

Formation Of The Pro-Social Behaviour Among Adolescent Audience Through Exposure To Films

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Abstract

This research studies the relationship between the exposure of films towards the formation of pro-social behaviour among the adolescent audiences. The social cognitive theory was used as the theoretical framework through the observational learning construct and acts as the intervening variable. The cross-sectional survey was employed in this research as the research design. Data were collected from the distribution of questionnaire through the stratified random sampling method. There were 1028 respondents involved in the research. The questionnaire was constructed from the combination of self-developed questionnaire and Prosocial Personality Battery (PSB). The analysis through partial correlation test shows a significant positive relationship between exposure to films ($r=0.246$, $p<.05$) and prosocial behaviour by controlling the intervening variable. Based on the multiple-regression test, exposure to films and observational learning are the main predictor factors that contribute to the prosocial behaviour for 28.3 percent.

Keywords: Films exposure, prosocial behaviour, social cognitive theory, observational learning

1. Introduction

Damico (2007) stated that films have a unique influences on individuals. Some adolescent groups thought that violence and sexual elements that they watched from the television were for entertainment purposes only. Damico (2007) also talked about the effects of media including films that influenced teens on how to socialize, dress up and make a decision. The social cognitive theory besides explaining on the learning concept and modeling of the environment (Bandura 1996; Bandura 1989), individuals and people around them will also be linked to the same influence and effects of the media (O'Rorke 2006; Bandura 2004; Bandura 2001). Message from the media is one factor that creates the learning and observing process. A person can monitor and another person's behaviour and practice the same behaviour to their daily life (Severin & Tankard 2010; Miller 2005).

2. Film Exposure

According to the research done by Anderson et al. (2003), the violent scenes watched by the audience will enhance the level of aggressiveness and violent actions directly and indirectly (long-term). A few studies like Sargent (2005), Wills et al. (2009) and Wakefield et al. (2003) have discussed the relationship between the exposure of smoking scenes in the films with the actions of smoking among adolescence. The influence of films also likes to discuss issues of sexual violence (Brown 2002; Weisz & Earls 1995). Furthermore, Ostrov et al. (2006) has conducted a research on the violent media exposure and educational media exposure with the aggressive and prosocial behaviour. Ostrov's et al. (2006) research has proven that the exposure of media through television, films, video and many more contribute to the aggressiveness and minimise the prosocial behaviour although they were exposed to the education based media.

Md Salleh et al. (2009) in their research on types of films preferred by the male students found that male students like films with the action, animation and comedy genre. They would prefer to watch the films through television media and DVD/VCD. The message from the media is normally transmitted to the community through televisions, radios, films, displayed adverts on magazines, the Internet, book and even posters (Wakefield et al. 1998).

3. Pro-social Behaviour

The pro-social behaviour is a voluntary behaviour in the effort to be kind to other people and reflection done proactively and reactively towards other people's needs in the effort to promote healthy live in the community (Eisenberg et al. 2006; Hastings et al. 2007). Baron et al. (2009) debated on the factors that determine whether the individual is affected in the prosocial action. This is also known as motive that explains on how far an individual reacts through the prosocial action.

Muller & Donnerstein (1981) conducted two experimental research on the pro-social behaviour by showing the arousal kind of film and used the excitation transfer model. Muller & Donnerstein (1981) did a research on two groups of male students which they saw as having positive behaviour and neutral. The subjects were shown films that have the elements of arousing erotic and neutral. The findings showed that arousal films enhanced the

subjects' punitive behaviour and the second group was more neutral and positive in terms of their behaviour (Muller & Donnerstein 1981).

4. Social Cognitive Theory

According to Bandura (1986), behaviour is shaped through a reinforcement of social context. This shows that people can think and arrange their own behaviour and not influenced by the environment. The surrounding factors did not cause any changes in behaviour only because the personal and environment factors are interrelated.

4.1 Observational Learning

Bandura (1994) argued that not all learning experiences are obtained through a direct experience. The learning process is caused by many sources including media and mass communication (Bandura 2004; Bandura 2001). Bandura (1986) came up with arguments on human beings' learning process happened through observation of action and behaviour of others and can be explained through the process of attention, retention, reproduction and motivation. The observational learning was introduced by Bandura and has become the foundation for the discussion of the theory (refer to Fig. 1). All the four principles are the steps in the process that happened (in order) to get the outcome that can change certain behaviours.

ATTENTION PROCESS	RETENTION PROCESS	REPRODUCTION PROCESS	MOTIVATION PROCESS
1. Modeling simulation 2. Modeling characteristics	1. Symbolic coding 2. Cognitive management 3. Symbolic exercises 4. Motor-based exercises	1. Physically competent 2. Self-efficacy component 3. Response accuracy	1. External reinforcement 2. Vicarious reinforcement 3. Self reinforcement

Fig. 1: Observational learning process
 (Source: Bandura 1986)

5. Research Conceptual Framework

This conceptual framework (Fig. 2) is based on the social cognitive theory (1986). This framework is used to find answers for the research that involved films, audience and pro-social behaviour. It studies on how far the exposure of oneself towards films could contribute to the forming of pro-social behaviour.

