

Grade School Children: More Affected On Violent T.V. Cartoons

Dr. Jessie V. Alzate

Associate Professor V. Davao Oriental State College of Science and Technology, City of Mati, Davao Oriental, Philippines

Abstract: This study determined the effects of violent TV cartoons on the attitudes of some selected pupils in the City of Mati Central Elementary School II. It investigated their socio-demographic characteristics, TV exposure; their attitudes before and after exposure to violent TV cartoons; the significant difference between their pre-test and post-test attitudinal scores, analysed the significant relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics and their attitudes towards aggression. Seventy (70) Grade IV pupils of Mati Central Elementary School II were included in the study where majority were ten years old and dominated by females (38) and 32 males. They viewed three recorded violent TV cartoons. Most of the children were exposed to television spending an average of 2.2 hours per week when they still awake at night time thus most of them (79%) were cartoons viewers and watched violent T.V. cartoons. Both males and females had moderately aggressive attitude during the pre-test. After viewing 3 violent T.V. cartoons, males' aggressiveness declined while females become more aggressive. It was further found out that there was a significant relationship between females' pre-test and post-test attitudinal scores. Most females were avid viewers of non-violent cartoons and spent more time watching cartoons than males. Males were more attracted to violent TV shows and spent more time viewing TV than their female counterparts. Intervening variables included in the analyses, sex, family size and sibling status were known to have affected the change of attitude among respondents.

Keywords: Aggression, Attitude, School Children, Violent T.V. Cartoons.

I. INTRODUCTION

Communication is referred as the process of transmitting messages from the source to the receiver with shared meaning. Though communication, man is able to interact with other people relevant for his progress and survival in the society. As a process, it involves elements such as channel to effectively convey messages which come in a form of an ink in the paper, sound waves in the air, impulses in an electric current, or any other signal capable of being interpreted meaningfully.

Television is one of the channels of communication. It has been called as the "central nervous system" of the modern body. Without doubt, it is the most popular and influential medium today. No person remains unaffected by it, directly or indirectly.

Television reaches millions of people. By a flick of the switch, viewers can enjoy a correct, a lecture, a play, or a comedy skit, and even news events can be seen as they happen. It has become one of the most important mass communication tools and the world's popular form of entertainment and communication. Television's impact on the society has been profound. It has changed the lifestyles of most Americans and became a major influence in our culture. Unlike printing, which took years to influence culture, television's impact was almost instantaneous (Jeffres, 1986).

Some of the programs on television contain violence which has been a special problem especially among children, who spend much of their time watching it. TV violence has become prevalent nowadays, which is feared to distort the

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construction of reality of the children. As reported, television cultivates the perception of real world. Violence is pictured as a way of life on many television shows. Evildoers kill and get killed; police and detective use extensive violence in upholding society's laws. Violence on television is portrayed unrealistically. The lasting results are rarely seen by the viewers. An injured individual may not recover for weeks, or months, or perhaps not at all in real life, yet on television it takes only thirty or sixty minutes for recovery, this is the "sanitized" element in cartoons (Kirsh, 2005).

Among TV viewers, children are the most vulnerable and most affected since they composed the largest viewers of TV. The A.C. Nielsen Co. reported in 1985 that the average six year old watch twenty-seven and a half hour per week. Children under six often watch more. Estimates range as high as 30-50 hours per week (Johnson, 1991).

Children are exposed to a "substantial amount" of violence content in TV and they remember and learn from such exposure (Johnson, 1991).

Since they are most exposed to it, they learn from it. Children imitate what they see on TV to include violence they view. They tend to perceive it as real and correct affecting their construction of reality. Hence, as concluded by Cantor (2002), media violence has many unhealthy effects on children and even adolescents. And made him to recommend to researchers and advocates for the welfare of children to develop and promote more useful content labels and filters, and by exploring effective intervention strategies based research findings. There is also a need to expand media literacy education for children, including helping them place what they see in perspective, and encouraging them to engage in a critical analysis of their own media choices (Holland, 1985).

