

The Impact of Media Violence on Primary School Children Behaviors

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Abstract

Background: Young population including children, represents more than a quarter of the world's population during the stage of human development, and risk-taking and violent behaviors are prevailing among this group of people. Violence prevalence in television, videogames and movies has been considered among the factors mentioned as causing aggressive behavior among young people. **Aim:** Assess the impact of media violence on behavior of primary school children. **Setting:** Two primary schools in Shebin El Kom at menoufya governorate (Meet Mousa A males and El Shahid Ahmed Goda), Egypt. **Sample:** A multi stage random sample was used. The total number of students was 320 in third and fourth grade in these two schools. **Tools:** First tool, An interviewing questionnaire sheet. Second tool, Anxiety scale for children. Third tool, aggression scale for children. Fourth tool, Scale for violent media. **Results:** (52.4%) of the studied children were in age group of 8 to less than 10 years, (53.8%) of them were female, (95.2%) of them had working father and (49.3%) of them had working mother, (58.2%) of them were had one TV at home and (79.8%) of them were had computer or play station. There was a statistical significant relation between violent media (preferable player/artist), (preferable computer/video games), (preferable cinema/computer films) and degree of aggression in the studied children. There was statistical significant relation between violent media (Preferable computer/video games) and degree of anxiety in the studied children. **Conclusion:** less than one quarter of children had verbal and physical aggression. Less than one quarter of children had total aggression. More than half of the studied children reported severe anxiety followed by moderate anxiety level. Also, there was statistical significant relation between aggressive degree and socio-demographic characteristics (sex, school grade, Amount per diem and No TV at home) of the studied children. Moreover, there was statistical significant relation between anxiety degree and socio-demographic characteristics (sex, mother work and No. TV at home) of the studied children. **Recommendations:** Further research studies are needed for ongoing assessment of children including large sample for generalization of results.

Key words: Media Violence, Primary School Children Behaviors.

Introduction

Children are the most important asset and wealth of a nation. Healthy children make a healthy nation. Primary school children is the period from 6-12 years of age, is this age growth in general is slow till just before puberty which tend to be near the end of this stage (Garg et al., 2014).

One of the notable changes in our social environment in the 20th and 21st

centuries has been the saturation of our culture and daily lives by the mass media. In this new environment radio, television, movies, videos, video games, cell phones, and computer networks have assumed central roles in our children's daily lives. For better or worse the mass media are having an enormous impact on our children's values, beliefs, and behaviors. Unfortunately, the consequences of one particular common element of the electronic mass media has a particularly detrimental

effect on children's well being (**Linder & Gentile, 2016**).

Research evidence has accumulated over the past half-century that exposure to violence on television, movies, and most recently in video games increases the risk of violent behavior on the viewer's part just as growing up in an environment filled with real violence increases the risk of violent behavior. Correspondingly, the recent increase in the use of mobile phones, text messaging, e-mail, and chat rooms by our youth have opened new venues for social interaction in which aggression can occur and youth can be victimized – new venues that break the old boundaries of family, neighborhood, and community that might have protected our youth to some extent in the past (**Huesmann, 2015**).

These globe spanning electronic communication media have not really introduced new psychological threats to our children, but they have made it much harder to protect youth from the threats and have exposed many more of them to threats that only a few might have experienced before. It is now not just kids in bad neighborhoods or with bad friends who are likely to be exposed to bad things when they go out on the street. A 'virtual' bad street is easily available to most youth now (**UNICIF, 2017**).

However, our response should not be to panic and keep our children "indoors" because the "streets" out there are dangerous. The streets also provide wonderful experiences and help youth become the kinds of adults we desire. Rather our response should be to understand the dangers on the streets, to help our children understand and avoid the dangers, to avoid exaggerating the dangers which will destroy our credibility, and also to try to control exposure to the extent we can (**Tanwar, 2016**).

Children today grow up in a world saturated with media use. Media has proved to be a very useful tool in the fields of

education, arts, science, sports, and culture. Children spend a considerable portion of their time watching television, movies, playing videogames and on the internet. Media violence poses a threat to public health as much as it leads to an increase in real-world violence and aggression. The link between violent media and aggression among children is both well established and widely misunderstood (**Furlow, 2017**).

Significance of the study

The children of today are surrounded by technology and entertainment that is full of violence. Television, video games, and music are very influential and if too much violence is available for children to watch, play, or listen to, this can sway their attitudes in a negative direction (Camara, 2018).

