

A Comparison of the Approach to Physical Violence Amongst Primary School Students in Regard to the TV Programs They Watch

İlköğretim Öğrencilerinin Fiziksel Şiddete Başvurma ve Fiziksel Şiddete Yaklaşımlarında Televizyon Programlarının Etkisi

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ABSTRACT Objective: In recent years, the television programs are considered as one of the primary causes for the increase of violence in the behavior of both children and adolescents. In this study, we tried to evaluate the connection between the tendency of the primary school students to resort to physical violence and to adopt physical violence as a way of solving certain problems and the TV programs they watch. **Material and Methods:** This descriptive work has carried out in public-health stations located in central Elazığ. One fifth and one eighth class from the three primary schools of the district were randomly chosen. Field study of research was completed in 2003. Out of the sample population of 2990 students, 2867 filled the questionnaire. The questionnaire, prepared by the researchers after a careful study of the relevant literature, is aimed to assess the relation between the violent behavior and the TV programs watched by the students. To analyze the derived data, 2 tests are performed using SPSS. **Results:** Of the students included in the study, 53.3% were boys and 46.7% were girls with an average age of 12.8±1.7 years. In this study, we found that primary school students were mostly watching Turkish/foreign TV series (%21.8) with high content of violence and rarely children's programs (%0.9). Children getting involved in fights involving physical violence are found to watch primarily violence bearing Turkish/foreign TV series (25.0%) and children programs the least (0.3%). Also, the rate of getting involved in fights involving physical violence was highest amongst children watching sports (85.1%) and Turkish/foreign TV series (79.4%) containing violence (p<0.001). Similarly, the children responding as "yes" to the question "Is physical violence a solution for certain problems?" are most commonly watching Turkish/foreign TV series (27.7%) containing violence. Also, it is observed that the rate of those who consider physical violence as a solution is higher among the children who watch sport programs (45.3%) and Turkish/foreign TV series (42.7%) with violent content (p<0.001). **Conclusion:** Students watching TV programs with high violence content were tend to use violence more often and to regard violence as a way of solving problems to a higher extent. Watching TV is one of the most common spare time activities amongst children and adolescents. Thus, we believe that families, teachers and members of media should play a proactive role in influencing the contents of TV programs with the aim of positively affecting the attitudes of children.

Key Words: Children; adolescents; violence; television

ÖZET Amaç: Son yıllarda çocuk ve ergenlerde şiddet davranışının artmasında en önemli faktörlerden birisi olarak televizyon programları gösterilmektedir. Bu çalışmada, ilköğretim öğrencilerinin izledikleri televizyon programlarına göre fiziksel şiddete başvurma ve karşılaştıkları bazı sorunlarda fiziksel şiddeti çözüm olarak benimseme eğilimlerinin değerlendirilmesi amaçlandı. **Gereç ve Yöntemler:** Tanımlayıcı tipte bu çalışma, Elazığ il merkezinde bulunan sağlık ocağı bölgelerinde gerçekleştirildi. Her bölgeden en az üç ilköğretim okulunun beşinci ve sekizinci sınıflarından birer şube rastgele seçildi. Araştırmanın saha çalışması 2003 yılında yapıldı. Örnekleme alınan toplam 2990 öğrenciden 2867'sine ulaşılarak öğrencilerin fiziksel şiddete başvurma ve en sık izlemiş oldukları televizyon programlarının değerlendirildiği ve literatür kaynaklı olarak hazırlanan bir anket uygulandı. Elde edilen veriler SPSS programına kaydedilerek hata değerlendirme, tabloların hazırlanması ve istatistiksel analiz işlemleri bu program aracılığıyla yapıldı. İstatistiksel analiz yöntemi olarak χ^2 testi kullanıldı. **Bulgular:** Araştırma kapsamına alınan öğrencilerin %53.3'ü erkek, %46.7'si kız öğrenci olup, yaş ortalamaları 12.8 ± 1.7 idi. Çalışmamızda ilköğretim öğrencilerinin en çok şiddet içerikli yerli/yabancı dizileri (%21.8) en az da çocuk programlarını (%0.9) izledikleri belirlendi. Fiziksel şiddet içerecek şekilde kavga edenlerin, en çok şiddet içerikli yerli/yabancı dizi (%25.0), en az da çocuk programları (%0.3) seyrettikleri saptandı. Ayrıca, fiziksel şiddet içerecek şekilde kavga etme oranlarının en yüksek olduğu grupların, spor programı izleyenler (%85.1) ile şiddet içerikli yerli/yabancı dizileri izleyenler (%79.4) olduğu tespit edildi (p<0.001). Benzer şekilde, "Bazı olaylar karşısında fiziksel şiddete başvurma çözüm müdür?" sorusuna "evet" diyenlerin en çok şiddet içerikli yerli/yabancı dizi (%27.7) seyrettikleri, spor programı ile şiddet içerikli yerli/yabancı dizileri izleyenlerin en yüksek oranlarda (sırasıyla %45.3 ve %42.7) fiziksel şiddeti çözüm olarak gördükleri belirlendi (p<0.001). **Sonuç:** Şiddet içeriği yoğun olan programları izleyen öğrencilerin daha yüksek oranda fiziksel şiddete başvurabileceği ve fiziksel şiddeti yüksek oranda çözüm olarak görebilecekleri düşünüldü. Bu nedenle, çocuk ve ergenlerin televizyon izlemleri üzerinde ailelerin, eğitimcilerin ve medya sorumlularının dikkatle durmaları gerektiği kanaatine varıldı.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çocuk; ergen; şiddet; televizyon

