

Television content related fears: Preschoolers and their parents' perceptions.

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degree of Master of Arts (Counselling Psychology) at the
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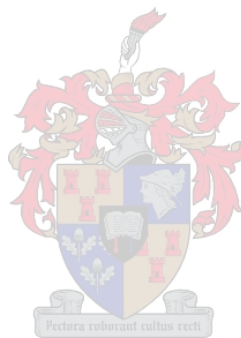
April 2005

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare the work contained in this assignment is my own original work, and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

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SUMMARY

The primary aim of the present study was to determine what the television content related fears of a sample of preschool children are and their parents' perceptions thereof. The secondary aim was to establish whether there are differences between the television content related fears with regard to the different age groups and gender groups used in the present study. The sample of 67 participants consisted of 11 four year olds, 29 five year olds and 27 six year olds. Data were obtained by conducting child-friendly semi-structured individual interviews, using a questionnaire as guideline, with a sample of preschool children. The parents or legal guardian of the participants completed similar questionnaires, in which the perceptions of the parents about the television content related fears of their children were obtained. The questions focused on the programmes the participants preferred watching and the contents of the programmes that elicit fear in them. The sample size used in the study was small and the researcher was very careful not to make generalisations regarding the findings. The results, presented in a descriptive manner, nevertheless indicated that the participants were experiencing television content related fears. Although the four-year-old group reported more age appropriate fears, it seemed that the older the participants are, the more television related their fears become. Boys in general reported more television related fears than the girls. Parents seem to be aware of the contents of the fears of their children. Limitations in the present study were mentioned and recommendations for further studies regarding television content related childhood fears were made.

OPSOMMING

Die primêre doelwit van hierdie navorsing was om vas te stel wat die televisie inhoudverwante vrese van 'n groep voorskoolse kinders is, asook wat die groep kinders se ouers se persepsie rakende hulle kinders se televisie inhoudverwante vrese is. Die sekondêre doelwit was om vas te stel of daar verskille is in die televisie inhoudverwante vrese van seuns en meisies en verskille tussen die verskillende ouderdomsgroepe in die steekproef. Die steekproef van 67 deelnemers is saamgestel uit 11 vierjariges, 29 vyfjariges en 27 sesjariges. Data is ingesamel deur kindervriendelike semi-gestruktureerde individuele onderhoude met elk van die deelnemers in die steekproef te voer. Die onderhoude is gedoen aan hand van 'n vraelys. Soortgelyke vraelyste, waarin die persepsies van die ouers oor hulle kinders se televisieervante vrese bepaal is, is deur die biologiese ouer of wettige voog van die deelnemers in die steekproef ingevul. Die vrae het gefokus op televisie-programme wat die deelnemers verkies om na te kyk en die inhoud van die programme wat vrees by die kinders aanwakker. Die steekproef wat in hierdie navorsing gebruik is, was klein en die navorser is versigtig om veralgemenings te maak op grond van die bevindinge. Die bevindinge, aangebied op 'n beskrywende wyse, dui daarop dat kinders wel vrese ervaar wat verband hou met die inhoud van televisieprogramme. Alhoewel die vierjarige groep 'n groter frekwensie ouderdomsgepaste vrese aangedui het, is daar aanduidings in die resultate dat hoe ouer die deelnemers raak, hoe meer hou hulle vrese verband met die inhoud van televisieprogramme. Seuns het oor die algemeen meer vrese aangedui wat verband hou met die inhoud van televisieprogramme as meisies. Die wil voorkom of ouers wel bewus is van hulle kinders se vrese. Daar was sekere tekortkominge in die navorsing wat aangedui is en aanbevelings vir verdere navorsing rakende televisie inhoudverwante vrese van kinders is gemaak.

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The Honours in Psychology class of 2003.

All my family and friends who supported me and believed in me.



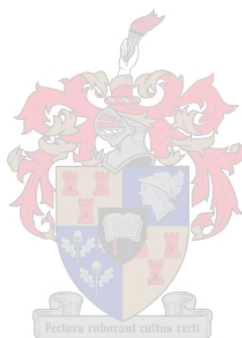
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Introduction

The motivation for the present study was based on obtaining a better psychological understanding of the preschool child's world, to determine whether television content is related to childhood fears, and also to determine parents' perceptions in the above regard.

To date most of the research studies relating to the influence of television on the development of children were mainly undertaken in the United States of America. These studies mainly focused on the influence of violence in television content on children. Only a few studies concerning television and the influence of violence in television content were done in South Africa. None of these studies focused on the target group 4 to 6 year olds. As far as the researcher could establish, no South African studies focused on television content and the relation to childhood fears.

The social relevancy of the present study with regard to the South African context lies parallel to the South African Government's criteria of fostering children's physical, mental, emotional, moral and social development, as stated in the White Paper for Social Welfare (Government Gazette, 1997).

Most children, especially young children, watch television. According to Comstock (cited in Botha, van Ede, Louw, Louw & Ferns, 1998) some studies indicated that children watch television fairly regularly at the age of six months and when they are three years old, they are regular television viewers. Eighteen-year-old American children would have spent more time watching television than any other activity, except for sleep. Moreover, their experience regarding television would begin long before their exposure to school or in many cases, any socialisation agent other than family (Husten, Wright, Rice, Kerkman & St Peters, 1990 cited in Dworetzky, 1996). The American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP) (cited in Certain & Kahn, 2002) recommended that children two years and older should watch less than two hours television per day and that children younger than two years should not watch any television. In a study by Certain and Kahn (2002) it was found that a substantial number of children begin watching television at an earlier age and in higher numbers than the AAP recommended. They also found that these patterns persist into childhood. They recommended that preventative research on television viewing should target toddlers and their families.

Schlozman (2003) stated that after examining more than 10 000 hours of television programmes between 1994 and 1997, the National Television Violence Study in the United States of America concluded that young children view about 10 000 violent scenes per year. More than half of all television programmes contained violent content. Children programmes contain about 20 violent scenes per hour, compared to an average of 8 – 12 scenes per hour in all other programmes. These include violent scenes in cartoons. According to Van Vuuren and Kriel (cited in Botha et al., 1998) an average of six violent incidents in television programmes viewed, were recorded during a study on South African television content. These television programmes were viewed during prime time.

The *primary aim* of this study was to establish what the television content related fears of a sample of preschool children were, and what their parents' perceptions of such fears were.

The *secondary aim* of this study was to establish whether there were differences in the television content related fears with regard to the different age groups, and gender groups.

1.1 Defining Key Constructs

1.1.1 Preschool children

The target group of the present study was preschool children between four and six years old who were attending a preschool in the Stellenbosch region for at least six months prior to assessment. The preschool has a multi-cultural and multi-linguistic nature and the children were represented according to the different socio-economic status levels from the community.

1.1.2 Television related fear in preschool children

For the purpose of the study, television content related fears will be fears that were induced by the content of those television programmes that the participants watched. The fears reported by the participants in question 7, "*Is there a programme that scares you?*" and question 8, "*What scares you?*" were categorised as *television content related*.

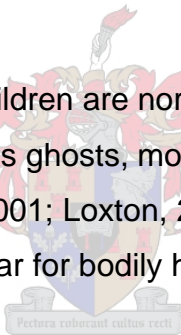
Cantor and Nathanson (cited in Cantor, 2001) reported in a survey done in 1996 that 43% of a random sample of parents of elementary school children stated that their children had experienced enduring fright as a function of exposure to television. In another survey done by Gentile and Walsh (cited in Cantor, 2001) in 1999 they reported that 62% of

parents with children between the ages of 2 and 17, used in their survey, said that their child had become scared of something they saw on television.

