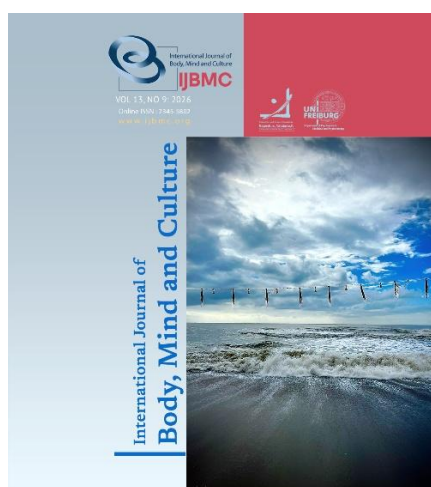


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Film Reception, Emotion Regulation, and Cultural Identity in Kazakhstan: A Three-Pathway Conceptual Model

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This article aimed to develop a non-clinical conceptual model explaining how film reception may create conditions for emotion regulation, autobiographical meaning-making, and cultural identity negotiation in Kazakhstan.

Methods and Materials: A theory-building critical narrative synthesis was conducted. The review integrated 63 sources, including 50 interdisciplinary sources and 13 sources focused on Kazakhstan or Central Asia. Sources were identified through targeted searches in Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, and JSTOR, supplemented by citation tracing. Selection was based on conceptual relevance, credibility, and contribution to model constructs, pathways, moderators, boundary conditions, or adverse alternatives. Conceptual saturation was reached when additional sources no longer changed the model. No participants, interventions, clinical procedures, or new empirical data were involved.

Findings: The synthesis proposed a parsimonious three-pathway model. Film reception begins with perceived narrative and form and passes through a reception gateway involving narrative engagement and viewer stance, including identification, resistance, irony, or moral distance. Three conditional pathways were identified: an affective-regulatory pathway, an autobiographical-narrative pathway, and a cultural-relational pathway. These pathways may contribute to proximal psychosocial integration, defined as viewing-related change in meaning coherence, self-understanding, and relational or cultural belonging. The model also includes three moderator clusters: film and viewing conditions, viewer resources and history, and sociocultural-linguistic position. Positive, null, and adverse outcomes, including distress, rumination, avoidance, stereotype reinforcement, and alienation, are treated as theoretically meaningful.

Conclusion: Film reception should not be assumed to produce therapeutic benefit or uniform identity change. The proposed model offers a bounded, testable framework for future audience research in Kazakhstan.

Keywords: Film Reception, Emotion Regulation, Cultural Identity, Narrative Identity, Audience Studies.

Introduction

Film reception can be studied as a psychocultural event in which audiovisual form, bodily response, interpretation, and social meaning meet. A viewer may become absorbed in a story, resist a character, recall a personal episode, or discuss a difficult moral problem after the screening. These possibilities make film relevant to body-mind-culture scholarship because they connect embodied response with interpretation and social meaning. The theoretical task is to identify which processes might occur, in what order, under which conditions, and with what positive, null, or adverse consequences.

Existing literatures leave three specific gaps. Film theory explains embodied and emotional spectatorship, media psychology models engagement and identification, emotion-regulation research specifies regulatory strategies, and narrative and cultural psychology examine memory and belonging. Yet these traditions rarely distinguish the film stimulus from the viewer's stance, separate immediate affect from durable identity change, or place beneficial and adverse outcomes in one testable architecture. Health-humanities accounts also offer a strong interpretive rationale but often stop short of specifying measurable pathways. The missing contribution is therefore not another general claim that films matter; it is a parsimonious model that connects reception, regulation, autobiographical meaning, and cultural positioning without treating identification or benefit as automatic.

Kazakhstan is used here as a theory-sharpening case rather than as an empirical sample. Its multilingual practices, regional and rural-urban trajectories, generational memories, family relations, and layered civic and ethnic identifications make background assumptions in universal models visible (Dave, 2007; Kudaibergenova, 2017; Laruelle, 2016). The article does not infer how Kazakhstani viewers actually respond. Instead, it identifies contextual distinctions that future studies must measure rather than leave as undifferentiated demographics.

