

THE IMPACT OF BOLLYWOOD FILMS ON WOMEN'S ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

By

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BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Abstract

There is a gap in the literature examining the impact of Bollywood media consumption on its audience. Correlations have been found between the consumption of Hollywood romantic media and romantic television increasing and lowered relationship satisfaction, higher conflict rates, self-objectification and partner-objectification, and overall unrealistic expectations of love and relationships (Dew & Tulane, 2015; Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer, 2015; Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014; Storey & McDonald, 2014). This study explores whether the exposure to Bollywood media has an impact on romantic relationships. A sample of twenty-six South Asian women, identifying as heterosexual, and living in North American, self-reported measures of the following: relationship and partner satisfaction, expectations of their partners, falling in love, gender roles, partner interaction, relationship ideals, and the participant's view of love and intimate relationships. This study provides evidence that as the participants reported that the amount of influence Bollywood films had on the participant's romantic relationships increased, the participants perceived the influence to be more negative. Additionally, there was a positive correlation between the amount of influence Bollywood films had on the participant's romantic relationships and how strongly the participants agreed with the statement that Bollywood films reflect their relationships. Furthermore, there was also a positive correlation between the participants stating that Bollywood films reflect their romantic lives and participants stating that they believe Bollywood films depict real romance. Further research in this area could allow for the creation of romantic competence programs for youth before they enter into relationships as well as premarital counselling to help create healthy relationships.

Keywords: Bollywood, Hollywood, romantic relationships, romantic competence, gender roles, objectification, premarital counselling, cultivation theory, social exchange theory

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

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BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

For Dad, Mom, Kapish, Diya, and Rahul

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgements.....	3
Dedication	4
Chapter 1. Introduction and Overview	8
Situating the Researcher	8
Research Thesis Questions	8
Purpose of This Study	8
Background and Rationale of the Study	9
Chapter 2. Literature Review	11
What is Bollywood?	11
Unique Characteristics of Bollywood films	13
Romantic Competence	14
Romantic Belief Scale	15
Relevant Current Research.....	16
The role of television.....	18
Influence of romantic films.....	19
Romantic comedies.....	20
Being single.....	22
Research on Bollywood films.....	23
Chapter 3. Methodology	27
Introduction.....	27
Design and Approach	27

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Sample	29
Procedure.....	30
Hypotheses	32
Instruments and Material	32
Variables	33
Survey Questions	33
Chapter 4. Results	36
Data Analysis	37
Sample.....	37
Correlation analysis values	38
Statistically significant Pearson correlations.....	39
Observed trends that followed hypothesized predictions.....	40
Observed trends that did not follow hypothesized predictions.....	42
Conclusion.....	43
Chapter 5. Discussion & Conclusion	43
Purpose of The Study	43
Findings.....	44
Statistically significant Pearson correlations.....	44
Trends observed that support the predicted hypothesis.....	45
Trends observed that did support the predicted hypothesis.....	50
Additional Comments by The Participants	52
Future Research & Implications	54
Limitations.....	56

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Conclusion	56
References	58
Tables.....	70
Appendices.....	75
Appendix A - The Survey	75
Appendix B - The Link to the Survey	79
Appendix C - The Consent Form	80
Appendix D - Initial Request to Participate in the Study.....	84
Appendix E - Request to Get Consent Forms Signed.....	85
Appendix F - IRB Approval.....	86

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Chapter One: Introduction and Overview

Situating the Researcher

A feminist frame of reference will be used to guide portions of the research as well as racialized discourse. The research will be conducted by an Indo-Canadian female living in North America who is raised in a Western society. The researcher has the privilege of being an academic who has been raised watching Bollywood films.

Research Thesis Questions

The main thesis question explored was: “How do Bollywood films impact the expectations of love and relationships in females?”

Sub Sub-question 1: How do women perceive their relationships compared to what they see in the media?

Sub-question 2: What impact do Bollywood films have on “falling in love”?

Sub-question 3: What impact do Bollywood films have on relationship satisfaction?

Sub-question 4: How can Bollywood films impact what women expect from their partners?

The Purpose of the Study

Social media platforms have been used to discuss jokingly, as well as seriously, how “Bollywood Gave People Unrealistic Expectations about Love” (Daryanani, 2013; Ghura, 2014; Hirji, 2010; Mahtab, 2007; Shah, 2015). However, minimal research has been conducted to determine if Bollywood media can impact one’s expectations and interactions with love and romantic relationships. The purpose of the study was to investigate the relationship between the exposure to Bollywood films and the impact their impact on the expectations of love and relationships among young females.

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Love is a vital aspect of human lives and is a fascinating topic that has been explored at great lengths for many, many years, and in myriad ways. Maslow's hierarchy of needs includes love as one of the basic needs a human requires in order to achieve self-actualization (Rahim, 2013). Therefore, it is extremely important to determine how people can have or maintain loving relationships and experience the transformations that may accompany such relationships.

Romantic relationships are of particular importance because they play a vital part in individuals' lives and it is common for humans to seek a secure relationship with a long-term partner. It isn't surprising that healthy relationship functioning, which is also known as romantic competence (RC), has been associated with greater security, healthier decision-making, greater satisfaction, and fewer internalizing symptoms (Davila et al., 2017). Conversely, romantic relationship dysfunction has been linked to significant mental and physical health problems (Loving & Slatcher, 2013). Exploring love and relationships can be very beneficial in the field of counselling, as counsellors routinely have clients with relationship problems (Timmermans, Coenen, & Van, 2017). Exploring different mediums that can impact relationships, such as Bollywood films, provides counsellors with important insight. The main goal of this study is therefore to address a gap in the literature by examining the association between Bollywood media and romantic relationships.

Background and Rationale of the Study

Many factors can impact how people view love and interact with it. The social cognitive theory (SCT) suggests that human behaviour is based on environmental and internal dispositions (Bandura, 2002). Hefner (2018) has found it important to conduct research investigating the influence of romantic media on the beliefs and attitudes towards love. Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan (2002) have used the "Cultivation Theory" to explain how watching

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

television teaches individuals what to expect from society as well as what society expects from them.

Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook (2014) state that the way the media portrays romantic relationships gives people a certain understanding of romantic norms and expectations. Determining how the media impacts attitudes towards love and relationships is beneficial, as it may reflect various issues and attitudes. Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook (2014) point out that it is important for researchers to explore romantic relationships, given that they are linked to individuals' overall well-being and life satisfaction.

Research has been conducted to explore the impact of romantic comedies, romantic films, and romantic television on the romantic beliefs and relations of the audience. Romantic media has been found to be a source of teachings of love, romance, and relationships (Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer, 2015). Negative outcomes such as lower commitment to marriage (Osborn, 2012), increased conflict, lower commitment to relationship (Dew & Tulane, 2015), unrealistic relationship expectations increasing (Storey & McDonald, 2014) and overall negative ideas about relationships (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014) were observed when people were consuming various types of romantic media. Additionally, some qualitative studies have explored the impact of Bollywood films as well and found that people understood love through watching Bollywood films and strived to have Bollywood romantic relationships in reality (Banaji, 2006). Although Bollywood films have been considered to be unrealistic, they still provide a medium for people to explore and learn about love and relationships (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010). The audience has responded negatively and positively to some of the messages seen in Bollywood films such as love at first sight, happy ending, finding the one that showers them with love endlessly (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010).

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

As many Bollywood films have a romantic theme (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010), it is very important to be aware of some of these common messages seen in the films as well as determining the impact they can have on the audience.

Research has been conducted to investigate the impact of television, Hollywood romantic comedies, and other media sources on romantic relationships. However, little research has been conducted to explore how Bollywood films impact beliefs and attitudes with regards to love. This subject thus merits investigation.

According to the *Statistics Canada Census* (2011), there were approximately 210,420 Indo-Canadians in British Columbia in 2011. Although Asian-Indian immigrants have adapted well to North American environments, they remain quite close to their native culture (Das Dasgupta, 1996). Watching Bollywood films is one way that Indians have remained connected to their native culture, especially since Bollywood films are created in order to be commercially successful and shown worldwide (Das Dasgupta, 1996). A significant number of Indo-Canadians can therefore be impacted by the Bollywood industry.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

What is Bollywood?

Bollywood emerged as a theatrical art form in the 1800s (Ganti, 2012) and has one of the world's biggest movie industries, producing around 1,000 films annually (Uday, 2004). India had a population of approximately 1.3 billion in 2017 and its population is growing (Frince & Pandya, 2017). About four million Indians watch a movie in a theatre daily, and more movies may be watched on special occasions and during festivals (Krishnan & Sakthivel, 2010). Bollywood is deeply embedded in Indian culture, and its music and iconic music scenes impact the daily lives of Indians (Bennington, 2013). Bollywood films are thus considered to be the

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

“epicenter of the cultural narrative and social expression” among Indians (Bennington, 2013, p. 30). As such, it holds a major key to India’s cultural identity, particularly given that where there are billions of Bollywood fans throughout the world (Bennington, 2013).

Most Bollywood films have a love story. This story can involve “either the kind of self-abnegating devotional love or highly romanticized and drawn out courtship that previously predominated in Bollywood love stories” (Gehlawat, 2014, p. 55). Romantic Bollywood films commonly follow the storyline of boy meets girl, boy falls in love with girl, boy pursues girl until girl also falls in love or boy and girl meet and fall in love and encounter a hurdle, they must overcome in order to be together (Sunya, 2015). These storylines can be derived from classical epic love stories and poetry such as “Punjabi *Hir-Ranja* and *Sohini-Mahiwal*, Afghani/ Pakistani *Siri-Farhad*, Rajasthani’s triumphant *Dhola-Maru* and tragic *Moomal- Mahendra* or Romeo and Juliet” (Sarrazin, 2008, p. 394). These stories can represent different types of love: “tragic, joyous, worldly, mystical, devotional, and transcendent and experiences such as suffering, pain, separation, union and pleasure from different tradition” (Sarrazin, 2008, p. 394). Even if a Bollywood film’s main storyline or theme may not be about love, it usually includes a love story (Sunya, 2015). These love stories can involve the two protagonists, as well as other characters (Sunya, 2015).

As mentioned above, Bollywood films traditionally include song and dance, both very popular features of the films (Gopal, 2015). The film songs are typically pre-recorded by the playback singers and are used to promote the films before they are released (Monteiro, 2014). In romantic films, these songs can have romantic and expressive lyrics that originate from Urdu or Sufi poetry (Sarrazin, 2008). Such lyrics heavily rely on metaphors in the romantic genre, and direct sentiments such as ‘I love you’ are rarely heard in these songs (Sarrazin, 2008). Instead,

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

many of these romantic songs will either be a private love song between the couple, describe the first glimpse song at the initial sighting of the lover, the courtship and meeting song which commonly are duets, a public love song that is sung and danced in front of others, the traditional song that includes folk, religious, or tribal singers that will be performing a love song usually with poetry, and a separation song that is typically a sad song (Sarrazin, 2008). The songs are a way to express “moods, affective state-love, desire, loss, melancholia-or to stage communal and ritual activities such as celebrations, festivals, and victories” (Gopal, 2015, p. 807). The love songs generally tend to express the emotions and thoughts that characters in the films may not have been able to verbalize (Sarrazin, 2008). Therefore, the songs are a method of story-telling method and an important aspect of Bollywood films.

Love stories as well as love songs can be very commonly seen in a Bollywood film. Films with a romantic story are also some of the most popularly watched Bollywood films. Therefore, since most Bollywood films have themes of love and romance and given how many people that watch these films it is extremely important to determine what impact these films can have on how people view and interact with love and romance.

