

Effect of Foreign Films on Youths' Moral Conduct Especially Students from the Undergraduate Level-An Exploratory Study at USTC, Bangladesh.

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Abstract:

Films are the source of spreading the messages, attributes to exchanging the ideas in a different way, and making an impact on our behavior, attitude and moral conduct. In the 21st century, people are surrounded by technology. Everyone is being smart day by day to access any source. We can hardly find anyone who doesn't watch movies or films. In Bangladesh, people watch mostly Bengali, Indian, Tamilian, English, and nowadays Korean, Chinese movies and films. And today we can access any foreign films through YouTube, Google, Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+, etc. Teenagers and youths of our country are mostly getting influenced by English, Korean, Chinese, Tamilian, and also somewhat Iranian films and movies. In my personal observation, I can see the hot market of unrealistic but probable situational films among the audiences of foreign films. The area of our inquiry and interest field is about: the effect of foreign films on the first-year students of undergraduate level, more specifically at the Department of English in 'University of Science and Technology Chittagong'. This area of study especially about the behavioral and moral impact on the students made us curious for further investigation. Fascinating part, students' opinions, ideas and experiences regarding the foreign films are given importance in order to get a clear idea of the effect of foreign films in changing the moral conduct. Moreover, the area of study is comparatively new from the perspective of Bangladeshi tertiary level study and the scope of further research will certainly be necessary and appreciable.

Keywords:

Foreign films, Probable situational films, Technology, Behavioral Code, Undergraduate level, Teenagers, Youths, Moral Conduct.

Introduction:

To define it in simple terms, film is known as a motion picture which is generally played by some characters; and projected in rapid succession onto screen by the means of light. It has a long story for building the tradition of the film industry. The history of films developed from a visual art form with the advancing of technology in the late 19th century. Although the advent of film as an artistic medium is not clearly defined, the commercial, public screening of ten of

the **Lumière brothers'** short films in Paris on 28 December 1895 can be regarded as the breakthrough of projected cinematographic motion pictures (“Wikipedia, History of films”). The first multi-reel, feature-length film in the world is ‘*The Story of the Kelly Gang*’ opened on Boxing Day 1906. In Bangladesh, Cinematic world was first introduced in 1898 by the Bradford Bioscope Company, credited to have arranged the first film release (“Wikipedia, Cinema of Bangladesh”). But the first Bengali-language full-length feature film was produced in 1956, *Mukh O Mukhosh*. Mainly in 1950s, television came to light and started to compete with motion pictures as a major form of popular entertainment. If we see 1950s popular culture, such as movies and television, sought to entertain, while reinforcing values such as religious faith, patriotism, and conformity to societal norms (Khan Academy).

In the 21st century, we can easily access any source to watch any country’s film. On-demand streaming services are online platforms which provide viewers with the possibility to watch any show or film at any time (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015). People are fascinated about watching foreign films more than native films nowadays. They are not bound to learn and enjoy from the foreign films. This is the reason we see the mixed-cultural thinking in the southwest Asian countries. The effect of western culture in the east is being so rapid that we can hardly define these two cultures. This dynamic situation in our country is mostly affecting our young students morally, culturally, behaviorally, and psychologically. Some experts believe that technology (Including Television) is making us less patient as well as sluggish. Nowadays mobile, PC, Television is in everyone’s hand for watching films. Audiences get influenced by what they see on films and movies; and they try to emulate it in their real life; think that if they have any chance to make their life like their favorite actors or actresses with that same joy, struggle, fight and spirit. More surprisingly, young students are a big part of it; and they are playing some major roles as a target audience of the film industries. They are not even aware of whatever they are seeing on Media and Television. Their binge-watching films might have some negative implication on their studies. Even maximum students are now not into their studies, household chores or helping parents but rather they are more into technological devices and binge-watching films or series. Those behaviors of abject refractoriness influence their formative ages and other behavioral patterns (Brown, N. J and Bassey-Duke V. 2014).

Now in Bangladesh, it is a matter of concern how much our students are mentally aware of the reality of the film, and how much they are getting affected morally. As our teenagers and youths are spending lots of time watching films, movies, and series from various countries, they will better know about it. We always have to remember that a coin also has a flip side. Watching films or movies has both positive and negative sides. Watching movies with social message or pure fun might be worthy, but films with too much violence, romantic messages and mean

messages are not good for students and young people (Kubay& Larson, 1990). So, it is necessary to decide which films are to give importance and which are not.

