

A Study on the Influence of Television Shows (Reality Shows, Science Fiction shows and Sports Television Shows) on Control-Beliefs

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ABSTRACT

The issue of media influence continues to be a growing cause for concern in today. It is seen by many as both an increasing burden causing body image distortion and also as a pathway to psychological illness such as low self esteem, depression and eating disorders. The aim of this research is to explore the influence of watching television series like reality television shows, science fiction and sports television shows on control beliefs. The study, conducted in Mizoram, consists of 30 samples between the age group of 16 to 20. After filling out the demographic sheet and the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS), the results of the study revealed that gender differences exists among viewers of reality, science-fiction and sports television series in their control belief. The results also reveal that there is no significant relationship between viewers of reality, science fiction and sports television series with regard to their control beliefs.

Keywords: Reality television shows, science-fiction television shows, sports television shows, control beliefs

The issue of media images and its effects on body image has attracted a substantial amount of attention from the public as well as researchers in various disciplines. In terms of the cause, researchers now have reached to a consensus that mass media are at least partially responsible for the chronic states of bodily discontent and unhealthy attitudes toward eating widespread among women in most Westernized societies.

Gender Differences and Body image

We usually believe that women get more affected by what they see on television rather than men. But things have changes in today's world. Men are also highly influenced by what they see on television

shows or media as a whole. In a study done by Tiggemann (2005) stated that body dissatisfaction has also become increasingly common among men. After viewing well-toned body on television or media, they become more conscious about their looks and hence leads to body dissatisfaction and a drive to look more toned and muscular.

A research done by Tiggemann, M. (2005) "Television and adolescent body image: The role of program content and viewing motivation" was reviewed for the purpose of this research. The main aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between several aspects of television viewing, in particular total exposure, selective viewing of particular genres, with body attitudes among adolescents

(boys and girls). The participants for this study were 1,452 students who completed a questionnaire which measures eating disorder attitudes and symptomatology, internalization of appearance and uses of television. The participant's account of television watching was also taken from which total exposure and exposure and viewing specific of genres were generated. The results showed that the amount time spent on television does not affect body image. However, the time spent watching soaps television was positively related to drive for thinness among both genders. The time spend watching soaps and music videos were also related to drive for masculinity among boys. The study concluded that television watching does not have an impact on body image among adolescents but the kind of television shows, types of material and motivation does have an impact.

McCabe *et al.* (2007) reported that both men and women are almost equally influenced by societal pressures from the media to attain the perfect body image. Whether we accept it or not, societal pressure plays a big role in influencing body image among men and women. The more we are exposed to something, the more that may have an influence on us. Television shows consist of many genres and the influence it has on us may depend on the genre of the television shows. A study by Tiggemann (2005) reported that television shows in general does not have an impact on body image among boys and girls but the kind of television show does have an impact.

Significance and Rationale of the study

Television shows is seen as the most influential conveyor of sociocultural values regarding ideal size and shape. The impact of body perfect ideals from the mass media is the core risk factor for negative body image for men and women. Recent studies have confirmed that negative body image or body dissatisfaction leads to negative self perception, negative emotional state and unhealthy behaviours. Images of the unrealistic body perfect ideals are transmitted and reinforced, which impact our perception and attitudes towards our

bodies. Television shows play an important role in forming our body image hence leads to formation of our identity. According to Erikson's theory of psychological development, it is during the age of 12 to 18 that people form their identity. Adolescents may get influenced by their environment like their peers, family, media and many other variables when forming their identity. The content of television shows also play a vital role on how it influences the individual, whether it has a positive or negative impact. The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between viewing of reality television shows, science fiction shows and sports television shows and control beliefs. The study is the first of its kind to be conducted in the state of Mizoram, north eastern part of India.

Objectives of the study

1. To explore the relationship between viewing of reality television shows, science fiction shows and sports television shows and control beliefs.
2. To study if gender differences exist between viewers of reality television shows, science fiction shows and sports television shows and control beliefs.
3. To study if differences exists between viewers of different genres i.e. sports, science fiction and reality on control beliefs.

Hypotheses

- ⊙ **H1:** Gender differences exists between viewers of reality television series, sports series and science fiction television series on control beliefs
- ⊙ **H2:** There is no significant difference between viewers of reality television series, science fiction series and sports television series with regard to control beliefs

Sample

A sample of 30 students between the age group of 16 to 20 years was selected as part of the study. The sample consists of both females and males. The primary sampling technique used is convenient

sampling technique and quota sampling technique. The sample consists of the population of Mizoram.

Inclusion criteria

- ⊙ Students between the age group of 16 to 20.
- ⊙ Students who watch either reality or science fiction or sports television series.

Exclusion criteria

- ⊙ Non-Mizo students.
- ⊙ Students who watch the three genres i.e. reality or science-fiction or sports television series for the same amount of time.

Research Design

The research followed a quantitative research design, to explore the relationship between viewing of television shows and control beliefs. After inclusion criteria were met tools were administered to the samples to test the various hypotheses.

Tools

Informed consent form: The informed consent form was used to obtain permission from the students for data collection. The form included the purpose of the study, phases of data collection, and a guarantee of anonymity and confidentiality of all information given. Since the sample included minors, parental consent was also offered.

Demographic data sheet: This contains information about the kind of television series watched, the frequency of viewing and the numbers of hours spend on it will be taken. Only those who watch either reality or science fiction or sports television series will be included in the study.

Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (revised): The study uses the revised Objectified Body Consciousness Scale (OBCS) developed by Lindberg, S.M., Hyde, J.S., & McKinley, N.M. (2006). The scale consisted of 14 questions which measures selfsurveillance, body shame and control-beliefs.

Procedure

Preliminary phase: Data was collected from St. Paul's higher secondary school and Pachhunga

University, Aizawl, Mizoram. Permission was obtained from the Principal and Department of Counsellors prior to data collection. The OBCS, the informed consent and the demographic sheet form were also approved by the institution. The participants of the study were selected and appointments were arranged with the students.

Secondary phase: Rapport was established with the students and the purpose of the study was explained. After the students signed the Informed Consent Form volunteering to participate in the study committedly and without compensation, the study was conducted. To collect the required data, the demographic sheet and the Objectified Body Consciousness Scale was administered to them. The scale was administered to them as per the manual of the test. General instructions included that all information would be kept confidential; all items of the scale must be answered as honestly and as carefully as possible.

Final phase: The obtained data was scored according to the OBCS-manual. All data was sorted according to the sample criteria-30 who watch reality television series, 30 who watch science fiction television series and 30m who watch sports television series.

Data was analyzed using the two way analysis of variance. (Two way ANOVA).

Data Analysis

After data collection and scoring, results were tabulated and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics 20 software. After the scores are noted, a two way analysis of variance (two way ANOVA) was used to analyze the data collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of students in the area of control beliefs

Gender	Genre	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Male	Sports	4.71	0.65	22
	Science fiction	4.34	0.66	8
	Reality	4.46	1.06	10
	Total	4.58	0.77	40

Female	sports	3.97	0.99	8
	Science fiction	4.73	1.01	22
	Reality	4.60	0.90	20
	Total	4.56	0.98	50
Total	Sports	4.52	0.81	30
	Science fiction	4.62	0.93	30
	Reality	4.56	0.94	30
	Total	4.57	0.89	90

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics of students who watch either sports, reality or science fiction television series in the area of control belief. The mean score of males who watch sports in area of control belief is 4.71 which is more than the mean score of females who watch sports in the area of control belief with the score of 3.97. The standard deviation score of males who watch sports is 0.65 which is less than females who watch sports with the score of 0.99. The mean score of males who watch science fiction in area of control belief is 4.34 which is less than the mean score of females who watch science fiction in the area of control belief with the score of 4.74. The standard deviation score of males who watch science fiction is 0.66 which is less than females who watch science fiction with the score of 1.01. The mean score of males who watch reality in area of control belief is 4.46 which is lesser than the mean score of females who watch reality in the area of control belief with the score of 4.60. The standard deviation score of males who watch reality is 1.06 which is less than females who watch reality with the score of 0.90. The total mean score of males for all the genres combined is 4.58 which is more than females who received a score of 4.56. Hence this proves the hypothesis which states that gender differences exists between viewers of reality television series, sports series and science fiction television series on control belief.

Table 2 shows that for genre i.e. reality, science fiction and sports television series the *f* ratio (0.37) to be not significant as the significance level is $p < 0.69$. Thus this proves the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between viewers of reality television series, science fiction series and sports television series with regard to control belief.

Table 2: Table showing tests of between-subjects effects for control beliefs

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects			
Source	d.f	F	Sig.
Gender	1	0.12	0.73
Genre	2	0.37	0.69
Gender * genre	2	2.64	0.08
Corrected total	70.301	89	

The third hypothesis states that gender differences exists between viewers of reality television series, sports series and science fiction television series on control beliefs. This hypothesis is proved by the research which found that the control belief in males was higher than females with a total mean score of 4.57 and 4.55 respectively. Although gender difference exists, there is little difference among their scores. In the context of this hypothesis, McCabe *et al.* (2007) reported that both men and women are almost equally influenced by societal pressures from the media to attain the perfect body image. This study also stated that women felt worse about their body image after being exposed to thin body image, they either feel too ugly or too fat. Survey showed that 13% of men believed that television influenced their body image whereas 6% believed that fashion magazines influenced their body image (McCabe *et al.* 2007).

The sixth hypothesis states that there is no significant difference between viewers of reality television series, science fiction series and sports television series with regard to control-belief. This hypothesis is proved by this research as the results showed that there is not much significance among these three genres on control-beliefs. In the context of this hypothesis, McCabe *et al.* (2007) reported that both men and women are almost equally influenced by societal pressures from the media to attain the perfect body image. This study also stated that women felt worse about their body image after being exposed to thin body image, they either feel too ugly or too fat. Survey showed that 13% of men believed that television influenced their body image whereas 6% believed that fashion magazines influenced their body image (McCabe *et al.* 2007).

Implications of the study

Entertainment plays a vital part of young adults. Television influences our perception of our self and this has an impact on us as proved by the research. The influence may differ between genders. In today's world, where females face a lot of pressure from the media especially when it comes to body image, television plays an important role. This research highlights the influence of television on body image, be it negative or positive impact. From this research we understand that the three different genres has an impact on body image, positive or negative impact. The media like television shows can change the portrayal of the characters as it is clear that what they show has an impact on the viewers. Television shows can show more realistic images to influence the viewer's so that it may have a positive image on them.

Recommendations and Suggestions

1. The study can be better and broadened by increasing the participants.
2. Various differences in the groups within the age range can also be further studied.
3. Other variables can be added to the study which may influence the dependent variable.

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