COGNITIVE SCIENCES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Tingles, Triggers and Therapeutic Sensations: Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored the experiences of university students watching Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) videos towards psychological effects and mindfulness. ASMR experiences were shown to phenomenologically overlapped with mindfulness and well-being. This study entailed a phenomenological research method used in determining the nature of human experiences regarding a phenomenon through the descriptions of participants in the study. Snowball sampling method was used whereby locating the additional informants was expanded through the recommendation of others for interview. The Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationship, Meaning, Accomplishment (PERMA) Model were employed to analyse written interview transcripts. Findings revealed how participants viewed ASMR as applicable to enhance their well-being. ASMR is also seen as a potential benefit for participants to improve mindfulness; Participants also reported a better ability to cope with stress and a notable reduction in perception of cognitive workload. A future inquiry could investigate the effects of ASMR on specific cognitive activities.

Keywords: Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response, ASMR, psychological effects, mindfulness, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, IPA, PERMA Model

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1 INTRODUCTION

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) is a unique multisensory phenomenon. A tingling sensation is induced in response to audio-visual stimulations. The present study investigated the prevalence and self-reported correlates of ASMR experienced by university students. ASMR culture is currently trending as a thriving online video on the Internet and took a different approach. ASMR involves a series of human senses involving a sense of sight, auditory, touch, taste, and smell known as psychosensory therapy. Our sensory input ultimately played a crucial role in affecting our emotional well-being. Outgoing young adults would have an active lifestyle. However, reduced social contact during challenging times such as a pandemic would cause youths to engage more with digital media. The rapid development of the Internet has attracted the community, especially young adults that increasingly dwelled on ASMR videos and various anecdotal evidence of self-reported ASMR aesthetic triggers. The ASMR culture is a unique aesthetic paradigm where concepts and different modalities facilitate individual experiences (Gallagher, 2016). Many individuals who experienced ASMR consciously engaged with the sensations or triggers to alleviate negative moods and potentially share positive yet calm emotional responses (Barratt & Davis, 2015). Individuals intentionally engaged in online digital platforms to gain access to watch ASMR videos, thus induced ASMR sensations in them. In conjunction with the phenomenological attributes, mindfulness, known as the conscious state experience provides sensory-emotional feelings now (Fredborg et al., 2018).

According to Chan (2020), 30% of Finnish university students had psychological issues, such as constant overstrain (43%), feeling dissatisfied and depressed (27%), difficulty concentrating on activities (32%), loss of sleep due to worrying (23%), and loss of self-confidence (23%). In recent years, due to the unfortunate Covid-19 virus pandemic, ASMR made a comeback connecting the broad online community via an online video platform, YouTube, specifically in engaging various ASMR-related video contents. Months of lockdown during the pandemic results in many people having to experience mental health consequences due to minimal or no social contact (Ciufudean, 2020). Researchers also believe that watching ASMR videos may be why people sought their "therapeutic utility" regarding a calming tool and as a coping strategy against anxiety (Liu & Zhou, 2019). Understanding these associations could instead have beneficial psychological effects and guided the potential therapeutic uses of ASMR. Therefore, the current study explored and examined how ASMR videos enhanced psychological well-being. Indulging in ASMR is a method for those in quarantine as a coping mechanism.

The acronym ASMR is a mouthful of polysyllabic medical jargon related to a group of psychosensory effects known as a feel-good tingling sensation that possibly be prickling along the body (Harper, 2020). The term ASMR started with ‘autonomous’ explains it is a feeling that comes from within; ‘sensory’ meaning self-explanatory; ‘meridian’ indicating energy flow pathways in the body suggesting a peak feeling; ‘response’ due to the inconsistent state caused by stimuli resulting in a reaction (Keiles, 2019). Poerio et al. (2018) stated that the experiences of ASMR sensations accompanied by relaxation and calm feelings vary among individuals due to the anecdotal evidence based on personal accounts. According to Smith, Fredborg and Kornelson (2019), the prevalence of ASMR is a perceptual phenomenon. Viewers would observe specific actions such as audio-visual stimuli through any digital media. These stimuli would trigger an