Fear is regarded as part of the normal emotional development of children (Botha et al., 1998). It is usually caused by a specific object or situation and is described as a normal reaction to a real or an imagined threat that disappears when the specific threat is withdrawn or the child is removed from the situation. A fear is a present-orientated emotional reaction to current danger. It involves behavioural expressions and feelings and psychological changes are also present (Mash & Wolfe, 2002).

Learning theory states that fears are learnt and that environmental factors could contribute to the development of a fear. Violent television content or frightening images on television could cause fear in children. Cognitive theory states that fear in preschoolers develops because of their intense fantasies, imaginations and their inability to distinguish between fantasy and reality (Botha et al., 1998).

Between the ages of three to eight, children are normally frightened primarily by animals, the dark, supernatural beings – such as ghosts, monsters, witches and anything that looks strange or moves suddenly (Cantor, 2001; Loxton, 2004; Martalas, 1999; Muris et al, 2000). Bauer (1976) concluded that fear for bodily harm increases with age and fear for fantasy objects decreases with age.



Morris and Kratochwill (cited in Botha et al., 1998) listed the following as developmental age-appropriate fears for the different age groups used in this study:

Table 1

Developmental age-appropriate fears

Age	Fear
4 Years	Separation from parents, animals, the dark, noise.
5 Years	Animals, “bad people”, the dark, separation from parents.
6 Years	Supernatural creatures, the dark, media events (reports on war, violence, kidnapping of a child), being alone at home, separation from parents.

Adapted from Morris and Kratochwill (cited in Botha et al., 1998, p. 271).

1.2.3 Gender

A distinction is made between the perception of the boys (n = 37) and the girls (n = 30) for the purpose of the present study.



1.2.4 Age

The following age groups were distinguished, four year olds (n = 11), five year olds (n = 29) and six year olds (n = 27) for the purpose of the present study.

1.2.5 Parent

Parent is defined as either the biological parent or legal guardian of the children interviewed.

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review revealed that only a few research studies have been done in South Africa regarding the influence of television on the development of children. Some of the studies encountered were those of Van Vuuren (1979), Strydom (1989) and Botha (1996). Zwane (current) from the University of North West is busy with research concerning

children's understanding of reality on television and the influence of parental guidance in television viewing.

Internationally, research points to the following tendencies regarding television content and early childhood viewing:

Excessive television viewing was linked with higher rates in violent behaviour, obesity and poor school performances amongst children (Certain & Kahn, 2002; Schlozman, 2003).

A longitudinal study over a 15-year period by Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski and Eron (2003) concluded that childhood exposure to media violence predicts young adult aggressive behaviour. Their results indicated that men and women, who were high frequency television-violence viewers as children, were more likely to respond aggressively to other people's actions. They also found that violent programmes and films that probably had the most deleterious effects on children were not always those that adults believed to be the most violent.

The violent scenes, on which children are most likely to model their behaviour, are the ones where these children identify with the perpetrator of the violence, when the perpetrator is rewarded for the violence and in which children perceive the scene as reality (Bandura cited in Bushman & Huesmann, 2001). Young children do not always fully grasp the fictional nature of a television programme (Calvert, 1999; Livingstone, 1998).

Because of their cognitive functioning in the preoperational stage, young children believe that television characters, and the actors that portray them, are the same person and also believe that the characters in cartoons are real (Botha et al., 1998; Du Toit & Nel, 1975; Shaffer, 1999). Husten et al. (cited in Wright, Husten, Reitz & Piemyat, 1994) indicate that studies with children younger than eight years showed that children in this age group did not understand the more abstract elements of social reality. They were able to compare what they saw on television with their own experience, but other aspects of social reality that were not comparable with their experiences would have little meaning to them. Social reality is that even though the child knows that the story is scripted and acted, he or she still judges it as real because it is thought that the people and events are similar to those in the real world (Wright et al., 1994). Prior to age eight children process programme content in a piecemeal fashion. They are likely to be captivated by zoom, fast-paced action, loud

music and the cartoon characters' voices. Preschool children are, therefore, usually unable to construct a causal chain of events leading from the beginning to the end of a story. They would rather merely recall the relevant action scenes (Calvert, 1999; Lorch & Castle, 1997; Shaffer, 1999). A study by Schmitt, Anderson and Collins (1999) indicated that the preschool television viewers' attention was related to content in addition to salient features. According to these researchers, children prefer watching action in programmes. Cartoon viewing increases until the age of five and then levels off (Husten, Wright, Marquis & Green, 1999). Martalas (1999) reported a fear of dinosaurs that could be linked directly to the film, Jurassic Park. The children experienced a fictional character as real, which in turn elicited a fear. This finding supports the notion by Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Cantor and Hoffner (1990) that the media, film and television industry, as part of the ecosystem, could influence the developing of a fear.

Cantor (2002) stated that it was sometimes hard to predict what preschoolers' reactions to media would be, because it was difficult for adults to remember how they themselves perceived the world and reasoned about what was happening in the world when they were young. According to her, preschoolers react to television content by believing everything they see on television. Research has shown that the television content and movies that frightened preschoolers would typically contain grotesque, scary-looking characters. Cantor listed the following as images and themes in media presentations and television content that scared preschoolers: vicious animals, witches, monsters, images of disasters (natural, accidents, visual images of intense violence), series that involve the death of a parent or a child in danger and productions involving intense audio features.

Muris, Merckelbach, Gadet and Moulart (2000) reported that the most common fears of four to 12-year-old children were the following: animals, imaginary creatures, being kidnapped and social threats, such as being teased. They studied the content, developmental pattern and the origin of fears, worries and scary dreams of a group of children. According to Piaget's cognitive developmental theory children in the age group four to six are still in the preoperational stage. During this stage, cognitive abilities are restricted, so anxiety is concerned with the immediate, concrete threats. Children in this stage are prone to magical thinking and this may result in fears of imaginary creatures. Their study also revealed that the developmental patterns of fears were similar among boys and girls and that fears and scary dreams were fairly common among four to six year olds.

Muris, Merckelbach, Mayer and Prins (2000) concluded that common childhood fears were not only frequent, but also that these fears reflected significant anxiety problems in some of the children used in that study. They concluded that there was a need for early intervention programmes for childhood anxiety problems. Muris and Merckelbach (2000) deduced after their survey that children reported specific fears and that there was evidence that these common specific fears were true for a wide variety of cultures.

Cantor and Reilly (cited in Cantor, 2001) noted that parents are often unaware of the frequency or severity of their children's fear reactions. In their study the parents' estimates of the frequency of their children's media-induced fright reactions were lower than their children's self reported media-induced fright reactions. Spirek's (1993) research stated that parents were not sensitive to their children's cognitive development and their children's responses to frightening media. Brewin et al. (cited in Muris & Merckelbach, 2000) indicated that there were some indications that parents underestimated the problems of the children.

1.4 Theoretical context

It is important to understand the development of the child and the child's everyday environment. The ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986) is applied as framework for the present study. Other theories, such as Piaget's cognitive developmental theory (Brems, 2002; Piaget, 1972), the social-learning theory of Bandura (1977), and Erikson's psychosocial developmental theory (1963), are applied within the framework.

The ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986) describes all the factors influencing the child and his/her development. In the present study the main focus is on the micro system (the child's relation with the parent) as well on the ecosystem (the child in relation to the media) and the influence of the systems on the development of the child.

According to Bronfenbrenner the environment and circumstances in which the child grows up, plays an important role in his/her development. He describes these circumstances or factors as systems that exist simultaneously at different levels. These systems have an influence on the development of the child and, therefore, on childhood fears. The micro system represents the child's immediate circumstances. It includes the home, school and relation with parents.