Problems:

The impact of mass media in the world is so large. It includes television, radio, advertising, movies, the Internet, newspapers, magazines, and so forth. It helps us to get in touch with everyone around the world, and get the news and information every day. The negative effects of mass media on society can lead people towards poverty, crime, nudity, violence, bad mental and physical health disorders and others as such severe outcomes (NIMCJ, 2019). Film is a part of media which also can carry these effects toward students. Films play a vital role to change the thoughts, point of view; and to shape the behavioral patterns of students as they start to react to whatever they see or hear on the screen. Therefore, this study seeks to find out how foreign films are affecting the moral conduct of the first-year students of undergraduate level in the Department of English Language and Literature.

Objectives:

The aim of the research is to ascertain the idea that watching too many foreign films can affect teenagers and youths' actions and behavior from a moral sense.

It can affect teenagers mentally which would make them less sensitive in their real life.

They will start applying the things they used to watch on films.

Also, they will try to adapt to the culture they are watching which might not be acceptable in some societies, and as a result the sense of revolt or retribution would work on their mind for not being allowed to go with the wish they want to have in their society.

So here, we are looking forward to these things:

1. To figure out how much teenagers are getting affected and influenced by the foreign films.
2. To find out the types of foreign films they are interested in.
3. To see the student's perspectives toward films.
4. To ascertain the level of moral concern among the surveyed students.
5. To explore the benefits, harms of adapting foreign films in your daily life, and also some quick fix of this.

Research questions:

1. How much students are getting affected and influenced by the foreign films?
2. What types of films do you watch?
3. How often do they watch foreign films?

4. Where do the films you watch belong?
5. What fascinates you the most in the foreign films?
6. How much are the students morally concerned about the films?
7. What are the benefits and harms of watching foreign films?

Literature Review:

In today's world, media related things are part of our lives. Since the 1950s, media has taken place vastly in the form of Television. Now at any corner, we can see the use of mobile, laptop, television, etc. media related things. From these relevant sources, students are giving their time watching foreign films which are very enjoyable for them to watch. Some students unknowingly binge watch movies and films in their leisure time. In the study of Riddle et al. (2017), he stated that 19% of the participants experienced unintentional binges and that this unintentional binge-watching was related to symptoms of addiction. And for that reason, students are losing their concentration on study day by day. Effect of films on the students is vast on the matter of learning things and adapting them morally in their real life. There are so many good and bad sides of watching foreign films. **“What’s great about foreign cinema, is that it not only highlights how, as human beings, we hit similar milestones in life, but it demonstrates the different ways people cope or see these events and arguably, a lot of the time, these reactions can be influenced by where people live”** (Hello Student, n.d.). In the times of India, a retired professor of Community Medicine **Vk Muthu** said cinema also has an impact on the economy, society, politics, rationalism etc. It exerts a tremendous effect on people's psychology. People are exposed to all kinds of emotions in cinema within a short span of 2 to 3 hours. Love, hatred, vengeance, savage violence, rape and many other undesirable activities are shown within such a short period of time (VK Muthu, 2021). We all know that films affect the lives of men and women. “Film is a powerful tool, because of its conversational nature, which can create or break the culture of people” (Aldana, 2004). Even most researchers believe that films affect a wide range of attitude and teenagers' behavior. The consequences of television violence are indeed a significant area of media consequences: foreign films profess violence (Raji Precious Aduragbemi, 2020). They illustrate new forms of torture and physical violence that inspire the young mind to imbibe these behaviors. Boys who grew up watching violent films were more prone to violence.

In our country, teenagers and youths are more into foreign films than native films. Because they tend to fall for the quality of scenery, story, fascinating fictional sights and beautiful characters which are yet lacking in our country's films. It reflects on their minds, and they start adapting their favorite things in their real life. Watching foreign films helps a lot in many cases but not choosing the films wisely might gradually make their morality vulnerable. Their beliefs would be changed by the course of the tradition and violent practices of the foreign films. Sometimes it shows on their activities and behaviors when they cope with society. The films and movies they watch on television does matter for their attitudes. Because the films they see on television they think that it is true, and sometimes take emotional scenery, violence, murder very normal

in human life. Meltzoff and Moore (1977) argued that heavy exposure to television is believed to be one of the causes of violent behavior, crime and abuse in society.