Concerns about the harmful effects of the media on children and young people are rarely absent from the headlines, and have a very long history dating back well before electronic technology. These concerns reflect much more general anxieties about the future direction of society; and they can be inflamed and manipulated by those with much broader motivations (**Buckingham, 2017**).

Therefore, assessment of impact of media violence on primary school children behaviors is deemed important in improving care.

Aim of the study

This study aims to assess the impact of media violence on behavior of primary school children.

Subjects and Methods

Hypotheses:

Media violence has negative effects on primary school children behaviors at home and school.

This study have been portrayed under four main topics as follows:

- I. Technical design.

- II. Operational design.
- III. Administrative design.
- IV. Statistical design.

I- Technical Design:

The technical design for this study includes research design, research setting, subjects of the study and tools of data collection.

1-Research design:

Descriptive design will be used to assess the effect of media violence on aggressive behavior among primary school children.

2-Subject

The sample:

A multi stage random sample will be used to select two primary schools in Shebine El Kom at Menoufya Governorate by using computer method and each school has male and female students.

Inclusion criteria:

Random selection of the student in third and fourth grade in these two schools and there are two classes for each grade in each school and the number of students in each class ranges between 30-40 students. The total number of students was 320 in student in third and fourth grade in these two schools.

3-Research setting:

The study was carried out in two primary schools in shebin El Koom (Meet Mousa A for males and El Shahid Ahmed Goda).

4-Tools:

Data was collected through using the following tools:

Tool (1) An interviewing questionnaire:

It was developed by the researcher to elicit data about the socio demographic characteristics of the subjects such as age, sex, father job, school gradeetc.

Tool (2) Scale for violent media:

It was developed by Buchanan et al (2002). it cover two subscales,as follows:

(A) **Subscale 1**:-It consists of 3 items about each of which the student is asked to name three of them, all items are rated on 2 score of rating scale where violent = 1 and nonviolent = 2

(B)**Subscale 2**:-It consists of 15 items and items number 2 and 4 are divided into 2 parts.

All items are rated on 3 score rating scale where 2 = yes, 1 = sometimes, 0 = no except item number 3 its response are opposite as 0 = yes, 1 =sometimes, no = 2.

Tool (3) Anxiety scale for children

Scale to assess anxiety developed by Castaneda, Mc Candless and translated by El Beblawy (1985). It was used to assess anxiety. It consists of 53 items (Physiological symptoms, social anxiety and negativity).

Each sentence has a score ranging from (0-1). zero for no and 1 for yes

- score was considered mild up to 18.
- score was considered moderate from (19-28).
- score was considered severe above 29.

Tool (4) Aggression scale for children:

This tool was developed by Dodge and Coie, 1987; Loeber, Farrington, Stouthamer-loeber and van kammen, 1998.

It contains 25 items which cover two main subscales.

1- Verbal aggression (10 items)

2- Physical aggression (15 items)

- physical aggression against self (3 items)
- physical aggression against others (9 items)
- physical aggression against objects (3 items)

And all items are rated on 3 score rating scale which are 2 = yes,1= sometimes

and no = 0 (minimum score:0, maximum score:50)

II. Operational Design

The operational design consists of the preparatory phase, pilot study, fieldwork, ethical consideration.

1-Preparatory phase

It include reviewing past, current, local and international related literature and theoretical knowledge of various aspect of the study using books, articles, internet, and magazines to develop tool of data collection

2-Validity and reliability

The tool was tested and evaluated for face and content validity band reliability by committee consisting of five experts from Ain Shams University and Cairo University, from faculty of medicine and faculty of nursing. They were from different academic categories, i.e., professor and assistant professor. Different specialties were represented in the group such as neuropsychiatric, psychiatric mental health nursing and medical surgical nursing.to ascertain relevance, clarity and completeness of the tool experts elicited responses were either agree or disagree for the face validity and content reliability.

To achieve the criteria of trustworthiness of the tool reliability a doctor in statistics checked faces and content of all times. No modifications were performed and the every part of tool were tested through pilot study.

3-Pilot study

Pilot study was carried out before starting data collection on ten students. this was done to estimate the time required for filling out the sheet to check the clarity of the questions, to detect any constraints or problems that may arise during data collection and to make the necessary modifications.

4-Field work

The researcher interviewed the students who agreed to participate in the

study. The researcher conducted with group of students to explain the purpose and nature of the study.

Data were collected three days per week these days were Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday from 9.00 a.m to 12.00 p.m ; it took about three months from the beginning of April 2018.