Piaget (1972) describes the child between the ages 4 to 7 year old as being in the intuitive period within the preoperational stage of development. It is difficult for the child to distinguish between fantasy and reality. At the end of this stage the child would have developed a distinction between real and fictional stimuli.

According to Erikson (1963) the development of initiative is prevalent amongst children between the ages of 4 to 6 years old. They develop initiative through frequent challenges and exploring. They acquire guilt when they act against the wishes of their parents in their attempts to explore and master challenges. Parents play an important role in this development. Unresolved conflicts and guilt could have a negative influence on their development. At this stage children become aware of both their own and also of other people's emotions. They are able to recognise and describe basic emotions, such as happiness, fear, anxiety, anger and sadness (Botha et al., 1998). The assumption is made that children at this age (4 to 6 years) can report on their fears when asked. Borke's research (cited in Martalas, 1999) supports this assumption.

Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986) views the ecosystem not only as a system that involves the child as an active participant, but also as a system that is affected by what happens to the child. The media – and specifically television in the present study – are part of the ecosystem. Cantor and Hoffner (1990) concluded that television had an influence on children's fears. Botha, van Ede and Piek (1992) referred to studies regarding the effect of television on children and concluded that television had both a negative and positive effect on children.

2 METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

2.1 Research design

The research was conducted in order to address the primary and secondary aims of the present study. The study was done in a descriptive and an exploratory nature.

2.2 Participants

All children from the ages of four to six, attending the specific preschool, and their parents were included in the present study. The final sample of 67 participants consisted of 11 four year olds, 29 five year olds and 27 six year olds. There were 37 boys and 30 girls. Of the potential 67 parents, 43 responded by completing the questionnaires voluntarily.

According to the preference of the participants, the interviews were conducted and the questionnaires completed either in Afrikaans or in English.

2.3 Measuring instruments

Data collection was primarily done by means of an individual semi-structured interview of approximately seventy-five minutes per participant and the completion of a questionnaire.

2.3.1 Semi-structured interview combined with drawings

A semi-structured interview, based on a questionnaire as guideline (see Addendum A), was conducted whilst the children made drawings of “something they saw on television” (see Addendum E).

Each participant was asked to make a drawing of something they saw on television. Van der Merwe and Jacobs (1992) stated that a child's drawing is a symbol of reality to which the child attaches meaning. Drawings, according to Jenkins (cited in Van der Merwe & Jacobs, 1992) are a means by which a child communicates ideas about himself and his environment. Bruner (cited in Bauer, 1976) aimed the use of drawings to facilitate communication in young children.

Ryall and Dietiker (1978) reported that the associations for the word '*fear*', preferred by preschoolers of 4 to 6 years old in their study, were *afraid, scared and nervous*. '*Scared*' was the term used in the present study. The question asked by the interviewer was: “What scares you?” (see Addendum A). The question was specifically focused on television content related fears. The question followed a series of specific questions regarding television and the respondents' television viewing.

One of the major goals of an interview with a child is to establish a meaningful relationship and to gather information (Brems, 2002). Ways to establish the meaningful relationship include free-play, open-ended questions, drawings and story telling. Brems (2002) highlights the importance of the child feeling safe with the interviewer and that the interviewer should establish an environment of trust, respect and flexibility. The interviewer also needs to be friendly, enthusiastic, interested, creative, nondirective, accepting, and spontaneous. When interviewing a child the interviewer should use simple language and focus on the child's needs. These guidelines were incorporated in the students', who collected the data, training procedure.

2.3.2 Questionnaire for children

A questionnaire (see Addendum A) was completed during a semi-structured interview.

The following information was obtained:

- Sex
- Age
- Home language
- The television programmes they like most
- Why they like the programmes
- The television programmes they do not like
- Why they do not like the programmes
- The television programme that scares them
- What scares them in the programme

2.3.3 Questionnaire for parents

A questionnaire (see Addendum B) – similar to the one used regarding the children – was completed by either a biological parent or legal guardian.

2.4 Procedure

During 2003 the data were obtained by conducting individual interviews with the children at the relevant preschool. Permission was obtained from the school to conduct the research.

Individual semi-structured interviews were conducted by Honours Psychology students. The students had to undertake a research project for the module Child Psychology by practical observation of young children and conducting an individual semi-structured interview with the aim to observe normal child behaviour within the South African multi-cultural context. These students received prior training in interviewing young children. Each interview was conducted in a child friendly manner. Rapport was achieved by means of drawings and the questions were asked in a non-threatening way. Following the initial establishment of rapport, the drawings were used as a medium of further communication with the children. Each interview was concluded with a story to normalise any possible negative feelings that may have arisen.

The parents of the participants were invited to participate in the proposed research study by a letter (see Addenda C and D). One of the biological parents or the legal guardian of the child was requested to complete the questionnaire without discussing the answers with his/her child.

The research procedure adhered to the principles of the APA ethical code. There were no physical risks involved in the research study. All research was done in the best interests of the children and complete confidentiality of all participants was assured (Edwards & Louw, 1998).

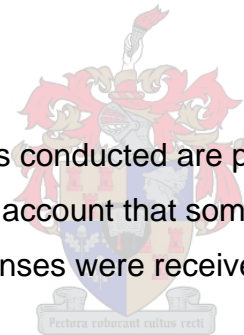
2.5 Statistical Techniques and Method of Analysis

The data were obtained in a quantitative and a qualitative manner, but were mainly processed in a quantitative manner. The analyses were done with the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) (Babbie, 2004; George & Mallery, 1999).

3. RESULTS

3.1 Introduction

The results of the statistical analyses conducted are presented in this section. During the statistical analyses it was taken into account that some of the questionnaires were not completed correctly or that no responses were received in some instances.



3.2 Descriptive Analyses

The focus in this section is on the exploration of the descriptive analyses of the data in order to address both the primary and the secondary aims of the present study.

The results will be presented and discussed under the following sub-headings:

- 3.2.1 Composition of the sample used in the present study
- 3.2.2 Content of fears reported by the participants in the present study
- 3.2.3 The perceptions of the parents regarding the content of their children's fears
- 3.2.4 Television programmes watched by the participants in the present study

3.2.1 Composition of the sample used in the present study

The age and gender distribution of the children in the sample used in the present study appears in Table 2.

Table 2

Age and gender distribution of participants

	Four year olds	Five year olds	Six year olds	
Boys	6	19	12	n = 37
Girls	5	10	15	n = 30
Total	11	29	27	N = 67

The participants consisted of 55,22% boys and 44,78% girls. The five year old group (40,30%) was the largest and the four year old group (16,42%) the smallest group amongst the participants.

Of the 67 questionnaires handed out to parents, 43 were completed. The response rate of 64,18% represents a high response rate. The high response rate allows for the assumption that, with certain boundaries of error, the feedback may be considered to be representative of the parents' perceptions of the content of their children fears.

3.2.2 Content of fears reported by the participants in the present study

In Table 4 the content of fears reported by the children are tabled according to four categories: *age appropriate fears* (based on the content presented in Table 1), *television related*, *other* and *no response*. This was done for the different age groups used in the present study. *Other* was used when the fear mentioned by the participant could not be related to *age appropriate fears* or a *television programme content* fear. Responses, such as "don't know," were categorised as "other". When a child did not respond to a question the response was indicated as "no response".

