UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, FEELINGS OF VIOLENCE IN TAMIL FILMS AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR AMONG INDIAN TEENAGERS

KALAIVANI A/P MUNUSAMY

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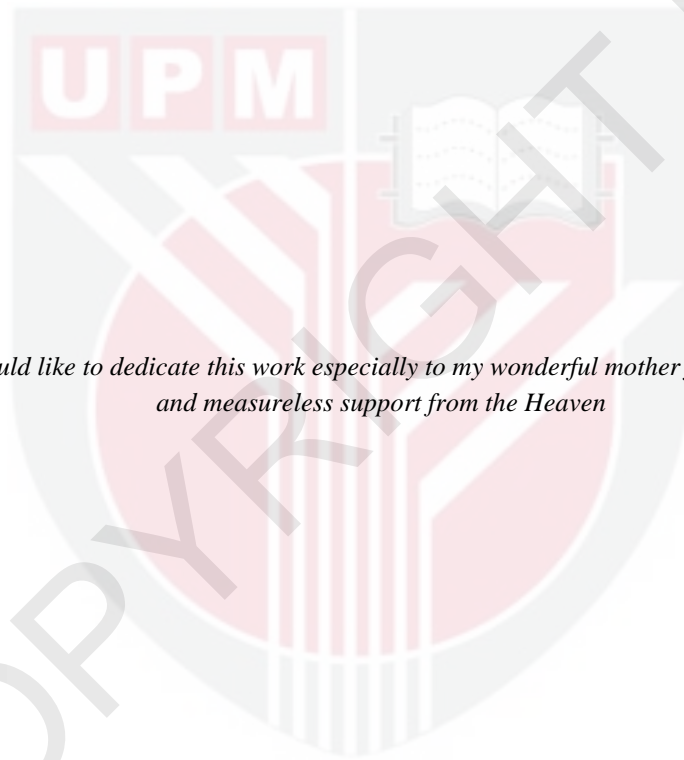**By**

KALAIVANI A/P MUNUSAMY

Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfilment of the Requirement for the Degree of Master of Science

July 2016

*I would like to dedicate this work especially to my wonderful mother for her love
and measureless support from the Heaven*

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ATTITUDES, BELIEFS, FEELINGS OF VIOLENCE IN TAMIL FILMS AND VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR AMONG INDIAN TEENAGERS

By

KALAIVANI D/O MUNUSAMY

July 2016

Chairman : **Akmar Hayati Binti Ahmad Ghazali, PhD**
Faculty : **Modern Language and Communication**

Television contains a wealth of movie genres that can be one of the potential contributors to the growth of violent behavior among teenagers. Violent film is one of the issues that is gaining wide attention from the electronic media. Thus, violence in films is one of the specific learning conditions believed to be a potential contributor towards the growth of violent behaviour among teenagers. According to Natesan (2012), Tamil films on television are prime examples that promote and spread gangsterism among the Indians. From previous research, violent behaviour problems among teenagers and the effect of viewing violence in media have already existed in Malaysia. This leads to high crime rate among Indian teenagers.

The general objective of this study is to examine the relationship between viewing violent scenes in Tamil films on television towards the behaviours of Indian teenagers. Apart from that, it specifically focuses on the pattern of watching films on television among Indian teenagers, the relationship between attitudes of viewing violent scenes in Tamil films and the behaviours of Indian teenagers, the relationship between beliefs in viewing violent scenes in Tamil films and the behaviours of Indian teenagers; and also the relationship between feelings of viewing violent scenes in Tamil films and the behaviour of Indian teenagers.

A quantitative method was used in this study. Two sampling methods were employed in this study. The sample of this study consisted of 400 teenagers from a total population of 133, 767 Indian teenagers in Selangor. The sampling methods were convenient sampling and purposive sampling. This location was selected for the study because data showed that the state has the highest crime rates. The study was designed based on the Cultivation Theory.

