between them. The epic, also termed as the historical film genre, predominantly portrays historical (also imaginative) stories of grandeur, worthy figures, myths with spectacular settings and high budget production. The horror genre is deliberately designed to scare the viewers and is provided by invoking the fears of people in pleasurable experiences (Bartsch, Appel &Storch, 2010). People enjoy catharsis through the influx of hyper-negativism under the protection of screens. The science fiction presents the quasi-scientific and predominantly imaginative storyline often packed with fantasy, adventure, thrill and display of futuristic technology. The war film genre portrays combats and stories of military men, highlighting their operations, trainings, bliss and hardships.

2.1.2 Why Choose the 'Grotesque'? for Pleasure: Gregson (2003) studied the factors that make horror movies attractive for viewers and pointed to multiple factors that breed attraction on the viewers' minds and allow the anxious viewers to experience catharsis while watching violent and horrific scenes. They feel free to express their fears and voice their anxiety openly as a consequence of horror viewership (Lester, 2016). Expressing their fears makes them feel relieved from the clutches of the 'inner demon' that already resides in their souls and troubles them. The viewers feel relieved subconsciously, by facing the negative emotions and expressing out those reflexes and reactions that they cannot express in their normal lives (O'gwin, 2017). Palmer focusing on 'psycho-physiological analysis' studied fear from horror movie viewership and revealed that the huge sphere of horror movie genre spans across the oceans and people, without any discrimination, adopt the horror film industry with open arms (2008). However, the likelihood of enjoyment varies in degrees across the globe (Prohaszkova, 2012).

Prohaszkova (2012)calls horror the one of the most 'paradoxical' genres that attracts fandom through the most unnatural means, and makes viewers enjoy the most dreadful and avoided features in the normal life. According to David Carter, horror cinema as a modern day fairytale, constitutes the most 'repulsive,' yet people choose to watch them so excitingly that this industry sky-rockets in its profits (Huppert, 2009). A society reflects its values, expresses in the form of communication, and the day to day communication takes the course of popular culture of people. Media reproduces the artistic displays of the society's popular culture (Edwards, 1984). A society that likes to watch violence, gore, blood, danger and disgust through mass media makes this explicitly aggressive genre a part of the popular culture (Huesmann, 2007).

Cantor (2004) and Gregson (2003) studied the perceived negative impacts of extreme horror media on viewers and found out that the horror viewers are predominantly teenagers and young adults (BFI Statistical Yearbook, 2017/2018). Young viewers often experience behavioral changes, or become aggressive by deliberately frightening themselves through horror film viewership (Gregson, 2003). Youngsters reported terrifying memories of experiencing hallucinations after watching the horror content. Gregson (2003) revealed that young college students often prefer to watch a horror movie on a date for a thrilling experience but end up feeling frightened and anxious for long. Studies show that the horror film industry enjoys continuous profits at the box office despite the troublesome knowledge gathered from multiple samples of horror movie viewers. Its repeated success at a grand scale emphasizes that this genre provides satisfaction to the viewers (Harrison, 1999).

Despite enjoying huge monetary profits, the horror genre faces staunch criticism and negative publicity from—horror hater— community of movie watchers. Nonetheless, the horror genre fans always look forward to extreme forms of torture and horror content which they admire the most and enjoy within safe realms of cinema screens or their personal space (Cherry, 2009).

Horror genre either enjoys 'enthusiasm and love' from its fans or plain 'disgust and rejection' from hating people (Cherry, 2009). Either proven loyalty or a stern dislike, there is no middle-ground chosen by viewers for this particular genre. The loyal viewers embrace the fascination of imaginative roles, creatures, entities in the horror content and enjoy the 'element' of being scared (King, 1981). However, the haters express themselves as emotionally and psychologically disturbed after watching horror content, because the intensification of their emotions through grotesque imagery seems unsettling to them rather than a pleasurable experience (Cherry, 2009).

Cherry (2009) suggests that the viewers of horror genre are typically those young adults who have learnt to tame their emotions at a considerably younger age by exposing themselves to this particular genre. Some adults engage themselves in building up the courage to watch horror content. They intend to improve their emotional response towards fictional horror, as a perceived courageous endeavor along a peer group. Nevertheless, the researcher exclaims that the responses on watching the frightening content are not bound to any demographic quality but the genre itself evokes the reflexes and reactions. Neuendorf and Sparks(1988) suggest that experiences and memories with any object or incident can greatly affect the type of responses of viewers of horror movies.

