

## Impact of Media Violence on Behaviour of Children Exposed to Subtle and Direct Forms as Visualized on Television, Movies and Video Games

<sup>1</sup>Pattnaik Aneesha, <sup>2</sup>Kshirsagar Sharad, <sup>3</sup>Deshmukh Ajay,  
<sup>4</sup>Deepak Kaushal, <sup>5</sup>Nisha Nandal

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<sup>1</sup>Department of Psychiatry,  
Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences,  
Krishna Vishwa Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Karad,  
Email: medhavidesh@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>Department of Psychiatry, Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences,  
Krishna Vishwa Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Karad,  
Email: medhavidesh@gmail.com

<sup>3</sup>Department of Psychiatry, Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences,  
Krishna Vishwa Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Karad,  
Email: medhavidesh@gmail.com

<sup>4</sup>Department of Management Studies, Graphic Era Deemed to be University, Dehradun,  
Uttarakhand, India, 248002,  
dipak.kaushal@geu.ac.in

<sup>5</sup>Assistant professor, Bharati Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University) Institute of  
Management and Research, New Delhi, India. nishanandal@yahoo.com

### Abstract

The pervasive presence of mass media in 20th and 21st-century society is one of the most noticeable shifts in our social environment. Media like television, radio, movies, videos, arcade games, cell phones, and networks of computers are increasingly ubiquitous in our children's everyday lives. The media has a significant impact on our children, both positively and negatively. A major drawback of modern electronic mass media is the damage it does to children's health. Since the 1960s, it has been increasing proof suggesting that being surrounded by violence on screen raises the risk in violent behaviour in the viewer, a lot like being brought up in a violent family raises the risk.

**Keywords:** Social environment, mass media, culture, saturation, radio, television, movie, videos, exposure, violence.

### Introduction

Over the past fifty years, research has accumulated showing that being exposed to violent media (television, movies, and recently, video games) boosts the risk of violent behaviour on the part of the viewer, just as being raised in a violent household does. Similarly, the rise in youth use of cell phones, messaging via text, e-mail, and online forums has created new settings for aggressive and victimising social interactions, settings that transcend the traditional safety nets of family, neighbourhood, and community. Despite the fact that these globally pervasive electronic communication mediums have not brought new psychological hazards to our children, they have made it much more difficult to safeguard youngsters from the threats they now face and have exposed a lot of them to threats that only a select few may have ever faced. When kids go out nowadays, they are more likely to encounter danger regardless of where they live or who they hang out with. Most young people nowadays have easy access to a "virtual" dangerous neighbourhood. However, we shouldn't react with fear and keep our kids "indoors" because the "streets" outside are unsafe. Young people may get valuable experiences and develop into the type of adults society values by spending time on the street. Instead, we should educate ourselves and our children on the risks they face on the streets, do what we can to limit their exposure to those risks, and avoid inflating those risks at the expense of our credibility.

When you say "media violence," different individuals may think of quite different things. The public may also not agree on what defines aggressive and violent behaviour. However, most academics have firm ideas about what they mean when they talk about media violence or aggressive conduct.

### **Scholarly Reviews**

Most scholars who study media violence describe it as depictions of aggressive physical activities between human or humanoid characters as their working definition of media violence. This description is an effort to identify the kind of violent media presentation most likely to teach the viewer more violence, and it has developed alongside ideas regarding the impacts of media violence. This kind of graphic violence is all too frequent in today's mainstream cinema, and as commonplace are violent TV shows. These days, most kids grow up with video games, the internet, and mobile phone screens, all of which increasingly include graphic depictions of violence.

Most academics define aggressive behaviour as conduct with the specific goal of hurting or annoying another person. Researchers do not consider forceful salespeople to be "aggressive," despite the common perception to the contrary. Aggression may take many forms, both violent and nonviolent. Many behaviours that are not often thought of as "violent" are included. Harmful rumor-mongering and insulting others fulfil the criterion. Physical aggressiveness, including pushing or shoving, fighting, violent attacks, and killing, is, of course, the most concerning kind of hostility. In this analysis, we refer to these more extreme types of physical violence that carry a high risk of causing severe injury to the victim as violent behaviour.

### **Post causes of Aggressive Expressions**

Violence and aggression are seldom the result of a single factor but the accumulation of several. Since there are many factors that might affect whether or not someone would engage in aggressive or violent conduct, it is more appropriate to see the influence of violent entertainment as only one of them. No one is arguing that watching violent entertainment is the sole cause of violent behaviour. Also, a consistent approach to the problem, and a precise comprehension of how media violence affects young people's conduct, need a developmental perspective. Most children who exhibit aggressive or antisocial behaviour will not grow up to be violent adults.

