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The Influence of Media Violence on Children
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Medya Şiddetinin Çocuklar Üzerindeki Etkisi

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The Influence of Media Violence on Children

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Abstract: This study examines the impact of media violence on children. While parents have a central role in influencing the lives of their children, culture, school, peers and especially media has a powerful effect on children's attitudes, behaviors and development. This paper starts with the discussion of media and its responsibility. Afterwards, it opens windows to explore two contrast ideas of the studies on media violence. While one group of researchers claims that there is a strong link between aggressive behaviors of children and media, others argue that media violence is not the only cause of children's violent behaviors and the negative effect of media is not serious. Finally, the paper argues the issue of media violence in different countries such as USA, Bangladesh, Britain, France, China, Vietnam, and Turkey to be able to understand the situation of media violence in those countries and its effects on children's aggressive and violent behaviors.

Key Words: Media, violence, aggressive, television, violent behaviors

Medya Şiddetinin Çocuklar Üzerindeki Etkisi

Özet: Bu çalışma, medya şiddetinin çocuklar üzerindeki etkisini incelemektedir. Her ne kadar aileler çocuklarının gelişiminde temel rol oynasa da kültür, okul, arkadaş çevresi ve özellikle medya çocukların, tutumları, davranışları ve gelişimlerinde güçlü bir etkiye sahiptir. Çalışma, medya ve medyanın sorumluluklarını tartışarak başlamaktadır. Daha sonra medya şiddeti ile ilgili yapılan çalışmalarda ortaya çıkan zıt düşüncelere pencereler açmaktadır. Bir grup araştırmacı medya şiddeti ile çocukların saldırgan davranışları arasında kuvvetli bir bağın olduğunu savunurken diğerleri çocukların saldırgan davranışlarının tek sebebinin medya olmadığını ve medyanın olumsuz sonuçlarının ciddi olmadığını savunmaktadırlar. Son bölümde, medyadaki şiddetin Amerika, Bangladeş, İngiltere, Fransa, Çin, Vietnam ve Türkiye gibi farklı ülkelerdeki durumlarını ve bu durumun o ülkelerdeki çocukların agresif ve saldırgan davranışları üzerindeki etkisini anlayabilmek için farklı ülkelerde medya şiddeti tartışılmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Medya, şiddet, saldırgan, televizyon, saldırgan davranışlar.

1. INTRODUCTION

Civilization hinges largely on the communication revolution that has guided in the age of mass media. In this new world order, the media play a significant role in providing information across geographical borders. Moreover, globalization has prompted new forms of interaction on the economic, political, social and cultural fronts. Media play a major role in the development of cultural orientations, world views and beliefs, as well as in the global distribution of values and images. Media has many functions as mirrors of cultural trends and channels those trends, and they are major constituents of society. It is important to identify its contribution to the world's phenomenon. Recently, with the technical means of automatization of digitalization any media content has become global (Groebel, 1998).

Nowadays, it is easy for people to access every news, sounds and images instantly. Mass entertainment has become an international enterprise all over the world. Thus, many studies on media and children have been conducted for the last decades. What is the deal with media? According to Flannery (2006) "the big deal is that violence in the media has become more frequent, more intense, more easily accessible and more real than violence in the media used to be (p.90)". As Flannery stated violence in the media more real and intense what it used to be. Then what has changed? Children have access to more media means and information than ever before.

Television is not the only means our children are exposed to but it is the most compelling one. Nevertheless, since it is cheap and accessible and, at seemingly no cost, delivers entertainment right in our living room. As Schramm (1961) stated that with children spending an average of 3 hours daily in front of the television, it is easily the most popular out of school activity. In a current study showed the similar results. According to Hürriyet newspaper children spend an average of 18 hours weekly in front of the television (Haftada 18 Saat, 2012). Thus, it has become the medium with the most telling effect on the way our children think and behave, in shaping their habits and attitudes and how they view the world.

