Violent Movies and Criminal Behavior of Delinquents

Noshina Saleem
Assistant Professor, Institute of Communication Studies,
University of the Punjab, Lahore, Pakistan
E.Mail: noshina2001@hotmail.com

Sarfraz Ahmed
Lecturer, Mass Communication,
Government College University Faisalabad,

Mian Ahmad Hanan, PhD
Professor, Mass Communication Department,
Forman Christian College A Charter University, Lahore,
E.Mail: hanan-mian@hotmail.com

Sana Haroon
Lecturer, Mass Communication,
Government College University Faisalabad,

Abstract:
Violence, aggression, or delinquency has been a major concern for almost every society, whether it’s medieval one or modern. Researchers, throughout the history, have given special attention to understand its causes and effects. With the passage of time and with the advent of modern technology this concern has caused great apprehensions. So far as, a plethora of research have been done in the field of media and their effects on individuals. This study focuses on the exposure of violent movies and their effects on juveniles. The media effects studies have great attraction for the scholars of social sciences. Western governments in general and the USA in particular, arranged several discussions and formulated some commissions that not only tried to address this issue and approved some recommendations. This issue has been paid less attention in developing countries like Pakistan. This study tried to explore the effects of violent movies on Pakistani teenagers and then to find out a correlation between exposure to such movies with criminal tendencies. Nevertheless, consistent published studies have reviewed media effects with various outcomes; this study carries empirical evidence that establishes this fact that violent media causes delinquency especially in Pakistani juvenile.

Key Words: Violent movies; Adolescents; Aggression; Criminal behavior; Delinquents

I. Introduction
An immense data on media effects have emerged right after the invention of moveable pictures. There is cogent evidence which supports the hypothesis that exposure to violent media, especially long term exposure, leads to aggressive behavior in adults generally and in children/adolescents particularly. Plenty of studies have shown a link between violent media exposure and its detrimental impacts on individuals. Anderson, Gentile, and Buckley (2007) have reported a plethora of studies that have been executed
under the aegis of different commissions formed by US government. They conclude that several expert panels convened by various federal agencies have examined the television and film violence research and issued reports (e.g., Anderson et al., 2003; National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, 1969; National Institute of Mental Health, 1982; U.S. Surgeon General, 1972). The main conclusion, even from reviews as early as 1969, is that exposure to television violence is a significant risk factor for aggression and violence. That is, exposure to media violence causes an increase in the likelihood of aggression in at least some significant portion of the population.

Researchers from the field of sociology, psychology, and media studies have traced out a few factors that enhance the probability why adolescents engage themselves in criminal and violent activities. This might include history of aggression, uneven financial conditions, disputes between parents, history of being abused, notorious and antisocial peer group(s), drug use, minimum counseling and guidance from parents, unsafe environment, fear of academic failure, and the most important one is the exposure to real life or media violence. The knowledge obtained through electronic media has juxtaposed both negative and positive impacts before each individual. The children who don’t have proper guidance either by their parents or by the community get more affected by this kind of material. With undeveloped and immature mind set, they are influenced by what’s going on around them. The present study is altogether concerned with violent content shown in action movies and its effects on adolescents. Through this study, it has been attempted to examine the effects of action/violent movies and the growth of criminal tendencies in juveniles after exposure to action/violent movies. In order to examine the effects of action movies on youth behavior, the researcher has conducted a survey along with in-depth interviews with those juvenile delinquents who are under custody at Camp Jail Lahore (CJL). The study is designed to ascertain whether exposure to action movies has some relation with criminal behavior of adolescents. This research study is quantitative in its nature, and the researcher has also tried to put forward some suggestions that might play some productive role in minimizing violence in our youth.

II. Objectives
i. To examine to what extent the exposure to violent movies affects the extent of aggression in adolescents.
ii. To assess whether exposure to action/violent movies is the only factor or some other variables (family background, income, gender etc.) are also responsible for delinquent behavior in juveniles.

