



CONVERSION OF NOVELS TO DIFFERENT MEDIUMS

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Abstract: Books were written for education, entertainment, as records, etc. The mediums used for the conversion of such books range from movies, plays, series, or even games that matter, where the topics range from action, adventure, thriller, historic, historical romance, romance, biography, etc. This paper presents a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) on studies of books being converted to other media and the impact it created. The research was initiated with a sample of 100 articles out of which a total of 20 relevant articles were identified and further examined. The extent of this research was to highlight the aspects of books being converted to other mediums and the observations made and the impact it may create. The findings of this research provide insights for researchers and evaluators of the effects and the limitations or problems faced during the conversion of books into other mediums. The research was carried out using the databases from SCOPUS, Springer, Taylor & Francis, and Google Scholar. Considering keywords, we included articles that showed the terms: 'Novels' and/or 'Films' and/or 'Adaptations' and/or 'Books' and/or 'Problems' and/or 'limitations' and/or 'turning books to media' and/or 'Author' and/or 'Observations' and/or 'Impacts'. The paper concludes by identifying several difficulties faced in converting novels to a different medium.

Keywords: Novel, Film, Adaptations, Books, Novel Adaptations, Literature to Film, Adapting books into games, Book vs film, Studying Adaptations, Adapting classics, problems of fidelity, world building, games turned to movies.

INTRODUCTION

Several books have been converted into different mediums of entertainment throughout history. Many books have been employed to be transformed into movie adaptations. Some examples may be ‘Fault in Our Stars’ (2012) by John Green adapted into its movie released in 2014, ‘The Da Vinci Code’ (2003) by Dan Brown leading to the movie's release in 2006.

While books have been found to be at recording each character’s emotions and thoughts, movies have been shown to be better at capturing the visual detail of the scene (Zhu et al., 2015). Several comparisons between books and their movie adaptations have been made. A few of them include, ‘Discussing the Da Vinci Code: Examining the Issues Raised by the Book and the Movie’ (2006) by Lee Strobel and Garry Poole, ‘Book Verses Movie Me Before You: a Case Study of the Film Adaptation of the Novel in Film Industry’ by Law, E. Y. T. (2020). Studies in this field have also been conducted where researchers have explored the nuances of converting books to movies. One example could be ‘Aligning Books and Movies: Towards Story-like Visual Explanations by Watching Movies and Reading Books’ (Zhu et al., 2015), ‘To Prevent the Prevalent Type of Book: Censorship and Adaptation in Hollywood, 1924-1934’ (Maltby, 1992).

Avid readers of books converted into movies have also shared their opinions on several internet forums.

- *“Despite her surprising shutout in Oscar nominations this year, there’s no doubt that Greta Gerwig did something remarkable with her adaptation of Louisa May Alcott’s classic novel. Gerwig adds a simple twist to the story by imagining that Jo is the author of the novel Little Women. This transforms the story into one about creative passion and achievement, and in one stroke makes a classic feel fresh without betraying its essential nature.” (Somers, 2021)*
- *“A novel by Stephen Chbosky, the coming-of-age story The Perks of Being a Wallflower depicts life through the lens of an outcast, Charlie, trying to find his way through life. Featuring the main character’s personal thoughts through intimate letters, the novel stands the test of time, as the film was created nearly two decades after the book was first published in 1999. The film quickly picked up a cult following, with the near-perfect casting of Logan Lerman as Charlie, and his best friends played by Emma Watson and Ezra Miller. Fans adore both the movie and novel for their raw portrayal of the complicated and risky lives of teenagers. Though the novel depicted Charlie’s story through diary entries and the film showed more of a straightforward point-of-view, it’s undeniable that Perks of Being a Wallflower is full of memorable quotes and impactful life lessons in both iterations.” (Atkins, 2022)*

Keeping these observations in mind, this systematic literature review is an effort to categorize different factors that have been reported to be essential in the process of converting books to different mediums like movies, animations, and series, and the probable impact it might have on the audience.

METHODOLOGY

A systematic literature review is a means of evaluating and interpreting all available research relevant to a particular research question, topic area, or phenomenon of interest. Systematic reviews aim to present a fair evaluation of a research topic by using a trustworthy, rigorous, and auditable methodology.

The need for a systematic review arises from the requirement of researchers to summarize all existing information about some phenomenon in a thorough and unbiased manner. (Keele, 2007)

This study aims to identify and represent information on factors that arise when books are adapted to different mediums such as movies, games, etc

A systematic search was performed to identify relevant articles, and books published in databases from 1990 to 2023. The databases used were google scholar, springer, and IEEE. Searches were based on the broad keywords like “NOVEL”, “FILM”, “ADAPTATIONS” and “BOOKS” were used in the combinations, for example, “NOVEL ADAPTATIONS”, “LITERATURE TO FILM”, “ADAPTING BOOKS INTO GAMES”. Titles were reviewed to check whether the content was relevant to this field of research, if not the papers were eliminated. There was a further refinement to the keywords in which newer more relevant keywords were added such as “BOOK VS FILM”, “STUDYING ADAPTATIONS”, “ADAPTING CLASSICS”, “PROBLEMS OF FIDELITY”, “WORLD-BUILDING”, “GAMES TURNED TO MOVIES.”

