

Does Television Shape the Values of our Youth?

By

Cathy Hudson Riley

A thesis submitted in fulfillment
Of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science
Criminal Justice
Florida Metropolitan University

April 2007

Professor: Dr. Hal Campbell

© 2007 Cathy Hudson Riley
All rights reserved. This work may not be reproduced in
in whole or in part, by photocopy or by other means without permission of the author.

Epigraph

I believe the children are our future
Teach them well and let them lead the way
Show them all the beauty they possess inside
Give them a sense of pride to make it easier
Let the children's laughter remind us how we used to be
Everybody searching for a hero
People need someone to look up to
I never found anyone to fulfill my needs
A lonely place to be
So I learned to depend on me

-Whitney Houston

Song Lyrics "Greatest Love of All"

ABSTRACT

DOES TELEVISION SHAPE THE VALUES OF OUR YOUTH?

This paper will examine violence depicted through the media with a concentration on television. This paper reviews, and discusses the history television has played in our society and on our youth. Reflection will be made on past decades and what content changes have taken place throughout time. Data will be offered on the present viewing of television in contrast to past viewing audiences. Facts will be gathered to elaborate as to what shaped the values of viewing audiences 20 years ago against current values. Television shows such as “Leave it to Beaver” do not exist as they were replaced with more “reality” television with shows like “Survivor”. These new type programs have content including nudity, violence and sex, which is not acceptable to audiences of all ages. No restrictions are in place to prevent younger kids from watching so they watch inappropriate material. This paper will validate the postulation of fact that it is not ok for all ages to watch these shows. To allow them to watch is clearly not in the best interest of our youth now or in future generations. Society needs to teach them and let them lead the way, as the epigraph suggested. Regulations exist with differences depending on different types of programming with a review of public television, cable and network television. The reality is that although the FCC has rules, those rules vary and are not enforced as they could be. Statistics for the differences are articulated and evaluated for reasonableness of conclusions. Facts will be measured against rules that exist with content restriction and just what those restrictions are.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I want to express gratitude to everyone who has encouraged me on this path of education starting with God. I have many blessings in my life including the ability to be able to attend college, raise a family, and be a parent. I continue to believe a higher power has assisted me to become the person I am. I want to acknowledge and am grateful to Florida Metropolitan University for this program and the knowledge I have gained to be intelligent enough to write a paper of this caliber. Lastly, I say thank you to the subjects I interviewed who allowed me to ask personal questions and answered freely without holding back information that was private but helpful, for the content of this paper.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EPIGRAPH

ABSTRACT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION

II. NEED FOR STUDY

A. Purpose

B. Research Hypothesis

C. Thesis Questions

D. Interview Questions

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND HISTORICAL EVENTS

A. Defining Concepts

B. Facts with Historical Time Line

C. Broadcast.

D. Local

E. Public

F. Cable

G. Historical Timeline

IV. RESEARCH METHODS

- A. Design
- B. Statistics & Demographics
- C. Examples of Cause and Effect
- D. Statistical Analysis

V. DISCUSSION WITH RESULTS

- A. Study and Case Reviews
- B. Thesis Answers
- C. Survey Answers
- D. Summary

VI. TABLES AND GRAPHS

- A. Violence in the Media tables
- B. Television Show Content Tables
- C. Rating Chart survey results

VII. CONCLUSION

- A. Recommendations

VIII. REFERENCES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I believe that children are our future and can be taught to be examples for future generations. The key is to instill appropriate value systems and beliefs into our youth starting at a young age. The objective of this paper is to show how television has shaped the value system in America including our youth. A review of history over time will be done to see how the information viewed by the public has changed the years. Research suggests that the changes have been for both the positive and the negative. Subjects that were believed to have been taboo years ago appear to have become more acceptable in recent years.

Society is desensitized by the acts of violence that are witnessed daily on television. Reviewing history, back in the 1990's, viewers were not accepting of acts of violence being shown on regular television as they are today. Time has changed that view but has America changed its mind regarding the harm this has on children? This research suggest that society has not changed its mind. Television has the ability to educate our children and is known to be influential to all age groups but especially for kids. The future behavior patterns can be formed based on what is viewed on television by children at an early age. Television should have age appropriate material at all time frames. Content of shows that include violence and sex need to be limited to evening hours only. This paper will examine how values from the past that were deemed necessary. They were in place for the mental and emotional health of our youth but those safeguards appear to have changed. The question becomes if those changes made because they are believed to no longer be necessary or did society forget they needed to pay attention? A comparison will be made of the past to the present and determine what the future might hold in answer to these questions. The future of content on television will depend on many issues.

In order to reduce the violence, nudity, and sexually explicit content from progressively getting worse, action must be taken to determine what the affects are on youth. This paper will give ideas and recommendations as to how to control and prevent future generations from watching harmful programs. Society must not accept, but rather challenge, television content for the sake of our youth. Society must set examples of good moral and values. Those values should start with television content. Suggestions on how, and what, can be done will be presented for review. The reader will be educated as to what is viewed today on television and by what age groups to determine if the viewing content containing violence is harmful to kids.

A rating system is offered for movie theater releases. We have age limits as to what age one can legally drink. We have minimum ages as to when a child is considered adult enough to drive. The legal age for voting has been set as 18. Yet, with all these restrictions on appropriate age limits, we allow our youth to be influenced the most when they are sitting in the safety of they're own home watching television. Society thinks they are protecting our youth but this paper questions if that is truly the case. Research will reveal just how vulnerable kids have been and continue to be when it comes to watching television. The world has suburban children trying to live the life of the inner city youth, which could be contributed in part, to watching television. Television has helped shape America's youth both for the good and for the bad. Parents have strived to teach kids what family values are and yet those same children come home from school to watch unsupervised television. Values are what children need to be successful so care must be given as to what should be viewed by our youth. Children should not be allowed to be raised by television and witness topics beyond there years.

