

# The influence of the media on the formation of aggressive and extremist inclinations among young people

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**Abstract.** The article is devoted to the study of the influence of the media on the formation of aggressive and extremist forms of behavior among young people, as well as their role in the social and psychological prevention of these manifestations. To achieve the goal of the study, an experiment was carried out in which 112 youths living in the territory of the Chechen Republic took part. As a result of the study, it was shown that the choice of a source of information can, to a certain extent, influence the formation of individual propensities for aggressive behavior and dispositions of violent extremism in young people. Also, the results obtained allow us to conclude that modern media can play a key role in the implementation of state policy aimed primarily at preventing violent, aggressive, and extremist manifestations in the youth environment.

## 1 Introduction

Today we live in the information age. The rapid development of information technologies has led to the fact that at this stage of the formation of human civilization, they have penetrated almost all spheres of human life. As a result, the availability of various kinds of information has significantly increased for a modern person. At the same time, not the last place in the dissemination of information and, accordingly, in the information impact belongs to various mass media (media), which continue to exert, along with already more advanced social networks, influence on the formation of both positive value-semantic attitudes of the individual, and various destructive, dangerous for the society of trends. In this context, a modern person experiences a constant impact of huge flows of information, which either contribute to his adaptation to the dynamic changes taking place in the world or, on the contrary, cause maladjustment [1–4].

In the modern world, the media play a significant role in building a value-semantic picture of the world of the younger generation. This is primarily due to their manipulative influence on the lifestyle of young people, with the transmission of certain images and ideals. Given that the very process of personal development of young people takes place in difficult socio-economic conditions [5, 6].

The modern media act as a social institution, which, in addition to influencing the very lifestyle of an individual, significantly influences the ways of his integrative behavior. The active consumption of a huge amount of various content has entered the everyday life of a modern person, who is not entirely clear about the

influence he exerts on him through the formation of certain behavioral habits, life, and social attitudes [6].

At the same time, according to N.V. Taganov, the media, by demonstrating negative and aggressive information, can also form a readiness for action in society in general and young people in particular, provoke aggression [7], which can already manifest itself in specific socially dangerous acts of a xenophobic, criminal and even extremist nature. In this regard, K.A. Vorobyova notes that the fascination of young people with scenes of violence, demonstrated through various channels of obtaining information, has a significant impact on the formation of their attitudes and behavior [8].

Therefore, it is no coincidence that many researchers are unanimous in the opinion that the media, especially television and the Internet, through the demonstration of scenes of violence, films, and programs with the use of physical and verbal aggression, affect the unstable psyche and consciousness of young people, generating appropriate behavioral models for which they are guided in their real-life [9–12].

At the same time A.M. Kiseleva, studying the problem of the aggressiveness of the information environment, notes its impact on reducing the level of trust in society, as well as its negative impact on social security and sustainability in the absence of effective management practices on the part of the authorities within the framework of the territorial information policy [13].

Therefore, it is extremely important to work out mechanisms for the prevention and prevention of aggressive manifestations, especially among young people, since an increase in the level of aggression can result in antisocial violent actions and generate tension in

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society. In addition, one should not forget that personal aggressiveness, acquiring extreme forms under the influence of certain concomitant social and environmental factors of a negative nature, can also be realized in actions that pose a particular danger to society and the state, in particular within the framework of extremist and even terrorist activities. [14, 15].

As noted by V.S. Sobkin and A.A. Mkrtchyan, the broadcast of extremist behavior patterns in the media, along with other factors, is the reason for the growing popularity of extremist views in a wide variety of areas of the youth subculture [16].

## 2 Materials and Methods

We carried out an experimental study to study the influence of the media on the formation of aggressive and extremist forms of behavior among young people, as well as to determine the role of the media in their socio-psychological prevention and prevention.

The study involved 112 youths living in the Chechen Republic.

The following techniques were used in the work: a technique for diagnosing dispositions of propensity to violent extremism (D.G. Davydov, K.D. Khlomov) [17]; the scale of fascism (Scale F) [18], the method "Personal aggressiveness and conflict" (E.P. Ilyin, P.A. Kovalev), and a survey was conducted using a questionnaire modified by the authors [19].