Cherry, 2009 suggests that young people (early to mid-teens) are mostly the viewers of horror genre. He claims that the audience might vary from sub-genres of horror predominantly, but young males retain as a constant characteristic. Rufer (2014) highlighted that horror movies are designed to address the psyches of troubled youngsters—as young people have usually have chaotic lives due to emotional and hormonal changes. Evans (1984) suggests that some of the adults like the horror genre because they tend to retain the adolescent mindset even in their adulthood. Other reasons of the horror viewership include fondness of 'extreme media,' or fascination of horrible creatures, monsters, vampires, and ghosts (Shah, 2016). According to Costanzo (2011), some viewers watch horror movies because they highlight the significance of survival against a credible danger. They teach how to adapt to the unfavorable conditions and defeat the threat and survive at any cost (Mrug, 2016). The viewers perceive it as a valuable lesson to be drawn out of a movie.

Some viewers reflected that they watch horror movies to feel frightened, shaken, petrified, and wondered, and to experience chills down their spine. They affirmed that no other genre than horror imparts them the above mentioned thrilling experience in an inhumane manner but a worthy taste. Costanzo (2011) derives philosophical meaning out of the viewers' perceptions of horror that mirror their own nature and grotesque fantasies, when they get attracted to a certain horrifying content that they cannot experience in

real life. It also provides them an opportunity to experience the power and exhibit it against a demon on screen by remaining harm free from its physically destructive capacity. Initially, the shock is felt because of its terrifying content that heighten the fear to a limit of helplessness (Schmitz, Drake, Laake, Yin & Pradarelli, 2012), but then a sense of safety and catharsis overpowers the fear regardless of the demons stature and power because it cannot harm the viewer. This sense of power over the fearsome is actually invigorating and pleasurable for the viewers.

Edwards (1982) enlisted a couple of theories regarding the negative communication circulated into the society and its fandom under the garb of horror genre. He mentioned Haskin's (1982) 'hyper-negativism' as the appropriate term to define horror genre because this genre is replete with tension-arousing, unpleasant and pessimistic messages for the viewers to absorb. Edwards also describes the 'sensation-seeking' theory postulated by Marvin Zuckerman in 1979, as it provides a linkage between bio-chemical needs of individuals and their desire to watch horror movies, and lets emotional and social stimulations (Gregson, 2003) takeover them to enjoy pleasurable experience. Gregson says 'personality traits' such as extraversion, coping style, desire to experience destruction (visually), and sensation-seeking are the urging factors for horror movie viewers (2003).

Cherry (2009) categorizes gender-roles as 'protector-protectee' with reference to viewership of horror movies. Horror movies are the agents that define the gender roles expected of young adults in their future lives (Kao, 2017). This genre allows the young males to figure out, tame, enhance and demonstrate their courage, absorb the shocks and freight induced by horrifying content, and offer comfort to their female partners that accompany them to witness the soul-rendering content. Young females can reflect their need for emotional stability and protection in admittance of their sensitive feminine nature.

According to Gregson (2003), another reason for horror movie viewership is the fascination felt by viewers to see people suffer, die and get tortured in unique and enthralling ways. Prohaszkova (2012) conducted a study on horror movie viewership 'motivation' phenomena and categorically enlisted four motivational groups that include 'gore watchers', 'thrill watchers', 'independent watchers' and 'problem watchers'. Hence, it can be assumed that people use movie for the gratification of their needs. The 'Uses and Gratification' theory justifies the need for horror movies by the viewers by considering the above-listed reasons (Csikszentmihalyi, 1991).

2.2 Impact of Horror Movie Viewership on Viewers: Amongst the film genres, 'horror' movies are categorically one of the most unnatural and horrific depiction of repulsive content. Horror film features violence, blood and threatening scenes that greatly affect the viewers. Multiple studies have proven the causal relation between anxiety, aggressiveness, desensitization and exposure of horror and violent media messages (Cantor, 2004; Gunderson, 2006; Hassan, 2009; Huesmann, 2006; Madan, 2013; Phillips, 2017 & Shu, 2017). Due to psychological reflex and 'response mechanism', people react to fear in different ways under a fear-inducing situation (Palmer, 2008). Horrifying scenes in a movie excite the viewers' emotions. Some people feel their hearts racing and blood rushing in their bodies while others feel their bodies numb and lifeless due to extreme fright.

