

# Film Education for Awareness and Social Empathy in Retirees from Guadalajara, México

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## Abstract


A qualitative study with an exploratory design was carried out to describe the effects of the film education program in promoting social awareness and empathy in retired people from Guadalajara, Mexico. Sixteen people (14 women and two men), with an average age of 67 years and 10 years as retirees, participated. The program included 22 films and was implemented for six continuous months in weekly sessions. All the films starred older actors. The data were collected using the film-debate technique and analyzed based on phenomenology. Through the film education program, the participants became humanized on the situation of social disadvantage and the needs faced by older adults in their environment, who do not have the right to retire, identified their obstacles to broader social participation and understood the problems of people resistant to retirement from work and of those who have been forced to retire. It is concluded that the film education program positively affected the promotion of social sensitivity and empathy in these retired people.

**Keywords:** Cinema; Education; Social awareness; Social empathy; Retirement.

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# Filmoeducación para la sensibilización y la empatía social en jubilados de Guadalajara, México

## Resumen

Se realizó un estudio cualitativo con diseño exploratorio para describir los efectos del programa de filmoeducación en el fomento de la sensibilización y la empatía social en personas jubiladas de Guadalajara, México. Participaron 16 personas (14 mujeres, dos hombres) con promedio de edad de 67 años y 10 años como jubilados. El programa cinematográfico incluyó 22 películas y se implementó por seis meses continuos en sesiones semanales. Todas las películas estuvieron protagonizadas por actores mayores. Los datos se recolectaron con la técnica de cine-debate y se analizaron bajo el fundamento de la fenomenología. A través del programa de filmoeducación los participantes se humanizaron sobre la situación de desventaja social y sobre las carencias que enfrentan los adultos mayores de su entorno, quienes no tienen derecho a jubilarse, identificaron sus propios obstáculos para una participación social más amplia y comprendieron las problemáticas de las personas resistentes al retiro laboral y de las que han sido forzadas a jubilarse. Se concluye que el programa de filmoeducación tuvo un efecto positivo en el fomento de la sensibilidad y empatía social en estas personas jubiladas.

**Palabras clave:** Cine; Educación; Sensibilización social; Empatía social; Jubilación.

2

**Summary:** 1. Introduction, 2. Methodology, 3. Findings, 3.1 Identification of drawbacks that prevent broader social involvement, 3.2 Empathy for problems faced by people not entitled to retirement benefits, 3.3 Empathy for people who resist labor retirement, 3.4 Empathy for reasons and consequences of forced retirement, 4. Conclusions, 5. Bibliographic references.



## 1. Introduction

Retirement is probably the most critical transition that people will undergo in life. According to Agahi *et al.* (2021), retirement affects the roles performed by a person, their families, and their social life. Retirement disrupts customary routines and all other daily habits, like physical activities or sleep. According to Hale *et al.* (2021), retirement also affects cognitive function. Despite all the above, retirement implies a privileged social condition since, as Rivas and Silvia (2017) stated, only a fourth of elders in Latin America have access to a retirement pension. The rest of the elderly, because they were never linked to any retirement program, now continue to work informally under unsafe and precarious conditions and work until they die or until they become ancient.

Even when retirement is a privilege, individuals must prepare for life's pre- and post-retirement stages. Pre-retirement training will ideally focus on saying goodbye to work and designing a retirement plan to project a healthy and fulfilling life in the future. Post-retirement training – the subject of this paper is aimed at sustaining the retirement transition and adaptation process. This is quite a broad field of action, as it is this stage of life for retirees.

On one side, post-retirement courses are intended to support people while they execute their retirement plans. In this regard, such courses promote well-being, quality of life, physical activities, self-care, family, and sound social coexistence so people can have a fulfilling life as they age while still being active and healthy. Not all retirees are necessarily old, yet this will be their next stage in life.

Some authors suggest that post-retirement courses should include topics not included earlier, like bridge employment, as this is a crucial type of employment for retirees (Anderson & Guo, 2018; Londoño-Moreno & Díaz-Bambula, 2019). Authors like Arzate-Salgado (1995) have considered other essential topics, such as poverty, marginality, informality, and survival strategies. All these are issues to include when dealing with education for the elderly in Latin America. Under the same scope, Alavi *et al.* (2021) recommend encouraging knowledge about psychosocial challenges, opportunities for development, and barriers and enablers affecting retirement adaptation. Such issues, although harsh and challenging to deal with, cannot be set aside. These are part of the complex context lived by retirees in Latin American countries.

Under such scope, we think that an expanded knowledge about the social and economic issues faced by most elderly in Latin America will contribute to promoting empathy and social-problem awareness, adding a sense of life transcendence for retirees. In contrast, they contribute to social transformation.

As pertaining to teaching methods of intervention for transition and adaptation to retirement, we shall consider contributions by Knowles (2006) in terms of the peculiar ways that the elderly acquire knowledge or Kolb (1984), who claimed that the elderly learn through experiential activities and Mezirow (1991) who established that elderly's experiences are transformational. On the other side, Martín-García's (2003) research showed a clear preference from those older than 55 years of age for learning through reflection, observation, group conversation, and personal interaction, according to the experiential learning proposed by Kolb.

