Can Narrative Journalism Teach us How to Survive?

The Influence of Crime Narratives on the Intended Behaviour of its Readers

BACHELOR THESIS

Theme 10: Kobie van Krieken

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out whether crime narratives can influence the intended behaviour of the readers. An experiment was carried out, in which 150 Dutch students participated. The aim was to measure an effect on two types of genres (narrative vs. news) and two action havioural clues (hide vs. escape) that were suggested in the manipulation of the materials. A fifth questionnaire was added without a text to create a baseline to which comparisons could be made. Other variables that were taken into account were the level of identification, narrative presence, action simulation and emotional response. The hypothesis was formulated according to previous research indicating that narratives have a different impact on readers than other writing formats and therefore stated that narratives should arouse higher levels of the previously mentioned variables. Also, stories could be able to 'teach' readers and action verbs are processed in the brain activating the areas related to the motion described. However, the intended behaviour of the readers is not affected by the narratives as expected; the readers chose the opposite of the action verbs suggested in the text. This could be due to the reason that the participants did not 'believe' the narrative was an actual news article and therefore displayed uncooperative behaviour. The readers of the news articles however did choose for the same actions that was described in the text. Furthermore, the outcome of this study also opposes previous research, implying that narratives do not cause higher levels of narrative presence, action simulation and emotional engagement. Solely the level of identification was significantly higher with the readers of the narratives compared to the readers of the news articles. The contexts in which the action verbs occur could be the cause of these results.

Keywords: *Narrative journalism, identification, crime news, mental simulation, narrative presence, new journalism.*

'There was glass everywhere,' the resident said. 'He was just shooting everywhere as if it were the Wild West' (Daily Mail UK, 2011).

The previous quote has been extracted from a Daily Mail UK news article describing a shopping mall shooting in Alphen aan de Rijn, the Netherlands. The journalist who wrote the article has made use of quotes of eyewitnesses to sketch a visual image of the violent incident, which happened in 2011. This 'sketching an image' is not uncommon in journalistic texts; contrary to informative styles that simply report news; more and more news articles use literary techniques Previous research by Johnston and Graham (2011) suggests that newspapers have become story papers.

A reason for this shift may be that other forms of media are rising, whereas journalism in newspapers and metropolitan dailies had to become more interesting to read to remain compelling enough for the readers (Johnston & Graham, 2011). The change also indicates that newspapers view their readers different from before; not as passively waiting for what they will be told, but as actively trying to create their own meaning and opinions about current events (Hartsock, 2007). This 'new' practise is called *narrative journalism*.

Narrative Journalism

Narrative writing techniques can be applied to texts, regardless of whether this text contains fictional or factual information. These techniques entail the chronological ordering of events and the portrayal of the characters' personal views and perspectives. The terms 'story' and 'narrative' are related to each other in a way that each story is a narrative, but not all narratives are stories (Fleishman, 1985).

A previous experiment was carried out by Shen, Ahern and Baker (2014), examining the impact of the use of narratives in a news article about a political issue. Participants were asked to either read a narrative text or informational text about potential economic benefits or about environmental consequences. Results pointed out that the narratives about environmental consequences had a significantly greater impact than informational environmental news. These results were partly mediated by empathic feelings towards the individuals affected and favourable cognitive responses of the participants (Shen, Ahern, & Baker, 2014).

Another experiment evaluated the extent to which narratives and news texts can initiate emphatic feelings and more positive evaluations towards stigmatized groups such as elderly, immigrants and prisoners. Results have indicated that participants who read the narratives had more compassion for the characters in the text, had more positive behavioural intentions, more favourable attitudes and displayed more information-seeking behaviour (Oliver, Dillard, Bae, & Tamul, 2012).

Audience Involvement

Narrative texts contain a set of characteristics that distinguish these texts from other written pieces. One of the reasons why readers take a mental leap into the imagined world described by the text is because *situation models* are created. Situation models represent affairs described in the text, rather than what the texts actually says. Elements of situation models are; Space, time, goals, causation, people and objects (Zwaan, 1999). This means that reading a story involves more than simply constructing a mental representation of the text itself; comprehension is influenced by the situation that is presented in the narrative, in combination with the structure, words, phrases, clauses, paragraphs and sentences (O'Brien, Cook, & Peracchi, 2004). Narratives can affect the attitudes and beliefs of its readers different from non-narratives (Appel & Richter, 2007).

According to Tal-or and Cohen (2010) these written pieces draw attention, involve, teach, persuade and delight their readers. Audiences should become engaged and involved psychologically and processes of how these states can be attained are identification and transportation. Identification is characterized by a strong attachment to the person described in the narrative, related with caring and positive feelings towards this person. The reader may also adopt the goals and perspectives of the character described. Different from identification, transportation causes the reader to get absorbed into the story; this process results in the state where readers are transported to the world described and forget about facts from the real world. Whereas mainly the behaviour of the character in the story affects the level of identification, the level of transportation is affected by the time and deeds that are explained in the text. From this knowledge, the conclusion can be drawn that these processes both contribute differently to the level of audience involvement Tal-Or & Cohen, 2010).

Mental Simulation

Readers can commit to a narrative in a way that they experience what is described; they feel happy when something positive occurs, worried, sad, nervous etcetera (Zwaan, 1999). But it can go even further; research in cognitive neuroscience of language focuses on how meaning is expressed and picked up in the brain during language understanding. When language is processed, perceptual and motor areas of the brain are used activating the areas in the brain that are responsible for the movement the text implies (Bergen, 2007).

Especially action verbs are processed differently in the brain; Glenberg and Kaschak (2002) have found that people who read about a motion or movement that is directed towards themselves, for example pulling, that the sentence in which this word occurs is processed faster than when the verb is directed away from the person, for example pushing (Glenberg & Kaschak, 2002). The conclusion that can be drawn from this ongoing research is that the human brain is able to experience the motion that is described in a text (Troyer, Curley, Miller, Saygin, & Bergen, 2014). This may mean that this *mental simulation* influences the reader in a way that he or she is triggered to move similarly to the person in the narrative.

Crime Narratives

Narrative writing techniques can be applied to both fictional and factual texts and therefore news items about crime also exists in a narrative format. Whereas the focus of the mass media lies on incidents of serious violent criminal acts rather than white-collar and corporate crime, the majority of recorded crime exists out of that coverage (Ferrell, 1995). This may be due to assumption that violent incidents are generally more ‘spectacular’ and ‘sensational’ and therefore arouse more intense emotions and opinions with the readers.

