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Ana Afrina Abd Jamil, Yarina Ahmad, Ahmad Naqiyuddin Bakar

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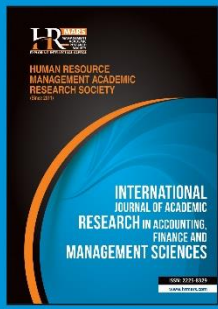
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Violent Entertainment: A Review of its Implications on Children's Aggressive Behavior and Addiction

Ana Afrina Abd Jamil¹, Yarina Ahmad^{1,2}, Ahmad Naqiyuddin Bakar¹

¹Faculty of Administrative Science and Policy Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, MALAYSIA, ²Institute for Biodiversity and Sustainable Development (IBSD), Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450 Shah Alam, Selangor, MALAYSIA.

Corresponding Author's Email: yarinaahmad@uitm.edu.my

Abstract

Children are easily influenced even by entertainment they consume. Since 1960s, violent acts in entertainment have been discussed in literature as acts that express physical force against oneself or others, either with or without the use of a weapon, compelling action against one's will in response to pain or being hurt, or murder, actually causing harm and killing. Hence, the main research question of this study is to explore the research gaps and suggest future direction of study, which related to violent entertainment among children and its implications. Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method being used to review literature evolving around violent entertainment implications among children using Scopus database of within 12 years (2010 – January 2022) has found significant pattern about violent entertainment consumed by children. Based on the analysis involving 12 articles related to (1) "violent entertainment" "children" AND "implication"; (2) "violent entertainment" "children" AND "aggressive behaviour" OR "aggressive"; (3) "violent entertainment" "children" AND "violent behaviour"; (4) "violent entertainment" "children" AND "addiction", three implications being discussed which are aggressive behaviour, violent behaviour and addiction that should be prevented among children. Aggressive behaviour found to be the most discussed implication that potentially lasts until adulthood with the ability to create a cycle of violent/aggressive generations. In a nutshell, everyone including parents, society, and the authority plays an important role in ensuring that implication of violent entertainment among children can be reduced to protect every child.

Keywords: Violent Entertainment, Children, Aggressive Behaviour, Implication, Addiction

Introduction

Grand Theft Auto V to be one of the most controversial violent video game has been out for a while, has made the most money of any other kind of media amounting USD 6 billion (Cherney, 2018). Numerous series of this video game were released in response to the rising demand for Grand Theft Auto and fans demand for future releases in 2023/2024 (Keach, 2022). Gujarat (a state in India) officials, for the first time banned PUBG (PlayerUnknown's

Battlegrounds) due to local parents being largely worried about how the game would affect their children (Agense France-Press, 2019). The news reported on an addicted child who missed meals and beverages, was sick, and succumbed from it without seeking medical care (Ikoba, 2020).

The next season of Squid Game the hit violent film which soon will be available on Netflix the streaming platform, is already highly anticipated by the violent film's fans. Even when these entertainment were not originally meant for children's consumption, they will be motivated to engage with popular entertainment to fit in with the trend. Throughout history, people have always enjoyed violent entertainment. People of ancient Rome were introduced with the Gladiator games in 264 BCE (before Common Era) by Julius Brutus sons to honor their father by having three pairs of gladiators' to fight in The Colosseum with the capacity of 50,000 people (Bushman, 2018).

Nowadays, it seems to be easier to get violent entertainment. Violent entertainment is one of the many forms of entertainment that children may readily access. Early exposure to violent entertainment will have a number of negative impacts, including behavioural changes, aggressive thoughts and behaviours, desensitisation to violence, a lack of prosocial behaviour, rage, hostile assessments, and physiologic arousal (Anderson et al., 2017). Additionally, aggressive behaviour may be learnt among children through their observation and reinforcement (Bandura & Walters, 1963) makes violent and aggressive behaviours from violent entertainment easily mimicked by children.

