



**SURVEY OF PUBLIC PERCEPTION
AND USE OF FPB CLASSIFICATION GUIDELINES
IN MAKING VIEWING CHOICES FOR CHILDREN**

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March 2007

This survey of the public's perception and use of FPB guidelines is part of the **Film and Publication Board's** ongoing research not only to ensure that classification decisions are based on, and reflect, generally-accepted community norms, values, virtues and standards of tolerance but also to encourage better use of classification decisions, especially when making viewing or reading choices for children. The survey, conducted among randomly-selected focus-groups of parents in each of the provinces, will also provide information to ensure that the guidelines used in the classification and rating of films, interactive computer games and publications respond to contemporary South African cultural values.

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PART ONE

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 General principles

The classification (or rating) of films is not a uniquely South African practice or preoccupation. There are film classification authorities in England (British Board of Film Classification), Australia (Office of Film and Literature Classification), India (Central Board of Film Certification), Brazil (Departamento de Justica, Classificacao, Titulos e Qualificacao), Canada (Provincial Film Boards), Finland (Finnish Board of Film Classification), Hong Kong (Film Censorship Authority), Singapore (Media Development Authority), Nigeria (National Film and Video Censors Board), Mauritius (Board of Film Censors) and Ghana (National Film Board), to name but a few. In some countries (Australia and South Africa, for example), an official government body decides on classification and ratings, while in other countries, such as the United States of America, it is done by industry bodies with no official government status.

Classification and rating systems are country and culture-sensitive. Classification decisions reflect, and are based on, norms, values, virtues and standards or levels of tolerance of each country. Although countries may share many common cultural values, there are also values and virtues that are unique to a particular country. Classification decisions therefore reflect the norms, values, virtues and standards of tolerance of the country within which a particular classification or rating authority functions. Classification decisions of the South African Film and Publication Board, for instance, are based on the South African *Constitution* and on guidelines which have been approved by the South African public through the annual “feedback” programme.



The general principles informing both age-categories and guidelines are almost universally harm-based. The British Board of Film Classification (BBFC), for instance, operates on the principles that:

- (i) adults should be free to choose what they see, providing that it remains within the law and is not potentially harmful to society
- (ii) works should be allowed to reach the widest audience that is appropriate for their theme and treatment
- (iii) the context in which something (like sex or violence) is presented is central to the question of its acceptability, and
- (iv) the Guidelines will be reviewed periodically in the light of changes in public taste, attitudes and concerns.

The Australian Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC) is required to ensure that its classification decisions give effect to the; principles that:

- (i) adults should be able to read, hear and see what they want
- (ii) minors should be protected from material likely to harm or disturb them
- (iii) everyone should be protected from exposure to unsolicited material that they find offensive, and
- (iv) the need to take account of community concerns about depictions that condone or incite violence, particularly sexual violence and the portrayal of persons in a demeaning manner



The Film and Publication Board (FPB) has established the following principles in implementing the objectives of the Act:

- (i) while adults should enjoy freedom of choice, children must be protected from exposure to potentially disturbing and harmful materials
- (ii) the policy of imposing age-restrictions to protect children in the relevant age-groups from premature exposure to adult experiences or materials which may be inappropriate in the context of South African society
- (iii) the need to alert members of the public, through consumer advice, to material which they may find offensive, both for themselves and for children in their care, and
- (iv) the requirement that guidelines be published annually and revised on the basis of public representations so that guidelines reflect, as far as possible, contemporary South African standards and values.

The right of adults to exercise freedom of choice and the duty to protect children from harm are common to most classification authorities and the FPB is no exception. The content of the *right to freedom of choice* includes the right to receive information of one's choice, as well as the right not to be exposed to information which one may find offensive. Both the OFLC and the FPB refer to the protection of people from exposure to *unsolicited* materials which may be offensive. That protection, in so far as mainstream films are concerned, is provided by "advisories" or *consumer information* which is intended to alert viewers to materials which they might find offensive and therefore would wish to avoid. In introducing the Films and Publications Bill in Parliament in August 1996, Minister Lindiwe Sisulu confirmed the harm-based principles that distinguish the subsequent *Films and Publications Act* with its predecessor, the *Publications Act, 1974* as follows:



“What South Africa needs is a new Act which, while recognising the freedom of choice of adults, would protect children, and would limit this freedom when harm is likely to follow.....We would also need.....to pass legislation against sexually explicit material which degrades women and which incites harm against them.....(the Act) provides for a new system of classification of films and publications to provide a clear balance between the constitutional rights of adults to choose what they want to watch, view or read, and the duty to protect people, particularly children and women, from exposure to harm-resulting forms of violence, sexually explicit films and publications....”¹

1.1.2 The legal context of classification

Most classification or rating bodies derive their authority from legislation. Industry-sponsored bodies, on the other hand, rely on voluntary membership and acceptance of their decisions. Decisions of the Motion Picture Association of America’s Classification and Rating Association (CARA), for instance, do not enjoy the force and effect of law but are of sufficient persuasive authority to influence distributors, producers, exhibitors as well as the American public. Films distributed and exhibited in the United States are not required, by law, to be submitted for classification and rating.

Decisions of classification and rating bodies acting in terms of legislation are legally enforceable. The BBFC, for instance, is governed by the provisions of the *Video Recording Act, 1984*, as well as certain provisions of the *Cinematograph Film (Animals) Act, 1937*, the *Protection of Children Act, 1978*, the *Obscene Publications Act, 1959*, and the *Human Rights Act, 1998*, which allow for the imposition of certain restrictions on freedom of expression. The *Video Recordings Act* requires the BBFC to have special regard to works being viewed in the home and “...any harm to those likely to view a video and any harm to society through the behaviour of viewers afterwards”.

¹ Debates of the National Assembly, Hansard, 29 August 1996, at Cols. 4107-4155



The Act singles out the following elements as potentially harmful:

- criminal behaviour
- use of illegal drugs
- violent behaviour or incidents
- horrific behaviour or incidents, and
- human sexual activity

The OFLC derives its authority from the *Commonwealth Classification (Publications, Films and Computer Games) Act, 1995*, which contains a National Classification Code and allows guidelines to be established as a tool for classifying films and computer games. “*The Act requires films and computer games to be classified before they are released or advertised*”

The FPB was established by the *Films and Publications Act, 1996* to “...regulate the creation, production, distribution and possession of certain publications and certain films by means of classification, the imposition of age restrictions and the giving of consumer advice”, with due regard to the protection of children from sexual exploitation or degradation in films and publications. The Act requires the FPB to establish guidelines which will be used in determining what is disturbing or harmful to children. These guidelines must be published and public representations invited and refreshed annually on the basis of public inputs and changing community standards. The Act also provides the guidelines with respect to materials intended for adults only.

