

Effectiveness of Media Literacy on the Violent Behaviour of Adolescents in Kanyakumari District

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Abstract: *Violence is one of the increasing problems in world. Children's exposure to violent content of media plays an important role for the violent behaviour of adolescents. They are desensitized to violence we cannot avoid the children to the media exposure. This study teaches the students how to interpret the violent content. The purpose was to develop the critical thinking skill of adolescents. For this a pre and post test were conducted among grade 9th school students. An intervention about media violence was given to the students after the pre test. The students more aware of the negative impact of televised violence and how to reduce its influence on them after attaining media literacy training. The findings suggest that media literacy is needed for the betterment of adolescents.*

Keywords: Adolescents, Media Literacy, Desensitized, Violence, Critical thinking skill.

1. Introduction

Frank W. Baker has conducted hundreds of workshops for educators and students across the United States. A message from Frank (2009): "Everywhere I go, teachers tell me that their students believe everything they see, read and hear. Today many students aren't applying the critical thinking skills; we know they need in order to become active, engaged, intelligent citizens and consumers of information. 21st century skills include both critical thinking and media literacy-both part of every state's teaching standards. Today's students only know what they see on the screens (TV, computer, motion picture). They don't have a clue how it got to the screen: the process. Media literacy, among other things, is about helping them appreciate how media are constructed. When we 'pull back the curtain' (on advertising, TV, film, propaganda, etc.) exposing how they work, and give students opportunities to create media, we help them better understand and appreciate both the 'languages of media' and how the media influence and persuade: critical skills in a 21st century world."

Children especially in pre-schoolers and young children are indeed a "special audience" for the fascinating medium that is television (Dorr, 1986). Children, particularly, pre-schoolers and young children may miss some of what is good about television and are more vulnerable to the influence of what is not: Television producers, parents, and educators alike could enhance the critical thinking skill of children. Children are treated as a special audience for two reasons. The first reason is lack of maturation (cognitive, emotional, and moral development) and the second reason is lack of work experience. The lack of maturity can make children vulnerable to negative effects of media.

Media Literacy

The terms 'media literacy' and 'media education' are used synonymously in most English-speaking nations. Media literacy has been developing in the UK since at least the 1930s.

In India, NCERT project promotes media literacy. The project was launched in 2009-2010. At present Media clubs are running in Delhi, Kerala and West Bengal. The attempt to promote awareness about media and to increase the academic performance of the school students in Kanyakumari district is the objective.

Definition of Media Literacy

In 1992, the National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy defined media literacy as "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate, and communicate messages in a variety of forms" (Aufderheide 1993). Potter (2004, 58-59) defines media literacy as "the set of perspectives from which we expose ourselves to the media and interpret the meaning of the messages we encounter." For Potter, the key to media literacy is to build good knowledge structures. In particular, individuals need to have a good deal of information about media industries, media messages, media effects, the real world and the self. The more people actively use the information in those knowledge structures during exposure to media messages, the more they will be able to use media exposures to meet their own goals and the more they will be able to avoid risks for negative effects

Media Violence

Violence refers to the intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual against one self, another person, or against a group or community which either results in or has high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, mal development or deprivation

Some researchers have demonstrated that very young children will imitate aggressive acts on TV in their play with peers. Before the age of four years, children are unable to distinguish between fact and fantasy and may view violence as an ordinary occurrence.

2. Literature Survey

A report from American Academy of Paediatrics (2001) about Children, Adolescents, and Television, describes the negative health effects of television viewing on children and Adolescents, such as violent or aggressive behaviour, substance use, sexual activity, obesity, poor body image and decreased school performance. Media education is an effective approach in mitigating these potential problems. The American Academy of Paediatrics offers a list of recommendations on this issue for paediatricians, parents, the federal government and the entertainment industry like discussions about family values, violence, sex and drug with their children and show them high-quality educational programmes, They encourage alternative entertainment for children, including reading, athletics, hobbies and creative play to initiate legislation and rules that would ban alcohol advertisements.

In [4], Bobbi Jo Kenyon (2002) "The Effects of Televised Violence on Students" conducted this study with eight students at Ottawa High School. The purpose was to see the relationship existed between the amount of televised violence watched by the students and some of the behaviours they exhibited at school. The students were given both a survey and an interview to access their behaviours and feelings regarding this issue. The results found that they were bothered very little by the violence they saw on television and in real life and they often used aggressive behaviour to solve conflicts in their lives. This fearfulness, desensitization and aggressiveness displayed by youth manifests itself in behaviours observe at school. Caputo (1999) reiterates the commonness of violence in television news stories, calling specific attention to the sensationalized coverage of murders, rapes, and disasters far out of proportion to their frequency in real life. One reason why television violence is so popular is because many viewers are sensation seekers. When viewers get bored they watch TV violence which entertains them.

