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## The Influence of the Media in Publicizing Violence

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### Abstract

The paper "The Influence of the media in publicizing violence" is oriented on the applicative dimension following how the media industry produces manipulative media messages, a culture of degrading leisure and promotes pseudo-individuality among children and adolescents, thus contributing to generalization of some personalities clichés, promoting vulgarity and kitsch. In this promoted subculture, on this psychosocial background, the impact of the publicized violence develops in time in learner a violent behavior, social integration difficulties or insufficiency in his social maturation. From year to year develops and intensifies in learners the forms of manifestations of violence in school under the influence of publicized violence.

Keywords: teacher; little scholar; media message; deviant behavior; media violence.

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## **1. Problem Statement**

Knowing changed its status in Romania once the society entered into another ideological epoch that marked the early '90s, which was intended to "ensure the general framework inside which can be formed and developed professionally an individual in a freely and legally way, even if there are some codified rules" (Cuc, 2015). This new beginning represented the reconstruction and the revival of Romanian society through a redirection of human capital towards the general paradigm of European Union on scientific progress and contemporary technologies, but also the informatization of Romanian society. The development of some new media institutions, perfecting the informational infrastructure nationwide, simultaneously with the improvement and specialization of the old ones represented "the information system accessible to most individuals " from Romanian society (Albulescu, 2003). In this dynamic mechanism of social, economic and political changes, media by its well built structure and by its dashed media messages has become an alternative school that captured the spectrum of behavioral problems specific in children, adolescents or adults of middle age population.

The economic crises which Romania has crossed it, social policy and fluctuating and incoherent employment have contributed to the increase of the poverty line of the population and to the discrimination at work on criteria of beliefs, age, ethnic origin, social category, gender or even belonging of individual to a disadvantaged category. This contributed only to the development of a new media message, more violent, based on manifestation in this context of expressive emotional function of language which changes from year to year its register of connotations and through this nonconformism is stimulated media violence at social level. Thus, the change of social attitudes makes the media meet the desire of the public to engage emotionally immediately in participation in media communication, which every day leads to a variety of typology of violence, to the increase of the number of acts and scenes of violence, but also to the increase of the duration of presentation of violence.

## **2. Purpose of Study**

The amplification of violence through the effects of media among children and young people represents at national and international levels a research topic, where both psychologists, sociologists and pedagogues are interested to know the phenomenon, its detrimental effects on the harmonious development of learner, as well as the stimulation of the main forms of deviant behavior. The motivation for proposing this study was based on knowing the factors that build the phenomenon at community level, but also on the impact of violence induced by media messages on learners who find themselves in a stage of personality development with a reduced socio-cognitive and affective resistance.

Media trusts just for the desire to increase ratings, the financial profit of institutions, most of the times they stop reporting the media message to the moral referent and because of this "magical thinking is that to which are served, beyond the rationality, television images. Thus, emotionalism is affected without that intellect to be able to interfere "(Cuc, 2010). School has the task to train and develop the media literacy in students, building the infrastructure that would provide psycho-pedagogical counseling of pupils who develop deviant behavior under the influence of watching media messages.

## **3. Research Methods**

The studies carried out in Romania in the last years by sociologists, psychologists and specialists in communication sciences emphasize that children manifest an active behavior as consumers of media messages and demonstrate that they have the ability to make decisions in a conscious way without being under the influence of parents or tutor in selecting programs and favorite shows from the program grid of media trusts. But all this selection of media messages is performed within the limit of

their cognitive and social development, emotional experiences, but also the system of internalized values and norms.

Among the increase of violence at social level, development of delinquent groups and cliques, intensification of offenses and juvenile delinquency was noted, also, the influence of media, that facilitates nationwide the dissemination of media messages with an increased intensity of the violence contributing in forming among children of some reprehensible conducts because at this category of population the degree of moral, psychological and social resistance is much lower. In this context, the social consciousness and social attitude of the Romanians change from year to year, the sociologist Vasile Dâncu emphasizes that the population believes that "media is to blame for not building a good image, in other words, it broadcasts only negative stereotypes and false images about Romania and Romanians "(Dâncu, 2015). At the societal level you can not create a positive image and cultivation of respect for system of human values when "our young stage directors have won awards at film festivals selling characters of a Romanian agony: prostitutes, families with problems, simulated revolution and other things "(Dâncu, 2015 ).