Experiencing a horror movie enables the viewers to easily grasp the 'negative message' presented by Haskin (Edwards, 1982).Visual messages accompanied with sound effects enable the viewers to comprehend the message to optimal level at ease (Prohaszkova, 2012). Repeated exposure to horror movies can develop 'habituation' in the cognition of viewers (Cherry, 2009). It would make them less reactionary to fear-inducing scenes (Caenagey, Anderson & Bushman, 2006). Such cognitive ability may make fierce realities seem less frightening to the habitual viewer and allow them to tackle real life problems, courageously. Smuts (2010) adds that viewers tend to objectify fictional characters like ghosts, witches and monsters as existing in real life when they observe demonstrations similar to those of fictional beings that they used to fear. They unconsciously stereotype similar figures, people and objects in real life to experience the pulsating emotions that they felt on screen (Brewer, 2009).

Horror genre normally contains explicit content, emphasizing violence and aggression. This type of content is predominantly categorized as anti-social. Klien and Shiffman (2008) studied exposure to anti-social content and behavioral changes in viewers and found out the linkage between content and its impact on the viewer's behavior. In this regard, the 'cultivation theory' suggests that media messages act as agents of socialization for viewers and influence the viewers' thinking and understanding of social norms (Galloway, 2013& Baillie, 1996). When viewers watch violent content, revenge stories and aggressive responses to committed violations then they unconsciously perceive them as 'appropriate'

reactionary manners and consider it justified to act in anti-social ways (Livingstone, 1996). The majority of horror genre fans are teens and youngsters who have immature minds and can possibly grow to be destructive adults if exposed to anti-social content (Anderson, 2008, Huesmann, 2007, Peel, 2011,& Singh, 2014). Youth can show negative effects by ingesting such 'hyper-negativism'.

Despite the astounding negative perception and impact of horror genre, viewers can learn a thought-provoking lesson from horror movies because they depict endangered lives that primarily beat the odds of death and torture for their survival. Sometimes people fall prey to a danger and resist molding themselves to the situation for survival; horror movies teach the viewers to accept the assistance of a 'vampire and confront it on its own terms' (Costanzo, 2012). They win through damnation and death for survival.

Worland (2007) suggests that, under the garb of blood thirsty monsters and fierce creatures, the film-makers intend to 'warn' the viewers of the dangers that exist around them and haunt them whenever they commit a mistake. Historically, in 1990s, a number of slasher films such as 'Scream (1997), I Know What You Did Last Summer (1997) and Urban Legend (1998)' typically depicted the story of youngsters that violated the social norms and suffered, subsequently. However, the horror movies of the current era usually depict normal human beings having an evil, monstrous nature. Such a depiction instills the idea of humans fearing fellow-humans (Sweet, 2016). An observant viewer would link it to the rising number of killers, suicide bombers, dacoits and rapists. One must be careful that viewer will see the evil face of humanity with bare eyes and the slasher will assure safety from it. This study elucidates that horror viewers face, contain and destroy the fear— depicted as a monster—in front of their bare eyes through the cinema screens.

<div align="center">III.   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK</div>

The hypodermic needle theory from the family of classical media effects theories and the protective frame theory of psychology provide anchorage to the theoretical framework of this study. Hypodermic effects theory is the key theory which provides the basis to this research that aims at finding out the nature and types of impact of media messages on the viewers. This study addresses the impact of the media messages received from horror movie viewership on the real-life personal experiences of viewers. The 'protective frame theory' suggests that viewers like to watch the fierce, violent, grotesque and unpleasant content as a source of entertainment because they consider themselves safe from danger, as the cinema screen acts as a protective shield between them and the viewed content. This theory justifies horror movie viewership by the viewers despite experiencing the danger.

3.1 Hypodermic Effects Theory: Hypodermic effects theory postulated in 1930s suggests that media messages (Curran & Gurevitch, 1996) have 'strong effects' on the audiences (Bineham, 1988; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2007).They absorb the bombarded information as 'silent ducks,' as media messages delivered through radio, television and film are mostly one-way communication from the sender to the receiver. Hence, the messages communicated through these media directly affect the receiver because there is no back and forth communication and the audience is 'passive'.

The hypodermic needle theory is applicable to this study because the horror movie viewers passively receive media messages through one-way communication. Movie viewership is a personal entertainment choice and the viewers expose themselves to horror content with an intention to seek pleasure. Hence, neither have they wanted nor can they resist the articulation of media messages that influence them immediately (Neuman & Guggenheim, 2011). Thus, it important to examine the nature and types of impact generated by horror movie viewership on the real life personal experiences of viewers.

