

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF HARRY POTTER ON THE YOUTH

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Abstract

This research discusses the novel and movie Harry Potter and its popularity among youth as well as adults. This is a fantasy literature which has mysticism and supernaturalism in it. It describes the ratio of the gender among which it is popular and also examines the psychological effect that people have undergone after watching / reading this novel. This paper analyses why Harry Potter gained universal importance among the other fantasy movies / books that were written at that time. It also studies the influence of Harry Potter in the present time. It examines the learnings people derived from it considering the character of Harry Potter. The study was undertaken in the form of a survey. The questions included in it were related to the favourite characters, quotes and language concerned with the character of Harry Potter and its impact on the mental health of the viewers or readers. The paper also studies viewers or readers' belief in occult or supernatural. It also studies among which age group it is ubiquitous and also analyses whether its popularity is as a novel or as a movie. It also contains the ratio of how many times it has been watched or read. It further scrutinises whether people were primed to recommend it to others.

Keywords: *Mysticism, supernaturalism, occult, primed.*

INTRODUCTION:

Joanne Rowling popularly known as J.K. Rowling is a British author and a philanthropist. She wrote Harry Potter, a seven-volume children's fantasy series published from 1997 to 2007. The series has sold over 500 million copies, has been translated into 84 languages and spawned a global media franchise including films and video games. Harry Potter is a series of seven novels written by J.K. Rowling. It chronicles the life of a young wizard whose name is Harry Potter and his friends Hermione Granger and Ron Weasley, all of whom are the students of Hogwarts school of witchcraft and wizardry and concerned with Harry's conflict with the dark spirit Lord Voldemort.

WHY AND HOW WAS HARRY POTTER WRITTEN?

Rowling escaped her small-town life and went to the University of Exeter. She got a degree in French and Classics. After school Joe moved to London working as a bilingual secretary. Once she was on a 4-hour train delay, suddenly the idea for Harry Potter came into her head. She wrote all of her ideas about the series concerning its characters, plot, themes, language and decided that she wanted to write the book. Every detail mentioned in the book was not only for the audience but partly for herself as well. She also wrote the final chapter of the final book; it was the way of saying to herself that she will write the seventh book. The absence of a meaningful relationship with her father and the slow loss of her mother were the two most important influences of Joe's writing. For e.g., the chapter with the mirror of Erased makes this very clear. These books were published by Bloomsbury Publishing after Rowling told them the whole story. Rowling wrote the entire seven series on Harry Potter based on her own personal life. Take for an instance - Joe's parents used to treat her like a boy which disappointed her. She grew up on a suburban street just like Harry, her house even had a cupboard under the stairs. Their house was surrounded by a field and the forest of Dean, which often appears and is mentioned in the series. The character of Hermione came from a very deep place within her. The character of Harry was inspired by a boy named Ian Potter who was a little mischievous and his antiques greatly paralleled the hero, Harry Potter. Rowling always felt that she was an outsider but her best childhood friend Shawn Harries changed that belief of hers as he always remained by her side. Thus, this inspired her of the character Ron Weasley.

As per the survey conducted, the majority of the respondents were adults and it was more widespread among females than male.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

The Harry Potter series, written by J.K. Rowling, has captivated the imagination of millions of readers worldwide since its first publication in 1997. This literature review aims to provide an overview of the critical reception and scholarly analysis of the Harry Potter books, exploring the themes, narrative structure, character development, and cultural impact of the series.

One of the most remarkable aspects of the "Harry Potter" series is its ability to engage readers with a complex, multi-layered plot that gradually develops over the course of seven books. Rowling's masterful storytelling skills, combined with her vivid imagination and attention to detail, create a rich and immersive world that readers can fully immerse themselves in.

The characters in the "Harry Potter" series are also incredibly well-developed, with each character having their own distinct personality and backstory. Harry, Hermione, and Ron, the three main characters, are particularly compelling, with each of them undergoing significant growth and development throughout the series.

The series is also notable for its exploration of themes such as Love Friendship, Loyalty, and Sacrifice. These themes are woven throughout the books and provide a powerful emotional impact that resonates with readers long after they finish the series.

In terms of literary style, Rowling's writing is both engaging and accessible, making the books easy to read for both young and adult readers. Her use of humour, wit, and wordplay adds a light hearted touch to the series, while her ability to create suspense and tension keeps readers on the edge of their seats.

In terms of popularity and cultural impact the Harry Potter series has achieved unparalleled popularity, transcending age and cultural boundaries. Numerous studies have examined the reasons behind its global success, including its ability to resonate with readers' emotions, the creation of a fully immersive magical world, and the skilful incorporation of universal themes like friendship, love, and the battle between good and evil.