TV violence, based on S-O-R theory (as cited by Bettinghaus, 1972), could elicit response from its viewers. As a stimulus, TV violence draws forth responses from viewers in a form of their attitude. This attitude maybe replaced with new one after they are exposed to mass media's influences such as television.

To some extent, viewing TV violence seems alarming to everybody. Children will likely be at risk because of their vulnerability to such influences, that is, they could easily absorb what they view, even violence, and perceive them to be true. Hence, media specifically T.V. violence is a causal risk factor for aggressive and violent behaviour (Chaves and Anderson, 2008).

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to determine the effects of violent TV cartoons on the attitude of some grade school children of the City of Mati Central Elementary School II towards aggression.

The general objective of this study is to determine the effects of violent TV cartoons on the attitude of some grade IV pupils of Mati Central Elementary School II.

Succinctly laid the following specific objectives:

1. To determine the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents;
2. To find out the TV exposure of the respondents;
3. To assess the attitude of the respondents before and after their exposure to violent TV cartoons;
4. To ascertain the significant difference between the pre-test and post-test mean attitudinal score of the respondents; and
5. To analyse the significant relationship between socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their attitude towards aggression.

III. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Locale of the Study:

This study was conducted among the Grade IV pupils of Mati Central Elementary School II, City of Mati Davao Oriental. There were seven sections in Grade IV with total of 237 pupils. From seven, three sections were randomly chosen to be the respondents of this study.

Sample and Sampling Techniques:

An interview schedule was set first with the principal of MCES II to determine the total number of Grade IV pupils which then served as the sampling frame. After determining the population, a sample size was ascertained. Based on the total population of 237, a simple random sampling was employed to arrive at a sample size of 70. The formula in getting the sample size can be seen below.

$$\begin{aligned}
 N &= \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} &= \frac{237}{1 + 2.37} \\
 &= \frac{237}{1 + 237(10\%)^2} &= \frac{237}{3.37} \\
 &= \frac{237}{1 + 237(0.10)^2} &= 70.32 \\
 & &= 70
 \end{aligned}$$

Respondents:

The respondents of this study were the Grade IV pupils of MCES II from a population of 237, 70 pupils were randomly picked from the three chosen sections. Regardless of sex, twenty-three (23) pupils were drawn each for three sections, except for one section which had twenty four to complete the 70 respondents. These respondents were a mixture of slow, moderate, and fast learners. Their ages ranged from 9 years old to thirteen years old.

The Variables:

This study included the following variables: attitude towards aggression as the dependent variable; violent TV cartoons as the independent variable; and socio-demographic characteristics-age, sex, religion, family income, family size and sibling status as the intervening variables.

Research Instruments:

Data were gathered using the following research instruments:

- a. TV
- b. Pre-test questionnaire
- c. Post-test questionnaire
- d. Recorded violent TV cartoons

Research Design:

This study employed the pre-experimental method with no control group design. Respondents were asked to answer the attitudinal questionnaire which used 7-points scale where 7 is highly aggressive and 1 is non-aggressive before and after exposure to violent cartoons. The violent TV cartoons were recorded from current popular cartoon series. In exposing them to violent cartoons, a pre-test questionnaire was first given to them. Then they viewed the three recorded violent TV cartoons for one hour and fifteen minutes. These cartoons contained bombing, gun firing, chasing and killing people. A total of 40 violent acts were presented for one and a half hour. After such exposure, a post-test questionnaire was answered by them.

Method of Analysis:

The data were gathered using statistical tools such as simple frequency count, percentage, and means to describe the personal characteristics and TV exposure of the respondents. The Chi-Square was also used to get the significant relationship between the attitudes of the respondents and their sex, religion, age, family income, family size and sibling status.

