



From Isolation to Connection: A Thematic Analysis of Emotional Healing and Human–Animal Bonding in *777 Charlie*

Likhitha H R¹, Mubeena A N²

¹M.Sc. Psychology, ST PAULS COLLEGE, Bangalore, likhitharajaiiah08@gmail.com

²Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities (Psychology), ST PAULS COLLEGE, Bangalore;
mubeena.an@stpaulscollege.edu.in

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.20111828>

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Accepted: 22-04-2026

Published: 10-05-2026

Keywords:

Loneliness, Emotional Isolation, Human–Animal Bonding, Personal Transformation, Self-Discovery, Grief, Attachment, Acceptance

ABSTRACT

This study analyses the psychological themes presented in the film *777 Charlie* using a qualitative thematic analysis approach. The research focuses on key psychological concepts such as loneliness and emotional isolation, human–animal bonding, personal transformation and self-discovery, and grief, attachment, and letting go. By closely examining the film’s narrative, dialogues, and character progression, the study explores how these themes are represented through the emotional journey of the protagonist, Dharma. The findings reveal that Dharma’s character reflects a transition from emotional detachment, rigid behaviour, and unresolved trauma to emotional connection, empathy, and self-awareness. His isolated lifestyle and lack of meaningful relationships highlight the psychological impact of loneliness and withdrawal. The development of the human–animal bond with Charlie plays a crucial role in reducing this isolation, fostering emotional expression, and facilitating behavioural change. Furthermore, the film portrays personal transformation as a gradual process shaped by experience and relationship, where Dharma develops a new perspective on life and a deeper understanding of himself. The narrative also effectively represents grief and attachment, particularly through Charlie’s illness and death, illustrating anticipatory grief, emotional



distress, and eventual acceptance. Overall, the study concludes that 777 Charlie presents complex psychological themes in a simple and relatable manner, making it a valuable resource for understanding emotional experiences, attachment, coping with loss, and personal growth. The film emphasizes the importance of connection, empathy, and meaningful relationships in promoting psychological well-being.

Introduction

The increasing prevalence of psychological distress in contemporary society has brought renewed attention to experiences of loneliness, emotional isolation, and the search for meaningful connection. Loneliness, as highlighted in recent psychological research, is not merely the absence of social interaction but a deeply subjective experience rooted in unmet emotional needs and perceived disconnection (Wolters et al., 2021). Particularly among individuals facing internal struggles such as depression, anxiety, or loss, loneliness often becomes intertwined with maladaptive cognitive patterns, emotional withdrawal, and reduced well-being. This growing concern underscores the importance of exploring alternative pathways of emotional support and healing beyond conventional human relationships.

One such pathway that has gained significant empirical and theoretical attention is the human–animal bond (HAB). A substantial body of research demonstrates that interactions with animals can alleviate symptoms of anxiety, depression, and loneliness while simultaneously promoting emotional regulation and psychological resilience (Jacinto et al., 2023). Companion animals provide non-judgmental presence, unconditional acceptance, and a sense of purpose qualities that are often difficult to obtain in strained human relationships. These interactions also operate at a physiological level, influencing neurochemical responses such as oxytocin release, which facilitates bonding, reduces stress, and enhances emotional well-being.

Further strengthening this perspective, studies on animal-assisted interventions (AAI) indicate that structured interactions with animals can significantly reduce loneliness and enhance emotional stability, particularly among clinical populations (Gee et al., 2020; Sahebalzamani et al., 2016). Animals function as “social catalysts,” facilitating communication, fostering trust, and creating safe emotional spaces for individuals who struggle with interpersonal relationships. However, emerging research also cautions against overly simplistic assumptions about these benefits, emphasizing that the quality of



attachment rather than mere interaction frequency plays a critical role in determining psychological outcomes (Orlando & Chin, 2024). This highlights the complexity of human–animal relationships as both therapeutic and context-dependent.

In addition to relational factors, the experience of loss, grief, and emotional suffering plays a crucial role in shaping human psychological development. While traditional grief theories emphasize acceptance as a pathway to healing, empirical findings suggest that psychological well-being is influenced by multiple interacting factors beyond acceptance alone (Maroko, 2020). Grief often disrupts an individual's sense of identity, purpose, and emotional stability, creating a state of vulnerability but also opening possibilities for transformation. This dual nature of suffering aligns with broader psychological frameworks that view distress not only as a deficit but also as a potential catalyst for growth.

Supporting this perspective, research on suffering-induced transformational experiences (SITEs) illustrates how intense emotional turmoil such as bereavement, illness, or existential crisis can lead to profound psychological transformation (Taylor, 2012). These transformations are characterized by increased self-awareness, deeper emotional connections, reduced fear, and a renewed sense of meaning in life. Central to this process is the dissolution of prior psychological attachments and the emergence of acceptance, which enables individuals to reconstruct their identity and worldview. Such findings provide a compelling framework for understanding emotional healing as a dynamic, non-linear process.

