



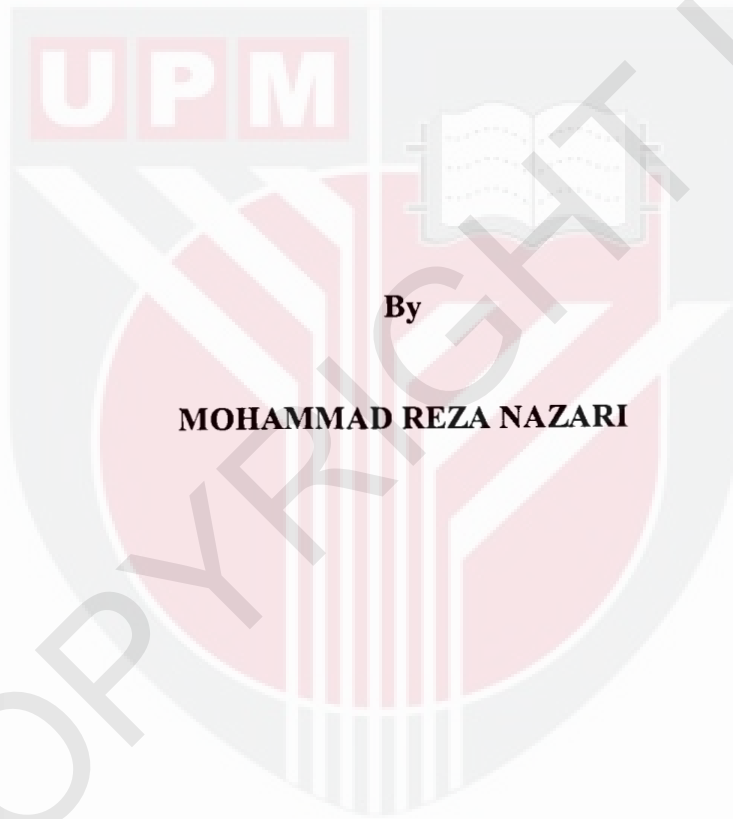
***RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXPOSURE, PREFERRED GENRE AND
PACING OF TELEVISION PROGRAM WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS' AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IN IRAN***

MOHAMMAD REZA NAZARI

FBMK 2013 52



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By

MOHAMMAD REZA NAZARI

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,
Universiti Putra Malaysia, in Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy**

September 2013

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DEDICATIONS

Specially dedicated to,

My beloved wife Mrs. Saadat Parhizkar and my dear sons Reza, Pooya, and Parsa for their invaluable support, love, patience, and intellectual stimulation making my ambition and dreams come true.

And also dedicated to,

All people who were involved in my learning from the first step until present.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EXPOSURE, PREFERRED GENRE AND PACING OF TELEVISION PROGRAM WITH PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IN IRAN

By

MOHAMMAD REZA NAZARI

September 2013

Chairman: Prof. Md Salleh Bin Hj Hassan, PhD

Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

Children are among the population most at risk for experiencing violence. Children also spend a great deal of their free time engaged in media consumption, much of which includes increasingly violent content. Media violence has been a topic of both public and scientific concern for over 50 years. There are literally hundreds of studies that provide evidence that exposure to television violence leads to subsequent physical aggression in viewers. However, the effects of television violence would depend on the type of content viewed and the pace of programs viewed. In the past few decades, a subset of research has focused on how the structural features of media alter viewers' cognitive and emotional processes. Research has shown that how message sensation value influences emotional responses and how the speed of pacing in some children's programs has detrimental effects on their aggressive behavior; therefore, pacing has been most actively investigated in related literature. In this study, pacing is measured based on six essential criteria as suggested by the

literature. In relation to this study, relatively little attention has been paid to television program pacing on aggressive behavior among elementary students in Iran. The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between television program pacing and aggressive behavior in primary school students. Two phases were conducted in this study to comprehensively explore this phenomenon. The first phase consisted of a survey with 424 primary school students (aged 7-12 years) in the five provinces of Iran which were selected through a multi-stage random sampling from different geographical areas comprising of North, South, West, East and Central area of Iran. This survey investigated whether exposure to television program was related to children's use of media that explored using Buss – Perry standard questionnaire. The results of the survey revealed a significant relationship between amount of exposure to television program and aggressive behaviors among primary school students ($p < 0.05$). In addition, the students' aggression was positively associated with watching movies with action adventure genre ($p < 0.05$). According to the findings obtained from the first phase of the study, a total of 22 programs were selected as the most favorite children's TV programs which were assigned to a technical content analysis known as pacing. The second phase of the present study included a pacing index derived from the following criteria: (a) frequency of camera cuts, (b) frequency of related scene changes, (c) frequency of unrelated scene changes, (d) frequency of auditory changes, (e) percentage of active motion, (f) percentage of active talking, and (g) percentage of active music. The findings of the study showed that the highest pacing index was attributed to *Pokemon* (67.08), while *Fetileh* ranked as the lowest pacing index program (23.86). The results also revealed that TV program pacing scores were significantly and positively associated with aggression level of primary school children ($p < 0.05$). The results of this study

suggested the need for further attention on children's television program production to protect them from antisocial behaviors and interventions for violence-exposed children in order to reduce negative outcomes. Finally, more research is needed to focus on the relationships of pacing with dependent measures, such as violent behaviors, learning process, social interaction, and problem solving.



Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk ijazah Doktor Falsafah.

HUBUNGAN DI ANTARA PENDEDAHAN, GENRE PILIHAN DAN PACING PROGRAM TELEVISYEN DAN TINGKAH LAKU GANAS DI KALANGAN PELAJAR SEKOLAH RENDAH DI IRAN

Oleh

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September 2013

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Kanak-kanak merupakan antara populasi yang paling berisiko untuk mengalami keganasan. Kanak-kanak juga banyak menghabiskan waktu lapang mereka mengakses dan melayari media, di mana kebanyakan isi kandungan media adalah lebih bersifat ganas. Selama lebih 50 tahun, keganasan di dalam kandungan media yang membimbangkan masyarakat telah menjadi topik perbincangan dan kajian dalam kalangan sarjana dan penyelidik. Terdapat beratus-ratus kajian yang membuktikan bahawa pendedahan kepada keganasan di televisyen akan menjurus kepada keganasan fizikal di kalangan penonton. Walau bagaimanapun, kesannya bergantung kepada jenis kandungan dan “pace” program yang ditonton. Pada beberapa dekad yang lalu, subset kajian telah memberi tumpuan kepada bagaimana ciri-ciri struktur media mengubah proses pemikiran dan emosi penonton. “Pacing” kini merupakan di antara perkara yang paling kerap dihuraikan dan dibincangkan di dalam hasil kaji selidik program kanak-kanak. Di dalam kajian ini “pacing” diukur

berdasarkan enam kriteria penting seperti yang dicadangkan oleh hasil literatur. Matlamat kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan di antara “pacing” program televisyen dan tingkah laku agresif di kalangan pelajar sekolah rendah di Iran. Dua fasa kajian telah dilakukan secara menyeluruh untuk merungkai fenomena ini. Kajian fasa pertama dilakukan dengan berpandukan kepada borang kaji selidik yang diedarkan kepada 424 pelajar sekolah rendah (berumur 7-12 tahun) di 5 wilayah di Iran yang dipilih melalui persampelan secara rawak pelbagai peringkat dari kawasan geografi yang berbeza yang merangkumi kawasan Utara, Selatan, Barat, Timur dan Tengah Iran. Kajian ini mengkaji sama ada pendedahan kepada program televisyen mempunyai kaitan dengan keganasan sosial kanak-kanak yang diselidik menggunakan instrumen kajian selidik yang dibangunkan oleh Buss-Perry. Hasil kajian menunjukkan terdapat hubungan yang signifikan di antara jumlah pendedahan kepada program televisyen dan tingkah laku agresif di kalangan pelajar sekolah rendah ($p < 0.05$). Di samping itu, tingkah laku agresif pelajar juga mempunyai perkaitan positif dengan menonton filem-filem genre aksi pengalaman yang mendebarkan ($p < 0.05$). Hasil dapatan kajian fasa pertama menunjukkan sebanyak 22 program televisyen telah dipilih sebagai program televisyen kegemaran kanak-kanak yang dijalankan analisis teknikal kandungan yang dikenali sebagai “pacing”. Satu indeks “pacing” dibentuk daripada kriteria berikut (a) kekerapan pemotongan penggambaran kamera, (b) kekerapan perubahan babak yang berkaitan, (c) kekerapan perubahan babak yang tidak berkaitan, (d) kekerapan perubahan audio, (e) peratusan gerakan aktif, (f) peratusan percakapan aktif dan (g) peratusan muzik aktif. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa indeks “pacing” tertinggi ialah bagi program televisyen *Pokemon* (67.08), sementara *Fetileh* disenaraikan sebagai indeks program “pacing” paling rendah (23.86). Hasil kajian juga menunjukkan bahawa skor

“pacing” program televisyen sangat signifikan dan berkait rapat dengan tahap agresif pelajar-pelajar sekolah rendah ($p < 0.05$). Hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa terdapat korelevanan bagi memberikan perhatian yang lebih ke atas penghasilan program televisyen untuk kanak-kanak untuk melindungi mereka daripada bersikap anti-sosial dan pemantauan serta keterlibatan ibu bapa dan masyarakat juga diperlukan dalam program yang mendedahkan keganasan kepada kanak-kanak supaya dapat mengurangkan kesan-kesan negatif. Akhir sekali, lebih banyak kajian diperlukan yang memfokuskan kepada hubungan “pacing” dengan angkuh bergantung seperti tingkah laku ganas, proses pembelajaran, kesedaran, interaksi sosial dan penyelesaian masalah.

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LIST OF ABBRIVATIONS

ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
AQ	Aggression Questionnaire
CD	Compact Disc
CD	Conduct Disorder
DVD	Digital Video Disc
EF	Executive function
GPA	Grade Point Average
IQ	intelligence quotient
IRIB	Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting
LC4MP	Limited Capacity Model of Motivated Mediated Message Processing
MOE	Ministry of Education
OR	Orienting responses
Q	Quartile
SCT	Social Cognitive Theory
SD	Standard Deviation
sec	Second
SES	Socio Economic Status
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TV	Television
U.S.	United States
vs.	Versus

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the background and basic ideas of this study, the organization of this chapter including 1) introduction, 2) background of study, 3) problem statement, 4) research questions, 5) research objectives, 6) significance of the study, 7) scope of the study, and 8) definition of terms.

