

Aran, S., & Rodrigo, M. (2013). The Notion of Violence in Television Fiction: Children's Interpretation. *Comunicar*, 20(40), 155–164. <https://doi.org/10.3916/C40-2013-03-06>

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Children and Television Violence

As our achievements in technology and mass media continue to grow, one of the largest concerns among media consumers is the concept of media literacy. Humans consume media more and more everyday, and it is important that individuals are conscious and aware of the messages that media is sending to them. This concern is especially specific to children, as they are the most susceptible to base their viewpoints on the media that surrounds them. Rodrigo and Aran's study on "The Notion of Violence in Television Fiction: Children's Interpretation" details the reactions and analysis of violence by child viewers. Their research provides a great insight into how children interpret violence in television, and how children are able to find different levels of rationality for certain displays of violence.

The research study's goal is clearly stated in the study, as the study seeks to determine "the role of the media in the debate on mediatised social violence, particularly in its representation in television fiction" (Aran & Rodrigo, 2013) The study was conducted through the means of showing multiple children (under the age of twelve years old) two different forms of television genres, while gauging their reaction to scenes involving violent behavior. Later, the children were interviewed one-on-one by the researchers to discuss their reactions and analyses of the media that they were shown.

Both authors are credible in their research and are fully qualified to manage the research study. Dr. Aran is a research professor of Communication and International Relations at the University of Ramon Llull in Barcelona, and Dr. Miquel Rodrigo-Alsina is a professor of communication at the University of Pompeu Fabra in Barcelona. As professors of communication, their knowledge of television's role in mass media gives them strong insight into the large impact that media portrayal of violence has on children. Knowing the relevance of the issue of media violence allows these professors to distinctly craft the research study to fit the criteria needed to make informed conclusions about mass media and its impact.

From an ethical and procedural standpoint, the methodology of the research is very sound and appropriate for the type of study being conducted. In terms of analysis of data from the study, key factors of interpreting violence were considered and identified. The research noted many viewpoints to understand and interpret violence, focusing on different levels of primary indicators, such as the actual violence itself, the motive, the context in which the violence is produced in, and the perceived 'realness' of the violent actions. This allowed better analysis of the interview responses, in order to approach the conclusion of the study from many different sides. Additionally, the study was very ethically conducted. All parents and participants had the study disclosed to them prior to the beginning of the research, and they were given the analysis results after the study was finished.

The researchers' conclusion appear to be very sound, and can even be considered surprising. The children interviewed seem to have a great ability of recognizing whether or not certain media violence is appropriate or even realistic. While the children were able to identify the most intense and morally ambiguous forms of violence in the media that they were shown,

the majority of the children were shaken the most by the portrayal of a family argument than of a scene involving murder. The children were able to differentiate between morally triggering and emotionally triggering content.

While the research findings of the study appear to be very sound, there is a lack of variety in the content that the children were asked to analyze for the study. The children were only asked to interpret a cartoon depicting a parental argument, and a live-action movie depicting murder. The researchers could have studied the difference between showing the same type of violence in both a cartoon and a live-action program, to see how children interpret the severity of violence as based on the genre of the media they are exposed to. However, the methodology of the study still stands appropriate and rational on its own.

It is important that media consumers are aware of the different messages and agendas that media organizations are attempting to submit to their audiences. Aran and Rodrigo's research reflects the necessity of educating children in the subject of media literacy. While there are additional methods of study that could be conducted to embellish and perfect the conclusions made in this study, the research has drawn legitimate and relevant results in its execution.