1.1. Responsibility of the Media

The screen has practically become a universal medium. For school children, it is the most powerful source of information and entertainment. Even radio and books don't have the same global distribution. The world's children spend an average of three hours in front of the screen which is at least 50% more time than any other out of school activity such as home-work, being with family or friends, and reading (Feilitzen & Carlsson, 2002). Therefore, TV has

become a major socialization feature and dominates the life of children in urban or rural areas around the globe.

US National Television Violence Study (1998) estimates that almost two out of three television programs, including children's programming, contain some violence, averaging about six violent acts per hour. Children especially boys are fascinated by TV heroes. Some of these are Arnold Schwarzenegger's 'Terminator' (88% of children know him around the world) and 'Rambo'. Obviously, children's world views are influenced by actual as well as media experiences.

In most Third World countries, media has been under state control for a long time. Under state ownership, the traditionalist role they were obliged to play facilitated, to a great extent, structural or cultural violence perpetrated by the system. However, with liberalization, things have swung the other way. In the competition for the advertising market, sometimes the boundaries of civility are crossed. The images created and messages sent out by media make people dissatisfied with what they have and encourage them to want more, irrespective of their economic conditions. For poorer sections of the community, this propaganda worsens feelings of frustration and discontent (Kaskun & Öztunç, 2012).

As a gateway of information, media yields much power both to uphold and destroy, to influence and reform. It is not merely a provider of entertainment but is increasingly a purveyor of social change and development. Technology has made possible media without boundaries. The free flow of media affects everyday lives. This free flow caused many discussions about violence in media (Kaskun & Öztunç, 2012). While some researchers suggest that media violence affect people especially children's behaviors and thinking, some others argue that there isn't much effect of media violence on aggressive behaviors of children. Thus, it is rational to identify media violence at first. In the following section, the definition of media violence and its effects on children will be presented.

2. MEDIA VIOLENCE

When we talk about violence, we take it to mean any anti-social behavior with the intention to harm a living being. The most common form of violence is physical violence but we must also include verbal abuse, intimidation, aggressive humor and other forms of aggression. All these types of violence are watched on many television programs that children are exposed. What about media violence? What does it mean? Definition of media violence

differs from a person to another. But the most accepted definition is from National Television Study (1998) as follows:

> "… any overt depiction of a credible threat of physical force or the actual use of such force intended to physically harm an animate being or group of beings. Violence also includes certain depictions of physically harmful consequences against an animate being or group that occurs as a result of unseen violent means. Thus, there are primary types of violent depictions: credible threats, behavioral acts, and harmful consequences (p.41)".

Groosman and DeGaetano (1999) define media violence as "portrayals of violence in the media that glamorize and/or sensationalize violent acts toward other human beings or animals and show them as acceptable behavior (p.121)". Grapes (2000) argues that society should not close its eyes to the connection that research has found between violence in the media and violent behavior in young people.

However, scholars also argue that the elimination of violent themes from television, movies, popular music and video games is increasingly recognized as both unlikely and insufficient to eliminate the problem. Rather, the emergence of a "culture of violence" in some schools must be acknowledged, understood and countered (American Psychological Association Commission on Violence and Youth, l993; Gardner & Resnik, 1996; Gerbner, 1994).

Violence in the media also has been linked to the increase in school and community violence among young people. Constant exposure to media violence has been demonstrated to increase children's and adolescents' aggressive attitudes and behavior (Centerwall, 1994; Huston et al., 1992; National Institute of Mental Health, 1982).

According to Centerwall (1994), frequent television watching "actively disturbs the process of superego formation (p.192)", increases the likelihood of a superego that is weak and poorly organized and thus more susceptible to the introjections and acting-out of the violence seen on the screen. Moreover, heavy exposure to violence in the mass media increases children's fear and apprehension about being harmed, increases the likelihood of carrying weapons for self-protection, and thus, as discussed previously, contributes to their further involvement in violence (National Institute of Mental Health, 1982).

Children and adolescents have always been interested in arousing and even violent stories and fairytales. With the appearance of mass-media, film and in particular television,

however, the quantity of aggressive content daily consumed by the secondary school children has dramatically increased. Roberts et al. (1999) reported that children and adolescents aged 2-18 years spent an average of 5 hours 48 minutes a day with electronic media, while spending only 44 minutes a day with print media.

