

## Effects of Hollywood Action Movies on Child Offenders in South Africa

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### Abstract

Different types of media have been tackled to explain the causes of child offenders but there is limited knowledge on the effects of violence from Hollywood movies on child offenders in South Africa. The purpose of this study is to examine whether violence from Hollywood action movies has any effects on child offenders in South Africa. The employed methodology was the quantitative approach, where 66 articles were reviewed by the researcher. The findings of this study included that the frequent watching of Hollywood action movies can negatively affect children and influence their behaviour through desensitisation and imitation of violent behaviour. Violence, drug use and sexual content were found to be the major signatures of Hollywood action movies and that can propel child offenders. Therefore this study recommends that the South African government should intervene on what media portrays to young people who are the future of the nation so as to reduce the factors that contributes to increase of child offenders.

**Keywords:** Child offenders, Movies, Media violence, Child Offenders in South Africa, Hollywood action movies.

### Introduction

Child offenders have received great attention in previous research publications over the past years. Child offender and ways to eradicate it has been the most discussed problem both nationally and internationally. The issue of child offenders is a major challenge in different sectors in South Africa, for an example, in community settings, home and schools violence by child offenders has been a rife (Ntshangase, 2015). The South African justice system is dealing with a large number of child offenders who are violating the law, in detention and some wait for trial (Nstangase, 2015). Variety of studies demonstrates that some of the causes of child offenders include physical factors like drugs addiction and economic factors where poverty is regarded as a cause (Ntshangase, 2015). This study will focus on violence from Hollywood action movies and the effects they have on child offenders in South Africa. By the effects of violence from Hollywood action movies, this study aims to uncover the change in behavior (effects) of children after the exposure to Hollywood action movies. As it is commonly known, effects may be negative or positive; this study focuses on the negative effects of increased exposure to violence to Hollywood action movies. It

specifically hypothesizes that frequent exposure to violent films pose an effect on child offenders meaning that the frequent exposure to violence from Hollywood action movies remains as one of the cause to child offenders in South Africa.

In South Africa, the Child Justice Act 75 of 2008 is the legislation that's responsible for distinguishing delinquent and non-delinquent offenders (Super, 2016). The focus of this study is on young people with antisocial behavior and in violation with the law. In South Africa, a child is considered to be 18 years old or below (Marimuthi 2014). Meaning that child offenders are people under the age of 18 with a behavior that is in conflict with social norms and law. However, the Correctional Services Act 8 of 1959 proposes that everyone below the age of 21 in conflict with the law can be regarded as a child South African Law Commission [SALC] (1997). Different countries have different explanations and age limits with regards to child offenders. This study mainly focuses on the age grouping of child offenders in terms of the South African definition of child offenders.

Rainer (2003) states that an action movie is a film genre where there is a series of activities in a form of violence or physical fights. Action films involve a protagonist who may use intense violence in order to solve any obstacles (Tasker, 2004). Hollywood movies are an internationally known movie industry which includes variety film genres including action movies (Tasker, 2004). Hollywood movie industry started to be popular during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (Dangcil, 2007). The Hollywood movies industry was popularly recognized for its creative fiction stories (Dangcil, 2007). It basically originates from America. From the first movie that Hollywood movie industry produced in the year of 1911 until now Schatz (2004) maintains that violence in Hollywood movies has always been their signal feature. This industry has grown to be very popular and has dominated all other movie industries by the global audience they have. The country of South Africa is one of many countries that have been influenced by the Hollywood film industry. The extent of harm that Hollywood action movies can potentially pose to the society especially children is what served as a motivation to focus this study on the effects of Hollywood action movies on child offenders.

This growing number of crime rates in South African provinces clearly indicates the challenge that the country is facing and the portion of these crimes are executed by young people. Young people in South Africa have generally been regarded as the treasure and hope of the country (Makiwane & Kwizera, 2009). The future of the country lies in the hands of young people. If young people are not productive and reflecting deviant behavior that poses a great threat to the future of the country (Makiwane & Kwizera, 2009). The prison population in South Africa consists of almost 36% of people under the age of 16 years (Khan & Singh, 2014). Presently the country of South Africa holds 13 prisons that mainly house child offenders (Slamdien, 2010). However, De Wet (2004) states that 50% of crime is executed by young people between the age of 14 to 18 in South Africa. Cavadino and Dignan (2008) further reveal that during the mid-2000s the number of child offenders confined was 4,158. Such increase in the rates of child offenders depicts that South Africa is faced with a great challenge in relation to child offenders.

