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Abstract

This paper aims to present the place occupied by television in the life of teenagers and to emphasize the importance of television in shaping the opinions and behavior modeling. Television offers often some behavioral models which demonstrate how to achieve goals regarded as legitimate one through illegal means such as the use of violence. The research that we realized it was based on a quantitative methodology focused on identifying the social effects of television on adolescents. The qualitative methods used allowed us to identify student attitudes after watching some movies with violent content and determine the type of student behavior in situations that replicate the causal diagrams from films followed.

Keywords: *television, adolescents, social effects, movies, violence*

TELEVISION AND THE SOCIAL EFFECTS ON ADOLESCENTS

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1. Context of the research

The social effects of television on young people made the subject of dozens of research in the last 70 years. In one of such study, the authors talk about television as being linked to "the death of childhood". "The television, with its programs is seen as an outsider, an uninvited guest in the protective home that brings harsh reality of the outside world in the living room and feed children's minds with sex and violence".

In the United States, with the advent of the cinema, was born also the question regarding the possible relationship between violent content of films and the delinquency. An unequivocal explanation has not been given ever: there is no scientist to claim that there is a virtual causality. Rather the question is whether the media contribute to the cause or exacerbate the antisocial behavior of individuals. Moreover the research is continually hampered by the difficulty we face in measuring the effects because they have no means to delineate the empirical phenomenon. However, beyond these obstacles, the theoretical papers devoted to violence, to violent behavior attributed to the media, are very numerous.

Therefore we propose grouping them according to five fundamental axes:

a. The Cathartic approach

From this perspective, everyday life, the individuals face a number of frustrating situations that may degenerate into aggressive scenes. The catharsis is the "ease" of this kind of frustration, through imagined participation in aggressive scene. The television thus serves as a means of alleviating aggressive individuals. Contrary to the success in the '60s, the theory does not really persuade the scientists.

b Analyses made in terms of aggressive stimuli.

Berkovitz (1962), being the opposite of the Cathartic thesis sees in the media a source of aggressive indices, able to amplify the aggressive phenomenon. The exposure to aggressive stimuli enhances the emotional tension of the individual, and this can cause the aggressive behavior. How to make an aggressive stage is a crucial variable for the viewer reaction (Ferréol, Neculau, 2003). If the aggressive act is presented as "justified", then it will increase the likelihood of an aggressive response from the viewer. This thesis aimed at the short-term effects, is widespread among psychologists.

c "Apprenticeship" by observation.

Proposed by two psychologists, Bandura and Walters (1963), the approach is based on demonstrations where children - scenes noting aggressive media easily learn such behaviors and contextual get to practice. The researchers do not automatically invoke here an imitation of violent behaviors, but a true "apprenticeship" that produce long-term effects in a favorable situation.

Psychologists insist on the concept of "apprenticeship", which means that - depending on the reward or punishment model seen on TV is more or less adopted by the child.

D. The strengthening

This thesis suggests that aggression shown by the media reinforces the natural aggressiveness of individuals. According to Klapper (1960), one of the supporters of the idea, media violence does not contribute directly to increased aggression, but enables the individual predisposition (something already there).

This approach shares with the others the emphasis on individual differences. However, if the followers of the Cathartic thesis and those of the effect of "apprenticeship" through observation carried only just a few social variables in their statements, the supporters of the idea of "curing" focus mainly on teaching social and social relations between individuals. On the one hand, they claim that individuals from similar social groups tend to share the same values, attitudes and behaviors and, secondly, that individuals whose social relations are stable not change their responses (aggressive) by the viewed scenes. This would mean that violent shows acts only on the behavior of individuals less balanced, unstable, poorly integrated into society.

e. Culture of violence

This thesis, developed by George Gerbner team in the Annenberg School of Communication, University of Pennsylvania, proposes a different approach. Its origin being determined by the sociologists, the emphasis is rather on the social dimension of the audience and not the psychological one (Sterian, 2010). The attention is directed exclusively toward the TV, as this means of mass communication became "the gun culture" of the American society that generated a kind of "symbolic cultural environment".

