

A portfolio evaluating the possible effects of media on young children's personal, social and emotional development.

Section 1:

An evaluation of the development of media and digital media over the past 50 years and its influences on young children's lives and experiences.

The mass communication has been evolving rapidly within the 21st Century (MacNamara, 2009). Neuendorf (2002 cited in Yale and Gilly, 1988) report on mass communication research illustrated that the media has been the fastest-growing technique over the past half-century. During the 1980s and 1990s, the commencement of digital technology has occurred. Unlike the former times, media has been developed into the unlimited usage of entertainment, social and interactional aspects, and a more convenient style to access disparate types of news (MacNamara, 2009). The availability for children to access a wide variety of media increased in both homes and schools, beyond, the social trends are transforming the society with digital technology in most daily activities. Our next generation is then impacted to be the unprecedented group of personality who grow up with digital technologies start from their birth.

The main concern of the developed media in nowadays' children's development is their impacts on physical and mental health aspects. A report from Childwise (2016) indicated that young children were found spending more than three hours a day using different digital devices in a variety of uses. Besides, it also determinates that the percentage of children staying in their bedrooms using digital devices has raised 10% from 2015. According to these results, the possibility of isolation with others and the lack of communication might have raised, which will then affect children's social and language development. As according to Buckley (2003) who identified causes including psychosocial deprivation, which may refer when the child has a lack of communication with adults or technology influences may cause the developing child a language delay. In regards in Lenneberg (1967 and 1969) theory of the critical period for language development illustrated that if language input hypothesis is malfunction or does not occur within the period, the individual will never achieve a full command of language. Furthermore, the results also arise the consideration of

the lack of exercises and outdoor play opportunities in children's everyday life, which their physical health and emotional well-being might be affected. The amount of concentration of light in most digital devices also affects the body producing melatonin, which will directly affect children's sleeping routines. (Baiba, 2012).

Research from Corpuz-Bosshart (2018) indicated that children under two years old learn less from digital products than from real-life experiences. It determined that digital devices only offer limited sensory opportunities and physical exertion, beyond, it stops creativity and face-to-face social interactions. Klein and Aduato (2011) defined digital products and images as having a distorted experience of the world and are confusing children's in their holistic development when they have not yet experienced or acknowledge the natural order of things.

However, researchers also found the impact of digital media and devices enhance children's learning. Research done by Boog (2014) indicate that iPads may have educational benefits for young children. It was found that certain apps may improve children's language and mathematics skills. Which evidence also shows that in children with cognitive delays, iPad apps may enhance their language use and social interactions. In the report of Gray et al. (2017) early years teachers reported that the use of digital devices in class has enhanced children's communication with each other. Children were also seen to have an increase of confidence and ownership of their learning process. Pitchford and Outhwaite (2016) reviewed that children view learning with digital devices as play, they are more motivated and engaged when activities are presented on tablets.

Section 2:

An analyzation of the influence of celebrities or media personalities on young children's behaviour, self-image and self-esteem.

At present, in this worldwide media-focused environment, celebrities and famous persons have become the people that children and young persons looked up to rather than their parents or people around them (Steinhoff, 2016). Children started to have access to media easily and are more attracted to types of program series or social media by the emerge from adults or peers. The celebrity culture has been a major

influence on children developing personalities, social behaviours, their beliefs and views, as well as impacting children's social and emotional well-beings (Neuendorf, 2017). However, taking into account of children's age, the great majority types of celebrity children acknowledge and interacts with the most are fictional characters, including characters from cartoons, comics, novels, games or children's show (Dunn, 2013). Therefore, in the following discussion, the targeted types of celebrities that will be primarily focused are fictional and hero-based characters with special powers, including people with superhuman powers or magical abilities will be mentioned.

The influence of superhero stories to children have been a successive topic that professionals from different aspects disputed about. Most of the concerns about superhero stories to children are the violence behavior and views children might observe and copy from the characters. The research studies from American Academy of Pediatrics (2011) determined that diverse forms of media including from TV series to music contains a considerable risk to children's mental health and emotional well-being. Evidences has indicated violence actions or happenings in media content may facilitate in violence behaviours, aggression, bullying, sleep disturbances, fear of injury or harmed, and antisocial attitudes. Research from Coyne et al. (2017) identified that viewing aggressive relative elements in media will decrease empathy and sympathy thoughts, decrease assisting and prosocial behavior, as well as damaging social relationship of others. Studies from Huesmann at al. (2003) provided evidences about an observation within a group of children conducted when they were 9 years old and in fifteen years later, on the behavior influence caused by media violence from childhood to adulthood. The results shown that the access of media violence during childhood were identified being influenced easier to result physical aggression as adults.

