

Investigation 1 – A study by a 16 year old male GCSE Sociology student carried out in 2012 in Glasgow.

‘The media causes violent behaviour.’

I read an article in my local newspaper which said that violent crime was increasing, especially by young males. This made me think about the riots in 2011 and that most of the law breakers seemed to be male. I also noticed that my younger brothers, aged ten and 12, become very loud and aggressive when they watch some TV programmes and play computer games. Also, I was very interested in the study by Bandura (see my secondary sources) which I found out about in my sociology lessons. 5

I began to wonder if the media has an effect on how people act. It seems to me the media does influence behaviour, especially that of young people.

I decided to research this by looking at whether the media causes violent and other types of behaviour. I know there are many areas of the media such as TV, rap music lyrics, internet etc and I couldn't study them all. 10

I decided to study four types of media with a possible influence on behaviour:-

- Computer games
 - Adverts
 - Films
 - Celebrity magazines
- 15

I wanted to do an observation. Without telling my parents, I would have made my younger brothers and their friends watch some violent DVDs and carried out covert observation of their behaviour to see if they became violent. However, my teacher said this would be unethical research. Therefore I had to use a different primary method which would be ethical. 20

Primary Method

I decided to use a questionnaire. This will be made up of both open and closed questions to find out the respondent's views about how the media affects them and whether it causes anti-social behaviour. There are many advantages of using a questionnaire to collect information. Questionnaires are easy, cheap and will provide me with quantitative data. 25

Sampling

I will use two samples. One will be a sample of young people and the second a sample of adults who are parents.

The sampling frame for the young people will be drawn from a list of relatives of the people in my tutor group. I will use a snowball sample and ask my peers if they will give out questionnaires to relatives between the ages of eight and 15. I will get a sample of 50 young people in this way. The adults will be chosen by my Dad. I will ask my Dad to hand them out in the local working men's club one night. I will hope to get 50 adults to complete a questionnaire. 30

This is a copy of the questionnaire I gave out to young people:

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Questionnaire 1

| Questionnaire on the Media and Behaviour | |
|--|----|
| 1. Age - 8 - 10 <input type="checkbox"/> 10 - 12 <input type="checkbox"/> 12 - 15 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 2. Gender - Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 3. List your 5 favourite computer games - 1. _____ 2. _____ 3 _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ | 40 |
| 4. Do you think violence in films and TV is ok? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 5. Do you ever watch or use media which is certified by the BBFC as being over your age? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 6. Explain how you feel when you have watched violence in films and TV programmes: | 45 |
| 7. Do you believe that watching violence:- a) Makes you violent? <input type="checkbox"/> b) Gets rid of aggression? <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 8. Do you think the media causes anti-social behaviour? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 9. In your view, what part did the media play in encouraging the riots in August 2011? | 50 |
| 10. Which of the following do you think the Government should do? Ban violent films and computer games <input type="checkbox"/> Fine people who let their children watch violence <input type="checkbox"/> Let people watch what they want <input type="checkbox"/> | |

I am very pleased with my questionnaire. I know I should do a pilot study but I am confident my questionnaire has no mistakes and will produce some good results to help to prove my hypothesis. This is also the case with my second questionnaire.

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This is a copy of the questionnaire I gave out to adults:

Questionnaire 2

| Questionnaire on the Media and Behaviour | | 60 |
|---|--|----|
| 1. Age - | 18 - 25 <input type="checkbox"/> 26 - 35 <input type="checkbox"/> Over 35 <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 2. Gender - | Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 3. Do you let your children watch TV after the watershed? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 4. Do your children play violent computer games? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 5. Do you ever let your children watch or use media which is certified by the BBFC as being over their age? | | 65 |
| | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 6. Do you watch violent films when your children are around? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 7. Explain how you and your children feel when you / they have watched violence in films and TV programmes. | | 70 |
| 8. Do you think the media causes anti-social behaviour? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| 9. In your view, what part did the media play in encouraging the riots in August 2011? | | |
| 10. Are you in favour of censorship? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| | (Please explain your answer) | |

I think I have been successful in designing a questionnaire suitable for adults but with some similar questions to those in questionnaire 1 so that I can compare the answers of the two sample groups.

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Secondary Sources

Source A

I got this information from the Ofcom website:

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Statement by Ofcom 19 August 2010

Consumers are spending almost half (45%) of their waking hours watching TV, using their mobiles and other communications devices, new Ofcom research revealed today.

Media Literacy Audit – Report on UK Children’s Media Literacy (Published 2008)

Percentage of households with no blocking software for internet access

85

| Age of children in household | 2005 | 2008 |
|------------------------------|------|------|
| 8 – 11 | 55 % | 50 % |
| 12 – 15 | 51 % | 43 % |

Source B

I adapted this from an article in the Daily Mirror (10 August 2011) – written about the London riots in 2011.

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Why did the London riots happen?

