

### AFFECTION TOWARDS VIOLENT MEDIA AND AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDE AMONG SECONDARY LEVEL STUDENTS (15-17 YEARS) IN ISLAMABAD AND RAWALPINDI

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#### Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to contribute to the state of the research by predicting and comparing attitudes about aggression among adolescent boys and girls on the basis of their exposure to media violence. The study used a mixed method approach utilizing survey method and interview method. Two hundred adolescent boys and girls aged 15-17 were selected from seven schools located in capital city Islamabad. The quantitative data was collected using four instruments: the Informed Consent, Demographic Performa, Media Violence Affection scale, and Aggressive Attitude Scale. The results indicated after applying complex statistical measures that ( $R^2 = .48$ , F = 21.05, P < .000) boys develop more affection towards media violence and ultimately exhibit greater aggression as compared to girls, as well as media violence is 48% contributing factor in initiating and extending violence among both genders. Qualitative data revealed through cluster and percentage analysis of interview responses, also verified that adolescents have affection towards media violence and ultimately exhibit greater aggression.

Keywords: aggression, affection, media, violence



#### Introduction

Aggression, violence, brutality, resentment and hostility are the major worldwide concerns of this century and most common today in all segments of societies which is affecting social life enormously. People are now frequently reading or hearing about street violence cases, squad battles, shooting cases, bombings and actually become sufferers of such proceedings. These actions are the most tremendous instances of the aggression and violence which takes place every day. Recent studies indicate that adolescents are the major contributors of violence and violent crime increase, often involving with guns, and that they are largely involve in rape cases, robbery proceedings and assaults at two to three times niche the rate of adults (Finkelhor & Dziuba- Leafheiman, 1994).

Violent and aggressive behaviors and anticipated attitudes in people are documented to be associated to a large quantity of physiological, psychological (emotional), domestic, social and cultural reasons. The learning environment to which the child of this era is exposed to is also considered as contributing to the augment of unsociable and antisocial attitudes and feelings (Berkowitz, 2001).

In recent times, investigators and professors bring into being the thought that "attitude toward real life violence and aggression play a causative role in the translation of aggressive feelings into aggressive behavior" (Huckel & Hanson, 2003).

Hence, attitudes may have a significant influence on behavioral conduct, especially on violent and brutal actions, because if there is aggressive attitude than the out come will be aggressive behavior (Kraus, 1995). One of the noteworthy and important changes in our social environment in the twenty first century is the advent and explosion of mass media.

Physical and non-physical harm that causes pain, injury or fear is violence. In general the violence shown on the media either it is printed or electronic is the media violence. Not surprisingly, people blamed the amount of violence in entertainment media for the apparent increase in the aggression rate in the children. The vast majority of the research has found a positive relationship between viewing of valences and aggressive behavior.

Although the tendency has been to assume that television violence is the antecedent to aggressive behavior, i.e. the cause of the behavior, a number of studies have found that although we have a correlation between violence viewing and aggressive antisocial behavior, aggressive people may actually be seeking out violent material (Bryant, 1989; Black & Bevan, 2001; Gunter, 1983).

The media that children are exposed to are broader than television alone. There is almost no research on the effects or violence portrayed in newspapers or books on children, and very little on the effects of films (either shown in theatres on shown in the home on VCRs) and video games. But in general it is the research on television that has served as the model for how exposure to violence in the media affects children. This is probably because watching television is such a high frequency event for children and because violence is portrayed on television as occurring much more frequently than it is encountered in everyday life (Houseman, 1986).



One key study that showed the connection between media violence and real violence conducted by Eron (1992). He followed a group of young people for 22 years and fond that those who watched more television at age eight were more likely, at age 30, to have committed more serious crimes, to be more aggressive when drinking, and to punish their children more harshly than other, other researchers have repeated Eron's study and found similar results throughout the United States and other countries as well (Eron, 1992).

Researches showed a growing evidence that children interacted and exposed with media in a very meaningful way, specifically interpreting the emotional messages, and exposure of media starts from very young age in child's life because of societal settings in 21<sup>st</sup> century (Susan, 2004).

### **Objectives of Study**

The chief objectives of this study are as follow:

- To explore covert cognitive and attitudinal consequences as a result of violent media affection among the schoolboys and schoolgirls aged 15 17.
- To determine relationship between affection toward violent media and attitudes concerning aggression.
- To find out the gender differences among students regarding affection towards media violence.
- To investigate the gender differences among students regarding impact of violent media on their attitude.

### Hypotheses

- 1. Violent media affection and aggressive attitudes will be positively correlated.
- 2. Boys will be more affectionate towards media violence as compared to girls.
- 3. Boys are more aggressive as compared to girls.

4. Boys will be more affectionate towards violent media and ultimately exhibit more aggressive attitude as compared to girls.

