



# The Research on the Influence of American Horror Films upon Chinese People

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**Abstract.** Researchers consider American horror movies to be the scariest of all the horror films currently on the market. Usually, they do not just have made-up horror stories. There are also movies or movie type reality shows with real events as the background. For researchers, it is reasonable to propose the physical and psychological impact of American horror movies based on these backgrounds. Although it happens to a few people. But this is indeed a niche social problem. These social problems have consequences that hurt people, not like illnesses that kill people directly. It is more of a psychological trauma, but it is also a physical injury, but it is a small part of the injury. To sum up, researchers have always considered this to be one of the psychological problems worthies of attention. So researchers used questionnaires to confirm people's views on this matter. The number of people interviewed in this method is not large enough to represent the majority opinion. Also, time was too short so researcher do not collect enough number of people's opinion to stronger prove her opinion. But this small group of people is very representative. However, in another hand it was true for some of the types of people interviewed. From the final result, the interview had some effect. The above interview summary can also prove that the people interviewed and their circle of friends do conform to the researcher's conjecture. Finally, there are still some problems with this research method in general.

**Keywords:** American · Horror films · Chinese people · Influence

## 1 Introduction

Nowadays lots of people like to watch movie. The movie has lot of types, such as romantic, comedy, etc. But horror films have some differentiate with other kinds of films. First of all, suspense film is a kind of film which has lots of scary plots, irritative picture in the film. Those things help directors to achieve their goal that make people in nervous emotion. But movies in many countries have limits on how scary they can be [1]. But America's relatively lax discipline has led to some surprises. In another hand there already have lots of investigation to show that suspense films that was too horrible may affect our health, psychological health, and people's mood especially to children and elders [2]. In terms of having a relatively light impact, people might to have a nightmare and they cannot get it out from head for several days when they finish watch a good

suspense film that really scared them. But in terms of serious impact, people who scared by film might cause sudden convulsions by rapid heart rate [3]. There even have lots of instances that suspense films caused death of people [4]. Such as film in 1986 which called, “collapsed from shock”, it indirectly caused death of a person called Aliens. He was watching horror and suspense movies for whole night with his friends. Later on, when he watched on this movie’s scary plot he just screamed and died because of too excited. Those kinds of films that caused some accidents also had abundant of news reports to verified that they were too scary [5].

But from materials horror films effect on people not only from body also other aspects. For example, suspense films can also have some influence on people’s behaviour. From the perspective of crime, there are many examples of criminals in real life who are inspired to commit crimes by watching a certain movie, but few people have studied their psychology at that time. Sometimes they cannot even tell which step they were inspired by. Take movie “taxi driver” as instance, it released in 1976, it tells the story of a taxi driver who becomes insane for various reasons and decides to assassinate a presidential candidate. In 1981, a man in the United States tried to assassinate the then president of the United States. He gave two reasons. In the first place. He charmed the heroine of the movie and hoped that through his behavior, he would make her like him and he would get inspiration in the movie. It was something that many Americans at the time could not understand, but he was later found not guilty of the whole thing because he was mentally ill [6].

People have a lot of desires. These desires are likely to be triggered randomly in any situation. When people really think that the technique or the plot in the movie can be implemented [7]. They might be desperate enough to try. Even in some very strange ways as the reason why they do it, but people are different. Everyone’s perception of character and even view of the world is different, so everyone thinks differently. This can also lead to the same movie, which some people may feel very scared and even have some after-effects, while others just get excited about it. In conclusion, this paper is going to talk about how horror films affect us in lots of aspects [8].

In the past, most researchers and most journalists have looked at people’s reactions to horror movies, or their spontaneous fear during the movie—the way their face is rubbed or their heart rate indicates how nervous they are. Take second reference of health for instance, it mainly talks about our first reaction when people watch suspense film [2]. And break down each part of our body to talk about its different symptoms. The symptoms listed by these researchers are all bad for us. Take another example which is the second reference from death part. Researcher lists 10 real-life examples of horror movies that have killed people. And list the causes of death for each of them. In these 10 movies most of them was come from America. Some of them have even been chronicled in horror and suspense movies [9]. As a result of all this, the physical and psychological trauma of returning home is also what the researchers are concerned about. They also study movies that end up killing people [10]. To prove that horror movies do have an effect on people’s health, what they rarely talk about is what effect horror movies have on the psychological side, or whether watching a horror movie can change the course of their life. In many ways, such movies that are too scary and make people afraid have an

impact on our life to some extent. The researcher limits its level to improve the situation. Because even today, some people still harm their own health.