For the mathematical processing of the primary data, Microsoft Office Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics 27 were used. Data analysis was carried out using the following statistical criteria: Student's t-test, Mann-Whitney U-test, Kruskal-Wallis H-test, Fisher's one-way ANOVA, and test Friedman.

## 3 Results and Discussion

In order to obtain statistical data (potentially capable of influencing the formation of aggressive impulses and even extremist inclinations), the respondents' answers were analyzed, given by them to a specially compiled series of questionnaire questions aimed at determining such parameters as: the time spent on average per day on the Internet in order to obtain information; attitude towards coverage of offenses through the media; preference for content containing scenes of violence; dependence on the Internet and telephone; preference for virtual communication over real; preferred sources of information (friends, television, the Internet, parents, teachers, radio, books, magazines); preferred types of consumed content (entertainment; films and TV series; youth-related programs; financial sphere, political and economic programs; programs about criminal incidents, disasters; programs about fashion and style; scientific and educational programs); preferred genres of films; trust in news information received through official media sources.

So, to the question: "How much of your time a day do you spend on the Internet to obtain information?", the majority of respondents (48.8 %) answered that they

spend on average 1 to 3 hours a day. 22.4 % of the total number of respondents use for this purpose from 4 to 6 hours of personal time, and 9.1 % of respondents – from 7 to 9 hours. And, finally, 5.2 % of the respondents devote 10 or more hours a day to obtain the information they need on the Internet, 3.9 % of the respondents answered that they do not spend time obtaining information on the Internet. The remaining 10.6 % refused to answer this question at all.

When asked about interest in videos with scenes of violence spread on the Internet, 94.7 % of the respondents answered that they were not interested in such content and only 5.3 % preferred videos with such content.

The majority of respondents (63.2 %), when asked about their readiness to live without the Internet and communication means, answered that they do not represent a normal life for themselves in case of abandoning these achievements of civilization. At the same time, 36.8 % of the respondents do not see this as any threat to the organization of a way of life acceptable to them.

When asked how often they communicate with their friends and acquaintances via the Internet, 26.4 % of the respondents answered that they communicate often, 61.8 % of the respondents chose the option "sometimes" and 11.8 % noted that they do not communicate on the Internet with their close friends.

Upon receipt of information from the media 36.8 % of the total number of respondents surveyed use only official sources, 1.4 % – only unofficial sources and 61.8 % of respondents use both types of sources equally.

When asked to mark the content topic most preferable for them, 42.1 % of respondents answered that they like to watch entertainment programs, and 50.0 % of respondents preferred films and TV series. Programs about criminal incidents and disasters are most often watched by 1.3 % of respondents. 1.3 % of respondents also like to watch programs about fashion and style. Scientific and educational content is preferred by 5.3 % of the total number of respondents.

Also, note that 28.9 % of respondents consider the information obtained through the media often useful for themselves. For 60.5 % of respondents, information from these sources is rarely useful. Finally, according to 10.6 % of the respondents, information from the media is never useful for them.

At the same time, 10.5 % of the surveyed respondents believe that information from the media is never true. While the majority, namely 77.6 % of the respondents, noted that information coming from the media is rarely true. 10.5 % of the respondents consider the information that is always broadcast by the media to be practically reliable. And only 1.4 % of the respondents from the entire sample always trust this source of information.

At the same time, an analysis of the information sources most preferred by the respondents shows that the respondents most of all trust the information emanating from their parents (see Table 1).

**Table 1.** Results of ranking by respondents of information sources in order of importance.

Sources of information	Middle rank
Parents	3.09
Friends	3.76
Educators	3.88
Internet	4.03
The television	4.89
Radio	5.31
Newspapers	5.51
Magazines	5.53

Note:  $\chi^2 = 95.96$ ;  $p < 0.00000$

So, according to the results of ranking information sources according to the degree of their preference by the surveyed sample of young people, the most authoritative and significant for them is the information received from their parents. Further, friends and teachers are noted as the most important sources of information, respectively. At the same time, less significant sources of information for the young people surveyed are such sources of information as magazines, newspapers, and radio ( $\chi^2 = 95.96$   $p < 0.00000$ ).