Media violence has been a topic for public discussion since the 1920s when scholars tried to perceive the impacts of the motion pictures on children (Blumer, 1933; Anderson, Sakamoto, Gentile, Ihori, Shibuya, Yukawa, Naito, & Kobayashi, 2008; Bratic, 2008; Anderson & Hanson, 2009). With the growth of the television in the 1950s, the interest towards the effects of media violence has been increased (Liebert & Sprafkin, 1988; Vandenberg, Wenner, & Gronbeck, 2004; José Martínez, Prieto, & Farfán, 2006). In the decades that followed, social scientists have examined the relationships between television violence and juvenile delinquency (Daigle, Francis, Cullen, & Wright, 2007; Reingle, Jennings, Maldonado-Molina, Piquero, & Canino, 2011), desensitization (Anderson, Berkowitz, Donnerstein, Huesmann, Johnson, Linz, Malamuth, & Wartella, 2003; Murray, 2008) and fear (Murray, 2008; Kupchik & Bracy, 2009). As Grimes (2008) argues, undoubtedly television has affected us, particularly in the case of children. Aggression in childhood is considered as a serious problem, especially among children who display aggression at different times

and contexts (Bendersky, Bennett, & Lewis, 2006) as they are more likely to display the future juvenile misdeed (Hinton, Sheperis, & Sims, 2003) and violent offending (Broidy, Tremblay, Brame, Fergusson, Horword & Laird, 2003; Bendersky *et al.*, 2006). It is quite clear that children absorb every type of media that they have access to, from TV to computers, video games, print media, videotapes, and even to music. The research has confirmed that most children watch television about two hours per day. It also suggests that this time spent in front of TV is significantly increasing through childhood, and it reaches at its peak about three and a half hours per day during primary schooling (Rideout, Vandewater, & Wartell, 2003; Jordan, Hersey, McDivitt, & Heitzler, 2006; McDonough, 2009).

Researchers have established that there is an increase of aggressive behavior after being exposed to television or movie violence (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963; Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, & Baumgardner, 2004; Savage & Yancey, 2008a; Moses, 2008). Children who watch more television and play violent video games are more likely to view violence and exhibit hostile attributional biases (Buchanan, Gentile, Nelson, Walsh, & Hensel, 2002). Additional findings showed that physically aggressive children were possibly more than non-physically aggressive children to watch violent movies (Buchanan *et al.*, 2002; Savage, 2008b). Additionally, strong relations were showed by meta-analysis between exposure to media violence and both emotional and behavioral problems, especially aggressive feelings and actions (Anderson *et al.*, 2003). “Effects of media violence may be quite similar to the effects of real life violence, with research confirmation beginning to amass for links between media violence and increased psychopathology, increased enmity, aggression, and reduced empathy” (Anderson *et al.*, 2003, p.81). According to Villani (2001), children and

adolescents are specifically vulnerable to the television messages which affect their behaviors and perceptions. “Television level of violence, particularly in children's programming, has been carefully documented for nearly few decades” (Rosenkoetter , Rosenkoetter, & Acock , 2009, p.382). A great number of younger children cannot distinguish between what they see and what is real. A body of research has revealed important negative health impacts on violence and aggressive behavior (Potts, Belden, & Reese, 2008).

Obviously young children can learn a variety of behaviors from television, from aggressive acts to letter and number recognition (Krcmar, Grela, & Lin, 2007). Television watching at a young age may be a set up for behavioral problems later on (Osterweil, 2007). However, it should also borne in mind that one of many potential causes of aggression is television. There are some other factors which influence some of kids' characteristics such as age, sex, family practices, and the way violence is displayed (Nofziger & Kurtz, 2005). “While most researchers conclude that children learn aggressive attitudes and behavior from violent media content, they also agree that parents can be a powerful force in moderating, mediating, and reducing such influence” (Emory & Gridina, 2000). A large number of studies have revealed that media violence has an impact on children's later aggression (Bensley & Eenwyk, 2001; Wilson, Smith, Potter, Kunkel, Linz, & Colvin, 2002). Media violence has appeared in many formats, from television programming and movies to video games and other interactive activities. Scholars believe that TV program pacing, i.e. how fast cuts are edited, is one of the most important factors affecting viewers' attitude and behavior (Zimmerman & Christakis, 2007).

1.1 Background

Media violence has been a topic for public discussion for few decades (Bushman & Anderson, 2001; Gunter, 2008). Much attention is paid to exploring the link between television violence and physical aggression. There are great numbers of studies to show that exposure to television violence causes later physical aggression in viewers. Nevertheless, the impacts are based on the kinds of the content watched and the way the child engaged (Anderson *et al.*, 2003a; Huesmann & Taylor, 2006; Comstock, 2008; Manganello & Taylor, 2009).

Developing social cognitive theory, Bandura (1973) and Huesmann (1988) maintain the laboratory and field of studies showed that both children and adults like to imitate those who act aggressively. For example, Bandura and his colleagues (1963) identified that exposing to films consist of aggression increased children's aggressive reactions. In other words, children who were exposed to aggressive human and carton models were twice more likely to display aggression in comparison with the children in the control group. The exposure to aggressive behaviors through models has been generalized to mass media such as television, movies, and video games (Anderson & Dill, 2000; Orange & George, 2000; Anderson & Bushman, 2001; Funk *et al.*, 2004; Bartholow, Sestir, & Davis, 2005; Hurd, Zimmerman, & Reischl, 2011).

