



DRUG USE IN MOVIES: OUTBREAK OF SOCIAL LEARNING ON VIEWERS

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ABSTRACT

Movies always remain as a compulsory element for the entertainment industry worldwide from decades. The frequent use of illegal drugs in the movies and its impact on the viewers is seems as a core issue for the researcher of the media. This study explore out the behavior of the drug user which is supposed to be provoked after viewing the movies. In this paper the researcher wants to search out the social learning effects of the movies. In this regard, learning appropriate way of using drugs from movies and copying these styles in the real life by the respondents is evaluated. For this purpose a survey of 375 drug user students is conducted from different higher education universities of Punjab Pakistan. By using RDS (Respondent Driven Sampling) technique data is collected. The results of the study are overall suggested that, 80.8 percent (303) respondent thinks that they have learned the appropriate way of consuming drugs from movies. Furthermore, 79.2 percent (297) respondents copied the drug presentation as demonstrated in the movies.

Keywords: Drugs in Movies, Social Learning Effects, Appropriate Way of Using Drugs, Respondent Driven Sampling Technique

INTRODUCTION

Movies are always known as they are lifeblood for the industry of entertainment. Billions of dollars are produced through films annually [1]. Movies influence us, our

lifestyle; the food we eat, fashion we adopt and the method we communicate [2]. Andy Warhol once said "It's the movies that have really been running things in America ever

since they were invented. They show you what to do, how to do it, when to do it, how to feel about it, and how to look how you feel about it.”

The effects of media have been studied so many times and its results show that attitudes and behaviors have been changed of individuals, societies and in whole countries. Numerous inquiries develop in our mind that the media we consuming is having some kind of influence, Is it only one of a few impacts, or maybe it is a simple reflection of our society? [3]. Media is changing everything and it can be characterized as a perspective of future.

By 18 years of age, the average American teenager would have watched 10,000 alcohol commercials on television. Many experts mutually believe that the advertisements in which alcohol is being presented as a convenient drink encourages the teenagers for drinking in underage which creates brand loyal for alcohol in very early age and contributes a rapid increase in alcoholism [4].

Movies are presenting alcohol as a drink since 1945, when Joan Crawford did the scene of drinking Jack Daniels in his movie *Mildred Pierce* [5]. After that, Gordon's gin was exposed by carrying Humphrey Bogart's drink of choice in the

movie *The African Queen* [6], John Belushi was publicized as drunk by having an entire bottle of Jack Daniels in *Animal House* and Tom Cruise was seen with Red Stripe beer in *The Firm* [7]. These few examples show that how the alcohol industry has promoted its product through a non-traditional form of advertising.

Nowadays, teenagers are grown up by watching product placements in movies and they have become so familiar to them. Persuasive powers of product placements make them feel that they are immune to it [6].

Which movie is considered or taken as a teen movie? Movies in which youngsters plays the lead role and characterized to appeal the under 20 considered most appealing to the young audiences, such as, most horror movies and lowbrow comedies [8]. These types of movies not only entertain the audiences but put influence upon them. A research of newsletter beats per minute was conducted to visualize the influence of movies upon teens, it was seen that 56% of teens found a career for future after visualizing and admiring an occupation in a movie, 38% of teens reported as they discovered a new role model after watching a movie and 30% have changed their hairstyle after inspiring from a character in a movie.

Furthermore, teens adopt the new hobby after watching a movie [9]. It has been experienced that movies also influence the attitudes and behaviors like desired childhood play, daydreaming, emotional experiences and lifestyles [6].

Tobacco companies have also encouraged key movie industry leaders and actors to smoke, so that smoking would be portrayed in movies. Internal documents showed that tobacco companies have provided free tobacco products to celebrities and film industry executives on a regular basis to keep them smoking their products [10]. Since the decisions to show smoking in movies were usually made by actors or famous filmmakers as reported by movie industry workers [11], this approach might have successfully promoted the portrayal of smoking in movies.

Because of the close relationship between the tobacco and movie industries, smoking in movies has become very prevalent. Based on several content analysis on the top money-making movies in the United States from 1988-2003, 75-98% of top movies depicted at least one smoking event. Although R-rated movies are more likely to portray smoking and 81-90% of them contain smoking depictions, from 64% to 80% of PG-13 rated movies, and more

than 50% of PG and G-rated movies also depict smoking. Even more shocking is that 56% of G-rated animations released by Disney and other companies from 1937-1997, for which the primary audience is children and teenagers, contained at least one smoking event [12].

