

PUPILS AND THEIR PERCEPTION OF MEDIA VIOLENCE

KAKO UČENICI DOŽIVLJAVAJU MEDIJSKO NASILJE

Majda Pšunder, Mihaela Cvek

*Faculty of Arts, University of Maribor, Maribor, Slovenia
Filozofski fakultet, Sveučilište u Mariboru, Maribor, Slovenija*

Abstract

In modern informational society the media has become a constituent part of peoples' and pupils' everyday life. Along with many positive effects they have also brought numerous negative ones, such as violence. Violence in media influences the receivers – pupils. The most alarming consequences of pupils' frequent contact with media violence are imitation and apathy. The survey, carried out among pupils from 4th-8th grade of different primary schools in Slovenia shows their perception of media violence in these modern times.

Sažetak

Mediji su u modernom informacijskom društvu postali sastavni dio također i učeničke svakodnevice. Osim mnogih pozitivnih učinaka isti donose i nebrojene negativne učinke, među kojima je na čelu upravo nasilje. Nasilje u medijima utječe na primatelje – učenike. Najviše zabrinjavajuće posljedice čestog sretanja učenika s nasiljem u medijima su oponašanje i otupjelost. Ispitivanje koje smo proveli među učenicima 4. i 8. razreda različitih OŠ u Sloveniji pokazuje kako učenici u današnje vrijeme doživljavaju medijsko nasilje.

INTRODUCTION

The media are an important part of a pupils' everyday life. They assume a dominant role in all levels of life. Along with many positive effects they also bring numerous negative ones, especially violence. Exposure to violence must not be disregarded. Mass media are an especially important factor of socialization for children, as they do not yet have clearly defined criteria and values /1/, /2/.

Surveys on "Media violence" have shown that the media do not have an absolute influence on children's behaviour. The course and power of such influence becomes evident when integrated with experience and influence of socialisation and the child's environment. The media can certainly strengthen any existing predispositions – that can be observed with children and youngsters who are in the process of developing their own personality and do not yet have an entirely developed system of values.

Based on media surveys carried out in Germany /3/ we already know about the existence of differentiated motive catalogues, which discuss why a certain person chooses media with specific contents. The choice of a medium depends on whether the youngster chooses the medium on his own or the decision

depends on other family members, meaning that the choice of media is being agreed upon. Discussions on media violence begin, when violent and intolerable behaviour of youngsters occurs, similar to the one, seen in films and on television. Violence, broadcasted by television, disturbs children. The reason may lie in the fact that the consequences of violent acts are not shown in a realistic manner. However, we know that the side effects of violence shown have an impact on children. Erjavec and Volčič /4/ emphasize the importance of communication. We can warn children about negative effects of violent behaviour and influence their choice of shows watched in the future.

Parents are concerned because of violent contents shown on television. The best way to spite violence on television is to raise awareness of the viewers. Viewers are consumers that are able to make a conscious choice regarding what to watch on television. Programs children like to watch have to be discussed in school and at home and help them understand the real world around them. Erjavec and Volčič /5/ draw attention to the fact that watching television should become a family activity. The parents should often plan ahead what they are going to watch with their children and show how infor-

mation from television shows can be projected to everyday life. Nevertheless we have to know that television is not the only factor that influences children's violent behaviour. Frequency and duration of television watching, a child's personality, domestic, social circumstances and circumstances prior to watching television, as well as after, also play an important role. Media violence affects the receiver. The most alarming consequences of violence are imitation and apathy. It is characteristic of imitation that the viewer internalises aggressive behaviour patterns or learns such behaviour /6/. Children's perception seems to be much more intense and they receive most messages as worthy of imitation, especially when such imitation enables or creates superiority over their peers (imitation of heroes fighting – beating up others) (especially). Frequent encountering with media violence lowers the viewers' sensibility /7/, so we can speak of numbness. Children often watch violent scenes on television. Erb /8/ says that the children get numb watching such scenes; there can be no other explanation for indifferent behaviour of children watching their classmate get beaten up. Also the fact that some children never get sad after watching violent films which contain scenes of shooting and fighting proves two things: children are able to tell that the death and blood are fictional. Because they gain such "knowledge" from the early years on it is not surprising that they watch such scenes with ease, while we close our eyes, look away or turn off the television, as well as choose not to go to the cinema, if violent films are shown /9/. It can be said that due to frequent exposure of violent scenes children "freeze" feelings of sadness. However, if a child is exposed to media violence to frequently and accompanied by other aggravating environmental circumstances, he is likely to become completely insensitive to images of violence and therefore unable to "defrost" feelings. Parents are often frustrated with the programme on television, but they should be aware that they are the ones raising a child and not people on television. Parents should therefore have the last say when choosing a programme. Children should also not make decisions on what the whole family or they alone will watch. Violent scenes, whether in cartoons, films or news, stimulate violence. Children who spend a lot of time watching television lose touch with reality, for all they do is passively observe what someone else is going through. Of course we may not over exaggerate with the remote control in our hand, either. We too should look at the programme be-