Chi-Square formula:

Where:

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$$\chi^2 = \frac{(O_i - e_i)^2}{e_i}$$

O_i = Observed frequency

e_i = Expected frequency

T-test was used to determine the change in the attitude of the respondents which are scaled as highly favourable, favourable, moderately favourable, neutral, highly unfavourable, unfavourable and moderately unfavourable.

T-test formula:

$$T = \frac{x^1 - x^2}{\sqrt{[(n^1 - 1) S^2 + (n - 1) S^2] [1/n_2 + 1/n]}}$$

Rank Correlation Coefficient was used to determine the trends in family size and sibling status.

$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6 \sum d_i^2}{N(N^2 - 1)}$$

Where:

d_i = difference between ranks assigned to x_i & y_i

n = number of pairs of data

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents:

Age:

Results showed that of the 70 respondents, forty-three pupils (61%) were ten years old while fifteen (21%) of the respondents were known to be nine years old. Age eleven was composed of six pupils of 9%. Four pupils or 6% were twelve years old while two or 3% belonged to age thirteen.

Table 1 Age of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------|-----------|------------|
| AGE | | |
| 9 | 15 | 21 |
| 10 | 43 | 61 |
| 11 | 6 | 9 |
| 12 | 4 | 6 |
| 14 | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 70 | 100 |

Sex:

It was found out that thirty-eight (38) female Grade IV pupils (54%) outnumbered the male pupils with only 32. Males got a share of 46%.

Table 2 Sex of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------|-----------|------------|
| SEX | | |
| Female | 38 | 54 |
| Males | 32 | 46 |
| Total | 70 | 100 |

Monthly Family Income:

One half of the total respondents (35) belonged to the income bracket of P3,000 below. Twelve pupils had a family income between P3,500 – P4,000 while ten answered above P6,000 monthly income. Seven or 10% of them fell within the bracket income of P4,500 – P5,000. The other six pupils revealed a range of P5,500-P6,000 family income . This implied that majority were poor based on the Poverty Threshold Level which is P8,000 per capita (source: NEDA).

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Table 3 Monthly family income of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME | | |
| 3,000 BELOW | 35 | 50 |
| 3,500 – 4,000 | 12 | 17 |
| 4,500 – 5,000 | 7 | 9 |
| 5,500 – 6,000 | 6 | 10 |
| 6,000 ABOVE | 10 | 14 |
| TOTAL | 70 | 100 |

Religion:

Roman Catholic dominated the religious affiliation of the respondents with 76% and 11% belonged to Islam religion. There were three Baptist pupils with 4% share while the remaining 9% was occupied by the Faith Tabernacle, Four Square, Iglesia ni Cristo, Saksi ni Jehova, Ifradavics, and Nazarine.

Table 4 Religion of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------|-----------|------------|
| RELIGION | | |
| Catholic | 52 | 76 |
| Islam | 8 | 11 |
| Baptist | 3 | 4 |
| Others | 6 | 9 |
| Total | 70 | 100 |

Family Size:

Majority of the respondents (25) had a family size of seven. Sixteen pupils has a size of five while fifteen belonged to the size of six. Family size of four and three covered eight and six pupils, respectively. This means that most of the respondents had bigger number of family members despite its low economic status.

Table 5. Family size of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------|-----------|------------|
| FAMILY SIZE | | |
| 3 | 6 | 9 |
| 4 | 8 | 11 |
| 5 | 16 | 23 |
| 6 | 15 | 21 |
| 7 ABOVE | 25 | 36 |
| TOTAL | 70 | 100 |

Sibling Status:

Data revealed that 16 pupils were eldest in their families. Thirteen were third children, twelve were second children, and nine were youngest among their siblings. Eight were fourth children, five were fifth in the family, three were only child, and one each for the seventh, eighth, ninth and thirteen child in the family.

