YouTube high risk driving videos: What are the effects on young male drivers?

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YouTube

- YouTube shows millions of extreme risky driving videos.
- Top 20 highly subscribed automotive YouTube websites mostly on high performance vehicles, high speed and often show risky driving.
- YouTube, not TV, is the choice for males 18-34 year-olds.
- Young men engage in most high risk driving behaviours.
- Hence, cohort most likely to engage in risky driving, most likely to use YouTube.

(Vingilis et al. 2017)
Purpose

To interview young men to determine:

(i) if they watch and share YouTube videos, in particular high risk driving videos, and

(ii) what effects high risk driving videos have on them (either positive or negative, on attitudes, arousal, emotions and driving behaviours) and whether YouTube videos of negative consequences (violations, collisions, injuries) discourage high risk driving.
Method

- Three focus groups conducted.
- 2-hr focus group with guided questions.
- 1st hour focused on YouTube use generally and of automotive and high risk driving videos.
- 2nd hour focused on perceptions and feelings regarding two YouTube video clips: one of risky driving on motorcycles and a second of a stunt motorcyclist getting caught by police.
Method

- Thematic analysis conducted (Braun & Clarke 2006).
- 4 phases:
  - Generating initial codes;
  - Searching for themes;
  - Reviewing themes;
  - Defining and naming themes.
Method

• First two researchers immersed themselves in the data by independently listening to tapes and reading transcriptions and field notes.

• Then compared and combined their analyses.

• Followed by additional team analysis to further clarify themes and patterns.

• Only selected highlights will be presented.
Examples of more unusual YouTube videos

Sidewalk skiing – an automotive driving stunt where vehicle is driven while balanced only on two wheels, often to change tires on vehicle while in motion.

~ 59,100 results
Ghost Riding – Driver not in care or control of vehicle, while in motion and sits on or dances around vehicle or stands on seat of motorcycle, often to music.

~120,000 results
Vehicle Surfing – on hood, roof or other part of vehicle while in motion, or being dragged by vehicle e.g., couch.

~233,000 results
Many “fail” videos, i.e., “accident” and “death” YouTube videos,

E.g., Vehicle Surfing Fail videos

~ 362,000 results
The most popular type of videos

Street racing – illegal, unsanctioned

~19,300,000 results

Street racing crashes

~2,240,000 results

#1 has title: Ultimate 2016 STREET RACING Crash Compilation - Best Street Race Crashes
Sample

- 3 focus groups (London, Toronto, Ottawa regions).
- 22 males (14 no shows).
- Maximum variation sampling.
- 18-30 years of age.
- Students, blue collar (e.g., welder, airline ground handling), white collar (e.g., recruitment consultant, peer support worker, physiotherapy assistant), unemployed.
Results

• YouTube use common – about 8 hrs/wk, <1 - 40 hrs/wk

• Limited sharing of videos – about 2/wk

• Share with close friends and family

• Not many videos produced and uploaded.
Results

• Automotive/driving videos - “not a lot” to “25% to almost 100%”

• Infotainment:
  • “tutorials”, “car reviews”, “Motor Trend”,
  • “weird car crashes”, “chases”, “races”,
  • “Canada’s worst drivers”, “Top gear”, “police videos”, “South Beach Tow and Operation Repo”,
  • “visualize driving Ferrari”, “Super cars”
Results

What effects high risk driving videos have:

• Responses to 2 videos:
  
  • Duality of thoughts and feelings:
    
    • Both negative and positive views among and within participants
Negative: dangerousness, stupidity, anxiety

• “dangerous”

• “retarded”

• “really unwise idea”

• “I just thought crazy what’s the point in risking your life for a video, I guess, I don’t see the point”
Negative: dangerousness, stupidity, anxiety

• “I think if I were to die in a motorcycle accident and it was my fault I would die happy. But if I were to die because of somebody else’s fault I would come back as a ghost and literally until they cry, I would have a knife dangling over their heads all the time. So I think it’s a very stupid idea.”