When it comes to crime narratives, van Krieken, Hoeken, and Sanders (2014) found that readers of a narrative news article about a shocking criminal incident could identify more strongly with eyewitnesses to the incident. These readers also felt a stronger sense of being present, contrary to the readers of a non-narratives. Moreover, the researchers imply that narratives are preferred over a traditional, informative news format if editors and journalists aspire to differentiate their news articles from online mediums.

From the previously mentioned experiments the conclusion can be drawn that journalistic narratives affect readers differently than informative news articles. Narratives have a greater impact on the reader, can evoke emphatic processes and cause more positive

evaluations towards the individuals described in the text. The use of action verbs can lead to mental simulation, where the reader of the story experiences the movements of the character in the narrative as if he or she is carrying out those same movements. Knowing that narratives can lead to a higher level of identification than non-narratives, it is more likely that mental simulation occurs with readers of narratives, because they identify more with the character in the story than readers of non-narratives.

Finally, journalistic narratives about criminal events can cause a sense of 'being present' at the crime scene. These results correspond with the research by Tal-or and Cohen (2010) about audience involvement for fictional stories. However, narratives can also 'teach' readers, which also indirectly overlaps with the findings of Slater and Rouner (2002) stating that journalistic narratives are believed to be able to both entertain and educate similarly to fictional narratives (Tal-or & Cohen, 2010). Thus, would it be possible that news articles about violent incidents can evoke a similar process? Can the media teach their readers in a way that their behavioural intentions change? And finally: Do narratives evoke processes that lead to higher levels of identification, narrative presence, action simulation and emotional engagement? With the information from the previous paragraph in mind, the following hypotheses were formulated:

H1: Narrative journalistic texts about crime arouse a higher level of identification with the readers than non-narrative news texts.
H2: Narrative journalistic texts about crime arouse a higher level of narrative presence with the readers than non-narrative news texts.
H3: Narrative journalistic texts about crime arouse a higher level of action simulation with the readers than non-narrative news texts.
H4: Narrative journalistic texts about crime arouse a higher level of emotional engagement with the readers than non-narrative news texts.

This study contributes to the existing literature by examining how readers are influenced by a text they were assigned to read. The relevance of this research derives from the following: If narratives about criminal and violent incidents consciously or unconsciously affect the intended behaviour of the reader, people may become more alert and aware. That process can result in people acting more wisely in order to survive a comparable situation. This means that the study may provide evidence that crime narratives are a useful

contribution to contemporary media. Additionally, if readers can identify more with the characters in the news article they might be able to show more empathy and understanding. With the previous information in mind, the following research question was formulated;

RQ: To what extent, if any, can crime narratives influence the intentional behaviour of its readers?

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed a 2x2 between subjects experimental design. Independent variables in this study were genre and action. The participants of this experiment were randomly assigned to read one of the four texts that varied in genre (narrative vs. news) and action (hide vs. escape). After reading one of the four texts, the participants were asked to fill in questions regarding this text. Additional to these four different texts, a fifth questionnaire was added to the material. This questionnaire was distributed to the, also randomly selected, control group of which participants answered questions without reading a text beforehand in order to create a baseline to which comparisons could be made.

MATERIALS

The stimulus materials used for this study were four different texts about an incident involving a shooting in a cinema, written by Kobie van Krieken. These texts are formatted as a news article with a title, the name of the reporter, a brief introduction and two columns. All four texts have the same length; 416 words. The fictional incident takes place in a cinema in Utah, where a gunman walks into a darkened movie theatre, while shooting at the visitors. These texts are manipulated according to genre and action. Two texts are written in a narrative format whereas the other two texts are written to provide the reader with information about the incident in the style of a regular news article. In the narrative format, the story is told from the perspective of the person that is present at the incident, he describes how he feels, what he does, what he sees etc. This is a fictional character named Adam, a 25-year old student who went to the cinema with his friend. A fragment of this text underlines how the text focuses on Adam's experience in particular: *''Adam felt his heart beat in his chest while he saw the gunman pointing his weapon at the audience. Bullets soared around his head and stroke beside and above him. 'I'll never survive this' he thought. 'What am I going to do?''.*

The news format is not written from a personal perspective but it describes the incidents objectively. The previously mentioned example about Adam experiencing the incident lively is left out in the news text and replaced with the following fragment: ‘*’According to several eyewitnesses the gunman was holding an automatic-gun that he waved around wildly. He would have been dressed completely in black and wore an army helmet. He had pointed the weapon at the audience several times and shot dozens of bullets.’’* These fragments are translated from Dutch to English and the full articles can be found in Appendix 1. The second manipulation to the text is the suggestion to hide or escape. In the narratives this is: ‘*’Adam* ***jumped up*** *instinctively and started to* ***run***’’ or ‘*’Adam* ***dived down*** *instinctively and started to* ***crawl****’’*. The same action verbs are also mentioned in the news texts as a quote of Adam: ‘*’We* ***jumped up*** *and started to* ***run*** *towards the exit’’* or ‘’*we* ***dived down*** *and started to* ***crawl*** *around the seats’’.* The choice of action verbs derived from the difference between these two actions; crawling is a rather ‘slow’ horizontal movement linked with hiding, whereas running is a ‘fast’ and vertical movement linked with escaping.

SUBJECTS

A total 150 Dutch participants took part in this experiment (age: M = 21.7, SD = 2.5; range 18 – 30; 60.7% female). A chi-square test showed no significant relation between version and gender ($\chi 2$ (4) = 2.99, p = .560) and one-way analysis of variance showed no significant relation between version and age (F (4, 145) = 1.823, p = .128). The majority of the participants had a university education (86.7%). Other levels of education were HBO (12%) and secondary school (1.3%).

INSTRUMENTS

The independent variables of this study were genre (narrative vs. informative) and action (hide vs. escape). These manipulations of the material led to four different texts with similar questionnaires, whereas an additional questionnaire was added without any text to form the baseline of this study. Additional information was asked at the beginning of the questionnaire, this information included age, gender, nationality, mother tongue and level of education. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix 2.

The main effect that was measured is to what extent people were influenced by what is written in the text they were assigned to read, for example; whether their intention was to escape if they read a text about a person that escaped the crime scene. It will also be measured if this effect occurs when this person was assigned to read a narrative news text instead of a regular news text. This variable was split up into three different questions starting with the sentence: *''Imagine that you are in a cinema watching a movie when a man walks in and starts to shoot at people, what would you do?''* This question was followed by three 7-point semantic scales anchored by '*'Jump up – dive down, run away – crawl away, escape – hide''.* To avoid the possibility that people instantly knew that this question was related to the action described in the text, two distraction questions were added with the same set-up.

