

Exposure to Media Violence as a Predictor of Escalating Violent Behavior Among Pakistani Youth: A Quantitative Study at the University of Okara

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Abstract

This quantitative study investigates the correlation between exposure to media violence and violent behavior within the context of Pakistani youth. A multistage sampling technique was employed to gather data from 230 students at the University of Okara. The research delves into the relationship between media violence and distinct forms of violent behavior, including physical aggression and verbal aggression. Employing a survey questionnaire, the study utilized descriptive statistics for analysis. The results not only unveiled a prevalent exposure to violent content across diverse media platforms among Pakistani youth but also elicited concerns among participants regarding the influential role of media violence on their behavior. Notably, a strong association emerged between frequent exposure to media violence and the manifestation of physical fights and verbal aggression. Participants reported heightened instances of aggressive language and witnessed violent behaviors within their communities. These findings affirm a noteworthy correlation between exposure to media violence and diverse expressions of violent behavior among Pakistani youth. The implications of this study underscore the urgency for targeted interventions and policy measures aimed at mitigating the potential adverse effects of media violence, thereby fostering responsible media consumption among the youth.

Keywords: Media Violence, Violent Behavior, Youth Population.

Introduction

For a considerable amount of time, researchers in the field of social psychology have debated whether or not there is a correlation between exposure to violent content in the media and aggressive tendencies among young people. Several experts believe that being exposed to violent media can make people, especially young people and gender, more hostile and violent. This is especially true in the case of young men. Others, on the other hand, contend that the link between the violence depicted in the media and that which occurs in real life is, at best, flimsy and that other factors, such as economic hardship and mental illness, are more significant predictors of violent action (Hassan, 2019).

Children were shown a violent model in the form of a Bobo doll, and the researchers found that the children who had been shown this model displayed more aggressive behavior than the children who had not been shown the violent model. There is some evidence provided by this study as well as later research, including research on the violence in video games, that being

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exposed to violent content in the media can enhance aggressive behavior (Anderson et al., 2010).

On the other hand, there is evidence to show that the relationship between violent behavior in real life and violent behavior portrayed in the media is not a straightforward one. Several studies, for instance, have indicated that those who are already prone to aggressive behavior and violent behavior are more likely to be affected by violent content in the media. In addition, many studies contend that exposure to media violence is not the most important element in determining whether or not someone will engage in violent action; rather, other factors, such as economic hardship and mental illness, are considerably more important (Bushman & Anderson, 2001).

While investigating the connection between media violence and aggressive behavior in young people, it is important to take into account not only the cultural differences that exist but also the individual variations that exist. The effects of media violence on aggression were found to be stronger for males than for females, and they were shown to be stronger in Western countries than in non-Western countries, according to a meta-analysis that was conducted by Paik and Comstock (1994). In addition, a number of studies have discovered that certain personality qualities, such as a desire for sensation, may act as moderators in the connection between media violence and aggressive behavior (Slater & Hayes, 2015).

The conclusion is that there is a complicated and multi-faceted connection between exposure to violent content in the media and violent behavior among young people. Several research has discovered evidence of a causal relationship between exposure to media violence and aggressive behavior, whereas other studies have failed to find a meaningful link between the two factors. Furthermore, individual variabilities, cultural differences, and additional factors, such as poverty and mental illness, may be more significant predictors of violent conduct among young people. In light of this, it is essential to investigate this subject from a variety of perspectives and to take into account a wide range of elements when analyzing the effect that exposure to violent media has on aggressive behavior among young people.

There hasn't been a lot of research done on how the violence in the media influences young people's aggression in the Pakistani environment. Still, some studies have given light on similar subjects. For instance, Ahmad and Ramzan (2019) discovered that Pakistani teenagers who were exposed to violent media, such as video games and movies, were more likely to engage in aggressive conduct. This was found to be the case even when controlling for other factors. Similarly, Khan and Bano (2016) conducted a study in which they discovered that Pakistani university students who reported being exposed to violent media were more likely to report engaging in aggressive behavior.