Table 3

Distribution of content of fears according to participants' age

Age group	FEARS			
	Age appropriate	TV related	Other	No response
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Four (n = 11)	4,48 (3)	2,99 (2)	1,49 (1)	7,46 (5)
Five (n = 29)	10,45 (7)	14,93 (10)	1,49 (1)	16,42 (11)
Six (n = 27)	11,94 (8)	16,42 (11)	1,49 (1)	10,45 (7)
Total (N = 67)	26,87 (18)	34,34 (23)	4,47 (3)	32,84 (23)

It seems that most of the reported fears experienced by the participants were television content related (34,34%), although it needs to be borne in mind that there were 32,84% no responses.

In Tables 4, 5 and 6 the content of fears experienced by the participants were divided according to the different age groups and gender.



Table 4

Distribution of content of fears of four year olds

Gender				
	Age appropriate	TV related	Other	No response
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Boys (n = 6)	18,18 (2)	18,18 (2)	9,09 (1)	9,09 (1)
Girls (n = 5)	9,09 (1)	0,00 (0)	0,00 (0)	36,36 (4)
Total (N = 11)	27,27 (3)	18,18 (2)	9,09 (1)	45,45 (5)

According to Table 4 the four-year-old boys in the sample used, equally reported age appropriate (18,18%) and television content related (18,18%) fears. There was a 45,45% no responses that need to be taken into consideration.

The responses of the five-year-old group in the sample used appear in Table 5.

Table 5

Distribution of content of fears of five year olds

Gender	Age appropriate	TV related	Other	No response
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Boys (n = 19)	13,79 (4)	20,69 (6)	3,45 (1)	27,59 (8)
Girls (n = 10)	10,35 (3)	13,79 (4)	0,00 (0)	10,35 (3)
Total (N = 29)	24,14 (7)	34,48 (10)	3,45 (1)	37,94 (11)

According to the responses it seems that most of the fears are television content related (34,48%), but it needs to be considered that there were 37,94% “no responses” recorded in the category.

In Table 6 the responses of the six-year-olds are shown.

Table 6

Distribution of content of fears of six year olds

Gender	Age appropriate	TV related	Other	No response
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Boys (n = 12)	11,11 (3)	22,22 (6)	0,00 (0)	11,11 (3)
Girls (n = 15)	18,52 (5)	18,52 (5)	3,70 (1)	14,82 (4)
Total (N = 27)	29,63 (8)	40,74 (11)	3,70 (1)	25,93 (7)

According to Table 6 it is indicated that 40,74% of the fears of six year old boys and girls are television content related. In the category “no response” 25,93% were recorded.

Table 7 makes provision for the distribution of content of fears according to the gender of the participants in the present study.

Table 7

Distribution of content of fears according to gender

Gender	Age appropriate	TV related	Other	No response
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Boys (n = 37)	13,43 (9)	20,89 (14)	2,99 (2)	17,91 (12)
Girls (n = 30)	13,43 (9)	13,43 (9)	1,49 (1)	16,42 (11)
Total (N = 67)	26,86 (18)	26,86 (18)	4,48 (3)	34,34 (23)

It seems according to Table 7 that the boys (20,89%) are experiencing more television content related fears than the girls (13,43%) used in the sample. However the 34,34% “no responses” must be taken into account.

3.2.3 The perceptions of the parents of the participants in the present study regarding the content of their children's fears

The responses of the parents on their perceptions regarding the content of their children's fears, according to the age groups used in the study, appears in Table 8.

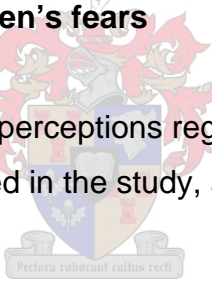


Table 8

Distribution of content of fears according to age groups: parents' perception

Age group	Age appropriate	TV related	Other	Don't know	No response
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Four (n = 11)	2,99 (2)	2,99 (2)	0,00 (0)	1,49 (1)	7,46 (5)
Five (n = 29)	4,48 (3)	10,45 (7)	1,49 (1)	4,48 (3)	16,42 (11)
Six (n = 27)	4,48 (3)	5,97 (4)	0,00 (0)	2,99 (2)	26,87 (18)
Total (N = 67)	11,95 (8)	19,41 (13)	1,49 (1)	8,96 (6)	50,75 (34)

According to Table 8, parents perceive the content of their children's fears mostly as television related (19,41%). There was a 50,74% “no response”. A response was

indicated as a “no response” when a parent did not respond on the question either by not filling in a response or by not completing the questionnaire.

The parents' responses on their perception regarding the content of their children's fears are tabled according to the gender of the participants in Table 9.

Table 9

Distribution of content of fears according to gender: parents' perception

Gender	Age appropriate	TV related	Other	Don't know	No response
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Boys (n = 37)	11,94 (8)	8,96 (6)	0,00 (0)	7,46 (5)	26,87 (18)
Girls (n = 30)	0,00 (0)	10,45 (7)	1,49 (1)	1,49 (1)	31,34 (21)
Total (N = 67)	11,94 (8)	19,41 (13)	1,49 (1)	8,95 (6)	58,21 (39)

According to Table 9 the parents of the girls in the sample perceive the content of the fears of their children as television related (10,45%) and none (0,00%) as age appropriate. The parents of the boys reported that their children's fears are more age appropriate (11,94%). However, the high no response (58,21%) should be taken into account. 8,95% of the parents used in the present study were not aware of what scared their children.

Data were also collected on how much time per day the participants in the present study spent watching television. The information was supplied by the parents and appears in Table 10.

Table 10

Hours spent per day watching television by the participants: parents' perception

Hours	Age			Total = 67
	4 year old	5 year old	6 year old	
	n	n	n	
Do not watch	2	1	0	3
0 – 1	1	5	5	11
1 – 2	2	4	4	10
2 – 4	1	6	4	11
4 – 6	0	2	0	2
6 – 8	0	1	0	1
more than 8	0	0	1	1
no response	5	10	13	28
Total (n)	11	10	13	

According to Table 10, 15 (38,46%) of the participants spend more than two hours per day watching television. Three of the parents responded that their children “do not watch” television.

3.2.4 Television programmes watched by the participants in the present study

Television programmes were categorised under seven headings (see Tables 11 and 12) for the purpose of the present study, while categories for “don’t know” and “no response” were also indicated. The programmes that the participants in the present study prefer watching across the different age groups were listed in Table 11 for boys and in Table 12 for girls respectively.

Table 11

Television programmes that boys preferred watching, according to age distribution

Programmes	Age groups		
	four years old	five years old	six years old
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Cartoons	5,41 (2)	16,22 (6)	13,51 (5)
Educational	2,70 (1)	5,41 (2)	2,70 (1)
Children's' stories	0,00 (0)	5,41 (2)	0,00 (0)
Videos	0,00 (0)	2,70 (1)	0,00(0)
Animals	2,70 (1)	0,00 (0)	0,00 (0)
Sport	0,00 (0)	2,70 (1)	0,00 (0)
Action	2,70 (1)	13,51 (5)	16,22 (6)
Don't know	2,70 (0)	0,00 (0)	0,00 (0)
No response	0,00 (0)	5,41 (2)	0,00 (0)
TOTAL (n = 37)	16,21 (5)	51,36 (19)	32,43 (12)

According to Table 11 it appears that the four-year-old boys used in the present study preferred watching cartoons (5,41%) such as *Scooby Doo*. The five-year-old boys watched programmes where the content was cartoons (16,22%) such as *Cartoon Network* and *Scooby Doo* and action related (13,51%) such as *Spiderman* and *Superman*. The six year old boys watched more programmes where the content was action related, such as *Spiderman*, *Superman* and *Batman* (16,22%) as well as cartoons such as *Scooby Doo*, *Cartoon Network*, *Dragonball-Z* and *Pokémon* (13,51%).