DISCUSSION:

Origin of the fantasy genre: The fantasy genre has its roots in mythology, folklore, and fairy tales, which were often used to explain natural phenomena or moral lessons. These stories were passed down orally from generation to generation and eventually recorded in written form.

One of the earliest works of fantasy literature is "The Epic of Gilgamesh," an ancient Mesopotamian poem that tells the story of a demigod king on a quest for immortality. The poem features fantastical elements such as gods, monsters, and magical objects.

In medieval Europe, fantasy literature developed in the form of chivalric romance and epic poetry, which often featured knights, dragons, and magic. One of the most famous examples of this genre is "Le Morte d'Arthur" by Sir Thomas Malory, which tells the story of King Arthur and his knights of the Round Table.

In the 19th century, the genre of fantasy began to take on a more modern form with the publication of works such as "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" by Lewis Carroll and "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz" by L. Frank

Baum. These stories combined fantastical elements with modern themes and settings, and paved the way for the development of modern fantasy literature.

In the 20th century, the fantasy genre exploded in popularity with the publication of J.R.R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, which introduced readers to a complex, fully-realised fantasy world. Since then, fantasy literature has continued to evolve and expand, with works by authors such as George R.R. Martin, J.K. Rowling, and Brandon Sanderson pushing the boundaries of the genre in new and exciting ways.

Harry Potter as a fantasy genre: The fantasy genre actually has a long and rich history that predates the publication of Harry Potter. While Harry Potter is undoubtedly a hugely popular and influential series within the fantasy genre, it did not create the genre itself.

When J.K. Rowling published Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone (known as Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone in the US) in 1997, it was a huge success and helped to further popularise the fantasy genre. The Harry Potter series features many classic fantasy elements, such as magical creatures, a hidden magical world, and a young hero on a quest to save the world.

However, it would be inaccurate to say that the fantasy genre originated based on Harry Potter. Rather, Harry Potter is a significant and influential work within the genre that has contributed to its continued popularity and growth.

Impact on the Actors: The "Harry Potter" series has had a significant impact on the careers of its actors. Here are some ways in which the series has affected them:

Fame and Recognition: The success of the "Harry Potter" franchisee has made its actors household names. They have become some of the most noticeable faces in the entertainment industry and have gained worldwide fame and recognition.

Financial Success: The series has also been incredibly financially successful, with the actors receiving lucrative salaries for their roles. This financial success has allowed them to pursue other projects that may not have been possible otherwise.

Career Opportunities: The exposure and recognition gained from the "Harry Potter" series have opened up numerous career opportunities for its actors. Many have been offered leading roles in other films and TV shows and have been able to expand their range as actors.

Typcasting: While the "Harry Potter" series has opened doors for many of its actors, it has also led to some being typecast in certain roles. For example, Daniel Radcliffe has had to work hard to break out of his role as Harry Potter and take on more diverse and challenging roles.

Fan Base: The series has created a massive fan base, which has been both a positive and negative impact for the actors. While the fans have supported the actors throughout their careers, it has also resulted in a lack of privacy and the actors being subject to intense scrutiny.

Overall, the "Harry Potter" series has had a significant impact on the lives and careers of its actors, providing them with numerous opportunities and challenges along the way.

Translation: The Harry Potter series of 7 fantasy books by Joanne Rowling are one of the most translated series of all time. The 1st book Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone have been translated in 79 languages. This showed the ultimate progress of the book thus, it became universally prevalent. Movies on Harry Potter were also made after the novel's success, which had the same theme and plot as that of the novel.

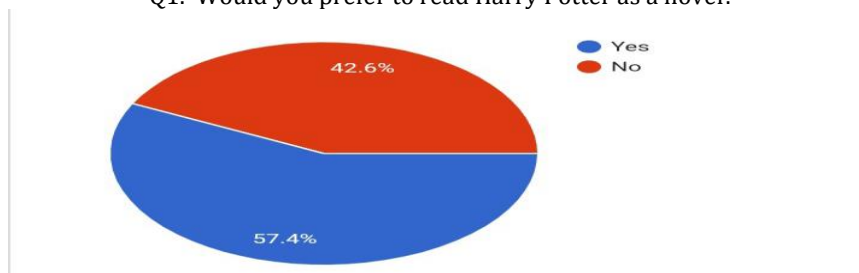
In India it was translated in Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Malayalam, Marathi, Tamil and Telugu. The main reason for the translation was to serve people's quest for reading fantasy novel, such as Harry Potter that was influencing the youth of the time. In order to avoid copyright, translations were only allowed after each book was published in English.