In this regard, film education, although not new, has turned into a novel learning resource for the elderly. Pereira-Domínguez (2005) describes cinema as the ideal pedagogical resource for it allows engagement and experience exposure; cinema depicts social values and supports a critical reconstruction of culture to solve both group and individual problems. Ciuffolini *et al.* (2007) consider cinema to promote reflection and understanding. González *et al.* (2008) attribute films with the ability to project personal experiences of people of all ages and levels of education. García-Martínez *et al.* (2012) claim cinema encourages critical thinking and sharpens observation capabilities. According to Felippa *et al.* (2015), cinema allows people to approach real-life scenarios by analyzing situations, identifying issues, and sketching possible solutions.

In film education, the dilemma is what movies are best to screen for retired people who need to watch specific films that talk about their own experiences and problems. In this regard, the authors of this paper have created several filmographies specifically selected to promote conversation and awareness about labor retirement.

Such filmographies include films made in both the 20th and 21st centuries. Films from the previous century regularly depict retirement as an adverse scenario, a time of crisis, discouragement, boredom, hardship, and death. The elderly typically appear to be neglected by the system and become living examples of the effects of forced retirement. An example of this type of film is the 1952 Japanese film *Ikiru* by Akira Kurosawa (Klein, 2016; Martínez-Riera, 2017).

In contrast, 21st-century cinema offers examples of resistance to labor retirement and satisfactory retirement cases. In general, movies recently produced show characters who, after retiring, appear fully adapted to this new stage of life (Iacub, 2008). In these films, life can be seen as a whole; these delivers meaning to the passing of time, illness, and death. Tokens of such types of films are Clint Eastwood's *The Mule* (Mc Garvey & O'Neill, 2021) and Alexander Payne's *About Schmidt* (Scolni *et al.*, 2016).

Based on the above, we designed and implemented a program for film education to promote awareness and social empathy. This paper describes the film Education of a Group of Retirees. Besides an introduction, the paper includes the methodology, findings, conclusions, and references.

## 2. Methodology

In 2019, qualitative research based on exploratory design was carried out to describe the effects of a film education program to create awareness and promote social empathy in a group of retirees in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. The program took five and a half months.

There were 16 people included, 14 of them women and two of them men. They were, on average, 67 years of age, ten years as retirees, and 33 years of previous labor life. During the intervention, participants would attend a daycare center for retirees, coordinated, in this case, by the educational institution they once worked for. Such a center offers art courses and organizes celebration events as part of the benefits retirees get from the monthly fees taken from their pensions.

Previously, these participants had already engaged in a previous film education intervention, with 25 films screened that dealt with the seven stages of labor retirement, as proposed by Atchley (1976). As a result of that intervention, students were able to broaden their cultural perception about retirement. They transitioned from thinking of this as a passive time for relaxing and doing nothing to a more active stage of life—a time to pursue happiness, enjoy leisure, and relax. However, notwithstanding their new cultural understanding, participants progressed only in focusing on themselves without considering the social and economic issues amongst the most vulnerable around them. That is, they were not yet capable of being altruistic to others. They were practically unaware of the social issues around them.

5

Hence, they have proposed a new program based on film education that is explicitly created so that they can have a chance to become aware of other people's conditions, feel empathetic, and be prone to help and provide support. Four topics were agreed on: obstacles to social involvement, understanding the lack of social security benefits, resistance to retirement, and forced retirement.

During this film education program, 22 movies were screened. These were classified according to the four topics of interest and selected from the filmography called *Mirar y reflexionar la jubilación* (Seeing and reflecting about retirement), prepared in 2017 by the authors here cited. All these are drama films and are starred by elderly actors. The primary roles of these stories needed to be played by elderly performers because it was considered that participants would thus be able to better identify with the characters and their situations. See Table 1.

**Table 1. The Film Education Program aims to create awareness and social empathy among retirees in Guadalajara, Mexico.**