forehand and decide what show we would like to watch. The same applies for children's programmes. That is how a child will learn to choose good quality programme. When we see too much violence in a show or content we disapprove of, we simply turn off the television. It is also necessary and important that we talk to children about violent programmes they watched (Grossman and DeGaetano, 2002, Kunczik, 2002, Selg, 2008). Children need to be listened to and offered help. It is necessary to explain the difference between violence on television, which is artificial, over exaggerated and shown unrealistically and violence that must be considered as a warning and has informational value.

It is highly recommendable that parents are present, especially with younger children. Parents can help children if they are scared or unable to distinguish between fiction and reality. A child must not be mocked if he is scared and covers his eyes, so he would not see a scary scene on the television. If children want to go to bed at that time, the parents have to talk to them, explain the scene, so they can work through their fear and do not feel abandoned and isolated while the rest of the family continues to watch the film /10/. According to Petković /11/ studies show that the majority of children watch television alone, without the presence of their parents, including violent contents. Those were also the findings of Anita Mikulič, who was examining the habits of television watching of children in Slovenia. She used the method of focused groups and included children aged 6-8. It was found that children often watch television because they feel lonely. On average they watch television 3 hours per day, and in most cases the parents are not present. Parents especially do not watch children's shows with their children. It is unusual in the sense that parents are afraid of the impact television has on children, they often resent violence on television and recognize it as harmful for children, however at the same time they leave them in front of the television by themselves and avoid discussions about the programme.

THE EMPIRICAL PART

Definition of the research problem

The aim of this research was to find out the following:

- Do the respondents like to watch programmes that show violence and why?

- Who do they most often watch violent programmes with?
- Do pupils talk to anyone about violence they saw in the media?
- Do parents ever forbid them to watch certain programmes or choose programmes that they are allowed to watch?
- Can any consequences of violence be seen with pupils (imitation, numbness)?
- To which extent pupils agree with methods that could help reduce the extent of violence in children's programmes?

Methodology

The pattern included 381 pupils of different primary schools in Slovenia. The pattern was divided into two groups. The first group includes 2004th grade pupils of different primary schools, that is 101 male pupils and 99 female pupils. The second group includes 181 8th grade pupils, that is 93 male pupils and 88 female pupils. We decided for such a pattern because we wanted to see the comparison of media violence perception and difference among groups of pupils regarding their grade and gender. The answers to the questions were gained by interviewing pupils. The

interviewing was performed in groups and was not guided. The data, gained with interviews, are processed with a computer programme, the SPSS package, on the level of:

- Descriptive statistics (frequency distribution – tabular presentations) and

- Inferential statistics, where we verified our research hypothesis with a non-parametric statistics (χ^2 – test). Correlations and differences between variables were tested with a χ^2 – test. It is a test of statistical difference between model structural percentages (male and female pupils, pupils of 4th and 8th grades).

The results

The results are in tables and presented in 5 sets: the first set presents data on whether the respondents like to watch violent programmes and why; the second set

presents data on who the respondents most frequently watch violent programmes with; the third set present results showing whether the respondents discuss the programmes they watched and if their parents ever forbid them to watch certain programmes or choose programmes that they are allowed to watch; the fourth set presents data on possible consequences of violence (imitation, numbness) and the last set presents the degree of agreeing with methods that could help reduce the extent of violence in children's programmes.

Watching violent programmes and the reason for watching

In the first subject set we wanted to find out whether the respondents like to watch violent programmes and if so, what is the reason for watching according to gender and grade.

Table 1: Gender and watching violent programmes.

Watching violent programmes.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Yes.	98	50.0%	29	15.5%	127	33.3%
No.	96	49.5%	158	84.5%	254	66.7%
Total.	194	100.0%	187	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 52,511, p = 0,000$$

Table 2: Grade and watching violent programmes.

Watching violent programmes.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Yes.	57	28.5%	70	38.7%	127	33.3%
No.	143	71.5%	111	61.3%	254	66.7%
Total.	200	100.0%	181	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 4.426, p = 0.035$$

The results in Table 1 show that there are more male than female pupils that like to watch violent programmes. The difference among male and female pupils, as the result of the χ^2 – test shows, is statistically significant.