According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1973), children learn behavioral responses by daily experiencing or viewing models in their social contexts. In other words, they imitate and learn some models attractive to them by interacting with their environment, individuals' behavior, and individuals' inner incidents.

Aggressive behavior generates aggressive reactions in viewers (Bandura, 1965). Today's adolescents in the United States are among the most at risk population who experience violence (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005). Besides, the great consequences for the society as a whole, individuals exposed to violence are personally influenced by this experience. While adolescents act differently in their response to experience or witness violence, a typical response to violence exposure (especially repeated exposure) comprises of "developing a view of the world as a negative and unsafe place and viewing others as hostile or threatening" (Price & Glad, 2003, p.331). The previous research has shown that exposure to TV violence "increases hostile thoughts and aggressive behavior towards others, as well as decreases empathy towards others are common consequences of exposure to personal or community violence" (Sams & Truscott, 2004; Funk *et al.*, 2004) While all adolescents are not exposed to violence at home or in the community, the average adolescent is exposed to large quantities of violence by the means of media each year (Wilson *et al.*, 2002; Anderson & Hanson, 2009; Zur, 2011).

Well-known forms of entertainment like television, film, music videos, and video games have all been the subjects of recent research on influences of violent media. "Individual and meta-analytic studies demonstrate that exposure to violent media increases hostility and aggressive behavior and decreases feelings of empathy

towards others” (Anderson, Carnagey, Flanagan, Benjamin, Eubanks & Valentine, 2004, p. 202).

With the increasing awareness of social and clinical psychologists of the adverse impacts of violence, such as media violence, it becomes important to perceive the individuals who are at risk. Slater and colleagues (2003) consider adolescents “most at risk for the negative effects of media violence as those who have a history of exposure to real life violence, have aggressive tendencies, and actively seek out violent media”.

“The new information technologies constitute a major cultural factor that transforms children’s everyday lives and consequently child development” (Livingstone, 2004). Different new types of electronic media devices are assessable to children, and older devices have undergone the technological improvement. Television plays an increasingly powerful role in young children’s everyday life because of increased exposure TV, more TV sets in households, more channels available, increased broadcasting time, and transmission of increasingly international TV programs for children (Yoshimi, 2003; Lahikainen, Korhonen, Kraav, & Taimalu, 2004; Korhonen & Lahikainen, 2008; Jones *et al.*, 2010). The everyday role of TV for children is increasingly important and relevant because of the greater burden of parents’ work, and hence, their reduced opportunities for interaction with their children (Taimalu, 2006; Lahikainen, Taimalu, Korhonen, & Kraav, 2007).

Adolescents are exposed to the different kinds of media entertainment and spend too much of their spare time using them. For instance, 8 to 18 year-old students spend 40 or more hours a week utilizing various sorts of media, except the school or homework assignments (Roberts, Donald, Foehr, Ulla, Rideout, Victoria, & Brodie, 1999; Anderson & Bushman, 2001; Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010). As Bushman and Huesmann (2001) argue, even short exposure to violent movies scenes produces huge increases in aggression, in both adults and children. As stated before,

When children are repeatedly exposed to media violence, they have an increased likelihood of becoming aggressive adolescents. As such, exposure to media violence is a significant risk factor for youth. Long-term effects involve a learning process. Each violent media episode is essentially one more learning trial. When adolescents rehearse these knowledge structures, they become more complex and more difficult to change cognitively (ibid, pp. 224-225).

As children spend more time with television and discuss less with their parents nowadays (Evans, Jordan & Horner, 2011), the decrease in interaction between parents and children may results in the replacement of the media equipment while they are alone without the parental supervision, and therefore, they may face unexpected fears which, later, can lead to appearance of some problems difficult to cope with.

Media studies have worked on how various kinds of media content (advertising, news, sports, violence, and so on.) impact people's attitudes, behaviors, emotions, knowledge, and perceptions. In the past years, some studies have concentrated on how the media structural features such as cuts, camera techniques, light, edits, sound, voice changes, and so on change viewers' cognitive and emotional processes (Potter

& Callison, 2000; Lang, Schwartz, Chung, & Lee, 2004; Potter & Choi, 2006; Fox, Park, & Lang, 2007).

The pace of the content is described by the term media pacing, or just pacing. According to Chandler (2009), pacing is unconsciously felt by the audience. Pacing has been most actively researched in children's program literature. Researchers extended the concept of pacing by including different salient production features since simply measuring the rate of cuts in a message cannot show the complex nature of visuals in children's programs (Dancyger, 2002; Kelley, 2002; Escobar-Chavesa, Shegoga, Markhama, & Brehm, 2010; Singer, Golinkoff & Hirsh-Pasek, 2006).