Moreover, this study measured what effects different writing formats had on the level of identification, narrative presence and the persons' emotional engagement (De Graaf et al., 2012). Additionally, the action simulation, related to the previously mentioned mental simulation, was measured as well. These four dependent variables were measured with different items on a 7-point Likert scale anchored by ''*totally disagree – totally agree''.*

The level of identification was measured with six items starting with: *''While reading…''.* These six items were all related to imagining how it would be to be Adam, for example*; ''I felt for the eyewitness Adam, I imaged how it would be to be in the position of Adam ''* (de Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders, & Beentjes, 2012). The reliability of the six items measuring the level of identification was good (α=.90).

The variable action simulation was measured starting with *''While reading …''* followed by seven sentences that suggested motion, for example: *'' I felt like I was carrying out the actions that Adam carried out, I felt like I was moving through the room like Adam''.* The reliability was good (α=.89).

The seven items that measured the narrative presence of the reader are based on research carried out by De Graaf et al. (2012) and are formulated as follows:*'' While reading …''* continuing with a sentence related to how the reader imaged to be in the world of the article, for example: *''I was in the world of the article, I had the feeling I was present at the incident in this article.''* The reliability was good (α = .92).

The emotional engagement of the reader was measured with four items: *''I found the article moving, the article aroused emotions, the article did not arouse any emotions''* (de Graaf, Hoeken, Sanders, & Beentjes, 2012). The reliability was also good (α = .89).

Finally, the personality of the participants was taken into account due to the possibility that some results might be influenced solely by the personality of that person. The items measuring personality were: *extraversion* (α=.78)*; agreeableness* (α = .40)*; concientiousness* (α=.42)*; emotionally stable* (α=43)*; openness to experiences* (α=.21) (Gosling, Rentfrow & Swann, 2003). Due to the low reliability of four of the five items, the choice has been made to not take these items into further account for this study.

PROCEDURE

The participants of this experiment were approached randomly at the Radboud University and asked for ten minutes of their time to take part in a study about the effects of crime narratives. The participants were told that they would get a scratch card with which they could win €25.000 after they had filled out the questionnaire. People who were willing to participate were given a text including a questionnaire printed in hard copy. The first page introduced the topic and explained what was expected of them whereas the text was presented on the second page. In the introduction the participants could read that this questionnaire focused on their opinion about news articles. It also stated that everything they filled out remained confidential. After reading the text, the participants were instructed to not look at the text anymore but focus on the questions instead.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

The statistical procedures that were carried out for this study are two-way analyses of variance and one-way ANOVA'S.

RESULTS

Intended behaviour

Intended behaviour was measured with three items; *Jump up – dive down, run away – crawl away, escape – hide.* These items were analysed separately.

Table 1

Mean scores and standard deviations of intended behaviour (1= jump up; 7 = dive down. 1 = run away; 7 = crawl away. 1 = escape; 7 = hide).

	Narrative format						News format					
	Hide			Escape			Hide			Escape		
	M	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Jump up - dive down	6.23	1.10	30	6.52	0.79	29	6.67	0.76	30	6.23	0.81	31
Run away- crawl away	5.30	1.69	30	5.31	2.0	29	5.86	1.08	28	4.55	1.65	31
Escape- hide	4.33	1.82	30	4.10	2.19	29	5.03	1.61	30	4.42	1.82	31

Jump up – dive down. A two-way analysis of variance showed no significant main effect of genre on the intention to jump up – dive down (F (1, 116) < 1), neither was a significant main effect found of action on the item jump up – dive down (F (1, 116) < 1). The interaction effect was however statistically significant (F (1, 116) = 5.15, p = .025).

Figure 1

Interaction effect of genre and action on the intention to jump up – dive down (1 = jump up; 7 = dive down).

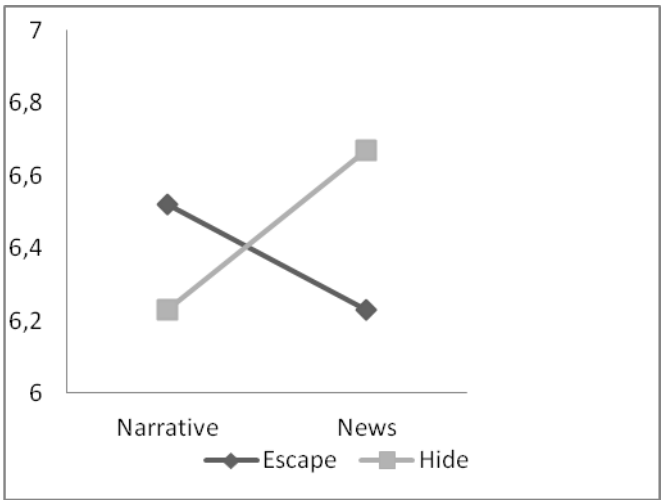


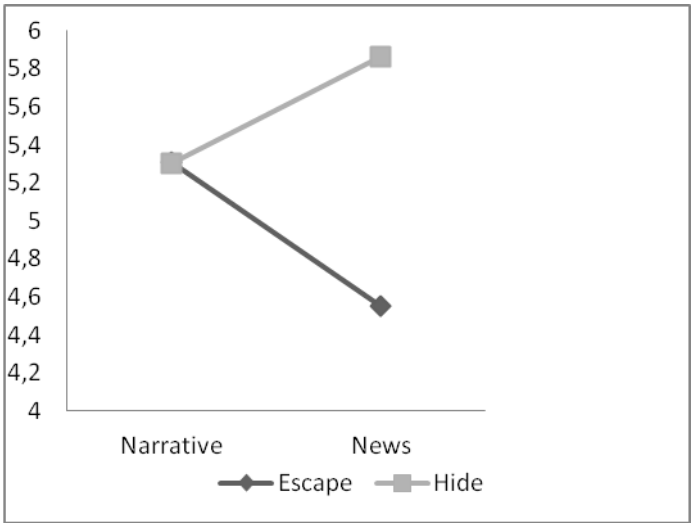
Figure 1 illustrates that the readers of the narrative text with the suggestion to hide, chose to dive down. The readers of the news with the suggestion to escape also chose to dive down. The readers of the other two texts also leaned more towards diving down, instead of jumping up, but the choice of the readers of the news text with the suggestion to hide was the most convinced choice. The means and standard deviations can be found in table 1.