In the research undertaken by Hoge (2009) revealed that aggressive behaviour and peer pressure are two risk factors that contribute to the continuing crime problem. Criminals often exhibit aggression, which not only fosters other forms of delinquency but also encourages commercial crime. Juvenile delinquency often started while the offender was in school since it is the typical age for children to meet friends from school and neighbourhood. Bullying, defiance to authority, and truancy are seen as the beginning of future issues since they may lead to other delinquencies (Gerth, 2020). In China, 34,000 children between the ages of 14 and 17 are regarded as juvenile offenders, accounting for between 2.41% and 6.78% of all crimes between 2010 and 2018 (Lu et al., 2018).

Aggressive behaviour may continue into adulthood when additional factors are present (Henriksen et al., 2020). This would escalate other social problems like crime, domestic violence, and murder—all of which ought to be avoided in the first place. This study aims to explore the direction of research published in reputable journals particularly Scopus to further explore the research gaps and suggest future direction of study, which related to violent entertainment among children and its implications. In detail, excessive violent entertainment engagement here would cause children to be addiction to this genre of entertainment and allowing aggressive behaviour.

Literature Review

Due to the widespread use of entertainment, the world is currently experiencing "entertainmentization" (Wolf, 1999). People, rich or poor, consume entertainment differently since it provides leisure, joy, satisfaction, and passing time. Violent entertainment is one of the industry capable of consistently making enormous sales, and it has become a profession for many, including individuals addicted to this kind of entertainment (Kierkegaard, 2011). From 1995 to 2012, the top-grossing films in each year had at least a mild degree of violence. Globally, online video providers had 613.3 million subscriptions in 2018 and this figure is rise to 1.1 billion by 2020 (Motion Picture Association of America, 2021). According to Bartsch et

al (2016), audiences reflect and mean-make violent content in media if it is realistic. The authors discovered that audiences avoid excessive violence if it is viewed as real, thought-provoking, and overwhelming, as opposed to when it is perceived as unrealistic and merely entertaining. However, enjoyment of virtual violence can lead to moral acceptance of physical violence and a greater demand for aggression sensation seeking, particularly among males (Hartmann et al., 2015).

Adolescents' active and passive engagement in violence has increased as technology and internet activities have evolved (Agbaria, 2020). The internet has rendered violence more widely accessible, and the user experience has been enhanced by allowing users to connect with one another, particularly in violent video games (Yang, 2016). Gentile et al (2014) discovered that exposure to violent video games over time leads to aggressive behaviour on children in Singapore. Another study on children watching violent cartoons, conducted by Zhang et al (2021), discovered that the amount of aggressive thinking increases rapidly, leading to aggressive behaviour. The element of violence in comedic cartoons, such as the "Happy Tree Friends" series, has received a large number of views and is freely accessible via their YouTube channel.

Enjoying violence in entertainment is not a new or widely publicised occurrence; violence in games and sports such as hockey and football was widespread even during the Elizabethan era (Cartwright, 2020). According to Sindermann et al (2018), there is a high risk of addiction to general internet use whereby excessive participation in violent entertainment can lead to addiction. Achievement (increased desire to earn more wins), status within the gaming competition, and escapism from real-life concerns are some of the factors that can lead to addiction, particularly to active engagement in violent entertainment such as violent video games (Biolcati et al., 2021). According to Gtzsche-Astrup (2018), even radicalised individuals vent their rage by aggressing if they are distressed. A higher level of emotional dysregulation is a significant risk factor for teenagers participating in addictive behaviours (Estevez et al., 2017).