The results in Table 2 show that there are more 8th grade than 4th grade pupils that like to watch violent programmes.

The difference among them is statistically significant.

More than a half of male pupils (50.5%) like to watch violent programmes, unlike female pupils (15.5%). There are 38.7% of 8th grade pupils and 28.5% 4th grade pupils that like to watch violent programmes.

Table 3: Gender and reason for watching violent programmes

The reason for watching.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Boredom.	29	33.0%	11	28.2%	40	31.5%
Amusement.	59	67.0%	28	71.8%	87	68.5%
Total	88	100.0%	39	100.0%	127	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 0.283, p = 0.595$$

Table 4: Grade and reason for watching violent programmes

The reason for watching.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Boredom.	15	26.3%	25	35.7%	40	31.5%
Amusement.	42	73.7%	45	64.3%	87	68.5%
Total	57	100.0%	70	100.0%	127	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 0.286, p = 0.257$$

Tables 3 and 4 show that more than a half of pupils like to watch violent programmes for amusement regardless of their gender and grade. The difference among them, as the result of the χ^2 – test shows, is not statistically significant. More than a half of male pupils (67.0%), female pupils (71.8%), 4th grade pupils (73.7%) and 8th grade pupils (64.3%) stated that their reason for watching violent programmes is amusement.

Watching violent programmes

The second subject set concerns watching violent programmes. This set presents results showing who

the respondents like to watch violent programmes with. We wanted to find out how often pupils watch violent programmes by themselves, with their friends or with parents. Are there any differences regarding their gender and grade? The studies point out /12/ that children spend too much time in front of the television and among other things watch violent programmes without their parents being present. We know how important parent’s presence is, especially since children have difficulties distinguishing between real violence and fictitious violence on television.

Table 5: Gender and independent watching of programmes

I watch the programmes alone.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Rarely	70	36.1%	112	59.9%	182	47.8%
Often	77	39.7%	49	26.2%	126	33.0%
Very often	47	24.2%	26	13.9%	73	19.2%
Total	194	100.0%	187	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 21.834, p = 0.000$$

Table 6: Grade and independent watching of programmes.

I watch the programmes alone.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Rarely	122	61.0%	60	33.1%	182	47.8%
Often	53	26.5%	73	40.3%	126	33.0%
Very often	25	12.5%	48	26.5%	73	19.2%
Total	200	100.0%	181	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 30.671, p = 0.000$$

The results in Table 5 show that male pupils watch television, videos or DVDs by themselves more frequently than female pupils. The difference among male and female pupils, as the result of the χ^2 – test shows, is statistically significant.

The results in Table 6 show that there are more 8th grade than 4th grade pupils that watch television programmes by themselves. The difference among them is statistically significant.

Table 7: Gender of pupils and watching programmes with friends

I watch programmes with friends.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
	Rarely	134	69.0%	126	67.4%	260
Often	49	25.3%	43	23.0%	92	24.1%
Very often	11	5.7%	18	39.6%	29	7.6%
Total	194	100.0%	187	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 2.199, p = 0.333$$

The results in Tables 7 and 8 draw our attention to the fact that both male and female pupils rarely

Table 8: Grade and watching programmes with friends

I watch programmes with friends.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Rarely	145	72.5%	115	63.5%	260	68.2%
Often	42	21.0%	50	27.6%	92	24.1%
Very often	13	6.5%	16	8.8%	29	7.6%
Total	200	100.0%	181	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 3.529, p = 0.171$$

watch television programmes together with their friends, regardless of their age.

Table 9: Gender of pupils and watching programmes with parents

I watch the programmes with parents.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Rarely	95	49.0%	108	57.8%	203	53.3%
Often	66	34.0%	55	29.4%	121	31.7%
Very often	33	17.0%	24	12.8%	57	15.0%
Total	194	100.0%	187	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 3.126, p = 0.210$$

Table 10: Grade and watching programmes with parents

I watch the programmes with parents.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Rarely	103	51.5%	100	55.3%	203	53.3%
Often	61	30.5%	60	33.1%	121	31.7%
Very often	36	18.0%	21	11.6%	57	15.0%
Total	200	100.0%	181	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 3.060, p = 0.217$$

In majority of cases the 4th and 8th grade pupils watch violent programmes by themselves. The majority are male pupils (39.7%) and 8th grade male pupils (43.3%). More than a half of respondents rarely watch violent programmes with friends or parents, regardless of gender and grade.

