



THE EFFECT OF WATCHING HORROR FILM ON HEALTH CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN INDONESIA

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Abstract. Horror films are one of the film genres that are in great demand by many people, one of which is children. The purpose of this study is to find out how horror films affect the personality and emotional state of the children who watch them. This research is aimed at children and adolescents in Indonesia, with an age range between 10-17 years. This research method includes quantitative descriptive, namely by using a questionnaire to the respondents. The results of the study show that children who watch horror films experience anxiety, fear, difficulty sleeping, negative thoughts, the desire to be alone, and imagining scary things to commit acts of violence, even against themselves and their parents.

Keywords: Horror films, children's emotions, children's personalities

1 Introduction

Background of the problem

The development of the film is getting higher as time goes by. Good quality movies affect people's minds, therefore affect their characters and emotions. The high-quality visuals and sound create a vivid effect in the minds of everyone, including children and young people. Vivid depictions of violence and screams in horror films burn a child's memory in the short and long term, thereby creating an element of fear that affects the child's mental, personality and emotions. If this continues for a long time it will result in very worrying problems.

Film is one type of entertainment that is most in demand by the public, because easily, we can watch it anytime and anywhere via laptops, cellphones and especially television. Over time, the film industry is growing and growing in Indonesia. As a medium, film has survived to this day in the development of new media and is becoming increasingly popular in many aspects. Film is seen in

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many ways as art, as an educational medium, and as a mass media industry.

Film was originally made as a medium of entertainment for the public, to relieve fatigue and stress after doing activities. However, now there are many films that are rumored to be brainwashing media that focus on children and adolescents. As is the case for horror genre films. In his research, Musfira (2018) reported that children aged 3 years who often watch horror films are more likely to experience personality, mental and emotional disorders. The disorder in question is the fear of being alone in a lonely place. Children and adolescents are afraid to sleep alone, don't dare to be alone at home and go to the toilet by themselves, are afraid when it's dark or the electricity goes out, have bad dreams, and also result in physical disturbances, for example lethargy and fatigue, not focusing while studying,

Watching horror films can have a different effect on each child. Some children may feel intimidated or scared after watching a horror film, while others may not be affected at all. In general, children are more susceptible to the negative effects of watching horror films than adults, especially if they are not yet able to understand and manage their emotions and fear well. Children may also be less able to distinguish between fiction and real, so watching horror films can confuse them and make them feel uncomfortable or afraid.

Some children or teenagers may feel intimidated or scared after watching a horror movie that contains jumpscare, especially if they are not able to understand and manage their emotions and fear properly. Children or adolescents may also be less able to distinguish between fiction and reality, so watching a horror film containing jumpscare can confuse them and make them feel uncomfortable or scared.

Regardless, children and teens may enjoy horror films because they feel challenged to experience intense emotions, such as fear or joy. They may also be interested in knowing what happens next and want to know how the story will end. In addition, children and adolescents may also feel connected to the characters in horror films and feel involved in the events that occur on the screen. They may also feel dependent on something fun and enjoyable, such as watching a horror movie with friends.

However, while watching horror films can be an enjoyable experience for some children and adolescents, there is also a risk that horror films may induce fear or unhealthy fear, especially if children or adolescents are unable to understand that horror films are mere fiction. Therefore, parents must carefully consider whether horror films are suitable for children or adolescents who will watch them, and ensure that children or adolescents can understand that horror films are just fiction. Parents should be more selective in choosing films that will be watched by children, and ensure that children can understand that horror films are just fiction. If children show signs of anxiety or fear after watching horror films,

Salovey and Mayers (1990) define emotion as an organized reaction involving a physiological system that can transcend the boundaries of psychological subsystems such as cognition, motivation and experience (Wahyono, 2001: Bakar, 2011). In this way, when the child's personality and emotions are disturbed by the influence of horror films, the child's various social activities and the people around him will also be disturbed.

