



RESEARCH PAPER

**Media Violence and Siblings' Aggressive Behavior:
Parents' Perception in Pakistan**

Dr. Faiza Latif ¹ Shumaila Abid ² Dr. Malik Adnan ³

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Mass Communications, Lahore College for Women University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Lecturer, Applied Psychology, Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Sub Campus, Vehari, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Media Studies, The Islamia University of Bahawalpur, Punjab, Pakistan

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Corresponding

Author:
shumaila.abid_vca
mp@bzu.edu.pk

ABSTRACT

This study aims at exploring the perception of parents regarding the effect of media violence on siblings' behavior. This study was conducted in the province of Punjab collecting data from Multan, Faisalabad and Lahore. Theory of cultivation was employed on the study. The study concluded that the children mostly watch television and play games on computers when they are free. Parents also witnessed behavioral changes like siblings fighting with each other after viewing violent media contents. The results also reveal that there is a significant relationship between the time spent per day on media and aggressive behavior. The study recommends that parents should be vigilant as what sort of media contents their siblings are watching and how much time they are spending on such media exposure

Introduction

In this age of information, we are surrounded by a large landscape of different media i.e. television, radio, video games, social networking sites etc. A lot of studies are being conducted to understand the consumption patterns, needs and impact of media on different segments of society. Having access to different media has become the necessity and not the luxury of life any more. In today's society, the prevalence of internet and TV is an indisputable fact (Anderson, B. B. 2001). Nowadays; media offers variety of programs not only for adults but also for children. The programs which are produced for children are full of drama, fantasy, adventure and violence. Such programs provide them information, education and entertainment. It is believed in general that the programs relating to entertainment are mostly dominated by violent content. Viewership of these programs is

observed to be higher if compared with the other ones. The exposure to violence in media contents causes greater aggression in children (Gerbner & Signorielli, 1994). Watching violent content in media for a long time may create aggression in children's behavior, causing nervousness, frustration and hostility at times (Funk, & Buchman, 1997). Hence, violent contents play a pivotal role in nurturing attitudes of children which are harmful for their activities and behaviors (Zafar, & Chaudhary, 2018).

The past two decades have witnessed a growing interest among researchers in exploring the linkages between the violent media contents and the behavioral change of children. Social scientists have long been concerned about the effects of media violence on the behavior of children and in particular the siblings' behavior; there are apprehensions about such exposure leading siblings to risk taking behaviors including quarrel, revenge, breaking things and violence as well. Yet, in Pakistan the context of the media violence is a chapter of concern for many mass communication scholars but a small number of studies have explored media habits among children and effects. The issue of media violence is still pertinent as it used to be in the past. This violence has adverse impact on viewers, children in particular. Playing of video games is a big entertainment source for children and adolescents. Many adolescent spend their most of the time in playing video games and watching television. Many researchers have examined the relationship between exposure to violent media and aggressive acts. Exposure to violence affects the thinking processes of adolescents and they do the same violent acts in different social situations (Clara, 1979). Cartoons are contributing in modifying the behavior of the growing children. Violence presented in television and animated films (weapon, guns, and sticks) is putting the bad effects on the minds of the siblings. Cartoons have their place in people's heart especially in children's heart (Bryant, 2003). As the kids occupy their free time sitting in-front of the television sets and viewing cartoon as it is fun to watch and easy to understand. Because of those reasons cartoon has become important part of the lives of the children. The statistical data reveals that children from 2.5 years old and older children are the regular viewer of cartoons (Soumya 2014). Averagely children and adolescents spend three to four hours in watching television. The integration of different researches indicates that continuous television exposure to violence surges violent and aggressive behavior.

This study aims at exploring as to what kind of media contents are being watched by the children and what is the impact of those contents on their behavior from parents' perspective. This study will also help the parents to guide their children in watching programs besides providing broader guidelines to the policy makers to devise strategy for production of media contents for the children.

Violence

The term violence refers to the aggression that causes death, injury or extreme aggression. All those acts with the intention to cause rape, assault, robbery and murder are violent. The World Health Organization defines that violence is a

deliberate use of physical force or power against a person, or a group or community that culminates or may culminate in injury, death, psychological trauma, or deprivation. American Psychological Association defines violence as an acute form of aggression, like assault, rape or murder. While, Encyclopedia of Psychology states that the factors behind adoption of violence may be watching the violent contents presented by media, violence in and around the home.