Unique Characteristics of Bollywood films

There are several unique ways in which Bollywood films differ from Hollywood films. Bollywood films are elaborate spectacles of music, dance, and costuming, and fantastical storylines (Nanda, Pattnaik, & Lu, 2018).

The themes of commercial Bollywood films are mythological, romantic, historical, patriotic, socially relevant, and fantastical. However, the majority of the Bollywood films are a “mixture of family-drama, romance, and action-violence, with a generous sprinkling of song and dance” – typically referred to as ‘*masala films*’ (Das Dasgupta, 1996, p. 174). Films belonging to

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

the masala genre (Larouche & Brunet, 2015, p.66) are melodramas that are two to four hours long, incorporate elements of comedy, action, adventure, and romance, and feature song, dance, special effects and flamboyant costumes (Jones, Arora, Mishra, & Lefort, 2005). These films also tend to be the most popularly viewed Bollywood films.

Bollywood films focus on emotional melodrama and narrative rupture such as include branching off into side plots, abrupt scene changes, and interrupting scenes with song-and-dance sequences (Srinivas, 1998). Bollywood films will include side plots with multiple characters that also have their storylines being portrayed that generally follow the overall theme of the film. On average, Bollywood films average a length of two-and-a-half hours, incorporate storylines of epic proportions, and contain six to eight songs with complex dance choreography (Kao & Do Rozario, 2008). Another unique characteristic of Bollywood is that the films are judged as either a “hit” or a “flop” before the film is actually released, according to how the audience rates the film’s music (Srinivas, 2002). The music rights of a film are quite profitable and can also produce profits for the film before it is released (Kaur & Sinha, 2005). Bollywood films are very distinctive due to their unique characteristics.

Romantic Competence

Davila et al. (2017) argue that it is important to promote healthy relationships at a young age, especially before one begins to date or make the choice to be in a relationship. Early adulthood is a period of development in which individuals are faced with decisions that will shape their future lives in important areas such as education, job opportunities and romantic relationships (Nelson & Luster, 2015). Davila et al. (2017) find that romantic competence (RC) skills should be taught to young adults before they begin to form relationships in order to allow

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

them to make suitable partner choices as well as relationship decisions ensuring that their behaviour is healthy for both parties. Davila et al. (2017) explain that if RC skills are taught early enough, it can be helpful to allow clinicians to prevent and intervene before couples encounter common problems. It is often seen that couples come to couples' therapy when their problems have already progressed and are in distress therefore, creating a program that focuses on premarital relationship education would be very helpful in intervening early (Payne, 2010). This is especially true given that in all samples of both men and women, greater RC has been associated with lower levels of anxiety about abandonment, fewer symptoms of depression, healthier decision making, and greater overall relationship satisfaction (Davila et al., 2017). Davila et al. (2017) also point out that relationship security and satisfaction help to determine how healthy a romantic relationship is across all ages. Therefore, Davila et al. (2017) suggest that providing RC programs will enable young women and men to apply skills pertinent to insight, mutuality, and emotional regulation in their approach to relationships.

Romantic Belief Scale

The Romantic Beliefs scale was created in order to reflect and categorize romanticism into the subscales of: Love Finds a Way, One and Only, Idealization, and Love at First Sight (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014). Researchers have found that endorsing these romantic ideals can have both positive and negative impacts on romantic relationships (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014). They have also found that people showing higher romanticism appeared to report greater love for a current partner, higher levels of relationship satisfaction, greater commitment to a current partner, a decreased tendency to engage in extramarital sex, and overall have more successful romantic relationships (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014). Higher levels of romanticism were also found to be linked to higher self-esteem and more ambitious academic

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

and career aspirations among women. However, it was also found that people who strongly endorse a “One and Only” belief and only weakly endorse a “work-it-out” theory of relationships are more likely to stay with an abusive long-term partner (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014). Similarly, it has been found that people with a stronger belief in romantic destiny - similar to the “One and Only” belief - are more likely to act aggressively when they are rejected by a romantic partner (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014). Due to the important impact on personality and the overall impact on people’s relationships, it was explained that it is important to examine how media use, romantic belief endorsement, and relationship health and dysfunction are related (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014). Thus, given the important impact on the media on people’s beliefs and attitudes regarding relationships, it is important to further examine how the media’s construction of romantic beliefs and relationship health and dysfunction are related.

Relevant Current Research

The current research explores the impact of various genres of media on romantic beliefs and relationships. Television, romantic films, romantic comedy films, social networking sites, and gaming have all been researched to determine their influence on individuals and their attitudes towards love and relationships. There has been very limited research conducted to determine the impact of Bollywood films. There have been a few qualitative studies that utilized interviews to analyze some of the ways people believe the themes of love in popular films influence how they perceive love in real life. However, there has been some research conducted on how Hollywood films impact people’s intimate relationships.

Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook (2014) explained how past studies have found that 94% of youth looked to media to learn what romantic love looks like, therefore, showing how romantic

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

beliefs can be influenced by media. The romantic comedy genre is the sixth highest-grossing category (Nash, 2014). The common themes of a happily-ever after and love conquers all are visible in romantic comedies (Nash, 2014). Hefner (2018) points out that in the film *He's Just Not That Into You* (2009), “actress Ginnifer Goodwin complains that movies teach us to look for happy endings, in our romantic relationships and country-pop sensation Taylor Swift bemoans the loss of a lover in her song, *If This Was a Movie* (Swift, 2011) claiming that if her life was a movie, he would have already returned to sweep her off her feet” (Hefner, 2018, p. 1). Common messages in romantic films and music are that we are searching for our happy ending in relationships and expect our partners to sweep up off of our feet, although these may not be realistic expectations. Studies done by Baran (1976a, 1976b), Holmes (2007), Signorelli (1991), and Shapiro & Kroeger (1991) have examined the correlations between media consumption of idealized love and relationships and have found a link between a partiality toward romantic media, perception accuracy of mediated portrayals, and participants endorsement of unrealistic beliefs about intimate relationships leading to frustration and dissatisfaction with one’s sex life and one’s romantic relationship (Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer, 2015). A correlation was found between the consumption of media creating a fantasy and unrealistic views about relationships leading to a negative impact on their relationship expectations (Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer, 2015).

Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer (2015) conducted a study of undergraduate students’ romantic beliefs and movie-viewing patterns and found that women significantly “expected intimate romantic relationships, imagined being married and daydreamed about their weddings, and anticipated getting married and staying married more than men” (p.701). They also found that watching romantic films tends to promote romantic mythologies and gendered

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

cultural scripts, specifically impacting women more often than men (Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer, 2015). It was found that young adults that had a preference for viewing romantic comedies and dramas were more likely to idealize the common messages such as ‘love conquers all,’ and had greater expectations for intimacy, and endorsement of the Eros love style (Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer, 2015).

Osborn (2012) found that people that were frequently exposed to media with romantic themes were associated with negative outcomes in relationships including a lower commitment to marriage. Another study by Dew & Tulane (2015) explored the relationship between entertainment media usage and marital satisfaction, conflict, and perceived marital instability. Dew & Tulane (2015) used *social exchange theory* to argue whether the media use is considered to be a cost or benefit to the relationship in order to predict the impact on marital quality. This study used both the spouses’ responses to determine if there is a difference in marital quality about traditional media such as television as well as more modern media such as social networking sites and gaming (Dew & Tulane, 2015). A negative relationship between the frequency of media use and marital quality was found (Dew & Tulane, 2015). However, the use of social media websites and gaming were linked to even more conflict and marital instability (Dew & Tulane, 2015). Dew & Tulane (2015) suggested that these differences could be due to the interactive components of these newer forms of media that can distract a person away from their partner, whereas television can be watched together.

The role of television.

Johnson & Holmes (2011) had found that television is a strong predictor of romantic beliefs. Reizer, & Hetsroni (2014) found that a greater total time viewing television predicted

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

lower commitment to the relationship and viewing of programming focusing on romantic relationships predicted lower satisfaction and a stronger tendency to engage in conflicts. Reizer & Hetsroni (2014) explained these results using the *cultivation theory*. The *cultivation theory* believes that media serves as “modes of communication and central arenas for emotional stories” (Reizer & Hetsroni, 2014, p. 232) and thus watching a great amount of television can be linked to believing that what is shown in the media is a realistic representation of reality. Therefore, one internalizes the norms, beliefs, and evaluations of social interactions that are seen on television (Reizer, & Hetsroni, 2014). Viewing television that seems to represent reality can be linked-to the viewers following that what they view on television is how they should approach their relationships. It can also allow one to determine how people can approach love in their own life based on what television portrays as love.

Influence of romantic films.

A study by Storey & McDonald (2014), participants reported that some romantic films provide relationship stages, thus when someone is in a real relationship, they may not let the relationship progress naturally. One may become disappointed when the relationship does not progress the way that has been seen in romantic films (Storey & McDonald, 2014). Therefore, it was found that people base their relationship on what they have seen in romantic media, and when their relationship doesn't follow what has been illustrated in the films as “normal,” they become disappointed (Storey & McDonald, 2014). Storey & McDonald (2014) also found that the participants compare what they see in the films to what is happening in their relationships. This can include different aspects such as looking a certain way, having a certain profession, expectations of their partner, even though they may be happy in their relationship (Storey & McDonald, 2014). Storey & McDonald (2014) found that the participants tend to use romantic

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

media as a language that is used to “articulate the meaning of their own experience of romantic live” (p.117).

Romantic comedies.

Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook (2014) states that majority of the romantic comedy films focus on newly developed relationships, falling in love phase, and also promoting the partner’s well-being. George Gerbner developed the *cultivation theory* that argues that mass message systems such as movies, T.V., and magazines are vessels by which communities can cultivate shared and public notions about values about people (Gerbner, 1969). Osborn (2012) explained using the *cultivation theory*, that researchers in the past have found that viewing romantic media cultivates negative ideas about relationships. Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook (2014) also used the *cultivation theory* to explain how exposure to media leads to people adopting the values and beliefs that the media displays, and this can explain how romantic media could impact the way relationships are viewed in the real world. It was also found that people that have a higher affinity to romantic media could lead to a stronger endorsement of romantic ideals and people also have to view the films as being realistic (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014). Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook (2014) explored how different romantic media genres such as romantic-themed movies, sitcoms, and marriage-themed reality shows can be linked to romantic belief endorsement specifically relating to the Romantic Beliefs Scale (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014). It was suggested by Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook (2014) that romantic media exposure can be linked to relationship satisfaction because endorsement of romantic beliefs has been demonstrated to positively relate to relationship functioning.

Johnson and Holmes (2009) analyzed 40 top-grossing romantic comedies and found that romantic comedies often portrayed relationships as novel, exciting, and emotionally meaningful.

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Romantic ideals are defined as sets of beliefs about what constitutes a perfect relationship (Hefner, 2018). Hefner and Wilson (2013) also did an analysis of more than 50 top-grossing romantic comedies and found that romantic ideal expressions such as the power of love, the perfection of romance, or expectations about how a model relationship is formed, developed, and maintained were found in 98% of the films. Koontz & Norman (2019) explained that Disney movies and romantic comedies perpetuate and reinforce Western cultural romantic ideals and cultural norms including (1) true love that conquers all (2) love at first sight (3) an ideal partner who is a soul mate, and (4) the importance of choosing one's partner-and marriage-for the correct reason of love. Additionally, to Hefner (2018), there are four ideals of romance that are commonly found in romantic comedies: "idealization of other (i.e., a perfect partner), soul mate/one and only (i.e., love can seek out that one perfect mate), love at first sight (i.e., love can happen instantaneously), and love conquers all (i.e., love can overcome all obstacles)" (Hefner, 2018, p. 3). Johnson and Holmes (2009) found that watching a romantic comedy versus a control film with no romance lead to a stronger endorsement of the romantic ideal of destiny and happy endings. Hefner (2018) also explored how life satisfaction can be affected by watching romantic comedy because viewers may compare their relationships, or lack thereof, and therefore have a negative impact. Hefner (2018) found that watching ideal romantic comedies had a stronger romantic belief versus watching a romantic comedy with challenges as well as stronger life satisfaction. Hefner (2018) also found it wasn't watching a movie with a happy ending that leads to stronger life satisfaction, rather watching an ideal romantic comedy film. Hefner (2018) believes that participants in relationships may report stronger romantic beliefs because they may compare their relationships and be thankful, they do not have to deal with finding a romantic partner.