CHAPTER 2

NEED FOR STUDY

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to educate the reader and society, with a better understanding of what television has to offer and the effects that information has on youth. Unfortunately, although television can be a great tool for educating our youth, it can also be one of the most destructive educational tools. For these reasons, we need to educate each other and let the marketers of destructive show content material know that they have a responsibility to society. Information is beneficial in our role for society to accept responsibility for what children watch because they in turn, attempt to reenact television drama into real life situations. The hypothesis is to examine societal values with the need to accept the burden that past and future generations are influenced by television violence. By reviewing statistics and information gathered as to the relatedness of violence observed by youth from an early age and explore what impact it has already had will lead to suggestions for future changes. The goal of this paper is for parents, educators, and the reader, to understand the full affect television has had, and will have, on youth.

Research Hypothesis

Past research has given validation to the fact that violence has shaped the value system in society today. Surveys and studies have concluded part of those statistics have been formed based on information related to viewing television. The reality is proof exist that validate the claim that the affects of watching television violence at a young age will affect children on a permanent basis. This thesis tests that theory with statistics that validate the position it does affect youth negatively and that television does have lasting affects on youth watching that violence. Violence on television is harmful and does influence the values of our children which is proven by this paper although much more research on this subject is needed.

Thesis Questions

- 1 Does Television violence affect people?
2. Are youth affected more/less by violence on Television than the average adult?
3. What proof do we have that violence does affect youth negatively?
4. Who is regulating television programming?
- 5 How can we make television safer and positive for our youth?

Interview Questions

1. How much time a day do you spend watching Television?
2. What time of day do you watch?
3. Do your parents supervise what you watch?
4. What is your favorite show? Why?
5. Overall, what is the most violent act you have seen on TV?
6. What show do you watch that would be considered as informational or educational?
7. Have you ever acted out something in real life that you learned from watching TV?
8. How has TV shaped you in your life?
9. Do you think that we should have a better system to monitor violence or graphic content on regular program TV?
10. Should cable networks be forced to follow programming rules?

CHAPTER 3

REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND HISTORICAL EVENTS

Defining concepts

Depending on the culture of the reader, violence can be defined many ways. For the overall purpose of this paper, the concept and definition of violence is used in relation to television. It will include the definition as the use of power or physical force that ends with the result of injury to the person. This can be to one person, a group of people or even against oneself.

The problem with television and violence is overwhelming proven to be that that youth can get the wrong messages about violence, sex, gangs, or reality of real life situations. America has regulations for media because it was regarded as a necessity years ago. Regulations exist for content on television based around specific time frames deemed appropriate by age of the viewers. It is unlikely that the later hours of the evening should have younger age viewing audiences so regulations are in place for that purpose. By observing what is on television these days at many different time frames, allow for a conclusion to be drawn. That conclusion, society has gotten away from past regulations and restrictions. Why? Years ago, society had strong moral conduct, ethical values, and a belief system that helped shaped America that did restrict television content. Today, that same society is not in tune with what the media is showing and expectations have changed over time. Were those changes intentional?.

By accepting the recommendations by past researchers, society must decide what the priority in the world today will be in regard to what is and what is not acceptable programming for public television. The recommendation is society should be less tolerance of explicit material and studies prove why they must be. A closer look by more researchers needs to be done to observe the changes that have taken place over time with a determination to compare what society feels today compared to years ago. A final analysis needs to be presented to determine if those

changes were beneficial or harmful to society and children as a whole. Do the changes speak to the morality of society or has society forgotten to stay focused on the issue and the affects they have had on our youth.

Facts with Historical Timeline

Television Content varies based on the type of television represented including local, syndicated, public television or cable television. A comparison can be made based on the broadcast networks content limitations as to what is acceptable for each type of programming. Often the broadcasters attempt to claim the problem with content in relation to sex and violence on television is the result of cable programmers instead of taking any responsibility. The blame is shared equally and not the sole responsibility of one programmer. Although studies have been conducted for prime time television, no definitive analysis could be proven.

Historically, syndication was initially set for the reruns of old network television type of series. In the 1980s, ad hoc networks began to form along with independent stations. The purpose was initially to produce there own programming. Syndication started to compete head-to-head with networks especially for drama type shows. As the syndication market began to develop we got shows like Wheel of Fortune, or Jeopardy, Entertainment Tonight and Hard Copy. Unlike the broadcast networks, syndicated shows have no large departments of broadcast standards or practices. For this reason, stations make decisions as to what is acceptable. When comparing these to the network programming, a higher percentage of original syndicated programming raised concerns about the use of violence. Many of these syndicated shows are aired much earlier in the day than network shows. This raises the issue of a large audiences possibly consisting of children. Although many of these shows should run an advisory about the content, since it is not mandated or enforceable, many do not run any precautionary information.

In a study conducted by Edward Carmines, Professor of Political Science at Indiana University was conclusive that a generation gap existed when it comes to television for sexual content and violence between adult audiences and minor viewing audiences. Carmines, along with University of California political science researchers issued a report called Public Agendas and Citizen Engagement Survey (PACES). In this survey interviews were conducted with some 1,250 people between ages 15 and 92 on the issue of violence on television where vast differences were experienced. The results were that 67% of those ages 27-59 said the issue was serious problem. However, for those ages 15-26, 47% thought it was not a serious crime. Overall, 74% of older adults (27+) think this is serious while only 45% of the younger audiences thought it was.