Session	Name in México / Original name	Film-maker	Country	Year	Topic
1	Ikiru-Vivir / <i>Ikiru</i>	Akira Kurosawa	Japan	1952	
2	Las confesiones del Sr. Schmidt / <i>About Schmidt</i>	Alexander Payne	USA	2002	
3	Cuestión de principios	Rodrigo Grande	Argentina	2009	Obstacles to socially engagement
4	Mammuth	Benoit Delépine Gustave Kervern	France	2010	
5	Los recuerdos / <i>Les Souvenirs</i>	Jean-Paul Rouve	France	2014	
6	Heritage Falls	Shea Sizemore	USA	2016	
7	El último / <i>Der Letzte Mann</i>	F. W. Murnau	Germany	1924	
8	El encanto del erizo / <i>Le Hérisson</i>	Mona Achache	France	2009	
9	Martha	Marcelino Islas Hernández	Mexico	2010	Understanding the lack of social security for retirement
10	Sr. Pig / <i>Mr. Pig</i>	Diego Luna	Mexico	2016	
11	Bellas de noche	María José Cuevas	Mexico	2016	
12	La mula / <i>The Mule</i>	Clint Eastwood	United States	2018	
13	El camino / <i>The way</i>	Emilio Estevez	Spain	2010	
14	Amor a la carta / <i>Dabba</i>	Ritesh Batra	India	2013	
15	Grandes amigos / <i>A Walk in the Woods</i>	Ken Kwapis	United States	2015	Understanding retirement resistance
16	Si Dios quiere / <i>Se Dio vuole</i>	Edoardo Maria Falcone	Italy	2015	
17	Nosotros en la noche / <i>Our Souls at Night</i>	Ritesh Batra	United States	2017	
18	La última carcajada / <i>The Last Laugh</i>	Greg Pritikin	United States	2019	
19	Lugares comunes	Adolfo Aristarain	Argentina	2002	
20	Un fin de semana en París / <i>Le Week-End</i>	Roger Michell	United Kingdom	2013	Understanding forced retirement
21	El juez / <i>The Judge</i>	David Dobkin	United States	2014	
22	Candelaria	Jhonny Hendrix Hinestroza	Colombia	2017	

Source: Own elaboration.

Data was gathered through the cinema-debate technique. This has been considered a technique that not only supports information gathering but is also a work method. The validity and reliability of cinema debate to gather information were based on film-selection criteria, clear communication, proper moderation, engagement strategies, attendance records, and provided feedback. Besides securing validity and reliability as of the cinema-debate technique, such criteria opened the room to approach the different topics through lively and meaningful discussions.



Films were explicitly selected according to their relevance in approaching the proposed topics adequately. These high-quality films are backed up by positive critique, awarded, and duly recognized. Before screening each film, participants were informed about the cinema-debate purpose, the subject to be discussed, and participation rules, ensuring expectations were adequately established and clearly understood. Cinema-debate sessions were moderated by researchers who had previously trained in the technique and were experts on the discussed topics. Moderation ensured that all voices were heard, thus propelling everyone's participation. Among the strategies to make everyone participate, we included the open questions enlisted further. Active engagement and discussions were always promoted so people would feel they belonged to the process. Attendance to debate sessions was registered. The technique was assessed when the film cycle ended, and each participant was requested to provide feedback.

As a working method, and per Vázquez (2016), experiencing cinema debate consists of a formal dialogue with people who just watched the film to exchange viewpoints with a moderator who mediates conversation and guides opinions based on proper inquiry.

In this regard, participant conversation, inquiry, and learning were the primary activities. The methodology proposed by Splinter-Hernández (1995) was followed during cinema debates. This consisted of five steps:

1. Appropriate film selection was based on participants' interests and on having a clear idea of the intention to screen. As of this research paper, researchers checked and watched all the films in the *Mirar y reflexionar la jubilación* filmography. Then, they selected those films that would be considered necessary to expand their understanding of each topic (obstacles to social engagement, understanding the lack of social security to retire, retirement resistance, and forced retirement). Films were selected according to the variety and diversity of everyday situations. This and the next steps were started a few months before the intervention.
2. They were studying a film and getting its technical sheet. Researchers watched the selected films several times to ensure that their message's intention matched our study. Then, they prepared a presentation with slides containing the technical information of each film and their advertising posters. The technical sheet and the poster were obtained from *the Filmaffinity México*® website.
3. The film was screened to participants. This filmography was previously promoted amongst participants through the daycare center's *WhatsApp* chat. The four topics were announced with each related film, their screening date and time, and links to trailers. On screening day, the scheduled film was introduced with slides and some stories about the filmmaking process, the filmmaker, and the actors.
4. Formal screening of a film at a theater. On a weekly basis, the daycare center was conditioned to properly screen each film: the living and dining area was filled with

armchairs and chairs, then darkened by turning lights off and placing thick curtains on windows (donated by one of the retirees). The video projector was used together with a portable screen. The sound was amplified through a speaker, and at 3:00 pm sharp, the film was introduced. Popcorn was offered while participants would decide what language they preferred to watch the film. The screening started at 3:15, when everybody was quiet, and darkness had settled.

5. We discussed the film, its content, and its topic by conceptualizing the time and the country where it was made. After watching each film, lights were turned on, and chairs were moved, forming a circle. The debate started. Each session debate was audio-recorded, and pictures were taken. The question that opened the debate was: What did we learn about today's topic?

Once the film ended, questions were asked to open a free analysis of the film (the total number of elderly actors appearing, the roles they performed as leading or secondary characters, what values related to retirement and everyday life of the elderly were shown.)

Questions to analyze the leading character (behavior, everyday activities, feelings, challenges, support provided by others, actions carried out by themselves to address their problems, retired-life situations, stereotypes or distorted images, and positive, negative, or neutral appraisal of the leading character's situations in his/her life as a retiree.)