The phenomenon reflects very negatively on young viewers in search of patterns and with a tendency to perceive the world as is presented on the small screen. Contrary to other theses, which focus on violent behavior, here the emphasis is mainly on emotions such as

fear and anxiety generated by the television programs. The more concerns towards the “symbolic world”, increases the trend of individuals to perceive the world through “tv glasses”, which in time will lead to a number of social implications of his behavior. The social factors - gender, race, profession, residence, education level are involved decisively in this approach.

The cultivation theory launched by Gerbner, claims that media and especially television became “a family member or monopolizing the communication with the outside world, or accumulating other information sources. Due to almost constant exposure to media messages, people get addicted to it, so through knowledge of the environment in which they live as well as the incorporation of a certain way of thinking the world around. It's about the effect of “cultivation”, which leads to setting a common vision of a world of common roles and common “values”. Gerbner divides those who are watching television in people looking for more than four hours / day (“heavy viewers”) and those who watch less television (“light viewers”), and demonstrated that those who watch more on TV have a world view “grown”, dependent of the concept distributed by television.

The leading effect of watching TV is according to Gerbner's view, the following: the loyal viewers describe the world through the distorted image provided by television. The secondary effect, less tangibly can be seen, Gerbner says in the consequences of intensely watching television which is expressed by specific attitudes, such as for law, order or personal safety rather than through the general belief that television provides an accurate reflection of the degree of violence the world.

Following this brief historical journey, we see that there is no sentence to establish a direct and undeniable causal link between the violent behavior and media. But all recognize that the media is one of the triggers of the aggressive behavior.

A general conclusion of all these studies is clear that television influences children's behavior. What is worse is that the level and intensity of violence on TV is growing. As children are desensitized the scenes must be more shocking and terrible. Many forms of violence shown on television are acts that few ever think of committing them. However, the imitation phenomenon proves that these inconceivable acts of barbarism influence the behavior in our society to alarming levels.

2. Objectives

The main objective of the research was to identify the social effects of television on adolescents. The secondary objectives that we considered were:

- determine the frequency with which the adolescents watching television programs and the number of hours spent daily in front of the TV;
- investigating the preferences for certain programs broadcast by television;
- assessing the influence of television on personal opinions and attitudes of the pupils;
- assessing how the mass media and the messages they induced elements in our attitudes and values among adolescents;
- identifying of student's attitudes after watching some violent movies and determination of the students behavior in situations that replicate the causal diagrams of the films.

3. Hypotheses

Hypotheses on the effects of television on high school students were:

1. Preferences for certain shows or movies, differ according to sex, age, and number of hours spent watching TV;
2. There is a direct link between media consumption and the attitudes of adolescents;
3. The television programs create new attitudes, perceptions and behavior patterns among teenagers.

4. Methodology

The research methods used to reach that goal are both quantitative and qualitative and consisted of applying different questionnaires among teenagers from one of the famous high schools in Brăila. In an attempt to discover something about today's adolescent personality and perception and how much is it influenced by the television programs we designed a survey based on different questionnaire techniques.

To measure the variables considered representative for assessing the influence of television on young we used both quantitative research tools related to, namely the questionnaire and some qualitative research methods such as tests Berkley.

The research methods and their associated tools used in this study were subject to the specific theme. We considered defining characteristics of adolescent personality structure: introversion/extraversion, creativity factors, perceptibility images, attitudes and emotional reactions and style features.

As a result of the use of television we have selected as representative: the attitude towards certain types of films, the solutions offered by the subjects in certain conflicting scenarios, affective-attitudinal turnaround time of the televisual content of messages, such as fear of crime.

Identifying and evaluating the relationships between these aspects asked the combination of specific research methods of psychology, both emotional and social ones.

5. The researched community

The analyzed community was made up of pupils from the Economic College "Ion Ghica" in Brăila. This community was defined by the number of those who were willing to answer at the questionnaires. Thus, the questionnaires were completed by students from all years of study, the sample being randomly.