Thus, Harry Potter has been translated into many languages and has gained worldwide fanbase, and its relevance will continue in the upcoming generation as well.

Observations: A questionnaire in the form of survey was carried on to scrutinise vogue of Harry Potter amongst the youth.

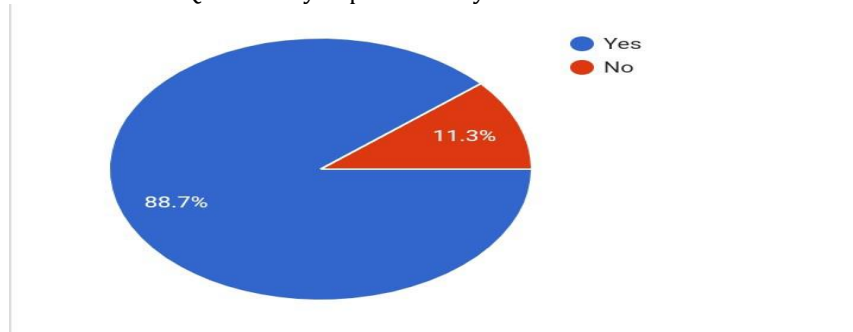
The following observations were made:

Q1. Would you prefer to read Harry Potter as a novel?



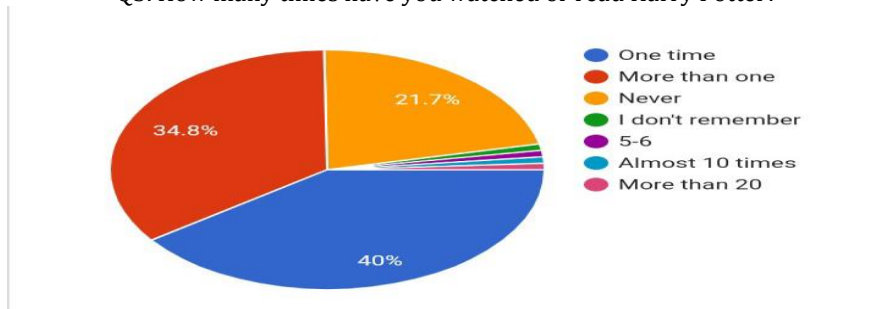
From the above pie chart, we can interpret that out of the 115 responses 57.4% of respondents preferred to read novel while the remaining 42.6% of respondents were not in favour of reading the novel. The reason to include this question was, Harry Potter was released in two forms first as a novel and then as series of movies. In order to find out what attracted the audience more between the movie and the novels. Respondents were in the favour of the novels, because they felt that they can be benefitted, as it enhances their reading and imagery skills.

Q2. Would you prefer Harry Potter as a movie?



From the above pie chart, we can interpret that out of 115 responses 88.7% of the respondents preferred to watch movie while the remaining 11.3% respondents were not in favour of watching the movie. The reason to include this question was Harry Potter was released in two forms first as a novel and then as series of movies. In order to find out what attracted the audience more between the movie and the novels. Viewers enjoy watching Harry Potter as a movie for these reasons: Firstly the films are very entertaining and can make the viewers feel immersed in this amazing world of Harry Potter for a few hours. We become familiar with these characters in such a way that they almost feel like real people in a way with superpowers.

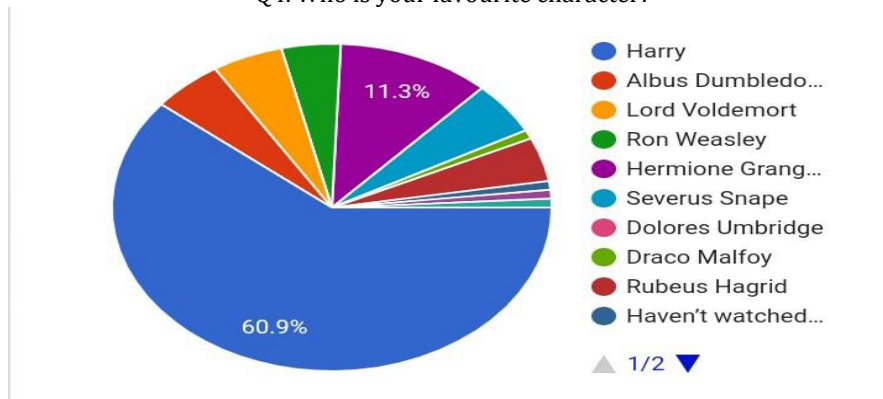
Q3. How many times have you watched or read Harry Potter?