I blame the culture of hatred around rap music which glorifies violence, hatred of the authority of police and parents, and raves about trashy materialism and drugs. The important things in life are the latest smart phones, fashionable trainers and jeans and idiot computer games. No wonder the stores selling them were the main looting targets!

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Cutting police numbers by 2000 in London is not wise. Ending Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) that helps young people stay in education and half-hearted measures to bring down the appalling level of youth unemployment are not enough. No wonder there are riots!

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Source C

A published study by Bandura (1961).

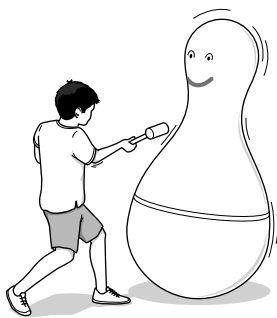
I read about this in an A level Sociology textbook lent to me by my teacher. I also watched copies of the experiment done on the internet. It was long but this is my summary of what I read:-

The Bobo Doll Experiment was carried out by Albert Bandura to try to prove that all human behaviour was learned through imitating others. 105

By using aggressive and non-aggressive actors, Bandura aimed to show that children would copy an adult role model's behaviour.

The Bobo Doll is an inflatable toy about 1.5 metres tall, designed to spring back up when knocked over. 110

Bandura chose children between three and six years old for his experiment because they have less social conditioning; they have been taught less about the rules of society than adults. He divided them into groups of 24 with equal numbers of males and females. The experiment was complicated but basically what I picked up when I read about it was the children watched an adult playing with toys which included a Bobo Doll and a large hammer. In one group the adult was seen hitting and kicking the doll. In the other group the adult was passive and did not hit the doll. 115



The children were then allowed to play with the toys and Bandura claimed the children who had watched the doll being hit copied this and were aggressive. The children in the group who had not watched the violent adult were not aggressive when they played with the toys. 120

Findings

1. Children who see aggressive behaviour copy it and behave aggressively themselves.
2. Boys are more likely than girls to copy violent behaviour. 125
3. A repeat of the experiment in 1963 did not have the same results – the link between watching aggression and acting aggressively was not clear.

My Research Overall

I realised during my research that although some parts were good, I had made some mistakes with my questionnaires and with my sampling. Designing questionnaires was harder than I expected! Perhaps I should re-design my questionnaires and carry out my research again? Also, I did not study all the areas I intended to. 130

My secondary data was mixed. Some proved my hypothesis but some did not.

Investigation 2 – A study by a female university student in London on a degree course in Feminist Studies in 2011.

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‘People have a stereotypical view of women because of the way in which they are represented in the media.’

The media is very powerful and influences people’s attitudes and behaviour. It is mostly men who own and control the media. They select the content and choose to show women in particular ways.

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I think this is important because it affects how men view women and how they are treated in terms of the stereotypes and it also affects how women see themselves and their views of the ‘ideal woman’.

I have decided to investigate this by studying the representation of:-

- 1) Women in soap operas
- 2) Women celebrities

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I have chosen to study soap operas because they are some of the most popular programmes on TV; with repeats, they are on every day of the week. Some of the audience see soap characters as ‘real’ and identify with them or in some cases hate them. Therefore, I think the programmes have an effect on the viewers.

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I think celebrities are presented as having ‘perfect’ bodies. They encourage even very young girls as well as some boys to be obsessed and unhappy with their appearance and diet, and in some cases develop eating disorders.

Both male and female celebrities are represented as having a luxury lifestyle. This leads the audience to value consumer goods and ‘bling’ more than community and looking after others. In my view, this was shown in the riots in 2011 when people were injured and some died as others looted shops.

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Primary Research

I decided I would carry out a questionnaire as this method has many advantages. I can collect data for both parts of my research by asking the questions I need.

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I will use two samples across two generations and then I can see if young girls today are different from their mothers. For this I will need two samples.

I will give 100 questionnaires to a local school with instructions that 20 are given out to pupils in each year group from year seven to year 11. This way I will gain a stratified sample. My second sample will be selected via Mumsnet.co.uk. It will be an easy and quick way to get a representative sample. I will ask for 100 volunteers; mothers of daughters between the ages of 11 and 16, to fill in my questionnaires. (A copy of my questionnaire is shown in the Appendix on page 11.)

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Secondary Research

This is important to gain background information and a wider view. I have included some media materials although I know I need to use these with care as they have disadvantages for sociological research.

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I found data on the most popular programmes on TV from BARB (British Audience Research Board).

