

The Role of Crime Serials on Aggression among Adolescents

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Abstract:

In the era of 21st century media has become an essential part in individual's life. Whether it is for gaining knowledge or for a source of entertainment, its effects are unavoidable. Focusing on the prominent effects, the study was designed to measure the level of aggression in young adolescents as a result of exposure to television crime serials. The study included one group pre-post test design involving 101 young adolescents from Nayagarh and Khordha Districts of Odisha including both male and female whose demographic as well as cultural background were same. The level of aggression was assessed in both pre test and post test conditions. Findings suggest that young adolescents showed a higher level of aggression when exposed to television crime serials. And male expressed higher aggression in comparison to female. Future implications were highlighted.

Key words: Media, Aggression, Adolescents, Entertainment and Cultural Background, Crime Serials

Introduction

For decades we have seen many parts of our world rapidly going through changes in technology. Today's society has been transformed by means of communication and the available information through mass media. Most people rely on television for news, sports, and entertainment. Television is just one of the many examples of how technology has changed our lives. Since the invention of the television in the early 1900's, it has played a very important role in our lives. Having a television set at home has become very essential in today's society. One depends on it to entertain with its sitcoms and to inform about current world issues. The problem is that sometimes what one hears or sees on television is not always accurate or correct. Due to this most of the time television casts a negative impact on people especially on children and adolescents. This leads to expression of some negative behaviors like violence, aggressiveness etc. Some social scientists support this link. Complaints about the possible deleterious effects of mass media appear throughout the history; even Plato was concerned about the effects of plays on youth. Several longitudinal and survey research findings have shown that fictional Television shows and film violence contribute to both a short-term and a long-term increase in aggression and violence in young viewers. Aggression is any behavior directed toward another individual that is carried out with the proximate (immediate) intent to cause harm. In addition, the perpetrator must believe that the behavior will harm the target, and that the target is motivated to avoid the behavior (Bushman & Anderson 2001, Geen 2001, Baron & Richardson 1994, Berkowitz 1993).

Review of Literature

Aggression and Young Adolescents

A national study by **Grabmeier (2014)** on parents, researchers and doctors revealed that exposure to violent media can increase aggression in children.

Media violence is an important causal risk factor for increased aggression and violence in both the short- and long-term (Anderson et al., 2014). A thematic analysis by Hopkins et al. (2013) revealed that the adolescents held a shared understanding of the terms relating to aggression, bullying and violence.

A study by Mitrofan and Ciulovică, (2012) revealed that there a significant relationship between anger and emotion regulation, hostility and life satisfaction. In this context, the study obtained also a good agreement with existing literature for the variance of aggression and emotion regulation mechanisms as functions of gender and age.

According to Krahe and Möller (2011) there is a direct positive link from media violence usage to teacher-rated aggression for girls and boys.

According to Hoff et al. (2009) relational aggression was related to higher overall social centrality and being nominated as cool even when controlling for overt aggression. Although girls used relational aggression more often and boys used overt aggression more often, the use of relational aggression by either gender was related to membership in high status peer groups and high status within the peer group.

Psychological aggression was more likely than physical aggression to be rated as unpleasant, and less likely to be attributed to the partner “playing around.”(Jouriles, 2009)

A study by Öngen (2009) revealed that, discrepancy was the positive predictor of anger, physical aggression and hostility while order was the negative predictor of anger, physical and verbal aggression.

Emotion plays a central role in adolescent interpersonal relationships. Seeking greater emotional arousal through sensation seeking, and taking risks in doing so, and greater anger arousal, is two sources of motivation for aggression and violence. (Marcus, 2008).

Digital game violence seems to be one of the risk factors of increased aggressive behavior. (Wallenius & Punamäki, 2008). Viewing indirect aggression in the media can have an immediate impact on subsequent aggression (Coyne, Archer and Eslea, 2004)

Media Violence and Aggression

A study by Lin (2013) indicated that video game players (mediated enactive experience) experienced greater increases in aggressive affect, aggressive cognition, and physiological arousal than participants who watched recorded game play or comparable movie scenes (mediated observational experience).