A related study of foreign films named on the influence of Western entertainment television programmers on the behavior of Nigerian youth that was done by Johnson and Adegoke (2016). The research was based on the theory of cultivation and social learning. In the survey of 300 students from Babcock University and Covenant University, Findings showed that Western film television shows affected Nigerian youth's dressing style (60.7%), sexual conduct (60.5%) and eating habits by (58.7%); the youth express aggressive behavior, mimic foreign language and engage in public show of love by viewing Western television programs. Therefore, teenagers and youths are to be sincere enough to choose the right and safe way to enjoy watching foreign films.

Methods:

This study is conducted in one of the renowned private universities in Chittagong called University of Science and Technology Chittagong (USTC); and more specifically from the first-year undergraduate level of the English literature department students. Here in this paper, we can see both quantitative and qualitative methods to draw on information and data. The Quantitative measurement deals with numbers, frequencies, rankings or percentages. Other sources of quantitative information are checklists, surveys and self-ratings. On the other hand, the Qualitative method (information in words and meaning) helps us to explore concepts and experiences more in detail.

The close-ended questions (Ranking Questions) that are collected from the students have actually been analyzed by quantitative research methods. There have been seven close-ended questions in which 5 questions are expressed numerically here and 2 questions (opinions) are expressed in qualitative research methods.

Participants:

Main participants were students who were very interested in the research paper; and they were attentive in their classes which helped me a lot to contact them easily. They consented to be the active participants with the condition of keeping their names hidden. I selected 20 students from the first year (first and second semester) undergraduate level of the Department of English Language and Literature in USTC.

Twenty students have participated in this study on questionnaires or close-ended questions. The questions are MCQ type questions with 4/5 options in which some questions are selected for ranking questions like: mark 3star for first priority, and then comes 2 star, and 1 star for least priority in options. Couple of questions are asked just like any other MCQ (selecting the one), and two questions are asked for the personal opinion of the students.

As the participants are the students of first year undergraduate level, their ages are around 18-21 years old (according to Bangladeshi students). The blend of the teenagers and youths (Teenouths) mind has made this case more interesting. The students are quite sensible enough to understand the benefits and harms of watching the foreign films. Their opinion has become essential as their psychology of films behind these Q/A would be reflected in the paper. Maximum were interested and friendly to help me out to share their opinion. Out of those twenty students, some students have participated passively. Though their passive opinions are not recorded still it helped me a lot to create many points in problems, findings and recommendations.

Data Collection procedures with analysis and presentation:

Data collection refers to the collecting information and data in order to know a specific result of a topic. In this paper, close-ended questions are used in a both quantitative and qualitative way. All the questions have been collected from tertiary level students, specifically first year undergraduate level students. Here the surveyed students are from the English Language and literature Department of USTC (University of Science and Technology Chittagong). There are 20 attentive students who have been selected for collecting the information. They were quite interested in answering the close-ended questions related to films. As they have ideas about recent movies and films, the analyzed answers and opinions are genuine. The questions are a blend of MCQ types (some are ranking), and descriptive types, in total 7 questions. These questions are organized in such a way that would tell your personal opinions and also, you're thinking about films. The close-ended MCQ type's questionnaires emphasize the student's liking on films, types of movies/films they watch, how much they are being affected by foreign films.

Through this research, we get to know the students of the first-year undergraduate level of DELL, USTC, how much they are aware of the negative sides of the foreign films, and how much they believe in the positive sides also. In fact, this data collection has been presented through charts, statistics, and numbers in a structural way. In this dissertation, primary data has been collected which are actually the samples of recorded written production and it has been analyzed and discussed in order to find out the harms, benefits and the main areas of attraction behind the foreign films. There are relevant findings, detailed study of the findings, and recommendations and limitations consecutively presented in this paper.

Data Collection and Findings:

In this dissertation, primary data have been collected by the help of questionnaire surveys and recorded questions and answers of the students. There were twenty students as participants who responded in the questionnaires. Here, students gave their personal opinion about the reality and moral concerns about the foreign films. Some students answered the questionnaires in such a way that reflects their influence on watching foreign films.

In the analysis, both qualitative and quantitative approaches are applied in order to clarify the detailed ideas in connection to the discussion of the findings. As a result, it has proceeded according to the arrangement of the multiple-choice questions and the findings in percentages. Here most students tried to give honest answers and for that mixtures of negative and positive are there. They believe that today's films are the cause of our violent actions which decrease our moral values.

Corpus 1: How often do the students watch films?

Nowadays more or less students watch films in their leisure times.