Media Violence

The term Media Violence refers to the dissemination of violent contents in a manner that is considered harmful to viewers through media sources such as movies, television, videos and animated films or cartoons. Gonzale stated that Media violence is the portrayal of aggressive, violent and hostile acts of one human towards another. This can include humans engaging in acts like hurting, torturing, killing, raping or stealing from each other. After knowing what media violence is, we can take a more in-depth look at how children are exposed to it and find ways to limit its impact. Playing of video games is a big entertainment source for children and adolescents. Many adolescent spend their most of the time in playing video games and watching television. Many researchers have examined the relationship between exposure to violent media and aggressive acts. Exposure to violence affects the thinking processes of adolescents and they do the same violent acts in different social situations (Clara, 1979). Cartoons are contributing in modifying the behavior of the growing children. Violence presented in television and animated films (weapon, guns, and sticks) is putting the bad effects on the minds of the siblings. Cartoons have their place in people's heart especially in children's heart (Bryant, 2003). Most of the children spend their free time sitting in front of the TV sets watching cartoon as it is fun to watch and easy to understand. Because of those reasons cartoon has become important part of the lives of the children. The statistical data reveals that children from 2.5 years old and older children are the regular viewer of cartoons (Soumya 2014). It is very important to consider that violence is heavily presented in television programs and films. Averagely children and adolescents spend three to four hours in watching television. The integration of different researches indicates that continuous and attentive television exposure to violence causes a rise in intense and aggressive behavior.

Aggression

"Aggression is a kind of behavior that is planned to harm a person who does not desire to be harmed" (Baron & Richardson, 1994). As it includes the understanding of intent, what is aggression from one's perspective can't be aggression from the other person's respective, and depending on the intent, same harmful behavior cannot be considered aggressive. While to harm someone intentionally can be understood as worse than not intentional harm, even when the level of harm is same (Ames & Fiske, 2013)

Review of the Literature

Akçay and Akçay (2018) conducted a study to explore the media using habits and effects of media content on adolescents. Results have shown that aggression was higher in students who frequently watched violent media. The aggression was positively correlated with watching television, DVDs, movies, playing games on computers, cellular phones and the Internet and listening to music, and negatively correlated with taking part in sports and reading newspapers and books. The study also suggested that the experts should advise parents, educators, and children about the use of media, as uncontrolled use of violent media can exert negative effects. Jahan (2017) explored that how violence in media affects on the school going children and how to cope up with their violent behaviors in school. The researcher explained that it is evident from the previous studies that media violence influences on the behavior of the children. The study aimed to find the ways to deal with students' aggressive behavior in an educational institution. The findings revealed that media play an important role in changing the behavior of students. The fact is that parents should also pay attention on their children. Parents are busy in their routine lives and never focused on what their child were doing and what type of content they were watching. Teachers also described that family background also play a great role in violent behavior of a person (Jahan, 2017). The studies of Huesmann, (2017) and Furuya, (2016) found that aggression is not caused by the exposure to violent media but it is related to the factors like traits of antisocial personality traits, family violence peer influence. Groves, (2014) suggested there many deficiencies were reported in the studies conducted by the Ferguson and he claimed that his researches are more valid. Some researchers oppose the Anderson and support Ferguson's view Anderson Gentile, 2015; Rothstein and Bushman 2015). However another researcher (Markey, 2015) view is neutral and he states that views of extremes should not be taken in the relationship between violent video games and aggression.

Tanwar (2016) explained the effects of media violence in developing the aggressive behavior in children in a study. The researcher explained that, in this world a child grows with excessive use of media. Media is very helpful in every field, but it has also some negative effects. Children watch television, play video games, use internet on a daily basis. The research article explores that the violent behavior shown in cartoons, violent content of video games and internet has affected the psychological health of the children and made children aggressive and insensitive regarding violence. This type of content makes them habitual of watching violence (Tanwar, 2016). Fitzpatrick, Oghia, Melki & Pagani (2016) concluded in a research that exposure to media violence in early age may increase aggression and self-regulation problems. Moreover, parents are essentially the gatekeepers of their siblings' access to media who should devise guidelines for wellbeing of their children. A study was conducted by Zitha (2014) to explore the effects of violent films and video games on children. Results of the study show that video games and films remain the source of entertainment. Both have positive and