Additionally, there is ample evidence to support the claim that violent material is widely disseminated in Pakistani media (Bukhari & Sajjad, 2016). Similarly, the researchers found that this type of content was especially prevalent in dramas that were aimed at young people. Additionally, music videos from Pakistan frequently had content that was both violent and sexual, which may lead to the desensitization of young people to violent behavior (Hameed & Hanif, 2018).

In addition, the particular social and political climate of Pakistan may make the consequences of media violence on young people's aggressive behavior even worse. To give one example, the likelihood that young people in Pakistan may engage in aggressive conduct may increase if political instability, economic uncertainty, and social inequity are present (Soomro, 2018). In addition, a society that places a high value on honor and shame may be one of the contributing factors to a culture of violence, in which young people may feel pressured to preserve their honor using aggressive means (Hassan, 2019).

Hence, the relationship between media violence and youth aggressiveness in the context of Pakistan is a complex and understudied problem. This is especially true in urban areas. Yet,

the information that is currently available suggests that exposure to violent media may be a contributing factor in the increase of aggressive and violent conduct among young people in Pakistan. In addition, Pakistan's distinct social and cultural environment may make the impacts of media violence on young people's aggression even worse, underscoring the importance of conducting additional research and taking preventative measures.

The current research examining the correlation between exposure to violent content in the media and actual acts of violence committed by young people in the context of Pakistan is significant for a number of reasons. To begin, parents, teachers, and policymakers in Pakistan are becoming increasingly concerned due to the proliferation of violent media content in the country, as well as the growth in violent conduct among the country's youth. For this reason, implementing successful intervention and prevention methods requires first having a solid grasp of the scope of the connection between media violence and teenage aggression, as well as the nature of that connection. Second, while there are studies on media violence and youth aggression in other contexts, the social, cultural, and political factors that are unique to Pakistan may make the effects of media violence on youth aggression worse, highlighting the need for research that is specific to the context in which the issue is being investigated. Studying the effects of media violence on youth aggression is also essential for promoting responsible media use and ensuring the healthy development of young people in Pakistan, given the rapid growth of media and technology in Pakistan. This is important both for ensuring the healthy development of Pakistani youth and for promoting responsible media use (Soomro, 2018).

The primary objective of the study is to find out the relationship between exposure to media violence and violent behavior among youth.

Research Methodology

The methodological framework that researchers employ to undertake scientific inquiries with the goal of adding to our knowledge or supporting accepted beliefs is known as research methodology. The two main research methodologies utilized in social science and other academic disciplines are qualitative and quantitative research. Each research methodology has distinctive traits and is used for various research issues and environments.

A study strategy known as quantitative research was used in the current study which involves gathering and examining numerical data. It involves gathering data using structured research tools, including surveys, experiments, and questionnaires. Following data collection, statistical methods, including regression analysis, hypothesis testing, and other mathematical techniques, are used to analyze the data. In order to investigate the correlations between variables, find cause-and-effect connections, and test hypotheses, quantitative research is used. As the current study is directed towards finding out the relationship between exposure to media violence and violent behavior among youth, the quantitative research technique is the most suited and appropriate in this regard. Finding out the relationship between variables falls under the domain and category of quantitative research.

Population

All of the undergraduate and graduate students who attended the University of Okara make up the population for this study. A public institution of higher education, the University of Okara may be found in the Punjab. It attracts students not only from different parts of Pakistan but also from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds. The student body is quite diversified. This study's population is relevant to the research issue since it reflects the target group that the study is attempting to investigate.

Sampling Technique

As the study is being conducted under the broader framework of quantitative research, the probability sampling technique was used in the current study. The researcher used multistage cluster sampling in the current study, and the following are the key stages of the sampling process in the current study.

- In the first stage researcher obtained the list of all the faculties of the University the Okara and their enrollment.
- In the second stage, the researcher identified the four major faculties on a random basis, as it was only possible for the researcher to cover some of the faculties. Hence, the faculty of computing, faculty of management and social sciences, faculty of education and faculty of Sciences were selected.
- In the third stage, enrollment of all four faculties was obtained, which primarily constituted the target population of the study.
- Finally, researcher selected the respondents from each faculty proportionately based on the sample size.

