

What Children Learn from “A Good Boy” and “Daughter”: A Stairway Foundation Functional Research Study

In the first quarter of 2008, Stairway Foundation Inc. conducted a functional research study with regards to the effectiveness of its two animations, “Daughter” and “A Good Boy” on school-age children. This paper is a brief summary of the research findings (*see attached summary and the full report*).

Methods. Stairway conducted the study following the rigors required of such an undertaking. The population was randomly chosen to cover the target participants—school-age children in urban/rural areas and in public/private schools. There was a balanced mix of urban and rural students, and students from public and private schools. The questionnaire used and the procedures for data gathering were drafted, pilot-tested, and implemented. Technical and other assistance were also given to the participating schools. In evaluating the effects of the animations, the researchers used a questionnaire which measured learning in the areas of *disclosure*, *knowledge about the dynamics of CSA*, and *pre-empting abuse* after watching the videos without processing. The 29 items in the questionnaire were answered with a ‘Yes’, ‘No’, and an ‘I don’t know’. The questions for the pre-test and the post-test were the same. There were 935 students in the Intervention Group and 44 in the Control group. The Control Group only watched the videos after taking the pre- and post tests. However, after taking the pre-test, the children in the Intervention Group then watched the videos. After watching the videos, it was assumed that learning in the Intervention Group had taken place when the children showed an increase of correctly answered questions in the post-test that followed.

Quantitative Results. The questionnaires for both groups were checked, encoded and analyzed for significance using a statistical package. Results showed that the children given the intervention (the videos) after the pre-test, and the Control Group who were not, started out with the same level of knowledge and awareness about the issue of child sexual abuse. However, in the post-test, the children in the Intervention Group who had already seen the videos showed the greatest increase in learning in the three areas mentioned. Across the range of children in the Intervention Group there was a significant increase in scores over the Control Group in the three areas mentioned.

Qualitative Results. Aside from the hard data gathered, the disclosures, questions, and possible misconceptions about the issue of CSA were also noted. Out of 979 students who participated in the research, four students directly disclosed in class (e.g., by sharing, crying) about their personal experiences of abuse, while another four disclosed during a separate interview in another study. This implies the effectiveness of Stairway’s videos in encouraging the children to speak about personal experiences of abuse. This is validated by the quantitative data gathered about their increased tendency to pre-empt further abuse by taking action.

During processing, the children’s common learning included: the realization that anyone can be a sexual abuser, that they should not accept things easily from people they are not close to, and that they should not easily trust everyone who befriends them. They see the abuser (the pedophile Bob in AGB) as “half good” because he is helping Jason’s family while they see the victim as being willing because of a desire to help the family. It should be noted that there were children who said they had friends who had the same experience as Jason, or had the same experience themselves.

Out of the 29 items, only one number in the questionnaire did poorly in the post-test. The item (“If I receive gifts or money from a person, I have to do everything he wants me to do”) reflects the embedded cultural value placed on “*utang na loob*” (debt of gratitude), which determines the socially acceptable response in such a situation.

Conclusion/Recommendations. **The study verifies that the 2 films facilitate significant learning, even without any kind of processing.** Since such learning is crucial to combating CSA, the videos could play a significant role in protecting children in areas where they are shown. The disclosures in class indicate that dissemination of the films to the mass media would tend to produce positive consequences, since the children who watched them, would tend to take action when faced with a potential abusive situation. However, this also implies that prior to mass distribution, the community must first be prepared for possible disclosures from children in the area, educating them about the need for vigilance about potential abusive situations, and to believe the children when they disclose accounts of sexual abuse. Accompanying the video could also be a short segment telling viewers what to do and where to report.

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