The World Health Organization (WHO) states that mental health is a condition of individual conscious well-being, in which there are abilities to manage reasonable life stress, to work productively and productively, and to participate in their community. According to Karl Menninger, a psychiatrist from America, individuals

Those who are mentally healthy are those who have the ability to hold back, show intelligence, and have a happy attitude to life. Meanwhile, according to Joseph Pieper, German philosopher and Marinus van Uden, Professor and Doctor of Philosophy, said that mental health is a state where a person does not experience feelings of guilt towards himself, has a realistic estimate of himself and can accept his weaknesses and strengths, the ability to deal with problems in his life, have satisfaction in his social life and have happiness in his life.

The mental health of children and adolescents is important to maintain, because it can affect the development of children and adolescents, as well as their ability to learn, communicate and interact with others. Therefore, researchers are interested in conducting research in several schools ranging from elementary to high school in the city of East Jakarta, Indonesia.

2 Research purposes :

- Knowing whether watching horror films has a negative effect on the mental health of children and adolescents.
- Knowing how the influence of watching horror films on the anxiety level of children and adolescents.
- Knowing whether there are differences in the effect of watching horror films on children and adolescents based on gender and age.

3 Benefits of research:

- Provide useful information for parents and teachers about the impact of watching horror films on children, so that they can help parents and teachers make the right decisions about what children should watch.
- Provide useful information for policy makers in making policies regarding showing horror films for children.
- Provide data that can be used as a basis for developing interventions or programs aimed at reducing the negative effects of watching horror films on children.
- Increase knowledge about how horror films affect children's mental

health, which can assist in the development of theory and further research on this topic.

4 Research Questions and Methodology

In general, this study will investigate how watching horror films has a major influence on the mental health of children and adolescents.

5 Research questions (research questions – RQ) are defined as follows:

- RQ1: What is the role of parents in supervising their children while watching movies?
- RQ2: What is the impact that occurs when children are allowed to watch horror films repeatedly times and without parental supervision?
- RQ3: What causes children and adolescents to be interested in watching horror films?
- RQ4: Does watching horror movies affect a child's mental health?
- RQ5: How does watching horror films affect the fear level of children and adolescents?
- RQ6: Are there any differences in the effects of watching horror films on children and adolescents by gender and age?

6 Research methods

For data collection and analysis, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods will be applied. Broadly speaking, this is written in the form of data collection related to the research title through interviews and questionnaire surveys.

Interview is a method of collecting data by conducting question and answer between researchers and respondents. Interviews can be conducted individually or in groups. Individual interviews are interviews conducted with only one respondent, while group interviews are interviews conducted with several respondents at once. Questionnaires are a method of collecting data by distributing question sheets to respondents and asking them to answer these questions.

Interviews were conducted in the East Jakarta area to understand the situation and behavior of children in everyday life. By interviewing several people from elementary-high school to get data about their interests and treatment after watching horror films. Questionnaires can be given directly to respondents, via google form, or sent via email.

Table 1. Summary of the method and its relation to the research questions

No.	Research question	Research methods	Quantitative/Qualitative
1.	What is the role of parents in supervising their children when watching movies?	Interview and questionnaire survey	Mix method (qualitative and quantitative)
2.	What are the impacts that occur when children are allowed to watch horror films repeatedly and without parental supervision?	Interview and questionnaire survey	Mix method (qualitative and quantitative)
3.	What causes children and teenagers to be interested in watching horror films?	Interview and questionnaire survey	Mix method (qualitative and quantitative)
4.	Is watch film horror affect a child's mental health?	Interview and questionnaire survey	Mix method (qualitative and quantitative)
5.	How watch film horror affect the level of fear of children and adolescents?	Interview and questionnaire survey	Mix method (qualitative and quantitative)
6.	Is there is difference from influence of watching horror films on children and adolescents based on gender and age?	Interview and questionnaire survey	Mix method (qualitative and quantitative)