III. Theoretical Framework
Anderson’s General Aggression Model (GAM)

A meta-analysis by Anderson et al. (2003) shows a strong relationship between exposure to media violence and both emotional and behavior problems, particularly aggressive thoughts and behavior (Jennifer Gunderson, 2006). Anderson et al. deem both violence desensitization and cognition to aggression as the most decisive variables responsible for the progression of an aggressive attitude. Anderson’s General Aggression Model explains how exposure to real life or media violence increases the risk of aggressive behavior in individuals. GAM states that any kind of behavior is learned via knowledge structures that are created through the process of social learning. This model emphasizes that the process of social learning takes place in our daily life when we
interact with other individuals. This interaction might happen with ‘real’ situations like family, peer group, and office work etc. or with ‘imagined’ situations (e.g. exposure to violent media). Every violent act either in real life or through media portrayals proves a fast learning experience, and the people who are prone to such violent acts behave in an aggressive manner. But the people—exposed to real life or media violence over a long time period—perceive, judge, interpret, and react in a more aggressive way. The GAM argues that the juveniles who contain a history of real life violence are more at-risk to media violence. The reason behind this argument is the increased violent perceptions and the greater learning of aggressive scripts. For such juveniles, exposure to violent media means the depiction of a world where violence is inevitable. Given the fact that the research is about the long term and durable effects of filmed aggression, Anderson’s General Aggression Model (GAM) can most convincingly explain the impacts of violent movies and juveniles’ activity dealing with aggressive attitudes.

IV. Review of Literature

A great range of empirical literature on the effects of violent media exposure has surfaced right after the invention of television. Reviews of such kind of literature provide the evidence that viewing violent media causes not only aggression but also some other problems pertinent to character building in juveniles. A vivid relationship between viewing violent media and delinquency has been forwarded by Huesmann and Miller (as cited in Savage, 2004) and both researchers argue that the most plausible hypothesis is that habitual exposure to violent television programs teaches children aggressive habits which are maintained well into adulthood. Exposure to violence directly or indirectly has become a part of human cognition. On the other hand, psychologists put forward this argument that there might be several other causes behind human aggression or violent behavior. Amodei & Scott (2002) state that psychologists generally acknowledge that no one single factor can be accounted for the expression of violence and that biological, chemical, political, economic and sociological factors may all play a role and of varying degrees of importance at different times. Across middle childhood and adolescence, exposure to violent cartoons and movie clips has produced positive attitudes towards the use of aggression (Nathanson & Cantor, 2000; Wotring & Greenberg, 1973, as cited in Krish, 2010). Media may sometimes be spuriously blamed for negative outcomes in children, and this tendency may ultimately prevent the positive use of this media (Grimes et al., 2008; Ferguson, 2010; Cerenoglu, 2010, as cited in Ferguson, 2011). Bandura et al. (1963) state that “Filmed aggression, not only facilitated the expression of aggression, but also effectively shaped the form of the subjects’ aggressive behavior. Sometimes both children and adolescents imitate their favorite movie character and imagine themselves in the ‘fairy’ world of film and television. In doing so, they get a so-called identification following their favorite characters. McQuail (1994) expresses that the balance of evidence supports the view that media can lead to violent behavior and probably have done so; these effects occur mainly as a result of ‘triggering’ of aggressive acts, imitations, identification with aggressive heroes and ‘desensitization’ leading to a higher tolerance for real violence. Motion pictures have been in vogue from the beginning of 20th century. They, for majority of the people, were taken as a big source of entertainment. Initially, to study media effects, they were given less importance as compared to television programs. This was the reason that few quantity of research work was rendered in that field. Although movies have received less research attention than television, violent content and portrayals in both the mediums are often similar. Motion pictures (similar to television) do more than capitalize on crime; they promote the
cultural embeddedness of the emotional and sensual parameters that constitute the foreground of criminal activity (Stevens, 2010). Carter and Weaver (2003) consider movies as the only single factor responsible for media violence. According to the both that if there is one medium that has produced the most brutal, macabre, bloody and excessive scenes of violence and to which controversy about such representations inevitably returns, it is film. In many respects, violence has played a central role in the history of cinema. Media experts, psychologists, and parents throughout the globe have been demanding consistently to cut down violent elements in media programs. They argue that these specific elements prompt the attention of both children and teenagers; as a result, they spend most of their time watching violent media. A survey conducted by Huston et al. (1992) estimated that a typical child views 10,000 murders, rapes, and aggravated assaults in a single year on television. In this whole scenario, the parents’ concern is greater than that of media practitioners or psychologists. The parents are more terrified by on screen violence that might damage the personality of their children. In UK, Andrea Millwood Hargrave (2000) conducted a research which testifies the fact that parents fear about the possible impacts of violence on television for their own children lay with a concern that their children might become frightened or traumatized by on screen violence.