Run away – crawl away. A two-way analysis of variance showed no significant main effect of genre on the intention to run away – crawl away (F (1, 114) = < 1). A significant

main effect was found of action on the item run away - crawl away (F (1, 114) = 4.57, p = .035). The readers of the texts insinuating escaping (M = 3.19, SD = 1.48), are more likely to run away and therefore less likely to crawl away than the readers of the text including the suggestion the hide (M = 3.26, SD = 1.14); they were less likely to run away. The interaction effect was also significant (F (1, 114) = 4.72, p = .032). See figure 2.

Figure 2

Interaction effect of action and genre on the item run away- crawl away (1 = run away; 7 = crawl away).



As showed in Figure 2, the readers of the narratives score similarly high on the scale towards running away (M =5.31, SD = 1.84). The narrative including the suggestion to hide had the tendency to choose the option crawl away, whereas the readers of the narrative text including the suggestion to escape did almost the same. The readers of the news text suggesting to hide scored relatively high on the scale towards crawling away, and the readers of the text in which the main character escaped the cinema scored lower on the scale, leaning more towards running away. Means and standards deviations can be found in table 1.

Escape – hide. A two-way ANOVA showed no significant main effect of genre on the item escape – hide (F (1, 116) = 2.21, p = .140). No statistically significant main effect found of action on the item escape – hide (F (1, 116) = 1.52, p = 219), nor an interaction effect (F (1, 116) < 1).

Intended behaviour versus the baseline

The fifth version of the questionnaire was carried out by the participants that did not read a text. This version was added to form a baseline to which comparisons with the four conditions could be made.

Jump up – dive down. A one-way analysis of variance showed no significant effect of the condition on the item jump up –dive down (F (4, 145) = 1.30, p = .272).

Run away – crawl away. A one-way analysis of variance showed a significant effect of the condition on the item run away – crawl away (F (4, 143) = 2.46, p = .048). The effect of the item run away – crawl away was significant. A post hoc Bonferroni showed that the two news formats differed significantly from one another (p = .026).

Table 2

Means and standard deviations of condition and the item run away – crawl away (1 = run away; 7 = crawl away).

	M	*SD*	*n*
Baseline	5.40	1.59	30
Narrative/hide	5.30	1.69	30
Narrative/escape	5.31	2.02	29
News/hide	5.86	1.08	28
News/escape	4.55	1.65	31

The news text including the suggestion to escape differed significantly from the news text with the suggestion to hide, of which the readers tended to score closer to running away. The readers of the news text with the suggestion to hide chose to crawl away.

Escape – hide. A one-way analysis of variance showed no significant effect on the condition and the item escape - hide (F (4, 145) = 1.06, p = .379).

In table 3 the mean scores and standard deviations of the variables identification, narrative presence, action simulation and emotional response can be found.

Table 3

Mean scores and standard deviations of identification (1 = I strongly disagree; 7 = I strongly agree), narrative presence (1 = I strongly disagree; 7 = I strongly agree), action simulation (1 = I strongly disagree; 7 = I strongly agree) and emotional response (1 = low; 7 = high) as a function of action and genre.

	Narrative format						News format					
	Hide			Escape			Hide			Escape		
	M	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	*n*
Identification	4.70	1.22	30	4.92	1.13	29	4.33	1.49	30	3.89	1.21	3
Narrative presence	4.82	1.27	30	4.89	1.46	29	4.75	1.27	30	4.20	1.30	31
Action simulation	3.18	1.31	30	3.66	1.60	29	3.34	1.52	30	2.75	1.23	31
Emotional response	4.61	1.45	30	4.97	1.19	29	4.80	1.36	30	4.40	1.34	31

Identification. A two-way analysis of variance showed a significant main effect of genre on identification (F (1, 116) = 9.26, p = .003). Readers of the narrative text showed a higher degree of identification than the readers of the news. However, no significant main effect was found of action on identification (F (1, 116) = < 1). The interaction effect was also not significant (F (1, 116) = 2.04, p = .156). This is in line with the following hypothesis: H1; narrative journalistic texts about crime arouse a higher level of identification with the readers than non-narrative news texts.

Narrative Presence. A two-way analysis of variance showed no significant main effect of genre on narrative presence (F (1, 116) = 2.47, p = .119). Neither was a si gnificant main effect found of action on narrative presence (F (1, 116) = 1.02, p = .316). The interaction effect was also not significant (F (1, 116) = 1.61, p = .206). The outcome does not correspond with the formulated hypothesis: H2; narrative journalistic texts about crime arouse a higher level of narrative presence with the readers than non-narrative news texts.

Action Simulation. A two-way analysis of variance showed no significant main effect of genre on action stimulation (F (1, 116) = 2.02, p = .158. Neither was a significant main effect found of action on action simulation (F (1, 116) < 1). The interaction effect was however significant (F (1, 116) = 4.25, p = .041).

Figure 3

Interaction effect of action simulation on genre and action (1 = totally disagree; 7 = totally agree).

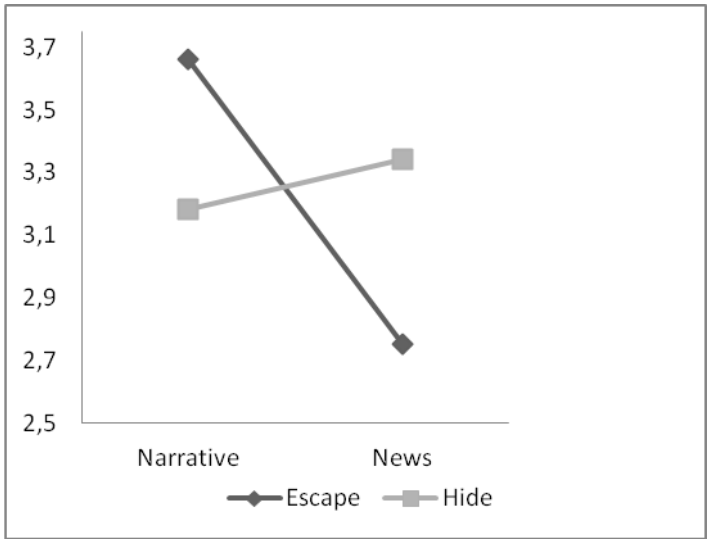


Figure 3 illustrates the interaction effect of genre and action, on action simulation. The results show that the readers of the narrative text with the suggestion to escape experienced a higher degree of action simulation than the readers of the narrative text including the suggestion to hide. The readers of the news text that suggested hiding scored higher on action simulation than the group of readers that read the news text in which the main character escaped. Means and standard deviations can be found in table 3. These results are not in line with the hypothesis: H3; narrative journalistic texts about crime arouse a higher level of action simulation with the readers than non-narrative news texts.