The sampling was nonprobabilistic, the only selection criterion of the respondents' being the quality of pupils at the economic specializations of the Economic College "Ion Ghica".

The sample was comprised of a total of 100 subjects, which were selected according to sex, a total of 50 boys and 50 girls. The selected subjects are aged between 14 and 16 years. We believe that the gender and age structure of the sample is representative and the objective of this study.

6. The research results

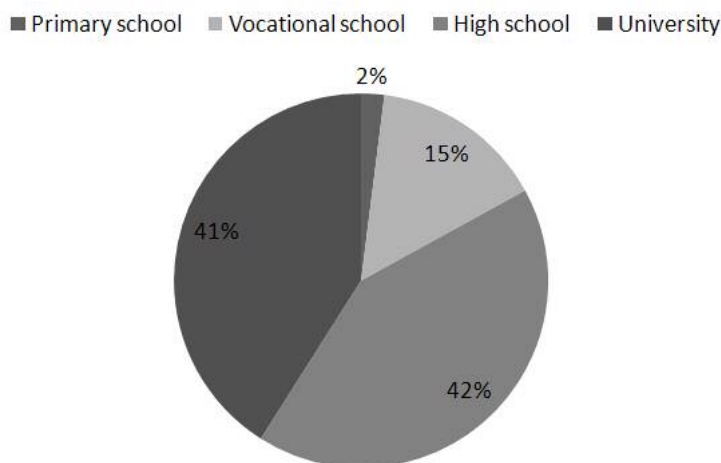
The research was conducted from October 1 to November 1, 2011, and the questionnaires were applied by the operator in educational counseling classes.

To discover more about the family and the viewing habits of the respondents we have some questions on a questionnaire that included identification interrogations concerning: the education level of parents, the number of hours spent watching television, the frequency of tracking certain programs.

We summarized the answers to these questions so we got following categories: subjects whose parents only completed

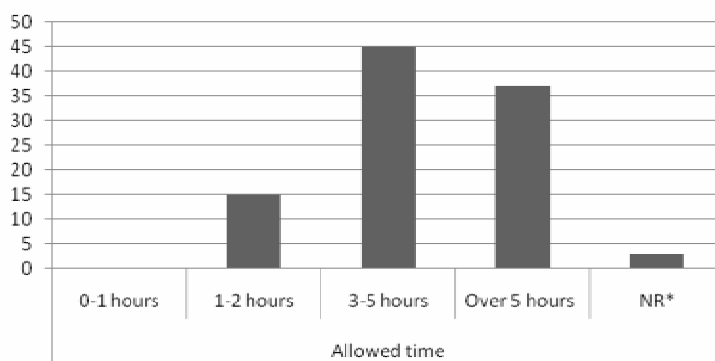
elementary school, subjects whose parents graduated from a vocational school, parents who finished high school and university-educated parents.

Figure no. 1.
The distribution of subjects by level of parent's education



Another direction in our research was to identify the time spent by teenagers in front of the TV. Thus, 45% of the respondents said they spend between 3 and 5 hours daily watching TV, 37% over 5 hours and 15% between one and two hours. To this question we recorded also 3 non-answers, from people who for various reasons could not specify time spent watching TV, but the percentage of 3% does not affect substantially the results of the research.

