Research Article

The Role of Media in Crime Prevention

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Abstract

Today, the media play a very wide and influential role in the world system. In addition to many of its basic functions, the media play a very vital role in crime prevention, and it can be safely said that today, no tool will be as effective as the media in this field. Crime prevention is considered to be the focus of criminal policy. In order to achieve the prevention of crime, various tools and facilities are used in important types of legislative, judicial and cooperative criminal policy. One of the ways to reach the issue of prevention is the influence of different mass media, which today has found an important role in the development of global communication. The role of the media and the impact it has on the individual and social life of the society is not hidden from anyone. By adopting effective legislative, judicial and cooperative policies, media can be used as a tool that has a direct and fundamental impact on crime prevention.

The effective role of the media in education and the impact they have on the minds of their audience regarding the problem of crime and dealing with it is also of interest because due to the characteristics of this phenomenon; It can easily have negative or positive effects in the field of delinquency. At the same time, the media can be a factor in the spread of crime by inciting and encouraging people who are ready to commit crimes or by teaching the methods of committing crimes; They can be considered an effective factor in crime prevention by trying to make crime look ugly and also by educating citizens in the field of dealing with crime.

Keywords: Media; crime; prevention; crime prevention; role of media

Research Methodology

The methodological policy and method of conducting research is descriptive-analytical according to the nature of the subject, goals and method of gathering information and basically the organization and structure of the research. In the descriptive-analytical method, along with the real and systematic description of the characteristics of a subject and the expression of the available information about it, efforts are made to improve the current conditions and to provide suggested solutions and models in the discussed field. Therefore, the explanation and analysis of the subject is done in order to discover and learn the truth.

It is a method of collecting library information.

1.	It is a tool for collecting information through the review of works available in libraries and scientific-research centers, which will accept the necessary verification. Also, in order to enrich the topics, sometimes valid articles are studied by referring to some databases and searching the internet.

2. The data analysis method will be done qualitatively. The method of reasoning is also in the form of evidence.

Introduction

Today is known as the age of communication, and the media play a big role in the culturalization and norm-making of societies by transmitting new information and exchanging public thoughts and opinions. In the new age, the media are among the inseparable factors of everyday life [1]. So that if the media works correctly in line with the society's culture, they can promote human values and prevent many crimes from happening; On the contrary, if the content of the media is regulated without expertise and positive targeting, it will have many negative effects on the society and lead to the occurrence of crimes and social deviations [2]. Crime prevention and control is considered as one of the main components of creating security, and security in a negative sense is somehow related to the lack of fear and threat of crime and is the result of mass media production, Interaction and participation of civil institutions. Every individual and social institution must play its role in producing security, and on the other hand, establishing security by reducing and controlling crime, which is a social phenomenon, cannot be achieved except with civil participation and the participation of all social institutions, the most effective of which are mass media. Is. Therefore, it can be claimed that the mass media play a very important role in establishing collective opinions and ensuring public security and preventing crime.

With this view, we can recognize the vital role of mass media in crime prevention. Media is a very effective tool in fighting crime. Institutionalizing the mass media as the basic and fundamental pillar of the judicial and police systems by using the training of those working in the media, considering the role of the media in creating security, peace and success, plays a very important role in crime prevention [3]. Based on this, the media has a security function. They have an effective role in creating security, but when they assume an inverted role in a negative function, they make the information space of society polluted, ambiguous and dark [4].

Theoretical and Philosophical Foundations of Media and Crime

In a period, it was believed that social actions are more influenced by external factors than individual choices. In this period, emerging mass media became the focus of theories that explained the harmful effects of these external factors. From the point of view of some thinkers of the early 20th century, the new mass media were alien invaders who directly instilled their messages, thoughts and concepts into the minds of their audiences. If some other researchers seriously opposed the efforts that were trying to explain the cause and effect relationship between crime and the media; However, there were some thoughts related to potentially harmful media that can have negative and anti-social messages [5].

In general, in the field of media and crime, there are two general points of view, the statement of which shows how much there is disagreement in this field. The followers of one point of view believe that the media is not only the cause of crime in society, but also plays an undeniable role in complicating crimes and organizing them. Another point of view suggests that the media have no effect on the formation of crime or have very limited effects. The relative validity of these two opposing viewpoints, i.e. the centrality of the media on the one hand and their insignificance on the other hand, has somehow caused confusion in the analysis of the experts in this field, and this is the same point that has already been pointed out that should not be included in the analysis. The relationship between crime and media had an absolute and one-sided view. Rather, it should be accepted that the analysis of this relationship is somewhere between these two distances (the two recently proposed theories). In fact, according to the second point of view, the media alone cannot turn a law-abiding person into a criminal, and it is not appropriate to blame the cause of the crime on the media alone. It may be because of this that the chosen strategies based on this theory have not had much effect in controlling social deviations, in other words, radio, television, movies, press and other means of information are not considered as a means of creating crime. Rather, they are tools that can be exploited as desired [6].

Agenda-setting Theory

Donald Shaw and Maxwell McCombs, who are the authors of the opinion of highlighting, in the research "Press highlighting function" have explained the engineering of public opinion by the media and have shown that the media advance their own line in the form of news reports. In other words, this theory is related to the media and the misuse of public opinion by those in power. The more the media gives importance to events, the more the audience values it. The main concept of this theory is that the media does not tell people what to think but tells them what to think about; (Surin, 2008: 334) [7].