The article makes three linked contributions. First, it reorganises seven analytical constructs into an input, a

reception gateway, three primary pathways, and one narrow outcome: proximal psychosocial integration. Second, it specifies alternative viewer stances, adverse and null outcomes, three moderator clusters, and only two feedback processes, making the framework more testable. Third, it translates the revised model into three priority studies while maintaining clear temporal and evidential boundaries.

Methods and Materials

Study Design

This article uses a theory-building critical narrative synthesis. This is a purposive and iterative method for integrating heterogeneous conceptual and empirical literatures into an explicit explanatory model (Jaakkola, 2020; Snyder, 2019). The unit of analysis was each source's contribution to a construct, mechanism, boundary condition, alternative outcome, or contextual moderator. The method does not estimate effect sizes or claim exhaustive coverage; its purpose is conceptual differentiation, integration, and generation of propositions that can be tested and rejected.

Source Identification, Appraisal, and Corpus Adequacy

Targeted searches were conducted in Scopus, Web of Science, PsycINFO, and JSTOR and updated through 25 July 2026. Search terms were organised around four clusters: film emotion and embodied spectatorship; narrative engagement and viewer-character relations; emotion regulation, autobiographical memory, narrative identity, and well-being; and Kazakhstan, Central Asia, multilingualism, post-Soviet identity, film, media, and audiences. Backward reference checking and forward citation tracing supplemented database searching. The publication status and bibliographic details of the 2024-2026 Kazakhstan-related items were rechecked against publisher or proceedings records during revision.

The searches were purposive and iteratively refined rather than based on a fixed systematic-review sampling frame. The retained-source log contains 63 unique publications after deduplication, comprising 50 interdisciplinary theory, method, or measurement sources

and 13 Kazakhstan- or Central Asia-focused sources. The original search log did not preserve database-level hit counts, the pre-deduplication total, the number of duplicates removed, or the numbers excluded at title, abstract, and full-text stages; these values cannot be reconstructed reliably. The selection flow therefore cannot be quantified beyond the retained corpus, and no retrospective counts or PRISMA-style flow diagram are supplied. The auditable selection trail begins with the 63 included sources and records how each informed the model. This constraint is acknowledged below as a limitation.

A source was retained when it clarified at least one construct or relationship, supplied evidence relevant to a boundary or adverse pathway, or provided grounded contextual knowledge for Kazakhstan or Central Asia. Purely descriptive filmographies, opinion pieces, unverifiable claims, and publications that did not alter the model were excluded. Because the corpus includes theoretical books, conceptual articles, scale-development studies, reviews, and empirical audience research, no single quality score was appropriate. Appraisal instead considered publication provenance, peer-review or academic-press status, methodological transparency, traceability to the original source, relevance to the stated claim, and whether the inference remained within the source design. Conceptual saturation was reached when further searching did not add a distinct construct, revise a principal relationship, reveal a new adverse alternative, or add a Kazakhstan-relevant moderator.

Conceptual Synthesis and Model Audit Trail

Each included source was entered in a matrix with its disciplinary field, construct, proposed mechanism, level of analysis, evidence type, temporal scale, Kazakhstan relevance, and implication for the model. The synthesis proceeded in three passes. The first separated seven constructs that operate at different analytical levels: perceived narrative and form; narrative engagement and viewer stance; embodied affect; emotion regulation and co-regulation; autobiographical memory and narrative identity; cultural identity negotiation; and proximal psychosocial

integration. The second classified links as primary when they formed a theoretically necessary sequence supported across more than one literature, or as secondary when they depended on timing, discussion, or prior viewer resources. This pass replaced unrestricted bidirectionality with three directional pathways and two feedback processes. The third pass tested boundary conditions and explicitly added null and adverse outcomes.