Broadcast

Broadcast networks have had fewer programs raising concerns than local or cable television channels did. Content where concerns were of violence, found that on the broadcast networks it is filtered out better and have less violent shows. Typically, they are edited more thoroughly and raise fewer concerns. Basically, cable television, because it is a paid for product, most often does not edit films at all.

Local television

Local television networks features theatrical films in comparison to the other networks. Local stations do not have the large practices and standards department that one would most often find at networks. They often have syndicated series (usually 1 hour dramas), which often have more violence when compared to a 30-minute network comedy show. These drama series can run in various time slots so children might be home to see them, which are a definite concern.

Public television

Public television network is often showing features that are full of drama; they also show many films like some documentaries. This type of programming normally does not raise concern when it comes to the issues of violence and youth viewing the content.

Cable television

Cable television network does show theatrical films with the major difference being cable is a pay channel. They do not edit films so more violence is observed much of the time. The overall situation where the viewer is a youth provided details that that the violence presented is more graphic. Therefore, raising more concerns when it comes to age of the viewing audiences. It is not restricted in any manner so the sole supervision is with the adults for a child not to be able to view inappropriate material. Many situations arise that an adult is often no present when the child watches television so they are routinely exposed to violent shows.

Historical Time Line

In the 1920s, the Department of Commerce regulated the industry of broadcasting. Back in those days the person in charge Herbert Hoover. From the inception, the economic structure for radio and television was to attract the largest possible audience, including children. Networks were created to ensure all programming could reach the entire country. Without the creation of networks, a signal could not reach beyond the local metropolitan area where the station was based. Broadcasters created programming accessible and understandable to everyone. Radio and television were enormously successful in creating programming that millions of people wanted to hear and see. However, the downfall was that no one wanted to create educational materials since they had only a small target audience, which might have included the youth. Economically, networks needed to attract the vast majority of viewers. Thus, the development of public

television designed to meet the needs of the smaller target audiences, including children. This area of programming had a huge impact with the creation of shows we recall such as Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, or Sesame Street or Captain Kangaroo. These were programs that taught the children education skills including counting and the ABC's. The overall findings are that public television both past and present, rarely created a concern since violence is was not a factor. Studies show that practically nothing shown in public television programming has even come close to having violent content shown so no concern exist toward children viewing content.

Concerns of children viewing inappropriate television has existed for years. Research has the opinion that over time the behavior to show violent acts has steadily increased for the past twenty years. An example of inappropriate viewing of children of all ages was back in 2004, during of the super bowl game, which should be able to be viewed as family entertainment. In this situation in 2004, Justin Timberlake tore a piece of Janet Jackson's clothes off exposing her breast with the entire world watching. Children definitely witnessed the act that is against every program rule that exists. Included in the viewing audience were 6.6 million kids between the ages of 2-11, of the 12 – 17 year olds we had 7.3 million teens watching. Although this was not violent, it was definitely inappropriate material. It was alleged to have been an accident but many feel it was rehearsed in advanced to get more ratings, which it definitely did. Another example was the Billboard Music awards in 2006. During these awards language was used deemed inappropriate and we had 2 million kids from the age of 2-17 listening to the “F” word repeated used.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODS

Design

The form of measurements for this report was based on many projects and research reports by other researchers. The multivariate methods along with questionnaires were used to base facts of statement. Specifically, the quantitative method was cited and used for this paper. Also included was the survey method with several qualitative methods presented. Many specific resources with statistics were already researched and were used for the purpose toward the validation of the thesis and problem statement. The first step was that of isolation of the problem. Once determining a problem existed, the process was then to continue to research why this is a problem. The attempt was then made to unveil suggestions as to what can be done in the future towards prevention.

The research clearly takes aim at the facts presented that television violence viewed by children is a concern. We continue to have concerns so recommendations are needed for solutions to be put into place. The comparisons were made using several projects throughout the research with the same conclusion drawn. Charts and graphs were reviewed and are included as a validation of the problems along with some solutions suggested. Information obtained on the subject incorporated into this research has been done with the assurance that these documents have been found to be credible and justified to be used with reliability.

Statistics & Demographics

Clear conclusions are drawn regarding children viewing violence on television. That conclusion overwhelming presented the issue that kids become less sensitive to pain and suffering, they become fearful of the world around them, and will tend to be more likely candidates to have aggression towards others later in life because of viewing television.

Research from the University of Pennsylvania, documented by George Gerbner, showed that of television shows for children, on average they had approximate 20 violent acts viewed each hour. His conclusion was the same as mine in that violence does impact children negatively at a very early age. His research supports that a child starting from as early as age three that sees violence on television can become, and has become, a bully later in life.

(<http://foolmoon.com/showflat.php/Cat/0/Number/239064/page/0/fpart/all/vc/1>).

Examples of cause and effect

A research article posted with information collected by Parents Television Council in 2002 takes information collected over a four-year timeframe (1998 – 2002) and reviews it. It included shows that over those 4 years that television violence increased drastically in all 6 major broadcast networks. The networks that were included were ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, UPN and WB. The conclusion that was drawn is that 41 percent more frequency existed for violence shown during the first hour of prime time compared to back in 1998. The fact proved that television violence became more graphic over the years. Another factor presented is that the use of guns or other weapons, along with depictions of blood in violent scenes, with on-screen killings and depictions of death existed in 2002 but they were much less in 1998. Violence is definitely changing over time to become more and more aggressive. This in turn has the affect to created more and more aggression in the children viewing the show. The appearance reflects that this violence has been accepted by society over time and content has escalated so it might be considered as acceptable content which clearly is not the case. The information in these reports are in agreement with my theory, the escalation of violence and the negative impact it has had on society has negatively affected our youth.