Child offenders and the influence from action has been found to be greatly related.

The problem increases mostly when children begin to take what they see in movies to the streets (Gondola, 2016). The evidence of the influence of Hollywood movies on children can be clearly seen amongst child offenders as it has been seen on the way they go all-out to talk, behave and dress precisely like people they see on the Hollywood films (Grossman & DeGaetano, 2009). This shows that there is a level of influence that Hollywood action movies potentially impose on children. If they are striving to talk and dress in the way that characters in movies do this raises a question on how much influence do Hollywood action movies pose on the way they behave? This predicament is what executed an interest to focus this study on the effects of Hollywood movies on child offenders.

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effects of Hollywood action movies on child offenders in South Africa. Not all movies contribute to child offender, which is why this study mainly focuses on action movies as they are greatly characterized with violence. The reason why this topic was formulated is that violence amongst child offenders in South Africa still stands as a challenge and the population of young people in prisons is tremendously increasing thus it is significant to find out the causal factors. The gap still stands on the interventions that can be made to lessen the effects of western movies on young people's moral values thus this research aims to fill that gap.

### **Preliminary literature review**

#### **The negative influences that Hollywood action movies depict towards children.**

Lichter (2002) conducted a study on the effects of violence on movies amongst young people, they concluded that in many action movies violence is mostly committed by good people and rarely face consequences of the criminal acts they commit. What does this teach young people of South Africa? Does it teach them that every violent or criminal act they may engage themselves into really has consequences? For action movies, this is not the case. Anderson and Bushman (2001) proposed that violence in Hollywood action movies is usually justified, for an example, the viewers come to trust that their own violence reactions are suitable, so they are hence more adept to the use of violence.

Malamuth and Impett (2011) further revealed that the negative influences that are depicted on Hollywood action movies include demonstrations of sexual content. Hollywood movies have been found to show sexual behaviour that misleads children about sexual activities (Anderson, Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Huesmann, Johnson, Linz, & Wartella, 2003). The effects of demonstrations of Hollywood action movies which are X-rated have been a bone of contention in a way that researchers have different views on whether they can cause young people to engage in sexual violence or not. Anderson *et al* (2003) argued that the sexual content that is depicted in Hollywood action movies can potentially cause them to engage in reckless sexual behaviours and teach them language that may be a form of insult to other people. On the other hand (Bleakley, Jamieson & Romer, 2012) argued that the level of extreme violence as a result of exposure to violence in movies such as rape and homicide is uncommon meaning that sexual content on movies does not actually suggest that young people

will engage in sexual violence like rape. This, therefore, shows that more longitudinal studies still need to be undertaken to assess precisely children's exposure to action movies and the chance of extreme violence among children in South Africa.

The other feature of Hollywood action movies has been mostly associated with is drug use (Stern & Morr, 2013). The exposure of young people to Hollywood action movies have been shown to have an influence on the children's drinking habits (Stern & Morr, 2013). In many South African townships, child offender has been greatly associated with drugs and substance abuse (Espelage, Low, Rao, Hong & Little, 2014). However, Stern and Morr (2013) show that a group of young people who are exposed to action movies which include alcohol and drug use are even twice as prone to begin consuming alcohol compared to the group who are less exposed action movies with alcohol and drug use. The use of drugs and alcohol may lower a person's level of self-control this in return tend to cause a person to engage in risky behavior and resort to violent behavior Anderson *et al* (2003). Young people who use drugs might end up engaging in criminal behavior just to get money to buy more drugs and commit other drug-related crimes (Stern & Morr, 2013). This, therefore, shows that drug use that is popularly shown in Hollywood action movies has a negative impact on children.

