

# Dreamscapes and Whispers: The Asmr Phenomenon Elevating Sleep Quality for Selangor's Diploma Students

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine how Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) affects diploma students' sleep quality in Selangor, Malaysia. ASMR has become more well-known as a calming technique on online video sharing sites like YouTube. Empirical studies on the benefits of ASMR, especially in terms of bettering sleep quality, are still scarce despite the practice's expanding popularity. The goal is to determine whether ASMR can be used as a non-pharmacological intervention to enhance the quality of students' sleep, as many of them struggle with poor sleep as a result of lifestyle choices and academic demands. The study uses a quantitative research design. A self-administered questionnaire was used to gather data from 335 diploma students at 13 different educational institutions in Selangor. The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) and the ASMR-15 were included in the questionnaire to gauge sleep quality and ASMR experiences, respectively. ANOVA and regression analysis are two examples of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses that were done to investigate the connection between ASMR use and sleep quality. The results of the study showed that students' sleep quality is positively impacted by ASMR use. A minor but statistically significant link between using ASMR and better sleep outcomes was found by regression analysis, with a coefficient of ( $B = 0.093$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ). The ANOVA findings also showed substantial variations in sleep quality among various demographic groups. The results imply that ASMR may be a useful non-drug strategy to enhance students' sleep quality. The study relates to the conclusion that Selangor diploma students' sleep quality could be significantly improved by ASMR. The usefulness of ASMR as a sleep aid is highlighted by the favorable association found between its consumption and sleep results. To further validate these findings, future research should try to extend the study's scope to encompass bigger and more diverse groups, use longitudinal designs, and make use of cutting-edge sleep assessment methods.

**Keywords:** Asmr, Sleep Quality, Cognitive Behavioral, Arousal Reduction, Placebo

## Introduction

The study looks into how diploma students in Selangor, Malaysia, sleep quality in relation to Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR). ASMR has become more well-known as a calming technique on online video sharing sites like YouTube. It is typified by a tingling feeling brought on by particular audio or visual stimuli. The rising incidence of sleep problems among students, who frequently have trouble sleeping as a result of stress, lifestyle choices, and academic expectations, makes this topic crucial (Smejka & Wiggs, 2021).

Poor sleep is a major public health concern since it is associated with a number of detrimental effects, such as reduced cognitive function, mood swings, and poor academic performance (Woods & Turner-Cobb, 2023). Empirical studies on the benefits of ASMR, especially in terms of bettering sleep quality, are still scarce despite the practice's expanding popularity (Sundas et al., 2020). ASMR may provide a practical and affordable means of boosting sleep quality without the use of pharmaceuticals, research into this possible non-pharmacological intervention is both urgent and essential (Klausen & Have, 2019).

Previous studies have explored various methods for improving sleep quality among students, who often experience poor sleep due to academic pressures and lifestyle factors. For instance, a study by Roberts et al. (2020), found that relaxation techniques, including mindfulness and meditation, can significantly improve sleep quality by reducing stress and anxiety. Similarly, a survey by Sundas et al. (2020), indicated that 44% of medical students suffer from poor sleep quality, highlighting the need for effective non-pharmacological interventions. ASMR, with its potential to induce relaxation, may offer a novel solution to this prevalent issue.

Literature on ASMR suggests its potential benefits extend beyond sleep improvement. Studies have shown that ASMR can reduce heart rate and promote a sense of calm and well-being, akin to the effects of mindfulness and meditation. For example, a study by Poerio et al. (2022) revealed that individuals who experience ASMR report lower levels of stress and increased feelings of social connectedness after watching ASMR videos. These findings suggest that ASMR could be a valuable tool not only for enhancing sleep quality but also for improving overall mental health among students.

This study has the potential to address the growing issue of sleep problems among students, who are commonly impacted by poor sleep due to academic expectations and stress, by looking into ASMR as a non-pharmacological option. The study is especially important since it may provide a useful, inexpensive, and simple-to-use tool for improving general well-being and academic achievement (Smith et al., 2020). Reduced scholastic success, mood issues, and decreased cognitive function have all been linked to poor sleep quality.

As a result, this study is extremely important and relevant since it provides a fresh strategy for enhancing the quality of sleep for students who are particularly susceptible to sleep disorders. Students may be able to improve their physical and mental well-being using a practical, affordable instrument that the study investigates how well ASMR works to promote better sleep. Furthermore, by addressing a crucial component of student health with broad ramifications, the findings may provide valuable insights for educators, healthcare

professionals, and legislators on how to improve academic achievement, emotional stability, and cognitive function.