8

Questions to promote applying the film's message to everyday life: What did I learn about my retirement from watching this film? What did the film teach me about my past or my current and future life? How can I use these lessons in my everyday life? How can this learning be shared with others? What emotions did the film provoke regarding my retirement and my life? Which among my behaviors and activities did the film make me think about? What problems in the film relate to my problems? How can I address these problems? What type of support or help do I need to solve my problems? What distortions or stereotypes about labor retirement are still in me and my life?

As a data-generating technique, as established by Vázquez (2016), cinema debate was built to promote interaction between viewers and the film, between their perspectives and the sensitive manifestation of ideas, and, collectively, through a dialogue, enable both the individual experience and its collective conceptual perception.

While gathering data, reflection, and insight became relevant. This is what Vázquez (2016) has called "the philosophical insight from a film," which allows us to live a sensory experience that turns real under our gaze because, according to this author, a film is compelling when viewers can live what they see in it, that is when movies place us in the middle of what is natural to us.



It was also relevant to follow the contributions of Splinter-Hernández (1995) because what was discovered from these films came from the participants. All their opinions were considered, and they were allowed to explore all possibilities for conversation after viewing each film. This means that cinema debate was the technique from which the data and the intervention method were taken.

The obtained data were theoretically analyzed using Merleau-Ponty's (2018) rationale regarding the phenomenology of perception. According to Lyotard (1989) and Mendieta-Izquierdo *et al.* (2015), phenomenological analysis allows one to capture the global life experience that is common to all. On the other side, Gutiérrez (2005) considers, from the phenomenology of perception analysis, the subject is permitted to become part of the object by experiencing phenomena from mere observation and then generating elements to understand, interpret, and identify these phenomena as a byproduct of actual interaction with groups and individuals.

In this paper, and according to Álvarez-Gayou (2019), through data analysis, we searched for elements that reflected temporality (lived time), spatiality (lived space), corporality (lived body), and commonality (human relations). Nevertheless, above all, the analysis was centered on the essence of what Merleau-Ponty proposed as the pursuit of pre-insights, temporality, corporality, and the world lived by participants. It was recognized that the lived physical body is a permanent condition for experiencing life, the main component of opening our perception to the world (Sánchez-Migallón, 2014). Furthermore, the inheritance of awareness and body perception is here for us to find the primacy of participants' experiences and then link these to insights about spatiality and depth, which are necessary for their being in this world and inside a body (Dasilva, 2010).

From the operative perspective, analysis was carried out through the five steps of the interpretative phenomenological method (IFA) proposed by Duque y Aristizábal-Díaz (2019). The first step was about generating initial comments. This included Word transcriptions of recordings of cinema debate sessions (one document per session). Also, these transcriptions were read repeatedly before finally preparing notes and initial comments written to the right of the transcriptions.

The second step included the identification of emerging topics. Since four topics or analysis categories were first established (obstacles to social engagement, understanding the lack of social security when retiring, understanding retirement resistance, and understanding forced retirement), initial comments were included here as per category. Topics were written to the left of transcriptions.

The third step consisted of grouping topics. The four topics were then entered into the *AtlasTi* software, version 9.1. A hermeneutical tool was created in the software, and quotes (initial

comments) regarding experiences lived around the four established topics were selected. Then, each textual quote was tagged with a code and linked to the corresponding film.

The fourth step consisted of preparing the table of topics. After processing the groups of subjects, codes were classified by families and then set on the tables of topics. Each table of topics included the codes and quotes in proper order, as per superordinated topics. Based on this structural match, we could make the participants' descriptions the summary of this study. This step allowed a global experience and analysis of a film education intervention. Finally, the fifth step was the written report of results, which is attached to this paper in the next section.

At all times during this research process, we proceeded by the ethical principles for research on human beings, currently in force in Mexico (*Ley General de Salud en materia de Investigación para la Salud* and *Comisión Nacional de Bioética*, General Law of Health on Research for Health and Bioethics National Commission), and worldwide by the Helsinki Declaration, aiming to ensure and safeguard each participant's anonymity and autonomy. The principles of beneficence versus malfeasance, justice, respect for dignity, integrity, and protection of vulnerable people prevailed.

### 3. Findings

#### 3.1 Identification of obstacles that prevent a broader social engagement

10

After having viewed *Ikuru*, *About Schmidt*, *Les Souvenirs*, and *Heritage Falls*, participants analyzed protagonists' behaviors, reflected on their own behaviors, and then identified which obstacles prevented them from socially engaging in a fulfilling manner. Empathy for other participants was only sometimes perceived. There were only some glimpses of empathy after they watched *Mammuth*, which was screened for the fourth session.

Now, some comments expressed confirming the above:

JMR (personal communication, May 16, 2019) expressed: While watching this movie, I thought about the ladies who take cardboard from the trash they find on the streets. They never had a chance to retire. It is an unfortunate situation for these poor women.

AYGG (personal communication, May 16, 2019) shared the following: A lady who is more than 70 years old sweeps the sidewalk outside my house. This is what she does for a living. She charges 30 pesos (a dollar and a half) per week. These people have never had a chance to get anything, not even if they could attend elementary school. They live for the day. This is so awful, even when I just glanced at what it is.