Statistical Analysis

Other research reports suggest that by 18 years of age that youth will have already watched 200,000 acts of violence on television. Statistics compiled of children indicated that children between the ages of 8-16 have a television in the bedroom, which is not monitored most of the time. Other specifics were that children ages 2-7 spends 81% of the time watching unsupervised television, which is an average of 19 hours and 40 minutes weekly. Based on a report directly from the Senate Judiciary Committee Staff Report, 1999, television alone is responsible for 10% of youth violence. If we compare the fact that the average hours an American youth watches television is 1500 hours but spends only 900 hours in school, clearly television is the more dominate presence and therefore could be the more influential factor. The approximate number of studies examining TV's effects on children over the years is recorded at 4,000.

The comparisons of parents talking to the child verses how much time the child watches television shows does indicate drastic differences exist. The time per week that parents spend conversing with there children was three and one half hours. The time that the average child is watching television is 1,680 hours. Other details that were representative of the control of television over youth is the research conducted that surveyed 4-6 year-olds where 54% that said they prefer to watch television than playing with there dad. The reality presented was that children spend more time watching television other than sleeping (<http://www.csun.edu/science/health/docs/tv&health.html>).

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION WITH RESULTS

Studies and Case Reviews

Many research projects have been conducted on this topic including a poll conducted by Pew Research Center as to its opinion if tighter restrictions should be enforced. The response was that “75% of the 1,505 adults polled wanted to see tighter enforcement of government rules on broadcast content at the time children are most likely to be watching”. A Time magazine report from March 05 reflected that 53 percent of the respondents want the FCC to have stricter controls where sex and violence are shown. To drive home the points made in this paper regarding American and the values, this same report reflected that 68 percent feel the entertainment industry has lost touch with what most viewers feel for moral standards and felt the FCC should also extend to cover content on cable T.V.

Reviewing some of the programs currently on in the evening that is not child appropriate would be the consideration of the show Desperate Housewives aired on ABC. According to the Nielsen studies, it found that kids in the age of 9-12 say this is their most popular show. Not only is that an issue about content, the shows airs at 10pm when they should be in bed already. This leads to the probable questions of when a 9 year old is up at 10pm, where the responsible parent. Many times the answer is they are right there with the child watching the same show. A review of the Nielsen studies for the tops shows for 12-17 year old female included American Idol, O.C., Wil & Grace, and One Tree Hill. When presented with the same age group of boys the shows were different and included The Simpson’s, Malcolm, but still included the O.C. Clearly differences are made even at this age about what is shown and girls and boys of the same age typically do not watch the same shows.

Other statistics that are documented by researcher show that 66% of children who are 10-16 feel peers are influenced by T.V. They indicated that the idea to have sex at a young age probably comes from television. They confess shows like The Simpson's could give children the idea to disrespect parents. Data available in over 1000 studies, reported to the National Institute of Mental Health, will attest to facts that a causal connection between media violence and aggressive behavior has been witnessed in some kids. Situations arose where kids were trying to demonstrate real life situations they were learned from viewing programs. Reportedly, by 18 our youth will have seen 216,000 cases of murder and violence. The American Psychological Association (APA) concludes that kids act different after they have viewed violent programs and are more likely to strike another child, argue and disobey authority because of television. They further concluded that kids under 8 are not able to discriminate TV and real life and other than family; the television is the largest soliciting institute for a child.

We know that not all children watch and understand television depending on the differences in the age of the child viewing the show. Consideration needs to be given to several different variables that influence thought processes based on age. Attention needs to be paid to the basics starting with the actual attention span of children. For example, an infant does not have the ability to absorb or process, nor the attention span to pay attention more than a few minutes. The conclusion can be drawn that they would rarely be influenced. Depending on the age, the information viewed is going to be processed differently. A sample for this situation would be a toddler. They have the ability to pay more attention to the television but have a limited ability to really understand the meaning behind what they view. Another consideration is the amount of effort they must put forth to understand what they are viewing and processing.

A child from the age of 6-8 has the ability to understand aggression on television and they are able to follow a plot of a show. They can determine content and motives and a consequence in the show that requires very little effort mentally. However when we look to the age group further

from 6 but up to the age of 11, we learn kids will still watch cartoon type programming but also like adult and family type shows and horror type films. These types of shows do desensitize them of fear and violence but at the same time it is unconsciously teaching them to be more tolerable of violence in everyday life experiences when they encounter it. We enlarge the territory of the group to include 12-17 year old, vast differences are apparent. They are very capable of understanding with reasoning while exerting little mental effort. One of the major differences in this age group is they are no longer primarily watching television with the family. At the same time, they are normally averaging watching less hours of overall television than when they were younger. The problem is more with the content of what they select to view because the content of choice at this age becomes sex, romance, horror, and music television (MTV). Typically, these subject areas that is mostly negative in nature so consequentially, they have lasting negative effects on the child and will for years to come.

Thesis Answers

1. Does Television violence affect people?

Yes, according to the research conducted it does affect groups of all ages but starts as early as the age of three when it comes to children.