Table 12

Television programmes that girls preferred watching, according to age distribution

Programmes	Age groups		
	four year old	five year old	six year old
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)
Cartoons	6,67 (2)	10,00 (3)	23,33 (7)
Educational	0,00 (3)	16,67 (5)	13,33 (4)
Children's stories	0,00 (0)	3,33 (1)	6,67 (2)
Videos	0,00 (0)	0,00 (0)	3,33 (1)
Action	0,00 (0)	0,00 (0)	3,33 (1)
Don't know	0,00 (0)	3,33 (1)	0,00 (0)
TOTAL (n = 30)	16,67 (5)	33,33 (10)	49,99 (15)

According to Table 12 it appears that the girls preferred watching cartoons, such as *Barbie girl*, *Tweenies*, *Spunch Bob*, *Tom and Jerry* and educational programmes, such as *Tekelani Sesame*, *Barney* and *Teletubies*. The four year olds preferred watching programmes of an educational nature (10,00%) such as *Barney* and *Teletubies*. The same tendency was observed with the five year old girls. There was, however, a difference in programme content watched by the four and five year old girls compared to the six year olds respectively. The six year olds preferred programmes relating to cartoons (23,33%), such as *K-TV* and *Cartoon Network*.

In Table 13 (boys) and Table 14 (girls) the television programmes are listed that the participants reported to be scary.

Table 13

Television programmes that the boys reported to be scary, according to age distribution

Programmes	Age groups			Total (n)
	four year old % (n)	five year old % (n)	six year old % (n)	
Cartoons	0,00 (0)	2,70 (1)	2,70 (1)	5,41 (2)
Children's stories	0,00 (0)	5,41 (2)	0,00 (0)	5,41 (2)
Animals	0,00 (0)	2,70 (1)	0,00 (0)	2,70 (1)
Music videos	0,00 (0)	0,00 (0)	2,70 (1)	2,70 (1)
Action	2,70 (1)	8,19 (3)	8,19 (3)	18,92 (7)
Thrillers	0,00 (0)	5,41 (2)	13,51 (5)	18,92 (7)
Don't know	8,19 (3)	16,22 (6)	5,41 (2)	29,73 (11)
No response	5,41 (2)	10,81 (4)	0,00 (0)	16,22 (6)
TOTAL (n = 37)	16,21 (6)	51,36 (19)	32,43 (12)	*100,01

*Not all percentages add up to 100 due to rounding

According to Table 13, 37,84% of the boys in the present study were scared by action programmes and thrillers, such as *Scary Movie*, *Scream*, *Chucky*, *Hulk*, *Batman*, *X-men* and *Spiderman*. However, 45,95% of the participants responded by “*don't know*” and “*no response*”. Five of these participants that responded by “*don't know*” and “*no response*” were four year olds.

Table 14

Television programmes that girls reported to be scary, according to age distribution

Programmes	Age groups			Total (n)
	four year old	five year old	six year old	
	% (n)	% (n)	% (n)	
Cartoons	0,00 (0)	3,33 (1)	3,33 (1)	6,67 (2)
Adult programmes	0,00 (0)	0,00 (0)	3,33 (1)	3,33 (1)
Animals	3,33 (1)	0,00 (0)	0,00 (0)	3,33 (1)
Action	0,00 (0)	3,33 (1)	13,33 (4)	16,67 (5)
Thrillers	0,00 (0)	10,00 (3)	6,67 (2)	16,67 (5)
Don't know	0,00 (0)	10,00 (3)	13,33 (4)	23,33 (7)
No response	13,33 (4)	6,67 (2)	10,00 (3)	30,00 (9)
TOTAL (n = 30)	16,67 (5)	33,33 (10)	49,99 (15)	

According to Table 14, 33,34% of the girls in the present study were scared by programmes, such as *Scary Movie*, *Scream*, *Creepy movie*, *Superman* and *Spiderman*. The content of these programmes could be termed as action and thriller related. There was a 53,33% “no response” and “don't know” response.

The television programmes that the participants reported to watch are categorised in Table 15 according to gender and the categories used in Tables 11 to 14. The amount of responses equals the amount of children that reported watching the specific programme.

Table 15

Television programmes generally watched by the participants, according to gender distribution (Boys N= 81; Girls N= 67)

Programmes	Gender		Gender	
	Boys	(n)	Girls	(n)
Cartoons	Scooby Doo	(5)	K-TV	(8)
	Tom & Jerry	(1)	Barbie girl	(3)
	Cartoon network	(3)	Tweenies	(2)
	Dragonball-Z	(7)	Popeye	(2)
	Jackie Chang	(1)	Tom & Jerry	(5)
	Power Rangers	(2)	Spunch Bob	(1)
	Pokémon	(2)	Power Puff Girls	(3)
	Spunch Bob	(5)	Dragonball-Z	(1)
Educational			Craz-e	(1)
			Cow & Chicken	(1)
	Teletubbies	(7)	Barney	(2)
			Takelane Sesame	(3)
			Teletubbies	(7)
Children stories	Pinochio	(1)	School TV	(2)
	Jungle Book	(1)	Pinochio	(2)
Videos	Lion King	(1)	Peter Pan	(2)
Adult programmes			Stuart Little	(1)
			7de Laan	(2)
			Egoli	(2)
Animal programmes	Animal planet	(1)	Spider programmes	(1)
Music videos	Thriller (Michael Jackson)	(1)		
Sport	Motorcycle	(1)		
Action	Batman	(6)	Superman	(2)
	Hulk	(1)	Spiderman	(3)
	Blade	(1)	Batman	(1)
	X-men	(1)		
	Spiderman	(16)		
	Superman	(3)		
Thrillers	Scream	(8)	Scary Movie	(5)
	Scary movie	(4)	Scream	(2)
	Chucky	(2)	Creepy movie	(2)
			Six Feet Under	(1)

According to Table 15, both the boys and the girls in the present study were watching an extended number of action programmes, thrillers and cartoons. It is notable and worrying that all the action programmes and thrillers these participants watched had an age restriction of 13 or higher.

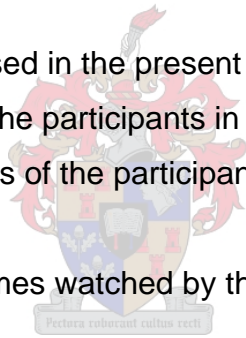
4. DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The primary aim of this study was to establish what the television content related fears of a sample of preschool children were and what their parents' perceptions were regarding these fears. The secondary aim of this study was to establish whether there were differences in the television content related fears with regard to the different age and gender groups.

The most significant findings of the present study will be discussed under the following subheadings:

- 4.2 Composition of the sample used in the present study
- 4.3 Content of fears reported by the participants in the present study
- 4.4 The perceptions of the parents of the participants regarding the content of their children's fears
- 4.5 Preferred television programmes watched by the participants



The researcher is very careful not to make any generalisations regarding the findings, since a small sample size was used in the present study.

4.2 Composition of the sample used in the present study

The gender representation of the participants consisted of 55,22% boys and 44,78% girls. According to the age representation it should be taken into consideration that the four-year-old group represented only 16,42% of the sample group and were thus not well represented. The researcher is, therefore, careful not to make assumptions regarding the four year olds' television content related fears.

4.3 Content of fears reported by the participants in the present study

The content of the expressed fears of the participants' seemed to be more television content related than age appropriate fears, according to Table 3. The responses of the participants in the category "*television related*" could be directly linked to the content of

specific television programmes, such as *“the green goblin” in Spiderman*, *“the monster” in Scooby Doo*, *“the white mask” in Scream*. Extracts from drawings, used to facilitate communication in the interviews, *“the green goblin”* (participant 2) and *“the killer in Scream”* (participant 49) supports this notion (see Addendum E). It appears that the older the participants become, the more television content related their fears become (see Table 3).