- RQ1: What is the role of parents in supervising their children while watching movies? In RQ1, the focus of the study is to collect and analyze data to find out how big the role of parents is in supervising their children when watching movies, especially horror movies. The stages in this interview include: 1) Interviewing one of the students at several schools in Jakarta, 2) Giving questionnaire survey questions via Google form, 3) Descriptive analysis of interview data.
- RQ2: What is the impact that occurs when children are allowed to watch horror films repeatedly times and without parental supervision?
- In RQ2, the focus of the study is to collect and analyze data to find out how big the impact is when children are allowed to watch horror films repeatedly and without parental supervision. The stages in this interview include: 1) Interviewing one of the students at several schools in Jakarta, 2) Giving questionnaire survey questions via Google form, 3) Descriptive analysis of interview data.
- RQ3: What causes children and adolescents to be interested in watching horror films?
- In RQ3, the focus of the study is to collect and analyze data to find out why children and adolescents are interested in watching horror films. Stages in

this interview among others, namely: 1) Interviewing one of the students in several schools in Jakarta, 2) Asking questionnaire survey questions through the Google form, 3) Descriptive analysis of interview data.

- RQ4: Does watching horror movies affect a child's mental health?

In RQ4, the focus of the study is to collect and analyze data to find out whether watching horror films affects children's mental health. The stages in this interview include: 1) Interviewing one of the students at several schools in Jakarta, 2) Giving questionnaire survey questions via Google form, 3) Descriptive analysis of interview data.

- RQ5: How does watching horror films affect the fear level of children and adolescents? In RQ5, the focus of the study is to collect and analyze data to find out how watching horror films affects the fear level of children and adolescents. The stages in this interview include: 1) Interviewing one of the students at several schools in Jakarta, 2) Giving questionnaire survey questions via Google form, 3) Descriptive analysis of interview data.

- RQ6: Are there any differences in the effects of watching horror films on children and adolescents by gender and age?

In RQ6, the focus of the study is to collect and analyze data to find out whether there are differences in the effects of watching horror films on children and adolescents, based on gender and age. The stages in this interview include: 1) Interviewing one of the students at several schools in Jakarta, 2) Giving questionnaire survey questions via Google form, 3) Descriptive analysis of interview data.

7 Research Findings and Discussion

Based on the background and methods as well as the research questions mentioned above, the researcher also makes a hypothesis as a conjecture or temporary theory that can be verified through research. The following are several hypotheses regarding the effect of horror films on the mental health of children and adolescents. The first is that watching horror films will increase the anxiety level of children and adolescents. Second, watching horror films will reduce the level of self- confidence of children and adolescents. Then watching horror movies more often will increase the anxiety level of children and adolescents compared to watching horror movies less often. Then Boys will be more affected by watching horror movies than girls. And lastly, Son and older adolescents will be more affected by watching horror films than younger children and adolescents.

Elementary school-age children usually have developmental characteristics such as physical- motor, intellectual, language, emotional, social, religious development, and various factors that influence this development, which may cause developmental disorders. These factors are genetic factors and environmental factors that can cause problems in seven aspects of development (Latifah, 2017). Environmental factors or external factors can be through various ways, one of which is a horror film. Films that provide real images and sounds to

children easily affect children's development, especially their personality and emotions. Children in ancient times, before the development of technology, were often afraid of things that smelled bad, and most of these children were not interested in bad things.

Of the many respondents, some children like or are interested in horror films, there are around 60% of all respondents. Respondents stated that, even though there is horror and tension, watching horror films has its own excitement. It can be said that watching horror films, the children interviewed felt their adrenaline was challenged, so it was said that children are people who have a great desire to try new things. Iskandar (2020) found that children aged 10-12 are different from early childhood who are relatively vulnerable to environmental influences, but children at this age are still weak in filtering outside influences. Children tend to be more active in trying new interesting things.