The initial search resulted in 100 research papers, out of which 10 were eliminated after an analysis of their abstracts.

Another 7 studies were excluded because they were not related to the keywords but appeared in the search, because of keyword match.

Additionally, 20 more papers were excluded due to the non-availability of the full text. This resulted in the exclusion of 37 studies and left 63 studies remaining. In the next stage, the majority of the papers could not be assessed due to incomprehensible data, thus further 33 papers were eliminated. And another 10 were excluded due to inconclusive data backing the research, and finally left with 20 studies to work on.

Below is a flowchart representation of the selection process.

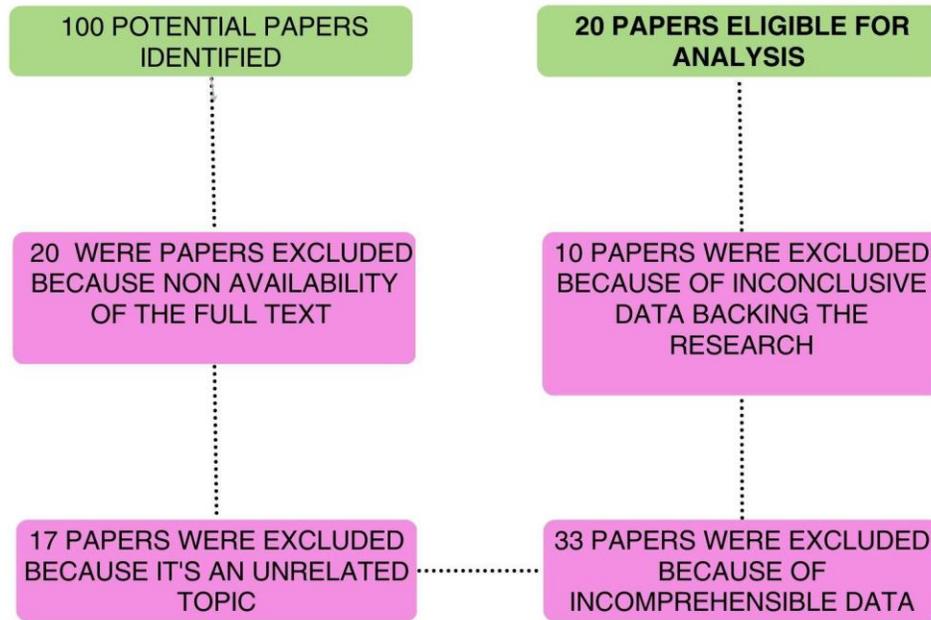


figure 1

From each study, research papers were adopted if they reported information on the comparison of the book vs different mediums. We also included papers on what all types of mediums books have been adapted to or the perspective of authors or the film industry. We also took papers if they reported on the user’s preferences between films and books and if the adherence to the objective of the topic was maintained. All outcomes of adaptations and complications and results reported were also extracted from all included studies and abstracts.

Author Name	Findings
Altahri, A. R. (2013)	In the literature study of the book witcher the author of the research paper observes that all the female character's personality has been taken away by the game developers and is left with no personality.

Annette Lamb (2018)	Many children's books like Jungle Book (1894) by Rudyard Kipling have both animated and live-action adaptations, Matilda(1988) by Roald Dahl has a stage musical adaptation and a 1996 film adaptation. Librarians in school found it important to connect the youth with books and other print-based reading material. It was found that many children were unaware of the fact that movies may be based on classical works.
Bajorek, K. (2020)	The author believes there isn't much representation of different genders in the harry potter movie compared to the books and the movie makers could have done something about it.
Bojanowska, A. B	It is noted by the author that the main character's personality development is slower in the series than in the movie.
Caitlin Boyle (2018)	The author writes about the significant changes made to Matilda the musical from the book. For example, Mrs. Wormwood spends her days playing bingo in the novel, but in the musical, she is devoted to her dance competitions. It was observed by the author that a change in the medium of communicating the story, was a contributing factor in the change of expressing the information. For example, In the book, Miss Honey writes down many of her innermost thoughts in one or two sentences. In the musical, these brief musings are expanded into full-length songs that explore Miss Honey's motives and emotions.
Doughty, R., & Etherington-Wright, C. (2017).	According to this research, since the reading process is personal, the adapter, screenwriter, and director may all aim to present a 'faithful' film adaptation, but it is their individual understanding of the literary source that prevails. This is why the film adaptation may not be up to the author's standard of how it should have been portrayed.
George Bluestone (1968)	The author observed closely that the percept of the visual image and mental image lies in the difference between the two media.
Gill, B. (1977)	The author observes that films have their own distinct aspects intended to make an effect and draw viewers because of this, some authors attested to feeling uncomfortable adapting their work to film because this can completely alter the original novel's content.