III. Administrative design

An official letter requesting permission to conduct the study was submitted from the Dean of the Faculty of Nursing, Ain Shams University to all persons in charge. This letter included the aim of the study and a photocopy from the data collection tools in order to get the permission and help for collection of data.

Official permission was taken from the principal person at school to carry out the study and the aim of the nature of the study were explained to the subjects to obtain their consent.

IV. Statistical design

The statistical analysis of data was done by using excel program and the statistical package for social science (SPSS) program version 10. First part of data was descriptive data which were revised, coded, tabulated and statistically analyzed using the proportion and percentage(%), the arithmetic mean (X), standard deviation (SD). The second part was analytical statistics to test statistical significant difference between two or more groups. For qualitative data, Chi-square test X and p-value were used to test associations among the variables.

Degrees of significance of results

were:

- Non significant (NS) if P- value >0.05
- Significant (S) if P- value <0.05
- Highly significant (HS) if P- value <0.001

Limitation of the study :

Inability of children to tolerate long and more questions.

Decreasing trust between the researcher and the students that lead to lying.

Results:

Table (1): It was found that 52.4% of the studied subjects were in age group of 8 to less than 10 years, While only 47.6% were in age group of 10 – 11 years, Also 53.8 were female and 46.2 were male, The highest frequency was found among children who have daily per diem representing 97.9%, And who have one TV representing 58.2%, The majority have working father 95.2%, And working mother 49.3%.

Table (3): Results indicated that 80.1% like watching TV, While 32.2% sometimes stay for a long period, The majority like internet games 66.4%, 46.9% like games including more than one player,

64.4% like fighting and beating programs, 47.8% like aggressive cartoon movies.

Table (4): about (22%) of the studied children reported verbal aggression while (16.2%) reported physical aggression. Total aggression has reported by (18.5%) of the studied children.

Table (6): There was a significant relationship between violent media (preferable computer/video games) and degree of anxiety in the studied children. Severe anxiety was more prevalent in children who preferred violent games than who preferred non-violent ones. There was a significant relationship between violent media (preferable computer/video games) and degree of aggression in the studied children. Moderate aggression predominated in children who preferred violent games than who preferred non-violent ones. Severe predominated in non-violent games.

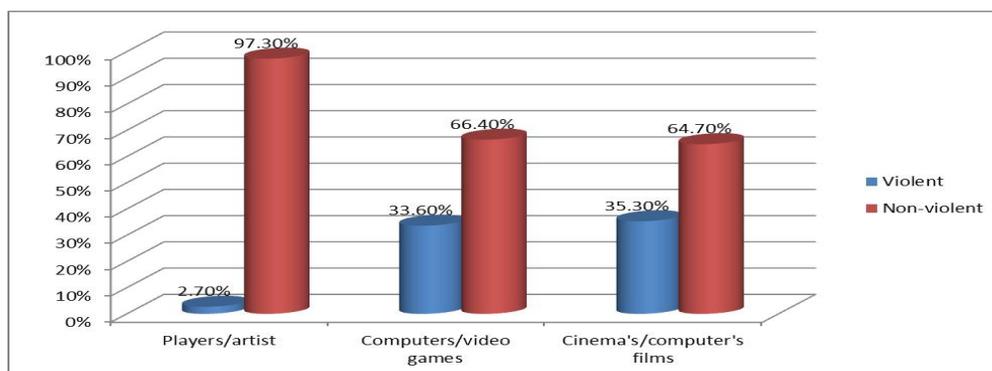
Table (1): Sociodemographic characteristics of the studied children.

Demographic characteristics	The studied children (n=292)	
	No	(%)
Age (years):		
8- >10	153	(52.4)
10-11	139	(47.6)
Sex:		
Males	135	(46.2)
Females	157	(53.8)
School grade:		
Third	166	(56.8)
Fourth	126	(43.2)
Father work		
Employed	278	(95.2)
Unemployed	14	(4.8)
Mother work		
Employed	144	(49.3)
Unemployed	148	(50.7)
Crowding index:		
≤ 2	226	(77.4)
< 2	66	(22.6)
Per diem:		
Yes	286	(97.9)
No	6	(2.1)
Amount per diem (pound):		
Mean± SD	2.8 ± 1.5	
No TV at home:		
1	170	(58.2)
≥ 2	122	(41.8)
Having computer or PlayStation:		
Yes	233	(79.8)
No	59	(20.2)

Crowding index= No of individuals at home/ No of rooms

Table (2): Preferable media items as reported by the studied children.

