

IMPACT OF MEDIA VIOLENCE AMONG ADOLESCENTS AND INFLUENCE ON THEIR INTERNALIZING AND EXTERNALIZING BEHAVIORS

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Abstract

Background: The adolescence current prevailing environment, television, movies, videos, video games, and computer networks have assumed vital roles in their daily activities. Over many years, exposure to violence on television and in video games increases the risk of violent behavior on the adolescents, growing up in an environment filled with real violence increases the risk of violent behavior. **Aim:** The present study aimed is to assess the impact of media violence among adolescents and influence on their internalizing and externalizing behaviors. **Methods and Materials:** 71 adolescents were selected randomly from the schools with the help of the teacher, those who have expose to media, screened and selected 31 (15 males, 16 females) adolescents within the age group of 12 to 18, data collected from the schools based on urban background using simple random sampling method. **Results:** There is significant relationship between Violent TV exposure with Withdrawn/depression, somatic complaints, thought problems, attention problems and other problems and relationally aggressive TV exposure with anxiety/depression, social problems and attention problems. **Conclusion:** The study concluded that there is significant relationship between aggressive behavior and media exposure. There is influence between internalizing and externalizing with media exposure.

Keywords: Media Exposure, aggressive behavior, internalizing and externalizing behaviors

Introduction

The manifest innovations in the 20th century are the appearance and intensity of mass media and it has postulated master roles in our routine life. Although the mass media are having a massive impact on our values, beliefs, and behaviors, the emanation of one specific element of the mass media exposure has distinctly inimical outcome on viewer's vigor. Research evidence gathered over many years shows that disclosure to media violence increases the venture of violent behavior on the viewer's just as budding in an environment stuffed with real violence. Media violence is the optical enactment of violence exhibited through aggression by any mortal or mortal-like character against another (Rowell Huesmann. L and Laramie D. Taylor, 2006).

18 years aged adolescent children have been watching television on an average of 28 hours in developed countries like United States, kids have seen 16,000 phoniest murders and 200,000 acts of violence in television (Muscari, 2002). 10,000 hours of broadcast programming in 1995-1997 and

found 61% of the programming characterized inter-personal violence (Seawell, Margaret, Ed, 1997). Animated feature films produced in U.S during 1937-1999 characterized 100% assault (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2001). According to Indian studies documented that disclosure to media violence is minimal, a considerable part of adolescents also has substantial exposure to media violence irrespective of family type and domicile (Munni Ray and Kana Ram Jat, 2010).

The best predictor that age nine year's kids have aggressive behavior is when the kids are exposed to ten year's violent television programming (Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder, and Huesmann, 1977). Effect of television violence is so powerful because aggression and television violence feed off each other (Bushman and Huesmann, 2001). Violent video games are linked to increase in aggressive cognitions, feelings, and behaviors (Anderson and Bushman 2001; Anderson 2004; Gentile and Stone 2005; Anderson, Gentile and Buckley, 2007). Television-induced fright leads to regression in behavior, which is expressed in a reduction in the quantity of imaginative play (Valkenburg, 2001). Exposure to violent shows increases the suspicious nature of the person and their expectancy of being involved in real violence (Lefkowitz and Huesmann, 1980).

Cross-sectional surveys have consistently provided evidence that physical aggression, verbal aggression and aggressive thoughts of young people are related with the amount of disclosure to media violence (Chaffee, 1972, Comstock, 1980, Eysenck & Nias, 1978, Huesmann & Miller, 1994). TV violence legitimizes and justifies violence and aggression as a solution to problems. Exposure to television is positively associated with social problems, delinquent behavior, aggressive behavior, externalization, and total problemscores (Elif Ozmert; Muge Toyran; Kadriye Yurdakok, 2002).