negative effects of media that can be seen through long and short exposure. The study revealed that the effects on children may be determined by several factors such as: cognitive development of one's mind, time spent consuming violent films and video games, age and interpretation attached to messages represented by the media. The findings revealed that child's perceptions of the reality may be affected by media violence and repeated exposure of violence on children might result in aggressive behaviour. Furthermore, parents do not always monitor what their children consume on daily basis and children should be taught about the importance of age restrictions and television guidelines. Dogutas (2013) discussed two contrasting ideas in an article, one group of researchers' favors that media violence has effects on the behavior of children while other group supports that media plays no role in aggressive behavior of the child. Dogutas explained this issue in context of different countries (USA, Bangladesh, Britain, France, China, Vietnam, and Turkey) and discussed the responsibilities of media and the effects of media violence on developing aggressive behavior among children. The researcher concluded that parents and program makers must understand the severity of this issue. Media violence has influence on the children but this influence can be decreased by providing proper knowledge of media as a special subject so that children can understand the differences between media world and real world. The parents should also pay attention on their children properly (Dogutas, 2013). Hassan & Daniyal (2013) concluded in their study that Cartoon channels are the most favorite channels among children. Children and adolescent's spend most of their time in watching them. The themes in cartoon movies have different positive and negative impact on children as well. One of the most important causes of watching cartoons is violence which is presented through animated characters. After watching cartoons, children duplicate their most enjoyed animated characters, and they likewise power their folks to purchase shirts of animation characters and different embellishments also.

Eugene (2010) concluded that adolescents perform fierce and forceful act with their friend groups which they see on screens, as a rule legends on television are forceful and brutal and they become good example for young viewers. So they attempt to practice violence in their normal life like Superman. According to Siripen (2009) the favorite activity of children is to watch cartoons and cartoons have an impact on children's behavior. According to Tompkins (2003) violence is a usually considered common form of entertainment on media. As the result watching programs with violent content, children develop faulty thinking patterns and they become self-lover, due to self-love and by developing faulty thinking they are more prone to depression and stress. Children who have more exposure to small screen increased feeling of antagonism and the response to injuries and pain decreases. In a study conducted by Ferguson, San Miguel & Hartley (2009) explored multivariate nature of risk factors for youth violence including criminal peer associations, exposure to domestic violence in the home, family conflict, neighborhood stress, antisocial personality traits, depression level, and exposure to television and video game violence. The study concluded that childhood

depression, criminal peer association, and parental use of psychological abuse may be the avenues for efforts leading towards future prevention. Huesmann (2007) conducted a research to know why and how the media violence effects the youth and the children. He stated that in early 1960's research evidences has suggested that the exposure to violent content through mobile phone, television, social media, video games and web content has increased the risk of viewer behaving violently. Nicholas (2007) reported that violent computer games presentation increase the violent observations, fierce mind-sets and lessen kind habits. Studies demonstrated that fierce computer games impacts naturally and mentally desensitize the children. In this manner asking the media seeing propensities, takes part were asked to play a game from peaceful and savage games and different members were approached to watch rough scenes, the galvanic skin response and heart rate in violent scenes viewers was measured from general aggressive model and it was not noted that heart and galvanic skin response was increased. An analysis of multiple research studies conducted by Ferguson (2007) reported that there are biases of publications, it is related to the hypothesis that many of the researches report that violent media including violent video games are highly related with aggression. Then, Ferguson et al. proposed a model which is called Catalyst Model (CM). According to this model, genetic predispositions play very important role in developing aggressive behavior. The genetic predisposition can lead toward the aggressive behavior of child temperament and they grew as aggressive personalities. The persons with aggressive personality or with aggressive temperament are more prone to produce violent and aggressive behaviors. Villani (2001) reviewed the literature of past ten years regarding the impact of media on children and adolescents. Categories of media were searched with the computer technologies including television, and movies, rock music videos, advertising, video games, computer and internet. The results revealed that primary effects of media exposure were increased violent and aggressive behavior including alcohol and tobacco use along with sexual activity. So, this study concluded that the behavior of children and adolescents were learnt by media and their values systems were also shaped by the media.