Participants identified three types of obstacles: personal, family, and social. They pondered and questioned their behaviors around these obstacles; they could walk in the shoes of the film characters. See Table 2.



**Table 2. Identification of Obstacles Preventing Broader Social Engagement by retirees in Guadalajara México.**

Personal obstacles	Unsolved widowhood grief	I learned I could overcome my grief by enjoying life, by traveling, or by doing something different. I can have conversations and unburden my problems by talking, writing, and expressing my feelings. I enjoy my solitude, and I have time to reflect. I can support others, as Schmidt did (Comments after viewing About Mr. Schmidt)
	Lack of retirement project	Happiness can be attained when we rely on a retirement project. The protagonist needed to figure out what to do with his free time. He traveled around trying to make sense of life by recuperating the old times he cherished. (Comments after viewing About Mr. Schmidt).
	Ignoring our own need to transcend	The protagonist left a piece of work for posterity. He fought against all odds; he challenged influential people and never gave up. He transcended despite his deadly disease. I supported workers my boss did not welcome during my job life. (Comments after viewing Ikiru).
	Unsolved childhood trauma	Grandmother and grandson started thinking about her past and were able to address the traumatic events of her childhood. She solved trauma through her inner child and then died in peace (Comments after viewing Les Souvenirs).
	Incapacity to make decisions on one's own	The old lady accepted her son for what he was and made her own decisions. That is something we need to do: stand firm on our feet. (Comments after viewing Les Souvenirs).
Family-related obstacles	Become a nightmare for our relatives.	The protagonist constantly annoyed the family. That is why we may be rejected and left behind; we become a nightmare for those around us. The most important lesson would be: How can I stop being a burden to others? (Comments after viewing Les Souvenirs).
	Lack of affection for grandchildren	Grandmother and grandson were genuinely connected. I would like to have that with my granddaughter because intergenerational relationships are reassuring. (Comments after viewing Les Souvenirs).
	Not accepting children and grandchildren as they are	The person who had just retired was good at sports, but he could not accept that his son was a writer, and his grandson was a musician. Only when he could accept them as they were could they all get along. (Comments after viewing Heritage Falls).
Social Obstacles	Judging people without meeting them	Mammuth lived a very incongruent and confusing life. He wanted to retire without the security of a pension. He had no identity. While being a child, he was told he was stupid and grew up thinking he was. He lacked self-confidence. We need to see others. We need not stigmatize, criticize, or judge. We must be supportive instead. (Comments after viewing Mammuth).
	Incapacity to adapt one's values as time passes by	We can be flexible and not betray our values. This is about seizing opportunities that will benefit our whole families. This does not mean our dignity, or our ethical values will disappear. We shall always honor our values. (Comments after viewing Cuestión de principios).

Source: Own elaboration.

### 3.2 Empathy to issues faced by people who are not entitled to retirement benefits

After having viewed *Der Letzte Mann*, *Le Hérisson*, *Martha*, *Mr. Pig*, *Bellas de noche*, and *The Mule*, participants held a conversation about behaviors and about the ambiance where characters move around; then they compared their socioeconomic conditions and surroundings to finally learn and become aware of what happens when there is no social security, as it is for most Mexican elderly and the elderly from other countries.

This group of films offered participants an opportunity to get to know themselves as people who enjoy the social advantages of relying on a humane and dignified pension to live on: “We are privileged by the simple fact of having the security of an income.” The impact produced by films dealing with significant social problems made participants – at this specific moment of film education – observe and understand these protagonists' situations but not relate them to their everyday lives yet. See Table 3.

**Table 3. Empathy to problems faced by people not entitled to retirement benefits in Guadalajara, México.**

	People are forced to settle.	These exotic dancers ended up feeling happy with the very little they had. (Comments after viewing <i>Bellas de Noche</i> ).
	Emotional stability gained with great effort	The dancers became emotionally stable after suffering, hardship, and resilience. (Comments after viewing <i>Bellas de Noche</i> ).
	They replace family love with pet love.	Mr. Pig spent his life alone. He was empathetic, and by the end of his life, he became fond of his piglet. He truly loved it and defended himself against everybody. (Comments after viewing <i>Mr. Pig</i> ).
	They need friends to overcome poverty and disease.	Friends are cherished when one is poor and ill. Often, poor people have no friends (Comments after viewing <i>Mr. Pig</i> ).
Personal problems	They suffer from loneliness.	Renée was a self-educated lady. In her loneliness, she read a lot and savored everything she watched. She enjoyed both cinema and books, so she became a cultivated woman. (Comments after viewing <i>Le Hérisson</i> ).
	They pretend to be strong only to protect themselves.	Renée pretended she was rough, but her spirit cared for people. Until her very end, she protected a homeless man. She was filled with love. (Comments after viewing <i>Le Hérisson</i> ).
	They yearn to be loved by someone as they approach the end of their lives	Renée, although fearful, opens herself to be loved by the end of her life. (Comments after viewing <i>Le Hérisson</i> ).
	They withdraw and become insecure. They live locked inside themselves.	<b>Society is so cruel and indifferent to people with low incomes.</b> Moreover, that is why people withdraw, become lonely, and get locked inside themselves, although they are eager to talk to someone. ( <i>Martha</i> ).
		Mr. Pig wanted to depend on nobody; he did not want to be overprotected. He wanted to be independent and take good care of himself ( <i>Mr. Pig</i> ).