### Instruments

In this study 4- point Likert scales are used as the quantitative method of data collection. Likert is a psychometric scale often utilized in questionnaire forms, and is the most frequently utilized scale in survey studies as well. For qualitative analysis unstructured interview consisting of 3 verbally asked questions are used.

The qualitative data will be collected by using three instruments:

**The Demographic Information Performa.** In this "Age", "Gender", "Grade in Schools", "Siblings", "Monthly income" and "Parent's education level" has been included.



**The Media Violence Affection scale.** It is a 4- point rating scale consisting of 9 items to measure the violent media affection and possible scores will range from 9 to 36, with higher scores. It has four subscales labeled as "*Very Much*," "*Much*", "*Not Very Much*", and "*Not at All*", and it is developed by M. Salleh Bin Hassan.

Reliabilities test of the instruments were developed by using the Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha check. A pilot study has been conducted by M. Salleh Bin Hassan for reliability ordeal of instrument in 2009. Results of the pilot study revealed that Cronbach's alpha was 0.75 for the Affection towards Media Violence Scale. The results showed a satisfactory rank of internal reliability for entire indexes. In conclusion, instrument credited as valid.

**Aggressive Attitude Scale.** It contains 29 items scale divided by factor analyses into four correlated subscales: Physical Aggression (9 Items), Verbal Aggression (6

Items), Anger (7 Items) and Hostility (7 items) These four subscales, offer more differentiated coverage of the tripartite model of aggression and represent the affective and cognitive components, adequately. It is a Likert type rating scale "*Strongly Agree*", "*Agree*", "*Disagree*" and "*Strongly Disagree*" and possible scores will range from 28 to 135, with higher scores indicates more tendencies toward aggression. Developed in 1992 by Buss and Perry.

Buss and Perry (1992) reported that all the factors were Interco related beyond chance. Verbal and Physical Aggression were closely related but only moderately correlated with Hostility. Anger correlated strongly with the other three factors.

Internal Constituency and Reliability: The internal consistency of the four factors and the total score was evaluated by the alpha coefficient. The alphas were as follows: Physical Aggression, .85; Verbal Aggression, .72; Anger, .83; and Hostility, .77 (Total = .89).

The Alpha for the total score indicated considerable internal consistency.

The test-retest correlations were as follow: Physical Aggression, .80; Verbal Aggression, .76; Anger, .72; and Hostility, .72 (total score =.80). These coefficients suggest adequate stability over time (Buss & Perry, 1992).

### **Research Design**

A mixed method approach is felt as the ideal method and was used for this study. This is because the literature review has evidently exposed that this phenomena can be studied through qualitative and quantitative method, and mixed method approach is extensively used in the field of research and it is a modern technique for better analysis of media and their effects on the society. Furthermore, a research design with quantitative measures and qualitative analysis was more pertinent to the purpose of the present study which was to compare and forecast violence related attitudes and concealed cognitive side among adolescent boys and girls on the basis of their experience and exposure to media violence.



Specifically, for quantitave assessment study used a survey research design method that allowed the insertion of a large number of sample (respondents) while taking into account several intervening variables, and for qualitative analysis unstructured interview method was used. This has numerous strengths that make it more proficient for intercultural studies. This provided the cognitive outcome and exposed attitudinal side of participants also it helped to contest the numeric and quantitative responses of participants with verbal outcomes so that any malingering and lie effects were elucidated.

### **Participants**

A sample of 200 students aged 15 to 17 were selected by using convenient sampling technique for this research. This age range was selected because according to Erick Ericson this is the age of adolescents when the child decides a set behavioral pattern for him self and continue it throughout the entire life. Another reason is that literature evidenced that previous researchers had focused on children in their learning age, but this research is specifically encountering the adolescent population.

The sample of 200 participants was selected because data was collected from schools and from schools the adolescent students were approachable, another cause is that large sample makes study results generalizable.

Since the numbers of students in chosen schools were equal. Distribution of the questionnaires was based on the proportion of number of schoolboys and girls in each school to the whole population of students. Therefore, 15 to 20 questionnaires have been distributed in different schools equally for boys and girls.

The decision to target both genders can be described by the actuality that adolescent boys are considered as the key audience of action movies and shows with sky- scraping levels of violence throughout the literature, so the present study aimed at assessing adolescents attitudinal side of both genders towards violence on the basis of exposure to media's violence, and for this, preference of the sample of the study was reasonable. The location of this study was schools in Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

### Procedure

Present research has been conducted on affection towards media violence and aggressive attitude of adolescents and in this research different students from schools of were selected.

At first step the scales Aggressive Attitude Scale (AAS) and Media Violence Affection Scale (MVA), were translated by professors and lecturers of National Institute of Psychology NIP Islamabad, and bilingual experts of National Language Authority and Pakistan Academy of Letters, than rechecked by M. Phil students of Preston University.