Smoking is not only prevalent in the movies, it is also flagrantly featured. In 1985-1995 almost half of the annual local film makers produced top ten movies in which five were those movies which had at least one major character who smokes [13]. Another report showed a similar result: after randomly selecting five movies from the top 20 grossing movies each year from 1990-1996 and analyzing their content, investigators found that 57% of major characters smoked [14]. In fact, leading characters in the annual top 25 money-making movies from 1988-1997 were twice as likely as minor characters to smoke [15]. This prevalence of smoking is unrealistically higher than that of similar individuals in the real world [16].

Obviously, it must be acknowledged that exposure to certain media depictions does not guarantee that young audiences will be influenced or if influenced, it is not mandatory that all the audience and members of the audiences will be influenced similarly.

Same as a lesson of a teacher or instructions of physicians often exhibit erratic responses among different students or patients, the same content is often retorted to in a different manner by different audience subgroups. "The ultimate effects of media exposure depend on multiple factors: how individuals interpret messages, the extent to which the messages are contradicted or supported by other sources, the dynamics of parent-child interaction, peer influence, social and cultural background, and so forth" [17].

Whereas different reports on alcohol portrayals depicts different picture as due to some discrepancies in systems and dimensions. The group of studies upon frequent alcohol portrayals shows a convincing trend in the late 1970's and early 1980's and a visible decline between 1984 and 1986 [18]. In 1986 television programming, references of alcohol were found in over 3/4 of prime-time television drama episodes, and a portrayal of actual usage was about 1/2. Recent studies evaluated that alcohol use is a regular manifestation on TV [19]. A recent research for the ONDCP [20], which examined four episodes of each of the top 20 displays among teens and the top 20 displays among adults, found that 77% of those episodes contain references to alcohol.

Although it was also reported that the number of teenagers who have started smoking has declined since 1997, officials still reported that approximately 2000 or more people who are teenagers start smokes every day [21]. It is predictable that if this pattern remains, 6.4 million of today's teenagers will die early of smoking-related diseases.

Despite teenagers' high degree of exposure to celebrity culture, very little is known about how they take it, specifically in relation to whether celebrities are seen as significant others, thus persuading alcohol consumption [22]. It is observed to add in our knowledge that despite of spreading much speculation about celebrity influence, lack of research/study is available to examine and determine celebrity culture's ability which influences audiences with respects to health-related behavior such as use of alcohol. The impact of celebrity alcohol use on youth's drinking is recurrently suggested by some academics, well known policymakers and the media itself. However, it is questionable that the influential role of celebrity is as simple or deterministic as it is commonly reported by researchers. Suggesting that images of drinking of celebrities are causally allied with young people's alcohol use is taken as the traditional 'hypodermic syringe' method

to media effects. Some Factors such as popularity of the celebrity, his time investment and some extent of level of attachment to a celebrity will affect the degree of influence/impact [23, 24, 25], as well as the interaction of other significant factors, such as family system and peers in young people's alcohol use.

It is sought that most successful marketing strategies by tobacco industry happens on the silver screen, where almost hundred millions of young adults worldwide were influenced by watching the product placement and smoking scenes [26]. Study shows that, more exposure to smoking in movies, more likelihood of trying smoking [27]. Most of the movies having smoking scenes will be later displayed times on TV, including some those movies which are produced for underage [28]. For instance, about 70 % of modern movies made in U.S are comprised of smoking scenes [29].

Problem Statement

Illegal drugs use has been considered as a public health issue, but it is especially a problem for young adults who are still in college/university [30]. Smoking and drugs usage are crucial problems of young people in college/university because they don't really perceive it as a unsafe behavior and do not fully realize the associated risks [31], and

they are going to adopt such hobbies and after that some of them become habitual to the drugs because movies are portraying drugs use in a heroic way and these movies could have a massive impact on the youth. In this study the researcher will investigate the relationship between drug usage in movies and its impact on the drug users in the Punjab Pakistan. This project will explore what is the learning effects on the drug user from the movies are occurring. In perspective of Pakistan, as an Islamic country, this type of study focusing media for drugs use is not investigated yet. So, this study will open new dimensions of the issue about drug usage in movies and its impact on the viewers.