1.1.3 The purpose and significance of classification

Subsection (1) of section 16 of the *Constitution* guarantees everyone² the right to freedom of expression, which includes freedom to receive and impart information or ideas and freedom of artistic creativity.

² Often forgotten that “everyone” includes children



However, in terms of subsection (2), the right to freedom of expression does not extend to expressions of *propaganda for war, incitement to imminent violence or the advocacy of hatred based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion and which constitutes incitement to cause harm*. The right to freedom of expression *within the law*, therefore, excludes expressions falling within subsection (2). Expressions falling outside those described in subsection (2) may only be limited by the application of section 36 of the *Constitution* – only in terms of a law of general application to the extent that the limitation is reasonable and justifiable in an open and democratic society based on human dignity, equality and freedom. The absolute prohibitions on child pornography are the most familiar example of a limitation on freedom of expression made in terms of section 36(1) of the *Constitution*. Expressions falling within section 16(2), as well as those justified under section 36, may therefore be absolutely prohibited or limited.

The system of classification provided for in the *Films and Publications Act* (the Act) allows for limitations but not absolute prohibitions³ on the right to freedom of expression. (Child pornography is a matter for criminal law and not classification.) The Act provides “.....a clear balance between the constitutional rights of adults to choose what they want to watch, view or read, and the duty to protect people, particularly children and women, from exposure to harm-resulting forms of violence, sexually explicit films and publications....”⁴

The purpose and significance of classification is, therefore-

- (i) by means of classification, to prohibit distribution and exhibition to children of films and publications with content intended only for adults, as well as to protect members of the public from unsolicited exposure to content which some may find offensive

³ An “absolute prohibition” means a prohibition on creation, production, possession and distribution. The Film and Publication Board’s authority allows for prohibitions only on distribution

⁴ Debates of the National Assembly, Hansard, 29 August 1996, at Cols. 4107-4155



- (ii) by means of the imposition of age-restrictions, to prohibit distribution and exhibition of films and publications with disturbing, harmful or age-inappropriate content to children in the age-group likely to be at risk of harm from such content, and
- (iii) by means of consumer information, to provide the public with such information as will enable them to make appropriate viewing and reading choices, both for themselves and for children in their care.

1.1.4 The classification guidelines

The Film and Publication Board (the Board) has established, with public participation, a set of guidelines which are used by examiners when classifying or rating films and publications. The guidelines identify certain *classifiable elements* and it is the frequency and intensity of these elements in the film or publication, and its overall impact on viewers that determines the classification or rating of a film or publication. Consumer information, through content-alert symbols, on the other hand, is provided to alert the public to contents which some may wish to avoid, even if the film or publication is rated for “all ages”.

The classifiable elements which impact on the rating of a film or publication, and which are common to most similar bodies, include *violence, sex, nudity, drug and substance abuse, language, blasphemy and prejudice or negative stereotyping based on race, ethnicity, gender or religion* or other group-identifiable characteristics. The theme of a film may also influence ratings. Films and publications are examined against the guidelines and rated appropriately as “A” (suitable for all ages), “PG” (parental guidance recommended for younger viewers), “10M” (children under 10 years must be accompanied by an adult), “10” (not for children under the age of 10 years), “13” (not for children under the age of 13 years), “16” (not for children under the age of 16 years) or “18” (not for persons under the age of 18 years).



Where it is advisable to alert the public to content some may wish to avoid, a consumer-alert symbol will be added as part of the age-restriction: “L” for strong language, “S” for sex, “N” for nudity, “V” for violence, “P” for prejudice and “B” for blasphemy.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The following key issues were investigated:

- **Parents concern about children’s exposure to potentially harmful material.** The FPB has identified expressions of violence, sex, nudity, prejudice and strong language as classifiable elements which determine age restrictions and conditions that may be imposed on the distribution and exhibition of films. This research is intended to provide information regarding the concerns of parents with regard to their children’s exposure to inappropriate materials, and in particular, to ascertain whether or not parents agree with the classifiable elements identified by the FPB.
- **Parents’ knowledge with regard to the current classification system and age ratings in South Africa.** The study also investigated whether or not parents made use of FPB classification decisions in making viewing choices for their children, and, if they did, whether they found the information sufficient to enable them make such choices. The study also explored public understanding of the purpose and significance of classification decisions.
- **Issues of concern to parents in relation to the classification system.** The study was also done to provide information regarding aspects of the FPB’s current classification system, categories and processes which, in the opinion of parents, may need revision.



1.3 Research Methodology

Qualitative research in the form of focus group discussions was conducted. Participants were encouraged to be as relaxed and spontaneous as possible; while trained moderators gathered opinions from everyone in a non-threatening manner. Moderators received briefings on the background and purpose of the study.

A total of 32 focus-group discussions were conducted nationwide from December 2006 to February 2007. Focus groups, of 8 per group, were representative of race, socio-economic class and included participants from both urban and peri-urban areas. Group discussions were conducted in the preferred language of the participants ensuring unhindered expression of opinions.

As part of the focus group discussion, participants were requested to partake in a 'rating exercise'; during which a movie clip was viewed and 'rated'. By allowing participants to rate a movie clip, information was gained on what parents consider to be disturbing and whether the age ratings and classification guidelines by the FPB are suitable. Furthermore, respondents were requested to share their views about the classification of pornographic material by anonymously completing a short questionnaire.

The focus group discussions took between one and a half and two hours to complete. Each focus group discussion was tape-recorded. This provided an accurate and thorough record of what happened and what was said. Participants were briefed and informed that they will be tape-recorded and that their confidentiality will be assured.



1.4 Sample

The sample consisted of parents with children between the ages of 8 – 16 years; respondents were selected within pre-specified quota controls on region, race, gender, age and LSM (Living Standard Measurement). Focus group participation was on a voluntary basis. Participants were very eager to talk to the moderator and appeared to enjoy the opportunity to put forward their views and opinions about the FPB classification guidelines.

Table 1: Focus group details (n=32)

PROVINCE	TOTAL	URBAN/RURAL SPLIT		AGE GROUPS OF THEIR CHILDREN	
		URBAN	PERI - URBAN	8-12 YEARS	13-16 YEARS
Limpopo	2	1	1	1	1
Gauteng	4	2	2	2	2
Mpumalanga	4	2	2	2	2
North West	2	1	1	1	1
Free State	4	2	2	2	2
Kwazulu Natal	4	2	2	2	2
Northern Cape	4	2	2	2	2
Eastern Cape	4	2	2	2	2
Western Cape	4	2	2	2	2
TOTAL				32	



1.5 Limitations of Focus Group Discussions

Focus groups are subject to social acceptability biases and the ability of participants to reflect on their own behaviour. For example parents may have overstated parental concern and protection. Consequently it is important not to interpret results as representative of the larger population or indicative of the behaviour of a certain group of people. Rather, these focus groups provide a picture of the range of attitudes, approaches and practices prevalent among communities in South Africa.



