
The Effects of Media Violence on Children's Behavior

With television being one of the main sources for entertainment today, prolonged exposure to violent TV programming during youth can be associated with aggression. When a child is taught how to ride a bike, that is because someone taught them how to do so. When a child learns how to read, that is also because a parent or teacher taught them how. With many role models to teach a child how to do most things, they also learn from what they see; which is usually from television. Most things seen on TV for children are cartoon or fictional cartoons to make them laugh and to grab their attention, but during the program violence may appear. Though we may think that it is harmless, but from the child's perspective, hitting or committing a crime, copied from the program, is fun or something they should try.

After reading an article on media violence from the council of communication and media, research has proved that exposure to violence in media; such as television, movies, video games, and music, represent a significant risk to the health of children and adolescents. Evidence has also indicated that media violence can contribute to aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, nightmares, and the fear of being harmed. (Media Violence) For an example school shooting, since around 1950 the medical community has been concerned with the influence of media violence. In 2000, the Federal Bureau of Investigation released a report on school shootings that stated that media violence is a risk factor. (O'Toole) Being that one reason for violence and aggression in children comes from media violence, which children tries to portray.

With media violence as one of the factors for aggression and violence in children, makes you wonder how can we help or change this behavior? How much media violence does a child watch to learn aggression? On an average, children typically spend about two to six hours a day using entertainment media; such as television, video games, music, computers, and the Internet. It seems almost impossible to control the situation with technology growing daily and with children with their own television in their bedrooms. With a child having a television in their bedroom, parents are less able to monitor what is seen, they are less able to have consistent rules for children's media use, the child will not participate in alternative activities such as playing outside, and may prevent the child to perform poorly in school.

The objective in this study is to investigate, how many hours of media violence do a child need to become aggressive? There would be a sample of children age range three to five into three age groups, using interval as the level of measurement. The limitations would be the child's IQ, parental control, and previous behavior problems.

In the study, there would be six children, 3 male and 3 females, will be asked to participate in this study on the effects of social media on children's behavior. The children will be from various cultural backgrounds, economic statuses, and of different races. The parents would have to be present, being that the children are minors. This study will span for two weeks.

Throughout their participation in the study, all attempts will be made to treat the students ethically and respectfully. Participants' names will be kept anonymous and they will be informed of their roles in the study before beginning. Each participant, as well as their parent or legal

guardian, will be asked to sign consent forms after the explanation of their rights and prior to the start of the study. Participants will also be informed of their right to leave the study at any point.

Each participants and parent will be given a logbook, to keep track of their media violence viewing as well as their risk-taking behavior. Their log will be used to keep a record of the number of hours they interact with media violence as well as a journal of their risk-taking behaviors. Participants will be given directions as to how to fill out the log prior to the start of the study. They will be asked to write down the approximate amount of media violence watched daily. They will also be asked to indicate in the log any risk-taking behaviors, which will be explained to them in detail before the start of the study. This information will also be written in the first page of their logbook, so that they can refer back at any time if they have any questions. The notebook will be dated, to keep the participants' information organized throughout the study.

In this study, we predict a positive correlation between children's risk-taking behavior and their media violence viewing time. Violence and risk-taking behaviors will be defined as underage tobacco use, underage drinking, the uses of drugs, fighting, theft, vandalism, and trouble at school. We measure the effect of media violence viewing and how it affects the amount of time the participants take part in violence and risk-taking behaviors. We will conduct a longitudinal study over the span of two weeks, which will investigate the correlation between adolescents' exposure to media violence and risk-taking behaviors. The sample of three males and three females will be asked to fill out questionnaires at the start of the study about the amount of media violence they have been watching in the past month and any risk-taking behaviors during that time (i.e. bullying, underage drinking, vandalism, theft, etc.). Participants will use the information to keep in their logs to input this information since it is difficult to identify such behavior. The parents may ask their children's teachers to help also to indicate risk-taking behavior among their students as a way of ensuring that the parents are indicating honest answers to the questions on the questionnaire. As an incentive for taking part in the study, the participants will be awarded a pizza party and a gift certificate at the end of the study.

Although the study may yield some interesting results, there may be some factors that would affect our findings. Dishonesty on the part of our participants, the possibility of participants either dropping out of the study or no longer being able to participate, and the fact that the questionnaire may produce invalid results are three of the most factors that may have the ability to confound our research. With the possibility of these factors affecting the research, there are some actions that could be taken if someone decides to try this study.

Dishonesty among the parents who are taking part in the study is a possibility. Since the questionnaire is for a self-report format, there is no way to know if the participants are using false information. Parents may log in the logbook false reports to make themselves seem as if the child is performing less risk-taking behaviors on the regular, or they could indicate more risk-taking behavior than they are doing. Either way, this factor can seriously yield the research. Some parents may also forget to write in their logs and by doing this, they are likely to indicate false information. Another major factor affecting the outcome of the research is the possibility of participants dropping out or no longer being able to take part in the study. The study is conducted over a two-weeks span, so the possibility of something happening to the participants during that time to make them no longer able to participate is high. A participant may move away, become ill, or simply no longer want to be involved in the research. With a small sample size the loss of a few participants may affect the data.

If another researcher were to repeat this study, it would be important to take into consideration the previously defined factors. To gain more accurate information regarding of the participants' risk-taking and media violence watching behaviors, the best way to get truthful results is to observe the participants doing violent behavior. However, to observe a person in such a manner for two weeks, would be extremely time consuming. It may be difficult to guard against participants dropping out of a study, but to fight this possible factor, increasing the number of participants may help. Lastly, if this research was to be repeated, definitely make sure that the questionnaire is reliable and valid.

Reference

1. Council on Communications. (2009, November 1). Media Violence. Retrieved from <https://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/124/5/1495>.
2. O'Toole ME. The School Shooter: A Threat Assessment Perspective. Quantico, VA: Federal Bureau of Investigation, US Department of Justice; 2000

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