At second step a pilot study was conducted with the 10 percent sample of selected participants. In this pilot study 20 students were selected, 10 of them were boys and other 10 were girls. Both questionnaires were administered on them and after that unstructured interview process was started with them individually.



Pilot study was conducted in order to make certainty about the befitting of the questionnaires and the interview format. Pilot study enabled researcher to conclude that this mixed method approach will be suitable for prospective participants.

At third stage, for conducting original research 200 students had been selected (20 boys and 20 girls from each school) Data was collected by using the scales Aggressive Attitude and Violent Media Affection scale developed by Muhammad Salleh Bin Hassan and Buss, mixed method design was used in which quantitative method was a survey for the collection of the data from the sample, and qualitative method was unstructured interview with all the participants. An informed consent had been be used to get the permission from the concerned schools.

The survey was conducted in the classroom location. Before conducting the survey the researcher introduced her self and purpose and significance of this study than in context to built rapport with participants, it was informed to the boys and girls that their participation is absolutely anonymous, voluntary, and confidential and participants were given assurance and assertion that they can ask questions if they face with any difficulty. A chocolate of dairy milk had been given by researcher as an incentive to the participants after completing questionnaires and interview.

Commitments of reporting about results have been made by researcher to the authorities of the schools and the results have been sent to committers, and researcher was careful about not creating any deception to participants and school staff for research purpose.

At forth stage results had been analyzed by using SPSS (*Multiple Hierarchical Regression Analysis and other complex measuring tools*) in which higher mean scores indicated more aggression as a result of media violence and more affection towards media among both genders, and regression score indicated the contributing percentage of media violence in exhibition of aggressive attitude among adolescents.

### Results

### **Quantitative Results**

Below are the results which are shown in tables

### Table 1

*Reliability Coefficients of Aggressive Attitude Scale 29 items and Media Violence Affection Scale 9 items (N=200)* 

	Reliability	
Scale		N. items
AAS	0.89	29
MVA	0.91	9



Table 1 indicates the reliability values of both scales. Aggressive Attitude Scale (AAS) is accepted at reliability coefficient 0.89 and Media Violence Affection (MVA) scale is reliable with alpha value 0.91 thus these both scales are proved highly reliable for selected population.

### Table 2

*Mean, Standard Deviation and t Values for Gender on Media Violence Affection Scale (N=200).* 

	Gender	Mean	S.D	<i>t</i> -values	<i>p</i> -values
	Boys	29.1900	9.91550		
Media Violence Affection	Girls	21.3200	9.79990	5.64	.000

Table 2 shows the comparison between boys and girls tendencies towards media violence affection. According to this table it is found that boys have high scores on this scales which are statistically being narrated that boys are more affectionate towards media violence as compared to girls.

The calculated value (t = 5.64) is showing that second hypothesis of the research is being accepted at (0.000) level of significance.

### Table 3

*Mean, Standard Deviation and t Values for Gender on Aggressive Attitude Scale* (*N*=200).

	Gender	Mean	S.D	<i>t</i> -values	<i>p</i> -values
	Boys	95.5600	23.96096		
Aggressive Attitude Scale				3.20	.002
	<u>Girls</u>	<u>87.4300</u>	25.15939		

Table 3 shows the comparison between both genders and their tendencies towards aggressive attitude. According to this table it is found that boys have high scores on this scale which are statistically being narrated that boys exhibit more aggressive attitude as compared to girls.



### Table 4

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analysis predicting Adolescents Aggression from Background Variables, Media Violence Affection, Gender and their Interaction (Standardized Beta Coefficients) (N= 200).

Predictors	$\mathbb{R}^2$		<i>F</i> -value
Step 1	022	69.50	.386
Control Variables <sup>a</sup>			
Step 2	.48***		21.05***
Media Violence Aff	ection		
Gender		1.71***	
Step 3		1.39	
Media Violence A Gender	ffection x .48***		18.95***
		248	

*Note:* <sup>*a*</sup>Control variables included age, gender, parents education, socioeconomic status, siblings, birth order and schools. \*\*\*n < 000; \*\* < 01; \* < 05

\*\*\*p<.000; \*\*<.01; \*<.05

Table 4 is showing the regression analysis for all variables. Adjusted value for R2 at step 2 is showing that there is 48.6% contribution of independent variable affection towards media violence at significance level (0.000) in playing a significant role for development of aggressive attitudes.

While looking at the other independent variables such as school either government or private, birth order, siblings, socio economic status, parents education and gender either male or female, the calculated value for these variables evidenced that these variables did not play any role in initiating and exhibiting aggressive attitude.