According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses 40% of the respondents have watched Harry Potter only one time while 34.8% of respondents have watched it more than once and the remaining 21.7% of respondents have never watched it.

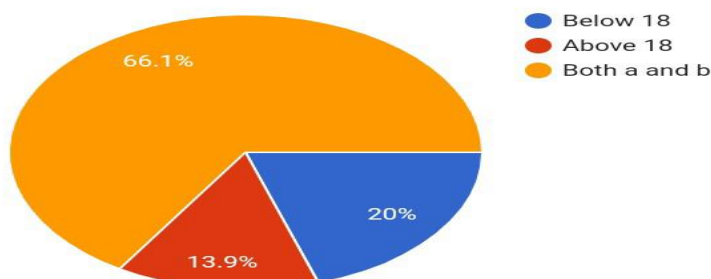
The question was included to inspect the excitement and widespread presence of Harry Potter among youth. We came to a conclusion that viewers enjoyed the series and they have at least watched it twice .

Q4. Who is your favourite character?



Ans. According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses 60.9% of respondent's favourite character was Harry Potter, other 11.3% of respondent's favourite character was Hermione Granger. Through this question we come to know that which character inspired the viewers more. Majority of the viewers choose Harry Potter and Hermione Granger, because they found their characters very strong and promising.

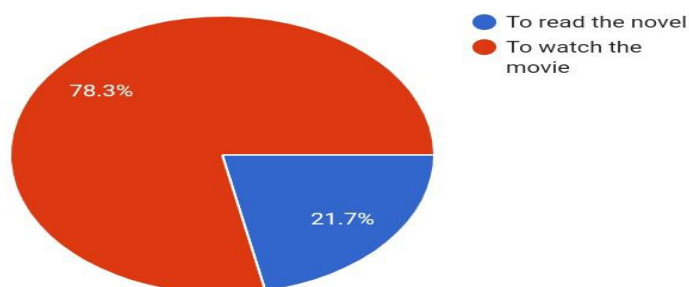
Q5. In which age group is Harry Potter popular?



According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses, 66.1% of responses suggest that it is popular among both the generations that is below 18 and above 18, other 20% of responses suggest that it is popular among generations below 18, while the remaining 13.9% responses suggest that it should be popular among the generation above 18.

This question was included to derive that which age group among the viewers loved the series Harry Potter. The answer derived was that Harry Potter was equally popular among all age groups because of the supernatural and mystic elements, character plot, the friendship between the 3 characters and the story line.

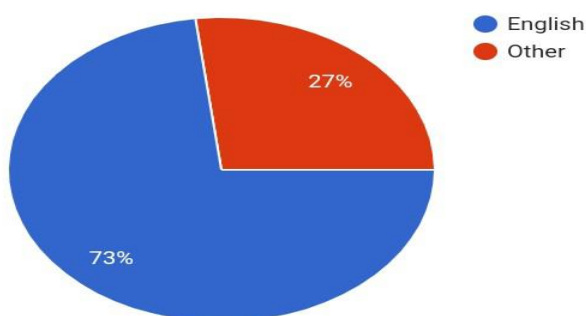
Q6. What would you recommend others Harry Potter as a movie or novel?



According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses, 78.3% of respondents would recommend Harry Potter as a movie, while the remaining 21.7% of respondents would recommend Harry Potter as a novel. The reason to include this question was to see that which category whether Novel or Movie, the viewers would recommend others.

Most of the viewers choose movie over novel because they feel that they can connect better with the movie through its characters as well as strong plot through audio visual medium than reading.

Q7. Which language was suitable to you while watching the movie?



According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses we can interpret that 73% respondents found English language more favourable, while the other 27% respondents found Hindi language favourable. The main reason to add this question was to derive that which language was suitable to the respondents to connect more with the movie.

The literary devices, pun, idioms and phrases and irony were not translated into the Hindi version. As a result, the audience preferred to watch the movie in English.

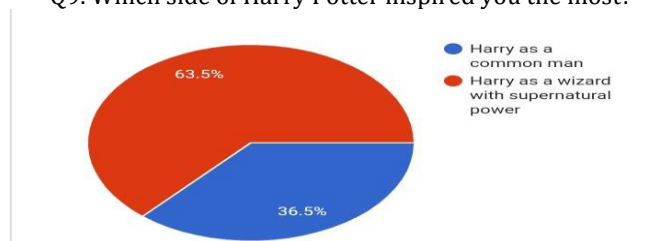
Q8. One quality of Harry Potter you would like to inculcate in your life?