2. Are youth affected more/less by violence on Television?

Youth are definitely affected more by violence than adults are. Youth do not have the clear ability to differentiate what is real and what is fiction. They are also very impressionable at younger ages. Proof states that lasting consequences from observing violence at a young age does exist and as such has consequences throughout the life of the observant child.

3. What proof do we have that violence does affect youth negatively?

Starting with Freud, and continuing with many researchers, over the years. Various examples have been cited throughout this paper which all substantiate the fact violence affects children and watching violence on television is harmful starting at an early age by researchers including APA.

4. Who is regulating the shows we watch?

The FCC is responsible to watch and place regulations along with the Motion Picture Association on America. Regulations are in place to protect all of society but more needs to be done to protect children specifically.

5. How can we make television safer and positive for our youth?

Put checks and balances in place to monitor stations and programming. Additionally, ask our government to be more active in regulations pertinent to violence on television.

Survey Answers

The survey consisted of 11 questions listed with a request for some individualization of the participant. Request was to select either male or female and the age groups specified. The groups were narrowed down to 10-15, 16-19, and 20+. The respondents included detailed information for my survey questions with a return of 70% observed.

Female 16-19 age Group:

1. How much time a day do you spend watching Television? 4-5 Hours

2. What time of day do you watch? All times

3. Do your parents supervise what you watch? No

4. What is your favorite show? Why? American Idol, I like Simon

5. Overall, what is the most violent act you have seen on TV?

People getting shot and killed

6. What show do you watch that would be considered as informational or educational?

Sometimes I watch the History channel.

7. Have you ever acted out something in real life that you learned from watch TV? No

8. How has TV shaped you in your life? I buy things I see on TV

9. Do you think that we should have a better system to monitor violence or graphic content on regular program TV? I think its good enough

10. Should cable networks be forced to follow programming rules? Yes

11. What can society do to help stop the violence on TV? They can stop watching offensive shows.

MALE – 10-15 Age Groups

1. How much time a day do you spend watching Television? 3 Hours
2. What time of day do you watch? Afternoon and night
3. Do your parents supervise what you watch? Yes, they have shows blocked
4. What is your favorite show? WWE, it's raw
5. Overall, what is the most violent act you have seen on TV? Owen Hart fell and died
6. What show do you watch that would be considered as informational or educational? No
7. Have you ever acted out something in real life that you learned from watch TV? I wrestle with my brothers.
8. How has TV shaped you in your life? It hasn't
9. Do you think that we should have a better system to monitor violence or graphic content on regular program TV? No
10. Should cable networks be forced to follow programming rules? NO
11. What can society do to help stop the violence on TV? Nothing

Male 20+ age Groups

1. How much time a day do you spend watching Television? 1 hour
2. What time of day do you watch? Nights
3. Do your parents supervise what you watch? No
4. What is your favorite show? Law & Order SVU
Why? So I see who people commit crimes
5. Overall, what is the most violent act you have seen on TV? Ax murder
6. What show do you watch that would be considered as informational or educational? No
7. Have you ever acted out something in real life that you learned from watch TV? No
8. How has TV shaped you in your life? In my youth it showed me how people live.

9. Do you think that we should have a better system to monitor violence or graphic content on regular program TV? No, with parental controls it is fine.

10. Should cable networks be forced to follow programming rules? Yes

11. What can society do to help stop the violence on TV? Stop watching.

Female 10-15 Age Groups

1. How much time a day do you spend watching Television? 3 Hours

2. What time of day do you watch? Afternoon & night

3. Do your parents supervise what you watch? Yes, Nickelodeon and Disney

4. What is your favorite show? Raven Why? It's cool.

5. Overall, what is the most violent act you have seen on TV? Fights

6. What show do you watch that would be considered as informational or educational?

Yes, animal planet.

7. Have you ever acted out something in real life that you learned from watch TV?

I pretend

8. How has TV shaped you in your life? Nope

9. Do you think that we should have a better system to monitor violence or graphic content on regular program TV? Yes, not violence

10. Should cable networks be forced to follow programming rules? Yes

11. What can society do to help stop the violence on TV? Stricter Rules

Male 16-19 Age Groups

1. How much time a day do you spend watching Television? 5 Hours
2. What time of day do you watch? Nights
3. Do your parents supervise what you watch? No
4. What is your favorite show? 24 Hours
5. Overall, what is the most violent act you have seen on TV? Decapitation
6. What show do you watch that would be considered as informational or educational?
No
7. Have you ever acted out something in real life that you learned from watch TV? When I was younger
8. How has TV shaped you in your life? Entertaining and shaped my sense of humor
9. Do you think that we should have a better system to monitor violence or graphic content on regular program TV? No
10. Should cable networks be forced to follow programming rules? No
11. What can society do to help stop the violence on TV? Nothing

Female 16-19 Age Groups

1. How much time a day do you spend watching Television? 2 Hours
2. What time of day do you watch? Evening & nights
3. Do your parents supervise what you watch? No
4. What is your favorite show? American Idol
Why? I like to sing
5. Overall, what is the most violent act you have seen on TV?
Shouting and fighting
6. What show do you watch that would be considered as informational or educational?
The History channel and the Animal Planet

7. Have you ever acted out something in real life that you learned from watch TV? No
8. How has TV shaped you in your life? I like music and singing because of TV
9. Do you think that we should have a better system to monitor violence or graphic content on regular program TV? I think parents and family should monitor kids.
10. Should cable networks be forced to follow programming rules? No
11. What can society do to help stop the violence on TV? Let the channels know.