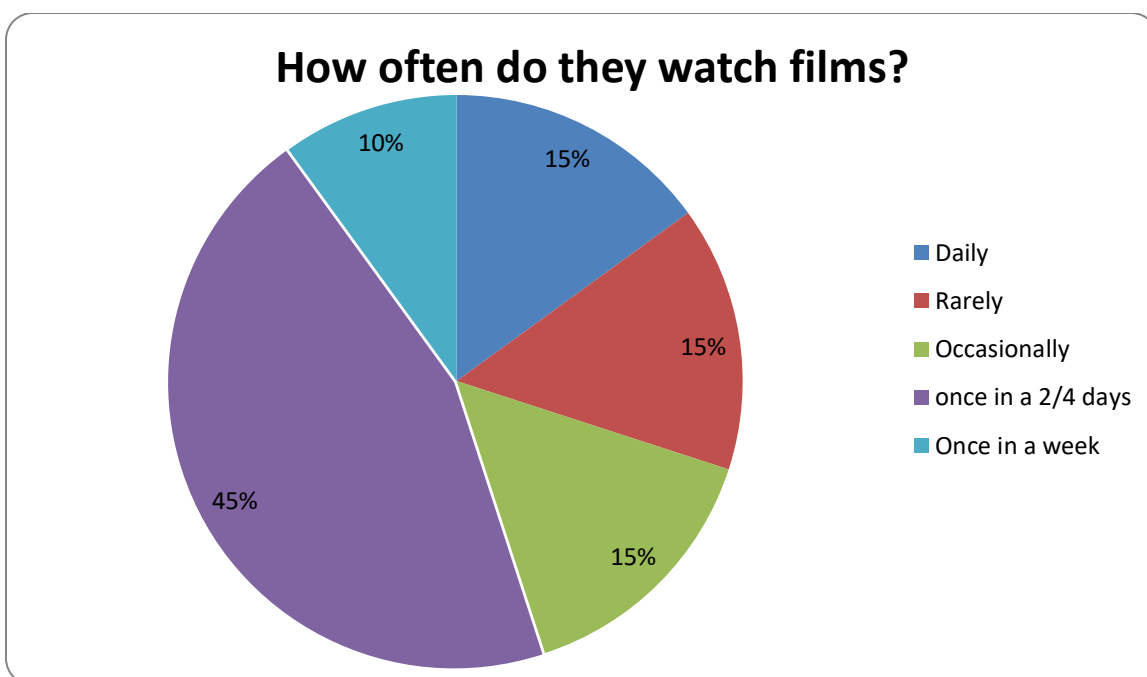


Fig 1: How often the surveyed students watch films?

Here, the first question of the research paper tells us the percentages of the frequency of watching films among the surveyed students. Among the 20 students, 45% of them enjoy films at least once in 2 or 4 days on average. That means not only on weekends but also on other days, students enjoy films and movies. 15% students watch films daily which is an important matter to be concerned about because what they are watching must be noticed by their guardian. 10% students watch films at least once in a week; and 15% students watch occasionally; and 15% students rarely.

Corpus 2: Where do the films belong?

The students watch some country's films or movies. Like: Indian, Tamilian, American, Korean, Chinese, Japanese, and Bangladeshi.