		<p>Not having enough money made Renée feel insecure and ugly. Her self-esteem was low, and she felt she did not deserve love. It was terrible that the girl's mother did not know Renée's name when she had employed her. Renée was invisible to her employer's eyes. (Comments after viewing <i>Le Hérisson</i>).</p>
Family-related problems	<p>Their spouses and children resent them.</p>	<p>Mr. Pig's daughter resented her father, for he had forsaken her. He did everything he could to reunite and leave her an inheritance (Mr. Pig). The daughter resented him because he was absent at her first communion or wedding. The good thing is that his wife forgave him. (Comments after viewing <i>The Mule</i>).</p>
	<p>They are not recognized or appreciated by their families despite their hard work.</p>	<p>The protagonist continued to work despite his age. He always worked hard to provide the best for his family, keeping him far away. Working the whole day is neglecting your children. If you work 12 hours a day, you are not deserting your children. (Comments after viewing <i>The Mule</i>).</p>
	<p>They endure mistreatment and humiliation from their relatives.</p>	<p>The niece rejected him when he was downgraded at work. Families and societies emasculate people with low incomes. (Comments after viewing <i>Der Letztze Mann</i>).</p>
	<p>They work until their last day of life.</p>	<p>They need to work despite their advanced age for they need to survive. (Comments after viewing <i>Le Hérisson</i>). Exotic dancers in the story continued to care what others may think about their need to keep working. They were left on their own with no money. They always need to learn about taking care of their financial future. All those around them took their money when they had it; that is when they were productive. (Comments after viewing <i>Bellas de noche</i>).</p>
Labor-related problems	<p>The lack of social security forces them to accept any employment</p>	<p>Poverty forces the leading character to work as a smuggler and continue to provide for his family. Despite leading illegal businesses, he promoted good work conditions. There was camaraderie, respect, and love among the people working there. (Comments after viewing <i>The Mule</i>). Martha's and her best friend's jobs were taken from them on the same day. That is why she thought about committing suicide. She had nothing, and no one left. Instead, she became a prostitute. (Comments after viewing <i>Martha</i>).</p>
	<p>They are degraded and humiliated at work.</p>	<p>Unfortunately, as they see you, they treat you. The protagonist was degraded at work for his age. Very soon after, he lost his poise and started having problems walking. His back bent over, and he would quickly fall. His entire career was lost after the one mistake he made. The elderly are very badly treated, and therefore, they feel they are useless. It was so hard for him to be humiliated as he was. Then, his family turned their back on him. This was an unfortunate situation. (Comments after viewing <i>Der Letztze Mann</i>).</p>

Source: Own elaboration.

### 3.3 Empathy for people who resist retirement

After viewing *The Way*, *Amor a la Carta*, *A Walk in the Woods*, *Se Dio Vuole*, *Our Souls at Night*, and *The Last Laugh*, participants talked about behaviors and emotions expressed by the leading characters in these films.

These conversations brought them back to the moment when they retired. They concluded they did not undergo any resistance because they were ready and willing to retire. Some of them had long wished to do so, for they felt their burden was excessive both from work and home, as it is mainly for ladies. However, they agreed that some people may have concerns and question retiring. This may be due to the negative influence of their immediate superiors. *“When I decided to retire, after 40 years of hard work, my boss insisted I should stay. That came hard on me, and in my first year as a retiree, I felt very insecure.”* See Table 4.

**Table 4. Empathy for people who resist labor retirement among retirees in Guadalajara, México.**

Behaviors identified in film characters who resisted labor retirement.	Their ego is big	The successful cardiologist had a hard time dominating his ego. He made amendments with his wife and children. (Comments after viewing <i>Se Dio Vuole</i> ).
	They are successful in their professional careers.	The successful doctor felt at ease with his work and his luxurious life. However, after having lost his son from sudden death, he resisted traveling because his deceased son wanted them to travel together. Many things had to pass before he accepted his new condition of life. (Comments after viewing <i>The Way</i> ).
	They are workaholics.	When we love what we do, we do not want to stop. Many actors have passed while performing. These people are genuinely dedicated to their jobs. They feel fulfilled when at work. The terminally ill comedian decided to continue to do what he loved: feeling, living, and dying, doing what he most loved. (Comments after viewing <i>The Last Laugh</i> ).
Emotions are identified in film characters who resist retirement.	They fear aging.	The famous doctor thought retirement meant he was ill or nearing his funeral. He feared becoming old. We fear younger people can be more learned than us; this happens to many of us. We want to continue to feel capable and will not accept our body's change. We need to accept that. (Comments after viewing <i>A Walk in the Woods</i> ).
	They feel guilty about their past.	The protagonist sacrificed her life to become her son's and grandson's maid. (Comments after viewing <i>Our Souls at Night</i> ).

