

ROLE OF MEDIA IN PROMOTING BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS AMONG CHILDREN WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the role of media in promoting behavior problem in children with Attention Deficit Hyper Disorder. The population of the study consisted of all the subject teachers of primary schools in Karachi, Pakistan working with ADHD children. Random sampling was used to collect the data through questionnaire. The total sample size was 120 teachers from three towns of Karachi, Pakistan. The research concluded that the role of media affects ADHD children at primary level. Children apply things learned from media in their daily life and the violence projected on media also promotes the aggressive behavior. Based on the results, different classroom instructional strategies are suggested for the teachers at primary level to minimize the effect of media in ADHD children.

Keywords: Behavior, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, Teaching, Children, Media, Instructional Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

All children are different from each other. They think and act differently; at the same time, they bring diversified experiences and expectations to classroom. They have varied beliefs about learning and classroom behavior. Moreover, their aptitude and abilities are quite different from each other. The academic success is correlated to the skills and ability to respond to the tasks in a classroom. Students not only attain knowledge but they also participate in all the activities which take place in the classroom (Forness & Kavale, 2001).

Children exhibit different behavior patterns in the classroom. From mood disorder to emotional disturbance, throwing tantrums to hyper activity, all kinds of behavior are challenging for a teacher to tackle and to maintain discipline in their respective classrooms. We may find shy, reserved as well as confident children in our classroom. Many children display inappropriate or problem behaviors in the classroom which distract others attention, cause harm to the child or others and isolate the child from his or her classmates; while there are some children having behavior problems associated with learning difficulties. We term it Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a syndrome which begins in childhood and characterized by hyperactivity etc (Barkley, 1990). In fact, because the symptoms associated with attention disorders appear to be most apparent and problematic in educational settings, ADHD has been defined as "a school-based disorder" (Atkins & Pelham, 1991 p.202). In the childhood age, this disorder runs from 3 to 5% of the total population. APA, (1994), & Barkley (1990) suggested that most classrooms may very well have at least one child with ADHD.

It is observed that impulsivity and behavior problems further instigate the core symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Any child with ADHD may have many behavioral traits such as difficulty in making friends, difficulty in communicating their needs, etc. Goldstein & Goldstein (1992) identified that these children may find it difficult to sit or pay attention in the classroom setting while Barkley (1990) noted that the academic performance of these children is low.

In the United States alone, 1 to 2 million children has symptoms of ADHD (Stevens, 1997; American Psychiatric Association, 1994). The statistics of the US Census Bureau, International Data Base (2004) shows the number of ADHD in southern Asia is given below

Showing the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder in Southern Asia (Extrapolated Statistics)

<i>Country/Region Extrapolated</i>	<i>Prevalence Population</i>	<i>Estimated Used</i>
Afghanistan	345937	28,513,677
Bangladesh	1,714,792	141,340,476
Bhutan	26,516	2,185,569
India	12,921,812	1,065,070,607
Pakistan	1,931,426	159,196,336
Sri Lanka	241,496	19,905,165

There are many medical reasons for ADHD in children, but it is also believed that media is one of the major causes of promoting further behavior problems in children with ADHD. In today's society, media are thoroughly integrated into the fabric of life. The neuro-developmental theory suggests that television contribute to develop ADHD among children. Aggressive behavior and anger are the two important behavioral issues found in children who are exposed to media violence.

Several studies were conducted in Pakistan which shows that there is a high prevalence of ADHD among school going children (Syed & Hussein, 2010). Children are socially active and impulsive, but those children having ADHD find many difficulties in social and educational set-up. Many studies have demonstrated that children with ADHD exhibit average or weak performance in different domains of learning. Barkley (1997), Barkley, Grodzinsky & DuPaul (1992), Guevremont & Dumas (1994) estimate that half of the children with ADHD find it tough to build relations with others.

A child with ADHD in the classroom shows lack of concern to follow instructions. They are restless and interrupt other children. Beside that they don't finish tasks on time (Nadeem, et al., 2010).