Table 2 presents the results of ranking the genres of films in the order of their preference by the respondents.

**Table 2.** The results of ranking movie genres in order of importance for respondents.

Movie genres	Average (rank)
Comedy	3.99
Adventures	4.00
Cartoons	4.05
Fantasy	4.36
Detectives	4.59
Militants	4.97
Melodrama	4.98
Horror	5.05

Note:  $\chi^2 = 26.53$ ;  $p < 0.00040$

So, the most preferable for the respondents were films of the comedy genre (see Table 2).

**Table 4.** Results of a comparative analysis of indicators of the severity of the parameters of aggression and violent extremism among young people based on the preference for television programs.

Variables	Entertainment	Movies and TV series	Crime and disaster	Fashion & Style	Scientific and educational	F	p
Irascibility	5.44	5.32	7.00	7.00	4.50	0.68	0.61
Vindictiveness	4.88	4.00	9.00	4.00	5.25	3.10	0.02
Intolerance of other people's opinions	5.00	4.18	5.00	4.00	5.75	1.20	0.32
Suspicion	4.81	4.05	9.00	3.00	6.25	2.64	0.04
Resentment	4.47	4.89	6.00	5.00	4.25	0.56	0.69
A tendency to be unyielding	4.59	3.05	6.00	2.00	4.75	2.87	0.03
Tendency to compromise	6.19	7.32	9.00	3.00	5.00	3.77	0.01
Tendency to be offensive, attacking style of behavior and communication	5.72	3.74	7.00	2.00	4.50	3.63	0.01
The cult of strength	9.91	7.95	4.00	17.00	8.25	2.72	0.04
Permissibility of aggression	14.88	12.55	6.00	15.00	12.00	1.38	0.25
Intolerance	5.16	3.37	1.00	14.00	4.50	3.30	0.02
Conventional	16.31	17.08	6.00	28.00	13.25	1.74	0.15
Social pessimism	17.66	17.58	14.00	25.00	16.75	0.42	0.80
Mysticism	15.28	13.74	12.00	15.00	17.75	0.76	0.55

The least of all the respondents are interested in watching horror films ( $\chi^2 = 26.53$ ;  $p < 0.00040$ ).

Among the TV programs for the respondents, the most attractive programs with a religious orientation and programs about health, and programs about politics and technology are less significant ( $\chi^2 = 65.46$ ;  $p = 0.00000$ ).

**Table 3.** Representation of TV program topics in order of importance for the young people surveyed.

TV program topics	Average (rank)
Religion	3.95
Health	4.43
The science	5.26
Entertainment	5.29
Cinema	5.41
Sport	5.45
Fashion	6.10
Contemporary music	6.20
Technics	6.22
Politics	6.69

Note:  $\chi^2 = 65.46$ ;  $p = 0.00000$

Further, using a one-way analysis of variance, the parameters of aggressive reactions, violent extremism, and the authoritarian potential of the individual were analyzed depending on the TV programs that were preferred by the respondents (the criterion for group selection for the comparative analysis, in this case, was the criterion of TV programs, consisting of 5 TV programs – entertainment, movies, and TV shows, crime, and disasters, fashion, and style, scientific and educational programs). As a result of the analysis, significant differences were revealed in certain forms of aggressive reactions and dispositions of violent extremism, while no statistically significant differences were found in the indicators of the authoritarian potential of the individual (scale F) (therefore, the scales related to the authoritarian potential of the individual are not presented in Table 4).

Destructiveness and cynicism	15.84	14.76	10,00	20,00	14.75	0.51	0.73
Protest activity	15.50	13.55	11.00	14.00	16.25	0.61	0.66
Normative nihilism	4.88	1.55	7.00	4,00	5.00	4.85	0.00
Anti-Intracception	10.28	10.34	5.00	11.00	9.00	0.47	0.76
Conformism	15.09	12.55	10,00	18.00	12.00	1.19	0.32

According to the results of the analysis of variance in the indicators of personality aggression among the young people surveyed, statistically, significant differences in terms of preferred television and Internet programs are found in such personality characteristics as suspiciousness, vindictiveness, a tendency to be offensive, attacking style of behavior and communication, a tendency to obstinacy, as well as a tendency to compromise.