The development of children personality is integrated in the family, educational institution, group, community, and under the influence of several aspects of the social, economic, technological, cultural environments, media's impact on learners is more pronounced on those subjects who come from families that live in poverty, with a socioeconomic and educational low levels, from single parent families or recomposed families, but also substitute families where communication, examples given by parents through a guidance and positive interaction at the level of family members are missing the most of the time. All the attitudinal and emotional provisions acquired in family and community by learners, under the incentive influence of the media contribute to the structuring of violent behaviors through direct manifestation of some violent actions of children. Because of this „connecting Romanian education system to the industry of communication represented a challenge, and educative direction that was necessary in actual development of the school institution, by improving education of the students due to valuing of formative valences of didactic use of the new media as a variety of resource of learning” (Cuc, 2014 ).

This research action represented an exercise of action model in the interaction of two domains education and media system, which in conditions of diversification of interests and educational needs of postmodern society, consider the influences of the media as significant resources of learning, just below "diffuse, spontaneous, unintended influences exercised through messages whose content was not designed in explicitly educational purpose "(Albulescu, 2003).

The purpose of the research was to analyze the factors considered essential in understanding the phenomenon and the impact of media violence on stimulating various forms of deviant behavior.

### **3.1 The research objectives**

1. Establishing a diagnosis on how teachers perceive the media as a source of media violence among learners
2. Identifying the relations between learners exposure volume to publicized violence and violent behaviors manifested by them.

The investigation followed also the solutions identified during the debates in the school institutions regarding the directions of liberty of media trusts that are engaged in dissemination of messages with violent content, but also the ethical issues of information and communication that encourage and support in the media industry the exercising the right of freedom of expression, without penalizing financial interests and of growing audience from messages with an increasing violence. Thus, we are witnessing at the level of the Romanian society to the pursuit of profit and ratings, not to the emphasizing the truth and freedom of expression. From this point of view in social and educational dynamics in Romania, both parents and teachers are encountering difficulties in terms of training

media skills in students to help them in the self-regulation conduct, in structuring the learners individual system of knowledge, attitudes and skills.

### **3.2 General hypothesis**

Knowing the phenomenon and the impact of publicized violence leads to better and efficient results concerning the development of capacities / competencies of selection, analysis and argumentation of media contents, but also to the decrease of undesirable behaviors among learners.

The investigated lot consisted of 150 subjects, and on the basis of the process of simple random sampling, was attended by teachers in undergraduate education: teachers teaching at the preschool level (50 subjects), primary (70 subjects), secondary (30 subjects). We mention that these teachers came from fifteen institutions and their related structures, pursuing an educational activity designed on the principles of cultural diversity, socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. In the research we also wanted to shape the actual situation concerning the barriers, which rise in communication and learning in actual informational society. This is why we considered it necessary to investigate a wider category of teachers, who are direct actors in educational action and the role they play in the development of media literacy at learners and how they contribute to the reduction of violence.

For the sample of population investigated were taken into account: initial and continuing training, teaching degree obtained; seniority in the specialty registered in the system and seniority in the school system, number of years since working in the institution where he is full teacher; completing psycho-pedagogical training programs, but also continuing training programs specialized in the field of education and media.

In line with the objectives was established the research methodology to ensure sustainability to the observant research, according to the conditions imposed by the limited time available for subjects to respond to the questionnaire. Interview-based survey method was used as a complementary method, aiming to investigate the teachers opinions, especially of those who face, in educational activities, with learners that manifest acts of violence in educational life and community, as consumers of media messages with a high degree of violence. It has been made a prior interview of the subjects for the development of relevant questionnaires for the study proposed, which would pursuit the relevant aspects of educational reality. The questionnaire applied to teachers was objectified in 30 items, which in terms of content have assumed to express an opinion, based on how to exploit media communication messages, the intrinsic quality of them and the typology of mediation relationship between learners and media, and the registration form of the responses focused on more items mainly with open aspect, allowing the expression of opinions; of various aspects and phenomena with a major impact in preventing and combating violence in school and community and also suggestions regarding the educational valences of media in educational reality and at the community level. The questionnaire was applied to a total of 150 teachers from undergraduate education, 35 questionnaires were not fully completed or had errors in issuing the response, processing and interpretation of data targeted the information provided by 115 teachers, including 40 teaching at the preschool level, 50 teaching at primary level, 25 teaching predominantly or only at middle school. Within the investigation we also focused on the criteria of differentiation: the quality of school counselor, the quality of class teacher, specializing in certification programs in information technology, marketing, advertising, communication of teachers, thus anticipating the correlations and interrelations between the answers offered by teachers in accordance with the debated issue.