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Although, the term media covers a number of different communication channels like television, radio, book, magazine, newspapers, films, video-games and internet, TV is still the most important one due to its high penetration rate in our daily lives and its active visual content. Today, TV receivers are present almost in all houses and attract a huge audience with widely different backgrounds.

In USA, the negative effects of television programs including violence on viewers became a focus of attention for the researchers since 1946, the time when TV commercials got started. In 1954, the first findings about contents of violence on television shows were published.^{1,2} In 1972, an assessment of the accumulated empiric information was announced to the public.³ National Institute of Mental Health declared that viewing violence on television has a strong relation with aggressive behavior compared to the other measured behavioral variables.⁴ Long term effects of watching programs which contain violence from small ages and the positive relationship between programs including violence and aggression is investigated in other studies.^{3,5}

An investigation made by Radio Television High Committee (RTÜK) in our country found that children watch television on average 3.42 hours in a day.⁶ Another study made by the Union of Advertisers (Reklamverenler Derneği) determined that children watch nearly 60.000 crime, death or laceration scenes until they reach the age of 17.

Because of the properties of their mental processes, children can not perceive the difference between the reality and fiction as clearly as adults. Consequently children are more unprotected than adults in front of the television.^{7,8} Thousands of studies on this subject conclude that children are the most affected group from violence on television. In these studies it is repeatedly shown that the violence reflected from televisions is harmful for children's mental health, and is particularly effective among those factors which increase the children's aggressive behavior.⁹⁻¹³

This study is aimed to determine whether TV programs watched by primary school students were influential on their behavior and their approach to violence.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

This descriptive work has carried out in public-health stations located in central Elazığ. One fifth and one eighth class from the three primary schools of the district were randomly chosen. Out of the sample population of 2990 students, 2867 filled the questionnaire.

Field study of research was completed in 2003. The questionnaire had closed-form and open-ended questions about the favorite television programs of the students, whether they use physical violence or not for solving their problems and their view on whether using physical violence is a solution. In the questionnaire, it is remarked to the student that hurting the other side by assaulting with a tool or freehand should be considered as physical violence. Turkish/foreign serial films with intensive action and physical attacks are also accepted as physical violence including programs. For allocating an adequate time for the survey and in order to check the appropriateness of the questions to the age group, a pilot study was carried out in one of the primary schools in advance. In the classes included in the sample group, the questionnaire was filled out under direct observation and with provision of a safe environment without the presence of the teachers or the administrative staff of the school.

