

**THE SHAWSHANK REDEMPTION: THE FIRST-PERSON
NARRATOR AND HIS EFFECT ON AUDIENCE'S CONSCIOUSNESS
AND EXPERIENCE**

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ABSTRACT

Current research and present condition reveal the narration on cueing understanding of audience's comprehension and some form of social communication. More research needs to be conducted to explore first-person narrators as a medium to get the audience into experience and consciousness. This is a quantitative research conducted in order to examine the impact of the narrator on the audience and to determine the criteria of the narration that pique the viewers' interest to watch the entire film as well as to examine whether first-person narrator is a great medium to evoke the human experience towards the audience. Online surveys were distributed to individuals at the age of 17 to 60-year-old within Malaysia. The result of statistical analysis showed the positive impact of the first-person narrator to trigger the emotion among the viewers and also the reliability of the narrator is highly appreciated and crucial but not necessarily needed. The findings of the research is significant in the film industry to film practitioners for better outcome in exploring the first-person narrator.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The nature of narrative has been a topic throughout history. From the theories of original mimetic and diegetic of Plato and Aristotle to Gerard Genette, the narrative has been explained as an underlying process of producing and communicating meaning and experience for the human mind. Major academicians such as Bordwell and Genette have contributed to the study of narratology. According to Bordwell and Thompson (2008), a narrative occurs in space and time due to the cause-effect relationship of a chain of events.

(Branigan, 1992) stated that narrative is the embodiment of judgement about the nature of events as a way of organizing spatial and temporal events into a cause-effect chain of events with a beginning, a middle, and an end. On the contrary, Bordwell (2003) found that narrative appears to be a universal division of human experience. It cuts across a variety of arts and science, fiction and nonfiction, literature and the other arts. Other scholars also apprehend narration as a mode of emotion.

This paper intends to establish that film narration of the first-person narrator as an act of communication can result in getting audiences into experience and consciousness via the narration of the prominent film, *The Shawshank Redemption* by Frank Darabont in 1994. It is deliberately one of the precise artworks of all time. This movie is about hope and the pursuit of freedom. This is about human resilience. The spirit and its ability to ultimately defeat the oppressive forces of the cruel world (Ulin, 2013).

Under the impression of the icy and remorseless man, Andy Dufresne, a

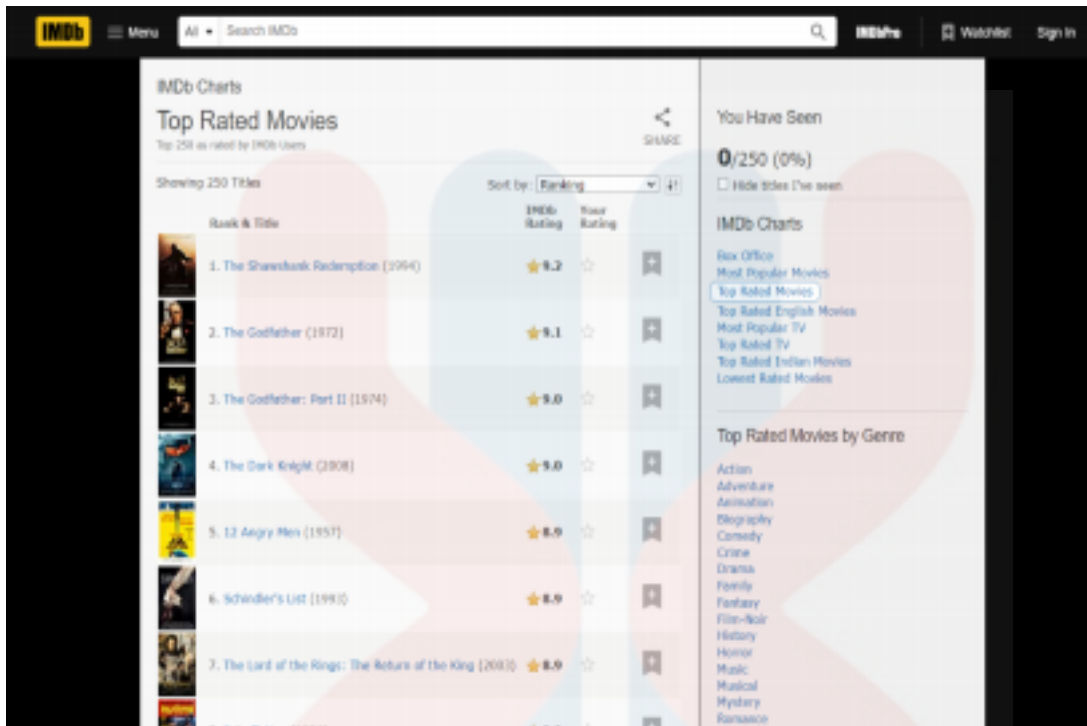
renowned banker in America is convicted for the brutal murder of her wife and her golf pro lover. He is sentenced to two life sentences during the court verdict. At Shawshank Prison he encounters Red, a convicted killer and a man who knows how to get things' and therefore, Andy requests a rock hammer from him. Andy encounters a series of unfortunate events in the prison; he is assaulted by Bogs Diamond and two other men (the Sisters) who jibe, rape and beat him senseless. He later becomes an ally and trustee of the warden for his skills and with that power, he can get rid of the Sisters. A breakthrough in Andy's life is when he meets a new inmate named Tommy who shares the story of his former cellmate at another prison who admits killing a golf pro and his lover. Andy demands a new trial but the warden rejects him at once. For his fear that Andy might reveal his corruption, he places Andy in solitary for a month. Andy realizes the harsh reality that he cannot prove his innocence, so he comes to his breaking point; he finally escapes through the hidden tunnel he secretly digs for almost twenty years.

Carmona (2017) found the following:

The most important objective of a narrative is to make sure that the audience understands the story. Thus, film narrative offers structures of information that appear divided into a narrative system and a stylistic system. These systems present the audience with cues, patterns, and gaps of information that shape and orientate the comprehension activity undertaken by the spectator. (p. 9)

Figure 1

The Top-Rated Movies of All Time According to IMDb Charts



Note. The above shows the top-rated movie chart among IMDb users. The Shawshank Redemption remains at the top and it was produced in 1994 by Frank Darabont.

(IMDb Top Rated Movies, 2021)

According to Goldwyn (2014), the film was nominated for seven Academy Awards and was released in the fall of 1994, marking the directorial debut of its screenwriter Frank Darabont (Frank Darabont). This film is based on Stephen King's novella "Rita Hayworth and Shawshank Redemption", which was originally released in "College Seasons" in 1982 in. On November 18, 2014, the 20th-anniversary celebration of modern American classics was held at the Academy. At that time, the actors and staff were in the special "Shawshank Redemption" hosted by "World War II" author Max Brooks. The film did not find a target audience at first, but the positive word-of-mouth spread quickly, making Shawshank one of the most popular films of the era.

Stolworthy (2019) stated that The Shawshank's Redemption has long been the highest-rated movie on IMDb but its director Frank Darabont is not sure if it is worth the feat. His prison drama is an adaptation of Stephen King's novella. It was

released 25 years ago. Although it was widely acclaimed at the time, the admiration for the film has deepened every year. Frank Darabont is not sure that his prison drama should be at the top of the database's "best film of all time" list. The film starring Tim Robbins and Morgan Freeman won seven Oscar nominations including Best Picture but failed to win any.

The Shawshank Redemption receives admiration from the audiences and filmmakers across the globe solely because the film itself is an artwork and the narration is powerful enough to make it linger in the heart of the audience. To be precise, not all films use a narrator in filmmaking but Darabont's masterpiece speaks for itself.

1.2 Problem statement

In the research undertaken by Otyway (2015), unreliable narrators mostly appear in fictional storytelling compared to nonfiction or documentary filmmaking, whether in theoretical essays, the literature of film. This statement does indicate that the existence of an unreliable narrator would result in the distortion of the facts in the films.

According to Wilson (2007), the audience perceives a narrator as a fictitious character who is narrating the story as real. To their interest and understanding, the narrator must possess genuine characteristics, in terms of personality, intelligence, reasonable in literary fiction. All those criteria need to be well balanced to let the persona come off as neutral. He also adds that the narrator qua character does not have to be a human being. To support this, in *Black Beauty* in 1994, a horse is the narrator. Apart from that, there are in science fiction films in which the narrator is an item such as a computer and a babbling brook is chattering out the story. Nevertheless, the narrating horse, computer and babbling brook has been evolved into characters that have the same attributions of human traits; emotions, or intentions to some degree.

On the contrary, Red, a human being, is the storyteller and mostly narrates in *The Shawshank Redemption*. He is the narrator and the character in this

filmmaking. Wilson (2007) also provided the fact that in works of fiction, an actual individual can appear as the narrator. To support these statements, Manfred (2005) found that a narrator who is also involved in acting is called the homodiegetic. The homodiegetic narrator divides into two parts; telling the story from his perspective and experiencing the action.

Carmona (2017) found that there is no clear narrator in a film but only a perceiver. This implies that the notable role of narration is to cue the narrative understanding of the audiences. To support these statements, Haacke's (2019) research stated the following:

For although film noir protagonists generally appear stuck "in a lonely place," as suggested by Dorothy B. Hughes's novel and Nicholas Ray's film of that name (1950), their narrative dis-course nonetheless aims to establish some form of social communication, relational recognition, and external judgment. In turn, audience members are often positioned to take on the role of active listeners rather than passive spectators, whether by being directly addressed or through more indirect modes of communicative discourse (and perhaps even through the kind of acoustic voyeurism involved in the act of eavesdropping, as when we become privy to the spoken confession in *Double Indemnity* just as the intended audience is later revealed to have been secretly listening from behind a door). (p. 51)

Research in this matter has focused the narration on cueing understanding of the audience and some form of social communication but there has been little work exploring the narration as a medium to get the audience into experience and consciousness throughout the entire film.

1.3 Research question

The main questions of this study are:

- 1) What drives the audience to be compassionate listeners rather than passive spectators? What criteria push the audience to evoke the human experience of the narrator that is part of the story?
- 2) What factors contribute to achieve the level of consciousness of the reality of

the narrator?

- 3) Is first-person narration a great medium for getting the audience into experience in filmmaking?
- 4) Do the experience and consciousness develop naturally during the exposure of the narration, or does it depend on another variable?

1.4 Research Objective

The questions for this paper are made to emphasize the narration of the first-person narrator as a medium of functional storytelling to get audiences into experience and consciousness. This leads to the research objective of this paper which can be described using the following questions:

1. To provide a review of the first-person narrators in other scholars' research
2. To find out the impact of the narrator on the audience in the aspects of experience and consciousness.
3. To evaluate whether the passive audience turns into a compassionate listener via narration.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Narrative in filmmaking

Movies are made by humans and aim to provide experiences for others. The audience participates in the experience through the prompts built into the film by the first producers. The structure of the prompt is designed to encourage a specific path of perception, understanding and appropriation, and the combination of all three types of activities also carries emotion. The experience is carried out through the viewer's reasoning abilities, some of which are very fast and compulsive (in terms of perception), while others are slower and more deliberate (usually within occupancy) (Bordwell, 2008).

