

# **THE INFLUENCES OF EMPATHY, DEPRESSION, ANXIETY AND STRESS ON SUPERNATURAL BELIEF IN WATCHING HORROR MOVIES**

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## **Abstract**

This decade, a horror movie in the world is very encouraging. Apparently horror film has received much attention of the audience in Malaysia. Based on the collection of films box-office, it turns horror movie has got the attention of the audience in Malaysia. This genre does not only give pleasure even he touched the feelings and emotions of the audience and reflect real life, entertaining and inspirational. Therefore, this paper is to investigate the influence of psychological factors such as empathy, stress, depression and anxiety (DASS 21) against the supernatural beliefs. This study uses the Disposition Theory and Theory of Suspense of Enjoyment by Zillmann. This study evaluated the effectiveness and processes viewing pleasure as well as the belief in the supernatural. This paper presents the results of a pilot study of the items of Empathy, Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Supernatural Belief. This study was conducted in Jitra Mall Cineplex Cinema after they was watching the Film of Villa Nabila in January 2015.

**Keywords:** Empathy, Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Supernatural Belief

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

Belief in a supernatural or a divinity is demonstrated as soon as it is interconnected, and determined by how it is expressed between persons (Teusner P. & NSW Sheppard, 2005). Hence, film is second medium after television most imperative and popular. The spectators can get a real experience when they watching film in the theatre or cinema. Thus, the film publishers active produce the horror movies around the world and the publication about zombie and supernatural belief are increasingly (Bishop, 2010; Christie

and Lauro 2011; Drezner 2011; Phillips, 2014). Voodoo priests were used by their slave rulers to deter other slaves from recklessness as they would claim they would revive them as they passed on to toil in the sugarcane fields into eternity, never to return to Ginen (Oldring, 2014). People shared their common ritual and experience, involving a presence into a story, an emotional knowledge from the experience.

Unintended, the people experience can express a suspension of belief, and then a yield to the daily sphere. It is a place where the mythological enters the regular for the community. It is where the mythologies that initiate and shape our philosophy are repeated, analysis and reinforced. In Malay culture horror movies was much related with supernatural belief. The community believes that the energy available in the spirit, soul, and spirit in human beings, animals, plants, and objects (Hajjah Amina Haji Wan Riza & Faizah Wan Yusoff Wan, 2012; Shariman M, 2007).

Faith is called a "magical", ie control of the supernatural power of certain acts and rituals performed by the medicine man or shaman until unseen energy could be used to their advantage or disadvantage to others (Atiqah Syed Ibrahim et al., 2003). The situation has also affected to medical system in the local community (Winstedt, 1950; and Werner, 1986). The community see as the spirits of ancestors preserved to protect or help their families make heavy work (Asaari A. & Aziz J., 2013). Horror movies were started with silence movies era in 1919 to 1925 in Germany.

The first horror movies film with *Das Kabinet des Dr Caligari* directed by Robert Wiene in year 1920 (Reimer, Robert Charles, Reinhard Konrad Zachau, & Margit M. Sinka, 2005). That era were succeeded in United State by Alfred Hitchcock until he was given the title "Director of Suspense". The scenario was also flourishing in Asia. In Malaysia the horror movies was started with film "Pontianak" in 1957 directed by BN Roa. Malay Film Production Studio is a studio production was produced film "Hantu Jerangkung" directive KM Basker in 1957, then appeared film "Anak Pontianak" and the film "Sumpah Orang Minyak" (1958), followed the same year with film "Gergasi" and film "Hantu Kubor" (Malaysian National Film Development, 2012).

## **II. THE DIMENSION OF EMPATHY, DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, AND STRESS**

Empathy is not referring to the emotions, but more suitable conceptualized as affective reaction (Nathanson, 2003; Zillmann, 2006). The affective reactions involving several emotions such as fear, anger, passion, joy, and humour, which is displayed by a person. The emphatic reaction can result when someone witnessed an incident or witnessed it in the film, television and media exposure (Zillmann, 2006). Spectators are often concerned with the character displayed in the movie (Vorderer, Klimmt, and Ritterfeld, 2004).

