

## **VIOLENCE IN MEDIA AND ITS EFFECTS ON CHILDREN HOW TO INVESTIGATE THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENT TV DRAMAS ON CHILDREN**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This paper basically presents a guideline for the young scholars who plan to explore the role of media in social learning of the children. It eventually proposes the ways to investigate the effects of violent TV programs on children. It is in this context that the key strategies to examine the amount and quality of media use among children and their aggressive attitude are proposed on 5-point ordinal scale. It is hypothesized that "high involvement with video violence increases the aggressive attitude of children". As major concepts, this paper conceptually and operationally explicates and defines the exposure to mediated violence as an independent variable and aggressive attitude among children as dependent variable. To observe independent and dependent variables two separate indices are also illustrated in this paper.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

People use television, the mini screen, as home entertaining mass medium and watch movies for entertainment with great interest, particularly violent movies (Woodard and Gridina, 2000). A research report published in the *Psychological Science In The Public Interest* (2004), journal of the American Psychological Society provides scientific assessment of research on the influence of violent television and films, video games, and music reveals unequivocal evidence that media violence increases the likelihood of aggressive and violent behavior. Children are like growing flowers. They need more attention and affection. Society is established by people. Youth play very important role in the development of any country. If the tendency of youth is towards destruction, the country can never develop. Violence in movies may lead to destruction and create destructive mind. These violent movies affect children's attitude. Huesmann and Eron (1986) have followed children in a variety of different countries. They argue

that the results of their research demonstrate that the extent of viewing TV in young children is an independent source of later aggression.

The theories about the influence of television on violent and aggressive behaviour vary. Many researchers assert that their work demonstrate that violent behaviour can be learnt, just as can other forms of behaviour, by example, by exhortation, by threat or persuasion and by personal experience. A second theory is that television desensitizes viewers by implying that violence is component of human life. The idea of viewing violent material can be cathartic, in that it purges one's own violent emotions, appears to have little support, now-a-days recent research having largely failed to confirm earlier findings that appeared to support this theoretically plausible position (Emmett, 1979). Individual differences in social behavior related to aggression (e.g., early temperament) are apparent before age 2 (Kagan, 1988). By age 6, a number of children have adopted aggressive patterns of behavior in their interactions with others (Parke & Slaby, 1983).

From that point on, the extent of aggressive behavior in children tends to increase into adolescence. By age 8, children are characteristically more or less aggressive over a variety of situations; and aggression becomes a relatively stable characteristic of the individual youngster that predicts adult aggression (Ensminger, Kellam, & Rubin, 1983; Farrington, 1982, 1990; Huesmann & Eron, 1984; Loeber & Dishion, 1983; Magnusson, Duner, & Zetterblom, 1975; Moffitt, 1990; Robins & Ratcliff, 1980; Spivack, 1983).

The research on this proposal may provide guidance to policy makers and they will realize the destructive effects of portraying media violence and will make policies on the amount of tolerable violence in movies. The present research topic is somewhat related to the stimuli response models and their modifications which have dealt with the question of effects in particular. The media effects have been of interest for many groups in society, those who want to reach others with their message and therefore want to get the most effective channel to the audience, and those who express

fears for the negative impact of media. The so-called stimulus-response principle has in this context been one of great importance. According to this simple model of learning, effects are specific reactions to specific stimuli, so that one can expect and predict a close correspondence between media message and audience reaction. The main elements in this model are:

1. Message (stimuli, S)
2. A receiver (organism; O)
3. The effect (response; R).

Usually, the relation between these elements is demonstrated this way:

### **STIMULI, ORGANISM, RESPONSE [S – O – R]**

The image of a hypodermic needle was used to represent an easy but highly influential mass media version of the effects process. Media content was then seen as an injection into the veins of the audience that was then supposed to react in a foreseeable way.

Comstock's Psychological Model of television's effects on individual's behaviour (McQuail, Denis and Windahi, 1981) is also relevant to the present enquiry. This model in its complete form is an attempt to find out an organizing framework for research out of a large and varied set of empirical enquiries into the direct behavioral effects of television with particular reference to the unintended effects of entertainment contents. The emphasis is on effects which might involve aggressive or delinquent behaviour, but the model could equally accommodate sexual behaviour, general pro-social behaviour and even learning from reality material.

The purpose of the model is to account for, and help predict, the occurrence of an effect on individual behaviour in a given case by bringing together some of the main findings and theories about the general conditions under which effects have been observed to occur. We may call it psychological model because it deals with mental states and behaviour of individuals. An individual together with associated infants observes a television's portrayal of a social

behaviour and arousal of perceived consequences on the behaviour and presentations of other related similar or alternative behaviour. The probability of any tendency to learn and apply the behaviour depends first on the degree of salience, or psychological importance. According to the thinking underlying the model, an act or behaviour will be given salience firstly, by the demonstration on television, secondly by the degree of positive value attached to it and thirdly, by the degree to which it is shown to be close to real life. At this point in the model we can say that the more salient acts are likely to be adopted and non-salient acts are likely to be ignored.