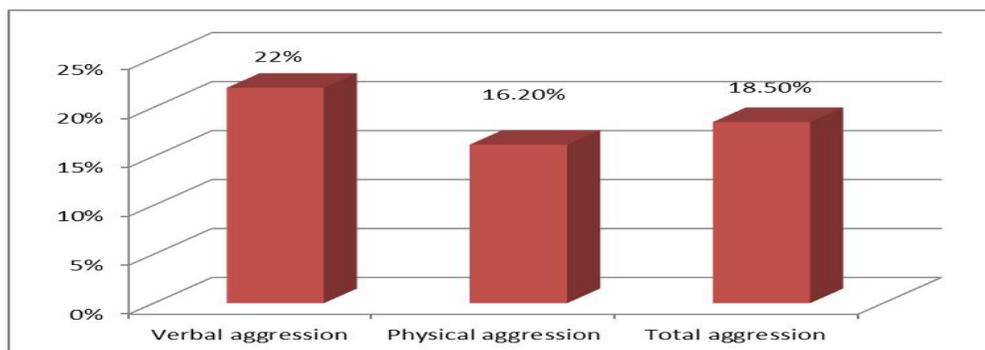
Preferable media items	The studied children (n=292)	
	No	(%)
Players/artist		
Violent	8	2.7
Non-violent	284	97.3
Computers/video games:		
Violent	98	33.6
Non-violent	194	66.4
Cinema's/computer's films:		
Violent	103	35.3
Non-violent	189	64.7

**Figure (1):** Preferable media items as reported by the studied children.**Table (3):** Pattern of media use as reported by the studied children.

Pattern of media use	The studied children (n=292)					
	Yes		Sometimes		No	
	No	%	No	%	No	%
Watching TV:						
-likes watching TV	234	80.1	54	18.5	4	1.4
-stays for long period	94	32.2	127	43.5	71	24.3
-any family member with you during watching TV	226	77.4	41	14.0	25	8.6
-has effect on homework performance	145	49.7	61	20.9	86	29.5
Games:						
*Net	194	66.4	57	19.5	41	14.0
-likes internet games	137	46.9	39	13.4	116	39.7
-likes games including more than one player	114	39.0	47	16.1	131	44.9
*likes watching freestyle wrestling	121	41.4	85	29.1	86	29.5
*likes Karate games						
Violent programs:						
-likes fighting/ beating programs	188	64.4	40	13.7	64	21.9
-likes the games you play to be full violence	179	61.3	31	10.6	82	28.1
PlayStation						
-Going PlayStation alone	80	27.4	52	17.8	160	54.8
Moves:						
-likes action moves	117	40.0	75	25.7	100	34.2
-likes aggressive cartoon movies	139	47.8	25	8.6	128	43.8

Table (4): Total answers for aggressive scale questions in the studied children.

Aggressive scale	Yes		Sometimes		No		Total	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Verbal aggression	641	22.0	407	13.9	1872	64.1	2920	100.0
Physical aggression	708	16.2	495	11.3	3177	72.5	4380	100.0
Total aggression	1349	18.5	902	12.4	5049	69.1	7300	100.0

**Figure (2):** Total answers for aggressive scale questions in the studied children.**Table (5):** Anxiety degree in the studied children.

Anxiety degree	The studied children (n=292)	
	No	%
Mild	22	7.5
Moderate	122	41.8
Severe	148	50.7

Mild= Anxiety score up to 18 Moderate= Anxiety score from 19-28
 severe= Anxiety score \geq 29 More than half of the studied children reported severe anxiety (50.7%) followed by moderate (41.8%)

Table (6): Relationship between violent media (preferable computer/ video games) and degree of anxiety in the studied children & Relationship between violent media (preferable computer/ video games) and degree of aggression in the studied children.

	Preferable computer/video games				χ^2	P-value
	Violent (n=98)		Non-violent (n=194)			
	No	%	No	%		
Anxiety degree						
Mild	3	3.1	19	9.8	6.59	0.037*
Moderate	37	37.8	85	43.8		
Severe	58	59.2	90	46.4		
Aggression degree						
Mild	70	71.5	151	77.8	3.40	0.041*
Moderate	26	26.5	31	16.0		
Severe	2	2.0	12	6.2		

Discussion

In this twenty first century, children populaces are embedding themselves with the media technologies as a part of their living. The proliferation of media technology is transforming the children lives at home, school, and public sphere. The children are engaged with media like radio, cinema, television, and video games (Saravanan, 2014). Recent reports emphasize the pervasive influence of the media on children's lives (Roberts et al., 2015).