Six Kazakhstan-based heuristic scenarios were used to test conceptual coverage: viewing a film in a more or less familiar language; interpreting conflict over elder or family authority; responding to rural-urban departure or return; encountering Soviet or post-Soviet memory; watching alone versus discussing the film with others; and encountering a distressing narrative that activates personal memory. These scenarios were derived from issues identified in the contextual literature and were not treated as audience data. They led to three revisions: identification was broadened to viewer stance so that resistance and moral distance were visible; contextual variables were grouped into three moderator clusters; and the outcome structure was expanded to include no lasting change, distress, rumination, avoidance, stereotype reinforcement, and alienation.

Scope and Viewing Levels

Film reception denotes a situated encounter with narrative, image, sound, language, bodily response, interpretation, memory, and possible discussion. Four viewing levels must be distinguished. Ordinary viewing is informal and has no planned therapeutic goal. Guided discussion is an educational or civic-reflective activity led by a facilitator. Cinematherapy assigns films within an ongoing professional therapeutic relationship, whereas clinical intervention research uses defined protocols, populations, ethics approval, and validated outcomes (Berg-Cross et al., 1990; Hamilton, 2024; Sacilotto et al., 2022). The present model concerns only ordinary viewing and guided discussion. It does not claim treatment, symptom reduction, or clinical benefit.

Findings and Results

Overview of the Revised Model

The synthesis retains seven analytical constructs but assigns them different roles. Perceived narrative and form constitute the input. Narrative engagement and viewer stance form the reception gateway. Embodied affect and emotion regulation form an affective-regulatory pathway; autobiographical memory and narrative identity form an autobiographical-narrative pathway; and cultural identity negotiation forms a cultural-relational pathway. These pathways converge on proximal psychosocial integration, defined narrowly as viewing-related change in meaning coherence, self-understanding, and relational or cultural belonging. The model predicts no universal sequence: pathways may operate separately, combine, stop, or produce adverse effects.

Health Humanities as an Interpretive Frame

Health humanities supplies an interpretive frame rather than a causal mechanism. It brings artistic narrative, embodiment, vulnerability, values, and cultural meaning into the study of human experience (Crawford et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2014). Narrative medicine contributes practices of close attention and reflective interpretation (Charon, 2001, 2006). Applied to film reception in Kazakhstan, this frame asks how audiovisual stories make language, family relations, loss, care, and historical memory available for reflection and discussion. It does not assume that exposure itself is beneficial.

Initial Reception: Narrative Engagement, Viewer Stance, and Embodied Affect

Film form can organise attention, arousal, expectation, and evaluation through narrative structure, performance, sound, rhythm, and image (Plantinga, 2009; Smith, 2003; Tan, 1996).

Embodied approaches add that cinematic experience is felt through the lived body and can activate sensory or cultural memory (Grodal, 2009; Marks, 2000; Sobchack, 2004). Work on embodied simulation further suggests a plausible route through which observed action and affect

become experientially salient, although such accounts do not determine how a specific audience interprets a scene (Gallese & Guerra, 2015/2020).

Taken together, foundational film scholarship supports embodied response as a construct, not a uniform effect (Plantinga & Smith, 1999; Smith, 1995).

Narrative engagement describes absorption and cognitive-emotional involvement, while viewer stance describes the position adopted toward a film or character. Transportation, engagement, and identification offer established ways to study absorption and perspective-taking (Busselle & Bilandzic, 2009; Cohen, 2001; Green & Brock, 2000). Fiction may simulate social possibilities, but simulation need not produce agreement (Mar & Oatley, 2008). The model therefore includes identification, empathy, and perspective-taking alongside resistance, rejection, irony, and moral distance. Identification is neither required for bodily response nor assumed to be beneficial; a resistant stance may be reflective, protective, or morally evaluative.

For Kazakhstan, scenes of family gathering, elder authority, rural-urban movement, mourning, language choice, or steppe landscapes are only illustrative hypotheses about potentially salient imagery. Their meaning cannot be inferred from the image itself. A scene may evoke recognition, nostalgia, indifference, discomfort, or rejection depending on the viewer's experience and position. This distinction prevents plausible cultural examples from being reported as demonstrated national responses.