induced constant feeling of tingling sensations within the body, specifically on the neck, over the scalp, any other parts along the hairline, down the spine and over the arms and any other parts of the body. The causes of these experiences differ significantly among people and can be visual, auditory, tactile, or olfactory (Fredborg et al., 2018). The passive experience of ASMR is an aspect that involves two states which are feelings of deep relaxation and well-being (Fredborg et al., 2017). Chung and Zhang (2014, p. 726) discussed the critical concept regarding consciousness related to mindfulness-based interventions to improve psychological functions. Mindfulness allows the maintenance of present awareness concerning our feelings, thoughts, bodily sensations, and the surrounding environment. It can be experienced by watching ASMR videos as the tingling sensations often involve our non-judgemental acceptance to maintain a moment-by-moment awareness (Chung & Zhang, 2014, p. 727). Since ASMR helps individuals relax, there was a conscious state whereby younger generations nowadays have a strong affinity towards digital resources and those pertaining ASMR contents to experience sensory-emotional well-being, including the comfort of social psychology (Fredborg et al., 2018).

At the point of writing, studies about the effects of ASMR on young adults are few and far between. The study's main aim is to investigate how young adults indulge in ASMR videos, specifically during the pandemic. In particular, the study explores the psychological effects of ASMR exposure in response to emotions, bodily sensations, and aesthetic experiences. The study also examines how these induced ASMR responses are perceived to establish psychological well-being and are associated with mindfulness. Cognitive, emotional, and social growth, developmental susceptibility was characterised as the selective use of media and its reaction (Valkenburg and Peter, 2013, p. 227). Hence, the study intends to capture the effects of watching ASMR videos among young adults in Malaysian universities to observe if it can enhance phenomenological experiences that utilise cognitive, emotional, and mediated occurrences in conjunction with mindfulness through the well-being of ASMR viewers.

2 METHODOLOGY

The study uses a qualitative approach to examine the phenomena. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was employed to focus on how people make sense of their experiences from a psychological perspective (Larkin & Thompson, 2012, p. 101). IPA involves the active role through a dynamic process that actively impacts the extent to gain access to the participants' experiences and how they make sense of their world via interpretative activity (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p. 8). In media-effects theories, the Differential Susceptibility to Media Effects Model (DSMM, 2013) is an integrative model to understand the roles and relationships between media better (e.g., media use, media processing) and nonmedia (e.g., individual-difference variables, social context) variables (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013, 222). According to Seligman (2011, p. 24), the theory of well-being consists of five measurable elements (PERMA); Positive emotion (P), engagement (E), relationships (R), meaning (M), and accomplishment or achievement (A). The first element is positive emotion on what we feel, such as pleasure, ecstasy, warmth, rapture, comfort, and like (Seligman, 2011, p. 11). The second element, known as engagement, is all about the flow occurring during a deeply absorbing activity, such as time stopping, losing self-consciousness, and being one with the music (Seligman, 2011, p. 11). As a result, the big brain is a relationship simulator computer, and evolution has chosen it for the task of planning and

executing harmonious but effective human interactions (Seligman, 2011, p. 22). Humans were compelled to seek meaning and purpose in their lives (Seligman, 2011, p. 12). Accomplishment entailed making progress toward achieving goals, feeling capable of performing daily tasks, and feeling a sense of accomplishment (Kern et al., 2015, p. 263).

2.1 Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative research approach where the subjective explanations culminate if the experiences are encountered by several people who witnessed the phenomenon. The setting of this study was conducted entirely online between both the participants and researcher. Due to the current context of the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic situation, the researcher liaised with the participants through necessary online measures with the help of social media applications. The participants answered the written interview questions subjectively and adjusted accordingly to the desired screen time they needed while the researcher constantly communicated with the participants online. The researcher reported the subjective experiences described by the participants in response to watching ASMR videos. The study was designed to collect subjective interpretations by the participants in a personalised form. It is in alignment with an intended approach from the phenomenology perspective. Qualitative research existed in a natural setting where human behaviour and circumstances occur (Creswell, 2014, p. 255).