3.2 Protective Frame Theory: The 'protective frame' theory of clinical psychology tries to answer the intriguing question why people enjoy the violent and grotesque content of horror movies. It suggests that negative emotions provide some benefits (empowerment, intrigue, sense of achievement, contemplation) that enrich the overall experience of a viewer to a pleasurable level (Andrade & Cohen, 2007). A viewer can only 'enjoy' the unpleasant and grotesque content if he feels himself 'shielded' under a 'protective frame' from a threatening experience. The screen acts as a protective frame between the horror content and the viewer while watching a movie. Hence, the viewer enjoys the enriching benefits duly out of the unpleasant (Fokkinga et al., 2007). Fokkinga (2007) introduces the protective frame concept stating that the threat transforms into excitement which provides pleasure to the viewer when the viewer

comprehends or experiences the frightening situation as manageable due to the protective shield (Andrade et al., 2007).

Andrade et al.(2007) categorizes the protective frame into three basic types, comprising the 'confidence frame' that deals with the concept that the person feeling the danger is confident of his skill set to beat the danger; the 'safety zone frame' that shows the person experiencing the threatening situation keeping him or herself at a safe level, away from the anticipated danger; and the 'detachment frame' which reflects that the person remains detached from the threat; he/she observes the dangerous experience but seeks pleasure out of it because there is no interaction amongst him/her and danger that could harm the observer (Fokkinga, 2007). This study uses the 'detachment frame' to provide the theoretical foundation to this studyof the horror movie viewers. They enjoy horror movies despite their grotesque and violent content because they feel safe behind the screens which act as protective barriers and detach them from the dangers and let them purely enjoy the unpleasant content.

3.3 Research Questions: This research aims to answer following questions:

RQ1: Which movie genre do Pakistani movie viewers like the most?
RQ2: Do Pakistani movie viewers like to watch horror movies?
RQ3: Does horror movie viewership affect the real life experiences of viewers?
RQ4: What type of real life experiences are faced by viewers of horror movie genre, if any?

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design: In this study mixed method approach is used to understand and explain the main objectives of the research and to answer the research questions. The mixed method allows greater depth and breadth of information for the better understanding of the problem under study. The survey method was used to collect quantitative data to answer the first, second and third research questions while the in-depth interviews were conducted to gather qualitative data to answer the third and fourth research questions. The mixed method approach helped in addressing the weakness of a single method usage and enhanced utility of research. In-depth interviews allowed the researcher to analyze the impact on personal lives of respondents, subjectively. Such thorough analyses were significant to comprehend the media effects, efficiently. Similarly, the quantitative method undertaken through survey allowed the researcher to extract the required information about the movie viewership: habits, preferences, trends and views of the Pakistani people regarding the horror movies.

4.2 Variables: Considering variables are important factors to measure the required effect in a study, the research used the two general independent variable and dependent variables as below:

Independent Variable: The 'viewership of horror movie genre' is the independent variable of this study.

Dependent Variable: The impact on 'real-life personal experiences' of horror movie viewers is the dependent variable for this study.

To have a better understanding of the topic, this study highlights one 'dependent variable' impact that is dependent on the 'independent variable'—horror movie viewership.

The researchers wanted to examine the impact of horror movies on viewers, as well as the nature and types of the impact of horror movie viewership on the real-life, or personal experiences of viewers.

4.3 Conceptual Framework: The conceptual framework elaborates the relationship between the variables, is utilized to achieve objectives of the study and to find out the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Youth is an integral segment of society. According to the National Human Development Report: Pakistan (2017), two thirds of the population in Pakistan is below the age of 30 with 29% of the total population between ages 15 to 29 years. The Research and Statistical Unit of the British Film Institute revealed that horror films were mostly viewed and liked by teenagers, adolescents and adults below the age of 30 years. In the United States, exposure to horror and violent media has been considered as major health problem faced by the young viewers because it has the tendency to aggravate anxiety, subjective violence and cause cardiovascular diseases (Madan, 2013, Peel, 2011, Phillips, 2017, & Shu, 2017). Due to lack of research in Pakistan regarding the movie viewing habits of the viewers, it is

difficult to highlight the impacts of horror movies on the Pakistani viewers. However, a great number of people in Pakistan often enjoy watching movies in cinemas or downloading them through the internet at home. The latter has enhanced their access to the content. Studies around the world have proved that media effects are experienced by the receivers and films leave both short and long term effects on the viewers. This study examines the movie viewing habits and finds out the most favorable movie genre of Pakistani movie viewers. The type of impacts on Pakistani viewers from horror movie viewership also has been studied in this research.

4.3 Qualitative Analysis: In-depth Interviews: A research interview is a process to collect data from an interviewee by the interviewer in a verbal communication method. The interviewee responds to the probing questions of the interviewer regarding the topic on which the research is conducted. In-depth interviews involve a detailed question-answer session with the respondent to have a deep insight into the problem under study. The tool for data collection through in-depth interviews was the self-structured questionnaire and the data was obtained by the researchers themselves.