Emotional Response. A two-way analysis of variance showed no significant main effect of genre on emotional response (F (1, 116) < 1). Nor was a significant main effect found of action on emotional response (F (1, 116) < 1), and the interaction effect was also not statistically significant (F (1, 116) = 2.43, p = .121). This is not in line with the fourth hypothesis: H4; narrative journalistic texts about crime arouse a higher level of emotional engagement with the readers than non-narrative news texts.

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to find out whether journalistic narratives lead to higher levels of identification, narrative presence, action simulation and emotional engagement than regular journalistic texts. Additionally, this study also explored if readers can learn from narratives in a way that their intentional behaviour is affected by action verbs in the text. After analysing and interpreting the data, a total of six effects were found. The following paragraphs will reveal whether these effects correspond with the hypotheses and the research question. An explanation for these results will be given together with a critical reflection on the choices that were made during this study, including implications for further research.

Starting with intended behaviour; the first item 'jump up – dive down' showed an interaction effect which did not correspond with the hypothesis. The news texts with the suggestion to hide, scored high on the scale towards diving down, whereas the narrative with the suggestion to hide scored a lot lower on that scale. This contradicts the theory that implied that narratives arouse more attention and that readers commit more to narratives than to other written pieces (Tal-or & Cohen, 2007; Zwaan, 1991). The commitment to a text, should have lead to better processing the action verbs jumping up and crawling, making the readers feel like they experienced these movements themselves (Bergen, 2007). The narrative texts did the exact same opposite; the choice of the readers of the text with the suggestion to hide leaned more towards jumping up, and the readers of the text with the suggestion to escape chose to dive down. The reason for this could be that the readers of the narratives instantly knew that this text format could not be found in a newspaper, and therefore displayed uncooperative behaviour. This would explain why the readers filled out the opposite intended behaviour of both action verbs. The readers of the news texts did not experience anything unfamiliar and therefore displayed the behaviour that was expected if they would read about the action verbs. It could be a suggestion for further research to find out whether this reaction of the participants is logical. A similar experiment can be carried out but with additional questions checking whether the participants believe this is a real news article. Examples for questions could be *''Do you think this article is extracted from a news paper? Do you think this writing style is used often in newspapers? Do you believe that this incident happened?''* It would also be interesting to look at the levels of attention and compare news texts with narratives. Detailed questions about the texts could be asked in a possible follow-up study.

The second effect that was found was a main effect of action on the intended behaviour to run away or crawl away. The readers of both the news text and the narrative that suggested escaping, are more likely to run away. This corresponds partly with the hypothesis; only in regards to the narrative. The reason behind could lie within the context of the action verbs, that differs for all four texts. This will be explained for the sixth effect.

The third effect was also related to the item 'run away – crawl away' and showed an interaction effect. The news text with the suggestion to hide made the readers choose for the option to crawl away and the news text with the suggestion to escape made the readers favour a score more towards running away. The hypothesis stated that the narrative text should have caused this effect. However, there was hardly a difference in results when it comes to the narrative texts. Both suggestions score similarly more towards crawling away. A reason for this could be that the action verbs only have the right effect when they are placed in a text that the reader 'believe'. As the participants were told that they were going to read a news texts, they did not expect the get a narrative. Therefore they might have gotten confused or started to show uncooperative behaviour. As for the news texts, this means that the scores correspond with the action verbs in the text. A suggestion for further research overlaps with the previously mentioned follow-up study about the level of attention readers have for a news text compared to a narrative.

Another significant effect was found for the item 'run away – crawl away'. The news items differ more from each other than the narratives. This means the action verbs were more effective in the news texts than in the narratives which underlines the explanations given for the previous effects. Another explanation can be found in the context of the action verbs. The news text with the suggestion to escape was the only text that mentioned the word '*'exit*'' in the following sentence '*'We jumped up and started to run towards the exit of the cinema''*. In the other three texts the direction in which the action was heading is not mentioned at all. This could have caused the news texts to differ more from each other.

The variable identification caused the fifth effect as a function of genre. The readers of the narratives experienced a higher degree of identification than the readers of the news texts, as expected. This corresponds with the hypothesis and is not directly related to intended behaviour. That readers can identify more with the character in the narratives does not mean that they instantly follow their actions.

Finally, the sixth effect was an interaction effect between action and genre on action simulation. The overall level of action simulation was relatively low. The narrative with the suggestion to escape had the highest score and the news text with the suggestion to escape score the lowest on action simulation. The texts with the suggestion to hide both scored similarly in the middle. An explanation for this could be that the context of the action verbs insinuated this specific outcome. The contexts were formulated in narrative as ‘*’Adam jumped up instinctively and started to run’’* or *‘’Adam dived down instinctively and started to crawl’’.* In the news texts the context of the action verbs was as follows: ‘*’We jumped up and started to run towards the exit of the cinema’’* or *‘’We dived down and started to crawl around the chairs’’*. The difference between the two contexts of the action verbs related to escaping is that Adam runs towards the exit in the news texts, whereas he escapes into the cinema hall afterwards. This part about running towards to exit is left out in the narrative. Possibly the level of action simulation is affected by the context of the action verbs. In this case the readers score lower on action simulation due to the direction in which the character in the story runs. It could be a suggestion for further research to study the effect of the context in which the action verbs occur. The difference in contexts could have been a limitation in this study. As researched by Glenberg and Kaschak (2002) action verbs are processed faster if the motion is directed towards the person, instead of away from the person. *Could this also be the case if the direction in which the action is heading is more specified?* Whether the direction in which the character moves or handles can influence the process could be another suggestion for further research.