Within this broader psychological context, cinematic narratives offer a powerful medium for exploring complex human experiences. Films often serve as cultural texts that reflect and shape societal understandings of emotion, relationships, and transformation. Through storytelling, visual symbolism, and character development, cinema can vividly portray internal psychological processes that may otherwise remain abstract. In particular, films that depict human–animal relationships provide unique insights into how non-human connections can facilitate emotional healing, resilience, and personal growth.

The Kannada film *777 Charlie* presents a compelling narrative that encapsulates these psychological themes through the journey of its protagonist, Dharma, and his bond with a dog, Charlie. The film portrays an emotionally withdrawn individual whose life is marked by isolation, unresolved trauma, and a lack of purpose. Through his evolving relationship with Charlie, the narrative illustrates the transformative potential of companionship, highlighting how non-verbal, non-judgmental connections



can foster emotional expression, attachment, and healing. The film also engages deeply with themes of grief, loss, and acceptance, ultimately presenting transformation as an experiential and relational process.

Despite the growing body of research on loneliness, human–animal bonding, and emotional healing, there remains a gap in understanding how these constructs are represented and integrated within cultural narratives such as cinema. This study, therefore, aims to bridge this gap by conducting a thematic analysis of *777 Charlie*, focusing on the transition from isolation to connection. By situating the film within established psychological literature, the study seeks to explore how human–animal bonding functions as a mechanism of emotional healing, how grief and attachment shape personal transformation, and how cinematic storytelling reflects deeper psychological realities. Through this analysis, the research contributes to both academic discourse and applied understanding of emotional well-being in contemporary contexts.

Background of the Study

Films are increasingly used as tools to understand human behavior and emotions, as they reflect real-life experiences in a relatable and simplified way. They help in exploring psychological processes such as loneliness, relationships, and emotional change through characters and narratives, making them valuable in psychological analysis.

777 Charlie provides a strong context for such analysis, as it portrays the journey of Dharma, an emotionally isolated individual who undergoes significant personal change. His transformation begins with the entry of Charlie, a dog, highlighting how companionship can influence emotional expression, attachment, and social connection.

The film also emphasizes the importance of the human–animal bond in reducing loneliness and promoting emotional well-being. At the same time, it explores themes of grief and acceptance, showing how emotional pain and past experiences shape behavior and how meaningful connections can support healing.

Although research highlights the benefits of human–animal interaction and emotional transformation, there is limited focus on how these are represented in films. Therefore, this study analyzes *777 Charlie* to understand how the journey from isolation to connection and emotional healing is portrayed.



Rationale of the study

The primary reason for selecting *777 Charlie* for this study is its clear and relatable portrayal of psychological themes such as loneliness, emotional isolation, and the need for connection. The film presents these complex experiences in a simple and engaging manner, making it easier to connect cinematic representation with real-life psychological processes. Dharma's journey reflects deep emotional struggles that many individuals experience, allowing for meaningful psychological interpretation.

The film strongly highlights emotional healing, acceptance of loss and personal transformation through the human–animal bond. It shows how an individual can move from isolation and emotional numbness to attachment, empathy, and a sense of purpose. The relationship between Dharma and Charlie illustrates how non-judgmental companionship can influence emotional expression and behavioral change. It also portrays how unresolved grief and internal distress can be gradually processed through meaningful connections.

Finally, this study contributes to existing literature by examining psychological themes through a thematic analysis of a regional film. While previous research focuses on human–animal interaction and emotional well-being, limited studies explore how these concepts are represented in cinema. This study integrates themes of loneliness, bonding, grief, and transformation to provide a deeper understanding of emotional healing, demonstrating how films can serve as valuable tools for studying human behavior and psychological development.

Review of literature

Orlando and Chin (2024) examined the associations between human–pet bond characteristics, interaction frequency, and mental health outcomes through a secondary analysis of survey data from 1,028 pet-owning adults in the United States. The study found that **pet attachment anxiety** emerged as the only significant predictor of depression symptoms, indicating that insecure emotional attachment to pets may exacerbate psychological distress. While more frequent human–pet interactions (e.g., play, affection) were associated with stronger and more secure bonds, these interactions did not directly predict lower depression levels, challenging assumptions that mere interaction frequency guarantees psychological benefit. The findings suggest that the **quality and security of attachment**, rather than quantity of interaction, are critical determinants of mental health outcomes. Additionally, exploratory results indicated that owning multiple pets (cats and dogs) was associated with higher depression



symptoms, possibly due to increased caregiving burden or underlying coping mechanisms. Critically, the study advances the literature by integrating attachment theory into human–animal bond research, offering a more nuanced understanding of relational dynamics. However, its cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported measures, and lack of control for human attachment styles limit causal inference and depth of interpretation. Overall, the study highlights the complexity of human–animal relationships, emphasizing that both beneficial and maladaptive attachment patterns must be considered when evaluating their impact on psychological well-being.