Before, data collection, the informed consent from the respondents was received and then the scheduling for interviews was done as per the ease of the respondents. Each interview lasted for about 20 to 25 minutes. The researchers gave a brief explanation of the study to respondents below 18 years of age and requested them to give their assent and their parents' informed consent regarding the interviews of their children.

4.3.1 Population: The population of the survey consists of 12 habitual horror movie viewers of age 13 to above 33 years from Lahore, only.

4.3.2 Sampling: The in-depth interviews were conducted from horror movie viewers of age 13 years to above 33 years for analyzing the impacts of horror movie viewership on the viewers of Lahore. Teenagers, young adults and adults living only in Lahore were the population of this research. Respondents had to be habitual horror movie viewers to be a part of this qualitative study.

4.3.3 Sampling Technique: Respondents are selected through snowball sampling. Four close friends from Lahore having the habit of horror movie viewership were contacted to seek help regarding data collection through in-depth interviews. The data was collected from Lahore only. Each of the four friends were requested to arrange at least 03 respondents amongst their friends and acquaintances who were habitual horror movie viewers belonging to the age group from 13 years to above 33 years. Hence, the data for in-depth interviews has been collected from 12 respondents from Lahore.

4.3.4 Sample Size: 12 horror movie habitual horror movie watchers were selected as a sample which included 06 male and 06 female respondents for the in-depth interviews and generalization of results.

4.3.5 Questionnaire Design for In-depth Interviews: The in-depth interviews were conducted through a self-structured written questionnaire designed by the researchers. The data from 10 respondents was collected personally by the researchers in face-to face meetings while 2 respondents gave their interviews through phone calls. To avoid any loss of information, the researchers recorded the interviews and made written notes during the meetings with each of the respondents. The inclusion of the researchers in the data collection through interview responses ensured that the respondents understand the concepts clearly and respond to the probing, adequately. The respondents complied with the researchers' request and shared their personal experiences. The questionnaire was divided into two parts; first portion of questionnaire was designed to obtain demographic information of the respondent and the second part was designed to obtain information regarding the respondents' movie watching habits, preferences, views about horror the movie genre and the impact of horror movie viewership on their personal real-life experiences.

4.4 Quantitative Analysis-Survey: A survey is an effective way to collect valid and reliable data by respondents from social settings of the real world (Kelly, Clark, Brown & Sitzia, 2003). It is most widely accepted method to collect individually un-identifiable but personal opinion of participants in the form of anonymous responses. In media effect studies, survey has become an appropriate method to collect data to have a better understanding of impact of media on youth by collecting individual views and opinions through responses.

Survey research is one of the most important areas of measurement in applied social research. According to the perspective and need of the study, a self-constructed questionnaire was used for data collection. It made the study more focused and gave quality result. For data analysis SPSS 20 statistical software was

used to make inferences. In the particular research, the researchers have used the quantitative method and have incurred the survey research technique to derive findings to the research problem. This research uses survey to obtain information regarding the respondents' movie watching habits, preferences and views about horror movie genre and through this quantitative analysis the movie viewership trend in Pakistan has been studied.

4.4.1 Sampling and Population

i) Population: The population of the survey consists of habitual movie watchers of age 13 to above 33 years from Lahore.

ii) Sampling: A survey was conducted from 300 movie watchers of age 13 to above 33 years for measuring the trends of movie watching in Pakistan. Teenagers, young adults and adults living in Lahore were the population of this research. Respondents had to be habitual movie watchers to be a part of this study.

4.4.2 Sampling Technique: Respondents were selected through snowball sampling. 12 close friends from Pakistan having movie watching habit were contacted to seek help regarding data collection. The data was collected from Lahore, which is the second largest city of Pakistan. Twelve close friends were accessed and contacted from Lahore and were requested to arrange at least 25 respondents each amongst their friends and acquaintances who were habitual movie watchers belonging to the age group from 13 years to above 33 years. Hence, the data has been collected from 300 respondents of Lahore.

4.4.3 Sampling Size: 300 movie watching respondents were selected as a sample which includes 170 male and 130 female respondents for the generalization of results. All the respondents completed the questionnaire and participated in the survey. Therefore, (n) 300 is the sample size without any exclusion.

4.4.4 Research Survey Conducting Tool: The survey was conducted through a self-structured written questionnaire. The data from each respondent was collected personally by the researcher. To avoid any repetition, the researchers made a checklist including names and demographics of the respondents. The inclusion of the researchers in the data collection of survey responses ensured that the respondents complete the questionnaire forms in all respects; incomplete questionnaires were not acceptable and the respondents complied with the researchers' request. The survey questionnaire was divided into two parts; first portion of questionnaire was designed to obtain demographic information of the respondents and the second part was designed to obtain information regarding the respondents' movie watching habits, preferences and views about the horror movie genre.