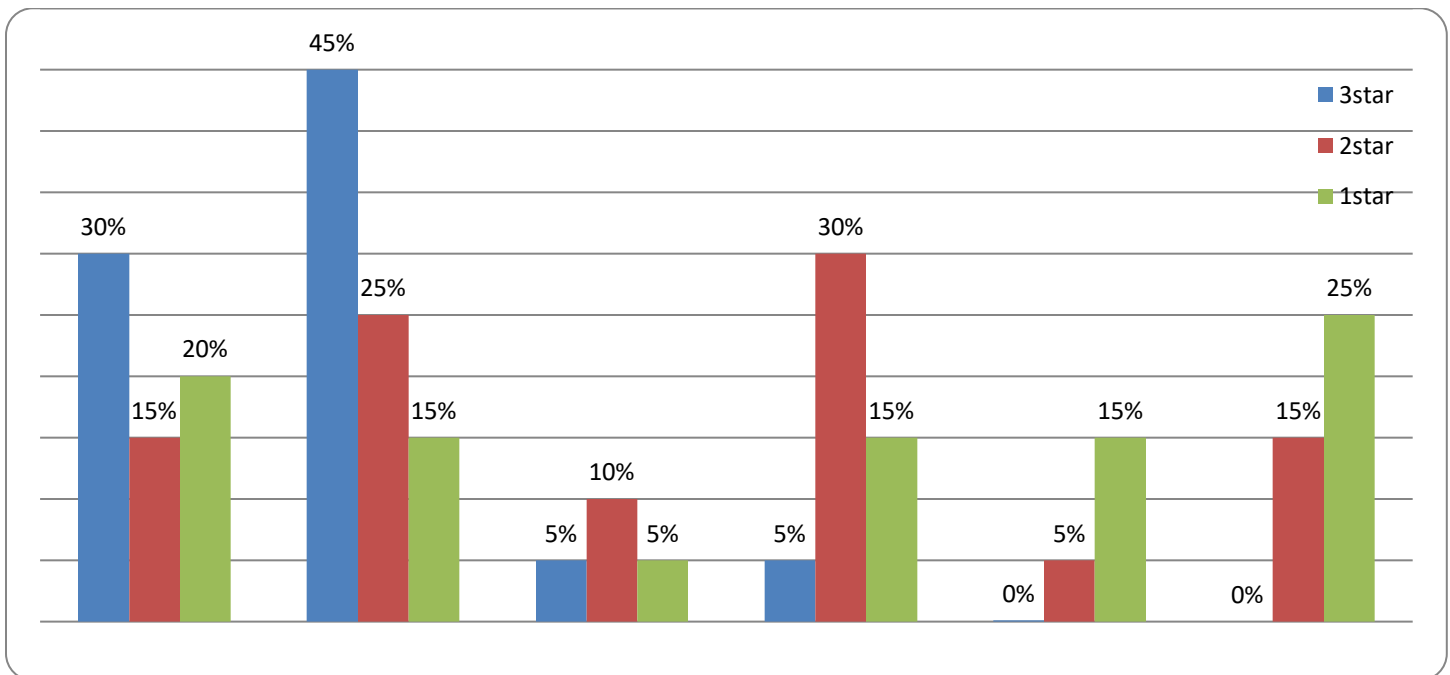


Fig 2: Where do the films belong?

This chart is based on ranking questions. The questions are given to select 3 options with marking 3 stars for first priority, 2 stars for second priority, and 1 star least priority. Along with foreign films I deliberately put the option of Bangladeshi films. The wonder is, no one selects Bangladeshi films as their first priority, only 15% students have chosen for second and 25% students have chosen for least priority.

Foreign films they watch like:

1. **Indian films:** 30% students' mark 3star to it for first priority, 15% students mark for second priority, and 20% students have 1 star. That means at least 65% of students watch Indian films (Bollywood).
2. **American films:** Here 45% students watch Hollywood films as their first priority. 25% of them put 2 stars and 15% put 1 star. In total 85% of students enjoy Hollywood films.
3. **Tamilian films:** Some of them also watch Tamilian films and movies as the films of that place are famous for its story, climax and characters. 5% students took that as their first priority, 10% for second, and 5% for their least.
4. **Korean Films:** The movies and films of Korea (South Korea) are now in the top watch list in the foreign film section. Students, teenagers, young generation are falling for the plots, twists, climax scenes, fictional things, cultural diversity, and even beautiful characters of South Korea. Even 10 years back, we would hardly find someone who watches Korean films. But now according to our survey, 5% students watch Korean films as their first priority, 30% students give 2 stars to it, which means that it is the 2nd in their choice. Then 15% of them gave 1 star which means they at least watch it.
5. **Chinese/Japanese:** Few of the students also watch this Chinese and Japanese. The numbers are few and that is why we need to count it together. 5% students took this option as their 2nd choice, and 15% took this as 3rd option (somewhat they watch this).

Corpus 3:

The types of films they watch:

There are so many types and genres of films in the film industry; for instance: Action, Comedy, Thriller, Fantasy, Horror, Adventure, Romance etc.

This also belongs to a ranking question to see the priority list of the students.

Types	3stars	2stars	1stars
Action	5%	15%	15%
Thriller	30%	15%	5%
Comedy	10%	15%	20%
Horror	20%	15%	0%
Adventure	5%	5%	20%
Romance	15%	10%	10%
Fantasy	5%	15%	20%

Fig 3: What types of films do they watch?

Here, we can perceive that the number of people watching is more than other types of film. 30% of students give 3 stars to it. Interestingly 35% of students enjoy horror films in which 20% mark for 3 stars(first priority) and 15% mark for 2stars(second priority). People also want to take pleasure from comedy films and movies. Comedy genre took 45% in total as 10% for first priority, 15% for 2nd and 20% for least. Here, all the options were available to every student and they had to select 3 options in serial to their priority list.