According to Engelhard (2011) evidence linking violence desensitization with increased aggression, and show that a neural marker of this process can at least partially account for the causal link between violent game exposure and aggression. Playing violent video games produces higher levels of aggressive cognition, aggressive affect, physiological arousal, and aggressive behavior (in the short-term) than non-violent video games. (Adachi & Willoughby, 2011)

The development of aggressive behaviour places children at serious risk for future mal-adaptation in the form of continued aggression, conduct problems, and overall difficulties in the domain of social relationships. (Lan , Abdullah & Roslan, 2010)

Delinquent peer influences, antisocial personality traits, depression, and parents/guardians who use psychological abuse in intimate relationships were consistent risk factors for youth violence and aggression. (Ferguson et al. 2009)

There is an evidence for a generalization effect of viewing media aggression, in that viewing one form of aggression can influence the manifestation of other forms. This is the first study to show that viewing relational aggression in the media can increase subsequent physical aggression.(Coyne et al., 2008)

Exposure to TV violence on both children and adults increases the likelihood of aggressive behavior and the sanctioning of violence as a means of resolving conflict. (Pieper et al. 2008)

Exposure to violence in television, movies, video games, cell phones, and on the Internet 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 them behaving violently.(Huesmann, 2007)

Playing violent video games can lead to the automatic learning of aggressive self-view. (Uhlmann and Swanson, 2004) Research findings by Anderson et al., (2004) consistent with prior empirical and theoretical work emphasizing the importance of media violence in the creation of habitual aggressive patterns of thought, partial ling out aggressive attitudes reduced the video game violent/aggression link to non significance.

Brown and Witherspoon (2002) suggested the media depict a world in which unhealthy behaviors such as physical aggression, unprotected sex, smoking, and drinking are glamorous and risk-free. A Meta-analyses by Cantor (2000) show that media-violence viewing consistently is associated with higher levels of antisocial behavior, ranging from the trivial (imitative violence directed against toys) to the serious (criminal violence), with many consequential outcomes in between (acceptance of violence as a solution to problems, increased feelings of hostility, and the apparent delivery of painful stimulation to another person).

Objectives of the Study

The present study addressing with the following research objectives

- I. To find out the level of aggression in adolescents aggravated by watching television crime serials
- II. To investigate the gender difference in relation to aggression among adolescents when exposed to crime serials

Hypothesis

The present study intends to prove the following hypothesis

- I. Watching Television crime serials would aggravate aggression in adolescents
- II. There would be a gender difference in aggression among adolescents when exposed to television crime serials

Method of Study

Plan & Design

The data for this study consisted of a group of 101 adolescent students from four different Junior Colleges of Nayagarh and Khordha district of Odisha. The study utilises one group pre test post test design. As per the data required the sample was collected from 47 numbers of male and 54 numbers of female students of different Junior Colleges of Nayagarh and Khordha Districts.

Plan and Design of the Study

Pre Test Without Expose to Crime Serials		Post Test With Expose to Crime Serials	
Gender	Samples	Gender	Samples
Male	47	Male	47
Female	54	Female	54
Total number of Samples	101	Total number of Samples	101

Participants

The sample for this research was taken from adolescent college students of four junior colleges of Nayagarh and Khordha districts. Purposive sampling method was used to collect data. It was used as per the availability of the samples within a short span of time. On the basis of availability of students 101 numbers of students have taken part in this research. The sample included both male and female students of 47 and 54 respectively. The average age was 15.79 (among 15 to 17 years).

Research Instrument

The Aggression Scale by Pal and Naqvi (1986) was used as the research instrument in this study. It measures the level of aggression of an individual. The scale consists of thirty (30) items. These items are rated on a 6-Point scale from Very much (5) to Not at all (0), with higher scores indicates higher aggression and vice versa. The highest score one can get in this Questionnaire is 150 and the lowest is 0. The reliability of this scale is .82 and the validity of this scale is .78.

Procedure

At first the researcher decided upon the sample size, the age group in order to collect data. This study consisted of a pre test and post test design; hence there were two phases of data collection. The participants in this study were the students from the various Departments of the Nayagarh Junior College, Nayagarh, Itamati Junior College, Itamati, City Womens College, Bhubaneswar and Prana Nath Junior College, Khordha. The collected sample consisted of all most equal cultural, regional and socio-economic background. The researcher took the prior permission from the participants who participated in the study. After that rapport was established with the participants, they were requested to fill the details of the personal profile and to respond or answer in the answer sheet. Later the Aggression Scale Questionnaire was provided

to the participants. The participants were instructed to analyse each item according to their subjective feelings.

