

**VIOLENCE ON PHILIPPINE TELEVISION:
An Initial Study on the Frequency and Nature of TV
Violence in the Philippines***

Philippine Children's Television Foundation **

Background:

The world's children are growing up in a complex and exciting global village where television plays an increasingly dominant role. For better or for worse, media has become as much a part of childhood as the traditional games passed on from one generation to another. But when violence in turn is a dominant part of that media diet, what could be the impact on children? And when children grow up in a real world where violence is a part of the daily life experiences, what could be the relationship between violence in real-life, and the violence they see on screen? The "violence debate" is not a simple one and it's time to take stock of what we know about children and media violence, about the content of television violence today in the Philippines. It is time to understand the problems and explore more effective solution if we are to translate how much we care about today's children—and the world's future—into concrete actions.

Ideally an in-depth study on the nature and frequency of TV violence in Philippine television will include an assessment of the types of violence, the context, and the frequency as well as a content analysis. PCTVF has designed a multi-stage research

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on Media Violence and its impact on Filipino children. With the available resources to date only the first stage of the study has been undertaken. This initial stage seeks to establish the types of violence, the frequency, context and broadcast hours when violence is shown on Philippine television.

The study begins with the premises provided by one of the most extensive and reliable studies on TV violence ever undertaken: the United States National Television Violence Study.¹ The U.S. study focused on key features of violent portrayals that either increase or diminish the risk of harmful effects on viewers, especially children. "Previous research has established that exposure to TV violence can contribute to aggressive attitudes and behaviors, to desensitization to real-world violence, and to increased fear in viewers," according to the U.S. National TV Violence Study. For this initial stage of the Philippine study, the significant findings of the U.S. study provided the major premises and the data on Philippine television were gathered and assessed *vis-a-vis* these significant findings and conclusions about the effects of television violence on children.

Methodology

A composite week of programs from each of the major local broadcast networks (Channels 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 13, 23) were taped on air from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. in April, 1999. A total of 728 programs were taped and considered for sampling. The programs were then categorized into three equal time blocks: (1) 7-12 AM; (2) 12-5 PM; (3) 5-9 PM.; (75 programs) 10% of the total number of programs, were randomly selected for coding and analysis for the nature and context of violence.

Coding and Definition of Terms:

The violence in each program was coded on two levels:

1. Coding separate incidents or interactions of violence between perpetrator(s) and victim(s).
2. Analyzing the entire program for violent content.

A code book with detailed and precise definitions of terms and rules of judgment were provided for reference to all coders.

A violent incident was defined as:

- Any overt between depiction of a credible threat of physical force.
- Actual use of such force intended to physically harm an animate being or group of beings.
- Violence also includes certain depictions of physically harmful consequences against an animate being or group that occur as a result of unseen violent means (i.e. off-cam violence).

Rules of Judgments:

- Key aspects present in a depiction of violence: involvement of animate beings, a clear intent to harm either physically or emotionally (through verbal violence).
- Mere presence or holding of weapons does not necessarily comprise a violent incident. It necessitates the actual use of the weapon or the use of the weapon to threaten an animate being.
- Credible threats of physical force—through words, and non-verbal action of the intention to harm.
- Destruction of infrastructure and property (buildings, bridges, cars) will be considered violent when such destruction has physically harmful consequences on animate beings.

The following contexts and definitions were considered in coding:

- Nature of the perpetrator
- Nature of the Victim
- Reason for violence
- Weapon used
- Extensiveness/Graphicness
- Realism
- Rewards and punishments
- Consequences of the violence
- Humor

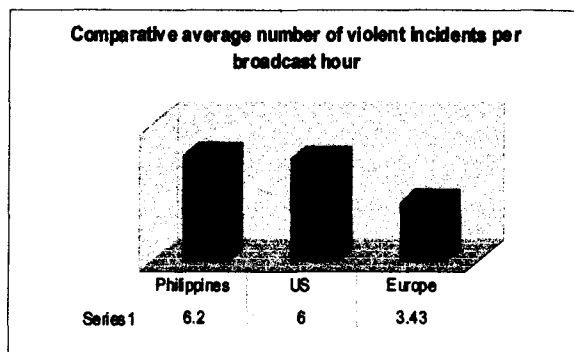
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

How much violence is there on Philippine TV?