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Being single.

The *cultivation theory* was also used by Timmermans, Coenen, & Van (2017) to show that exposure to media content was significantly related to the fear of being single especially in single women that were exposed to romantic media. Being single in the current society is becoming more common however, there are still people that believe being single is not ‘normal’ (Timmermans, Coenen, & Van, 2017). Considering that if society and media are dictating that being single is wrong, people may feel more pressure to be in a relationship. Thus, if one isn’t able to find a partner to be in a relationship with, anxiety can arise. Being single has been linked to negativity, therefore it tends to cause high levels of anxiety in people especially as they age (Timmermans, Coenen, & Van, 2017). Therefore, the fear of being single can stem from settling, having lower standards, and being in an unsatisfying relationship where this is less partner selection, and mental health problems linked to being alone are prevalent (Timmermans, Coenen, & Van, 2017).

Self-objectification involves focusing attention on how one’s body appears to others rather than how one feels in their body and using their body to perform actions in the world (Aubrey, 2006). Moradi & Huang (2008) found that the consequences of self-objectification can include body shame, anxiety, eating disorders, depression, and sexual function. Sanchez & Broccoli (2008) had found a significant correlation between self-objectification and decreased relationship satisfaction. Media is an important influence on self-objectification since the media focuses on quite a bit on women’s bodies (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). Aubrey (2006, 2007) has shown evidence that women and men having increased exposure to objectifying media predicted an increase of self-objectification. Zurbriggen, Ramsey, & Jaworski (2011) found that

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

consuming objectifying media is related to lowered relationship satisfaction and lower levels of sexual satisfaction in men through the variables of partner objectification and self-objectification. Zurbriggen, Ramsey, & Jaworski (2011) were able to provide evidence for the negative effects of objectification on romantic relationships among young adults.

Research on Bollywood films.

Hirji (2010) reports joining a group on Facebook called “Bollywood Gave me Unrealistic Expectations about Love” and although she viewed it as a joke, found some truth to it as well. Hirji (2010) reported having clear messages about heteronormativity, beauty, love, marriage, and monogamy. Therefore, when looking more specifically at Bollywood, similar trends can be expected to be found as seen in Hollywood films and television. However, to date, there is limited research that has been conducted in this area. Quantitative research on this topic was not found and may not have been conducted. However, there has been some qualitative research that has been conducted on this topic.

Qualitative research was conducted by Banaji (2006) where they interviewed youth to determine how they viewed Bollywood films. During the interviews, a common theme that was brought up during the interviews was discussing love and romance in Bollywood films. One of the interviewees, Jomir, after watching “Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge” stated that the film is how he would like his relationship to be like. He also stated that the film helped him realize what love means and that it isn’t worth falling in love if you’re going to be scared of the consequences (Banaji, 2006). This belief stemmed from the fact that one should fight for the one they love and not give up regardless of the obstacles. Another interviewee, Neetu, a sixteen-year-old female, stated that after watching these films she began to understand love better (Banaji, 2006). She

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

stated “because [pause] I believe in love. Really, I believe in love. You know, people say, ‘What is all this nonsense, love-dove stuff, well? What is love? Love is nothing. It's only attraction they say, but no, it's not like that, love at first sight, yes, I believe in that” (Banaji, 2006, p. 6). Banaji (2006) also pointed out that the “romantic aspirations inspired by film sequences were often clearly understood and discussed as such” (p. 7). The interviewees were very aware of their choices that involved different messages that were portrayed throughout the films as well. They formed opinions such as wanting a love marriage versus an arranged marriage but wanting to marry into their own caste system. Moreover, in comparison to Caucasian students discussing Hollywood films, positive responses to romance were similarly found when it came to family relationships with South Asian students discussing Bollywood films. Thus, it is important to conduct further research in order to explore the impact of Bollywood films on the attitudes of love and relationships.

Bollywood films have been referred to as being unrealistic, emotional, and quite over the top (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010). Dudrah (2006) state that Bollywood films create a medium that allows ideals of romance, love, and marriage to formulate and circulate within the community. Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, (2010) conducted a study looking specifically at how British Sikh youth interact with Bollywood films and found through interviews that Bollywood films promote the message that one should pursue romance and seek out ‘true love’ despite the arranged marriages that are typical in Indian culture. Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick (2010) state that Bollywood films are mainly love stories where the characters will do anything for each other, and it makes sense that the audience would want this for themselves. The female participants stated wanting to find their own love, romance, and prince so that they could live their own Bollywood fairy-tale and be showered with love (Takhar,

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010). The participants reported wanting to have the attraction, passion, and butterflies that they see in Bollywood films (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010).

Some participants reported how Bollywood films have helped them get through difficult times because the films are all about romance and happiness and therefore allows them to have hope that a prince will come to save them (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010). The dreams of Bollywood ideal love have allowed some participants to be inspired whereas, negatively compare their lives to the films (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010). One participant stated that they get their ideas of romantic and love from the films but get depressed watching them because their life does not unfold in the way the films do and they want someone to shower them with romantic gestures daily (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010). The participant becomes disappointed when they see how much the characters of the films love each other, but they have not been able to find this for themselves and continue to believe that these ideals are achievable in reality (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010). Although other participants have been able to acknowledge that Bollywood films function as an escape, participants still garner the hope that one can have the possibility of a happy ending (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010). Additionally, Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick (2010) found that their participants compared themselves to the characters portrayed in Bollywood films. Some participants reported being influenced by the traditional daughter-in-law role depicted in the films that can manage an entire household and has the desire to be the perfect daughter-in-law herself (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010). However, one participant also reported feeling pressured by these expectations of her from her family and leads to feelings of inadequacy and ultimately acts as a cycle of social comparisons (Takhar, Maclaran,

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Parsons, & Broderick, 2010). The role of being a dutiful wife and daughter-in-law are filled with gendered assumptions and thus can have a very negative impact on the audience. The male participants also reported wanting to experience love at first sight and have the realization that someone is right for them in that very moment (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010).

In the Bollywood film “Darr,” meaning fear, the character, Rahul, decorates his room with pictures of Kiran while he imagines her reciprocating his feelings (Dwyer, 2000). He is seen throughout the film obsessing over her, as well as stalking her while the song “Jaadoo teri nazar” meaning “Your look is bewitching” plays (Dwyer, 2000). In addition, there is an infamous scene in the film where Rahul carves out Kiran’s name on his arm as blood drips down his arm and this scene has provoked other young people in India to conduct similar actions to profess their love (Dwyer, 2000). This gesture was taken to be romantic by some, which is quite problematic. Imitating such behaviours can be very harmful to oneself as well as to others.

A gap in the research exists and the impact of Bollywood films on the attitudes of love and romance has not been quantitatively explored. Considering the large population of South Asian people that are currently in B.C. as well as the billions of people in the world that watch Bollywood films it is an important topic to explore. Healthy relationship functioning has been linked with greater security, healthier decision making, greater satisfaction, and fewer internalizing symptoms whereas romantic relationship dysfunction has been linked to significant mental and physical health problems. This research can benefit therapists and other professionals that work with the South Asian community in order to help understand the influence of Bollywood films on individuals and relationships.

Chapter 3: Methodology

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Introduction

This chapter will explore the design, procedure, and the approach that was used in the study conducted. The population being sampled, and the different characteristics of the sample will be discussed. The survey, the concepts measured, variables and the survey questions concerning the hypothesis will be also explained.

A mixed-method approach was used to conduct the research that included qualitative research to support the quantitative data. The data was collected using cross-sectional, self-reported online surveys consisting of 32 questions (see Appendix A for survey questions). The purpose of the survey was to explore correlations between consumption of Bollywood films and relationship expectations as well as relationship satisfaction. The participants were all South Asian, heterosexual identifying females that resided in North America.

Design and Approach

The topic was best suited to utilize a cross-sectional survey where the current views of the females were to be measured (Creswell, 2003). The participants completed self-reported online surveys that allowed data to be collected (see Appendix A & B for the survey link and questions). Online self-reported surveys were chosen for this study because surveys can provide a quantitative description of attitudes and opinions of a population by studying a sample of that population (Creswell, 2003, p. 203). A survey is a simple way to achieve the purpose of the study without it being too costly or time-consuming while conducting the study. Online surveys have a rapid turnaround in data collection, are faster, low to no cost, and generally tend to have higher response rates (Bonometti & Tang, 2006). Online surveys are user-friendly where the respondent can select their response by clicking on it thus allowing it to be quick and easy to

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

complete (Bonometti & Tang, 2006). Self-reported surveys also allow the participants to complete the survey at their convenience. Thus, the topic was best-suited to use a cross-sectional online survey.

The benefit of using this specific online survey design in the study was that it provided quantitative data to describe the impact that Bollywood films have on attitudes of love and relationships that women hold. Interviews provide data only from a handful of participants and can be time-consuming to conduct as well as analyze. Surveys, on the other hand, provide a larger amount of data promptly and also provide specific information that can be used to determine trends. Since surveys are easily accessible for the participants, this allows for participants that may be restricted in time to also complete the survey in accordance with their schedule. Therefore, these factors allow for a higher response rate. Overall, online surveys were the most optimal method of data collection to determine how the respondents relate to Bollywood films.

The online survey was administered using Google Forms (see Appendix B), which is a simple to use online survey platform that is also easy to send to participants (Creswell, 2003). The online surveys were created using Google Forms (see Appendix B) and were sent to 26 participants that accepted to be a part of the study and completed the consent form (see Appendix C). The survey allowed for the questions to be targeted to provide the data necessary to analyze the trends specific to the topic, thus allowing the trends and attitudes to be measured regarding the impact of Bollywood films. Demographic information was collected quickly and efficiently using the survey (see Table 1). The survey question responses were based on a Likert-like scale using a 1-5 bipolar scale (see Appendix A), where each question explained what each end of the

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

scale would represent (Jamieson, 2004). Likert-like rating scales are generally used to measure attitudes towards a specific topic (Jamieson, 2004). The Likert-like rating scale was helpful to ensure the respondents had their options defined for them in detail. Google Forms allows for the Likert-like rating scale to be applied to the various questions and overall can easily be used for analysis.

Sample

The sample was a convenience sample; thus, the respondents of the survey were selected based on convenience and availability due to the specific requirements that were required in order to qualify to be a participant of the survey (Creswell, 2003). The population that was sampled in the study were young females that resided in North America (see Table 1). The participants were also known to the researcher to ensure and determine if they would meet the eligibility criteria (see Appendix C & D). In order for a participant to be eligible to qualify, the participants must have been between the ages of twenty and thirty-five, identify as a female, define as being heterosexual, and have watched a minimum of five Bollywood films in the last five years that had a romantic theme (see Appendix C & D). The sample consisted of 26 South Asian females (see Table 1). The participants had an age range of 20-32 and had a mean age of 28.15 (SD=2.8) (see Table 1). The participants' occupations consisted of the following: 23.1% students, 7.7% were not employed, 11.5% were employed part-time, and 57.7% were employed full time. The participants' education level consisted of the following: 11.5% of the participants had some college but no degree, 7.7% had an associate degree, 53.8% had a bachelor's degree, and 26.9% had a graduate degree (see Table 1). The participant's marital status consisted of the following: 15.4% of the participants were in a relationship, 23.1% of the participants were married, and 61.5% of participants were single (see Table 1).