There is a correlation between the age and behavior changes among ADHD children. Older children are hyper active, impulsive and are unable to complete task timely. They are often impulsive and move round the room, reacting spontaneously without regard to previous plans or necessary tasks and homework (U.S. Department of Education, 2004).

In many cases, ADHD children are attention seeker for which they talk out of turn or move around the room. They often lack fine motor control, which makes note-taking difficult and handwriting a trial to read and often have trouble with basic arithmetic operations and they cannot complete long-term projects without supervision.

(http://helpguide.org/mental/pdf/Teaching_tips_ADHD_PDF-1.pdf).

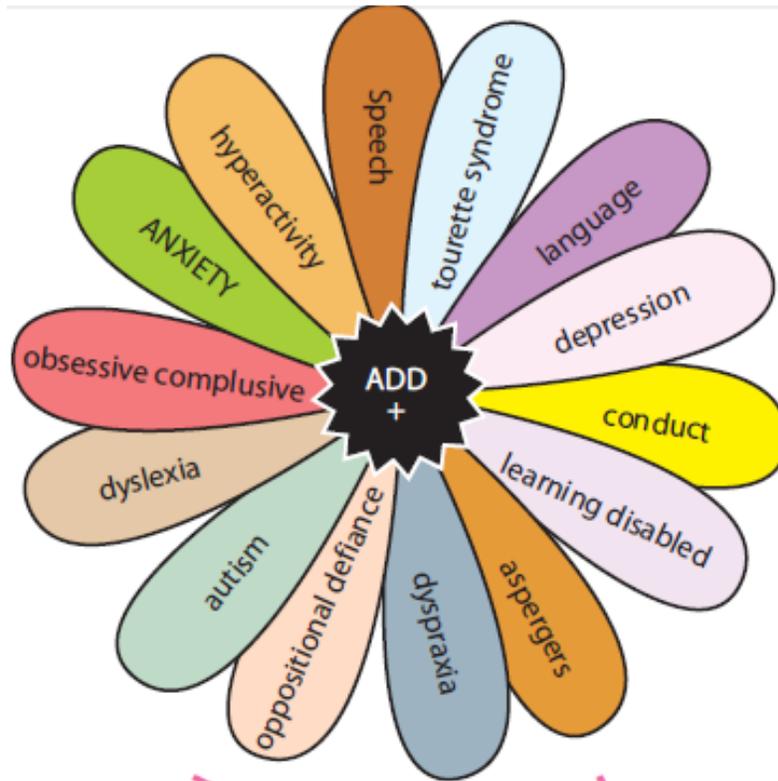


Figure 1. Affects of ADHD

Many laboratory- based experimental studies were conducted to evaluate the effects of TV watching on attention span immediately after viewing. Friedrich & Stein (1973) study found that children who watched violent free TV shows had greater tolerance than children who had watched Batman.

Infrequent exposure to media is not likely associated with behavior problem; however it is believed that children should not come into frequent contact with violent television programs or video games as it may produce behavior problems (Bushman & Huesmann, 2006).

It is believed that the students with ADHD benefit from an inclusive educational model where teachers use the latest teaching strategies for students with Learning Disability (Martinussen, et al., 2006).

STRATEGY

In order to understand the ADHD problems associated with children in classroom and the role of media in promoting behavior problems among these children, the research study was designed using survey method. The population of the study consisted of all subject teachers of primary schools in Karachi associated with ADHD children. Purposive sampling was used to collect data from 120 teachers (60 trained and 60 untrained) from 3 towns of Karachi, Pakistan. The teachers selected as a sample were closely associated with the home environment and parents of children with ADHD. The data was collected through structured questionnaire comprised of twenty items (5 items are selected for this research paper for analysis). The consent was signed by the respondents before the study was conducted.

The tables show the responses of the respondents to the questions

Table 1. Shows the distribution of town and teachers selected for this research

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Town</i>	<i>Teachers</i>
1.	Gulberg	40
2.	Nasirabad	40
3.	Federal B Area	40
Total		120

Equal number (40) teachers are selected from each area of Karachi. i.e., Gulberg, Nasirabad and Federal B Area

Table 2. Shows the distribution of teachers qualification

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
1.	Trained	60	50%
2.	Untrained	60	50%
Total		120	100%

Equal (50%) of the respondents are trained and untrained.