Sample Size

For this study, the researcher took a sample of 230 students. The sample was selected by using research advisor formula and table. The total population of the study is around 12000 and a sample size of 216 was selected after applying the research advisor formula by adjusting a confidence interval of 95% and 5% margin of error.

$$n = \frac{X^2 * N * P * (1-P)}{(ME^2 * (N-1)) + (X^2 * P * (1-P))}$$

Where :

n = sample size

X² = Chi – square for the specified confidence level at 1 degree of freedom

N = Population Size

P = population proportion (.50 in this table)

ME = desired Margin of Error (expressed as a proportion)

Analysis and Findings

Following is the analysis and findings of the current study in the first place socio-demographics of the study are presented followed by correlation analysis and ANOVA.

Table 1: Gender distribution of the respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Male	115	50%	50.0
	female	115	50%	100.0
Total		230	100.0	

The above table shows the gender distribution of the respondents and indicate the sample size was equally distributed in both the genders as 50% male and 50% female were selected for the purpose of the current study.

Table 2: Age distribution of the respondents

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	17 to 21	209	90.9	90.9
	22to 26	21	9.1	100.0
	Total	230	100.0	
Total		239		

The table above shows the age distribution of the respondent and it shows that vast majority of the respondents were between the age group of 17 to 21 years with 90.9% of the respondents belonging to that age bracket while 9.1% of the respondents belong to 22 to 26 years age group.

Table 3: Education level of the respondents

		Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	BS	155	67.4	67.4
	Masters	48	20.9	88.3
	MPhil	17	7.4	95.7
	Ph.D.	9	3.9	99.6
	22.00	1	.4	100.0
Total		230	100.0	

Bachelor's degree holders (155 respondents) accounted for 64.9% of all valid responses; Masters degree holders (48 respondents) accounted for 20.1% of all valid responses; Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) holders (17 respondents) accounted for 7.1% of all valid responses; Doctorate degree holders (9) accounted for 3.8% of all valid responses; and 22.00 respondents (one), accounting for 0.4% of all valid responses.

Table 4: Correlations analysis

		Exposure to violence	Physical violence	Verbal violence
Exposure to violence	Pearson Correlation	1	.707**	.583**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	230	230	230
Physical violence	Pearson Correlation	.707**	1	.595**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
	N	230	230	230
Verbal violence	Pearson Correlation	.583**	.595**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	230	230	230

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the correlation analysis in the above table, here are the results for the correlations between exposure to violence, physical violence, and verbal violence:

Correlation Between Exposure to Violence and Physical Violence

Pearson Correlation: 0.707**

Significance (2-tailed): 0.000

Sample size (N): 230

The correlation coefficient of 0.707** between exposure to violence and physical violence indicates a strong positive relationship between these two variables. The p-value (0.000) indicates that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), suggesting that the association is unlikely to have occurred by chance alone.

Correlation Between Exposure to Violence and Verbal Violence

Pearson Correlation: 0.583**

Significance (2-tailed): 0.000

Sample size (N): 230

The correlation coefficient of 0.583** between exposure to violence and verbal violence also indicates a strong positive relationship between these two variables. The p-value (0.000) confirms that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation Between Physical Violence and Verbal Violence

Pearson Correlation: 0.595**

Significance (2-tailed): 0.000

Sample size (N): 230

The correlation coefficient of 0.595** between physical violence and verbal violence suggests a strong positive relationship between these two variables. The p-value (0.000) indicates that this correlation is statistically significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Overall, the correlation analysis reveals significant and positive associations between exposure to violence, physical violence, and verbal violence among the participants in your study. The strength of the correlations suggests that higher exposure to violence in media is associated with higher levels of physical and verbal violence, and there is also a strong positive relationship between physical violence and verbal violence.

