# The Impact of Media Content on Children in South Africa

**Prepared for the**

**Film and Publication Board**

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# The Impact of Media Content on Children in South Africa

Research Report

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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**KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS**

- The media in the form of television, movies and games forms a great part of the entertainment environment of children 7 to 17 years old.

- Parental involvement and guidance are minimal within the movie viewing environment at home.

- Age restrictions and classification guidelines are less important when choosing movies to watch on DVD at home.

- Sexual content, violence and horror have the most observable impact on children 7 to 17 years old.

- Children are desensitised to violence and bad language in movies.

- More abstract or subtle themes such as blasphemy and prejudice are less noticeable in movies.

- Children are often reluctant to discuss with their parents the uncomfortable feelings they experience as a result of exposure to media content.

- The cinema environment plays a significant role on the impact of movies content.

- Age restrictions and classification guidelines are strictly enforced at cinemas although children do attempt to gain access to age inappropriate movies.

- Children have a reasonable level of awareness of age restrictions and classification information.  Some concepts such as prejudice and blasphemy are difficult to understand.

- Generally parents do not inform their children about the importance of age restrictions and classification guidelines for movies.  This is partially due to a lack of knowledge regarding the impact of media content and classification information.

- Although the classification guidelines seem to be aligned with the developmental levels of children, the classification decisions are mostly seen as inappropriate and inconsistent.

- Gaming is extremely popular among children 7 to 17 years.

- Most children 7 to 17 years play age inappropriate games containing elements of extreme violence.

- The impact of gaming on thoughts and behaviour is perceived to be less due to the fact that games are animated and seen as not real.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1    BACKGROUND INFORMATION

**Exposure and Impact of media content on children**

The media forms an enormous part of the lives of children.  Those concerned with the well-being of children agree that the extensive exposure of media has a profound effect on children, both positive and negative.  According to Villani (2001), whether through television or computers, music lyrics or music videos, the messages conveyed are received by children and become part of their internal world. As a result, the media either directly or subtly influences their thoughts and behaviour.

Concern over the possible impact of media on children is increasing and consequently, research about the impact of media content on children has grown steadily over recent years.  Although research on the impact of media on pre-schoolers and school-aged children has a long history, the debate has only recently included infants and toddlers (Courage & Setliff, 2009).  The focus of most research studies on media impact have continued to be on television (TV), largely because children spend most time with this medium and it reaches the widest audience.  According to the 2014B All Media Products Study (AMPS) by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) (http://www.saarf.co.za), approximately35 million South Africans viewed TV during the past 4 weeks of which just over four million were children aged 15-19 years old.  In a study conducted by Rideout (2013) amongst younger American children (8 years and younger), nearly six out of 10 children (58%) watch TV at least once a day, compared to 17% who use mobile devices on an everyday basis, 14% who are daily computer users and 6% who play video games every day.   In addition, of the roughly two hours average screen media use each day, 50% is spent watching television on a TV set.  This compares to 19% watching DVDs, 13% using mobile devices, 10% using computers and 9% using video game players.  It should be noted that the study by Rideout (2013) was conducted

amongst younger children (8 years and younger) and it is expected that the afore mentioned figures will be higher for older children.

With the further rapid advances in technology, one can predict that time spent with current media, and new forms yet to be developed will only increase.  A  Kaiser Foundation study by Rideout, Foehr and Roberts (2010) found that eight to 18 year olds spend more time with media than in any other activity besides sleeping – an average of more than 7,5 hours a day, seven days a week.   A key reason young people and children spend more time consuming media is that there are ever-expanding opportunities for them to do so with more TVs, computers and game consoles in their homes and cell phones in their pockets.

With regard to the ever increasing exposure to media among children, Villani (2001) emphasises that excessive media use, particularly where the content is violent, gender-stereotyped, sexually explicit, drug or alcohol-influenced, or filled with human tragedy, skews the child's worldview, increases high-risk behaviours, and alters his/her capacity for successful, sustained human relationships.  There are many studies about the effects of television violence and much less research on the specific effects of violent films although there are many overlaps.  In the largest international review of more than 1000 studies conducted by Comstock and Paik in 1991, the researchers concluded that there is a positive association between violent entertainment and aggressive behaviour among children, although some group and cultural distinctions were evident (Brown & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005).

To date, only a few research studies have been conducted on effects of other forms of media on children such as gaming.  According to Gentile (2011), in the past 30 years, gaming has gone from novelty entertainment to one of the largest industries in terms of both money and audience reached.  The existing research suggests that there are at least five dimensions on which games can affect players: the amount of play, the content of play, the game context, the structure of the game and the mechanics of game play.  Meta-analyses demonstrate that playing violent games increases aggressive cognitions, aggressive feelings and aggressive

behaviours(Gentile, 2011). A study by Subrahmanyam and Greenfield (1994) on the teaching ability of games, found that games are useful in teaching spatial performance, particularly for children with relatively poor skills in this area. Although this study looked at the teaching ability of gaming, it does not dismiss games' capacity to teach violence. What is especially concerning when it comes to gaming is that instead of just being a passive observer of violent acts, children get to engage in violent behaviour.

The possible impact of media content on children can be explained according to different theories including amongst others the social learning theory, cultivation theory, displacement theory and motivation theory which provide important explanations in this area. According to the social learning theory of Bandura, individuals learn through modelling and observing others. Hence, depending on the nature of the media content exposure to media content can either positively or negatively add to the development of a child (Hofferth, 2010).

The cultivation theory, argues that media content affects the viewers beliefs about the world and consequently alters their behaviour. For example, exposure to violent media leads to a belief that aggression can resolve problems with no adverse effects (Hofferth, 2010).

The displacement theory argues that media use displaces important developmental activities. Media used for entertainment or social activities may displace activities such as studying, reading, physically active sports and outdoor activities, non-screen play and sleep which positively contribute to health and development (Hofferth, 2010).

The motivation theory argues that the impact of media depends upon the uses to which media are put, the motivation (learning, entertainment) and the individual abilities and dispositions of the user. According to Hofferth (2010), young children are more susceptible to influence because their attitudes, beliefs, ideas and knowledge are developing rapidly and they absorb information from every source.

They cannot expect to have the same sophistication of understanding as do older children or adults. The motivation theory highlights the importance and relevance of considering the development of children when investigating the impact of media content.

**Development of children**

Investigating the impact of media on children requires a thorough understanding of the development of children.

Children go through different developmental stages, characterised by various developmental milestones. Consequently, many different developmental theories that focus on aspects such as physical, emotional and moral development have been developed. In view of the complexity of the impact of media on children, the theory of cognitive development by Jean Piaget, one of the most influential developmental psychologists of the 20th century, seems to be appropriate when considering the possible impact of media content on children.

The cognitive developmental theory of Piaget consists of four developmental stages through which human beings pass (Kail& Cavanaugh, 2000).During the first stage, from birth to two years of age, children are in the '**sensorimotor stage'** of cognitive development. During this stage, children are only aware of what is immediately in front of them and acquire knowledge through sensory experiences and motor skills. Piaget's next stage is called '**preoperational stage'** (from ages 2 to 6 years). At this stage, children develop memory and imagination, which allow them to understand the difference between past and future and engage in make believe. But their thinking is based on intuition and still not completely logical. Piaget's next stage is called '**concrete operational stage'**(from ages 7 to 11 years). Here, children begin to develop clearer methods of thinking and they start to overcome the egocentrism of the preoperational stage. They demonstrate logical, concrete reasoning and realise that their own thoughts and feelings are unique and may not be shared by others or may not even be part of reality. During this stage, however, most children still

cannot think abstractly or hypothetically. During the '**formal operational stage'**(from age 12 to adulthood) children develop the ability to think logically and systematically and to understand abstractions and the concepts of causality and choice. They see that different outcomes can proceed from different actions and that they are free to choose between various actions depending on a desired outcome. It is noteworthy that Piaget suggested that there is a qualitative change in how children think as they gradually proceed through these stages. A child at age 7 does not just have more information about the world than he did at age 2;there is a fundamental change in how he thinks about the world.

A summary of the four developmental stages of Piaget's cognitive developmental theory is presented in table 1.1 below.

**TABLE 1.1**

**PIAGET'S FOUR STAGES OF COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT**

| Stage | Approximate Age | Characteristics |
|---|---|---|
| **Sensorimotor** | Birth to 2 years | Infant's knowledge of the world is based on senses and motor skills. By the end of the period, uses mental representations. |
| **Preoperational thought** | 2-6 years | Child learns how to use symbols such as words and numbers to represent aspects of the world, but relates to the world only through his or her perspective. |
| **Concrete operational thought** | 7 years to early adolescence | Child understands and applies logical operations to experiences provided they are focused on the here and now. |
| **Formal operational thought** | Adolescence and beyond | Adolescent or adult thinks abstractly, deals with hypothetical situations and speculates about what may be possible. |

Source: Kail, R.V. & Cavanaugh, J.C. (2000). Human Development. A lifespan view.2nd edition. Belmont CA. Wadsworth, Thomson Learning.

Understanding the exposure and impact of media on children in relation to their level of development and the impact of media in young people's lives is essential. In particular, this understanding is important to those concerned about the impact of media on the wellbeing of children such as the Film and Publication Board (FPB),a regulatory authority responsible for the regulation of media content through appropriate age restrictions and classification guidelines. The ultimate challenge for the FPB is to be able to enforce appropriate age restrictions and classification guidelines for children, in ways that will encourage the positive aspects of media content, simultaneously protect children from being exposed to material that cannot adequately be processed or understood and therefore be potentially harmful.

## 1.2    RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Against the background information, it is evident that reliable research information on the impact of media content on children within a South African context is needed. The relevance of the current study is contextualised by Villani (2001) who indicated the cost of ignoring the impact of the media on children will be enormous both in economic terms and human suffering.

## 1.3    RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the study was to determine the impact of media content on children to ensure that the classification guidelines, and in particular, the age restrictions, are aligned with the development stages of South African children.

It is important to note that the scope of the study was aligned with the current mandate of the FPB which focuses primarily on films, DVDs and games. Hence, in achieving the main aim of the study, the following research questions were addressed:

- What is the general awareness and understanding of the classification guidelines and age ratings among children?

- Who are the key decision makers with regard to the selection of films and games (media content) for children?
- What influences the decision-making process when selecting films and interactive games for children?
- What is the level of agreement among children with the current classification decisions?
- What are the levels of conformity and discrepancy with the current classification decisions?
- What are the most concerning elements in media content for children?
- How do children handle exposure to concerning elements in films and games?
- What is the perceived effect of media content on children's immediate behaviour?
- What supporting mechanisms are in place to mediate the perceived effect?

1.4    **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

This chapter provided relevant background information to the study and discussed the rationale and research objectives.  The following chapter discusses the research methodology.

# CHAPTER 2

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 2.1    INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides information regarding the research methodology applied in the study as well as the sample frame and ethical considerations.  Initially, it was proposed to conduct qualitative research in the form of focus groups discussions.  However, based on the outcome of the focus group discussions, a mixed methods research approach was adopted.  According to Bryman (2012), mixed methods research stands for research that integrates quantitative and qualitative research within a single research project.  The mixed methods research approach followed in the current study is presented in exhibit 2.1 below.

**EXHIBIT 2.1**

**MIXED METHODS RESEARCH APPROACH**
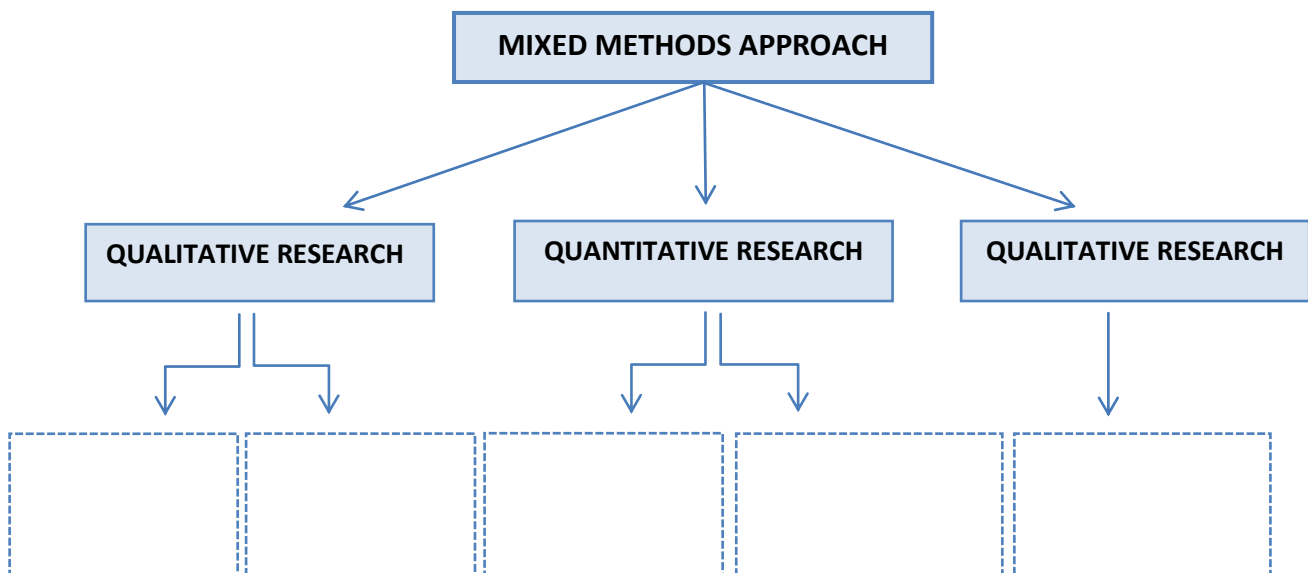
2.2    **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Before the planned focus group discussions were conducted, an exploratory group discussion was conducted with children aged 12 to 17 years old in Pretoria.  The main purpose of this exploratory group discussion was to interrogate and inform the draft discussion guide intended for the focus group discussions to ensure that all questions are in line with the research objective and asked in an age appropriate manner.

Following the exploratory group discussion, a total of eight (8) focus group discussions were conducted with 96 child participants in Pretoria (Gauteng) and Polokwane (Limpopo), as shown in table 2.1.  One of the main reasons Polokwane was included in the research design was due to its proximity to peri-urban areas to ensure that the research findings do not only reflect views of child participants located in urban areas. A semi-structured focus group discussion guide was developed (see appendix A) to allow the child participants to reflect on their involvement with the media, exposure to diverse media content and understanding of age restrictions and classification information provided by the FPB.

**TABLE 2.1**

**SAMPLE FRAME CHILDREN – FOCUS GROUPS**

| Province | Age group | Number of focus groups | Number of participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gauteng (Pretoria)** | 10-11 years | 1 | 13 |
| **Gauteng (Pretoria)** | 12-13 years | 1 | 12 |
| **Gauteng (Pretoria)** | 14-15 years | 1 | 12 |
| **Gauteng (Pretoria)** | 16-17 years | 1 | 13 |
| **Limpopo (Polokwane)** | 10-11 years | 1 | 11 |
| **Limpopo (Polokwane)** | 12-13 years | 1 | 11 |
| **Limpopo (Polokwane)** | 14-15 years | 1 | 12 |
| **Limpopo (Polokwane)** | 16-17 years | 1 | 12 |
| **Total** | | **8** | **96** |

In order to validate the exposure to media content, eight (8) viewing sessions with 89 child participants were conducted in Pretoria and Polokwane, as shown in table 2.2. During the viewing sessions an experimental research environment was created whereby children were exposed to pre-selected, age appropriate viewing material to determine the real-time impact of media content. In line with the main objective of the study, the viewing sessions guided the study to measure first-hand observations on the impact of media content on children. All the viewing sessions were facilitated by a trained clinical (see appendix B) and educational psychologist (see appendix C). In addition, the child participants also completed a short questionnaire in an attempt to further explore exposure and impact of movies.

**TABLE 2.2**

**SAMPLE FRAME CHILDREN –VIEWING SESSIONS**

| Province | Age group | Number of viewing sessions | Number of participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gauteng (Pretoria)** | 10-11 years | 1 | 12 |
| **Gauteng (Pretoria)** | 12-13 years | 1 | 9 |
| **Gauteng (Pretoria)** | 14-15 years | 1 | 11 |
| **Gauteng (Pretoria)** | 16-17 years | 1 | 11 |
| **Limpopo (Polokwane)** | 10-11 years | 1 | 12 |
| **Limpopo (Polokwane)** | 12-13 years | 1 | 12 |
| **Limpopo (Polokwane)** | 14-15 years | 1 | 10 |
| **Limpopo (Polokwane)** | 16-17 years | 1 | 12 |
| **Total** | | **8** | **89** |

In addition to the focus group discussions and viewing sessions with children aged 10 to 17 years old, a need was identified to obtain information about the use and impact of media content among younger children aged seven (7) to nine (9) years old. However, when dealing with children ages nine and under, responses regarding an abstract concept such as impact are more likely to be reliable when obtained from parents than from the children directly. Also, parents make numerous decisions about their children's media environment especially at a young age. Therefore, two focus group discussions were conducted with 22 parents with children aged seven (7) to nine (9) years old in Pretoria and Polokwane as illustrated

in table 2.3. It is also important to note that by not involving children aged 7 to 9 years old directly in the study, some of the experiences or feelings related to media content might not be reflected .A semi-structured interview guide was developed based on the discussion guide used during the focus group discussions with the child participants and their responses during the initial focus group discussions (see appendix D).