The gathered data was processed using SPSS; preparation of the tables and the statistical analyses were carried out with the help of this program. χ^2 tests were employed for statistical analyses.

RESULTS

Of the 2867 students included in this study, 1528 (53.3%) were male and 1339 (46.7%) were female. The youngest student was 10 and the eldest was 17 with the most commonly observed ages are being 14 (985 students) and 11 (947 students). Average age was 12.8 ± 1.7 . Only 46 students were

TABLE 1: The distribution of TV programs frequently watched by children participating in the study.

Types of TV program	No	%
Turkish/foreign TV series containing Violence	592	20.6
Comedy programs	469	16.4
Soap operas	370	12.9
Trivia	308	10.8
Music-entertainment programs	278	9.7
Cartoons	219	7.6
Sports programs	161	5.6
Action and adventure movies	118	4.1
Documentaries	91	3.2
News and talk shows	84	2.9
Children's programs	12	0.4
No Answer	76	2.7
Not Watching TV	65	2.3
Not Having a TV at Home	24	0.8
Total	2867	100.0

the only child in the family and one student has 15 brothers or sisters. 558 students had only 1, 910 students had 2 and 568 students had 3 sisters or brothers. 423 students were living with their grandparents. Only 584 of students had their own private rooms.

Primary school students were primarily watching Turkish/foreign TV series (%20.6) containing violence and children's programs (% 0.4)

the least. Reportedly, 2.0% of the students are not watching TV (56 students) and 0.7% (19 students) do not have a TV at home, while 2.7% (76 students) choose not to answer to this question (Table 1).

In our study we found that male students watch primarily Turkish/foreign films (%28.3) containing violence, and watch child programs the least (% 0.2). However, female students prefer to watch primarily soap operas (% 22.9), and sport programs the least (%0.4) (Table 2).

The χ^2 test applied between sex and the types of the TV programs gives $\chi:471.810$ (SD=11), $p < 0.001$. Accordingly, the frequency distributions obtained by comparing the type of the programs to the sex of the students carry a significantly important difference and the types of the programs that students watch are differentiated by sex. Table 2 also shows that, the viewing rate of the shows containing violence for the males (28.3% rate) drops to 11.9% for females, and viewing rate of soap operas for the female (22.9%) drops to 4.2% for the males. Similarly, the viewing rate of sports shows is 10.2% for the males and 0.4% for the females. Note that females are watching comedy (19.6%) and music-magazine (12.0%) programs more frequently than males with the viewing rates 13.5% and 7.7%, respectively.

TABLE 2: The Distribution of sex and tv programs frequently watched by students participating in the study ***

Types of TV program	Sex									
	Female				Male				Total	
	No	%*	%**	No	%*	%**	No	%**		
Turkish/foreign TV series containing Violence	159	26.9	11.9	433	73.1	28.3	592	21.9		
Comedy programs	263	56.1	19.6	206	43.9	13.5	469	17.4		
Soap operas	306	82.7	22.9	64	17.3	4.2	370	13.7		
Trivia	172	55.8	12.8	136	44.2	8.9	308	11.4		
Music-entertainment programs	161	57.9	12.0	117	42.1	7.7	278	10.2		
Cartoons	88	40.2	6.6	131	59.8	8.6	219	8.1		
Sports programs	5	3.1	0.4	156	96.9	10.2	161	6.0		
Action and adventure movies	43	36.4	3.2	75	63.6	4.9	118	4.4		
Documentaries	40	44.0	3.0	51	56.0	3.3	91	3.4		
News and talk shows	31	36.9	2.3	53	63.1	3.5	84	3.1		
Children's programs	9	75.0	0.7	3	25.0	0.2	12	0.4		
Total	1277	47.3		1425	52.7		2702	100.0		

*Percentage of lines

**Percentage of columns

***Non-responders, people who do not watch TV and who do not have TV at home are not included in the study.

TABLE 3: Physical violence requiring fight involvement of children recruited in the studies in relation with the TV programs they watched most often ***