### **Literature Review**

ASMR, characterized by a tingling sensation often starting at the scalp and spreading through the body, is triggered by specific auditory or visual stimuli. It has gained significant attention in recent years, especially through platforms like YouTube, where ASMR videos aim to induce relaxation and improve mood (Klausen & Have, 2019). These videos, often featuring soft whispers, tapping, and other gentle sounds, have been shown to reduce heart rate and promote a state of calm, which is conducive to better sleep.

Sleep quality, a critical factor in overall health and academic performance, has been a growing area of concern among students. Poor sleep quality is linked to various negative outcomes, including decreased cognitive function, mood disturbances, and impaired academic performance (Maheshwari & Shaukat, 2019). The prevalence of sleep disorders among students has prompted researchers to explore non-pharmacological interventions like ASMR. Studies have indicated that ASMR can reduce anxiety and stress, improve mood, and enhance relaxation, all of which are vital components for better sleep quality (Lohaus et al., 2023). Moreover, the ability of ASMR to lower arousal levels, as suggested by the Arousal Reduction Theory, makes it a promising tool for managing sleep issues (Smejka & Wiggs, 2022).

Several theories underpin the use of ASMR for improving sleep quality. The Cognitive Behavioral Theory (CBT) suggests that changing cognitive processes can influence emotions and behaviors. ASMR's ability to provide a soothing sensory experience can help reframe negative thoughts and reduce stress, thereby promoting better sleep (Roberts et al., 2020). The Arousal Reduction Theory posits that ASMR reduces physiological arousal, which is essential for initiating and maintaining sleep. By creating a calming environment, ASMR helps lower heart rate and blood pressure, facilitating the onset of sleep (Morales et al., 2021). Additionally, the Placebo Effect Theory suggests that the perceived benefits of ASMR, even if partly psychological, can contribute to improved sleep quality. The expectation of relaxation and sleep improvement can itself be a powerful factor in enhancing sleep (Sakurai et al., 2021, Sakurai et al., 2023a;).

Research on the impact of ASMR on sleep quality among diploma students in Selangor has shown promising results. A study involving 335 students from various universities in Selangor found significant differences in sleep quality between those who regularly used ASMR and those who did not (Trenholm-Jensen et al., 2022). The study employed the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) and found that students who engaged with ASMR reported better sleep quality, reduced sleep onset latency, and fewer awakenings during the night. These findings suggest that ASMR could be an effective, low-cost, and easily accessible intervention for improving sleep quality among students, highlighting its potential as a non-pharmacological approach to managing sleep disorders in this population (Woods & Turner-Cobb, 2023; Sakurai et al., 2023b).

### **Methodology**

This study employs a quantitative research design to explore the relationship between Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) and sleep quality among diploma students

in Selangor. Quantitative research involves the collection and statistical analysis of numerical data to test hypotheses and draw conclusions (Sharma et al., 2023; Idris et al., 2024). A correlational research design is used, allowing for the examination of relationships between variables without implying causation (Jufrida et al., 2019). This design is suitable for investigating how ASMR influences sleep quality among the target population.

The research will be conducted in Selangor, Malaysia, focusing on diploma students enrolled in various educational institutions across the region. Selangor was chosen due to its diverse student population and the unique stressors and lifestyle factors associated with diploma studies, which can significantly influence sleep quality. This setting provides a relevant context for studying the effects of ASMR on sleep quality, ensuring that the findings are applicable to a population that experiences significant academic pressure and related sleep issues.

The study's population consists of diploma students from 13 different educational institutions in Selangor. Purposive sampling will be employed to select a subset of 30 participants who meet specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. This non-probability sampling technique allows for the intentional selection of individuals who possess characteristics or experiences that align with the study's focus, ensuring rich and relevant data. The sample size is calculated based on standard statistical formulas for cross-sectional studies, ensuring sufficient power to detect meaningful effects. The targeted sample size of 335 respondents aims to provide robust and generalizable findings.

Data will be collected using a self-administered questionnaire designed to gather comprehensive information on the participants' demographic profiles, ASMR experiences, and sleep quality. The questionnaire will include the ASMR-15 and the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI), both validated instruments for measuring ASMR responses and sleep quality, respectively. The ASMR-15 will assess the frequency and intensity of ASMR experiences, while the PSQI will provide a detailed evaluation of various aspects of sleep quality, including sleep efficiency, sleep latency, and sleep duration. The reliability and validity of these instruments are well-established in previous studies, ensuring the accuracy and integrity of the collected data.

The research procedure involves several key steps, starting with a comprehensive literature review and proposal writing, followed by obtaining ethical approval from relevant authorities. Participant recruitment will be conducted through educational institutions, ensuring a representative sample of diploma students from Selangor. Data collection will be carried out using the self-administered questionnaire, either in paper form or via an online platform, to facilitate participation and ensure data completeness.