Ans. According to the survey conducted some of the qualities that people wanted to inculcate were his bravery, loyalty, power, intelligence and determination.

This question was included to see that, which quality of the character Harry Potter inspired them.

The audience were very much inspired with the qualities like bravery, loyalty, power and intelligence of his character.

Q9. Which side of Harry Potter inspired you the most?

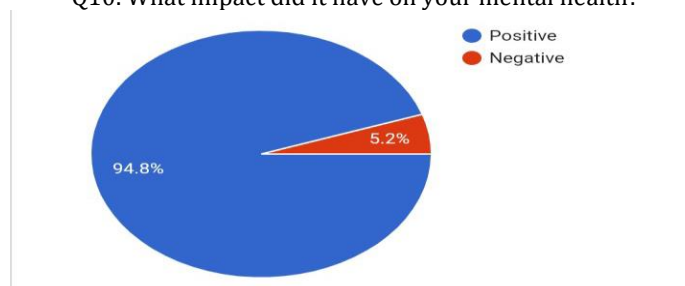


According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses we can interpret that 63.5% of respondents were inspired by Harry Potter as a Wizard with supernatural powers, while the remaining 36.5% of respondents were inspired by Harry Potter as a common man.

This question was included to see that, did the audience appreciated as a normal human or as a wizard.

Audience choose Harry as a Wizard because they were fascinated by his superpowers and how he fought with Lord Voldemort.

Q10. What impact did it have on your mental health?

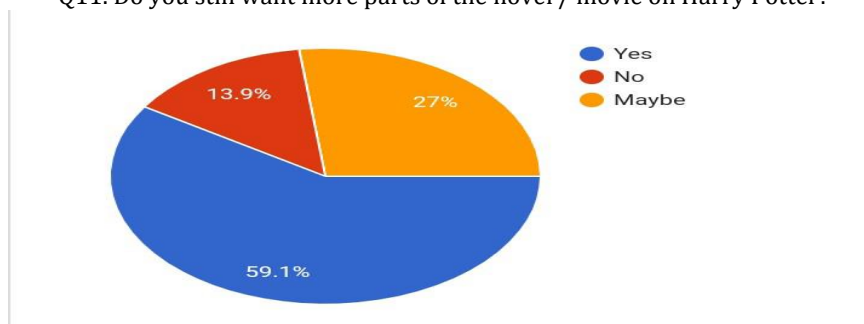


According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses 94.8% of respondents had a positive impact of Harry Potter on them, while the other 5.2% respondents had negative impact on them.

The main reason to include this question was to see that what kind of effect did the series of movies or novels have on the audience who watched it / read it.

The conclusion came out was that people were positively influenced by Harry Potter, because of Harry's nature, the bond he had with his friends, the bravery with which he fought with Lord Voldemort, and the way he tries to keep the relations with those he loves.

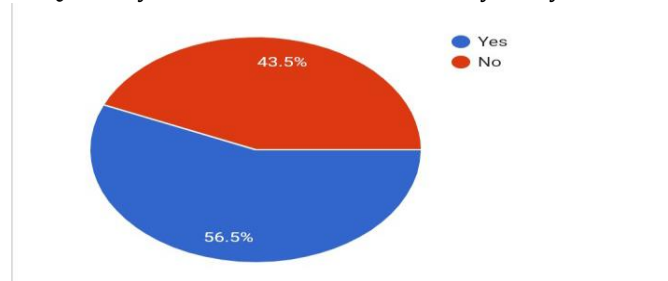
Q11. Do you still want more parts of the novel / movie on Harry Potter?



According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses 59.1% of respondents want more parts of the Novels / Movies on Harry Potter, other 27% of respondents, are not concerned they get or not. Remaining 13.9% respondents do not want more novels/movies on Harry Potter.

We selected this question to know about viewers curiosity for more parts of the Harry Potter. So, we derived that respondents have waited for more parts of the series.