**TABLE 2.3**

**SAMPLE FRAME PARENTS – FOCUS GROUPS**

| Province | Number of focus groups | Age group of children | Number of participants |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Gauteng (Pretoria)** | 1 | 7-9 years | 10 |
| **Limpopo (Polokwane)** | 1 | 7-9 years | 12 |
| **Total** | **2** | | **22** |

Based on the outcome of the two focus group discussions with parents with children aged seven (7) to nine (9) years old, a questionnaire was developed to obtain further quantifiable information from all parents regarding the main research objective (see appendix E). The questionnaire was administered through the Computer Aided Telephonic Interviewing system to parents of all participants and a total of 66 successful interviews were completed. During the interviews, parents were asked about a specific child within their household to keep them focused in their responses. They provided a third person perspective by providing quantifiable information on behalf of their child and reflected on what they observed within their household.

## 2.3    RECRUITMENT

The recruitment was done by a professional recruitment specialist who had the capacity to recruit a diverse group of children that were representative of the South African population.

To ensure a representative sample, the mid-year population estimates for South Africa for 2013 provided by Stats SA (www.statssa.gov.za) was used to determine the

ethnic composition of the sample ensuring the inclusion of children from different socio-economic groups within South Africa. Each focus group discussion and viewing session consisted of a minimum of 80% African participants, 9% white, 9% coloured and 2 % Indian participants.

## 2.4     ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Ethical approval to conduct the study was obtained from the Bureau of Market Research's Research Ethics Committee of the University of South Africa (Unisa). Parental consent was requested for all child participants who participated in the focus group discussions and viewing sessions. In addition, child assent was obtained. All adult participants were requested to familiarise themselves with a letter of consent and had to return the signed letter before they participated in the focus group discussions. Participants were informed that participation in the research study was anonymous and that all information would be kept confidential and used for research purposes only.

## 2.5     CONCLUDING REMARKS

This chapter provided detailed information regarding the research methodology, recruitment of participants and ethical considerations. The research findings will be presented in the following chapters of the research report.

# CHAPTER 3

## RESEARCH FINDINGS: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the research findings obtained during the focus group discussions with children aged10 to 17 years old.  Eight focus group discussions were conducted in Pretoria and Polokwane, as well as two focus group discussions with parents of children aged seven (7) to nine (9) years old.  The research findings provided essential contextual information related to the media environment and perceived impact of media content on children and are demonstrated by anonymous direct quotes from the participants who participated in the focus group discussions.

### 3.2 ENTERTAINMENT AND CHILDREN:  THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA

As commonly known, media are among the most powerful forces in children's lives today.  The study found that the media in the form of television, movies and games forms a fundamental part of entertainment for children.  Television continues to dominate children's media use as most participants affirmed that they regularly watch television, movies and play games for entertainment as illustrated in the following quotes: *"I play a lot of games"* (Participant, 10-11 years). *"I go to the movies; there isn't much to do here"* (Participant, 14-15 years).

Other things mentioned related to entertainment included practicing hobbies such as photography, playing sport, ice-skating and visiting with friends.

## 3.3    MOVIES: DVD

### 3.3.1    Movie viewing behaviour at home

It is important to note that due to the use of multiple technological devices, overlapping of viewing movies on DVD and through other technological devices, it becomes difficult to single out DVD viewing exclusively.

Watching movies at home was identified as a popular leisure activity among children aged seven (7) to 17 years old.  They watch movies during weekends and holiday times when they are not involved in school activities when they have unrestricted access to television.  Based on the research findings, it is clear that a large number of children obtain access to movies at home through the latest DSTV Box Office facility that allows DSTV subscribers the opportunity to rent the latest movies in the comfort of their homes. Although Multichoice has parental control mechanisms for their pay-tv channels, it is unclear if similar controls are available for their most recent Box Office service.  Based on this finding renting DVDs from outlets such as DVD rental stores are becoming less popular especially among the youth.  Participants who do not have access to DSTV still rent DVDs from DVD rental stores or buy DVDs and view them at home.

In most instances, children watch movies at home with their siblings or friends. Fewer participants mentioned that they watched movies with their parents at home. This was also evident among the younger participants aged seven (7) to nine (9) years old and is ascribed to parents being absent due to obligations at work or household responsibilities.  In some instances, participants reported that they watch movies alone in their bedrooms either on a television or laptop.  More media and electronic entertainment devices are moving to children's bedrooms, enabling them to spend more time watching, listening or playing.  Subsequently, the movie environment at home for children aged seven (7) to 17 years old are characterised by a lack of parental presence and minimal guidance.

In most cases, child participants between seven (7) to 17 years old make their own decisions about movies as shown in the following quote: *"They make their own decisions. They know what they want to watch and they decide"* (Parent of child, 7-9 years). The participants mainly select movies based on their preferred genre; for example action, adventure, comedies or horror movies. Furthermore, the choice of movies is greatly influenced by the person with whom they will be watching the movie.  It is clear based on the research findings that age restrictions and classification information play a secondary role among children when selecting movies.

 In some instances parents choose movies for the family to watch together and pay attention to the suitability of the movie within a family milieu as illustrated in the following quote: "*We watch DVDs almost every weekend. Usually my mom goes to a DVD store and rents DVDs* (Participant, 12-13 years).

Movie titles on DVD mentioned during the focus group discussions are presented in table 3.1

**TABLE 3.1**

**MOVIE TITLES VIEWED BY AGE**

| Age group | Movie title | Age Rating (DVD) |
|---|---|---|
| 7-9 years | ▪ Tinkerbell<br>▪ Cars | PG<br>A |
| 10-11 years | ▪ Mr Peabody and Sherman<br>▪ Frozen | PG V<br>A |
| 12-13 years | ▪ Step up<br>▪ Fast and Furious 6<br>▪ Annabelle<br>▪ Blended | 10 L<br>13VL<br>16 HV<br>10 L |
| 14-15 years | ▪ Hunger Games<br>▪ Breakfast Club<br>▪ Fast and Furious 6<br>▪ Twilight SAGA | 16 V<br>13 L<br>13VL<br>13 SV |
| 16-17 years | ▪ Temptation<br>▪ The Devil Inside | 13 SV<br>16 LV |

It is clear based on the information presented in table 3.1 above that in some instances age restrictions do not play an important role when deciding what movies to watch. Some of the movies mentioned during the study are rated higher than the age of the participants who actually viewed the movies. Most participants mentioned that they mainly get exposed to age inappropriate movie content at home through other family members such as older siblings as illustrated in the following quotes: *"I'm working most of the time; they're with my cousin so obviously they'll be watching movies with higher age restrictions"* (Parent of child, 7-9 years)*.* *"I remember when I was like 11 years old, when me and my cousins went to the movies, they picked the movies, I didn't. So they picked this movie, it was called 'Notorious' and we were watching it like with the whole family and I was there. And there was a scene with sex in it and I felt so uncomfortable. And the parents are busy watching, sjoe!"* (Participant, 16-17 years).

### 3.3.2 Impact of movie content at home

This section presents the perceived impact of movie content viewed at home on children as articulated by the study participants.

**7 – 9 years old (parents perspective)**

Parents with children aged seven (7) to nine (9) years old stated they undeniable noticed the impact of movies among their children as shown in the following quote: *"I saw that they'd been watching a movie, it was a horror movie, something to do with an old grandpa. It was quite a while ago, but up to now they're still scared"* (Parent of child, 7-9 years).Participants elaborated that the impact is noticeable through their children imitating what they see in movies as shown in the following quote: *"Yeah, most of the time you'll find that they're trying to be Spiderman, you hear the gunshots going and see all the actions. That is what they do"* (Parent of child, 7-9 years). Parents of younger children were particularly concerned about the violence in cartoons and how this might impact on children since cartoons are intended for children to enjoy.

All of the parents agreed that violence, bad language and exposure to sexual content have the greatest impact on their children as shown in the following quote: *"Children at this age are very sensitive, especially to sex and nudity"* (Parent of child, 7-9 years). They observed that the children get particularly uncomfortable when exposed to this content in movies.  In some instances, when parents observe possible harmful content in a movie that might cause uncomfortable feelings, they will change the scene by forwarding to another scene or switch between movie channels or explain to the children why they cannot watch a certain movie. However, this does not always happen.  It is of note that parents of younger children further explained that horror movies are gender specific and boys and girls respond differently to horror scenes as illustrated in the following quotation: *"Boys will say ag, it's just a movie.  They know it's just a movie and you hear them saying to each other this doesn't happen in real life, but the girls…!"* (Parent of child, 7-9 years).

**10-11 years old**

The participants 10 to 11 years old affirmed that they have been exposed to movie content that made them feel particularly uncomfortable.  In most instances, participants ascribed these uncomfortable feelings to elements of violence and bad language (swearing) in movies.  They described the uncomfortable feelings as being scared, shocked, angry and disgusted.

The group 10 to 11 years old reported that when they watch a movie at home and experience these feelings, they put the movie off, change the movie or try to comfort themselves as illustrated in the following quote: *"I tell myself it's not real, it's just a movie'* (Participant, 10-11 years).

When experiencing these uncomfortable feelings participants aged 10 to 11 years old do not discuss these feelings with their parents.  They are more likely to discuss it with their friends.  Further exploration indicated that in most instances parents are not engaged in any discussions because the movies evoking these feelings are often rated higher than the age of the participant and they do not want to be restricted by their parents to watch these kinds of movies.

Participants indicated they also experienced similar feelings when they were younger, which confirm that participants watch similar movies at a very young age. The impact of movies was clearly demonstrated during the discussion of imitating behaviour seen in movies.  Most participants aged 10 to 11 years old affirmed that they attempted to imitate behaviour that they have seen in movies as indicated in the following quotes: *"She jumped off the rock into a river and once I tried it when we were at a picnic.  Lots of people laughed at me"* (Participant, 10-11 years).
*"I watched a movie where they were sending letters in class and then I tried it and got into trouble"* (Participant, 10-11 years).


**12-13 years old**

All the participants aged 12 to 13 years old affirmed that they watch movies that make them feel uncomfortable.  Special mention was made of violent and horror movies as reflected in the following quote: *"I'm very gullible.  So I get scared.  That's why I don't like watching horror movies"* (Participant, 12-13 years).

The feelings experienced when watching a movie can be very powerful and cause children to avoid the situation as indicated in the following quote: *"I was scared and I went out of the room.  "My uncle was watching the movie so I went inside, then I just saw the people and went away"* (Participant, 12-13 years).  During the focus group discussions, the participants also recalled watching movies that made them feel uncomfortable when they were younger as shown in the following quote: *"Yeah, Anaconda, I was about 7 years old, then I felt uncomfortable.  I was really scared!"* (Participant, 12-13 years).The participants aged 12 to 13 years old reported that they do not talk to their parents about their feelings; instead they will discuss it with a close family member such as a cousin.  Some participants further elaborated that their parents do not care if they watch age inappropriate movies as long as they do not do what they see in the movies.  Most participants aged 12 to 13 years old affirmed that at some stage they have imitated behaviour that they have seen in movies.

**14-15 years old**

Similar to the younger participants, children aged 14 to 15 years old who participated in the focus group discussions affirmed that they have watched movies on DVD that made them feel uncomfortable and made specific reference to the intense feelings experienced when watching sexual content, violent and horror movies. Participants described these feelings being intense fear and sadness and therefore would prefer not to watch these kinds of movies at all.

Participants elaborated that when they experience uncomfortable feelings caused by a movie, they immediately leave the room as indicated in the following quote: *"It was almost like a horror story, kind of movie. But I stood up and left and a couple of minutes later I came back, but it still didn't please me so I just stayed in my room"* (Participant, 14-15 years).

Similar to the younger participants, when experiencing these uncomfortable feelings caused by movie content, the participants 14 to 15 years old do not discuss the feelings with their parents. Instead they will discuss it with their friends.

The impact of movie content on children 14 to 15 years old were demonstrated by participants affirming that they have attempted to imitate certain behaviour seen in movies. Specific reference was made to the imitating of dancing and fighting scenes. During the discussion, it became clear that in this particular age, fighting scenes in movies were imitated at school. It was also notable that participants in this age group mentioned incidents of bullying at their respective schools.

**16-17 years old**

During the focus group discussions, the participants 16 to 17 years old affirmed that sexual content, violence and horror scenes in movies made them feel particularly uncomfortable. They further elaborated and described their feelings as being embarrassed and frightened as shown in the following quote: "*I don't recall a specific movie, but violent scenes always make me scared!*" (Participant, 16-17 years).

Some participants indicated that despite experiencing the identified feelings, they will continue to watch the movie. This finding shows that the impact is often underestimated. Furthermore, the research identified that parents also experience uncomfortable feelings when watching movies with their older children and do not know how to respond to uncomfortable feelings caused by movie content as indicated in the following quotes: *"We just watch and then sometimes my dad will forward the movies"* (Participant, 16-17 years).

*"I think it depends on the movies. We were watching and I think she (participant refers to mother) was more scared than I was. She kind of all freaked out and said we're not finishing the movie"* (Participant, 16-17 years).

Participants aged 16 to 17 years old indicated that they did imitate behaviour seen in movies, especially when they were younger.

### 3.4    MOVIES: CINEMA

#### 3.4.1    Movie viewing behaviour at the cinema

Based on the research findings watching movies at a cinema remains a popular activity among children. Most participants reported that they regularly visited cinemas (NuMetro and Ster-Kinekor) to watch movies with their friends or family members. Children aged seven (7) to 11 years old are mostly accompanied by their parents when going to the cinema whereas older participants (12 to 17 years) mostly go to the cinema alone or with their friends. It is noteworthy that some participants' who do not go with their parents to the cinema ascribed this to the fact that their parents are too strict with regard to the kind of movie they are allowed to watch and age restrictions.

In most instances, child participants affirmed that they decide on which movie to watch at the cinema beforehand. This is often done by using the latest technology such as browsing the Internet for movie reviews, watching movie trailers on YouTube, and downloading applications on smart phones that provide information about the latest movies or television. The influence of peer pressure cannot be

overlooked, as participants indicated that they talk about movies with their friends and their friends' opinion can influence their decision as illustrated in the following quote: *"I go with a friend but me and my friends we'll have a vote and the majority wins"* (Participant, 16-17 years). Further exploration indicated that if participants have younger brothers and sisters and they go as a family to the cinema, they will choose a movie with no age restriction.

In some instances the selected movies have a higher age rating than the age of the participant and they do attempt to buy tickets or get into a cinema where the selected movie is shown. However, based on the research findings it is reassuring that the enforcement of age restrictions is strictly done and participants most often do not succeed to view movies with higher age restrictions at local cinemas. Participants mentioned that the cashiers at the cinemas indicate to them that the preferred movies is rated higher and recommend that they choose a different movie. All cinemas in South Africa are legally obligated to adhere to requirements for the public display of films as set out in the Films and Publications Amendment Act of 2009. This broadly entails that all cinemas need to display a registration certificate obtained from the FPB at the premises where they conduct business. Cinemas can only exhibit films that have been classified by an FPB classification committee. They need to clearly display for public awareness the age restriction, consumer advice and any other condition imposed on the exhibition of a film. These regulations are legally binding and by all accounts cinemas consistently adhere and enforce these decisions.

Furthermore, despite numerous attempts, participants are also restricted by other means to obtain movie tickets for age inappropriate movies as indicated in the following quote: *"Often we want to watch a 13 age restriction, but the movie card doesn't allow it. So you try and swipe it, it says you can't"* (Participants, 16-17 years).Thus, in comparison to the unrestricted movie viewing environment at home, the movie viewing environment at the cinema is characterised by strict enforcement of age restrictions and exposure to age appropriate movie content as shown in the

following quote: *"It is totally different when we are at home"* (Participant, 12-13 years).

### 3.4.2 Impact of movie content at the cinema

The following section will present the perceived impact of movie content viewed at the cinema on children according to age groups that participated in the study.

**7 – 9 years old (parents perspective)**

Mostly, children aged seven (7) to nine (9) years old watch movies intended for their age group at cinemas.  This can be mainly ascribed to the fact that cinema staff strictly enforces age restrictions as determined by the Films and Publications Amendment Act of 2009.  However, parents of children aged seven (7) to nine (9) years old elaborated that watching movies at the cinema can cause uncomfortable feelings and does have an impact on their children as shown in the following quote: *"It does have a not so good impact on them"* (Parent of child, 7-9 years).Further exploration identified that this might be ascribed to the cinema environment especially the images and in particular the 3D images can significantly affect younger children as it is seen and experienced as being real and even tangible.

In an attempt to deal with the uncomfortable feelings experienced at the cinema, parents with children aged seven (7) to nine (9) years old mostly go to the cinema with their children and therefore can provide comfort during and after the movie.  In addition, some participants indicated that they go to the Internet and get information about the movie or if possible watch the movie before they go to the cinema with their younger children to ensure that the selected movie is appropriate as illustrated in the following quote: *"We'll go to the Internet and see what is the movie about and then we'll sit and I will say 'okay, these are your choices'"* (Parent of child, 7-9 years).

*"I don't trust the description of the movie.  I always go and watch the movie first and then we can come and watch together"*(Parent of child, 7-9 years).

Comparing watching movies at home on DVD and watching movies on the big screen at cinema, parents had mixed opinions regarding the possible impact of movie content on their younger children.  Some parents affirmed that movies at the cinema have a greater impact on children aged seven (7) to nine (9) years old as shown in the following quote: *"Like in the cinema they're bound to their chairs because there's so many other people around them so they're restricted a bit.  But at home there's a pause button"* (Parent of child, 7-9 years).  Other parents felt watching DVDs at home have a greater impact as shown in the following quote: *"So at home it does have a bigger impact than at cinema.  In cinema, it's a once-off so it could be something that would last a month.  But at home they keep on repeating it until it's scratched"* (Parent of child, 7-9 years).