Chatman (1986) concludes the following:

Perceiving, of course, includes both seeing and hearing, but it does not include telling and displaying (the first, the typical mode of the bard or, by an easy metaphor, the literary narrator; the second, the typical mode of the cinematic narrator). The narrator (a function of narrative discourse) does not perceive-only characters (a function of narrative story) perceive. Narrators show, tell, display, represent, communicate a world, that of story; the act of representation is performed from "outside" the story, not "inside." Even if the narrator is first person and played a role as a character "back then" in the story, his/her/its present account is retrospective, after the fact. As Branigan himself says, in such cases "There is not a single 'I' but two distinct 'I's," the narrator-I the character-I. (p. 55)

2.2 Elements of narrative principle

According to a study by (Carmona, 2017, as cited in Bordwell, 2008), Within his narrative principles, Bordwell distinguishes three elements; Fabula, Syuzhet and style. The hypothesis can be understood as a story, and actions are combined as a temporal causal sequence of events that occur in a specific time and space. Syuzhet can be understood as a plot, which refers to the arrangement and organization of events that constitute a pseudonym.

Therefore, syuzhet is a dramatic process composed of specific actions, scenes, turning points and plot distortion patterns. Besides, style refers to the technical process involved in filmmaking, therefore, it represents the use of film elements, such as composition, photography, editing, or sound. According to Bordwell, the narrative is the result of the interaction between syuzhet and style. The process includes prompting and guiding the viewer to stories. The principles and their relations are explained via the figures as the following:

Figure 2

The narrative principle of Bordwell



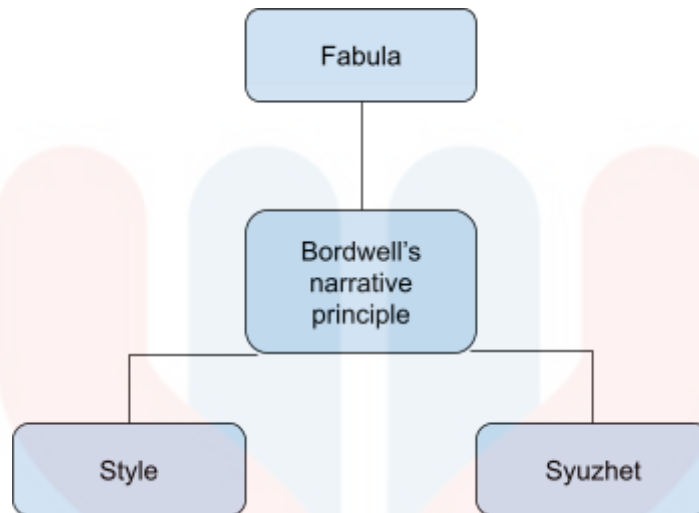
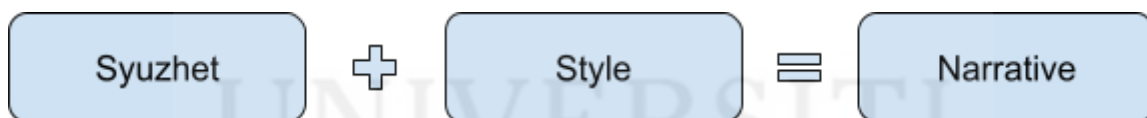


Figure 3

The interaction between syuzhet and style



Seymour Chatman's response to Bordwell by defending that narrative is presented in the movie. For Chatman, it makes no difference whether the narrative result comes from syuzhet and style interaction, or whether the audience actively participates in the construction of the narrative. The interaction between the film and the audience should have a responsible medium. Chatman believes that the audience is rebuilding the narrative rather than telling the narrative, not the story the audience will construct because after all the narrative will be the result of the interaction between the movie's prompts and the audience's interpretation (Carmona, 2017, as cited in Chatman, 1990).

2.3 Types of narration

According to Manfred (2005), there is two basic option of narration namely, (i) first person narrator that tells a story about himself and also personally experience it, or (ii) third-person narrator that tells the story about other people in which the narrator is absent from the story he narrates. However, in modern narratology analysis, you will often notice that these terms have been replaced by two terms invented by Genette which are homodiegetic narrative (first-person narrative) and heterodiegetic narrative (third-person narrative). In other words, diegetic means 'related to the narrative' and on the other hand, hetero means 'of different nature'. (Manfred, 2005 as cited in Genette, 1980). The detailed definitions are as followed in the table:

Table 1

Type of Narration

Homodiegetic	Heterodiegetic
First-person narrator	Third-person narrator
The narrator tells a story based on his personal life and also involved as an acting character	Tells the story about another person
Split up into two parts; narrate and experience	The narrator doesn't appear during the entire film

2.4 The impact of first-person narration on audience

To express the purpose of this study, Junfang (2017) outlines that the narrator's story (Mr. Patel in Life of Pi) should mainly be portrayed through his eyes and voice. The narrative is not chosen at random but is carefully designed to

achieve beauty influences. First person narratives have obvious emotions, artistic power and a sense of reality.

The readers would look at Pi's growth and experience his harsh environment, understand his thoughts and emotions better that way. He adds that the narration would bring the narrator and the reader closer thus creating an interrelationship between them. Readers would regard themselves as compassionate listeners rather than pure spectators, join along the communication process and the highlight is to be able to feel deeply with the narrator's mind and mood.

Carmona (2017) in her scholarly study observed the following:



Furthermore, we should also consider that film narration is experienced by audiences as if it is happening now and not as if it has already been. Therefore, a viewer may even know the narrative content by heart and they can still experience narration as if it is happening at the very moment they are watching it. Film narration manages to seduce the spectator to “forget or disregard” that they are watching a film for it provokes an experience when it communicates. This fact in my opinion reinforces my theory that film narrative can be better understood as a means to communicate through and from experience. (p. 14).

She also highlights how the narration can convey our feelings. Film narration can evoke abstract levels of human experience, which are not necessarily transformed into data, nor do they need to be understood or explained. This may indicate that narrative can be seen as a strategy to make others understand our personal life experience, and therefore can be used as a tool for perception and processing experience.

Memento is a "neo-classical revenge film" (Turner, 2014 as cited in Hurd, 2003) where its purpose of a narrative is to seek revenge. American Psycho (a criminal noir film) is more deliberately a villain. To seek the opposite of redemption and act as a seduction of the viewer to the dark side is the main of this film. With narration, this allows Bateman to attract and seduce the audience personally. The style and uses of narration make the film more vivid, making each moment more intimate and personal. Whereas Memento deals with the identity of a man, American Psycho is about the identity of the generation. Due to these, the viewer's empathy, and the perception of reality for the character are affected, in both negative and positive ways to the point of no return.

(Huw, 2017 as cited in Olson, 2003) uses Rimmon-Kenan's work as a basis to distinguish the unreliable narrator narrators and the fallible ones. Fallible narrators compared to the unreliable narrator, "the narrative events are not reported reliable because they mistakenly believe that their judgments or opinions are biased". Olson believes the readers would forgive this error-prone

narrator because they realize their limitations in narrators' feelings. On the other hand, unreliable narrators actively seek to become dishonest. This type of unreliability will cause different reactions from readers depending on the situation and the relationship between the reader and the narrator.

Olson also pointed out that the homodiegetic narrator as part of the story is not necessarily reliable but may only have access to limited information. The narrator who is part of the action does not have the insight into the motives or private thoughts of others nor have metaknowledge of words. The homodiegetic does not have the information of everything but may put their best report of truth to the reader; therefore, they can be considered a reliable narrator according to Olsen.

Figure 4

The notable narration of Red (Morgan Freeman in The Shawshank Redemption)

Red : *[narrating]* Andy Dufresne - who crawled through a river of shit and came out clean on the other side.

Figure 5

Red : *[narrating, referring to Andy]* I could see why some of the boys took him for snobby. He had a quiet way about him, a walk and a talk that just wasn't normal around here. He strolled, like a man in a park without a care or a worry in the world, like he had on an invisible coat that would shield him from this place. Yeah, I think it would be fair to say... I liked Andy from the start.

Figure 6

Red : *[narrating]* Two things never happened again after that. The Sisters never laid a finger on Andy again... and Bogs never walked again. They transferred him to a minimum security hospital upstate. To my knowledge, he lived out the rest of his days drinking his food through a straw.

Figure 7

Red : *[narrating]* I have no idea to this day what those two Italian ladies were singing about. Truth is, I don't want to know. Some things are best left unsaid. I'd like to think they were singing about something so beautiful, it can't be expressed in words, and makes your heart ache because of it. I tell you, those voices soared higher and farther than anybody in a gray place dares to dream. It was like some beautiful bird flapped into our drab little cage and made those walls dissolve away, and for the briefest of moments, every last man in Shawshank felt free.

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Figure 8

Red : *[narrating]* There's a harsh truth to face. No way I'm gonna make it on the outside. All I do anymore is think of ways to break my parole, so maybe they'd send me back. Terrible thing, to live in fear. Brooks Hatlen knew it. Knew it all too well. All I want is to be back where things make sense. Where I won't have to be afraid all the time. Only one thing stops me. A promise I made to Andy.

Figure 9

Red : *[narrating]* In 1966, Andy Dufresne escaped from Shawshank prison. All they found of him was a muddy set of prison clothes, a bar of soap, and an old rock hammer, damn near worn down to the nub. I remember thinking it would take a man six hundred years to tunnel through the wall with it. Old Andy did it in less than twenty. Oh, Andy loved geology. I imagine it appealed to his meticulous nature. An ice age here, million years of mountain building there. Geology is the study of pressure and time. That's all it takes really, pressure, and time. That, and a big goddamn poster. Like I said, in prison a man will do most anything to keep his mind occupied. Turns out Andy's favorite hobby was totin' his wall out into the exercise yard, a handful at a time. I guess after Tommy was killed, Andy decided he'd been here just about long enough. Andy did like he was told, buffed those shoes to a high mirror shine. The guards simply didn't notice. Neither did I... I mean, seriously, how often do you really look at a mans shoes? Andy crawled to freedom through five hundred yards of shit smelling foulness I can't even imagine, or maybe I just don't want to. Five hundred yards... that's the length of five football fields, just shy of half a mile.

Figure 10

Andy Dufresne : *[in a letter to Red]* Dear Red. If you're reading this, you've gotten out. And if you've come this far, maybe you're willing to come a little further. You remember the name of the town, don't you?

Red : Zihuatanejo.

Andy Dufresne : I could use a good man to help me get my project on wheels. I'll keep an eye out for you and the chessboard ready. Remember, Red, hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things, and no good thing ever dies. I will be hoping that this letter finds you, and finds you well. Your friend. Andy.

Figure 11

Red : *[narrating]* The first night's the toughest, no doubt about it. They march you in naked as the day you were born, skin burning and half blind from that delousing shit they throw on you, and when they put you in that cell... and those bars slam home... that's when you know it's for real. A whole life blown away in the blink of an eye. Nothing left but all the time in the world to think about it.

Figure 12

Red : *[narrating]* We sat and drank with the sun on our shoulders and felt like free men. Hell, we could have been tarring the roof of one of our own houses. We were the lords of all creation. As for Andy - he spent that break hunkered in the shade, a strange little smile on his face, watching us drink his beer.

Figure 13

Red : *[narrating]* Sometimes it makes me sad, though... Andy being gone. I have to remind myself that some birds aren't meant to be caged. Their feathers are just too bright. And when they fly away, the part of you that knows it was a sin to lock them up DOES rejoice. But still, the place you live in is that much more drab and empty that they're gone. I guess I just miss my friend.

(*The Shawshank Redemption* (1994) - IMDb, 2021)

Figure 4-13. Screenshots of Red's narration from the film *The Shawshank Redemption*, 1994. (n.d). Retrieved February 5, 2021 from <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0111161/characters/nm0000151>. Screenshot by author.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research methodology and is organized properly into a few sections.

3.1 Research Method

Generally, the research method refers to the structure used to plan and execute research. It is a critical part of research because it includes all four important aspects: the strategy, the conceptual framework, the targeted study and respondents and also the tools and procedures for collection and data analysis.