Source: Own Elaboration.

### 3.4 Empathy to causes and consequences of forced retirement

After viewing *Lugare's communes*, *Le Weekend*, *The Judge*, and *Candelaria*, participants discussed the cause and consequences of forced retirement. This time, their conversation was focused on the leading characters of the films they watched. Then, they expressed that none of them had been forced to retire.

The set of films reinforced the participants' empathy, especially after viewing *Candelaria*. Comments were as follows:

BST (personal communication, November 14, 2019) explained: When we go to a supermarket, we usually tip two or three pesos to the older adult who packs our purchase. We forget these people are working for a living, for they have no pension as we do.

FPQ (personal communication, November 14, 2019) shared: The other day, when we were in our watercolor painting class, I felt so happy, fortunate, and fulfilled. I was enjoying something that made me happy. And then, suddenly, I thought of people who cannot have this. I thought of people who need to do things they do not want to do because they do not have any income.

MC (personal communication, November 14, 2019) added that my eyes opened when I watched these films and listened to the explanations provided, and I became much more aware. I had always thought of people very lightly.

TRRV (personal communication, November 14, 2019) expressed: I get to think about what we can do to support these people. We need to help them all through legislation or something.

Some participants did something to help based on their desire to contribute. Their comments were as follows:

JTV (personal communication, November 14, 2019) said: I was at the Medical Center and got acquainted with one of the female guards. I told her: "Listen, you deserve a great round of applause for your great kindness and love of work." She burst into tears and hugged me. What we get from viewing these films and what we have learned have made us value these people. We have learned to express how appreciated they are.

AYGG (personal communication, November 14, 2019) referred to: I regularly do not like to be touched by anyone. Yesterday, I was walking on the street heading downtown. Coming towards, there was a lady, her lips and cheeks with too much lipstick and blush, and her eyebrows perfectly outlined. She was wearing blanket clothing, a beautiful set. I could not avoid telling her: "Madam, you look so beautiful!" She turned back to me and told me her story. She needed to be listened to. She touched my arm; then I thought she probably felt lonely and needed human contact.

Empathy for the causes and consequences of forced retirement is contained in Table 5.

**Table 5. Empathy to causes and consequences of forced retirement in Guadalajara, México.**

Causes of Forced Retirement	Strong political ideas	Some jobs, like teaching, do not hold respect for different political ideas. In the film, the teacher had socialist ideas, so he had an early retirement. We never saw him as religious, but he had a well-defined mindset. I loved that. (Comments after viewing Lugares comunes).
	Suffering from serious illness	Candelaria had to quit her job due to cancer. Sometimes, people need to survive, so they hide their dignity. In the beginning, Candelaria refused to make pornography, but due to her economic situation, she had to. She knew that sooner or later, she would be forced to quit her job, for she felt worse and worse. She had both herself and her husband exploited because she saw no other way to survive. Starvation must be terrible. (Comments after viewing Candelaria).
	She is being falsely accused of discriminating against his/her students.	The teacher never discriminated against anyone, and still, he was forced to retire. (Comments after viewing Le Wee-End).
	Committing murder	The judge should have retired when he knew he was ill and when he knew he had physical limitations prior to committing murder. (Comments after viewing The Judge).
Consequences of Forced Retirement	Difficulty in adapting to a new life	The leading character was also disappointed by never getting his pension. The way this university professor was told about this was just terrible. He never had a chance to digest that. The cold environment on campus could have been better for him. (Comments after viewing Lugares comunes).
	Low self-esteem	It was simply an unfair retirement. This made the professor lose trust in himself. (Comments after viewing Le Weekend).
	Insecurity and poverty	Sudden retirement produces insecurity and poverty. (Comments after viewing Candelaria).
	Death	Life made no more sense to the professor since he missed his classroom. He never got used to poverty and then died a sudden death. (Comments after viewing Lugares comunes).
Partner's influence	Positive influence	An understanding and conscious partner helps overcome a forced retirement. If the protagonist's spouse would not have been lovely to him, he could have started drinking or smoking even more. His spouse instead supported and made him stronger. That was good for him. (Comments after viewing Lugares comunes). Sudden retirement can be overcome when there is love from our significant others. (Comments after viewing Candelaria).
	Negative influence	A bad relationship with our spouse makes us feel worse when we retire. This character's wife was selfish and never helped the professor get back on his feet. She constantly humiliated him, and he was a masochist himself. (Comments after viewing Le Weekend).

Source: Own elaboration.



## 4. Conclusions

This film education program positively promoted awareness and social empathy amongst participants, who learned new social values and were able to project solutions to individual problems, as Pereira-Domínguez (2005) noted.

By approaching retirement-related social and economic problems through viewing and reflecting upon films, participants increased their awareness and understanding of barriers affecting, or even preventing, a satisfactory adaptation to labor retirement, according to what Arzate-Salgado (1995) and Alavi *et al.* (2021) have earlier proposed.