According to the research from Corriveau et al. (2013), children watching three to four hours of cartoons a day are susceptible in possessing aggressive behaviours. Considering long-term effects on children, cognitive abilities are believed to be damaged, the ability to differentiate from realities and the increase in negative behavior might develop when the routine sustained over times. In the study of the General Learning Model (Gentile et al., 2014) identified that media-based experience will shape and influence the person's knowledge structure and performance

component. The theory believes the experiences and knowledge the person absorbed during a situation will directly affect the emotions of person, which will then influence their production of behaviour or actions. In regard to media violence behaviours, the 'situation' or 'experience' the person sees in media may become the experience that helps to shape and structure the person's emotions and performance, in other words, children who observed aggressive behaviours in media will then develop emotions from it and will then structure their behavior performance basing on the emotions and learnings developed from those situations.

Moreover, the research studies from Lea (2017) identified a phenomenon when fictional characters or situations were often remaining actively in the people's mind, which as well influences the individual's conceptual thoughts and behaviours preformed were named the 'Experiential Crossing'. This could include circumstances when an individual hears the characters' voice or feeling as the characters do, and shaping their own emotions and behaviours as the characters, or even possessing the character's point of views and making judgements on events as the characters would. This Experiential Crossing theory identified the possibility of children placing themselves in the character to perform those behaviours, actions and thinking styles is evident. Furthermore, according to the Cultivation theory (Gerbner and Gross, 1976) which provided insights of the danger in the possibility of television programs possessing the ability to shape audiences' values, morals and behaviours from childhood by the invisible content that was contained in the series. In which these received contents in series will shaped children's general beliefs and could become the basis of children's broad worldview. Moreover, in the Social Learning theory initiated by Bandura (1977), his Bobo doll experiment also interpreted that children could copy aggressive behaviour easily by watching and observing from digital media. Besides, the reinforcement theory illustrated by Skinner (1953) provided the insight in which children can copy negative behaviours easily from observations without any reinforcement, contrary to positive behaviours that often requires reinforcements to conduct.

A research presented by Yokota and Thompson (2000) discovered that nearly all famous animated films contains at least one act of violence, 81% of the films presented bodily injury scenes, more than half of the samples contains the use of

weapons, in which 23% were found that magic was also used as weapon. If according to the believes of the learning theories and those research evidences showing the possibilities of children copying violence behaviours from media content, this piece of research has emphasized the concerns of fictional stories, including films, programmes and games could affect children's behavior performance in a negative way. For instance, if children observed a character wining control and victory through physical violence, they may refer this experience to reality situations, and could struggle physically whenever they feel to take the control of things rather than communicating or contributing opinions with others. Moruzi et al. (2018) added that the violent and hostile contents enhanced the possibility of children possessing aggressive emotions and notions, therefore aggressive behaviours will be performed more easily. Besides, children might decrease their understanding on real life social situations and their emotionally sensations on reality injuries or distress.

Beside the point of media violence, the concerns of children receiving in-appropriate messages were also raised. Research from Bauer et al. (2017) evaluated that in most superhero stories the characters were often created with inferior and humble backgrounds to make them relatable. 'In an analysis of 20 superheroes' origin stories, 86% were orphaned or abandoned, 49% had at least 1 parent murdered, and 29% were bullied; this may promote resilience in vulnerable children' (Bauer et al., 2017:1). Heer (2015) agreed that superhero stories have evolved on targeting adult audience rather than children. Popper (2013) believed that superhero stories at present tend to leave the moral and values for audience to consider individually. But these 'lack of moral explanation' stories would confuse children's values and confounds their moral beliefs. For instance, Coyne et al. (2014) identified most superhero films content the stereotypical values including beliefs about gender abilities and social roles, in which stereotyped cultural and ethnicity aspects were also found as common values in most fictional stories. Molu et al. (2017) subjoined that these stereotypical thoughts will estimate children's basis worldview and limited their play, self-confidence, and social behaviours. Although in the study from Bauer et al. (2017) shows female and male characters are having an unbalanced ratio in superhero (or action) stories, besides, discovering that female characters have less illustrative experiences as the male characters, who often have stories describing their development of conscience, responsibilities and other moral concepts, so as to

become the positive role models for children to observe and learn from. However, studies from Cohn et al. (2012) shows an insight about the typical hero stories created in America and the difference in Japanese hero stories. The study suggested that hero movies in America often centralize the storyline on male characters, but in comparison to the Japanese has an initial types of hero stories where female characters were centralized in the story acting alike the American hero would do in their stories (Cohn, 2011 and Cohn et al., 2012). Even, the stories were found having more children-targeted morals and prosocial behaviours in the stories to allow children to learn from (Duncan and Smith, 2009). According to these evidences, the considerations of stereotyping values about gender roles and gender abilities in superhero stories might be vacillated, as the concerns in the mentioned stereotypical problems seems happening more in Western countries, which will lead to another discussion about the differenced perspectives and cultural aspects media holds internationally.