Affective-Regulatory Pathway

Emotion expression and emotion regulation are distinct. Expression is the observable or reported manifestation of feeling; regulation refers to attempts to influence an emotion's occurrence, intensity, duration, interpretation, or expression (Gross, 1998, 2015). A film does not regulate emotion directly. It may provide cues or conditions under which a viewer labels feeling, creates symbolic distance, reappraises a conflict, suppresses expression, or discusses the response with others. These operations are performed by the viewer or through social interaction, and their effects depend

on strategy, timing, and context (Koole, 2009; McRae & Gross, 2020).

Four conditional affordances are proposed: emotion labelling through represented situations; symbolic distance from personally difficult material; reappraisal through alternative perspectives; and co-regulation through post-viewing discussion. Trait reappraisal and suppression can be measured with the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, while regulation difficulties require a distinct measure such as the DERS (Gratz & Roemer, 2004; Gross & John, 2003). These instruments do not establish that regulation occurred during a particular film and must be supplemented by state-specific items or qualitative accounts.

The pathway may also be dysregulatory. High arousal, unwanted memory activation, or an invalidating discussion can intensify distress, rumination, avoidance, or interpersonal conflict. Repeated stereotypes may be accepted rather than questioned. Meta-analytic evidence links some regulation strategies with psychopathology, but that evidence cannot be transferred automatically to ordinary viewing (Aldao et al., 2010). Differential-susceptibility theory further predicts that the same content may affect viewers differently (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013). Positive, null, and adverse responses must therefore be analysed together.

Autobiographical-Narrative Pathway

Narrative identity refers to an evolving account through which people connect reconstructed past, perceived present, and imagined future (McAdams, 2001; McAdams & McLean, 2013). Autobiographical memory is organised in relation to current goals and self-understanding rather than stored as a neutral archive (Conway, 2005).

Narrative coherence develops across the life course and depends on causal, thematic, and cultural resources (Bruner, 2004; Habermas & Bluck, 2000). These theories justify separating memory activation from later narrative elaboration.

A scene may evoke immediate personal resonance during or shortly after viewing, but this state response is not evidence of narrative-identity change. The model proposes a

longer-term pathway only when recalled experience is subsequently examined, contextualised, and linked across time in a differentiated personal account. The quality of that elaboration is a pathway process; any later change in meaning coherence or self-understanding is assessed separately as an outcome. Repeated viewing or discussion may contribute, but the claim requires longitudinal evidence. Memory activation may equally produce repetitive recall, a contamination-focused story, or no durable change. The earlier assumption that film-borrowed narrative resources simply enter a viewer's life story is therefore replaced by a conditional and falsifiable proposition.

Cultural-Relational Pathway in Kazakhstan

Cultural identity is treated as positioning rather than a fixed essence (Hall, 1990). Social and ethnic identity theories show that group membership, belonging, comparison, and adaptation can shape self-understanding (Phinney, 1992; Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Acculturation and identity-integration research adds that multiple affiliations may coexist without forming a single uniform orientation (Berry, 1997; Schwartz et al., 2010). Culture also shapes self-construal and emotional meaning (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Within this pathway, film may prompt recognition, misrecognition, identity negotiation, resistance, or repositioning. Any subsequent change in relational or cultural belonging is assessed separately as an outcome.

Linguistic-Cultural Position

Kazakh, Russian, English, and other repertoires organise access, intimacy, status, and identity in different settings (Dave, 2007; Fierman, 2006; Smagulova, 2008). In film reception, soundtrack, dubbing, subtitle, or discussion language may alter processing fluency, the availability of emotion labels, cues for autobiographical recall, perceived authenticity, character alignment, and identity salience. These are hypotheses to be tested, not effects established by preference data.