As McCollum and Bryant (2003) and Calvert and Kotler (2003) maintain, "pacing in children's programs is compared in three contexts: program purpose (education-oriented vs. entertainment-oriented); target audience (programs targeted at pre-school children vs. school-aged children); and program formats (live action vs. animation)". In other words, pacing can be "... measured based on six essential criteria suggested by previous literature, frequency of camera or editing actions, frequency of change to an essentially new visual scene, percentage of active motion, frequency of auditory change, percentage of active music, and percentage of active talking" (McCollum & Bryant, 2003, p.123). In fact, fast pacing programs cause more aggressive behavior in children than slow pacing ones.

According to Chock, Fox, Angelini, Lee, & Lang (2007), “the pacing is normally determined by the editor. Pacing can be quick, as in a dance music video. It can be slow, as in a historical documentary. Pacing is heavily influenced by the speed and frequency of cuts”. McCollum & Bryant (2003) also found fast pacing is more effective for younger children than for older ones, and thus, it could be thought that programs produced for younger children are at faster pace in comparison with the programs targeted at older children.

Recent researches (Lang, Bolls, Potter, & Kawahara, 1999; Yoon, Bolls, & Muehling, 1999; Lang, Zhou, Schwartz, Bolls, & Potter, Winter, 2000; Bickham, Wright & Huston, 2001; Kang, Cappella & Fishbein, 2006) have shown that production pacing has effects on attention, memory, attitudes, and behaviors that go beyond the influence of the message content. Production pacing is, therefore (along with the message content), a key feature that can influence a viewer in processing media messages.

After reviewing the literature for this study, it has become apparent that only scant number of published studies examined the relationship of media violence exposure on views' attitudes towards violence. Since some researchers (Strasburger & Donnerstein, 2000; Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski, & Eron, 2003; Funk *et al.*, 2004; Murray, 2008; Wang, Iannotti, & Nansel, 2009) confirmed that the main solicitude in this field has been the causal association between TV violence and violent behavior. However, as stated already, there has not been large body of research that has focused on the more subtle, but not profound cognitive and

affective consequences of exposure to media violence. Because of a potential positive association with a television character, despite their violent behavior, the young child may choose to imitate the character's behavior in their play (Hoffner, Levine, Sullivan, Crowell, Pedrick, & Berndt, 2006; Williams, Raynor, & Ciccolo, 2008; Bierwirth & Blumberg, 2010). And these violent behaviors in children's programs posed considerable risks for young viewers (Wilson, Smith, Potter, Kunkel, Linz, Colvin, & Donnerstein, 2002).

Formal features like pace, movement, music, visual effects, voices, and sounds are proven to have effects on viewers' behaviors (Wright, Huston, Ross, Calvert, Rolandelli & Weeks, 1984). The content features such as emotion, erotic portrayals, humor, and violence are proven to affect viewers' attention and arousal. Based on Bandura (1986) personal factors, behavior, and environmental influences impact on human behaviors and these factors are in line with the features in TV that mentioned before. In other words this theory can pave the way to investigate more about the relation between aggression in TV and the subsequent behaviors of viewers. According to this theory, children are more likely to imitate models that are rewarded than those that are punished. Children have also tendency to imitate a model that is perceived as an attractive or similar character to the self (Bandura, 1986).

Nonetheless, the limited capacity theory of mediated message processing (Lang, 2000) considers message processing to be the result of the interaction between a message's structure and the content, message recipient's goals, and their motivations. Lang (2000) also mentions that people are assumed to be limited capacity

information processors and they allocate processing resources to the subprocesses of encoding, storage, and retrieval. It means TV viewers encode and store the received information based on the available data. So, this theory can bring the awareness regarding the impact of violence programs on TV and the relationship between these programs and aggressive behavior.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge and the available database, no research in Iran has explored the relationship between TV program pacing and aggressive behavior among children. Consequently, it seems that the present study has its advantage and a great contribution and fills the gap to the related literature worldwide.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Huesmann (2007, p.7), "one of the notable changes in the social environment in the 20th and 21st centuries has been the saturation of the culture and daily lives by the mass media. In this new environment radio, television, movies, videos, video games, cell phones, and computer networks have assumed to have central roles in children's daily lives". As such, the mass media has a great influence on the children's, behaviors, beliefs, and values. Unfortunately, the consequences of one specific common element of the electronic mass media, i.e. violence have a harmful impact on children's well-being. Earlier researches have shown that exposure to violence on television, movies, and most recently in video games

heightens the risk of viewer's violent behavior just as they grow up in an environment full of real violence which, in turn, increases the risk of aggressive behaviors (Huesmann, 2007; Ferguson, Rueda, Cruz, Ferguson, Fritz, & Smith, 2008; Coyne, Callister, & Robinson, 2010). Huesmann (2007) notes media has not really introduced new psychological threats to children, but they have made it much harder to protect children from the threats and have exposed many more of them to threats that only a few might have experienced before.

According to Pine and Cohen (2002) and Savage and Yancey (2008), numerous problems such as impaired identity formation, increased aggressiveness, low self-esteem, and symptoms of psychopathology, substance use, and risk for future criminal behavior could be the consequence of exposure to media violence. Electronic media availability as well as the increased amount of consumer consumption helps the researchers to carry out further research on how media influences people.