Source 1 (a)

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The ten most watched programmes on BBC1 in the last week in July 2011

| | Programme | Viewers in millions |
|----|---|----------------------------|
| 1 | NEW TRICKS (MON 9pm) | 9.3 |
| 2 | EASTENDERS (MON 8pm) | 8.6 |
| 3 | EASTENDERS (TUE 8pm) | 8.1 |
| 4 | EASTENDERS (FRI 8pm) | 7.8 |
| 5 | EASTENDERS (THU 7.30pm) | 7.8 |
| 6 | TEN O'CLOCK NEWS (MON 10pm) | 5.7 |
| 7 | CASUALTY (SAT 8.30pm) | 5.7 |
| 8 | TORCHWOOD: MIRACLE DAY (THU 9pm) | 5.5 |
| 9 | RICHARD HAMMOND'S JOURNEY TO THE BOTTOM (TUE 9pm) | 5.4 |
| 10 | HOLBY CITY (TUE 8pm) | 5.2 |

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Source 1 (b)

The ten most watched programmes on ITV in the last week in July 2011

| | Programme | Viewers in millions |
|----|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 | CORONATION STREET (MON 8.30pm) | 8.7 |
| 2 | CORONATION STREET (MON 7.30pm) | 8.4 |
| 3 | CORONATION STREET (FRI 7.30pm) | 7.7 |
| 4 | CORONATION STREET (THU 8.30pm) | 7.6 |
| 5 | CORONATION STREET (FRI 8.30pm) | 7.3 |
| 6 | EMMERDALE (THU 8pm) | 7.0 |
| 7 | EMMERDALE (MON 7pm) | 6.7 |
| 8 | EMMERDALE (TUE 7pm) | 6.5 |
| 9 | EMMERDALE (WED 7pm) | 6.5 |
| 10 | EMMERDALE (THU 7pm) | 6.4 |

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Note: Eastenders, Coronation Street and Emmerdale are soap operas.

Diana Meehan carried out a content analysis of how women were put into ten stereotypes on TV in America in 1983.

She studied programmes such as Dallas, a 1980s American soap opera, but this could also apply to soaps today. 205

I have carried out a content analysis of UK soap operas and identified a character (either present or past) which fits into each stereotype (I only included five of Meehan's ten).

Source 2

A study by D. Meehan – Ladies of the Evening – Women Characters of Prime Time TV.


| Stereotype | Description of the stereotype | UK soap character | 210 |
|---------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----|
| The good wife | A happy housewife | Laurel Thomas (Emmerdale) | |
| The matriarch | Powerful, high status, older woman | Peggy Mitchell (Eastenders) | |
| The bitch | Manipulative, deceitful cheat | Janine Butcher (Eastenders) | 215 |
| The siren | Sexually dangerous – attracts men | Carla Connor (Coronation Street) | |
| The victim | Passive woman who suffers | Fizz Stape (Coronation Street) | |

This shows me Meehan was right and that women are shown as a narrow range of stereotypes. 220

Source 3

Adapted from the 'Daily Mirror' (July 2011).

KATE'S 'SKINNY' MOTTO T-SHIRT AD IS BANNED BY THE ADVERTISING STANDARDS AUTHORITY (ASA)
Slogan 'promotes anorexia'



The article shows a young girl wearing a t-shirt with Kate Moss's famous slogan and even plugs a toddler version. Slamming the on-line ad for the £11.20 t-shirts, the ASA branded it irresponsible for encouraging kids to think it was 'desirable' to be underweight and so 'develop an unhealthy relationship with food'. They also said it could result in 'physical, mental or moral harm to children'.

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Findings and Conclusion

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My research is not yet complete. I have done a pilot study and may need to make improvements to my questionnaire. Then I will need to put together the results of my questionnaire and put this into tables and charts.

I could also use unstructured interviews to collect qualitative data. I think this would be a useful method for studying people's views about how women are represented in the media.

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When I have completed my research I will be able to make conclusions and see if my hypothesis is proven.

Appendix

Questionnaire 3

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Questionnaire on Soap Operas and Celebrities</p> <p>I am at university and carrying out research to complete my degree. I would appreciate it if you would take part in my survey. Please tick the box of the response which most applies to you or write your answer where there are lines. All information is anonymous and confidential.</p> <p>1. Which age group are you in? 11 – 16 () 35 – 52 ()</p> <p>2. Do you watch soap operas? Yes () No () If yes, name the 3 female characters you:- a) Would most like to be – _____ _____ _____ b) Would least like to be – _____ _____ _____</p> <p>3. Please explain the answers you gave to question 2. _____ _____ _____ _____</p> <p>4. Do you ever use soap characters as role models? (eg. copy their clothes, hair, make up, behaviour etc) Yes () No () Don't know ()</p> <p>5. Most of the media (newspapers, TV channels, magazines etc) are owned and controlled by men. Do you think this is: a) very acceptable b) acceptable c) unacceptable d) very unacceptable?</p> <p>6. Who is your favourite female celebrity? _____ Please explain why _____ _____</p> <p>7. What is your view of the media using airbrushing to make celebrities look perfect? _____ _____</p> <p>8. Have you ever been on a diet to make you look more like people in the media? Yes () No () Don't know ()</p> <p>9. Kate Moss's 'Skinny motto' should be banned. Do you: Agree () Disagree ()?</p> <p>10. Do you believe women on TV are presented as stereotypes? Yes () No () Don't know ()</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Thank you for answering my questionnaire</p> | <p>245</p> <p>250</p> <p>255</p> <p>260</p> <p>265</p> |
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