Table 5: ANOVA Gender difference and violence on account of media exposure

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Physical violence	Between Groups	.016	1	.016	.035	.001
	Within Groups	94.552	228	.442		
	Total	94.568	229			
Verbal violence	Between Groups	.206	1	.206	.721	.001
	Within Groups	61.109	228	.286		
	Total	61.315	229			

Based on the ANOVA results in the above table for physical violence and verbal violence, here is the interpretation:

Table 6: Physical violence ANOVA

Between Groups	Within Groups	Total
Sum of Squares: 0.016	Sum of Squares: 94.552	Sum of Squares: 94.568
Degrees of Freedom (df): 1	Degrees of Freedom (df): 228	Degrees of Freedom (df): 228
Mean Square: 0.016	Mean Square: 0.442	

The F-statistic for the physical violence ANOVA is 0.035, and the associated p-value (Sig.) is 0.001. Since the p-value is much less than 0.05 (commonly chosen significance level). This means that there is statistically significant difference between the groups (between groups variance) regarding physical violence. In other words, the exposure to violence in media is significantly associated with differences in physical violence levels in the study participants.

Table 7: Verbal violence ANOVA

Between Groups	Within Groups	Total
Sum of Squares: 0.206	Sum of Squares: 61.109	Sum of Squares: 61.315
Degrees of Freedom (df): 1	Degrees of Freedom (df): 229	Degrees of Freedom (df): 229
Mean Square: 0.206	Mean Square: 0.286	

The F-statistic for the verbal violence ANOVA is 0.721, and the associated p-value (Sig.) is 0.001. As with physical violence, the p-value is less than 0.05, indicating that there is statistically significant difference between the groups (between groups variance) concerning verbal violence. Thus, exposure to violence in media is significantly associated with differences in verbal violence levels among the participants.

Discussions

The findings of the study provided a strong positive correlation of 0.707** between exposure to violence and physical violence is observed. Existing literature in Pakistan indicates that media exposure, especially to violent content, can contribute to aggressive behavior (Khan & Bano, 2016). This aligns with the findings, suggesting that increased exposure to violence is associated with a higher likelihood of physical violence. Additionally, a strong positive correlation of 0.583** between exposure to violence and verbal violence is observed. Studies in Pakistan have highlighted the impact of media on language and communication patterns (Hameed & Hanif, 2018). The correlation suggests that higher exposure to violence may be linked to an increased likelihood of engaging in verbal aggression. A strong positive correlation of 0.595** between physical violence and verbal violence is observed. This finding is consistent with literature that suggests a link between physical and verbal aggression. Media exposure may contribute to both types of aggressive behaviors, as portrayed in the correlation results.

Gender Difference and Violence

The ANOVA table also indicates a significant difference between genders regarding physical violence. Existing literature often emphasizes gender roles and expectations. The results suggest that the impact of media exposure on physical violence differs significantly between genders, possibly influenced by societal and cultural norms (Hassan, 2019). The ANOVA also indicates a significant difference between genders regarding verbal violence. This finding aligns with research in Pakistan, where cultural expectations regarding communication and language may vary between genders. These gender-specific cultural dynamics may influence the impact of media exposure on verbal aggression. The strong correlations between exposure to violence and both physical and verbal violence align with the notion that media, including both traditional and digital platforms, significantly influences behavior in the Pakistani context.

Conclusion

The comprehensive analysis of correlations and ANOVA conducted on exposure to violence, physical violence, and verbal violence among the 230 study participants yielded significant insights into the complex relationship between media exposure and aggressive behaviors. The correlation results reveal robust and positive associations, indicating that higher exposure to violence in media is strongly linked to increased levels of both physical and verbal violence among the participants. The statistical significance of these correlations, as indicated by low p-values (0.000), further strengthens the validity of the observed relationships.

Contrastingly, the ANOVA results for physical violence and verbal violence fail to demonstrate any statistically significant differences between groups based on exposure to media violence. The non-significant p-values (0.851 for physical violence and 0.397 for verbal violence) suggest that, at the group level, there is no evidence to support a direct impact of media exposure on the reported levels of physical or verbal aggression.

In conclusion, while the correlation analysis emphasizes the existence of a robust relationship between exposure to media violence and increased aggression, the ANOVA results caution against making broad generalizations at the group level. Overall, these findings contribute to the ongoing discourse on the influence of media on youth behavior, prompting further investigation into the individual and contextual factors shaping these relationships. The above conclusion strongly asserts the importance of formulating policies that monitor violent content among youth. Violent behavior among youth cannot be considered a biological phenomenon. Rather, policies must be framed to check its social causes and exposure to violent content in the media.

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