V. Methodology

As the current study is about to measure the delinquent behavior of adolescents after their cognition to violent movies, so a survey was conducted through which 51 delinquents were given in-depth interviews. An interview schedule was gradually formulated, and after the completion of pilot study, that schedule was scrutinized for final interview sessions. The reason behind choosing this methodology was that plenty of previous research studies had already chosen this type of methodology to measure media effects on adolescents. The research studies of Anderson, Bandura, Huesman, Carter & Weaver, Jennifer Gunderson, and Stephen Meyers etc. can be quoted as specimen.

Research Questions

i: Does delinquent behavior have stronger relationship with exposure to violent movies than economic family condition?

ii: Is there any relationship between parental disputes and criminal behavior in juveniles?

iii: Does exposure to violent movies encourage juveniles keeping and using arms?

iv: Do juvenile imitate their favorite movie character(s) in daily life?

v: Are illiterate juveniles more prone to commit crimes than literate juveniles?

vi: Does delinquent behavior have stronger relationship with exposure to violent movies than having family member(s) with criminal background?

Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant relationship between exposure to action movies and delinquent behavior in juveniles.

Research Design

Focused interviews with purposively selected 51 juvenile delinquents were conducted in Camp Jail, Lahore. The researcher conducted personal interviews with all 51 respondents; each lasted approximately half an hour. Prior the commencement of
inquiry, each juvenile was informed about the purpose behind the study, so, they had the choice either to accept or to decline their participation. During the interview sessions, the respondents were facilitated to express themselves freely, though majority of the juveniles were illiterate that’s why researchers conducted the interviews and filled the questions. To fulfill the purpose of study specific juveniles were selected who have committed some major crimes and have been convicted by the courts.

**The Universe**

The universe was juvenile delinquent of Camp Jail Lahore. Each delinquent who was detained at camp jail Lahore were the unit of analysis of current study. Although, it was intended to investigate both male and female delinquents to present a detailed comparison to measure their exposure about violent media, but the researchers could not find any female juvenile delinquent here. When asked, jail officials denied the presence of any female juvenile. Another big prison was traced out at Kot Lakhpat, Lahore; adult women were detained there but not the teenage girls.

**Sampling**

Among more than 150 available juveniles, total 51 delinquents were selected using purposive sampling technique. The reason behind using purposive sampling technique was to select those juvenile delinquents who have committed some serious/ major crime and whose cases were not under trial in courts. It was observed that under-trial juveniles might entertain the researchers with incorrect responses, so, under trial juveniles were not taken into consideration to evade the possibility of false information.

**Conceptualization and Operationalization**

The education, family background, economic background and exposure to action movies were the 4 independent variables, whereas, the delinquent behavior of juveniles was dependent variable. Economic background refers to the economic conditions of the family of the juveniles. The household assets, parental occupation, income etc. determine the economic status of the family. Question no. 21 describes monthly family income of each juvenile. Exposure to action movies refers to movie watching frequency and history. This variable shows that for how long and with what frequency the juveniles have been experiencing movies having action content. Question no. 32 and 33 measures this specific frequency and history. Delinquent behavior is the outlet of juveniles’ violent instinct nurtured by many of the independent reasons such as family criminal history, economic background of the family, juveniles’ exposure to action movies and so on. Here, question no. 29 (liking of movie type), 38 (all-time favorite movie), 44 (the movie juvenile wants to watch again and again), and 45 (the movie juvenile wants to recommend others) measure juveniles’ delinquent behavior. The answering options of these four question are summed up and a new question (coded as 47) has been designed which is the average measurement of these 4 questions.

**Tool of Data Collection**

A three page long ‘Interview schedule’ comprising of 7 information themes and 45 closed ended questions, was developed and used as tool of data collection. The survey was based on in-depth interviews to get information from juveniles as to what extent they were exposed to action movies. The last part of ‘interview schedule’ has been designed to investigate the respondents’ criminal record, their movie watching history, frequency,
liking of movie type, imitation of favorite movie character(s) and tendency of keeping and using arms.