The research question asked: C*an crime narratives influence the intentional behaviour of its readers?* Crime narratives do lead to more identification with the readers. In a societal and communication context this is positive because it means that readers mediate more empathic feelings towards the victims or characters in the news story, which also overlaps with the research of Shen, Ahern and Baker (2014). These findings have practical applications for both individuals and the media. Individuals might benefit from crime narratives in a similar way; more empathy and understanding for news issues might overcome confused and negative feelings about topics in the news. The media might raise interest for newspapers by publishing interesting and qualitative news issues. This was also mentioned at the beginning of the report; Johnston and Graham (2011) implied that the media have to become more interesting to remain compelling enough for its readers. On the other hand, if news items

become too emotional or sensational, people's opinions might get influenced by the writing format. This could jeopardize the objectivity of the media and may arouse false emotions and opinions with the readers.

The outcome of this experiment does not confirm that crime narratives lead to higher levels of narrative presence and emotional engagement compared to regular news items. However, an effect was found in relation to action simulation; The readers of the narrative text with the suggestion to escape scored high on action simulation whereas the readers of the news text with that same suggestion had the lowest score. In regards to 'learning' from crime narratives the conclusion can be drawn that the narrative journalistic texts were not able to teach the readers.

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Appendix 1: Stimulus Material in Dutch

A1 Narratief x Rennen (416 woorden)

Filmvertoning eindigt in nachtmerrie voor bezoekers

Van onze verslaggever
Harm Vermeulen

UTAH – Pas op het laatste moment besloot de 25-jarige student Adam Jacobs met een vriend naar de film te gaan. Het was vrijdagavond en ze waren toe aan wat ontspanning. Hun keuze viel op *The Hurt Locker*. Opgewekt betraden ze de donkere zaal, niet wetend dat even later alles voorgoed zou veranderen.

Het was druk in de bioscoop, zoals elke vrijdagavond. Er hing een sterke geur van popcorn en er klonk uitgelaten gepraat en gelach. Adam keek om zich heen en zag op de tweede rij nog een aantal lege stoelen. Ze ploften neer. Al gauw verloor Adam zichzelf in de beelden die het grote scherm vertoonde.

Even na negen uur, toen de film net begonnen was, zag Adam een silhouet bij de nooduitgang. Vlak daarna hoorde hij knallen. Hij dacht aanvankelijk dat het om een grap ging, maar al snel besefte hij dat het tegendeel waar was.

Adam zag het silhouet veranderen in een man. Een man die een mitrailleur vasthield waarmee hij wild in het rond zwaaide. Die volledig in het zwart gekleed was en een legerhelm droeg. Adams hart bonkte in zijn keel toen hij zag dat de man zijn wapen op het publiek richtte. De kogels floten langs Adams oren, misten hem rakelings en sloegen naast en boven hem in. “Dit overleef ik nooit,” dacht hij. “Wat moet ik doen?”

Toen stopte de schutter even om zijn mitrailleur te herladen. Instinctief **sprong** Adam **omhoog** en begon hij te **rennen**. Hij **rende** zigzaggend langs de bioscoopstoelen terwijl hij hoorde dat er opnieuw geschoten werd. Hij bleef de trap op **rennen**, zo snel als hij kon, en keek niet achterom. Hij hoorde het paniekerige gegil van de overige bioscoopbezoekers en zag vanuit zijn ooghoeken mensen bewegingloos op de grond liggen. Hij **vluchtte** de bioscoophal in, op de voet gevolgd door zijn vriend. Daar bleven ze tot de schutter werd ingerekend door de politie.

“Ik kan het nog maar amper bevatten,” vertelt Adam een dag later. “Het was surrealistisch, alsof ik in een nachtmerrie was beland. Je verwacht niet dat zoiets gebeurt in een bioscoop. Mijn gedachten gaan uit naar de slachtoffers en hun naasten.”

De schietpartij vond plaats in Megaplex, de grootste bioscoop in Salt Lake City (Utah). Bij de schietpartij kwamen een man van 28 en een vrouw van 41 om het leven. Twaalf anderen zijn zwaargewond naar het ziekenhuis overgebracht. Over het motief van de 35-jarige dader is nog niets bekend.

A2 Narratief x Kruipen (416 woorden)

Filmvertoning eindigt in nachtmerrie voor bezoekers

Van onze verslaggever
Harm Vermeulen

UTAH – Pas op het laatste moment besloot de 25-jarige student Adam Jacobs met een vriend naar de film te gaan. Het was vrijdagavond en ze waren toe aan wat ontspanning. Hun keuze viel op *The Hurt Locker*. Opgewekt betraden ze de donkere zaal, niet wetend dat even later alles voorgoed zou veranderen.

Het was druk in de bioscoop, zoals elke vrijdagavond. Er hing een sterke geur van popcorn en er klonk uitgelaten gepraat en gelach. Adam keek om zich heen en zag op de tweede rij nog een aantal lege stoelen. Ze ploften neer. Al gauw verloor Adam zichzelf in de beelden die het grote scherm vertoonde.

Even na negen uur, toen de film net begonnen was, zag Adam een silhouet bij de nooduitgang. Vlak daarna hoorde hij knallen. Hij dacht aanvankelijk dat het om een grap ging, maar al snel besefte hij dat het tegendeel waar was.

Adam zag het silhouet veranderen in een man. Een man die een mitrailleur vasthield waarmee hij wild in het rond zwaaide. Die volledig in het zwart gekleed was en een legerhelm droeg. Adams hart bonkte in zijn keel toen hij zag dat de man zijn wapen op het publiek richtte. De kogels floten langs Adams oren, misten hem rakelings en sloegen naast en boven hem in. “Dit overleef ik nooit,” dacht hij. “Wat moet ik doen?”

Toen stopte de schutter even om zijn mitrailleur te herladen. Instinctief **dook** Adam **omlaag** en begon hij te **kruipen**. Hij **kroop** zigzaggend langs de bioscoopstoelen terwijl hij hoorde dat er opnieuw geschoten werd. Hij bleef over de grond **kruipen**, zo snel als hij kon, en keek niet omhoog. Hij hoorde het paniekerige gegil van de overige bioscoopbezoekers en zag vanuit zijn ooghoeken mensen bewegingloos op de grond liggen. Hij **verstopte** zich onder een stoel, naast hem deed zijn vriend hetzelfde. Daar bleven ze tot de schutter werd ingerekend door de politie.

“Ik kan het nog maar amper bevatten,” vertelt Adam een dag later. “Het was surrealistisch, alsof ik in een nachtmerrie was beland. Je verwacht niet dat zoiets gebeurt in een bioscoop. Mijn gedachten gaan uit naar de slachtoffers en hun naasten.”