## 2 Methodology

Researcher adopted questionnaire to provide more evidence for researcher's investigation. First, researcher used Microsoft word to type out all of researcher's question. Then send it on WeChat from 2022/4/7 to 2022/4/11 for 4 days. Researcher have focused on research that adults aged 16–40 or on the cusp of adulthood. Because those people already have the ability to think for themselves without too many factors influencing their choices. There were people of varying degrees of maturity, but it was good for researcher's questionnaire to get some naive answers. At the same time, researcher also got 10 of questionnaire which was useless. Most of their answer was too simple, it cannot extract any useful information to enrich researcher's results. In the process researcher collect all questionnaires and found out that some people can answer it quickly with complex answer. In conclusion this can show they were sensitive to researcher's question. So, they may have more profound memories for horror movies. This kind of answer researcher defined them to "most useful answers". In another hand, people who answer is very slowly or their answer was much brief than other. Researcher defined those answer to "useless information" or "partly useful information". For useless information, researcher also got 10 of questionnaire which was useless. Most of their answer was too simple, researcher cannot extract any useful information to enrich these results. So, researcher just give up on them. Until 2022/4/12 researcher have received 35 answers which was available.

## 3 Result

For the first question there were 28 (Total number of people: 35) people said that they will choose horror movie. Researcher found out it was because in the cinema have lots of people which will not be horrible like watched it in home. Some of them just like horror movies. And most people were because any kinds of movie they all watch. For the second question 18 (Total number of people: 35) people said they cannot watch horror movie alone.

Researcher found out it was because most people want people accompany with them when they were in a nervous mood. And especially if people know in advance that there will be scary scenes in the movie, the quiet environment of being alone can make them even more scared. But in the presence of people, they can have a conversation and the discussion makes the environment less quiet. For the third question 18 said yes but only 10 people give example of it. Researcher found out it was because parts of the plot correspond to what people fear most. Or the plot is too scary, and some people have a problem with this kind of plot itself. For the fourth question, 17 people said do not know 18 people said America (Total number of people: 35). Researcher found out it was because they always record some real events from folk. And they had bigger scale on this, some bloody plots they can still have broadcast. For the fifth question there were 5 people (Total number of people: 35) give example. For their age, 24 people are between

16–20, 5 people are between 20–30, 6 people are between 30–40, for gender there are 19 man and 16 women. (Total number of people: 35).

In conclusion people between 16–20 were bolder on watching horror movie, several of them were devoted horror movie lover. And nearly half of them said they can watch movies alone. And at least half of the total had been frightened and could not forget it for a long time. Some of them, even today, are able to recall events quickly as the details fade. They also remember the fear and physical reaction.

Based on the results summarized above and the researcher's conjecture. Researchers say there should be tighter restrictions on who can watch horror films around the world. At the same time, in the introduction of the film, it introduces its horror type in more detail, such as telling the audience. It is a zombie horror genre, a ghost genre, etc. This can limit the number of people who already have the disease from watching. It also tells the audience that the horror genre of these films allows the audience to discover for themselves the horror genre that will affect them if they stop watching it.

## 4 Discussion

Most people would choose horror movies to watch but still feeling scared. For positive sides people can feel more different kinds of movies. But for negative sides people may hurt by it. More than half of the people who are willing to watch a horror movie are afraid to watch a horror movie alone. For positive sides people maybe enjoy time with friends. But for negative sides deep down to people's heart they are still afraid of horror movies so they can still get hurt. Most people are really scared by horror movies and have some after-effects. For positive sides it gave them courage and maybe make them braver later in life. But for negative sides the aftereffects can be both physically and psychologically damaging for people. For the results researcher have collected have some examples from 2 boys can partially provide researcher's investigation. These 2 respondents were friends, they used to watch an America movie called "Return of the living dead". Both of them was scared by a plot which was a dead woman came back to life with nails in her body and bleed lots of blood. When they watched this movie, they were already 15 years old. But one of them scared by this and have nightmare for a month, some day he even cannot sleep by himself. Another was a little special, his grandfather had just passed away, and after seeing this bloody scene he often became absent-minded and unconsciously associated his grandfather with blood. It was clear that the film had a profound effect on them. Even now, four years after the incident, they are 19 years old and can still quickly recall the fear and insecurity. This movie is from the United States and there are five of them that are a serial movie. Most people do find American movies the scariest. Mainly because they do not have too restrictive and daring shooting methods and content. For the positive side this may be good for us movie ratings and box office, because some people still love horror movies. For the negative sides this could hurt everyone. According to the above results, it can be found that middle-aged people are more likely to react to horror movies, such as being frightened or afraid. Some of them had psychological shadows due to horror movies when they were young, similar to nightmares. The possible reason for these incidents is that when people are not mature enough at a certain age, they will have a fear reaction to such movies. At the same time, for middle-aged people, when