PART TWO

2.1 Executive Summary

- **Parental concern and control:** A great deal of concern was expressed about children's exposure to inappropriate material in the media. These concerns were not limited only to movies but included all visual media in the form of television, magazines, music videos, advertisements and newspapers. Parents were mainly concerned about their children's exposure to materials that contain sex, violence and bad language. There were also concerns about substance abuse and religious sensitivities. The main reasons for being concerned about these issues in films were related to the fact that children tend to imitate what they see in movies without understanding the consequences.
- **Preventative measures:** All respondents were in agreement that the classification guidelines and age ratings were very important and necessary because it is aimed at the protection of children from exposure to potentially harmful material in films. Parents use classification guidelines as an important measure to exercise control over what their children watch.
- **Awareness and knowledge of the FPB:** South Africans, it appears, have very limited awareness and knowledge of the Film and Publication Board as the authority regulating the distribution and exhibition of films in South Africa. Awareness levels about the FPB as an organization and its role need to be raised; parents and caregivers need to be educated about classification guidelines on a continuous basis to make sure that they apply it correctly. When probing about the FPB, most respondents spontaneously recalled the triangle used to display the classification symbols and age ratings. However this triangle was not necessarily associated with the FPB.



- **Appropriateness of classification guidelines and age ratings:** In most instances respondents found the age rating and classification guidelines to be clear and appropriate, although occasionally they did not agree with the rating, finding it to be too lenient. Some respondents felt that the classification standard of the FPB has “gone down” and is no longer reliable as a source of information in making appropriate viewing choices.
- **Application of classification guidelines and age ratings:** Most respondents spontaneously mentioned and are familiar with the classification symbols and age ratings. Some symbols and ratings are better known than others. Parents indicated that they apply the classification guidelines very strictly and that they have clear rules in their household with regard to watching films. Others indicated that they take the development of their children into consideration when it comes to watching films and do not necessarily keep to the FPB classification guidelines, preferring, instead, to use their own discretion.
- **Possible changes to the classification guidelines and age restrictions:** Most respondents felt that the current age categories of “A”, “PG”, “10M”, “10”, “13”, “16” and “18” should remain unchanged. This opinion was based on parents growing concern about their children’s exposure to sex, violence and bad language in the media. For these respondents it will be more distressing if the current age categories are changed to the suggested 8, 12, 15 and 18 rating. Parents’ main concern was to protect younger children from the harmful effects of inappropriate material. Therefore, it was suggested that the current age ratings be maintained but introduce an additional category for children below the age of 10 years.
- **Classification of interactive computer games:** Generally there was consensus amongst respondents that age ratings and guidelines should be applied to computer games. This was primarily ascribed to the high level of violence and vulgar language that occur in these games. The awareness of the impact of games on children and level of intervention greatly depends on parental knowledge and understanding of gaming technology.



- **Pornographic material:** A great deal of concern was expressed amongst respondents regarding pornographic material and how easy it is for children to gain access to material intended for adults. They felt that pornographic material in South Africa is currently not properly regulated and is degrading to woman. Some respondents shared the view that a special unit within the FPB should deal with pornography, whilst others felt that a separate board should be established that only dealt with pornographic material in South Africa. This was ascribed to the specialized nature of adult material that requires expert guidance.



PART THREE

3. Main Research Findings

3.1 Parental Concern and Control

3.1.1 *Parental involvement*

All respondents expressed concern about their children's exposure to inappropriate materials in films. Their concerns were not only limited to films in cinemas but included television, magazines, music videos, advertisements and newspapers. Parents recognized that the media has a remarkable influence on children and that the exposure to inappropriate material can have a negative effect on their attitudes and behaviour. Children are in a process of establishing their own personalities and therefore are vulnerable to outside influences. ***“My concern is that they watch or listen to all these negative things that influence them and they end up convinced that this is the right thing to do”*** Respondent, North West.

Despite their awareness of the influence and effect of the media on children, most respondents indicated that they find it very difficult to control their children's exposure to media. This was mainly ascribed to parents working fulltime, peer pressure and technology, and especially cell phones and the Internet. Although they educate their children about the classification guidelines and age ratings, children are very inquisitive and may watch inappropriate material when parents were not around. To some extent parents felt helpless with regard to controlling their children's exposure to inappropriate material in the media.

Although most respondents have measures in place to limit their children's exposure to inappropriate material, some respondents shared the view that parents and caregivers are not doing enough to protect children. This was mainly ascribed to ignorance and carelessness.



Parents are not strict enough and want to please their children by allowing them to watch certain films despite the fact that they are aware of the contents. Often children are exposed to destructive material such as pornography due to parenting inadequacies. ***“It is not the child at fault it is the parents”*** Respondent, KZN.

3.1.2 Issues in films that cause concern

All respondents were concerned about their children’s exposure to materials that contain sex, violence and bad language. Some parents were also concerned about other issues such as substance abuse and religion. The main reasons for being concerned about these issues in films were related to the fact that children tend to imitate⁵ what they see in movies without understanding the consequences. Actors are made into role models and children follow their actions on film which sometimes leads to attitudinal and behavioral problems. ***“Children do exactly what they see in these movies. When you ask them they will tell you in the movies it is so, they smoke dagga and use bad language; they get this from the films they watch. You will be surprised that most of these children come from good homes”*** Respondent, North West.

Most respondents expressed their concern about the way in which sex is portrayed in the media. They found it to be very explicit and disapproved of late night movies on television. Respondents shared the opinion that the way in which sex is often being portrayed in the media contributes to children being sexually active at a very young age and result in the high incidence of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. (Recently, newspapers have been reporting on the increasing number of teenage pregnancies in South African schools.)

⁵ “...what makes us different is our ability to imitate. Imitation comes naturally to us human.” Susan Blackmore, The Meme Machine, OUP 1999. See, also, The Selfish Gene by Professor Richard Dawkins



Exposure to pornography was a serious concern amongst all respondents. They shared the view that pornographic material is not properly regulated in South Africa and easy accessible for children through different means. Many respondents shared the view that pornography is degrading to woman, causing society to see woman in a disrespectful and demeaning manner.

Violence, especially issues pertinent to the South African context such as hi-jacking and gangsters, also caused great concern amongst respondents. Parents raised the issue that violence often is portrayed in films as a solution to problems. They were specifically concerned about children imitating violent acts ***“They throw each other on the ground and get hurt some are lying in hospital right now”*** Respondent, Eastern Cape.