Based on the plot or storyline of horror films, the emotions that exist in children and adolescents, among other things, are mixed. The storyline of this scary film can make children feel joy and irritation, followed by fear. But after finally watching, children can have a feeling or emotion that is felt. The results of the study revealed that respondents felt satisfied after watching a horror film, because the end of the film made everything easier. As for some people who are also annoyed because the ending of the film is left hanging and scared because the film is very scary to watch from beginning to end. Horror movies can give negative thoughts to children which can cause emotional disturbances. This is in accordance with Iskandar's research (2020) which states that a person's emotional disturbances can be caused by an inability to adapt to their environment, be it peer interaction, learning or others. Moreover, it is also triggered by external feedback. It can also be caused by mental health problems.

In addition, there are emotional disturbances that children get after watching tense horror films, which are as follows:

1) Fear

Some of the emotional disturbances that children may experience after watching horror movies are fear. Children may feel scared after watching a horror film, especially if the film features scary or scary scenes. This fear can last a long time, even after the child is no longer watching the film.

2) Anxiety

Children may experience anxiety after watching a horror film, especially if the film features scenes that depict situations that the child finds frightening or uncomfortable.

3) Fear of events that are unlikely to happen

Children may be afraid of events that can't possibly happen, such as monsters or ghosts, shown in horror movies.

A character or scene in a movie is supported by sound. The color tones and sound effects that are created in horror films support the atmosphere of the film and create a tense, scary atmosphere that adds to the anxiety of the audience. Even if the movie characters or scenes aren't actually scary, the background noise makes them really scary. This makes children come up with scary thoughts about small things and makes it easier for children to imagine something scary. Children become more sensitive to sound and sight, and it's common for a child who experiences this sensitivity to easily associate things with the mysterious, depending on the horror movie they've watched. In the study, a respondent felt a walking shadow after watching a horror movie, and whenever he heard a voice, he felt it was a supernatural figure. Such things made him want to be left alone, making it difficult for him to sleep. However, most of the other respondents had no sleep problems and could still be left alone. It's just that anxiety and fear still enveloped him.

People with insomnia still feel that they are in the shadow of a scary character in a movie, the strong picture or sound quality of a horror movie creates the same images and sounds in the child's mind. Even if the child is not consciously imagining or thinking about the movie character or scene. Some children who watch horror films have nightmares or scary dreams. This makes it difficult for children to sleep. A source tells of a character who descends from the roof of a house in a scene from the film, which makes him not look at the roof of the house. Things like that cause anxiety and fear in children, so that children have trouble sleeping and don't want to be left alone in the room. Musfira (2018) stated that the subject's reaction after watching the mysterious broadcast was divided into two parts, namely: 1) Short-term reactions, seeing objects, experiencing screaming, crying, covering eyes with pillows, hiding, shaking, heart. 2) Long-term reactions are fear, imagery, addiction and fear of some animals, and these are the emotions the respondents feel after watching a horror movie. Some of the respondents were more afraid of seeing the characters and some were more afraid of the sound produced by the film.

Emotional feelings that radiate from a person create a form of personality. Personality is defined as a set of individual behaviors and characteristics, which are manifested in ways of expression, ways of responding, ways of thinking, attitudes, interests, and personal outlooks on life, as a dynamic thing in humans who adapt to their environment (Sitorus. et 2020). The first personality disorder that can develop from horror films is violent behavior. Horror films, in general, show how feelings of sadness are expressed by killing, and feelings of anxiety are expressed in acts of violence against others, up to scenes of murder and revenge. It is considered a personality disorder because when children talk about things that are sad or scary, they used to cry, but after watching some horror movies, that changed. Depending on what's in the movie, kids can injure themselves or others.

The results showed that most of the children surveyed were able to filter out what

was positive and what was negative. Even if they feel the movie, that doesn't make them the same personalities in the movie. Most of the respondents stated that the negative scenes in the film did not look good and should not be imitated. However, a small number of respondents considered negative scenes to be great and wanted to do the same, so they sometimes imagined what they would do scene by scene.

