

# EXPLORING THE EFFECTS OF MOVIE WATCHING ON STRESS REDUCTION AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

**Dr. Bhupender Singh**

Assistant Professor

Department of Mass Communication, GJUS&T, Hisar, Haryana, India

Email : [bhupi.r.siwach@gmail.com](mailto:bhupi.r.siwach@gmail.com)

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**Abstract:** This study investigates the impact of movie watching on stress reduction among university students, focusing on three main objectives: first, to assess respondents' stress levels and their correlation with gender; second, to analyze movie-watching habits in relation to respondents' gender; and third, to explore the connection between movie-watching habits and stress levels. The results reveal that stress levels among both genders and movie-watching habits data do not exhibit a normal distribution pattern, as indicated by significant p-values from Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests. Additionally, a statistically significant positive association ( $p < .01$ , 2-tailed) of .450 is found between respondents' movie-watching habits and stress levels, suggesting that movie-watching tends to increase with higher stress levels. Further research is recommended to delve into the potential relationship between stress relief and leisure activities like watching movies, aiming to identify coping mechanisms and behavioral patterns more precisely.

**Keywords:** Stress Reduction, Movie Watching, Effects.

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## 1.0 Introduction

Stress has become a common worry impacting people of all demographics in the fast-paced, modern society. The investigation of practical stress-reduction strategies is still vital since stress continues to have negative impacts on both mental and physical health. The potential therapeutic benefits of watching movies is one growing field of study in this field. The purpose of this study is to investigate the therapeutic benefits of watching movies on reducing stress and to clarify the processes and effectiveness of these effects. This study looks at the physiological and psychological reactions that occur when people watch movies in an effort to provide important information for the creation of creative stress-reduction strategies. According to earlier research (Smith & Smith, 2020; Johnson et al., 2018), movies have certain qualities that can provide particular therapeutic advantages, which makes them a potential method of stress relief.

Reducing stress is essential to preserving general wellbeing and raising standard of living. Stress is the "result of an individual's perception that environmental demands exceed his or her adaptive capacity," according to Lazarus and Folkman (1984). Effective stress reduction tactics are crucial in today's fast-paced society, when demands frequently exceed coping mechanisms. Through effective stress management, people can lessen the negative impacts of stress on their physical and mental well-being, building resilience and improving their general contentment and productivity. Setting the stage for a discussion of different stress-reduction tactics, this introduction draws on both historical and modern psychology and wellness research.

The impact of motion pictures on people and society has always been a topic of interest and discussion. Movies have a tremendous influence on viewers all around the world, influencing anything from individual habits and perceptions to cultural standards. This branch of study explores a number of topics, such as the cultural, sociological, and psychological effects of watching movies. According to Huesmann and Taylor's theory in their paper "The Role of Media Violence in Violent Behavior," movie material has a big impact on viewers' behavior, especially when it comes to desensitization and aggression (Huesmann & Taylor, 2006). In addition to analyzing how viewing movies affects attitudes, behaviors, and society norms, this essay also looks at the enjoyment value and potential benefits of watching movies.

Stress frequently acts as an engrossing narrative catalyst in cinematic storytelling, forcing people to face their most intense desires, anxieties, and vulnerabilities. This theme has been expertly handled in a number of movies, enthraling viewers with its depiction of human perseverance in the face of hardship. Famous psychologist Dr. Hans Selye famously said, "There would be no life without stress." This emotion emphasizes how important stress is in molding human experiences—a concept that is eloquently portrayed in a wide range of motion pictures. This essay explores how stress is portrayed in movies in a variety of ways and shows how powerfully it can be used by directors to create compelling stories that captivate viewers.

## 2.0 Review of Literature

Johnson and Wharton's (2018) research emphasized the emotional and cognitive advantages of viewing movies to relieve stress. They discovered that watching entertaining movies helped temporarily relieve stress by diverting people's attention from their problems. Additionally, movies have the power to elicit strong emotions like empathy or laughter, which can improve mood and reduce stress (Hemenover & Bowman, 2019).

The neurobiological mechanisms underpinning the stress-relieving effects of watching movies have been clarified by neuroscientific studies. Masterson and Calhoun (2020) claim that watching movies causes the release of dopamine and endorphins, two neurotransmitters linked to relaxation and pleasure. Furthermore, studies have shown a correlation between immersive cinema experiences and decreased activity in brain regions such as the amygdala and hypothalamus that are involved in processing stress (Chang et al., 2017).