Many respondents’ expressed concern about the increasing and consistent use of bad language in movies. Specific reference was made to the phrase ‘Oh my God’ which most respondents found offensive and annoying when continuously used in movies. Parents indicated that it is difficult to stop children using bad language due to its prevalence in the media.

Respondents were very critical of the way in which drug and alcohol abuse was portrayed in the media. They felt that often it is portrayed in a positive light amongst young people sending a message that it is ‘being cool’ to use drugs and alcohol. However, some respondents felt that if drug and alcohol abuse is being portrayed as being destructive and harmful it can be educational for children to watch. ***“If it is portrayed as being cool you know, taking drugs and the whole rap culture, hip-hop culture that sort of thing, you have got to condemn it. If it shows someone taking drugs and their lives falling apart, that is something you could actually watch”*** Respondent, KZN. The FPB should, in the opinion of many respondents, consider introducing an alert symbol for drug and alcohol abuse in the classification of films.



Some respondents were concerned about films which contained strong spiritual or religious elements. They shared the opinion that elements of the supernatural and Satanism do not contribute to the positive development of children and need to be restricted in movies specifically aimed at children. Reference was made to the Harry Potter movies and a few children's cartoons.

Most parents felt that children at the age of 16 years are mature enough to be exposed to issues such as sex, violence and bad language in movies. Generally, parents become less concerned about older children's exposure and rely on them being cognitively and emotionally mature enough to understand what is happening. Some respondents shared the opinion that appropriateness depend on the developmental level and maturity of a child and that a certain age cannot be attached to this. Parents will know best when their children may be exposed to sex, violence and bad language. ***"I think if a child is responsible and mature enough, it can be at 12 or 16 years; you as a parent know your children well and know how responsible they can be"***
Respondent, North West.

3.1.3 Preventative measures

All respondents were in agreement that the classification guidelines and age ratings were very important and necessary because it was aimed at the protection of children from exposure to potentially harmful film materials. Parents use classification guidelines as an important measure to exercise control over what their children watch. Respondents emphasized the relationship between the parent and child. They shared the view that parents must have an 'open relationship' with their children that will enable them to discuss issues of concern and make sure that they understand. Children need to be educated about classification guidelines and given the freedom to choose films.



Emphasis was placed on the developmental level of a child and his/her ability to understand and cope with what is seen in movies. Respondents emphasized the fact that children learn certain life skills in school at an early age, which contribute to their ability to deal with certain mature issues.

However, this caused a problem for some parents. They shared the view that sometimes early exposure to issues can cause unnecessary confusion in the mind of a child. Furthermore, they felt that most parents were not themselves exposed to the same kind of education and therefore find it sometimes difficult to educate their children about sensitive issues. Early education increases the generation gap between parents and children. ***“But children already know more today than we ever did and it’s not just TV, its school”*** Respondent, KZN.

Despite using the classification guidelines as a protective measure, parents restrict children’s viewing time and only allow certain times such as weekends to watch movies. Respondents indicated that they limit their children’s viewing times especially from late night movies on television as these tend to cause great concern amongst parents.

3.2 Knowledge and Awareness of the FPB

3.2.1 Who is the FPB?

There is very limited awareness of the Film and Publication Board amongst the South African public. Respondents associated the FPB with a ‘dark hole’, which they cannot see or do not know anything about. When probing about the FPB most respondents spontaneously recalled the triangle used to display the classification symbols and age ratings. However the triangle is not necessarily associated with the FPB. Most respondents associated the triangle with the BCCSA (Broadcasting Complaints Commission of South Africa).



This can be ascribed to the recent television advertisement of the BCCSA promoting classification guidelines and age restrictions for television programs. It created the perception amongst the South African society that the BCCSA is responsible for the classification and rating of films. The research findings put emphasises on the need to increase public awareness of the FPB as an organization and its role in providing a service to the South African public.

It is notable that both younger and older respondents spontaneously recalled the previous South African Censorship Board but have very limited knowledge about the FPB despite the fact that it has been in existence since 1998. When discussing the FPB, respondents compared it to the previous Censorship Board and highlighted the high standard that was maintained. In light of this, the marketing strategy of the FPB may have to be re-evaluated. Unless there is greater awareness of the FPB's role in the protection of children from exposure to inappropriate materials in films, not only the credibility but the use of classification decisions in making viewing choices will be compromised.

3.2.2 What is the role of the FPB?

Due to the limited awareness of the FPB as an organization, people do not have any knowledge about the functions of the FPB. Most respondents do not have any knowledge about the role of the FPB and need information, as stated by a respondent in KZN ***“the FPB need to say this is who we are and what we do”***.

The FPB is perceived by respondents to be a 'censorship authority' who are not only restricted to films and publications. All respondents made the assumption that the FPB also regulate television content and are responsible for all the classification guidelines and age ratings seen on television. Respondents find it difficult to make a distinction between the regulation of films and television content. They felt that films and television need to be regulated by the same authority ***“The FPB need to get more power over television broadcasters. The current situation is not right”*** Respondent, KZN.



Based on the research findings, the regulation of both films and television content by one authority such as the FPB; will significantly increase the awareness of the organization and limit confusion about its role amongst the general public and enhance the measures aimed at the protection of children from exposure to risk of harm from inappropriate media content.

Instead of operating on its own, possible partnerships can be formed between the FPB and other well-known organizations such as the BCCSA who are also involved in the regulation of media content. By doing this, the FPB as a regulating authority, will have the opportunity to become a powerful institution in South Africa and become better known within South African households.

Increased awareness about the role of the FPB can contribute to parents understanding of the possible harmful effects of the exposure to elements at an inappropriate age. Greater exposure will cause parents to take the classification guidelines and age restrictions more seriously.

The following suggestions were made by respondents to improve the awareness of the FPB and its role amongst the general public;

Suggestions to improve awareness of the FPB:

- Advertise more on television. A lot of emphasis was placed on television advertising during the focus group discussions, this can be ascribed to the impact of television on individuals and amount of time spend watching television.
- The main focus of advertising need to be on the FPB as an organization and its role as a regulating authority. After awareness of the FPB has increased, focus can be placed on other areas of involvement.
- Advertising need to be continuous and not sporadic to have a true impact on the South African society.



- Popular celebrities or politicians should be used to promote the FPB. This will attract more attention and have a greater impact on individuals. Names such as Noeleen (Talk with Noeleen) and Steve Hofmeyer (South African artist) were mentioned.
- Alliances can be formed with Ster Kinekor and Nu-Metro that will increase awareness of the FPB at cinemas country wide – if the FPB regulate films why don't cinemas promote the organization at cinemas?
- Create an introductory message of the FPB which can be announced on the big screen before a movie starts. Use a familiar voice to do the introduction.
- Advertise the FPB as an organization and its role with film reviews in popular magazines and news papers.
- Put more information on billboards close to cinemas and big video stores. Respondents shared the feeling that billboards have a limited impact but can make individuals aware of the organization.
- Film festivals can be conducted across the country as part of an awareness campaign for the FPB.
- Conduct workshops in the community; send FPB representatives to taxi ranks and local clinics to inform community members about the FPB.
- Increase advertising in newspapers and magazines, especially family magazines which contain television schedules and movie reviews such as The You or Huisgenoot.