Regarding to socio-demographic characteristics:

The current study results revealed that, more than half of the studied subjects were in age group of 8 to less than 10 years, more than half of them were female, the majority of them had working father and about half of them had working mother, more than half of students were had one TV at home and about majority of them were had computer or play station (Table 1).

Regarding preferable media items as reported by the studied children:

The present study results clarified that, the majority of children preferred non-violent players/artist. More than two thirds of them preferred non-violent computers/video games and cinema's/computer's films (Table 2). These findings contradicted with O'Toole (2017) who reported that, in a study on The school shooter: A threat assessment perspective, children spends inordinate amounts of time playing video games with violent themes, and seems more interested in the violent images than in the game itself. On the Internet, the student regularly searches for Web sites involving violence, weapons, and other disturbing subjects.

Regarding pattern of media used as reported by the studied children:

The current study results illustrated that, the majority of children likes watching

TV, more than one third of them stays watching TV for long period, more than three quarters of children had family member with them during watching TV and about half of them watching TV had an effect on homework performance. More than two thirds of children likes internet games. More than two thirds of children likes fighting/ beating programs. More than one third of children likes aggressive cartoon movies (Table 3).

Regarding total answers for aggressive scale questions in the studied children:

Less than one quarter of children had verbal and physical aggression. These findings were in accordance with Anderson et al. (2015) who stated that, in a study on Longitudinal effects of violent videogames on aggression in Japan and the United States, violent media is a significant risk factor for physically aggressive behavior. Tanwar (2016) confirmed that, in a study on Impact of Media Violence on Children's Aggressive Behaviour, violent media was associated with physical aggression in children. Also, Bjorkqvist (2015) revealed that, in a study on Violent films, anxiety, and aggression, violent media was associated with verbal aggression in children.

Regarding anxiety degree in the studied children:

More than half of the studied children reported severe anxiety followed by moderate anxiety level. This finding supported by Bjorkqvist (2015) clarified that, violent media was associated with increase anxiety level in children. Moreover, Valkenburg and Buijzen (2014) reported that, in a study on Fear responses to media entertainment, exposure to media violence increases anxiety in children. Also, Bear et al. (2014) stated that, in a study on Neuroscience: Exploring the Brain, exposure to media violence may increase anxiety through the experience of threat. When watching violent movies that are

highly realistic, individuals may feel a sense of threat.

There was statistical significant relation between violent media (Preferable computer/video games) and degree of anxiety in the studied children. Whereas, severe anxiety was more prevalent in children who preferred violent games than who preferred non violent ones. These findings supported by **Baldaro et al. (2015)** who confirmed that, in a study on aggressive and non-violent videogames: Short-term psychological and cardiovascular effects on habitual players, increased levels of state anxiety in their studied subjects assigned to play a violent computer game, compared to those who were randomized to play a nonviolent computer game.

There was statistically significant relation between violent media (preferable computer/video games) and degree of aggression in the studied children. Whereas, mild and moderate aggression predominated in children who preferred violent computer/video games than who preferred non-violent ones.

These findings were in the same line with **Hofferth (2015)** who revealed that, in a study on Home Media and Children's Achievement and Behavior, USA, violent video game play to be associated with aggressive behavior. Also, these findings supported by **Anderson and Dill (2017)** who stated that, violent video game play was positively related to aggressive behavior and delinquency.

Conclusion

On light of the current study results, it can be concluded that, less than one quarter of children had verbal and physical aggression. Less than one quarter of children had total aggression. More than half of the studied children reported severe anxiety followed by moderate anxiety level. Also, There was a significant relationship between violent media (preferable computer/video games) and degree of anxiety in the studied

children. Severe anxiety was more prevalent in children who preferred violent games than who preferred non-violent ones. There was a significant relationship between violent media (preferable computer/video games) and degree of aggression in the studied children. Moderate aggression predominated in children who preferred violent games than who preferred non-violent ones. Severe predominated in non-violent games

Recommendations

The following recommendations were inferred from the study:

- An educational program should be developed for parents to increase awareness regarding negative effects of media violence on children.
- Establishing a special rehabilitation program to children who affected by media violence to overcome children psychosocial problems.
- Parents should monitor and be more attentive to their children.
- Further research studies are needed for ongoing assessment of children including large sample for generalization of results.

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