8 Discussion and Analysis

Horror films have certain age restrictions for people who want to watch them, so not all ages can watch them. Unfortunately, parents ignore this. The respondent's parents do not control their children regarding the shows their children watch. Few parents understand that horror films can affect a child's emotions and personality. Horror movies shown on TV or in theaters have a minimum viewing age, but parents always ignore them. As long as there are no sex scenes, children are considered safe. Unknowingly, the slightest scene of violence can be dangerous for children. In general, horror films that qualify as normal horror films are allowed for children over 15 years of age, and horrors with a lot of horror film and violence are allowed for children over 20 years. If you are still allowed to watch horror child movies, and acts of violence enter the child's brain as fertilizer to grow into characters similar to characters in horror films. This case occurred in Indonesia where a teenager who likes horror films can kill his neighbor who is still a toddler. This is of course very disruptive to the growth and development of children who are not fulfilled. Therefore, shows aimed at children must always be supervised. Not that horror films are bad to watch. Horror films still have moral values, only watching these horror films must be age-appropriate so as not to interfere with children's development and personality.

Apart from the discussion above, of course parents have an important role in supervising their children when watching movies, especially horror films which can have a negative effect on children's mental health. Here are some ways parents can supervise their children while watching movies:

- a. Choose a film that is appropriate for the age and maturity level of the child. Horror films are usually not recommended for children under the age of 10, as children at this age still have a low resistance to fear and tend to be easily influenced.
- b. Watch movies with children. This will make it easier for parents to understand what their child is watching, and help explain what's going on in the film if their child gets confused.
- c. Be calm and don't overreact when watching a horror movie. This will help reduce any fear or distress your child may be feeling.
- d. Limit movie viewing time. Limiting movie viewing time can help children stay focused on other activities that are beneficial to their growth and development.
- e. Be open to any questions or concerns that may arise.

While watching horror films is generally considered to have a negative impact on the mental health of children and adolescents, several studies have shown that watching horror films can also have some positive effects. Here are some positive impacts that may arise after watching a horror film:

1. **Improve problem solving skills:** Watching horror films can help children and youth develop problem solving skills, as they have to solve the puzzles shown in the film.
2. **Improve the ability to control emotions:** Watching horror films can help children and adolescents control their emotions, because they have to face tense or scary situations in the film.
3. **Increase courage.** Watching horror films can help children and youth develop courage, as they have to deal with tense or frightening situations in the film.
4. **Increase sensitivity to the feelings of others.** Watching horror films can help children and adolescents develop sensitivity to other people's feelings, because they have to deal with tense or scary situations in the film and feel the emotions involved. This ability can help children and adolescents better understand and appreciate the feelings of other people, so that it can help them interact better with others.

However, keep in mind that the positive impacts mentioned above do not apply to everyone, and depend on the level of sensitivity and maturity of the child or teenager.

9 Conclusion

Based on several studies that have been conducted, it can be concluded that watching horror films can have a negative impact on children's mental health. Children can experience various emotional disturbances after watching horror movies, such as fear, anxiety, and fear of events that may not happen. These emotional disturbances can affect a child's mental health, and can lead to problems such as insomnia, eating disorders, or behavior problems.

Discomfort is a feeling of discomfort or unwell that is felt by someone. Children can experience various emotional disturbances after watching horror movies, such as fear, anxiety, fear of events that are impossible to happen, and discomfort or discomfot. The emotional disturbances experienced by children after watching horror films can last a long time, even after the child has stopped watching the film. These emotional disturbances can affect a child's mental health, and can lead to problems such as insomnia, eating disorders, or behavior problems.

Therefore, parents must be vigilant and provide proper supervision of what children watch. If a child has an emotional breakdown after watching a horror movie, parents should immediately contact a doctor or mental health professional to get proper help.

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