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Influence of Media (News and Crime Shows) on Public Knowledge of Crime Scene Protocol

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Abstract: ***This research paper explores the influence of media, news, television, and crime shows on public knowledge and understanding of crime scene protocols. Media representations of forensic investigations often shape the perceptions of people, creating opinions and expectations about how crime scenes are investigated and handled. However, these portrayals are frequently dramatized and may not always reflect real forensic practices. Through a survey-based approach, this study examines how exposure to crime-related media affects the awareness and understanding of individuals regarding crime scene procedures. The study includes participants from both academic and professional backgrounds, including forensic science students, teaching professionals, police personnel, and advocates. By analyzing the perceptions and responses of participants, the research highlights the role of media in influencing public understanding of forensic science and crime scene investigation protocols. This study further emphasizes the growing impact of crime-based media on society and encourages a deeper understanding of the difference between fictional representation and actual forensic practices.***

Keywords: Influence of media, crime scene protocol, forensic science, public perception, crime shows, media awareness.

I. INTRODUCTION

The media has become one of the most powerful sources through which people gain knowledge and form opinions about crime and forensic investigations. News channels, television programs, web series, documentaries, and crime shows frequently portray crime scene investigations in a dramatic and highly engaging manner, attracting the attention of a wide audience. These portrayals often influence the way the public understands crime scene protocols, forensic procedures, and the role of investigators. While such media content increases interest in forensic science, it may also create misconceptions due to exaggerated or inaccurate representations of real investigative practices.

The portrayal of media, news, television, and crime shows influences public perceptions regarding crime scene protocols. On occasion, the media contributes to the dissemination of misinformation. Crime shows are often presented in a vivid manner, potentially blurring distinctions between reality and fiction. Such representations are frequently partial, dramatized, or distorted, rather than technically precise. Most individuals do not directly observe crime scenes, and their understanding of crime scene protocols is largely shaped by media and crime shows. The increasing prevalence of crime shows and other forensic-oriented programs has focused attention on the phenomenon known as the CSI effect.

Crime scene protocol is an essential part of forensic investigations, involving the proper identification, collection, preservation, and documentation of evidence. In reality, forensic investigations require scientific accuracy, patience, and strict adherence to legal and procedural standards. However, crime shows and media reports often simplify or dramatize these procedures to enhance entertainment value. As a result, viewers may develop unrealistic expectations regarding the speed, accuracy, and methods used in forensic investigations. This growing influence of media on public perception is commonly associated with the “CSI Effect,” where fictional forensic portrayals shape public beliefs about criminal investigations and courtroom evidence.

The increasing popularity of crime-based media has created curiosity and awareness among students, professionals, and the general public regarding forensic science and crime scene investigation. At the same time, it raises important questions about whether media exposure genuinely improves public knowledge or simply promotes fictional understanding of forensic procedures. Different groups of people may interpret and understand crime scene protocols differently depending on their educational background, professional experience, and exposure to media content.

This study aims to examine the influence of media, news, and crime shows on public knowledge of crime scene protocols. By comparing the perceptions and awareness levels among forensic science students and professionals, such as teaching professionals, police personnel, and advocates, the research seeks to understand how media exposure contributes to the understanding of forensic practices. This study further highlights the importance of accurate forensic representation in the media and its role in shaping public awareness and perception toward crime scene investigations.

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II. METHODOLOGY

A. Research Design

The research design to be selected was a quantitative survey-based approach to examine the influence of media (news and crime shows) on public knowledge of crime scene protocol. The survey method helps in standardized responses from the diverse groups of participants and enables statistical analysis of perceptions and knowledge levels.

B. Participants

The total number of participants was 93, divided into two groups: 62 forensic science students and 31 professionals (teaching professionals, advocates, and police personnel). The participants were selected using convenience sampling through academic networks and professional contacts. The sampling strategy was intended to capture a range of knowledge levels and exposure to media content related to forensic science. It helped in comparing the results from both groups.

C. Data Collection

A structured questionnaire was formed to use Google Forms to collect data efficiently and securely.

1) The questionnaire included closed-ended questions based on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, designed to assess participants' awareness and perceptions about the crime scene protocols influenced by media representations.
2) The questions focused on knowledge of evidence collection, preservation, the realism of crime shows, and media portrayal accuracy.
3) The online survey was disseminated via email and social media platforms targeting the identified groups.
4) Participants were informed about the purpose of the research.

The responses were collected over a defined period and gathered for analysis.

D. Data Analysis

An independent samples t-test, specifically Welch's t-test, was applied to compare the mean score between students and professionals. Welch's test was used due to unequal group sizes and to account for possible variance heterogeneity between groups. Effect size was calculated using Cohen's d to assess the magnitude of differences observed.

E. Ethical considerations

1) Participation was completely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to data collection.
2) Confidentiality was strictly maintained by collecting no identifying information and securely storing data.
3) Participants were assured that the data would be solely used for academic and research purposes.