The spectators feel that there is a relationship between themselves and the experienced situations by the characters in the film (Vorderer, Klimmt, and Ritterfeld, 2004). Sharing feelings with this character whether in a positive or negative reaction refers to empathy (Nathanson, 2003). Empathy consists of several different aspects. First, there is the cognitive component consisting of Perspective Taking (PT) and Fantasy (FS). Second, the affective component includes Empathic Concern (EC) and Personal Distress (PD). The fourth aspect has the following meaning: Perspective Taking ie (PT) a tendency to take a psychological point of view of others spontaneous.

The concepts of empathy are multidimensional, involving cognitive and affective components (Davis, 1994; Stiff, Dillard, Somera, Kim, and Sleight, 1988). Affective component be measured by how a person view from the perspective of themselves, or to

share their views about another person (such as Davis, 1994; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990; Stiff, JB, Dillard, JP, Somera, L., Kim, H., and Sleight, C., 1988). While the affective components also involve a feeling of sympathy or concern about the welfare of others and share the negative affects the incident (Davis, 1994; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990; Stiff, JB, Dillard, JP, Somera, L., Kim, H., and Sleight, C., 1988).

Empathy is a ways comprising the individual emotional aspects (Sevdalis & Raab, 2014). It relates to situations involving the human body who involves the movement of the body. Sports and performing arts are key aspects of the process of movement of the human body and it may be evaluated. Despite this potential, there are currently no publications that synthesize research about empathy by combining the perspectives of the various performance areas that normally uses the movement of the human body. In this article, researchers reviewed the empirical studies that committed acts of empathy individual trends in performance such as sports, exercises and performing arts (ie music, dance, theatre and acting) and discuss the implications for this area (Sevdalis & Raab, 2014).

In researching feelings of empathy occurs when combined with the experience of the audience watched what the next will bring a variety of a feeling such as happy, full, complete, and perfect a feeling of harmony. Complacency is drained during the process flow in soul experience audience (Boroallo, Kadir, and Jusni, 2014). Therefore, the experience of art that will be remembered by the audience watched from past experience. An experience that consists of various elements as the visual, audio, graphics, and text affects the feeling of the audience (Mashud, 2013). There are viewers with a sense of empathy reorganize the memory of past experiences that will give an appreciation of the way the story is (Mashud, 2013).

The stress device is a concept often referred to in the impact of research is the impact of television and movie viewing. Studies of the season after traumatic to display the media images of violence such as the events of 11 September (R. Eric Johnson, 2014; Ten Veen, Morren & Yzermans, 2009; Ahern, Galea, Resnick & Vlahov, 2004; Houston, 2009; Franz, Glass, Arnkoff, & Dutton, 2009), seldom given due attention by researchers often assume this field has been recognized role of the victim after the traumatic who should be treated as a single construction of strong emotions. In other words, previous research does not give serious attention to the role of watching television and film in the process of recovery after traumatic incidents. Therefore, using longitudinal data from the 3, 6, and 9 months after the crime, the main goal of this study is to obtain the criminal effect of television viewing for crime victims to identify them as a result wrong level of recovery.

In addition, researchers want to identify the impact on the level of crime victims in terms of psychological depression, emotional stress, anxiety, resentment, sorrow, after what happened to the victim (Bee & Madrigal, 2012). Previous researchers argued inquire ways handle the emotional stress by watching the television and film as a means which can be prevented from feelings pressure reliable. Hence, the feeling of anxiety often experienced by viewers who watch horror movies but also an impact on the psychology of the audience as an example feel fear, anxiety, chills and others (Harris, Guido, & Cote, 2007). Minnebo and Eggermont (2012) using the checklist Skin conductance Level 90 (SCL-90) (Arrindell & Ettema, 1986) are widely used previously braid assess a person with eight levels of distress symptoms that resemble the original size scale success by Derogatis (1977). The eight-stage symptoms ialah agoraphobia, anxiety, depression, somatic complaints, lack of thought and behavior, do not trust and interpersonal sensitivity, hostility disorders, and sleep.

