RESEARCH ARTICLE

MEDIA INFLUENCE ON DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR OF ADOLESCENCE: TEACHERS' PERCEPTION

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	There is growing concern regarding the relationship between exposure to media and deviant behaviour. The younger generation is too much passionate in imitating heroes of movies and blindly accepting deviant cultural and social interactions in media. Knowingly or unknowingly today's adolescents are following it without any concern about our attitude, tradition and social interaction. The present study aims to analyse teachers' perception on media influence on deviant behaviour of adolescents in Kerala. The study was conducted among 30 higher secondary school teachers from five government schools of the five districts of Kerala state through random sampling technique. Two major objectives of the study were to identify recurring deviant thematic content in various types of media in the perception of teachers and to identify additional factors that render adolescents more vulnerable to deviant media. Questionnaires were used to collect data. Result of the study revealed that Violence, Social intolerance, Glamour and power and Glamorizing and disrespect for women were the recurring deviant thematic content and factors like Family environment, Socio-economic environment, Race and gender and Locus of control were vulnerable to deviant behaviour. The study seeks importance in the present realm to give better concern to our adolescents on how to be a better social individual.

INTRODUCTION

Historical perspective of violence in media reveals several changes, including increasing explicitness (e.g., clear visual and auditory presentations), intensity (killing), and moral ambiguity (no longer presented as socially deviant and pathological, but acceptable, or at least explained by social factors (such as poverty) (Freedman, 2002). There has been a growing concern regarding the relationship between the various types of media and deviant behaviour among young people. There appears to be a correlation between exposure to violent forms of media and violent acts by the senior year in high school and early collegiate years (Boehm, 2000). If these are valid and generalizable findings, then children need to be protected from exposure to violence and need immediate help from adults (e.g., to protect students or to remedy the negative effects of exposure).In recent years, the entertainment industry, particularly the video game industry, has been reaping profits from the sale of violent imagery to children. Hypothetically, by instilling violent attitudes and behaviour patterns in young people (e.g., such that students regard each other as targets of aggression and sexual predation), makers of violent imagery undermine values that are perhaps essential to civilized society (e.g., respect, self-control), and make it difficult for schools to achieve their social expectation and civic aspiration.

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Author Neil Postman (1982) argues that we are living in a new dark age for children. For Postman, TV doesn't simply erode old distinctions, or dissolve the boundaries between child and adult; it obliterates any and all differences. There is no such thing as children's programming, he explains. 'Everything is for everybody', television is 'the total disclosure medium'. Television gives children and teens access to all information. There are no more secrets. Television drives all mystery and awe from the imaginations of children and teens, it dangerously broadens exposure, giving unlimited access to the adult world, the consequences of which promise to be brutal. Exposed to extreme samples of the 'real world' through TV, a world filled with catastrophe, death and suffering, adults lose the appearance of omnipotence (which the youth of America apparently need) and, in the process, their authority over the young and vulnerable. In short, television programming can weaken children's ability to trust, believe in and rely upon the adult world. Some children remedy this deficit by developing their own culture, incorporating information (role models, values, personality traits, justification for action) from the media that surround them. There are disagreements about the possible connection between media and antisocial behaviour. Some researchers say that the connection is a cognitive phenomenon; a connection of ideas, perceptions, attitudes. Other researchers argue that violent and sexually-explicit media have physiological effects that induce aggressive behaviours. Still others focus on the ways in which media

violence primes or cues pre-existing aggressive thoughts and feelings. They believe these thoughts are already imbedded in the adolescent and seeing the images on television only increases the rates and intensities of anti-social thoughts. On television, the characters act out and usually do not receive any corrective consequences for their behaviour (Freedman, 2002). High levels of competition in the media industry prompted each one to exhibits anything without any pre assessment on its consequences. This has made the situation more vulnerable, which necessitates a research probe of the present nature in the Kerala context.

Objectives of the study

- To identify recurring deviant thematic content in various types of media in the perception of teachers
- To identify perceived factors that render adolescents more vulnerable to deviant media.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A sample of 30 higher secondary school teachers were selected from five government schools of the five districts of Kerala state through random sampling technique.

Tools

Questionnaires on Media Influence on Deviant Behaviour among Adolescence (Musthafa and Muhammed, 2014) were implemented to identify the recurring deviant thematic content in various types of media and also to identify additional factors that render adolescents more vulnerable to deviant media.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS

The result obtained from the analysis of the data collected is presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

Table 1. Analysing the recurring deviant thematic content in various types of media

S. No	Thematic content	Percentage
1	Violence	87
2	Social intolerance	85
3	Glamour and power	92
4	Glamorizing and disrespect for women	90

When the perception of teachers on recurring deviant thematic content in various types of media is analysed. It is found that majority of teachers are supporting the various thematic content. Adolescents are going passionately behind glamour and power. They do not find themselves inferior in glamorizing and disrespecting women. Tolerance in various aspects like frustrations and patience is not the matter of concern for the adolescence and social intolerance which may even lead to violence is a threat in our society initiated by adolescence. While analyzing the various factors contributing to deviant behaviour in the perception of teachers through questionnaire it is analysed that socio economic environment is the major factor among all the other dimensions and race and gender is the least

among the factors. Locus of control is also a factor vulnerable to deviant behaviour in the perception of higher secondary school teachers. Family environment also act as a factor vulnerable to deviant behaviour but it is not considered as a major factor by the Higher Secondary School teachers.

