



## Exposure to Juvenile-Based Crime Reenactment Programs;

### A Study of Perceived Parental Stress

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#### Abstract

The current study aimed to examine relationship between juvenile based crime reenactment programs and the perceived parental stress related to it. Researchers hypothesized that there is an association between exposures to juvenile based crime reenactment programs and perceived parental stress. The sample comprised of 157 parents. A survey was conducted in Islamabad, based on purposive as well as convenient sampling. Data collection measures comprised demographic sheet, exposure to juvenile crime reenactment programs and Impact of Events Scale (IES). Factor Analysis was performed which constructed five factors i.e. effects on mental health; stress increase; effect on health; ability to handle situation and social Isolation. Moreover, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation test was performed to see the association between the exposures to juvenile based crime reenactment programs and perceived parental stress. A significant relationship was found between the juvenile crime base programs and perceived parental stress.

**Keyword:** *Juvenile-based Crime Reenactment Programs, Impact of Event Scale, Perceived Parental Stress*

#### Introduction

Crime reenactment programs are the stories that are reported and broadcasted by media with alterations and are comprised of characters that commit crime and often gets punished afterwards. Such programs describe the criminal acts which are taken from real life events (Abdullah & Rahman, 2017). In simple terms, Crime Reenactment programs are focused on violence

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based criminal incidents with portrayal of sinful and bad criminals as well as the poor and helpless sufferers and victims (Hetsroni, 2012, p.143).

Empirical evidence (Anderson, 2003) indicates that people's mental health gets profoundly affected as exposure to television shows full of criminal activities takes place. Current study examines the effects of the extent at which parents watch crime-related shows and programs, while keeping in concern their stress level regarding personal victimization. Variables that have previously been investigated and related to effects of the cultivation theory such as; duration of watching TV, realism that is perceived, content of the message, direct exposure, etc. were taken into account as well as demographic variables that are in direct correlation cultivation, i.e. age, education, gender, and income. The researchers demonstrated parental concerns that are caused by TV shows of this crime genre. Only those parents were made part of the study whose children were no more than 16 years of age in context of Pakistan. People, after becoming exposed to crime-based shows and news, fear that they too could become victims in almost the same way as they witnessed on their TV sets. Hence, the current study aims at examining the effect that watching juvenile crime re-enactment programs has on parents' level of stress in the context of Pakistan's society.

### **Crime Reenactment Programs in Pakistan**

Media channels in Pakistan have emphasized the coverage of crime-based stories such as robbery, arson, rape, kidnapping, child abuse, domestic violence, forging of the official documents, Driving Under Influence, exposing juveniles to addictive drugs and alcoholic products, etc. (Zahra, Masood & Mussarat, 2018, p.141). Broadcast media outlets feature criminal and violent activities in a manner that is utterly exaggerated. The unprecedented and ever-growing fame of crime-based reenactment television shows has trebled people's exposure to violent activities and crimes of strange nature in the society have become rampant. Media plays a significant role in occurrence of crimes in the contemporary societies. (Bhatti, Iftikhar, & Mahmood, 2020, p. 514; Heath & Gilbert, 1996, p. 381).

Crime re-enactment programs, amidst their over dramatization of crime and exaggeration, create a sense of uncertainty and insecurity amongst viewers. The 'reality-based' crime shows abet people's abilities to acquire more information about criminal activities. These shows make it possible for people to closely observe issues that are of distant nature. These exaggerated reenactments interweave fact-based reports with speculations and rumors, resulting in distorting the line that sets news and entertainment apart from one another, sometimes referred to as "infotainment". Story is mostly deeply analyzed and sometimes two stories are crammed into one episode to utilize the full 60 minutes of the program.

Whilst alluding to media, Edwards (2007, p. 98) maintained that the material that it broadcasts, either based on fiction or reality, tremendously influences the opinions that viewers hold, and also affects heavily their policy making. Furthermore, production of dramas also contributed heavily towards mainstreaming the major commonly referred to as 'Forensic Science'. Crime incidents that have occurred in real life are broadcast on Television in programs called as 'Crime Reenactment Shows'. These Shows apprise viewers of the crime that is part and parcel of their everyday surroundings and make them aware of the tactics that could be exercised in a criminal situation for their protection (Bahadur, Ullah & Zaman, 2016, p. 67). Therefore, ambiguity and uncertainty arise amongst the viewers living in the respective society where the show gets broadcast and people fear their peers and sometimes also feel threatened by their own family members. People become fearful that they are to become the next victims of criminal activities or they themselves could turn into victimizers. Parents are especially affected as these Juvenile based Crime Reenactment Programs leave a psychological mark on their cognitive processes as they deem it necessary to not trust anyone when it comes to the safety of their children. They are fearful as these programs instill a sense of fear in their hearts that anyone could hurt their children (Tulloch, 2004, p.370). Even their immediate relatives are not trustworthy for them as in some of the episodes, children are seen

getting victimized by their own uncles, aunts, cousins, etc. Parents are compelled to not trust their relatives and friends regarding their children, which abets the creation of an anti-social environment.