The available studies justify careful sampling but not causal claims. Using a 2017 sample of 300 Kazakh-speaking

Astana residents aged 20-70, [Yessenbekova et al. \(2024\)](#) reported associations among public events, language format, television preferences, and ratings, as well as positive responses to Kazakh-language programming. An online survey of 1,000 respondents from all regions documented regional variation in language attitudes and examined Kazakh-English bilingualism and technology-mediated language promotion ([Tlepbergen et al., 2025](#)). Neither study tests emotion regulation or identity change following film reception.

Life-Course and Social Location

Generation, region, rural-urban trajectory, family position, and gender norms are grouped as a second moderator cluster. Films about migration, departure, return, care, authority, or social change may be interpreted through direct memory, family narration, or unfamiliarity. Scholarship on Kazakhstani cinema and nation-building demonstrates how representations of modernity and belonging have changed across the post-Soviet period ([Isaacs, 2015](#); [Norris, 2012](#); [Rouland et al., 2013](#)). Work on national narratives and social change further supports treating generation and mobility as positions to investigate, not cultural types ([Kudaibergenova, 2017](#); [Laruelle, 2016](#)).

Historical-Relational Meaning and Viewing Environment

Post-Soviet memory, civic and ethnic positioning, and the social setting of reception form the third cluster. Digital ethnography shows that national identification is negotiated through contemporary media practices rather than inherited unchanged ([Kudaibergenova, 2019](#)). Platform research similarly indicates that historical and cultural documentaries can generate stronger interaction than political documentaries and that participation varies by age ([Sultanbayeva et al., 2026](#)). A corpus of 100,502 reviews of 4,943 titles from 2001-2025 makes Russian, Kazakh, and code-switched evaluation observable at scale, but it does not establish psychological effects ([Yeshpanov, 2026](#)).

Relational terms require participant-led definition. Uyat is used here provisionally for context-sensitive judgments often translated as shame; ar-namys for dignity or honour; and izet for enacted respect or deference. None is treated as

a stable trait, a direct translation of a clinical construct, or a value shared identically across Kazakhstan. Care denotes relational support or obligation and must likewise be specified by relationship and situation. These terms function only as sensitising concepts for interviews and culturally adapted items.

Central Outcome: Proximal Psychosocial Integration

The model's central outcome is proximal psychosocial integration, defined as viewing-related change in three separable dimensions: meaning coherence, self-understanding, and relational or cultural belonging. It is informed by eudaimonic psychological well-being and social well-being, particularly purpose, positive relations, social integration, and coherence ([Keyes, 1998](#); [Ryff, 1989](#)). Autonomy, competence, and relatedness from self-determination theory can be examined as secondary explanatory resources rather than additional definitions of the same outcome ([Deci & Ryan, 2000](#); [Ryan & Deci, 2001](#)).

Immediate positive or negative affect is not part of the central outcome; it is a state response that may precede later meaning-making and can be measured separately with instruments such as PANAS ([Watson et al., 1988](#)). General life satisfaction and subjective well-being are distal candidate outcomes, not evidence that a single viewing episode produced integration ([Diener, 1984](#); [Diener et al., 1985](#)). Until the new construct has been validated, its three dimensions should be analysed separately rather than combined into an untested total score. Complex or painful reception may increase, leave unchanged, or reduce integration.

Meaningful entertainment research helps explain why sadness or moral difficulty cannot be equated with poor reception, but it also does not make such experiences growth-promoting by definition ([Oliver & Bartsch, 2010](#); [Oliver & Raney, 2011](#)). The direction, magnitude, and duration of change remain empirical questions.

A Parsimonious Three-Pathway Model

The primary sequence begins with perceived narrative and form, passes through initial reception, and then branches into three pathways. The affective-regulatory

pathway links embodied affect with state regulation, co-regulation, or dysregulation. The autobiographical-narrative pathway links personal resonance with memory activation and later narrative elaboration. The cultural-relational pathway links recognition or misrecognition with identity negotiation, resistance, or repositioning. These process measures are analytically distinct from the endpoint dimensions of meaning coherence, self-understanding, and relational or cultural belonging. Each pathway may contribute to positive, null, or negative change in proximal psychosocial integration, and none is assumed to occur for every viewer or film.