**10-11 years old**

Most participants aged 10 to 11 years old indicated that they have had an experience at a cinema where they have seen a movie that made them feel uncomfortable.  They described the feelings as being sad, scared, disappointed, angry and shocked as illustrated in the following quote: *"I got scared at first with the horror and then I actually felt sad about what they did to the young child"* (Participant, 10-11 years).

The study identified that the uncomfortable feelings experienced at the cinema was mostly ascribed to the sound as illustrated in the following quote: *"If it were to be a silent movie it wouldn't have that impact because we'd just see the people"* (Participant, 10-11 years).Some participants 10 to 11 years also mentioned the visual effect of the 3D movies as having a significant impact on them since visuals appear to 'pop out' of the screen and it feels real.

When experiencing these uncomfortable feelings, most participants aged 10 to 11 years old mentioned that they do share their feelings with their parents who usually accompany them to the cinema.  The participants elaborated that their parents either talk to them after the movie or take them out of the cinema and help them to choose a different movie next time.

In comparing watching movies at home on DVD and watching movies on the big screen at the cinema, participants aged 10 to 11 years old agreed that watching movies at the cinema had the most noticeable impact on their feelings and behaviour.

**12-13 years old**

Similar to the younger participants who participated in the focus group discussions, the participants 12 to 13 years old affirmed that they have watched age appropriate movies at the cinema that made them feel uncomfortable.  Besides the movie content, most participants also ascribed the uncomfortable feelings to the cinema environment characterised by overwhelming visuals and loud sound effects. Furthermore, children 12 to 13 years old mostly go to the cinema with siblings or friends and do not necessarily have an opportunity to discuss their feelings and experience with their parents who might be able to provide comfort.  The impact of movies at the cinema on participants 12 to 13 years old can however not be underestimated. Many participants in this age group, who participated in the focus group discussions, reported that they and their siblings often re-enacted the characters in a movie after watching the movie at a cinema.

In comparing watching movies at home on DVD and watching movies on the big screen at the cinema, participants 12 to 13 years old agreed that watching movies at the cinema had the most noticeable impact on their feelings and behaviour.

**14-15 years old**

The participants 14 to 15 years old affirmed that they have watched movies that made them feel uncomfortable at the cinema.  Specific mentions were made of movies containing scenes of horror and nudity as illustrated in the following quotes:
*"It was a scary movie that we watched, it's called Annabelle.  It's about a dog that's possessed.  Ja, we got scared in that movie!"* (Participant, 14-15 years).
*"I watched a movie, it was really inappropriate, it was called "My idiot brother" and it was like so with nudity"* (Participant, 14-15 years).

The participants reacted to the uncomfortable feelings by closing their eyes or walking out of the cinema. This immediate response clearly illustrates the intensity of the feelings experienced by the participants who participated in the focus group discussions. Some participants indicated that they did not discuss their feelings or experience at the cinema with their parents out of fear that they might not allow them to go out with their fiends again as shown in the following quote: *"I didn't speak to my parents because they might never let me go out with my friends again"* (Participant, 14-15 years).

Participants 14 to 15 years old mostly ascribed the impact of movies at the cinema to the loud sound effects as shown in the following quote: *"It's loud and you get scared. It is like out of nowhere"* (Participant, 14-15 years).

During the focus group discussion, most participants 14 to 15 years old agreed that they feel more comfortable watching movies at home than at the cinema.

**16-17 years old**

The participants 16 to 17 years old affirmed that they have watched movies at the cinema that made them feel uncomfortable. Specific reference was made to movies containing sexual content as indicated in the following quote: *"Pretty awkward, I was watching I think 'Twilight' and they were like having hectic sex and I was kind of looking around"* (Participant, 16-17 years). In addition to movies containing sexual content, reference was also made to horror movies and the intense feelings they cause.

The older participants aged 16 to 17 years old mostly go to the cinema with their friends and reported that the movie environment especially the loud sound effects contributed to the impact of movie content at the cinema. The impact of movie content at cinemas was ascribed to the loud sound.

It is notable that in comparing watching movies at home on DVD and watching movies on the big screen at the cinema, participants aged 16 to 17 years old agreed

that watching movies at home made them more uncomfortable because of the presence of other individuals especially their parents as illustrated in the following quote: *"I think it's more DVD.  Because if you're at home and you're watching and a scene comes on and your mom comes in, then you don't know what to do"* (Participant, 16-17 years).

### 3.5 AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF AGE RESTRICTIONS AND CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES FOR MOVIES (ON DVD AND THE CINEMA)

### 3.5.1 General awareness of age restrictions and classification guidelines for films

All the participants affirmed that they have seen and heard about age restrictions and classification guidelines for movies.  The general awareness among the participants was further explored by asking them to explain what they understand by age restrictions and classification guidelines in their own words as shown in the following quotes: *"The age you have to be before you can watch the movie"* (Participant, 10-11 years).

Most participants mentioned that they have seen the age restrictions and classification guidelines on television, at the back of the DVD boxes or at the cinema.

### 3.5.2 Understanding of age restrictions and classification guidelines

Although most of the focus group participants have a general understanding of age restrictions and classification guidelines for movies, there were still room for improvement.  It was clear that participants were unsure about age restrictions such as 7-9PG and 10-12PG and some classification guidelines were not well known such as p (prejudice), b (blasphemy), SV (sexual violence) and D (substance abuse) and sometimes H (Horror).  Parents of children seven (7) to nine (9) years old affirmed that they inform their children about age restrictions and classification guidelines. They also have to explain to them what it means and what the symbols indicate since younger children are unable to read or understand the concept.

### 3.5.3 Application and suitability of age restrictions and classification guidelines for movies

Most of the child participants reported that they take note of the age restrictions and classification guidelines when they choose a movie. However, it is not always taken seriously and sometimes they simply ignore the age restriction when they really want to watch a certain movie. It was noteworthy that some child participants mentioned that the age restriction make them more curious about the movie and can motivate them to choose a certain movie despite a higher age restriction.

Further exploration with regard to the application of age restrictions among parents revealed that in most instances parents allow their children to watch movies with a higher age restriction at home. According to the child participants, parents do not really pay attention to age restrictions for movies on DVD in comparison to movies shown at the cinema. Furthermore, besides noting the age restrictions, the application thereof depends on the movie content; for example, if the movie contains bad language, parents will allow their children to watch the movie despite the age restriction. However, if the movie contains scenes of violence and sexual content they will be stricter. In addition, based on the research findings, it seems that parents are much more likely to set rules for their children about what they can watch as opposed to how much time they can spend watching movies.

It is noteworthy that parents reported that family structure and different parental styles complicate the implementation of age restrictions as illustrated in the following quote: *"That's where the confusion comes in for the kids. I would say no to 13 rated movies, that's not your age. Then they go to dad and he just watches everything with them. So, I think they're suffering more when there are two different sides"* (Parent, child 7-9 years).

Pertaining to the suitability of age restrictions, most participants agreed that the age restrictions for the movies which they have watched are not appropriate as shown in the following quote: *"In most instance they are appropriate but you do find some movies that you really feel that ratings are not appropriate. It is too lenient; it needs to be more strict"* (Parent, child 7-9 years).In this regard, specific mention was made to movies viewed at the cinema. Participants shared the opinion that the age ratings were too lenient for movies shown at the cinema and need to be stricter in comparison to movies on DVD. This might be ascribed to the cinema environment and how it contributes to the overall impact of the movie content.

During the focus groups discussion, some of the child participants raised the issue of individuality (impact will depend on a child and his or her personality and behaviour) and the perceived inconsistency of age restrictions as shown in the following quote: *"Some of the 16 rated movies, don't really have things that will influence you. Not really bad things"* (Participant, 12-13 years).

Although it seems, based on the research findings presented in this report, that age restrictions and classification guidelines are not always strictly followed, child participants acknowledged the importance of having this information available and informing children about age restrictions and classification guidelines. This is substantiated by the finding that child participants reported that they will inform their own children about age restrictions and classification guidelines when they are parents as illustrated in the following quote: *"Ja, I will definitely, because what we watch is what we do"* (Participant, 16-17 years).

3.6    **INTERACTIVE GAMING**

There has been a significant increase in gaming over the past few years among children especially due to the availability of games on cell phones and handheld devices. According to an analysis of the local entertainment industry by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), console gaming is the biggest market in South Africa, with mobile gaming coming in at a close second.  The console gaming market generated R919 million in 2012, mobile gaming (that is, gaming on cell phones and tablets) generated R694 million in 2012.  PwC projects that by 2017, mobile gaming will account for 39% of South Africa's gaming revenue.  This PwC attributes to the massive smart phone penetration in SA's local market. While gaming consoles and gaming PCs remain expensive, smart phones are much easier for the average South African to get hold of (www.nag.co.za). This, coupled with the challenges with broadband in SA, prevalent for some time, have seen mobile gaming gaining momentum – and actually bringing in new gamers into the gaming market.

This has implications for the FPB in that it highlights the important issue of media convergence (where games are available far beyond the confines – both economical and spatial – of console gaming; further posing challenges in terms of access to all sorts of games, including age-inappropriate games, among young children.  The following section will focus on the research findings obtained in the current study regarding interactive gaming among children aged seven (7) to 17 years old.

3.6.1   **Gaming behaviour**

All participants affirmed that they play games on different devices including cell phones, iPads, PlayStation, XBox, Nintendo Wii, Laptops and Tablets. Based on the research findings, children play games frequently almost on a daily basis. *"I play games whenever I feel like playing them"* (Participant, 16-17 years).In some instances, parents do restrict game playing as indicated in the following quote: *"Because my parents won't let me play PlayStation during the week"* (Participant, 12-13 years).

In most instances, participants indicated that they download or buy the games that they play. Sometimes participants get it for free from friends or hire games. Parents of children aged seven (7) to nine (9) years old indicated that the children download games from the Internet as shown in the following quote: *"They even know how to download the games on my phone"* (Parent, child 7-9 years). Based on the research findings, it is clear that children play a variety of games that in some instances are not age appropriate as shown in the following quote: *"They play very scary games. There's another one that says Death something. It's about killing others, I don't know, the game is you're supposed to kill as many as possible. I didn't understand it because it was just killing and killing and killing. It's more violent games and it did not make sense"* (Parent, child 7-9 years). Not all children seem to be aware of age restrictions on games. The type of games played by children between the ages of seven (7) to 17 years (see table 3.1) confirms this view.

**TABLE 3.2**

**GAMES PLAYED BY AGE**

| Age group | Game Title | FPB Age Restriction |
|---|---|---|
| 7-9 years | Candy Crush Sage<br>Need for Speed<br>Memory | 16 |
| 10-11 years | Grand Theft Auto<br>Minecraft<br>God of War<br>Call of Duty<br>Angry Birds | 18<br>PG<br>18<br>18<br>PG |
| 12-13 years | Call of Duty<br>Need for Speed<br>God of War | 18<br>16<br>18 |
| 14-15 years | Call of Duty<br>Hitman<br>Need for Speed<br>Sims<br>God of War | 18<br>16<br>16<br>13<br>18 |
| 16-17 years | Grand Theft Auto<br>Fifa<br>WWW<br>Need for Speed | 18<br>PG<br>13<br>16 |

### 3.6.2 Impact of gaming on children

**7 – 9 years old (parents perspective)**

Parents of children aged seven (7) to nine (9) years old stated that their children seem not to be affected by playing interactive games. This was mainly ascribed to the fact that they know it is just pretence and it does not affect them. However, further exploration identified that parents observed a change in their children's attitude towards them when they are playing games as illustrated in the following quote: *"Normally if you ask them to do something, okay they do it. But the minute they're playing games and you ask them to do something, no, there's no ways. And their attitude changes"* (Parent, child 7-9 years).

**10-11 years old**

The child participants 10 to 11 years old indicated that they have never played an interactive game that made them feel uncomfortable. This was justified by the fact that they know it is only a game and not real, hence participants shared the opinion that a movie have more impact on them since it is more real. Further exploration identified that a game that has the potential to create uncomfortable feelings contains many blood scenes, swearing, romantic scenes or rape. Participants aged 10 to 11 years specifically mentioned that games containing rape scenes make them feel disgusted, shocked, frightened and disappointed.

Further exploration of the possible impact of games on children aged 10 to 11 years old indicated that younger participants felt like hurting someone who was irritating or not kind to them, make a person scared of you after playing a certain game. This clearly illustrates the effect of gaming on thoughts and behaviour of children in this age group.

**12-13 years old**

The focus group participants aged 12 to 13 years old mentioned that playing interactive games had the least impact on them in comparison to viewing movies on

DVD and at the cinema.  This was again ascribed to games being animated and seen as not being real as to movies.

Further exploration of the possible impact of games on participants aged 12 to 13 years old revealed that participants mentioned incidents when they were younger during which they imitated actions that they had seen in games, the initial effect is shown in the following quote: *"The first time I played I was like wow*!" (Participant, 12-13 years).

**14-15 years old**

The participants aged 14 to 15 years old expressed mixed feelings with regard to the possible impact of games.  Some participants reported that in comparison to movies, the impact of games is stronger since the players are in control as explained in the following quote: *"I think the game is stronger because you're kind of in control and what happens to you personally is scarier.  Because what happens in a movie happens to everyone"* (Participant, 14-15 years).

*"Well, I would say the reason why it would be scarier in a PC game is because most players have headphones on so they hear it better.  So it would be louder in your ears, but in the movie it's just speakers"* (Participant, 14-15 years).

*"I think a movie would be scarier because a game is animated and it's not real as in movies it's real people"* (Participant, 14-15 years).

Further exploration of the possible impact of games on children aged 14 to 15 years old revealed that there were incidents where they imitated behaviour that they have seen in games as revealed in the following quote: *"I tried to drive my dad's car and try to do a 360 turn"* (Participant, 14-15 years).

*"A game is just something that you play like when you're bored.  Like TV, you've seen it the whole weekend, you just want play a game to relax"* (Participant, 14-15 years).

**16-17 years old**

Similar to their younger counterparts, participants aged 16 to 17 years old agreed that playing interactive games do not make them really uncomfortable because they know it is only a game.  It was notable that some participants mentioned that they sometimes play interactive games to relieve uncomfortable feelings such as anger which resulted from a personal experience not related to gaming.

Further exploration revealed the impact of games on older participants aged 16 to 17 years old as shown in the following quote: *"No, it just happened, and then I thought 'oh, this is how I drive in GTA'"* (Participant, 16-17 years).

### 3.6.3 Age restrictions and classification guidelines for games

Based on the research findings, it is clear that in comparison to movies, participants pay the least attention to the age restrictions and classification guidelines for interactive games.  In cases where participants do notice the age restriction on games, it does not seem to influence their decision to play a specific game.  In most cases, participants confirmed that they either download or buy games that have a higher age restriction than their current age.

Further exploration revealed that most parents are not aware of the age restrictions for games or lack adequate information regarding the age restrictions and classification guidelines for games and therefore, do not inform their children about it.  In some instances, parents who are aware of the age restrictions make their children aware of it and influence their decision to play an age inappropriate game.

3.7    **CONCLUDING SUMMARY**

- Viewing movies and playing interactive games forms an important part of entertainment among children between the ages of 7 to 17 years old.
- The movie viewing environment at home is characterised by unrestricted viewing and lack of parental guidance.
- Children aged 7 to 17 years make their own movie choices.
- Age restrictions and classification guidelines play a secondary role when choosing movies.
- Violence, horror and sexual movie content have the greatest impact on children.
- The impact of movie content on children between 7 to 17 years of age is manifested in emotional and behavioural reactions such as the imitating of actions.
- The cinema environment intensifies the impact of movie content on children.
- Despite a general awareness of age restrictions and classification information, there is lack of understanding and implementation of these restrictions among children.
- Overall, the opinion was shared by children that the current age restrictions are not appropriate.  In most instances, age restrictions were perceived to be too lenient and need to be stricter especially for concerning movie elements such as violence, horror and sexual content.
- In most instances, children between 7 to 17 years of age have limited awareness of age restrictions and classification guidelines for games.
- In comparison to movie content, the content in games is perceived to have a minimal effect on children due to the fact that games are animated and not real.

# CHAPTER 4

## RESEARCH FINDINGS: VIEWING SESSIONS

4.1    **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the research findings obtained during viewing sessions conducted with the children aged 10 to 17 years, who participated in the focus group discussions.  The purpose of the viewing sessions was to assess the possible impact of movie content when actually watching movies.  Age-appropriate movies were selected by the FPB which contained movie scenes including classifiable elements such as, violence, sexual content, bad language, horror, substance abuse, blasphemy and prejudice.

The YRU research team created a cinema feeling during which child participants viewed movie clips from the selected movies, followed by a brief discussion.  All the viewing sessions and discussions were facilitated by a professional clinical or educational psychologist.  During the discussion, the reality of the impact was explored on individual, family and community level among the participants.  In addition, the child participants also completed a short one-page questionnaire in an attempt to further explore exposure and impact of movies content.  These results will be presented in section 4.3 of the research report.  The results of the movie viewing sessions will be discussed in the following section.