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The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. Descriptive statistic and inferential statistic were used in this study. Descriptive statistic was used to identify percentage values, mean, average and standard deviation. While inferential statistic was used to explain the relationships that contribute to the variables of the study. Teenagers who involved in this study spent a considerable amount of time to watch television and specially watch Tamil films on television in a week more than 13 times. Thus, almost more than half of respondents spent more than three hour to watch Tamil films in a day and like to watch films on television on Sunday. The correlation result showed that there is a strong relationship between attitudes of watching violent scenes in Tamil films and Indian teenagers' behaviour (0.832), beliefs of watching violent scenes in Tamil films and Indian teenagers' behaviour (0.908) and feelings of watching violent scenes in Tamil films and Indian teenagers' behaviour (0.939). The correlation was significant at 1% level of significance. The results revealed that teenagers give positive reactions towards violence in Tamil films on attitudes; beliefs and feelings that enhance their changes of violent behaviours.

In today's world, exposure to violence is essentially unavoidable. Teenagers tend to be affected negatively from the violence in films and follow sensational stories created by the media for profit purpose. Therefore, it is very important for the film censorship board to filter out violent scenes in Tamil films before telecasting them in the television. This is because there is lack of awareness on the violent messages that are steadily instilled in young viewers' minds, and the moral values that defied their development.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Master Sains

HUBUNGAN ANTARA SIKAP, KEPERCAYAAN, PERASAAN TERHADAP KEGANASAN DALAM FILEM TAMIL DAN TINGKAH LAKU GANAS DALAM KALANGAN REMAJA INDIA

Oleh

KALAIVANI A/P MUNUSAMY

Julai 2016

Pengerusi   : **Akmar Hayati Binti Ahmad Ghazali, PhD**
Fakulti   : **Bahasa Moden dan Komunikasi**

Televisyen mengadungi kepelbagaian genre filem yang berpotensi untuk menyumbang kepada tingkah laku ganas dalam kalangan remaja. Filem yang mengandungi unsur ganas adalah salah satu isu yang mendapat perhatian meluas oleh media elektronik. Dengan itu, keganasan dalam filem adalah salah satu elemen yang dipercayai menjadi penyumbang kepada peningkatan tingkah laku ganas dalam kalangan remaja. Menurut Natesan (2012), filem Tamil yang disiarkan di televisyen adalah salah satu contoh filem yang menggalakkan dan menyebarkan keganasan dalam kalangan kaum India. Hasil penyelidikan yang lepas mendapati bahawa masalah tingkah laku ganas oleh remaja India dan kesan menonton aksi ganas di televisyen sudah lama wujud di Malaysia. Malah kadar jenayah yang dilakukan oleh remaja India adalah sangat tinggi.

Objektif umum kajian ini adalah untuk mengetahui hubungan antara pengaruh penontonan aksi ganas dalam filem Tamil dengan tingkah laku remaja India. Manakala objektif khusus kajian adalah untuk mengenal pasti pola penontonan filem Tamil di televisyen dalam kalangan remaja India; mengetahui hubungan antara sikap menonton aksi ganas dalam filem Tamil dengan tingkah laku remaja India; mengetahui hubungan antara kepercayaan dalam melihat aksi ganas dalam filem Tamil dengan tingkah laku remaja India; dan hubungan di antara perasaan terhadap melihat aksi ganas dalam filem Tamil dengan tingkah laku remaja India.

Penyelidikan ini dijalankan dengan menggunakan kaedah kuantitatif. Terdapat dua kaedah persampelan digunakan oleh penyelidik iaitu persampelan mudah dan persampelan bertujuan. Sampel kajian ini terdiri daripada 400 orang remaja India daripada sejumlah 133, 767 remaja India di sekitar Selangor. Selangor telah dipilih sebagai lokasi kajian kerana lokasi ini mencatatkan kadar jenayah yang tertinggi berbanding negeri-negeri lain. Kajian ini juga direka berpandukan kepada Teori Kultivasi (Cultivation Theory).