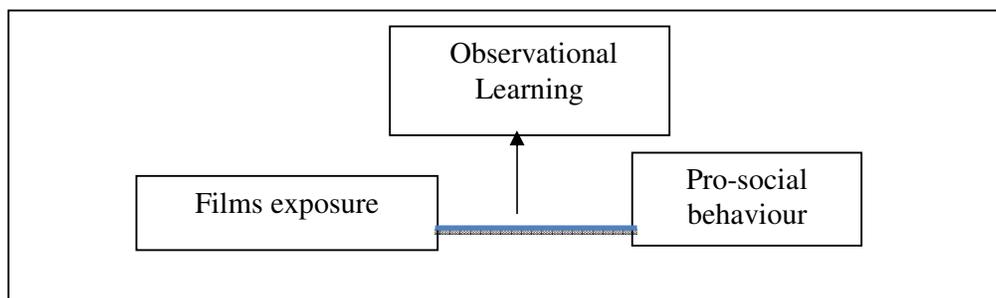


Fig. 2: Research Conceptual Framework

6. Research Hypotheses

Based on the literature review and the social cognitive theory, two main hypotheses were formed:

H1: There is a significant relationship between the exposure to films and pro-social behaviour, by controlling of intervening variable; observational learning.

H2: Exposure to films and Observational learning are the factors contribute towards the pro-social behaviour among the adolescent audience.

7. Research Objectives

Specifically the objectives of this research are:

- i. To determine the relationship between the exposure to films and pro-social behaviour with the intervening variable; observational learning.
- ii. To determine the factor that contributes to the pro-social behaviour among the adolescent audience.

8. Methodology

This research used the cross-sectional survey by distributing sets of questionnaire constructed by the researcher herself and accompanied by instrument taken from the Prosocial Personality Battery (PSB) developed by Penner et al. (1995). The questionnaires were distributed to 1028 respondents among the bachelor degree students from the public institute of higher learning at the Klang Valley; UPM, UIA, UM, UKM and UiTM. Samples were chosen by using the stratified random sampling technique. This procedure was referring to what was discussed by Cohen et al. (2007). Researcher chose to select members randomly in stratified where all elements in the population were put aside first based on the location of the sample. Data were analysed by using partial correlational test and multi-regression analysis.

9. Findings and Discussions

9.1 Relationship between Exposure to Films and Pro-social Behaviour

Based on the findings of the research, Table 1 shows that even without controlling the construct of the social cognitive theory; observational learning, there is a positive (moderate) relationship between exposure to films ($r= 0.398$, $p <.05$) and pro-social behaviour. Besides that there is also a relationship between the dependent variable (prosocial behaviour) with the controlling variable (observational learning). The relationship is positive (moderate) ($r= 0.488$, $p <.05$).

Table 1
 Correlation coefficient between variables by Zero Order of Partial Correlation

Variable	Exposure to Films	Pro-social Behaviour	Observational Learning
Exposure to Films	1.00 (0.00)		
Pro-social Behaviour	0.398 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)	
Observational Learning	0.413 (0.00)	0.488 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlation

Referring to Table 2, with the controlling variable, there is a significant positive but weak relationship between exposure to films ($r= 0.246$, $p <.05$) and pro-social behaviour. Therefore, this study accepts the hypothesis and it can be reported that with the elimination of the construct effect of the observational learning towards pro-social behaviour, audience exposes themselves to films has relationship with the development of the prosocial behaviour (Fig. 3). In other words, the higher the exposure, the higher the pro-social behaviour of the respondents.

Table 2
 Inter-Correlation Coefficient between variables by Zero Order Partial Correlation with Controlling Variables

Variable	Exposure to Films	Pro-social Behaviour
Exposure to Films	1.00 (0.00)	
Pro-social Behaviour	0.246 (0.00)	1.00 (0.00)

a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlation

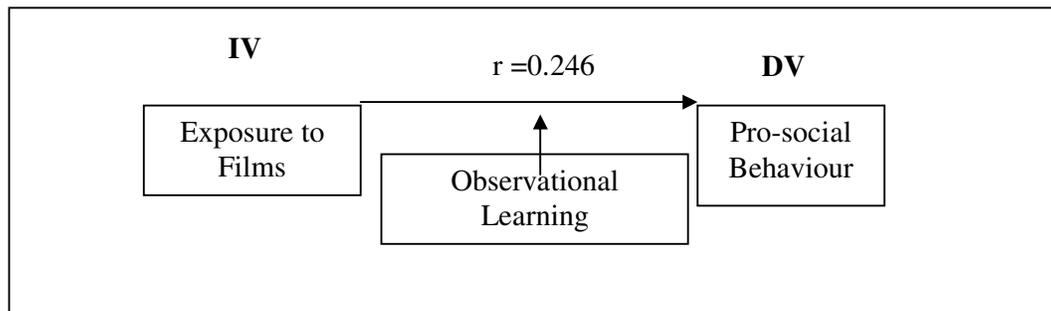


Fig. 3: Partial Correlation Analysis with Controlling Variable Model

This is different from past studies because exposure to films was linked to negative social activities like smoking, social aggression, violence and sexual behaviour (Steinberg & Monahan 2010; Shadel et al. 2010; Hanewinkel 2009; Holmes & Johnson 2009; Behm-Morawitz & Mastro 2008).