#### **The effects of Hollywood action movies on child offenders**

Anderson *et al* (2003) pointed out that some of the effects of violence on films may be behavioral effects. For an example, the frequent exposure to violence on Hollywood action movies can affect the behavior of the audience especially children. The study that was conducted by Anderson *et al* (2003) suggested that the violence on action movies can affect the behavior of children in a way that it can cause aggressive behavior. Anderson & Bushman (2001) revealed that different types of aggression like physical, verbal and aggressive thought amongst children are significantly linked to the exposure of violence on movies. For an example, children who are frequently exposed to violence on Hollywood action movies may develop aggressive thoughts which may lead to the behaviour that may violate other people, therefore, increasing the rates of child offenders in South African communities. In a study that was conducted by Anderson *et al* (2003), there is consistency in the findings from a variety of experiments that children who spend most of their times watching movies consequently display more aggressive behavior, thoughts and emotions as compared to the group of children who are not exposed to violence in action movies. Huesmann & Taylor (2007) also proposed that after exposure to Hollywood action movies children tend to develop verbal aggression through threats and bullying towards one another and this has been very popular in child offenders in South Africa.

Anderson *et al* (2003) further argue that it is not all children that may act aggressively after being exposed to violence in action movies. There are some factors that may play a role of reinforcing the effects of action movies on young people. Most children who identify with an aggressive movie character are more likely to be affected (Anderson *et al*, 2003). For an example, children who greatly identify with a violent character or see the vicious scene as practical are more likely to develop violent ideas because of the violence they have observed from movie characters. At the point when young people are directed to a situation where they have to relate to a character by envisioning

themselves as the hero as in the violent film they have been exposed to, violence instigating effects of watching the violent film are greatly increased. Hollywood action movies have different heroes and protagonists that are popularly known to be violent the likelihood of children to identify with characters of Hollywood action movies is greatly increased (Anderson *et al*, 2003).

The effect of action movies on child offenders is also reinforced by the characteristics of the viewer. Huesmann and Taylor (2007) showed that this occurs when violent characters on action movies portray traits that may be attractive to children. This may include personal attributes such as age, sex and race (Huesmann & Taylor, 2007). Children may easily relate to violent characters in Hollywood action movies that are at the same age as them or same sex. However, children with an aggressive personality are more likely to engage in a violent behavior when they have been frequently exposed to violence on action movies (Huesmann & Taylor, 2007). This does not imply that the generally nonaggressive individuals are unaffected by violent depictions of Hollywood action movies, they are also affected just that those that are aggressive are more prone. The longitudinal studies on people with low levels of prior aggression show that with an increased exposure to violence in Hollywood action movies aggression tend to develop at later stages in their lives (Huesmann and Taylor, 2007).

### **Influence of Hollywood action movies on children's attitudes towards criminal behavior**

Long-term exposure to violent media is also associated with more positive attitudes towards violence and causes normative beliefs about aggression (Funk, Bechtoldt-Baldacci, Pasold & Baumgardner, 2004). Exposure to media violence also distorts people's normative beliefs about violence and leads to perceptions of the world as a dangerous place (Bryant & Oliver, 2008). For example, heavy television viewers tend to overestimate the amounts of crime and danger in the real world (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli & Shanahan, 2002). Such distortions lead to other negative consequences. Media violence use reinforces beliefs that aggression is an appropriate response in different situations (Bushman & Huesmann, 2006). Such increases in pro-violence attitudes can, in turn, lead to increased aggression (Möller & Krahé, 2009). The other factor that is associated with the influence of Hollywood action movies on juvenile's attitudes towards criminal behavior is known as desensitization. Desensitization to violence that is depicted on action movie additionally changes the way which children see and respond to violence in their real lives (Carnagery, Anderson & Bushman, 2007). Desensitization has been explained as a decrease in enthusiastic and physiological responsiveness towards violence (Carnagery *et al*, 2007). It is a word used to describe the ways in which viewing acts of violence reduce a person's responsiveness (Bushman & Huesmann, 2006). The increased exposure to violence in Hollywood action movies is associated with desensitization to violence amongst children. This means that the more violence that a child views on television, the less emotionally concerned they become and the more acceptable violence seems to them. Frequent viewing of violence may cause children to be less anxious about violence and see it as more normal thus negatively affecting juveniles.

Hollywood action movies can also impact on children's attitudes towards criminal behavior is through disinhibition. Disinhibition refers to watching violence on television which may legitimize the use of violence by the viewer in real life by undermining social sanctions against behaving violently, which normally work to inhibit such behavior (Gunter, 2002). In South Africa, there are many sanctions that used to regulate or inhibit violent and criminal behavior, with frequent exposure to Hollywood action movies which demonstrates scenes, where violent behavior is glamorized and never punished the attitudes of children towards criminal and violent behavior is negatively affected. For example, if violence is seen to be successful for a screen hero, children tend to be more likely to select a violent option for solving real-life problems (Giles, 2003). Repeated exposure to such negative consequences can lead to lack of responsiveness to future scenes of blood and violence. Such habituation may affect the attitudes of children towards criminal behavior.