Table 3. Responses for the Item # 1: Do you think that media and society effects on ADHD children at primary level?

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
1.	Trained	93.3%	6.6%	
2.	Untrained	80%	20%	
Total		86.6%	13.3%	99.9%

Table 4. Responses for the Item # 2: Do you think that aggressive behavior of child depends on media violence?

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
1.	Trained	86.6%	13.3%%	
2.	Untrained	80%	20%	
Total				99.9%

Table 5. Responses for Item # 3: Can Children apply things learned from media in their daily life?

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Qualification</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Total</i>
1.	Trained	80%	20%	
2.	Untrained	93.3%	6.6%	
Total		86.6%	13.3%	99.9%

Table 6. Responses for Item # 4: Do you think that one of the ways to discuss with ADHD children is by sitting together with family?

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Qualification</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>D</i>
1.	Trained	66.6%	20%	13.3%	0%
2.	Untrained	86.6%	13.3%	0%	0%

Table 7. Responses for Item # 5: Does the behavioral issues are produced in your classroom

<i>S.No</i>	<i>Qualification</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>D</i>
1.	Trained	15%	35%	50%	0%
2.	Untrained	80%	13%	7%	0%

RESULT

1. 93.3% of the trained teachers while 80% of the untrained teachers think that media and society effects on ADHD children at primary level
2. 86.6% of the trained teachers think that aggressive behavior of child depends on media violence while 80% of the untrained teachers follow the same pattern of thinking.
3. 80% respondents of the trained teachers while 93.3% of the untrained teachers agree that children apply things learned from media in their classrooms.
4. 66.6% of the trained teachers strongly agree and 20% agree that one of the ways to discuss the behavior problem of ADHD children is by sitting together with family, while 80% of the untrained teachers strongly agree and 13% showed the similar pattern.
5. Only 15% of the trained teachers strongly agree and 35% agree that they face behavioral issues in their classroom, while 80% of the untrained teachers strongly agree and 13% agree that they face behavioral issues in their classroom.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that media and society affects ADHD children at primary level. The aggressive behavior of child is also influenced by media violence. Results of the study also indicate that children exhibit aggressive behavior, which they learn through media which also develop a ripple effect among other children.

Groves (1997) said "Media is the most ubiquitous source of violence encountered by the majority of children" (p. 272). Children apply things learned from media in their daily life and the violence, shown on media also influences the aggressive behavior of student.

Wilson et al. (2002) found that nearly 7 out of 10 children's shows some pattern of physical aggression and that, within a typical 1 h children's program, a child is likely to witness one violent act every 4 min. In comparisons between children's and other types of television programming, the study authors concluded that "violence is more prevalent and concentrated in programs specifically targeted to viewers under age 13" (p. 27).

A longitudinal study was conducted to assess the habit of media usage of primary grades children and found that children who spent more than two hours a day in front of a screen are

more likely to have attention problems. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children should not spend more than one or two hours in using either TV or games (<http://www.everydayhealth.com/adhd-awareness/does-technology-cause-adhd.aspx>).

Johnston & Mash (2001) reviewed the evidence and suggest that the behavior of the family towards these children influence their social as well as personal life. The research reveals that the presence of a child with ADHD results in demagnetization of parents' efficacy, relationship and increase parental stress level. Moreover, the siblings also detach themselves with one another due to negative societal attitude towards these children. It has been reported that siblings of children with ADHD are at increased risk for conduct and emotional disorders (Szatmari, 1989). This creates social detachment of ADHD and may also instigate children associated with ADHD.

Results also indicate that the most effective method which can control learned behavior by the process of counseling. Counseling is one of the best methods to control behavior problem among ADHD children. Teachers should sit together with family to discuss the matter and to know the family environment. Parents should be called occasionally to visit and discuss their children progress. Parents should be guided to give moral and emotional support to these children as demagnetizing these children will only increase the behavioral issues among ADHD children. It is also suggested by the respondents that children should not be exposed to violent programs or if they are keen to watch tv programs, then time should be specified with certain limitations. This suggestion was made keeping in view the fact that the side effect of watching media for a long time may also affect the health (physical and mental) of children.

