Coping with the pandemic:
Influence of Movie preference and Trait Anxiety

Kaneez Fatima[1] and Manish Kumar Asthana[1,2]

[1]Department of Humanities & Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, India

[2]Department of Design, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, India

INTRODUCTION

- The Pandemic was a major source of stress to people across the globe and people have different ways of coping with stress and exhibit variability in successful coping.
- People all around the world enjoy indulging with fictional experiences like reading a novel or watching films or TV shows.
- People enthusiastically seek out such experiences, this prompts an interesting question do such fictional experiences offer something more than just entertainment?
- According to adaptive simulation perspective fictional experiences provide us with simulations that allow us to mentally anticipate events that could occur in the future.
- These fictional experiences offer a way to get information about an event and anticipate what it would look like if it occurred in the real-world situation and how to prepare for it.
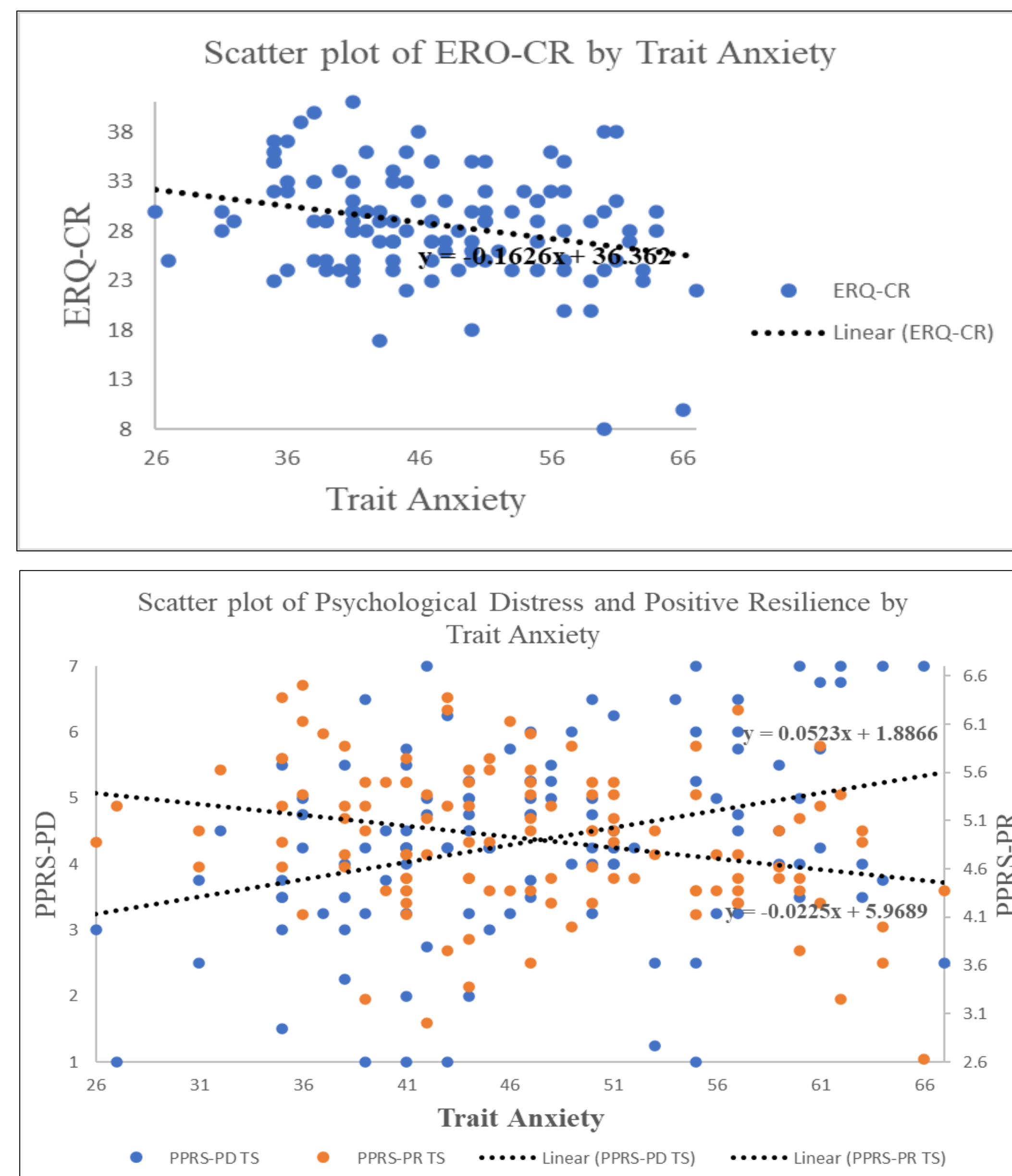
METHODOLOGY

- This study was conducted in an online mode via MSteams, in which 162 Btech students from Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee were screened and out of these 120 students (M=99; F=20; Mage =18.36 years, SD=.73) were selected for further testing.
- The data was collected through convenience and snowball sampling method.
- The following scales were used: State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), Pandemic Psychological Resilience Scale , Pandemic Preparedness Scale (PPS) .
- The participants were asked to rate their preference on 13 movie genres.

Movie Genres:

Horror
Drama
Adventure
Superhero
Comedy
Romance
Sci-Fi
Crime
Mystery
Animation
Thriller
Action
Fantasy

RESULTS

Scatter plot of ERO-CR by Trait Anxiety

$y = -0.1626x + 36.362$

Scatter plot of Psychological Distress and Positive Resilience by Trait Anxiety

$y = 0.0523x + 1.8866$

$y = -0.0225x + 5.9689$

DISCUSSION

- From our results we found certain movie genres: action, thriller, fantasy, superhero, mystery, drama and adventure positively correlated to positive resilience towards the pandemic which hints at the impact of certain movies on coping with negative life events.
- Horror movie preference was found to be positively correlated to pandemic preparedness, this explores the potential that horror movies can have in building emotion regulation skills and help deal with a negative experience like pandemic.
- Trait anxiety can be thought of as a variable that can affect people's cognitive reappraisal use and psychological distress and positive resilience towards COVID-19.

References:

Busselle, R., & Bilandzic, H. (2008). *Fictionality and Perceived Realism in Experiencing Stories: A Model of Narrative Comprehension and Engagement. 18*(2), 255–280. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2008.00322.x

Morin, O., Acerbi, A., & Sobchuk, O. (2019). Why people die in novels: Testing the ordeal simulation hypothesis. *Palgrave Communications, 5*(1), 62. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-019-0267-0

Scrivner, C., Johnson, J. A., Kjeldgaard-Christiansen, J., & Clasen, M. (2021). Pandemic practice: Horror fans and morbidly curious individuals are more psychologically resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Personality and Individual Differences, 168*, 110397. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2020.110397