Table 6. Sibling status of the Respondent

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| SIBLING STATUS | | |
| Eldest | 16 | 23 |
| 2 nd | 12 | 17 |
| 3 rd | 13 | 19 |
| 4 th | 8 | 11 |
| Others | 9 | 13 |
| Youngest | 3 | 4 |
| Only Child | 9 | 13 |
| Total | 70 | 100 |

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Exposure to Television of the Respondents:

All of the respondents were viewers of television, although data revealed only fifty-four or 77% of them have TV set at home while sixteen (23%) were non owners of TV. This showed that inspite of low economic status, their families still were able to purchase a TV set.

Table 7 TV Ownership of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|--------------|-----------|------------|
| TV OWNERSHIP | | |
| YES | 70 | 100 |
| NO | 0 | 0 |
| TOTAL | 70 | 100 |

Table 8. TV Viewership of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Tv viewership | | |
| YES | 54 | 77 |
| NO | 16 | 23 |
| TOTAL | 70 | 100 |

Of the 54 owners, twenty-nine of them were cable TV subscribers with 41% share while 25 or 36% were non-subscribers.

Table 9. Cable TV subscription of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| CABLE TV SUBSCRIPTION | | |
| YES | 29 | 41 |
| NO | 25 | 36 |
| TOTAL | 54 | 77 |

Fourteen pupils from a list of sixteen non-owners of TV watch in their neighbour's house, one each watches in their cousin's and grandmother's houses as their means of TV exposure.

Table 10. Other means of exposure of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| OTHER MEANS OF EXPOSURE | | |
| NEIGHBOR'S TV | 14 | 20 |
| COUSIN'S TV | 1 | 2 |
| GRANDMOTHER'S TV | 1 | 2 |
| TOTAL | 16 | 24 |

As to TV viewing frequency, males were known to be more frequent viewers the females. Thirty-two pupils watch TV twice a day (or sometimes). Twenty five pupils comprised the regular viewers of TV, that is, three times a day of viewing. Thirteen asserted they always watch TV (four times a day). This explained that although most of them were exposed to TV, as to frequency, they are not frequent viewers of TV (Table 11).

Table 11. TV viewing frequency of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|
| TV VIEWING FREQUENCY | | |
| ALWAYS | 13 | 18 |
| REGULAR | 25 | 36 |
| SOMETIMES | 32 | 46 |
| TOTAL | 70 | 100 |

Moreover, twenty pupils or 28% watch TV for 1-2 hours which mean they had minimal time of exposure to TV. Seventeen (24%) view for ½ - 1 hour, while sixteen view for 2-3 hours with a share of 23%. Seven enjoy 3-4 hours of viewing, equivalent to 10%. Six pupils (9%) have longer time to view TV with 5-6 hours while the other four have about 4-5 hours of viewing with 5% . Their average viewing hour is 2.2 which is 16% of their awake state hours. It is higher than the average viewing hours of Grade IV pupils in Metro manila which is 2.18 (Table 12).

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Table 12. TV viewing length of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| TV VIEWING DURATION/LENGTH | | |
| ½ - 1 HOUR | 17 | 24 |
| 1-2 HOURS | 20 | 29 |
| 2-3 HOURS | 16 | 23 |
| 3-4 HOURS | 7 | 10 |
| 4-5 HOURS | 4 | 5 |
| 5-6 HOURS | 6 | 9 |
| TOTAL | 70 | 100 |

In terms of TV VIEWING DURATION, IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT FORTY-FIVE PUPILS WATCH EVERY NIGHT. Obviously, it is their time to view TV since it is off school. Forty-two watch during Saturday, thirty-seven during Sunday, and twenty-seven watch during afternoon.

Table 13. TV viewing time of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|-----------------|-----------|------------|
| TV VIEWING TIME | | |
| EVERY AFTERNOON | 27 | 39 |
| EVERY NIGHT | 45 | 64 |
| EVERY SATURDAY | 42 | 60 |
| EVERY SUNDAY | 37 | 53 |
| TOTAL | 151 | 216 |

**multiple answers

Out of 70 pupils tested, only 79% were viewers while 21% do not like watching it. Twenty-nine of these viewers were females and twenty-six were males (Table 14).