Training of the teacher also plays an important role in reducing behavioral problems among ADHD children. The research reveals the fact that the student's behavior problems were controlled when the teachers were trained. According to the (US Department of Education, 2004), teachers who are successful in educating children with ADHD use a three-prolonged strategy. They begin by identifying the unique needs of the child. For example, the teacher determines how, when, and why the child is inattentive, impulsive, and hyperactive. The teacher then selects different educational practices associated with physical classroom accommodations, academic instruction and behavioral interventions, that are appropriate to meet that child's needs. Finally, the teacher combines these practices into an individualized educational program (IEP) or other individualized plan and integrates this program with educational activities provided to other children in the class.

The first major component of the most effective instruction for children with ADHD is effective academic instruction. Teachers can help prepare their students with ADHD to achieve goals by applying the principles of effective teaching when they introduce, conduct and conclude each lesson. Teacher should use good teaching techniques and also provide instructions to children with ADHD. Literature on self-management as it is applied to children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is reviewed in the context of (Barkley's, 1997) theoretical model of ADHD and best practices in overall treatment intervention. The self-management skills were applied to a sample with ADHD. It was found that the students with ADHD learn best with a carefully structured academic lesson- one where the teacher explains what he or she wants children to learn in the current lesson and places these skills and knowledge in the context of previous lessons. Effective teachers preview their expectations about what students will learn and how they should behave during the lesson.

Teacher should present the lecture by experimenting new teaching styles. Taylor & Larson (1998) identified several techniques to optimize the learning of children with ADHD which include changing activities frequently, breaking down of activities, etc.

The literature suggests that physical, environmental adaptations in the classroom to reduce distractions are helpful. Beside that children should be kept away from the classroom materials which can create distraction such as soft boards (Lichter, 1993). It has also been suggested that teachers should remove all the visually distracting things from the class.

Another common approach used by teachers in the classroom is to modify the curriculum for children with ADHD. Most of the time, management disagree to modify curriculum but modification enhances students' interest and attention of ADHD children. Zentall (1993) reported that simple strategies such as adding colorful materials can stimulate children learning. Besides that, such topics should be selected which are of interest to the child with ADHD (Taylor & Larson, 1998).

TEACHING STRATEGIES FOR ADHD

The following sets of strategies may assist teachers in conducting effective lessons:

1. Structure and consistency are very important for children with ADHD
2. Limited rules should be imposed on these children
3. All pastoral support should be provided by the teacher to ADHD children
4. Help children correct their own mistakes through trail and errors.
5. Designate one teacher as the student's advisor or coordinator to review the student's progress and act as a liaison between home and school
6. To assist them in time management, teach a child how to read and use clock and calendar. Practicing sequencing activities may help.

For modifying their behavior, following techniques are helpful

Praise should be specific for the positive behavior displayed by the student. The comment should focus on what the student did right; Ignore inappropriate behavior rather reacting; Parental involvement in academic planning is important. Media usage should be restricted to limit behavior problem; counseling sessions must be initiated

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that media has highly influenced the behavior of children. Furthermore, the type of behavior children learn from media is mostly imitated by them. Specific designed strategies can be used to minimize the effect of learned behavior. Teacher and parents play important role in controlling behavior problems in ADHD children. It is the responsibility of parents to keep an eye on children activities: what they watch on TV and internet. Violence and personal grudges should be avoided and homely environment should be provided to children. Moreover, teachers can play an important role in counseling the issues of children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Exposure to media should be minimized for children with ADHD
2. Parents should provide alternate activities to substitute their time, spend on watching TV
3. Teachers and parents should collaborate and coordinate in developing strategies to overcome the effect of ADHD on children

4. Students should be encouraged to socialize or develop friendly attitude towards ADHD children so that the demagnetization can be prevented and at the same time mutual sharing and caring be can promoted
5. Government and all the organizations working for children must consider that there is a dire need to develop recreational places for children so that the behavior can be mould through play activities rather spending time on watching television.

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