Jacinto et al. (2023) conducted a systematic review examining the psychological and physiological effects of the human–animal bond (HAB) and animal-assisted interventions (AAI) on stress reduction and mental health outcomes, synthesizing studies published between 2000 and 2023. The review highlighted that human–animal interaction (HAI) significantly reduces anxiety, depression, and loneliness while also influencing physiological markers such as blood pressure, heart rate, and neurochemical responses, particularly through the activation of oxytocin and other well-being-related hormones. The authors emphasized that HAB functions as a critical buffer against stress by providing companionship, social support, and a sense of purpose, while also enhancing emotional regulation, self-esteem, and social confidence. Additionally, the review underscored the dual psychological and physiological pathways through which HAI contributes to well-being, integrating neurobiological mechanisms with psychosocial benefits. However, the study critically noted several limitations within the existing literature, including reliance on self-reported measures, lack of standardized intervention protocols, insufficient control groups, and variability in AAI methodologies, which constrain the comparability and generalizability of findings. Furthermore, the absence of longitudinal and cost-effectiveness analyses limits the understanding of sustained therapeutic impact. Despite these constraints, the review provides a comprehensive and theoretically grounded synthesis, reinforcing the significance of HAB and AAI as emerging, multidisciplinary approaches in mental health care while calling for more rigorous, standardized, and ethically informed research frameworks.

Oosthuizen et al. (2022) explored the multifaceted role of human–animal bonds among individuals experiencing crisis situations through a qualitative design using semi-structured interviews with 13 participants involved in community support programs. Thematic analysis revealed three central dimensions: the high emotional value of human–animal bonds, their influence on help-seeking behavior, and their role in post-crisis recovery. Findings indicated that companion animals provide non-judgmental companionship, reduce social isolation, and enhance coping by improving mental health outcomes such



as reduced anxiety, depression, and loneliness. Additionally, pets were found to facilitate social connections and foster a sense of purpose, identity, and routine, which are critical in recovery processes. However, the study also highlighted complex challenges, including how strong attachment to pets may hinder individuals from seeking institutional help due to fear of separation, as well as the potential for pets to be involved in coercive dynamics in contexts such as domestic violence. Critically, while the study offers rich, in-depth insights into the emotional and psychosocial significance of human–animal bonds, its small sample size and qualitative nature limit generalizability, and the absence of longitudinal or quantitative validation restricts broader applicability. Nevertheless, the research makes a significant contribution by conceptualizing human–animal bonds as dynamic and context-dependent, emphasizing their dual role as both protective and potentially constraining factors in mental health and crisis intervention contexts.

Wolters et al. (2021) examined the interrelationships between social isolation, social loneliness, emotional loneliness, depression, and anxiety in a large sample of university students (N = 7,314) using network analysis and hierarchical regression. The study found that social loneliness was primarily predicted by social isolation, whereas emotional loneliness was more strongly associated with depression and social anxiety, with general anxiety influencing loneliness indirectly through depression. The authors highlighted that social and emotional loneliness, although conceptually distinct, share a significant overlap as subjective negative experiences rooted in unmet social needs. Contrary to expectations, depression and anxiety did not significantly moderate the relationship between social isolation and loneliness, indicating that these variables function more as independent predictors rather than interactional factors. A key contribution of the study lies in identifying social anxiety as a stronger and more direct predictor of loneliness compared to general anxiety, supporting cognitive models that link loneliness with negative social interpretations and withdrawal behaviors. However, the study is limited by its cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported data, potential gender and selection bias, and possible measurement artifacts associated with the DJGLS scale, which may affect the distinction between loneliness types. Overall, the research provides a nuanced understanding of loneliness by differentiating its dimensions and emphasizing the central role of emotional and cognitive factors in shaping loneliness experiences.

Gee et al. (2020) examined the effectiveness of Animal-Assisted Intervention (AAI) in reducing loneliness among individuals hospitalized for mental illness through a randomized controlled design involving 60 participants assigned to AAI (dog + handler), conversational control, or usual care conditions. Using multiple measures of loneliness, including the UCLA Loneliness Scale and an Analog



scale, the study found that loneliness decreased significantly more in the AAI group compared to other conditions, particularly in immediate pre–post intervention sessions and across a short-term intervention period. The findings highlighted that the presence of a dog contributed uniquely to emotional relief beyond human interaction alone, reinforcing the role of animals as “social lubricants” that enhance psychological safety and promote social engagement. However, the study also revealed nuanced outcomes, including sex differences and the moderating role of prior dog ownership, with stronger and more lasting effects observed among dog owners. Critically, while the study strengthens evidence for the therapeutic potential of AAI, its small sample size, short intervention duration, and lack of long-term sustained effects limit generalizability and the ability to draw causal conclusions about enduring emotional healing. Additionally, discrepancies between measurement tools suggest conceptual ambiguity in assessing loneliness as a construct. Despite these limitations, the study provides significant empirical support for the role of human–animal interaction in alleviating loneliness, particularly within clinical populations.