**Pilot Study**

Interview schedule was pretested first with 5 cases and reviewed on the responses; some changes were incorporated before going for the rest of other 51 sampled cases. Standardized scaling procedure was adopted to ensure the reliability and validity. The strategy relevant for this study was the use of Likert scale to measure the changes in juveniles’ attitude after their exposure to action movies.

**Data Processing and Analysis**

All the collected data were entered in computer using SPSS (Statistical Package of Social Sciences) version 17. Prior to data entry, all the response options given by juvenile delinquents were checked for the purpose of completeness and accuracy. If any inconsistency was found, response options were checked repeatedly until final correctness was achieved. After the entire data were entered, a cross-check was made between the answering options available in ‘interview schedule’ and inputted data. Later on, to check the co-relation between research questions, ANOVA test was applied to determine the level of significance.

**VI. Data Analysis**

The purpose of present study was to check whether criminal tendencies in juveniles are caused by greater exposure to action/violent movies, or there are some other significant variable(s) behind this phenomenon. Different variables other than exposure to action movies are also checked after the application of ANOVA test. In this study, exposure to action/violent movies emerged as a vital factor responsible of delinquent behavior in juveniles. Other variables like income, less intimacy with family, presence of other family member with criminal background etc. could not found responsible for delinquency in juveniles. The followings are the research questions with their descriptive statistics and variance analysis:

**Research Question1:** Does delinquent behavior have stronger relationship with exposure to violent movies than economic family condition?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimate of Family Income</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>15.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>103.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>118.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>17.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>62.58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Our results show that tendency towards crime is not significantly different for the considered family income groups (p>0.05). One limitation of our sample is that about 70% of our respondents belong to the family with income less than Rs. 25,000 per month, so we are unable to compare the results with the upper income groups. Here, exposure to action movies is found significant (p<0.05). Thus, exposure to action movies affects the juvenile’s mindset more than his family’s economic condition.

**Research Question 2**: Is there any relationship between parental disputes and criminal behavior in juveniles?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 2</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>70.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of question no. 2 show that the parental disputes don’t have any significant impact on the criminal mind set of their children. Rather, there might be some other factors that cause to accelerate this phenomenon. Parental disputes are not significant (p>0.05) here in our study. These disputes cannot be considered responsible for the juveniles’ criminal tendency.

**Research Question 3.1**: Does exposure to violent movies encourage juveniles keeping arms?

Findings of table 3.1 indicate that the juveniles who have greater exposure to action/violent movies have greater tendency to keep arms. Out of total 51 juveniles, 23 admitted that they ‘always’ want to use arms. Only 2 juveniles told that they want to use arms but ‘sometimes.’ Although, the mean value of these juveniles to commit crime is almost the same, yet they have committed crimes.

**Research Question 3.2**: Does exposure to violent movies encourage juveniles using arms?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 3.2</th>
<th>ANOVA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>15.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>64.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79.64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) shows the value (p<0.019) of this relationship very significant. The juveniles who have greater exposure to action/violent movies have greater tendency of using arms. Here, our hypothesis is verified.
Table 3.2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>19.33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.44</td>
<td>5.02</td>
<td>.004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>60.31</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79.64</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) of table 3.1 shows that there is a significant relationship (p<0.05) between exposure to action movies and the tendency of keeping arms by the juveniles. So, it can be deducted from the above findings that greater the exposure of action movies, juveniles have greater tendencies to commit crimes. They are more inclined towards criminal type situations.

Research Question 4: Do juvenile imitate their favorite movie character(s) in daily life?

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>19.42</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>2.902</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>60.22</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79.64</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above table is the result of ANOVA test applied to find out a relationship between imitation of favorite movie character(s) and the criminal behavior of juveniles. The majority of the juveniles endorsed that their favorite movie character was ‘hero’ and they liked his ‘fighting style’. Here, (p<0.024) is the value which shows a significant relationship between the imitation of favorite movie character and the tendency towards crime.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>22.67</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>77.36</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The ANOVA test also testifies a significant relationship between illiteracy or less education of juveniles and the tendency to commit crime. Here, (p<0.017) is showing that illiterate or less educated juveniles are more inclined towards criminal tendencies. Although there are some well-educated juveniles who committed some heinous crimes, but they are in few numbers. So our hypothesis is verified that illiterate juveniles are more prone to commit crime.