Female 20+ Age Groups

1. How much time a day do you spend watching Television? 2-3 Hours
2. What time of day do you watch? Late night
3. Do your parents supervise what you watch? No, they ask what I am watching
4. What is your favorite show? Vegas
5. Overall, what is the most violent act you have seen on TV? A Slit throat
6. What show do you watch that would be considered as informational or educational?
Sometimes
7. Have you ever acted out something in real life that you learned from watch TV? No
8. How has TV shaped you in your life? It has shown me that many things are glamorized
9. Do you think that we should have a better system to monitor violence or graphic content on regular program TV? Yes we have technology and we should use more for the better
10. Should cable networks be forced to follow programming rules? No
11. What can society do to help stop the violence on TV? Protest and boycott shows.

Summary

In summation, violence has affected our youth in many ways. One of the most important facts presented that television has increased crime by youth who are now responsible for 10% of all crime. It is certainly proven through this research, that television violence cannot be blamed for all aggression in kids but it clearly does play a role. Statistics have shown that some kids are going to be influenced and will be more affected by television violence than other kids. Age will be an important factor in just how much each child is affected. Further research should be done to study which children might be potentially at risk to become more aggressive based on some other factors (such as music or even race) along with television statistics already gathered. Some children are going to be considered to be at higher risk. Perhaps those children can be protected in advance to prevent aggression if we are aware of triggers and monitor them closer. .

Violence on television is a major concern for all Americans. Society should not continue to sit back and allow millions of dollars to be made at the expense of our youth. The problem is escalating and is a universal problem affecting all members in every race. Families cannot allow more “Reality” type programming fro influence their children. Our youth should not continue to witness abuse, violence, and exploitation of children and women just for the audience viewing pleasure. This has consequences directly relating to youth in society today and needs changes for future children. Therefore, parents, grandparents, Aunts and Uncles along with teachers and educators, need to start being more observant of what we view and what we allow kids to view. A clear message must be sent that we still have values in this society and stop supporting those who do not represent those values on television shows. Information presenter in this report has addressed the fact that broadcast network television is a major area to focus future studies of information for this area of research studies. Specific suggestions to address the need to control violence and children’s exposure to that violence have been made. The following are suggestions that are made with the intentions to control violence for avoidance of children watching explicit

materials. Facts for review are first, that programs that contain violent themes should be programmed in the later hours of the prime time schedule. The recommendation was made were specifically 9:00 pm or later. Secondly, a strong recommendation was made to rethink films that cannot be made suitable for broadcast television. The example presented is an action film that would have 30-50 scenes of violence. This makes them impossible to be edited because once completely edited nothing will be left to view that would make sense. Thirdly, as for the programming of Children's Television study clearly states that shows that attract children and keep them interested are going to be those without extensive fighting.

Another conclusion is that the FCC rules call for 3 hours of educational programming a week for children. This is believed to be a reasonable effort to represent the importance that is needed to deal with these issues properly. The fact is that society does have some dramatic stories and those need to be told so they should keep telling them just with more caution. Care should be given to how the stories are told and the titles they are given. Additionally, advisories need to be applied and need to be more consistent. A good and positive report on this area is that studies actually find that Fox has added these advisories for parents without having alienated viewers. They can be added without fear of losing audiences, which is what was believed, would happen which is not the case. Research stated, "A few shows contain so many scenes of violence that the overall context of the show is violent. These programs are in the greatest need of better writing to find plot devices other than just violence to move the story which is a particular challenge to development executives" (<http://www.digitalcenter.org/webreport95/otherfin.htm>). Producers and parents need to take control and not allow this to control what should be done for the betterment of society and children for future viewing audiences.

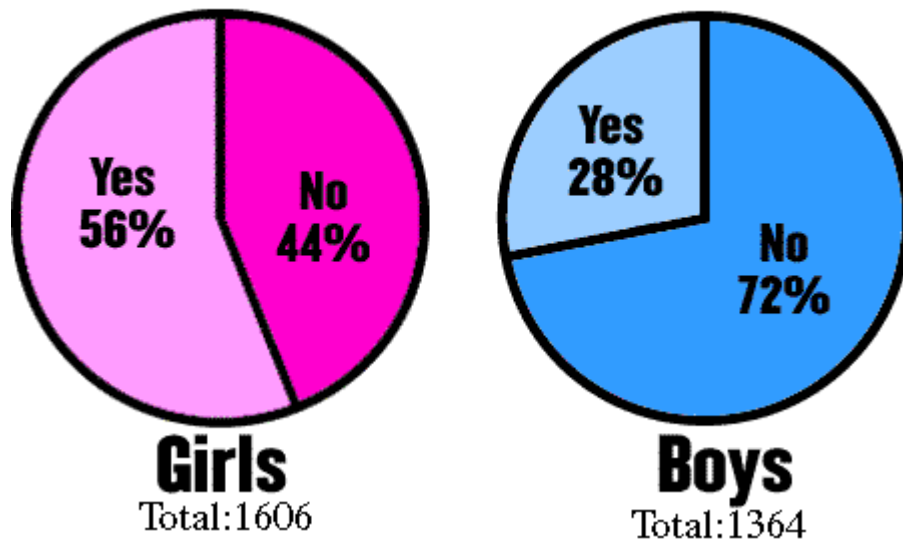
One way to take further control by the parent is through the use of the V-chip. This V-chip is required to be sold with all televisions since January 2000. The purpose of this chip is to let parents block television shows that they don't approve of their children watching. The parent has been given a tool to use but sadly enough most are just not taking advantage of it. Statistically, the facts are out of those televisions that are required to have a v-chip, only 42% of parents have actually used it. On a positive note, the ones that have used it do agree that it is very useful.