Theoretical Foundation

The theoretical foundation of the study is Cultivation theory presented by George Gerbner. Cultivation theory is often useful for television analysis. Television content cultivates the perception and attitudes of the viewers. Cultivation Theory suggests that the more the people view TV the more they are likely to adapt to the issues and situations, believing that reality as what is shown on media. The constant exposure to media cultivates specific values, beliefs, attitudes and desires in people.

Participants

The study was conducted in three major cities of Punjab province in Pakistan and data was collected from Multan, Lahore and Faisalabad. Universe of the present study comprised on the parents of those major area of selected cities.

The study consists of N=200 parents. The sample of n=65 was selected from Multan, n= 65 from Faisalabad and sample of n=70 was selected from Lahore. The researchers choose purposive sampling because the sample was parents who had at least two children aged 05-12 years. Respondents for the research were parents of the siblings. With view of the profile of the respondents purposive sampling was used as a technique selected the sample size.

Procedure

The study was completed in the cities of Multan, Lahore and Faisalabad Pakistan. The parents were given consent forms to fill and it was briefly explained to the participants about the purpose of the research. It was also assured about the confidentiality of the answers. After collecting data, the data was analyzed through SPSS for the analyses of the results, Descriptive statistics, Linear regression and correlation methods were used for the analysis of the results.

Hypothesis

H1: It's more likely to be that television would be more watched than other media by siblings.

H2: It's more likely to be that violent media characters put some psychological effects on sings' behavior.

H3: It's more likely to be that parents would have witnessed the behavioral change like siblings fighting with each other after viewing violent media contents.

H4: It is more likely that time spent on media or number of hours spent on media per day is significantly related with aggressive behaviors.

H5: It is more likely that there is significant impact of usage of media on aggression.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
What do your children do mostly when they are free?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Watching television	122	61.0	61.0	61.0
Social media	51	25.5	25.5	86.5
Playing video games	27	13.5	13.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that mostly children watch television when they get free.

Table 2
How many hours daily they spent on media?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Up to 4 hours per day	143	71.5	71.5	71.5
4 or more than 4 hours per day	57	28.5	28.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows mostly kids are light viewer of media contents.

Table 3
Do you think violent media characters put some psychological effects on siblings' behavior?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	73	36.5	36.5	36.5
Agree	51	25.5	25.5	62.0
Strongly Disagree	33	16.5	16.5	78.5
Disagree	29	14.5	14.5	93.0
Undecided	14	7.0	7.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows the results of the respondents, it is clearly seen that mostly parents said that violent media exposure put some psychological effects on siblings' behavior.

Table 4
Do you think sibling's behavior gets changed after watching violent media contents?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	51	25.5	25.5	25.5
Agree	63	31.5	31.5	57.0
Strongly Disagree	44	22.0	22.0	79.0
Disagree	25	12.5	12.5	91.5
Undecided	17	8.5	8.5	100
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

It can be seen from the results that mostly parents think that after violent media exposure siblings' behavior get changed.

Table: 5
Do siblings intend to imitate their accent and style?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	42	21.0	21.0	21.0
Agree	33	16.5	16.5	37.5
Strongly Disagree	49	24.5	24.5	62.0
Disagree	27	13.5	13.5	75.5
Undecided	49	24.5	24.5	100.0

Total	200	100.0	100.0
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When they asked do siblings intend to imitate their accent and style, then half of the respondents agreed with this notion and other half disagreed with it.

Table 6
Have you witnessed any behavior change like siblings fighting with each other after viewing violent media contents?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	33	16.5	16.5	16.5
Agree	74	37.0	37.0	53.5
Strongly Disagree	28	14.0	14.0	67.5
Disagree	39	19.5	19.5	87.0
Undecided	26	13.0	13.0	100
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that mostly respondents witnessed the behavioral change like siblings fighting with each other after viewing violent media contents.

Table 7
Do they call names of each other while quarreling?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	23	11.5	11.5	11.5
Agree	34	17.0	17.0	28.5
Strongly Disagree	42	21.0	21.0	49.5
Disagree	61	30.5	30.5	80.0
Undecided	40	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

It can be seen from the results shown above that mostly respondents disagreed with this notion that after viewing violent contents they call names of each other while quarreling.