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

There were intentional reasons for using specific criteria for the participants to be eligible to participate in the study (see Appendix C & D). The age requirement ensured that there was a specific population that was being sampled. The minimum age requirement of twenty was to ensure that most participants would have been in an intimate relationship (Zimmer-gembeck, Ducat, & Boislard-pepin, 2011). Additionally, according to Salvatore (2018), romantic relationships are a significant part of one's life and usually begin in the second decade of life for most individuals. The gender requirement ensured that there was a specific sex that was sampled. According to Koontz & Norman (2019), romantic films are targeted towards women specifically. The sexual orientation requirement was due to the fact that the majority of Bollywood films were based on heterosexual couples (Shubarna, 2019). Thus, the participants must have similarly experienced heterosexual relationships. The requirement of having watched a minimum of five Bollywood films in the last five years that had a romantic theme made sure that exposure to the films was recent, which ensured that individuals were able to recall the films, the themes of the films, as well as their attitudes towards the films. Thus, the criteria was to ensure that the participants would be best suited for the study and the specific topic being explored.

Procedure

Prior to the study being initiated, a thesis proposal was sent to the thesis advisor, once being approved, the thesis advisor supported the researcher in creating the research project. Next, a draft of the survey questions (see Appendix A), the consent forms (see Appendix C), and the invitational letter (see Appendix B, D, & E) were sent to the thesis supervisor, which were then edited and sent to the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Once approved by the thesis supervisor and the IRB (see Appendix F), the survey questions were sent to two potential participants that were asked to edit the questions and provide feedback before sending the survey was sent out to

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

the study participants. The two potential participants could not participate in the study and were asked only to ensure the clarity of the questions and make sure that they were error-free. Once approved by the two potential participants, the questions were used to create an online survey using the Google Sheets platform (see Appendix B).

In order to gather participants for the study, the researcher contacted individuals from their social circle that may qualify under the eligibility. The individuals were contacted by text, e-mail, WhatsApp, and Facebook by sending an invitation to the study that explained the nature as well as the purpose of the study (see Appendix B). The invitation also included the eligibility information to ensure the participants met all of the requirements. After the participants responded positively to the invitation, they were sent the consent forms (see Appendix C and D). Once the consent forms were completed and the participants agreed to take the survey, they were sent the link to the survey via email (see Appendix B). The participants were asked to inform the researcher after completing the survey in the next 48 hours. However, if any of the participants opted to not complete the survey, they were asked to message the researcher privately.

The participants that decided to take part in the study were provided with a link to the online survey hosted on the Google Sheets platform (see Appendix B). Each participant that was sent the link to the survey would be the only one to access the survey (see Appendix B). The participants were ensured that their anonymity of doing the surveys would be kept in confidence, thus no identifying information was asked of the participants. Each survey participant was assigned a random number and it was ensured that the researcher could not determine their identity. The participants were also informed of the risks that may come up for the subjects including emotional risk, unresolved love, and emotional reactions that could arise due to the

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

nature of the study (see Appendix C). The researcher informed the participants that there is counselling available at no cost with the UBC New Westminster clinic. Once the participants completed the survey, they had been asked to notify the researcher within 48 hours. The researcher avoided accessing the survey statistics to further ensure participants' anonymity until the completion of all of the surveys.

Hypotheses

The Null Hypothesis: There is no significant difference in the expectations of love and relationships by consuming Bollywood media.

Alternative hypothesis: There is an impact on the expectations of love and relationships by consuming Bollywood media.

Instruments and Materials

Google Sheets is a user-friendly tool that can generate results and report them back to the researcher as descriptive statistics or as graphed information which can then be downloaded for further analysis (Creswell, 2003). The number of members from the sample that responded and did not complete the survey will be recorded. A description of the participants based on their gender and age will be provided in a table form (Creswell, 2003). A descriptive analysis of the data for all independent and dependent variables in the study was conducted to find the means, standard deviations, and range of scores for these variables (Creswell, 2003). The Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated to determine the direction and strength of correlation between the factors being studied (Sedgwick, 2012).

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

The data analysis and the results will be presented in tables and graphs (Creswell, 2003). An interpretation of the results by the researcher will be done to draw conclusions from the results for the research questions, hypotheses, and the larger meaning of the results (Creswell, 2003). The researcher will explain why the results may have occurred looking to past literature to find causes as well as proposing further studies. The implications of the results for practice and future research on the topic will also be explored.

Variables

The variables measured in the study will include age, occupation, location, amount of Bollywood films watched, and the attitudes or behaviors about love and relationships. The independent variables include gender, age, and the amount of Bollywood films watched. The dependent variables are the attitudes and behaviour of people who have about love and relationships. A control variable could involve people that have not watched any Bollywood films to determine how they perceive love and relationships. However, due to the nature of the study, this was not utilized in the current study.

Survey Questions

The first few questions helped to determine demographic information about the participants including their age, the city they live in, their education level, marital status, and current occupation. Next, in order to determine what type of relationship the participants have with Bollywood content questions were asked including, “How often do you watch Bollywood films?”, “How regularly do you watch or listen to some form of Bollywood content”, “On average, how much do you enjoy watching Bollywood films?”, and “How much do you relate with the female characters in Bollywood films?” In order to determine the ideals a participants

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

has regarding intimate relationships the Idealistic Distortion Scale (Fournier, Olson, & Druckman, 1983) was used to create questions such as “Do you have ‘ideal scenarios’ for different areas of a romantic relationship (e.g. partner, first date, sex life, etc.)?”, “How similar are your current expectations of relationships to your adolescent relationship expectations?”, “How important is it for your romantic relationships to match your ideals?”, “How satisfied are you within your current romantic relationship (or most recent)?” “How satisfied are you with your current partner (or most recent)?” these questions further help understand the discrepancies that exist between the participant’s ideals and reality in intimate relationships (Fowers, Montel, & Olson, 1996).

Additionally, in order to determine how the participants experienced their own intimate relationships, the *Mutual Psychological Development Questionnaire* (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992) was used to determine important aspects of a relationship such as empathy, empowerment, and engagement. Questions such as “How much do you rely on your partner during times of distress?”, “How much does your partner rely on you during times of distress?”, “Does one partner initiate more intimacy within your relationship (dates, sex, romantic evenings, etc.)?”, “Does one partner make more decisions within your relationship (both every day and important decisions)?” allows the researcher to determine mutuality the participant experiences in their intimate relationship (Genero, Miller, Surrey, & Baldwin, 1992). These questions allow the researcher to determine how they view their current or most recent partner, as well as their current or most recent relationship.

Further, in order to determine the participants’ conflict resolution patterns, Shulman et al. (2006) had created an assessment that was based on their observation of couples as well as the

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

existing literature on the interaction between couples to study the couple's conflict resolution patterns. Shulman et al. (2006) created an assessment to investigate the conflict between couples and looked at how they handled confrontation, quality of negotiation ability, positive affect, and other important factors. This study was then used to create questions such as "How often do you and your partner address conflicts directly?", "How likely are you to bring up the conflict first?", "How likely is your partner to bring up the conflict first?", "How many of the conflicts in your romantic relationship are resolved (both parties find the outcome acceptable)?" These questions allow the researcher to explore the conflict resolution patterns the participant experiences with their intimate partner.

The question "How important is physical attraction to you within a romantic relationship?" allows us to determine how much the participant values attractiveness. Typically, in Bollywood films, physical attraction is one of the most important factors for two people to initially fall in love. Several Bollywood love songs talk about beauty and how they fell in love the second they laid eyes on their partner. The next question "On average (within your romantic relationships as an adult), how long does it take you to fall in love?" is based on the common theme that one can fall in love with someone as soon as they lay eyes on them. It is also very common for two people to fall in love shortly after meeting. Thus, these questions measure how often the participants also follow these Bollywood films patterns.

The question "Would you be willing to be in a romantic relationship that followed traditional gender roles ('feminine' partner takes care of the home and children, 'masculine' partner is the sole source of income)?" was based on Taylor and Segrin's (2010) study that looked at the parental gender roles and conflict styles relating to young adult's relational and

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

psychological well-being. This question is important because many of the Bollywood films made before the early 2000s consisted of typical gender roles where the female was expected to take care of the home and children, and where the male was expected to be the bread-winner. This question allows the researcher to determine how the participants relate to this theme in Bollywood films.

The next few questions allow the participants to answer the impact the viewing of Bollywood films has on the participants overall. These questions included “In your opinion, how influential were Bollywood films on your adult romantic relationships?”, “If you answered 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 to the question above, how would you describe this influence?”, “How much did you idolize the romantic relationships in Bollywood films?” The participants were then asked to read two statements and respond if they found Bollywood films to depict real romance as well as if Bollywood films reflect their own romantic lives. These questions allow for a comparison between expectations and reality in romantic relationships as well as how participants relate their relationships to Bollywood films. At the end of the survey, an open-ended question was intended for participants to leave any further comments or expand on their answers.

Chapter 4: Results

The objective of the study was to determine if there was a correlation between viewing Bollywood media and romantic relationships. This was done by comparing Bollywood consumption to factors that impact romantic relationships. Thus, this study was used to address the gap in the literature by examining the association between Bollywood media and romantic relationships.

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Data Analysis

The data was collected using Google Forms and was also used to create some of the data graphs. The data was analyzed using the *Statistical Package for Social Sciences* software. The *Pearson product-moment correlation* was conducted to examine the relationship between Bollywood consumption and how satisfied one is in their relationship, how one relates to a female characters in Bollywood films, how influential Bollywood films have been on one's relationships and if the influence was positive or negative, how much one idolized romantic relationships in Bollywood films, if one feels like Bollywood films depict real romance, and if one feels like Bollywood films reflect one's own romantic life. The amount of Bollywood films consumed was compared to the rest of the survey questions to determine if Bollywood film consumption influenced romantic relationships.

The purpose of using the *Pearson correlation coefficient*, also known as the *product-moment correlation coefficient* (r), to analyze the data collected (Weaver & Wuensch, 2013) was because it is a measure of linear-dependence between two random variables (Ly, Marsman, & Wagenmakers, 2018) and it can be used to test the null and alternative hypothesis (Weaver & Wuensch, 2013). A positive correlation coefficient means a positive correlation and a negative correlation coefficient means a negative correlation (Sedgwick, 2012). This would allow us to analyze the direction and strength of any correlation between Bollywood consumption and the other factors being investigated in the study.

Sample.

Table 1 provides a summary of the sample demographics. The sample consisted of $n=26$ of individuals that identified being a heterosexual female and were South-Asian. The participant's ages ranged from 21-32 and had an average age of 27.04 ($SD= 2.84$) and were all

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

located in North America (see Table 1). About half of the participants had a bachelor's degree (53.8%) and the rest of the participants had at least some college education (see Table 1). The majority of the participants were in single (61%) and the rest of the participants were either in a relationship or married (see Table 1). About half of the participants were employed full-time (57.7%), and the rest of the participants were either a student, employed part-time, or not employed at all (see Table 1).

The majority of the participants (76.9%) had seen more than 22 Bollywood films ($SD=1.17$) and on average ($M= 5.85$, $SD=1.19$) the participants watched Bollywood films once a month (see Table 2). The participants regularly ($M=1.65$, $SD=0.80$) watched or listened to some form of Bollywood content such as Bollywood movies, Bollywood Music, Bollywood news, Bollywood film awards (see Table 2). On average, it was the participant's semi-favourite activity ($M= 3.15$, $SD= 1.19$) to watch Bollywood films (see Table 2). On average, the participants sometimes identified and related ($M= 2.62$, $SD= 0.64$) with the female character in Bollywood films (see Table 2).