Many theories are evolved on the impact of media violence since the evolution of mass media. Majority of the theories shows that different perspectives on the relationship between child development and media exposure. Media affect theories begun with Desensitization theory. Desensitization Theory revolves around the idea that people have an instinctual negative reaction to violence and that this negative reaction is diminished with repeated exposure to it (Cline, Victor B, Croft, Roger G, Courier, Steven, 1973). Mass media has a massive impact on our values, beliefs, and behaviors. In particular research indicates that over many years disclosure to media violence increases the venture of violent behavior on the viewers. Previous studies have focussed on impact of media violence among children (8-14) and influence on their internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Few studies have been conducted on impact of media violence among adolescents and influence on certain domains of internalizing and externalizing behaviors. But these studies didn't focus on media as a whole instead they focussed on the aspects of media such as music, video games or television. These all raised the need to find the impact of media violence among adolescents and influence on their internalizing and externalizing behaviors.

Methodology

Aim

To assess the impact of media violence among adolescents and influence on their internalizing and externalizing behavior

Objectives

1. To assess the general media habits and aggressive behavior among adolescents
2. To examine the internalizing and externalizing behavior among adolescents

Hypothesis

1. There exists no significant relationship between violent media exposure and aggressive behavior among adolescents
2. There exists no significant relationship between violent media exposure and internalizing, externalizing behavior among adolescents

71 adolescents were selected randomly from the schools with the help of the teacher, from these 31 adolescents were filtered (15 males, 16 females) based on those who have exposure to media and adolescents within the age group of 12 to 18 and their parents. Data collected from the schools based on urban background using systematic random sampling method. Other inclusion and exclusion criteria are as follows.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Aged from 12-18 year's adolescent children Studying 6th to 12th standard and their parents
2. Exposed to visual media
3. Those who are willing to sign the informed consent form and Voluntary Participation

Exclusion Criteria

1. Presence of any health problems which might interfere in taking the administered tools
2. Children below 11 years and those who are not exposed to visual media

Tools

Socio Demographic Details: This social demographic data is intended to gather information regarding the name of the participant, age, gender, family type and domicile.

General Media Habit Questionnaire: This questionnaire was developed by Anderson and Dill in 2000. The General Media Habit Questionnaire consisting of 55 items. This questionnaire is used to assess the general media habits of the participants. It also assesses the participant's amount of exposure to media. The cronbach's alpha is $\alpha=0.870$ which indicates the questionnaire has good internal consistency reliability.

Aggression Questionnaire: It was developed by Buss and Perry (1992). The Aggression Questionnaire consists of 29 items. Participants have to indicate whether the given statements were characteristic or uncharacteristic of them in 5 different responses. It assesses the level of aggressive behavior and its four dimensions' physical aggression, verbal aggression, hostility and anger of the participants. The cronbach's alpha is $\alpha=0.89$.

Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL): (Achenbach and Rescorla, 2001): The CBCL (6 years -18 years) consisting of 113 items was developed by Achenbach and Rescorla in 1991. It is completed by parents, parent-surrogates, and others who see children in family by rating the frequency of behavior on a three-point scale from 0 to 2. The test measures the presence of anxiety/depression, withdrawn / Depressed, somatic complaints, Rule breaking behavior, Aggressive behavior, Social problems, thought problems, Attention problems and Oppositional Defiant disorder. The cronbach's alpha is $\alpha=0.84$.

Procedure

The informed consent form was given to the participants. The subjects were asked to provide information on certain socio demographic details followed by the administration of the General Media Habit Questionnaire and Aggression Questionnaire. Child Behavior Checklist was completed by the adolescent children parents either mother or father or both. The instructions about how to respond to the tests was explained in detail to the subjects in their convenient language (English or in Tamil). The entire administration took up to 45 to 60 minutes.