In particular, the group of interviewees who stated their preference for criminal chronicles and programs about disasters show higher values of the indicators of the propensity to be uncompromising, the propensity to be offensive, the attacking style of behavior and communication, as well as the propensity to compromise. At the same time, in the disposition of violent extremism, respondents who prefer fashion and style have the highest values on the “cult of power” scale, who also have high values for the disposition of intolerance. At the same time, fans of programs about crime and disasters have the highest indicators in terms of the disposition of normative nihilism.

In addition, according to the results of comparing the mean values in two groups of respondents who consider it acceptable (n = 28) and unacceptable (n = 48) to live normally without a telephone and the Internet, statistically significant differences were revealed in aggressive behavior manifested in the form of irascibility. So, those who answered this question in the affirmative, claiming that they cannot imagine a normal life without a telephone and the Internet, show higher values of irascibility (the average value on the irascibility scale is 5.69 versus 4.82 at p = 0.04).

Also, as a result of comparing the mean values of the study variables under consideration based on the presence of preferences or lack of interest in content containing violent materials disseminated on the Internet and social networks, differences were revealed in certain indicators of aggression and the authoritarian potential of the individual, while the dispositions of violent extremism, no significant differences were noted taking into account this feature.

Thus, significant differences dumped in the groups of respondents, divided according to the basis of interest in information content with violence, indicate that young people who consume such content (in particular videos with violence) differ from their peers with opposite interests by being more suspicious, inclined to intransigence, tendency to be offensive, attacking style of behavior and communication. At the same time, despite the susceptibility to these forms of aggressive behavior, young people who are interested in the topic of violence on the Internet and social networks demonstrate lower indicators of authoritarian aggression compared to their peers who have no interest in violence.

**Table 5.** Comparison of mean values in the parameters of aggression, violent extremism, and authoritarian potential based on preferences for violent videos distributed on the Internet and social networks.

Variables	Lack of interest in violence	Interest in violence	t-value	p
Irascibility	5.38	5.25	0.14	0.89
Vindictiveness	4.44	5.50	-1.13	0.26
Intolerance of other people's opinions	4.57	5.50	-0.94	0.35
Suspicion	4.40	7.00	-2.41	0.02
Resentment	4.75	3.75	1.23	0.22
A tendency to be unyielding	3.68	6.25	-2.28	0.03
Tendency to compromise	6.71	6.25	0.44	0.66
Tendency to be offensive, attacking style of behavior and communication	4.49	7.25	-2.19	0.03
Conventionalism	13.99	13.00	0.47	0.64
Authoritarian servility	28.60	22.75	1.35	0.18
Authoritarian aggression	34.13	23.50	2.01	0.05
Anti-intracception	14.01	12.00	0.93	0.36
Superstition and stereotypism	21.56	17.50	1.20	0.23
Power thinking and the cult of power	31.25	23.00	1.60	0.11
Destructiveness and cynicism	7.38	5.50	1.38	0.17
Projectivity	18.29	13.75	1.44	0.16
Sexual moralizing	12.11	8.25	1.92	0.06

Considering the above, to identify the relationships between the research variables and individual criteria (features) of group selection and observation, we also analyzed the correlations between them, which made it possible to identify the conjugation of indicators of some forms of personal aggressiveness, authoritarian potential, and dispositions of violent extremism with the level of preference for certain sources. obtaining information from respondents.

Thus, the choice of one's friends as a more significant source of information has a weak but significant connection with suspicion (r = 0.23, p <0.05). A similar, but with the opposite pole, connection with suspicion also has a choice in this quality of television (r = -0.29, p<0.05). Sensitivity negatively correlates with the choice of radio (r = -0.23, p <0.05) and newspapers (r = -0.25, p<0.05) as sources of information.