### **The role that can be played to reduce the effects of violent films on children**

There are different methods that have been regarded as protective factors to violence from action movies. Numerous countries strictly restrict films that are seen as morally offensive. Torr (2001) emphasized that generating programs that would educate the public and bring awareness to the society would be effective to reduce the effects of action movies on child offenders. In South Africa, there are recognized acts which ensure that everything that is depicted on television adheres to the code of conducts (Wasserman & De Beer, 2005). However, according to Torr (2001) reducing the time spent on movies can be one of the effective ways to reduce the effects of movies on Hollywood action movies. This means that parents, guardians and caregivers can play a major role in reducing the effects of Hollywood action movies on child offenders.

The role of a parent in reducing exposure to violence in Hollywood action movies is one of the most important protective factors. This can occur when the relationship between the child and the parent is strong and unwavering. This can be a parent or a legal guardian looking after a child who is caring and competent (Torr, 2001). In many cases, in South Africa, parents tend to be so protective about the places their children may be exposed to (Burton, 2007). For example, many parents ensure that their children refrain from staying in streets or places with the violent neighborhood with a belief that such increased exposure will lead to violent behaviour on their children. The problem lies in the notion that as much as parents make efforts to decrease exposure to violence from their children's environmental surroundings if they don't focus on what kind of values and norms do movies that their children spend most of their time watching the same should be done on violence that children are exposed to in media such as Hollywood action movies.

In South Africa, there is what is known as Film and Publication Board. There are established conducts made by this board whereby all broadcasters and exhibitors are compelled to obey those conducts (Film & Publication Board, 2012). Different descriptors and ratings are used to indicate suitable audience for different programmes. The mostly used descriptions include ratings and descriptions such as A =suitable for all, PG = Parental Guidance, 16= not suitable for people under the age

of 16, 18= not suitable for viewers under the age of 18 and XX= films that should not be depicted in public (Film & Publication Board, 2012). Thus it is significant for parents to be selective. The World Health Organization [WHO] (2010) states that parents should carefully select the programmes that their children views. Every programme that is depicted on television always has an age restriction. The Hollywood action movies usually contain age limits some are appropriate for 13 years some 16 years and some 18 years restriction of age (Torr, 2001). This does not become effective if parents are not strict in preventing their children to refrain from watching movies that are beyond their age.

### **Theoretical framework**

With an aim of comprehending the effects of Hollywood action movies on child offenders in South Africa, reception theory was deemed as a relevant theory that can be used for this study. The theory that was selected will assist in bringing full understanding of the effects of Hollywood action movies on child offenders in South Africa. Reception theory is the theory which focuses on the ways that viewers interpret media (Hall, 2007). Since Hollywood action movies form part of media, this theory will be used to understand how viewers, precisely, children in South Africa interpret Hollywood action movies and how that poses effects on their behavior.

#### **Reception theory**

The theorist known as Stuart Hall is the one who coined reception theory (Hall, 2007). Reception theory has been popularly known as an encoding and decoding form of communication whereby by the encoding process involves a sender and the decoding process includes the recipient (Hall, 2007). In this study, the movie makers of Hollywood action movies are deemed as the senders who encode messages in a film whereas the recipients are understood as children in South Africa who decode and hold different understandings after consuming Hollywood action movies. This theory shows that in many cases the message that the sender was aiming to pass may be decoded in a way that it has a totally different meaning to the viewers.

According to Hall (2007), the process of decoding the message by the viewers involves three various positions. The first position is known as the dominant hegemonic position and this provides the viewer to comprehend the message from the media texts similar to the encoder's perspective (Hall, 2007). Furthermore, within the dominant hegemonic position, there is no great deal of miscommunication and misunderstanding between the encoder and the decoder. For an example, in the dominant hegemonic position, the viewers passively accept what they view on their television screen (Holub, 2013). Hollywood filmmakers have argued that the purpose of including violence in their movies is to make people more cautious of violent and criminal behavior, the likelihood of the audience passively interpreting that in the same manner as the encoder is very high within the dominant hegemonic position. This then explains why some of the children in the country of South Africa may not act violently after consuming Hollywood action movies.