Significance of the Study:

Aim of this study is to check the impact of movies having content related to drugs on the youth who are consumer of such movies. Furthermore as concern of youth, Pakistan has a large number of youth among the globe and according to current statistics, most of them are literate and they are consuming media content and these movies for entertainment purpose. We know that media has a powerful effect on their consumer so these movies would also have influential impact on their consumer. This may provide insight on how the maturation during this age modifies the effect of the

exposure to such content. So, this study will give a guideline to the future researcher to check out the hidden impact of such content on the viewers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Youth is often described as they are heavy users of media and are seriously influenced by images presented in the media, which is making them an attractive market for marketers and advertisers. While acquiring the information from the media, it makes them more motivated in purchasing; it also makes them very skillful at recognizing deliberate persuasive attempts. This eventually makes them more complicated to market and advertise to than past generation [32].

It has been found in the researches and 73% of the general communities have agreed with the hypothesis that advertisement of alcohol has contributed a lot in the promotion of drinking habit in teenagers. Many studies have investigated that alcohol advertisement may motivate adolescents toward drinking alcohol, because it seems to enhance their positive approaches toward drinking alcohol and their likelihood to drink it [33].

Another study found same results. They explore that 93% of the 200 famous films rentals in 1996-97 involved portrayals of using alcohol. When alcohol was shown, no

penalties were connected with usage in 57% of the films. 20% of the movies included portrayals of alcohol contained a "pro-use" or positive statement, while just 9% of movies have an "anti-use" or negative statement [34].

Two studies examined on increase to depiction of usage of illicit drug, in general rather than in front of media. The first was an investigation of the impact of advertising of alcohol [35], this study did not found any association between males' or females' usage of alcohol and particularly their response of how frequently they saw characters of TV having alcohol. The second study was made to analyze the connection between direct exposure to illicit drugs portrayal and youngsters' beliefs and behavior about illicit drugs and substance. Meanwhile compare youth smoking tobacco habits to the on-screen tobacco smoking depictions and off-screen tobacco smoking behavior of their favorite and leading movie characters and it can be assumed that character preference located better exposure [36].

The evidences come from 2 experiments and 11 surveys with youngsters' that show stronger relations between exposure to media and positive outcomes about using substance. It is also found that, a greater association when substance or media depiction exposure is related to substance attitudes or beliefs as

contrasting to actual behaviors and beliefs. Finally, there are also causes to be aware that some of these depictions are probably to put an impact on small segment of young people those who are at menace, primarily, have little to do while experiencing to media portrayals [37].

Another study concluded that youth with higher exposure to tobacco smoking in films are about three times as likely to smoke as those with lower exposure to smoking [38]. In the study, the researchers set out the statement that "... media also have a profound impact on the adolescent self-concept: They shape views of what is 'cool,' what is attractive, and what is grown-up—all things that adolescents are trying to be". The researcher went on to arguing statement that media can also influence other behaviors, including the motivation towards smoking.

Demos of tobacco supplies and products that celebrities are using (or lead actors in case of films) can ease learning, even greater when there are portrayals of positive consequences following the tobacco product usage [39]. A relationship has been exposed between the spread of smoking tobacco and increased identification of brands of cigarettes by junior high school students [40].

In an investigations a question asked that the presence of a cigarette in a film does not

mean only one thing, believed that "relying on character and context, smoking cigarettes can be used to indicate a broad range of explanations, some of these meanings might actually encourage undesirable relations with smoking cigarette". In this research, it is noteworthy to know the framework and perspective in which smoking of cigarette occurs as it is allied to social reality and other aspects that affect the youth's choice to start smoking or not [41].

Some of the oldest placement of product actions included those cigarette companies which were working to target Hollywood in the 1920s, with the effective result of leading characters smoking in films [42]. In late 1970s, however, that placement of cigarette was seen as a high-profile or a well organize develop area within advertising [43].

A research looking at trends in tobacco smoking in a sample of top grossing movies in the USA from 1960 to 1990 resulted that, while smoking tobacco among leading characters had declined, it was still 3 times as common as their compared population in society and tobacco use involving youth had almost two times [44].

Alcohol drinking is frequently seen on TV and film, and several researches have addressed apprehensions surrounding mass media viewing as a hazard factor for drinking

alcohol. Increased TV and music video viewing have been investigated to be independent motivated factors for onset of alcohol drinking in youth [45], in the meanwhile another research of 1648, first year and fourth year secondary school students in Belgium found that overall TV viewing per day and music TV viewing specifically, extensively calculated the amount of alcoholic products youth consumed when going out [46].