What if violence is a dominant phenomenon in media? When violence is a dominant part of that media diet, what could be the impact on children? What is the relationship between violence in real life and the violence they see on screen? Does media violence affect children's aggressive behavior?

On media violence issue, researchers have opposite opinions. While some argue that media violence affect children's aggressive behavior and violent acts, others state that there isn't a link between violent viewing and aggressive behavior. In the next sections, these two controversy ideas and studies will be examined.

2.1. Media Violence Affects Children's Violent Behaviors

Learning theory of criminology suggests that exposure to media violence influences children's violent or aggressive behavior by demonstration (modeling), reward (reinforcement) and practice (rehearsal). Aggression, antisocial behaviors and violent activities are learned behaviors. Therefore, studies always link television violence with aggressive behaviors in children. This negative effect is particularly evident in children from single-parent households and from low socioeconomic groups. Young children are particularly vulnerable: even though behaviors may not become problematic until adolescence or adulthood, they are often first manifested in school (Hoffman, 1996).

Moreover, television decreases participation in outdoor activities, community events and sports. It replaces leisure-time activities with decreased creativity. For example, previous research showed that students in communities without television scored lower in aggressiveness than those in areas with television, but quickly caught up to their peers within two years of the introduction of television (Hoffman, 1996). Additionally, violence reflected through television affect children's whole lives. As Kaskun and Öztunç (2012) stated while television wasn't very effective in our daily lives children's drawings were more childish and innocent, nowadays their drawings include destructive robots, aggressive creators and children with guns.

Even if the media violence is not the only and most important cause of violent behavior, it is the most pressing public concern on the contribution of television, movie and video game violence to the perpetration of actual violence in society. A remarkable number of studies have been conducted on media violence and aggressive behavior. Studies showed that there is a strong association between media violence and the learning of aggression. They also suggested that the continued exposure to media violence leads to desensitization, meaning that people are no longer upset or aroused when they witness violence (Groebel, 1999).

Children's perceptions of the world are influenced by what they see on television. When they are continually exposed to violence on television, it is not surprising that they may come to view their world as a fearful and crime-ridden place. Most studies show that the relation between media violence and real violence is interactive – the media do contribute to an aggressive culture. People who are already aggressive use the media as further confirmation of their beliefs and attitudes; the media, in turn, reinforce these attitudes. Therefore, society and media are connected and what happens to one automatically affects the other (Groebel, 1999).

Even if there has been many studies done on media violence, there is very few studies done on a global scale. So, UNESCO decided to conduct a project on analyzing the international importance of the issue (Groebel, 1999). In this study, 23 countries and 5,000 twelve years old boys and girls have participated to this study. Regards to the sample size, it is the greatest study done on media violence in global perspective. Results suggested from this study are: 1- media violence is universal, 2- depending on the personal characteristics of the children, media violence satisfies different needs, 3- there are many cultural differences, and yet the basic patterns of the media violence implications are similar around the world, 4- individual movies are not the problem. However, the extent and omnipresence of media violence contribute to the development of a global aggressive culture, 5- the risk of media violence prevails on a global level.

In the year 2000, the Philippine Children's Television Foundation, with the help of the Goethe Institute of Manila, undertook what is probably the first in-depth study of the extent and nature of violence on Philippine television. Like most countries in Asia, Philippine television is largely dominated or influenced by programs exported from the United States. The Philippine study supported the findings of its US counterpart with regard to the nature and

context of violence. It was concluded that the way that most TV violence is portrayed continues to pose risks to viewers.

Research prior to 1990 documented that children learn behaviors and have their value systems shaped by the media. Media research has since, focused on content and viewing patterns. The conclusions of a 10-year review of the research by John Hopkins University are: the primary effect of media exposure is increased violent and aggressive behavior, increased high-risk behaviors, including alcohol and tobacco use, and accelerated onset of sexuality activity (Willani, 2001).