Figure no. 2. The distribution of subjects by number of watched hours
Television



**They did not want to answer.*

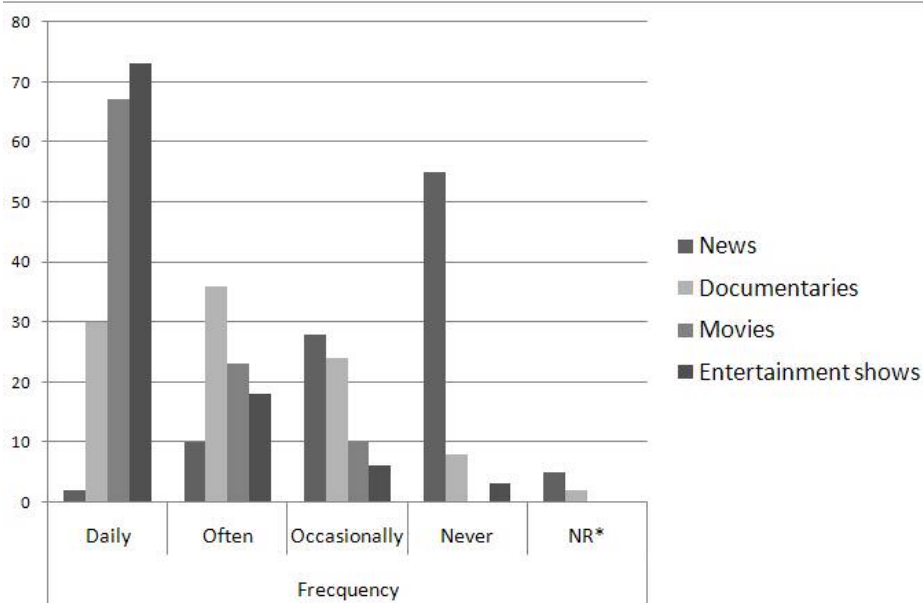
The identifying of adolescents favorite TV programs was another objective of the research. We built this item offering to the subjects four categories of TV programs and variables for frequency (daily, often, occasionally, never). By far, the student's preferences are for shows and feature films.

The entertainment shows are watched daily by 73% of the respondents, only 3% stating that they never look at such programs. The favorite TV shows for young people are usually the tabloid one, which are based on entertainment, shocking statements or material type paparazzo.

Movies ranks the second position in the ranking of young people favorite TV programs, 67% are watching movies broadcast on television daily. The percentage is indicative to support the objective mentioned at the beginning of the research.

The documentaries movies ranks third, 36% of the respondents often look such programs and 30% watch daily documentaries submitted by the niche television. 55% of pupils don't ever watch the news was another result of research that draws attention to the parts value of the young. Only 2% of all respondents follow the news daily, fixed option or other family members or the interests of students.

Figure no. 3. Distribution of subjects by type of program pursued



The evaluation program included monitoring the following sequences: watching movies, presenting some conflicting scenarios, the application of some questionnaires to measure subjective attitude towards the movies. The subjects were asked to watch four different series of films. And at the end of viewing, the subjects were applied "Questionnaire on attributes of watched movies."

Margin of a day watching the last film of the four series, the subjects went through the next stage of research, called "A conflict research", where they were shown a series of conflicts extracted from the movies. To mask the true purpose of the research, the scenarios were presented as various legal cases or criminal trials. Students were asked to evaluate the effectiveness of violent or non-violent solutions of conflicts specified.

The films presented were:

1. In the category Movies "without violence": "The Last Emperor", "Memoirs of a Geisha", "The Red Violin", "The Legend of 1900".
2. In the category of classic violence: "Firewall", "Pride and Glory", "Mr. Brooke", "The Departed".
3. In the category of superviolent Movies: "I Saw", "Hostel I", "Domino", "Die Hard 4".
4. In the horror category "Silent Hill", "The Grudge I", "Wrong Turn", "Mirrors".

The set of conflicting scenarios

Subjects were presented a booklet containing the next six hypothetical scenarios:

1. There is an almost perfect family, a father who has achieved all the goals and is leading a multinational and a wonderful wife too. But he is unhappy with his life and his full routine so he creates a dangerous alter ego, proving to be one of the most feared serial killers.
2. A person finds himself being captured along with some foreign characters. The only way to escape from there is to renounce humanity and to kill in cold blood.
3. Due to financial and emotional hardship, the husband / the wife is cheating with the greatest enemy of the partner and is plotting to kill him.
4. A family is taken hostage in exchange for burglary a protection performance bank system.
5. A computer virus threatens the world's resources and one policeman has to solve the problem at the cost of his daughter.