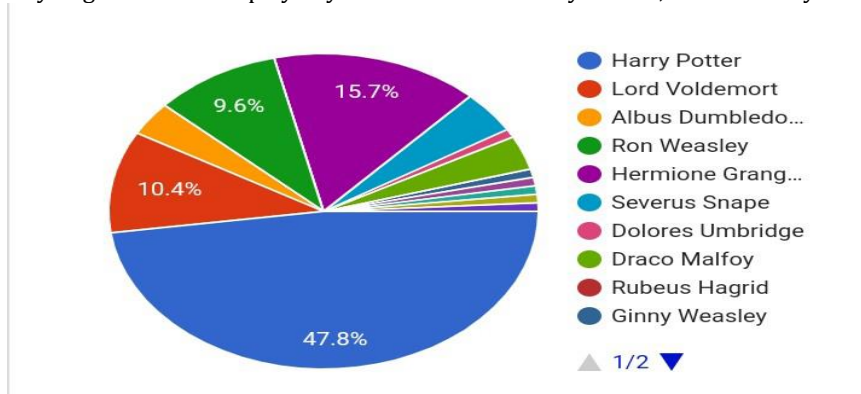
Q12. Do you believe in the tactics used by Harry Potter?



According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses 56.5% of respondents believed in the tactics used by Harry Potter, while the other 43.5% respondents did not believe in the tactics used by Harry Potter.

We opted this question to identify whether the viewers believed in the tactics used by Harry in the movie. Viewers did believe in the tactics used by Harry Potter.

Q13. If you get a chance to play any character from 'Harry Potter', what would you select?

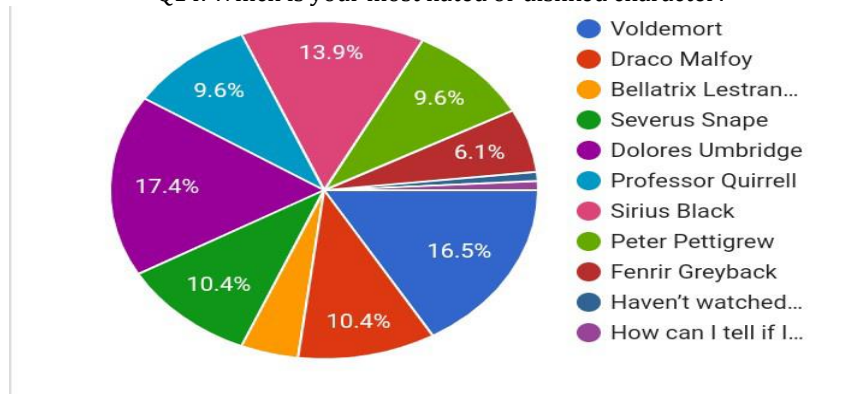


According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses 47.8% of respondents wanted to play the character of Harry Potter, 15.7% of respondents wanted to play the character of Hermione Granger, while 10.4% of respondents wanted to play the character of Lord Voldemort and the other 9.6% of respondents wanted to play the character of Ron Weasley.

The reason to select the question was to know which character from Harry Potter inspired the audience the most.

Audience was inspired by Harry, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger because of the strong friendship and individual confident characters they played.

Q14. Which is your most hated or disliked character?



According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses 17.4% of respondents' most unliked character was Dolores Umbridge, other 16.5% of respondents' most unliked character was Voldemort, while 13.9% of respondents' most unliked character was Sirius Black, other 10.4% of respondents' unliked

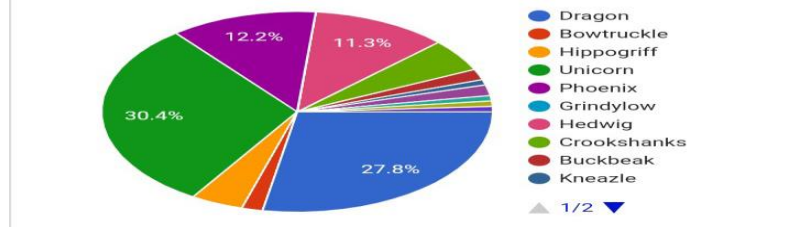
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characters were Draco Malfoy and Severus Snape, other 9.6% of respondents' most disliked character was Peter Pettigrew and Professor Quirrell, while the other 6.1% of respondents' most disliked character was Fenrir Greyback.

According to this question we can depict who was the most disliked character by the audience

The audience found Lord Voldemort the most negative character because of the tricks he used to play to gain the power over wizard world as well as to kill Harry

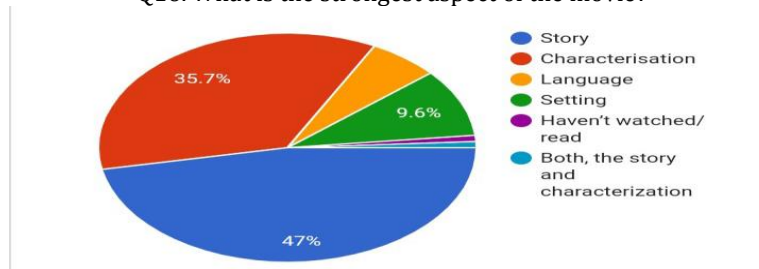
Q15. Which is your favourite animal creature from the novel/movie?