According to World Health Organization (2002) in 2000, estimated 199,000 youth murders took place globally. Some of the contributing factors were: witnessing violence in the home and over-exposure or preoccupation with violence on the media e.g. video games, movies and television, computers and internet, music and rock videos, and advertising. In their study Finkelhor and Kendall-Tackett (1997) stated that where children are "secondary victims" there is a high risk of psychological harm that has been covered extensively in child trauma literature. Four reported symptoms were bad dreams, anxious feelings, being afraid of being alone, and withdrawing from friends and truancy. Sadly, the average child viewer is exposed to 20,000 murders and 80,000 assaults in the media before leaving elementary school (Murray, 1993). Conover (1997) claimed that children spend 22-28 hours a week watching television - being exposed to 150 acts of violence and about 15 murders. The effects of media violence are no longer debatable and are widely known.

Children acquire the values, norms, customs, attitudes and behaviors valid in the society to which they belong and grow up to become full members of that particular society. This socialization process is said to be the second birth of a human being. The transfer of culture happens in learning processes occurring not only in childhood but through lifelong learning from predominating models.

Many authors suspect that television, video and other new media such as computers and computer games, curtail the parent's importance in children's socialization. Children spend more time watching television programs than in the classroom or with their parents. That is why television is now termed as a new third parent exercising considerable influence because the direction in which a personality develops is largely set in childhood. All media are educational. The question that needs to inform our ongoing approach to media and children is always: "What is media teaching our children?". This question must be considered from the

perspective of our knowledge of the social skills required for non-violence and how they are learned. Children learn social skills through imitation: they imitate the way they are treated and the way they see others treated; through their experience of "real life" and getting responses from others and through their play in which they use their creativity and imagination to make sense of life experiences. It has been rightly pointed out by some media critics that, at this time, the mainstream media feed children a steady diet of stories of domination and violation (Santrock, 2010).

On the one hand, parents, teachers and professionals are worried about impact of media violence. They do not want their children to become more violent. On the other hand, media producers and other figures of authority are saying that there are no clearly demonstrated effects of the media increasing violence in children or in the community.

As a community, we cannot agree with the opinion of the media group. Evidences put forward by some researchers and news published by the media indicates that depiction of violence by the media has grave consequences on children.

Here are a few evidences which strengthen this belief by Kunczik (1994): First, two ten-year-old boys killed little James Bulger in the year 1993, which was blamed on the media because the father of one of the boys sentenced had hired a horror video before the killing. The German media reported: "The murder of the child happened like in a horror video". Judge Morland voiced his suspicion that the two children could have been incited by video films to emulate their "unspeakable barbarism". Second, survey of German psychiatrists reported that two girls aged about 12 who were often left to themselves (so-called " key children") and saw many violent videos in their free time, murdered a small child from the neighborhood. The girls said they carried out the killing because they "wanted to try out how that is in real life".

3. CONTROVERSY OF MEDIA VIOLENCE RESEARCHES AND STUDIES ON VIOLENT BEHAVIORS OF CHILDREN

The majority of media violence researchers claim that media violence is a direct cause of violent criminal behavior. On the other hand, recent reviews of the literature have concluded that evidence is unequivocal and that "… the scientific debate over whether media violence increases aggression is essentially over … (p.85)" (Anderson et al., 2003). They also state that despite the general belief that media violence is increasing, violent crime has been declining for over a decade (Federal Bureau of Investigations, 1951–2000). Thus, they ask what exactly is meant by "media violence" in society may be as a nebulous concept as what is meant

by "aggression". According to these researchers, there are many deficiencies and falsities in extant literature on media violence and violent behavior studies. In the following paragraphs, some of these deficiencies argued by controversy researchers will be presented.

First of all, Savage (2004) states that no stringent evidence linking media violence to violent criminal activity exists. Because "violence" can be difficult to study both practically and ethically, so "aggression" is often substituted for violent behavior. In the literature, these two patterns were assumed to be close enough that factors that influence aggression may also influence violence. Hence, examining the relationship between media violence exposure and aggressive behavior can imply a link between media violence and violent crime. Most media violence researchers assume that their research is generalizable to violent criminal behavior in the "real world". At this point, a number of critiques like Freedman (1992) have suggested that evidence for the predictive use of these measures for real-world violence is limited.