Three moderator clusters replace the earlier list of six partially overlapping dimensions. Film and viewing conditions include genre, affective intensity, film language, representational fit, viewing setting, and opportunities for discussion. Viewer resources and history include prior experience, media literacy, baseline regulation capacity, autobiographical relevance, and prior psychosocial resources. Sociocultural-linguistic position includes language repertoire, generation and post-Soviet memory, region and rural-urban trajectory, and family and gender position. A study should select only moderators relevant to its specified pathway.

Only two feedback processes are retained. Within an episode, reappraisal or discussion may revise the initial viewer stance. Across time, meanings retained from earlier viewing may influence later film selection or reception.

Other cross-pathway links remain exploratory and are not shown in [Figure 1](#). This restriction makes the model falsifiable without denying that real reception can be complex. Operational definitions and minimum indicators for these analytically distinct roles are summarised in [Table 1](#).

Proposition 1- Affective-regulatory pathway: Narrative engagement and viewer stance may be associated with proximal psychosocial integration through embodied affect followed by state regulation or co-regulation. High arousal combined with regulatory breakdown is expected to predict separate adverse state responses such as distress, rumination, or avoidance, together with no improvement or a reduction in the endpoint.

Proposition 2- Autobiographical-narrative pathway: Personal resonance may increase autobiographical memory activation, but positive endpoint change is expected only when activated material is subsequently contextualised and elaborated rather than left repetitive or contamination-focused. Elaboration quality and later endpoint change must be measured separately.

Proposition 3- Cultural-relational pathway: Cultural recognition or misrecognition and subsequent identity negotiation may connect viewer stance with relational or cultural belonging. Recognition may strengthen belonging, whereas stereotype reinforcement, identity threat, or perceived exclusion may weaken it; reflective resistance may interrupt either route.