Maroko (2020) investigated the influence of acceptance of parental loss on the psychological well-being of bereaved secondary school students in Kenya using a quantitative design with a sample of 50 participants. The findings revealed no statistically significant relationship between acceptance of loss and psychological well-being, suggesting that psychological distress among bereaved students may be influenced by multiple external and contextual factors beyond acceptance alone. Despite this, descriptive results indicated that a majority of students, regardless of their level of acceptance, experienced low psychological well-being, highlighting the pervasive emotional and behavioral challenges associated with bereavement. The study further discussed acceptance as a complex, gradual process linked to emotional stabilization, development of self-acceptance, autonomy, and a renewed sense of purpose, aligning with grief theories such as Kübler-Ross’s model and concepts of post-traumatic growth. Critically, the study contributes to the literature by problematizing the assumption that acceptance directly leads to improved well-being, instead emphasizing the multifactorial nature of grief and adjustment. However, limitations such as small sample size, localized context, and reliance on self-reported measures restrict generalizability and depth of inference. Overall, the study underscores the need for broader psychosocial support systems and multidimensional interventions when addressing grief and psychological well-being among bereaved individuals.

Brooks et al. (2018) conducted a systematic review to examine the role of companion animals in the management of diagnosed mental health conditions, synthesizing evidence from 17 studies using a



narrative framework informed by illness work theory. The findings revealed that while quantitative evidence on the benefits of pet ownership was mixed showing positive, negative, and neutral effects qualitative data consistently highlighted the significant emotional, practical, and identity-related support provided by companion animals. Pets were found to contribute to **emotional work** by offering consistent companionship and non-judgmental support, particularly during periods of crisis; to **practical work** by promoting routine, behavioral activation, and distraction from distressing symptoms; and to **biographical work** by enhancing self-identity, self-worth, and coping with stigma. Additionally, pets functioned as social facilitators, improving both the quality and quantity of human interactions, thereby addressing social isolation. However, the review critically noted the early and fragmented nature of the evidence base, with a lack of high-quality experimental studies and inconsistencies between qualitative richness and quantitative validation. It also acknowledged potential negative aspects, including the emotional burden of pet loss and practical challenges of caregiving. Overall, the study underscores the complex, multi-dimensional role of companion animals in mental health care while calling for more rigorous, longitudinal research to establish causal mechanisms and inform integration into clinical practice.

Sahebalzamani et al. (2016) investigated the effects of Animal-Assisted Therapy (AAT) on happiness and quality of life among chronic psychiatric patients residing in care homes through a randomized controlled trial involving 70 male participants. The intervention group engaged in animal interaction (with birds) over an eight-week period, while the control group received no intervention. Findings revealed a significant increase in happiness levels and improvements across multiple domains of quality of life, including psychological well-being, life satisfaction, and daily functioning. The study further highlighted that AAT contributed to reduced loneliness, anxiety, and depressive symptoms, potentially through the development of emotional attachment between patients and animals, which fostered a sense of security, companionship, and purpose. Additionally, animals acted as social facilitators, enhancing communication and interpersonal interaction among residents and staff. Critically, while the study provides strong experimental evidence supporting the therapeutic benefits of AAT, its limitations include a gender-restricted sample, relatively small size, and context-specific setting, which may limit generalizability. Furthermore, the underlying mechanisms of change remain insufficiently explained, indicating a need for more theory-driven and longitudinal research. Nonetheless, the study significantly contributes to the literature by demonstrating the clinical efficacy of AAT in improving both emotional well-being and overall quality of life in psychiatric populations.



Taylor (2012) explored the phenomenon of suffering-induced transformational experiences (SITEs) through qualitative interviews with 32 individuals who underwent psychological transformation following intense trauma, including bereavement, illness, addiction, and existential crises. The study identified key characteristics of transformation such as enhanced well-being, heightened perception, a deeper sense of connection, reduced fear of death, and increased altruism, aligning closely with concepts of self-actualization and spiritual awakening. Central to this transformation was the **dissolution of psychological attachments** and the process of **acceptance**, which enabled individuals to move beyond distress toward a more integrated and meaningful state of being. The findings challenge reductionist interpretations of transformation as maladaptive coping, instead framing it as a progressive restructuring of identity and consciousness. The study further distinguishes these transformations from religious conversion by emphasizing their permanence, non-dogmatic nature, and experiential depth. Critically, while the research offers rich phenomenological insights into post-traumatic growth and emotional healing, its reliance on retrospective self-reports, small sample size, and lack of empirical validation limit generalizability and objectivity. Nonetheless, the study makes a significant theoretical contribution by positioning trauma not only as a source of psychological distress but also as a catalyst for profound personal transformation and existential growth.

Methodology

Aim

The aim of this study is to explore the psychological themes of emotional healing and human–animal bonding in the film *777 Charlie* through thematic analysis, focusing on the protagonist’s journey from isolation to connection and personal transformation. The study seeks to understand how the human–animal relationship influences emotional expression, reduces loneliness, and fosters empathy, while also examining the role of grief, loss, and acceptance in shaping the process of healing and self-discovery.

Research objectives

1. To identify and analyze the theme of loneliness and emotional isolation as portrayed in *777 Charlie*.
2. To examine the role of human–animal bonding in influencing emotional connection and psychological well-being in the film.
3. To explore the process of emotional healing and personal transformation experienced by the protagonist.