4.2    **RESULTS OF VIEWING SESSIONS**

4.2.1   **10-11 year olds**

Two viewing sessions, one in Pretoria and one in Polokwane, were conducted with participants aged 10 to 11 years old.  According to the developmental theory of Jean Piaget (Kail& Cavanaugh, 2000), children aged 7 to 11 years old are in the "concrete operational" stage.  These children begin to develop clearer methods of thinking and start to be less self-centred.  They begin to better understand spatial relationships and matter of time, but they are largely bound by the concrete world and have

trouble conceiving abstract thought. Based on this theory, it is expected that children in this group typically have an increased attention span and will be able to see the point of view of others more clearly and form more complex relationships with their peers. Participants were exposed to scenes from the movies listed in table 4.1 below.

**TABLE 4.1**

**MOVIES SELECTED FOR VIEWING SESSIONS WITH CHILD PARTICIPANTS
(10-11 years)**

| Movie Title | Classifiable Element | FPB Age Rating |
|---|---|---|
| **X Men II** | Language, Prejudice, Violence, Nudity | 10 – 12 years |
| **10 Years** | Substance abuse | |
| **The Notebook** | Sexual content | |

It was clear that **sexual content, nudity and violence** had the most noticeable impact on participants aged 10 to 11 years old. This was observed through the non-verbal behaviour of the participants and expressed verbally during the discussion after each movie scene.

- **Sexual content** –Participants 10 to 11 years old described the impact of sexual content and nudity on an individual, family and community level to be 'uncomfortable' and 'awkward'. Participants elaborated that an individual will feel self-conscious when exposed to sexual content in a movie, whereas on a family level the discomfort resulting from exposure to sexual content can cause parents to restrict children from viewing movies containing sexual content.

- **Violence** – Strong feelings such as fear and sadness were experienced by the participants aged 10 to 11 years old when exposed to movie scenes containing violence. The participants stated that on a family level, the movies scenes containing violence can result in parents being concerned about their children and it might result in an argument among family members. On community level participants agreed that community members' thoughts can become corrupted and they can act out violent behaviour as seen in movies. This can lead to

breaking-up the community as stated in the following quotes: *"I think a lot of people will damage their minds and a lot of people will get hurt"* (Participant, 10-11 years).*"It would break up the community because they will try to resolve conflict in a very aggressive way"* (Participant, 10-11 years).

Scenes in selected movies containing **substance abuse, bad language and prejudice** had observable less impact on participants aged 10 to 11 years old.

- **Substance abuse** –Participants 10 to 11 years old shared the opinion that on an individual level substance abuse in the media can directly influence behaviour since individuals identify with what they see. This was similar on a family level, families can identify with behaviour related to parties and alcohol consumption. In addition, on a family level it can lead to parents being more attentive to substance abuse among young people and become stricter especially with alcohol consumption. On a community level participants agreed that community members can imitate the behaviour they see in the media related to substance abuse and it can result in chaos within the community. Furthermore, it can create an unsafe environment for children lacking adult guidance as illustrated in the following quote: *"Children won't grow up properly with norms and values"* (Participant, 10-11 years).
- **Bad language** – Based on the research results from the viewing sessions with participants aged 10 to 11 years old, bad language in movies had less impact. It was clear that bad language is part of their everyday lives and therefore less obvious within a media environment.
- **Prejudice** –Participants aged 10 to 11 years old were unaware of the classifiable element prejudice within the selected movie scenes. Further exploration revealed that participants find it difficult to understand and recognise the concept of prejudice.

4.2.2 **12-13 year olds**

Two viewing sessions were conducted with child participants aged 12 to 13 years old.  According to the developmental theory of Jean Piaget(Kail& Cavanaugh, 2000), children from 12 years to adulthood are in the "concrete operational" stage.  They develop the ability to think logically and systematically and to understand abstractions and the concepts of causality and choice.  They see that different outcomes can proceed from different actions and that they are free to choose between various actions depending on a desired outcome.  Children in this developmental stage typically feel more intense emotions and have a better ability to express feelings through talking.  Furthermore, they have more ability for complex thought and experience a greater influence from their peer group.

The participants were exposed to scenes from the movies listed in table 4.2 below.

**TABLE 4.2**

**MOVIES SELECTED FOR VIEWING SESSIONS WITH CHILD PARTICIPANTS
(12-13 years)**

| Movie Title | Classifiable Element | FPB Age Rating |
|---|---|---|
| **Beloved** | Sexual content, Nudity | 13 years |
| **Burlesque** | Sexual content, Nudity | |
| **Little Miss Sunshine** | Language | |
| **Ghost** | Violence | |

Similar to participants aged 10 to 11 years old, it was clear that **sexual content, nudity and violence** had the most noticeable impact on participants aged 12 to 13 years old.  This was observed through the non-verbal behaviour of the participants and expressed verbally during the discussion after each movie scene.

- **Sexual content** – On an individual level, the child participants aged 12-13 years describe the impact of sexual content and nudity to be 'uncomfortable' and 'confusing' as shown in the following quote: *"I was totally uncomfortable"* (Participant, 12-13 years).Participants elaborated that on an individual level, sexual behaviour in movie scenes can easily be imitated.  On a family level, the

child participants agreed that sexual content and nudity in movie scenes will result in children asking uncomfortable questions which their parents have to answer. On a community level, exposure to sexual content in the media can create awareness of issues related to sexual behaviour and generally community members will be angered because children are vulnerable and innocently exposed to sexual content in movies.

- **Violence** –Participants aged 12 to 13 years old experienced strong feelings when exposed to movie scenes containing violence as shown in the following quote: *"I felt pretty angry when the guy with the gun ran away and the guy started chasing him"* (Participant, 12-13 years).These strong feelings were notable especially when comparing the participants' reaction to movie content containing bad language. This can be ascribed to the fact that many children are often exposed to the use of bad language and has become desensitised to it. Participants further elaborated that on an individual level, a person can imitate the violent actions seen in movies and this can also happen on a family level. Participants shared the opinion that on a family level, exposure to violence in the media can be a teaching opportunity whereby parents can discuss issues of violence and safety with their children as illustrated in the following quote: *"I think it would be kind of a good influence because parents could teach their children and make them aware. Because anything can happen in South Africa"* (Participant, 12-13 years). On a community level, the participants agreed that exposure to violence in the media can normalise criminal behaviour. On the more positive side, it can make the community aware of dangers and teach the community members how to react in dangerous situations.

Scenes in selected movies containing bad language had observable less impact on the participants 12-13 years old.

- **Bad language** – Among participants aged 12 to 13 years old it was observed that feelings overrule the use of bad language within a movie. In the particular movie scene the character used bad language to express his frustration and emotions. Consequently the participants empathised with the character and the impact of

the bad language was lessened. This clearly shows that participants aged 12 to 13 years took the context in which the bad language was used into consideration. Although it was noticeable based on the participants response that bad language in movie scenes had less impact on them, participants explained that on an individual level, inappropriate words can be copied and both on an individual and familial level, the use of inappropriate language can be disrespectful. On a community level, participants stated that the exposure to movie scenes containing bad language can result in community members copying words and using them within the community.

4.2.3 **14-15 year olds**

Two viewing sessions were conducted with child participants 14 to 15 years old. The expected developmental milestones between the age groups 12 to 13 years and 14 to 15 years do not differ significantly. Typically, children in this group show more interest in their peer group and greater concern about their body image and physical appearance. They feel deeper emotions such as sadness and develop a stronger sense of right and wrong.

Participants were exposed to scenes from the movies listed in table 4.3 below. It should be noted that due to the current age categories used by the FPB for films, the same movie scenes used with participants aged 12 to 13 years old were used during the viewing sessions with participants aged 14 to 15 years old. This was done to ensure that all participants are exposed to age appropriate material.

**TABLE 4.3**

**MOVIES SELECTED FOR VIEWING SESSIONS WITH CHILD PARTICIPANTS (14-15 years)**

| Movie Title | Classifiable Element | FPB Age Rating |
|---|---|---|
| **Beloved** | Sexual content, Nudity | 13 years |
| **Burlesque** | Sexual content, Nudity | |
| **Little Miss Sunshine** | Language | |
| **Ghost** | Violence | |

Similar to the younger participants (10 to 13 years), based on the research findings, it was clear that **sexual content, nudity and violence** had the most noticeable impact on participants aged 14 to 15 years old. This was observed through the non-verbal behaviour of the participants and expressed verbally during the discussion after each movie scene.

- **Sexual content** –Participants aged 14 to 15 years old described the impact of sexual content on an individual level to be uncomfortable. Participants further explained that an individual might get the wrong perception about sexual behaviour and imitate the sexual behaviour seen in movies. On a family level, participants agreed that exposure to sexual content is uncomfortable. However, on the positive side the exposure can be used by parents as an opportunity to discuss sexual issues with their children. On a community level the exposure to sexual content can encourage sexual activity although it can also be used as sex education and to inform community members of the danger of HIV and AIDS.

- **Violence** – On an individual level participants agreed that exposure to violence in the movie scenes results in intense feelings such as being afraid. Participants aged 14 to 15 years old stated that exposure to violence can cause a person to act out violent behaviour. On the other hand it can also be educational and contribute to self-protection. Likewise, on a family level it can be used as a teaching opportunity to create awareness about dangerous situation and protection of family members. Within a community, it creates greater awareness with regard to safety and security issues. However, on the negative side, it can encourage community members to commit crime as illustrated in the following quote: *"If you watch a movie like someone stealing a car, you will go and try stealing a car or handbag"* (Participant, 14-15 years).

Similar to the viewing sessions conducted with participants aged 10 to 13 years, **bad language** in movies seems to have less impact on participants aged 14 to 15 years old.

- **Bad language** – Participants agreed that on an individual level, it is likely that a person will copy inappropriate language heard in movies. On a family level the use of bad language can oppose family values. On a community level, members of a community may think that children are bad-mannered.

4.2.4 **16-17 year olds**

Two viewing sessions were conducted with participants between the ages of 16 to 17 years old. Typically children in this age group have more interest in the opposite sex, have deeper capacity for caring and sharing and for development of intimate relationships. Furthermore, they show more independence and are better able to give reasons for their own choices. The participants were exposed to scenes from the movies listed in table 4.4 below.

**TABLE 4.4**

**MOVIES SELECTED FOR VIEWING SESSIONS WITH CHILD PARTICIPANTS
(16-17 years)**

| Movie Title | Classifiable Element | FPB Age Rating |
|---|---|---|
| **Beloved** | Sexual content, Nudity | 13 years |
| **The Notebook** | Sexual content, Nudity | 10 years |
| **No Country for Old Men** | Violence | 16 years |
| **25th Hour** | Prejudice, Language, Blasphemy | |
| **Exorcist** | Horror, Language | |

Similar to the viewing sessions with the younger participants between the ages of 10 and 15 years old, it was clear that **sexual content, nudity and violence** had the most noticeable impact on participants 16 to 17 years old. This was observed through the non-verbal behaviour and verbal expression of the participants during the discussion after each movie scene.

- **Sexual content –** On the individual level, participants aged 16 to 17 years old stated that the sexual content in the movie scenes watched during the viewing session can result in uncomfortable feelings. It is also likely that a person can imitate the sexual behaviour scene in movies. It is noticeable that some of the older participants reported that on an individual level, a person can experience a physical reaction to sexual content seen in movies. These movies also evoke feelings of an incident that might have happened to the person. On the family level, participants agreed that exposure to sexual content creates uncomfortable feelings. It can create an opportunity to discuss issues related to sexual behaviour between parents and children as illustrated in the following quote: *"Sex education, of what to do and what not to do, what is safe and what is unsafe"* (Participant, 16-17 years). On a community level, participants 16 to 17 years old stated that viewing sexual content in movies is a form of sex education among community members. However, they indicated that it can lead to sexual activity and possible unplanned pregnancy among community members.

- **Violence –** Participants in this age group confirmed the intensity of viewing violence in movies. They confirmed that violence in movies can be disturbing as shown in the following quote: *"I don't normally watch this. I was scared for the poor dude in the car who was a cop and grossed out"* (Participant, 16-17 years). For some participants in the older group, violence on an individual level was boring since they are exposed to much more intense violent scenes than the ones in the selected movie scenes and tend to become desensitised. On the family level, participants agreed that violence can be scary and shocking. They also stated that it can lead to possible domestic violence since family members can imitate certain violent acts scene in movies containing violence. On the community level, exposure to violence in movies can be disturbing as illustrated in the following quote: *"Well, when you see violence it is proven that it sticks in your mind. So when something bad happens, your mind triggers that part where the violence has been stored and then you act it out. And once you start killing one person, if you do not feel remorseful, then you're going to kill again and kill again and again and again"* (Participant, 16-17 years).

Based on the response from participants aged 16 to 17 years old, **bad language and horror** had perceivable less impact on them and classifiable elements including **prejudice and blasphemy** was unfamiliar. Although they do understand the concepts of blasphemy and prejudice, it is likely to go unnoticed in movies. The participants only start to notice that these concepts are probed. This was consistent finding through all the viewing sessions. However, it was noticeable that blasphemy did evoke feelings.

- **Bad language** – On the individual level, participants agreed that bad language can be imitated and used. On the family and community level, the use of bad language will create a disrespectful environment between individuals.

- **Horror** –Participants aged 16 to 17 years old were exposed to movie scenes containing horror. It was noticeable that movies containing horror were very popular among most participants in this age group. On the individual level, participants reported that powerful feelings such as fear can be experienced especially among younger participants. This can result in an individual being traumatised by exposure to the movie. On the family level, the family can be traumatised by their exposure to horror and within a community, it might strengthen certain beliefs.

On further exploration of the appropriateness of the current age restrictions of the selected movies, participants aged 10 to 17 years old agreed that the movies containing classifiable elements such as sexual content, nudity and violence which have the most impact, were not appropriately classified and need to be more strictly classified by the FPB.

4.3    **SURVEY AMONG CHILD PARTICIPANTS**

During the viewing sessions, a survey was conducted with child participants to obtain additional quantitative information related to the research objective.    The participants completed a short one-page self-administered questionnaire including questions related to the exposure and impact of classifiable content in movies and games.  The results of the questionnaire will be presented in the following section. It should be noted that these results are based on small sample sizes and cannot be generalised. Despite this precaution, the information obtained from the survey largely served to validate and enrich the findings emerging from the qualitative research phase.  Of particular value was the differentiation of the exposure and impact of different classifiable elements across different age groups, as it will become evident from the discussions in the sub-sections below.  In this regard, the experiential research exposed valuable information regarding the impact of media content on children that was more significant when compared with the qualitative research findings.

4.3.1    **Ever watched movies containing classifiable elements**

All participants had exposure to different classifiable elements in movies since a very young age.  Based on the results illustrated in exhibit 4.1, younger participants 10 to 11 years old had less exposure to sexual activity in movies.

**EXHIBIT 4.1**

**WATCHED MOVIES CONTAINING CLASSIFIABLE ELEMENTS
10-11 YEARS**
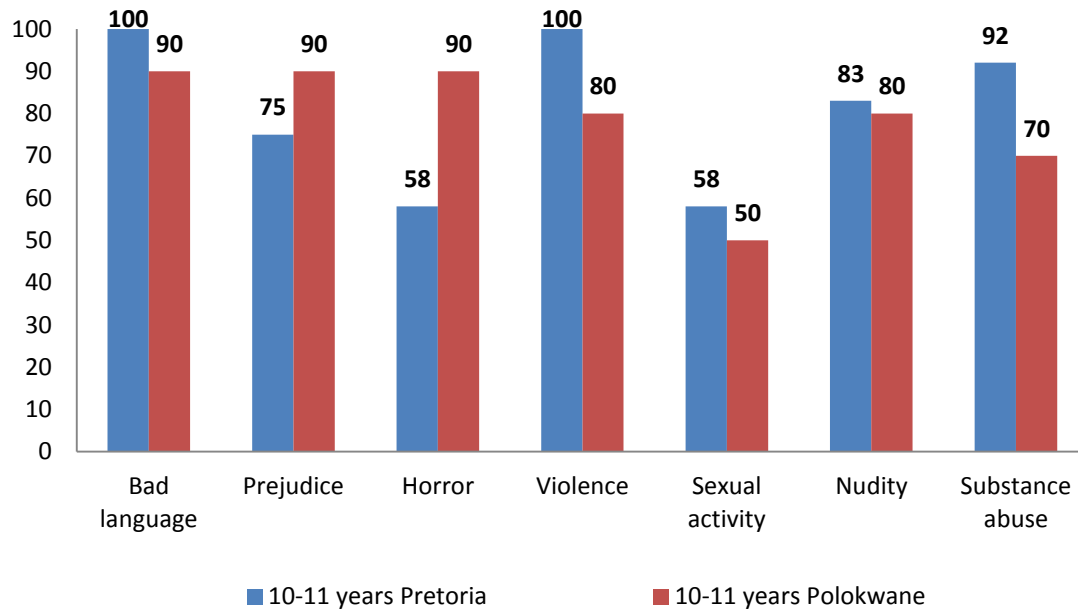


Most participants aged 12 to 13 years old in Pretoria and Polokwane had exposure to violence and bad language in movies as illustrated in exhibit 4.2 below.