Table 2. Analysing the factors vulnerable to deviant behaviour in the perception of teachers

S. No.	Factors vulnerable to deviant behaviour	Percentage
1	Family environment	38
2	Socio-economic environment	78
3	Race and gender	32
4	Locus of control	67

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Perception of higher secondary school teachers on thematic content in visual media

Violence: One of the most evident recurring themes in media contribute to anti-social behaviour is violence. Ananad (1998) states, "The effect of media violence on our children is no longer open to debate. The exceedingly violent portrayals in the media in the form of films, documentaries and even cartoons have firmly placed the media in the midst of a controversy with far reaching effects". In our society many young blood are getting more exposed to graphic media violence through movies, popular music and video games. Murder, rapes and assaults are part of many of the movies. Teachers contend that adolescent people are imitating the actions and behaviours that they observe and they even do not have the maturity to identify whether the action is good or bad.

Social Intolerance: Much of the literature reviewed in this study mentions various forms of social intolerance as a common theme in media. Of particular concern are the stereotypical portrayals of minorities and the demeaning treatment of women. Davies (1985) observes that minority males are often depicted as aggressive and abusive toward anyone perceived as weaker than them. Women are treated as sexual property and the images of powerful men, who take the advantage of women foster the notion that the aggression is equivalent to power and weakness deserves disrespect. Teachers conclude that there is a definite connection between these situations viewed by the younger generation and growing disrespect to women. In addition, teachers explains that, while survival of the fittest is certainly not a new theory, the influence of media is creating an unhealthy acceptance of abusive and disrespectful behaviours toward anyone considered weak or disadvantaged by media standards.

Glamour and Power: According to Boehm (2000), much of what young people view on television, in movies and in music videos focuses on glamorous, albeit unrealistic, acquisition of fame and fortune. The false notion in the mind of the people is that powerful men are depicted in luxurious homes, having expensive cars and are surrounded by the opposite sex. One implication is that this lifestyle is a result of some innate and effortless talent. For example, the child who grew up poor in the ghetto becomes the famous rap star, or the pro athlete. Teachers note that the hard work and healthy competitions

among the youngsters are missing from them and the value ideals are being deteriorating from them. They are engaged in Illegal activity for the purpose of material gain and they just need power and money to expose their glamour. As per the opinion of the teachers, the hero is rarely shown as the successful executive or the factory worker who measures success by his work ethic and integrity while in a meaningful monogamous relationship. Teachers state that unfortunately, the younger generation of our society is measuring the standard of life only by means of money, fame, power and popularity.

Causative Factors on Deviant Behaviour of Adolescents

Family Environment: In considering the influence of family status on student behaviour, the most frequently noted situation is that of separation and divorce. According to Morgan (1994), separation and divorce is a process of disorganizing and reorganizing that can extend over a period of several years and cause great frustration to all involved. Teachers contend there should be support from the family for the well being of the child which is deteriorating in now a days. This is leading to insecurity feeling, disruption and alienation. These students do not feel a sense of belonging and acceptance in the home or at school. How children respond is often reflected in behavioural performance at school. Teachers argue that when they move on to some kind of fallacies. Negative imitation and the risk factor of abuse is also occurring in this kind of circumstances. Inappropriate behaviours at school can often be a result of an abusive environment. In the opinion of teachers such behaviours may even be an attempt to gain sympathy and understanding or to vent anger and frustration associated with abuse.

Socioeconomic Environment: The attitude of the parents toward education is a major variable in student success and behaviour at school directly impacts academic performance (Davies, 1985). According to Roderick (1993), students from disadvantaged families are more likely to have behavioural problems throughout their school careers. Rumberber (1983) finds that parents in disadvantaged homes are less likely to encourage their children to strive for high achievement and less likely to monitor the school performance of their children. Teachers report that disadvantaged parents are also less likely to provide an environment in the home that consistently models expectations for appropriate behaviour at school. In addition, these parents are less likely to closely monitor what their children watch on television or the music that they listen to. Teachers also agree that the behaviour of the students is getting deviated without the support of the role models or active parental monitoring. Research has shown that economic conditions can influence children both directly through the resources that economic conditions can afford, and indirectly by causing parental distress and consequently impaired parenting (Conger, et. al, 1997).

Race and Gender: According to Wehlage and Rutter (1987), after controlling for family background, race is not a factor that predicts unacceptable school behaviour. The same holds true for behaviour in the opinion of teachers in gender comparisons in which all other factors are equal. Race and gender factor do not have much association related to the misbehaving of the students as opined by teachers. However, according to teachers when other variables that increase vulnerability to media influence are present, boys are more likely to exhibit physically aggressive misbehaviour than girls.

Locus of Control: Smey-Richman (1988) and Houston (1988) discuss a connection between the above-mentioned factors that influence behaviour and what they term "locus of control." This term refers to what an individual believes in regard to personal control over success and failure, good behaviour and bad. As per the opinion of teachers if individual believes that event or outcome is dependent on personal charecteristics it has internal locus control and vice versa. Low esteemed students attribute success or failure to external factors, such as luck or nature of the task as per the opinion of teachers. Higher secondary school teachers also opined that these students tend to be easily influenced by external factors (media, peer pressure, negative role models) as they are not having proper self control. Conversely, students with a strong internal locus of control are less vulnerable to the influence of negative media, even when other factors are present. These students tend to be more successful in school, both academically and behaviourally.

Conclusion

Media does have a significant influence on middle adolescents, especially when it's combined with the effects of greater or lesser parental control. The relation seems to be one of emulation of lifestyles and the admiration of their way of life, e.g. money, cars, and lavishness. The clothing and mannerisms of students mimic those seen on television by professional athletes and music video personalities. The study revealed similarities in answers among teachers of all races and socioeconomic standing regardless of their number of discipline referrals. Money, clothing, and cars overwhelmingly came up as the main attraction to certain types of media, especially videos and professional athletes. Rap music and videos were the most preferred media. The study helped to identify the thematic content on media and their respective causes on deviant behaviour of adolescents. It also stressed the need for a strong mechanisms to address the issue at the school level.

Acknowledgement

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