CHAPTER 6

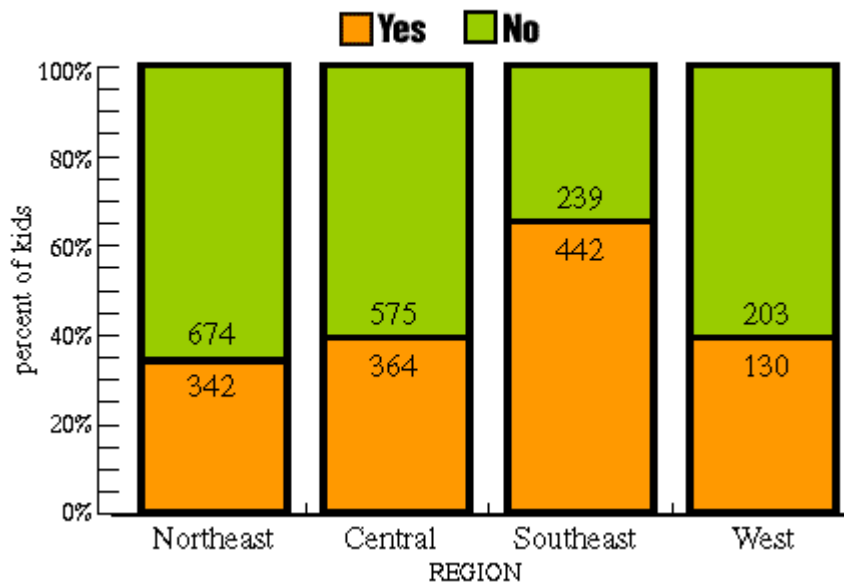
TABLES AND GRAPHS

"Violence in the Media" Survey Results

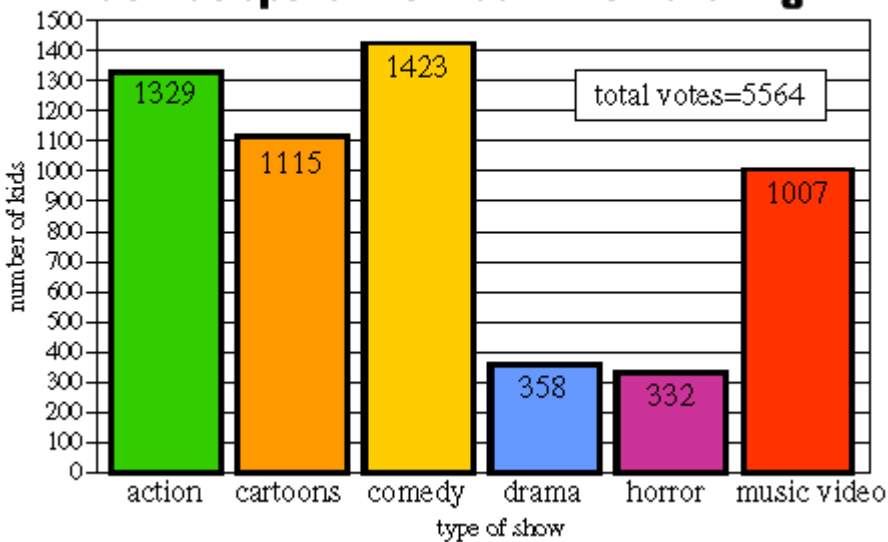
Is there too much violence in the media?



Is there too much violence in the media?



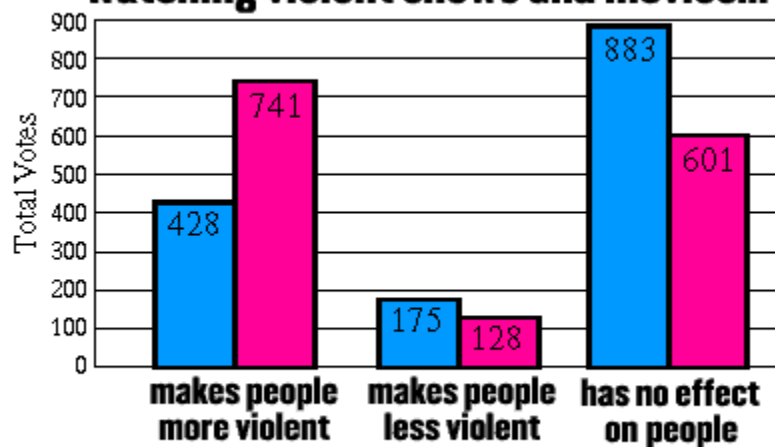
What types of TV shows & movies do kids spend the most time watching?



The ratings (G, PG, etc.) for TV shows and movies are most likely to

	K-5	6-8	9-12
a. Help kids decide whether a show or movie is appropriate for them to watch.	756	87	2
b. Make kids want to watch shows and movies that are intended for adults.	406	311	0
c. Not make a difference to kids.	653	624	243
Total votes	1815	1022	245

Watching violent shows and movies...



Total Votes: 2956

■ = boys ■ = girls

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

In conclusion, acknowledgement must be made that television has changed over the years. The reality is that although some very good shows are on television, many other shows are not. Some shows have harmful aspects and need to be restricted to mature viewing audiences. Overwhelming figures show predominance as to what our children view, especially when not supervised. Society must develop into a more responsive and educated society when it comes to the influence television can and does have on the world today. A key factor for future success lies with the parents who need to become vigorous in monitoring what children watch. Adults must lead by example for our children. Care should be given as to what is viewed in the presence of children.