**EXHIBIT 4.2**

**WATCHED MOVIES CONTAINING CLASSIFIABLE ELEMENTS
12-13 YEARS**
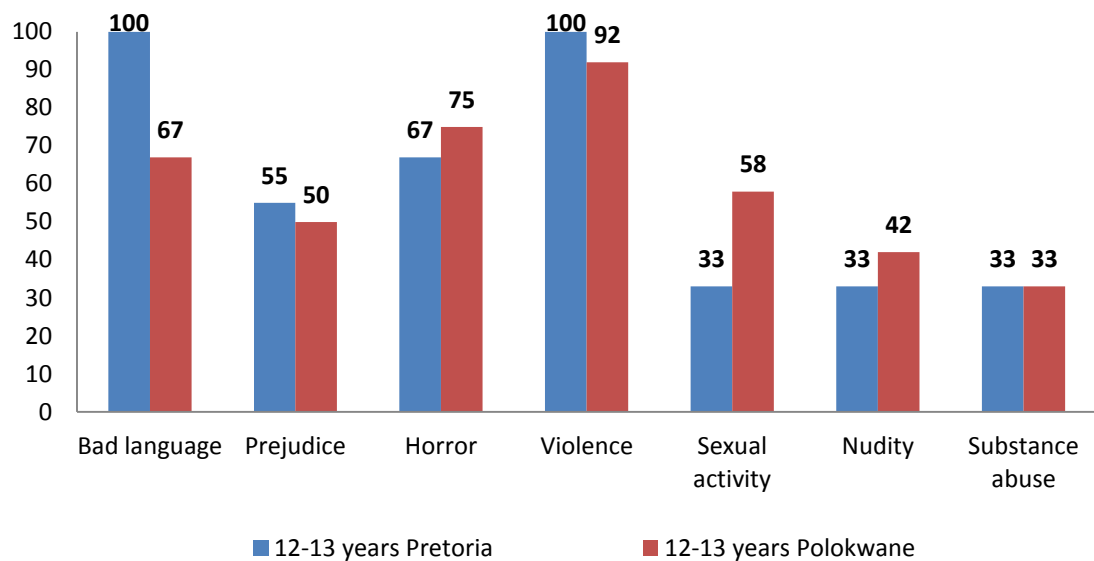
As illustrated in exhibit 4.3, as children get older, their exposure to more classifiable elements in movies increases.  In comparison to the younger children (10 to 13 years) a notable increase is noted for all classifiable elements among the age group 14-15 years.

**EXHIBIT 4.3**

**WATCHED MOVIES CONTAINING CLASSIFIABLE ELEMENTS**
**14-15 YEARS**
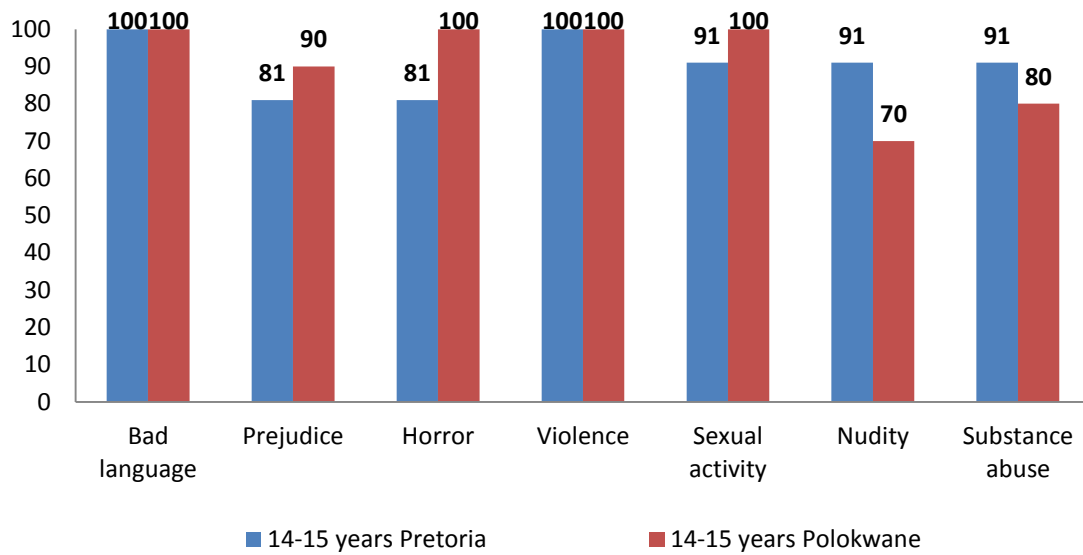


In comparison to participants aged 14 to 15 years old, a slight decrease was reported for exposure to each classifiable element among participants aged 16 to 17 years old, as shown in exhibit 4.4.

**EXHIBIT 4.4**

**WATCHED MOVIES CONTAINING CLASSIFIABLE ELEMENTS**
**16-17 YEARS**



■ 16-17 years Pretoria    ■ 16-17 years Polokwane
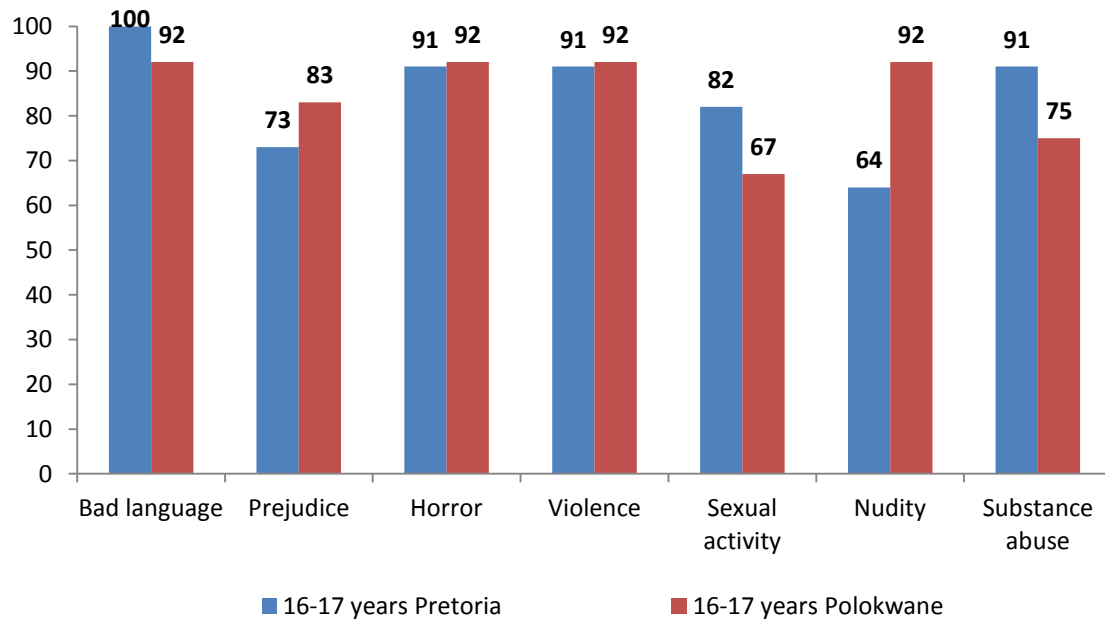
### 4.3.2    Impact of Media Content on the Individual, Family and Community

During the viewing sessions, participants were exposed to age appropriate movie content containing classifiable elements including language, prejudice, horror, violence, sexual activity, nudity and substance abuse. The participants were requested to rank these classifiable elements according to the perceived impact on an individual, family and community level. These results are shown according to the age groups of the participants in table 4.5, table 4.6, table 4.7 and table 4.8 below.

As illustrated in table 4.5, it is noteworthy that younger participants (10-11 years) in Pretoria considered the impact of the viewed movie content to be greater on community level whereas younger participants in Polokwane considered the viewed movie content to have a greater impact on individual level.

**TABLE 4.5**

**IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY**
**10-11 YEARS**

| 10-11 years | Pretoria | | | Polokwane | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Movie Contents | Individual | Family | Community | Individual | Family | Community |
| Language | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| Prejudice | ■ | | ■ | | | ■ |
| Horror | | ■ | | ■ | | |
| Violence | | | ■ | | | ■ |
| Sexual activity | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| Nudity | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| Substance abuse | | | ■ | ■ | | |

Participants (12-13 years) in Pretoria and Polokwane ranked the impact of the viewed movie content on individual level greater as illustrated in table 4.6 below.

**TABLE 4.6**

**IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY**
**12-13 YEARS**

| 12-13 years | Pretoria | | | Polokwane | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Movie Contents | Individual | Family | Community | Individual | Family | Community |
| Language | ■ | | | ■ | | |
| Prejudice | ■ | | | | | ■ |
| Horror | ■ | | | ■ | | |
| Violence | ■ | | | ■ | | |
| Sexual activity | ■ | | | ■ | | |
| Nudity | ■ | | | ■ | | |
| Substance abuse | | | ■ | | | ■ |

**TABLE 4.7**

**IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY**
**14-15 YEARS**

| 14-15 years | Pretoria | | | Polokwane | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Movie Contents** | **Individual** | **Family** | **Community** | **Individual** | **Family** | **Community** |
| Language | ■ | | | ■ | | |
| Prejudice | | | ■ | | | ■ |
| Horror | ■ | | | ■ | | |
| Violence | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| Sexual activity | ■ | | | | | ■ |
| Nudity | | | ■ | ■ | | |
| Substance abuse | ■ | | ■ | | | ■ |

As seen in table 4.7 and table 4.8, it is noteworthy that in comparison to participants aged 14 to 15 years, older participants (16-17 years) in Pretoria and Polokwane ranked the impact of the viewed movie content greater on a family and community level. This might be ascribed to their level of development and ability to think broader with regard to the possible impact and consequences.

**TABLE 4.8**

**IMPACT ON INDIVIDUAL, FAMILY AND COMMUNITY**
**16-17 YEARS**

| 16-17 years | Pretoria | | | Polokwane | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Movie Contents** | **Individual** | **Family** | **Community** | **Individual** | **Family** | **Community** |
| Language | | ■ | | | | ■ |
| Prejudice | | ■ | | | | ■ |
| Horror | | ■ | | ■ | | |
| Violence | | | ■ | | | ■ |
| Sexual activity | | ■ | | | | ■ |
| Nudity | | ■ | | | ■ | |
| Substance abuse | | ■ | | | | ■ |

### 4.3.3 Impact of games

Although participants reported that gaming has no impact on them during the focus group discussions, the behavioural impact of games was evident based on the analysis of the survey results. Among the older participants in Pretoria, 73% (14 to 15 years) reported that they use bad language after gaming and 36% (16 to 17 years) become aggressive towards others after playing games. Among the younger participants in Pretoria (10 to 11 years), 58% reported that they feel anxious and restless after gaming. These results are shown in table 4.5 below.

**TABLE 4.9**

**BEHAVIOURAL IMPACT OF GAMES ON CHILD PARTICIPANTS 10-17 YEARS**
**(Pretoria)**

| Behavioural Impact | 10-11 Years | | 12-13 Years | | 14-15 Years | | 16-17 Years | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Yes % | No % | Yes % | No % | Yes % | No % | Yes % | No % |
| Use inappropriate language | 25 | 75 | 22 | 78 | 73 | 27 | 27 | 73 |
| Become aggressive towards others | 25 | 75 | 11 | 88 | 18 | 82 | 36 | 64 |
| Feel anxious and restless | 58 | 42 | 33 | 67 | 27 | 73 | 45 | 55 |
| Engage in irresponsible sexual activity | - | 100 | - | 100 | 18 | 82 | - | 100 |
| Use illegal substances | - | 100 | - | 100 | 10 | 90 | 27 | 73 |

Similar research results were obtained among child participants in Polokwane. Among older participants (16 to 17 years), 75% reported that they use inappropriate language, 25% become aggressive towards others and 17% engage in irresponsible sexual activity. Younger participants (10 to 11 years) reported that they feel anxious and restless after gaming. These results are shown in table 4.6.

**TABLE 4.10**

**BEHAVIOURAL IMPACT OF GAMES ON CHILD PARTICIPANTS 10-17 YEARS**
**(Polokwane)**

| Behavioural Impact | 10-11 Years | | 12-13 Years | | 14-15 Years | | 16-17 Years | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Yes % | No % | Yes % | No % | Yes % | No % | Yes % | No % |
| Use inappropriate language | - | 100 | 16 | 84 | 50 | 50 | 75 | 25 |
| Become aggressive towards others | 10 | 90 | 8 | 92 | 20 | 80 | 25 | 75 |
| Feel anxious and restless | 60 | 40 | 23 | 67 | 40 | 60 | 33 | 66 |
| Engage in irresponsible sexual activity | - | 100 | - | 100 | - | 100 | 17 | 83 |
| Use illegal substances | - | 100 | - | 100 | 20 | 80 | 8 | 92 |

4.3.4   **Describe your general mood**

The survey further explored the general mood of the child participants as this might contribute to the possible impact of media content.  Most participants in Pretoria and Polokwane described their general mood as being joyful (excited, playful, creative) or peaceful (loved, relaxed, thankful) as illustrated in exhibit 4.5 and exhibit 4.6. It is also interesting to note that more mood traits are visible among older children, which may also impact on the choice of media content.

**EXHIBIT 4.5**

**THE GENERAL MOOD OF CHILD PARTICIPANTS 10-17 YEARS**
**(Pretoria)**
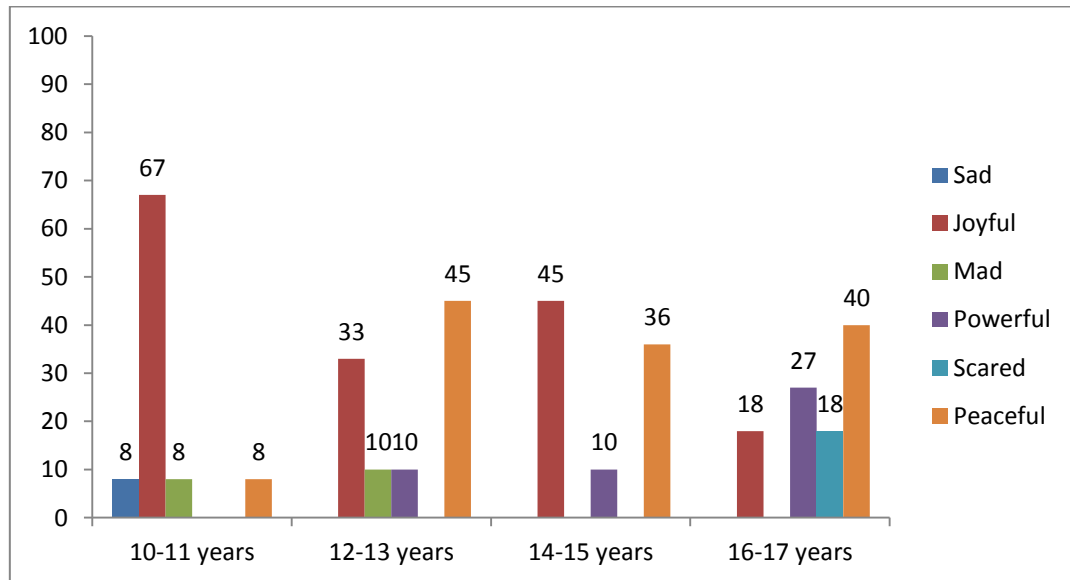


**EXHIBIT 4.6**

**THE GENERAL MOOD OF CHILD PARTICIPANTS 10-17 YEARS**
**(Polokwane)**
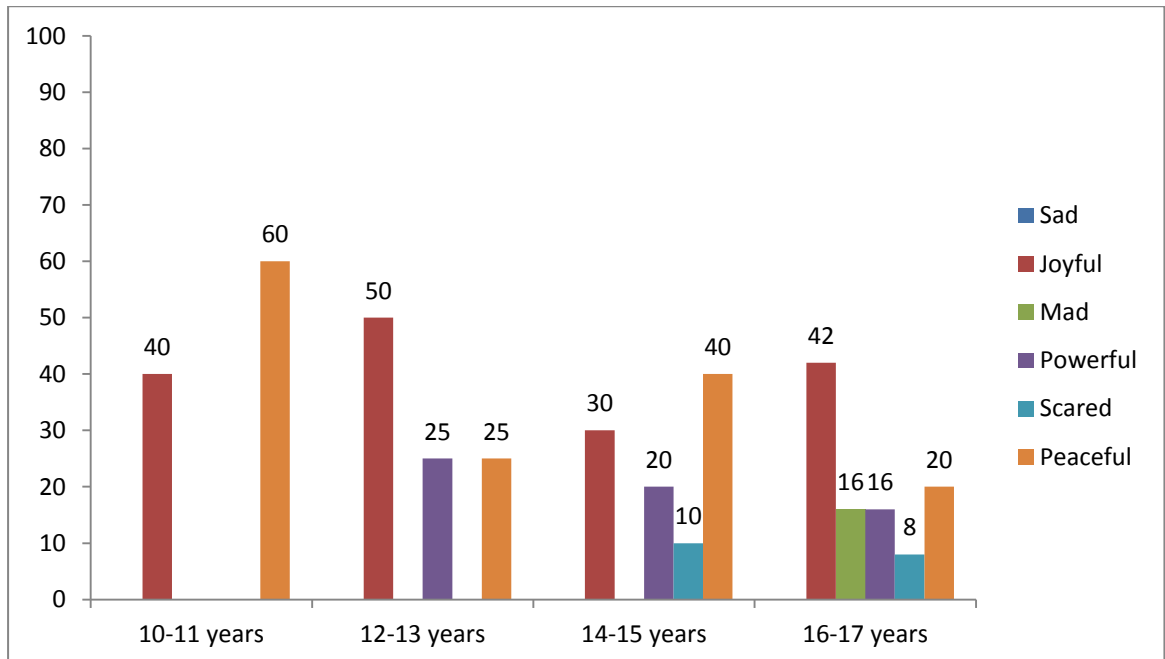
4.4     **CONCLUDING SUMMARY**

- The impact of movie content on children aged 10 to 17 years old is profound. They are aware of the impact on an individual, family and community level.