Another argument of the researchers, who claim that media violence isn't only reason for the violent behavior, is that there is a misinterpretation of the studies` results. The most striking example for this is that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) expressed that "Since the 1950's more than 3500 research studies in the United States and around the world using many investigative methods have examined whether there is an association between exposure to media violence and subsequent violence behavior. All but 18 have shown a positive correlation between media exposure and violent behavior (p.35)" (Cook, 2000). Looking at those 18 studies some interpreters may claim that there is a strong association between media exposure and violent behavior and disregard what the major number of studies suggested.

Another key problem with the extant literature according to the Ferguson (2009) is the failure of investigators to take account of key variables that may explain both why individuals are attracted to violent media and why they behave violently. Although researchers sometimes claim to have controlled for "personality" or "family history," this is simply not the case. If there is any, very few studies have controlled for this personality characteristic in the examination of media violence effects or any other valid measure that has been associated with actual violent behavior.

Likewise, the extant literature mostly omits family or social violence and their link with violent behaviors. Thus, media violence studies rarely make a serious attempt to control for exposure to violence within the family. Environmental exposure can predict future behavior;

family violence is arguably a better explanation for social modeling theories than is media violence effects. As Ferguson (2009) stated that this factor is almost never considered in media violence literature and it is difficult to understand the unique contribution of media violence to violent behavior while studies leave family violence variables uncontrolled. Several recent analyses have indicated that genetics plays an important role in the development of anti-social personalities (Blonigen, Carlson, Krueger & Patrick, 2003). However, extant literature usually excludes family violence, society and genetics in their studies.

Researchers, who claim that the extant literature excludes some points and make generalizations with these deficiencies, state that even though people from different countries, societies, even ethnicities watch same programs on TV and play same video games, they show different rates of aggression and violent behaviors. And they explain this with very little or no link between media violence and violent behaviors. For example, an examination of violence rates across countries notes that other nations such as Canada, Japan, England, Finland, Australia, and the like, have widely different violent crime rates, and even within a single country such as the United States, different ethnicities experience much different crime rates (World Health Organization, 2002). Hence, different nationalities, and even subgroups within the countries, are experiencing very different rates of violent crime, despite having essentially the same media violence consumption levels.

Ferguson (2007) pointed out publication bias on media violence researches. He stated that unfortunately, neither Anderson and Bushman (2001) nor Sherry (2001) provided any analyses of publication bias. Moreover, as discussed in Rosenthal and Rosnow (1991) publication bias occurs when articles with positive (i.e., statistically significant) results are selected for publication to a greater proportion than are articles which report negative results. Ferguson (2007) claimed that as a result, the extant literature in peer-reviewed publications may provide a biased sample of all of the studies actually carried out, portraying more positive findings than actually exist.

Last deficiency of extant literature is that video game researchers have adopted unreliable methodologies from media violence research in general (Tedeschi & Quigley, 2000). Ferguson (2007) argued that most of the research (particularly laboratory research) employs invalidated ad-hoc measures of "aggression." Perhaps the most often used is the modified Taylor Competitive Reaction Time Test which has never been subjected to validation studies and more pertinently, no reliability data exists for this measure.

4. MEDIA VIOLENCE AROUND THE WORLD

After discussing two conflicting ideas of researchers, this section presents the level of media violence in different countries to be able to understand the situation of media violence in different countries and its effects on children's aggressive and violent behaviors. As mentioned before, to analyze the international importance of media violence the study conducted and based on UNESCO project in 1999 suggested that media violence is universal, there are many cultural differences, and yet the basic patterns of the media violence implications are similar around the world, individual movies are not the problem, however, the extent and omnipresence of media violence contribute to the development of a global aggressive culture, and finally, the risk of media violence prevails on a global level.