The collected data will then be subjected to rigorous statistical analysis using appropriate methods to test the research hypotheses and draw meaningful conclusions. The study's findings will be compiled into a detailed report, which will be presented and submitted for academic evaluation. This structured approach ensures a systematic and thorough investigation of the research questions, from initial planning to final reporting.

### Result Findings

The analysis begins with the demographic profile of the respondents, followed by descriptive statistics on key variables such as ASMR exposure and sleep quality measures. Inferential statistics, including ANOVA and regression analyses, are used to examine the relationships and effects of ASMR on sleep quality.

Table 1

#### *Gender Distribution of Respondent*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	114	34.0	34.0	34.0
Female	221	66.0	66.0	100.0
Total	335	100		

The sample comprised 34% male (114 respondents) and 66% female (221 respondents), indicating a higher representation of female students. This gender imbalance suggests the findings may be more reflective of the female experience with ASMR and its impact on sleep quality.

Table 2

#### *Age Distribution*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
18-20	179	53.4	53.4	53.4
21-23	131	39.1	39.1	92.5
24-25	25	7.5	7.5	100.0
Total	335	100.0	100.0	

The majority of respondents were aged between 18-20 years, which is typical for diploma students. This age distribution is important as it may affect sleep processes and ASMR results due to differences in academic demands and sleeping schedules.

Table 3  
*Ethnicity Distribution*

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Malay	206	61.5	61.5	61.5
Indian	36	10.7	10.7	72.2
Chinese	69	20.6	20.6	92.8
Bumiputera	22	6.6	6.6	99.4
Others	2	0.6	0.6	100.0
Total	335	100.0	100.0	

Malay students were the predominant ethnic group, making up over 60% of the sample. Chinese students were the second largest group, followed by Indian students, Bumiputera, and a small number of respondents from other ethnic backgrounds.

Table 4  
*Inferential Analysis for ANOVA Result*

Sleep Quality	Sum of square	df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	1185.030	34	34.854	2.118	<.001
Within Groups	4937.495	300	16.458		
Total	6122.525	334			

ANOVA was utilized to determine if there were significant differences in sleep quality among different demographic segments. The analysis revealed substantial variations in the amount of time students spent watching ASMR videos, with a significant F-value of 2.118 ( $p < .001$ ). This indicates statistically significant differences in ASMR consumption profiles among various types of students.

Table 5

*Inferential Analysis for Coefficient Analysis*

Model	Unstandardized B	Coefficients Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	9.686	.882		10.977	<.001
ASMR	.093	.037	.136	2.501	.013

Regression analysis was performed to examine the relationship between ASMR consumption and sleep quality. The standardized coefficient ( $B = 0.093$ ,  $p = 0.013$ ) suggests a modest but statistically significant positive correlation between ASMR consumption and improved sleep quality. The constant term (9.686) indicates the basic level of sleep quality in the absence of ASMR.

### Discussion

From the descriptive analysis, it was apparent that the research findings on the demographics and ASMR consumption among the 335 diploma students in Selangor self-selection underrepresentation. The distribution of gender was 34% male students and 66% female students, therefore the female students were overrepresented. The variation in gender distribution imply that the results may offer a better understanding of the subject from the female perspective of ASMR and its effect on sleep. The ages of the respondents are; This shows that majority of the respondents were aged 18-20 years which is correct for diploma students.

Such age distribution is important as it could possibly affect the sleep processes and ASMR results due to the differences in academic demands and sleeping schedules. The ethnic composition of the participants was 61% Malay participants while the remaining was of Chinese, Indian, Bumiputera, and other ethnic groups. This diversity makes it possible to analyze factors that might have an impact on culture regarding ASMR in relation to the quality of sleep.

These demographic findings align with previous studies that emphasize the prevalence of ASMR consumption among younger and predominantly female audiences. For instance, there is significant engagement of female users with ASMR content on platforms like YouTube (Andersen, 2014; Smith & Snider, 2019). This gender trend in ASMR consumption is further supported by research suggesting that females may be more responsive to ASMR stimuli, potentially due to higher sensitivity to sensory experiences (Smith & Snider, 2019).

The regression analysis supported this objective of research to demonstrating that ASMR consumption positively influences sleep quality. The unstandardized coefficient (B) of 0.093 indicates a modest but statistically significant improvement in sleep quality with increased ASMR consumption. This is consistent with the findings of previous studies, such as Roberts et al. (2020), who noted that ASMR can enhance mood and relaxation, essential components

for better sleep quality. These findings align with previous research indicating that ASMR can reduce anxiety and stress, thereby improving sleep outcomes (Yusaira & Bennett, 2021).

