

Impacts of Scary Television Programmes on children Psychology, Attitude and Behavior

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Abstract

The television programmes influence the perception, behavior and attitude of children negatively and positively. This study was conducted in the District Headquarter town in Dharamshala. The data was collected through circulating both Hindi and English questionnaires to the 100 children during their shopping, playing, and their free time hours at different places. The sample for this study was chosen randomly. The study finds out that scary television programmes have a negative impact on the children behavior, psychology and their attitudes specifically who watch more television than other children. The impact of these television scary programmes remains more than three months on children mind. The fear of unknown and darkness dominate their manner of study.

Key Words: Scary, Psychology, attitude, horror, Television, Movies.

Introduction

Today, every Indian household have a television set and children are great watcher of television programmes. Watching scary television programmes are also common in Indian audiences. Most young children in India live with their illiterate parents in villages. But, at the small age, they are often unable to differentiate from fact versus fiction, and accept everything at face value. While this can lead to some hilarious situations, it does mean that when these children view scary television programmes, it can have a lasting impact.

Facts show that horror and scary television programmes entertain children but also harm their mental status and life style. According to the Wikipedia "scary movies deals with the viewers' nightmares, hidden worst fear, revulsions and terror of the unknown. A lot of people don't like watching horror movies because they usually don't have happy endings. People thrive off of positive energy. Horror or scary television programmes usually end badly with someone dying and blood splattering everywhere.

A new U-M study shows that long-term effects of scary character can linger even into adulthood. While the short-term effects of watching horror movies or other films and television programs with disturbing content are well-documented among children and teens,

Defenders of these movies may say they're just harmless entertainment. But if their attraction is powerful, Cantor says, so is their impact. These impacts are felt by adults as well as children, by the well-adjusted as well as the disturbed. They may linger well after the house lights go up -- sometimes for years. And they may be anything but pleasurable.

Undoubtedly, children love scary films. But movies with scary images, intense danger, loud noise, and blood and gore can create all sorts of disturbances among children. Some researches show that scary movies increase the level of anxiety, sleep disruption, and fear about possible situations. It affects vulnerable kids for years.

Review of Literature

In their study "Tales from the Screen: Enduring Fright Reactions to Scary Media," Harrison and colleague Joanne Cantor (1996) found that 90 percent of the study's participants (more than 150 college students at Michigan and Wisconsin) reported a media fright reaction from childhood or adolescence. Moreover, about 26 percent still experience a "residual anxiety" today.

Timothy Sexton in her article quoted the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) study that exposed direct facts in kids of the age group of five and younger, especially small children, those horror movies can create sensitive cases of nervousness. The symptoms of such anxieties comprise of sleeping disorders, aggressiveness and self-endangerment.

Danielle Braff, (2011) quote the statement of Dr. George Bakris that horror movies do increase heart rate, and if you have coronary heart disease, (they) can increase chest pain and blood pressure. Horror films also affect your body physiologically. Watching a horror movie can cause a spike in adrenaline

Researchers Eduardo Andrade and Joel B. Cohen have argued that those two theories are incorrect. Horror movie viewers are happy to unhappy because in their book, their "novel approach to emotion reveals that people experience both negative and positive emotions simultaneously -- people may actually enjoy being scared, not just relief when the threat is removed.

After doing the review of literatures it is found that researchers have different opinion on this subject. Some scholars find out the direct relation with children psychic and physical behavior where as some branch of the scholar think that these programmes just entertain the child and do not have any negative impacts on their mind.

Meyrowitz, (1986) study find out horror movies is one of the more surprising developments in elementary school-aged children taste. This is the genre that is probably the most likely to frighten children. Besides a great deal of graphic and gory violence, horror movies have formal features that make them especially scary. Close-up shots, for example, elicit a more intense response to startling or gory events.

Allen (2009) researches that violence in films isn't being glorified as many would want us to believe. The world itself is a violent place. We have our very own serial killers running around taking life after life. The violence in horror films isn't new to society, it already exists within society. Violence depicted in films is done to shock us. It would be hard to believe that the viewers would want to commit acts like that themselves.