50% of TV programs contain violence.

Average number of violent incidents: 6.2 incidents per hour.

For every hour of TV viewing, there are 6.2 incidents of violence.

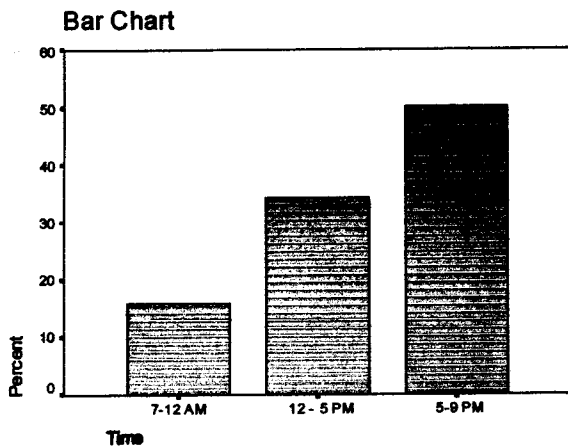


On average for every 10 minutes there is one violent incident.

According to AC Nielsen, 2-12 year olds spend 2.8 hours watching TV. This means a 2-12 year old could view an average of 13 incidents of violence a day

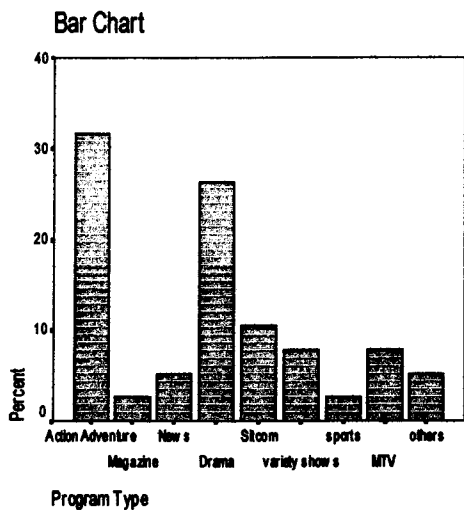
When is the violence most likely to be present?

50% of violent programs occur in the 5-9 PM time slot which is also the time with the greatest number of children ages 2-17 viewing TV³



In what kinds of programs is violence likely to occur?

Violence occurs most often in action/adventure programs (31.6%) followed by drama (26.3%), situation comedies (10.5%), variety shows (7.9%) and MTV (7.9%)



The PCTVF 1999 Filipino Children's Media Landscape has shown that action/adventure programs make up 52% of all programs targeted to children 3 to 12 years of age.

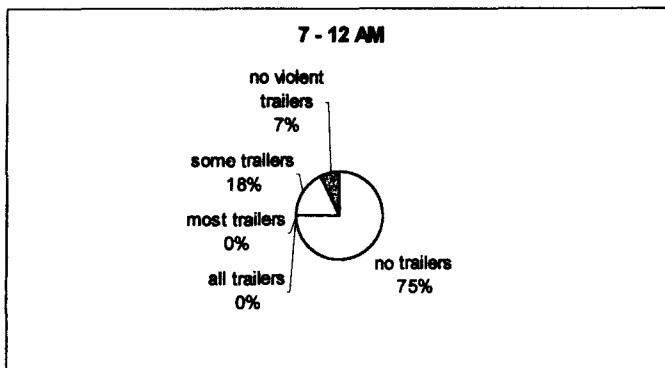
According to AC Nielsen, two of the most popular TV shows watched by children aged 2-12 are Ghost Fighter and Streetfighter 2. They are both action/adventure programs.

- 60% of programs with violence are targeted to adults.
- 40% of programs with violence are targeted to children 7 to 17 years old.