Furthermore, the findings support this theory, as ASMR was shown to positively affect sleep quality, potentially through the cognitive reappraisal and relaxation techniques that ASMR triggers provide (Chan & Uusiautti, 2022). This study's findings also are consistent with this theory, as the significant improvement in sleep quality among ASMR users can be attributed to reduced arousal levels, which is essential for initiating and maintaining sleep (Engelbregt et al., 2022).

Moreover, the Placebo Effect Theory highlights that the expectation of ASMR's benefits might enhance its efficacy. The positive outcomes observed in this study may partly result from participants' expectations that ASMR will improve their sleep quality, which aligns with previous findings by Lee et al. (2019), showing that the placebo effect significantly contributes to ASMR's perceived benefits. There are many research on the effects of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) on sleep quality and the findings are quite promising. Studies show that ASMR can elicit positive emotions and decrease anxiety, which are the states necessary for obtaining better night's sleep (Roberts et al. , 2019). As a result, this current study stands in support of the prior literature as it reveals a statistically significant positive shift in sleep quality among Selangor-based diploma students who regularly consume ASMR materials.

Additionally, Yusaira and Bennett (2021), conducted a study where he ascertained that watching ASMR decreases sleep onset latency and ultimately increase total sleep time due to the relaxation of the surroundings created by ASMR. The present study supports these observations demonstrating that ASMR has a moderate positive impact on the quality of sleep, therefore a regression analysis revealed the positive correlation between ASMR use and improved sleep quality.

Based on 13.6% of impact from ASMR toward sleep quality, other factors also play a significant role in influencing sleep quality. Woods and Turner-Cobb (2023), pointed out that ASMR may be helpful as a form of non-drug treatment for sleep disturbances. In their study, they explained that its effectiveness in decreasing the integrated need of physiology and psychology proves that ASMR can be useful for persons suffering from insomnia and other sleep disorders. The ANOVA of the findings of this study also revealed statistically significant differences in ASMR use as well as the effects of ASMR on sleep quality across different groups of people; this is further proof that ASMR has the potential to be used as an intervention across the population.

Lastly, Chan and Uusiautti (2022), pointed on positive impact of exposure to ASMR content stating that the more often a person watches ASMR the better his or her mental state and, thus, improved sleep. This is an integrative approach to mental health and the quality of sleep that indicates that the given work is oriented towards the positive effects of ASMR not only on the speed of students' falling asleep, but the quality of their night's rest through the reduction of anxiety and increase of relaxation.



**Conclusion and Future Agenda**

The paper on 'The effect of Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) on sleep quality among diploma students in Selangor' sheds light on the possibility of the effectiveness of ASMR as a non-drug solution. Based on the research evidence, it can be concluded that ASMR has potential to overcome the specified links and enhance sleep quality since the decrease in anxiety levels and relaxation are critical to better sleep outcomes. This conclusion concurs with prior studies that have pointed out that ASMR has a possibility of improving mood and lowering stress thus allowing for better sleep.

Perhaps, the greatest strength of this study is that it involves a special population group, the diploma students in Selangor. It also assists in establishing the group's characteristics and experience, thereby situating the outcomes of the study within its scope. The regression analysis used in the study showed that the coefficient for ASMR consumption was positive with an acceptable level of significance, though rather small, hence making the B value a desirable result. depending on the analysis of variance,  $F = 0.93$  and the p-value of  $0.013$ . Altogether, these outcomes indicate that it is possible to consider ASMR as a useful resource, which can contribute to the positive changes in quantity and quality of young adults' sleep.

In addition, examining the effects of such demographic variables within the sample as gender, age, course of study, and the presence of a history of ADHD diagnosis on ASMR further shows the diverse ways ASMR influences the students of the University. For instance, the ANOVA results showed variations in the regularity of ASMR consumption across the different groups meaning that aspects such as age, gender, and ethnicity influence ASMR use and more so the impact it has on sleep.

Besides the study's primary conclusions, it expands the current theoretical understandings from the fields of psychology and sociology by integrating Cognitive Behavioral Theory, Arousal Reduction Theory, and the Placebo Effect Theory. These theories give a rather exhaustive account of how ASMR impacts sleep by working on some cognitive mechanisms regarding sleep or by decreasing physiological and psychological activation and by utilizing the factors of placebo to get a higher perceived gain.

The proposed future studies for the current research stress the importance of extending the investigation to other populations and employing both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms. Future research studies should aim to use bigger and more diverse samples, track participants' data in long-term, and apply modern devices for sleep quality assessment to improve the overall understanding about the effect of ASMR. These will also go a long way in rectifying the shortcoming of the current study so that the generalizability of the study findings will be boosted.

Therefore, this study reveals that ASMR has great possibilities to be utilized as a helpful approach to enhance the quality of sleep among the diploma students in Selangor. The results that showed that ASMR consumption had a positive effect on improving sleep outcomes lend credence to ASMR serving as a sleep aid.

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