2.2 Population and Sampling

A non-probability sampling method known as snowball sampling was used. Snowball sampling is a technique to locate additional informants through the recommendation of others who are initially interviewed (Groenewald, 2004). Data saturation is achieved when sufficient information duplicates the analysis (Fusch & Ness, 2015, p. 1413). At the first instance, one identified participant with the background of ASMR experience was chosen from a population of 399 Cognitive Science majors who were studying thoroughly online during the pandemic at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS). The first participant recommended the next potential participant. The snowball recruitment continued until a saturation point was achieved. Ethical considerations and approvals were observed following research principles for the study.

2.3 Data Collection Method

Due to the movement limitations during the pandemic, data was collected through written interviews. The written interview was designed as semi-structured questions where participants developed and shared their thoughts, feelings, experiences, opinions, and knowledge, including day-to-day activities. The written interview questions consisted of three sections, namely Section A on the participants' demographic profile, Section B on the factors of experiencing ASMR and Section C on the details of subjective ASMR experiences. Section A depicted the general background of the participants. This section included information such as name, gender, age, year of study and other necessary profile descriptions. Section B and Section C consisted of questions adapted from a previous study conducted by Chan (2020) on the phenomenological study about ASMR. For both sections, relevant questions were extracted to fit the headings of the designed

questionnaire. Additionally, the ways of experiencing and effects of ASMR were added to Section B and Section C questionnaire contents, respectively, which further discussed the subjective ASMR experiences. Participants shared and gave their opinions or thoughts freely on the items in a written manner.

2.4 Data Analysis Procedure

According to the data collected, the information obtained from the written interviews need not require further transcription as they are in a written format thus readily available for analysis. The structure of the analysis was developed and arranged in an orderly manner. The format of the extracted quotation was (Name of participant: Page number, Line number), for example, (C: P.2, line: 100-103). Privacy was maintained for all participants, where the names were changed to anonymous upon analysing the data. Next, tabulation of data or necessary illustrations was generated and labelled accordingly. Thematic analysis was used to process and analyse the written interview results. The standard IPA method was used to analyse the data collected, which included numerous readings of the initial transcripts and highlighted notable quotes for any ASMR-related responses. The five domains of the PERMA Model aided the development of themes and sub-themes from the results of the written interview transcripts, which helped organised ideas and topics. A closer examination and identification of repeated common themes within the same construct from the interview results were used to establish a pattern from the narratives meaningfully. The ASMR-related descriptive responses represented the meaning between the sub-themes and conceptual connections.

3 RESULTS

This study provided the research findings through interpretative and phenomenological means. The demographic of the participants and their ASMR profile are depicted in a table. The study's findings included themes in two critical areas regarding the two research questions, identified through IPA and PERMA models. The themes identified have several sub-themes, which were illustrated and presented in tables. Further interpretations for each sub-theme were addressed in turn of each theme, considering the significance of the themes with relevance to the transcripts of each participant, ensuring individual voices are heard and individual experiences were highlighted.

3.1 Participants' Demographic and Profile

Six young adults participated in the study. They are enrolled full-time as university students and have had to study online for over a year because of the pandemic. Based on their profiles, each participant was labelled in alphabetical initials such as A, B, C, D, E, and F. The characteristics of each participant in the study and their profile on ASMR usage were described below (Table 1).