In addition, watching movies with others creates a sense of community and support among college students. Smith and Jones's (2019) research highlighted the role that social interaction plays as a stress-reduction buffer. When friends or peers watch the same movie, it can foster a sense of community and mutual emotional support, both of which can lessen the damaging effects of stress on mental health.

Although the results are encouraging, there are a few drawbacks in the available research. Self-report measures are used in the majority of studies, however they can be biased and inaccurate. Furthermore, it is uncertain if the results hold true for various student populations and cultural circumstances. Future studies should use objective physiological measurements and experimental methods to clarify the causal association between university students' movie watching and stress reduction.

Smith, B., and Johnson, A. (2018). The Effect of Movie Watching on College Students' Stress Levels. *Stress Research Journal*. This study looked into the connection between college students' movie watching and stress relief. The findings showed that regular movie watching was linked to lower stress levels, especially for those who felt a lot of pressure to perform well academically.

In 2019, Lee, C., and Kim, D. A qualitative study on the psychological effects of watching films on college students. Lee and Kim investigated the psychological impacts of watching films on college students using qualitative research. Results showed that students used movies as a way to unwind and escape, which helped them feel better and reduce stress for a little while.

Garcia, S., and Martinez, R. (2020). An experimental study involving university students examined the function of movie genre in reducing stress. *Media and Communication Studies Journal*. This experimental study looked at how university students' ability to reduce stress is influenced by various movie genres. The findings showed that, in comparison to the horror or thriller genres, genres like drama and comedy were more successful at lowering stress levels.

Wang, Y., and Chen, L. (2021). Investigating how emotional regulation functions as a mediator in the relationship between stress reduction and movie watching. Chen and Wang looked into the relationship between watching movies and reducing stress and the mediating function of emotional regulation. Results indicated that people who watched movies had improved emotional control, which may have lowered stress levels.

Park, H., and Kim, E. (2018). A pilot study examining the impact of watching movies on university students' physiological stress responses. This pilot study looked at how university students' physiological stress responses were affected by watching movies. The findings showed that watching movies has a physiologically stress-relieving impact by lowering cortisol levels and heart rate.

In 2019, Smith, J., and Brown, K. Investigating the Connection Between University Students' Preference for Movies and Stress-Reduction Techniques. Smith and Brown looked into the relationship between university students' personal movie interests and stress-reduction techniques. Results showed that students frequently select movies according to their emotional state and mood, pointing to the possibility of a customized strategy to stress reduction.

Zhang, Q., and Liu, M. (2020). Chinese university students' stress coping strategies are impacted by how frequently they watch movies. This study investigated how Chinese university students' stress coping mechanisms were affected by how often they watched movies. The findings showed that people who often watched movies had lower perceived stress levels because they were more likely to use adaptive coping mechanisms.

Li, L., and Wang, S. (2018). Movie Watching as a Social Activity and Its Influence on Stress Reduction among University Students. Wang and Li investigated the impact of social movie-watching on university students' ability to reduce stress. The findings revealed that bonding and social support were enhanced when friends or peers watched movies together, and this helped reduce stress.

Rodriguez, A., and Garcia, M. (2019). A longitudinal study on the benefits of movie watching for improving positive emotions and lowering stress levels in college students. This long-term study looked at how watching movies helped university students feel better and cope with stress over time. The results showed a link between regular movie watching and long-term stress reduction.

Wu, X., and Yang, H. (2021). Cultural Differences in Movie Preference and Stress Reduction Among University Students: A Cross-Cultural Study. In a cross-cultural investigation, Yang and Wu looked at how university students' preferences for movies and stress relief varied among cultures. The findings made clear how crucial it is to take cultural aspects into account when figuring out how watching movies and reducing stress are related.

The researched literature offers insightful information about how watching movies might help university students reduce stress. Research indicates that viewing movies is a well-liked and practical stress-reduction technique with both psychological and physical advantages. To investigate the underlying mechanisms and cultural differences in this association, more research is necessary.

**3.0 Research Methodology**

**3.1 Research Method:** In order to investigate the connection between university students' movie watching and stress relief, this study uses a quantitative research methodology. A cross-sectional survey design will be used to gather information from a representative group of Guru Jambheshwar University students.

**3.2 The Respondents:** A total of 162 undergraduate and graduate students from various departments at Guru Jambheshwar University will be the participants, chosen at random. Being a university student enrolled for the current academic sessions (2023-24) and being willing to take part in the survey are admission criteria.

**3.3 Gathering of Data:** Participants' responses to a structured questionnaire will be gathered for analysis. The questionnaire has included standardised measures to gauge stress levels (Stress Scale, K10), questions on movie watching habits (frequency, preferred genres), and demographic information (age, gender, academic qualification). The survey has been conducted in an anonymous manner to promote truthful answers.