The tendency towards compliance is directly proportional to the choice of parents as a reliable source

of information ( $r=0.26$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and is inversely proportional to the respondents' preferences for television ( $r=-0.45$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), radio ( $r=-0.44$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), magazines ( $r=-0.42$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and newspapers ( $r=-0.40$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). In turn, the propensity for an offensive, attacking style of behavior and communication among young people also has a negative relationship with the choice of television ( $r=-0.35$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), radio ( $r=-0.32$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), magazines ( $r=-0.33$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and newspapers ( $r=-0.35$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). At the same time, the disposition of violent extremism manifested in the form of destructiveness and cynicism has a positive relationship among young people with the choice of magazines ( $r=0.24$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and newspapers ( $r=0.26$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

The results of the correlation analysis of indicators of aggressiveness and violent extremism with the preferred topics of video content were also very interesting. For example, vindictiveness is positively associated with religious themes ( $r = 0.29$ ,  $p <0.05$ ) and negatively correlates with programs about technology ( $r = -0.28$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), science ( $r = -0.30$ ,  $p <0.05$ ) and sports ( $r = -0.25$ ,  $p <0.05$ ). Suspiciousness ( $r = 0.28$ ,  $p <0.05$ ) and a tendency to obstinacy ( $r = 0.29$ ,  $p <0.05$ ) also positively correlate with religious themes. The preference for political programs negatively correlates with intolerance of other people's opinions ( $r = -0.23$ ,  $P<0.05$ ). Interest in programs about fashion is positively associated with a tendency to compromise ( $r = 0.24$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). At the same time, the tendency to be offensive.

The indicator of the cult of force, which is part of the disposition of violent extremism, is also negatively associated with topics about fashion ( $r = -0.28$ ,  $p <0.05$ ), politics ( $r = -0.31$ ,  $p <0.05$ ) and technology ( $r = -0.34$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The tolerance of aggression is also at the opposite pole with the preference for modern music ( $r = -0.25$ ,  $p <0.05$ ), cinema ( $r = -0.23$ ,  $p <0.05$ ), entertainment programs ( $r = -0.25$ ,  $p <0.05$ ) programs on politics ( $r = -0.31$ ,  $p <0.05$ ) and technology ( $r = -0.27$ ,  $p <0.05$ ). Finally, intolerance is negatively associated with a preference for fashion programs ( $r = -0.24$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

At the same time, the analysis of the links between the aggressiveness and extremist orientation of the individual, on the one hand, and the choice of the preferred film genre by the respondents, on the other, also showed the presence of certain correlations between these characteristics. Let us clarify that young people were offered the following genres to choose from comedy, action, science fiction, adventure, melodrama, horror, detective stories, and animated films. As a result, statistically significant correlations were found only with the detective genre and animation.

Thus, the preference of young people for the cartoon genre directly correlates with the tendency to obstinacy ( $r = 0.29$ ,  $p <0.05$ ) and the propensity to be offensive, attacking the style of behavior and communication ( $r = 0.28$ ,  $p <0.05$ ). The preference for the detective genre is positively correlated with the inclination to compromise ( $r = 0.26$ ,  $p <0.05$ ), as well as with destructiveness and cynicism ( $r = 0.25$ ,  $p <0.05$ ).

## 4 Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, in general, it can be concluded that the choice of a particular source of information to a certain extent affects certain indicators of aggressiveness and violent extremism. Thus, young people who trust more to their friends more demonstrate an increase in the level of suspicion, while trust in television among young people coincides with a decrease in suspicion and a propensity for offensiveness and an attacking style of behavior against the background of an increase in the individual's propensity for compliance and compromise.

Young people who trust their parents are more prone to intransigence, while trust in such sources of information as radio can be accompanied not only by an increase in the individual's propensity for compliance and compromise but with a decrease in vindictiveness and a tendency to be offensive, and attacking style of behavior. At the same time, young people who prefer magazines and newspapers can show, on the one hand, a tendency towards compliance and frequent rejection of offensive-attacking behavior, on the other hand, a susceptibility to the formation of destructiveness and cynicism.

In addition, the results of the study also indicate that broadcasts of various topics, excluding religion, either do not have any influence on the formation of extremist and aggressive forms of behavior or, on the contrary, lead to their decrease, while interest in religious content may be accompanied by insignificant degree with the process of formation in young people of revenge, suspicion and a tendency to uncompromising behavior.

## Acknowledgments

The reported study was funded by Russian Foundation for Basic Research (RFBR), project number 20-013-00239.

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