Several studies (Huma, 2015, p.122; Bhatti & Hassan, 2014, p. 295; Zahra, Masood & Mussarat, 2018, p.142; Brown, Lauricella, Douai, & Zaidi, 2012, p. 48) have been conducted previously to examine the Crime based programming in diverse settings and perspectives such as; how such programming effect viewers perceptions in terms of cognition, Mood, fear & Behaviors and presentations of Crime Re-enactment programs etc. While reviewing the existing literature regarding Crime Re-enactment Programs, still there are some key areas to explore. The Current study examines the effects of the extent at which parents watch crime-reenactment programs, while keeping in concern their stress level regarding their children's victimization after a particular disturbing event happens. The Current study will significantly contribute in the existing literature. It will also provide guidance and knowledge specifically, for the media practitioners, policy makers, future researchers, and society, overall. Demographic Variable included gender (Male and Female) and socio-economic status.

The main objective of the study is to examine the relationship between exposure to Crime Reenactment Shows and Parental Stress.

### **Literature Review**

Gerbner and Gross (1976, p.182) propounded that people who keep watching the television for more than four hours a day perceive world as full of criminal activities and deem it as a place only to be fearful. They argued that the images that are broadcast persistently are able to cultivate a particular viewpoint regarding what happens in the actual world.

Media emphasizes crime-related reality TV shows as TV programming which weakens the differentiating line between entertainment and fact. With the advent of the broadcast media, one of the most emphasized matters of the news channels has been the content that relates to crime. Criminal events that have

taken place in reality are dramatized and Police's role is also portrayed during resolution of the respective case. Crimes that are committed in society and hence are depicted in the aforementioned reenactment shows comprise of myriads of natures, including; thefts, robberies, rapes, child abductions, murders, forging of the official documents, monetary or financial corruptions, illicit ways of earning money, accepting bribes, swindling the customers, etc. Exposure to such crime-based shows generates stress and anxiety amongst the viewers and, hence, a sense of insecurity arises in them. Parents, especially, become stressed when they turn on the Television only to see someone's child being abducted and become fearful regarding their own children's protection. After exposure to such content, thoughts arise in their minds that persuade them to tread carefully amidst all the menaces that prowl in the society, ready to pounce on their next victim (Näsi, Tanskanen, 2020, pp. 12,15). Crime related content creates mental distress and emotional uncertainty among viewers (Hafeez, 2017, p.780). Moreover, van der Molen (2004, p. 1772) documented in her study that depiction of violent content on television affects audience on a huge level. It also leads towards serious health related effects. The violent news create stress, shocks, uncertainties and worries. Consumption of such content creates many other relevant factors including nightmares and sleeplessness that affect badly on individuals.

According to Anderson (2008, p. 343), Parenting stress is closely linked with the destructive performance. Hetsroni (2012, p.145) evaluated the portrayal of violent based crime content in the American TV. He analyzed 6 decades in which various studies have been conducted on such crime content in different perspectives on American television. He claimed that crime content influences audience on larger level.

Holbert, Shah, and Kwak (2004) added that prior researchers have identified that non-fictional material has much more powerful effects of cultivation when compared to fictional material when it comes to people's fear of crime and also perception of crime itself. Parents are no exception here, as the ones who opt to watch such crime-based showed more often are

as much likely to suffer from conditions of stress and anxiety. So, this research cements the already accessible literature with inclusion of media studies and emphasizes the potential influence of child-based and crime-related reenactment television shows (p.351).

The authors opined that the heavy viewers are affected to a larger extent when compared to the light viewers and the growing influence of television will construct a fantasy world that heavy viewers will perceive as reality. This theory is in line with the current study and it is planned to discover the stress of Juvenile crime re-enactment programs within parents.

### **Research Question**

RQ 1. To what extent the exposure to Crime Reenactment Shows effect the Parental Stress?