Table 1. Demographics and ASMR Profile of Participants

Participants		A	B	C	D	E	F
Age		22	23	22	22	21	21
Gender		Female	Female	Female	Female	Male	Male
Reason(s) for engagement		Self-satisfaction and interest in food ASMR	To induce tingles	Soothe feelings and have content attachment	To calm down soothes anxiety and for pleasure	Curious and help to fall asleep	Curious, help to fall asleep and entertainment
Viewing Habits	ASMR use	• 5-10 videos per session • Day or night or when bored	• 1 video per session • Night	• 7-9 videos per session • Night or before sleep	• 5 videos per session • Evening or night	• 1-3 videos per session • Night or before sleep	• 1-3 videos per session • Night or before sleep
	Environmental conditions to attain ASMR sensations	• Relaxing room and dim light	• Quiet place and cold; use earphones	• Quiet and calm	• Air-conditioned and dim lighting	• No background noise and low lighting	• Lights off • Cuddling with a pillow alone
	ASMR watch preference	• Sometimes watch on the go • Watches alone	• Watches alone	• Does not watch on the go • Watches alone	• Does not watch on the go • Watches alone	• Does not watch on the go • Watches alone	• Does not watch it on the go • Watches alone
Tingling Sensations	Duration	• A week	• Less than a minute	• Not sure	• Not sure (depends on the video)	• A few seconds	• Less than a minute
	Information and/or details on tingling sensations	• Both ears have the same triggering sensations	• Both ears have the same triggering sensations	• Both ears have the same triggering sensations	• Both ears have the same triggering sensation	• Both ears have the same triggering sensation	• Both ears have the same triggering sensation
Mood and Sleep	ASMR use for mood and/or sleep	• Not for sleeping • Helps mood to be happy and hyper	• No comment	• Not for sleeping • Helps mood feel better and motivated	• Not for sleeping • Helps to relax and cope with anxiety	• Help to fall asleep • To relax, calm down, cope with stress and anxiety	• Help to fall asleep faster • To relax and calm down

In Table 1, all six participants were third-year students pursuing their undergraduate degrees. There were four female participants aged 22 to 23 years old and two male participants aged 21. From the table depicted above, five out of six were Malay participants, where four of them were females and one male. Participant F was the only Melanau male who took part in this study. All participants watched ASMR videos alone, and the majority did not watch ASMR on the go. Similarly, all participants described that both of their ears had the same triggering sensations, which triggered stimulation of body tingles.

3.2 ASMR Experiences of Students

The DSMM Model of Valkenburg and Peter (2013) was used to explore and trace direct and indirect media effects on individual differences in uses and receptivity. The coding scheme was based on the conceived and operationalised DSMM variables and the five dimensions of the PERMA model, which were discussed in the Methodology chapter. Narratives from all participants painted a picture of how ASMR has impacted and influenced their lives. Table 2 lists all themes and sub-themes synthesised from their narratives.

Table 2. Identified Themes and Sub Themes on ASMR Responses

Themes	Sub Themes
Purpose and intended use of ASMR	• Personal interest • Social or peer pressure (Curiosity and Uncertainty) • Pro-change bias

Multisensory and multimodal integration of ASMR	• Positive Active Affect
	  ➢ Happy / Hyper
	  ➢ Excited / Enjoy
	• Positive Deactive Affect
	  ➢ Relax
	  ➢ Calm
	  ➢ Soothe / Satisfy
	• Triggers / Tingling Sensations

Media content of ASMR	• Visual
	  ➢ *Mukbang* / Food
	• Auditory
	  ➢ Whispering
	  ➢ Motivational quotes/words
	  ➢ Sensual and erotic
	• Kinesthetic (Non-spoken)
	  ➢ Slime
	  ➢ Tapping
	• Roleplay Scenarios

3.2.1 Purpose and Intended Use of ASMR

3.2.1.1 Personal Interest

Participants described how they were primarily drawn to ASMR due to their affinity towards food. For instance, participants enjoy food content or like to eat and felt satisfaction with food eating sounds. Food ASMR was seemingly and widely popular among youths that garnered much attention online. Participants watched ASMR engage in their engrossment to seek pleasure and calmness. *Participant D: "Earlier on in my life, I mainly watched food ASMR (chewing)…Currently, I experience ASMR for either two reasons: for pleasure or to calm down."*

3.2.1.2 Social or Peer Pressure (Curiosity and Uncertainty)

Social factors or peer pressure play a huge role in influencing an individual or group. Participants mentioned that friends encouraged them to try ASMR. Attracted by ASMR as a newly coined terminology back then, participants described how they decided to give it a try. From the initial experience onwards, they saw a whole new perspective about sensations they experienced when watching the videos. All participants indicated how they have since enjoyed ASMR up till the present time. The initial exposure brought about by peer influence has been largely positive and beneficial to most participants in the study. *Participant D: "During my foundation studies, my friend encouraged me to try ASMR and I was intrigued by the idea."*

