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## Exposure to Television Crime Shows and Crime Learning Behaviours of Adolescents: A Case of Pakistani Juvenile Delinquents

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### Abstract

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The media have been condemned for contributing to crimes by glamorizing and publicizing criminal acts. The dynamic has come to be known as a copycat or contagion. This research focuses on the risky behaviours of Pakistani adolescents who are exposed to crime shows on television, which may have resulted for them to become juvenile delinquents. Juvenile delinquency is a serious problem worldwide and in Pakistan. The objective of the research are: to identify the most popular television crime shows among adolescents, : to find out how Pakistani adolescents learn crime method through television crime shows, : to investigate and describe the other negative (aggression) and positive (fear of bad consequences, hate of crime) effects of television crime shows on the behaviour of Pakistani adolescents, : to identify the role of socio economic factors that influence Pakistani adolescents' crime learning behaviour. The finding of this paper found that, the most of the studies on juvenile delinquency with respect to the media, especially on TV affects are on aggression. The deviant peers contribute to serious offending by child delinquents during the period of their transition to adolescence.

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**Keywords:** Television crime shows; Crime learning behaviours; Pakistani Juvenile Delinquents

### 1. Introduction

Television crime shows are popular with Pakistani adolescents included interactive web sites where fans could comment and chat with others about that week's episode. Not only do adolescents spend a great deal of time with a wide variety of media, they are also learning about ideas through the media; they can learn about anything they are interested in, whenever, wherever they are at the moment; and



they can express themselves publicly. Given the accumulating evidence that adolescents' use of media contribute to a range of potentially unhealthy behaviours (Fischer, Krueger, Asal, Aydin, & Vingilis, 2012). Juvenile delinquency is one of the outcomes resulting to these unhealthy behaviours.

On the other hand a growing body of evidence indicates that adverse childhood experiences can lead to grave, diverse, and long-term negative outcomes for adolescents (Knox et al., 2011). Violence in society is ubiquitous and may be found in every domain of social experience in homes, neighbourhoods, broader communities, schools and the political arena. These socioeconomic factors play a very important role in the personality dimensions of a person. Such social and economic factors also increase the probability of juvenile delinquency.

Furthermore, socioeconomic factors have the potential to induce the adolescents towards the risky behaviours. For example, certain negative family environments are considered risk factors for criminal behaviour problems (Swing, 2012). By considering this dimension, it is also important to investigate the role of social and economic factors; to know, how these factors influence Pakistani adolescents' behaviour to commit a crime.

The objectives of the study are as under: To identify the most popular television crime shows among adolescents; To find out how Pakistani adolescents learn crime method through television crime shows; To investigate and describe the other negative (aggression) and positive (fear of bad consequences, hate of crime) effects of television crime shows on the behaviour of Pakistani adolescents; To identify the role of socio economic factors that influence Pakistani adolescents' crime learning behaviour.

The research questions of the study as under: What are the most popular television crime shows among adolescents?; How do Pakistani adolescents learn crime method from television crime shows?; What are the other negative (aggression) and positive effects of television crime shows on the behaviour of Pakistani adolescents?; How do the socio economic factors influence Pakistani adolescents' crime learning behaviour?

## **2. Literature Review**

### *2.1. Crime Learning Behaviours of Adolescents*

In recent years, there has been a surge in the quantity of media content that glorifies risk-taking behaviour. Peter Fischer, Tobias Greitemeyer, Andreas Kastenmüller and Claudia Vogrincic conducted a meta-analysis involving more than 80,000 participants and 105 independent effect sizes to examine whether exposure to such media depictions increased their recipients' risk-taking inclinations. A positive connection was found for overall, combined risk taking ( $g = .41$ ); as well as its underlying dimensions: risk-taking behaviours ( $g = .41$ ), risk-positive cognitions and attitudes ( $g = .35$ ), and risk-positive emotions ( $g = .56$ ). This effect was observed across varying research methods (experimental, correlational, longitudinal); types of media (video games, movies, advertising, TV, music); and differing risk-related outcome measures (e.g., smoking, drinking, risky driving, sexual behaviour) (Fischer, Greitemeyer, Kastenmüller, Vogrincic, & Sauer, 2011).