For the study, respondents are the highest level of 81 out of the original 90 items. The study also used the longitudinal method, 3, 6 and 9 months by interviewing victims of crime pre and post exposure to crime and horror film intention in television and film.

Feelings of anxiety often occur when there is nothing surprising in accordance with the use of theory Suspense of Enjoyment, viewers who watch horror movies will experience feelings of anxiety, nervousness when live or dispose them to the storyline. Previous studies examining the relationship between anxiety and enjoyment that arises from suspense from the model of appreciation by Carnagey et al. (2007) in (Minnebo & Eggermont, 2012).

In the study Carnagey et al. (2007) explained that repeated exposure to media violence and horror films that is going to bring in reaction to concerns over terrorism. Huesmann and Kirwil (2007) call this process as sensitivity. They argue that, for some people, enjoy watching violence, and could trigger anger. However, there are elements that do not produce anxious or nervous enjoyment caused by high appreciation of viewing pleasure. In addition, Brahe et al., (2011) noted that anxiety and violent stimuli published by the media will be pleased by the promise are often watch. They began to consider the matters are common to both negative and positive emotional reactions to them. For example, in a study of adolescents in Poland, Kirwil (2008) found that individuals proactively aggressive tend to react to stimuli stimulus violent media with a reduction in aid, while passive aggressive people tend to respond with an increase in enjoyment.

By now, the several studies in normal and clinical adult samples have provided strong support for the three factors structure of DASS21 (Antony, Bieling, Cox, Enns, & Swinson, 1998; Brown, Chorpita, Korostitsch, & Barlow, 1997; Henry and Crawford, 2003; Henry and Crawford, 2005). In our study, we decided to measures to the spectators after there was watching film in cinema.

### **III. SUPERNATURAL BELIEFS**

Conceptualization of spirituality is personal, self-defined and even secular. Something oceanic and unequalled liberated from the strictures of organized and traditional religions (Koenig 2009). The spiritual is peoples understood as a search for the fearful (Hill & Pargament, 2003). The scared was example as well as the Ultimate Reality, God and Divine truth and it is relate with personal event like perception and also people emotions (Pargament, 1999). At the second hand, the perception and emotions will connected with prosocial (Myers, 2012). However, the conceptualizations of supernatural beliefs are difficult to understand. It is depend to people culture and their living. Previous study was measures spiritual as a belief in supernatural forces by Stekhoven J.S (2014), with a survey method for the first time data collection. The respondent was urban participant in New South Wales Australia. 848 participants were completed the survey. The survey limited the CSI-spirit and the subjective wellbeing metric (Pavot, Diener, Colvin and Sandvik, 1991), and also measures the single-item of socio-demographics. The survey consumed for the inner-city subsample also contained the I/ER, the DSES, and brief agreeableness and conscientiousness inventories (Goldberg et al., 2006). Study 2 used a longitudinal study over a two year period. He used the online survey monkey for collecting the data. The findings Factor analytic investigations (exploratory and confirmatory) suggest that six items reliably (Cronbach's  $\alpha > .70$ ) capture a single latent construct that accounts for around 45% of the variance in responses. This truncated CSI-Spirit appears normally distributed and uni-dimensional. Item difficulty (as reflected by mean scores on items) varies and total scores converge meaningfully with religious affiliation and measures of religiosity, spirituality, paranormal beliefs, wellbeing, agreeableness and conscientiousness. In summary, the CSI-Spirit appears statistically robust and its brevity makes it ideal for individual assessment (in psychological practice) and large scale socio-epidemiological research purposes.

#### **IV. PROBLEM AREA**

Horror genre films in Malaysia industry was thrive in four periods. The first period started in 1950s era, second period was in 1990s era, third period in 1990s and 2000s era and now. Film “Jangan Belakang” from Metrowealth Movies Production, produce in 2006 was trigger off the box office collection with RM5.78 million. The situation has changed scenario of the film industry in Malaysia. Filmmakers began producing the horror film genre. Almost one, decade the situation has caused the dumping of horror movies and sparked a controversy to Malaysia spectators and society. One unclear issue is the dimensions of empathy, depression, anxiety, and stress to supernatural belief in watching horror movies. Previous studies are using the experimental method because several previous researchers better see the effect of the feeling of before and after watching a horror movie. First, we will use a survey technique namely confirmatory factor analysis to test the items. However, this paper is the first stage in preliminary studies.