4. To analyze the representation of grief, loss, and acceptance and their contribution to the healing process.

Research Questions

1. How is loneliness and emotional isolation portrayed in *777 Charlie*?
2. How does the human–animal bond influence emotional connection and psychological well-being in the film?
3. In what ways does the protagonist experience emotional healing and personal transformation?
4. How are grief, loss, and acceptance represented, and how do they contribute to the process of healing?

Research Design and Paradigm

This study adopts a qualitative research design grounded in a constructivist paradigm, which assumes that meaning is not fixed but constructed through individual interpretation and experience. The research focuses on understanding the deeper psychological meanings embedded within the film *777 Charlie*, particularly how themes of loneliness, emotional healing, and human–animal bonding are represented. Rather than relying on numerical data, the study emphasizes subjective interpretation of characters, emotions, and narrative progression to gain insight into psychological processes.

The study employs Thematic Analysis as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to systematically identify, analyze, and interpret key psychological themes present in the film. In addition, elements of Qualitative Content Analysis are used to examine dialogues, significant scenes, character interactions, and emotional expressions. This combined approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of both explicit (visible) and implicit (underlying) meanings, helping to capture the complexity of emotional transformation and relational dynamics portrayed in the narrative.

Sample Selection

The sample selected for this study is the Kannada film *777 Charlie*. The movie was chosen using purposive sampling, as it clearly represents key psychological themes such as loneliness, emotional isolation, human–animal bonding, grief, and personal transformation.



The film is suitable for this study because it presents strong character development and a gradual process of emotional healing, particularly through the protagonist's journey from detachment to connection. The relationship between Dharma and Charlie provides a meaningful context to explore how human-animal interaction influences emotional expression, attachment, and psychological well-being, making the film highly relevant for thematic analysis.

Data Collection Procedure

Data for this study was collected by viewing the film *777 Charlie* multiple times over a period of several weeks. During this process, the researcher carefully observed key scenes, dialogues, and character behaviors to capture the psychological depth of the narrative. Repeated viewing enabled a more nuanced understanding of emotional transitions, relationship development, and underlying themes.

Detailed notes were recorded focusing on:

1. Key dialogues reflecting themes such as loneliness, bonding, grief, and healing
2. Emotional expressions and behavioral changes of the protagonist and other characters
3. Significant scenes illustrating isolation, attachment formation, and transformation
4. Symbolic elements such as the journey, the presence of Charlie, and moments of separation and connection

To ensure systematic organization, the researcher prepared structured tables including dialogues, corresponding characters, and timestamps. This method facilitated clarity in data analysis and supported accurate identification of themes. Multiple viewings helped in refining interpretations and ensured the reliability and depth of the analysis.

Analytic Procedure

Data analysis in this study followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step model of thematic analysis.

1. **Familiarization** – The researcher watched *777 Charlie* multiple times to gain a deep understanding of the storyline, characters, and emotional progression.
2. **Coding** – Important dialogues, scenes, and character behaviors related to psychological themes such as loneliness, bonding, grief, and healing were identified and coded.



3. **Searching for Themes** – Similar codes were grouped together to form broader themes such as emotional isolation, human–animal bonding, personal transformation, and grief and acceptance.
4. **Reviewing Themes** – The identified themes were reviewed and refined by comparing them with the film’s scenes and dialogues to ensure consistency and relevance.
5. **Defining Themes** – Each theme was clearly defined and explained using relevant psychological concepts and interpretations.
6. **Writing** – The final analysis was presented in a structured manner, supported by examples from the film to illustrate each theme.

Reflexivity Statement

The researcher acknowledges that personal perspectives, academic training in psychology, and prior exposure to themes of emotional healing and human–animal relationships may influence the interpretation of the film *777 Charlie*. Given a strong inclination toward understanding human emotions, attachment, and transformation, the researcher may have been naturally drawn to interpret the narrative through a psychological lens, particularly focusing on themes such as loneliness, bonding, grief, and recovery.

To address this, conscious efforts were made to maintain reflexivity and minimize subjective bias throughout the research process. The researcher engaged in repeated viewing of the film, systematically analyzed scenes and dialogues, and grounded interpretations in existing psychological literature, particularly in areas such as human–animal bonding, emotional healing, and attachment theory. Attention was given to both explicit and implicit meanings within the film to ensure a balanced interpretation.

The researcher remained aware of their positionality and its potential impact on meaning-making, striving to present an analysis that is thoughtful, credible, and academically grounded. The aim was not only to interpret the film from a personal viewpoint but to situate the findings within broader psychological frameworks, thereby enhancing the depth and trustworthiness of the study.

Ethical Considerations

This study is based on the analysis of the film *777 Charlie*, which is a publicly available source; hence, no direct human participants were involved, and formal ethical approval was not required. The



research relies entirely on secondary data derived from the film's content, making it non-intrusive in nature.

However, ethical principles were carefully followed throughout the study. All scholarly sources and research studies used in the literature review and analysis were appropriately cited to maintain academic integrity. The researcher ensured that interpretations of scenes, dialogues, and character behaviors were grounded in evidence and avoided any false or unsupported claims.