The participants were given the option to skip any question that they did not want to answer. Two questions were unanswered by a participant: "How satisfied are you with your current partner (or most recent)?" and "How often do you and your partner address conflicts directly?" No further explanation was provided by the participant explaining why they chose to skip those two questions.

Correlation analysis values.

Based on some of the messages that can most commonly be seen in romantic films regarding romantic relationships, it was hypothesized that more Bollywood film consumption would be associated with more negative relationship experiences. There was a total of 32

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

calculations performed using the *Pearson's correlation coefficient* (r) looking at Bollywood film consumption and the rest of the relationship factors (see Table 3) as well as examining how the participants perceived and were influenced by Bollywood films (see Table 4). Three of the calculations were statistically significant and a total of thirteen trends found during the analysis that aligned with the hypothesis, although they were not statistically significant (see Tables 3 & 4). Additionally, there were sixteen trends found during the analysis that did not align with the hypothesis and were also not statistically significant.

Statistically significant Pearson correlations.

Three calculations were statistically significant according to the *Pearson correlation coefficient calculation*. There was a significantly negative correlation observed at the 0.05 level between the amount of influence Bollywood films had on the participant's adult romantic relationship and how the participant rated the influence to be negative or positive (Pearson's $r = -0.462, p = 0.017$). As the amount of influence Bollywood films had on the participant's adult romantic relationships increased, it was perceived by the participants that the influence was more negative. There was another significantly negative correlation observed at the 0.01 level between the amount of influence Bollywood films had on the participant's adult romantic relationship and the participant's stating that Bollywood films reflect their romantic lives positive (Pearson's $r = -0.554, p = 0.003$). As the amount of influence Bollywood films had on the participant's adult romantic relationships increased, the less strongly the participants disagreed with the statement that Bollywood films reflect their romantic relationship. There was a significantly positive correlation observed at the 0.05 level between the participants stating that Bollywood films reflect their romantic lives and the participants stating that they believe Bollywood films depict real romance (Pearson's $r = 0.489, p = 0.011$). As the number of participants stating that

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Bollywood films reflect their romantic lives increased, so did the number of participants stating that they believe Bollywood films depict real romance. These were the three statistically significant results that also supported the hypothesis.

Observed trends that followed the hypothesized predictions.

Additionally, there were thirteen trends observed that followed the trend predicted by the hypothesis. A negative correlation was observed (Pearson's $r = -0.033$, $p = 0.875$) it was observed that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the amount a participant relied on their partner during times of distress decreased. A positive correlation was observed (Pearson's $r = 0.010$, $p = 0.960$) it was observed that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the participants were more willing to be in a romantic relationship that followed traditional gender roles ('feminine' partner takes care of the home and children, 'masculine' partner is the sole source of income). A negative correlation was observed (Pearson's $r = -0.253$, $p = 0.212$) it was observed that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the participant and their partner were less likely to address conflict directly. A negative correlation was observed (Pearson's $r = -0.307$, $p = 0.127$) it was observed that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, a lower number of conflicts in the participant's romantic relationships were resolved where both the parties found the outcome to be acceptable. A positive correlation was observed (Pearson's $r = 0.142$, $p = 0.489$) it was observed that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the participants were less likely to report that physical attraction was not at all important in a romantic relationship. A negative correlation was observed (Pearson's $r = -0.090$, $p = 0.662$) it was observed that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the participants were less likely to disagree with the statement that Bollywood films reflect their own romantic relationship. A positive correlation was observed

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

(Pearson's $r = 0.173$, $p = 0.397$) as the participants reported Bollywood films were increasingly influential on their romantic adult relationships, the participants reported more strongly relating to the female characters in Bollywood films. A negative correlation was observed (Pearson's $r = -0.209$, $p = 0.306$) as the participants reported Bollywood films were increasingly influential on their romantic adult relationships, the participants were less likely to disagree with the statement that Bollywood films depicted real romance. A negative correlation was observed (Pearson's $r = -0.0307$, $p = 0.857$) it was observed that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the participants were less likely to disagree that it is important to have the participant's romantic relationships to match their ideals. A negative correlation was observed (Pearson's $r = -0.355$, $p = 0.075$) it was observed that as relatability to the female characters in Bollywood films increased, the less strongly the participants disagreed with the statement that Bollywood films depict real romance. A negative correlation was observed (Pearson's $r = -0.355$, $p = 0.075$) it was observed that as relatability to the female characters in Bollywood films increased, the less strongly the participants disagreed with the statement that Bollywood films reflect their own romantic relationship. Additionally, the more positively influential Bollywood films were observed to be on the participant's adult romantic relationships the less likely they were able to disagree with the statement that Bollywood films depict real romance (Pearson's $r = -0.210$, $p = 0.303$) and the less likely they were able to disagree with the statement that Bollywood films reflect their own romantic lives (Pearson's $r = -0.037$, $p = 0.859$).

Observed trends that did not follow hypothesized predictions.

Ten positive correlation trends were observed that did not follow the trends predicted by the hypothesis. The positive correlations that were observed include, as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, satisfaction within your current romantic relationship (or

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

most recent) increased (Pearson's $r = 0.334$, $p = 0.095$); satisfaction with current partner (or most recent) increased (Pearson's $r = 0.329$, $p = 0.109$); reliance on partner during times of distress increased (Pearson's $r = 0.093$, $p = 0.651$); likelihood that participant brings up the conflict first increased (Pearson's $r = 0.073$, $p = 0.722$); both partners initiating intimacy within the relationship (dates, sex, romantic evenings, etc.) increased in equality (Pearson's $r = 0.301$, $p = 0.135$); both partners making decisions within the relationship (both every day and important decisions) increased in equality (Pearson's $r = 0.133$, $p = 0.518$); the average time (within your romantic relationships as an adult) to fall in love increased (Pearson's $r = 0.276$, $p = 0.172$); the participants were less likely to believe that Bollywood films depict real romance (Pearson's $r = 0.022$, $p = 0.915$); the participants were more likely to report the influence of Bollywood films on their adult romantic relationships to be more positive (Pearson's $r = 0.068$, $p = 0.741$). Additionally, as relatability to the female characters in Bollywood films increased, the participants reported Bollywood films were more positively influential on their romantic adult relationships (Pearson's $r = 0.102$, $p = 0.621$).

Six negative correlation trends were observed that did not follow the trends predicted by the hypothesis. The negative correlations that were observed include, as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the number of ideal scenarios for different areas of a romantic relationship (e.g. partner, first date, sex life, etc.) decreased (Pearson's $r = -0.178$, $p = 0.384$); the participant's current expectations of relationships to their adolescent relationship expectations was more different (Pearson's $r = -0.102$, $p = 0.622$); likelihood of the participant's partner bringing up the conflict first decreased (Pearson's $r = -0.035$, $p = 0.865$); Bollywood films were observed to be less influential on their adult romantic relationships (Pearson's $r = -0.127$, $p = 0.537$); idolization of romantic relationships in Bollywood films decreased (Pearson's

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

$r = -0.002$, $p = 0.991$); relatability to the female characters in Bollywood films decreased (Pearson's $r = -0.062$, $p = 0.764$).

Conclusion

Overall, it was found that the three statistically significant Pearson correlation coefficients supported the hypothesis. Additionally, it was found that thirteen of the trends observed did follow the trends predicted based on the hypothesis. On the other hand, there were sixteen trends observed did not follow the trends predicted based on the hypothesis as well.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Purpose of The Study

The main goal of this study is to address the gap in the literature by examining the association between Bollywood media and romantic relationships. This study specifically examined the association between viewing Bollywood media and female adult romantic relationships including relationship and partner satisfaction, expectations from their partners, and falling in love, in a sample that had responses from females aged 21-32. The study looked at different aspects of a relationship including gender roles, interactions with their partner, ideals in a relationship, and how the participants view love and intimate relationships. Exploring the influence, or lack of influence, of Bollywood films, can help provide an understanding of how media may influence one's adult intimate relationships. This can allow one to be more aware of the influence media can hold and potentially alter the type of content viewed by others by creating awareness of the messages that people are exposed to when watching Bollywood films. It is also possible that Bollywood films can use this awareness to guide future films and alter the messages that are relayed to their audiences. Ultimately, this research can benefit women when initiating and continuing healthy adult intimate relationships.

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Findings

Statistically significant findings that support the hypothesis.

Overall, there were three calculations that were statistically significant according to the Pearson correlation coefficient calculations. One of the significant correlations that were calculated was that as the amount of influence Bollywood films had on the participant's adult romantic relationships increased, the participants perceived the influence to be more negative. Similarly, a study conducted by Osborn (2012) found that as people were frequently exposed to media with romantic themes, there was an association of negative outcomes in relationships. Therefore, as one felt that Bollywood films had more of an influence on one's relationship, they found that influence to be more negative. Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer (2015) also found in their study that consuming romantic media had a negative impact on the participant's relationship expectations because of the unrealistic portrayals of love and relationships. Hefner (2018) also found that watching romantic media creates the expectations of happy endings. Storey & McDonald (2014) also found that if a viewer's relationship does not progress the way that one has seen in romantic films, they can become disappointed and unhappy in their relationships. Hefner (2018) also explored how one's overall life satisfaction can be affected by viewing romantic comedies because viewers may compare their relationships. Therefore, the finding in this study is as predicted by previous studies as well. Showing that, as Bollywood media constantly displays these messages, it can create unrealistic expectations of our partners and intimate relationships and have an overall negative influence on the viewers. However as seen in this study, the viewers must perceive the influence is larger, in order for the influence to be perceived to be negative.

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

The second significant correlation that was calculated was that as the amount of influence Bollywood films had on the participant's adult romantic relationships increased, the less strongly the participants disagreed with the statement that Bollywood films reflect their romantic relationship. Additionally, the third significant correlation that was calculated was that as the number of participants stating that Bollywood films reflect their romantic lives increased, so did the number of participants stating that they believe Bollywood films depict real romance. According to Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook (2014), media portrayal of romantic relationships teaches the viewers romantic norms and expectations. Reizer & Hetsroni (2014) used the cultivation theory to argue that viewing media can allow us to believe that what is shown in the media is a realistic representation of reality and viewers can internalize the norms, beliefs, and evaluations of social interactions that are seen on television. Thus, leading viewers to believe that is how one should approach their relationships. As one uses media as a guide on how to approach relationships, viewers are more likely to perceive media as representing their relationships. Additionally, also having the viewers perceive that Bollywood films depict real romance. Hence, the findings in this study suggest that viewing Bollywood content can teach the viewers romantic norms and expectations that are most commonly portrayed in the films and thus, ultimately leading them to perceive that the films reflect their relationships and depict real romance.

Trends observed that support the predicted hypothesis.

There were a total of thirteen trends observed that followed the trend predicted by the hypothesis.

It was observed that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the amount a participant relied on their partner during times of distress decreased. It was also observed that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the participant and their partner were less

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

likely to address conflict directly. Additionally, it was observed that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, a lower number of conflicts in the participant's romantic relationships were resolved where both the parties found the outcome to be acceptable. Research done by Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer (2015); Hefner (2018); Osborn (2012); Storey & McDonald (2014) all found that as people were exposed to romantic media, there were negative outcomes. (Dew & Tulane, 2015) specifically found that as media usage increased, so did conflict. Additionally, Reizer, & Hetsroni (2014) found that viewing more media that focused on romantic relationships, predicted lower satisfaction and a stronger tendency to engage in conflicts. Therefore, as conflict increases, due to the messages in romantic films, it would less likely be addressed directly and that can lead to a lower number of conflicts resolved where both partners were satisfied (Reizer, & Hetsroni, 2014). Having good conflict management behaviours, strong communication skills, and conflict resolution skills were predictors of the decrease in physical and emotional abuse as well as improved overall relationship quality (Antle, Karam, Christensen, Barbee, & Sar, 2011). Additionally, Gustavson et al. (2012) found that higher rates of problems in an intimate relationship impacted personal happiness and were predictors of an individual having lower life satisfaction 15 years later. Therefore, it is important to consider these findings that having good conflict management behaviours, strong communication skills, and conflict resolution skills would be overall more beneficial for individuals.

