

## An Empirical Study on the Influence of Media in Well-Being of the Psychological & Spiritual Dimensions of Children Using Logotherapy.

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**Abstract:** Well-being of children is associated with the ambition, hope, meaning and fulfillment found in them as they journey through the developmental transitions in different stages of life. Children of this generation live in an era of computers and technology. The constructive purposes of media are undeniable and the debilitating effects of media are an evident challenge threatening the well-being of children. The consequences are seen in the spiritual, emotional, rational, volitional and social sectors of a child. The need for creation of awareness on the consequence of unhealthy media usage in a child is realized. Logotherapy is a therapy of meaning. It is perceived as an appropriate concept for counselling children who are losing their sight of purpose through unhealthy usage of media. Well-being can be restored if the consequence of unhealthy media usage in psychological and spiritual dimension of a child is dealt meaningfully. Psychology, ‘the Science of the Mind’ concentrates on thoughts, feelings and will of an individual and Spirituality ‘the essence of being’ gives a true meaning and purpose of life. This paper aims at the quantitative assessment of the influence of media in children of age 8 to 12. The paper also describes the analysis of the psychological differences in children who are addicted to media and the meaning and purpose of life as perceived by them. It also suggests the logo therapeutic approach that would benefit children in their path of restoration from the negative consequences of media.

**Keywords:** Existentialism, Logo therapy, Psychoanalysis, Transcendence.

### I. Introduction

A child is a human being of a definite age. Psychologists maintain that childhood continues till the age of twelve. Child Psychology is a positive science which studies the behavior of child in the context of his environment treating child as an individual. S. Feldman says, “Human life proceeds by stages. The life periods of the individual are no less real and significant than the geographical ages of the earth or the evolutionary stages of life. Each stage is distinguished by a dominant feature, a leading characteristic which gives the period its coherence, its unity and its uniqueness.” [1] The mental development of the child comprehends the development of his intellect, mental capabilities, imagination, thinking, emotion, volition and other mental processes. Functions of the human brain are three – to know, experience and to reach decisions. The process of knowing comprehends perception and cognitive knowledge. Well-being of children is associated with the ambition, hope, meaning and fulfillment found in them as they journey through the developmental transitions in different stages of life.

### II. Hypothesis

1. There is an influence of media in the well-being of Psychological and Spiritual dimensions of children.
2. The children may lose their purpose of life due to unhealthy usage of media.

#### Objective

To study the impact of media on the feeling, behavior, thought and spiritual orientation of pre adolescent children.

#### 1.1 Erikson's Psychosocial Theory Overview

Erikson's Psychosocial Stages	Life Stage / Relationships	Basic Virtue And Second Named Strength (potential positive outcomes from each crisis)	Maladaptation
1. Trust v Mistrust	infant / mother	Hope and Drive	Sensory Distortion
2. Autonomy v Shame & Doubt	toddler / parents	Willpower and Self-Control	Impulsivity
3. Initiative v Guilt	preschool / family	Purpose and Direction	Ruthlessness
4. Industry v Inferiority	schoolchild / school, teachers, friends, neighbourhood	Competence and Method	Narrow Virtuosity

Erikson was able to do this because of his strong interest and compassion for people, especially young people, and also because his research was carried out among human societies far removed from the more inward-looking world of the psychoanalyst's couch, which was essentially Freud's approach. This helps Erikson's eight stages theory to be a tremendously powerful model: it is very accessible and obviously relevant to modern life, from several different perspectives, for understanding and explaining how personality and behaviour develops in people. As such Erikson's theory is useful for teaching, parenting, self-awareness, managing and coaching, dealing with conflict, and generally for understanding self and others.

- Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way.
- When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves.
- Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom. [2,3]

## **1.2 Basics of Logotherapy**

Viktor Frankl is the founder of Logotherapy which has come to be called the Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy (after Freud's psychoanalysis and Adler's individual psychology). Logotherapy finds its philosophical roots in existentialism and phenomenology, its psychological roots in psychoanalysis and individual psychology, and its spiritual roots in a profound commitment to the human being as an irreducibly spiritual creature. Frankl states that human beings are unique, responsible by nature and limited.

The meaning is circumstantial, thus individual and unique in each person's situation. "Being human is being conscious and being responsible, culminating in a synthesis of both—namely in one's consciousness of his responsibility."