Despite the concerns about the negative behaviours and in-appropriate messages that fictional and hero-based characters could have influenced children resulting negative aspects on their emotional and social well-beings, many studies also argued that superhero and fictional stories could result children in positive emotional well-beings. Studies from Bauer et al. (2017) provides evidences saying most classic superhero films illustrates positive elements of prosocial behaviours including assisting and helping others; protecting the public; self-sacrifice values; sharing; co-operating; and volunteering. Besides, factors such as taking responsibilities for actions; apologizing; overcoming obstacles; self-controls on own abilities; planning and achieving goals; honesty; as well as making decisions that results good outcomes were also found in the research. According to those social and situational learning theories that was mentioned before, children may copy these positive and encourageable performances from the presented stories (De-Souza and Radell, 2011). Having regard to the Experiential Crossing theory, children might also develop self-confidence and self-reliance on own abilities, talents and to believe in and work towards to their dreams with the positive influences from the characters. In addition, studies also convince that superhero play may develop children's personalities, empowerments on decision makings, independency, problem solving skills, sharing and helping behaviours, as well as supporting children to understand morality and ethics aspects (Edmiston, 2008;

Kinard, 2014; Kocis and John, 2015; and Weinstein, 2011).

Therefore, fictional and hero-based characters' influence to children may conclude as equivalent of both positive and negative impacts. In addition, studies from Bauer et al. (2017) claimed that avoiding aggression scenes in superhero films is difficult, but the study recommends the creators to also show the consequences and views behind those violence behaviours, so as to let children reflect and think the morals in those actions. Beyond, Bauer and Dettore (1997) indicated that if adult are supervising children with mediation analysis alongside could avoid the negative media influences, and at the same time enhances children's acquisition of critical thinking abilities and develop their objectiveness in different values and beliefs. Which in another word, the supervision from adults to children regarding with media content is the key of influencing children's social and emotional well-being, yet, their values and beliefs.

Section 3:

A discussion about the role of parents and carers in safeguarding children from negative influences linked to media content.

Apart from the discussions about the media's influences on children's social development, physical and mental health, there are also concerns about children accessing different forms of media without or lack of adult supervisions could result in the upon concerns, as well as safety matters (Alghamdi, 2017). According to the report from Childwise (2016) indicated that young children spend more than three hours a day accessing different forms of media. Beyond, research indicated that the technology addiction can affect children resulting social isolation, which will then cause a psychological and behavioral disorders named 'Neurosis'. This condition 'includes anxiety, sadness or depression, anger, irritability, mental confusion and may also lead to a sense of low self-worth' (Alghamdi, 2017:4). Where significantly, the influence on children's holistic development were concerned according to these evidences, however, the role of parents in this situations also called in to attention.

The UK Council for Child Internet Safety (2015) recommended that parents could provide suitable supervision for children to avoid negative messages influencing

young children. Parental mediation to children between the aged of two to twelve about media contents or internet uses will be the best efficiency and effective period for supervising children's use of media and avoiding negative influences on children (Nikken and Jansz, no date). Nikken and Schols (2015) explains that parents could participate and take an active role in children's access on media, this is a type of restrictive mediation out of the three types of parental mediation. They may help to schedule children's access on media by having time controls. For instance, setting rules with children to limit the period of time on using media devices, which parents could arrange children to possess a balanced daily routine on play, rest, exercise, and learning, so as to avoid technology addiction, social isolations, or lacking in physical activities which could affect children's physical and mental health (Livingstone and Helsper, 2008).

In addition, appropriate supervision for children is essential. Alghamdi (2017) conveyed that discussing the media content with children allows them to develop the abilities in challenging and criticizing media content, which will be the active mediation, where the content of media are discussed and explained to children. For instance, to learn to filter the message from the media, that the media will not always be correct and precise. Livingstone and Helsper (2008) explains that children need the understand the language of media, in which the media might over exaggerated different content in circumstances. Nikken and Schols (2015) children need to understand the reality and the fantasy elements media conveys. For example, understanding there are different types of values and points of views, and supervising children to learn to filter and criticize these messages. Nikken and Jansz (no date) recommended that adults should conduct discussions with children continuously about different kinds of media content. This is to allow children to have the opportunity to think and convey their views on different messages they received. Besides, the co-use of media mediation is where parents take an active role with the children, for example watching the same content with children, then conduct discussions and explanations to children.

Livingstone and Helsper (2008) indicated that parents could have controls in children's media access. For example, turning on parental control on websites to filter children's access on media. However, the United Nation on the Rights of the

Child indicated that in the Article 17 that children have the rights to access information from the media (Unicef, 2010). Which in another word, parents should not over limit or over control children's access to the media.

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