Allowing pupils to watch violent programmes and talking with others about the content

As it is known only a child at the age of 10 is capable to distinguish between what he/she sees on televi-

sion and real life, and even not every child this age /13/. That is why a family should make some sort of arrangement when and how much television they are going to watch. Of course it is very important that the parents discuss with their children the contents of programmes that they have seen. That is why the third set presents data that shows how often parents allow or choose violent programmes for pupils and how often pupils discuss the contents with their parents or friends. When analysing the results we took into consideration the influence of gender and age of pupils.

Table 11: Allowing, choice of programmes according to gender

Allowing, choice of programme.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Never	85	43.8%	83	44.4%	168	44.1%
Sometimes	102	52.6%	100	53.5%	202	53.0%
Always	7	3.6%	4	2.1%	11	2.9%
Total	194	100.0%	187	100.0%	381	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 0.733, p = 0.693$

Table 12: Allowing, choice of programmes according to grade

Allowing, choice of programme.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Never	58	29.0%	110	60.8%	168	44.1%
Sometimes	132	66.0%	70	38.7%	202	53.0%
Always	10	5.0%	1	0.5%	11	2.9%
Total	200	100.0%	181	100.0%	381	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 41.645, p = 0.000$

The results in Tables 11 and 12 show that parents sometimes do not allow both male and female pupils to choose programmes and the result that par-

ents do not allow especially younger pupils to choose programmes, is statistically significant.

Table 13: Discussing the contents watched with parents according to gender

Discussing the contents with parents.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Rarely	145	74.7%	124	66.3%	269	70.6%
Often	38	19.6%	54	28.9%	92	24.1%
Very often	11	5.7%	9	4.8%	20	5.2%
Total	194	100.0%	187	100.0%	381	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 4.495, p = 0.106$

Table 14: Discussing the contents watched with parents according to grade

Discussing the contents with parents.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Rarely	138	69.0%	131	72.4%	269	70.6%

$\chi^2 = 4.289, p = 0.117$

Often	47	23.5%	45	24.9%	92	24.1%
Very often	15	7.5%	5	2.8%	20	5.2%
Total	200	100.0%	181	100.0%	381	100.0%

As it can be seen from Tables 13 and 14 parents rarely discuss with pupils, regardless of pupils' gender or age. watched programmes

Table 15: Discussing the contents watched with friends according to gender

Discussing the contents with friends.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Rarely	46	23.7%	38	20.3%	84	22.0%
Often	78	40.2%	76	40.6%	154	40.4%
Very often	70	36.1%	73	39.1%	143	37.6%
Total	194	100.0%	187	100.0%	381	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 0.722, p = 0.697$

Table 16: Discussing the contents watched with friends according to grade

Discussing the contents with friends.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
Rarely	58	29.0%	26	14.4%	84	22.0%
Often	71	35.5%	83	44.9%	154	40.4%
Very often	71	35.5%	72	39.7%	143	37.6%
Total	200	100.0%	181	100.0%	381	100.0%

$\chi^2 = 12.215, p = 0.002$

For more than a half of respondents, both male (52.6%) and female pupils (53.5%) parents sometimes choose the programme they can watch. There is a relatively high percentage of male (43.8%) and female pupils (44.4%) that never have a programme chosen by their parents. There are more 4th grade pupils whose parents sometimes (66.0%) choose a programme they can watch; among 8th grade pupils there are 38.7%. There is a very low percentage of parents (2.9%) that always keep track of what their children are watching and this result is very worrying. The results show that more than a half of respondents regardless of their gender and grade rarely discuss with their parents the violent programme

they have seen. The respondents often or very often discuss the programmes seen with their friends regardless of their age; the majority are 8th grade pupils.

The consequences of violence among respondents

Showing violence may not be understood as a completely innocent act. Media violence has an effect on the recipient. The most worrying consequences of violence are imitation and numbness. This set shows the possible consequences of violence (imitation and numbness) that can be attributed to watching violent programmes, taking account of gender and age.

Table 17: The degree of agreeing with statement (imitation) according to gender

The degree of agreeing with statement.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
I agree	18	9.3%	5	2.7%	23	6.0%
I partially agree	56	28.8%	19	10.1%	75	19.7%
I disagree	120	61.8%	163	87.2%	283	74.3%
Total	194	100.0%	187	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 32.017, p = 0.000$$

Table 18: The degree of agreeing with statement (imitation) according to grade

The degree of agreeing with statement.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
I agree	10	5.0%	13	7.2%	23	6.0%
I partially agree	32	16.0%	43	23.7%	75	19.7%
I disagree	158	79.0%	125	69.1%	283	74.3%
Total	200	100.0%	181	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 4.917, p = 0.086$$

The results in Tables 17 and 18 show that there is no imitation that could be contributed to watching violent programmes in mass media with pupils regarding gender and grade.