In this respect, this part will examine media violence from a global perspective through the countries of USA, Bangladesh, Britain, France, China, Vietnam and Turkey. The reason of selecting these countries is to see the issue of media violence in different cultural and ethnical parts of the world. Besides USA and Turkey, two countries are from Europe and other three are from Asia.

Let's look at the America at first. American children view about two hundred thousand violent acts on television by the age of 18. This media violence may facilitate the learning of aggressive and antisocial behavior. Although the entertainment industry claims that images portrayed in movies and television are not real, but children believe that they are. Much of the research showing that exposure to media violence increases aggressive behavior in young people is now ten to twenty years old (Hoffman, 1996).

Beresin (2010) claimed that televised violence and the existence of television in American households have increased over the years. He continued that "in 1950, only 10% of American homes had a television and today 99% of homes have televisions (p.116)". Almost all children have a television in their own rooms which allows an opportunity for children to view programs without parental supervision. Beresin stated that the typical "American child will view more than 200,000 acts of violence, including more than 16,000 murders before age 18. Television programs display 812 violent acts per hour; children's programming, particularly cartoons, displays up to 20 violent acts hourly (p.138)".

According to Eashwer (2003), more than 3,500 research studies and papers have been conducted on the effect of TV violence on viewers due to the expansion of media violence during the past 40 years. Since 1994, the most pervasive research entitled "Study of National

Violence" is done annually. The audience opinion polls show that 75% of Americans evaluate entertainment and television programs as very violent. They believe that limiting media violence would be more effective than trying to control personal weapons in tackling increasing violence, corruption and felonies (Litcher, 1994). A recent study in the USA showed a strong relation between the rate of television children watch between the ages of one or three and later risk for significant attention problems (Christakis et al., 2004).

Second, it will be good to go to Europe and look at the Britain and France. There is a great deal of violence in cartoons, many of which are made for and watched by children in large numbers in Britain. Violence forms a staple part of feature films originally made for cinema, stretching from Westerns to The Godfather and Pulp Fiction; many films based on historical events necessarily include episodes of violence. Made for television film series are often built around violent characters. Violence is, in the global market, thus providing an incentive for program-makers to portray increasing violence. Such material is often available relatively cheaply to television stations throughout the world that are desperate for broadcast material.

According to Shaw (as cited in Eashwer, 2003), British television has its share of such cartoons and feature films. It also has a considerable proportion of home-made drama, much of it in contemporary settings and often concentrated on domestic situations and relationships within families. Many of these productions include violence.

In Britain, the distress caused to children by violence of this sort on television was one of the reasons why concerns about children and television developed in the late nineteen fifties. Another concern was the encouragement which might be given to the use of violence as the means of solving disputes. But a prime cause of anxiety was the belief that children were wasting their time watching the screen.

Shaw (as cited in Eashwer, 2003) argues that apart from the news, the majority of people in Britain regard some violence in programs as acceptable. The tradition in which the good person triumphs over the bad is as old as story-telling itself. For instance, in the Tom and Jerry cartoons, we want to see the little mouse overcome the big cat and watch the cat subjected to a series of disasters in which it is often flattened, drenched with water, burnt and humiliated. So, viewers' perceptions are a crucial factor.

What about France? Today, children in France spend more time in front of their television sets than in any other social activity. But the influence of media on individual

behaviors is underestimated by the general sociological theory in the western countries. The system of primary and secondary education in France did not adapt to the rise and mass diffusion of the media in society. Primary and secondary teachers have little information about the effect of media on children's behavior. As Roche (as cited in Eashwer, 2003) stated in France, there is no large and systematic scientific study of the relationships between violence and television viewing. It is only very recently that the government has been worried about media and violence, mainly regarding its influence on young people. Scientific results are unanimous, whatever is the methodology: there is an association between media viewing and violence is it in the short or long run. Regardless of the research methods, scientists find a positive correlation between exposure to media violence and interpersonal aggression. Roche concludes although childhood neglect, unsafe neighborhood, low family income, low parental education and psychiatric disorders are associated with time spent watching television, even when these variables are controlled, the effect of media exposure on aggressive behavior is still significant.