- Similar feelings are experienced across different age groups although the level of impact may differ.

- Sexual content, nudity and violence seem to have the greatest impact on children aged 10 to 17 years.

- Children aged 10 to 17 years old had repeated exposure to violence and bad language since a very young age. Consequently, they are desensitised towards violence and bad language in movies due to continuous exposure.

- Similar findings were identified for movies containing horror scenes. Although it is clear that elements of horror has a significant impact on children, they tend to become desensitised towards these elements due to continuous viewing of more extreme horror movies.

- The impact of classifiable elements in movies may depend on how vulnerable a child is due to his or her personal circumstances.

- Personal feelings or sympathy with a character in a movie can overrule certain classifiable elements in a movie such as bad language.

- Children aged 10 to 17 years old do not notice all possible classifiable elements in movies. More abstract or subtle themes such as blasphemy and prejudice are less noticeable in comparison to more prominent elements such as sexual content and violence.

- Although children underestimate the impact of gaming on their emotions and behaviour, it was found that gaming does have a behavioural impact on children aged 10 to 17 years old.

- The impact of media content on children aged 10 to 17 years old can be long-term including nightmares, feelings of anxiety and paranoia.

# CHAPTER 5

## RESEARCH FINDINGS: SURVEY AMONG PARENTS

### 5.1    INTRODUCTION

The survey that was conducted involved parents of children aged 7 to 9 years old who personally participated in focus groups discussions as well as all parents of the child participants who participated in the focus group discussions and viewing sessions.    The survey was conducted through the CATI System (Computer Aided Telephonic Interviewing) system and the questionnaire was designed based on the feedback received during the focus group discussions.    A total of 66 successful interviews were conducted.    The research results are presented in the following section of the report.

### 5.2    DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

The descriptive statistical information presented below presents the basic features of the data collected during the interviewing process in a manageable form.    The information is presented according to the subsections of the questionnaire and includes viewing movies at home on DVD, viewing movies at the cinema, awareness and understanding of age restrictions and classification guidelines and interactive gaming.

### 5.2.1 Section A: Viewing movies at home on DVD

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Does (child's name) often watch movies at home on DVD? | Yes | 87.9 |
| | No | 12.1 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| When (child's name) watched movies at home on DVD, who usually decides which movie to watch? | Child him/herself | 50.0 |
| | Parent | 47.0 |
| | Siblings (brother/sister) | 6.1 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Do you know if (child's name) ever watched a movie on DVD with a higher age restriction than his/her age? | Yes | 34.8 |
| | No | 45.5 |
| | Unsure | 19.7 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Please rank which of the following movie content on DVD will have the most impact on (child's name) | Index |
|---|---|
| Violence | 100.00 |
| Bad language | 61.70 |
| Horror | 59.57 |
| Sexual behaviour | 57.45 |
| Nudity | 39.36 |
| Prejudice | 18.09 |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| What effects in movies on DVD will contribute to (child's name) experiencing uncomfortable feelings? | Sound | 7.1 |
| | Images | 30.4 |
| | Both sound and images | 62.5 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| How do you respond when (child's name) experiences uncomfortable feelings? | Provide physical comfort (e.g. hugging) | 9.1 |
| | Talk about movie and feelings | 54.5 |
| | Discontinue viewing | 25.8 |
| | Ignore and continue viewing | 9.1 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Has (child's name) ever seen something in a movie on DVD and imitated what he or she saw? | Yes | 15.2 |
| | No | 72.7 |
| | Unsure | 87.9 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

### 5.2.2 Section B: Viewing movies at the cinema

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Does (child's name) often go to the cinema to watch movies? | Yes | 71.2 |
| | No | 28.8 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| How often does (child's name) go to the cinema to watch movies? | Weekly | 2.1 |
| | Monthly | 48.9 |
| | Occasionally (few times a year) | 48.9 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Who usually accompanies (child's name) to the cinema? | Parent | 48.5 |
| | Siblings (bother/sister) | 12.1 |
| | Family member | 7.6 |
| | Friends | 22.7 |
| | Child goes alone | 3.0 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| When (child's name) watches movies at the cinema, who usually decides which movie to watch? | Child | 43.5 |
| | Parent | 23.9 |
| | Siblings (brother/sister) | 13.0 |
| | Family member | 2.2 |
| | Friends | 17.4 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Where does (child's name) get information about movies at the cinema? | Internet | 30.3 |
| | Friends | 27.3 |
| | Parents | 9.1 |
| | At the cinema | 22.7 |
| | Newspapers | 4.5 |
| | Television | 18.2 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Have you ever been at the cinema with (child's name) and tried to buy movie tickets for a movie with a higher age restriction than his/her age? | Yes | 11.1 |
| | No | 88.9 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Have you ever been stopped from doing so by the ticket sales person at the cinema? | Yes | 20.0 |
| | No | 80.0 |
| **Total** | **n=7** | **100.0** |

| **Please rank which of the following movie content on DVD will have the most impact on (child's name)** | **Index** |
|---|---|
| Violence | 86.17 |
| Sexual behaviour | 50.00 |
| Bad language | 42.55 |
| Horror | 38.30 |
| Nudity | 34.04 |
| Prejudice | 11.70 |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| What in movies at the cinema contributes to experiencing uncomfortable feelings? | Images | 16.7 |
| | 3D Images | 14.3 |
| | Sound | 14.3 |
| | Both sound and images | 54.8 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| How do you respond when (child's name) watches a movie at a cinema and experiences uncomfortable feelings? | Talk about it during the movie | 9.1 |
| | Talk about it after the movie | 33.3 |
| | Walk out of the cinema | 10.6 |
| | Provide guidance with future movie choices | 3.0 |
| | Ignore and continue viewing | 6.1 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Do you think the impact of movie content on (child's name) is more powerful at home or at the cinema? | Home | 36.6 |
| | Cinema | 51.2 |
| | Both | 12.2 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

### 5.2.3 Section C: Awareness and Understanding of Age Restrictions and Classification Guidelines

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Are you aware of age restrictions for movies? | Yes | 87.9 |
|  | No | 9.1 |
|  | Unsure | 3.0 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Are you aware of classification guidelines for movies? | Yes | 96.7 |
|  | No | - |
|  | Unsure | 3.3 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Where have you seen age restrictions and classification guidelines for movies? | Television | 62.1 |
|  | Back of DVD boxes | 42.4 |
|  | Posters at the cinema | 39.4 |
|  | Magazines | 3.0 |
|  | Newspapers | 10.6 |
|  | Other | 4.5 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| What can be done to effectively inform adults and children about age restrictions and classification guidelines for movies? | Educational program on television | 53.0 |
|  | Advertisement on television | 43.9 |
|  | Educational program at school | 57.6 |
|  | Information on the Internet | 16.7 |
|  | Other | 4.5 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Do you ever pay attention to age restrictions and classification guidelines when you are choosing a movie for (child's name) to watch? | Yes | 90.9 |
|  | No | 1.5 |
|  | Sometimes | 4.5 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Do you think (child's name) is aware of age restrictions and classification guidelines? | Yes | 85.9 |
| | No | 10.9 |
| | Unsure | 3.1 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Have you ever informed (child's name) about age restrictions and classification guidelines? | Yes | 84.4 |
| | No | 15.6 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Do you think the current age restrictions are appropriate for children of (child's name) age? | Yes | 45.3 |
| | No | 43.8 |
| | Sometimes | 10.9 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Do you think the current age restrictions are too strict or too lenient? | Strict | 14.3 |
| | Lenient | 85.7 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

### 5.2.4 Section D: Interactive Games

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Does (child's name) often play games on PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo Wii or cell phone? | Yes | 87.7 |
| | No | 12.3 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Where does (child's name) mostly get the games that he/she plays? | Buy with pocket money | 15.8 |
| | Download from Internet | 19.3 |
| | Receive as gifts | 1.8 |
| | Parents buy | 56.1 |
| | Borrow from friends | 3.5 |
| | Other | 3.5 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Do you know what kind of games (child's name) plays? | Yes | 74.1 |
| | No | 17.2 |
| | Unsure | 8.6 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Do you know that there are age restrictions and classification guidelines for games? | Yes | 77.6 |
| | No | 22.4 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Do you ever consider age restrictions and classification guidelines when (child's name) is playing games? | Yes | 70.7 |
| | No | 29.3 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Have you ever allowed (child's name) to play a game with a higher age restriction than his/her age? | Yes | 10.3 |
| | No | 81.0 |
| | Unsure | 8.6 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Has (child's name) ever played a game that made him or her feel uncomfortable? | Yes | 10.3 |
| | No | 75.9 |
| | Unsure | 13.8 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| Can you recall if (child's name) ever played a game and imitated what he/she saw in the game? | Yes | 24.1 |
| | No | 63.8 |
| | Unsure | 12.1 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

| Question | Answer | % |
|---|---|---|
| When playing games do you think (child's name) is more likely to…? | Use inappropriate language | 3.0 |
| | Become aggressive towards others | 7.6 |
| | Feel anxious | 10.6 |
| | Have a negative attitude | 4.5 |
| | Engage in immature sexual behaviour | 1.5 |
| | Use illegal substances such as tobacco and alcohol | 1.5 |
| | No behavioural change is noted | 66.7 |
| **Total** | **n=66** | **100.0** |

5.3     **CONCLUDING SUMMARY**

With regard to watching DVDs at home, parents confirmed that children are the main decision makers with regard to the movies they watch.  Their main concern with regard to movie content children watch on DVD is violent content.  Parents confirmed that children have been exposed to age inappropriate media. However, some are unsure about their children's exposure.  This can be ascribed to the fact that parental involvement and control is often limited especially as children get older.  The impact of movies on DVD is noticeable among parents who identified that children sometimes imitate behaviour observed in movies.

With regard to viewing films at the cinema as indicated in the descriptive analysis, parents confirmed that it remains a popular activity among children.  They confirmed that they do accompany their children to the cinema and mostly children make a decision about the movie they want to watch before they go to the cinema.  They mostly obtain information related to movies on the Internet and it is clear based on the research findings that children fully embrace the use of new technology as part of their entertainment.  The enforcement of age restrictions and classification guidelines are stricter within the cinema environment in comparison to the home environment. This was mostly ascribed to the cinema staff's attentiveness of age restrictions and enforcement thereof as stipulated in the Films and Publications Amendment Act of 2009.

Based on the analysis, parents identified the contribution of the cinema environment (sound and images) to the overall impact of the movie content on children.  Violent content remains a concern.

As evident within the descriptive analysis, parents indicated that they are aware of age restrictions and classification guidelines.  However, the level of awareness and even comprehension might be limited.  Addressing these limitations is imperative with regard to the protection of children and creating a future generation adhering to classification information.  Parents confirmed that they do discuss age restrictions

and classification information with their children. However, only half shared the opinion that the current classification decisions made by the FPB are appropriate.

With regard to gaming among children, parents confirmed that gaming is an extremely popular activity. Mostly, children obtain games from their parents. This emphasises an important focus area for the FPB to increase the organisation's focus on the awareness of age restrictions and classification information for games. The descriptive analysis identified that parents did not notice any behavioural change among their children due to gaming.

It can be concluded based on the descriptive analysis that there are several links between the research findings obtained during the focus group discussions with children and the quantitative information obtained from parents.

## CHAPTER 6

## DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 6.1    INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides an in-depth discussion of the main research findings identified in the study and presents some recommendations and suggestions for future research as well as the limitations of the current study.

### 6.2    DISCUSSION

In line with the main research objective, it can be concluded that the current study provided valuable information regarding impact of media content on children and the suitability of the age restrictions and classification guidelines provided by the FPB.

It is without doubt that the media plays a great role in the lives of children from different socio-economic backgrounds in South Africa.  The current study, conducted among children 10 to 17 years old in Gauteng and Limpopo, confirms available research findings regarding the exposure to different media platforms among South Africans.  According to the 2014(A)All Media Products Study (AMPS) by the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) (http://www.saarf.co.za), just over four million South African children aged 15-19 years old watch television with approximately 1.5million viewing DSTV channels.  Almost half a million South African children aged 15-19 years old visited cinemas and over two million used the Internet through different technological means including PCs and cell phones.

Classifiable elements within media content such as violence, sexual content and horror remain a concern and due to children's extensive exposure to different media platforms, they are more likely to be exposed to violent and sexual content on TV, in movies, in video games, on computers and even in music.  According to Browne and Hamilton-Giachritsis (2005), there is consistent evidence that violent imagery in television, film, video and computer games has substantial short-term effects on

arousal, thoughts and emotions; increasing the likelihood of aggressive or fearful behaviour in younger children. The evidence becomes inconsistent when considering older children and adolescents. The current study identified both emotional and behavioural effect of exposure to media content on children 7 to 17 years old, especially with regard to the imitation of behaviour. This finding is consistent with the social learning theory which proposes that an individual learns from observation. The Film and Publication Board, which is responsible for the effective regulation of media content in South Africa, requires a thorough understanding of the media environment and impact of these media elements on children to ensure that classifiable content containing violence and other elements are appropriately classified with the aim to protect children from any possible harm.

The classification process is not a static process and subject to the continuous changing media environment and developments in society; hence the FPB needs to be innovative in its approach to classification and continuously revise the current classification guidelines and age restriction to ensure its appropriateness to the South African society as it continuously changes. Thus, the purpose of the current study was to contribute to this understanding, by providing empirical research information about children's media environment and the impact of media content on feelings, thoughts and behaviour.

Based on the research findings of the current study, the FPB classification guidelines seem to be aligned with the developmental levels of children although the classification decisions are mostly seen as inappropriate and inconsistent among both children and parents of younger children. The current study identified that both children aged 10 to 17 years old and parents of younger children seven (7) to nine (9) years old, shared the opinion that the FPB classification decisions are too lenient and need to be stricter especially when classifiable content includes violence, sexual content and horror. The observed impact of media content on children was significant despite different developmental levels and expected developmental milestones, especially among younger children (7 to 11 years) who lack the capacity to distinguish between reality and fiction and take for granted what they see in the

media. According to Troseth and Deloache (1998) mature viewers are able to respond flexibly to media content, they realise that some images represent reality and could profitably be taken as a source of information, whereas others are the products of imagination art and acting. Children gradually learn to decipher the conventions or formal features of media content that are used to symbolise temporal and spatial relations including cinematic techniques such as cuts, zooms and montage. However, there are reasons to suspect, however, that very young children's understanding of the relation between media and reality is far from complete.

The findings of the current study is further supported by the findings of Brown and Hamilton-Giachritsis (2005) who identified that for both passive viewing (television and film) and interactive viewing (video and computer games), there seems to be consistent evidence of an association between younger children watching media violence and showing more aggressive play and behaviour, although this is mainly short-term. However, this does not imply that older children (12 to 17 years) are less likely to be affected. Based on the cognitive development theory of Piaget, it can be inferred that children before 12 years lack cognitive ability due to development. After 12 years, however, they gain stronger cognitive ability but are strongly influenced by emotional development within the adolescent phase. Subsequently, it can be concluded that all children are affected in some way by media content, but the effects depend on an individual's cognitive appraisal as well as family, social and cultural environment.

All children are unique and research on vulnerable groups has shown that some children and adolescents are more susceptible to media influence than others. The UNESCO review of research findings suggests that everyone is negatively affected in some way by media violence, but that these effects depend on an individual's cognitive appraisal and physical and social environment (Von Feilitzen & Carlsson, 1999). This highlights a critical focus area for the FPB when making classification decisions and requires the proper training of individuals who view and make

classification decisions to be aware and knowledgeable of media content that potentially have a greater influence on human behaviour.

The current study identified many opportunities for the FPB to improve awareness and implementation of age restrictions and classification guidelines among the South African society.  One simple step in reducing children's exposure to violent or sexual content would be to increase parents' familiarity with the FPB's age restrictions and classification guidelines for both movies and games.  Parents make numerous decisions that create the media environment in which their children grow-up; for example, whether children are allowed to have TVs and game consoles in their bedrooms and whether they are allowed to buy certain games or have cell phones. Research in the UK found that 45% of young people under the age of 18 had seen an 18 certified film.  They were able to do so because controls over age restriction in the home are more difficult to implement than in the cinema and rely on the consent of adults in the home to effectively control television, videos and DVDs (Brown & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005).Similar findings were identified in the current study highlighting less parental monitoring within the home environment.  In addition, the current study identified that within the home environment, parents are less likely to consider the age ratings of movies and focus more on the classification guidelines specifically for violence and sexual content.  Similarly, in a research study conducted among American parents, it was found that parents prefer categorisations related to content rather than age when selecting an appropriate film for their children.  In fact, age ratings have little effect on children over 10 years of age (Bushman & Cantor, 2003).

Consequently, parents need to be aware of the possible impact of media on their children and the importance of enforcing age restrictions and classification guidelines as well as setting limits for interacting with the media.  However, the current study identified limited parental awareness of the impact of media on children and fewer parental involvement and guidance at home. Hence there is an urgent need for parents to take an educational approach with regard to exposure to appropriate media content.

Finally, the current study provided important baseline information for further investigation into the impact of media content on children and appropriateness of the current age restrictions and classification guidelines.  It is without doubt that the research findings re-emphasised the relevance and importance of the FPB as regulatory authority in South Africa.

## 6.3    RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research findings presented in this report, the following recommendations can be made:

- The establishment of a single content classification system would serve to enhance the content regulatory function of the FPB.  Due to the convergence of the media there is a need to have a common classification framework that can be implemented across different media industries within South Africa.