F. Limitations

1) The sample was limited to forensic students and professionals, which may not fully represent the broader public's knowledge or media influence.
2) Self-reported data might involve response biases such as social desirability or varying interpretations of questions.

G. Appendix

The following instructions and questions were administered to the participants.

1) INSTRUCTIONS: -This questionnaire has 30 statements. Read each statement carefully and respond honestly, as your responses will be kept confidential. Each statement has five alternative options, and you need to give your responses by choosing any of the options given. There is no right or wrong answer in this questionnaire. There is no time limit for filling out the questionnaire.

Precautions:1. The individual is encouraged to be honest & spontaneous.
2. The individual must not skip or omit any questions.

The following scale was used for scoring: -

1. Strongly disagree
2. Disagree
3. Neutral

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4. Agree
5. Strongly agree

2) QUESTIONS: -

- Public expectations of professionals in my field are influenced by the media.
- Accurate media portrayals may improve justice results.
- Media depictions raise the pressure to produce speedy and fair results.
- The media has influenced decision-making in my professional or academic environment.
- Crime-related media influences the credibility attributed to forensic evidence or testimony.
- Media portrayals alter the public's cooperation with investigators.
- Crime-related media raises a general awareness about crime-scene protocols.
- Media influence may have a negative impact on fairness in the legal system.
- Resource limitations faced by the investigators are ignored by the media.
- The media portrays crime scene investigations as faster than they actually are.
- Crime shows rarely include the regular or administrative aspects of investigations.
- Social media discussions put pressure on investigators to share information prematurely.
- Understanding media influence reduces its impact on legal decisions.
- Crime-related media supports the idea that technology will solve most problems.
- Formal education helps eliminate stereotypes produced by crime-related media.
- There should be guidelines on how crime procedures are depicted in the media.
- The media plays a role in differentiating between actual and fictional forensic practices.
- The media provides sufficient information to grasp the importance of crime-scene preservation.
- Media influences how advocates present forensic evidence in their arguments.
- Public perceptions can be influenced by media coverage.
- Media representations encourage improved documentation of evidence.
- Before broadcasting the crime cases, the media should consult forensic experts.
- The media tends to depict crime scenes as more structured than they typically are in reality.
- Proper use of protective gear is infrequently shown in the media.
- Viral crime-related content shapes public views regarding investigations.
- Curiosity created by the media often leads to crowding at the crime scenes.
- Media (Crime shows) frequently show the use of sophisticated technologies.
- Ethical issues are frequently overlooked in crime news reporting.
- Thoughtful reporting can enhance public confidence in justice systems.
- People tend to trust the explanations provided by the media.

III. SCORING

TABLE I
SCORING FOR THE OBTAINED RESPONSES

Sl.no	Aspect	Details and Evaluation	Comments
1	Sample size and composition	Total participants: 93 62 students and 31 professionals The sample size allows the comparison between two groups	The sample size is adequate for initial analysis, though larger sample size could improve the statistical power.
2	Descriptive statistics (means and differences)	Students mean (M) = 2.45 Professionals mean (M) = 3.48 Mean difference = 1.03 The higher mean among the professionals indicates greater awareness.	The substantial difference in the mean suggests a notable disparity in perceptions and knowledge of the field.
3	Statistical Significance (p-value)	P < 0.001 indicates that the difference is statistically significant.	The low p-value confirms that the observed that the observed differences are unlikely due to

			chance, strengthening the validity of the findings.
4	Effect size (Cohens d)	d = 1.4 indicates a very large effect size. The difference in awareness is practically significant.	The large effect size suggests the disparity level of disparity between students and professionals is substantial and meaningful.
5	Implications of result	Professionals demonstrate significantly higher understanding/knowledge of crime scene protocols influenced by media.	The findings support the hypothesis that media exposure correlates with differences in knowledge, emphasizing the gap between different groups.
6	Interpretation and validity	Results are statistically robust, indicating media's influence on knowledge varies notably across the group.	The statistical analysis using Welch's t-test and effect size calculation provides confidence in authenticity and relevance of these conclusions.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The analysis revealed a significant difference in awareness among the students and professionals about the crime scene protocol. The responses collected from students were 62, and from professionals, they were 31. The mean for the students' data was M=2.45, and for the professionals was M=3.48; students gave lower results (due to less awareness and knowledge) than professionals. The mean difference between them was 1.03. The statistical test used was an independent samples t-test (Welch's t-test) to compare two different groups. The p-value was calculated as $p<0.001$, which indicates that the difference is statistically significant. The effect size calculation (Cohen's d, which measures the effect size) was conducted, d=1.4, which indicates a very large effect, suggesting a substantial difference between the two groups.