In [9], Laras Sekarasih et al., (2015) discusses that "Media violence is made to attract and entertain people: Responses to Media Literacy Lessons on the Effects of and Institutional Motives Behind Media Violence," investigated the following research question How do sixth-graders respond to a media literacy lesson that was designed to, among other goals, introduce the concept of the presence of commercial interest in media production, particularly regarding the prevalence of media violence? Media violence for which there has been an established link between violent media use and negative outcomes such as aggression, desensitization, and the mean world syndrome, perhaps the guide must be a bit more direct in encouraging students to challenge the dominant view of media violence as purely entertaining.

In [8], an article "Media and Violence: Intervention Strategies for Reducing Aggression," by Joanne Cantor and Madison Barbara J. Wilson, discussed how the effects of media violence on aggression may be diminished and how media productions may be used to reduce aggressive attitudes and behaviours. Studies show that adults comments before or during media exposure can reduce the

impact of violent programming on children's aggressiveness under some circumstances. Experiments involving more extensive media literacy curricula show that some approaches can alter attitudes toward media violence and, in a few cases, intervene in aggressive behaviour. Studies of the impact of antiviolence media productions reveal that although such efforts can be effective, unanticipated "boomerang" effects are prevalent. Overall, the effectiveness of the 3 types of interventions was highly variable, and age and gender differences were prominent. The findings suggest that more research is needed to determine the best approaches in developing parental interventions, media literacy strategies, and pro social media presentations for reducing youth violence.

In [6], According to Fingar KR & Jolls T (2014) in their study "Evaluation of a school-based violence prevention media literacy curriculum" discussed about the association of violence prevention media literacy curriculum and improved knowledge, beliefs and behaviours related to media use and aggression, for this a quasi-experimental design, from 2007 to 2008, teachers from schools across Southern California administered the curriculum with Control group. Students were tested before and after the curriculums were implemented, Multivariate hierarchical regression was used to compare changes in the intervention and control group. Compared with controls, at the first post-test, students in the trained and untrained groups reported increased knowledge of five core concepts/key questions of media literacy, increased self-rated exposure to media violence, as well as stronger beliefs that media violence affects viewers and that people can protect them by watching less. In comparison, there was no increase in these behaviours in the trained and untrained groups. This study suggests that media literacy can be feasibly integrated into schools as an approach to improving critical analysis of media, media consumption and aggression.

In [10], Lindsay A. Weymouth (2010) in his study Act Against Violence: A multi site evaluation of the parents raising safe kids Program discussed that Parents Raising Safe Kids (PRSK) is an empirically research-based, national violence prevention created by the American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), with the goals of reducing violence in families with children ages 0-8 and making violence prevention visible within the community. The PRSK curriculum is comprised of four modules: anger management, social problem-solving, positive discipline, and media violence literacy that, through the use of videos, role playing, group discussions, homework, and hands-on activities, serve to teach caregivers non-violent strategies for parenting as well as to increase their child development knowledge. The current study is a formative and summative evaluation of the PRSK program.. Results of the current study suggest PRSK is an effective parenting program. The results from this study suggest that PRSK is an affordable, flexible, effective program that can reduce coercive parenting behaviour while increasing positive parenting techniques and child development knowledge.

3. Statement of the Problem

It is important to understand how to use media in a positive way. There is a lack of knowledge about viewing pattern of television and the preciseness of the media content among adolescents. This study envisages the need of awareness about media effects among adolescents in Kanyakumari district. In this article, an attempt made to help the adolescents to create awareness about media violence among adolescents and how to overcome the threats in lives. The teachers and parents help their children to increase the critical thinking skill to analyze the violent media effects. The study area of Kanyakumari district is the southernmost district in Tamil Nadu and India.

4. Methodology / Approach

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the influence of TV viewing upon violent behaviour of School students in Kanyakumari district.
2. To understand the critical analysis of media violence.
3. To determine the understanding of violent media messages among adolescents after attaining media literacy intervention.

The present study involved quantitative research (experimental method) and qualitative research (focus group discussion). For the experimental method population of the present study consisted of class IX students of A and B division in SMRV Higher Secondary School Nagercoil. The sample comprised of 100 students from A and B, the divisions of class IX of one school. The students were randomly assigned to two groups, 50 students in experimental group and 50 in control group with 25 boys and 25 girls. Pre and post survey were conducted, the two groups before and after treatment were compared. The media literacy training was given four days (45 minutes per day), Retention test was done after one month of training. Each question was scored using a five-point Likert scale. Secondary data collected from various books, journals, reviews and websites. After the data had been collected, it was processed & tabulated directly in to SPSS 20.0 Software. Cronbach's Alpha reliability was done to find out the reliability of the data. The data reliability score alpha is .666 which is at an acceptable level.

For the focus group discussion six parents and six teachers of the students involved in experimental study. Focus group was done to get ideas to prepare the module for experimental study.

Selection of Topics

The topics for the present study are to measure the knowledge about how to view the media violent content

Learning topics: Violence

Violence exposure, Bandura's short term model, long term exposure, desensitization, individual and environmental risk factors, characteristics of program that affect risk

violence consequences. Discussion about types of aggressive behaviour. Critical thinking about violent media content using knowledge and skills.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Factor Analysis was done on the 12 factors on analysis of violent content of media. These factors were selected after doing an extensive literature review. Exploratory factor analysis was conducted and the initial results of tests of sampling adequacy showed the following results.