- Improve awareness and understanding of age restrictions and classification guidelines.  Television continues to be the most widely-used entertainment and educational platform by children and parents and should be used by FPB to convey information regarding age restrictions and classification guidelines.

- It will be beneficial to develop a specific programme on an appropriate level for children from seven (7) to 17 years old to inform them about age restrictions and classification guidelines and possible impact of exposure to age-inappropriate media content.

- For younger children, it is recommendable to make animation to convey appropriate information regarding age restrictions and classification guidelines and possible impact of exposure to age-inappropriate media content.

- It is imperative to use new technology platforms such as the Internet to reach children and parents with information regarding age restrictions and classification guidelines as well as the latest classification decisions for movies on DVD and at the cinema.  It is advisable to develop an application that can be easily downloaded on a cell phone.

- The importance and relevance of age restrictions among parents need to be emphasised and parents need to be motivated to discuss age restrictions with their children. Parents must be well informed to lay down the boundaries for their children when it comes to appropriate media content.

- The FPB needs to consider the different viewing environments at home and the cinema when children are exposed to media content. There is limited parental guidance at home.

- Based on the changing media environment it is imperative for FPB to work in partnership with other service providers such as Multichoice regarding the appropriate protection of children from exposure to inappropriate media content.

- Gaming is currently a major activity among children and limited attention is given to the age restrictions and classification guidelines for games. Hence, it is advisable for the FPB to actively educate parents and children about the potential dangers of gaming and prolonged periods spend playing games.

In light of the fact that media violence remains a concern, it is important to note the multi-factorial recommendations made by Browne and Hamilton-Giachritsis (2005) to reduce the possible effects of media violence on children.

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**Public-health recommendations to reduce effects of media violence on children and adolescents**

**Parents should:**
- be made aware of the risks associated with children viewing violent imagery as it promotes aggressive attitudes, antisocial behaviour, fear, and desensitisation;
- review the nature, extent, and context of violence in media available to their children before viewing; and
- assist children's understanding of violent imagery appropriate to their developmental level.

**Professionals should:**
- offer support and advice to parents who allow their children unsupervised access to inappropriate extreme violent imagery as this could be seen as a form of emotional abuse and neglect;
- educate all young people in critical film appraisal, in terms of realism, justification, and consequences;
- exercise greater control over access to inappropriate violent media entertainment for young people in secure institutions; and
- use violent film material in anger management programmes under guidance.

**Media producers should:**
- reduce violent content and promote anti-violence themes and publicity campaigns;
- ensure that when violence is presented it is in context and associated with remorse, criticism, and penalty;

and
- ■ ensure that violent action is not justified or its consequences understated.

**Policy makers:**
- ■ should monitor the nature, extent, and context of violence in all forms of media and implement appropriate guidelines, standards, and penalties;
- ■ should ensure that education in media awareness is a priority and a part of the school curricula.

Source: Browne, K.D. & Hamilton-Giachritsis, C. (2005). The influence of violent media on children and adolescents a public-health approach. *Lancet.* 365: p.708

### 6.4    LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study investigated a complex topic related to the effect of media content on children. Despite the fact that the study provided extensive information that can further be explored, it is important to recognise the following limitations.

- The inability of younger children to verbalise their feelings associated with the impact of media content on their emotional state and behaviour.
- The possible underreporting of the impact of media content by children out of fear to be excluded by their peers or restricted from viewing certain content.
- The study did not include children under the age of 10 years due to several considerations and had to rely on parents (third person reporting) to obtain research information regarding the impact of media content on younger children.
- Although the study was aligned with the current mandate of the FPB to focus on films, DVDs and games it can be seen as a limitation taking into consideration the expansiveness of  media (ranging from radio to newspapers and books, digitally generated audio and video materials and so on) and also considering the multiple uses of media platforms by children.

### 6.5    FUTURE RESEARCH STUDIES

The following future research studies can be considered:

- A possible follow-up study can be conducted whereby every classifiable element such as violence, sexual content and horror are investigated independently to provide more in-depth information.

- The gaming industry is growing rapidly and it is likely to have both positive and negative effects on children. Further research is needed to investigate the impact of gaming on children in South Africa.

- Future studies are needed that look at how the harmful impact of media content can be prevented.

- More research is needed on the possible impact of cartoons and music lyrics among children as these often portray elements of violence, inappropriate language and sexual conduct.

- A future study can be conducted exploring the impact of media beyond the current mandate of the FPB including among other social media platforms.

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**APPENDIX A**

**Discussion Guide – Child Participants (10-17 years)**

**Introduction**

**TIME: 5 Minutes**

▪ Ensure that all participants are comfortable and feel welcome at the focus group discussion.

▪ Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the focus group discussion as follows:

The purpose of this research study (or investigation) is to explore the influence of media content (in movies and interactive games) on children and to ensure that they will make the right choices when they view movies or play interactive games.

▪ Inform the respondents about the following issues:

   o There is no right or wrong answer - every opinion is important.

   o Participation in the focus group discussion is anonymous (meaning the respondents will not be identified in the research study).

   o The focus group discussion will be recorded and notes will be taken for the purpose of writing a research report.

**SECTION A: Ice Breaker**

**TIME: 10 Minutes**

▪ What do you do for fun (entertainment)?

   o <u>If not mentioned</u>: do you enjoy watching movies? *(Probe different access points e.g. television, DVDs, Internet and Cinema)*

   o <u>If not mentioned</u>: do you enjoy playing interactive games?

**SECTION B: Movies**

**TIME: 45 Minutes**

**I would like us to talk more about watching movies.**

## At home (DVDs)

- Do you often watch movies at home on DVD? *(Probe: viewing time, viewing environment (family room or own bedroom), different kinds of movies)*

- What is your favourite movie on DVD, can you remember the name of the movie?

- How do you usually decide which movie to watch? *(Probe: see advertisement, friends talk about a movie (peer influences), brothers or sisters choose, parents or family member choose)*

- Have you ever hired a movie on DVD with a higher age restriction than your age? *(Probe: reaction of sales assistant)*

- Have you ever watched a movie on DVD that was awkward and made you feel uncomfortable? *(Probe: feelings of fear, anxiety, embarrassment)*

- If yes: What was it about the movie that made you feel uncomfortable and caused these feelings? *(Probe: images, sound effects, language)*

- If no: Can you remember if you had such an experience when you were younger?

- How do you respond when you watch a movie and experience these uncomfortable feelings? *(Probe: talk to parents, talk to friends, if possible stop viewing the movie)*

- How do your parents respond? *(Probe: restrict viewing, provide more information, provide comfort)*

- Have you ever seen something in a movie and imitated (copycat) what you saw? *(Probe: give an example of positive or negative behaviour imitated, probe in which movie the behaviour was seen)*

**At cinema (Films)**

▪ Do you often go to the cinema (NuMetro or Ster-Kinekor) to watch movies? *(Probe: frequency and motivation)*

▪ When you go to the cinema do you usually go alone or with someone else?

▪ At the cinema, how do you usually decide which movie to watch? *(Probe: see advertisement, friends talk about a movie (peer influences), brothers or sisters choose, parents choose)*

▪ Have you ever tried to buy movie tickets and enter a cinema where a movie was showing with a higher age restriction than your age? *(Probe)*

▪ <u>If yes</u>: What has been the reaction of the cashier at the cinema when you tried to purchase the ticket?

▪ Have you ever watched a movie at the cinema that made you feel uncomfortable? *(Probe: feelings of fear, anxiety, embarrassment)*

▪ <u>If yes</u>: What was it about the movie at the cinema that made you feel uncomfortable and caused these feelings? *(Probe: images, sound effects, language)*

▪ How did you respond? *(Probe: talk to parents after movie, talk to friends after movie, closed eyes, walked out of the cinema)*

▪ Do you sometimes feel more frightened or embarrassed by a film at the cinema than a movie on DVD? *(Probe: experience more intense feelings)*

**Awareness and understanding of age categories and classification guidelines for movies**



▪ Have you ever heard of age restrictions (limitations) and classification guidelines (content symbols) for films?

▪ Can you tell me in your own words, what do you understand when I mention

- ○ age restrictions
- ○ classification guidelines (content symbols)?

Age restrictions can be described as a minimum age for viewing certain media content. Classification guidelines (content symbols) provide information about the content of the movie and assist parents and children to make informed choices when deciding about the suitability of a movie.

**I want us to play a game. I am going to ask each of you to pull a piece of paper out of the hat. You will either see an age restriction or classification guideline (content symbols) written on the piece of paper. I would like you to read it out loud and then the whole group can tell me what it means. Remember it is only a game that we are playing!**

*Moderator Note: Allow the children to freely explain what the meaning is of each age restriction or classification guideline. Probe fully. When done, briefly explain the correct meaning as supplied in the table below.*

| Age Restrictions | Explanation |
|---|---|
| A | **All ages** - means it is suitable for all. |
| PG | **Parental Guidance** - means that parents and caregivers are in the best position to decide whether or not a child in their care may view film or DVD for home entertainment purposes. |
| 7-9 PG | **Means that the material is not suitable for children under the age of 7 years.** A parent or caregiver may decide if the material is appropriate for children in their care from ages 7-9, if it is of particular entertainment or educational value for such children. Children from the ages of 7-9 years may not be allowed to watch a film classified 7-9 unless accompanied by an adult. |
| 10-12 | **Means that the material is not suitable for children under the age of 10.** A parent or caregiver may decide if the material is appropriate for children in their care from ages 10-12, if it is of particular entertainment or educational value for such children. Children from the ages of 10-12 years may not be allowed to watch a film classified 10-12 unless accompanied by an adult. |
| 13 | **Means that material is not suitable for children under the age of 13 years.** |
| 16 | **Means that the material is not suitable for children under the age of 16 years.** |
| 18 | **Means that the material is not suitable for children under the age of 18 years.** |

| Classification Guidelines (Content Symbols) | Explanation |
|---|---|
| L | **Language** – material may contain instances of very strong language justified by the context. |
| H | **Horror** – any scenes of very strong horror must be justified by the context. |
| S | **Sexual activity** – material may contain occurrences of strong or even very strong implied sexual activity. |
| P | **Prejudice** – material may contain scenes or language of prejudice of strong impact, if clearly disapproved of, and if justified within context or if used in an educational or historical context. |
| SV | **Sexual violence** – material may contain occurrences of actual moderate to strong sexual violence, if justified by context. |
| V | **Violence** – material may contain strong to very strong violence if justified by context. |
| D | **Substance abuse** – material may contain strong impact instances of substance abuse if justified by context |
| N | **Nudity** – material may contain instances of strong impact nudity if justified by context |

Where have you seen or heard about the age restrictions and classification guidelines (content symbols)? *(Probe: DVD boxes, DVD discs, posters at cinemas, heard about it from parents)*

- Do you ever pay attention to the age restriction and classification guidelines (content symbols) when you are choosing a movie to watch?

- Have your parents every refused that you watch a certain movie with a higher age restriction or certain classification guidelines (content symbols)? *(Probe: if they ever allowed them to watch movies with higher age restrictions)*

- If you were a parent will you tell your children about age restrictions and classification guidelines *(Probe: Why?, how?)*

- Think about the movies that you have watched, do you think that the current age restrictions are appropriate for children of your age? *(Probe: examples)*

**SECTION C: Interactive Games**

**TIME: 25 Minutes**

**I would like us to talk more about playing interactive games such as PlayStation, Xbox and Nintendo Wii.**

- Tell me more about playing games? *(Probe: frequency of playing games, reasons for playing games)*

- What kind of games do you play? *(Probe: types of games and titles of the games)*

- Where do you get the games that you play? *(Probe: buy with own pocket money, parents buy games as gifts, hire games, share with friends, download from the Internet)*

- Do you know that there are age restrictions and classification guidelines (content symbols) for games, similar to the ones that we have discussed for movies? *(Probe: awareness)*

- Do you think your parents are aware of the age restrictions and classification guidelines for games?

- <u>If yes:</u> have they ever discussed it with you?

- Do you consider these age restrictions and classification guidelines (content symbols) when you select games to play?

- Have you ever hired or bought a game with a higher age restriction than your age? *(Probe: reaction of salesperson)*

- Have you ever played a game that made you feel uncomfortable?

- <u>If yes:</u> What was it about the game that made you feel uncomfortable? *(Probe)*

- Thinking of movies and games, would you say that you experience stronger feelings when viewing a movie or when playing a game?

- Have you ever played a game and felt that you would like to do what the characters in the game are doing? *(Probe: feeling aggressive and wanting to fight with others)*

**SECTION D: Conclusion**
**TIME: 5 Minutes**

- Thank you for your participation in the focus group discussion.

**APPENDIX B**

**Concise Curriculum Vitae – M.Rademeyer**

Marita Rademeyer is a registered Clinical Psychologist with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA).  She obtained her MA (Clinical Psychology) degree from RAU in 1992 and has extensive experience working with children.

In 2001, she founded the Child Trauma Clinic in Pretoria providing assessments and therapeutic services to children aged 2 to 18 years.  Marita became the co-founder of Jelly Beanz Inc., a non-profit organisation rendering therapeutic services to children and families who experienced violence and abuse.

Besides being in practice, Marita is involved in the training and mentoring programmes including amongst others the following:

2002-2004:    Presenter workshops and seminars on burnout and secondary trauma;

2005:          Conference organizer: Dealing with child sexual abuse;

Speaker: Divorce and young children seminar;

Speaker: Trauma and the child, Bryanston;

2006:          International conference Durban, speaker "Burnout in the helping profession";

Speaker: Training workshop: Diagnosing psychiatric disorders in children;

2007:          Speaker, seminar: Helping children deal with divorce;

Presenter of two day workshops dealing with violence in schools, Free State Department of Education, Gauteng Department of Education;

Speaker: Cape Town seminar The Child with Attention Deficit disorder;

2008:          Speaker: Seminar on Bullying amongst South African children;

Speaker: Seminar on helping the traumatized child, PTA Cape Town;

Speaker at NACISSA Symposium on Crime in South Africa;

Co-presenter: Play therapy with the child that has been sexually abused, Port Elizabeth;

Speaker: The child with bipolar disorder;

Guest lecturer: Huguenot college: MA Play therapy;

Supervisor D Psych Health Psychology;

2009: Speaker at seminar on Autism in children "Burn out in parents of children with autism";

Co-presenter: Play therapy with the child who has been traumatized (2 day seminar)

Speaker at conference on adolescence Cape Town "Psychiatric disorders in adolescence";

Guest lecturer TUKS Play therapy MA;

Speaker at seminar "Depression, suicide and self-mutilation in children";

Organizer of seminar "Women against crime in South Africa";

2010: Speaker: HSRC Conference on child trafficking "Trans-disciplinary approaches to dealing with child sexual abuse";

Co-presenter: Play therapy with the child who has been sexually abused (2 day workshop);

Presenter: workshop for SAPS West Rand on child sexual abuse and secondary trauma;

Supervisor HPCSA registered counsellors, trauma counsellors, psychometry interns

Speaker binocular vision conference "Burnout" KZN;

2011: Speaker at "Children who abuse other children sexually" 2 day seminar Pretoria & Potchefstroom;

Speaker at Child trauma conference Cape Town "HIV and loss in children";

Co-presenter: The healing project: therapy for children who have been sexually abused (3 day training) CT and PTA;

Presenter: Emergency services Gauteng: Dealing with the traumatized child;

Speaker: Seminar on the child in healthcare "The neuro-biology of trauma in children" PTA;

Train the trainer: Therapy with children who have been sexually abused (3 day workshop) for RAPCAN;

Cape Town 2012: Presented paper at ISPCAN International Congress in Turkey on "Psycho-social interventions for children in a children's home in Mamelodi";

Keynote speaker at 4th annual Child Trauma Conference Cape Town; and

Consultant on Khusela project (National training framework for social work training in child protection);

**APPENDIX C**

**Concise Curriculum Vitae – J. van Jaarsveld**

In 2004, she obtained a Master's degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Pretoria and is a registered Educational Psychologist with the Health Professions Council of South Africa (HPCSA) PS 0092827. She was in private practice since 2005 done extensive work with children including:

- Children with Asperger syndrome, Autism, Down syndrome, Fatal Alcohol syndrome;
- Children that are visually, hearing, speech and cognitively impaired;
- Children with trauma injuries to the head;
- Children suffering from ADD (Attention Deficit Disorder) and Children with ADHD (Attention Deficit and Hyperactive Disorder);
- Children that experienced emotional trauma;
- Parental guidance for parents with children who are physically or cognitively impaired;
- Children that have been sexually abused as well as guidance for the parents;
- Children whose parents are going, or have gone through divorce; and
- Psycho-assessments: third party claims.

Besides working with children, Jana also present workshops on different topics including:
- Parents with sexually abused children;
- Parents going through divorce;
- Parents whose children suffered brain trauma; and
- Parents with new born babies that are impaired.

**APPENDIX D**

**Discussion Guide**

**Parents (with children 7-9 years old)**

**Introduction**

- Ensure that all the participants are comfortable and feel welcome at the focus group discussion.

- Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the focus group discussion as follows:

**The purpose of this research study is to explore the possible influence of media content (in movies and interactive games) on children between the ages of 7-9 years old.**

- Inform the respondents about the following issues:

  o There is no right or wrong answer - every opinion is important.

  o Participation in the focus group discussion is anonymous (meaning the respondents will not be identified in the research study).

  o The focus group discussion will be recorded and notes will be taken for the purpose of writing a research report.