Additional trends that were observed include that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the participants were more willing to be in a romantic relationship that followed traditional gender roles ('feminine' partner takes care of the home and children, 'masculine' partner is the sole source of income). It was also observed that as the participants

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

reported Bollywood films were increasingly influential on their romantic adult relationships, the participants reported more strongly relating to the female characters in Bollywood films. Lastly, it was observed that as relatability to the female characters in Bollywood films increased, the less strongly the participants disagreed with the statement that Bollywood films reflect their romantic relationship. Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer (2015) had found that watching romantic films tends to promote gendered cultural scripts that specifically impact women more often than men. Levinson and Huffman's (1955) Traditional Family Ideology Scale states that femininity is connected with ideas such as *women are too emotional, women should obey men, women should be chaste* and masculinity is connected with ideas *such as men should provide, men should be strong and ambitions, men should be leaders within the relationship*. These messages have been commonly seen in Bollywood films. This is crucial to consider because Taylor and Segrin (2010) found that as participants held more traditional gender roles, they were more likely to have an external relational locus of control, poor conflict resolution skills, and experience more psychological distress. Randles (2016) points out the harm that gendered stereotypes have on women and men, especially their relationships. Randles (2016) explains that there can be relationship conflict due to gendered power struggles that largely resulted from the still unequal social, economic, and political conditions in which partners' husbands respectively live. Therefore, Randles (2016) explains that it would be important to teach couples that men are capable of the same range of emotional experiences as women and that gender does not inevitably predispose partners to assume child-care, housework, and breadwinning responsibilities. Thus, it is crucial to address traditional gender roles and how viewers may relate to female characters in Bollywood films.

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Additionally, another trend that was observed included that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the participants were less likely to report that physical attraction was less important in a romantic relationship. When people evaluate a potential romantic partner based on momentary feelings about a partner such as physical attraction over abstract construals such as matching their ideals there may be less relationship satisfaction and an overall shorter relationship such as a one-time encounter (Zurbriggen, Ramsey, & Jaworski, 2011). If an individual puts more emphasis on their partner's physical attraction, the partner will be objectified as a romantic partner and less satisfied than they reported being in their relationship (Zurbriggen, Ramsey, & Jaworski, 2011). One may view their partner as an object, whose purpose is sexual pleasure, rather than seeing their partner as a human with feelings and thus leading to a lower personal and emotional connection (Zurbriggen, Ramsey, & Jaworski, 2011). Eastwick, Luchies, Finkel, & Hunt, (2014) also pointed out that romantic media also shows an endless supply of attractive partners which is setting up an unrealistic expectation. If individuals expect to only encounter physically attractive partners, they may set themselves up to reject partners that do not match their ideals. Alternatively, physical appearance is linked to sexual desire, thus partner-objectification can benefit sexual satisfaction and ultimately increasing relationship satisfaction (Zurbriggen, Ramsey, & Jaworski, 2011). Therefore, it is important to be aware of the messages being displayed in Bollywood films about male and female characters always being attractive and setting up false expectations.

Furthermore, it was observed that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the participants were less likely to disagree with the statement that Bollywood films reflect their own romantic relationship. It was also observed that as the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the participants were less likely to disagree that it is important to have the

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

participant's romantic relationships to match their ideals. As the participants reported Bollywood films were increasingly influential in their romantic adult relationships, the participants were less likely to disagree with the statement that Bollywood films depicted real romance. It was also observed that as relatability to the female characters in Bollywood films increased, the less strongly the participants disagreed with the statement that Bollywood films depict real romance. Additionally, the more positively influential Bollywood films were observed to be on the participant's adult romantic relationships the less likely they were able to disagree with the statement that Bollywood films depict real romance and the less likely they were able to disagree with the statement that Bollywood films reflect their romantic lives. As discussed previously, Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook (2014) pointed out that the media portrayal of romantic relationships teaches the viewers romantic norms and expectations. As examined previously, Reizer & Hetsroni (2014) explained that media can be seen as a realistic representation of reality and viewers can internalize the norms, beliefs, and evaluations of social interactions that are seen on television. Storey & McDonald (2014) had also found that the participants use romantic media as a language in order to make meaning of their romantic lives. It was also found that people that have a higher affinity to romantic media could lead to a stronger endorsement of romantic ideals and therefore view the films as being realistic (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014). Therefore, the findings in this study suggest that viewing Bollywood content can teach the viewers romantic norms and expectations that are most commonly portrayed in the films and thus, leading them to perceive that the films reflect their relationships and depict real romance. Thus, participants would also relate to the characters in the films if they perceive that the films depict real romance and their relationships.

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Trends observed that did support the predicted hypothesis.

There were sixteen trends observed that followed the trend predicted by the hypothesis.

As the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, satisfaction within your current romantic relationship (or most recent) increased; satisfaction with current partner (or most recent) increased; reliance on partner during times of distress increased; likelihood that participant brings up the conflict first increased; likelihood of the participant's partner bringing up the conflict first decreased; both partners initiating intimacy within the relationship (dates, sex, romantic evenings, etc.) increased in equality; both partners making decisions within the relationship (both every day and important decisions) increased in equality. These trends can be explained by Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer (2015) found that women significantly 'expected intimate romantic relationships, imagined being married and daydreamed about their weddings, and anticipated getting married and staying married more than men' (p.701).

Therefore, it would make sense for women to be more satisfied with their partners and in their relationships if they would like to be in intimate romantic relationships and would like to stay married to their partners. Furthermore, Galloway, Engstrom, & Emmers-Sommer (2015) also found that young adults that had a preference for viewing romantic comedies and dramas were more likely to idealize the common messages such as 'love conquers all,' and had greater expectations for intimacy, and endorsement of the Eros love style. This further explains how the participants can have higher rates of partner and relation satisfaction, rely on their partner during distress more often, and also having good conflict resolution skills. When one idealizes a message such as 'love conquers all' one would more likely resolve conflict, make compromises, and have equal decision making in order for a relationship to be a long-term commitment. Having greater expectations for intimacy and endorsement of the Eros love style can encourage females

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

to initiate intimacy in the relationship. Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook (2014) suggested that romantic media exposure can be linked to relationship satisfaction because endorsement of romantic beliefs has been demonstrated to positively relate to relationship functioning. Past research has also found that people exposed to romantic media that showed higher romanticism appeared to have more successful romantic relationships, reporting higher love for a current partner, higher levels of relationship satisfaction, greater commitment to a current partner, and a decreased tendency to engage in extramarital sex (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014). Thus, seeing these patterns does fit into the current literature available. However, it is important to keep in mind that people who strongly endorse a ‘One and Only belief’ and only weakly endorse a “work-it-out” theory of relationships were more likely to stay with an abusive long-term partner and more likely to act aggressively when they were rejected by a romantic partner (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014). Hefner (2018) also argued that participants in relationships may report stronger romantic beliefs because they may compare their relationships and be thankful, they do not have to deal with finding a romantic partner. Thus, the observed patterns fit into the current literature available.

Additional trends that were observed were that as the average time (within your romantic relationships as an adult) to fall in love increased; the participants were less likely to believe that Bollywood films depict real romance; the participants were more likely to report the influence of Bollywood films on their adult romantic relationships to be more positive. As the amount of Bollywood films consumed increased, the number of ideal scenarios for different areas of a romantic relationship (e.g. partner, first date, sex life, etc.) decreased; your current expectations of relationships compared to your adolescent relationship expectations were more different; Bollywood films were observed to be less influential on their adult romantic relationships;

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

idolization of romantic relationships in Bollywood films decreased. Overall relatability to the female characters in Bollywood films decreased, however, if relatability to the female characters in Bollywood films increased, the participants reported Bollywood films were more positively influential on their romantic adult relationships. Koontz, Norman, & Okorie (2019) discovered that majority of the women distanced themselves from media representations of love because they felt media representations were idealistic romantic fantasises and not of realistic love. The participants explained that having idealistic romantic fantasies can create false expectations because of the over-the-top, extravagant portrayals and over-simplified, superficial portrayals (Koontz, Norman, & Okorie, 2019). Stephanie, a participant in Koontz, Norman, & Okorie's study (2019), explained that these portrayals can be very harmful when they do not match their real-lived relationships. Leading women to expect too much or too little from their partners and their relationships. It was found that women whose partners had been divorced were less likely to believe the 'happily ever after' message seen in romantic media (Koontz, Norman, & Okorie, 2019). However, it was also found that even when women understood how unrealistic these portrayals were, some still struggled with their desires to experiences some aspects of the media portrayals such as grand gestures of love, such as proposals, (Koontz, Norman, & Okorie, 2019).

Additional Comments by The Participants

The end of the survey provided participants with an opportunity to elaborate on any of their answers.

One participant wrote:

In my opinion, Bollywood films depicts an imaginary ideal relationship. Actors and actresses presented in these films are tall, handsome/beautiful, has an ideal weight with virtually zero imperfection (on screen): something that the majority of the population

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

cannot relate to. Yet we fantasize about reaching this unattainable level of perfection. In other words, Bollywood films do not depict individuals that the general population can easily relate to. As mentioned, these films depict what an ideal relationship would look like. Any deviation from that, would make a female question whether the love her partner has for her is real or not.

Another participant responded:

I feel that Bollywood movies currently reflect modern day romance, tending to shy away from the typical Bollywood movies from the 90s. Romance has evolved and become to realistic in most Bollywood movies, however there are still some that are still more traditional.

Another participant responded:

While I believe that Bollywood depicts real romance, I refer to the ideology that it portrays. In my opinion, the songs symbolise and capture the feeling of being in love by creating musical scenes that are typically do not occur in reality. In my own relationship, I feel this illustrates the feeling of love I have towards my partner even though we haven't ran through grass fields singing and dancing... yet. Bollywood films have reflected on my own relationships in the past in that, it has helped me recognise the feelings I had towards someone and whether or not I should be in a particular relationship. Bollywood films have taught me how to be strong and independent even though most films oppose strong female characters. They have also taught me to persevere in life and continue to have faith in myself. Bollywood is the reason I am who I am today.

Another participant responded:

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Difficult to answer the question on average how long it takes to fall in love in a relationship as some people have only fallen in love once or have had only one relationship therefore can be difficult to give an average sometimes.

Another participant responded:

Not in a relationship, hard to answer these questions.

From these responses, it seems that some of the participants of the survey were influenced by Bollywood films, however, they were also aware of some of the unrealistic portrayals and were able to be more critical of the messages. This could be due to these participants being raised in Western culture rather than in India. Having their experiences with intimate relations can also bring more awareness to some of the unrealistic portrayals. As one of the participants explained that Bollywood films taught them “how to be strong and independent even though most films oppose strong female characters” due to feminist teachings and beliefs. Additionally, one of the participants pointed out that some of the more recent Bollywood films have been able to portray love and relationships that are more modern and realistic. The participants that were not in a relationship or had only one relationship may have not been able to answer the survey questions adequately thus skewing some of the results.