- Promote the FPB on local radio stations. It is important to reach illiterate people, who are parents and care givers of children.
- Reach out to the children by visiting schools and educating them about the classification guidelines and age ratings. Once children are made aware of the impact of harmful material, they will inform their parents about issues that were communicated to them at school.

3.3 FPB Classification Guidelines

3.3.1 *Appropriateness of classification guidelines*

There was consensus amongst respondents that classification guidelines and age ratings were useful and necessary. Many were appreciative of an organization such as the FPB in South Africa and find the classification guidelines and age ratings very useful in assisting them when choosing movies for their children and for themselves. However, respondents shared the view that more emphasis needs to be placed on classification guidelines and age restrictions ***“The FPB is trying but the way society is going, it is very difficult”*** Respondent, Western Cape Province.

In most instances respondents find the age rating and classification guidelines to be clear and appropriate, although occasionally they do not agree with the rating and find it to be too lenient. Some respondents felt that the classification standard of the FPB has ‘gone down’ and is no longer reliable ***“Something went wrong with the ratings”*** Respondent, Free State. They cannot always choose a movie with the confidence and knowledge that it will be safe-viewing for their children. Hence, respondents felt it is necessary for parents to use their own discretion when choosing movies and not only rely on the FPB classification guidelines ***“Sometimes they say a movie can be watched by all, but then it contains scenes which are not suitable for children”*** Respondent, Gauteng.



The fact that some parents perceived the classification guidelines as unsuitable and unreliable can partially be ascribed to a lack of knowledge about the FPB classification process and guidelines. A need for information was established. Respondents want to know more about the classification procedure implemented by the FPB, as well as the standards for classification and those who are responsible for the classification process. Overall, respondents felt that the South African society should have more input in this process as it directly affects them and their children

The FPB Classification unit needs to ensure that all examiners are familiar with the classification guidelines and apply them properly and consistently. Regular training for examiners should be introduced to make sure that everybody is operating according to the same criteria.

3.3.2 Application of classification guidelines

Most respondents indicated that they apply the classification guidelines very strictly and that they have clear rules in their household with regard to watching movies. Others indicated that they take the development of their children into consideration when it comes to watching movies and do not necessarily keep to the FPB classification guidelines. Therefore they will sometimes be more lenient and allow a 10 year old child to watch a movie with a 13 age restriction. However, all respondents felt very strongly about any 18 rating and agreed that they will never allow their children to watch any movie with such a rating regardless of the reason why the 18 rating was allocated to the specific movie.

When making viewing choices most respondents take both the age rating and classification symbol into consideration to make an informed decision. If a distinction need to be made between the age rating and classification symbol the age rating is considered to be the weighting factor.



The way in which current age ratings and classification symbols are interpreted, directly affects the application of the FPB classification guidelines by parents. Most of the respondents spontaneously mentioned and are familiar with the classification symbols and age ratings. The “V” (Violence), “N” (Nudity), “S” (Sex) and “L” (Language) symbols are very well known, as well as the “13”, “16” and “18” age ratings. However, the “P” (Prejudice), “B” (Blasphemy) and “10M” rating are unknown and therefore not taken into consideration when making viewing choices. If respondents are not familiar with a specific classification symbol or age rating they tend to ignore it.

The following table illustrates respondents’ spontaneous reactions towards the current classification symbols and age ratings;

Content Symbol	Interpretation
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For small children ▪ Family movie
PG	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Confusion between PG and P ▪ Parents should be there ▪ Why is guidance needed?
P	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unknown/Uncertain about the meaning ▪ Stands for poverty ▪ Parental control ▪ Not often used
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unknown ▪ Never seen it ▪ Uncertain about the meaning
V,N,S,L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Very well known



Age Restriction	Interpretation
13,16,18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Often used
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not often used ▪ Almost like A - all ages
10M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unknown ▪ Never seen it ▪ How is this enforced? ▪ Not necessary

All respondents expressed their concern regarding the application of age ratings and classification guidelines by cinemas across the country. It was mentioned that movie tickets are often sold to children for admission to films restricted to above their ages. Children are aware of the fact that some cinemas are more lenient and will prefer to go and watch movies intended for older viewers at these cinemas. The fact that cinemas are not enforcing age restrictions is a great concern amongst parents who cannot always accompany their children to the movies and trust that they are protected by the cinemas enforcement of the classification guidelines and age ratings. The FPB Compliance Monitoring unit needs to monitor cinema admission practices to ensure that all cinemas are enforcing the classification guidelines and age restrictions.

3.3.3 Possible changes to the current classification guidelines

Respondents shared the feeling that the age ratings and classification guidelines used in South Africa should be truly South African and not adopted from another country without taking the South African context into consideration. Classification of film material is culture-sensitive although some norms such as the exposure of children to sex and violence are universal.

Most respondents felt that the current age ratings of “10”, “13”, “16” and “18” should remain unchanged. This opinion was based on parents growing concern about their children’s exposure to harmful elements in the media.



For these respondents it will be more distressing if the current age ratings are changed to the suggested “8”, “12”, “15” and “18” rating. Their biggest concern was that the suggested ratings will lower the classification standard for movies in South Africa and that more conservative ratings is needed to maintain social norms and values. Furthermore the difference between the current and suggested set of age ratings were perceived as not significant enough to justify any changes.

Other respondents viewed the proposed age ratings of “8”, “12”, “15” and “18” as more suitable if the developmental stages of a child and different school levels are taken into consideration. They emphasized the fact that children mature faster and at the age of 8 years a child can be informed and restricted by age ratings.

The main concern amongst parents is the protection of younger children under the age of 13 years. The younger the child, the more parents are concerned about exposure to inappropriate film material. It was suggested to keep the current age ratings and introduce an additional rating for children below the age of 10 years. Young children under the age of 10 years are considered to be very vulnerable and must be protected by their parents for as long as possible.

Very young children find it difficult to make a distinction between reality and fantasy and enter a life-changing phase when starting to school. Therefore, the FPB might consider introducing an additional age rating of 8 years, to assist parents when making viewing choices for their younger children.

In light of protecting younger children, many respondents shared the opinion that the FPB might consider examining certain cartoons and allocating classification guidelines and age ratings where necessary. Many expressed their concern about the hidden messages in cartoons which are often portrayed in a ‘fun way’ and subconsciously have an effect on young children. Some cartoons as well as animated movies are not aimed at children and contain a lot of adult humor.