6. Police declare war on mafia and is determined to catch the big boss at all costs. A lot of innocent victims fall prey to police intervention.

Each scenario has three possible solutions for actions and answer according to own opinion. Subjects were asked to analyze each solution separately and indicate their preference by circling a letter representing a set choice for that scenario. The solutions chosen were subsequently classified into: nonviolent, violent and neutral towards the violence.

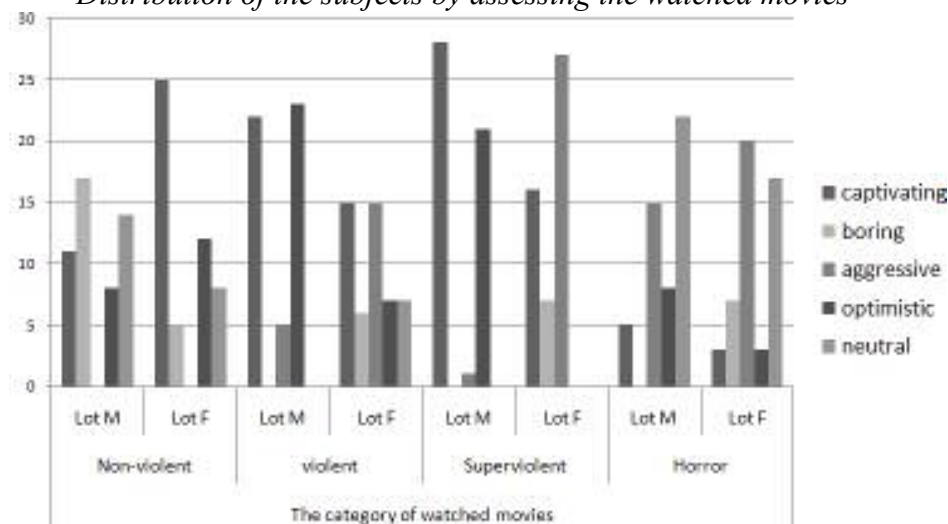
We included a list of five adjectives: exciting, boring, aggressive, optimistic, neutral subjects that was presented immediately to students after viewing each film category. Subjects were asked to tick in the list presented those adjectives expressing their mental disposal induced by that movie category on a scale of 0 to 11. The attitudes expressed by the adjectives were grouped into 3 categories namely: positive attitude towards each of the 4 categories of films (7-11 points), negative attitude towards each of the 4 categories of movies (0-3 point) and neutral attitude towards each of the 4 categories of movies (4-6 point).

The attitude towards films

After watching the four film categories described above, the distribution of subjects as how they appreciate every genre of film is the one in the table below.

Figure no. 4.