Results and Discussion

Data was coded for IBM SPSS.20 analysis. To assess the internal consistency for General media habit questionnaire, the cronbach's alpha found to see the consistency (0.870). The frequencies and percentages were calculated for the socio-demographic variables. In order to test the hypothesis, correlation, t-test was performed to find out the relationship between General Media Habits, Aggression and Child behaviors (Internalizing and Externalizing behaviors). The results are as follows,

Table 1 Frequencies and Percentages of Socio-Demographic Variables of Adolescent Children

Socio-Demographic Variables		Frequency	%
Age	12 -14	15	48.4%
	15 - 17	16	51.7%
Gender	Male	16	51.6%
	Female	15	48.4%
Domicile	Rural	0	0%
	Urban	31	100%
Family Type	Nuclear	24	77.4%
	Joint	7	22.6%

Table-1 shows the frequencies and percentages of socio-demographic details of the participants in such as age, gender, domicile and family type. The study was conducted with a sample group consisting of 31 participants (16 males, 15 females); age ranging from 12-17 years where 48.4% of the participants are between 12-14 years of age and 51.7% of the participants are between 15-17 years of age. All the participants were from urban background.

In family type, 77.4% of the participants were belonging to nuclear family and 22.6% of the participants were belonging to joint family. Hence, majority of the participants are aged 15-17 years, male, urban background and belongs to nuclear family.

Table 2 Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test of General Media Habits among adolescent children in terms of gender

PM-E	Male	16	33.44	8.794	2.198	-0.544
	Female	15	35.53	12.466	3.219	(0.591)
VV-E	Male	16	29.31	10.177	2.544	2.225
	Female	15	20.27	12.418	3.206	(0.749)
RAV-E	Male	16	27.50	9.723	2.431	2.005
	Female	15	18.80	14.168	3.658	(0.696)
PV-E	Male	16	19.81	11.623	2.906	-0.553
	Female	15	23.53	24.112	6.226	(0.168)

Table-2 shows Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test of General Media Habits among adolescents in terms of gender. It can be concluded that there exists no significant difference between the means of General Media Habits among adolescents in terms of gender. Hence, this finding serves as accepting the null hypothesis that both boys and girls have similar level of media exposure.

Table 3 Mean and Standard Deviation of Aggressive Behaviors among Adolescent Children in terms of Gender

Aggressive Behaviors	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test
Anger	Male	16	19.19	5.822	1.456	4.070
	Female	15	19.33	5.640	1.456	(0.944)
Physical Aggression	Male	16	21.69	5.747	1.437	-3.013
	Female	15	28.07	6.041	1.560	(0.005)
Hostility	Male	16	23.31	8.048	2.012	0.351
	Female	15	22.40	6.243	1.612	(0.728)
Verbal Aggression	Male	16	15.63	4.064	1.016	0.741
	Female	15	14.40	5.110	1.319	(0.465)
Total (Aggression)	Male	16	79.94	18.241	4.560	-0.661
	Female	15	84.20	17.608	4.546	(0.514)

Table-3 shows the mean and standard deviation of Aggressive behaviors among adolescents in terms of gender. It shows that there is significant difference between the physical aggression in terms of gender ($t = -3.013$; $p = 0.005$). However, there exists no significant difference between males and females in terms of overall aggression.

Table 4 Behavioral Problems of Adolescent Children in terms of Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-test
A/D	Male	16	10.63	4.911	1.228	0.235
	Female	15	10.27	3.390	0.875	(0.816)