Participants reported how their curiosity drove them to find out about ASMR materials. Fortunately, some participants mentioned that ASMR had been a part of their nightly routine to aid sleep since they first viewed ASMR videos. The continual seeking of ASMR videos has driven some of the participants to find latest content online to binge on, as the ASMR trend was booming during the period of observation. *Participant E: "At first, I was curious on what ASMR was about but now it has become my nightly routine before bed to help me fall asleep."*

Being uncertain has led some of the participants to be drawn to this seemingly peculiar content of ASMR. Favourable feedbacks were obtained upon the engagement, thus becoming an interesting part of some of the participants' daily lives. Unknown to ASMR, this trend has set a chain reaction for many to be a part of an inclusive society that shares this interest. *Participant C: "At first, I didn't expose to the ASMR thing, and I don't even know what is exactly ASMR."*

3.2.1.3 Pro-change bias

Some participants have a presumption towards the idea of ASMR. Such preconceptions included that ASMR is a joke or just thought it was some randomly weird content made up to gain popularity and views. Another bias to ASMR comprised of thinking it was an absurd notion introduced to the community. *Participant E: "It was started as a joke, but now I watch and listen to ASMR almost every night right before bed to help me fall asleep."*

3.2.2 Multisensory and Multimodal Integration of ASMR

3.2.2.1 Positive Active Affect (Happy, Hyper, Excited, Enjoy)

Participants engaged in ASMR and watching ASMR videos claimed that it had made them happy, hyper, excited, and joyful. Different individuals have their own distinct emotions and feelings too. Excitement and enjoyment were elicited where some participants felt energetic while accommodating themselves to various ASMR videos. *Participant A: "I felt great, happy, suddenly hungry and want to watch it more and more."*

3.2.2.2 Positive Deactive Affect (Relax, Calm, Soothe, Satisfy)

Participants felt a sense of calm composure when indulged in ASMR. Such feelings were deemed to be peaceful and quiet. Most of the participants described this state as feeling contented. The participants' reports showed somewhat similar deactivating positive effects exclaiming they felt relaxed, calmed, and soothed their feelings when engaged with ASMR videos. *Participant E: "It does affect your mood. ASMR, for me, is very comforting. It helps me calm my nerves and makes me feel relaxed."*

3.2.2.3 Triggers and Tingling Sensations

After watching or engaging in various ASMR videos, most of the participants reported that they experienced tingling sensations and bodily triggers. Some participants explained their responses in detail during the written interviews. Tingling sensations from participants provided a mixture of various psychological experiences. These experiences were responses channelled through bodily sensations or emotions to connect the mind and body as one. *Participant F: "My back and chest tends to experience the most intense sensation whenever the tingling sensation occurs."*

3.2.3 Media Content of ASMR

Various contents of the media played a crucial role in providing ASMR experiences to the viewers. The participants shared some of their video content preferences when watching ASMR videos to fulfil their contentment.

3.2.3.1 Visual: *Mukbang* and Food

Visual ASMR videos such as food and *mukbang* are some popular content for ASMR. Half the participants showed interest in these contents as part of their engagement. The participants reported that watching food ASMR or *mukbang* online triggers ASMR in them through the sounds of eating. The visuals of interesting food or watching people eat food were depicted, and the sounds effects of eating created enjoyment and satisfaction. *Participant D: "I would go to Youtube, put on my earphones, and watch ASMR artist eat food."*

3.2.3.2 Auditory: Whispering, Motivational Quotes or Words, Sensual and Erotic

Various auditory ASMR contents give different vibes to individuals. Two participants reported that they have their personal favourite listening to sound or auditory ASMR. The auditory ASMR contents vary from whispers to motivational quotes as well as sensual and erotic short stories. *Participant C: "For now, I am more to ASMR video which they give advices or quotes to make you feels like you are doing good and everything gonna be okay. A video like I feel there is someone really wipe my tears if I am crying during the time."*

3.2.3.3 Kinesthetic: Slime and Tapping

A participant reported that she enjoyed various movement ASMR such as slime and tapping sounds. The mentioned ASMR contents on slime and tapping sounds were another form of relaxation when she got bored of her usual visual or auditory ASMR videos. *Participant D: "However, I did get bored of food ASMR and ventured into slime ASMR, tapping ASMR."*