Third, Islam stated that in Bangladesh, a country of Asia, mass media, especially print media, played a vital role in rallying public opinion in favor of the movement for restoration of democracy, which ultimately turned to the liberation movement during 1969 to 1971 (as cited in Eashwer, 2003). In recent times, a television serial named 'Shabuj Shathi' successfully disseminated health information to the targeted clientele. There is no doubt about the impact of mass media, especially television, on their viewers. A major issue is: what happens when the mass media depict violence, especially in the case of children?

The media undoubtedly plays an important role in educating the public on the need for implementation of child rights in Bangladesh. The need for free and accessible education was portrayed very effectively by the cartoon character of Meena created by the UNICEF with Hanna Barbera. It brought to light the plight of girls in South Asia and the issues of protection, health and education. Mobile film units and comic book series have brought the message in the Meena series to nearly 500 million rural folk. Similarly, radio has a very important role to play in this day of technology advancement. Many children still do not have access to television or computers or may not be able to even enroll at school.

Yunxuan (as cited in Eashwer, 2003) argues that violence has existed in China for a long time. As time has gone by, the world has changed a lot, but violence has not been eliminated or even reduced in the world. Yunxuan points out that "On September 11, 2001, a

tragedy took place in New York; a few weeks ago, one of the most violent explosions took place in Bali; just a few days back, hundreds of hostages were held by terrorists in a theatre in Moscow (p.59)". All these incidents prove that violence has not been reduced as modernization and globalization of the world continues. On the contrary, it has become increasingly more violent and threatens people's lives more and more frequently. What have changed are the forms and patterns of violence and the agents of violence in China. Every morning when people read the newspapers, the headlines are of rape and murder crimes. Every time people watch television, the sensational scenes of explosions and shootings are seen.

China is a huge country and has the largest population in the world. It is difficult to create awareness among all citizens regarding the laws and punishments, and the Chinese media may play an important role here in reducing violence. In China, the audience of CCTV is more than 1.1 billion; that means 90% of the country's population watches the programs of CCTV. Since it has such a large audience, CCTV may help the government inform the public about the state's laws, punishments and policies in reducing violence. As the largest and most influential television station, it is easier for CCTV to do so than the government itself.

Media in Vietnam represent the voice of the state, the ruling party, and political and social organizations. It also serves as a forum of the people. The media keep people informed about the state guidelines and policies and reflect people's aspirations and their response to such guidelines and policies. Media agencies today are faster, more appealing, more competitive, and more responsive to people's needs. The market mechanism results in swift changes in media operations in Vietnam. Radio, television and newspapers invest heavily in new technologies and constantly update methods of news coverage, increasing interaction with audiences.

According to Tien Long (as cited in Eashwer, 2003), Vietnam's external information service—with Voice of Vietnam's external broadcasting, plus satellite television coverage and the emergence of fast-growing online newspapers on the Internet—is contributing to regional and global peace, stability, cooperation and development. On the negative side, however, the market mechanism, as an expression of modernity and globalization, has exerted adverse impacts on media. Tien Long states that there is a growing tendency of sensational reporting with regard to violence and social values. Competition among media agencies for fastest

coverage and more sales sometimes results in misreporting, with serious consequences for individual conduct or business profits.

Lastly, media violence in Turkey will be explored. Although media's job is to inform public, however, they should be careful about how they inform and entertain people. Too much violent and aggressive content has been shown in Turkish TV programs. Of 2004 study by Ayrancı et al. supported this idea by stating that the rate of violent scenes on Turkish TV programs during 16.00-21.00, when children mostly watch TV, is very high. Since children especially ages from two to seven are being affected and imitate things they see, Turkish programs shouldn't include violent and aggressive contents. Why? Because Tokdemir et al. (2009) showed that primary school students mostly watch TV series (%21.9) and at least children programs (%0.4).