### **Hypothesis**

H. The more the exposure to Crime Reenactment Shows, the higher the effect on Parental Stress.

### **Juvenile Crime Re-enactment Programs**

Crime shows blur the line amid entertainment and information. Such shows "Aisa bhi hota hai", "Wardaat", "Shabbir to daikhayga" etc. are produced in a manner that makes them as realistic as can be. These shows are comprised of several genres such as Drama, Documentary, or Re-enactment. These TV shows or News stories particularly concentrate on violence, gore, voracious perpetrators, and 'poor' victims that are totally helpless. Such programs mostly cover stories like sexual abuse, rape, kidnapping, murder etc. particularly related to children.

### **Perceived Parental Stress**

According to Warren and Aloia, stress is a cognitive experience that directly affects person's emotions, and has the capability to alter mood and behavior. It can also induce biochemical, and physiological changes in the respective person (2019, p. 487). Stress, in contemporary world, is often result of crime-based content that is mostly exaggerated in order to attract as many viewers. Sometimes, people become anxious because the crime news stories or shows that they watch prompt fear in them. With relentless broadcast of these crime stories, a fear is created

amongst the viewers that instigates a feeling that they could also become the victims of what is being broadcast (Zahra, Masood & Mussarat, 2018, p.141). Tulloch (2004, p.370) alludes to fear and threat of crime against children, broadcast on media in form of news stories or shows, carry stupendous challenge for parents who are expected to safeguard their children.

**Impact of Events Scale (IES)**

Impact of Events Scale, IES (Horowitz, Wilner, & Alvarez, 1979, p. 211; Weiss & Marmar, 1997) was adapted and modified to measure perceived parental stress after watching a traumatic and disturbing event in a juvenile based crime reenactment shows. The Impact of Events Revised Scale is a brief questionnaire. It is a self-report questionnaire and can easily be administered. The IES is considered as a helpful scale for measuring the effects of daily life traumas and stress (Weiss & Marmar, 1997, p. 399). In Impact of Events Revised Scale (Weiss & Marmar, 1997) five of the twenty-two questions were added to original Impact of Event Scale (Horowitz, Wilner, & Alvarez, 1979, p. 211). The IES is a fitting apparatus amid measuring of the individuals-based response to an event of trauma in the population. The response sets that are especially emphasized are avoidance (avoidance of feelings, ideas, and situations), intrusion (intrusive thoughts, imagery, dissociative-like re-experiencing, and intrusive feelings), and hyperarousal (irritability, hypervigilance, difficulty concentrating, anger, heightened startle). The tool was constructed and assessed by use of a particular trauma event.

**Methodology**

This study was quantitative research method that consisted of survey for collecting the data through questionnaire. From a sample of 157 parents, survey was conducted in F-10 and G-5 sectors of Islamabad, based on purposive sampling as well as convenient sampling. Criteria for their inclusion was- parents having at least 14 years of education were considered to be part of the survey for their cognitive stress measurement after witnessing crime against children in a re-enactment programs. Parents who had children less than 16 years of years. Only those parents were questioned whose families were unbroken.

**Demographic Variables**

In current study, a comprehensive list was compiled that contained information regarding age, gender and socio-economic status and also child's age and gender.

Gender comprised of male and female parents. Socio-economic status is related with the income level. Only two income levels were selected low and high purposively. Low-income level was monthly income between 10,000 and 30,000 and high-level income was between 80,000 and 100,000.

**Impact of Events Scale (IES)**

The IES is considered as a helpful scale for measuring the effects of daily life traumas and stress. Thirteen items were adopted and modified for measuring the perceived intensity of parental stress after watching a traumatic and disturbing event in a juvenile based crime reenactment shows with the help of five-point response Likert scale. The bigger the score is, the higher the extent of parental perceived stress is. There are five indicators used in this study to measure the impact of stress. First indicators is stress on mind which includes stress due to reminders, post watching stress increased, removal from memory, avoided the reminders. Second indicator is stress increase that includes pro-stress feelings increased, sleeplessness. Third indicator is effect on health that comprised, health issues, dreaming about crime shows. Fourth indicator is ability to handle situation that is unable to handle impact, hallucination, handled by avoiding. Fifth indicator is social isolation that includes remained silent.

**Data Analysis**

The data of this study was analyzed using various statistics in order to answer the questions and test the hypotheses. With the help of SPSS version 25 to reduce the items, Factor Analysis technique was used to analyze the data. The principal component factor analysis was performed by using the method of orthogonal rotation with the varimax procedure. The purpose of conducting the factor analysis was to see the relationships among scale items in order to develop cluster of associated items (Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma, 2003; Lewis, 2002; Nunnally, 1978). The researchers constructed five factors by computing the allied items.