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.710	10

4.4.5 Reliability of Survey: Reliability is the consistency of the results. To check the reliability of the questioner, a test 'Cronbach's Alpha' was applied to all 10 of the questions. Cronbach's alpha of all the items in the questionnaire was calculated using reliability analysis. Reliability analysis was performed through SPSS 20 and Cronbach Alpha values are mentioned against the number of items in the Table 3.4.1.

All 10 items used in the study are found to be reliable as the Cronbach's alphas of all the items collectively is 0.710 respectively. According to Bruin (2006) the Cronbach's alpha greater than 0.700 indicates acceptable reliability of the data in social sciences.

<p style="text-align:center">V.   RESULTS AND ANALYSIS</p>

The descriptive analysis on the basis of different demographics, quantitative analysis of the variables related to the research questions and the qualitative analysis of the in-depth interviews of respondents to answer the research questions are included in this section.

In Table 5.1.1, the statistical analysis of total sample is listed followed by the statistics regarding the demographic analysis of the respondents included in the study.

Table 5.1.1 Demographic Analysis of Overall Sample

	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Total Respondents	300	100
Gender		
Male	170	56.7
Female	130	43.3
Age		
13-17	49	16.3
18-22	73	24.3
23-27	66	22
28-32	60	20
<33	52	17.3
Qualification		
Under Matriculation	55	18.3
Matriculation	75	25
Intermediate	73	24.3
Graduation or above	97	32.3

VI.   DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the researcher analyses the trend of horror movie viewership in Pakistan and the impact of horror movie viewership on the real-life personal experiences of viewers.

A research questionnaire consisting of two parts was distributed among 300 respondents for the quantitative survey analysis. The reliability of the survey questionnaire was tested by Cronbach's Alpha which showed the value as 0.721 which reflected that the survey was reliable.

The respondents that accounted for 56.7% of the total sample were males and 43.3% were female. 16.3% of the respondents were 13-17 years of age, 24.3% were 18-22 years of age, 22% respondents were 23-27 years of age, 20% were 28-32 years of age and 17.3% respondents were above 33 years of age. The respondents had varied educational levels; 18.3% of the respondents were qualified under-matriculation, 25% respondents were matriculate. 24.3% respondents were intermediate qualified and 32.3% respondents were qualified up to (or above) graduation.

All of the respondents were movie viewers but with varied habitual tendencies of movie viewership. About 5% respondents responded that they did not frequently watch movies whereas, 21% and 6.3% respondents had a habit of watching movies twice a month and once a week, respectively. 29% respondents watched movies few times a year. While the largest fraction of the sample under this study (38.7%) watched movies multiple times of the year, habitually.

On the question regarding the movie watching trend and preferences of the Pakistani respondents, the collected data revealed that about 31.3%, 19.3%, 15.3% and 17.3% respondents preferred Comedy, Action, Romance and other genres of movies, respectively. However, only 50 respondents that account for 16.7% of the total data preferred horror movie viewership the most which meant that 83.3% of the total population does not prefer horror movie viewership. It means that mostly Pakistanis have repulsion towards horror movie genre and trend of horror movie viewership is out of fashion in Pakistan. Statistics revealed that Pakistani movie viewers like comedy the most. 67.7% respondents found horror content repulsive due to its frightening nature. 71% respondents found horror content repulsive because they found blood and killing horrifying to watch, which is a primary component of the horror film. 67% respondents found horror content repulsive because they experienced nightmares and hallucinations after watching horror movies. 68.7% respondents found horror content repulsive because they think that it is a source of destructive ideas. 72.7% respondents found horror content repulsive because they think

that it increases negative thoughts. 81.7% respondents did not agree that horror movies can be used as a productive source of entertainment to relieve stress or anxiety. 59% respondents found horror content repulsive because they think that emotionally sensitive people do not like the exposure of hyper-negative content. 81.3% respondents do not enjoy watching horror movies because they find horror movie viewership fearsome and repulsive consequently. 74.7% respondents found horror content repulsive because they did not consider horror movies as a source of entertainment. 76% respondents found horror content repulsive, therefore, they did not want horror film production to thrive in Pakistani film industry.

The results of the survey answer the first, second and third research questions which were regarding the trending movie genre choice of Pakistani movie viewers.