Heritage, F. (2022)	<p>The author strongly believes that the world-building of the witcher books is greatly ignored by the series because of the time constraint</p> <p>World building is most often used to describe the creation of an entirely new fictional world.</p>
HU Caixia (2013)	<p>Author says that the film also captures the same literature as in the novels but its visual effects and sound effects got wide popularity.</p>
Jiménez Rey, A. (2015)	<p>According to the author, for an effective adaptation, the changes should come from simple repetitions rather than reinterpretations and recreations.</p>
Len Unsworth (2014)	<p>In ‘Investing Point of View in Picture Books and Animated Movie Adaptations’, the author does an analysis of ‘Where the Wild Things Are’, the book(1962), and the movie(1973). It was observed by the author that the point of view in both the movie and book is that of an outsider and the audience is never put as or along the characters of the story, but the main difference was that the book couldn’t capture the mid-shots and close-ups while the movie could.</p>
Linda Costanza Cahir (2014)	<p>In the book, ‘Literature into Film: Theory and Practical Approaches’, the author states that the movie in comparison to the book has a time constraint, which leads to a lot of the information in the book is shortened or altered. Introducing new characters, or giving small characters more screen time may be an attempt to fill the narrative gaps in the movie adaptations. The author suggested that this might lead to the audience receiving the film as an ‘unfaithful’ attempt to adapt the book, especially if they expect exactly what the book contains, making serialized productions of these books preferable.</p>
Megha, B (2022)	<p>From page to screen, what is written is a difficult process that involves combining several literary and cinematic techniques. the direction and meaning of the novel are determined by just one person, the author but in a film, it is the result of the collaborative effort of many people</p>
Megha. B & Shima Mathew (2022)	<p>It was observed by the author that books had more significant freedom in the context of time.</p>

Nur Wahid, R. N., Thoyibi, M., & Candraningrum, P. D. (2019)	The author asserts that since the adapter is limited to how much information gets added to the final product the adaptation process raises the issue of originality and integrity.
Ramrao, T. N (2016)	Film and novels are the two main dominant media in literature. They exhibit great differences in terms of image vs. word, sound vs. silence, point of view, time, and so on. A film basically shows a story whereas a novel tells a story.
Snyder, M. H. (2011)	The author emphasizes that as a woman in the profession, the film industry is not the most hospitable to women, hence why many female authors would be opposed to having their books made into movies.
Surowiec, A. (2022)	The author observed a pop culture references pose challenges for people who write subtitles in languages other than English.
Takuji NOSE (2006)	<p>As stated by the author, numerous critics have provided a variety of viewpoints and evaluations regarding the comparison that can be drawn between the movie and the original novel. According to the author, Scott (2006) says even though the original novel's moral is "simple and hard to dispute," and that no one has "the right to treat another person the way Miranda treats her assistants;" The lesson "is not quite so unambiguous" in the movie version.</p> <p>While Meryl Streep's Miranda in the movie "inspires both terror and a measure of awe" and discloses "a vision of aristocratic, purposeful and surprisingly 50 human grace," Scott (2006) also notes that both the screenwriter (Aline Brosh McKenna) and the director (David Frankel) "have reimagined a few characters, discarded some plot developments and implanted others."</p>

CONCLUSION

As both books and movies have been observed to be a medium of narration, books have always been deemed as a major source of inspiration for other mediums of entertainment. However, in recent years, rather than serving as mere sources of inspiration, books have been bound to be elevated to the forefront of scriptwriting. This has turned the opportunity to turn novels into another medium of entertainment. Almost all genres of books have been adapted into entertainment in different mediums such as movies, games, and animation, but some have been found to do well, while others have been observed to be below par. Similarly, some sections of the audience prefer book adaptations while others have been vocally against books being adapted into other mediums due to the adaptation not being faithful to the books according to their liking. This systematic literature review has been positioned to showcase the problems that were reported by the selected studies when books have been intended to adapt to a different medium. The inclusion criteria for the studies that were deemed eligible were based on the availability of full text, the article relevant to the topic, and language barriers. Any research that did not meet any of the criteria was eliminated. After searching relevant databases, we extracted 100 research papers. This resulted in the elimination of 80 papers on the basis of exclusion criteria and the inclusion of 20 research papers. This review helps us find many findings such as.

- For an effective adaptation, the changes should come from simple repetitions rather than reinterpretations and recreations
- That since the adaptation is limited to how much information gets added to the final product the result suffers from originality and integrity.
- The increase in the prevalence of Pop culture references is seen as a problem by the team member responsible for adding subtitles.

Future researchers can reference this study to understand and study these individual problems in isolation.

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