9.2 Factors on Forming Pro-social Behaviour

The Anova for the regression analysis shows that there is a significant relationship between predictor variables with dependent variable at the significant level 0.05. The analysis shows that exposure to films and observational learning (Model 1) gives significant results with the value $F=204.053$, $p < .05$. (Table 3).

Table 3
 Variation of Prosocial Behaviour Level with Chosen Independent Variable: ANOVA Test

Model	Df	F	Sig.
1. Regression	2	204.053	.000
Residual	1025		
Total	1027		

Nevertheless, the multiple-regression test uses a stepwise method to show the significant of the exposure to films and observational learning contribute 28.3 percent of variance towards prosocial behaviour. This shows that the observational learning ($\beta=.391$, $p < .05$) and exposure to films ($\beta=.236$, $p < .05$) are the predictor factors in this research that influence the development of the respondents' prosocial behaviour. (Table 4).

Table 4
 Independent Variable Regression Coefficient: Multiple-Regression Analysis Stepwise Method

Model	Regression		
	Beta	T	Sig.
1. (Constant)		20.382	.000
Observational learning	.391	13.471	.000
Exposure to Films	.236	8.139	.000
1	$\Delta R^2=0.283$		

Based on the results of the analysis from Table 3 and Table 4, the hypothesis is accepted because both factors that are predicted manage to contribute to the prosocial behaviour. Therefore, it can be reported that both main factors that are also the predictor variables; observational learning and exposure to films could influence the respondents' prosocial behaviour in this research (Fig. 4).

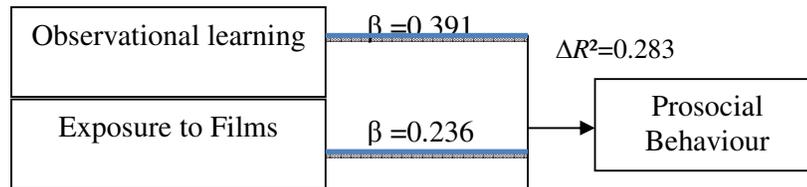


Fig. 4: Model after the Multiple-Regression Analysis- Model 1

Based on the multiple-regression test analysis, researcher finds that exposure to films and observational learning are the predictor factors that contribute to the prosocial behaviour for 28.3 percent. The positive role played by exposure to films in this study shows the film products also contribute to the forming of the prosocial behaviour. Therefore, this research has proven that the role of films is more positive towards behaviour compared to other research done previously like Holmes & Johnson (2009) and Steinberg & Monahan (2010), which linked the exposure to films with negative behaviour. The findings of this research also support the previous studies when it talked about role played by the observational learning in the process of learning, changing and forming the audience's behaviour. However, although observational learning could influence behaviour, it is not necessarily and always positive as it can also contribute to negative behaviour. Hence, past studies found that observational learning is used as the theoretical framework in studying violence behaviour.

Take Huesmann's (2007) research as an example where he used observational learning as a factor that influences behaviour among children. This factor acts as the long-term effects onto observing violent behaviour through television, film and video games. Huesmann (2007) also said that children who watched violent movies or played violent video games are more aggressive. Anderson et al. (2003) also used the same framework as the mechanism to explain violent behaviour observation among adolescents.

10. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the research through the testing of the hypothesis 1 (H1) shows although the social cognitive theory construct (observational learning) is eliminated, the relationship between exposure to films and prosocial behaviour still exist. However, these adolescent audience felt that the films that they watched were only at the weak level that contributes to their prosocial value. This is because, besides the realization of their self exposure to films that they like, they are also linked to other factors that form their positive behaviour. As for the hypothesis 2 (H2), the findings show that both predictor factors tested have proven that there is a significant relationship with prosocial behaviour. However, both of the factors are contributed 28.3 percent only towards the pro-social behaviour. The findings suggested that a further study need to be carried out in the future in order to examine other factors on this dependent variable since over 70 percent of the dependent variable changes is not identifiable through other studies.

Thus, the observational learning has proven its role in forming the prosocial personality. As the social cognitive theory constructs, it promotes learning through observation, and its contribution is parallel with the functions of films as a medium to give effects to the audience. Hence, whatever that is shown to the audience (be it good or bad) gives impact onto the changes of the audience's cognitive aspects and affective behaviour.

The findings of the research see that there are significant relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The findings manage to strengthen the theoretical framework used-social cognitive theory (Bandura 1986) that links the theory with some media effects. Other than that, this research strengthens the points about social cognitive theory through media towards positive behavior like some previous research conducted by Udornpim & Singhal (1999) and Dumova (2006). This is because, although at the early stage of this theory it had always been connected to the violence of media (Bandura et al., 1963; Bandura et al., 1961), this theory remains as the choice for some media and film scholars to associate it with the prosocial behaviour.

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