W/D	Male	16	5.56	3.366	0.841	0.871
	Female	15	4.47	3.642	0.940	(0.391)
SC	Male	16	4.44	3.162	0.790	-1.937
	Female	15	6.67	3.244	0.838	(0.063)
IP	Male	16	20.69	9.555	2.389	-0.216
	Female	15	21.40	8.765	2.263	(0.831)
SP	Male	16	7.06	3.130	0.782	0.385
	Female	15	6.60	3.562	0.920	(0.703)
TP	Male	16	7.88	3.948	0.987	-0.600
	Female	15	8.80	4.632	1.196	(0.553)
AP	Male	16	9.38	3.462	0.865	1.818
	Female	15	7.33	2.717	0.701	(0.079)
OP	Male	16	10.63	6.344	1.586	1.637
	Female	15	7.67	3.039	0.785	(0.112)
RBB	Male	16	12.25	5.686	1.422	1.010
	Female	15	10.20	5.609	1.448	(0.321)
AB	Male	16	23.06	10.939	2.735	1.424
	Female	15	18.27	7.334	1.894	(0.165)
EP	Male	16	7.38	2.849	0.712	-0.392
	Female	15	7.80	3.189	0.823	(0.698)
Total	Male	16	75.13	24.660	6.165	0.628
	Female	15	69.80	22.371	5.776	(0.535)

Table-4 shows the behavioral problems of adolescents in terms of gender. It shows that there exists no significant difference between means of behavioral problems of adolescents in terms of gender.

Table 5 Relationship between Violent Media Exposure and Aggressive behavior among adolescent children

	Anger	Physical Aggression	Hostility	Verbal Aggression	Total (Aggression)
VTV-E	0.240	0.179	0.309*	0.401*	0.371
RTV-E	-0.019	0.071*	0.467	0.041**	0.219
PTV-E	-0.027	0.260**	0.280*	-0.155*	0.158
VM-E	-0.165	0.151	-0.004	-0.277	-0.073
RAM-E	-0.302	-0.141	-0.030	-0.301	-0.241
PM-E	-0.123	0.255	0.142	-0.073	0.089
VV-E	-0.531	-0.273	-0.182	-0.390	-0.447
RAV-E	-0.488	-0.189	-0.047	-0.467	-0.368
PV-E	-0.348	0.089	-0.286	-0.471	-0.322

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level
 * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 5 shows the relationship between violent media exposure and aggressive behavior. Violent TV exposure is positively correlated with hostility of the participants (0.309*) and the correlation is significant at 0.05 level and also it is positively correlated to verbal aggression and the correlation is significant at 0.05 level. Relationally aggressive TV exposure is positively correlated with physical aggression and the

correlation is significant at 0.05 levels and also it is positively correlated to verbal aggression and the correlation is significant at 0.01 levels. Pro-social TV exposure is positively correlated with physical aggression and the correlation is significant at 0.01 levels, it is positively correlated with hostility and the correlation is significant at 0.05 levels, also it is negatively correlated with verbal aggression and the correlation is significant at 0.05 levels. Therefore, there is a relationship between Violent TV Exposure and Pro-Social TV Exposure with hostility and verbal aggression, relationally aggressive TV Exposure and Pro-Social TV Exposure with physical aggression and verbal aggression, Violent TV Exposure with Verbal aggression.

Table 6 Relationship between Exposure to Media and Behavioral problems of Adolescent Children

	VTV-E	RTV-E	PTV-E	VM-E	RAM-E	PM-E	VV-E	RAV-E	PV-E
A/D	0.239	0.237*	0.088**	-0.198	-0.076	-0.021	-0.072	-0.037	-0.243
W/D	0.278*	0.269	0.180*	-0.037	-0.022	-0.127	-0.072	0.077	-0.216
SC	0.088*	-0.038**	0.064*	-0.183	-0.255	-0.301	-0.292*	-0.282	-0.196
IP	0.249	0.199	0.132	-0.179	-0.145	-0.175	-0.172	-0.092	-0.270
SP	0.294	0.257*	0.042**	0.019	-0.118	-0.027	-0.132*	-0.099	-0.132
TP	0.323*	0.416	0.382*	0.060	-0.054	0.194	0.042**	0.159	0.080
AP	0.226*	0.148**	-0.126*	-0.168	-0.222	0.099	0.070	0.231	-0.204
OP	0.107*	0.163	0.039*	0.245	0.170	-0.083	0.198	0.146	0.098
RBB	0.072	0.020	-0.261	0.255	0.098	0.091	0.065	0.066	-0.139
AB	0.185	-0.038	-0.029	0.051	-0.077	-0.133	-0.217	-0.141	-0.204
EP	0.105	-0.073*	-0.201**	0.245	0.170	-0.083	-0.122	-0.075	-0.211
Total	0.308*	0.218**	0.051*	0.017	-0.081	-0.046	-0.081	0.009	-0.203