#### *MAJOR CONCEPTS OF THE STUDY*

1. Exposure to video violence.
2. Aggressive attitude of children.

There can be two ways for studying the present study's research question:

(i) Lab experiments (ii) Survey methods

Survey research design is suitable for exploring the present research question. We can either assume dramatized entertainment as containing violence or we can determine the amount of violence in the dramatized entertainment. The researcher can record all Urdu dramas and English film and other fares in any language to a panel of independent judges, who will rate these programmes in terms of amount of violence according to the following definition:

It is that physical art of actors in a movie/drama which is meant to inflict bodily harm on some one.

After determining and rating the dramatized entertainment in television's fare the researcher can conceptually define the independent variable as follows:

## **INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

Exposure to video violence.

### **Conceptual Definition**

It is the amount of exposure and the extent of exposure to that dramatized entertainment on television in Urdu, English and in any other language that is judged to contain elements of physical violence in it. This exposure to video violence is an audience attribute. It is not an attribute of media stimulus. There are two dimensions for observing this concept:

- (i) The amount of exposure, and
- (ii) The quality of exposure.

The amount of exposure is a necessary condition but a sufficient one for observing the concept. The quality of exposure is also a necessary condition but not a sufficient condition for observing this concept. Together, these are necessary and sufficient conditions for observing the concept.

### **Unit of analysis**

The primary unit of analysis is children, whereas the secondary unit of analysis could be television entertainment programmes.

### **Concrete Operations or Operational Stages (7 to 11 years)**

In the operational stage, they are young logical positivists who understand functional relationships because they are specific and they can test the problems out. Therefore, selection of 5-10 years age group children as a unit of analysis is appropriate for the present social investigation.

### **Explication of independent Variable**

#### **Types of exposure**

- Factual TV News
- Fictional Violence
- Time (duration of exposure)

## **DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

Aggressive attitude of children.

### **Conceptual Definition**

It is a mental state or state of negative feeling about an issue, person, a place or a thing expressed or unexpressed in action. There are two dimensions for observing aggressive attitude:

- i) Negative effect, and
- ii) Expressed or unexpressed.

Negative Effect is necessary and sufficient condition for observing aggressive attitude.

## **HYPOTHESIS**

High exposure to video violence increases the aggressive attitude of children.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

What is the extent and nature of violence effects on children by exposure to the entertainment world of television?

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Design***

For collecting the data this design is generally felt appropriate by the researchers and, therefore, to conduct this scientific study the survey research design will be employed.

### ***Sample***

Sample is a subset or portion of the total population. The research population is the students of age 5-10 years studying in different schools of a city. The researcher will adopt the method of simple random sampling technique for providing equal and independent chance of being selected in subsequent sample. We will obtain their names from roll call register and make form of reference and arrange their names alphabetically and then use a

table of random number to select a representative sample of total population.

### **DATA COLLECTING TECHNIQUE**

For this research study the data will be collected through interview cum questionnaire technique. The logic of selecting this particular instrument is that both interview and questionnaire tend to have a better response rate than any other method. The self administered questionnaire having close-ended questions on all major variables of the study will be used in face to face interview technique.

### **DATA ANALYSIS**

At first the descriptive statistics in terms of univariate frequency of distribution on each of the major variables involved in the study will be presented. The study's hypothesis will be tested through Chi-square and Yule's-Q statistical tests.

### **OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF INDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VARIABLES**

#### **INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

Exposure To Video Violence: We can measure this concept by asking question on the amount and quality of exposure from our respondents. We can operationalize the concept by asking questions relevant with amount and quality of exposure because these are necessary and sufficient conditions for observing the concept.

#### **DEPENDENT VARIABLE**

Aggressive Attitude Of Children: Operationally we can measure the negative attitude of respondent by asking him to respond to various issues or attitude objective on 5 point ordinal scales.

#### **INDEX OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLE**

1. How much time do you spend watching violent dramas?
2. How frequent do you see dramatized entertainment containing violence?



3. How much attention do you give to violent programmes?

### INDEX OF DEPENDENT VARIABLE

1. Do you share your toys with your guest children?
2. What is your response when your class fellows snatch any thing from you?
3. What is your attitude if your class fellow beat you?
4. When you visit zoo what is your attitude towards different animals?

If it is moderate to strong inter-item correlation we conclude that our index has some reliability.

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