Table 8
Do you think your children break the things of each other when they quarrel?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	78	39.0	39.0	39.0
Agree	41	20.5	20.5	59.5
Strongly Disagree	38	19.0	19.0	78.5
Disagree	32	16.0	16.0	94.5
Undecided	11	5.5	5.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that mostly parents think that children break the things of each other when they quarrel.

Table 9
Do you think your children have revenge feelings after quarreling?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly Agree	26	13.0	13.0	13.0
Agree	48	24.0	24.0	37.0
Strongly Disagree	64	32.0	32.0	69.0
Disagree	35	17.5	17.5	86.5
Undecided	27	13.5	13.5	100.0
Total	200	100.0	100.0	

The above table shows that mostly parents disagreed that children have revenge feelings after quarreling.

Table 10
Correlation of the number of hours spent on media exposure and aggression

Variables	HSMP	AB
HSMP	1	.834**
AB	.834**	1

Note: Correlation Variables (N=200). HSD= Hours spent on media per day; AB= Aggressive behavior. Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2 tailed).

The results show that there is strong positive correlation between the variables. The result indicate as if the no of hours spent on media exposure are increasing then the aggressive behaviors are also increasing. The results indicate the strong positive relationship between the variables.

Table 11
The impact of number of hours spent on media per day (HSMP) with aggression

Predictor	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	P
	26.932	2.365		11.403	.000
HSMP	2.139	.631	.291	3.389	.001

The main aim of the study was to check the impact of no of hours spent on media per day on aggressive behavior as given in table 11. The findings clearly indicate that time spent on media exposure hassignificant impact on aggressive behavior.

Conclusion

Media has become an important social institution which is fulfilling the information, education and entertainment needs of the people and affecting them in different ways. There is a growing interest of social scientists in exploring the impact of media contents on children. This study is about the effects of media violence on the behavior of the siblings in Pakistan. The results illustrated that according to the parent's perception their siblings mostly watch television whenever they get free. Most of the parents said that their siblings are light viewers of media which means they spend less than four hours on media. The parents' perception about violent media characters and psychological effects on siblings' behavior was that violent media exposure puts psychological effects on siblings' behavior. The views about change in sibling's behavior after watching violent media contents

were that after violent media exposure siblings' behavior gets altered. The opinion of the parents regarding whether siblings intend to imitate their accent and style in their routine life was taken, and half of the parents were of the view that this impression was correct and other half disagreed with it. When enquired of any behavioral changes like siblings fighting with each other after viewing violent media contents, most of the parents claimed that they observe these behavioral changes in their children. The majority of the parents disagreed with the notion that after viewing violent contents their children call names of each other while quarreling. When they were asked if they thought that their children break the things of each other when they quarrel, most of them thought that they do. Most parents also disagreed that children have feelings of revenge after quarreling.

The first hypothesis of the study stated that it is more likely that television is more watched than other media by siblings. After these findings, it is concluded that the first hypothesis is correct. The second hypothesis was that it was more likely that violent media characters put some psychological effects on siblings' behavior and it is evident that mostly parents claimed that they did. The second hypothesis was also proved. Third hypothesis was that it was more likely that parents witnessed behavioral changes after viewing violent media contents in their children and the results exhibited that most of the respondents witnessed behavioral changes after viewing violent media contents. Henceforth, third hypothesis is also proved. The fourth hypothesis of the study states that there was significant relationship of number of hours spent on media and the aggressive behavior. The results proved that aggression of the children increases with the increase in time spent on media. The relationship is positive and significant. In the last hypothesis, the impact was analyzed through the regression analyses and the results proved that there is significant impact of number of hours spent on media per day on the aggressive behavior of the children.

Recommendations

In the end, it is recommended that parents should be very vigilant as to what sort of media contents their siblings are watching and how much time they are exposed to such media especially violent media contents and computer games. Parents should play an active role in gate keeping of media contents to control the violent and aggressive behavior in their siblings. The parents should keep check and balance to what their children are watching and how much time they spend on violent contents depicted through media. It is also recommended to the parents that they should indulge their children in outdoor games like cricket and badminton to reduce the aggressive behavior. It is also recommended to the media that they should reduce violent content from cartoons and even films. So that violence behavior can be reduced.

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