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

↓ A/D = Anxiety/Depression, W/D = Withdrawn/Depression, SC = Somatic Complaints, IP = Internalizing Problems, SP = Social Problems, TP = Thought Problems, AP = Attention problems, OP = Other Problems, RBB = Rule breaking behavior, AB = Aggression Behavior and EP = Externalizing Problems.

⇨ VTV-E = Violent TV Exposure, RATV-E = Relationally Aggressive TV Exposure, PTV-E = Pro-Social TV Exposure, VM-E = Violent Media Exposure, RAM-E = Relationally Aggressive Movie Exposure, PM-E = Pro-social Movie Exposure, VVG-E = Violent Video Game Exposure, RAVG-E = Relationally Aggressive Video Game Exposure and PVG-E = Pro-social Video Game Exposure.

Table-6 shows the relationship between the Exposure to Media and child behavior problems of adolescents. Violent TV exposure is positively associated with Withdrawn/depression (0.278*), somatic complaints (0.088*), thought problems (0.323*), attention problems (0.226*), other problems (0.107*) and overall total (0.308*) which is significant at 0.05 level. Relationally aggressive TV exposure is positively correlated with anxiety/depression (0.237*), social problems (0.257*) and the correlation is significant at 0.05 level, also it is positively correlated with attention problems (0.148**) and overall total (0.218**) and the correlation is significant at 0.01 level. It is also negatively correlated with somatic complaints (-0.038**) and the correlation is significant at 0.01 level and it is also negatively correlated with the externalizing problems (-0.073*) and the correlation is significant at 0.05 level. Pro-social TV exposure is positively correlated with the anxiety/depression (0.088**) and social problems (0.042**) and the correlation is significant at 0.01 level, also it is positively correlated with the withdrawn/ depression (0.180*), somatic complaints (0.064*), thought problems (0.382*), other problems (0.039*) and overall total (0.051*) and the correlation is significant at 0.05 level. It is negatively correlated with the attention problems (-0.126*) and the correlation is significant at 0.05 level, also it is negatively correlated with the externalizing problem (-0.201*) and the correlation is significant at 0.01 level. Violent video game exposure is positively correlated with the thought problems (0.042**) and the correlation is significant at 0.01 level. It is negatively correlated with somatic complaints (-0.292*) and social problems (-0.132*) and the correlation is significant at 0.05 level.

Discussion

In order to test the hypothesis, the results were tabulated and interpreted. The present study findings and discussions are presented in this chapter. The frequencies and percentages of socio-demographic details obtained indicate that most of the participants are aged 15-17 years, male, urban background and belongs to nuclear family. The type of family in which a person lives and gets socialized has immense importance in deciding his / her values, beliefs and behaviors patterns which are likely to influence the exposure to media, hence the family type plays its own role in giving the response of an individual and therefore it was important to understand the family type of the respondents. Gender is an important variable in a given Indian social situation which is variably affected by any social or economic phenomenon. Socio-economic status of an individual is indicative of his life style and the pattern of his behavior. The person from a low socio-economic background will show some peculiar social and psychological characteristics which in turn will be reflected in his responses on exposure to violent media.