Research Question 6: Does delinquent behavior have stronger relationship with exposure to violent movies than having family member(s) with criminal background?
An analysis of variance showed that the conviction of other family member was not significant (p>0.169) factor for the criminal motivation. So, the hypothesis of any link between conviction of other family member and criminal behavior of the delinquents was not proved. Now, it’s concluded that the criminal tendency of the juveniles whose family members were found convicted in any crime and those whose family members were not found convicted are the same.

VII. Discussion

In this study, the economic condition of juvenile’s family was not a major reason that could be related with their criminal behavior. Most of them, whether poor or rich, had committed some serious crime. When asked, majority of the juveniles were belonging either upper, middle or lower class families. Instead of family’s economic condition, juveniles were transformed into delinquents after exposure to action movies. The economic condition of their family had nothing to do with their criminal behavior. During the investigation of this study, the financial status of a juvenile’s family had least significance for the promotion of delinquent behavior. So it’s verified that poverty, in this study, doesn’t determine or change the internal mind set of the juveniles. Rather, there are some other factors that might influence them to commit something wrong, and exposure to action/violent movies is one of those major factors. ‘Parental dispute’ was not a big reason for the promotion of criminal tendencies. 12 (23.5%) juveniles confirmed that their parents quarrel ‘often.’ The parents of 11 juveniles quarrel ‘sometimes’, 9.8% parents of 5 juveniles don’t have any conflict at all, whereas, the remaining parents of other 5 juveniles always quarrel with each other. ‘Not Applicable’ option was valid for those juveniles whose either mother or father was not alive. So, it was hypothesized that parental disputes and their apathy towards their children can lead them towards crimes, but parental disputes could not be proved powerful factor to encourage juveniles’ delinquent behavior. The juveniles were encouraged with some other background factor to become delinquent and exposure to action/violent movies were the very factor. Exposure to action/violent movies and the tendency to keeping and using arms was quite important question which directly measured juveniles’ delinquent behavior. The juveniles who were very frequent viewer of action movies showed greater tendency of keeping and using arms. Out of total 51 juveniles, 23 admitted that they ‘always’ wanted to keep and use arms, while 30 (58.8%) juveniles of the total admitted that if available, they would ‘always’ want to avail them. These statistics show a significant relationship between criminal mind set of those juveniles. So when ANOVA test was used, it showed a clear relationship between exposure to action movies and tendency to keeping and using arms. The majority of the investigated juveniles went for the option ‘hero’ as their favorite movie character and they admitted that always imitated their favorite character. ‘Fighting style’ was the reason of liking for 24 juveniles, whereas, ‘Communication style’ was the reason of liking for 10 juveniles who represent 19.6% of total sample. This particular question showed a significant relationship between

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6</th>
<th>S S</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>M S</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between Groups</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>1.95</td>
<td>.169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within Groups</td>
<td>96.20</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1.96</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
the imitations of hero’s fighting style and the criminal behavior of the juveniles. The ANOVA also testified this fact and showed a significant relationship ($p<0.024$) between these two variables. It’s very interesting, and as it was hypothesized, that the majority of illiterate juveniles were more prone to commit some crime. Out of total 51 juveniles, almost half of the juveniles i.e. 25 (49%) were illiterate. As compared to literate ones, illiterate juveniles were more aggressive with excessive criminal tendencies. Out of 51 investigated juveniles, 25 juveniles were illiterate and 20 juveniles were with just primary educational background. So, from the results, it’s concluded that illiteracy or less education plays an important role for the upbringing of criminal tendencies in juveniles. The analysis of this question shows a significant link ($p<0.017$) between illiteracy and delinquent behavior. Answering this question, 30 juveniles who represent 58.8% of the total, confirmed that any of their family members has been convicted or imprisoned already. Whereas, 21 denied the conviction or imprisonment of any of their family member. Although, the conviction/imprisonment of other family member could be a helping factor to measure the delinquent behavior of juveniles, but in this study, the relationship between the two variables was not the reason of juveniles’ criminal mind set. An insignificant value ($p>0.169$) was found after statistical and variance analysis of this research question. Although exposure to action movies was a vivid reason but the imprisonment of other family member had no significance as compared to this specific exposure.