Violent TV programs or newspapers are affecting children and their behaviors. Children who are watching violent programs very often have aggression problems and become more violent. In Turkey, Özmert (2002) studied the association between time spent watching television and child behavior. Two primary schools were selected randomly: one in a district with a low SES and the other in a district with a high SES. Subjects were in the second and third grades (472 from the district with a low SES and 414 from the district with a high SES). In the study, children who watched television the most were found to have higher scores in delinquent behavior and on aggressive behavior subscales as compared to students who watched little television.

There is a strong relationship between TV watching and children's behavior. Thus, media shouldn't show violence as a desirable thing. Especially, teaching violence to children through cartoons isn't media's job or responsibility (Özal, 1996). A cartoon called Pokemon which was a commonly viewed cartoon in Turkish television caused two bad events. Two boys who identified themselves with Pokemon jumped down from 5. and 7. floors (Pokemon, 2000). Event had progressed as cartoons because luckily two boys didn't die. However, this was just luck, what if these boys died?

Other events occurred in Turkey related to media and violence are as follows: a girl suicides after she watched a film called Inferno, and a boy who has been affected from television hang himself to the wardrobe in Istanbul and etc. However, the effects are not only just killing themselves but also children are imitating heroes of films who are bad guy. Such programs are teaching the techniques of using violence and violence is spreading. According to

some lawyers, a 15 years old child, who has watched programs every day since 5 years old, has learned 18000 events of sexual abuse, attack, fight and torture. Behavior Science Institute psychologist Pamuk stated that children and youths who are watching these kinds of programs see violence as a problem solving and later they accept these events as normal things (as cited in Turam, 1996).

Eventually, it is understood that media violence in some way exists in those countries and it has some negative impact on the social lives of individuals. Violent images and videos are seen in newspapers and all kinds of TV programs such as TV news headlines, shows and series. This effect might be unconsciously however looking at negative consequences of those programs; urgent precautions should be taken without causing much more damage.

5. CONCLUSION

The problem of violence is not just a domestic problem, it is a global problem. Media violence is a sub-category of violence around the world. Even though some researchers believe that it is clear that violence on media has an important effect on children's violent behaviors. To understand and deal with the influence of media violence, parents and program producers should be aware of the issue.

Television, videos and video games expose children to high levels of violent images on a daily basis. In many countries, there is an average of five to ten aggressive acts per hour of television. Does this violence affect children's behavior?

Most research concerning violence on television has focused on whether violent programs provoke aggressive or violent behavior in spectators and, consequently, whether violence on television is the cause of violence in the real world. Very little research, however, has dealt with the more pervasive effects of television violence on society as a whole: reinforcement of the already depraved attitudes of some television viewers towards violence and aggression; degradation of personal, cultural and social values, especially use of the popular methods of violence to achieve power and status; and psychological identification with violent, aggressive heroes or even villains. The answer is: no, but it can help stop it, if we act on the findings.

What are the additional suggestions? For schools, the inclusion of media education in the curriculum can do much to nullify the effects media violence. Media literacy helps children understand and evaluate the impact of the media on them and to soften the sharp line

between their viewing experiences and their real life experiences. The study of television techniques can be fascinating to young viewers, in addition to helping them become more literate, less vulnerable viewers. By deconstructing television, and teaching them how the images they see on screen are made more dramatic and sensational through the use of lighting, sound effects and other production techniques, we deglamorize television to make children less susceptible to its effects and more critical consumers of this medium (Evra, 2004).

For parents, the first line of defense in the fight against media violence because they are in a position to exercise immediate intervention. They need to monitor their children's viewing, decrease the amount of violence their children view and help them develop coping strategies when they are exposed to material that frightens them. We should also cultivate and nurture our children's interest in other activities from which they could learn - reading, a love for the outdoors, cultivating an interest in sports, etc. - to lessen the impact of television in their lives.

The world's children are growing up in a complex and exciting global village where television plays an increasingly dominant role. Additionally, different media means such as computer, television and others became children's games instead of traditional games. Thus, it is important for parents and researchers to be aware of the influences of media means (especially violent video games and violent cartoons on television) on our children.

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