Aggressive behaviour is another implication of violent entertainment. In the literature, aggressive behaviour is classified as: reactive or proactive; hostile or instrumental; direct or indirect; impulsive, active or passive; overt or covert; and legitimate or illegitimate (Allen & Anderson, 2017). Aggressive behaviour is one of the few visible externalising behaviours, which are commonly antisocial, aggressive, and disruptive behaviour (Rose et al., 2018). Aggressive behaviour, often known as aggression, is a type of behaviour that can be done verbally, nonverbally, or by action in order to harm and hurt another person (Singh et al., 2014). Aggression is an unpleasant reaction to anything provided in an inappropriate manner. Researchers frequently define aggression as an act to damage another person who does not have the purpose of harming or being harmed (Anderson et al., 2017). The authors stated that violence is extreme, and it has the potential for greater severity, particularly in physical injury, and it can even lead to death. Based on a study conducted by Moreno-Ruiz (2018), violent behaviour has been classified similarly to aggressive behaviour, as the authors explored violence in the typology of aggressive behaviour, which is explicit and relational violence. However, the concept of aggressive is debatable due to the fact that a layperson could address a forcing salesman to be aggressive. This study adopted a SLR to explore the recent trends in violent entertainment among children, as well as its implications for addiction and aggressive behaviour.

Method

Systematic Literature Review (SLR) is a practical approach for reviewing literature that is useful for gathering, reviewing and synthesising research data. Furthermore, using SLR, researchers will have a better understanding of the literature and can find the research gaps pertaining to the issue discussed. As a result, the purpose of this study is to conduct SLR in order to explore the direction of research published in respectable publications, especially Scopus. This will indirectly explore research gaps and propose new research directions. The following processes are incorporated into the methodology of this study by using SLR: (1) identification; (2) screening; (3) eligibility; and (4) included.

(1) Identification

The Scopus database has been selected as the primary and only database to be utilised in the SLR for this study. This is due to the fact that it contains respectable publication from all around the world and published peer-reviewed journal (Perevochtchikova et al., 2019). After that, this study found four unique search strings to explore, which are connected to the primary topic of this study. The following search strings are: (1) "violent entertainment" "children" AND "implication"; (2) "violent entertainment" "children" AND "aggressive behaviour" OR "aggressive"; (3) "violent entertainment" "children" AND "violent behaviour"; and (4) "violent entertainment" "children" AND "addiction."

For the first search string which is "violent entertainment" "children" AND "implication", there are 211 publications appeared. This search string was developed to ensure various kind implications to appear due to violent entertainment engagement among children. This followed by the second search string which is "violent entertainment" "children" AND "aggressive behaviour" OR "aggressive" in order to narrow down one of the commonly discussed implications of violent entertainment engagement among children which is aggressive behaviour. This search string produced 225 publications. The third search string used for this study is "violent entertainment" "children" and "violent behaviour" and resulted 117 publications. This search string is useful as the term violent behaviour and aggressive behaviour is sometimes being used interchangeably within literature. Lastly, 61 articles for "violent entertainment" "children" AND "addiction" has been used in analysing this SLR research. Addiction appears to have the fewest articles among the other strings. This is because the addiction is one of the compulsive behaviours that might occur in children as a result of excessive exposure to violent entertainment. Table 1 shows a summary of search strings and the number of articles that appeared.

Table 1
Search string from Scopus database

Search string	All fields	Date of acquisition
"Violent entertainment" "children" AND "implication"	211	12/8/2022
"Violent entertainment" "children" AND "aggressive behaviour" OR "aggressive"	225	13/8/2022
"Violent entertainment" "children" AND "violent behaviour"	117	13/8/2022
"Violent entertainment" "children" AND "addiction"	61	13/8/2022

(2) Screening

Following the identification process, this research conducted the screening process by categorising all publications from the domain "All Fields" into the following categories: (1) document type; (2) year of publication; and (3) subject area. This research limits its findings to the document type "article," and the results reveal that there were 276 articles. Meanwhile, in terms of publication years, the scope of this study ranges from 2010 to 2022, producing 145 publications. According to the findings, there are 84 articles that are related to the search strings. In terms of subject area, this study has been limited to social science solely. Table 2 provides an overview of the screening procedure.