### **Qualitative Results**

Qualitative analysis was also done in order to explore view points of selected sample and for this purpose interviews were conducted, it was also done in order to eliminate the malingering and lie or carelessness effect. Three questions were asked in unstructured interview and clusters were made from response patterns also percentage analysis was done in the process of content analysis.

Below are the questions and figures showing the clusters and response percentages.



## Figure 1

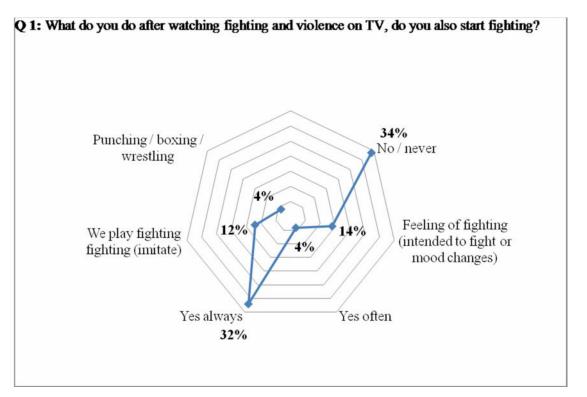


Figure 1 presented that the higher percentage is of the category "yes always" which indicated that 36 percent of the population used to do fighting or violent acts after watching violent media content. 14 percent of people feels their mood change and aggression innitiation.

# Figure 2

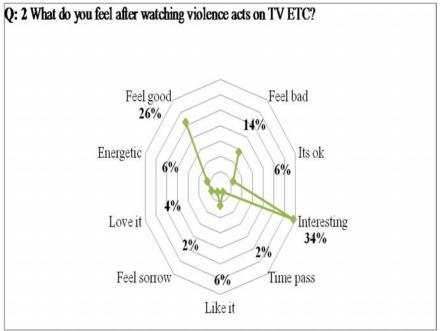




Figure 2 shows that about 34 percent of adolescents are developing interest and feels the violent content interesting to watch, which on the other hand indicates that they are developing likeness and affection towards media and 26 percent of people feels enjoying and good while watching violent content through media. Only 2 percent of adolescents feels sorrow or take media violence as negative.



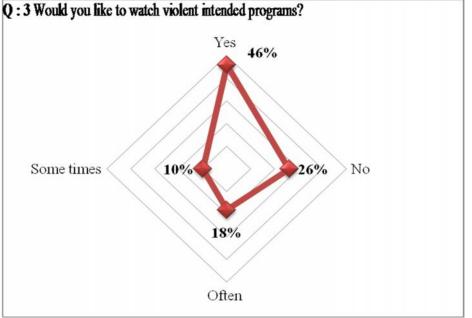


Figure 3 shows that on third question, about 46 percents of participants responded as "yes" they like to view the violence on media and 18 percents of people do like to watch violence often. These percentages are very important in understanding the covert attitudinal side of developing likeness towards the violence and ultimately the outcome is exhibition of aggressive attitude.

### Discussion

This research has presented compelling evidence that short-term exposure to media violence stimulates more aggressive and violent behavior in the young viewer immediately and that long-term exposure leads to the acquisition of social cognitions (scripts, world schemas, attitudes, and beliefs) that increase the risk of aggressive and violent behavior in the observers of media violence beyond childhood.

However, after synthesizing literature and theoretical evidences one valid remaining question was, that whether the size of this effect is large enough that one should consider it a public health threat?? Present research has given the answer that "yes", as results proved that, the media violence is now liked by youth as they are becoming affectionate of violence and as a consequence they develops the aggressive attitude. Research bases this answer on two calculations:

First, according to the former tentative statement of this research which was the higher the media violence display, the higher will be the aggressive attitude is proved by the value of correlation 0.69



which indicates that there is the positive association between these two variables. When the display of violence through media is increased it ultimately develops and initiates the aggressive attitude, and when causative analysis is done by using hierarchical multiple regression test, evaluated that media violence is 48 % contributing factor of initiating and developing attitudinal changes and in exhibition of aggression in youth.

Second, research results evidenced about other hypothesis that male have more tendencies of affection towards media violence and ultimately they have more aggressive attitude. Mean value of male on 29.1 indicates that it is higher than mean value of female which is 21.3 on media violence affection scale which means that boys are more affectionate towards media violence. Same is the case with aggressive attitude on which mean value of male participants is 95.5 and female is 87.4 which indicate that boys have more aggressive attitude than girls.

The overall pattern of research numerical and connotative findings indicates a positive association between media violence and aggressive attitudes. The preponderance of evidence from many research studies over two decades shows that the violence portrayed on media influences the attitudes and behavior of children who watch it.

Furthermore, most of the scientific evidence reveals a relationship between media violence and aggressive behavior. While few would say that there is absolute proof that watching violence on media caused aggressive behavior, the overall cumulative weight of all the studies gives credence to the position that they are positively related.

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