Types of TV program	Fighting status						Total	
	Not Fighting			Fighting			No	%**
	No	%*	%**	No	%*	%**		
Turkish/foreign TV series containing Violence	122	20.6	14.8	470	79.4	25.0	592	21.9
Comedy programs	173	36.9	21.0	296	63.1	15.7	469	17.4
Soap operas	151	40.8	18.4	219	59.2	11.6	370	13.7
Trivia	104	33.8	12.7	204	66.2	10.9	308	11.4
Music entertainment programs	87	31.3	10.6	191	68.7	10.2	278	10.2
Cartoons	61	27.9	7.4	158	72.1	8.4	219	8.1
Sports programs	24	14.9	2.9	137	85.1	7.3	161	6.0
Action and adventure movies	32	27.1	3.9	86	72.9	4.6	118	4.4
Documentaries	32	35.2	3.9	59	64.8	3.1	91	3.4
News and talk shows	29	34.5	3.5	55	65.5	2.9	84	3.1
Children's programs	7	58.3	0.9	5	41.7	0.3	12	0.4
Total	822		30.4	1880		69.6	2702	100.0

*Percentage of lines

**Percentage of columns

***Non-responders, people who do not watch TV and who do not have TV at home are not included in the study.

Children getting into fights involving physical violence are found to watch primarily Turkish/foreign TV series (25.0%) containing violence and children programs the least (0.3%). The rate of getting into fights involving physical violence was highest amongst the students watching sports programs (85.1%) and Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence (79.4%) and was lowest amongst students watching soap operas (59.2%) and children's programs (41.7%) ($p < 0.001$) (Table 3).

The detailed distribution of fighting rates involving physical violence according to the sexes is given in Table 4 which shows that 48.8% of the females and only 14.0% of males prefer not to get into fights. The students in the largest portion of the not-fighting females (23.0%) watch soap operas and do not watch sports programs at all ($p < 0.001$). The largest portion of the not-fighting males (23.6%) are found to be watching Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence and not watching children programs at all ($p < 0.001$). The figure $p < 0.001$ is evaluated by analyzing the comparison of sexes and the program types they watch among the students who do not get into fights involving violence. As a result, it can be stated that the fa-

vorite program type differs according to sex among the not-fighting students.

Besides, the analysis of within-group data for females and males who fight gives $p < 0.001$. When ki-square test is applied between sex and the types of the shows preferred by the students who fight, we get $\chi:303.488$ ($SD=10$), $p < 0.001$. Evaluating these findings together, we come to the conclusion that fighting or not fighting behavior of male and female students depend on the programs they watch (Table 4).

Our study determined that fifth grade students watched primarily comedy shows (24.3%) and children programs the least (0.6%) and eighth grade students watched primarily Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence (22.6%) and children programs the least (0.3%) (Table 5).

Table 5 indicates that 30.6% of the fifth grade students who don't fight watch primarily comedy shows and watch children programs the least ($p < 0.001$). The 24.0% of fifth grade students who fight, watch primarily Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence and watch children programs the least ($p < 0.001$). When the frequency distribution of this table is analyzed $\chi:34.864$ ($SD=10$), $p < 0.001$ were evaluated. The data shows that the viewing

TABLE 4: The distribution of the fighting status of the students included in the study according to sex and the tv show they watch the most ***

Types of TV program	Fighting Status and Sex								Total	
	Not Fighting				Fighting				No	%**
	Female		Male		Female		Male			
	No	%*	No	%*	No	%*	No	%*		
Turkish/foreign TV series containing Violence	75	12.7	47	7.9	84	14.2	386	65.2	592	21.9
Comedy programs	135	28.8	38	8.1	128	27.3	168	35.8	469	17.4
Soap operas	143	38.6	8	2.2	163	44.1	56	15.1	370	13.7
Trivia	89	28.9	15	4.9	83	26.9	121	39.3	308	11.4
Music entertainment Programs	73	26.3	14	5.0	88	31.7	103	37.0	278	10.2
Cartoons	38	17.4	23	10.5	50	22.8	108	49.3	219	8.1
Sports programs	0	0.0	24	14.9	5	3.1	132	82.0	161	6.0
Action and adventure Movies	23	19.5	9	7.6	20	17.0	66	55.9	118	4.4
Documentaries	24	26.4	8	8.8	16	17.6	43	47.2	91	3.4
News and talk shows	17	20.2	12	14.3	14	16.7	41	48.8	84	3.1
Children's programs	6	50.0	1	8.3	3	25.0	2	16.7	12	0.4
Total	623	23.0	199	7.4	654	24.2	1226	45.4	2702	100.0