According to Table 4 it seems that the four-year-old participants experienced more age appropriate fears like *“the dark”*, *“ghosts”* and *“monsters”*, as concluded by various researchers (Cantor, 2001; Loxton, 2004; Martalas, 1999 & Muris et al., 2000). The four-year-old boys in the sample group reported equally age appropriate and television content related fears. The television content related fears were for example the *“big robots”* in *Power rangers*. Of the four year old girls, 36,36% of them did not respond to the question on what scared them.

However, both the five-year-old group (see Table 5) and the six-year-old group (see Table 6) reported more television content related fears than age appropriate fears. According to Table 5, 34,48% of the participants' fears expressed could be related to television content, whilst 24,14% was age appropriate fears. Similarly, 40,74% of the six year olds fears could be related to television content and 29,63% were age appropriate fears (see Table 7).

What is interesting is the difference between the content of fears reported by the boys and the girls (see Table 7). The boys in both the five-year-old group and the six-year-old group reported more television content related fears than age appropriate fears. The difference between the age appropriate fears and television content related fears reported by the girls was very small amongst the five-year-old group and no difference at the six-year-old group. This finding does not concur with the finding of Muris, Merckelbach, Gadet and Moulart (2000). They reported that the developmental patterns of fears were highly similar among boys and girls.

4.4 The perceptions of the parents of the participants in the present study, regarding the content of their children's fears

According to Table 8, parents' perceive the content of their children's fears mostly as television content related. It concurs with the surveys by Cantor and Nathanson (cited in

Cantor, 2001) in 1996 and Gentile and Walsh (cited in Cantor, 2001) in 1999. Both surveys concluded that parents were aware of their children's television content induced fears. However, Cantor and Reilly (cited in Cantor, 2001) reported that parents were often unaware of the severity of their child's fear reaction. Spirek (1993) and Brewin et al. (cited in Muris & Merckelbach, 2000) supported this notion.

What is interesting in Table 9 is that the parents of the boys reported that they perceived the content of their child's fears as more age appropriate than television content related. The fact that there was a high percentage (58,21%) "*no responses*" renders the researcher cautious to make assumptions regarding this finding.

Another interesting finding is that although it seems that the parents of the participants were to be sensitive to the content of their child's fears and the influence of television content, 15 of them nevertheless allowed their child to watch television more than 2 hours per day (see Table 10). The American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP) (cited in Certain & Kahn, 2002) recommended that children older than 2 years should watch television less than 2 hours a day.

4.5 Television programmes watched by the participants in the present study

Schmitt, Anderson and Collins (1999) reported that children preferred watching action programmes. According to Tables 11 and 13 it appears that most of the boys in the present study preferred watching more television programmes where the content is related to action. The television programmes they reported to be scary were also more action related programmes. It seems that that boys are more attracted to action programmes and their fears are more influenced by the content of such television programmes. It seems that specifically the six year old - and five year old boys in the present study preferred watching programmes where the content is action related involving current heroes, such as *Spiderman*, *Superman*, *Batman* and cartoons, such as *Scooby Doo*, *Dragonball-Z* and *Pokémon*.

It is interesting that the four-year-old boys in this study preferred to watch cartoons. Husten, Wright, Marquis and Green (1999) reported that cartoon viewing increased until the age of five and then levelled off. According to the findings in the present study the latter notion is evident in the viewing habits of the boys used in the sample. However, there seems to be a higher percentage of girls in the sample who preferred watching

cartoons. The six-year-old girls seem to prefer watching cartoons, such as *Barbie girl*, *Tweenies*, *Spunch Bob*, *Tom and Jerry* and educational programmes, such as *Tekelani Sesame*, *Barney*, *Teletubbies*. It appears that the five year old and the four-year-old girls, according to Table 12, prefer to watch more educational programmes.

The programmes that the participants reported to be scary are listed in Tables 13 and 14. According to Table 13 action programmes and thrillers scared the boys. Responses, such as "*Chucky*", "*the green goblin in Spiderman*" and "*Scary movie*," were recorded during the interviews. Although few in number, it is notable that the four year olds did not know what programme scared them or did not respond to the question. Similar results were recorded when the girls' responses were categorised in Table 14. The high "no responses" does not concur with the assumption, supported by Borke's research (cited in Martalas, 1999) that children at the age of 4 years can report their fears when ask.

In Table 15 the programmes that the participants watched were listed under different categories. It is notable that all the programmes listed under "Action" and "Thrillers," have an age restriction of 13 or higher. Cantor (2002) reported that television content and movies that frightened preschoolers typically had grotesque, scary-looking characters. The characters in the specific programmes that the participants watched and scared them were scary-looking and grotesque. Some of the participants noted the following characters: "*Hulk*", "*The green goblin in Spiderman*", "*and the white mask in Scream*." Some of the participant's drawings of something they saw on television portrayed these fears (see Addendum E). This concurs with the finding of Martalas (1999) where a fear of dinosaurs was linked to the age-restricted film, *Jurassic Park*. Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Carte and Hoffner (1990) stated that the media, film and television could influence the development of fears. Calvert (1999) and Livingstone (1998) stated that young children do not always understand the fictional nature of a television programme. The findings of the present study support the notions of the abovementioned researchers.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMODATIONS

The child and his or her development is a very important focus in the South African Government's Social Welfare policy. The researcher aimed to support this policy in highlighting the influence of television content on the developing of childhood fears. The researcher also aimed to emphasise the importance of parents' involvement in their children's development.

The primary aim of this study was to establish what the television content related fears of a sample of preschool children were and what perceptions their parents had. Establishing the content of fears of the participants attained the primary aim. Although the sample of the four year old group used in the present study were small it seems that the content of their reported fears were more age appropriate. However, the content of the fears of the five year olds and six year olds used in the present study seems to be television content related. The parents' perception in general was that the content of their children's fears were also television content related. The parents of the boys, however, perceived the content of their children's fears as more age appropriate whereas the parents of the girls used in the present study perceived the content of their children's fears more television content related.

The secondary aim of this study was to establish whether there were differences in the television content related fears with regard to the different age groups and gender groups. Establishing that the boys used in the present study were experiencing seemingly more television content related fears than the girls attained the secondary aim. A tendency that emerged was that the older the participants became, the more the content of their fears was influenced by television content.

The findings of the present study support the notion of various researchers, such as Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Cantor (2002; 2001), cited in the literature review, that television has an influence on the development of the child. It is evident, although a small sample was used in the present study, that television is influencing the development of childhood fears.

Although it was not a primary aim of the present study, data were obtained on what programmes the participants were watching and which of these programmes elicited fears. It is with considerable concern that the researcher has to report that the programmes eliciting fears are mostly those that are not suitable for viewing by young children.

It should be borne in mind that the following limitations of the present study are relevant when the results are evaluated:

- a small sample was used
- there was a high percentage of "*no response*" reporting

Given the findings and the limitations of the present study the following recommendations are made for further research: that a further investigation with a wider sample group could be undertaken with regard to age groupings; that culture and social economical status should be taken into consideration and that a comparative study could be done in a rural area. The specific content of the television programmes that the children in the sample mentioned could be investigated to establish the mechanisms that elicited the fears. It should also be relevant to determine if and why the fears of the boys seemed to be more influenced by television content than those of the girls

Although the present study can be viewed as a pilot study, it is important that the parents and other relevant role players should be informed of the findings. Parents play an important role in the development of their children and therefore is it important that they should know that the content of television programmes seems to have an influence on the development of their children' fears. They need to become more aware of the content of the television programmes that their children are exposed to.