**SECTION A: Ice Breaker**

**TIME: 10 Minutes**

- Tell me more about your children and what you as a family do for fun? *(Probe: watching movies or playing interactive games together)*

**SECTION B: Movies**

**TIME: 30 Minutes**

**I would like us to talk more about your children aged 7-9 years old and in particular when they watch movies.**

**At home (DVDs)**

- Do you often watch movies with your children at home on DVD? *(Probe: viewing time, viewing environment, different kinds of movies)*

- When watching movies with your 7-9 year old child, who usually decides which movie to watch? *(Probe: Parent make decision, child inform decision, see advertisement, friends or family members talk about a movie)*

- Have you ever hired a movie with a higher age restriction than the age of your 7-9 year old child and watched the movie with your child? *(Probe: reasons, titles of movies)?*

- How does your 7-9 year old child usually react when watching movies at home on DVD containing scenes of:
  - Violence;
  - Bad Language;
  - Nudity;
  - Sexual activity; and
  - Horror.

- Can you remember any specific examples of movies on DVD that had a noticeable impact on your 7-9 year old child?

- What was it about these movies that contributed to your child experiencing uncomfortable feelings, would you say it was the images or sound effects?

- How do you respond when your 7-9 year old child watches a movie and experiences these uncomfortable feelings? *(Probe: talk to child and provide comfort, stop viewing the movie).*

- Can you recall if your child have ever seen something in a movie and imitated (copycat) what they saw? *(Probe: give an example of positive or negative behaviour imitated, probe in which movie the behaviour was seen)*

- In one word, how would you describe the overall impact of movies on DVD on children aged 7-9 years old?

### At cinema (Films)

- Do you often go to the cinema (NuMetro or Ster-Kinekor) to watch movies with your children? *(Probe: frequency and motivation, if children go alone)*

- At the cinema, how do you usually decide which movie to watch with your 7-9 year old child? *(Probe: child choose movie, see advertisement, friends or family members talk about a movie, parent choose)*

- Have you ever tried to buy movie tickets and enter a cinema where a movie was showing with a higher age restriction than the age of your 7-9 year old child? *(Probe: reasons)*

- How does your 7-9 year old child usually react when watching movies at the cinema containing scenes of:
  - Violence;
  - Bad Language;
  - Nudity;
  - Sexual activity; and
  - Horror.

- What was it about these movies that contributed to your child experiencing uncomfortable feelings, would you say it was the images or sound effects?

- How do you respond when your 7-9 year old child watches a movie at the cinema and experiences these uncomfortable feelings? *(Probe: talk to child during the movie and provide comfort, talk to child after watching the movie, walk out of cinema)*

- Do you think the impact of movie content on children aged 7-9 years is more powerful at cinemas than at home?

**Awareness and understanding of age categories and classification guidelines for movies**



- Have you ever heard of age restrictions (limitations) and classification guidelines (content symbols) for films?

- Can you tell me in your own words, what do you understand when I mention

  o    age restrictions; and

  o    classification guidelines (content symbols)?

Age restrictions can be described as a minimum age for viewing certain media content. Classification guidelines (content symbols) provide information about the content of the movie and assist parents and children to make informed choices when deciding about the suitability of a movie.

- Where have you seen or heard about the age restrictions and classification guidelines (content symbols)?  *(Probe: DVD boxes, DVD discs, posters at cinemas, heard about it from parents)*

- Do you ever pay attention to the age restriction and classification guidelines (content symbols) when you are choosing a movie for your children to watch?

- Do you think your children are aware of age restrictions?

- Have you ever made your children aware of and informed them of the age restrictions and classification guidelines (content symbols)?

- Think about the movies that you have watched with your children aged 7-9 years old, do you think that the current age restrictions are appropriate *(Probe: too strict or too lenient).*

**FLIPCHART: I am going to write age restrictions and classification guidelines on the flipchart. I would like you to give me a short explanation of each.**

*Moderator Note:* Allow the participants to freely explain the meaning of each age restriction or classification guideline. When done, briefly explain the correct meaning as supplied in the table below.

| Age Restrictions | Explanation |
|---|---|
| A | **All ages** - means it is suitable for all. |
| PG | **Parental Guidance** - means that parents and caregivers are in the best position to decide whether or not a child in their care may view film or DVD for home entertainment purposes. |
| 7-9 PG | **Means that the material is not suitable for children under the age of 7 years.** A parent or caregiver may decide if the material is appropriate for children in their care from ages 7-9, if it is of particular entertainment or educational value for such children. Children from the ages of 7-9 years may not be allowed to watch a film classified 7-9 unless accompanied by an adult. |
| 10-12 | **Means that the material is not suitable for children under the age of 10.** A parent or caregiver may decide if the material is appropriate for children in their care from ages 10-12, if it is of particular entertainment or educational value for such children. Children from the ages of 10-12 years may not be allowed to watch a film classified 10-12 unless accompanied by an adult. |
| 13 | **Means that material is not suitable for children under the age of 13 years.** |
| 16 | **Means that the material is not suitable for children under the age of 16 years.** |
| 18 | **Means that the material is not suitable for children under the age of 18 years.** |

| Classification Guidelines (Content Symbols) | Explanation |
|---|---|
| L | **Language** – material may contain instances of very strong language justified by the context. |
| H | **Horror** – any scenes of very strong horror must be justified by the context. |
| S | **Sexual activity** – material may contain occurrences of strong or even very strong implied sexual activity. |
| P | **Prejudice** – material may contain scenes or language of prejudice of strong impact, if clearly disapproved of, and if justified within context or if used in an educational or historical context. |
| SV | **Sexual violence** – material may contain occurrences of actual moderate to strong sexual violence, if justified by context. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **V** | **Violence** – material may contain strong to very strong violence if justified by context. |
| **D** | **Substance abuse** – material may contain strong impact instances of substance abuse if justified by context |
| **N** | **Nudity** – material may contain instances of strong impact nudity if justified by context |

## SECTION C: Interactive Games

**TIME: 20 Minutes**

**I would like us to talk more about your children aged 7-9 years, playing interactive games such as PlayStation, Xbox and Nintendo Wii.**

- Do your children aged 7-9 years play interactive games? *(Probe: frequency of playing games, reasons for playing games)*

- What kind of games do they play? *(Probe: types of games and titles of the games)*
  - o <u>If not mentioned</u>: Do you ever play educational games?

- Where do they get the games that they play? *(Probe: buy with own pocket money, parents buy games as gifts, hire games, share with friends, download from the Internet)*

- Do you know that there are age restrictions and classification guidelines (content symbols) for games, similar to the ones that we have discussed for movies? *(Probe: parental awareness, informing children)*

- Do you ever consider these age restrictions and classification guidelines (content symbols) when you buy games for your child aged 7-9 years old?

- Have you ever allowed your child aged 7-9 years old to play a game with a higher age restriction than your child's age? *(Probe: reason)*

- Has your child aged 7-9 years old ever played a game that made him/her noticeably uncomfortable? *(Probe: what about the game made the child uncomfortable, titles)*

- Can you recall if your child has ever played a game and imitated what they had seen in the game? *(Probe: feeling aggressive and wanting to fight with others)*

- In one word, how would you describe the overall impact of interactive games on children aged 7-9 years old?

## SECTION D: Conclusion

- Thank you for your participation in the focus group discussion.

**APPENDIX E**

**Questionnaire (Parents)**

**Dear Parent**

The Youth Research Unit (YRU) of the Bureau of Market Research (BMR) at the University of South Africa (Unisa) is conducting a research study to determine the impact of media content on children between the ages of 7 – 17 years. Accordingly, you are invited to participate in this survey by answering all relevant questions as honestly as possible. To guide you in answering the relevant questions, please carefully follow all instructions. Please note that all information will be treated as confidential and that your identification will remain unknown.

Your child _____ (Name of child) participated in a focus group discussion conducted by the YRU regarding the impact of media content on children. I would like you to think about _____ (name of child) when you answer the following questions related to the topic of the study.

**SECTION A: MOVIES - AT HOME (DVD)**

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A1 | Does _____ often watch movies at home on DVD? | • Yes | 1 | | **Office Use** |
| | | • No | 2 | | |
| A2 | When _____ watches movies at home on DVD, who usually decides which movie to watch? **(Multiple answers possible)** | • Child him/herself | 1 | | |
| | | • Parent | 2 | | |
| | | • Sibling (brother/sister) | 3 | | |
| | | • Family member | 4 | | |
| | | • Friend | 5 | | |
| | | • Other (specify) | 6 | | |
| A3 | Do you know if _____ ever watched a movie on DVD with a higher age restriction than his/her age? | • Yes | 1 | | |
| | | • No | 2 | | |
| | | • Unsure | 3 | | |
| A4 | Please rank which of the following movie content on DVD, will have the most impact on _____ , by using a scale from 1 to 3, with 1 having the most impact, 2 having less impact and 3 having the least impact. | • Violence | | | |
| | | • Sexual behaviour | | | |
| | | • Nudity | | | |
| | | • Bad language | | | |
| | | • Horror | | | |
| | | • Prejudice | | | |
| A5 | What effects in movies on DVD will contribute to _____ experiencing uncomfortable feelings? | • Sound | 1 | | |
| | | • Images | 2 | | |
| | | • Both sound and images | 3 | | |
| A6 | How do you respond when _____ watches a movie on DVD and experiences uncomfortable feelings? **(Multiple answers possible)** | • Provide physical comfort (e.g. hugging) | 1 | | |
| | | • Talk about movie and feelings | 2 | | |
| | | • Discontinue viewing of movie | 3 | | |
| | | • Ignore and continue viewing | 4 | | |
| | | • Other (specify) | 5 | | |

| A7 | Has _____ ever seen something in a movie on DVD and imitated what he or she saw? | • Yes (If yes continue to A7.1) | 1 |
| | | • No (If no continue to section B) | 2 |
| A7.1 | **If yes in A7:** Briefly explain what in the movie was imitated? | | |

**SECTION B:  MOVIES - AT CINEMA**

| B1 | Does _____ often go to the cinema to watch movies? | • Yes | 1 |
| | | • No | 2 |
| B2 | How often does _____ go to the cinema to watch movies? | • Daily | 1 |
| | | • Weekly | 2 |
| | | • Monthly | 3 |
| | | • Occasionally (few times a year) | 4 |
| B3 | Who usually accompanies _____ to the cinema? **(Multiple answers possible)** | • Parent | 1 |
| | | • Siblings (brother/sister) | 2 |
| | | • Family member | 3 |
| | | • Friends | 4 |
| | | • Child goes alone | 5 |
| | | • Other (specify) | 6 |
| B4 | When _____ watches movies at the cinema, who usually decides which movie to watch? **(One answer only)** | • Child | 1 |
| | | • Parent | 2 |
| | | • Siblings (brother/sister) | 3 |
| | | • Family member | 4 |
| | | • Friends | 5 |
| | | • Other (specify) | 6 |
| B5 | Where does _____ get information about movies at the cinema? **(Multiple answers possible)** | • Internet | 1 |
| | | • Friends | 2 |
| | | • Parents | 3 |
| | | • At the cinema (e.g. posters) | 4 |
| | | • Newspaper | 5 |
| B6 | Have you ever been at the cinema with _____ and tried to buy movie tickets for a movie with a higher age restriction than his/her age? | • Yes (If yes continue to B6.1) | 1 |
| | | • No (If no continue to B7) | 2 |
| B6.1 | **If yes in B6:** Have you ever been stopped from doing so by the ticket salesperson at the cinema? | • Yes (If yes continue to B6.2) | 1 |
| | | • No | 2 |
| B6.2 | **If yes in B6.1:** Did the salesperson at the cinema explain to you why he/she is preventing you from buying the movie tickets? | • Yes | 1 |
| | | • No | 2 |
| B7 | Please rank which of the following movie content at the cinema, will have the most impact on _____, using a scale from 1 to 3, with 1 having the most impact, 2 having less impact and 3 having the least impact. | • Violence | |
| | | • Sexual conduct | |
| | | • Nudity | |
| | | • Bad language | |
| | | • Horror | |
| | | • Prejudice | |

| B8 | What in movies at the cinema contributes to _____ experiencing uncomfortable feelings? | • Images | 1 |
| | | • 3D Images | 2 |
| | | • Sound | 3 |
| | | • Both sound and images | 4 |
| B9 | How do you respond when _____ watches a movie at a cinema and experiences uncomfortable feelings? **(Multiple answers possible)** | • Talk about it during the movie | 1 |
| | | • Talk about it after the movie | 2 |
| | | • Walk out of the cinema | 3 |
| | | • Provide guidance with future movie choices | 4 |
| | | • Ignore and continue viewing | 5 |
| | | • Other (specify) | 6 |
| B10 | Do you think the impact of movie content on _____ is more powerful at home or at the cinema? | • Home | 1 |
| | | • Cinema | 2 |
| | | • Both | 3 |

## SECTION C: AWARENESS AND UNDERSTANDING OF AGE RESTRICTIONS AND CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES

| C1 | Are you aware of age restrictions for movies? | • Yes (If yes continue to C2) | 1 |
| | | • No (If no continue to C4) | 2 |
| | | • Unsure | 3 |
| C2 | Are you aware of classification guidelines for movies? (Classification guidelines provide information about the classifiable content in the movie e.g. V – violence, L - language) | • Yes (If yes continue to C3) | 1 |
| | | • No (If no continue to C4) | 2 |
| | | • Unsure | 3 |
| C3 | **If yes in C1 and C2:** Where have you seen age restrictions and classification guidelines for movies? **(Multiple answers possible)** | • Television | 1 |
| | | • Back of DVD boxes | 2 |
| | | • Posters at the cinema | 3 |
| | | • Magazines | 4 |
| | | • Newspapers | 5 |
| | | • Heard about it from others | 6 |
| | | • Other (specify) | 7 |
| C4 | What can be done to effectively inform adults and children about age restrictions and classification guidelines for movies? **(Multiple answers possible)** | • Educational program on television | 1 |
| | | • Advertisement on television | 2 |
| | | • Educational program at school | 3 |
| | | • Information on the Internet | 4 |
| | | • Other (specify) | 5 |
| C5 | Do you ever pay attention to age restrictions and classification guidelines when you are choosing a movie for _____ to watch? | • Yes (If yes continue to C6) | 1 |
| | | • No (If no continue to C5.1) | 2 |
| | | • Sometimes (If sometimes continue to C6) | 3 |

| C5.1 | **If no in C5:** Briefly explain why you do not pay attention to age restrictions and classification guidelines? | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| C6 | Do you think _____ is aware of age restrictions and classification guidelines? | • Yes | 1 |
| | | • No | 2 |
| | | • Unsure | 3 |
| C7 | Have you ever informed _____ about age restrictions and classification guidelines? | • Yes | 1 |
| | | • No | 2 |
| C8 | Do you think the current age restrictions are appropriate for children of _____ age? | • Yes (If yes continue to section D) | 1 |
| | | • No (If no continue to C9) | 2 |
| | | • Sometimes (If sometimes continue to C9) | 3 |
| C9 | **If no/sometimes in C8:** Do you think the current age restrictions are too strict or too lenient? | • Strict | 1 |
| | | • Lenient | 2 |

**SECTION D: INTERACTIVE GAMES**

| D1 | Does _____ often play games on PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo Wii or cell phone? | • Yes | 1 |
|------|------|------|------|
| | | • No | 2 |
| D2 | Where does _____ mostly get the games that he/she plays?<br>**(Multiple answers possible)** | • Buy with pocket money | 1 |
| | | • Download from Internet | 2 |
| | | • Receive as gifts | 3 |
| | | • Parents buy | 4 |
| | | • Borrow from friends | 5 |
| | | • Other (specify) | 6 |
| D3 | Do you know what kind of games _____ plays? | • Yes | 1 |
| | | • No | 2 |
| | | • Unsure | 3 |
| D4 | Do you know that there are age restrictions and classification guidelines for games? | • Yes | 1 |
| | | • No | 2 |
| D5 | Do you ever consider age restrictions and classification guidelines when _____ is playing games? | • Yes | 1 |
| | | • No | 2 |
| | | • Sometimes | 3 |
| D6 | Have you ever allowed _____ to play a game with a higher age restriction than his/her age? | • Yes | 1 |
| | | • No | 2 |
| | | • Unsure | 3 |
| D7 | Has _____ ever played a game that made him or her feel uncomfortable? | • Yes (If yes continue to D8) | 1 |
| | | • No (If no continue to D9) | 2 |
| | | • Unsure | 3 |
| D8 | **If yes in D7:** Can you recall what about the game made _____ feel uncomfortable? | • Images | 1 |
| | | • Sound | 2 |
| | | • Both | 3 |

| D9 | Can you recall if _____ ever played a game and imitated what he/she saw in the game? | • Yes (If yes continue to D9.1) | 1 | |
| | | • No (If no continue to D10) | 2 | |
| | | • Unsure (If unsure continue to D10) | 3 | |
| D9.1 | **If yes in D9:** Briefly explain what in the game was imitated? | | | |
| D10 | When playing games do you think _____ is more likely to…? **(Multiple answers possible)** | • Use inappropriate language | 1 | |
| | | • Become aggressive towards others | 2 | |
| | | • Feel anxious | 3 | |
| | | • Have a negative attitude | 4 | |
| | | • Engage in immature sexual behaviour | 5 | |
| | | • Use illegal substances such as tobacco and alcohol | 6 | |
| | | • No behavioural change is noted | 7 | |

**The Youth Research Unit would like to thank you for your participation in the research study**