A two-fold limitation is emphasized. First, is the limit of one's destiny, which sums up the unique set of opportunities and influences which converge upon the individual at any particular time. Secondly each human being is limited by death which sooner or later will put an end to opportunities and responsibilities. [4]

### **1.2.1 Sources of Personal Meaning**

Personal meanings do not develop in a vacuum. A phenomenological analysis of the immediate data of the actual life experience of an individual reveals sources of meaning in that person's life. Frankl maintains that life can be made meaningful in a threefold way: First, through what we give, in terms of creative works; second by what we take from the world; and third, through the stand we take toward a fate we no longer can change. Meaning is not invented but discovered. One can give meaning to our lives by realizing creative values, that is, by achieving tasks. One can also give meaning to our lives by realizing experiential values, "by experiencing the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, or by knowing one single human being in all of his uniqueness. And to experience one human being as unique means to love him." Even when those experiences are impossible, "a man can still give his life a meaning by the way he faces his fate, his distress."

### **1.2.2 Defiant Power of the Human Spirit**

One of Logotherapy's most helpful contributions to gerontology is its stress on the "defiant power of the human spirit." While recognizing the holistic nature of the human being, the Logotherapist appeals to what lies beyond the person's psycho-physical nature—the spirit. The spiritual core of a person is recognized as capable of taking a stand not only toward negative and painful external circumstances but also toward its own psychological character structure. Such recognition conveys to older persons a renewed awareness of self-worth and human dignity. Conversely, if they regard themselves as inadequate psychic mechanisms, with no control and responsibility for themselves, they have no capacity to transcend themselves or fashion meaning from their suffering.

## **1.3 Media and Its Consequences**

Research indicates that the influence of the media on the psychosocial development of children is profound.

### **1.3.1 Television**

Television has the potential to generate both positive and negative effects, and many studies have looked at the impact of television on society, particularly on children and adolescents. The following groups of children may be more vulnerable to violence on television:

- children from minority and immigrant groups;
- emotionally disturbed children;
- children with learning disabilities;
- children who are abused by their parents; and
- children in families in distress

### **1.3.2 Music Videos**

Music videos may have a significant behavioural impact by desensitizing viewers to violence. Up to 75% of videos contain sexually explicit material, and more than half contain violence that is often committed against women. Women are portrayed frequently in a condescending manner that affects children's attitudes about sex roles. A detailed analysis of music videos raised concerns about its effects on adolescents' normative expectations about conflict resolution, race and male-female relationships. Music lyrics have become increasingly explicit, particularly with references to sex, drugs and violence. Paediatricians should bring this up in anticipatory guidance discussions with teenagers and their parents. At the very least, parents should take an active role in monitoring the music their children are exposed to.

### **1.3.3 Video Games**

Some video games may help the development of fine motor skills and coordination, but many of the concerns about the negative effects of television (eg, inactivity, asocial behavior and violence) also apply to excessive exposure to video games. Violent video games should be discouraged because they have harmful effects on children's mental development. Parents should be advised to familiarize themselves with various rating systems for video games and use this knowledge to make their decisions. The effect of violent video games on children has been a public health concern for many years.

### **1.3.4 Internet**

Parents may feel outsmarted or overwhelmed by their children's computer and Internet abilities, or they may not appreciate that the 'new medium' is an essential component of the new literacy, something in which their children need to be fluent. These feelings of inadequacy or confusion should not prevent them from discovering the Internet's benefits. The dangers inherent in this relatively uncontrolled 'wired' world are many and varied, but often hidden.

These dangers must be unmasked and a wise parent will learn how to protect their children by immersing themselves in the medium and taking advice from the many resources aimed at protecting children while allowing them to reap the rich benefits in a safe environment. The physician is in a good position to encourage parents and children to discover the Internet and to use it wisely. The Internet has a significant potential for providing children and youth with access to educational information, and can be compared with a huge home library. However, the lack of editorial standards limits the Internet's credibility as a source of information. There are other concerns as well. The amount of time spent watching television and sitting in front of computers can affect a child's postural development. Excessive amounts of time at a computer can contribute to obesity, undeveloped social skills and a form of addictive behaviour. Although rare, some children with seizure disorders are more prone to attacks brought on by a flickering television or computer screen.[5]