*Percentage of lines

**Percentage of columns

*** Non-responders, people who do not watch TV and who do not have TV at home are not included in the study.

rate of Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence is quite high among the fifth grade students who fight and the viewing rate of comedy programs and soap operas (which is watched at the highest rate among the fifth grade students who don't fight) is very low. Soap operas are the most popular among the eighth grade students who do not fight with the largest viewing rate of 22.0% who do not watch children programs at all (p< 0.001). The 25.9% of the eighth grade students who fight are found watching Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence at the largest rate and not watching children programs at all (p< 0.001). Comparing fighting/not fighting eighth grade students according to program types they watch, we get p< 0.001. As a result, we observe that the viewing rate of Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence is

quite high among the eighth grade students who fight but the the viewing rate of soap operas, which is preferred highly by those who do not fight, is significantly low and this difference between rates is meaningful.

When all data and analysis results from Table 5 are evaluated together, the fighting/not fighting behavior of fifth and eighth grade students can be said to depend on the physical violence content of TV programs they watch.

Similarly, the children responding as "yes" to the question of 'Is physical violence a solution for certain problems?' are primarily watching Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence (27.7%) and children programs the least (0.3%). Also, children watching sports programs (45.3%) and Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence (42.7%)

TABLE 5: The distribution of the fighting status of the students included in the study according to their basic education grades and the tv show they watch the most ***

Types of TV program	Fighting Status and Their Basic Education Grades								Total	
	Not Fighting				Fighting				No	%**
	5th Grade		8th Grade		5th Grade		8th Grade			
	No	%*	No	%*	No	%*	No	%*		
	%**	%**	%**	%**	%**	%**	%**			
Turkish/foreign TV series containing Violence	66	11.1	56	9.5	215	36.3	255	43.1	592	21.9
Comedy programs	132	28.1	41	8.8	191	40.7	105	22.4	469	17.4
Soap operas	65	17.6	86	23.2	107	28.9	112	30.3	370	13.7
Trivia	41	13.3	63	20.4	76	24.7	128	41.6	308	11.4
Music entertainment programs	22	7.9	65	23.4	63	22.7	128	46.0	278	10.2
Cartoons	55	25.1	6	2.7	128	58.5	30	13.7	219	8.1
Sports programs	11	6.8	13	8.1	50	31.1	87	54.0	161	6.0
Action and adventure movies	13	11.0	19	16.1	26	22.0	60	50.9	118	4.4
Documentaries	14	15.4	18	19.8	26	28.5	33	36.3	91	3.4
News and talk shows	7	8.3	22	26.2	12	14.3	43	51.2	84	3.1
Children's programs	5	41.6	2	16.7	3	0.25	2	16.7	12	0.4
Total	431	16.0	391	14.4	897	33.2	983	36.4	2702	100.0
		32.5		28.5		67.5		71.5		

*Percentage of lines **Percentage of columns *** Non-responders, people who do not watch TV and who do not have TV at home are not included in the study.

are the ones who see physical violence as a solution at a greater rate and students watching soap operas (27.8%) and children TV shows (25.0%) are the ones who see physical violence as a solution at a much lower rate (p<0.001) (Table 6).

The children responding as ‘Can’t live without fighting’ to the question of ‘What do you think about fighting?’ are found to be watching primarily Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence (28.1%) and children programs the least (0.2%). Additionally, the answer ‘Can’t live without fighting’ comes mostly from the children watching Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence (%38.0) and action-adventure movies (%37.3) and to a lower extent from those watching children TV shows (%16.7) and documentaries (%23.1) (p<0.001) (Table 7). Because the question on this

table and on table 6 is related, the obtained results are the same as expected.