Table 19: The degree of agreeing with statement (numbness) according to gender

The degree of agreeing with statement.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
I agree	85	43.8%	23	12.3%	108	28.3%
I partially agree	82	42.3%	68	36.4%	150	39.4%
I disagree	27	13.9%	96	51.3%	123	32.2%
Total	194	100.0%	187	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 75.503, p = 0.000$$

Table 20: The degree of agreeing with statement (numbness) according to grade

The degree of agreeing with statement.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
I agree	62	31.0%	46	25.4%	108	28.3%
I partially agree	54	27.0%	96	53.0%	150	39.4%
I disagree	84	42.0%	39	21.6%	123	32.3%
Total	200	100.0%	181	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 29.720, p = 0.000$$

The majority of 4th and 8th grade pupils, among them are 61.8% of male and 87.2% of female pupils, 79% of 4th grade and 69.1% of 8th grade pupils do not agree with the statement that they like to imitate heroes of violent programmes. That shows that in such cases we can not speak of imitation. 6% of respondents (the majority are male) agree with the statement and that shows that we can speak of imitation. There are more male pupils (43.8%) and more 4th grade pupils (31%) that agree with the statement indicating that they are never sad watching films

that show killing and shooting. With them we can already observe the consequence of excessive watching of violent programmes – numbness.

Instructions that could help reduce violence in children's programmes

Adults can help reduce the quantity and frequency of violence on television that the children see. The fifth set presents data on possible measures that lead to reduction of violence regarding gender and age of pupils. The pupils could stop watching violent pro-

grammes, talk about such contents with their parents and in such way realise that violence is not the

only approach to solving conflicts.

Table 21: The degree of agreeing with instruction (turn off the television) according to gender

The degree of agreeing with instruction.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
I agree	44	22.7%	68	12.3%	112	29.4%
I partially agree	74	38.1%	63	36.4%	137	36.0%
I disagree	76	39.2%	56	51.3%	132	34.6%
Total	194	100.0%	187	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 8.931, p = 0.012$$

Table 22: The degree of agreeing with instruction (turn off the television) according to grade

The degree of agreeing with instruction.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
I agree	89	44.5%	23	12.7%	112	29.4%
I partially agree	61	30.5%	76	42.0%	137	36.0%
I disagree	50	25.0%	82	45.3%	132	34.6%
Total	200	100.0%	181	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 47.463, p = 0.000$$

The results in Tables 21 and 22 show that there are statistically significant differences among groups of pupils regarding their gender and age in connection

with the degree of agreeing with the instruction that they should turn off the television when the programme shows too much violence.

Table 23: The degree of agreeing with instruction (talk to parents about violent programmes) according to gender

The degree of agreeing with instruction.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
I agree	39	20.1%	50	26.7%	89	23.3%
I partially agree	49	25.3%	64	34.2%	113	29.7%
I disagree	106	54.6%	73	39.1%	179	47.0%
Total	194	100.0%	187	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 9.309, p = 0.010$$

Table 24: The degree of agreeing with instruction (talk to parents about violent programmes) according to grade

The degree of agreeing with instruction.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
I agree	47	23.5%	42	23.2%	89	23.3%
I partially agree	48	24.0%	65	35.9%	113	29.7%
I disagree	105	52.5%	74	40.9%	179	47.0%
Total	200	100.0%	181	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 7.278, p = 0.026$$

Tables 23 and 24 show results that point to statistically significant differences among groups of pupils

regarding their gender and age in connection with talking to their parents about violent programmes.