Throughout the course of the investigation were taken into account the method of research curriculum documents and other school documents, conversation method used in different educational contexts in order to add new data to the opinions expressed, and research methods used in data collection, whose analysis would check hypothesis and provide relevant answers on the investigated topic.

#### 4. Findings

By correlating the objectives of the research, the hypothesis confirmed the validity and coherence of the carried research. In the undertaken research was noted a heightened concern of teachers in developing among learners the operations of critically selection, retention, decoding and integration of new information into the major structures of personal culture. A percentage of 94% of respondents pointed out that in the curricular and extracurricular activities they are concerned about the manner in which learners receive media messages, making selections of meaning and content; establish relationships between elements identified in the structure of messages and their meaning; and through the new cognitive experiences of learners they wanted a dynamic process of selection and assimilation through processing, but also, the gradual integration of meanings, critical analysis and personal judgment.

These respondents also criticized the mechanical processing of media content, the learners' passivity, lack of reflections, the critical reflective feature of issuing value judgments on disseminated media messages that at the level of harmonious development of the individual do not lead to his independence in thinking. These findings are reinforced by other factors such as the amplification of violence in everyday life; the increase of the number of offenses and delinquent acts among children; lack of models promoted by the media; increasing audience and economic profits through media narration, produced without a moral landmark, based on moral and aesthetic mediocrity.

By analyzing the answers given by respondents on questionnaire-based survey and on interview-based survey was achieved a quantitative and qualitative appreciation of the aspects expressed in items, were provided data and information about the impact of publicized violence on the learners behavior: a percentage of 86% reported that the training programs of teachers do not provide topics of study through which would be disseminated ways of preventing and combating violence in the structure of the Romanian audiovisual, because the media has proven to be in recent years an important factor in learning and stimulating aggressive behaviors among learners as a result of frustrating socioeconomic or familiar situations in which they are involved and which make them direct participants in acts of violence in educational institutions or in the community; even if 92% of respondents, in educational activities, use rationally audio-visual means of communication in school streamlining teaching practice, they notice that the new information technologies are not only pedagogical means to increase yield learning at learners or to promote educational programs, they also represent instruments for transmitting violent acts through duration of exposure of learners to scenes of violence.

From year to year learners are exposed to violent scenes with an increasingly larger frequency, which causes a certain emotional state, leads to desensitization, to the effect of increasing anxiety and fear, to the manifestation of certain violent behaviors that otherwise it would have remained latent; 87% of teachers pointed out that the exposure of preschoolers and young pupils to short scenes of violence, but with a higher frequency in the media has led over time to physical desensitization, but also to the blurring of emotional reactions to the violent scenes of social life and at the schoolchildren from the middle school they stood out the increase of permissive attitudes specific to the social acts of violence and manifestation of abilities and aggressive social behaviors, the need for aggression in school and everyday life of learners; 86% of respondents claimed that the socioeconomic and cultural context of learner, belonging to the reference group, psychosocial traits leave their mark in selecting and analyzing media messages, but also in how to report to the violence they publicized. Thus, on learners from middle school there is an increase of the intensity of violence in the social environment through insults with reference to socioeconomic status and ethnicity of the victim, conflicts pursuing mental or physical traits of victims, beats, fights and extension of negative effects of the media on their attitude towards the school and towards the process of socio-professional development. An advanced solution for educators and school counselors represents a presentation in a correctly, impartially and in good

faith way of media content with an anchor in educational size for both school audience and for their parents.