Many aggressive children grow up to be rude adults, and many considerably violent teenagers and adults exhibited similar aggressive and violent behaviours as children, according to studies. The most consistent predictor of aggressive conduct as a teen or young adult is earlier aggressive behaviours. As a result, studies show that early exposure to aggressive role models correlates with increased likelihood of violent conduct in adulthood.

Understanding why and how violent media induce hostility is crucial for comprehending the empirical findings exposing violence in the media as a danger to society. In reality, there are well-established psychological hypotheses that explain why violence in the media poses such a hazard. Further, these ideas explain why seeing violence in real life (among family, classmates, and the community) might also make an individual more prone to violent outbursts.

Children may experience temporal displacement effects due to media consumption, but there seems to be a clear difference between the short-term and long-term consequences of violent material. The term "time displacement effects" is used to describe the function of mass media (which includes video games) in substituting other activities that a kid may participate in, which may alter the child's risk for certain types of behaviour. Although the impacts of relocation are likely significant, this article will only discuss the consequences of violent media content.

“According to most experts who now agree that the short term effects of exposure to media violence are mostly due to”:

- A. Preparatory steps
- B. Mechanisms of arousal
- C. Direct emulation of observed actions

### **Stages of Socialization Processes**

When one brain node representing an internal state (such as a thought, emotion, or activity) receives stimulation from another brain node reflecting an external state (such as a stimulus), this is called priming. There are two types of external stimuli: those that are inherently linked to a cognition, like the sight of a gun getting inherently linked to the idea of violence [5], and those that are inherently neutral, like a specific ethnic group that has been historically related to

certain behaviours or convictions (such as receiving welfare). More likely to take the activities linked to the inspired ideas. Media violence may stimulate aggressive thoughts, increasing the likelihood of aggression.

For two reasons (excitation transfer and general arousal), violent behaviour may become more probable in the short term when viewers of mass media presentations are themselves agitated. To begin with, the media presentation might misattribute part of the emotional reaction it elicited as being attributable to the provocation transfer, leading to an exaggerated perception of the severity of a future stimulus that elicits the same emotion (such as a provocation eliciting rage). Such excitation transfer may lead to more aggressive reactions to provocation, for instance, just after an intense media presentation. Alternately, the media presentation may just cause a rise in general arousal that is too high to allow for the suppression of improper reactions, allowing for the exhibition of dominant learnt responses in social problem solving, such as direct instrumental violence.

The third step occurs over a shorter period of time and may be seen as a particular example of the longer-term process of learning through observation. Growing research suggests that infants and early children of all monkey species have a natural inclination to imitate the behaviours of those they witness. Children are more likely to mimic the social behaviours they see in others as they become older. To be more specific, when kids see adults acting violently, they often start acting violently too. Although the precise neurological mechanism by which this occurs has yet to be elucidated, "mirror neurons," which activate when either a behaviour is watched or when the same behaviour is enacted, appear to play a significant role.

**Certain long- term effects that are observed are due to:**

- i) Improvements in long-term behavioural imitation (a kind of observational learning)
- ii) Emotional processes are both stimulated and dulled.

Social cognitive models postulate that an individual's behaviour in social situations is heavily influenced by their emotional state, worldview, normative beliefs, and learned scripts for social behaviour, all of which interact with one another. Children learn social scripts to follow by observing their parents, friends, teachers, and the media during their formative years. As a result, people tend to mimic the actions of others long after they've first seen them. Children's social cognitive schemas are developed and refined throughout this time. Children's world schemas, for instance, have been demonstrated to be biased towards attributing animosity to the behaviours of others after prolonged exposure to violent media. When kids internalise these kinds of blame, they are more likely to act violently. Eventually, children's normative notions about what constitutes proper social behaviour crystallise and serve as a filter to restrict undesirable behaviours. Children's observation of the behaviours of individuals around them, especially those viewed in the mainstream media, influences the development of these normative views.

**Desensitization by Mass Media**

Desensitization The emotional impacts of media, including video games, are expected to have far-reaching consequences for social development. Habituation of normal emotional responses may occur with repeated exposure to emotionally arousing media or video games. Desensitisation describes this change in reaction. After repeated viewings, the negative feelings elicited in reaction to a specific graphic depiction of violence or gore become less intense. Exposure to blood and gore, for example, is commonly accompanied with elevated heart rates, sweating, and feelings of pain. Desensitisation occurs when a child's negative emotional reaction becomes habitual after repeated encounters. Without fear of retaliation, the youngster is free to entertain hostile thoughts and plot aggressive actions.