Corpus 4:

Another star ranking question: What fascinates them the most in a film?

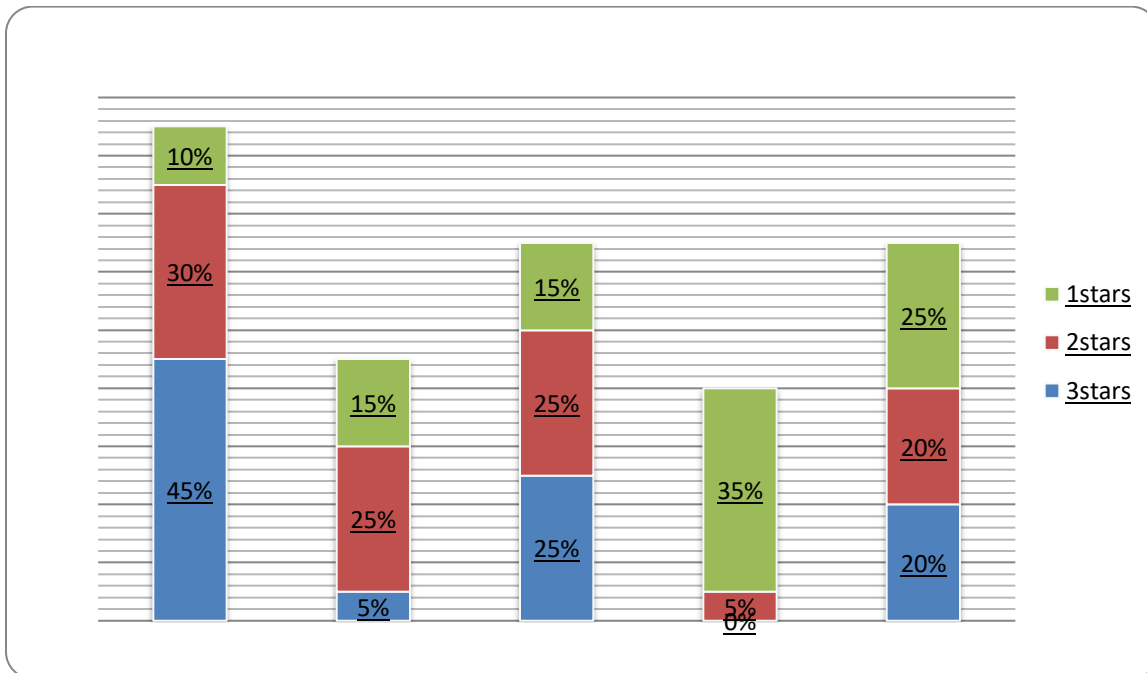


Fig 4: What fascinates them the most in a film?

In this questionnaire, 5 options were given to the students. Maximum people get attracted to the story, climax, themes, setting, or the Characters. For the story part, 45% students voted 3star for it, 30% of them voted 2 stars, and then 1 star was given by 10% students. Then the second maximum 3 stars holder is Themes and ideas which is crucial for a quality film. Besides that, characters and their acting are also playing an eye-catching role to grab the attention of audiences here.

Corpus 5: What do they think about the reality in the films?

Through this question we wanted to know how they take the films, relate them in their life, and especially their speculations towards their favorite films.

This is just a one way answering the questions among 5% options. They had to take one option.