VIII. Suggestions

This study suggests some measures to prevent violence/aggression in adolescents. The majority of violent behavior and criminal acts such as murder, assault, and rape in the last half-century have been committed by adolescents and young adults. Parents, teachers, school administrators, and social scientists are perplexed by the problems of increased violence in the schools, and researchers continue to search for solutions of this gigantic problem. Many researchers agree, however, that better understanding and progress in dealing with the problem of youth violence should ideally be based upon solid information obtained from well-designed, executed, and evaluated prevention programs. Here are some suggestions to reduce the tendencies of violence and aggression in both children and juveniles:

i. The majority of TV programs and movie contents should be focused on changing attitudes and beliefs.

ii. Programs like adjustment in behavior and social skill training should be introduced in the contents of electronic media to evade the possibility of victimization and aggression in juveniles.

iii. Future researchers should focus on introducing new dimensions to minimize aggression in juveniles who have gone through violence either real or mediated.

iv. Parental guidance can play a pivotal role in this regard. Parents should emphasize on factors like personal responsibility and moral guidance etc.

v. Interaction at peer group level must be encouraged so that juveniles might understand the differences of each other.

vi. Jails and juvenile detention centers can also be proved a dynamic platform to make juveniles aware how destructive their aggression might be for their character building.
vii. Aggression prevention efforts by parents at primary level may disrupt violent behavior in juveniles.

viii. Electronic media itself can be used as an effective tool to reduce the probability of aggression in youth by producing non-violent programs.

ix. In curriculum at all level, approaches must be taught to resolve the conflicts in non-violent manner.

x. Parents’ association with their children has been a prominent factor in reducing violent behavior. If parents don’t pay adequate attention, their children might experience apathy, which consequently results in aggression.

xi. Media managers generally and film directors particularly should produce their programs keeping in view the nature and age factor of children.

xii. Workshops, awareness programs, and participation of youth in social activities can also help them reducing their aggression.

IX. Conclusion

It admits no doubt that there are many challenges and dimensions in the field of media violence and its impacts on individuals. It’s quite hopeful fact that social scientists throughout the globe have been working for not only observing but also measuring this important phenomenon. The results of present study do not provide some new dimension which might lead us to understand some new reason of adolescents’ delinquent behavior. Rather, the results endorse the findings of previous research studies rendered to measure media effects. It has been hypothesized that exposure to action/violent movies has a significant relationship with the delinquent behavior of juveniles. Savage (2004) presents empirical evidence which establishes fact that the viewing of violent portrayals doesn’t cause crime. But the results of present study do not support Savage’s contention. Instead, the results suggest that such frequent exposure has greater potential to influence juveniles’ mind set. They can easily engage themselves in some criminal activity if they have incessant cognition of violent portrayals. Majority of the studied juveniles admitted that they had been very fond of watching action/violent movies. And, they modeled the patterns that were depicted in such type of movies. The results of this study vividly verify that the economic or financial family condition didn’t have any contribution for the conversion of juveniles into delinquents. Rather, action/violent movies emerged as a significant variable responsible of their delinquency. Majority of investigated juveniles, who have greater frequency and longer history of movie watching, were aspirant of keeping and using firearms. The results of present study verified their criminal tendency. Factors like socio-economic background or less intimacy with family members had nothing to do with their criminal mind set. Here, exposure to action movies was the decisive element for the motivation of such behavior. Another important issue was also addressed in this study, and it was the education level of these juveniles. Illiterate or less educated juveniles were more prone towards crime. Contrary to it, the juveniles with upper level of education had fewer tendencies towards crime, or they were charged with less heinous crimes. Although they had also exposure of action movies, yet they committed comparatively less serious crimes. The criminal background of any relative or family member could not be proved a significant variable for the provocation of delinquent behavior in juveniles. Here again, exposure to action/violent movies was responsible for juveniles’ delinquency. In the end, a policy based on certain recommendations has also been put forward. In retrospect, the research studies like this have not been frequently done in Pakistan. It can be hoped, somehow, that this study
would be helpful for the newcomers who are ambitious to work within the sphere of ‘media effects.’

References