According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses 30.4% of respondents' favourite animal creature was Unicorn, while 27.8% of respondents' favourite animal creature was Dragon, 12.2% of respondents' favourite animal creature was Phoenix and 11.3% of respondents' favourite animal creature was Hedwig.

This question was opted to see which animal character was the most loved by the viewers.

Q16. What is the strongest aspect of the movie?



According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses 47% respondents' strongest aspect of the movie was the Storyline, for 35.7% of respondents' the strongest aspect of the movie was its characterisation while for 9.6% of respondents' the strongest aspect was the setting.

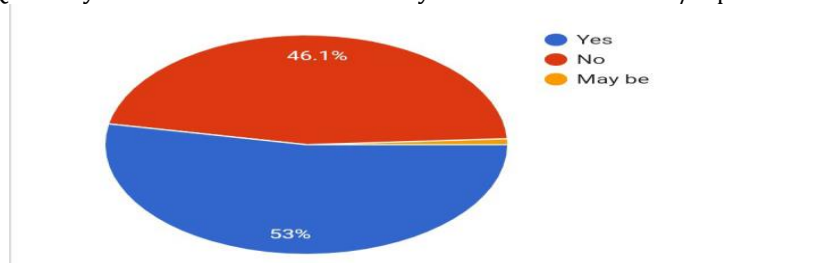
We opted this question to know about strongest aspect of the movie according to the respondents

Through this question we derived that the story line of the movie was the strongest aspect that inspired the viewers to engage themselves to this series.

Q17. If Harry Potter was to be Indianised, what name would you give to the boy?

Ans. We derived a list of names out of which Harish, Hari, Henry as the common ones.

Q18. Do you think this movie has made you believe in the occult/supernatural?



According to the pie chart we can interpret that out of 115 responses 53% of respondents believed in the occult / supernatural from the movie while the other 46.1% of respondents did not believe in the occult/supernatural from the movie.

Through this question we wanted to understand - does the movie Harry Potter make the viewers believe in occult.

Viewers did start believing in occult after this movie.

Q19. Which is the most favourite quote in the book/movie?

Ans. Some of the quotes derived from the survey were:

“It is our choices Harry that show what we truly are far more than our abilities.”

“Believe in Yourself.”

“Help will always give to those at Hogwarts that deserve it.”

“Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the lights.”

Psychological impact: The psychological aspects found in the movie are as follows:

The house system at the Hogwarts can enhance a social Trible effect: There are few prejudices against some of the houses in Harry Potter, perhaps against Slytherin particularly. In this way if they feel the psychological impact of that they can remain loyal to their groups. This effect can be applied on the larger group in the society, such as people with different nationalities.

Dobby effect of psychology is inspired by the character of the Malfoy family’s house-elf Dobby: Dobby was extremely insecure about his duties towards his master and would ultimately engage into self-harm out of guilt. Similarly, the people who suffer from this effect feel guilty for doing something wrong or not achieving something that was expected from them.

The series also demonstrates some signs of PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress- Disorder): It occurs after a tragic event in the life of an individual. Harry exhibits this trait particularly when we see how miserable his childhood went and how his uncle and aunt treated him which can cause a lot of damage to an individual.

The gossip columnist Rita Skeeter’s character serves as a Metaphor of Anxiety when she over exaggerates the news that does not match what’s actually happening.

These were some of the psychological aspects we derive in the series of Harry Potter. Moreover, an entire generation grew up reading Harry Potter which had a positive influence on them. It inspired them to read again and again due to the fantasy elements such as mysticism and supernaturalism present in it and it further inspired others to read children/teen literature.

However, there can be a negative impact on youth such as, sometimes people get too impressed by reading the fantasy genre that at times leads them to believe in false occult.

The fantasy genre, including books, movies, and other forms of media, often incorporates elements of magic, supernatural creatures, and mythical realms. While fantasy stories can be entertaining and imaginative, there is a distinction between fictional fantasy and belief in the occult or supernatural in the real world. It is important to understand that consuming fantasy media does not inherently lead people to believe in false occult practices or supernatural phenomena.

Belief in the occult or supernatural is influenced by a combination of factors, including cultural, religious, and personal beliefs, as well as individual susceptibility to magical thinking. While exposure to fantasy media may spark curiosity or interest in the mystical, the majority of people understand that these are fictional elements created for entertainment purposes.