The research design applied for this paper is a quantitative approach to test the hypothesis that the film narration by a first-person narrator can be a powerful medium as an act of communication and to get audiences into the experience via the narration of the prominent film, *The Shawshank Redemption* by Frank Darabont in 1994. This study will be involved with statistical analysis through the data collected and eventually conclude.

Quantitative research is represented by numbers and graphs. It is used to test or confirm theories and hypotheses. This type of research can be used to establish generalizable facts about the subject (Streefkerk, 2019).

Danial (2016) affirms the advantage of the quantitative research method is the use of statistical data as a tool to save time and resources. (Danial, 2016 as cited in Bryman, 2001, p20) believes that quantitative research methods are studies that emphasize numbers and figures in data collection and analysis. It is imperative that quantitative

research methods can be seen as scientific in nature. Using statistical data for research description and analysis can reduce the time and energy that researchers will invest in describing their results. Data (numbers, percentages and measurable figures) can be calculated and performed by a computer through the use of statistical software packages social science (SPSS) (Danial,2016, Gorard, 2001, p3; Connolly, 2007, p2-34) can save a lot of energy and resources.

DME (n.d) described the quantitative approach as the following:

Quantitative research methods are designed to produce statistically reliable data that tells us how many people do or think something. Quantitative data typically is in numerical form such as averages, ratios or ranges. (p. 5).

The organization also added that it is especially useful when carrying out a large scale which needs assessment or baseline survey. It is independent for the researcher and one should get similar results no matter who carries out the research. It can also be used to measure trends. Quantitative research is usually independent of the researcher and would generally reveal the same results irrespective of the researcher provided that the methodologies are similar.

Table 2

A breakdown of the key features of each of these categorizations of research method and data.

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Aim	The aim is to count things in an attempt to explain what is observed.	The aim is a complete, detailed description of what is observed.
Purpose	Generalisability, prediction, causal explanations	Contextualisation, interpretation, understanding perspectives
Tools	Researcher uses tools, such as surveys, to collect numerical data.	Researcher is the data gathering instrument.
Data collection	Structured	Unstructured
Output	Data is in the form of numbers and statistics.	Data is in the form of words, pictures or objects.
Sample	Usually a large number of cases representing the population of interest. Randomly selected respondents	Usually a small number of non-representative cases. Respondents selected on their experience.
Objective/ Subjective	Objective – seeks precise measurement & analysis	Subjective - individuals' interpretation of events is important
Researcher role	Researcher tends to remain objectively separated from the subject matter.	Researcher tends to become subjectively immersed in the subject matter.
Analysis	Statistical	Interpretive

(Macdonald & Headlam, n.d.)

3.2 Sampling population

MacDonald & Headlam (n.d) described the sample as a part of the broader population that will participate in the survey and sampling is the process of determining who to aim from that population. The term 'population' is used to describe the target group. Although this may be the entire population, it may also be a smaller group, such as single parents or business members of a Chamber of Commerce in a specific location. Sampling needs to be carefully considered to ensure the validity of the results.

They also mentioned the following:

The sample is the section of the wider population that will be engaged in the survey. Detailed consideration of sampling still needs to be made even when not striving for statistical significance. It is still important to

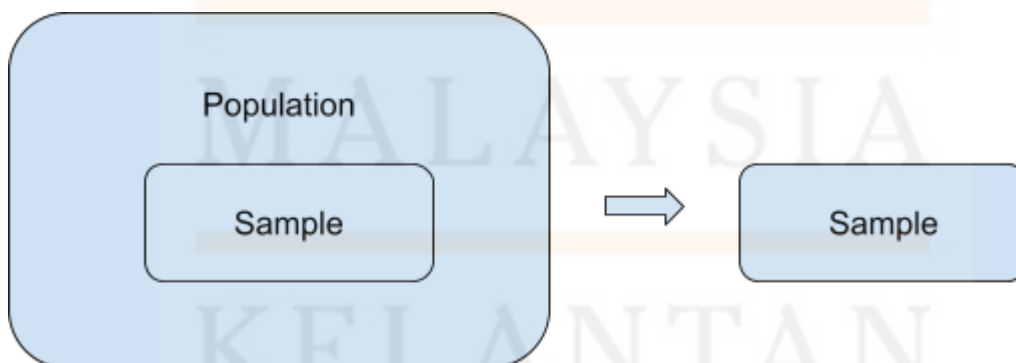
understand who the respondent is and what your sampling frame is going to be. (p.12)

The data collected should answer and fill the questions and information as guidance below:

- Who is the respondent?
- The first thing you need to know is who your population or respondent is going to be. This person will provide the data you want.
- If the survey is conducted in the household, then who should fill out the survey in particular?
- Do you want to describe clearly who the survey is going to be completed by? And do you know why this person is described?
- This is also true when investigating organizations or groups. If the survey is conducted on the right respondent, greater success will be achieved. Identifying the most suitable person to complete the survey will help increase response rates and generate more accurate data.

Figure 14

A sample is derived from the population.



Therefore, the population (intended to achieve) that will provide the data from the samples would consist of the following groups/ participants/ respondents:

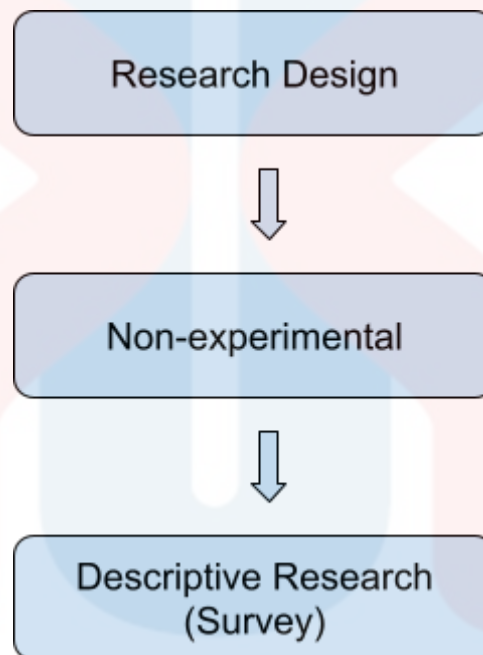
Table 3

Num	Population Sample		Reasons the sample is targeted
1	All creative technology study students	All creative technology students from the University of Malaysia Kelantan (UMK)	Knowledgeable about the research studied
2	All institutions students in all education institutes	All institutions students of the University of Mara Technology (UiTM)	Educated and easy to understand the research studied
3	All moviegoers	Adult moviegoers from non-educational institutes	Have knowledge in the film but might be not in details

3.3 Research design

Figure 15

Research design flowchart



3.3.1 Nonexperimental Research

Compared to experimental research design, the best approach opted for this paper is non experimental research.

Mertler (2016) described the non-experimental research design as embodying a set of techniques for conducting quantitative research without any manipulation of any variables in the research. In other words, variables are measured when they occur naturally without any interference from researchers. The lack of such manipulation may be because the variable was naturally “manipulated” before the research began, or because researchers couldn't

manipulate a particular variable (Mertler, 2016 as cited in Mertler, 2014). The three types of non-experimental research designs are descriptive research (including observational research and survey research), correlation research and causal comparative research.

3.3.2 Descriptive research

The descriptive survey method is a one-shot survey where the purpose is to briefly describe the characteristics of the sample at a certain point in time.

Descriptive research aims to describe populations, conditions or phenomena accurately and systematically. It can answer what, where, when and how to ask questions, but it cannot answer why. Descriptive research design can use a variety of research methods to study one or more variables. Unlike experimental research, researchers do not control or manipulate any variables but only observe and measure them. (McCombes, 2019).

Descriptive research is an appropriate choice when the purpose of the research is to determine characteristics, frequencies, trends, and categories. It is useful when little is known about the subject or problem. Before researching why something happened, having insights into how, when and where it happened is a must.

3.3.3 Surveys

Survey research allows collection of large amounts of data, which can be analyzed for frequencies, averages, and patterns.

Perhaps the most popular (quantitative) research design is survey research. The design of survey research is very flexible, so it can appear in many forms, but all of these are characterized by the use of standard questionnaires managed over the phone or face-to-face, through postal pencil and paper questionnaires, or increasingly through the use of Web forms and email forms. (Danial, 2004)

In survey research, most students or scholars may have some experience, even if they are not the ones who develop it but as the participants. This makes many people feel that survey research is the simplest form of research that can be done quickly. Many organizations design internal surveys to study various issues. However, designing survey research is not that simple. Besides, this research focuses on gathering numerical data to generalize it to a group of people and to explain a phenomenon in the firm (Babbie, 2010, p. 24-25).

This approach is opted in purpose using computational techniques because it would emphasize the objective measurements and the statistical, mathematical or numerical analysis of the data collected. Survey data can be conducted to gather a large size of information in a short time and the data output will depend on how the survey is constructed.

Online surveys were chosen for this research because they are reliable and a faster method to collect information from multiple respondents efficiently. This is especially vital where time and connecting with people face to face are major restraints during the movement control order. This study was no exception and online surveys serve the purpose. Compared with other survey techniques, online surveys are quick in getting information and feedback from respondents. After collecting information, the next phase would be the analysis and with the online survey software available, the data can be analyzed in real-time from a central dashboard.

First of all, survey research has a high degree of flexibility. A wide range of research questions can be studied using survey methods. You can describe a situation, study the relationship between variables, and so on. Because survey research does not create man-made situations like experiments, it is easier to generalize the survey results to the actual environment because this is where the research is conducted. Compared with other methods (such as observation), survey research is also effective in that we can collect a large amount of data at a relatively low cost and energy. It is also easy to guarantee the anonymity of the interviewee, especially through pencil, paper, Internet and

telephone survey forms, which may lead to more frank answers than less anonymous methods (such as interviews). Therefore, survey research is particularly suitable for soliciting opinions and feelings on specific issues. Using standardized questions allows easy comparison between respondents and groups of respondents (for example, differences between men and women). (Danial, 2004)



3.4 Data Analysis

Regarding that, the data was analysed. Descriptive statistics analysis was used to describe, display, and summarise the data in meaningful ways, allowing for a more straightforward interpretation of the data. Descriptive statistics were helpful in summarising the data by combining tabulated description (tables), graphical description (graphs and figures), and statistical commentary (a discussion of the results).