The factors were; Effects on Mind, Stress Increase, Effect on Health, Ability to Handle Situation and Social Isolation.

**Results**

The demographic characteristics of the sample based on 78 male respondents (50.8%) and 77 female respondents (49.2%).

**Table1:** *Characteristics of Sample*

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency
<b>Gender</b>	Male	78(50.8%)
	Female	77(49.2%)
<b>Age</b>	Young Couple	1(0.64%)
	Mature Couple	92(59.25%)
	Middle Age Couple	46(29.66%)
	Old age Couple	16(10.31%)
<b>Income level</b>	Low Income Level	9(5.8%)
	Middle class Income	57(36.75%)
	Upper Middle-Income Level	67(43.2%)
	High Income Level	22(14.18%)
<b>Watching Crime Re-Enactment Shows</b>	2hrs	13(8.1%)
	3hrs	56(35%)
	4hrs	68(42.5%)
	5hrs	18(11.3%)

Table 1 shows that the majority (59.25%) were Mature Couple, followed by 29.66% were Middle Age Couples, and 10.31% were Old Age Couple. Only 0.64% was in Young Couple category.

The majority of the sample (43.2%) comes in the category of Upper Middle-Income level. This was followed by 36.75% in Middle class Income group, 14.18% in High Income Level and 5.8% in Low Income Level. In terms of exposure to Crime Re-Enactment Shows, the majority (42.5%) had exposure of 4 hours. it was followed by the respondents with having exposure to such content of 3 hours (35%) and 5 hours (11.3%). Whereas, 8.1% of the respondents had exposure of 2 hours.

Keeping in view the Research Question that was to analyze the list of perceived mental stress of parents after exposure to Juvenile-based Crime Reenactment Programs. The

principal component factor analysis was performed by using the method of orthogonal rotation with the varimax procedure. The purpose of conducting the factor analysis is to see the relationships among scale items in order to develop cluster of associated items (Netemeyer, Bearden, and Sharma, 2003; Lewis, 2002; Nunnally, 1978). The five factors with Eigen values greater than 1 appeared as a result. These factors were: Effects on Mind; Stress Increase; Effect on Health; Ability to Handle Situation and Social Isolation (Table 2). Based on the proportion of total variance, the five factors accounted for 57.351 percent of the variance. Ryu (2006) underlined that some of the researchers advised that if a variable loaded on more than 1 factor and it describes four percent of the total variance, then the factor is perceived significant and meaningful (Hair, Anderson, Tatham, and Black, 1998). As per the Eigenvalues given, the five factors accounted for more than four percent of the total variance.

Table 2: Factor Analysis of Impact of Event Scale

Factors	Mean	Std. Deviation	1	2	3	4	5	h <sup>2</sup>
Effect on Mind								
Stress due to Reminders (IES1)	2.80	.996	.720					.593
Post watching Stress Increased (IES4)	2.86	1.142	.699					.522
Removal from Memory (IES10)	2.99	1.051	.644					.462
Avoided the Reminders (IES5)	3.03	1.093	.449					.431
Stress Increase								
Stress Increased (IES3)	2.86	1.053		.713				.611
Pro-Stress Feelings Increased (IES9)	2.78	1.021		.704				.621
Sleeplessness (IES2)	2.82	.990		.692				.707
Effect on Health								
Health Issues (IES11)	2.90	1.216			.768			.653
Dreaming about Crime shows (IES12)	2.97	1.059			.669			.730
Ability to Handle Situation								
Unable to Handle Impact (IES8)	2.90	.999				.701		.513
Hallucination (IES6)	2.95	1.071				.558		.540
Handled by Avoiding(IES7)	2.81	1.076				.401		.517
Social Isolation Remained Silent (IES13)	2.85	1.110					.723	.555
% of Variance			18.898	10.961	10.237	8.865	8.389	57.351

The first factor, “Effect on Mind” explained 18.898 percent of the variance. It had four statements dealt with stress due to reminders (2.80 Mean with .996 Standard Deviation), post watching stress (2.86 Mean with 1.142 Standard Deviation), Removal from Memory (2.99 Mean with 1.051 Standard Deviation), and Avoided the Reminders (3.03 Mean with 1.093 Standard Deviation). The factor was about the effect on mind

after watching Juvenile-based crime content on Crime-Reenactment Programs.