Respect for the original content of the film was also maintained by preserving the intended narrative and meaning without distortion. Additionally, the study refrains from making clinical or diagnostic judgments about the characters, as the purpose is to understand psychological themes rather than to label or pathologize individuals.

Overall, the study upholds essential research ethics by ensuring honesty, objectivity, and respect for both the source material and academic standards.

Results: Thematic Findings

The thematic analysis of the film *777 Charlie* identified key psychological themes closely linked to the story, characters, and emotional progression. These themes were derived through repeated viewing, coding of important dialogues, and careful interpretation of significant scenes over a period of analysis.

The findings reflect the protagonist's journey from loneliness and emotional detachment to connection, healing, and self-discovery. The themes are interconnected and highlight how human-animal bonding plays a central role in emotional transformation. Each theme represents important psychological concepts and is supported by relevant scenes and character behaviors, forming the basis of this study's analysis.

1. Loneliness and Emotional Isolation

In *777 Charlie*, Dharma's loneliness is clearly reflected in his aggressive behavior, preference to stay alone, and lack of interaction with others, including his neighbors. He avoids conversations, shows irritability, and maintains emotional distance, indicating not just physical isolation but deeper emotional withdrawal.

This can be understood through the theory of John T. Cacioppo, which explains that loneliness often leads to negative emotions, social avoidance, and hostility (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009). Similarly,



Erik Erikson suggests that difficulty in forming meaningful relationships can result in isolation and emotional disconnection (Erikson, 1968). Dharma's behavior in the film reflects this state, showing how loneliness can influence personality and social functioning.

2. Human–Animal Bonding

In *777 Charlie*, the bond between Dharma and Charlie highlights the theme of human–animal bonding. Initially distant, Dharma gradually develops affection and responsibility through his interactions with Charlie, finding companionship and emotional comfort.

This can be understood through John Bowlby, which explains how emotional bonds provide security and connection (Bowlby, 1969). Charlie becomes a source of unconditional support, helping Dharma overcome loneliness and build emotional attachment.

3. Personal Transformation and Self-Discovery

In *777 Charlie*, Dharma's journey reflects significant personal transformation and self-discovery. Initially, he is emotionally closed, aggressive, and disconnected from others. However, through his bond with Charlie, he gradually becomes more compassionate, responsible, and emotionally aware, developing a sense of purpose and connection.

This transformation aligns with Carl Rogers, who emphasizes personal growth through self-awareness and emotional openness (Rogers, 1961). Dharma's journey shows how meaningful relationships can facilitate inner change, leading to self-discovery and psychological growth.

4. Life, Loss, and Acceptance

In *777 Charlie*, the theme of life, loss, and acceptance is portrayed through Dharma's emotional journey as he learns to face pain and let go. Through his bond with Charlie and the challenges they encounter, he begins to understand the reality of loss and gradually accepts it, leading to emotional healing and maturity.

This aligns with Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, which explains acceptance as the final stage of coping with loss (Kübler-Ross, 1969). Dharma's journey reflects this process, showing how acceptance helps individuals move forward and find meaning after emotional pain.

Table 1: Thematic Findings from Thematic and Content Analysis of 777 Charlie



Themes	Description	Representative Examples/indicators	Theoretical Reference(s)
Loneliness and emotional isolation	Dharma's isolation is marked by physical withdrawal and a rigid, self-centered cognition.	-Neglected living conditions. -Refusal of social invitations . -Defensive communication. -Empty daily routine.	Cacioppo & Hawklyw (2009); Erikson (1968)
Human - Animal bonding	The bond involves initial resistance and rejection to secure attachment and mutual care.	-Initial rejection of the dog. -Empathy through emergency care. -Mutual support during a crisis. -Fear of separation.	Bowlby(1969)
Personal transformation and self discovery	Dharma shifts from a detached persona to one of compassion and awareness.	-Connection by naming the animal. -Softened demeanor noticed by others. -Improved self-discipline. -Expanded worldview and growth.	Rogers (1961)
Life, loss and acceptance	Dharma navigates stages of grief towards emotional healing and meaning.	-Confronting terminal diagnosis. -Denial and search for hope. -Cherishing remaining time.	Kubler-Ross (1969)



-Final acceptance and legacy

Loneliness and isolation

Loneliness and emotional isolation refer to a state of limited social connections along with feelings of inner emptiness and disconnection (Cacioppo & Hawkley, 2009). In 777 Charlie, this is reflected through Dharma’s withdrawn lifestyle, lack of relationships, and avoidance of social interaction. His rigid thinking and dismissive communication indicate difficulty in connecting with others, reinforcing his isolation (Beck, 2011).

His monotonous routine and lack of interest in life suggest emotional numbness, while irritability and aggression point to underlying internal distress (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010). The recurring memory of losing his family highlights unresolved trauma, which contributes to his emotional detachment and inability to form close bonds (Bowlby, 1980).