Kesemua hasil kajian telah dianalisis dengan menggunakan Pakej Statistik untuk Sains Sosial (SPSS) versi 22.0. Statistik deskriptif dan statistik inferensi telah digunakan dalam kajian ini. Statistik deskriptif digunakan untuk mengenal pasti nilai-nilai peratusan, min, purata dan sisihan piawai. Manakala, statistik inferensi digunakan untuk mengenal pasti hubungan yang dapat menyumbang kepada pemboleh ubah kajian ini.

Hasil keputusan menunjukkan bahawa remaja yang terlibat dalam kajian ini telah meluangkan masa yang lama untuk menonton televisyen khususnya filem Tamil yang mana mereka menonton lebih daripada 13 kali seminggu. Malah, hampir separuh daripada responden menonton filem Tamil lebih daripada tiga jam sehari. Di samping itu, hasil ujian korelasi menunjukkan bahawa terdapat hubungan yang kuat di antara sikap terhadap menonton aksi ganas dalam filem Tamil dengan tingkah laku remaja India (0.832), kepercayaan dalam melihat aksi ganas dalam filem Tamil dengan tingkah laku remaja India (0.908) dan perasaan terhadap melihat aksi ganas dalam filem Tamil dengan tingkah laku remaja India (0.939). Hasil keputusan menunjukkan bahawa remaja India memberi reaksi yang positif terhadap keganasan dalam filem Tamil. Oleh yang demikian, hubungan yang kuat antara sikap, kepercayaan dan perasaan terhadap aksi ganas dalam filem Tamil membawa perubahan terhadap tingkah laku ganas remaja tersebut.

Pada zaman sekarang, pendedahan kepada keganasan pada dasarnya tidak dapat dielakkan. Remaja mudah terjejas dengan penularan aksi ganas dan negatif yang ditayangkan dalam filem Tamil serta cerita-cerita sensasi yang disiarkan oleh pihak media yang mementingkan keuntungan semata-matanya. Oleh itu, kajian ini mencadangkan agar pihak Lembaga Penapisan Filem dapat mengetatkan lagi penapisan adegan ganas dalam filem Tamil sebelum disiarkan di televisyen. Hal ini kerana, kesedaran yang terhad pada mesej ganas akan mempengaruhi fikiran penonton muda, dan nilai-nilai moral yang salah akan menbantutkan perkembangan mereka.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on (25 July 2016) to conduct the final examination of Kalaivani A/P Munusamy on her thesis entitled "The Relationship Between Attitudes, Beliefs, Feelings of Violence in Tamil Films on Television and Violent Behaviour Among Indian Teenagers" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U. (A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the degree of Master of Science (Communication Technology).

Members of the Thesis Examination Committee were as follows:

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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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Date:

Declaration by graduate student

I hereby confirm that:
- this thesis is my original work;
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- this thesis has not been submitted previously or concurrently for any other degree at any other institutions;
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Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name and Matric No.: Kalaivani A/P Munusamy (GS37874)

Declaration by Members of Supervisory Committee

This is to confirm that:

- the research conducted and the writing of this thesis was under our supervision;
- supervision responsibilities as stated in the Universiti Putra Malaysia (Graduate Studies) Rules 2003 (Revision 2012-2013) are adhered to.

Signature: _____

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Supervisory
Committee: <u>Dr. Akmar Hayati Binti Ahmad Ghazali</u>

Signature: _____

Name of
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Supervisory
Committee: <u>Dr. Wan Anita Binti Wan Abas</u>

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AQ	Aggression Questionnaire
CAP	Consumer Association of Penang
DOSM	Department of Statistic, Malaysia
ICFM	Organisation of the Islamic Conference
LPF	*Lembaga Penapisan Filem*
MIC	Malaysian Indian Congress
PDRM	*Polis Diraja Malaysia*
RTM	Radio Television Malaysia
SD	Standard Deviation
SPSS	Statistical Package of Social Science
TV	Television
UNESCO	United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UPM	Universiti Putra Malaysia
WHO	World Health Organization

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter begins with an introduction, followed by the problem statement, research questions, research objectives, significant of the study, scope and limitation of the study and definition of keywords.