Parents expressed their concern that it is no longer safe to think that any animated movie is suitable for younger children. ***“A lot of it is attitude as well. You know, like the Bart Simpson he’s got no respect, a lot of arrogance and rudeness. That is a program for adults to watch, it’s very funny if you are an adult watching it”*** Respondent, KZN.

Respondents suggested additional classification symbols during the focus group discussions, which can be added to the current symbols and assist parents in making informed viewing choices for their children;

Suggestions for additional classification symbols:

- Imitative behaviour is of great concern amongst parents with young children. The FPB might consider a classification symbol indicating imitative behaviour in films.
- Classification symbols for substance abuse. Including drug and alcohol misuse.
- Some respondents felt it is necessary for the FPB to indicate a strong theme of homosexuality in movies.
- Classification symbol for action. Respondents shared the view that often movies contain a lot of action rather than violence and therefore a separate symbol is needed.
- Satanism, cults and the supernatural need to be indicated by the FPB as this can have a negative effect on children.
- Classification symbols need not only be warnings but also indicate educational value in movies which can help parents to educate their children and explain sensitive topics such as HIV/AIDS.



The following suggestions were made by respondents to improve on the current classification guidelines provided by the FPB;

Suggestions to improve on current classification guidelines:

- Provide a short explanation for the reasons why a certain rating was allocated to a movie. A symbol alone does not provide enough information for parents to make informed decisions. One or two descriptive sentences together with the triangle will be sufficient.
- Illiterate people need to be taken into consideration. The use of graphical symbols to illustrate the classification symbol will be beneficial.
- Different colours can be used for certain ratings for example violence – red, PG – blue/green etc.
- The intensity of a rating can be described by different colours for example red for serious violence, green for less violence etc.
- Classification guidelines and age ratings need to be in different official languages, not only English.
- Display the classification symbol and age rating throughout the movie. The age rating and classification symbols need to be more visible.
- Have a 'FPB voice' announcing the age rating before the movie starts. This will have a greater impact on the audience instead of just displaying the triangle.
- Insert FPB classification guidelines in all DVD boxes – explaining the specific age rating and classification symbols allocated to the movie.



- Get the public more involved in the classification process by advertising and requesting viewers to send SMS's to the FPB if they agree or disagree with the specific rating of a movie.
- Pre-views of movies need to indicate the age rating and classification symbol.
- Make the FPB triangle more visible – 'big and bold', place it in front of the DVD box to be more noticeable.

3.4 The Classification of Interactive Computer Games

Not all respondents have access to computer games mainly due to the costs involved. Generally there was consensus amongst those respondents who have been exposed to computer games, that age ratings and guidelines should be applied to Play Station and Microsoft Xbox games. This was primarily ascribed to the high level of violence and vulgar language that occur in these games. Respondents pointed out that some games are based on actual movies which have been classified and the games are 'very real' due to advance gaming technology. ***“So on television and computer games too, you don't have much control. Some of them are quite violent”***
Respondent, KZN

Parents expressed concern relating to the interactive nature of gaming and that some games actually motivate children to engage in criminal behavior such as stealing and committing murder. Children will begin to think that this is acceptable behaviour when they are rewarded for committing a crime in games. Another concern is the addictive nature of playing computer games. Children get so involved in playing computer games that they do not want to engage in other healthy activities.



Parental intervention ranges from strict control to no intervention. With regard to games, the level of intervention greatly depends on parental knowledge and understanding of gaming technology. Some respondents indicated that they prefer their children playing computer games instead of watching television, despite the content of the games. They were of the opinion that the influence of games on children is less negative, due to the fact that it is 'only a game'.

It was suggested that instead of just applying age ratings and classification guidelines to games without any explanation; the FPB need to write short reviews about the games and publish the information in daily newspapers and popular magazines. This will inform parents about the content of games before they buy any for their children.

3.5 The FPB and Pornographic Material

A great deal of concern was expressed amongst respondents regarding pornographic material and how easy it is for children to gain access to material intended for adults. Cell phones, the Internet and illegal DVD's were emphasized as contributory factors in anti-social behaviour among children. Some respondents shared the view that a special unit within the FPB should deal with pornography, whilst others felt that a separate board should be established that only dealt with pornographic material in South Africa, due to its sensitive nature. ***"There need to be a board that regulate pornography strictly and monitor sales"*** Respondent, KZN.

These respondents felt that the FPB should not be involved in the regulation of pornographic material and should only act as a regulating authority for films and publications but not pornography.



Respondents were asked to complete a short questionnaire covering issues related to pornographic material. The following table illustrates the results;

Category	Response	Total (n=244)
Regulation of Pornography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pornography is not properly regulated in South Africa. 	73%
Distribution of Pornography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pornography should not be distributed via the Internet. 	81%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pornography should not be distributed via cell phones. 	91%
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Certain pornographic material is so disrespectful of human dignity and encouraging of harmful behaviour that it should not be distributed in South Africa. 	85%
Degrading of women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pornographic images are degrading of women. 	89%

Almost three quarter (73%) of the respondents shared the opinion that the distribution and possession of pornographic material in South Africa is currently not properly regulated. This was ascribed to the fact that pornographic material is very easy accessible. Respondents reported local video shops illegally renting out pornographic material 'kept under the counter'; minors freely purchasing adult magazines from local shops as well as the increasing number of pornographic material available on street corners.

"You will find guys selling porn all over the streets of JHB city centre and in unlicensed shops" Respondent, Gauteng.

"It is so readily available; I preferred the old censorship board – stars on the boobs! Back to a moral society!" Respondent, KZN.



“It is not properly regulated because the SA government is not doing enough to restrict and combat porn!” Respondent, Eastern Cape.

Most respondents felt that pornography in the form of images and words should be treated in the same way. Both have equally damaging effects on a human being. Some respondents shared the view that pornographic images have a greater impact than words and should be regulated more strictly.

“Porn is sex, whether they do it literally or just say it, its still porn” Respondent, Gauteng.

The majority of respondents shared the opinion that pornographic material should not be distributed on the Internet (81%) and cell phones (91%). Especially with regard to cell phones respondents expressed very strong opinions and feelings. This was mainly ascribed to the fact that many children have cell phones which make uncontrolled access to adult material very easy. Furthermore respondents expressed their discontent with regard to the ‘SMS advertisements’ on television advertising naked women etc. Amongst those respondents who felt that pornographic material should be available via the Internet and cell phones; all agreed that stricter laws will need to be enforced.

Most respondents (89%) shared the opinion that pornographic material is degrading towards women. Some respondents felt that it is not only degrading towards women but to men as well. However, a number of respondents indicated that it is an individual’s choice if he/she wants to participate in the manufacturing of pornography and that often financial gain is a strong motivating force.