Table 14. Cartoon Viewership of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| CARTOON PROGRAM VIEWERSHIP | | |
| YES | 55 | 79 |
| NO | 15 | 21 |
| TOTAL | 70 | 100 |

These 55 cartoon viewers watch cartoon because of the following reasons: 36 said cartoon entertain them; 21 were attracted to the casts of the program; 19 were interested to the story of the program; 18 believed cartoons give them lessons to ponder on; 17 claim they learn new skills from the program; 11 were lured to the fighting scenes of the program; and 10 watch cartoons since they are aired during their free time. This implied that pupils want entertainment more than the attraction they get from the fighting scenes. This further proved the report that children just sit down for hours in front of TV and wait to be entertained (Table 15).

Table 15. Reasons for viewing cartoons of the Respondents

| | FREQUENCY | PERCENTAGE |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| REASONS FOR VIEWING CARTOONS | | |
| • THE CASTS | 21 | 30 |
| • THE STORY | 19 | 27 |
| • IT TEACHES NEW SKILLS | 17 | 24 |
| • AIRS DURING FREE TIME | 10 | 24 |
| • IT ENTERTAINS ME | 46 | 51 |
| • IT TEACHES LESSONS | 18 | 26 |
| • THE FIGHTING SCENES | 11 | 16 |
| TOTAL | 142 | 188 |

**multiple answers

In getting the trend of family size and sibling status as affected by violent TV cartoons, it was discovered that as the family size increases, the frequency of the tendency to aggressiveness also increase, and the lower the order of sibling status, the lesser the frequency of the aggressive tendency. The first correlation can be explained since parents cannot monitor their children as their sibling increases thus, Dogutas (2002) recommends that parents should monitor their children and provide other traditional media means of entertainment other than cartoons while having media education among them.

Table 18. Relationship between socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents and their attitude towards aggression

| INTERVENING VARIABLES | | X ² VALUE |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| a. | Sex | 7.88* |
| b. | Age | 7.28n.s. |
| c. | Religion | 6.26n.s. |
| d. | Family income | 10.37n.s. |
| e. | Family Size | 17.67* |
| f. | Sibling status | 30.26* |

Legend: * - significant at $\alpha=0.10$
 n.s. – not significant

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions:

Based on the analyses of data, it was concluded that viewing violent TV cartoons affect attitude formation of the children towards aggression, especially among girls. It is further concluded that females are more vulnerable to persuasion of TV violence than males, thus, the tendency to be adversely affected when subjected to certain stimulus.

Hence, it is concluded that violence has lesser impact on males than on females. Males were less aggressive than females when exposed to violent cartoons. Males liked violent cartoons more than females do.

It is concluded that females are more aggressive in attitude than males who are known to be aggressive in behaviour. In congruence to the claim of observation-learning theory, both sexes learned aggression from TV but females are said to perform fewer acts of learned aggression.

Moreover, family size and sibling status affected the change in attitude among the respondents which means that the bigger the family size, the greater the frequency of the aggressive tendency and the higher the order of sibling status, the greater the frequency of aggressive tendency.

Recommendations:

Based on the instrument used in this study, the researcher came up with the following recommendations:

Knowing the effects of violent TV cartoons, it is therefore recommended that children's viewership on violent cartoons must have restrictions, especially among girls who were known to be vulnerable to the influences of TV. Parents should attend their children's TV viewing to guide them, to explain the scenes presented – be it violent or not, and to filter the kind of cartoon programs to be viewed.

Television program planners must, likewise, take into account the adverse effects of TV, plus the advent of cable TV complicates the situation where they could switch to various channels showing violence. And if these are ignored, the more the children are willing to accept and suggest the use of violence Holand, 1985).

It is also recommended that a related study will be conducted to include some environmental factors like parents, teachers, and residence area that will affect the degree of effects of violent cartoons vis-à-vis to their attitude.

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