Overall, Dharma’s character illustrates that loneliness is not just physical isolation but a deeper psychological state shaped by trauma, negative cognition, and lack of meaningful relationships

Timestamp (Approx.)	Dialogue	Character
00:07:10	“In my opinion, I’m right. It’s people’s perception of me that is wrong.”	Dharma
00:10:50	“I have no interest in coming with you.”	Dharma
00:11:30	“When someone asks for my help, I never send them empty handed. I always give them an earful.”	Dharma
00:17:50	“I asked you for a cigarette, not advice. Give me two Gold Flake.”	Dharma



00:19:30 “Home, factory, idli, cigarette, beer — that’s what my Dharma life is all about. Nothing interests me.”

Human animal bonding

Human–animal bonding refers to the emotional connection that develops between humans and animals through interaction and care (Fine, 2015). In 777 Charlie, this bond gradually evolves from rejection to deep attachment between Dharma and Charlie.

Initially, Dharma shows irritation and avoidance, reflecting his resistance to connection. However, continued interaction leads to reluctant caregiving, marking the beginning of emotional attachment (Serpell, 1996). Over time, he becomes affectionate and responsive, while Charlie also provides comfort, showing mutual bonding.

Eventually, the relationship develops into strong emotional attachment, characterized by care, commitment, and fear of separation. This highlights how human–animal bonds can promote emotional healing and reduce isolation (Beetz et al., 2012).

Timestamp (Approx.)	Dialogue / Scene Description	Characters
00:21:10	“Get lost.”	Dharma
00:22:10	“Didn’t I tell you about the tragedy of not finding food? Now there’s a greater tragedy that awaits me.”	Dharma
00:23:15	“Why the hell is this dog following me? If it comes inside the house, I will not spare it.”	Dharma
00:23:20	The dog meets with an accident. Initially, Dharma refuses to help, but later he takes the dog to the hospital.	
00:28:20	Dharma decides to leave the dog at the hospital, but the doctor convinces him to take care of it temporarily.	
00:29:30	Dharma takes the dog home.	



- 00:52:30 Charlie feels happy seeing ice cream, and Dharma buys it for her.
- 00:53:40 A family comes to adopt Charlie, but Dharma feels insecure and hesitant.
- 00:58:30 Dharma attempts to give Charlie away but takes her back after seeing her distress.
- 01:11:10 After learning about Charlie’s illness, Dharma decides to keep her happy and takes her on a journey.
- 01:59:40 Dharma gets upset when Charlie doesn’t listen, but Charlie returns and comforts him.

Personal transformation and self discovery

Personal transformation and self-discovery involve changes in behaviour, self-awareness, and understanding of life through experiences (Rogers, 1961). In 777 Charlie, this is seen in Dharma’s shift from emotional detachment to openness and growth.

His acceptance of Charlie marks the beginning of change, which later becomes visible in his improved behaviour and conscious decisions, such as giving up old habits. His reflection on life further shows increased self-awareness and a changed perspective.

Overall, Dharma’s journey highlights how experiences and relationships can lead to meaningful personal growth and self-discovery

Timestamp (Approx.)	Dialogue / Scene Description	Character
00:29:30	Dharma takes the dog home and names her Charlie, gradually allowing her into his personal space.	



01:02:00	“Dharma sir has changed so much.”	Dharma
01:03:40	“I have quit smoking.”	Dharma
01:07:20	“Nothing is permanent in this wicked world? Not even our troubles. Charlie Chaplin is right. I had a limited view of life. But Charlie came along and changed it.”	Dharma

Life loss and acceptance

Life, loss, and acceptance involve confronting loss, experiencing grief, and gradually coming to terms with it (Kübler-Ross, 1969). In 777 Charlie, this is seen through Dharma’s journey after Charlie’s illness.

The diagnosis initiates anticipatory grief, leading to fear and attempts to hold onto hope. As time passes, Dharma shows deep attachment and desperation, followed by moments of acceptance as he cherishes the remaining time.

Ultimately, Charlie’s death brings intense grief, but Dharma begins to find meaning and emotional closure, reflecting the process of accepting loss

Timestamp (Approx.)	Dialogue/Scene Description	Characters
01:08:00	Dharma takes Charlie to the hospital after she vomits; the doctor diagnoses hemangiosarcoma and says medicine is not enough to cure.	
02:13:00	Dharma takes Charlie to a Buddhist Ayurvedic practitioner... They say that Charlie was pregnant, but her puppies are no more.	
02:15:20	“Charlie, how much do you love me?” / “I love you Charlie”	Dharma Charlie



02:17:40	“Sir he’s not letting me to go to the other side. Please help me. My dog is unwell. I need to show her snow at earliest. If I don’t do it today, it might be too late. Please sir... I beg you.”	Dharma
02:20:50	“Charlie’s every breath was a reminder that we didn’t have much time in our hands.”	Dharma
02:24:20	Dharma feels happy seeing Charlie play in the snow.	
02:31:10	Why did you leave me and come here Charlie? Do you know how much I searched for you? I’ve lost everyone I’ve loved. I thought I could somehow save you. It’s hurting me so much Charlie. I don’t know what to do. I tried my best... Doctors, prayers... But I’m unable to save you.”	Dharma
02:33:20	Charlie does a “thank you” gesture.	
02:35:20	Charlie dies.	
02:37:40	“Charlie knew I’d be unable to live without her, that’s why she left me with a little Charlie.”	Dharma