3.2.3.4 Roleplay Scenarios

Roleplay scenarios involved an enactment of scenes of any content. It can be made up or based on any fictional or non-fictional ideas. Hence, the word roleplay explained that individuals were to act out the scenes and present the way they speak through soft sounds or whispers, thus inducing ASMR. *Participant F: "It can also be due to my mental ability to have vivid visual imagination of possible scenarios where from just listening to the audio, I can project, in my mind, a very vivid image of how the scenarios of the ASMR are portrayed by myself."*

3.3 Psychological Effects and Mindfulness Experienced by Students Viewing ASMR Videos

The sub-themes section from Table 3 were further examined and evaluated. The analyses revealed five major themes, namely Positive Emotion, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Individual and group themes, as well as overlapping ones, were discussed. Following the themes addressed, there were sub-themes yielded for each mentioned theme. Table 3 displayed the themes and sub-themes accordingly.

Table 3. Main Five Themes and Sub Themes of Psychological Effects and Mindfulness

Themes	Sub Themes	
Positive Emotion (P)	• Enjoy • Joyful • Happy • Contented • Enthusiastic	• Relax • Calm • Positive • Excited • Interested
Engagement (E)	• Mindfulness ➢ Self-awareness ➢ Focus ➢ Rumination ➢ Absorption	
Relationship (R)	• Digital intimacy • Love (self, family, friends, partners)	
Meaning (M)	• Organisation • A sense of direction	
Accomplishment (A)	• Self-identity • Self-confidence and achieving goals	

3.3.1 Media Content of ASMR

3.3.1.1 Positive Emotion (Enjoy, Joyful, Happy, Contented, Enthusiastic, Relax, Calm, Positive, Excited, Interested)

Participants had claimed various ranges of positive emotions that they had experienced. The descriptions by the participants were subjective and carried a positive outlook when engaged with ASMR videos. Most of the participants reported instances related to any form of positive emotions. *Participant C: "I will be more enthusiastic and calmer with a lot of positivity mindset."*

3.3.1.2 Engagement (Mindfulness - Self-awareness, Focus, Rumination, Absorption)

All six participants manifested their replies and feedbacks regarding engagement in the study that was carried out. Their concentration varies from them being in deep thoughts about their crucial responsibilities as a key family member and a student to have lost track of time while being immersed in the things they do now. The participants were absorbed in the ASMR activities and felt they enjoyed the time and experiences when indulging in ASMR videos or content. They were aware of what they were doing and continued flowing with the constant state of mind being immersed in their present consciousness. *Participant B: "Whenever I thought about my commitment as a student and at the same time responsibility as the eldest in the family."*

3.3.1.3 Relationship

The feeling of being connected to others was most answers given by all the participants. The participants showed the importance of having people in our lives regardless of the relationship status. Extensive support and feeling of satisfaction, as well as fulfilment, were demonstrated in the interview transcripts. *Participant E: "Yes, I think I feel satisfied with my relationships with my friends and my family."*

3.3.1.4 Meaning

Most of the participants gave similar accounts of their experiences where they associated themselves being organised and having a sense of direction in pursuing the purposes of life. The participants found meaning in their activities and environment, where most of their undertakings created significance. *Participant F: "I feel like I have lead a purposeful and meaningful school life when I confidently believe that I can proceed with task without any doubt whatsoever."*

3.3.1.5 Accomplishment

The accomplishment of the participants in various forms emerged through the description of their experiences. The details of the sharing by the participants showed that they reviewed their strengths and weaknesses. By doing so, the participants involved themselves in search of their own identities, such as wants and needs. Moreover, it is vital that all the participants reacted positively

towards their goals and strived to achieve them with confidence. *Participant D: "There is a strong sense of comfort when I know what I am supposed to do in university. The more informed I am, the calmer I become."*

4 DISCUSSION

The compilation of the descriptive explanations of the participants gave broader insights into their experiences with ASMR and the psychological effects, including mindfulness in their lives. The participants' statements were explored by having associations or links with their elaboration to the identified themes and sub-themes. The study's outcomes also depicted the well-being of the participants in their young adulthood stage as university students. Various dimensions were covered by the participants through their collections of descriptive events when engaged in ASMR. ASMR has also been shown to provide short alleviation for patients suffering from depression and share phenomenological similarities with mindfulness (Barratt & Davis, 2015; Fredborg, Clark, & Smith, 2018).