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This section presents the findings obtained from the analysis of the respondents' results. The findings are divided into the following main themes:

- Demographic
- General perception and attitudes towards film and the first-person narrator
- Characteristics of first-person narrator
- Impacts of the first-person narrator in The Shawshank Redemption towards viewers

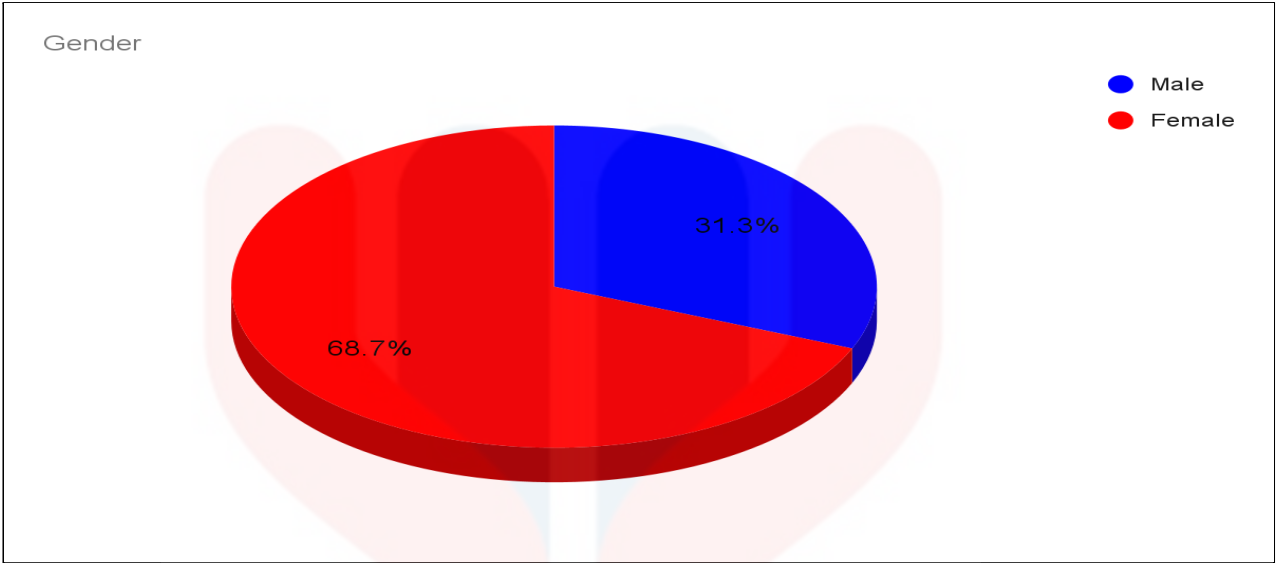
4.2 Demographic

Respondents classified as adults were asked a series of questions to profile them in terms of their demographic characteristic. An understanding of the profile of them is a vital initial step to have in-depth understanding of the first-person narrator and his effects on audiences.

4.2.1 Gender

Respondents were asked to indicate their gender.

Figure 16: Gender



The findings showed that 31% of the adults were male and 68% were female. The distribution of respondents by gender is crucial as traditionally it's believed that within households, females are more likely to consume more time to consume film than males.

4.2.2 Age group

The findings obtained when the respondents were asked to indicate their age categories are shown in the table below.

Table 4: Age Group

Age Category	Count	Percentage (%)
17-20	5	15.6
21-30	21	65.6
31-40	1	3.1
41-50	3	9.4
51-60	2	6.3
Total	32	100%

The table illustrates the highest number of adults (66%) were between 21 and 30-years-old followed by 16% between 17-20 and 9% between 41-50 years of age. These results indicate that older people have been attributed to lack of time or interest in film while the youth are more flexible to engage in different kinds of genres.

4.2.3 Occupational status

The occupational status of the respondents is shown in table 2.

Table 5: Occupational status

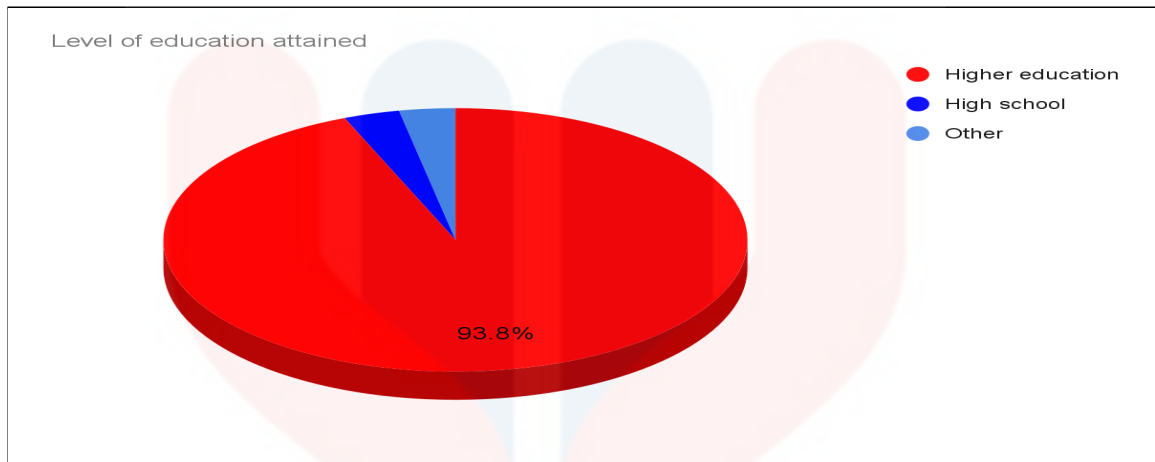
Occupational status	Count	Percentage (%)
Employed	10	31.3
Student	15	46.9
Studying and seeking employment	1	3.1
Unemployed	6	18.8
Total	32	100%

Almost half of the respondents (47%) were students, followed by 31% who were employed and 19% were unemployed. Another 3% of the respondents were studying and seeking employment. In terms of occupational status, the above results show that the most respondents are currently studying so the chances are high that they invest more time in movies.

4.2.4 Educational level attained

The figure below presents the findings on the level of education attained by the respondents.

Figure 17: Education level attained



More than half the respondents 93.8% said that they had attained post high school qualifications such as certificates, diploma, degree, masters and so on, followed by 3.1% who completed high school. And the remaining 3.1% indicated either IT certification or hadn't completed their schooling.

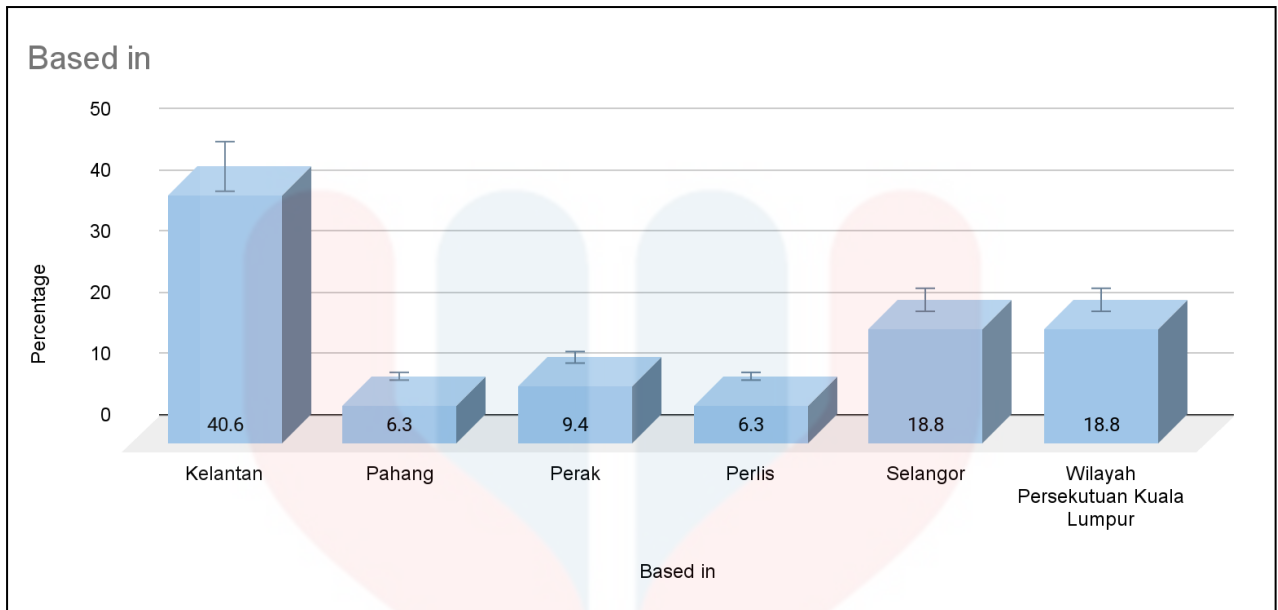
4.2.5 The state they currently living in

Figure 18 below presents the state of the respondents.

The findings show that a large proportion of respondents reside in Kelantan (41%) followed by Selangor (18.8%), Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur (18.8), Perak (9.4%), Pahang (6.3%) and Perlis (6.3%).

MALAYSIA

KELANTAN



4.3 General perception and attitudes towards film and the first-person narrator

The questions were aimed at gaining insights into the viewers' perception and attitudes towards the first-person narrator and the film itself. A robust research can only be realised if there is an understanding of the viewers' approach towards the subject.

4.3.1 Frequency of enjoyment of watching films on any platform

Respondents were asked to indicate how often they enjoy watching films on different kinds of platforms. The findings are presented in the following table:

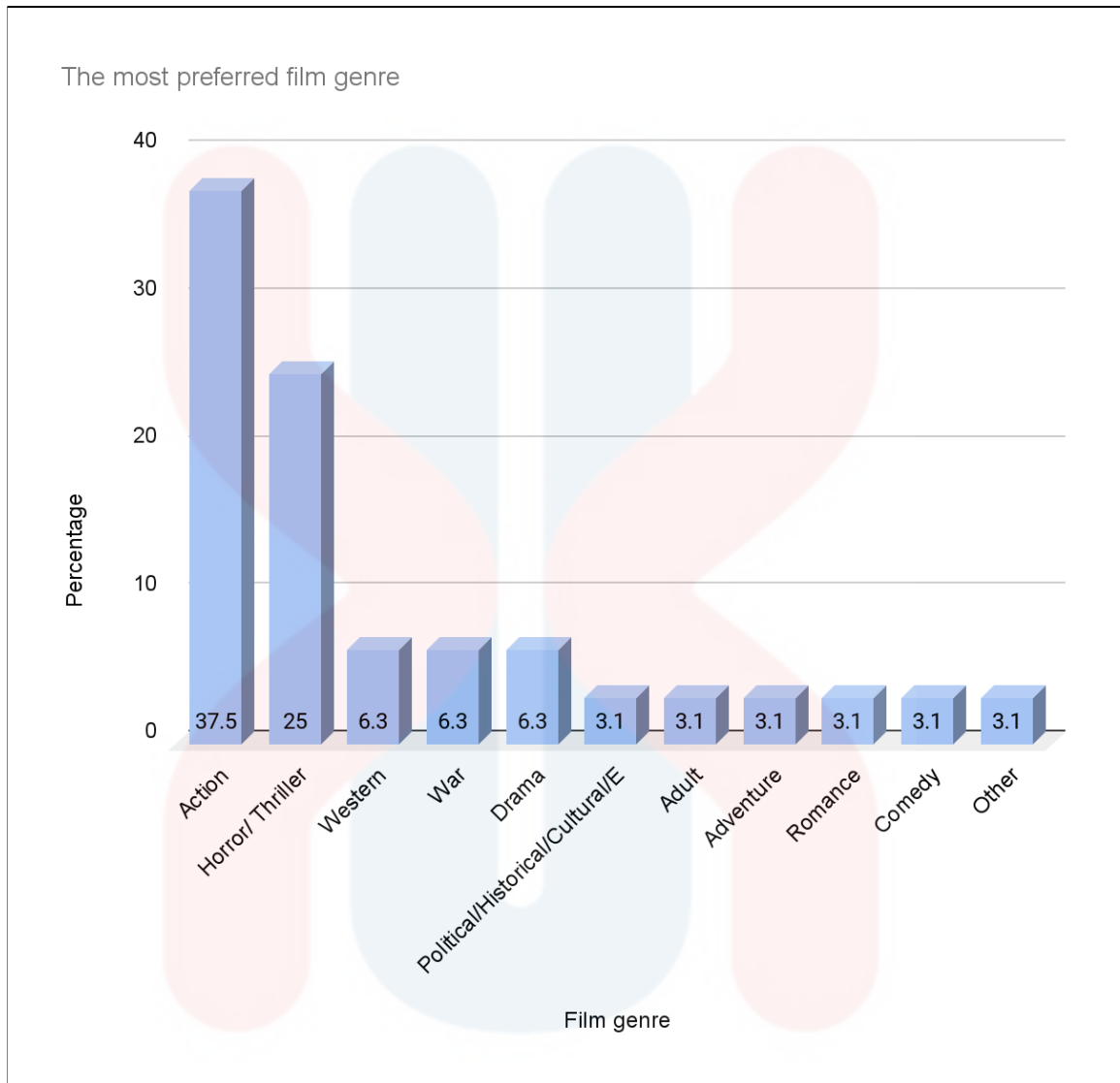
Table 6: Times when films are generally watched

How often do you watch film	Count	Percentage (%)
One to four times a week	8	25
One to four times a month	9	28.1
More than four times a month	1	3.1
Once a month	5	16.6
As often as there is something interesting to watch	9	28.1
Total	32	100%

28% indicated that they watch films as there is something interesting, followed by 28% who said one to four times a month and 25% who stated all through the weekend. Another 16% watched film once a month and 3% more than four times a month. It can be noted that film viewership is a matter of personal convenience; thereby people watch films on TV, internet streaming and other mediums of their own will and at a particular time which is flexible to their needs.