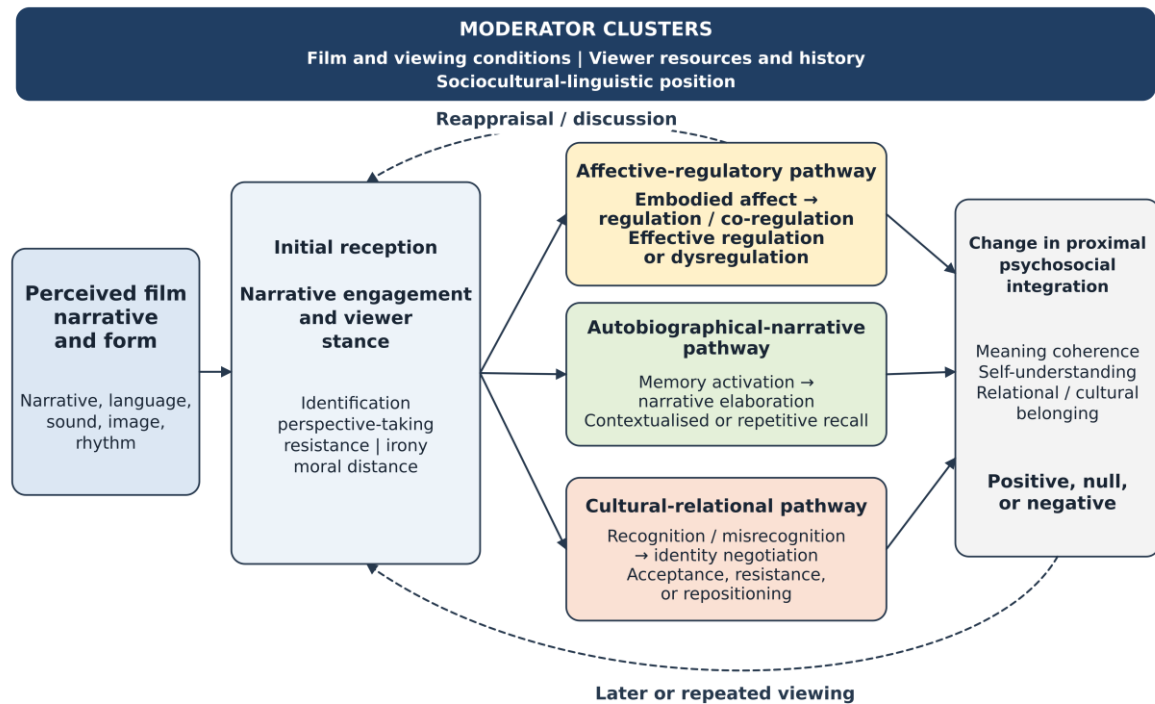


Figure 1. Parsimonious three-pathway model of film reception and proximal psychosocial integration

Note: Solid arrows represent primary hypothesised pathways and do not imply established causal effects. The pathways are parallel and need not co-occur; each can yield positive, null, or adverse responses. Dashed arrows show reappraisal or discussion revising initial reception and retained meaning shaping later or repeated viewing. Moderator clusters alter selected pathway strength or direction.

Table 1

Core elements and minimum indicators of the proposed model

Model element	Operational definition	Minimum empirical indicators
Perceived narrative and form	Narrative, linguistic, visual, and auditory features as perceived by the viewer.	Structured stimulus coding; participant perception or manipulation checks.
Reception gateway	Engagement and viewer stance, including identification, perspective-taking, resistance, rejection, irony, and moral distance.	Narrative engagement; identification and perspective-taking; resistance or moral-distance items.
Affective-regulatory pathway	Embodied affect followed by regulation, co-regulation, or dysregulation.	State valence and arousal; emotion labelling; reappraisal or distancing; regulatory breakdown; discussion coding.
Autobiographical-narrative pathway	Activation and elaboration of personal memories into narrative meaning.	Memory activation and specificity; contextualisation and temporal linkage; repetitive or contamination-focused recall; delayed process assessment.
Cultural-relational pathway	Recognition or misrecognition followed by negotiation of cultural position.	Recognition or misrecognition; identity salience; discursive positioning, resistance, stereotypes; language-specific interpretation.
Proximal psychosocial integration	Viewing-related change in meaning coherence, self-understanding, and relational or cultural belonging.	Separate immediate and delayed indicators of all three dimensions; positive, null, and negative change reported separately.

Priority Empirical Studies

The model should be evaluated through a staged programme rather than an unrestricted test of all constructs and moderators. A first study should establish construct and cultural validity through approximately 30-40 Kazakh- and Russian-language scene-elicitation interviews sampled for

variation in language dominance and generation. Analysis should determine whether participants distinguish the three pathways and should retain positive, null, adverse, resistant, and morally distanced responses. Cognitive interviewing can then refine bilingual items for viewer stance, cultural recognition, and proximal psychosocial integration.

A second study should be a preregistered controlled viewing experiment that varies one theoretically relevant feature, such as language congruence, and one social condition, such as individual reflection versus post-viewing discussion, while holding narrative content constant. Measures should be collected before viewing, immediately afterward, and after approximately one week. The three pathways should be tested in separate models. Immediate affect and state regulation should be primary outcomes for the affective-regulatory pathway; delayed narrative coherence and cultural belonging should be primary outcomes for the other pathways. Only language dominance and baseline regulation capacity should be treated as prespecified moderators in the first test.

A third, three-wave diary or panel study could examine the two temporal feedback propositions: whether reappraisal or discussion changes an initial stance and whether retained meanings influence later film selection or reception. Across all studies, immediate state responses must be separated from durable change, and positive, null, and adverse outcomes must be reported. The dimensions of proximal psychosocial integration should remain separate until their measurement structure and invariance across Kazakh- and Russian-language groups have been established.