Table 2
Number of articles based on the search string and domain

Search String	Articles	Year (2010-2022)	Social Science
"Violent entertainment" "children" AND "implication"	101	51	35
"Violent entertainment" "children" AND "aggressive behaviour" OR "aggressive"	107	57	37
"Violent entertainment" "children" AND "violent behaviour"	52	29	19
"Violent entertainment" "children" AND "addiction"	16	8	3
Total	276	145	84

(3) Eligibility

Following the screening process, this study moves on to the eligibility process, which includes the development of inclusion and exclusion criteria. For the purpose of this study, the following article criteria have been determined to be excluded, which are: (1) not discussing violent entertainment; and (2) discussing violent entertainment that does not include children. The selection of articles is also based on the overall content of the articles (Mengist et al., 2020). As a result, articles that were unrelated to this study were eliminated. Furthermore, articles that are not accessible through Scopus and university library services are also not included. As previously mentioned, articles published before the year 2010 will not be considered for analysis in the study.

In addition to the exclusion criteria, the following inclusion criteria were used in this study: (1) articles comprising both empirical and non-empirical findings; (2) articles relating to children; and (3) articles published entirely in English. Furthermore, only publications that discuss the "implication" of violent entertainment among children are reviewed. Based on these inclusion and exclusion criteria, 72 irrelevant papers are excluded from the analysis of this study. The details of the criteria are listed in Table 3.

Table 3

SLR study selection using inclusion and exclusion criteria

Criteria	Decision
Empirical and non-empirical study	Inclusion
Predefined keyword consisted of All Fields	Inclusion
Subject area of Social Sciences	Inclusion
Papers that findings are about children	Inclusion
Papers must be fully written in English	Inclusion
Papers that can't be accessed	Exclusion
Date of publication before 2010	Exclusion
Papers that findings unrelated with children	Exclusion

(4) Included

Articles that fulfilled all of the criteria and went through a rigorous process of identification, screening, and eligibility are selected as the most pertinent articles related to the topics. As a result, there are a total of 12 articles included in the analysis of SLR, as shown in Table 4.

Table 4

Number of publications included in the study

Search String	Articles
"Violent entertainment" "children" AND "implication"	7
"Violent entertainment" "children" AND "aggressive behaviour" OR "aggressive"	5
"Violent entertainment" "children" AND "violent behaviour"	0
"Violent entertainment" "children" AND "addiction"	0
Total	12

Results and Discussion

Based on the rigorous SLR procedure, the findings revealed important patterns and gaps regarding the impact of violent entertainment on children. Four patterns that emerged in the study include: (1) methodology; (2) trend; (3) type of entertainment; and (4) implication.

Methodology

Nine empirical and three non-empirical publications were selected for analysis after passing through the stages of preparing SLR as adapted from Mengist et al. (2020). The majority of empirical studies employed a quantitative methodology and distributed surveys to their participants. Additionally, one study used a mixed-methods strategy to conduct their research, which also included conducting qualitative interviews and distributing surveys (quantitative). The non-empirical publications include case law and review articles.

Trend

The scope of violence in entertainment can be limited to television violence, such as violence in films shown on television. Children needed to be kept away from violent entertainment because this was the most powerful mass media available to influence all generations. According to the research from the 12 years of literature, there is no comprehensive review of how violent entertainment evolved from television to modern forms, but this literature provides summaries of these developments. Violent video games have been a trend in literature for the past ten years. This study predicts that other modern kinds of violent

entertainment, such as streaming services and short videos and its effect will be one of the research focus by scholars in the future.