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.619
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	217.015
	df	45
	Sig.	.000

The test of Kaiser Meyer Olkin shows a measure of 0.619 and hence shows a sampling adequacy for the application of factor analysis.

The results of Principal Component Analysis to extract the number of variables are given in Table: 1

Table 2: Total Variance Explained

Components	Extraction Sums of Squared Loading		
	Total	Percentage of Variable	Cumulative Percentage
1	5.846	49.139	49.139
2	1.791	15.057	64.196
3	1.495	12.566	76.762

Extraction Method: Principal Components Analysis

From the Table 2, it is clear that eight factors can be extracted together which account for 76.762 per cent of the total variables. Hence 12 variables are summated to 3 factors.

Table 3: Analysis of Violence Programmes using Skills

Factors	Components		
	F1	F2	F3
Violence is rewarded	.886	.122	-.098
Violence is justified	.843	.098	-.205
Violence is funny	.798	.126	.058
Violence pleasurable	.693	-.208	.257
Relationship between media and violence	.081	.840	.113
Media violence reduce our emotions	.128	.728	-.098
Media violence increase the aggressive behaviour	-.490	.502	.374
Imitate what they see	-.092	-.130	.951
Television portrays good guy with violence	.123	.030	.780
Argue with parents because of media	.007	.050	.648

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.46 (c) clearly shows that in the first column the variables namely 'Violence is rewarded', 'Violence is justified', 'Violence is funny', 'Violence pleasurable' have higher loadings of .0.886, 0.843, 0.798 and 0.93 respectively and it can be suggested that factor one is the combination of these four factors and have the variance of 33.538 per cent and it can be named as 'Violence is entertainment.'

From the second column it can be seen that the variables of 'Relationship between media and violence' .840, 'Media violence reduce our emotions' 0.728, 'Media violence increase the aggressive behaviour' 0.502,

In the last column only three variable of 'Imitate what they see' .951, 'Television portrays good guy with violence' 0.780, 'Argue with parents because of media' 0.648 have

higher loadings with a variance of 15.869 and it can be combined and called as 'Media Violence'

Thus 10 factors are reduced into three variables and are given different names by using factor analysis like 'Violence in Entertainment', 'Media Violence', and 'Control of Violence'. Thus have been identified and plays a good role in analyzing 'Violence' using the skill factors.

Table 4: Analysis of Violence using skills

Skills	Tests	Experimental ^a		Control ^b		Mean Difference	t	Sig (2-tailed)
		M	SD	M	SD			
Violence	Post	4.69	.13	2.4	.11	2.22	22.1	.000
	pre	2.38	.08	2.2	.14	.170	1.74	.156

The above table shows the average pre-test score of experimental group and control group were M=2.38 and M = 2.216. The mean difference is M = .170, $p > 0.05$ 'p' value is greater than 0.05. This shows no significant difference between two group in the analysis of media violence. The average achievement mean scores in post-test of experimental group is M = 4.69 and control group M = 2.47. The mean difference is M = 2.22, $p < 0.05$. 'p' value is less than 0.05. There is a significant difference between the two groups. The experimental group achieved higher mean score in post test of media violence when compared to control group.

5. Results and Discussion

Most of the parents think younger generation are more aggressive. TV messages increases unfulfilled desires which cause irritation, disappointment, aggressiveness and violence on adolescents.

Most of the teachers felt that violence are shown as something glamorous, violence is justified and desensitized in media and use violence and aggressive behaviour to solve problems successfully.

Post test of control group and experimental group

There is significant difference in the critical analysis of violent acts in TV among the control group and experimental group.

Pre test – post test control group

There is no significant difference between mean source of pre and post test of control group in analyzing media violence.

Pre test – post test experimental group

There is significant difference between pre and post test of experimental group in analyzing violence.

The experimental group student's critical analysis skills about media violence increased than control group by media literacy training.

This shows media literacy intervention is effective and this finding was supported by the study of Scharrer Erica (2005) experimental study's finding shows media literacy and critical analyzing skill attitude towards TV violence increased after treatment. Another study of Vooijs et al., (1993) found school TV project led to increase in factual knowledge of difference between real violence and violence depicted in television.

6. Conclusion

Regarding the negative effects of media violence, the media literacy training helped the students to limit the negative effects of violence. The survey responses also reveal that the media literacy training was very much effective among treatment group children. The students were given training to the analysis of media messages using cognitive, emotional, aesthetic and moral skills and can access, analyze and evaluate the media messages, and can able to identify the intention of media messages, on who send the message and target audience. The media literate person has greater control over media violence. The media literacy training helps the students to get out of automatic processing stage and built strong knowledge structure and skills to analyze media messages and have gain greater control over media violence. They can able to perceive the positive values and leave the negative effects of media.

7. Scope for future Research

This work may through insight for further research in the area of media literacy. Several recommendations for additional research have emerged naturally from the present study. The study of media literacy can be extended to different departments like health department, agriculture department, environmental studies..this can be done for attitude change and in reducing negative effects of media. Media literacy can be increased by constant coaching in schools may give better results for the society.

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