There exists no significant difference between their media habits among the genders (male & female) which is consistent with the findings that both the male and female participants are all the same in their media habits, nevertheless each other (Donald.F.Roberts, 2000). On contrary, aggressive behavior amid the adolescents resulted that the level of physical aggression is higher than usual among females than male individuals, but there is not much notifiable difference in their aggressive behavior in terms of both the gender (Kaj Bjorkqvist, Karin Osterman, Kirsti M. J. Lagerspetz, 1994). Adolescents are not much prone to the behavioral problems due to their exposure to media habits (Elif Ozmert, Muge Toyran, Kadriye Yurdakok, 2002). Comparative

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findings between the violent TV exposure and aggressive behavior states that violent media has a positive impact on adolescent hostility and verbal aggression, this finding is corroborated with the findings that aggressive behavior is mostly expressed through verbal interaction and expressed as a result of conflict between any two (Huesmann, L. R, Moise-Titus, J., Podolski, C.& Eron, L.D. 2003).

The relationally TV exposure has a positive impact on both physical and verbal aggression, this shows consistency with the findings that the adolescents are expressing aggressive behavior externally either as abusive words and actions as a result of aggression (Craig A. Anderson, Leonard Berkowitz, Edward Donnerstein, L. Rowell Huesmann, James D. Johnson, Daniel Linz, Neil M. Malamuth, and Ellen Wartella, 2003). The Pro-social exposure to TV has a positive correlation with adolescent hostility and negative impact towards the verbal aggression, as a sum of all exposures it is clear that adolescents are much prone to verbal, physical aggression and hostility which corroborated with the findings that violent media habits, exposure affects the degree of aggressiveness (Chaffee, 1972; Comstock, 1980; Eysenck & Nias, 1978; Huesmann & Miller, 1994). On comparison between all the dimensions of TV exposure with the adolescent behavior problem indicates that depression/ attention, thought problems and social problems which contradictory to the study finding that adolescent children have externalizing problems (Elif Ozmert; Muge Toyran; Kadriye Yurdakok, 2002). There is no impact of externalizing problem due to violent TV exposure when compared to the other two factors. Adolescents face other problems if only they are exposed to violent TV exposure. Adolescents with high degree of violent game exposure tend to have high extent of thought problems because they lack in the level of concentration in academics and with a positive side they are less likely prone to somatic problems.

The aggressive nature towards the adolescents may be due to media violence and understand the circumstances of aggression through various shows, games comparatively to the real life events. Adolescent's exposure to the violent behavior may be due to the peer pressure or social influence by other individuals. They may face thought problems due to repeated involvement to the shows and this leads to addiction. Repeated exposure to media is addicting as the first visit to show gives excitement and opinion is high, and the adolescent children do not understand the effects of their cognitive and somatic functions. The role of heredity, environment and peer pressure plays an equal amount in aggressive behavior, because several genes from the parent influence a child that carries aggressive nature. Thus all the biological, heredity, environment, psychological aspects have an equal impact on the adolescent aggressive behavior.

Conclusion

The present study derived several conclusions such as association of violent TV exposure with physical hostility, verbal aggression, withdrawn/depression, somatic complaints, thought problems, attention problems and other problems. Relationally aggressive TV exposure is associated with physical and verbal aggression, anxiety/depression, social problems and attention problems. It is negatively associated with somatic complaints and externalizing problems. Pro-social TV exposure is positively associated with physical aggression, hostility, anxiety/depression, social problems, withdrawn/depressed, somatic complaints and thought problems. It is negatively associated with verbal aggression, attention problems and externalizing problems. Violent video game exposure is positively related with the thought problems and negatively correlated with somatic complaints and social problems. The study concluded that there is significant relationship between aggressive behavior and media exposure. There is an influence between internalizing and externalizing behaviors with media exposure.

Further research needs to be done in terms of longitudinal studies with larger sample size, to completely understand the impact of media violence on adolescents and their behaviour. Third variable might include poverty, abuse, drug use or family stability. Exposure to media with prosocial content in media increases the accessibility of prosocial thoughts, empathy and helping behavior and decreases aggression and aggression-related cognition and affect but this study has found contrary evidence that prosocial behaviour and TV exposure leads to physical aggression and hostility. Therefore further research can be conducted to explore this relationship.

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