4.3.2 Most preferred film genre

Figure 19: Most preferred film genre

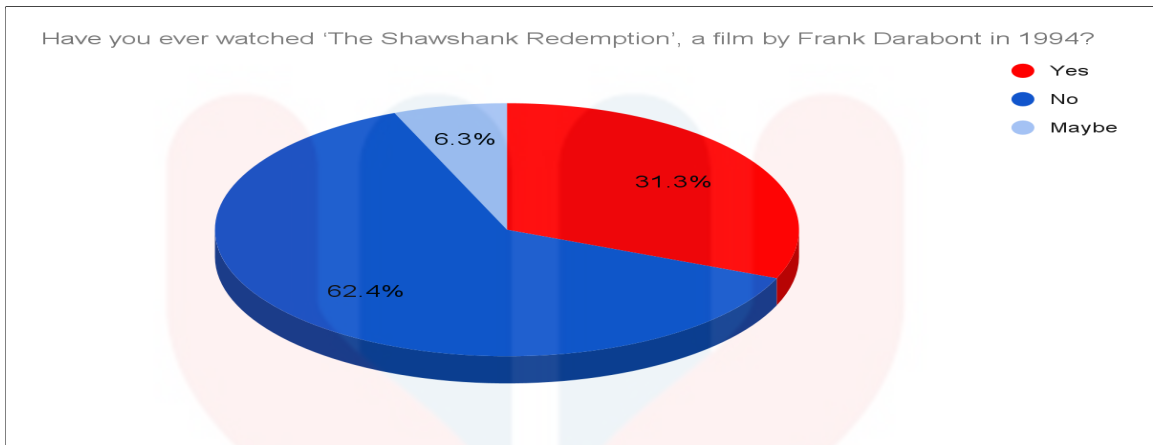


The findings show 37.5% preferred action, followed by 25% who have interest in horror and thriller. 6.3% said they would watch western, war and drama films. The least group (3.1%) admitted adult film, adventure, romance, comedy and other genres suit their taste better.

4.3.3 Most preferred film genre

Respondents were asked if they recall ever watching The Shawshank Redemption.

Figure 20: Recalling watching the film

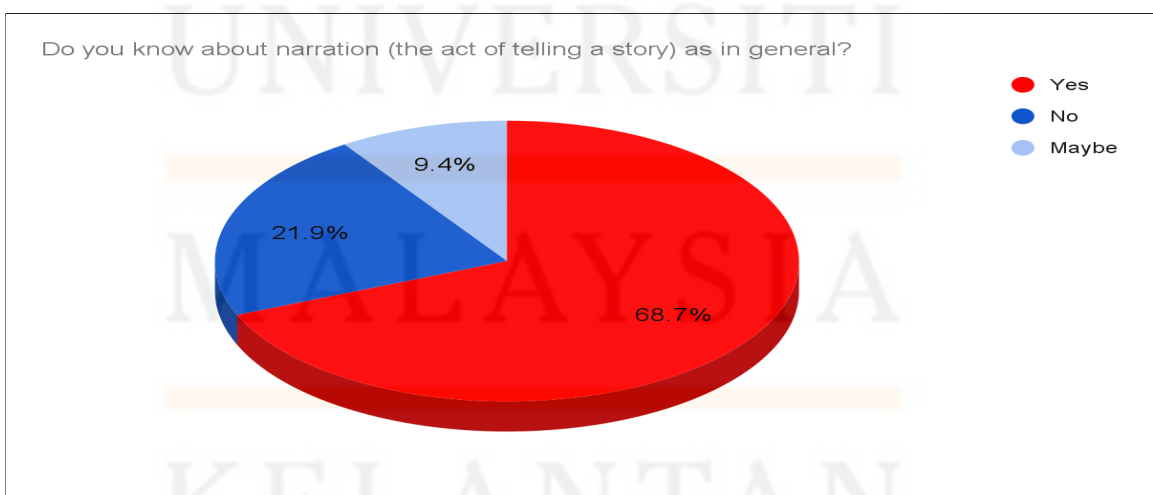


The majority of the adults (62%) recalled that they never watched the film and 31% answered Yes. These results reveal that The Top Rated Movie of All Time in IMDb Charts (The Shawshank Redemption) needs more exposure in Malaysia.

4.3.4 Awareness of narration as in general

Respondents were asked to indicate if they know about narration.

Figure 21: Awareness of narration



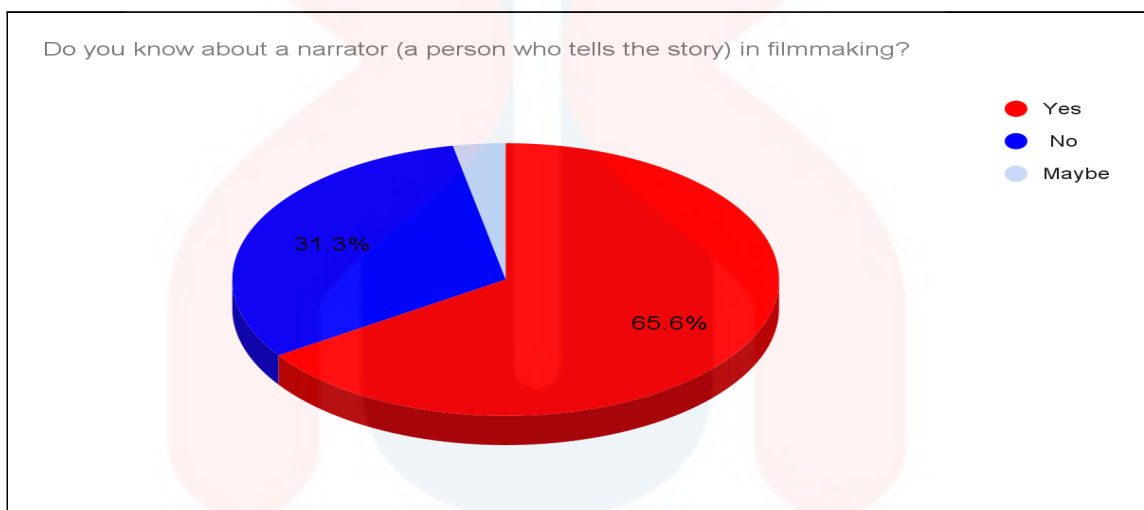
The findings show that more than half of the adults (68.7%) across all the age groups said that they have general knowledge of narration followed by 22% who

say they don't. The least group (9%) is unsure of what is narration. The findings also show that the term narration might only apply to those who acquire the knowledge of narration in syllabus through their studies.

4.3.5 Awareness of narration as in general

Respondents were asked if they knew about narrators in filmmaking.

Figure 22: Awareness of narrator in film

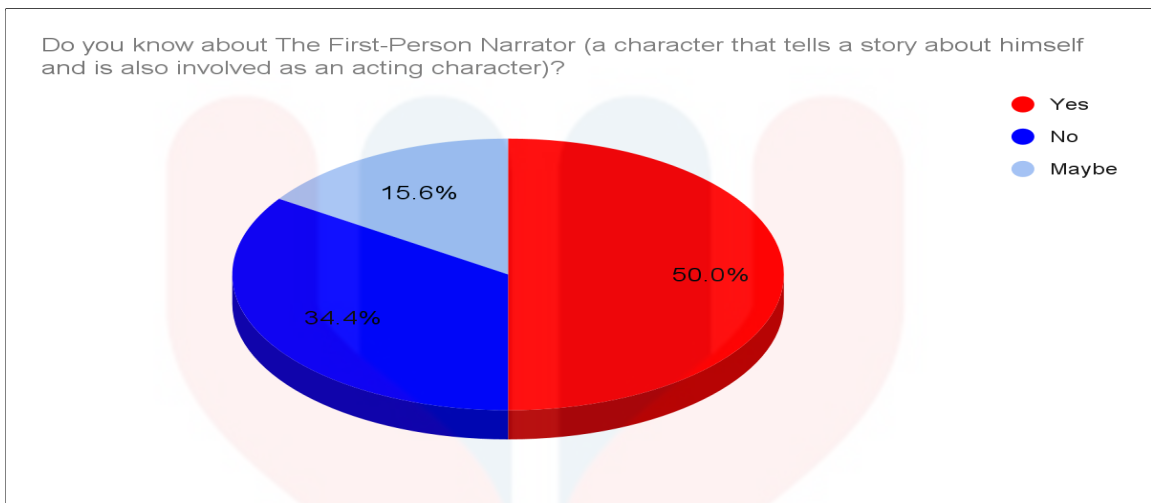


It can be observed that most of the respondents (65.6) said they know about the narrator in filmmaking while 31.3% said they didn't and followed by the least group (3%) who is unsure of the meaning.

4.3.6 Awareness of the first-person narrator in filmmaking

Respondents were asked if they knew about the first-person narrator in filmmaking.

Figure 23: Awareness of first-person narrator



Half of the adults (50%) said they have insights of the first-person narrator in filmmaking; conversely 34% didn't have a clue and another 15.6% was unsure of the term itself. The findings indicate that the first-person narrator is not a common subject to these respondents, possibly due to the less exposure of the film industry.

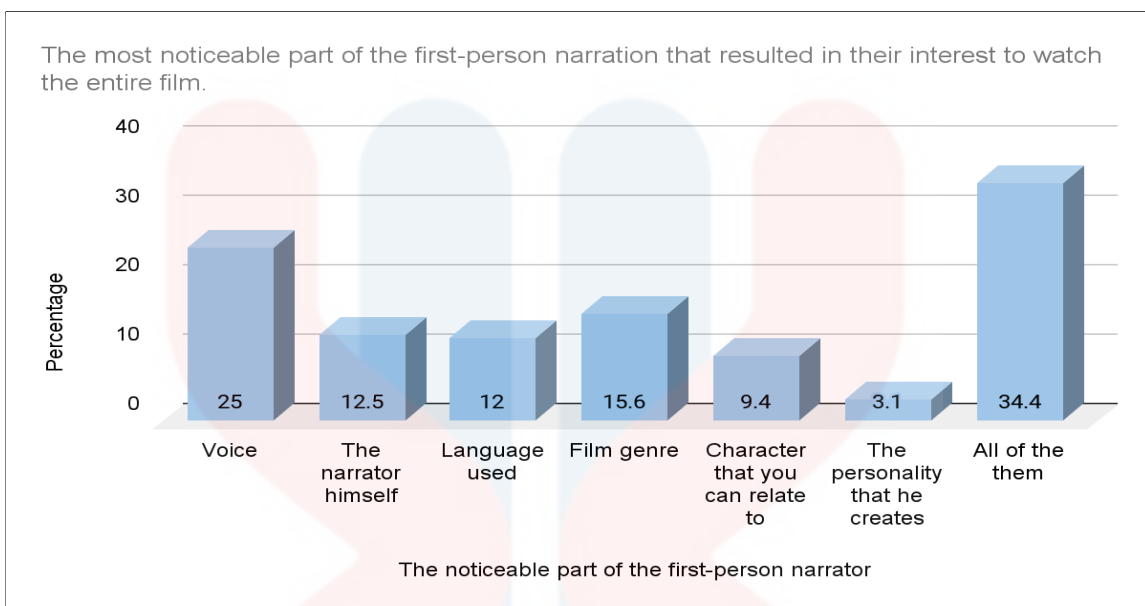
4.4 Characteristics of First-Person Narrator

Respondents were asked several questions to investigate and gain insights into the viewers' perception of the first-person narrator in terms of what part of the narrator that triggers the viewers' emotion, the reliability and the likelihood of them watching a film apply the concept of the first-person narrator.