**3.4 Procedure:** Each participant will be asked for their informed consent before the questionnaire is distributed, during which they will be told of the study's goal, the nature of their voluntary involvement, and the confidentiality of their answers. It will be communicated to participants that they should fill out the questionnaire honestly and completely. Adequate sample size will be ensured by spreading out the data collection over a predetermined amount of time. Reminders may be given to participants at regular intervals during the data collecting time to improve response rate.

**4.0 Research Objectives:**

1. To explore the stress level of the respondents and its relationship with gender.
2. To find the movie watching habits and its relationship with the gender of the respondents
3. To explore the correlation between movies watching habit and stress.

**5.0 Limitations of the Study**

1. Because the study uses self-reported data, it is susceptible to social desirability bias and response bias.
2. The cross-sectional form makes it more difficult to prove a link between stress relief and movie watching.
3. It's possible that generalizability is restricted to Guru Jambheshwar University students.

**6.0 Results and Findings:**

**Table 1: Stress Level and Gender of the respondents**

Descriptives of Stress and Gender				Statistic	Std. Error
Gender of the Respondents					
Stress Level	Male	Mean		1.6308	.05045
		95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	1.5303	
			Upper Bound	1.7312	
		5% Trimmed Mean		1.6175	
		Median		1.6000	
		Variance		.199	
		Std. Deviation		.44556	
		Minimum		1.10	
		Maximum		2.40	
		Range		1.30	
		Interquartile Range		.70	
		Skewness		.344	.272
		Kurtosis		-1.232	.538
	Female	Mean		2.1786	.06575

	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound	2.0478	
		Upper Bound	2.3093	
	5% Trimmed Mean		2.1429	
	Median		2.1500	
	Variance		.363	
	Std. Deviation		.60262	
	Minimum		1.40	
	Maximum		3.60	
	Range		2.20	
	Interquartile Range		.90	
	Skewness		.738	.263
	Kurtosis		-.021	.520

The table 1 illustrated stress levels are described in the table according to gender categories. The 95% confidence interval for the mean stress level in men is 1.5303 to 1.7312, and the mean stress level is 1.6308 (SE = 0.05045). The median stress level is 1.6000, and the 5% trimmed mean is 1.6175. The standard deviation is 0.44556 and the variance is 0.199. With a range of 1.30 and an interquartile range of 0.70, the stress level varies from 1.10 to 2.40. The distribution appears to be reasonably flat with light tails, as indicated by the kurtosis of -1.232 and the skewness of 0.344, which indicates a small right skew. In contrast, the mean stress level for females is 2.1786 (SE = 0.06575) with a 95% confidence interval spanning from 2.0478 to 2.3093. The median stress level is 2.1500, and the 5% trimmed mean is 2.1429. The standard deviation is 0.60262 and the variance is 0.363. Female stress levels had a range of 2.20 and an interquartile range of 0.90, ranging from 1.40 to 3.60. A considerable right skew is indicated by the skewness of 0.738, and a near-normal distribution is suggested by the kurtosis of -0.021. Overall, the statistics indicate that women are more likely than men to suffer high levels of stress, as shown by the fact that women's mean and median stress levels are greater, their variance and standard deviation are larger, their range is wider, and their distribution is somewhat skewed to the right.

**Table 2 Stress level and gender of the respondents**

Tests of Normality							
	Gender of the Respondents	Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Stress Level	Male	.159	78	.000	.896	78	.000
	Female	.164	84	.000	.910	84	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The table 2 show the results of tests for normalcy utilizing the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests for respondents' stress levels broken down by gender are shown in the table. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results for men showed a statistically significant value of.000 with 78 degrees of freedom (df) and a statistic of.159; the Shapiro-Wilk test gave a statistically significant value of.000 with the same df and a significant value of.000. In a similar vein, the Shapiro-Wilk test revealed a statistic of.910 with the same df and a significant value of.000, while the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test revealed a statistic of.164 with 84 df and a significant value of.000 for females. The extraordinarily low p-values in these results suggest that the stress level data for both genders considerably vary from a normal distribution. The table makes reference to Lilliefors Significance Correction, but it doesn't go into detail. All things considered, the tests indicate that the respondents' stress level data, when broken down by gender, do not conform to a normal distribution pattern.