The second factor, "Stress Increase" explained 10.961 percent of the variance. The factor contains statements like Stress Increase Level (2.86 Mean with 1.053 Standard Deviation), Pro-Stress Feelings (2.78 Mean with 1.021 Standard Deviation) and Sleeplessness (2.82 Mean with .990 Standard Deviation).

The third factor, "Effect on Health" explained 10.237 percent of the variance. The factor comprises statements about the Health Issues (2.90 Mean with 1.216 Standard Deviation) and Dreaming about Crime shows (2.97 Mean with 1.059 Standard Deviation).

The fourth factor, "Ability to Handle Situation" explained 8.865 percent of the variance. The factor had three statements like Unable to Handle Impact (2.90 Mean with .999 Standard Deviation), Hallucination (2.95 Mean with 1.071 Standard Deviation), and Handled by Avoiding (2.81 Mean with 1.076 Standard Deviation).

The fifth factor, "Social Isolation" explained 8.389 percent of the variance. It had statement regarding Remained Silent after exposing with Juvenile-based Crime Reenactment Programs (2.85 Mean with 1.110 Standard Deviation).

**Table 3:** *Coefficient Alpha Value For Each Factor Of All Indicators*

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Number of Items</b>	<b>Coefficient Alpha</b>
<b>Effect on Mind</b>	4	79
<b>Stress Increase</b>	3	78
<b>Effect on Health</b>	2	76
<b>Ability to Handle Situation</b>	3	73
<b>Social Isolation</b>	1	54
<b>Total</b>	13	72

**RQ. To what extent the exposure to Crime Reenactment Shows effect the Parental Stress?**

*H. The more the exposure to Crime Reenactment Shows, the higher the effect on Parental Stress*

**Table 4:** *Pearson Product-Moment Correlation*

Indicators	Number of Hours Spending on Watching TV			
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed) P Value
Effect on Mind	2.66	.804	.162*	.004
Stress Increase	2.59	.804	.149*	.046
Effect on Health	2.66	.841	.185*	.021
Ability to Handle Situation	2.67	.842	.159*	.048
Social Isolation	2.66	.841	.045*	.015

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4 shows results of exposure to Juvenile based Crime Reenactment Programs and its impact on parental stress. As evident from the table, the relationship between exposure to crime reenactment programs and all indicators to parental stress was found in hypothesized direction. Thus, the hypothesis, “the more the exposure to crime reenactment shows the higher the effect on parental stress,” was supported.

**Discussion**

Findings show exposure to crime reenactment shows gives rise to higher effect on parental stress that is related to the effect on mind, level of stress increase, effect on health, ability to handle situation and social isolation. If the exposure to juvenile-

based crime reenactment programs increases, parental stress also increases. It shows that there is direct relation between these two variables. It answered the problem statement that in Pakistan's society how juvenile-based crime reenactment programs increased stress in parents. If more number of hours spent on watching juvenile-based crime reenactment TV programs leads to parental stress. Previous studies revealed that as more hours spend in watching TV programs especially juvenile reenactments that triggers more stress in parents in western countries. People of Pakistan have limited entertainment outlets, therefore, they spend more time in watching TV programs. As media do not portray real picture of the world as described by Gerbner. Media exaggerate as world is a full of criminal activities and prolong exposure of disaster and fearful viewpoint make world more disastrous and fearful. Such content trigger stress and anxiety as Anderson examined the relation between parental stress and destructive content of media. Keeping in view the findings of this study hypothesis, "the more the exposure to crime reenactment shows the higher the effect on parental stress is supported that showed strong relationship between exposure to crime reenactment programs and all indicators to parental stress in the context of Pakistan. Study focused on the number of hours spend on watching TV. There are other factors like socio-economic status and gender can also examined that which gender is more exposed to the juvenile reenactments TV programs. How the socio-economic status effect the watching behaviors of Pakistan's society.

**Conclusion**

The study concludes that number of hours spending on watching TV and Variable effect on mind on parents is significant at level .162\* (p=.004). Both are strongly related with one another. If one increases, the other also increases. This also leads to increase level of parental stress which has also significant relationship with spending time on watching juvenile reenactments TV programs .149\* (p=.046). The third indicator is effect on health. It has been revealed that more time spend on watching juvenile reenactments TV programs strongly effect the health. Both are correlated .185\* (p=.021). Ability to handle situation is related with spending time on watching TV i.e. .159\* (p=.048). The more time spend on watching juvenile reenactments TV programs that leads to more social isolation. So both variables are strongly related with one another .045\* (p=.015). Hence, it has been revealed that the more time spend on watching crime reenactment TV programs increases the parental stress.

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