Mass media exposure affects its viewers as suggested by the concept 'dose-response' effect, which says that the extent of exposure to media determines the extent of effects or impacts experienced by the viewer. Horror films are replete with anti-social, violent and hyper-negative content. It means that the horror movie viewers were more likely to face effects by consuming negative media messages. To prove this assumption; in-depth interviews were gathered from fans of horror movies who frequently watched horror content. The analysis of the in-depth interviews from twelve horror movie fans revealed a number of short and long term effects thus proving that impact was faced by the respondents on their real-life personal experiences. All the respondents of in-depth interviews had watched more than four (IMDb) horror movies in their life (by the time of interview). The analysis of the interviews revealed that young respondents from age thirteen to twenty-eight mostly experienced that their subconscious mind unconsciously related their real-life personal experiences with the horror movie scenes. While, the respondents above thirty years of age experienced nightmares and hallucinations rather than relating the real world experiences to horror movie scenes.

Thirteen year old respondent feared windy nights, flying curtains, rustling gushes of air, and porcelain or puppets dolls, thinking that they would turn into witches at any given moment. The fourteen year old respondent feared swimming and faced water phobia since she watched 'The Nun'. The sixteen year old male respondent felt uncomfortable and feared to use torch-light in darkness since he watched 'Annabelle'. The seventeen years old male respondent reflected that since he has watched religious figures as witches and demons, he has unintentionally started to stereotype anyone wearing a religious robe as a threat. He also fears from darkness and experiences phobia of a painful death by getting trapped since he saw the 'Saw Series'. The eighteen years old female respondent expressed that unconsciously she fears from anyone who has a disagreement with her because she thinks that the person might take revenge from her to express his/her anger towards her. She also fears zombie attack despite knowing that it is all fictional. The twenty years old male respondent shared that he has developed unease around clowns and phobia towards them after watching 'It'. He told that he has also feared from revenge takers since he watched 'Saw Series'. The twenty-one years old female respondent shared that she unintentionally and unconsciously objectifies hotel rooms are creepy, haunted, mysterious and, frightening since she watched '1408'. The twenty-three years old male respondent reflected that he fears lawlessness from fellow human beings and experiences trust issues since he watched 'The Purge', 'Saw Series', 'You're Next' and 'It', etc. The twenty-six years old male respondent told that since he has watched 'Dark Water' he has feared to use empty lifts. He also fears darkness and prefers to sleep with the lights on. The twenty-eight years old female respondent experiences an unintentional fear from clowns; she never lets her children get close to them since she has watched 'It'. She unconsciously stereotypes them as evil creatures.

The thirty years old female respondent continues to experience dreadful hallucinations of her own death in an unfortunate accident whenever she is on wheels since she watched 'Final Destination'. The fifty-five years old respondent recalled his memories and shared that he has repeatedly experienced nightmares of himself, getting caught to die in a blade and face-claw trap after watching similar scenes in the 'Saw Series'.

All of the younger and older respondents experienced nightmares, flashbacks and (or) hallucinations in their real-life personal experiences similar to the watched horror movie scenes multiple times in their lives. Hence, the third and fourth research question of this study which was related to the inquiry of horror movie impacts on viewers is answered by the above mentioned analytical details of the qualitative data.

6.1 Summary of Results

RQ1: *Which movie genre do Pakistani movie viewers watch the most?*

31.3%, 19.3%, 15.3% and 17.3% respondents preferred Comedy, Action, Romance and other genres of movies, respectively. While, only 16.7% of the total sample of respondents prefer horror movie viewership.

RQ2: *Do Pakistani movie viewers like to watch horror movies?*

The quantitative survey analysis revealed that only 50 respondents out of 300 participants of Pakistan had a liking towards horror movie viewership. Therefore, the horror movie liking population accounts for only 16.7% of the total sample.

RQ3: *Does horror movie viewership affect the real-life personal experiences of viewers?*

Viewership of horror movie genre causes impact on the real-life personal experiences of viewers. The in-depth interviews from twelve respondents (horror genre fans) who had a regular habit of watching horror movies revealed that every respondent faced long-lasting impact of horror movie viewership on real life personal experiences because they could easily recall the memories of the experiences.

RQ4: *What type of real-life experiences are faced by viewers of horror movie genre, if any?*

The subconscious memories of horror films enable the viewers to unconsciously relate their real world experiences with the viewed film content. The in-depth interviews from twelve respondents (horror genre fans) who were horror movie fans and regular horror viewers revealed that every respondent unconsciously related the viewed horror movie scenes to the real world scenarios. They expressed that after watching horror content their subconscious mind often tricked them that the fictional horror memories can turn into their personal reality.