Furthermore, in one study, a series of interviews were asked to adolescents about their opinions of smoking tobacco in movie [47]. They responded that smoking tobacco in movies was seen to be both memorable and prevalent. Young teens felt that the presentation of smoking reflected truth, and related characters showing the way a member of family would in a related situation; cigarette smoking was believed to be an essential part of designing a character. The authors felt that respondent reflected the normalization of tobacco smoking in real world; in fact, when questioned to estimate cigarette smoking frequency among their friends and in the mature population, the groups responded to overestimate fully. Another research among Australian secondary school students responded similar beliefs [48]. Youth supposed smoking

tobacco to be a way of relieving tension, identified with the warmth of smoking tobacco and perceive it as a part of their normal environment, in spite of being aware of its risk and unhealthy consequences.

Social learning theory proposes that children develop motivations and positive expectations about tobacco smoking prior to start. These attitudes, beliefs and principles result, in part, from examining others activities the behavior. Several researches have provided confirmation that exposure of using substance by celebrities and placement of product can encourage youth to observe, attain positive beliefs about and later follow the substance use of their media celebrities [49, 50].

A study conducted in California asked 6,252 adolescents about their favorite film stars, exposure to smokers, smoking history, rebelliousness, attitudes and knowledge regarding tobacco smoking, and cigarette promotion and advertising [51]. The finding told that young tobacco smokers are different from non-smokers in their selection of favorite film stars and many of the film stars chosen by adolescent tobacco smokers were either a smoker in actual life or depicted characters that smoked tobacco. Furthermore, adolescent non-smokers who select a film star favored by smokers were approximately

1.5 times more likely to be inclined to smoking. In addition to it, a study found that smoking cigarette by movie stars in films particularly, increased potential smoking cigarette among adolescent females who had never smoked before [52].

A large amount of information about usage of different substances that can motivate young people's attitude and expectations comes from Mass media [53], and youth have always been the main target of mass media's portrayal of smoking, which supports the impression that tobacco smoking is a social custom [54]. The usage of tobacco among American young generation also has a composite impact on the generation's self-perception: opinions of what things are cool, what are gorgeous, and what is considered to be mature — all those things that youth are demanding to be [55].

Films, like other mass media, are usually considered to shape and reflect social beliefs and deeds [53]. The marketing literature explain that showing of product in films is successful if the consumer interprets the product representation according to what kind of person the leading character is and how the product is used by the him/her [56].

Earlier detailed studies found that smoking tobacco acts in films motivates young people to start smoking, which may

have long lasting health-related issues [57], with dose-response result: more tobacco smoking scenes young people are exposed to, more likely they are to start smoking, with strongly exposed young generation about three times as likely to start smoking tobacco as lightly exposed young people [58]. On the other hand, many studies say there is a direct connection between seeing tobacco smoking scenes and instant consequential tobacco smoking behavior [59].

Moreover in another study pro-smoking pictures in the mass media have the power to down-play the chronic health related consequences of tobacco smoking by representing it in a way that youth explain as a normal part of daily life. The finding clearly showed the portrayals of cigarette smoking which rated mainly positive for societal acceptability were at 64% proposition and showing a desperate meaning that tobacco smoking is linked with success, coolness, sociability, reward and popularity [60].

Theoretical Framework

This theory explains how folks capture certain behaviors by witnessing and imitating the behaviors of others. This process is called communal or observational learning. Young people are more likely to start using drugs (smoking and drinking

alcohol) if they observe that other people are using drugs [61]. By the evidences and justification of correspondence, this project is mainly associated with the social learning theory as youth watches drugs related content in movies which would compel them to copy the presentation.

Hypothesis for the Study

H1: It is more likely that drug users learn appropriate way of using drugs from movies.

H2: It is more likely that drug users copy the drug using styles as presented in the movies.

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Population: The youth whose age is of 15-35 year and who are using cigarette and any of the drugs i.e. alcoholic or illicit drugs together are the population of the study. Moreover, respondents must have been watching movies in routine life. The youth of Punjab enrolled in different universities, and these institutes must have a minimum enrolment of 15 thousands would be consider as the population of study. There are 110 universities in Punjab out which 32 are private. For the present research, researcher has selected those universities with more 15000 enrolled students. There are 10 universities fulfill the criteria out of 110.