Types of Entertainment

The literature discusses popular forms of violent entertainment like music, movies, and video games as the source of violence. The most of literature, however, is concentrated on violent video games since children are so intrigued by games. Removing the violent element would lessen its appeal to violent entertainment consumers. Children are encouraged to engage in aggressive behaviour through active violent entertainment, such as violent video games. Because of the "hands-on practice" encourage audience participation and escalates violent behaviour. Active violent entertainment, such as violent video games, encourages children to commit violent acts. To win over clients, the industry competes to enhance the experience. To win over consumers, the industry competes to enhance the experience. This shows that industry participants are simply interested in making money and that none of them cares about keeping children away from violent entertainment. Since they may still be convinced to buy, children remain the industry's main target market.

Implications

After this series of SLR process, aggressive behavior is argued to be the most common implication of violent entertainment among children. The implication is vice versa whereby: (1) readily aggressive children are more prone to violent entertainment; and (2) violent entertainment induces desensitization, which makes it possible for children to tolerate violence even if they weren't naturally aggressive. This is backed by the idea that aggression only happens in response to provocation. Children who mildly engage with violent entertainment was not found to be aggressive with their friends such as being caught fighting. Notably, children who engage with excessive amounts of violent entertainment are more likely to act aggressively or violently. Their ingrained beliefs and perspectives about violence may be altered by the components and behaviours shown in violent entertainment. Aggressive behaviour is more common due to the increased amount of violence in entertainment nowadays compared to earlier eras.

There are debates on the relationship between violent entertainment and aggressive behaviour in children. It was found that aggressiveness occurs when individuals watch violent entertainment while these components are present. The components include: (1) developing aggressive behaviour; (2) understanding the underpinnings of other variables; and (3) readily aggressive children are more interested in violence and more drawn to violent entertainment. The extent to which empirical studies might show a causal relationship between violent entertainment and aggressive behaviour was acknowledged to be somewhat ambiguous in the literature. Serious violent behaviour may result from a combination of inherited traits and local environmental variables, like friends and family. This study draws the conclusion that the welfare of children is significantly influenced by the entire environment around them, including their families, friends, neighbourhoods, and society as well as national and international policymakers.

The discussion of how parents influence their children's entertainment choices has also been incorporated in the literature. Parents believe that letting their children choose the type of entertainment they want to enjoy will not impact on their children's behaviour. Every kind of entertainment, including violent content, must be graded and ranked according to the maturity of specific age groups. Meanwhile, many parents are not well-informed about these

gradings. This becomes worse when children have access to platforms that are free to use or even ones that their parents pay for, particularly ones that accept online payments. Parents can meet children's needs when they are unable to make purchases for themselves. Notably, this study has two limitations: it only uses the Scopus database, which concentrates on a particular subject, and it only considers two implications, but the consequences of entertainment vary greatly in many ways.

Conclusions

Information technology is always evolving, and this includes entertainment. The way people consume entertainment, too, has changed to fit its environment. From the old ways of consuming entertainment by attending theatres and moving around, to the new ways of getting entertainment that are easy to reach with a variety of gadgets, entertainment has come a long way. However, entertainment may also be destructive, particularly if it features violent, gory, or aggressive behaviour. Violent entertainment is often promoted as a means to have fun without adverse impact.

Some types of violent entertainment make money off of dramatic criminal cases. This makes the audience perceive such actions in violent entertainment as "normal". Characters in violent entertainment are too often portrayed as being heroic, powerful, bold, and even independent. The audience's curiosity first drives their interest, which is potentially followed by strong interest and an increase in engagement. The violent content will cause them to be desensitised and change their perception that violent behaviour is acceptable and usual.

Therefore, when these consequences occur to children, it actually shapes them to be violent by having them mimic the acts of entertainment. This could potentially last until adulthood. Due to its enormous demand and the interest that both adults and children have in engaging with violent entertainment, there is almost no chance that demand for violent entertainment will decline. The implications of violent entertainment, especially towards children, are many as it could lead to other damaging consequences, including to children's mental and physical health. However, this study focuses only on two (2) implications of violent entertainment among children, which are: (1) aggressive behaviour and (2) addiction.

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