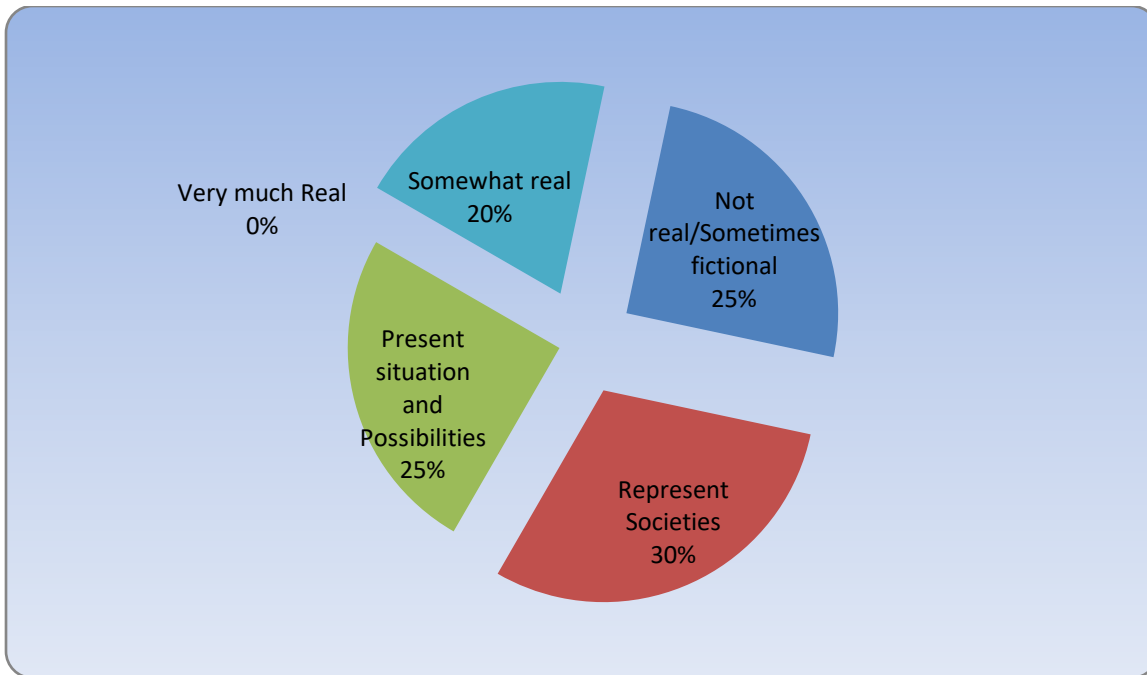


Fig 5: What do they think about the reality in the films?

We can see here that, 30% students' belief that films often represent societies. They believe whatever they see in the films, it is just the reflection of society. The mirror of society reflects on the films. 25% of them think that it shows the present situation and the possibilities of the future. So, in total, 55% of them strongly believe that films are a part of our lives. 25% students take the films as unreal, and 20% of them take that as somewhat real. One amazing side is, no one thinks that films and movies are very much real. That means they are not blind at least.

Student Quotes and opinion analysis:

The lines have been collected from the closed ended 'opinion based' questionnaires.

Two questions had been asked for their opinion as close-ended questions.

1. How much are today's films morally concerned? Do you think that foreign films can affect our moral conduct?

As the answer of this question, some of the students tried to be mutual.

One student said,

“We need to know what we should take from a movie because there are certain things that can happen in a movie, like wrong dialogue, violence”.

This student tried to be positive about the films and aware of choosing the right one.

● Another student said that:

“No foreign movies can claim that these are free from adultery content whether it is largely portrayed or not. But moral lessons are there”.

It is a very clever statement because some films have moral lessons but no foreign films in the 21st century can claim that it is free from adultery content.

So, when they watch foreign films, they are used to seeing adult scenes and adultery content. Psychologically, it is gradually becoming normal to see these types of incidents.

- Interestingly some students raised questions about the commerciality of the films.
“Today’s foreign films are only concerned about entertainment and attention grabbing to the audience. It shows pretty violent and sexual content. It contributes to vulgarity and cheap entertainment. It misleads particularly young minds with its gross sensation”.

- One of students said:
“As those movies are from different countries, it represents different cultures, themes and a different society. Sometimes their thoughts can be contradictory to our moral conduct and to our religious views also”.

- One of students also showed an example:
“Take ‘Eye in the Sky (2015)’ for example, we watch it and we question the morality of modern-day warfare, how it feels if one might get caught in a crossfire, and also, the use of drones as we see in the film.

- Immoral images or activities has also been mentioned:
“Most of the movies show immoral images or activities by highlighting the social disorders. This is embedding the problem in the young mind more than solving it”.

2. Question: Benefits and harms of watching foreign films: Students’ opinions:

- Benefits:
 1. Learn various customs, culture, history
 2. Learn new languages
 3. Understand the perspective of other country’s people.
 4. Get to know the criteria of making a good film.
 5. A good foreign film not only gives knowledge but also provides analytical skills.

- Harms:
 1. Films portraying larger than life characters makes it difficult for the audience to separate fiction from reality
 2. In movies there might be some disturbing scenes that some people might get traumatized, affected. And some scenes might not be appropriate for people of a certainage to watch.
 3. Just for entertainment they show some visual incidents which can give us the wrong message.

4. Mixed up culture wipes out native culture.
5. Adultery and Sexual content.
6. Addiction of watching films can harm our mental and physical health. It also affects student's concentration from study.