The second position that the audiences in the reception theory use to interpret messages from media is known as the negotiated position. The negotiated position

occurs when the decoder both accepts and rejects some of the media texts formulated by the encoder (Hall, 2001). For an example, the decoder may make exceptions to the encoder's perspective. Kim (2004) further points that the negotiated position is the point at which the viewers can decode the message formulated by the encoder based on the encoder predominant social and societal perspectives. The messages are largely seen in a different sense from of the encoder, which greatly differs with the predominant hegemonic position. However, it is totally likely for the viewers to unravel the message as a more individual message, which can then results their own particular predispositions and perspectives in the decoding process (Hall, 2001). The audience may watch violent behaviour from Hollywood action movies and see different tactics to use violence to achieve power and some other material things but tend to reject this behaviour by considering the costs of violent behaviour thus showing the negotiated position.

The last position of reception theory refers to the oppositional position. Kim (2004) stated that oppositional position occurs when the audience is able to interpret the messages in media texts in the way that was planned to be decoded, yet in view of their own societal convictions end up observing another unintended message in media texts rejecting the intended message to culture or political views they may hold (Hall, 2001). The reception theory on the oppositional position entails that a person may consume media with an end goal or to fulfill individual needs. When violence is demonstrated in Hollywood action movies, which involves violent behavior, values, norms and tactics it is transmitted around the whole world. Children may see Hollywood action movies as a tool that can help them learn even more antisocial and deviant behavior thus increasing the effects in their behavior.

## **Methodology**

This study used non-empirical research design which is the systematic review. The systematic review has been defined as the actions followed to exhaustively and reproducibly gather, evaluate and integrate all accessible empirical data to answer the researcher's research question (Boland, Cherry & Dickson, 2017).

This study is quantitative, meaning that it employed quantitative methods to collect and analyze data. The quantitative approach was seen as most appropriate as it allowed the researcher to conduct a systematic and formalised search of information (Creswell, 2013). In order for the researcher to explore the connections between Hollywood action movies and juvenile delinquency and also observe the causality between these two variables, it was deemed as more appropriate to use quantitative approach instead of the qualitative approach. Since this is the desktop research, the population was documentary sources and electronic sources.

## **Sampling**

This research study will employ the sampling technique known as purposive sampling (Creswell, 2013). This technique falls under non-probability sampling which has an assumption that the population that will be used does not have equal the chance of being selected (Scott, 2014). This study used content analysis to sample documents which is a method that is used by researchers to describe communications which may

be written or spoken systematically (Neuendorf, 2016). In this study no participants were involved; the purposive sampling was used to select academic articles that have been written by previous researchers. It used sources such as articles, research reports and books.

For data analysis, this study used Textual Analysis to analyze data. TA is whereby a researcher analyses previously published documents with an aim to comprehend the ideas and thoughts communicated through composed words (Kuckartz, 2014). This study analyzed the data collected from previous research articles to find out how Hollywood action movies affect children.

### Limitations of the Study

This study was a secondary research; the major challenge that was faced is that some of the data was not presented in the way that exactly meets the researcher's aim. For an example, some of the articles did talk about effects of violent action movies on children but the grouping of the age of child offenders was not the same as the grouping of the age of children in South Africa. The second challenge was that most of the research articles were focusing on the effects of Hollywood action movies on children of countries outside the country of South Africa. However relevant articles were restricted and needed to be purchased thus those were the challenges that were encountered.

## Data analysis and interpretation

### Data analysis

TA was conducted with an aim to find out the motivation behind the content of reviewed articles and the quantity of times the researcher's keywords appeared on the reviewed texts.

**Table 1. Frequency and Percentages**

Keywords	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Child offenders	17	24.64%
Hollywood action movies	20	28.99%
Movies	13	18.84%
Media violence	9	13.04%
Child offenders in South Africa	7	10.14%

Source: Researcher's illustrations

Table1 shows the method used for data analysis which was TA. Keywords were firstly determined to search data. The keywords were then used to search published information in the form of articles and research reports. With an aim to reduce unreliable information, the scholarly search engines were used such as Google scholar and EBSCO host. The researcher used each of the above keywords to search on Google Scholar and the frequency and percentages of each keyword have been recorded in table 1. The articles that the researcher reviewed were 66 in total where 17 were from Child offenders, 20 for Hollywood action movies, 13 for movies, 9 for media violence and 7 for Child offenders in South Africa. The percentages for these articles differs

with highest being 28.99% for Hollywood action movies and lowest being 10.14% for child offenders in South Africa. This is because the researchers screened out all articles that were not relevant to the topic. Data saturation was reached when the sequence of keywords no longer repeated itself.