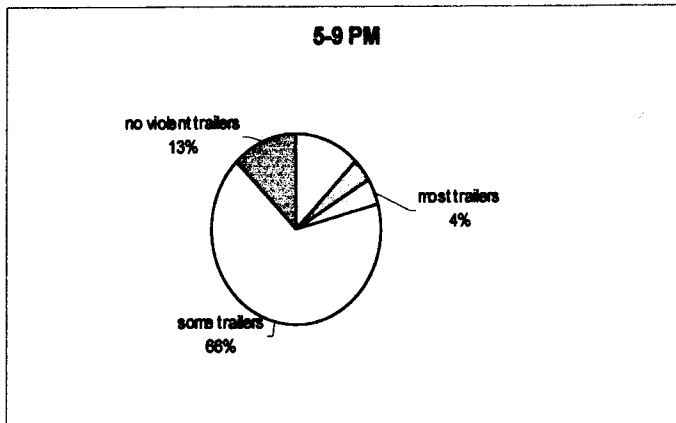
Movie trailers and plugs

Violence in movie trailers are often shown without context. This study shows that 40% of trailers shown have violent scenes and content, usually without a context for the violence.

- 18% of programs during the morning block (7-12 AM) the program block generally reserved for children by most networks have trailers with violent content.



- 66% of programs on primetime, the block with the most viewers, contain movie trailers and plugs with some violent content



NATURE AND CONTEXT OF VIOLENCE

Studies have shown that violence on TV may either increase or decrease the likelihood of learning aggression, fear and desensitization to violence depending on the context in which violence is situated. One of the most recent and most extensive studies on TV violence was the United States National Television Violence Study³. The following are the significant findings from the US Violence Study. Data from the Philippine Violence Study are presented for each finding.

- **An attractive perpetrator will most likely increase the tendency to learn aggression**

On Philippine television,

40% of all perpetrators of violence are attractive, making them more likely role models. With unattractive perpetrators, only 20% get punished for using violence, 31% are rewarded and 49% of violent acts committed by unattractive perpetrators go unpunished.

- **Justified violence most likely will increase the learning of aggression. Unjustified violence, in turn decreases the learning of aggression but increases the likelihood of fear**

On Philippine television,

80% of all violent incidents are unjustified. With unattractive perpetrators, 92% are unjustified acts of violence thereby increasing the likelihood of fear.

- **An attractive victim will most likely increase fear**

On Philippine television,

55% of victims of violence are attractive.

- **The presence of weapons increases the likelihood of aggression.**

On Philippine television,

Filipinos prefer to use their hands.

52.8% of all violent incidents involve the use of physical strength

10% of programs with violence use guns.

14% use a combination of guns and other forms of weapons.

- **Extensive and graphic violence increase the likelihood of learning aggression, promote fear and desensitize viewers to aggression.**

On Philippine television,

Although violent incidents are not extended unnecessarily 82% of all violent incidents are graphic, ranging from very graphic (30%) to somewhat graphic (52%).

- **Violent acts which are rewarded increases the likelihood of learning aggression and fear while the punishment of violent acts decreases the likelihood of learning aggression and fear.**

On Philippine television.

- 50% of all violent acts are rewarded and 30% are unrewarded, neither punished nor rewarded.
- Perpetrators, are rarely or never punished for committing violence.
- Reward for using violence clearly outweigh punishment.
- **Violent acts which are portrayed realistically increases the likelihood of fear and learning aggression in children.**

On Philippine television.

- Half of all violent incidents on television (57.9%) are portrayed realistically.
- The consequences of violence are rarely portrayed realistically
- **Showing violence as causing harm or pain decreases the likelihood of learning aggression.**

On Philippine television.

Almost 50% (44.7%) of programs with violent content rarely or never show violence as causing visible harm or pain to the perpetrator.

ENDNOTES

¹The National Television Violence Study was undertaken by researchers from the University of California, Santa Barbara, University of Texas at Austin, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. University of Wisconsin, Madison.

²AC Nielsen TV Establishment and Peoplemeter TV Ratings Service, 1999

³ Dale Kunkei, Stacy Smith, *et al.* Television Violence and Its Context: A Content Analysis. National Television Violence Study Executive Summary, Vol. 3, ed. Joel Federman, (Santa Barbara: Center for Communication and Social Policy, 1997)