4.4.1 The most noticeable part of first-person narration

Respondents were asked to indicate what is the most noticeable part of the first-person narration that resulted in their interest to watch the entire film.

Figure 24: The most noticeable part of first-person narration that piqued viewers' interest

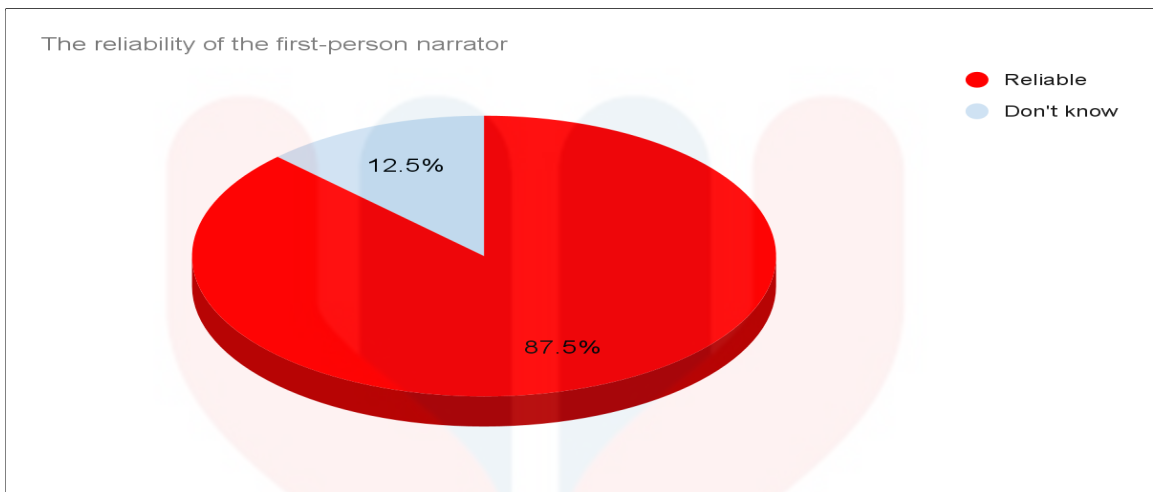


The figure above illustrates 34% of the respondents stated they concur with all the parts of the narrator while 25% stated the voice is crucial in gaining their interest to watch the entire film. 16% on the other hand said the genre is the most noticeable part followed by 13% the narrator himself, 12% language used, 9% character that you can relate to and the least group (3%) said the personality that the narrator created is his option. Their preference is due to the great satisfaction they have in each trait of the narration or all of them.

4.4.2 The reliability of the story or confession of the first-person narrator

The respondents were asked if they would trust the first-person narrator’s story or confession in film.

Figure 25: The reliability of the first-person narrator

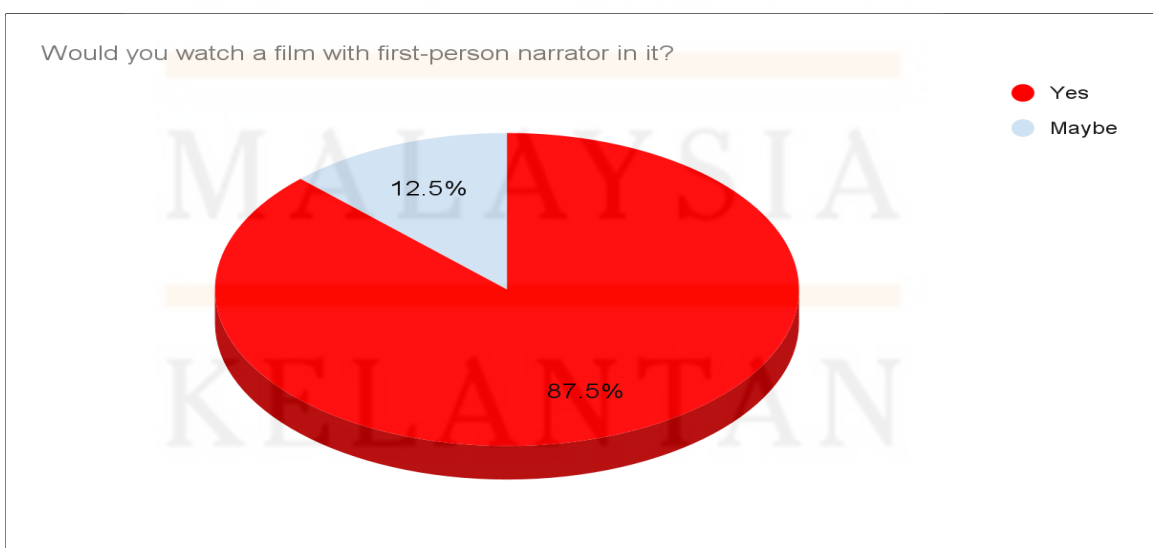


The findings revealed that most adults (88%) said they would trust the confession of a first-person narrator when they engaged in a film while 13% were unsure of the statement given. Not even a percent of a group or an individual stated they would never trust solely on the narrator's story. This clearly shows the great domination the narrator holds.

4.4.3 The likelihood of watching film with first-person narrator film

The respondents were asked if they would watch a first-person narrator film.

Figure 26: The likelihood of watching film with first-person narrator film



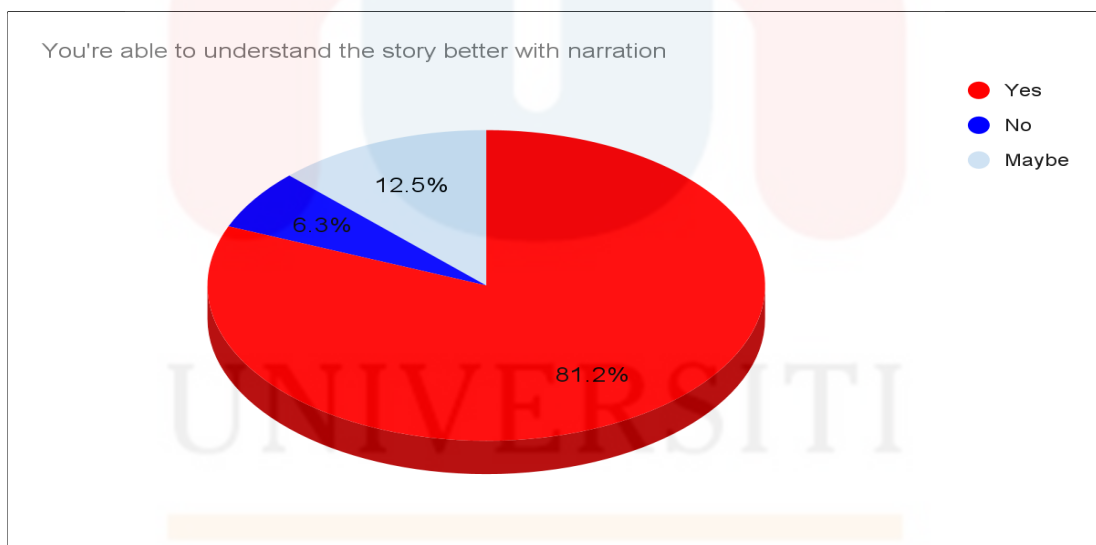
A large proportion of the adults (88%) stated they would watch a film with first-person narrator concept while another 13% was not firm with the option. The above results clearly show that most of the respondents have keen interest in the narrator and thus define the noteworthy role of the narration.

4.5 Impacts of The First-Person Narrator in The Shawshank Redemption Towards Viewers

To fully understand the impact of the first-person narrator towards the viewers, the respondents were asked a series of questions to obtain their insights.

4.5.1 Audience’s acceptance of narration in gaining insights of film

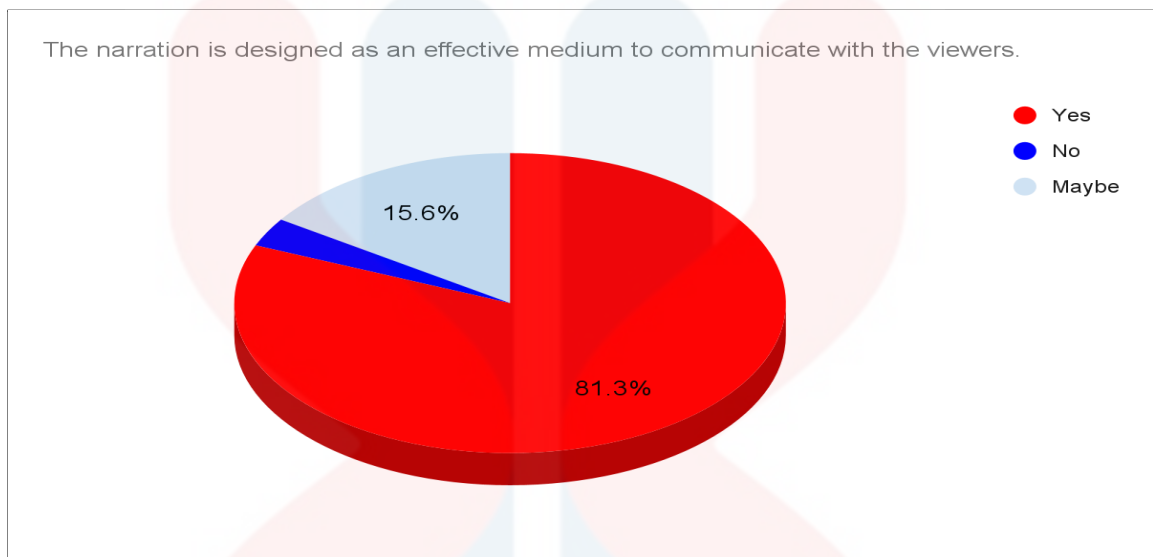
Figure 27: You’re able to understand the story better with narration



More than half of the respondents (81%) said that with narration they were able to grasp the story better. On the other hand, 6% were not on common ground. Around 13% did not stick to any opinion.