1.1   Introduction

Mass media, which includes print media, electronic media and the internet, have strong influence on the adolescents. It shapes their beliefs, values and behaviours (Rivadneyra, 2006). This is as the media provides information about the social, economic, politic and cultural aspects of the human existence. Rahim, Ping, Yin and Phil (2015), assert that violence is a prevalent term in media language and has become an indispensable part of our life.   Therefore, screening violent acts in the media especially the television may have harmful effects towards the viewers (Rahim, Ping, Yin & Pill, 2015). This is mainly because television is one of medium that delivered information to the audience.

Indeed, Uhlmann and Swanson (2004) claimed that it is significantly proven that watching violence in television and films has huge effects towards violent cognition, on aggressive performance, violent effects, physiological provocations and prosocial behaviour. Most of the teenagers prefer to watch television whereby indirectly they will be affected by the antagonist character in the shows. Therefore, exposure to violence in the media increased the level of desensitization towards violence, increased level of defiance, increase problematic peer and decreased parental relationships (Bushman & Anderson, 2009; Ostrov, Gentile, & Crick, 2006; Krahe, 2012).

Most of the films and programmes screened on the television nowadays are competing to show the hottest and unpredictable scenes to attract the audience. This phenomenon is one of the main causes that spread violent culture to the audience (Gagne, Drapeau, Melancon, Saint-jacques & Lepine, 2007). According to Yaacop (2010), violence in the media raises juvenile problem among the teenagers. He continued that some artists who acted in films tend to be involved in significant deviance culture like Black Metal and drug abuse.

Browne and Hamilton-Giachritsis (2005), stated that violent scene on the television is a catalyst which increases violent behaviour among the teenagers. This statement is supported by Subramanian (2007), who mentioned that the global community is aware of and accepts that films have influence and impact on the society. Therefore, the media is one of the medium that influences the viewers and impacts on their behaviour.

There are varied strategies of violence present on the television with opportunity to develop an extensive repertoire of aggressive scripts, including scripts for physical

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aggression, object aggression, and verbal aggression (Rosenkoetter, Rosenkoetter, & Acock, 2009). Media nowadays tends to highlight more violence which gives negative influence among the juvenile minds (Brains, 2015). Brains (2015), asserted that violent activities are increasing day by day because violent scenes trigger violent behaviour among the children and illiterate Indians.

According to Pendakur (2003), Tamil films are the most powerful medium of the cultural expression which function's as social, cultural, political and economic institutions. It also has a big impact on the audience life by shaping them into real life. In addition, it is a fantasy world which persuades and influences the audience. Thus, Krishnan (2012) stated Tamil films such Vattaram, Pokkiri, Polladhavan, Manggatha and Billa are prime examples to encouraging and spreading the idea of gangsterism among the Indians. This is because Tamil cinema has a hypnotic effect towards the masses (Ravi, 2014).

A lot of past studies have examined the exposure to media violence and the increment of aggressive attitude and delinquent behaviours among the youth (Weaver & Wilson, 2009). This issue should be overcome and solved immediately so that violence in the media does not affect the viewers especially the teenagers. This is because these teenagers are the future generation to lead the country's development and become future leaders. This problem should be given special attention immediately to control the spreading of negative impact on the audience.

1.2   Problem Statement

The electronic media especially the television is one of the medium that can have an impact in terms of influencing the viewers and their behaviour. Yahaya, Lee, Ma'alip and Dunggi (2014), asserted that the television and films highlight the yellow culture that created problems towards the physical behaviour, verbal and nonverbal, aggressive and violent behaviour among the teenagers. They also mentioned that exposure to violent scenes in media would affect the teenagers' thinking and behaviour. By viewing violent scenes in films would also indirectly induce aggression among viewers (Bettencourt, Talley, Benjamin & Valentine, 2006). It can be said that teenagers are easily influenced by watching violent action films and causing them to be involved in crime daringly.