There are total of 32 students saying “I bring tools to the school in case I will fight” and 15 (46.9%) of them are found to be watching TV series containing violence.

There are total of 215 students saying “I would beat my children when I’ll become a parent” and the largest ratio of them (27.0%, 58 students) are found to be watching TV series containing violence.

DISCUSSION

It is commonly accepted that television shows have considerable influence on determining conceptions, values and reactions of individuals. Our study revealed that 99.2% of the families have television

TABLE 6: The distribution of the answers provided by children participating in the study to the question "Is physical violence a solution for certain problems?" according to the types of TV programs they watch most often ***.

Types of TV program	Is physical violence a solution?				Total	
	Yes		No		No	%**
	No	%* %**	No	%* %**		
Turkish/foreign TV series containing Violence	253	42.7 27.7	339	57.3 19.0	592	21.9
Comedy programs	137	29.2 15.0	332	70.8 18.6	469	17.4
Soap operas	103	27.8 11.2	267	72.2 14.9	370	13.7
Trivia	94	30.5 10.3	214	69.5 12.0	308	11.4
Music entertainment programs	89	32.0 9.7	189	68.0 10.6	278	10.2
Cartoons	74	33.8 8.1	145	66.2 8.1	219	8.1
Sports programs	73	45.3 8.0	88	54.7 4.9	161	6.0
Action and adventure movies	36	30.5 3.9	82	69.5 4.6	118	4.4
Documentaries	27	29.7 2.9	64	70.3 3.6	91	3.4
News and talk shows	27	32.1 2.9	57	67.9 3.2	94	3.1
Children's programs	3	25.0 0.3	9	75.0 0.5	12	0.4
Total	916	33.9	1786	66.1	2702	100.0

*Percentage of lines, **Percentage of columns, ***Non-responders, people who do not watch TV and who do not have TV at home are not included in the study.

at their homes and practically there is no home without a television today. The most affected group from television at every house is known to be the children. Consequently, it can be said that putting explicit violence in television programs more than it exists in daily life, results in an increased amount of mental trauma. American Psychiatry Institution, based on a research made public, has stated that, being exposed to violence scenes displayed in media has increased violent attitudes among children.

The viewers basically get affected from media by taking it as a raw model. They also get exposed continuously and even systematically, to the circumstances of protagonists being in negative conditions in television series and movies as well as the

news. In a research made in the USA, on the violence scenes in television, 73% of the assailants go unpunished. The excess of such experiences can lead to a higher level of helplessness and indifference. Scenes containing violence and sexuality, highly exaggerated and watched very frequently, lead to stolidity to escape from the disturbing emotions caused by them. Thus, movie and program producers had to increase the dose of such themes progressively in order to stimulate emotions on these two themes. This leads to even more saturation of stolidity.¹⁴⁻²⁰ In our study it has been revealed that students mostly watch Turkish/foreign television series with violence themes and the frequent screening of such violence containing programs is the primary cause of this outcome.

TABLE 7: The distribution of the answers provided by children participating in the study to the question "What Do You Think About Fighting?" according to the types of TV programs they watch most often ***

Types of TV program	What Do You Think About Fighting?				Total	
	can't live without fighting		can live without fighting		No	%**
	No	%* %**	No	%* %**		
Turkish/foreign TV series containing Violence	225	38.0 28.1	367	62.0 19.3	592	21.9
Comedy programs	114	24.3 14.3	355	75.7 18.7	469	17.4
Soap operas	94	25.4 11.8	276	74.6 14.5	370	13.7
Trivia	78	25.3 9.8	230	74.7 12.1	308	11.4
Music entertainment programs	76	27.3 9.5	202	72.7 10.6	278	10.2
Cartoons	68	31.1 8.5	151	68.9 7.9	219	8.1
Sports programs	51	31.7 6.4	110	68.3 5.8	161	6.0
Action and adventure movies	44	37.3 5.5	74	62.7 3.9	118	4.4
Documentaries	21	23.1 2.6	70	76.9 3.7	91	3.4
News and talk shows	27	32.1 3.3	57	67.9 3.0	94	3.1
Children's programs	2	16.7 0.2	10	83.3 0.5	12	0.4
Total	800	29.6	1902	70.4	2702	100.0

*Percentage of lines, **Percentage of columns, ***Non-responders, people who do not watch TV and who do not have TV at home are not included in the study.