#### **V. METHODOLOGY**

For the preliminary studies, we only measure about the reliability of instruments. The questionnaire distributed to horror movie spectators after their out of the cinema. The data collection for pilot study was distributed on January 2015 through film “Vila Nabilla” directed by young director was Syafiq Yusof. Each respondent was paid by RM5 or USD1.4 per questionnaire. Respondents were chosen among Muslim spectators because this study involves the supernatural beliefs of understandings and views as Muslims (N = 30).

The majority of the respondents which have participated in this study are a university and college student with 13 respondents, professional with 3 respondents, private sectors with 10 respondents and not working with 4 respondents.

#### **VI. FINDING AND DISCUSSION**

##### **A. Instruments**

Empathy consists of 28 items that measure a composite of four components of empathy (Davis, 1983; Davis et al., 1987). Each subscale consists of seven items, which includes perspective taking, empathic concern, imagination, empathy fantasy, and personal stress.

Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS21) (Lovinbond & Lovinbond 1995) was specific designed discriminate effective between three distinct states of negative emotion in adult and also youth older than 12. Symptoms of depression scale measure about lack of interest, dysphoria, and devaluation of life, hopelessness, self-depreciation, inertia and anhedonia. DASS21 is short version from DASS Lovinbond, (1995), an original with 42 items.

A directly related topic is the effect of over and under extraction (e.g., Fava & Velicer, 1992, 1996) although it has been reported that the effect of over extraction can be stronger when N is small (Lawrence & Hancock, 1999), one may question whether factor misspecification is a small N problem or a matter of well or ill conditioned data. More

research is needed on the strengths and weaknesses of procedures to determine the most appropriate number of factors.

While, the anxiety instruments measures such as skeletal muscle effects, autonomic arousal, subjective experience of anxiety and panic and last situation anxiety.

The instrument of stress measures about nervous arousal, difficulty relaxing, irritability, impatience and agitation.

The instrument belief in the supernatural adapted from psychology, anthropology and religious studies CSR (Atran, 2002; Barrett, 2004; Bering 2010; Boyer, 2001; Pyysiainen, 2009; the Kremlin, 2006; Whitehouse 2004; Wilson, 2002). We were composed the 10 items include positive and negative supernatural agent.

**Table 1: The items of instruments**

| Items of Empathy | (Davis, 1994; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1990; Stiff, JB, Dillard, JP, Somera, L., Kim, H., and Sleight, C., 1988)   |
|------------------|--|
| 1. Empathy       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I daydream and fantasize, with some regularity, about things that might happen to me.</li> <li>2. I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in horror movies.</li> <li>3. I am usually objective when watch a horror movies, and I don't often get completely caught up in it.</li> <li>4. Becoming extremely involved in good horror movies is somewhat rare for me.</li> <li>5. After seeing horror movies, I have felt as though I were one of the characters.</li> <li>6. When I watch a good movie, I can very easily put myself in the place of a leading character.</li> <li>7. When I am watching an interesting story, I imagine how I would feel if the events in the story were happening to me.</li> </ol> |
| Items of DASS21  | (Lovinbond & Lovinbond 1995)   |
| 2. Depression    | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No positive</li> <li>2. Forward to</li> <li>3. Blue</li> <li>4. Initiative</li> <li>5. Meaningless</li> </ol>  |
| 3. Anxiety       | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Breathing</li> <li>2. Heart action</li> <li>3. Scared</li> <li>4. Fool</li> <li>5. Trembling</li> </ol>  |
| 4. Stress        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Over-react</li> <li>2. Touchy</li> </ol>   |