Brown and Bobkowski (2011) reviewed the past decade's research on the use and effects of older (television, music, movies, magazines) and newer media (the Internet, cell phones, social networking) on adolescents' health and well-being. They presented a portrait of patterns of use of the media and then indicated the predictors and effects of those patterns on adolescents' mental health. They included the research on the effects of exposure to specific kinds of content on adolescents' aggressive behaviour, gender roles, sexual relationships, body image disturbances, obesity, and substance use. Given the accumulating evidence that adolescents' use of media contribute to a range of potentially unhealthy behaviours, including aggression, body image disturbance, bad nutrition, early sexual intercourse, and tobacco and alcohol use (Brown & Bobkowski, 2011).

Commonly perceived as rare, crime imitation behaviour has not been sufficiently studied. In an effort to encourage research, Surette (2013) offers a refined estimate of the proportion of offenders and at-risk individuals who report personal imitation crime histories. An analysis of 10 estimates spanning 50 years of self-reported imitator crime prevalence among just under 1,500 respondents was conducted. The studies were conducted between 1975 and 2011. Six used interviews to obtain their prevalence estimate, three used written questionnaires, and one used a mix of written and oral responses. Samples were drawn from four U.S. locations and one foreign country. Collectively, the 10 study estimates indicate that about one in four respondents reported personal imitator crime histories. Imitation crime behaviour was indicated as a characteristic of a substantial number of offenders and at-risk youth (Surette, 2013). This crime imitation behaviour is deserving of more serious research and a number of associated research questions await attention.

There has been much discussion of associations between media and long term behavioural insight effects' problems with respect to adolescents' development. Most, although not all, of the published studies report that media using is associated with the potential of social learning analytics to identify and predict media literacy skills from media platforms (Ahn, 2013; Möller, Krahe, Busching, & Krause, 2012; Prot et al., 2014; Wiedeman, Black, Dolle, Finney, & Coker, 2015).

## *2.2 Television and Crime Learning*

Opinions on the matter of media violence effects are wide ranging. Some scholars (Anderson et al., 2003) claim that media violence effects have been conclusively demonstrated, so much so that the certainly equals that of smoking and lung cancer. By contrast, other scholars have claimed that the entire media violence research field has been mismanaged, with weak, inconsistent results; poor measures of aggression; a mismatch between the theories and actual crime data; and failure to consider alternative causes of aggression such as personality, evolution, or family violence (Ferguson, San Miguel, & Hartley, 2009; Fischer et al., 2011; Savage & Yancey, 2008).

Research about the relationship between exposure to TV violence and viewers' aggression suggests that TV violence is one of the factors that contribute to the development of aggressive behaviour. A study conducted in Portugal (2012) examined the role of identification with violent TV heroes, enjoyment of TV violence, and perceived reality in TV violence as mediators of the relationship between viewing TV violence and subsequent physical and verbal aggression. A sample of 722 4th, 6th, and 8th grade students from schools in the central region of Portugal completed measures assessing

enjoyment of TV violence, perceived reality, aggression, identification with violent TV heroes, and exposure to TV violence. The results showed that the relationship between TV violence and physical aggression is mediated by enjoyment of TV violence, perceived reality in TV violence, and identification with violent TV heroes (Pinto da Mota Matos, Alves Ferreira, & Haase, 2012).

Emerging research suggests sexual media affects sexual behaviour, but most studies are based on regional samples and a few include measures of newer mediums. Furthermore, little is known about how sexual media relate to sexual violence victimization. Ybarra, Strasburger and Mitchell (2014) tried to find this equation in their empirical study. They included data from 1058 youth 14 to 21 years of age in the national, online Growing up with Media study. Forty seven percent reported that many or almost all/all of at least one type of media they consumed depicted sexual situations. Exposure to sexual media on television and movies, and music was greater than online and in games. All other things equal, more frequent exposure to sexual media was related to ever having had sex, coercive sex victimization, and attempted/completed rape (Ybarra, Strasburger, & Mitchell, 2014).