Future Research & Implications

Considering that personal happiness has been linked with social relationships (Hilpert, Bodenmann, Nussbeck, & Bradbury, 2016) and Davila et al. (2017) state that is important to teach romantic competence skills before young adults enter romantic relationships, it is important to create a program that addresses these needs. Having a program similar to what Hilpert, Bodenmann, Nussbeck, & Bradbury (2016) had recommended that focuses on increasing relationship-relevant skills such as dyadic coping, communication, and conflict resolution can be

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

very beneficial to counter some of the influence romantic media can have on the audience. It is imperative to consider that currently, couples therapy focuses on couples that are already in distress and having problems in their relationships, creating a program that targets premarital relationship education would be very beneficial. As mentioned previously, greater romantic competence has been associated with lower levels of anxiety about abandonment, greater relationship satisfaction, healthier decision, and fewer symptoms of depression and anxiety for women and men (Davila et al., 2017). Thus, as Davila et al. (2017) has suggested that an RC program would create romantically competent individuals with increased skills of insight, mutuality, and emotion regulation in their approach to relationships.

Furthermore, it is important to consider that recently, Bollywood has been trying to create more realistic romantic movies that explore contemporary issues such as “premarital relationships, depicting break-ups, struggles to find ‘self’ in the contemporary nexus of profession, money and love, and also live-in relationships” (Bhandari, 2017, p. 110). Bollywood has also tried to incorporate more feminist values by creating movies such as *Pad Man* that addresses important issues such as lack of female hygiene products being readily available to women in rural areas of India (Priyadarshini, 2018). Additionally, a study conducted by Rasul & Raney, (2016) showed that more recent Bollywood films are having a positive impact on women’s enjoyment and job-seeking behavior because of the successful female role models that are shown in the films. Thus, taking these factors into consideration, the future of Bollywood films does seem promising.

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Limitations

The limitations of this study include that the subjects were recruited by the researcher and thus were known to the researcher. The study also had specific requirements including that the participants had to be South Asian women aged 20-35 years old that live in North America and had seen at least five Bollywood films in the last three years. Due to these limitations, the research could not be applied to the general public. The sample size was also limited to a small sample of women and thus does not allow generalizability. The study would benefit from expansion of the sample size as well as demographic. It would also be beneficial to have men to do a similar survey to analyze the impact Bollywood has on them. The messages in Bollywood films likely can affect both genders. Also as mentioned above, the participants that reported that they were not in a relationship or had only one relationship may have not been able to answer the survey questions adequately thus skewing some of the results. Therefore, it would have been beneficial to create additional requirements for the participants to either has been in a recent relationship or in one currently. Additionally, having the opportunity for the participants to provide qualitative data to explain their responses could have also been beneficial or being interviewed to understand more clearly the specific impact Bollywood films had on the participants.

Conclusion

The current findings of this study and past studies explain how romantic media exposure can impact one's personality and relationships, therefore it is important to examine how media use, romantic belief endorsement, and relationship health and dysfunction are related (Lippman, Ward, & Seabrook, 2014). Thus, further research still needs to be conducted in this field to explore how consuming Bollywood media can impact its audience.

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

The findings of this study as well as the current research available also suggest that the messages portrayed in Bollywood films must be critically examined. It would also be important to be mindful of these messages when creating new Bollywood films and avoid promoting traditional gender roles, unrealistic expectations, unattainable ideals (Takhar, Maclaran, Parsons, & Broderick, 2010). Instead, Bollywood films should focus on using a lens that promotes gender equality as well as more realistic portrayals of love and relationships. Some of the participants were able to avoid having these unrealistic messages impact them due to their privilege of being educated, however, audience in India and other countries may not have the same resources to be able to reject these messages. There can be harmful consequences of these messages as discussed previously such as lowered partner and relationship satisfaction, increased conflict and abuse towards women, and overall lower life satisfaction.

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BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Tables

Table 1

Description of Participant Demographics

Location		
	<u>Frequency in sample</u>	<u>Percent of sample</u>
Abbotsford	1	3.8%
Burnaby	7	26.9%
Cranbrook	1	3.8%
Hervey Bay	1	3.8%
New Westminster	1	3.8%
Rockaway, NJ	1	3.8%
San Jose, CA	1	3.8%
Seattle, WA	1	3.8%
Surrey	9	34.6%
Vancouver	1	3.8%
Victoria	1	3.8%
White Rock	1	3.8%
<u>Education level</u>		
Less than high school degree	0	0
High school degree or equivalent	0	0
Some college but no degree	3	11.5%
Associate degree	2	7.7%

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Bachelor's degree	14	53.8%
Graduate degree	7	26.9%
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Married	6	23.1%
Widowed	0	0
Divorced	0	0
Separated	0	0
In a relationship	4	15.4%
Single	16	61.5%
<u>Current Occupation</u>		
Student	6	23.1%
Employed part-time	3	11.5%
Employed full-time	15	57.7%
Not employed	2	7.7%
Age	Range	Mean
	21-32 years old	27.04 (SD=2.84)

Note: SD=Standard Deviation; All participants identified as being female and heterosexual at the time of the study.

Table 2

Bollywood Film Consumption, Enjoyability, and Relatability to Female Characters Data

<u>Number of Bollywood films seen</u>		
	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
5-10	4	15.4%
11-16	2	7.7%

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

17-22	0	0
22+	20	76.9%
How often Bollywood films were watched		
More than two times a week	0	0
Twice a week	0	0
Once every week	1	3.8%
Once every two weeks	3	11.5%
Once a month	5	19.2%
Once every two months	7	26.9%
Once every six months	10	38.5%
	(M=5.85)	(SD=1.19)
Regularity of Bollywood Content consumed		
Regularly	14	53.8%
Often	7	26.9%
Sometimes	5	19.2%
Occasionally	0	0
Rarely	0	0
	(M=1.65)	(SD= 0.80)
Enjoyability of Bollywood films		
Least favourite activity	2	7.7%
Partially favourite activity	7	26.9%
Semi-favourite activity	5	19.2%
Favourite activity	9	34.6%
Most favourite activity	3	11.5%
	(M=3.15)	(SD=1.19)
Relatability of Bollywood female characters		
Do not identify at all	1	3.8%
Rarely identify	9	34.6%
Sometimes identify	15	57.7%
Identify	1	3.8%
Strongly identify	0	0
	(M=2.62)	(SD=0.64)

Note. M = mean; SD = standard deviation

Table 3

Pearson Correlation Coefficient of Amount of Bollywood Consumption vs Survey Questions

	<i>R</i>	<i>P</i>
Satisfaction with romantic relationship	0.334	0.095
Satisfaction with partner	0.329	0.109
Amount of reliance on partner during distress +	-0.033	0.875
Amount of Partner Reliance on us during distress	0.093	0.651

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Willingness to be in relationship that follows traditional gender roles +	0.010	0.960
Amount of Ideal scenarios for romantic relationships	-0.178	0.384
Similarity of current expectations of relationships to adolescent expectations	-0.102	0.622
Importance of romantic relationships to match ideals +	-0.037	0.857
Likelihood of addressing conflict directly +	-0.253	0.212
Likelihood of participant bringing up conflict first	0.073	0.722
Likelihood of partner bringing up conflict first	-0.035	0.865
Amount of conflicts resolved with acceptable outcome +	-0.307	0.127
Balance of intimacy initiation	0.301	0.135
Balance of decision making	0.133	0.518
Importance of physical attraction +	0.142	0.489
Length of time to fall in love	0.276	0.172
Amount of Bollywood films influence on relationships	-0.127	0.537
Rating of the influence	0.068	0.741
Amount of idolization of romantic relationships in Bollywood	-0.002	0.991
Bollywood films depict real romance	0.022	0.915
Bollywood films reflect own romantic life +	-0.090	0.662
Amount of relatability to female characters in Bollywood films	-0.062	0.764

Note. r = Pearson correlation coefficient; p = significance value;

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed);

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed);

+ The trend follows the hypothesized direction

Table 4.

Pearson Correlation Coefficient of How Participants Perceive and are Influenced by Bollywood Films

<i>R</i>	<i>P</i>
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BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Amount of Bollywood influence vs influence rating +	-0.462*	0.017
Relatability to female characters in Bollywood films vs Amount of Bollywood influence +	0.173	0.397
Relatability to female characters in Bollywood films vs Rating of Bollywood influence	0.102	0.621
Relatability to female characters in Bollywood films vs Bollywood depicting real romance +	-0.355	0.075
Relatability to female characters in Bollywood films vs Bollywood reflects own life +	-0.304	0.130
Amount of Bollywood influence vs Bollywood depicting real romance +	-.209	0.306
Amount of Bollywood influence vs Bollywood reflects own life +	-0.554**	0.003
Rating of Bollywood influence vs Bollywood depicting real romance +	-0.210	0.303
Rating of Bollywood influence vs Bollywood reflects own life +	-0.037	0.859
Bollywood depicting real romance vs Bollywood reflects own life +	0.489*	0.011

Note. r = Pearson correlation coefficient; p = significance value;

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed);

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed);

+ The trend follows the hypothesized direction

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Appendices

Appendix A

The Survey

INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF BOLLYWOOD FILMS

Questions:

1. How many Bollywood films have you seen?
1= 5-10 2= 11-16 3= 17-22 4= 22+
2. How often do you watch Bollywood films?
1=Once a month 2=Once every three weeks 3=Once every two weeks 4= Once a week
5= Twice a week 6= More than two times a week
3. How regularly do you watch or listen to some form of Bollywood content such as Bollywood movies, Bollywood Music, Bollywood news, Bollywood film awards?

1= Rarely 2= Occasionally 3= Sometimes 4= Often 5= Regularly
4. On average, how much do you enjoy watching Bollywood films? (0 =

Least favourite activity 2= Partially-favourite activity 3= Semi-favourite activity 4=
Favourite activity 5= Most favourite activity)
5. How much do you relate with the female characters in Bollywood films?

1= Do not identify at all, 2= Rarely identify 3= Sometimes identify 4=Identify 5=
Strongly identify
6. How satisfied are you within your current romantic relationship (or most recent)?

1 = Not at all satisfied 2=Somewhat Satisfied 3=Satisfied 4=Very satisfied 5 = Extremely
satisfied
7. How satisfied are you with your current partner (or most recent)?

1 = Not at all satisfied 2=Somewhat Satisfied 3=Satisfied 4=Very satisfied 5 = Extremely
Satisfied
8. How much do you rely on your partner during times of distress?

1 = Not at all 2=Sort of 3=Sometimes 4=Often 5 = Very often

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

9. How much does your partner rely on you during times of distress?

1 = Not At All 2=Sort of 3=Sometimes 4=Often 5 = Very often

10. Would you be willing to be in a romantic relationship that followed traditional gender roles ('feminine' partner takes care of the home and children, 'masculine' partner is the sole source of income)? (0 = Not Willing at all, 5 = Completely Willing)

1 = Not at all Willing 2=Sort of Willing 3=Willing 4=Very willing 5 = Extremely willing

11. Do you have 'ideal scenarios' for different areas of a romantic relationship (e.g. partner, first date, sex life, etc)?