4.5.2 The first-person narration as an effective medium to communicate with viewers

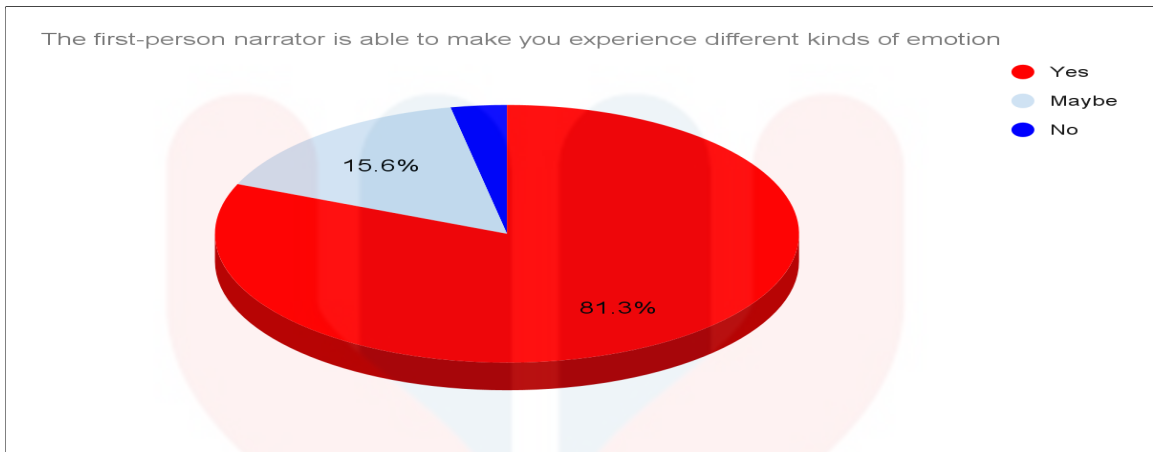
Figure 28: The narration is designed as an effective medium to communicate with viewers



Most of the respondents (81%) considered first-person narration as an effective tool to communicate with the viewers while 3% didn't. The other 16% however was unsure. This finding indicates that narration would bring the narrator and the reader closer thus creating an interrelationship between them.

4.5.3 The first-person narrator is able to make you experience different kinds of emotion.

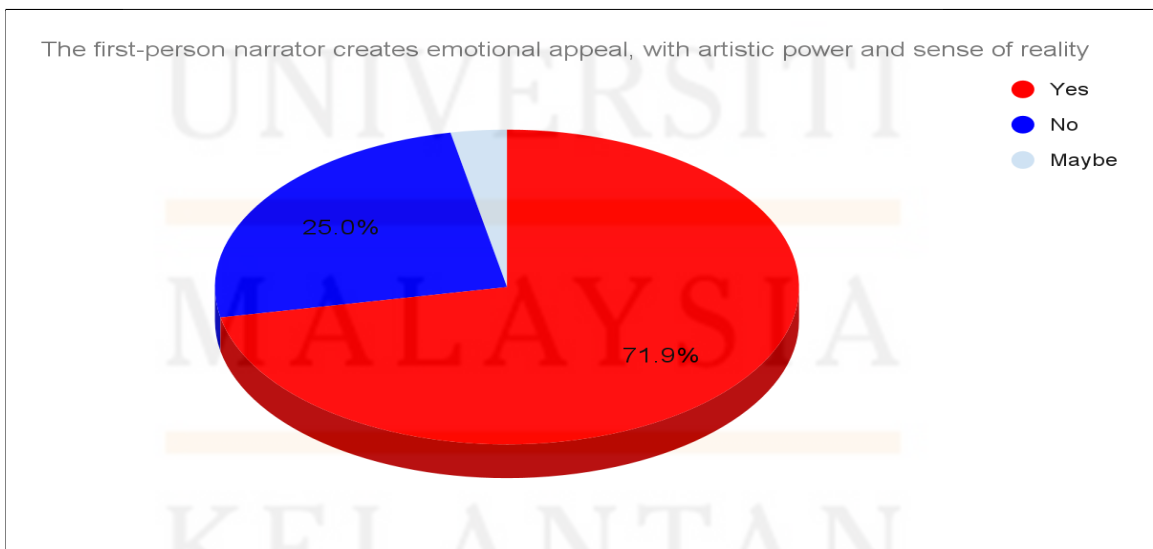
Figure 29: The first-person narrator is able to make you experience different kinds of emotion



The findings revealed that the majority (81%) of the respondents stated first-person narrators are able to evoke different kinds of emotion in them followed by 16% who aren't sure of the statements. On the other hand, 3% aren't affected at all by the narrator.

4.5.4 The power that the first-person narrator holds

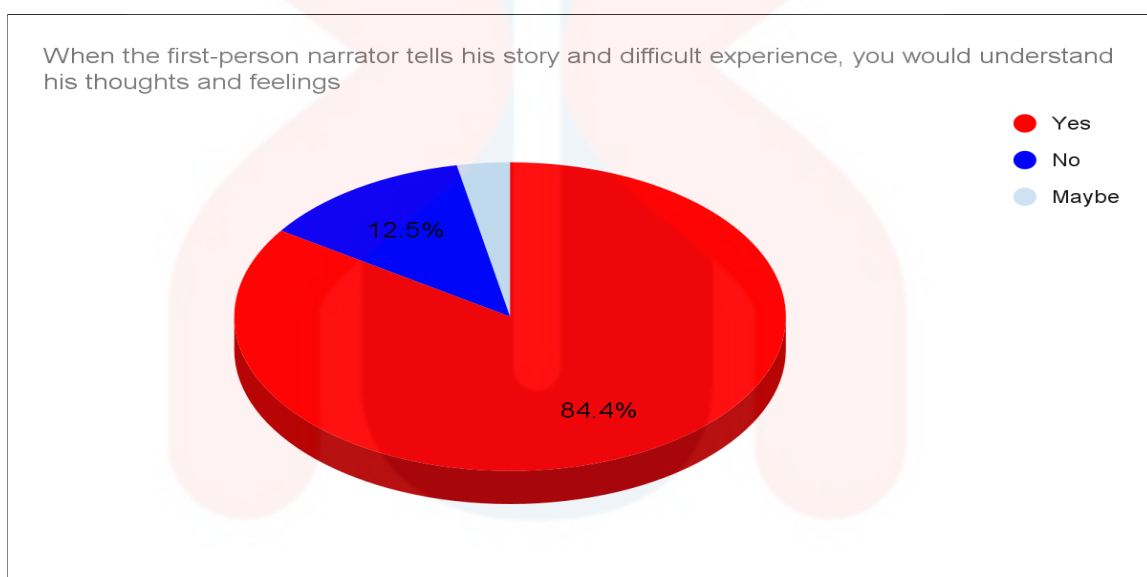
Figure 30: The first-person narrator creates emotional appeal, with artistic power and sense of reality



Looking at the findings presented in the figure above, the majority (72%) of the respondents said the first-person narrator is able to create emotional appeal with such artistic power and a sense of reality.

4.5.5 The effect of the first-person narrator in telling his story and harsh experience

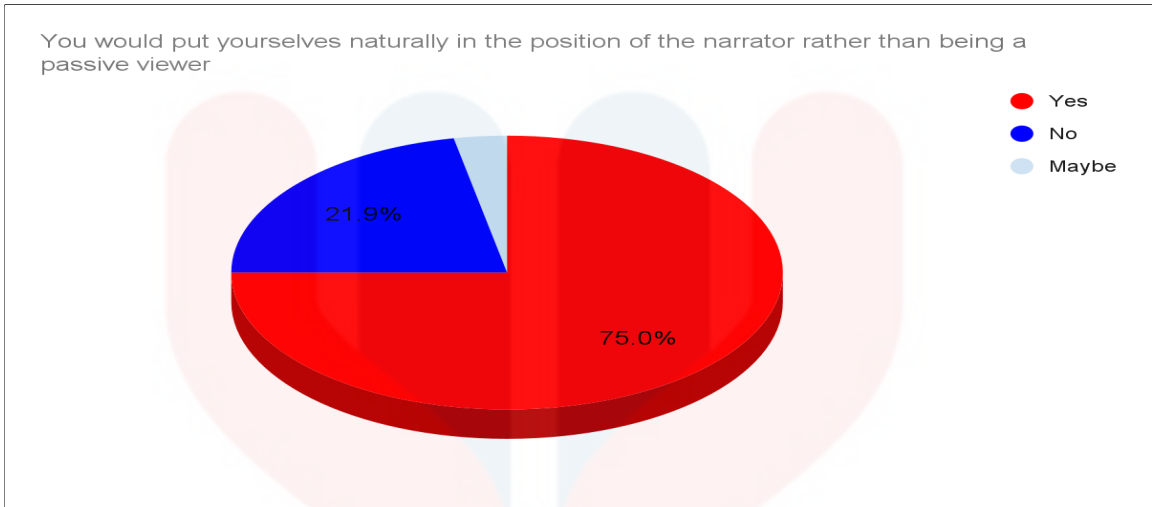
Figure 31: When the first-person narrator tells his story and difficult experience, you would understand his thoughts and feelings



The results demonstrated that the majority of adults in the sample (84%) understand the thoughts and feelings of the narrator while 13% indicated that they don't. The 3% said they are unsure. This illustrates that there is a large scope in terms of stimulating viewers to be able to perceive the narrator's emotion.

4.5.6 The ability to be a compassionate audience

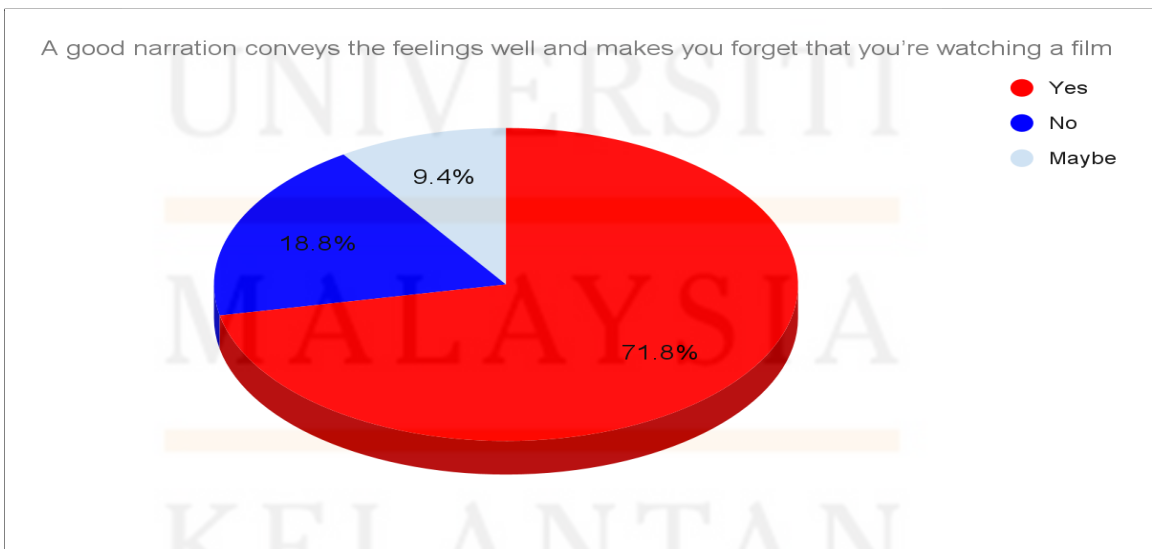
Figure 32: You would put yourselves naturally in the position of the narrator rather than being a passive viewer.



The survey revealed that most adults (75%) said they are able to be a compassionate viewer rather than being passive followed by 22% who didn't and 3% that isn't sure.