• “I was waiting for him to fall”
Positive: respect, exciting, vicarious pleasure

• “pretty ballsy”

• “pretty skilled...I wish I had those skills”

• “I mean it’s obviously not easy, it’s challenging”

• “And I think when you have a fast car, I’ve seen people, I don’t mean to stereotype, but with average car, you shouldn’t go rev, rev, and a person that has a sports car that has a lot of power, are you not more like just calm chilled most of the time?”
Positive: respect, exciting, vicarious pleasure

- “exciting”
- “it has an entertainment aspect to it”
- “It was kind of cool there, there were seven of them doing it”
- “We’re living vicariously through them”
Negative consequences video: retributive justice, OK to harm self, not to harm others

- “At the end it kind of restored my faith in the police force in that they actually caught this guy. So that was one.”

- “If he crashes actually I think yeah, he's like an organ donor who's signed his card. I don't know, flesh on the road?”

- “if you do hit him at that point then you've undergone a traumatic experience”

- “My philosophy in life is you do stupid stuff, you get hit, that's cool. You knew your risk that you were getting into.”
Could the videos affect behaviour?

- Social cognitive theory

- Based on modelling;
  - behaviours that are observed, positively valued and reinforced could be imitated.
• “And that is sort of a trend on YouTube where you have some people doing stupid things to themselves, and the real tragedy is because it’s so entertaining and because the audience of YouTube tends to be very young impressionable kids you get this sort of viral trend going on where everybody wants to imitate it, it’s kind of like a copycat whatever or something like that.”
• “That’s, yeah another part of watching these videos, the reason I sometimes do, sometimes, you realize it’s not something you’d ever do but through watching the videos you kind of, you kind of live through it yourself.”

• “Vicariously.”
“they realize the more extreme stunts that they pull off, the more views they’re going to get, because many of these people, they post videos regularly, almost on a weekly basis, like a compilation of all sorts of crazy things that they did that week. And that gets them a lot of views, so they realize, okay the more crazy things we do, the more views we get so we’ve got to kind of like play on this and do even more stupid things to get even more views, because if you’re a YouTube partner, there’s a lot of money involved in that; getting people to look at your channels, subscribe to it and yeah.”
• Evolutionary theories in psychology

• The “young male syndrome” of high risk taking (Nell 2002; Wilson and Daly 1985; Wiesenthal and Singhal 2012),

• Competitive risk-taking evolved as an aspect of “masculine psychology”, along with “an evolved inclination toward the social display of one’s competitive risk-taking skills” in the quest for status and resources (Wilson and Daly 1985, p. 66).

• E.g., intrasexual competition.
• “It’s like the competitive side of you.”

• “Alpha male.”

• “Especially like, predominantly males that are doing it, males are like really competitive, like you know like testosterone driven, you know?”

• “if you’re able to show off to the group it’s like well guess what, I can do that - you guys can’t.”
• **Self- and Social- Identity theories**

• **Self-identity theory** - person’s self-concept is defined in relation to the societal roles to which he/she identifies (Elliott 2010; Hogg et al. 1995).

• **Social identity** motivates person to align his/her behaviours with the perceived norms of that in-group (Elliott 2010; Scott-Parker et al. 2009).
“They get more from the social aspect and just like the pride and respect you gain from doing these crazy stunts in your community.”

“Like if you’re in a group, you’re invested, but if you’re alone then you won’t do any of those stuff.”
“It’s not peer pressure but it’s definitely there. When you see somebody else do, the guys that are very calm, very cool, collected, I don’t want to say it just happens but there is a motivator where you just want to do it because you know what? I can do this. It’s cool, it’s fun. It’s not peer pressure, but I don’t know how to...”
Conclusions

• YouTube a highly popular form of social media, but no research.

• Young men display dual views, seeing both the negative and positive of risky driving videos.

• They feel that videos could promote copycat behaviours, particularly among younger persons.

• Also that it’s a “male” thing, with competition and social pressure.
Conclusions

• Mixed views on whether “fail” videos or PSAs could have educational or deterrent effect.

• Possibly really well produced videos but then people choose what they want to watch.

• Clearly a medium that needs more exploration in terms of content and effects on society.
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