

# “SKIP, IT’S VIOLENT”: AN INDEX TO MEASURE VIOLENT ENTERTAINMENT ADDICTION AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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## ABSTRACT

The "Skip, it's violent" index is an indicator to measure violent entertainment addiction and aggressive behaviour among adolescents. This index covers five dimensions: self-motivation, parental monitoring, peer influence, addiction, and aggressive behaviour. The items for each dimension are developed through a thorough literature review. This product is targeted at adolescents, government, and educational institutions as the end-user to receive its benefits. The index is essential to measure the current status of violent entertainment addiction and aggressive behaviour among adolescents in Malaysia. Further, this index is vital in addressing criminal acts and other social problems among adolescents whilst ensuring children's social development and well-beingness.

**Keywords:** violent entertainment addiction, aggressive behaviour, an indicator measuring aggressive behaviour

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Aggressive behaviour is done to cause harm and hurt to another person, which can be verbally, non-verbally, and in the form of an action (Singh et al., 2014). According to Rose et al. (2018), aggressive behaviour is one of few externalising behaviours which are visible, and it is being acted out, which are commonly antisocial, aggressive, and disruptive behaviour. While aggressive behaviour of adolescents and children can be discussed from various perspectives, this product was developed to measure aggressive behaviour due to violent entertainment addiction.

"Violent entertainment" is a combination of two words which contains "violent" (thriller, murder, aggressive, explicit – adult content that is not suitable for young audience) and is in the form of "entertainment" (online streaming platform [film and music], online video games, online reading (e.g., Wattpad and others). Cases linked to violent entertainment such as those related to PUBG, the famous violent video game, its seriousness in India have caused parents to be worried about the influence it brings to adolescents, which triggers Gujarat state authority to put it on a ban (Agence France-Presse, 2019). The news reported that an adolescent aged 16 years old was continuously playing PUBG, skipping his meals and drink, fell sick, and failed in his medical treatment (Ikoba, 2020). Similarly, China also faced challenges in health due to gaming addiction; hence, restriction of different measures such as facial recognition, real name verification (to detect underage gamers), and game time restriction was imposed by its government.

While the factors leading to adolescents' addiction to violent entertainment and aggressive behaviour can be myriad, this product was developed based on four main factors, which are self-

motivation, parental monitoring, peers, and social media influence. Self-motivation is when adolescents further engage in violent entertainment due to motivational factors such as seeking sensation, competence, sense of belongingness, and autonomy. Lack of parental monitoring will be discussed as the reason for adolescents' involvement in violent entertainment until their values, norms, and beliefs justify their interest in violent entertainment. Aside from that, adolescents can also be influenced by their friends involved in violent entertainment and social media connections. In Teimouria et al. (2014), 58% of adolescents in Selangor have seen movies with violence, photos, physical violence, and 36% have seen uncomfortable things and regret seeing them.

There are many possible consequences which are aggressive thoughts and behaviour, desensitisation to violence, lack of prosocial behaviour and empathy, anger, hostile appraisals, and physiologic arousal (Anderson et al., 2017). Addiction too leads to health problems from excessive screen time (Lissak, 2018), along with other social and children exploitation issues. Excessive engagement in violent entertainment may lead to addiction regardless of the high demand and engagement from audiences. Once addicted, adolescents may learn the actions, languages, and aggressive thoughts may be translated into aggressive behaviour. In the worst scenario, adolescents addicted to violent entertainment will engage in other social problems such as murder, suicide (Florida State University, 2017), massive killing, and others. Every adolescent and child are the country's future, making it crucial for the government to tackle the issues effectively as it potentially leads to disruption of social well-being, emotional and physical health.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The “Skip, It’s Violent” product is developed as an indicator that serves as an “Index” to measure violent entertainment addiction and aggressive behavior among adolescents. There are six dimensions in Skip, It’s Violent Index which are:

1. **Self-motivation:** 10 items developed based on Zuckerman, Eysenck, and Eysenck (1978); Molitor and Hirsch (1994); Krcmar and Greene (1999); Deci and Ryan (2000); Ersan (2019); and Shoshani and Krauakopf (2021).
2. **Parental monitoring:** 9 items developed based on Larzelere, Morris, and Harrist (2013); Collier et al., (2016); Sarwar (2016); Gershoff and Grogan-Kaylor (2016); Palaiologou, (2017); Rose et al., (2018) and Abd Hamid et al., (2020).
3. **Peer influence:** 10 items developed based on Akers (1966); Deci and Ryan (2000); Defoe et al. (2015); Gunuc (2016); Gallupe, McLevey & Brown (2018); Walters (2020).
4. **Social media:** 10 items developed based on Akers (1966); Harris (1998); Allen et al., (2014); Broadus and Evans (2015); Yang (2016); Young, Len-Ríos, and Young (2017); Ortega (2019); Orlando (2018); Dewar et al., (2019); Tague, Reysen, and Plante (2019);
5. **Addiction:** 10 items developed based on Soper and Miller (1983); Ajzen (1991); Griffiths (2005); Broadus and Evans (2015).
6. **Aggressive behavior:** 29 items developed by Buss and Perry (1992).

Adolescents who answered all questions in Skip, It's Violent Index will get a self-generated result about their self-motivation, parental monitoring, peer influence, social media, addiction, and finally the aggressive behavior score. The score for all dimensions for each adolescent serves as an index to measure violent entertainment addiction and aggressive behavior among adolescents in Malaysia.

## 3. CONTRIBUTIONS AND USEFULNESS

This product is a part of the doctoral work of this paper's main author, which aims to examine the moderating effects of violent entertainment in predicting aggressive behavior among adolescents in Malaysia. Subsequently, this index will be circulated to adolescents online nationwide. The result of the survey will provide the current status of violent entertainment addiction and aggressive behavior among adolescents in Malaysia. This index is useful for each adolescent to know their score or by

teachers or counsellors in schools to test their students' level of violent entertainment addiction and aggressive behaviour. Further, a specific program can be designed for the adolescents or students in schools to create awareness about the consequences of violent entertainment addiction to their behavioural changes. This will help to reduce aggressive behavior among adolescents and finally lowering the number of crime cases involved by a minor.

#### 4. NOVELTY AND UNIQUENESS

There are four (4) novelty and uniqueness of Skip, It's Violent Index which are:

1. The index is developed based on the literature review and current scenario of violent entertainment engagement and addiction among adolescents in Malaysia.
2. The dimensions used in this index cover individual (self-motivation), family (parental monitoring), and social aspects (peers influence and social media).
3. The items used in each dimension can be continuously improved based on the adolescents' feedback and key stakeholders, including parents, teachers, and others. Further, technological advancement will be one of the main elements to be considered to improve the index.
4. The index will provide the status of violent entertainment addiction and aggressive behavior among adolescents in Malaysia.

#### 5. POTENTIAL FOR COMMERCIALISATION

This product has the potential to be commercialised particularly to the Ministry of Education, private educational institutions/centres, and others. While the main idea of this product is not to maximise the profits, this product on the other hand can help the government to reduce crimes among adolescents, promote child well-being and social development—this will help the country to save costs to combat social issues.

#### 6. CONCLUSION

All children should be protected from any form of influence that could lead to aggressive behaviour, primarily due to excessive violent entertainment engagement. As technological advancement, forms of entertainment from content and devices evolve very fast, putting every child at risk of addiction to violent entertainment, leading to aggression that can damage their cognitive, emotional, and behavioural well-being. Hence, this index is meant to first measure adolescents' aggressiveness due to violent entertainment, treating one of many roots cause of aggressive behaviour and crime among children.

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