they experience more, they will be more afraid of this kind of movie. According to the above results, it can be found that middle-aged people are more likely to react to horror movies, such as being frightened or scared. Some of them had psychological shadows from horror movies when they were young, similar to nightmares. The possible reason for these incidents is that when people reach a certain age and are not mature enough, they have a fear reaction to such movies. Meanwhile, for middle-aged people, the more they experience, the more afraid they will be of such movies. In horror films, those seemingly virtual plots often project some problems in the real society and reflect some primitive intentions of people. It shows people's real humanity in an abnormal way. For example, the *Shining* reveals a man's mid-life crisis, which comes from gradually understanding the nature of the particular alienated society he lives in, and the confusion of choosing between moral pursuit and interest pursuit. Therefore, such stories reflecting people's real humanity not only bring people's deep fears, but also satisfy people's subconscious needs and carry certain social significance. In short, from the perspective of the deep psychology revealed by psychoanalysis, although horror films aim at expressing horror, their purpose is not to deepen the horror psychology of the audience, but to help the audience release psychological pressure, get stimulation and satisfaction, and expose and face the real humanity through virtual stories and images. This is the deep reason why many audiences love horror movies, but also a normal healthy watching psychology.

In addition to sensory stimulation, when people watch horror movies, they can also eliminate the depression and pressure in their hearts. Therefore, horror movies often become a unique way for people to decompress, especially high pressure urban white-collar workers. In the process of watching horror movies, people's mental state is often tense, temporarily forget the pressure in work and life, and devote themselves to the content of the film. And along with the advancement of the movie, music atmosphere rendering, audience's fear is becoming more and more strong, anxiety, anger, resentment, in real life has been transferred to the movie together, even frighten screaming, and therefore has caused the viewing pleasure and joy, achieve the goal of the emotional release, eliminate the accumulation of negative pressure in real life. Whether it is the fear of supernatural power, modern science and technology and unknown power in western horror movies, or the fear of ghosts and supernatural in eastern horror movies, horror movies reflect the fear and anxiety of modern people in terms of their psychological essence, and even the conscious pursuit of fear experience. Under the surface of film narration, it reveals the deep cultural and psychological structure through the exploration of audio-visual structure and surface story. Modern people's fear and anxiety are expressed in horror movies, so it is the history of human psychological crisis.

## 5 Conclusion

And there has been a lot of research on this kind of thing, from the 90s all the way back to the present. One of the things you can find is that people have been doing a lot of research on this topic earlier. However, few people have discovered which country's horror movies are the most terrifying and can bring people the immediate impact. Through all of the above content, American horror movies belong to the more diverse genres and the horror level is not limited. This type of film is different from horror films in other countries

where there are restrictions. They could have been more daring in their filming and given more thrillers. This is a good experience for many horror movie lovers. But at the same time for most ordinary people, they are more easily unacceptable to such movies. Excessive stress, fear, and horror will only put you in a bad mental state for a long time. In good times people only remember the plot for a while. But in bad cases people can even hallucinate and feel as if they are actually present in the movie. Some people will have a sudden heart attack, heart attack and death. (Specific contents can be seen in the reference.) On the worse side, American horror movies may evoke evil thoughts such as murder in their plots. (Specific contents can be seen in the reference.) There should have been more restrictions on movies like this. Do not let any more people get hurt, because people are not usually that disciplined. Sometimes they think they can watch horror movies, or seek thrills. So first of all, people with a history of disease should be restricted first. Secondly, it is necessary to classify the horror level of horror films and explain in detail which types of people can or cannot watch them. Third, there should be specific restrictions on age. For example, minors should not watch or be forbidden to watch some types of horror movies. Fourth, the above points need to be more universal, which some countries currently restrict but not enough, or not at all. But such horror movies can sometimes have an impact without people realizing it.

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