De schietpartij vond plaats in Megaplex, de grootste bioscoop in Salt Lake City (Utah). Bij de schietpartij kwamen een man van 28 en een vrouw van 41 om het leven. Twaalf anderen zijn zwaargewond naar het ziekenhuis overgebracht. Over het motief van de 35-jarige dader is nog niets bekend.

B1 Nieuwsbericht x Rennen (416 woorden)

Filmvertoning eindigt in nachtmerrie voor bezoekers

Van onze verslaggever
Harm Vermeulen

UTAH – Bij een schietpartij in een bioscoop in Salt Lake City (Utah) zijn vrijdagavond twee mensen om het leven gekomen. Daarnaast raakten twaalf mensen zwaargewond. Vanuit het niets opende een man met een mitrailleur het vuur terwijl nietsvermoedende bioscoopbezoekers naar de openingsscène van *The Hurt Locker* keken.

De schutter kon door de politie worden ingerekend. Het zou gaan om een 35-jarige man die niet eerder in aanraking is geweest met de politie. Over zijn motief is nog niets bekend. "Het onderzoek is op dit moment nog in volle gang," aldus een woordvoerder van de politie. "De auto van de verdachte is voor sporenonderzoek in beslag genomen. Zijn woning is inmiddels doorzocht." Het zal nog een tijd duren voordat zich een duidelijk beeld heeft gevormd van de schutter en zijn beweegredenen.

De schietpartij begon even na negen uur, toen de film net begonnen was. Het was op dat moment erg druk in de bioscoopzaal. De schutter kwam de zaal vermoedelijk binnen via de nooduitgang, bleef daar kort staan en opende vervolgens het vuur. Volgens verschillende ooggetuigen hield hij een mitrailleur vast waarmee hij wild in het rond zwaaide. Hij zou volledig in het zwart gekleed zijn geweest en een legerhelm hebben gedragen. Hij richtte zijn wapen meermalen op het publiek en zou daarbij tientallen kogels hebben gelost.

"De schutter stopte een paar keer om zijn mitrailleur te herladen," aldus de 25-jarige student Adam Jacobs, die met een vriend in de zaal zat. "We **sprongen omhoog** en begonnen naar de uitgang van de bioscoop te **rennen**."

De chaos tijdens de schietpartij was enorm, blijkt uit de verklaring van Adam. "We waren net de trap op aan het **rennen** op het moment dat de paniek groot was. Er klonk voortdurend gegil en overal lagen mensen bewegingloos op de grond. We **renden** door en **vluchtten** de bioscoophal in. Het was surrealistisch," aldus Adam.

De schietpartij vond plaats in Megaplex, de grootste bioscoop in Salt Lake City. Bij de schietpartij kwamen een man van 28 en een vrouw van 41 om het leven. Twaalf anderen zijn zwaargewond naar een ziekenhuis in de omgeving overgebracht.

Tijdens een ingelaste persconferentie verklaarde gouverneur John Huntsman vrijdagavond: "Ik nog maar amper bevatten dat dit in onze gemeenschap heeft plaatsgevonden. Je verwacht niet dat zoiets gebeurt in een bioscoop. Het is alsof we in een nachtmerrie zijn beland, maar het is helaas niets dan werkelijkheid. Mijn gedachten gaan uit naar de slachtoffers en hun naasten."

B2 Nieuwsbericht x Kruipen (411 woorden)

Filmvertoning eindigt in nachtmerrie voor bezoekers

Van onze verslaggever
Harm Vermeulen

UTAH – Bij een schietpartij in een bioscoop in Salt Lake City (Utah) zijn vrijdagavond twee mensen om het leven gekomen. Daarnaast raakten twaalf mensen zwaargewond. Vanuit het niets opende een man met een mitrailleur het vuur terwijl nietsvermoedende bioscoopbezoekers naar de openingsscène van *The Hurt Locker* keken.

De schutter kon door de politie worden ingerekend. Het zou gaan om een 35-jarige man die niet eerder in aanraking is geweest met de politie. Over zijn motief is nog niets bekend. “Het onderzoek is op dit moment nog in volle gang,” aldus een woordvoerder van de politie. “De auto van de verdachte is voor sporenonderzoek in beslag genomen. Zijn woning is inmiddels doorzocht.” Het zal nog een tijd duren voordat zich een duidelijk beeld heeft gevormd van de schutter en zijn beweegredenen.

De schietpartij begon even na negen uur, toen de film net begonnen was. Het was op dat moment erg druk in de bioscoopzaal. De schutter kwam de zaal vermoedelijk binnen via de nooduitgang, bleef daar kort staan en opende vervolgens het vuur. Volgens verschillende ooggetuigen hield hij een mitrailleur vast waarmee hij wild in het rond zwaaide. Hij zou volledig in het zwart gekleed zijn geweest en een legerhelm hebben gedragen. Hij richtte zijn wapen meermalen op het publiek en zou daarbij tientallen kogels hebben gelost.

“De schutter stopte een paar keer om zijn mitrailleur te herladen,” aldus de 25-jarige student Adam Jacobs, die met een vriend in de zaal zat. “We **doken omlaag** en begonnen langs de bioscoopstoelen te **kruipen**.”

De chaos tijdens de schietpartij was enorm, blijkt uit de verklaring van Adam. “We waren net over de grond aan het **kruipen** op het moment dat de paniek groot was. Er klonk voortdurend gegil en overal lagen mensen bewegingloos op de grond. We **kropen** door en **verstopten** ons uiteindelijk onder een paar stoelen. Het was surrealistisch,” aldus Adam.

De schietpartij vond plaats in Megaplex, de grootste bioscoop in Salt Lake City. Bij de schietpartij kwamen een man van 28 en een vrouw van 41 om het leven. Twaalf anderen zijn zwaargewond naar een ziekenhuis in de omgeving overgebracht.

Tijdens een ingelaste persconferentie verklaarde gouverneur John Huntsman vrijdagavond: “Ik nog maar amper bevatten dat dit in onze gemeenschap heeft plaatsgevonden. Je verwacht niet dat zoiets gebeurt in een bioscoop. Het is alsof we in een nachtmerrie zijn beland, maar het is helaas niets dan werkelijkheid. Mijn gedachten gaan uit naar de slachtoffers en hun naasten.”

Appendix 2: Questionnaire in Dutch

Instructie

Voor dit onderzoek zijn we geïnteresseerd in de mening van mensen over krantenartikelen. Op de volgende pagina vind je een krantenartikel (*Algemeen Dagblad, 21 december 2009*). Lees het artikel zorgvuldig. Na het artikel volgt een aantal stellingen. Bij elke stelling wordt gevraagd in hoeverre je het met de stelling eens bent. Het gaat hierbij om je mening, er zijn dus geen foute antwoorden.
Deelname aan het onderzoek is geheel anoniem. De gegevens worden vertrouwelijk verwerkt.