Notwithstanding, participants in this research expressed that they never resisted retirement, were forced to, and were not excluded from their pension system. They developed empathy after watching these films and discussing and reflecting on them. They became socially aware of these problems, proving that cinema can be a powerful educational tool since viewers can submerge themselves in real-life situations.

It is worth noting that empathy was perceived only after the fourth cinema debate session. However, it was reaffirmed during the last sessions. Now, we know empathy cannot be easily attained. It requires a long and consistent process.

Participants in this project became empathetic and socially sensitive with their relatives, neighbors, and those that they usually come across – the guard at the hospital entrance, the old lady who comes to find cardboard in garbage cans, the lady who sweeps the sidewalk, the older man who washes cars, the very old lady who walks by herself, eager to find somebody to chat with.

This Film Education Intervention was a learning experience appropriate to the participant's age, as suggested by Knowles (2006), Kolb (1984), and Mezirow (1991). Participants found themselves at ease and comfortable with this learning style, for they could thoroughly reflect, observe, work as a group, engage in conversation, and interact personally, as Martín-García (2003) suggested in his previous paper.

Participants of this research reflected upon labor retirement and understood more about it as a social phenomenon. However, they mostly learned about their retirement, according to what Ciuffolini *et al.* (2007) noted regarding cinema's essential function.

This Film Education involvement enabled participants to better project personal experiences in their lives as retirees, no matter what educational background they have or how old they are, as expressed by González *et al.* (2008). Besides, this contributed to promoting critical

thinking about the lack of social security and forced retirement. However, above all, they learned about themselves and about what areas they can improve in their own lives.

They were able to sharpen their capacity for observation, placing the focus on what people their same age need, and then turn and see those who do not rely on a steady income and must work despite their advanced age. García-Martínez *et al.* (2012) have already related to cinema's contribution to education. Film education also helped them approach real-life scenarios, analyze authentic situations, identify problems, and propose solutions, as established by Felippa *et al.* (2015).

This intervention program, consisting of twenty-two films, was influential in promoting reflection and social awareness. The films, either watched individually, in small groups, or when screened as special events as it was for a whole cycle of films, offered participants lessons about the main social and economic problems that labor retirement brings.

Previously prepared filmographies turned out to be successful. It was appropriate to Screen films from the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, as Klein (2016) and Martínez-Riera (2017) suggest. Old movies made these participants become sensitive to the reality faced by many people in their hometowns. Participants found recent productions entertaining, although some referred to a lack of social retirement benefits, wrongful termination, and resistance to retirement.

18

Regarding this intervention program and its implementation, it was convenient to work together weekly because participants had a chance to assimilate better the insight they got from films and had time to reflect. From one week to the next, participants had a chance to observe their surroundings and then return with a few more new concerns.

Finally, it was right to analyze the reflections and testimonials of retired participants, considering the phenomenology and the interpretative phenomenological method, as suggested by Duque and Aristizábal-Díaz (2019), Lyotard (1989) and Mendieta-Izquierdo *et al.*, (2015), because, through the shared experience lived by the participants, it was possible to capture the global experience from the intervention.

The way results are presented – tables with analytical axes and participants' testimonials – turned out very useful for future interventions in social education. For instance, in Table 3, we observe that films like *The Mule*, *Bellas de Noche*, *Martha*, *Sr. Pig*, *Le Hérisson*, and *Der Letzte Mann* largely supported awareness about not relying on social security. These fostered empathy for those who are not protected by social programs.

The experience could improve if carried out for a more extended period, year-round, where participants can also apply their learning to increase empathy and awareness of social issues. These are only the bases for social transformation.

An essential limitation of this study was its descriptive-qualitative design. This does not allow for the generalization of the results obtained despite the vital data extracted about the usefulness of using cinema to educate people through similar social and educational situations. Nonetheless, it is possible to replicate this experience in different contexts and similar population groups.

New interventions have been proposed based on these same films. However, it is recommended that new films from the very extensive filmography at hand be tested. Another proposition is to consider that, for future interventions, the formal analysis of esthetics and other cinema elements are included so films can be globally appreciated and serve to promote more empathy, stimulate emotions, and induce catharsis.

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## Authors' Contribution statement

María de los Ángeles Aguilera-Velasco: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, resource acquisition, research, methodology, project management, resources, software, supervision, validation, visualization, writing (original draft), writing (review of the draft and revision/correction); Martín Acosta-Fernández: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, research, methodology, project management, resources, software, supervision, validation, visualization, writing (original draft), writing (review of the draft and revision/correction); Víctor Horacio Orozco-Covarrubias: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, research, methodology, project management, resources, software, supervision, validation, visualization, writing (original draft), writing (review of the draft and revision/correction); Blanca Elizabeth Pozos-Radillo: conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, resource acquisition, research, methodology, project management, resources, software, supervision, validation, visualization, writing (original draft), writing (review of the draft and revision/correction);



## Conflicts of interest

The authors unequivocally state that there is no conflict of interest in the writing or publishing of this article, reinforcing the integrity and impartiality of the research.

## Ethical statement

The authors do not have any type of ethical implication to be stated in writing and publishing this article.

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