Up to two billion young people less than 18 has made up of approximately one-third of the world's population (Zwicker, 2004). A report by Sheikh (1995), in which a national sample of 25,000 adolescents and youth in Iran gave information about media use patterns, it stated that respondents watched television for three hours a day. Statistics about children usage of television indicated that with 3 years old, one child out of four; with 5 years old, four children out of five; and with 7 years old, nine children out of ten are watching television (Ghermez Cheshmeh, Moniri, & Mirkhani, 2006). Mesri (2011) reported that the average time which the Iranian

children between 5 to 10 years old spent in front of TV is 4 hours and 9 minutes which is two times more than the worlds' standard. Other studies also (Sepasgar, 2008; Razavi, Jaafari, & Nowroozi, 2007) reported an average of two to five hours spending time in front of television among children and adolescence in Iran. There are a number of channels in Iran engaged in producing and airing the children's program such as channel one, channel two, the provincial channel, Pooya channel, and show channel. The above mentioned channels use animation, TV series as well as musical and toy elements in presenting children programs.

Based on the study carried out by Fallah (2012), most of the Iranian children were interested in *Amooporang* (58%), *Khaleh Shadoneh* (31%), *Fitile* (21%), *Tom and Jerry* (21%), *Pink Panter* (14%), and *Mal Mal* (11%). Moreover, a great number of children (39.7 %) were eagerly viewing action movies displaying on satellite such as *Superman*, *Batman*, *Spiderman*, *Ninja Turtles*, *Captain Subasa*, *Ben Ten*, and *Pokemon*.

The study in Iran by Najafi, Foadchang, Alizadeh, and Mohamadifar (2009) presented the prevalence of aggressive behavior in Shiraz city, Iran. They revealed that prevalence of aggressive behavior among 1300 elementary school children including both genders was 17.8%. In addition, this study explained that 5% of these children affected from aggressive behavior. Azadyekta (2011) reported that the prevalence of aggression in Tehran, Iran is 10.5% among 2016 the primary school students. Particularly common responses to violence exposure include affection such as anxiety and depression (Breslau, Davis, Andreski, Peterson, 1991; Scarpa, 2003;

Bacchini, Miranda, & Affuso, 2011), and externalizing problems, particularly aggression (Price & Glad, 2003; Selfhout, Delsing, ter Bogt, & Meeus, 2008).

Based on the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1973), children learn aggressive behaviors from TV programs particularly programs containing action and horror genres. They also tend to imitate these behaviors which are attractive to them. Exposing and interacting with aggressive TV programs, children show the same reactions in their daily behaviors in different circumstances.

Eventually, a decrease in empathy can be resulted from exposure to personal and community violence (Sams & Truscott, 2004; Bacchini *et al.*, 2011). Violence exposure should be viewed as a significant issue for children due to its connection with a wide range of behavior problems and its related detrimental consequences (Trickett, 2002; Kantor, & Little, 2003).

Public health communication research which is concerned with how to convey a message to a target population to alter beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors, has also paid attention to how the messages structural features influence viewers' attention and attitudinal responses which play a role in behavior change. Lang (2004) and her colleagues conducted research to see how message sensation value influenced emotional responses and message selection and they found that messages high in sensation value were preferred and might be more effective.

Almost 700 Japanese children in Japan in the year 1997 were taken to the hospital after viewing a cartoon named *Pokemon*, which is now famous in the United States. The program was produced for elementary school children, comprised a scene with strobe-like red, white, and blue flashes amidst an explosion of other colors. An American neurologist considered that the cartoon's flashing lights could have either prompted hyperventilation in the children, causing their convulsions, dizziness, fainting, and nausea, or acted directly on their brains' circuits to cause seizures (Wudunn, 1997; Radford, Amherst & Bartholomew, 2001; Nakano, 2002).

Pokemon is certainly not the first program to be labeled as detrimental because of its pacing. In fact, a program that debuted almost 30 years earlier, although not noted for provoking medical attention, has often been singled out as being anywhere from unhelpful to detrimental to children, primarily because of pacing issues.

Both children's aggression behavior and television program pacing have been well-studied separately. Nevertheless, children's aggressive behavior and television program pacing have scarcely been studied together, in other words, the relationship between children's aggressive behavior and television program pacing has not apparently been reported. For instance, aggressor motives have influenced later aggression by adults (Lang, Bolls, Potter, & Kawahara, 1999); family and community development committee (2000; Thakkar, Garrison & Christakis, 2006); "and consequences to the model have modified children's later behavior" (Lang *et al.*, 1999, p.453). In typical television portrayals, as in other natural occurrences, motive and consequence cues are present (Lang, Schwartz, Chung, & Lee, 2002;

Chock, Fox, Angelini, Lee, & Lang, 2007) and may be the basis for the viewer's affection such as values, attitude, and behavior.

Pacing has been generally explored in children's program studies. The scholars in this domain extended the concept of pacing by comprising various noticeable production structures since calculating the amount of cuts in a message alone cannot represent the complexity of illustrations in children's programs. Some specialists and critics have stated that the fast pace of children's television programming has detrimental effects, but little systematic assessment of different children's television programs pace has been carried out (Hill & Lang, 1993; Lang, 2000).

Researchers believe that not only content of program but also the method that a television program is edited might influence later behavior. As Appleyard (2007) claims that there is probably a link between fast pace programs and attention deficiency hyperactivity in behavior. Christiakis (2009) has recently suggested that fast edits and rapid scene changes may be over-stimulating brains development.

