Assessment of the Effects of TV Programs Containing Violence on Children in Pre-school Period through the Views of Parents

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Abstract

This research was prepared to draw public attention to the effects of violence containing television programs on preschool period children, the views of parents regarding such effects and suggestions for their solution. Even though there are many researches in relation to this matter all over the world when reviewing literature, the scarcity of researches focusing on solution suggestions draws the attention. The problem phrase of the research was determined as "how the effect of violance containing television programs is observed in preschool children?". The study is a qualitative one and the research design is determined as case study. The study group consists of the parents of students participating in private preschool institutions. Semi-structured interview form was used as data collection tool, and the analyses were realized through descriptive analysis. The following findings were obtained from the study: It was detected that the rate of students to be affected by the violance in television depends much on the programs viewed and daily television watching hours. It was also seen that reflection of television violence to the children depends on the viewpoint of parents against the violence on that program. One of the outstanding findings is that it is frequently pointed out by parents that programs for children are focused on increasing the ratings rather than being instructive.

Keywords: Children, Parents, Education, Communication, Technology, TV Programs.

1. Introduction

The pre-school period is an important period for a child to improve his/her social, affective, self-esteem and self-confidence and development. Developmental feature that an individual gains in this period is a process forming the basis of life-long learning of individuals in the future (Sapasağlam, 2017). Family, school, peer groups and mass communication that are effective at first have an important place. The positive relationships influence the development of children between parents and them. Socializing is the most important phase of life in childhood. Social development of children in this phase forms the base of social behaviours in future periods they will face (Barbaroğlu, 2015). This base is the process starting from pre-school education of children that is

the first step of educational life to the period when the basic education begins. All developmental features of children are completed in this period. The aim is to let children develop emotionally, cognitively, physically and socially, and create the main objectives of pre-school education which is necessary for sustaining a consistent life (Karaca, Gündüz & Aral, 2011). Thus, children could learn the role patterns that they are expected to have through social environment and mass communication during socializing process.

Communication has a great place in daily life of human being. Human being could deliver his/her interactions such as knowledge, thought, attitude and necessity to other people by using communication. TV programs come first among the devices that are spread in most of the living area of people in today's world (Güngör, 2014). Animated cartoons are the most preferred programs of children among all other TV programs. For this reason, they are the primary programs that are most criticized (Aktaş-Arnas, 2005). Imaginary world of pre-school children is well-developed. Thus, whereas unceasing energy and show of strength of children in this period are in a certain level, the perception of reality is more limited (Hamarat et al., 2015).

While recreation activities increase in quantity based on the development of technology in today's societies, they differ in qualitative aspect. Contemporary mass communication means started to replace traditional mass communication means such as book, newspaper and magazine that are each leisure activities that could be obtained easily (Aslışen, 2017).

The problem statement of the research based on that issue is stated as "How is the effect of violence containing TV programs observed on pre-school children?". The sub-problems in this regard are as follows:

1. How is the relationship between television and violence interpreted by parents?
2. How is the relationship between children and television interpreted by parents?
3. What are the suggestions for solution of parents in order to minimize children's influence level by violence containing TV programs?

2. Method

The research model is qualitative while research design is the case study. The reason why this design has been selected is that there is a consent on scrutinizing the views of pre-school children's parents on TV programs and their effects on their children, and to describe such views by making an analysis. The case study is the approach allowing us to deeply focus on a certain situation (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2006).

2.1. Participants

Data resources in case studies are the individuals or groups that have a living about the situation on which the research focuses and could reflect the mentioned situation to outer environment (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2006). The study group consists of eighteen mothers and fathers that have children in pre-school period. The easy attainable case sampling among purposeful sampling types was used while selecting participants. For this reason, data was preferred to be obtained from a pre-school educational institution.

2.2. Data Collection

As the main data collection tool is interview in case studies, the interview method was selected as data collection tool in this research.

The interview form which was developed by the researcher during data collection phase was used. The questions were prepared on the basis of revealing clearly the experiences and views of parents. Later on, the views of experts were gathered and so, the interview questions were posed to the participants upon being re-arranged. The parents to be interviewed were informed about the content and duration of the interview, and appointment was made on voluntary basis. The participants were informed that the interview would be recorded and about its aim just before the interview, so they initiated the interview after a short practice-oriented conversation for the subject.

The interviews were completed between 20 - 30 minutes. Some notes were also taken by the researcher in order to prevent data loss within this period.

2.3. Data Analysis

The records that were obtained during interviews were decrypted and converted into written documents. Decryption procedure was carried out by the researcher arranging the interviews, thus, data loss and errors were prevented. Data was interpreted by using the descriptive analysis technique in analyzing data. The descriptive analysis technique envisages to summarize and then interprete the data obtained according to predetermined themes (Şimşek & Yıldırım, 2006). Taking into consideration the themes emerging from the research and interview questions, a framework was formed for data analysis. Based on this framework, themes were determined. The data obtained was arranged under predetermined themes, some quotations were directly borrowed from the participants' views and the findings were interpreted by being supported. Direct quotations were submitted by being coded in order to keep the privacy of participants. Direct quotations were allowed so as to increase the reliability of the research. Furthermore, the data obtained was coded by a second researcher experienced in qualitative research in the field. The formula (Reliability = Consensus / Consensus + Dissensus) of Miles & Huberman (1994) was applied to the coding made by the two researchers. The coherence between coders was calculated as 82%. It is deemed to be sufficient that reliability calculations are found to be 70% or over. The research period was tried to be identified in details so as to increase external validity of the research.