Table 25: The degree of agreeing with instruction (talk about the fact that the violence is not the only possible solution) according to gender

The degree of agreeing with instruction.	Male pupils		Female pupils		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
I agree	121	62.4%	144	77.0%	265	69.6%
I partially agree	46	23.7%	26	13.9%	72	18.9%
I disagree	27	13.9%	17	9.1%	44	11.5%
Total	194	100.0%	187	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 9.699, p = 0.008$$

Table 26: The degree of agreeing with instruction (talk about the fact that the violence is not the only possible solution) according to grade

The degree of agreeing with instruction.	4 th grade		8 th grade		Total	
	f	f%	f	f%	f	f%
I agree	151	75.5%	114	63.0%	265	69.6%
I partially agree	22	11.0%	50	27.6%	72	18.9%
I disagree	27	13.5%	17	9.4%	44	11.5%
Total	200	100.0%	181	100.0%	381	100.0%

$$\chi^2 = 17.423, p = 0.000$$

34.6% of respondents, more female pupils (51.3%) and more 8th grade pupils (45.3%) do not agree with the instruction that they should turn off the television when the programme shows too much violence. More than a half of male pupils (54.6%) and 39.1% of female pupils do not agree with the instruction that they should discuss the violent content with their parents. 52.5% of 4th grade pupils and 40.9% of 8th grade pupils also disagree with this instruction. More than a half of respondents, regardless of their gender, agree with the instruction that it is necessary to discuss the fact that violence is not the only way to solve conflicts and that there are other, non-violent ways to solve them.

Interpretation

The results show that among respondents that like to watch violent programmes are more than a half of male pupils (50.5%) and 15.5% of female pupils. Pupils like to watch violent programmes and imitate their heroes and their actions, which is very important to them. According to the existing data /14/ we can conclude that pupils far too often transfer these patterns from films to real life. The relatively low percentage of female pupils that like to watch

violent programmes can be explained with the fact that they get emotionally more touched by violence. 38.7% of 8th grade pupils and 28.5% of 4th grade pupils like to watch violent programmes. These results are not surprising. The lower percentage of 4th grade pupils that like to watch violent programmes can be explained with the fact that 4th grade pupils are more sensible as far as accepting violent contents is concerned. More than one half of male pupils (67.0%), female pupils (71.8%), 4th grade pupils (73.7%) and 8th grade pupils (64.3%) claim they watch violent films for amusement. In everyday television programme there are too many violent programmes and the pupils are used to them, so they enjoy watching them. We believe this is a sort of a „getaway“ for children from everyday worries and problems (negative experiences at school etc.) and also a way to identify themselves with their heroes and to express their feelings of helplessness, hatred, oppressed fear, despair and other. The high percentage of 4th grade pupils that watch violent programmes for amusement is really worrying, as they are only 9 or 10 years old. Most frequently the respondents watch violent programmes by themselves; there is a higher percentage of male pupils and 8th grade pupils.

The reasons for this may lie in the fact that pupils may choose the programme they would like to watch by themselves (without parents' supervision) and do not have to adapt to other family members. That goes especially for 8th grade pupils and to a smaller extent for 4th grade pupils. We believe that 8th grade pupils are more independent and that parents do not have control over what they watch on television, video and DVD. Our findings correspond to findings of earlier researches (comp. Erjavec, Volčič 1999b), claiming that the percentage of children viewing television without anyone else being present increases with age. More than a half of the respondents, regardless of their gender and grade, rarely watch television, video and DVDs together with friends. Pupils hang out with their friends, but prefer to do that on playgrounds and with other activities rather than hanging out at home and watching television. A high percentage of respondents, more female pupils and more than a half of both 4th grade and 8th grade pupils rarely watch programmes with their parents. We can conclude that more and more parents spend too little time with their children. Parents should take time for their children and „take time“ means they should find other alternative ways to spend time with their children and not only watch television together. Among respondents that often watch television with their parents are more of 8th grade pupils. We would expect that this would be more typical for parents of younger pupils, as they probably spend more time together and should have a tighter control over what their children are watching. It is interesting that parents sometimes choose the programmes the surveyed pupils can watch for only just over a half of them. It is obvious that parents do not pay enough attention to that or do not have time to spend it with children. In literature we can find that allowing children what they may watch does not differ according to gender. Parents more often choose programmes for younger pupils. In spite that it is worrying that there is a relatively high percentage of 4th grade pupils that are allowed to watch various television programmes of their own choice. In the 8th grade this percentage is even higher. We can conclude that the indifference of parents regarding what their children watch increases with age. The results of our research correspond to previous findings (e.g. Erjavec and Volčič, 1999b; Gunther, 2000; Stangl, 2004) which point out that regular supervision of parents regarding what their children are watching strongly decreases with age. Parents