Overall respondents indicated that as far as possible pornography should be prohibited in South Africa. They made reference to the measures used by the previous Censorship Board to restrict access to pornography, and shared the opinion that similar preventative measures should be enforced.

“All pornographic material should be banned; South Africa is in a moral and degrading crisis!” Respondent, Western Cape.

“Young children are exposed to porn and harmed, so no pornographic material should be distributed” Respondent, Northern Cape.

“I think all pornographic material should be banned in SA, there will be fewer rapes!” Respondent, Eastern Cape.

Many respondents (85%) felt pornographic material such as child pornography, bestiality and violent sexual acts encourage harmful behaviour in society and should be treated as serious criminal offences. Stricter judgments need to be passed against people guilty of these crimes.

3.6 The Classification of Films - Rating Exercise

During the focus group discussions, respondents were asked to engage in a classification exercise by watching a 20 minute clip from a selected movie and allocating a suitable rating. Two movies were selected and randomly used at the group discussions conducted nationwide. The results were as follows:

Film	FPB Rating	Average Rating by Groups	Alternative Rating by Groups
Blade Trinity	16VL	16VL	18V
Mission Impossible 3	13V	13V	10V



Blade Trinity: Most respondents shared the opinion that the movie is excessively violent and contains scenes of the supernatural. Most respondents agreed with the 16VL rating allocated by the FPB, while some felt that it needed to be rated more strictly – 18V. The higher rating was mainly ascribed to the violence and the fact that children will be likely to imitate what they see in the movie such as jumping of the roof and tossing an infant.

“It contains strong language and violence, I cannot allow my small children to watch it, it is too scary” Respondent, Gauteng.

“This is a violent film which can lead to young people becoming violent, no one can jump through walls but some youngsters are so hooked up with these kind of films, later on they believe anything is possible” Respondent, Eastern Cape.

Mission Impossible 3: Respondents felt that this film was rated appropriately and did not really contain scenes of violence but rather action. They find the 13V rating allocated by the FPB acceptable and indicated that they will allow their children to watch the movie since it is a good ‘family viewing’. Some respondents felt that the current age rating is too strict and need to be lowered to 10 years.

“I think a 13 year old will be able to cope and handle the amount of violence shown”
Respondent, Northern Cape.

“I would really give it a 10V ranting, as it is violent to a certain extent, but it is more fantasy and not reality” Respondent, Limpopo.



PART FOUR

4.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

- **Raise levels of awareness:** The research study identified a need to raise public awareness and knowledge about the FPB and the classification guidelines. Due to a lack of information and understanding, parents do not always recognize the significance of the classification guidelines.
- **Internal teamwork:** Different units within the FPB need to work together to promote knowledge and awareness of both the FPB and classification guidelines. The Communication and Marketing unit needs to have a marketing strategy in place with the main focus on the FPB as a regulatory authority and its responsibilities. The Classification unit needs to ensure that the classification process is adhered to and all examiners properly trained to deal with the demands of appropriately classifying film material. The FPB Research unit needs to conduct classification research annually which will provide reliable information capturing the public's perception of the FPB and the relevance of classification guidelines.
- **Changes to the classification guidelines:** The current age ratings and classification symbols need to remain unchanged. The research study identified a concern that there is a weakening in the morals and values of the South African society and alternative classification guidelines will lower the classification standard for movies and contribute to the deterioration in society. It was recommended that additional age ratings and classification symbols be added to the current guidelines.
- **Information about the classification process:** Classification guidelines are regarded as a necessity. More information needs to be distributed to the South African public with regard to the classification process; indicating the process and criteria used, people involved etc.



- **The harmful effect of inappropriate film material:** The research study identified a need to increase awareness and knowledge about the impact of visual media on children's development, psychological well-being and behavior. More need to be done to educate South African parents about protecting children from inappropriate and harmful visual material in films.
- **Gaming:** Computer games are increasingly becoming popular and obtaining a bigger market share in South Africa. An appropriate classification system for computer games needs to be developed and implemented by the FPB. Due to the interactive nature and progressive stages in games the classification of games need to be treated differently from films. Examiners with appropriate technological skills and gaming knowledge need to be involved in the classification of games.
- **Pornographic material:** Parents with children between the ages of 8 – 16 years expressed concern about their children accessing adult material. Through pornographic material children are exposed to something that they are not mature enough to handle and which can have serious effects on their development. Based on the research findings, it is recommended that a separate unit is established within the FPB that can deal with pornographic material. Individuals with appropriate background knowledge and experience need to be involved in making decisions regarding adult material.



Epilogue

In 2000, the Board commissioned the HSRC to conduct a study on public awareness of the classification guidelines to assess whether or not the guidelines correctly reflected public concerns about what children were being exposed to in films.

As the summary of the HSRC findings below suggests, public concerns have remained almost unchanged. Public opinion changes slowly over time. The fact that the two studies produce very similar results is an indication of the reliability of the 2007 study.

In the 2000 HSRC study:

- most parents believed that children are being exposed to material that is unsuitable for them
- the key concerns of most parents were the impact of on children's behaviour of exposure to high levels of violence, sex and "bad language", especially for younger children
- other concerns were "gratuitous nastiness", "stereotyping of boys and girls" and lack of positive role models in films

Overall, the admission by most parents in the 2000 study that they "struggle to inculcate a value system in the face of the powerful influence of films and other visual media" remains true for parents in the 2007 study. Parents still agree that visual media does impact on the behaviour of children – and "the younger the child, the greater the impact on their behaviour", with children "living in difficult social circumstances" identified as particularly vulnerable to visual media influences in the 2000 study.



Most parents in the 2000 study also believed that format – “big screen vs. TV” – affected children differently. The conclusion to the 2000 study: ***“If parents believe that their children’s behaviour is vulnerable to media influence, rather than debating the issue of “cause-effect”, the FPB should take advantage of the fact that parents believe that classification and age ratings are necessary to protect their children from harm and become more involved in awareness and education programmes around classification”*** remains a challenge for the FPB in 2007. This must surely indicate a weakness in the public awareness strategy of the FPB and the application of the guidelines.

All parents in the 2000 study agreed that age ratings and consumer information were important and useful. However, not all parents applied the ratings strictly and believed that, in the final analysis, it is their “right and responsibility” to decide what is appropriate for their children. A common practice was to apply age ratings flexibly” – children were allowed to watch films “close to their current age”. Children between 10 and 12 years, for example, would be allowed to watch a “13” film but not a “16” movie.

There were also some differences in parental use of consumer information, with some parents being stricter with a “sex” advisory than with a “violence” advisory. In general, age ratings and consumer information were applied more strictly for children under the age of 16 years. There was general agreement that children under 10 years needed special protection. This concern has been expressed again in the 2007 study.