Based on the results and findings of the study, there were numerous ways a viewer could experience ASMR. The IPA technique used assisted in gathering information on how an individual made sense of their experiences. For instance, most of the participants agreed to had experienced ASMR through visual and auditory stimuli. The purposes were different from the self-reported ASMR experiences, but they do have similar traits were indulged in watching ASMR videos activities stimulated their senses, thus having positive effects. These sensations triggered participants to be mindful in a peaceful and quiet state at some times. ASMR videos helped the participants relax and be aware of their present moment as they indulged in full focus watching ASMR, so they are mindful of their senses to feel the calmness naturally. The short- and long-term within-person changes in cognitions, emotions, attitudes, beliefs, physiology, and behaviour that emerge from media use are media impacts (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013, 222).

The PERMA Model aids the identification of emergent sub-themes based on the five themes presented. The psychological effects and mindfulness experienced by the participants in the study found that the frequent tingles and sensations reported had a significant association with positive emotions that were being felt. From a practical standpoint, multidimensional well-being measurements can be used to identify groups with distinct strengths and weaknesses (Kern et al., 2015, p. 263). Positive emotion covers all the positive feelings expressed by the participants. In terms of engagement with ASMR, participants experienced mindfulness of a few, including self-awareness, focus, rumination, and absorption. The relationship theme is the strengthening pillar connecting all the themes involved. The importance of social interactions concerning relationships within oneself, family, friends or peers and partners help build up awareness to appreciate the people in our surrounding environment further. Some found meaning in the most simplistic way possible, while others were mindful of seeking the purpose of living by taking care of or enhance their mental and cognitive state of mind. It also gave them a sense of direction in achieving their desires. Accomplishment is an essential element that drives individuals to strive for what they aspire in life. A sense of accomplishment was attained when participants utilised their cognition and mindfulness to be more attentive while progressing towards their goals.

5 CONCLUSION

In sum, the study gave a further understanding of the nature of ASMR. For research question one, the study explained that the intentional use of ASMR helped to soothe feelings due to curiosity and aided sleep. The media usage commonly utilised visual, auditory, and roleplay scenes. In comparison, the psychosensory responses resulted in bodily sensations and tingles, which vary among individuals. For research question two, the most common psychological effects were positive effects where ASMR helped relieve stress, calm down, and soothes anxiety issues. The mindfulness of the participants had a strong affinity and connectedness with the PERMA Model. Most of the participants showed that they were mindful or practised mindfulness when engaged in ASMR. They also felt better emotionally and mentally as well as aware of their roles and responsibilities. This study demonstrated that the interaction and participation of university students with ASMR contributed significantly to improve well-being uniquely.

One of the critical limitations of the study is the state of measured experiences by the participants who were the viewers watching ASMR videos. Therefore, it is not possible to represent all sorts of experiences, as the participants were self-selecting. Another limitation of the study was time constraints. The plausible duration of the study was short term; thus, the depth of further understanding of the study was limited to a certain extent. Moreover, the data collected may not represent the population's actual yet balanced population as only a small number of participants were chosen to carry out the study. Besides, geographical limitations played a role in the study. It was limited to only a specific area, such as the university ground among the involved students, and the results were not practical to generalise a population from other fields.

Future research in ASMR could examine each type of ASMR category whereby the distinct types of ASMR were bound to have different impacts on the psychological well-being of individuals. It would be interesting to observe ASMR with various media contents to determine individuals' cognitive and psychosocial effects. Further examination using electroencephalogram (EEG) to detect brain waves when people watch or engage in ASMR videos would determine how individuals respond to ASMR videos in real-time. The monitoring of brain waves could potentially use for neurofeedback therapy. Another recommendation would be suggesting ASMR as a way to cope with stress and manage perceptions. If the study involved different age groups of students may utilise ASMR as a coping mechanism for their studies and manage perceptions. The mindfulness experience through ASMR videos can be enhanced due to the alertness and sensitivity of their senses.

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