6.2 Significant Findings: Apart from answering the research questions, the following significant findings were obtained from the research:

Statistics revealed that 31% Pakistani movie viewers like comedy the most. Action genre is the second most favorable movie genre of Pakistani viewers. 67.7% Pakistani respondents feel frightened by the horror content; therefore, they do not like to watch it. 71% Pakistani respondents find violence (blood and killing) horrifying to watch. 67% respondents found horror content repulsive because they experienced nightmares and hallucinations after watching horror movies. 68.7% respondents found horror content repulsive because they think that it is a source of destructive ideas for young/immature viewers. 72.7% respondents found horror content repulsive because they think that it increases negative, suicidal and anti-social thoughts. 81.7% respondents did not agree to the fact that horror movies can be used as a productive source of entertainment to relieve stress or anxiety. 59% respondents found horror content repulsive because they think that emotionally sensitive people do not like the exposure of hyper-negative content. 81.3% respondents do not enjoy watching horror movies because they find horror movie viewership; fearsome and repulsive consequently. 74.7% respondents found horror content repulsive because they did not consider horror movies as a source of entertainment. 76% respondents found horror content repulsive, therefore, they did not want horror film production to thrive in Pakistani film industry. The horror movie viewers often experienced hallucinations, nightmares and recalled horrific memories after watching horror scenes. The horror movie viewers also expressed that they feared, stereotyped and objectified certain roles, figures and objects in real world that they saw in the horror movies depicted as demons, haunted and frightening.

VII. CONCLUSION

This study supports the assumption that movie is a powerful medium to inculcate media messages through the means of one-way communication. Movies are heavily consumed by young people because they are considered as a refreshing and pleasant way to get entertained at low cost.

This scholarly research also supports the popular notion that media effects its viewers cognitively, psychologically and emotionally. In Pakistan, more than 64% of population is under the age of 30 and they are high end consumers of mass media. This research focused on collecting data from Pakistani movie viewers, only; to analyze the habits, trends, and impacts of movie viewership in Pakistan. The survey results highlighted that about 95% of the total 300 respondents were frequent movie viewers which

revealed movie viewing as a fashion in Pakistan. However, horror genre was not considered a favorable genre amongst the Pakistani movie viewers as only 16.7% respondents liked watching horror movies.

The in-depth interviews of the horror movie fans revealed the impacts of horror movies on their real-life personal experiences. They recalled the memories of horror content stored in their subconscious mind; denoted incidents of unconscious stereotyping and objectification; and, revealed the hallucinations and nightmares faced by them after watching horror movies. All the personal accounts of the horror movie fans affirmed the assumptions made by the researcher regarding horror movie impacts on their real-life personal experiences.

As, it is proven that the horror movie leaves grave imprints on the subconscious mind of the viewer, hence, the young and immature viewers should avoid watching horror content because it has the tendency to inculcate aggression, anxiety, depression, negative attitude and anti-social behavior in them as they are not capable to discern among fiction, entertainment and reality.

7.1 Limitations of the Study: The results of this study discuss the trend of movie viewership in Pakistan and the impacts of horror movie viewership on Pakistani viewers. However, the study is not exclusive of limitations and they are as follows:

The study may have some analytical limitations and unintentional bias; because the in-depth interviews from the respondents were analyzed by the researchers themselves but to reduce the risk, the researchers offered the participants to review the analysis and results to possibly avoid tampering. Due to limited time for the study, the survey from Lahore was completed in fifteen days which may have affected the response rate. The survey data was collected from mostly urban areas of Lahore so the data may not have a proper representation of population living in rural areas.

7.2 Recommendations and Suggested Areas of Research: This research proposes the enlisted recommendations and encourages following further areas of research:

Writers should avoid creating content without assessing its psychological and social implications. The horror movie lovers should avoid the exposure to hyper-negative and anti-social content because it has psychological, cognitive and social implications as suggested by this study. While writing the script, producing and directing the content, focus should be given on the nature of media messages inculcated in the youth through horror (and other genre) movies and, other media of mass communication in Pakistan by the writers, producers and directors. Experimental and focus group studies should be conducted on old-aged media viewers to scientifically evaluate long-lasting imprints of media messages on the cognition and psyche of the Pakistani viewers, so that the moderators can devise the management of media content to generate positive impacts on people and avoid negative effects of media consumption. The policy makers should promote and encourage problems related to prospective media effect studies to find out the ways to promote character and nation-building ideals for the immature and young media viewers. To have a better understanding of trend patterns and impacts, a further study should be conducted on the role of demographics of young Pakistani movie viewers in accordance with their media viewing choices.

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