## Study Findings

The main aim of this study was to analyze the link between frequent exposure to violence from Hollywood action movies and child offenders in South Africa. As reviewed in the literature, a study conducted by Anderson and Bushman (2001) included findings which demonstrated the link between the exposure to Hollywood action movies and child offenders. The exposure to Hollywood action movies on South African Broadcasting Commission (SABC) channels has been found to have been reduced compared to the exposure from other Television services such as Digital Satellite Television (DSTV) and South African cinemas. In the box office in South Africa, action movies have been to be the dominant genre constituting of 20% and the gross for Hollywood movies compromised of over 50 million rands (Box Office Report, 2016). This shows how dominant Hollywood movies are in the South African movie industry, which increases the exposure of South African children to violent content that Hollywood action movies demonstrate.

The findings of the study conducted by Anderson *et al* (2003) found that the sexual behaviour of children is greatly influenced by the sexual content shown in visual motions. Bleaky (2012) found that 66% of Hollywood films made every year 77 are R-rated, consisting of not less than one naked scene of which may show up to 15 occasions of sex and young people are exposed to these scenes before the age of 16. A study on Hollywood movies depicted that there are about 8 of the depictions of cannabis in Hollywood movies whereby tobacco (68%) and alcohol (32%) are mostly dominant (Gunasekera, Chapman & Campbell, 2005). These findings show that sexual behaviour, drug and alcohol use are the major signatures of Hollywood action movies which then supports the objectives of this study to determine the negative influences that Hollywood action movies depict towards children in South Africa.

Children have been found to accept from their own particular experience that movies do have an effect them. Gunasekera, *et al* (2005) findings shows that children between the age of 10-12 after being exposed to violence from movies are affected in a way that they have nightmares and that its effect the way they behave. As reviewed in the literature, (Huesmann & Taylor, 2007) states that violence from movies can result children to be aggressive and violent, the majority of the articles that were reviewed were consistent in that exposure to action movies results children to imitate brutality, violence, vulgar language and posing harm to their peer with the tactics they have seen from action movies. Therefore, this shows how Hollywood action movies can have an effect on children which may result to child offenders.

The attitudes of children towards criminal behavior have been found to be greatly influenced by Hollywood action movies. In line with the literature that was reviewed, there is a consistency in the findings of (Carnagery *et al*, 2007) and (Bushman & Huesmann, 2006) in the notion that after the exposure to violence in movies children tend to have decrease in enthusiastic and physiological responsiveness towards

violence. Meaning that violence becomes more acceptable amongst children and this is greatly seen in South Africa where children engage in violent actions to solve their problems. However, the findings of the reviewed articles depicted that violence in Hollywood action movies is usually glamorized and has no negative consequences which then results disinhibition that causes children to legitimize the use of violence in their real lives (Giles, 2003). This then shows why some children in South Africa end up in violent and aggressive behaviors, the exposure to Hollywood action movies could potentially cause them to perceive violence as legitimate.

The review of the literature shows that mainly parents to reduce the exposure of children to violence from Hollywood action movies can play the major role. The findings that were obtained from News24 (2016) revealed that the SABC has made different efforts to reduce international movies in all their channels including Hollywood movies. The content that is emphasised in the SABC is mainly the local content that is educational and informative. However, this study found that as much as the SABC has made the efforts to reduce violent movies on their screens the gap still lies in other Television (TV) services like DSTV where the huge amount of violent content is depicted. The measures that were found to reduce effects of movies on children in such services is age restriction and parental control settings where all contents that are not suitable for young people can be blocked (Ferguson & Adams, 2016). The findings from the review of the literature were in line with this objective as it offered different ways to reduce children from exposure to violence from TV. However, it can be argued that most of the population of child offenders usually come from township areas in South Africa, most people who reside in townships are mostly the working class thus spend less time on monitoring what children watch on TV which then increases children's susceptibility to the negative effects of Hollywood action movies thus showing the great need of education and knowledge about the severity of the effects of Hollywood action movies on children.