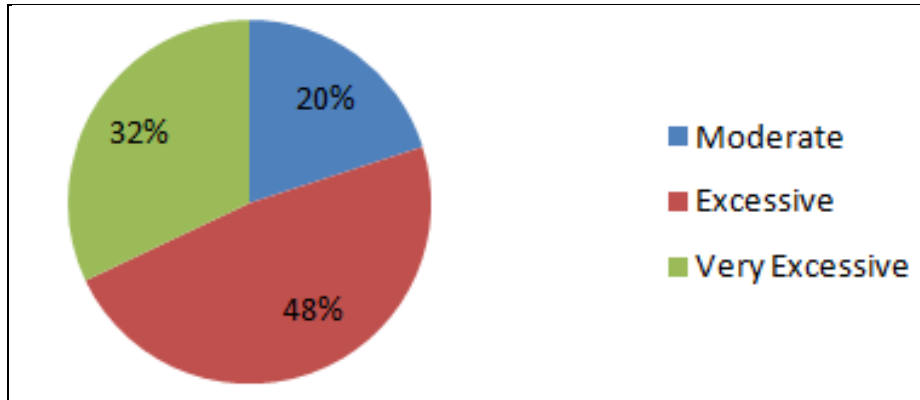
## **1.4 Focus Group Discussion**

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a good way to gather people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest. The group of participants is guided by a moderator (or group facilitator) who introduces topics for discussion and helps the group to participate in a lively and natural discussion amongst themselves. The strength of FGD relies on allowing the participants to agree or disagree with each other so that it provides an insight into how a group thinks about an issue, about the range of opinion and ideas, and the inconsistencies and variation that exists in a particular community in terms of beliefs and their experiences and practices. Some important points to bear in mind in facilitating FGDs are to ensure even participation, careful wording of the key questions, maintaining a neutral attitude and appearance and summarizing the session to reflect the opinions evenly and fairly. [8]

The concerns on the children losing their sight of purpose and excessive usage of media, expressed by the parents and students themselves during the counseling session are the rationale behind the choice of this study. This paper describes an empirical study on the influence of media in the well-being of children. Sample size is 56 pre-teenagers. Fig. (1) and Fig. (2) shows the duration of media usage and nature of programmes viewed respectively. The dominant feeling and the behavior experienced by and involved in respectively are depicted in Figures. (4, 5). The summary of the FGD conducted is, the children agree on the ill-effects of unhealthy media usage. Boredom, loneliness and peer-pressure are identified to be the major causes for spending an excessive duration in media. It is also evident that some children are quite cautious about the physical ailments that could result from an unhealthy media usage, but they are not aware of the consequences in the psychological and spiritual orientations, though the latter causes more inner damage. Awareness on Logotherapy is given as it insists upon the meaning of existence and focuses on purpose and responsibility to be fulfilled.

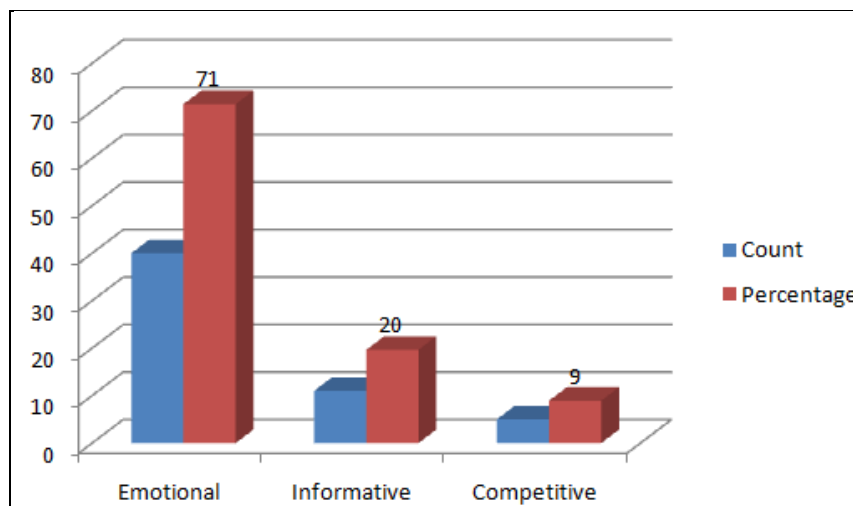
### III. Figures and Tables

In order to help children, explore themselves and assess the impact of media on them, a survey was undertaken among a conveniently selected sample of 56 pre adolescent students at SBOA (CBSE School), Madurai. A questionnaire which contained items related to duration of usage of media, Nature of programmes viewed, feelings conveyed by the programme viewed, dominant feeling, dominant behaviour and dominant thought after watching and values instilled were distributed to a sample of 56 students representing different age groups from 8 to 12. Focus Group Discussion were also conducted for the students in groups of eight participants each. A descriptive analysis of the collected data revealed the following:



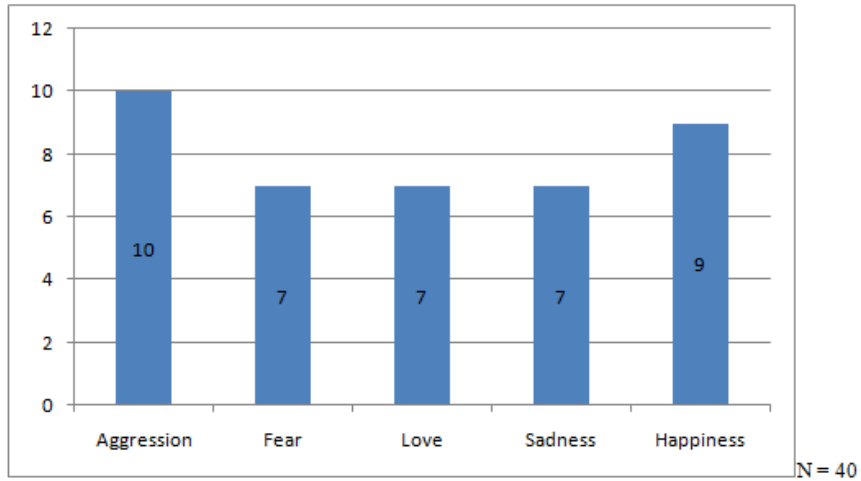
**Figure: 1** Duration of usage of Media

The study indicates that 32% of students have a very excessive usage of media (>5 hours per week), 48% exhibit a habit of excessive usage of media (1 – 5 hours per week) and 20% use media moderately (<1 hour per week). As 48% and 32% of students are using media excessively and very excessively respectively, the objective of this study to insist upon the healthy usage of media aiding to the well-being of children is found valid. Results showing the nature of the programmes viewed is given in Figure: 2.



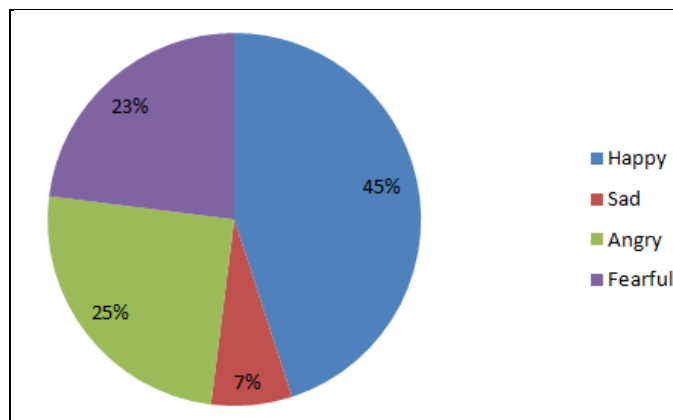
**Figure: 2** Nature of the Programme viewed

71% of students watch emotional programme, whereas 20 % and 9% of students watch informative and competitive programmes. Obviously, it is found that the number of students watching competitive and informative programmes is less than those who watch emotional programmes. The need for analyzing the feeling conveyed by the emotional programme is felt and done.



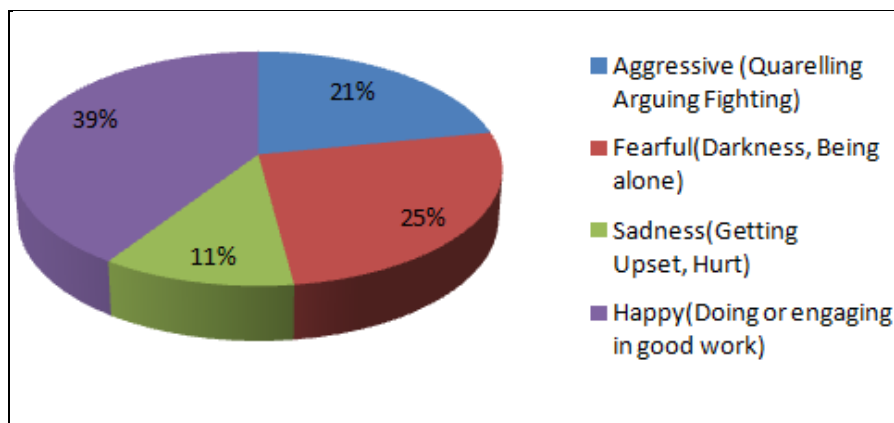
**Figure: 3** Feelings conveyed by the Emotional Programmes

This chart indicates that the most dominant feeling conveyed by the programme as perceived by the students is aggression, though happiness stands next. Fear, love and affection and sadness share an equal ranking. During FGD, students expressed that they experience mixed emotions too.