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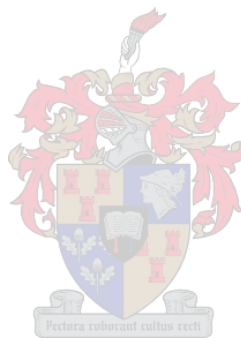
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7. ADDENDA

ADDENDUM A

QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN INTERVIEW WITH CHILDREN

VRAELYS / QUESTIONNAIRE

Student:

Datum / Date:

Studente nr / Student no:

Tydsgleuf / Time slot:

Naam van deelnemer / Name of participant:

Geslag / Gender:

Geboortedatum / Date of birth:

Ouderdom in maande / Age in months:

Taal / Language:

1. Het julle 'n Televisie tuis? / Do you have a television at home?

2. Hou jy van TV kyk? / Do you like watching TV?

3. Van watter program hou jy die meeste? / Which programme do you like most?

4. Wat is vir jou lekker? / *What do you like about it?*

5. Van watter program hou jy nie? / *Which program do you dislike?*

6. Waarvan hou jy nie? / *What do you dislike about it?*

7. Is daar 'n program wat jou bangmaak? / *Is there a programme that scares you?*

8. Wat maak jou bang? / *What scares you?*

9. Speel jy videospelletjies? / *Do you play videogames?*

1. Ja / Yes

2. Nee / No

3. Soms / Sometimes

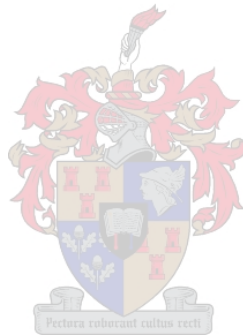
10. Van watter een hou jy die meeste? / *Which one do you prefer?*

11. Wat is vir jou lekker? / *What do you like about it?*

12. Van watter een hou jy nie? / *Which do you dislike?*

13. Waarvan hou jy nie? / *What do you dislike about it?*

14. Storie waarvan jy die meeste hou/ *Story that you like best*



ADDENDUM B**QUESTIONNAIRE COMPLETED BY THE PARENTS****VRAELYS / QUESTIONNAIRE**

Naam van kind / *Name of child:*

Geslag / *Gender:*

Geboortedatum / *Date of birth:*

Ouderdom / *Age :*

Taal / *Language:*

1. Het julle 'n Televisie tuis? / *Do you have a television at home?*

2. Hou jou kind van TV kyk? / *Do your child like watching TV?*

3. Van watter program hou jou kind die meeste? / *Which programme does your child like most?*

4. Wat van die program is vir jou kind lekker? / *What do your child like about it?*

5. Van watter program hou jou kind nie? / *Which program do your child dislike?*

6. Waarvan in die program hou jou kind nie? / *What does your child dislike about it?*

7. Is daar 'n program wat jou kind bangmaak?/ *Is there a programme that scares your child?*

8. Wat maak jou kind bang?/ *What scares your child?*

9. Speel jou kind videospelletjies? / *Does your child play video games?*

1. Ja / Yes

2. Nee / No

3. Soms / Sometimes

10. Van watter een hou jou kind die meeste? / *Which one does your child prefer?*

11. Wat van die speletjie is vir jou kind lekker? / *What does your child like about it?*

12. Van watter hou jou kind nie? / *Which does your child dislike?*

13. Waarvan in die speletjie hou jou kind nie? / *What does your child dislike about it?*

14. Storie waarvan jou kind die meeste hou/ *Story that your child likes best*

15. Hoeveel ure spandeer u kind ongeveer per dag met TV kyk?/ *Approximately, how many hours per day does your child spend watching television?*

Ouer van vraelys ingevul het/*Parent that completed questionnaire*

Ma/ <i>Mother</i>	Pa/ <i>Father</i>	Beide/ <i>Both</i>
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Vandag se datum / *Today's date* :

Dankie vir u tyd/*Thank you for your time*



ADDENDUM C

PARENTS INFORMATIVE LETTER - AFRIKAANS

2003-10-31

Geagte Babin Ouer / Voog

By die Departement Sielkunde van die Universiteit van Stellenbosch word tans **navorsing** gedoen met betrekking tot **die televisie voor en –afkeure van ‘n groep voorskoolse kinders en die persepsies van hulle ouers daaromtrent.**

Met die inligting wat deur hierdie navorsingsprojek ingesamel sal word, word beoog om kinders van die ouderdomsgroep vier tot sewe jaar beter te verstaan. Die einddoel is om ook uiteindelik hierdie inligting aan te wend tot voordeel van ander kinders in Suid-Afrika .

Die inligting aangaande die kinders se TV voorkeure en afkeure is reeds, met die toestemming van die skool, ingesamel.

Hiermee rig ek nou ‘n vriendelike en entoesiastiese versoek tot u as ouer/ voog van ‘n kind wat in die teiken ouderdomsgroep val om asseblief deel te neem aan hierdie navorsingsprojek. Indien u toestem tot u deelname, kan u die meegaande kort vraelys invul.

Die inligting wat ingewin word sal as vertroulik behandel word en geen inligting wat vir navorsingsdoeleindes gebruik word, sal op enige wyse direk na u en u kind in sy/haar persoonlike hoedanigheid herlei kan word nie.

Dit sal waardeur word indien u die vraelys voor Vrydag 14 November 2003 kan voltooi en terugstuur na die skool verseëld in die ingeslote kovert.

Indien u enige verdere inligting verlang, kontak asseblief Chrisna Richard, die navorser by die onderstaande telefoonnommer.

Moet ASSEBLIEF NIE die vrae en antwoorde met u kind bespreek nie – ons het u opinie nodig. Indien u dit verlang, kan reëlings getref word om na afloop van die projek ‘n algemene terugvoersessie te hê oor die resultate.

Vriendelike groete

Chrisna Richard
MI –Voorligtingsielkunde Student
Tel: (021) 8533826
Faks:(021) 8531044

Helene Loxton
Dosent: Departement Sielkunde
Tel: (021) 8083417

ADDENDUM D**PARENTS INFORMATIVE LETTER - ENGLISH**

2003-10-31

Dear Babin Parent / Guardian

At the University of Stellenbosch, **research** is currently being undertaken regarding a **group of preschool children's television preferences and dislikes and the perceptions of their parents in this regard.**

The information gathered from the research will provide a better understanding of children that fall between the age of four and seven years. The final aim is to utilize this information to the benefit of other children in South Africa.

The information on the children's TV preferences and dislikes were obtained earlier this year, with permission from the school.

To this end, this letter is a friendly, enthusiastic request to you as parents of a child who falls within the target age group of this study to participate in this research project. Should you give consent for participating, could you please complete the short questionnaire attached.

Complete confidentiality is assured. No information that will be used for research purposes will be related back to you or your child in his/her personal capacity.

It would be appreciated if you could send the questionnaire back to the school in the attached envelope sealed before Friday 14 November 2003.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Chrisna Richard, the researcher, at the number at the bottom of this letter.

Please DO NOT discuss the questions and answers with your child – we need your opinion. Should you be interested, arrangements can be made to discuss the findings during a general feedback session.