should put more effort into this and keep themselves informed of when children's programmes are broadcasted and if they are suitable for their children. Parents should determine, together with their children, which shows are appropriate and which are not. They should explain to their children why certain shows are not appropriate for them to watch. More than one half of male and female pupils rarely discuss the content seen with their parents. According to previous researches (Košir and Ranfl, 1996; Erjavec, Volčič, 1999b; Grossman, DeGaetano, 2002; Kunczik, 2002) confirm that parents do not discuss media content with their children often enough. Among respondents that often talk about the content seen are more 8th grade pupils. Probably older pupils think more about the contents and problems, shown by the media, and feel a bigger need to discuss them with their parents, as they want to find out the position of their parents on these topics. These findings differ from findings of the research that claim the percentage of children that talk with their parents about what they watched decreases with age. Parents are afraid of effects the television has on their children. They say that watching television is not good especially for younger children, but at the same time they leave their children alone on front of the television and do not discuss the content of programmes the children watched or do not talk about that often enough. Some authors (Erjavec and Volčič, 1999b; Grossman and DeGaetano, 2002; Kunczik, 2002) claim that having such a conversation with their parents is very important for children, as it is necessary to explain to them the difference between fictional violence on television and real violence that is around us. 4th grade and 8th grade pupils often talk with friends about the programmes they watch. The results show that exchanging opinions between friends is really important. That finding is surprising and confirms previous findings that communication between friends is strongly emphasised. That corresponds to previous researches which point out that the percentage of children who discuss television programme with their friends increases with age. That was also confirmed by findings of this research. A high percentage of respondents does not agree with the statement claiming they like to imitate heroes of violent programmes. Based on these results we can conclude that this consequence of violence in mass media, imitation, can not be found among pupils to a large extent. A higher percentage of 4th grade pupils that show numbness as a consequence of vio-

lence shows that these pupils have been exposed to such scenes from an early age on and they are used to them, so they can watch such scenes with ease. At the same time they know that a scene of someone dying is not real and are therefore not sad. There are more 8th grade pupils that do not agree with instruction saying that they should turn off the television, if the programmes show too much violence. These results can be interpreted with the fact that pupils are used to watching violent programmes and if they brag about that in front of their classmates, they get a sense of worth. At the same time we believe that 8th grade pupils are used to watching violent programmes and do not think it is important to turn off the television. Among respondents that do not agree with the instruction saying they should talk about violent programmes with their parents are more than a half of 4th grade pupils. Obviously pupils like to watch violent programmes, they are a part of their everyday and do not feel the need to discuss them with their parents. Pupils do not want to talk with their parents about such programmes, as they know that parents would not agree with that or that they would not allow them to watch such programmes in the future. Pupils of both grades realise that by taking account of the instruction that it is necessary to discuss the fact that violence is not the only way to solve conflicts and that there are other, non-violent ways to solve them, violence would in fact be reduced. How often this instruction is followed through in everyday life is, of course, questionable.

Conclusion

The aim of this research, done among 4th and 8th grade pupils of various primary schools in Slovenia was to find out how pupils nowadays perceive media violence. We wanted to find out if the respondents like to watch violent programmes and why, who they most often watch violent programmes with, who they talk with about the programmes they watch, if their parents ever forbid them to watch violent shows, if they show consequences of excessive watching of violent contents (imitation and numbness) and to what extent they agree with instructions that could help reduce violence in chil-

Notes

/1/ Erjavec, K. in Volčič, Z. (1999a). Moč i nemoč televizije: za starše in učitelje. Ljubljana: Založba Rokus.

dren's programmes. The research showed that more than a half of respondents said they like to watch violent programmes for amusement. The respondents most frequently watch violent programmes by themselves, the majority are 8th grade pupils. Most frequently they discuss the programmes they have seen with their friends. Communication among friends is especially emphasised among 8th grade pupils. Pupils are often exposed to media violence. The research showed that they have become less sensitive to violence due to their frequent encounter with it in the media. We can already find elements of numbness as a consequence of media violence, but cannot find imitation to a larger extent. Pupils of both grades realise that taking account of some instructions would help reduce violence in children's programmes. The majority of respondents agree that especially by taking account of the instruction that it is necessary to discuss the fact that violence is not the only way to solve conflicts and that there are other, non-violent ways to solve them, violence would in fact be reduced. What could we do to keep pupils less exposed to media violence, so they would preserve a critical position towards the media? We cannot so much influence television programme itself, but we can surely do a lot within institutions that are engaged in upbringing and education of children, namely nursery school, school and family. Parents play an important role in pupil's comprehension of media and their relation towards it, but do not, according to this research, pay enough attention to that. That is why we again emphasise the importance of communication, compromises, setting borders and especially setting a good example within the family. Pupils need advice and help from their pedagogues and teachers, so that they will learn how to make smart decisions and right choices, be critical and think creatively about the media. They need a wholesome pedagogical-educational process, an education about the media. If parents, pedagogues and teachers will be consistent, we will be on the right path to keep media reality from prevailing and becoming a substitute for real everyday life.