Then participants were divided into four groups (each group for one college) to watch popular crime serials of Indian television for 2 hours daily as an intervention. All the four groups were watched a popular crime serial for 2 hours in a day for fourteen days. It was made sure that during the intervention period no participants were exposed to any other crime serials or movies. After completion of two weeks of exposure to the television crime serials the researcher again administered the Aggression Scale Questionnaire as the post test. The procedure for administration remained the same as the pre test. During the total research it was taken care of that the respect and dignity of the participants must be maintained.

Results

The purpose of the study was to examine the effect of watching media crime serials on the young adolescents' students. It also aimed to examine the gender difference in relation to watching television crime serials.

Table I:- Results of *t*-test and Descriptive Statistics for Aggression by watching television Crime Serials

	Before Exposure to Crime Serials		After Exposure to Crime Serials		n	95% CI for Mean Difference		<i>r</i>	<i>t'</i>	df
	M	SD	M	SD						
Aggression	81.24	17.75	83.79	18.87	101	-3.750	-1.359	.94**	-4.238**	100

***p*<.01

Table I shows the results of the paired-samples *t*-test show that mean aggression scores differs before exposure media crime serials (*M*= 81.24, *SD*= 17.75) and after exposure to media crime serials (*M* = 83.79, *SD* = 18.87) at the .01 level of significance (*t* = -4.238, *df*= 100, *n* = 101, *p*< .01, 95% CI for mean difference -3.750 to -1.359, *r* = .94). On average

aggression was about 2.55 points higher after exposure to media crime serials.

Table II:- Gender difference in relation to expression of Aggression when exposed to television crime serials

	<i>M</i>	Male <i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	Female <i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	' <i>t</i> '
Aggression	89.91	19.22	47	78.15	16.51	54	3.309**

* $p < .05$

Table II represents Mean and standard deviations of two groups of participants (male & female). To find out gender difference between the two groups (male and female) in relation to aggression when exposed to television crime serials *t test* was applied. The *t* value of aggression was presented in Table II. Figure I represents the pictorial representation of the mean differences exist among the two groups. In aggression the mean and standard deviation found for male were ($M=89.91$, $SD=19.22$) respectively which was higher than the mean of female ($M=78.15$, $SD= 16.51$).

In the analysis of *t test* it was found that the *t* value for aggression was (3.309) which was significant at .01 level ($p < .01$). This indicated that there was gender difference exist in relation to aggression.

Figure I:- Mean aggression Scores of Adolescents in before (Pre Test) and after (Post Test) exposure to television crime serials

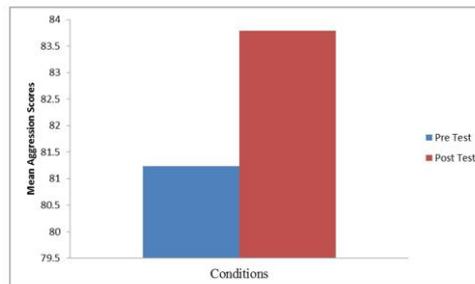


Figure II:-Mean Scores of male and female expressing aggression after exposure to television crime serials

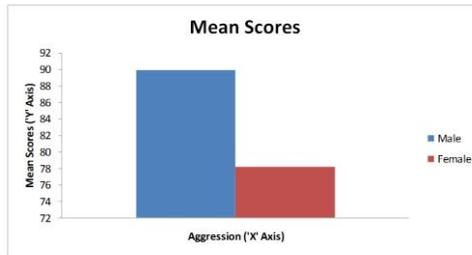


Figure III:- Mean scores of aggression of male adolescents in pre test and post test

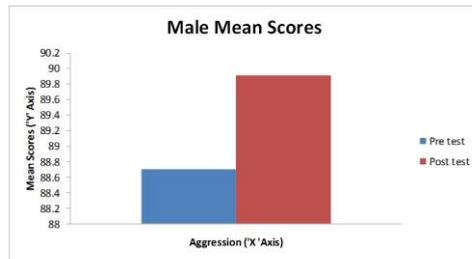
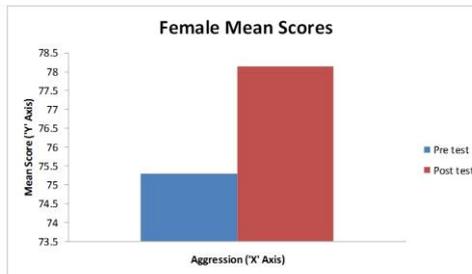


Figure IV:- Mean scores of aggression of female adolescents in pre test and post test



In Figure I. The 'X' axis represents the different conditions (Pre Test and Post Test) and 'Y' axis represents the mean scores of aggression. The blue bar shows pre test and maroon bar shows post test.