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
|                              | 3. Nervous   |
|                              | 4. Relax   |
|                              | 5. Wind down   |
|                              | 6.   |
| Items of Supernatural Belief | (Atran, 2002; Barrett, 2004; Bering 2010; Boyer, 2001; Pyysiainen, 2009; the Kremlin, 2006; Whitehouse 2004; Wilson, 2002) |
| 1. Supernatural belief       | 1. I believe in the devil/Satan.   |
|                              | 2. I believe in Heaven and Hell.   |
|                              | 3. I believe that each person has a soul.  |
|                              | 4. I believe I was in the power of God.  |
|                              | 5. I believe there are spirits who are still alive after death.  |
|                              | 6. I believe there is a spirit that survives after the death of the body that can communicate with person still living.    |
|                              | 7. I believe have had dreams that foretold what was going to happen.   |
|                              | 8. I believe in a universal power, a God.  |
|                              | 9. I believe in angels.  |
|                              | 10. I believe in the spirit world.   |

In table 1, shows all the items of the instruments. Likert scale, where “1” = “strongly disagree” and “7” = “strongly agree” are used. The scale was adapted from Ivory and Magee (2009).

Table 2 shows the results of a factor analysis was conducted to test the suitability of the eight components have been adapted to measure the influences of empathy, depression, anxiety and stress. The result of Kaiser-Meyer Olkin measure of sampling adequacy suggested that the sample was factorable (KMO=.676).

**KMO and Bartlett's Test**

|  |                    |         |
|--|--------------------|---------|
| Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy. |                    | .676    |
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity                    | Approx. Chi-Square | 623.175 |
|  | df                 | 231     |
|  | Sig.               | .000    |

The results of a factor analysis was conducted to test the appropriateness of the 22 components that have been developed to measure the effect of empathy, depression, stress and beliefs in the supernatural horror movie or need to be modified according to dimensions rising through the analysis. Factor analysis (rotated matrix) found that of 22 dimensions that were built, only produced 5 components can be used as a measurement dimension to the effects of empathy, depression, and stress with the Eigen value exceed 1.

**Table 3 : Total Variance Explained**

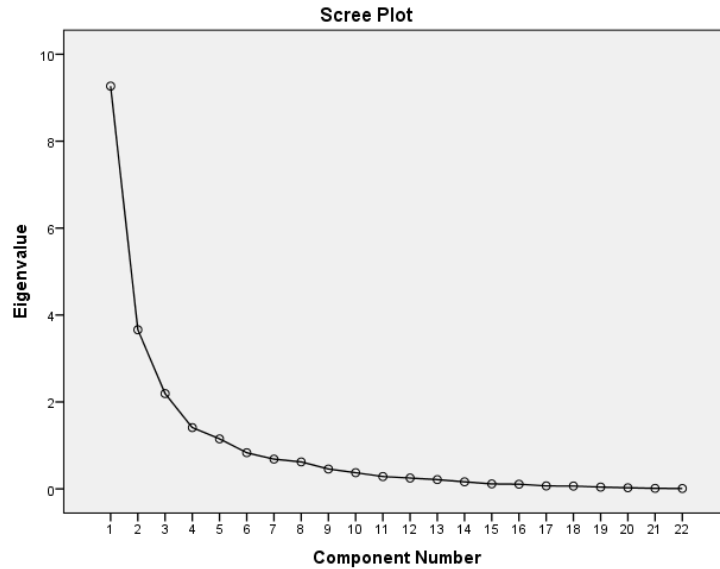
| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings |
|-----------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
|-----------|---------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|