Also, an other solution is rethinking of scenarios from the program grid of media trusts that target concrete models of social behavior and citizenship, which can positively influence learners and promote among them and the parents the increase of social security sense, through a socially responsible attitude towards the principles and social values of the Romanian people, but also a helpful and responsible attitude towards the person in difficulty. A percentage of 79% of teachers have argued that a possible solution is also the partnerships between school and media institutions, the involvement of learners regardless of school age in achieving media content through which to combat the negative impact of the media in terms of violence and to promote activation of community spirit among learners and their families. Also, media scenarios should not be drawn on the effect of aggressor's actions, but on the qualities of good character who is engaged in neutralizing violence. Meanwhile, respondents have pointed out that action scenario should not pursue the child, teen or the adult victim who acts in the domestic or public context through diverse ways in acts of physical, verbal, psychological, sexual or social violence. A percentage of 96% of respondents claimed as a solution the need to transform the media in an active partner in terms of education, through a more diversified educational offer of it both for learners and for his family by foreshadowing direct and indirect learning experiences and socio-professional training in the informal context that the learners should go through.

The respondents have advanced as a solution for preventing behavioral disorders of learners affected by publicized violence by promoting desirable behavioral patterns, respecting ethics of communication and information, but also through the educational programs developed to promote media literacy development, acquisition of a value reference system, of some rules and axiomatic principles applicable to the huge volume of media messages with violent content broadcasted by media trusts, because,, libertarian orientations of ethics of information and communication encourages an expression free of social constraints "(Albulescu, 2003 ).

There was found that continuing training in education for media and its involvement in publicizing violence are a poor form, there is an insignificant offer of auxiliary curricular services and products with a reduced number of specialists in the field. The lack of consistent, flexible and curative social and educational policies in this area, lack of financial resources allocated by the governmental sector but also by the private sector for training and educational programs, for conference, workshops in the field of education for media and combating media violence, all influence the efficacy of educational activity, but also the level of the learners knowledge conceptualization, with an impact on his affective experience and social integration.

The answers provided by respondents revealed their desire to participate in continue professional training programs that would follow the scientific and psycho-pedagogical preparation in this area, orientation in knowing and self-knowing of learners; carrying out some activities of training positive attitudes and responsibility to learn and to manage various sources of information which are outside the educational system; media skills development and decision-making in the rational use of media. These solutions advanced by respondents represent a relevant aspect in the professional training, but also in identifying the best intervention strategies and combating the media violence against: diverse forms of manifestation; the increase of time slots in publicizing it; creative solutions or marketing adopted by media trusts in increasing audience; the intensification of violent acts included on kids channels or forms of advertising supposed to some stimuli of dynamic complexity, sound or visuals effects; the limitation of linguistic information in order to obtain a direct impact on infant behavior.

## 5. Conclusion

The obtained results show that at the level of educational actors there is an increasingly more intense concern on preventing and combating the negative effects of the media that affects in recent years in an undesirable way the school performances of learners, the training level, their conduct and

also restrain educational influence of school institution. Through the marketing policies supported by the media this has caused profound changes in the sphere of learners concerns causing new social, professional or cultural options, but also new skills for leisure time as a result of lack of care and education from the priority factor, family or tutor.

The increase of the volume of exposing learners to publicized violence and to violent, escapist or risky behavior in the shows of real type: newsletters, debate telecasts, reality shows, entertainment shows broadcasted at the hours of maximum audience through the emotional strong charge influence deeper than the content of fictional type shows the way to think and act, contributing to the development of negative attitudes, stimulation and the increase of the aggressivity in learners life, deregulation of interpersonal relationships by dysfunctions occurring at the level of social insertion.

In this context, the concerns of parents and educators increased from year to year, because the media by its power of attraction and fascination of productions broadcasted among children and young people caused a fundamental crisis in the learning activity; at the level of learners performances; in traditional practices of leisure time and especially a true crisis of reading, which entails deficiencies and limitations in developing communication skills through a "correct and proper utilization in the production and reception of oral and written messages" (School programs of Romanian language and literature, fifth and eighth grades, 2009), and familiarization of learners with literary and nonliterary texts characteristic to the age and individual particularities.

From this point of view, we advocate for the "selection, sizing and structuring of curricular contents would permit the training of thinking functions, the transfer of knowledge in applications that have as priority language and meta-language and training students' communication skill" (Cuc, 2014 ). The prevention of affective-attitudinal predispositions acquired by learners after the exposure to publicized violence for a long time and reflected in violent acts in school and community, represents a priority course of educational action, projecting educational approaches that feature new themes for preventing violent actions and fighting against them. In the same time through a close collaboration with specialists at national and international level, it is aimed at the level of continuing training of teachers different ways to disseminate best practices reflected in socio-professional life.

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