### **Summary, conclusion and recommendations**

Summarily, from the analysis of both national and international previously published studies on negative influences that Hollywood action movies the objectives and the aim of this study was accomplished. The findings of the previous studies that were reviewed in the literature (Malamuth & Impett, 2011, Stern & Morr, 2013) served as evidence in proving that the content in Hollywood action movies may contain values, norms and behaviors that may negatively influence children such as depictions of sexual content and drug use.

The study depicted that there are many behavioural, sexual and psychological effects that Hollywood action movies impose on children which can make them to be delinquents. In terms of behavioural effects, there was a consistency in the findings of different researchers that the behaviour of children is affected after the exposure to Hollywood action movies in a way that they end up may act aggressively or violent and also use the tactics and strategies they have seen from movies in real life. The sexual content that is depicted also poses an effect on children sexual behavior, this, therefore, supports what this study initially hypothesized as it shows that prolonged

exposure to Hollywood action movies can cause immoral and aggressive behavior on children which then can result increased cases of child offenders in South Africa. The review of previous studies revealed that the scenes of violence and criminal activities are most prominent in Hollywood action movies; children spend most of their time watching such scenes which increases their exposure to violent acts. The findings of the study by Gaylord-Harden, Cunningham and Zelencik (2011) that was discussed in the literature served to fulfill the main aim of this study as it has found that children with increased exposure to violence acted less emotional to the illustrations of violence compared to those who were exposed to lower rates of violence. This study, therefore, supports that in South Africa, one of the underlying causes of child offenders is the change in the attitudes of children towards criminal behavior which could lead them to have less fear of breaking the law or behaving violently.

The study focused on the exposure of children to Hollywood action movies from the television services such as SABC and DSTV, less focus was paid on cinemas due to that some children in South Africa do not go to cinemas on regular basis compared to the time they spend on their televisions at their homes. The review of the literature revealed that the SABC has taken measures to limit the depictions of western movies; their main focus is to broadcast shows that are more local and productive thus eliminating the effects of Hollywood action movies on children. The study revealed that programmes that have been placed in hand by DSTV which includes parental control on the programmes that are broadcasted. This reduces the exposure of children to Hollywood action movies which has negative effects on their behaviour

## Conclusion

This study was conducted with an aim to explore the effect between increased exposure to Hollywood action movies and child offenders in South Africa. Child offender has been rife in many South African communities both rural and urban areas. This study hypothesised that the increased exposure to violence from Hollywood action movies will impact negatively on children's behaviour. The findings that were put forward in this study were that Hollywood action movies consist of a variety of negative influences that can endanger South African children's moral values. There is a great correlation between the studies that are conducted on the effects of Hollywood movies which supported the aim of this study which was to see the effects of Hollywood action movies on child offenders in South Africa. Furthermore, the review of the literature revealed that increased exposure can cause aggressive behaviour and less emotional responses to violence and criminal behaviour. These findings show that the attitudes of children toward the criminal and violent behaviour is greatly affected in a way that they internalise violence and they have less fear in the incidences of violence. As much as Hollywood movies can be seen as the form of entertainment, their negative influences should not be ignored thus this study was conducted with an aim to comprehend such effects in relation to children in South Africa. This study, therefore, filled the gap of ignorance and lack of research on western countries as the cause of child offenders in South Africa.

## Recommendations

The review of different studies that have been conducted to determine the relationship between children and exposure to violence from Hollywood action movies has propelled the researcher to recommend essential measures that can help to lessen the chances of such effects on children. Firstly, the South African government should work on the censorship of Hollywood action movies, for an example, such movies should be ban as they negatively influence children and propel them to child offenders. Secondly, the South African film industry should work on producing films with high quality as Hollywood movies but that mainly promote South African indigenous values and norms. Lastly, intervention programmes should be formulated to teach children about the effects of violent movies and that what they see in not something real.

## Future research

Less is known about the influence of Hollywood action movies on children's behaviour in South Africa thus it is highly encouraged that such topics are included in the future research. Most of the research studies in South Africa looks at the effects of the exposure of children to violence from the communities settings, homes and schools and the policies and interventions have been centred around these settings but the gab still lies on the violence that children are exposed to on their televisions thus more research needs to be conducted on violence from televisions and its effects on children to develop programmes that are holistic and focuses on all settings of violence.

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