Distribution of the subjects by assessing the watched movies

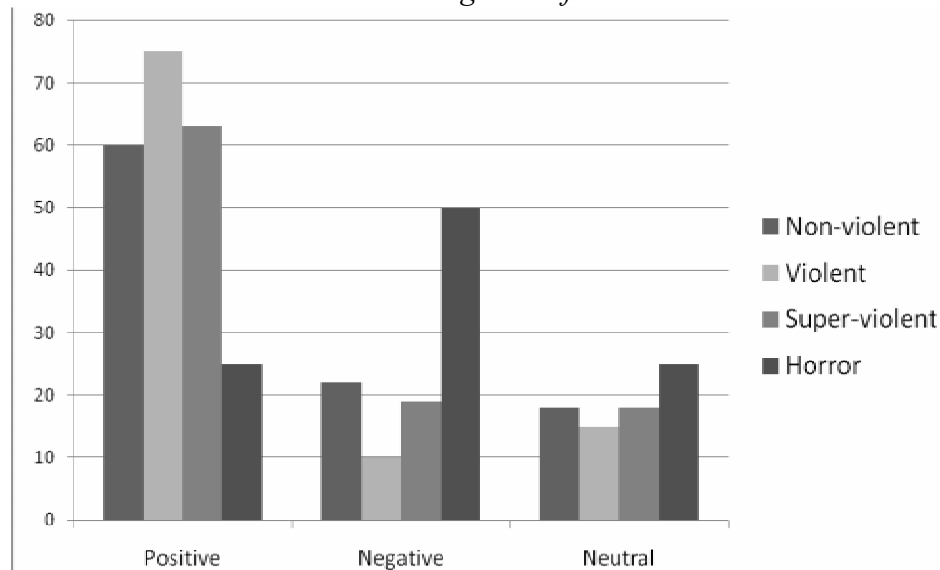


For efficiency was considered the adjectives used to express film appreciation to these three basic attitudes: acceptance (favorable, positive) fail (unfavorable, negative) and indifference (neutral).

It was found that the subjects who appreciate the films as optimistic and exciting have an attitude of acceptance of that category of films (positive attitude). Those who appreciate them as boring and aggressive have an attitude of rejection towards that category of films, and those who catalog them as neutral are indifferent to these movies.

If we made a hierarchy of the preferences by the categories of film, the whole lot, the first place is taken by the violent movies (75%) and the last place by the horror movies (25%). If we sum up the number of acceptances for violent and super-violent movies (130), we conclude that some of the subjects expressed their positive attitude, both for violent films and for the super-violent one. The horror films have met the highest number of refusals (50 per the entire lot investigated).

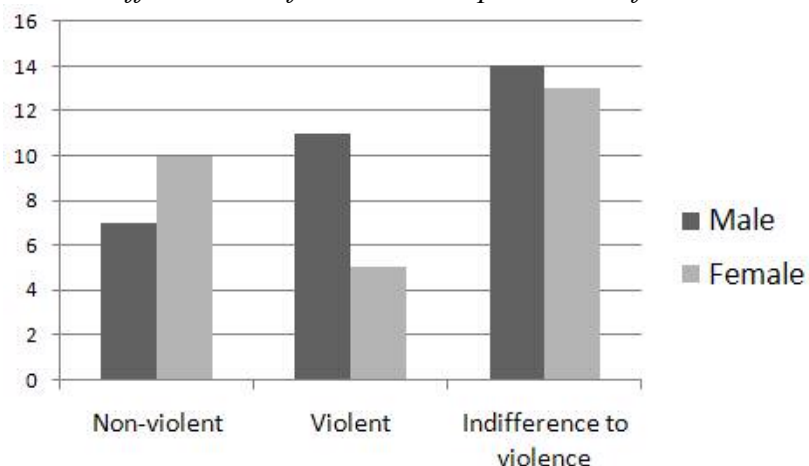
Figure no. 5. Distribution of the subjects of the entire sample by the attitude towards the categories of watched movies



As you can watch in Table 6, the types of solutions offered at the conflicting scenarios presented after the movies were: non-violent solutions, violent solutions and solutions that indicate indifference to violence. Distribution of subjects in the total group and type of

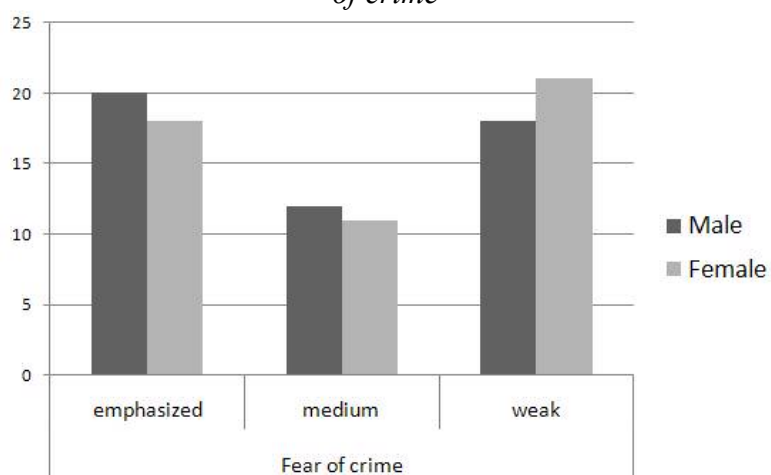
solution shows that more girls than boys choose for non-violent while the violent solutions are chosen much more by the boys than the girls.