Theory of Media Inseparability from Culture

Culture and communication in relationships are symbiotic and inseparable in practice. According to Kress, every cultural behavior and action is a communication event, and every communication action is considered a cultural event [8]. Carlson and colleagues believe that the media are the gates through which culture is transmitted to people, although the content of the media is considered a cultural element [9]. According to Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler, the field of cultural studies speaks of the kind of cultural understanding that confirms the important role of the media in the formation of culture [10]. The media, the place and space of cultural context, reflection and deep thinking about the importance of meaning and thinking according to the cultural context and social construction are considered to strengthen and restore a coherent pattern of meaning and establish a value center. Therefore, communication and culture are closely related; Communication is a product of culture and culture determines the structure, meaning and context of communication. On the other hand, communication is the life path of culture in such a way that no culture can survive without communication; It can even be said that without communication, there will be no culture [11].

Promoting the Culture of Public Participation in Crime Prevention Through the Media

Participatory criminal policy emphasizes on this strategy that the main institutions and actors related to the criminal phenomenon should take action to prevent and control crime through promoting interaction and participation with the general public and crime audiences. As an example of the community-oriented approach of the police, it is a kind of strategy of the police organization that is based on two main foundations. The first basis of this strategy is the establishment of communication between the police organization and various organs of society in order to provide better service to the people. The second basis, the community-oriented strategy of the police, is to consider the category of social order and security as general and to transform the issue of security into a general category with social and cultural contexts. In this regard, the media, by covering news and reporting security and criminal events in a suitable manner and providing suitable educational programs regarding the necessity of social security in society and even teaching how to protect one's property, status and honor, provide a favorable ground for this cooperation. and create public participation [12].

Media and Crime Prevention

The point of view of media dictatorship which talks about the high power of the media in inducing and influencing the audience, gives the audience a passive and impressionable role towards the messages of the mass media. However, the media's two criminalizing and decriminalizing effects are considered as a complementary and facilitating tool of media criminal policy. Contradictory research related to the criminalization of the media is more related to the inherent problems of this field because it is very difficult and non-generalizable to conduct quantitative research outside of laboratory conditions and the effects on the quality aspects of life. As a result, most of the evidence is descriptive rather than quantitative; Secondly, there are many methods of influencing the media on crimes; Thirdly, due to the smallness of media criminalization at the society level and its connection with other factors, it is not possible to measure the role of the media independently; Fourthly, it is not clear to identify the people who have become criminals under the influence of the media due to the unconscious effects of the media. On the other hand, it is possible that some media have been influenced in the field of committing crimes [13].

By emphasizing the special role of "journalism" in influencing the audience, Habermas has an effect on the passive audience, which he refers to as the "merely receptive mass" [14]. McQuail believes that despite the difficulties and inconclusiveness of the issue of media influence, it has become clear that this issue is very attractive and unavoidable for social scientists, the media itself, and the general public. If we did not fundamentally believe that the media have important long-term consequences, we would never have devoted so much time to studying them [14]. Sometimes the media judge and condemn an action in advance without asking themselves what results and consequences such "publicizing the accusation" can have. And on the contrary, sometimes they acquit an accused person before issuing a court [15].

One of the unfortunate effects of these media is that when the media announces that someone is the worst or the best or the most dangerous criminal, it causes this criminal to comfort himself in prison with these headlines and even feel proud of others. For example, in a personal observation with one of the prisoners of death row and sentenced to long-term prison in Tehran's Qasr prison, a person who had committed several murders would collect pieces of the newspapers of Iran and Hamshahri and proudly show them to other prisoners. And he felt proud, the other prisoners also had a special respect for him, and the number of times that his murder was discussed in the newspapers and on the radio, he considered himself more important and valuable than others! [13].

The media can teach people the methods of fighting crime and preventing it. By portraying the process of a person becoming a criminal, they teach the audience how to prevent themselves from becoming a criminal by adopting proper organizational, educational, economic and social measures. and become people around them. Of course, it is said that the reflection of crime news in the media leads to bad education, but since crime is an unusual thing and in most cases, it involves victims and hurts feelings, in case no media covers it. Again, through unofficial means and not as it happened, but based on the opinions and tastes of the narrators, it is brought up and reaches the people's ears. The truth raises the issue and in any case they receive the necessary news even from unreliable sources, it should be noted that keeping the news of incidents and events silent and the media not paying attention to them also causes people to feel worried and scared, because they On the one hand, they witness the incidents and insecurities in their city or place of residence, on the other hand, they are not given a proper analysis and interpretation of the events [16] and therefore they may turn to any means to find an answer. and get incorrect interpretations and cause more insecurity; Therefore, it is better for people to hear the truth from more reliable and comprehensive sources such as the media.

Conclusion

The media has the ability to sensitize the public to the issue of crime prevention at the local and national levels. Therefore, introducing and identifying the benefits and results of implementing successful plans and clarifying how to reduce crimes or resolve disputes is one of the actions that should be done through the media. Based on this, the media can play an essential role in this field by increasing the role of education and information. The media may be a tool to commit a crime; The media presentation of the crime, if it is in the form of news or a popular and popular show, will have a deep effect on the listeners and viewers. In general, the power of mass media in influencing and creating change in society has two general and fundamental approaches. Media can increase crime in society and at the same time it can be a tool to prevent crime. Therefore, in a way, it can be said that the media are subordinate to their policy makers to a great extent, and the positive or negative result of the media originates from them.

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