Rapid-paced shows also seem particularly likely to have a negative effect on attention, one reason for this being that rapidly presented events capture attention in a bottom-up fashion, involving the sensory rather than pre-frontal cortices. Thus, fast-paced television would do nothing to train internally controlled (prefrontal) attention over the long-term.

Using limited capacity theory (Lang, 2000), it can be found that to what extent TV programs contain aggressive scenes which can impinge upon children's behaviors and lead to aggressive reactions in their observed behaviors. The Lang's approach assumes that (a) television viewers are information processors, who encode, decode, store, and retrieve when needed and (b) each viewer has fixed and limited processing resources available to allocate to each of the processing tasks. It also pointed out that viewers simultaneously engage in multiple tasks of encoding, processing, and storing messages when consuming television messages. To be fully processed, television messages must be attended to, encoded into short-term memory, stored in long-term memory, and retrieved from long-term memory.

Research results showed that the prevalence of aggressive behaviors among Iranian children is about 18 percents which it can be partly resulted in aggressive TV programs (Najafi, 2009). Additionally, Iranian children who are heavy viewers of TV programs are between 5 to 10 years (Mesri, 2011).

Given the popularity of some fast-paced young children television cartoons, it is important that authorities and parents are alert to the possibility of some impacts, such as aggression, fear, and anxiety in young children immediately after watching such shows and in later life as well. These findings thus lead this researcher to explore the association of television pacing and exhibition of aggressive behavior among elementary students in Iran.

1.3 Research Questions

The accessibility of electronic media and increased quantity of customer consumption provides investigators with a suitable chance to conduct further research on how media affects adolescents' behavior. Based on the above discussion the following research questions are considered in this study.

1. What are the levels of the students' exposure to television program and their aggression level among the Iranian primary school students?
2. What are the most preferred students' television programs and their genre in the same context?
3. What is the pacing of students' preferred television programs within the same context?
4. Are there any relationship between exposure, preferred genre, and pacing of television program with the Iranian primary school students' aggressive behavior?

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

The study aims at to determine the relationship between television program pacing and the Iranian primary school students' aggressive behaviors.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

The following are specific objectives addressed by this study:

1. To examine the level of students' exposure to television;
2. To determine the most preferred TV programs and their genre based on students' point of view;
3. To examine aggression levels of the students;
4. To determine students' preferred TV program pacing;
5. To determine the relationship between exposure to TV programs and the Iranian primary students' aggressive behaviors;
6. To determine the relationship between preferred TV programs and their genres and the students' aggressive behaviors;
7. To determine the relationship between TV program pacing and the students' aggressive behaviors.

1.5 Significance of Study

Many scholars believe that children are spending more time watching television than other activities, such as spending time with parents, sleeping, or staying at school (Yoshimi, 2003; Jones, Otten, Johnson, & Harvey-Berino, 2010; Anderson, Ihori, N., Swing, Bushman, Sakamoto, Rothstein, & Saleem, 2010; Evans *et al.*, 2011). For

example, 25% of the sixth graders watched more than 40 hour of television per week, more time that they spend at school (Sege & Dietz, 2005). With so much time spent on watching television, children are exposed to innumerable actions of violence.

There are some advantages to this study. There are not a great number of academic studies on the relationship between television program pacing and aggression among elementary students. Many administrators, teachers, and parents understand that the media can have a negative effect on young people; however, few perceive the degree of the influence of the media and fewer still know how to resist these negative impacts; however, this study will provide some useful recommendations. On the other hand, all of media impacts are not negative; slow pacing media can help the students with their lessons to learn more. According to many researchers, there are important points to be made on both sides of the issue (Holmes & Branch, 1994; Kumar & Altschuld, 2000).

In terms of theoretical perspective, the Social Cognitive Theory maintains its status as one major theory used to explain the influence of viewing violent programs on children's levels of aggression (Bandura, 1965) On the other hand, the Limited Capacity Theory serves as the other major theory in the present study which can explain the nature of TV program pacing influences on the students' aggressive behavior. The present study tries to add to the current body of literature by investigating the relationship between TV program pacing and the Iranian primary students' aggressive behavior which might be confirmed by these theories.

The students are surrounded by different kinds of media with both positive and negative influences on their lives. They simply accept them along with the overt influence that media have over their lives (Rideout, 2007). The present study may benefit teachers, parents, television producers, policymakers and school administrators. The study might provide some advice for teachers, many of whom do not seem to realize how strongly students rely on information supplied by the media frequently. By examining the students' reports presented in this study, teachers might be able to use more media in their classrooms to better educate adolescents and help them achieve higher educational goals.

In addition, many parents are unable to understand how important media entertainment is to their children or the huge impact it has on their lives. Anderson and Bushman (2001) pinpointed this problem by stating that 90% of parents did not check the ratings of movies (DVD & CD) when buying them. This is surprising; to consider that 89% of parents did not even set time limits for watching movies. The results of this study might help parents learn more about these problems.