Table 2

Boundary conditions for interpreting the model

Boundary condition	Required interpretation	Boundary condition
Contextual heterogeneity	Kazakhstan is a theory-sharpening case, not a homogeneous audience. Language, region, generation, family position, and other differences must be measured rather than presumed.	Contextual heterogeneity
Outcome direction	Film reception may increase, leave unchanged, or reduce proximal psychosocial integration. Null and adverse findings are theoretically informative.	Outcome direction
Time and causality	Immediate affect, delayed narrative elaboration, and durable well-being are distinct. Cross-sectional associations cannot establish direction, and feedback claims require repeated measures.	Time and causality

Limitations and Future Directions

This article contains no primary data from Kazakhstani viewers. Its claims about language, rural-urban experience, generation, family relations, moral vocabularies, and historical memory are theoretical propositions or sampling requirements supported by indirect contextual evidence. The cited surveys, platform analysis, and review corpus

Discussion and Conclusion

Conceptual Contribution

The revised framework contributes a role-based architecture rather than an inventory of potentially relevant concepts. It distinguishes what is encountered, how a viewer positions themselves toward it, which of three processes may follow, and what counts as a proximal outcome. This structure prevents narrative engagement from carrying every downstream function and allows resistance or moral distance to be theoretically meaningful. It also places dysregulation, stereotype reinforcement, alienation, and no change inside the model rather than treating them as exceptions.

The Kazakhstan case sharpens the framework by showing why language, historical memory, mobility, family position, and viewing setting cannot remain generic background variables. Their role is not to predict a single national response but to specify which comparisons and interpretive questions an empirical design must make visible. The model can therefore inform cross-cultural media psychology, audience studies, cultural psychology, and health humanities while remaining open to disconfirmation. The principal interpretive boundaries are summarised in [Table 2](#).

establish that audience practices and language patterns vary, but they do not test the proposed psychological pathways. The model also lacks validation around specific films and populations, and the provisional construct of proximal psychosocial integration requires conceptual and psychometric evaluation.

A further methodological limitation is that the original purposive search did not preserve database-hit, pre-

deduplication, duplicate-removal, or stage-specific exclusion counts. These figures cannot be reconstructed without retrospective estimation and are therefore not reported. The included corpus and its conceptual mapping are auditable, but the retrieval flow is not reproducible as a systematic review. Future updates should preregister fixed searches and maintain a complete screening log if comprehensive coverage is claimed. Empirical work should then test one pathway at a time, include adverse and null outcomes, and distinguish immediate from delayed change.

Conclusion

This article develops a testable conceptual model of how film reception may become psychosocially consequential through three interrelated pathways: affective-regulatory, autobiographical-narrative, and cultural-relational. These pathways do not presume identification with characters, therapeutic benefit, or a homogeneous Kazakhstani audience. Their operation is conditioned by film and viewing characteristics, viewers' resources and histories, and sociocultural-linguistic positioning. The proposed outcome is deliberately narrow change in proximal psychosocial integration, expressed through meaning coherence, self-understanding, and relational or cultural belonging—and may be positive, null, or negative.

The framework should therefore be understood as a bounded explanatory proposal rather than evidence that ordinary film viewing constitutes therapy or produces uniform effects. Kazakhstan serves as a theoretically informative context in which multilingual reception, cultural recognition, and unequal interpretive resources make variation especially visible, not as a basis for population-wide generalisation. Future research should test the three pathways separately and jointly, examine moderator effects, compare ordinary, facilitated, guided, and clinical viewing contexts, and assess whether reappraisal, discussion, and repeated viewing alter initial responses over time. The model's value lies in specifying what should be measured, compared, and revised through empirical investigation.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The manuscript is a theoretical and conceptual review and did not involve human participants, animals, interviews, surveys, experiments, or clinical procedures.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

All authors equally contributed to this study.

Use of Generative AI Tools

Generative AI tools were used only for language editing, clarity improvement, formatting support, and the technical rendering of an author-defined schematic. The concepts, structure, labels, directional relationships, and interpretation presented in the schematic were created and verified by the authors. Generative AI tools were not used to generate original scientific content, analyses, interpretations, conclusions, references, sources, or empirical data. The authors reviewed and independently verified all manuscript and figure content and accept full responsibility for the submitted work.

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