Objectives of the study

The study was conducted to investigate the psychological and religious impact of horror and scary television programmes on children. The prime aims of the study are as follows:

1. *To what extent scary television programmes influences the children behaviors.*
2. *Is there any relation with the watching the scary television programmes and children religious behavior?*
3. *Do the scary programmes influence children academic activities?*

Research Methods

100 children sample from a town of Dharamshala were chosen for the study. The data was collected mostly circulated them Hindi language questionnaires during their shopping, playing, gossips and funning times. Some of respondents were also interviewed about their experiences of watching a horror television programmes.

Results

Table 1

The study found that a large section of the sample almost 96% love watching scary television programmes or any other horror contents on television whereas 4% children do not like watching a scary television programme. When they were asked the reason they asserted that they were very much frightened while watching the programmes. 97% children said their belief in the existence of the ghosts and supernatural things had been increased more after watching a horror programme.

Do you watch horror or scary television programme	96% (yes)	4% (No)
Can you watch a horror or scary television programme alone at night	5% (yes)	95% (No)
Did you believe in ghost after watching a horror programmes.	97% (yes)	3%(No)

Feeling while watching a horrible or scary television programmes

Crying or screaming	65%
Trembling and shaking	55%
Increases heart rate	92%
Freezing and feeling of paralysis	45%
Sweating, chilling, shortness of breath, fear of dying	56%

It was find out that a large group of children felt their heart rate increased during watching a scary television programme while 65% cried and screamed after watching the horrible scene. Trembling and freezing were felt by the 55% and 45% sample respectively.

Duration of remembering the scenes

The following table exhibits that 54% children do not forget the character of a horrible programme, they have seen it one week ago while only 24% children remember it till fifteen days. Some children about 13% keep it in their memories till one month and 9% children till three months.

Less than a week	54%
Less than fifteen days	24%
Less than a one month	13%
Till three months	19%

Impacts of scary television programmes on children

The survey finding also depicts that 35% children did not sleep well for several nights after watching a scary or horror movie. Other significant portion, 35%, feels that somebody is following them. A large group 89% of the

sample fear from darkness and they do not go out after evening. As seen in the table below, 88% respondents expresses that they do not visits the places, avoids the situations etc. shown in the scary programmes. The table also presents the fact that due to the watching of Horror contents on the television, children studies also influenced in many ways. Several other negative impacts are also discovered such as exposure to horror programmes has changed the attitude and behavior of children to some extent.

Don't sleep well for several nights	35%
Feel somebody is following me	35%
Fear from dark	89%
Remember the face of ghost have seen in the movie	34%
Keep the light on entire night	54%
Hear some scary sound outside my room	17%
Hear some knock at my door	5%
Avoids places, situations and people are portrayed or depicted in the horror movies	88%
is your study influenced	56%
Do you think your behave have been changed a little bit due to horror movie	44%
Aggressive and self-endangering behaviors	21%

Looking at the results now we can concludes that scary television programmes and movies have a negative impact on children thoughts, they adopt pessimistic behavior due to these reasons their study influences.

Discussion and conclusion

The primary objective of this research was to examine the psychological impact of scary and horrible television programmes and movies on children. And also find out how do the children react during watching them? Results of the study conclude that watching horror television programmes and movies influence children behavior, beliefs and attitude for long time. Young children have trouble distinguishing make-believe from reality; parents need to safeguard them from violent or scary TV content.

Visual images, whether realistic or fantastic, those are naturally scary: vicious animals, monsters, and grotesque, mutilated, or deformed characters are depicted in the programmes influences children memory. This study suggests that children are not permitted to watch scary television programme horror films in order to feeling such negative approaches. To some point it can be give them entertainment and improve their bad mood but it has some long complicated effects on their behavior and attitudes.

This study has shown that watching horror television programmes and films can make children fearful and timid and influence their study. This research has shed some light on the effects of horror films on individuals, how their personalities affect them, and their reactions to horror films.

All parents should not let their young children view a horror television programme particularly late at night. The results of the present study are also inconsistent with Gilissen and colleagues (2006) who investigated fearfulness in 3–4 year old children in response to viewing a fear-inducing television program. In their results, children reported some negative symptoms after viewing horrible television programmes.

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