### *2.3 Socioeconomic Factors in Crime learning and Juvenile Delinquency*

Pakistan is facing an ever-increasing juvenile delinquency and there are insufficient research efforts to know the reasons and supporting phenomenal in juvenile delinquency. An attempt to find the expected reasons behind these critical phenomena was conducted by Malik and Riaz (2010). The open ended data, through well-structured and pre-tested questionnaires, were collected only from the Karachi Central Prison and the Borstal Institutions located in Karachi, Pakistan. The result reveals the causes that are based on conflicting environments, in and outside the home, as well as spoiling attitudes and bad impact influenced by media. Poverty is the nucleus of all the anti-social actions and is the main cause of increasing juvenile delinquency (Malik & Riaz, 2010).

Researchers have agreed that family disruption is linked to delinquent behaviour. However, which gender is affected most is a matter of disagreement among several researchers. Empirical literature found boys to be more affected based on genetic and environmental influences. An investigation focused on delinquency, family issues, and the impact of viewing violence among Haitian youth conducted in 2010. The study used ideas drawn from sociological theory and social learning theory, and applied a qualitative method of phenomenological inquiry to attain a better understanding of the personal lived experiences of 16 individuals. The participation criteria included non-incarcerated adults between the ages of 18 to 40 years old who were former street children/juvenile delinquents living in Haiti. Findings indicated that poverty was the most significant factor of delinquency, followed by physical and emotional abuse, lack of family support, and violence (César, 2012).

Juvenile crimes and the behaviours attached to it are a popular issue of social research. An empirical view presented by Nisar, Ullah, Ali, & Alam (2015). The study aimed to explore the family, peer group and economic factors of juvenile crime. The research has been conducted in Central Jail Peshawar. Interview schedule had been used as a tool for data collection. A sample of 45 out of 50 juveniles was selected through purposive sampling technique. This study found that a majority of the respondents was illiterate (31.1%) and belong to the nuclear family system; most of the delinquents were in the age group of 15-18 years. Most of them belonged to low income profile (42.2%) and were

prone to friend's bad association (75.6%) which increase the rate of juvenile crimes (Nisar, Ullah, Ali, & Alam, 2015).

Previous research on the association between socioeconomic status (SES) and child and adolescent antisocial behaviour has produced findings showing variation in the strength of association. The relationship between family SES and antisocial behaviour, however, was independent of higher-level constructs such as national income inequality. These results indicate that SES can be considered a robust correlate of broadly conceptualised antisocial behaviour, but the strength of this relationship may depend on the antisocial subtype under investigation and the design of the study (Piotrowska, Stride, Croft, & Rowe, 2015),

Adolescents and their families defy narrow descriptions. Social, environmental, and family risk factors tend to cluster, and any number of them can occur together within the same family. Understanding the role and influence of each of these factors is a difficult task. In looking at the clustering of family risk factors, one goal is to identify which combinations of risk factors promote early misbehaviour because, more than likely, early misbehaviour is the result of an accumulation of a number of factors. The number of risk factors and stressors and the length of exposure to them have a strong impact on child behaviour. A number of social adversities in families can affect child's delinquency. These factors include parenting, maltreatment, family violence, divorce, parental psychopathology, familial antisocial behaviours, teenage parenthood, family structure, and family size. (Bui, 2009; Cicchetti & Rogosch, 2002; Derzon, 2010; Maas, Herrenkohl, & Sousa, 2008; Wasserman et al., 2003)

In conclusion the deviant peers contribute to serious offending by child delinquents during the period of their transition to adolescence (Dodge, Dishion, & Lansford, 2006; Maschi, Carolyn, & Morgen, 2008; Meldrum, Young, & Weerman, 2009; Schreck & Fisher, 2004; Taylor, Peterson, Esbensen, & Freng, 2007; Vitulano, Fite, & Rathert, 2010).

### **3. Conclusion**

After examining the various materials in the relevant areas of this study that are available to the researcher, it appears that the most of the studies on juvenile delinquency with respect to the media, especially on TV affects are on aggression. The aspect of crime learning behaviour analyses is a research gap, which this study endeavours to address. The researcher raises this concern in order to fully understand the dimension of how television crime shows impacts on the youth in the juvenile jail. Moreover, considering the case of Pakistan, the available research that analyse how television crime shows take part in teaching crime to adolescents is minimal. The importance of socioeconomic factors in juvenile delinquency cannot be neglected. A brief view of the professional literature analysing socioeconomic factors in adolescents' risky behaviours has been elaborated above.

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