2.4. Findings and Interpretation

The relationship between television and violence

A great number of the study group (%77.78) pointed out that there is a critical relationship between television and violence. It is believed by parents that the elements of violence included in television programs are reflected on

daily life through imitation by spectators. Parents who frequently mention that there is a connection between especially producers and policy makers and the policies followed in the country are reinforced by television programs that can be followed within the country stated that children are also integrated in this process.

> Whatever politicians want to instill to the society they start from children's programs. (K4)

Taking into consideration parents' views in terms of the relationship between television and violence, it can be seen that the findings obtained show parallelism with the researches of İmamoğlu and Şirin (2011) too.

The opinion that broadcasting which appeals to masses of people influences the process of socialization at the starting point of the researches conducted in order to reveal the connections between violence and media. It is true that there are some scenes whipping aggressive instinct of people that exceed the vision of enforcing social interaction, informing masses sometimes exaggerated sometimes reflecting the truth in television and certain programs on Internet.

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Data related to the Sample

Gender of Parent	**f**	**%**
Female	14	77.78
Male	4	22.22
Total	18	100
Gender of Child	**f**	**%**
Female	9	50.00
Male	9	50.00

Total	18	100
Age of Parent	**f**	**%**
26-30	3	16.67
31-35	8	44.44
36-40	3	16.67
41-45	4	22.22
Total	18	100
Age of Child	**f**	**%**
3	4	22.22
4	4	22.22
5	7	38.89
6	3	16.67
Total	18	100
Parents' Number of Children	**f**	**%**
1 child	8	44.44
2 children	8	44.44
3 children	1	5.56
4 children	1	5.56
Total	18	100

TV heroes that are beloved by children mostly

The parents who participated in the research stated that their children love mostly the following TV heroes; Pepe, Ege ile Gaga, Kuzucuk, Pijamaskeliler, Kertenkele Çocuk, Superman, Captain America, Spider Man, Hulk, Heidi, Niloya, Çilek Kız, Masha and the Bear, Ponny, Kare, Winx, Barbie, Frozen and Elsa, Caillou, The Smurfs, Pokemon, Angry Bird and Minnie. The outstanding point here is how children's programs have become more widespread compared to the previous years. Especially, 19 different programs were mentioned in the interview made with 18 people. Based on this information, we can say that greater efforts should be made in investigation process of the effects of such programs on the development of children.

Tools that may contain violence and used by heroes

The parents participating in the research pointed out the heroes that their children love most use equipment which may contain violence at 9%. Accordingly, while the rate of heroes showing violence through magic is stated to be 32.1%, the rate of those using their own bodies is stated to be 57.9%. The web, gun, shield, blowing up gift box are at the lowest level with 10%. The fact that 81.7% of these heroes apply violence to the counter party for self-defense draws the attention to an important issue among the views stated. The fact that violence is perceived as two dimensions by parents and these dimensions are the violence applied in order to damage the counter party personally for self-defense are among the findings obtained.

Impersonation of such heroes by children

33.33% of the participants pointed out that children do not imitate behaviours of the heroes they love. The same proportion stated that children insist on purchasing the products in which there are logos of these heroes in shopping only.

K12 called this situation as *"capitalist violence"*. Similar results support this conclusion obtained in the study conducted by Adak Özdemir & Ramazan, (2012). Parents who stated that they do not face many problems in imitating, only Physical sight agrees on the idea that passive imitation will not harm anyone. K2 states an experienced phenomenon as follows regarding imitation of behaviours that are called as active imitation:

As my son loves animals very much, his grandfather gave him two chicks as gift. But my son let one of them die by screaming "angry bird" and throwing it to the wall being under the influence of the program he watches. After that, we went through a trauma when we saw the chick died. When we asked him why he did that, he replied that he thought his chick would not die as the angry birds that are thrown in animated cartoon do not die."

K1 stated a similar situation as follows:
My son is fond of spider man. That is why he jumps from chairs very frequently. He says he sometimes hugs his cousins so tightly while playing in the garden that he squeezes them in the net. But this could be much hurting sometimes.

Suggestions for children to not to be influenced by the violence on TV

The suggestion that it could be obtained positive contributions for the development of children through directing questions which children could be let to watch the programs appropriate to their age and level under the control of their parents is one of the most mentioned suggestions. It is frequently stated that an accurate orientation not containing subliminal messages could be provided by receiving expert opinions to ensure it and it is necessary for not only parents but also program producers to ask expert's opinion. These emphases match up with other researches conducted in different years both in the country and overseas (İmamoğlu & Şirin, 2011; Adak Özdemir & Ramazan, 2012; Rosenqvist et al., 2016).

We can say that among the suggestions made, the following ones have an important place for the children to not be influenced by the violence on TV, these are; watching adult programs in an environment where there are no children, allocating time for children, letting children spend time with educating activities and thus, keeping the duration of watching TV under control.

3. Result and Suggestions

The findings obtained during the study conducted show similarities when compared to other studies conducted in different years both inside and outside the country. Despite the fact that the years passed by, the attention is drawn to the situations that are not or cannot be solved regarding the problem which is not related only to Turkey and Cyprus but to the whole world considering that the conclusions are similar based on the assessments made. Generally solution suggestions and situation determinations were made, but no experimental study regarding the application was found in the researches made, as in this study. From this viewpoint, any researcher who wishes to conduct research on this issue could be directed to experimental studies, so effective solution suggestions could be expanded.

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