Alvast bedankt voor je deelname!

***

Beantwoord alvast de volgende vragen:

1. Wat is je geslacht?

O Man
O Vrouw

2. Wat is je leeftijd?

_____ jaar

3. Wat is je nationaliteit?

_____

4. Wat is je moedertaal?

_____

5. Wat is de hoogste opleiding die je voltooid hebt of momenteel volgt?

0 Basisschool
0 Middelbare school
0 Middelbaar Beroeps Onderwijs
0 Hoger Beroeps Onderwijs
0 Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs

0 Anders, nl.: _____

<u>INSTRUCTIE</u> Blader vanaf nu niet meer terug naar het artikel.

Hieronder wordt telkens kort een situatie geschetst. Daarna wordt gevraagd wat je zelf zou doen als je in deze situatie zou belanden, waarbij steeds twee opties worden gegeven. Kies telkens één van de opties door op de schaal het bolletje van je keuze in te kleuren. Het is belangrijk dat je bij elke set van twee opties één bolletje inkleurt.

A) Stel je voor dat je in een ligstoel naast het zwembad ligt. Plotseling zie je een kind kopje onder gaan en niet meer boven komen. Wat zou je in deze situatie doen?

Ik zou…

1. *Hulp halen*	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	*Het water in duiken*
2. *Verstijven*	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	*Handelen*
3. *Blijven liggen*	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	*Mijn stoel uit springen*

B) Stel je voor dat je in een bioscoop naar een film aan het kijken bent. Plotseling komt iemand met een vuurwapen binnen en begint in het rond te schieten. Wat zou je in deze situatie doen?

Ik zou...

1. *Omhoog springen*	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	*Omlaag duiken*
2. *Weg rennen*	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	*Weg kruipen*
3. *Weg vluchten*	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	*Me verstoppen*

C) Stel je voor dat je in een winkelcentrum boodschappen aan het doen bent. Plotseling gooit iemand een baksteen door een winkelruit en rent weg. Wat zou je in deze situatie doen?

Ik zou…

1. *Weg lopen*	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	*Stil blijven staan*
2. *Verstijven*	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	*Handelen*

3. *Hulp halen* O O O O O O O *De gooier achterna rennen*

<u>INSTRUCTIE</u> Onderstaande stellingen gaan over het artikel dat je net gelezen hebt. Geef voor elke stelling aan in hoeverre je het ermee oneens/eens bent door op de schaal het bolletje van je keuze in te kleuren.

1. Tijdens het lezen heb ik meegeleefd met ooggetuige Adam

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

2. Tijdens het lezen stelde ik me voor hoe het zou zijn om in de positie van Adam te zijn

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

3. Tijdens het lezen heb ik me ingeleefd in Adam

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

4. Toen ik het artikel aan het lezen was, had ik het gevoel dat ik zelf meemaakte wat Adam meemaakte

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

5. Toen ik het artikel aan het lezen was, voelde ik niet mee met Adam

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

6. Tijdens het lezen was het alsof ik in mijn verbeelding zelf Adam was

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

7. Tijdens het lezen leek het alsof ik de handelingen uitvoerde die Adam uitvoerde

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

8. Tijdens het lezen was het alsof ik me net als Adam door de beschreven ruimtes bewoog

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

9. Toen ik het artikel aan het lezen was, was het alsof ik me in mijn verbeelding verplaatste zoals Adam zich verplaatste

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

10. Tijdens het lezen had ik het gevoel dat ik de bewegingen die Adam maakte nabootste

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

***

11. Tijdens het lezen was ik in mijn verbeelding in de wereld van het artikel

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

12. Tijdens het lezen had ik het gevoel alsof ik bij de gebeurtenissen in het artikel aanwezig was

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

13. Toen ik het artikel aan het lezen was, had ik geen levendig beeld van de gebeurtenissen in het artikel

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

14. Toen ik het artikel aan het lezen was, leek het alsof ik er in gedachten bij was

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

15. Terwijl ik het artikel las, was het alsof ik aanwezig was in de ruimtes die beschreven werden

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

16. Tijdens het lezen maakte ik me een voorstelling van de gebeurtenissen die in het artikel plaatsvonden

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

17. Terwijl ik het nieuwsbericht las, zag ik voor me wat er in het bericht beschreven werd

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

18. Ik vond het artikel aangrijpend

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

→

19. Het artikel riep emoties in me op

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

20. Het artikel liet me koud

Helemaal mee oneens O O O O O O O *Helemaal mee eens*

21. Het artikel raakte me

Helemaal mee oneens	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	*Helemaal mee eens*

***

<u>INSTRUCTIE</u> Hieronder staat telkens een set van twee eigenschappen. Geef voor elke set aan in hoeverre deze bij jou past door op de schaal het bolletje van je keuze in te kleuren. Het is belangrijk dat je aangeeft in hoeverre de <u>twee eigenschappen samen</u> bij jou passen, ook als één van de twee minder/meer bij je past dan de andere.

<u>Ik zie mezelf als:</u>	helemaal mee oneens						helemaal mee eens
1. Extravert, enthousiast	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
2. Kritisch, aanvallend	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
3. Betrouwbaar, gedisciplineerd	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
4. Angstig, snel van streek	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
5. Open voor nieuwe ervaringen, complex	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
6. Gereserveerd, rustig	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
7. Sympathiek, warm	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
8. Ongeorganiseerd, nonchalant	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
9. Kalm, emotioneel stabiel	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
10. Conventioneel, niet creatief	O	O	O	O	O	O	O

***** EINDE *****

Bijlage A. Verklaring geen fraude en plagiaat

Aan het einde van het traject inleveren bij het secretariaat tegelijk met de digitale versie van de scriptie op CD-rom.

Ondergetekende
Alexandra Slebus, s4488733

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verklaart dat deze scriptie volledig oorspronkelijk is en uitsluitend door hem/haarzelf geschreven is. Bij alle informatie en ideeën ontleend aan andere bronnen, heeft ondergetekende expliciet en in detail verwezen naar de vindplaatsen. De erin gepresenteerde onderzoeksgegevens zijn door ondergetekende zelf verzameld op de in de scriptie beschreven wijze.

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