In Figure II. The 'X' axis represents the aggression of male and female and 'Y' axis represents the mean scores of

aggression. The blue bar shows male and maroon bar shows female.

In Figure III. The 'X' axis represents the aggression of pre test and post test of male and 'Y' axis represents the mean scores of aggression. The blue bar shows pre test maroon bar shows post test.

In Figure IV. The 'X' axis represents the aggression of pre test and post test of female and 'Y' axis represents the mean scores of aggression. The blue bar shows pre test and maroon bar shows post test.

Discussion and Conclusion

The main purpose of the present study was to examine (I) the level of aggression in adolescents aggravated by watching television crime serials (II) to investigate the gender difference in relation to aggression among adolescents when exposed to crime serials. In this regard the Aggression Scale was administered on young adolescents aged between 15 to 17 years. The study adopted a one group pre test post test design and the sample consisted of both male and female adolescents.

Analysis of results revealed that there was a significant increase in the level of aggression among the adolescents in the post testing session. Such a finding clearly established the fact that exposure to crime serials increase the level of aggression among adolescents. We learn many things by learning by imitation and aggression also learnt to a larger extent by imitation or observation. There are several research evidences which have yielded results in this direction and the present result is in tuned with the earlier findings.

In the present day society we observe and upsurge aggressive and violent behaviors among adolescents which includes theft, robbery, kidnapping, murder, cyber crime, sexual offences etc. Children and adolescents derive great pleasure by imitating the behaviors of the role models. The

celebrities, cenestars, sports stars are the preferred role models for the youngsters. Accepted behaviors as well as unaccepted behaviors are learnt through observation and it is strengthened or weakened by rewards or punishments. We observe lawlessness and degradation of the moral and ethical values. Many criminals and anti social people are roaming in the society scot-free and the judiciary is not strong enough to punish them or put them behind the bars. They display their power and wealth and enjoy all kinds of luxuries and privileges. These social realities are often depicted in crime serials and many adolescents believe that these kinds of behaviors are socially acceptable. Therefore without any hesitation they blindly imitate the anti social, immoral, unethical behaviors of corrupt and anti social personalities.

It can also be argued that when there is a delay in the justice system, people also feel that they can escape from the eyes of the law. This kind of a belief is strengthening the motive of the young adolescents to become aggressive, destructive and continue to live in the society without the fear of punishment. Thus the crime serials are providing clues to the minds of the young adolescents to practice criminal activities. On the basis of the results it can be said that there should be a censorship on the crime serials and they should not be viewed by young budding adolescents. Thus hypothesis 1 is proved and accepted. The results of the study also revealed that there was a significant gender difference in aggression among adolescents when exposed to television crime serials. Males showed an increased level of aggression than females when both were exposed to crime serials. Gender difference can be explained in terms of biology and environmental factors. According to biological view point it is the male hormone which is responsible for aggressive behaviors among males. Testosterone is able to modulate levels of various neurotransmitters that show evidence of mediating effects on aggressive behaviour (Simpson, 2001). Convincing relationships have been found

between testosterone and aggression, hormones in general cannot cause a particular behavioral outcome; they can only facilitate or inhibit the likelihood that such an outcome will occur (Sante, 2004). With regards to environmental factors the socialisation process, especially child rearing practices also significantly contribute to the aggressive behaviors of children and adolescents. Male are taught, trained to be assertive, competent and aggressive because these are masculine traits. On the other hand female are trained to be passive, submissive and less aggressive and these are socially desirable feminine traits.

Our rewards and punishment systems are contingent upon the gender role stereo type behaviors. Therefore males and females are conformed to the gender roles prescribed by the society as the conformation brings in recognition and appreciation as masculine and feminine personalities. Thus the hypothesis 2 which proposed that there would be gender difference in aggression with regard to watching crime serials is proved and accepted.

Implications of the Study

- I. This study will help to develop an adequate censorship on the crime serials of Indian television.
- II. The study will provide a base work to the researchers who are working in the field of aggression in human being.
- III. The findings of the study can be used as an illustration for the gender stereotypes even in expression of aggression

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