American Psychiatry Association reported that children in USA were watching TV 28 hours a week on the average, thus when they have reached the age of 18 they would have already witnessed 16,000 murders and 200,000 scenes of physical violence on TV programs.²¹ In a study conducted in UK, it was demonstrated that children watching TV 2-3 hours a day from age 3 onwards, would have already spent more time in front of TV than the time spent in the classroom.²² Similar findings have been encountered also in the researches in our country.^{6,23} In our research, only 65 people (2,3%) have stated they do not watch television. Even though our survey did not include a question asking how many hours the

participants watch television, by the fact that other students watch television, it has been concluded that the watching rate is to be very high, matching the literature.

American Psychiatry Associations underlines the fact that, the children between the ages of 8-12 years constitute the most vulnerable group to the violence on TV.²⁴ In another study, the most critical period for exposure to violence in media is emphasized again as to be the childhood period until puberty; the study states that even 14-month children can take models for themselves.²⁵ In our study, the most common age is 14 with 985 students and 11 with 947 students, both in the most sensitive group to violence. The watching rates of

violence containing Turkish/foreign television series among fifth and eighth grade students is high among those who fought and significantly lower among students without fight problems who mostly watch comedy and soap opera. Comparing, the viewing rates of comedy and soap opera is significantly lower among students involved in fights, leading to the conclusion that fighting/not fighting behavior of fifth and eighth grade students differs according to the amount of physical violence in the programs they watch. This result is parallel to results presented in literature indicating that the fight rates of students watching violent television series have increased.

Children watching TV programs were reported to be regarding violence as something effective in the solution of problems, as something bringing social acceptance and requiring courage and as some sort of attitude that was being rewarded, thus they themselves were acting similarly.²⁶ In a study conducted on convicted children/adolescents who were forced to get involved in such activities, the rate of watching adventure and war programs including violence was found to be 51.9%, whereas in the non-convicted control group this was reported as 25.4 %.²⁷ In our study, correlating with the literature, we found that the ones who get involved in fights involving violence are the ones watching Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence the most (25.0%). Also the ones watching Turkish/foreign TV series containing violence are found to fight with the higher rate of 79.4%. Similarly, the students who see violence as a solution are watching mostly TV series containing violence (27.7%).

Violence on TV is usually covered as something “secret” and “polite” and can negatively influence children without even being aware of it.²⁸ Violence on TV is found to exert its effects on children as mimicking violence, being indifferent to violence, arousing thoughts of violence or suppressing ideas of violence.²² In a study in USA, it was reported that violence as covered in media was influencing normal behaviors of children and was guiding them towards physical violence.²⁹ In

another study carried out in UK on boarding school students between the ages of 13-16 years, the children were separated into two groups, first group only watched comics programs and programs with social contents for 15 days, while the second group was made to watch films and programs containing violence for the same duration. The results of the tests show that, the members of the first group had higher levels of tolerance, communication, laughter and discussion while in the second group the level of verbal and physical aggressiveness was found to be high.¹⁷ In the study we carried out, correlating with the literature, we determined the students saying ‘*can't live without fighting*’ are the ones primarily watching TV series containing violence (28.1%) and also the students saying “*I bring tools to the school in case I will fight*’ are the ones primarily watching TV series containing violence (46.9%). In the light of these findings, we reached the conclusion that the children watching TV series containing violence take violence naturally and perceive it as a part of life.

In another study, on a subset of the population containing 707 individuals, watching TV and aggressive behaviors are evaluated in a 17 years time interval and a possible connection is revealed between the amount of time spent watching TV in their adolescent and young adult years and aggressive behaviors towards others.³⁰ Another research about the connection between violence on TV and aggressiveness revealed that it is the determining factor of the aggressive behaviors on both males and females for the kids between 6 and 10 of generation of 70's and 80's, based on controls performed after 15 years.⁵ Even if our study did not resurveyed the same population years later, the question in which prospective behaviors are examined, “*I would beat my children when I'll become a parent*” is answered as ‘*I would beat*’, with the highest ratio of 27.0% by the students who watch TV series containing violence. Therefore, the conclusion we have come to is that the children of today watching violence would realize the violence one day in the future.