For the past 20 years, exposure to violence in the media has increased and violence is seen virtually in films and TV shows (Haswell, 2011). A lot of violent films are telecast in television through screenings from other countries such as Hong Kong, Hollywood, Bollywood, Kollywood and so on ("*Gengster India*," 2010). Natesan (2013), stated that Tamil films promote and spread gangsterism among the Indians. For example, in Malaysian Tamil films such as Parutheeveran, Virumandi, Thirupachi, Supramaniapuram, Bheema and many other films are categorised as extreme violent Tamil action films with various scenes of murder, rape and kidnapping. Some of the films are screened without any filtration ("*Gengster India*," 2010). Furthermore, many Tamil films are featuring violent scenes have influence the Indian teenagers in Malaysia to act like the behaviour of the heroes in Tamil films (Velu Naiker, 2002).

Therefore, the violence that telecast in Tamil films are associated with negative impact towards the viewers. This statement is supported by an article in Sinar Harian that stated that violent Tamil action films need to be filtered before screening to the audience to avoid violent crime ("*Aksi ganas filem Tamil*," 2016).

Thus, Shanthiah (2015) also asserted Tamil films contain violent elements and negative scenes. Eventually, Indian teenagers are influenced by these scenes that they watched in Tamil films. She also mentions that nowadays Tamil film contain's a lot of violent scenes which indirectly create gangsterism among Indian communities. It indirectly drag's Indian teenagers to involve in crime. According to the Consumers Association of Penang (2000), Indian youths in Malaysia are involved in crime and social problems caused by the influence of Tamil movies.

Thaiveegan (2012), pointed out that the involvement of Indians in crime is at a serious stage. The Statistic of Police Department (PDRM) (Desmond, personal communication, April 7, 2014), revealed that crime rate in Malaysia increased from 102,978 in 2012 to 117,687 in 2013. On the other hand, arrest data from 2010 to 2013 revealed that Indian teenagers involved themselves in crimes with increased ratings every year. According to Chauhan and Reppucci (2009), young adolescents are more engaged to violent behaviour. Therefore, these statements prove that Indian teenagers are more engaged towards violent behaviour. Moreover, Malaysia Hindu Sangam president Datuk Rs Mohan Shan said Indian teenagers like to mimic negative scenes in Tamils films which encourage brutal killing spree among teenagers which is activities contrary to the law of this country ("*Aksi ganas filem Tamil*," 2016).

Past research showed that violent behaviour among teenagers and the effect of viewing violence acts in the media has already existed in Malaysia (Samsudin, 2003). This statement is supported by Ranganathan (2010), who mentioned that violent scenes in Tamil films can influence the viewers as they tend to imitate those actions. This leads to cases such as truancy, gang activities, as well as various immoral activities among them. Samsudin (2003), added that violence in film has negative effects towards teenagers because the behaviour stimulates the teenagers mind to be juvenile deliaquent.

Teenagers are easy when it comes to imitating aggressive and violent behaviour shown on the television because of the imbalance between their identity and personality with the television. Violent scenes on the television can be a considerable problem among teenagers because of the negative behaviour that stimulate the youth to juvenile offenses (Samsudin, 2003). As violence in the mass media is becoming more common, thus this leads to some undesirable effects, particularly on violent behaviour among the young generation.

The studies mentioned above focus on the effects of viewing violent scenes in Tamil films against violent behaviour among teenagers, and characteristics of aggressive behaviour with the exposure to violence in the media. Therefore, the question is whether the audience gives positive or negative perception on violent scenes in Tamil films especially among Indian teenagers.

1.3   Research Questions

This research will answer the following questions:

1. What is the Television viewing habits among Indian teenagers?

2. Is there any relationship between attitudes of viewing violent scenes in Tamil films and Indian teenagers' behaviour?

3. Is there any relationship between beliefs of viewing violent scenes in Tamil films and Indian teenagers' behaviour?

4. Is there any relationship between feelings of viewing violent scenes in Tamil films and Indian teenagers' behaviour?

1.4   Research Objective

General Objectives

The general objective of this study is to examine the relationship between attitudes, beliefs and feelings of violence in Tamil films and violent behaviour among Indian teenagers.