Moreover, television companies' authorities such as producers and directors specifically in kids programs might benefit from the results of this study in their future program making. They may produce suitable programs without violent contents. Administrators could benefit from the results of the study by monitoring their schools policies on media and technology use and examining how these policies might affect the students' behavior. Each teacher's use of media in the classroom should be monitored closely to ensure that it is appropriate, useful to, and

informative for the students. As with parents, administrators have a great responsibility in ensuring that students are protected from negativity and surrounded by impacts that will bring positive learning opportunities into students' lives.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The scope of the present study was focused on three independent variables namely level of exposure to television, TV program genre preferences, TV program pacing which were correlated with one dependent variable, that is, the aggressive behavior of children. Therefore, the main focus of this study was on the relationship between each independent variable and the dependent variable.

It has been debated that particular television program content affects young children's cognitive or social behavior. Children have spent more time on watching media activities rather than involving in other social, school, and sleeping activities. This devoted time might reach four hours or more which can influence children's behavior, particularly if the content of the programs are actions of violence. The primary school age (ages from seven to twelve) is viewed as a critical period for perceiving the impacts of television on aggressive behavior. Since at this age, children focus their attention on plots and identify motivations and consequences of characters' behavior and actions. Hence, these primary school ages are opted to be affected by the harmful impacts of violent scenes and aggression. Due to importance of these critical ages of primary schooling in watching TV programs and the effect of

their content on aggression behavior, this study aimed at to highlight the impact of these programs on the Iranian primary school children in watching some of the selected programs. To pursue the objectives of this study, the researcher measured pacing index of these programs to find out the relationship between television program pacing and the Iranian primary school students' aggression level.

1.7 Definitions of Terms

Aggression refers to behavior between members of the same species that is intended to cause humiliation, pain, or harm. Ferguson and Beaver (2009) defined aggressive behavior as Behavior which is intended to increase the social dominance of the organism relative to the dominance position of other organisms. Aggression can be direct or indirect, hostile, instrumental, imitative, verbal, physical, even accidental (Kotler & Calvert, 2003). In this study, aggression is thought to be associated with a short- or long-term effect from viewing violent media that involves a display of aggressive behavior.

Attitude is a way of thinking about either a real or imagined event. Attitudes are believed to guide information processing. They are developed through a complex and selective evaluative process based on cognitive and affective reactions to life experiences (Eiser & van, 2003). In this study, attitude is thought to be associated with media effect that can create and shape one's opinions, beliefs, and values.

Television (TV) is a telecommunication medium for transmitting and receiving moving images that can be monochrome (black-and-white) or colored, with accompanying sound. "Television" may also refer specifically to a television set, television programming, television transmission (Baird, 2004). In the current study; a device designed to receive and convert incoming electrical signals into a series of visible images on a screen together with accompanying sound

Violence is aggressive behavior that may be physically, sexually, or emotionally abusive. The aggressive behavior is conducted by an individual or group against another, or others (O'Moore, 1994). Cultural Indicators Project defined violence as: the overt expression of physical force (with or without a weapon, against self or other) compelling action against one's will on pain of being hurt or killed or actually hurting or killing (Signorielli, Gerbner, & Morgan, 1995).

Pacing: program pacing is defined as the rate of scene and character change per minute on the basis of viewers' visual attention to television presentations (Howard Gola, & Calvert, 2010). Pacing is defined by how rapidly the shots or images presented to the viewer change (Lang, 2000). In this study, children's television programs were allocated a pacing index came from these criteria: (a) frequency of camera cuts, (b) frequency of related scene changes, (c) frequency of unrelated scene changes, (d) frequency of auditory changes, (e) percentage of active motion, (f) percentage of active talking, and (g) percentage of active music (McCollum & Bryant, 2003).

Media Violence is a visual portrayal of acts of physical aggression by one human against another (Huesmann & Taylor, 2006). In this study, it refers to visually portrayed physically aggressive acts by one person against another.

Violent Behavior is a more serious form of physical aggression that poses a significant risk of serious injury to victims. (Huesmann & Taylor, 2006). In the present study violent behavior is any behaviors by an individual that threatens or actually harms or injures the individual or others or destroys property.

Behavior: Behavior can be defined as the way in which an individual behaves or acts. It is the way an individual conducts herself/himself. Behavior, therefore, is the way an individual acts towards people, society or objects. It can be either bad or good. It can be normal or abnormal according to society norms (Gordon, Guez, & Allen, 2000). In this thesis behavior refers to; the actions or reactions of a child in response to external or internal stimuli.

Exposure: Exposure is defined as the state of being in contact with something (Sander, 1997). Today television offers more viewing options than ever before, and that means a child can be exposed to a vast range of programs, both good and bad. It also means that the child may be in front of the screen for hours every day while watching his or her favorite TV program. This viewing of TV program can influence children based on the duration of exposure to TV and its genre.

Genre: The term “genre” comes from the French language and means “type” or “kind.” According to Kellner (1980) a genre refers to as coded set of formulas and conventions which indicate a culturally accepted way or organizing material into distinct patterns. Genre is the term for any category of literature or other forms of art or entertainment, e.g. music, whether written or spoken, audial or visual, based on some sets of stylistic criteria. In this study; genre refer to television program’s genre. Television program genres can be categorized according to the setting of the program. Nevertheless, programs with the same settings can be very different, due to the use of different themes, format or moods. Berger (2007) stated that some of the more important formulaic broadcast television genres, and programs that can be placed in each genre, are as follows: commercials, news, sports broadcasts, action adventures, drama, religious programs, science and education shows, game shows, talk shows, comedies and so on.

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