|    | Total | % of<br>Variance | Cumulative<br>% | Total | % of<br>Variance | Cumulati<br>ve % | Total | % of<br>Variance | Cumulati<br>ve % |
|----|-------|------------------|-----------------|-------|------------------|------------------|-------|------------------|------------------|
| 1  | 9.267 | 42.123           | 42.123          | 9.267 | 42.123           | 42.123           | 6.333 | 28.786           | 28.786           |
| 2  | 3.661 | 16.639           | 58.762          | 3.661 | 16.639           | 58.762           | 3.720 | 16.911           | 45.697           |
| 3  | 2.192 | 9.966            | 68.728          | 2.192 | 9.966            | 68.728           | 2.709 | 12.313           | 58.010           |
| 4  | 1.410 | 6.409            | 75.137          | 1.410 | 6.409            | 75.137           | 2.661 | 12.098           | 70.108           |
| 5  | 1.151 | 5.231            | 80.368          | 1.151 | 5.231            | 80.368           | 2.257 | 10.260           | 80.368           |
| 6  | .832  | 3.781            | 84.149          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 7  | .685  | 3.112            | 87.261          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 8  | .621  | 2.823            | 90.083          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 9  | .457  | 2.079            | 92.162          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 10 | .373  | 1.695            | 93.857          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 11 | .284  | 1.289            | 95.146          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 12 | .250  | 1.136            | 96.282          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 13 | .214  | .971             | 97.253          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 14 | .162  | .737             | 97.991          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 15 | .114  | .517             | 98.508          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 16 | .109  | .494             | 99.001          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 17 | .068  | .309             | 99.310          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 18 | .064  | .293             | 99.603          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 19 | .042  | .189             | 99.792          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 20 | .026  | .117             | 99.909          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 21 | .011  | .051             | 99.960          |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |
| 22 | .009  | .040             | 100.000         |       |                  |                  |       |                  |                  |

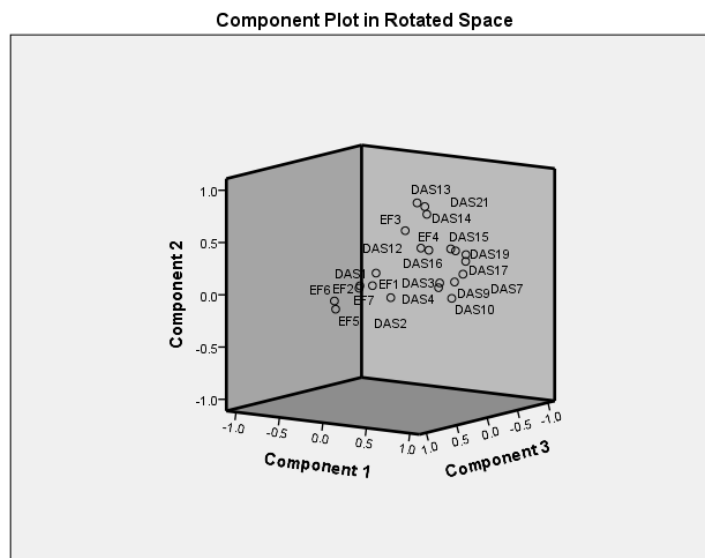
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

After doing a factor analysis there are 5 factors that the eigen value exceed 1. The first factor is the variance of 28.7%, second factor with 16.9%, factor 3 with 12.3%, factor 4 with 12%, and factor 5 with 10.2%. These five factors contributed 80.3% of the variance of the change data for this study. The five factors Scree plot indicated that 5 of the 22 factors that make up the graph of tilted.





A total of five items were eliminated because they did not contribute to a simple factor structure and failed to meet a minimum criteria of having a primary factor loading of .4 or above, and no cross-loading of .3 or above. However, there are 3 items to be removed for the Measure of Sampling Adequacy (MSA) of less than 0.5. The item was “I really get involved with the feelings of the characters in horror movies.”, and “After seeing horror movies, I have felt as though I were one of the characters”. For this stage, a principal components factor analysis of the remaining 22 items, using varimax and oblimin rotations, was conducted, with three factors explaining 23% of the variance. An oblimin rotation provided the best defined factor structure. All items in this analysis had primary loadings over .5.



Rotated Space Component plot shows that the distribution of the items in the form of three-dimensional after the five rotated factors. Note that the items gathered in one group only.

## VII. CONCLUSION AND LIMITATION

Limitations of this study were confined to obtain more data. Only 30 respondents only are collected. Time constraints limit the accumulation of large amounts of data because of the spectators who came out of the cinema continued to want to go elsewhere. We look forward to further pilot study to collect more data.

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