Sample Size and Technique: By keeping in mind the needs, nature & objectives of the study RDS (Respondent Driven Sampling)

sampling technique is utilized to draw the sample of 375 respondents from universities located in the province of Punjab. There are 375 respondents selected out of 221835 total enrolled populations of all the ten universities of Punjab.

Copy Drug Consumption as Presented in

Movies: The question is asked to the respondents weather they copy the way and pattern of consumption presented in the movies.

Movies as Source of New Trends of Drug

Usage: The question is asked to the respondents do they found new trends or patterns from the movies, presenting drug related content.

Movies Present Appropriate Way of Drug

Consumption: Under this category, it was intended to ask whether the drug related movies provide the right way of using drugs. Through this question it is investigated that movies are the source of appropriate way of drug consumption.

FINDINGS

By keeping in view the motive of the study the findings clarify the situation that drug user of Punjab enrolled in different universities like to watch drug related movies (Table 1).

Table highlights that as many as 94.7 percent (355) respondents like drug related

movies, indicating an effect of movies on the young individuals. Only 5.3 percent (20) respondents do not like drug related movies, indicating that they consider drug usage as a negative thing (**Table 2**).

Table 2 highlights that a clear majority of respondent agreed with the statement that movies are the source of information regarding new trends of drug usage with the slightly fluctuation in the response. There are 86.1 percent (323) respondents agreed with the given statement. Only 3.5 percent (13) respondents are remained neutral for the given statement. Moreover 10.4 percent (39) respondents from the sample disagree and of the view that movies are not the source of new trends of drug consumption.

Table 3 shows that 80.8 percent (303) agree with the statement that movies provide

appropriate ways of using drugs. Furthermore 10.7 percent (40) of them remained neutral to the statement, while 8.5 percent (32) respondents disagree with the statement. This finding also highlights that movies are the motivational factor to describe the appropriate way of using drugs. Hence these findings approve the hypothesis 1.

Table 3 explains that as many as 79.2 percent (297) respondents consume drugs in a way which is portrayed in the movies and 20.8 percent (78) of them do not follow the way of consuming drugs presented in the movies. This finding shows that majority of the population is being motivated by the movies containing drug related content. Hence these finding approves the hypothesis 2.

Table 1: Distribution of respondents by liking drug related movies.

Like drug related movies	Frequency	Percent
Yes	355	94.7
No	20	5.3
Total	375	100.0

Table 2: Movies are the source of setting new trends of drug consumption.

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	39	10.4
Neutral	13	3.5
Agree	323	86.1
Total	375	100

Table 3: Movies present appropriate way of using drugs

Opinion	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	32	8.5
Neutral	40	10.7

Agree	303	80.8
Total	375	100.0

Sample	X	N	Sample p
1	303	375	0.808000
2	32	375	0.085333

Difference = p (1) - p (2)
Estimate for difference: 0.722667
95% CI for difference: (0.673792, 0.771541)
Test for difference = 0 (vs ≠ 0): Z = 28.98 P-Value = 0.000
Fisher's exact test: P-Value = 0.000

Table 4: Respondent's opinion about copy the presentation of drug usage

Copy presentation	Frequency	Percent
Yes	297	79.2
No		
Total	78	20.8
	375	100.0

Sample	X	N	Sample p
1	297	375	0.792000
2	78	375	0.208000

Difference = p (1) - p (2)
Estimate for difference: 0.584
95% CI for difference: (0.525905, 0.642095)
Test for difference = 0 (vs ≠ 0): Z = 19.70 P-Value = 0.000
Fisher's exact test: P-Value = 0.000

CONCLUSION

On the basis of research findings it can be concluded that the students of different universities of Punjab are motivated and dragged towards those movies in which drug portrayals are involved. It is sought that a clear majority of respondents usually watch and learns new trends of drug usage from visualizing the content of movies. Similarly the hypothesis has been approved with the higher percentage and it is assumed from the literature that most of the respondents copied the drug usage styles and pattern from watching the movies. Furthermore, a high majority of the respondents are of the view that movies taught them the appropriate way of using drugs in real life. This study can be justified

in a way that movies have a significant impact on the drug users of Punjab Pakistan and drug users learns the drug usage trends and patterns from the movies.

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