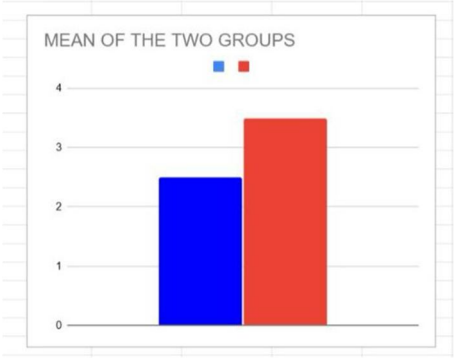

Figure 1: - means of two groups, i.e., students and professionals (teaching professionals, advocate and police personnel)

V. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that media, crime shows, and news reports significantly influence the perception of the public on the crime scene protocols. The level of understanding of crime scene protocols of forensic science students and professionals, including forensic science teachers, advocates, and police personnel, significantly varies. These awareness levels can underscore the impact of experience and knowledge on the understanding of forensic procedures. Media can generate curiosity about forensic science through exaggerated and dramatized portrayals, which often lead to unrealistic expectations of forensic investigation and fair justice. Therefore, it is necessary to promote accurate media representations related to forensic practices and also enhance forensic literacy through educational resources. This can lead to improved perception and trust in forensic science and the criminal investigation process.

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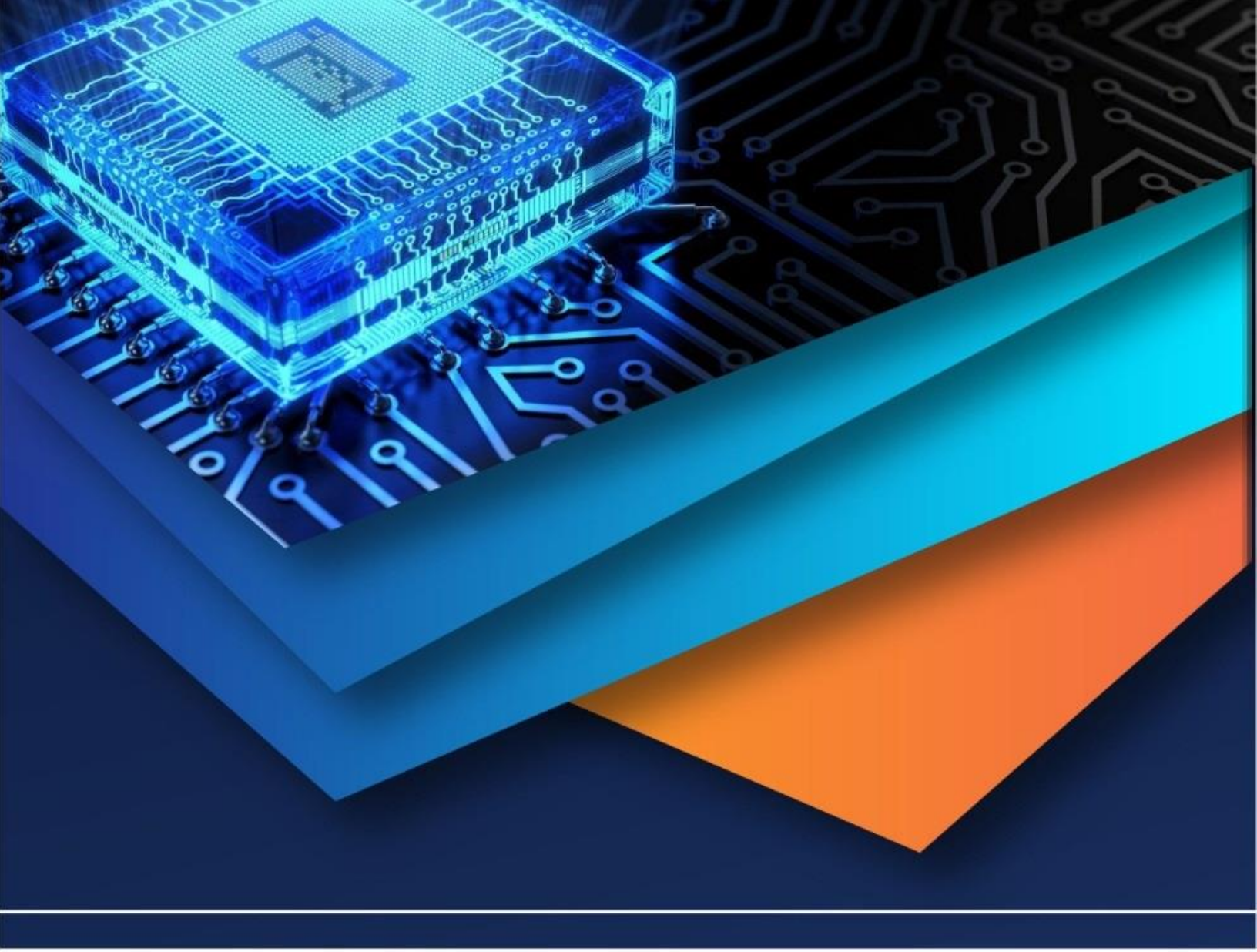

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