Specific Objectives

1. To determine the television viewing habits among Indian teenagers.

2. To identify the relationship between attitudes of watching violent scenes in

    Tamil films and Indian teenagers' behaviour.

3. To identify the relationship between beliefs of watching violent scenes in

    Tamil films and Indian teenagers' behaviour.

4. To identify the relationship between feelings of watching violent scenes in

    Tamil films and Indian teenagers' behaviour.

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1.5   Significant of the study

Policy

Based on this research, teenagers are expected to be able to evaluate the implications obtained from watching violent actions in films regularly. Although there are Acts such as the Broadcasting Act 1988 and the Film Censorship Board (LPF) established in an effort to reduce the production of violent action movies, violent acts are still allowed to be screened. There is a need for the Film Censorship Board (LPF) to filter and ban the screening of violent films.

Practical

The purpose of this study is to measure the impact of violent in films towards violent behaviour, in the hope that the youth will not be affected, unaware and constrained by what they watched in those films. In addition, it is hoped that they can interpret the information from the violent actions in the films and not just to follow sensational stories created by the media with profit motive.

Theory

This research applies the Cultivation Theory that indicates that watching television will influence the viewers' perception of their daily life. Therefore, this study hopes to contribute to the previous body of literature through the theory on the subjects related to the exposure to violence in the media and viewers' behaviour.

Method

Quantitative method is applied to this study regarding the application of violent actions in Tamil films on Indian teenagers by examining the effects in their daily life. Thus, the method gives an alternative to future researchers to use this instrument for research related to viewing violent films.

1.6   Scope and Limitation of the study

1.6.1   Scope

This study focuses on the influence of media violence towards Indian teenagers' behaviour. There are two variables used in this study. First variable is the independent variable involving watching violent acts in television while the dependent variable involves Indian teenagers' behaviour.

This study also focuses on element such as attitudes towards violence in Tamil films; beliefs towards violence by viewing violence in Tamil film and feelings after viewing violence in Tamil films.

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1.6.2   Limitation

The sample selection for this study is limited because only a small group of Indian teenagers aged group 15 to 19 years old from Selangor area involved in this study.

The study uses variables such as the effect of media violence on teenagers' behaviour only. Other variables such as the physical condition of teenagers, intelligence, personality and other factors are not accounted in this study. Besides that, the study is also limited in terms of the sample of questionnaire. This is because the results are highly dependent on the integrity of the sample when answering the questionnaire.

1.7   Definition of keywords

Violence

According to Anderson and Bushman (2001), violence refers to the extreme forms of aggression, such as physical assault and murder.

Teenagers

Based on the World Health Organisation (WHO), 2011, teenagers are those who is in the age group of 10-19 years. It is the period characterised by physical, psychological and social changes and they can be classified into two groups: early age group of teenagers is between 10-14 years while late age group of teenagers is between 15-19 years. Therefore, late group teenagers are more mature in making decisions (Anonymous b, 2014). In this study, it is referring to the Indian teenagers' aged group between 15 to 19 years old.

Behaviour

Behaviour includes an activity and action, a performance, respond and reaction of whatever is said and done by an individual (Martin & Pear 2006). In this study, it is referring to the teenagers' behaviour after watching violence in Tamil films.

Attitude

Attitude is defined as a"favourable or unfavourable reaction to a situation, individual, object or concept" (Jantan, Hamdan, Yahya & Salleh, 2015). In this context, attitude indicates teenagers' level of reaction after watching violence in Tamil films.

Belief

Allen (2010) stated that belief is a judgement of what is true or false and the attributes are linked to a given thing. In this study, the term refers to an individual belief toward violence from watching Tamil films.

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Feelings

Feelings are the emotional side of someone's character; emotional responses or tendencies to respond (Ober, 2009). In this study, the term refers to individual feelings in watching violent scenes in Tamil films.

1.8   Summary

This chapter covers the introduction, problem statement, research question, research objectives, significant of the study, scope and limitation of the study as well as the definition of keywords. The next chapter will look at past studies on the issues discussed.

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