Figure no. 6. Distribution of subjects according to the type of solutions offered to conflict scenarios presented after the movies



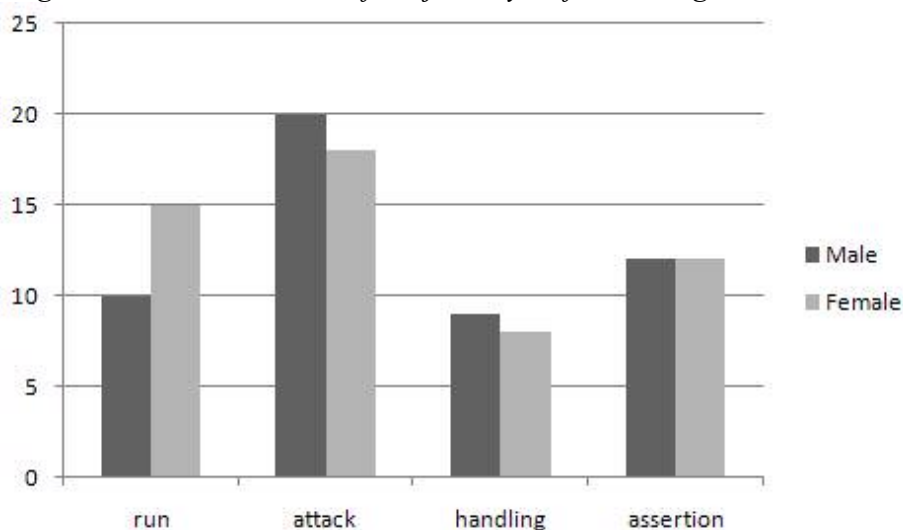
Another aspect of the profile of investigated subjects was the intensity of fear of crime. Female subjects know a fear of crime comparable to the male subjects group, *at* all levels of intensity, with a slight difference to extreme levels. We notice fewer female with a strong fear of crime and fewer male subjects in the group that have a lower fear of crime.

Figure no. 7. Distribution of subjects by the intensity of the fear of crime



Not least, the test of self-awareness of attitudes revealed the response of subjects in different unforeseen situations. So, we found that all the subjects respond with aggression against unforeseen situations no matter how simple it is.

Figure no. 8. Distribution of subjects by self-knowledge test attitudes



Conclusions

After applying this comprehensive study, we were able to reach an edifying result for the age of television in which we live. The first part of the research showed the time spent by pupils watching TV and the types of favorite TV program. Thus, 45% of respondents said they spend between 3 and 5 hours daily watching TV. We also found that pupils preferred TV programs are the entertainment programs indicated by 73% of respondents, 67% preferred the feature films and the documentary films were chosen by 36% of the pupils. Another result of the research that draws attention to the parts value refers to the percentage of young people, 55% of the students who argued that they never looks at the news.

The second part of the research was to reveal how pupils perceive the movies. After watching some films pupils were shown a series of conflicts extracted from the movies. Then the pupils were evaluated the effectiveness of the violent or non-violent solutions for each conflict set. The results showed that most girls would prefer the

non-violent solutions for the conflict resolution while the boys consider most appropriate the violent solutions for the same situations.

We found several aspects following the research which have highlighted the references and changes of the subjects in their behavior during the study. Thus, the results achieved the research objectives and validated the theories presented in the first part of the paper. Also, the hypothesis of the research were confirmed, so that after testing the attitudes, the gender differences were shown to be characteristic for typical reaction scheme that simulates conflicts cases presented in the movies.

Therefore, from investigations conducted, we found that in Romania, the televised violence may influence the behavior of teenagers and sometimes even has the potential to cause violence in interpersonal relationships that they establish.

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