Result and Final Outcome:

This paper deals with the collected figures and opinions from the student. Also, it has the findings, recommendations, limitations. As an outcome, we get the idea that most of the students accept that they are getting affected by the foreign films. But they believe that it is about how much concern you are about selecting or skipping the parts. And the main thing is: some of them are not aware of measuring their area of problem but they know what is good and bad for them. And, facing this dilemma is quite normal for their age. Understanding the depth of the findings, limitations, and recommendations can help them to have better solutions to their problems.

Summary of the Findings and Conclusion:

MCQ type close-ended questions:

1. All the surveyed students enjoy watching films. 55% students (15%+45%) watch films daily and once in 2-4 days. Only 15% of students watch rarely but they have the idea of films.
2. In a bird's eye view if you speculate what areas of film they watch, the priorities will be Indian (Bollywood), USA (Hollywood), South Korean Films serially in order.
3. In the ranking questions, students were asked the types of movies they watch: The top watching list serially comes:
 - Thriller (30% Three stars, 15% two stars, 5% one stars = 50% people watches this genre)
 - Comedy. (In total 45%)
 - Horror, action and romantic films took similar 35% for each in total stars.
 - There are other genre's films they also watch like adventure, fictional, fantasy but 50% of them watch Thriller films. The definition of Thriller movies is: The type of genre that has climax, critical plots, crime, action, exciting experience which generally control the audience's excitement. According to Cambridge Dictionary, "Thriller is a book, play, or film that has an exciting story, often about solving a crime". But in today's film, it is a matter of concern that how much the films are morally concerned.

To make the audience more excited, they can show anything on the screen. In the end, students are getting affected.

4. Also, they were asked, 'what are the fascinating parts they find in the films? They mostly voted for the story/plots section, Themes, and then characters. Mainly when they are learning and taking their observation from the story of other cultures. When we see any story of a film, we generally react (cry, laugh, be emotional, regret, wrap the brain around) on that. It teaches us several things for our daily life. We start connecting them in our real life, but we need to understand not everything is applicable for our life. Some students also feel fascinated about characters. They start imitating the styles, fashions of their favorite actors or actresses. Not always it brings fruit for us.
5. A survey says that 30% of the students think that films represent societies, 25% think that it reflects the present situation and possibilities. Besides that, 25% students believe films are not reality, and 20% told that they are somewhat real.

Opinion type close-ended questions found that:

Students know that today's foreign films are not fully concerned morally. They opined that the things they see like: violent scenes, sexual contents, harshness, accepting the customs, controversial matters are the reason for affecting the moral conduct. But when someone enjoys these things, accepting that they are the reflection of today's world, then problems arise. Some students believe that some films are morally concerned, some are not. But if a film is not morally aware, it will mislead particularly young minds with its gross sensation. They also told the benefits and harms of watching foreign films like:

1. It gives us knowledge and helps us to be open minded.
2. It harms us in a sense of accepting different cultures, regulating our fashion, being addicted, and watching disturbing scenes as normal things.

As a whole, the idea we get from the surveyed students is that they notice the good and bad sides of a foreign film. But the way they speculate, adapt, choose, regulate the films in their mind, psychologically it affects them directly or indirectly. To add up, it also makes us easy-going with any situation where people don't even want to react to any injustice.

Recommendations:

1. It is important to regulate our schedule of watching foreign films. (Once in a week is fine for the students).
2. Taking the films as a part of entertainment we need to be aware what to take seriously and what to not.
3. We need to be selective when watching all types of movies.
4. We should focus on the good sides of a culture like behavior, language, and treatment of people.

5. We shouldn't follow our favorite characters blindly as they belong to different cultures. Sometimes they just show up with the director's demand or they just come up with their commercial purposes.
6. Improvement of our country's films is necessary to keep our culture alive. We need to take steps for creating moral, cultural, and lovable films with some entertainment.

Limitations:

1. This paper only focused on 20 students instead of all the students in USTC.
2. Teachers' opinions have not been taken.
3. Not all student's quotes and opinions have been put here. Only an analyzed summary has been discussed.
4. Not everyone is an expert at analyzing films.
5. It is impossible to be aware all the time while you are watching a film for entertainment.
6. Couple of students were not aware of the question about morality of the films before. So, it was difficult for them to answer properly.

Strengths of the study:

1. The surveyed students are quite smart and most of them are movie lovers.
2. The research data and information are authentic and analyzed.
3. The study shows the problem, reality, and solutions.
4. As the surveyed students are university level students, this paper will be helpful for other university students to understand.

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