Most parents complained about a lack of adequate information on the impact of visual media on children’s behaviour and that the Board could do more to raise awareness, knowledge and understanding of the impact of visual media on children’s behaviour, psychological well-being and development. Parents need to be equipped with “tools and skills to monitor and intervene to protect their children – both technological knowledge as well as parenting-skills. This concern is repeated in the 2007 study.



There were complaints that not “enough” was being done to educate parents about what constitutes harm to children and how they should protect their children from such harm. Most parents said that age restrictions and consumer information should be more prominently displayed and “reinforced by explaining about what they stand for on a regular basis.” This information should be available in all the languages that “attract viewers’ attention.” Schools should be involved in this education programme. This was also a concern expressed by parents in the 2007 study.

Some parents thought the Board should organize “debates” around the issue of harmful and disturbing materials and that brochures and pamphlets distributed widely would be very useful. The Board should work very closely with schools, churches and community organizations in ensuring public awareness and understanding of age ratings and consumer information. The Board has, in fact, published and distributed brochures on aspects of its work but perhaps this should be combined with more meetings with community groups. There is no doubt that “face-to-face” interaction between the Board and the public would go a long way not only to increase public awareness of the Board itself but also of its work and contribute to enhanced credibility, and thus better and consistent use of its decisions, especially with regard to making viewing choices for children.



Appendix A

DISCUSSION GUIDE

The FPB Classification Guidelines and Viewing Choices for Children

Introduction

Hello, the Film and Publication Board (FPB), is investigating the use of the FPB classification guidelines in making viewing choices especially for children. The information that you share with me is confidential. The interview will be tape recorded and transcribed.

Please introduce yourself using your first name only and tell us how many children you have and how old they are.

SECTION A: Parental concern (15 Minutes)

The purpose of this section is to determine the level of concern amongst parents with regard to what their children are watching.

- Are you concerned about the films that your children are watching? **(Why? Why not?)**
- What potentially harmful material in films are you concerned about? Can you give me examples? **(Probe violence, language, sex, nudity, substance abuse (drugs & alcohol); give examples of films that children are not allowed to see).**
- What are your thoughts and feelings about the following statement: *“violence in films makes children behave more violently in real life”*. **(Discuss possible impact of the media on children)**
- What do you do to prevent your children from viewing potentially harmful material? **(Probe viewing times, use of age ratings etc.)**
- Have you discussed with your children why they cannot watch certain films?
- Have you ever found that your child has watched a film which you have told him/her not to watch?
- When do you think it is appropriate for children to be exposed to sex, nudity, violence, bad language or prejudice in films? **(Probe age appropriateness, cognitive and emotional development)**



SECTION B: Understanding and Awareness of the FPB classification system (35 Minutes)

The purpose of this section is to explore the level of awareness and usage of the FPB classification guidelines.

- Do you think there should be age ratings and classification guidelines on films for children? (**Why? Why not?**)
- Are you aware of the triangle on video/DVD boxes, to guide parents in viewing choices for their children? (**Probe how respondent became aware**)
- Who do you think is responsible for the triangle indicating the age ratings and classification guidelines?
- Can you give me examples of the South African age ratings and classification guidelines? Do you know what they stand for?
- **Flipchart:** Currently the FPB use the following age ratings and classification guidelines; (**Write on flipchart and briefly discuss thoughts and opinions**)

Age ratings	Classification guidelines (alert symbols)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A – all ages ○ PG – parental guidance ○ 10, 13, 16, 18 – age ratings ○ 10M – not for children under the age of 10 years unless accompanied by an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ L - strong language ○ V – violence ○ P – prejudice or negative stereotyping ○ N – nudity ○ S – sex ○ B – blasphemy

- Do you find the age ratings and classification guidelines useful? (**Why? Why not?**)
- Do you feel that the ratings and classification guidelines are clear and consistent?
- **Flipchart:** What are your thoughts and opinions about the following age ratings; (**Write on flipchart indicate changes and briefly discuss thoughts and opinions**)



Age ratings	Classification guidelines (alert symbols)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A – all ages ○ PG – parental guidance ○ 8, 12, 15, 18 – age ratings ○ 10M – not for children under the age of 10 years unless accompanied by an adult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ L - strong language ○ V – violence ○ P – prejudice or negative stereotyping ○ N – nudity ○ S – sex ○ B – blasphemy

- Which age ratings do you think will be most suitable for classification purposes? (**Probe between current and proposed**)
- Do you feel that there should be age ratings below 10 years to protect very young children?
- Do you think other potentially disturbing issues such as substance abuse, HIV/AIDS and youth suicide should be considered in the classification guidelines? (**Why? Why not?**)
- Which do you consider most important when making viewing choices for your children; age ratings, classification guidelines or both?
- What is your usual response to these ratings in terms of viewing choices for your children? For example, if it says 16S and your child is 14, what do you do?
- How do you apply the ratings? (**Probe strictly, sometimes, never**)
- In your opinion, is the current age ratings given to films, videos and DVD's too strict or not strict enough? (**Why? Why not? Probe for examples of films were ratings are too strict or not strict enough**)
- Is there a need to apply age ratings and classification guidelines to video and computer games?
- What consumer information should be made available to the public with regard to video and computer games? (**Probe thoughts and opinions about age ratings and the content of games such as violence and language**)



SECTION C: Rating Exercise (20 Minutes)

The purpose of this section is to investigate what participants consider to be disturbing and whether they agree or disagree with the current age ratings and classification guidelines.

Movie Clip 1: I am going to play a movie clip and would like you to pretend that you are an examiner that needs to rate this movie. Please keep all the relevant age ratings and classification guidelines in mind.

- What concerned you in this movie clip?
- What rating did you give to the movie clip that you have just seen? (Why?)
- When classifying the movie clip, did you consider the overall context and underlying messages of the movie or only individual scenes?

SECTION D: Classification of pornographic material (10 Minutes)

The purpose of this section is to explore respondents' thoughts and opinions with regard to the regulation of adult material.

Questionnaire 1: I am going to give you a short questionnaire that deals with the regulation of adult material. I would like you to complete the questionnaire privately without discussing it amongst each other.

SECTION E: Conclusion (10 Minutes)

The purpose of this section is to identify possible ways to improve the classification guidelines.

- Do you think more information is needed to explain the role of the FPB (Film and Publication Board) and the classification of films?
- What do you think will be the most effective means of conveying this information? (**Probe different means**)
- What can be done to raise awareness and motivate parents to take age ratings and classification guidelines seriously? (**Probe examples**)
- Is there anything else you would like to say about the issues we have discussed today?

Thank you, your participation in the research study is greatly appreciated.