Yours sincerely

Chrisna Richard
M1 – Counselling Psychology Student

Tel: (021) 8533826
Fax: (021) 8531044

Helene Loxton
Lecturer:
Department of Psychology
Tel: (021)8083417

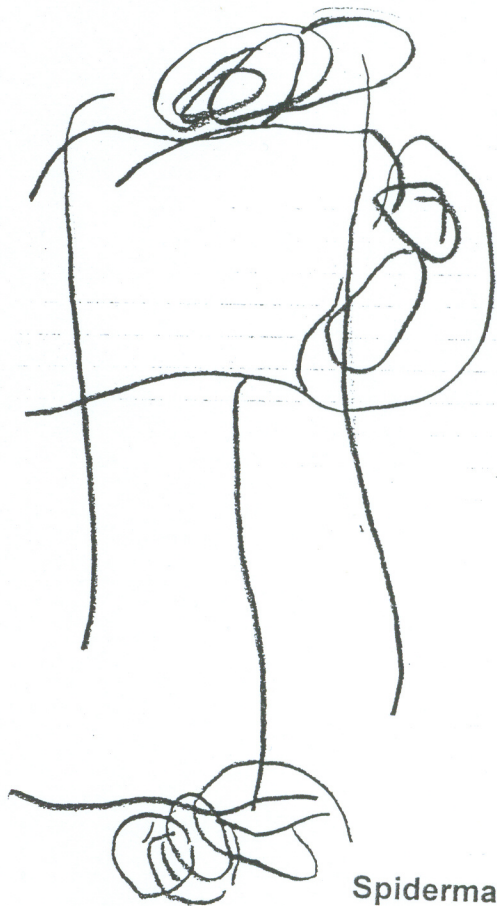
ADDENDUM E

EXTRACTS FROM DRAWINGS OF PARTICIPANTS: SOMETHING THEY SAW ON TELEVISION

Participant 2: Boy 4 year old

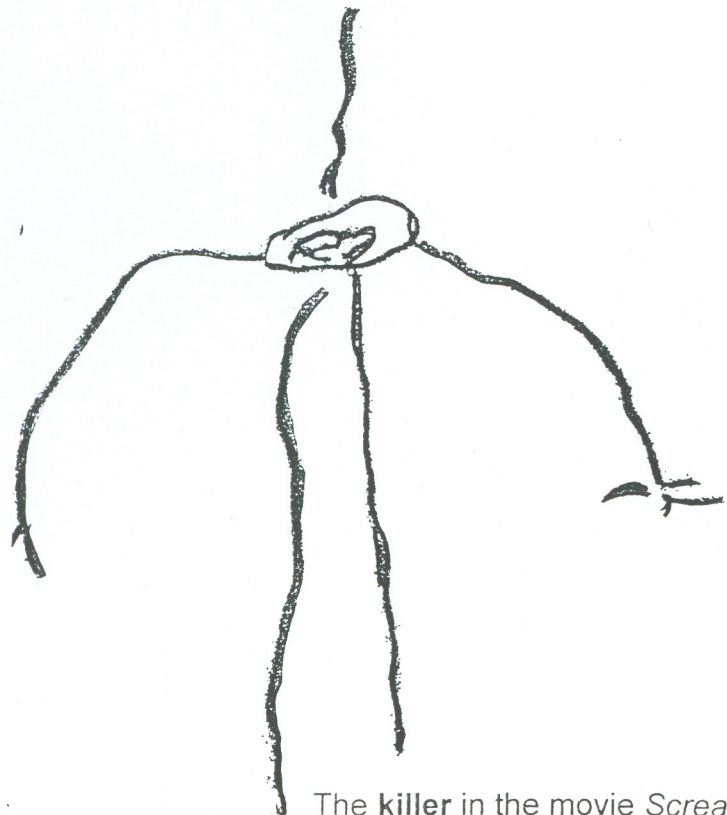
"Green Goblin" in *Spiderman*

Participant 2: Boy 4 year old



Spiderman

Participant 49: Boy 5 year old

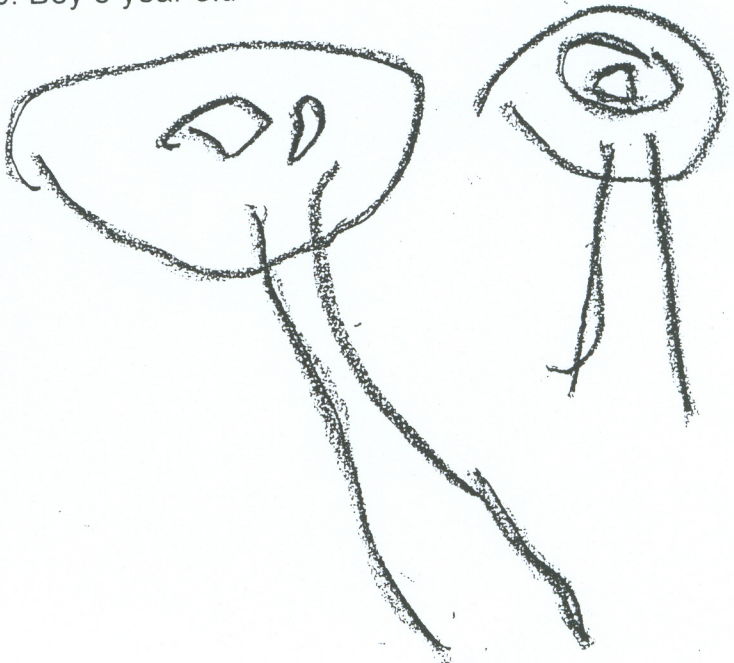
The killer in the movie *Scream*

Participant 54: Boy 5 year old



1. Superman 2. Batman 3. Spiderman

Participant 60: Boy 5 year old



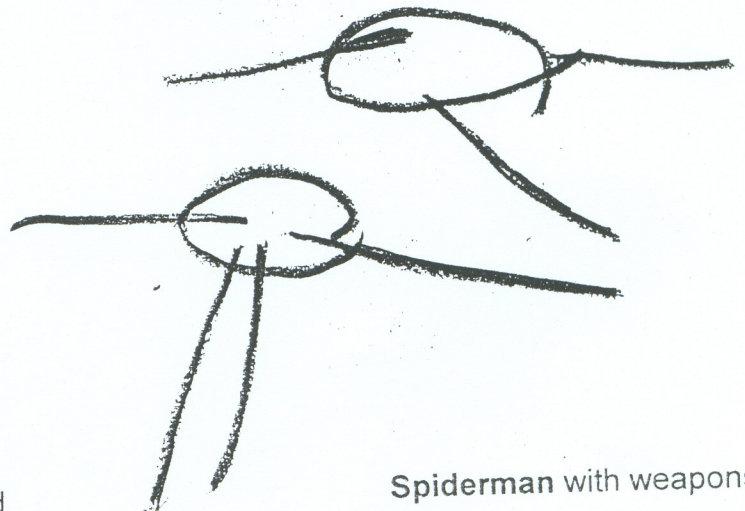
Spiderman (left) and a girl

Participant 59: Boy 4 year old



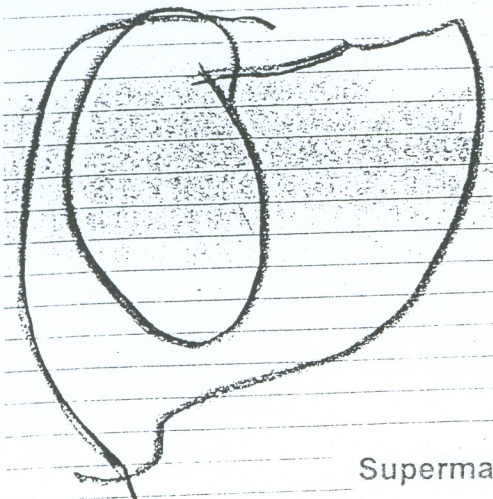
Scream

Participant 59: Boy 4 year old



Spiderman with weapons

Participant 59: Boy 4 year old



Superman with a chocolate