Implications

For Media Psychology and Media Literacy

This study highlights how films like *777 Charlie* communicate complex psychological themes such as loneliness, emotional isolation, human–animal bonding, personal transformation, and grief. The film demonstrates how emotional experiences are portrayed in a way that can influence audience perceptions and empathy. Viewers can be encouraged to critically analyse such representations, especially in understanding emotional struggles, coping mechanisms, and the role of relationships in mental well-being. Media literacy helps audiences recognize these themes and reflect on the importance of connection, empathy, and emotional awareness.



For Psychological and Educational Understanding

The film holds strong relevance in psychological and educational contexts, as it illustrates concepts like attachment, trauma, emotional healing, and self-development in a relatable manner. It can be used as a tool to explain real-life psychological processes such as isolation, bonding, coping with loss, and personal growth. Educators and mental health professionals can use the film to initiate discussions on emotional well-being, the impact of relationships, and healthy coping strategies. It also emphasizes the importance of companionship and supportive environments in promoting psychological resilience and recovery.

Limitations and Future Research

While this study provides a detailed thematic analysis of *777 Charlie*, certain limitations must be acknowledged. First, the study focuses on a single film, which limits the generalizability of the findings. Analysing multiple films with similar psychological themes could provide broader insights. Second, the study is based on qualitative interpretation, which may be influenced by the researcher's perspective despite efforts to maintain objectivity.

Another limitation is the absence of audience-based data. The study does not examine how different viewers perceive or emotionally respond to themes such as loneliness, human–animal bonding, personal transformation, and grief.

Future research can incorporate audience responses through methods like interviews or surveys to understand how these themes are interpreted across different groups. Comparative studies involving other films with similar themes can also be conducted to examine variations in representation. Additionally, future studies can explore the impact of such films on emotional understanding, coping mechanisms, and psychological well-being. Cross-cultural research may further help in understanding how audiences from different backgrounds interpret themes of attachment, loss, and emotional connection.

Conclusion

This study explored the psychological themes presented in the film *777 Charlie* using thematic analysis. The findings reveal that the film is not merely a narrative but a meaningful representation of human emotional experiences and psychological growth. Through Dharma's journey, the film highlights key themes such as loneliness and emotional isolation, human–animal bonding, personal transformation and self-discovery, and grief, attachment, and letting go.



The analysis shows that Dharma's progression from an emotionally detached and isolated individual to someone capable of connection and empathy reflects real-life psychological processes. His experiences demonstrate how unresolved trauma and isolation can shape behaviour, while meaningful relationships particularly with Charlie can facilitate emotional healing and personal transformation.

The human–animal bond in the film plays a central role in this change, illustrating how companionship can reduce isolation, promote emotional expression, and provide a sense of purpose. At the same time, Dharma's journey through Charlie's illness and death reflects the complex process of grief, highlighting stages such as denial, attachment, emotional breakdown, and eventual acceptance.

Overall, this study concludes that *777 Charlie* presents complex psychological concepts in a simple and relatable manner, making it a valuable text for understanding emotional struggles, attachment, and personal growth. The film encourages viewers to reflect on the importance of connection, empathy, and acceptance, and can be effectively used in psychological and educational contexts to explain key aspects of emotional well-being and human development.

References

- Beetz, A., Uvnäs-Moberg, K., Julius, H., & Kotrschal, K. (2012). Psychosocial effects of human–animal interactions.
- Bell, D. C. (2009). Attachment without fear.
- Bonanno, G. A. (2004). Loss, trauma, and resilience.
- Bowlby, J. (1969). Attachment theory overview.
- Bowlby, J. (1980). Attachment and loss (Vol. 3: Loss).
- Bowlby, J., & Parkes, C. M. (1970). Grief and mourning stages.
- Cacioppo, J. T., & Hawkley, L. C. (2009). Perceived social isolation and cognition
- Cacioppo, J. T., Cacioppo, S., & Boomsma, D. I. (2013). Evolutionary mechanisms for loneliness.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). Self-determination theory.
- Fine, A. H. (2015). Handbook on animal-assisted therapy.
- Hawkley, L. C., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2010). Loneliness matters: A theoretical and empirical review.
- Kübler-Ross, E. (1969). On death and dying.
- Masi, C. M., et al. (2011). A meta-analysis of interventions to reduce loneliness.



- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation.
- Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2007). Attachment in adulthood.
- Rogers, C. R. (1961). On becoming a person.
- Serpell, J. (1996). In the company of animals: A study of human–animal relationships.
- Stroebe, M., & Archer, J. (2013). Origins of attachment theory.
- Van der Horst, F., & Van der Veer, R. (2008). Separation and attachment.
- Worden, J. W. (2009). Grief counseling and grief therapy.