1 = In very few areas, if any 2= In few areas 3=In some area 4=In many areas 5 = In nearly all areas you can think of

12. How similar are your current expectations of relationships to your adolescent relationship expectations?

1 = Completely Different, 2= Sort of Different 3=Similar 4= Very Similar 5= Exactly the Same

13. How important is it for your romantic relationships to match your ideals?

1 = Not at all Important 2=Sort of Important 3=Somewhat Important 4=Important 5 = Very Important)

14. How often do you and your partner address conflicts directly?

1 = Rarely 2= Occasionally 3= Sometimes 4= Often 5 = Very Regularly

15. How likely are you to bring up the conflict first?

1 = Extremely Unlikely, 2=Not Likely 3=Likely 4=Very Likely 5 = Extremely Likely

16. How likely is your partner to bring up the conflict first?

1 = Extremely Unlikely, 2=Not likely 3=Likely 4=Very Likely 5 = Extremely Likely

17. How many of the conflicts in your romantic relationship are resolved (both parties find the outcome acceptable)?

1 = None, 2= A few 3=Some 4=Many 5 = All

18. Does one partner initiate more intimacy within your relationship (dates, sex, romantic evenings, etc)?

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

1 = One does all the time 2=One does more often than the other 3= Both do some of the time, 4= Both equally

19. Does one partner make more decisions within your relationship (both every day and important decisions)?

1 = One does all the time 2=One does more often than the other 3= Both do some of the time, 4= Both equally

20. How important is physical attraction to you within a romantic relationship?

1 = Not at all important 2=Sort of important 3=Somewhat important 4=Important 5 = Very important)

21. On average (within your romantic relationships as an adult), how long does it take you to fall in love?

0 = I do not fall in love 1 = less than a month, 2 = two to three months, 3 = three to six months, 4 = six months to a year, 5 = more than a year

22. In your opinion, how influential were Bollywood films on your adult romantic relationships?

1 = Not influential at all 2= Sort of influential 3=Influential 4= Very Influential 5 = Extremely Influential)

23. If you answered 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 to the question above, how would you describe this influence?

1 = completely negative 2=Somewhat negative 3 =Somewhat positive 4= Positive 5 = completely positive

24. How much did you idolize the romantic relationships in Bollywood films?

1 = Not at all 2= Sort of worship 3=Somewhat worship 4= Worship 5 = Totally worship

25. Please answer how you feel about the following statement:
Bollywood films depict real romance

1 = Strongly disagree 2=Sort of Disagree 3=Somewhat agree 4=Agree 5 = Strongly agree

26. Please answer how you feel about the following statement:

Bollywood films reflect my own romantic life

1 = Strongly disagree 2=Sort of Disagree 3=Somewhat agree 4=Agree 5 = Strongly agree)

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

27. If you would like to elaborate on any of your answers, please do so here. Please avoid including any identifying information where possible.

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Appendix B

The Link to the Survey

Thank you for signing the consent form. The survey link is provided below.

<https://forms.gle/FT9ZjWUKs5bGc6Yg9>

Bollywood Films Thesis Survey

Thank you in advance.

Kind Regards,

Rishu Suri

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Appendix C

The Consent Form



**CITYU RESEARCH PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT
FOR ON-LINE SURVEYS AND INTERNET DATA COLLECTION**

Title of Study:

The Impact of Bollywood Films on the Expectations of Love and Relationships

Name and Title of Researcher:

Rishu Suri

For Student Researcher(s):

Faculty Supervisor: Bruce Hardy

Department: Counselling

Telephone: 604-808-5763

City U E-mail: suririshu@cityuniversity.edu

Why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You are eligible to participate in this study if you are a South Asian female aged 20-35 years old in Vancouver that has seen as least 5 Bollywood films.

You will be in this research study for about 1 year.

About 20 individuals will participate in this study.

What should I know about being in a research study?

This form contains important information that will help you decide whether to join the study. Take the time to carefully review this information.

To make your decision, you must consider all the information below:

- The purpose of the research
- The procedures of the research. That is, what you will be asked to do.
- The risks of participating in the research.
- The benefits of participating in the research and whether participation is worth the risk.

The researcher will explain this research study to you.

- You do not have to participate in this research.

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

- It is your choice whether or not you want to participate in this research.
- Your participation is voluntary, and you can decide not to participate or withdraw your participation at any time without negative consequences.
- You should talk to the researchers about the study and ask them any questions you have.

If you decide to join the study, you will be asked to electronically sign this form before you can start study-related activities.

Why is this research being done?

You are being invited to participate in an on-line survey that is part of a research study that has been approved by City University of Seattle Institutional Review Board.

This form contains important information that will help you decide whether to join the study. Take the time to carefully review this information. You should talk to the researchers about the study and ask them any questions you have. If you decide to join the study, you will be asked to sign this form before you can start study-related activities. To make your decision, you must consider all the information below:

The purpose of the research

The procedures of the research. What you will be asked to do.

The risks of participating in the research.

The benefits of participating in the research and whether participation is worth the risk.

You do not have to participate in this research. It is your choice whether or not you want to participate in this research. Your participation is voluntary, and you can decide not to participate or withdraw your participation at any time without negative consequences.

Purpose of Study:

The purpose of the study will be to research the relationship between the exposure to Bollywood films and the impact they have on the expectations of love and relationships among females. The purpose is also to research the impact of Bollywood films on females concerning love and relationships. To research if watching Bollywood films alters the way females experience love and relationships.

Research Participation.

You will be asked to participate in the following procedures:

I understand I am being asked to participate in this study by completing an on-line survey. The survey consists of 27 questions and is expected to take approximately 10-15 to complete. You may choose to answer as many questions as you decide, and each question will have a “no response” choice.

Is there any way being in this study could be bad for me?

Taking part in this research involves certain risks: This could include:

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

- Since the participant may share and explore some personal examples of past relationship and current relationship experiences during the interview, I will debrief following the interview. There is a risk associated with answering some of the survey questions that can cause certain emotions or past experiences to resurface, thus I have ensured that counselling is available cost-free for any of the participants that require it. I have ensured that the participants can access free professional counselling for no cost and have made sure they are willing to work with my participant should they choose to use the provided services. I will ask for permission to contact the professional counsellor should the subject need this service to confirm the subject is not further triggered by the survey.

- They can receive counselling at:

New Westminster UBC Counselling Centre - 604-525-6651

<http://ecps.educ.ubc.ca/clinical-instructional-resources/new-westminster-ubc-counselling-centre/>

Free counselling for the general public by counselling psychology graduate students, supervised by a psychologist.

Will being in this study help me in any way?

You will not receive any payment for participation in this study.

Your involvement is completely voluntary, and you may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without negative consequences, by refusing to answer any further questions or exiting from the survey entirely. You may request a copy of the final research study report. Should you request a copy, you may be asked to pay the costs of photocopying and mailing.

I have been advised that I may request a copy of the final research study report. Should I request a copy, I understand I may be asked to pay the costs of photocopying and mailing.

☐

Confidentiality

I understand that participation is confidential to the limits of applicable privacy laws. No one except the faculty researcher or student researcher, his/her supervisor and Program Coordinator (or Program Director) will be allowed to view any information or data collected whether by questionnaire, interview and/or other means. If the student researcher's cooperating classroom teacher will also have access to raw data, the following box will be checked. ☐

Steps will be taken to protect your identity, however, information collected about you can never be 100% secure. All data (the questionnaires, audio/video tapes, typed records of the interview, interview notes, informed consent forms, computer discs, any backup of computer discs and any other storage devices) are kept locked and computer files will be encrypted and password protected by the researcher. The research data will be stored for 1 year (5 years or more if required by local regulations). At the end of that time all data of whatever nature will be

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

permanently destroyed. The published results of the study will contain data from which no individual participant can be identified.

You are advised that the company hosting this survey is located in the United States and as such is subject to U.S. laws, including the US Patriot Act which allows authorities access to the records of internet service providers. Therefore, anonymity and confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. If you choose to participate in this survey, you understand that your responses to the survey questions will be stored and may be accessed in the USA.

Initials here

I have carefully reviewed and understand this consent form. I understand the description of the research protocol and consent process provided to me by the researcher. My signature on this form indicates that I understand to my satisfaction the information provided to me about my participation in this research project. My signature also indicates that I have been apprised of the potential risks involved in my participation. Lastly, my signature indicates that I agree to participate as a research subject.

My consent to participate does not waive my legal rights nor release the researchers, sponsors, and/or City University of Seattle from their legal and professional responsibilities with respect to this research. I understand I am free to withdraw from this research project at any time. I further understand that I may ask for clarification or new information throughout my participation at any time during this research.

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: Please select your choice below.

Clicking on the "**agree**" button below indicates that:

- you have read and understand all of the above information, and
- you voluntarily agree to participate, and
- you are at least 18 years of age.

If you **do not wish to participate** in the research study, please decline participation by clicking on the "**disagree**" button.

☐ Agree

☐ Disagree

First and Last name:

Date:

Thank you,

Rishu Suri

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Appendix D

Initial Request to Participate in the Study

Hello,

My name is Rishu Suri and I am currently enrolled in a Master of Counselling program at City University of Seattle, in Vancouver British Columbia. My thesis topic is about South Asian Females and the impact of Bollywood films. Since you are a South Asian female, I am interested in hearing about your unique perspective and am wondering if you are willing to participate in a study that I am conducting.

The study will approximately include a 15 minute survey that will be conducted in a time and place that is convenient for you. The survey will be taken online in which I will ask you a series of questions regarding your experience with Bollywood films.

A participant must identify with **all** of the points below:

- I. You are between the ages of twenty and thirty-five
- II. You identify as a female
- III. You define as being heterosexual
- IV. You have watched a minimum of five Bollywood films in the last five years that had a romantic theme.

I will ensure that the data you have provided me with is securely locked away and password-protected to ensure your confidentiality is respected. Five years after the completion of my thesis, I will have the data professionally destroyed. Maintaining your confidentiality is my biggest priority so I will ensure that your identity remains anonymous by using a pseudo-name in my thesis paper. Please know that participation in this study is voluntary and should you choose to participate, you are not expected to share more information than you are comfortable providing. If at any time you feel uncomfortable, please know that you are able to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

If you are interested in participating in the study or have any further questions regarding the study, please contact me by e-mail suririshu@cityuniversity.edu. I will be sending a short survey to you if you agree to participate. Thank you very much for your time and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Kind Regards,

Rishu Suri, Master of Counselling

City University of Seattle, Vancouver Campus

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Appendix E

Request to get Consent Forms Signed

Thank you for your consideration in participating in this study. The aim of this study is to investigate the possible effect of Bollywood films on young women within heterosexual intimate relationships (reason being Bollywood films are based on heterosexual relationships). Before we begin, here are some qualifiers to ensure that the information gathered is from a relatively consistent sample. A participant must identify with **all** of the points below:

1. You are between the ages of twenty and thirty-five
2. You identify as a female
3. You define as being heterosexual
4. You have watched a minimum of five Bollywood films in the last five years that had a romantic theme.

If you said yes to **all** of the above points and wish to participate in this study, please fill out the consent form and send that back to me. I will then send you the survey link.

Thank you in advance.

Kind Regards,

Rishu Suri

BOLLYWOOD FILMS AND ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS

Appendix F

IRB Approval

**Institutional Review Board
Certificate of Approval****IRB ID# Suri_Hardy032019**

Principal Investigator (if faculty research):

Student Researcher: Rishu Suri

Faculty Advisor: Bruce Hardy

Department: DAS M couns.

Title: The impact of Bollywood films on the expectations of love relationships.

Approved on: March 20, 2019

- ☐ Full Board Review
- ☐ Expedited Review (US)
- ☒ Delegated Review (Can)
- ☐ Exempt (US)

CERTIFICATION

City University of Seattle has reviewed the above-named research project. The proposal was found to be acceptable on ethical grounds. The Faculty Advisor Bruce Hardy and the student researcher Rishu Suri have the responsibility for any other administrative or regulatory approvals that may pertain to this research project, and for ensuring that the authorized research is carried out according to the conditions outlined in the original Ethical Review Protocol submitted for ethics review.

This ***Certificate of Approval*** is valid provided there is no change in experimental protocol, consent process, or documents. Any significant changes to your proposed method, or your consent and recruitment procedures are required to be reported to the Chair of the Institutional Review Board in advance of its implementation.



Brian Guthrie Ph D, RSW, RCSW
Chair, IRB City University of Seattle