RTÜK conducted a research on 1836 individuals in Ankara, they found out that programs with violent contents were not restricted during the hours children could watch TV and therefore it was not possible to keep children away from watching such programs.³¹ Media surround us and cannot always be avoided, one way to filter their messages is to develop the skills to question, analyze, and evaluate them by media education.^{25,32} Our study does not include a parent survey however when we think about that 1353 (47.2%) student has 3 or more than 3 siblings, except for 584 students none of the others (79.6%) has their own bedroom and beside, 14.8% of them has a grandparent living with them, at least because of the physical conditions that children could not be prevented from watching TV and when we consider the education level of the families and socio-economic structure we come to the conclusion that a special attention could not be paid about this subject.

Another study considered the connection between violence on media and aggressive behaviors reported consistent evidence of watching television and movies containing violence increasing the aggressive behaviors on little children. They came to the conclusion that the violent content on TV has important short term effects on little children, putting them into an aroused mental and emotional state, thereby increasing the possibility of fearful and aggressive behavior; while these effects are more obvious on boys.³³ Parallel to these findings our study revealed that the boys of the primary school students has the greater rate 28.3% of watching programs containing violence while girls stayed at 11.9%. Also fighting rate for boys is as high as 86.0%, and that this rate drops to 51.2% in girls.

As the evidence of the correlation between being exposed to violent TV shows and increased aggressiveness,^{5,34} psychiatrists, psychologists, other mental health workers and pediatricians commonly agree on the necessity to limit the rate of the violence that children are exposed to.³⁵⁻³⁷ Direct or indirect violence on TV is shown to be a risk factor on the well being and health of the developing

child and adolescent as on the integrity of the family.³⁸ On European TV channels, children and adolescent programs are being broadcasted with the aim of developing capacity for abstract thinking, verbal development and laying down the foundations for the information age. Such programs are of one to two hours of duration, carefully avoiding overlaps between different TV channels. In our country, other than the programs by Turkish Radio and Television Agency (TRT), private radio and TV channels do not include such programs in their broadcasting schedules.³⁹

CONCLUSION

It is an undeniable fact that television, an essential element of our daily life, is becoming more and more effective on children's conception of the world and in shaping their reactions. Thus, it is clear that including explicit violence in television programs more than their real-life occurrences and broadcasting such programs when children watch TV will have serious adverse effects on children. Childhood and puberty are periods that physical, mental, spiritual and social changes are experienced very densely and fast by the individual. Therefore, the visual information broadcasted to children at these periods should take these growth characteristics into account and all media workers should acknowledge their own professional and ethical responsibilities on these issues.

It is obvious that programs with violent themes provide more profit and higher ratings to television channels. Thus, in regulating such programs, the financial aspect should also be taken into account. Recently, a grading system classifying programs into suitable age groups is put into use so that parents can have some control on the content of the shows their children will watch. Although such mechanisms are not decisively effective given the practically unlimited resources offered by the digital technology, such limitations should continue to be introduced.

On the other hand, in our country the average education is reportedly at the primary school level.

Given the fact that the majority of the population are composed of mostly poorly educated people with a low socio-economical profile, living in one room houses with many children and spending most of their time in front of television, it may be unrealistic to rely on parents to regulate the access of their children to TV shows. Therefore, a more effective solution is to reduce the violation content in television program as much as possible or at least adjust the broadcast times of such programs properly.

According to the findings of our study it can be concluded that children watching programs with high violence content make use of violence more compared to children watching soap operas and children's programs and more prone to regard violence as a way of solving problems. Thus, media professionals, lawmakers, families and teachers should make the joint effort to introduce necessary measures and mechanisms for an effective solution to improve the quality of life for every member of the society.

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