4.5.7 The reality of the situation

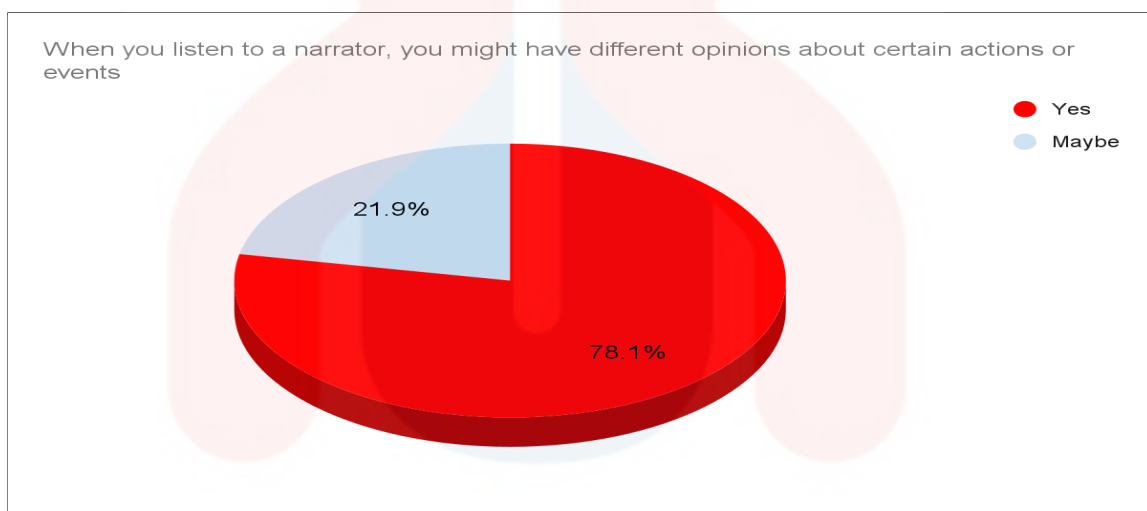
Figure 33: A good first-person narration conveys the feelings well and makes you forget that you're watching a film.



The results revealed that the majority (72%) of the adults said a good narration conveys the feelings well and due to this, they get absorbed in the movie while 19% said they didn't. On the other hand, 9% were not sure of this statement.

4.5.8 Differences in opinion with first-person narrator's certain actions and events

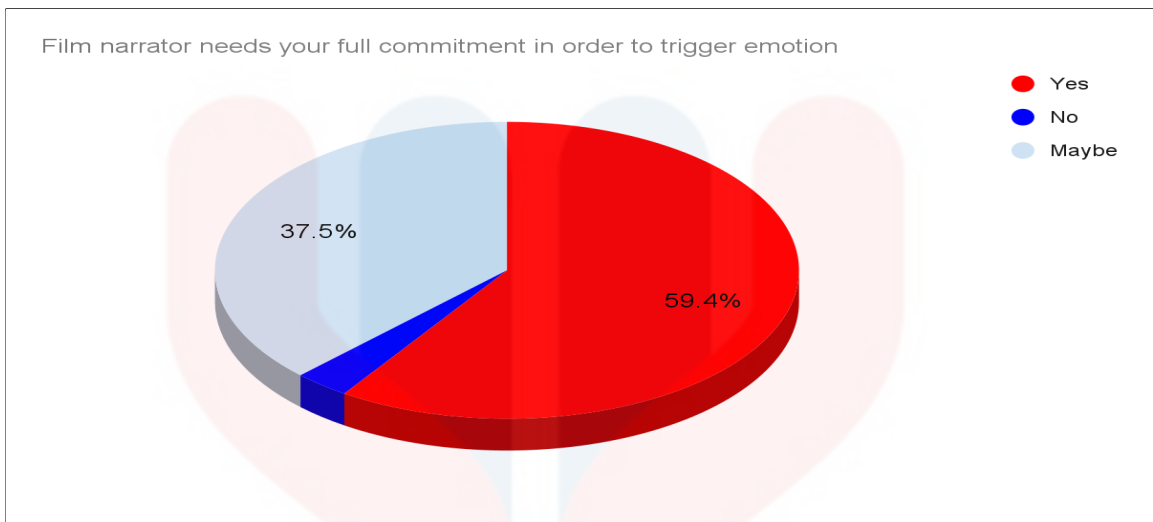
Figure 34: When you listen to a narrator, you might have different opinions about certain actions or events



Most adults (78%) indicated that they have different values about certain events or actions towards the narrator while 22% indicated otherwise. For instance some viewers feel disgusted and terrified of the crime the first-person narrator commits in a film when he doesn't even feel remorse for his action.

4.5.9 Full commitment of the audience

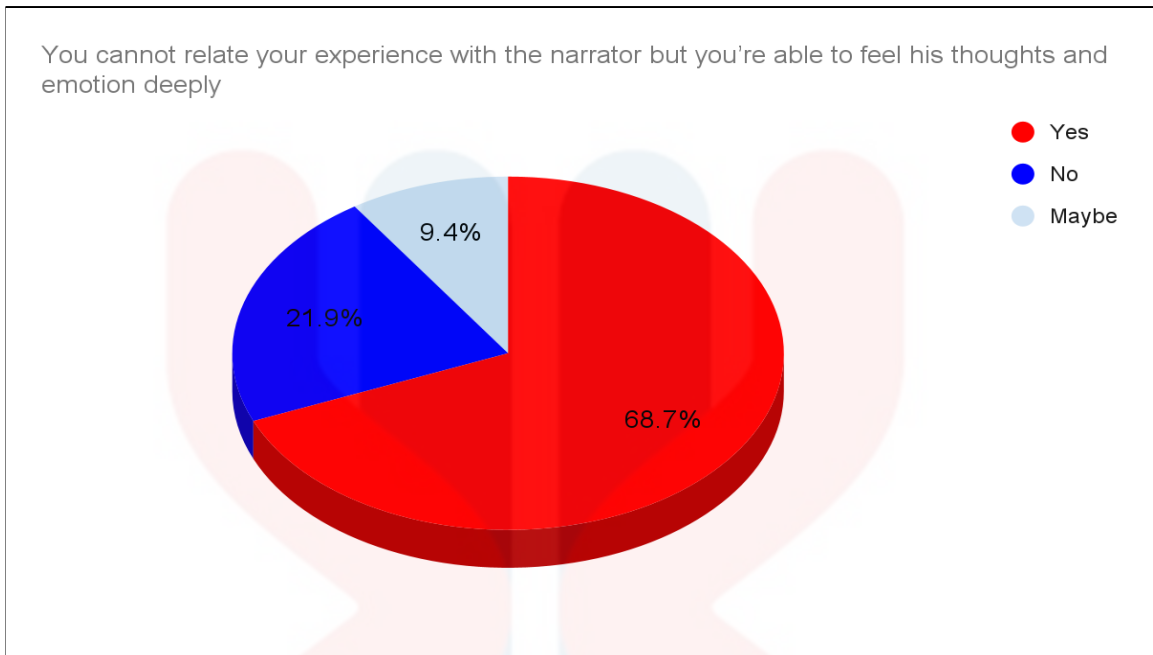
Figure 35: Film narrator needs your full commitment in order to trigger emotion.



The figure shows more than half of the adults (59%) said the narrator does need their full commitment to trigger their emotion, followed by 38% who said 'maybe' and 3% who said didn't. These findings seem to suggest that there are huge differences for stimulating emotion in the viewers.

4.5.10 The same mutual ground in terms of thoughts and emotions

Figure 36: You cannot relate your experience with the narrator but you're able to feel his thoughts and emotion deeply.



It can be observed that the adults (69%) stated they are able to feel deeply towards the narrator albeit they do not undergo the experience that the narrator has to go through while 22% said they didn't and followed by 9% who were unsure.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to determine whether first-person narrators as a medium of functional storytelling can result in getting the audiences into the experience and consciousness of the film. This chapter includes discussion of the conclusion based on the results from the data using a combination of tabulated description (tables) graphical description (graphs and figures) and statistical commentary (a discussion of the results).

These were the research questions need to be answered:

1. What drives the audience to be compassionate listeners rather than passive spectators? What criteria push the audience to evoke the human experience of the narrator that is part of the story?
2. What factors contribute to achieve the level of consciousness of the reality of the narrator?
3. Is first-person narration a great medium for getting the audience into experience in filmmaking?
4. Do the experience and consciousness develop naturally during the exposure of the narration, or does it depend on another variable?

An online survey was conducted to 32 participants from the age of 17 year-old and older that are based in Kelantan, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Pahang and Perak. The survey examined two sections; characteristics of first-person narration that resulted in viewers' interest to watch the entire film and also the impact of first-person narrator towards the audience.

5.2 The First-Narrator and Audience's Consciousness and Experience

The results revealed most of the respondents (88%) scored the highest percentage with the statements 'the reliability of the first-person narrator' where they stated they would trust the confession of a first-person narrator when they are engaged in a film. This clearly shows the great domination the narrator holds. The lowest percentage with the statement 'first-person narrator needs your full commitment in order to trigger emotion' scored 59%. In the study, the correlation was found between the first-person narrator's reliability and the commitment of the viewers. It was found the first-person narrator's reliability to be negatively related to audiences' consciousness and experience. The result can be interpreted that the first-person narrator with high reliability will need more commitment from the audience in order to trigger the emotion and vice versa.

Past study on narration discovered that narration adds a very personal element to the films, as the audience can never truly separate themselves from the characters. Thus, trusting the protagonist is essential, but it proves almost impulsive by the end (Turner, 2014). In conclusion, the reliability of the narrator is highly appreciated and crucial but not necessarily needed.

5.3 The First-Person Narrator's Criteria and Audience's Consciousness and Experience

The research indicated 34% of the respondents stated that all the criterias namely; voice, narrator himself, language used, film genre, characters the viewers can relate to and the personality that he creates piqued the audience's interest to watch the entire film. Their preference is due to the great satisfaction they have in each trait of the narration or all of them. On the other hand, 81% said that the first-person narrator is able to make them experience different kinds of emotions while engaging in film. The study found the correlation was found between the characteristics of first-person narration and experience and consciousness of the viewer and positively related. The results can be interpreted that the first-person narration with several attributes drive the audience to experience different kinds of emotion.

The narrator explains in the Author's Note, "It seemed natural that Mr. Patel's story should be told mostly in the first person—in his voice and through his eyes." (p.xi) Obviously, the mode of narration is not chosen at random, but is meticulously designed to achieve an aesthetic effect. The emotional appeal of first-person narration is obvious, with artistic power and a sense of reality (Xu, 2017). According to Carmona (2017), narration can express aspects of how we feel and film narrative can convey abstract dimensions of human experience which do not have to be translated into data or explained. To summarize, the attributes of first-person narration evoked the human experience towards the viewers and thus becoming an understanding and compassionate spectators.



5.4 Conclusion

Based on the research question; Do the experience and consciousness develop naturally during the exposure of the narration, or does it depend on another variable? What factors contribute to achieve the level of consciousness of the reality of the narrator? It was believed that the research questions were rejected where reliability was uninfluential to give impact towards the audience.

This research concluded that the first-person narrator who is telling the story and also an acting character himself is capable of evoking the experience and emotions of the viewers through a few attributes namely; voice, the narrator himself, language used, film genre, characters the viewers can relate to and the personality that he creates.

The study proved that first-person narration is a great medium for getting the audience into experience and consciousness in filmmaking. As the narration cues the viewers' comprehension, they could grasp the story better and thus be able to get absorbed throughout the entire film.

5.5 Recommendation

A study should be conducted for adults above the age of 16 years old in order to determine the age group which possibly contributed to more interest in film and exposure of the term used in film industry. The youth are more flexible to engage in different kinds of film genres compared to adults but the survey used should be in a much simpler version so the information is easy to be digested. On top of that, the study makes important recommendations for researchers and film practitioners who plan to explore the first-person narrator film type. Specific characteristics, such as narration attributes, film viewership, first-person narrator awareness and narration, should be considered critical to improve the research.

5.6 Limitation of Study

A few limitations can be seen in this study. First and foremost, the sample size was smaller than the amount expected to be collected. Time and budget constraints have become one of the challenges that the researcher must overcome while conducting the study. It was difficult to get a response because everything was done online. Researcher was expecting to get at least 60 respondents but only managed to get only half of them. Since internet coverage was limited in the smaller towns, retrieving the data took some time. For future researchers, it is advisable to use a larger sample population that leads to great results and more convincing.



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