In summary, while the fantasy genre can be captivating and imaginative, it does not inherently lead people to believe in false occult practices or supernatural phenomena. Belief in the occult is influenced by various factors, and it is crucial to maintain a critical mindset and differentiate between fictional fantasy and real-world beliefs. Education, critical thinking, and media literacy are vital tools in navigating the fantasy genre responsibly.

Happiness is a state of mind. "Happiness can be found, even in the darkest times, if one only remembers to turn on the light," says Dumbledore in Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban. This line is a powerful reminder that each one of us has an inner light within us — a beacon of happiness. We can either ignore it and let the circumstances control us or, we can choose to harness that light. That is, learn to have hope, look for the silver lining and continue to persevere. "Throughout the course of the series, Harry faces a lot of troubling challenges and despite all the evil and darkness he fights, he never loses that light of hope," Dr Scarlet points out. "Even though there is a lot of injustice out there, the series reminds us that there is always hope and that even one person can make a difference," she adds.

It is not a new information that a lot of religious people are against anything that contains witchcraft, occultism and themes related to this. Therefore, it is not surprising that a lot of those people view the popularity of Harry Potter and its influence on children as negative.

The movie Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix claims that: “Instead of dreaming about the joys that God gives us through Jesus Christ, they [children] will be dreaming of casting spells, using magic spells, riding brooms, and rebelling against their parents”. (2007) Though it might be true that the popularity of this series makes children think or even dream about it, you could hardly find anything that would lead the fans to rebelling against their parents.

The protagonist-centred morality of the Harry Potter series has encouraged the development of “us = good, them = evil” thinking. While it is far from being the sole cause, it has certainly helped to promote the divisiveness that is currently such a huge feature in our society. When a young person's favourite series—a story that strongly shaped their morality and outlook on life—allows the “good guys” to get away with horrible acts simply because they are the “good guys,” that can't help but inculcate the young reader with the philosophy that the end justifies the means.

This aspect of the series becomes more and more disturbing in the later books. We are told, in no uncertain terms in the fourth book, that Unforgivable Curses are so deeply evil that it was only when Voldemort seemed to be winning his War I that the Ministry gave a dispensation for Aurors (Aurors only!) to use those Curses. Typically, using them would mean a one-way trip to Azkaban.

But in the fifth book, Harry decides to use an Unforgivable (were the three curses: The Imperious curse, The Cruciatus curse and The Killing curse) He is not very good at it at first, but he casts the spell nevertheless. He gets no punishment for it. No one even says, “Do you realize what horrible evil you're slipping into, kid?” By the seventh book, one of his (supposedly good) teachers is cheering him on when he uses said Unforgivable! Apparently, if you're a “good guy,” the spell is not evil at all.

CONCLUSION:

Overall, the “Harry Potter” series is a modern literary classic that has earned its place in the canon of great works of fiction. Its richly imagined world, well-drawn characters, and powerful themes have captured the hearts and imaginations of readers around the world, making it a must-read for anyone who loves great literature.

From identity formation and empathy development to moral reasoning and resilience building, this series of novels/books have provided a framework for personal growth and exploration.

The escapism and imagination fostered by the magical world of Harry Potter have offered young readers a much-needed reprieve from the challenges of reality, nurturing their creativity and igniting a sense of wonder. Moreover, the series has fostered a strong sense of community and belongingness among its fans, providing a space for social connections, self-expression, and personal development.

The Harry Potter series has faced criticism and controversy, particularly regarding representation and diversity. It is crucial to engage in open dialogue and consider different perspectives to address these concerns and promote a more inclusive and equitable reading experience for all.

Nonetheless, the enduring popularity and cultural significance of the Harry Potter series speak of its profound influence on the psychological well-being and development of youth worldwide. Through its enchanting narrative and relatable characters, the series has left an indelible mark on the minds and hearts of readers, inspiring them to navigate the complexities of life with courage, empathy, and a belief in the power of imagination.

If more books or movies on “Harry Potter” get published / released in future we can have more material to research on this topic.

Psychology: The Harry Potter series is full of complex characters with rich psychological profiles, including protagonists such as Harry, Hermione, and Ron, as well as antagonists such as Voldemort and Bellatrix Lestrange. Research could examine the psychological motivations and traits of these characters, as well as their relationships and interactions with one another.

Education: The Harry Potter series has been used as a tool for teaching literature, critical thinking, and other skills in classrooms around the world. Research could examine the effectiveness of using Harry Potter in educational contexts, as well as explore other potential uses of the series in education.

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- [4] Harry Potter and The Goblet of Fire. (2005)

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