/2/ Stangl, W. (2004). Die Wirkung von Gewltdarstellungen in den Medien. Pridobljeno 10.9. 2008, iz

<http://arbeitsbleatter.stangl-taller.at>

/3/ Stipp – Hagmann, K. (2000). Wie werden Helden gemacht? Niedersächsisches Landesinstitut für Fortbildung und Weiterbildung im Schulwesen und

- Medienpädagogik (NLI). Niedersächsische Landesmedienanstalt für privaten Rundfunk (NLM).
- /4/ Erjavec, K. in Volčič, Z. (1999a). Moč i nemoč televizije: za starše in učitelje. Ljubljana: Založba Rokus.
- /5/ Ibidem
- /6/ Petrovec, D. (2003). Mediji in nasilje: obseg in vpliv nasilja v medijih v Sloveniji. Ljubljana: Mirovni inštitut.
- /7/ Ibidem
- /8/ Erb, Helmut, H. (1997). Otroci in nasilje. Ljubljana: Kres.
- /9/ Košir, M. in Ranfl, R. (1996). Vzgoja za medije. Ljubljana: DZS.
- /10/ Erjavec, K. in Volčič, Z. (1999a). Moč i nemoč televizije: za starše in učitelje. Ljubljana: Založba Rokus.
- /11/ Petkovič, B. (2004). Nasilje v medijih. Ciciban, priloga za starše, 8, 16–17.
- /12/ Ibidem
- /13/ Erb, Helmut, H. (1997). Otroci in nasilje. Ljubljana: Kres.
- /14/ Košir, M. (1995). Uvod. V M. Košir, (Ur.), Otrok in mediji (str. 5–8). Ljubljana: Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije.
4. Feibel, T. (2004). Killerspiele im Kinderzimmer. Was wir über Computer und Gewalt wissen müssen. Walter Verlag.
5. Grossman, D. in DeGaetano, G. (2002). Wer hat unsern Kindern das Tote beigebracht? Ein Aufruf gegen Gewalt in Fernsehen, Film und Computerspielen. Freies Geistesleben GmbH.
6. Gunther, M. (2000). Fernsehalltag und Medienangste von Kindern. Niedersächsisches Landesinstitut für Fortbildung und Weiterbildung im Schulwesen und Medienpädagogik (NLI). Niedersächsische Landesmedienanstalt für privaten Rundfunk (NLM).
7. Košir, M. (1998). Čas množičnih občil terja vzgojo za medije. V A. N. Dragan (Ur.), Vzgoja za medije in z mediji (str. 93–100). Ljubljana: Zavod Republike Slovenije za šolstvo.
8. Košir, M. (2003). Surovi čas medijev. Ljubljana: Fakulteta za družbene vede.
9. Kunczik, M. (1990). Fernsehen: Aspekte eines Mediums. Köln: Bohlau.
10. Kunczik, M. in Zipfel, A. (2002). Gewalttätig durch Medien? Pridobljeno 14. 2. 2010., <http://www.mediaculture-online.de>
11. Plenković, Mario; Kučič, Vlasta. Das Mediensystem Kroatiens // Internationales Handbuch Medien 2004/2005 / Hans-Bredow-Institut (ur.). Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2004. Str. 1200.
12. Plenković, Mario; Hadžić, Slobodan; Plenković, Juraj. Istota czasu wolnego // Wartosci w pedagogice / Waldemar Furmanek (ur.). Rzeszow : Zaklad Dydaktyki i Techniki i Informatyki Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2008. Str. 58-70.
13. Plenković, Mario. Urednički svijet klasika informacijskih znanosti Bože Težaka // Profesor Božo Težak, lučonoša znanosti / Težak, Tomislav (ur.). Zagreb : Hrvatska sveučilišna naklada, 2007. Str. 307-314.

Literature

1. Bašič Hrvatinić, S. (1995). Otrok in nasilje v medijih. V M. Košir (Ur.), Otrok in mediji (str. 37–42). Ljubljana: Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije.
2. Brandstatter, H. in Brandstatter, R. (1995). Fernsehen mit Kindern: ein Ratgeber für Eltern. Wien: Ueberreuter.
3. Erjavec, K. in Volčič, Z. (1999b). Odraščanje z mediji: rezultati raziskave Mladi in mediji. Ljubljana: Zveza prijateljev mladine Slovenije.