**Figure: 4** Dominant Feeling after watching

Among the students, 45% have felt happy after watching programmes but 25% feel angry and 23% feel scared. Exploration of the constructive and debilitating feelings is expected to bring an awareness in children on the importance of choosing the right programmes to spend their precious time upon.



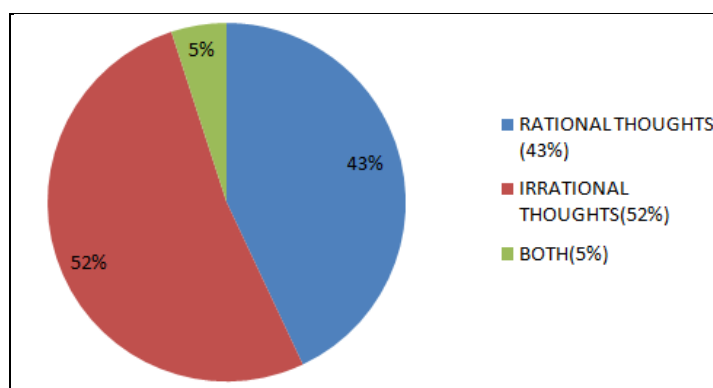
**Figure: 5** Dominant Behaviour after watching

The result shows an evident impact of media on the behaviour of children. Students expressed experiences of getting haunted dreams, fear of being alone, getting hurt often and being aggressive at home. The inner peace gets disturbed in such circumstances.

**Table 1** Study on Impact of Media on Thoughts

THOUGHT	Agree		Disagree		Undecided		Total	
	N	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	Percentage	N	Percentage
we must love and care for others	20	(36%)	26	(46%)	10	(18%)	56	100%
we should be humble and show respect to others	18	(32%)	30	(54%)	8	(14%)	56	100%
I must be happy with what I have	12	(21%)	38	(68%)	6	(11%)	56	100%
Its right to get angry and express it when I like it	14	(25%)	30	(54%)	12	(21%)	56	100%
It is ok to tease a teacher/elder for fun	20	(36%)	24	(43%)	12	(21%)	56	100%
Spirits can attack us and all people are scared of it	22	(39%)	20	(36%)	14	(25%)	56	100%

Contentment is the most disagreed rational thought and the Attack of Spirits is the most agreed irrational thought. There is a greater possibility that the younger generations are insecure and this is perceived to be the cause for much immoral behaviour.



**Figure 6:** Rational and Irrational Thoughts

52% of thoughts gained from the media are found to be irrational and 43% of rational thoughts are also obtained.

**Table 2** Study on Impact of Media on Values

No. OF VALUES LEARNT	0	1-2	>2
NO. OF RESPONDENTS	31	25	NIL

The table shows that media contributes less to the development of spiritual values in children. Data shows that many have learnt the value of self-confidence and belief in themselves, whereas the need to forgive others and the knowledge of God are the least significant values gained from the programmes viewed by the students. Results indicate that more emphasize on self is given through media. If the person is found to be absorbed by thoughts on self to a greater extent causing destructive reactions around, dereflection can be applied. By redirecting the attention away from self, the counselee can become more purposeful by considering others.

#### IV. Conclusion

Well-being of children can be ensured only if they are empowered to face life realizing the meaning. Excessive usage of media is a threat in disguise causing evident illness in their teenage. Accepting reality and the discrimination of fantasy and reality is a great challenge for children of this age. Distortion of facts and exaggeration of facts happens in media often. The attitude of children should be modified and encouraged towards healthy usage of media, search of truth, purpose and meaning. This would help them be hopeful realizing their worth with constructive social skills. St. John says ‘The truth shall set you free’. Let honesty drive us throughout the path we choose, experience, suffer and accomplish.

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