Parents have the ability to watch a child as that child watches television. They should observe and then ask questions of the child with inference being made on what they just viewed and how they feel about what they just saw. This will help determine what the child senses to be improper or appropriate and if they have been affected by what they watched. Parents can ask questions like how do they feel watching someone hurt another person? Perhaps, if they disapprove of watching the violence that was depicted then why are they still watching the show? Does the child think they are being influenced by what they see? Parents must help them realize that although it is on television, aggression is never acceptable even if it was on television. Children need to realize that these examples are not what they should do and are not customary acts of behavior that will be tolerated. Violent acts on television should not continue to desensitize the viewer from real life situations of violence. Parents and teachers should always demonstrate high moral grounds. Emphasis should be shown placing values with high

importance and living life as an example to be followed that express those values. Youth can be taught that being a gang member is not cool just because TV makes it appear that way. As a society we need to send a clear message that hitting a female, abusing a child, or underage drinking is not what society accepts regardless of how it appears on television. Although television makes these things appear sexy and cool, the reality is that it is not.

Members of society can become proactive in local communities. Parents can help schools and churches become more vocal to speak up against harmful programs. All adults need to recall why the rules were put into place years ago and try to change programming for the better by going back to stricter regulations where children are concerned. Historically, many of our older citizens fought hard to keep the elements that were undesirable off of the television set. Now, parents need to do the same for our future generation. Realistically, if audiences stop watching certain shows then there would be no need to produce them. If no profits will be made for producers, the investment will not be made to continue and therefore the shows will be canceled. If support is not given to programs that depict values against our belief systems then change will come. After all, much of this is about the money being made. If no one is watching then no money is being made it is actually being lost. It is up to society how future generations of youth will feel about television violence. Witnessing repeated violent acts have been studied enough to draw the conclusion that it does lead to desensitization and to a general lack of empathy for human's whether it is observed in real life or on television. According to the American Psychiatric Association, television alone is responsible for 10% of youth violence. "The debate is over... For the last three decades, the one predominant finding in research on the mass media is that exposure to media portrayals of violence increases aggressive behavior in children." (<http://www.parentstv.org/PTC/facts/mediafacts.asp>). Clear research suggesting the viewing pattern a child establishes from an early age does influence the viewing habits throughout their lifetime concluding that television violence does affect children.

Recommendations

Violence is a major concern for all Americans. Society should not continue to sit back and allow millions of dollars to be made at the expense of our youth by watching and supporting inappropriate television shows. The problem has been escalating especially with the addition of new shows referred to as “Reality” type series. Youth should not continue to witness abuse, violence, and exploitation of children and women on television. These shows have consequences directly relating to our youth and not in a positive manner. Therefore, society must be more observant of what we view and what we allow kids to view. A clear and present message needs to reflect we still have the same values in this society. Care should be given to stop supporting those who do not represent what the values should be. Society needs to take insight from the past and continue to learn from it to reshape future generations of our youth.

Consumers do have the ability to influence the networks to be able to reduce the violent content that is being viewed. We the viewers need to fight back to get the standards changed whenever the need arises. Suggestions were made that parents have a role to play in getting changes implemented including contacting the advertisers, contacting the local stations to stress the desire to use local community standards for programming content. The available exist to go to the FCC, television stations, broadcast networks, and your local government or even to Congress for the purpose of discussion on how to get violence reduced. Currently, broadcasting rules on indecency do not include violence and it should, make them aware of those facts. As for the youth, they need to learn to talk openly with parents about the difference between television and real life situations. If differences appear they need to be addressed and those concerns laid to rest. The adults need to set a clear understanding of what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior. Teach children that if a show is in conflict with how you have been raised, have the courage to say, “No, I am not watching this” and change the channel.

CHAPTER 9

REFERENCES

American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement, Volume 95, Number 6 -June 1995

American Psychological Association

Annenberg Public Policy Center, 2000. Media in the Home 2000

Bynum, J. E. and Thompson, W.E. (2005). *Juvenile Delinquency: A Sociological Approach* (6th ed.). Pearson: Boston. (p. 120)

Barber, Benjamin. (1993, November) *Harper's*. 1993: 41

Family and Relationships -Get the Facts: Children and Television Violence Kaiser Family Foundation, 9/23/04

Homes, Edward (1996). *No Matter How Loud I shout: A Year in the Life of Juvenile Court*. New York, NY: Touchstone

"Kids and Media @ the New Millennium." (1999) Kaiser Family Foundation

National Center for Children Exposed to Violence (2003) (NCCEV) Modification: December 16, 2005

"New Attempt to Monitor Media Content," *NY Times*, 5/21/03

Nielsen Media Research, 2000

Senate Judiciary Committee Staff Report, 1999

Siegel, Larry (2003). *Criminology* (8th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning

The Role of Television in American Society. Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 1992

Vitagliano, Ed (2004) *Journal*, "Group Says Television Violence a 'Bloodbath' dated May 19, 2004.

http://www.abelard.org/tv/kids_tv_100705

<http://www.ed.gov/pubs/OR/ConsumerGuides/tv.html>

<http://www.digitalcenter.org/webreport95/otherfin.htm>

<http://foolmoon.com/showflat.php/Cat/0/Number/239064/page/0/fpart/all/vc/1>

http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/resources/research_documents/reports/violence/tv_violence_child.cfm

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Violence>