**Table 3: Movies watching habits and gender of respondents**

Descriptives of Movie watching habits and gender of respondents					
	Gender of the Respondents			Statistic	Std. Error
		Movie Watching Habits	Male	Mean	
95% Confidence Interval for Mean	Lower Bound			2.3628	
	Upper Bound			2.6372	
5% Trimmed Mean				2.4583	
Median				2.2500	
Variance				.370	
Std. Deviation				.60838	
Minimum				1.75	
Maximum				4.00	

Female	Range		2.25	
	Interquartile Range		.25	
	Skewness		1.365	.272
	Kurtosis		.895	.538
	Mean		3.0714	.07067
	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Lower Bound	2.9309
			Upper Bound	3.2120
	5% Trimmed Mean		3.0238	
	Median		2.8750	
	Variance		.420	
	Std. Deviation		.64772	
	Minimum		2.50	
	Maximum		4.50	
	Range		2.00	
	Interquartile Range		.75	
Skewness		1.056	.263	
Kurtosis		-.082	.520	

The table 3 displays descriptive statistics about respondents' gender and movie-watching preferences. The mean movie-watching score for respondents who are male is 2.5, with a 95% confidence interval that spans from 2.3628 to 2.6372. Moderate variability is indicated by the 5% trimmed mean of 2.4583, the median of 2.25, and the variance of .370. With a minimum score of 1.75 and a maximum score of 4, the standard deviation is .60838, respectively. The data appear to be scattered very narrowly around the median, as indicated by the range of 2.25 and the interquartile range of .25. The distribution is mildly platykurtic (kurtosis = .895) and favorably skewed (skewness = 1.365). On the other hand, the mean movie-watching score of female respondents is higher—3.0714, with a 95% confidence interval between 2.9309 and 3.2120. 3.0238 is the 5% trimmed mean, and 2.8750 is the median. Compared to men, there is a little increase in variability, as indicated by the variance of .420. There is a range of two: the minimum score is 2.50, the maximum is 4.50, and the standard deviation is .64772. Compared to men, the interquartile range of .75 indicates a larger distribution of data around the median. Females' distribution is similarly highly skewed (skewness = 1.056), but it shows a flatter peak due to slightly negative kurtosis (kurtosis = -.082). In general, women score higher than men on the number of movies they have seen; both distributions exhibit skewness towards higher scores and different degrees of variability.

**Table 4 Movies watching habits and gender of the respondents**

Gender of the Respondents		Tests of Normality					
		Kolmogorov-Smirnov <sup>a</sup>			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Movie Watching Habits	Male	.352	78	.000	.758	78	.000
	Female	.190	84	.000	.809	84	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

The table 4 illustrated Kolmogorov-Smirnova and Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to determine the normalcy of the movie-watching habits data, which were categorized by the respondents' gender. The results are shown in the table. When it comes to men, the Shapiro-Wilk statistic is .758 with 78 degrees of freedom (df) and a significance level of .000, whereas the Kolmogorov-Smirnova statistic is .352 with 78 df. In the same way, the Shapiro-Wilk statistic is .809 with 84 df and a significance level of .000, and the Kolmogorov-Smirnova statistic is .190 with 84 df and a significance level of .000 for females. The table does not provide precise information regarding the Lilliefors Significance Correction. Overall, these findings indicate that the respondents' movie-watching habits are non-normal, as indicated by the low p-values (all <.05), which suggest that the data for both genders significantly vary from a normal distribution.

**Table 5: Correlation between stress level and movie watching habits**

		Correlations	
		Stress Level	Movie Watching Habit
Stress Level	Pearson Correlation	1	.450**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000



	N	162	162
Movie Watching Habit	Pearson Correlation	.450**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

Based on a sample size of 162 people, the table 5 shows relationships between stress levels and movie-watching habits. There is a moderately positive connection of .450 between stress levels and movie-watching habits, as indicated by the significant Pearson correlation coefficient at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). This implies that there's a propensity for movie-watching habits to increase along with stress levels. The results point to a possible connection between stress reduction and recreational activities like viewing movies, which should be investigated further to identify coping strategies and behavioral patterns.

**7.0 Conclusion:**

The stress level data for both genders do not follow a normal distribution pattern, as shown by the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests' statistically significant p-values (<.05). Similar to this, the gender-specific movie-watching habits data are non-normal, with low Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test p-values (<.05) indicating substantial departures from a normal distribution. The respondents' movie-watching habits and stress levels had a modestly positive association of .450 (significant at the 0.01 level, 2-tailed), suggesting that movie-watching tends to rise with stress levels. It is necessary to do additional research to examine the possible relationship between stress relief and leisure pursuits like viewing movies in order to pinpoint coping mechanisms and behavioral patterns.

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