Finally, a theoretical point. Neither desensitisation nor learning through observation occur in isolation from other forms of learning. Media interactions may be a fertile ground for the conditioning and reinforcement of desired behaviours in children. "Since players are not merely viewers but "active" participants in violent behaviours, and usually receive reinforcement for using attack to gain desired goals, the effects on encouraging over time increases in violent behaviour ought to be greater still for violent video games. Since certain games are played by teams of people (for example, multi-player games), and since individual games may often be performed jointly by peers, it is possible that more complex social conditioning processes are at play, which have not yet been properly examined." Selection and involvement effects are only two examples of the kind of things that need to be looked at.

### **Childhood Exposure to Media and Violence**

With this theoretical groundwork in place, let us now turn to an examination of the empirical data showing that exposure to violent media throughout infancy has both short-term and long-term impacts in provoking aggressiveness and violence in the viewer. The vast majority of these studies have focused on media like as television, movies, and video games; nevertheless, the aforementioned hypothesis suggests that similar consequences should be seen for violence shown on a variety of internet sites (such as multi-player gaming sites, video uploading sites, chat rooms, and handheld mobile phones or laptops).

The best evidence indicates that most children and teenagers spend between three and four hours a day in front of the television, and that over sixty percent of shows have some kind of violence, with forty percent including significant forms of violence. In addition, there has been an increase in the amount of time children devote to playing online games, many of that include violent material. As of right now, video game consoles may be found in 83 percent of homes with children. As of 2016, 52% of children and adolescents between their ages of 8 and 18 played video games monthly, up from 49% in 2004. For kids aged 8 to 10, the average daily video gaming time is 65 minutes, but for teens ages 15 to 18, that number reduces to 33 minutes. And the great majority of these games are violent; the video game industry labels 94% of youngster-appropriate games as violent, while evaluations by independent academics reveal that the genuine figure may be far higher.

The greatest overall estimates of the impacts of media violence come from meta-analyses which average the effects reported across numerous research. Paik and Comstock and Bushman and Anderson are two prominent examples of meta-analyses. While the emphasis of the meta-analysis by Paik and Comstock was on media violence, the focus of that by Anderson and Bushman was on violent video games. The effect sizes of 217 research published from 1957 and 1990 were analysed by Paik and Comstock. When compared with other public health consequences, the average effect size discovered by Paik and Comstock for the randomised research they analysed was moderate to substantial. Only studies that included actual physical aggression against a human subject were considered. The meta-analysis also looked at longitudinal and cross-sectional field surveys conducted and published from 1957 and 1990. The impact size did not change when only investigations were included in the analysis (N=200) in which the dependent variable was real physical violence towards another person. Finally, a .13 average link was found between seeing media violence and actual criminal behaviour.

The most important meta-analyses of the impacts of violent gaming were undertaken by Anderson and Bushman. "In particular, aggressive behaviour ( $r = .27$ ), aggressive affect ( $r = .19$ ), aggressive cognitions "(i.e. aggressive thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes), ( $r = .27$ ), and physiological arousal ( $r = .22$ )" were all positively correlated with playing violent video games, while pro-social (helping) behaviour ( $r = .27$ ) was negatively correlated. In addition, when research was ranked according to its methodological quality, the highest-quality studies produced the largest impact sizes."

### **The Violence of Thoughts and Actions**

Experiments show that showing individuals, particularly young people, depictions of violence on movies or television increases the risk that they would act violently soon thereafter. "In the standard experimental design, participants are randomly assigned to watch a brief violent film or TV programme, or play a violent video game, and then are monitored when they are given the chance to engage in aggressive behaviour. For kids, this implies engaging in potentially contentious play with their peers, while for adults it usually means taking part in a competitive activity where "winning" seems to include inflicting suffering on an opponent. Children that see the violent video clip or played the violent game tend to act more violently right thereafter than those who did not. For instance, in one study conducted by Josephson, 396 boys between the ages of 7 and 9 were split into two groups and asked to view either a violent or peaceful video before engaging in a game of floor hockey at school. In this study, the number of occasions each boy physically assaulted another kid during the game was recorded by assessors who did not know which movies any of the boys had viewed. Hitting, elbowing, or forcing another player to the ground, as well as falling, kneeling, and other assaultive behaviours, would all be considered a physical attack and would be penalised in hockey. Because the referees were carrying walkie-talkies in the violent picture, it was hoped that the lads would be reminded of what they had witnessed. When compared to any other combination of a film and cue, seeing a violent film and then seeing the movie-associated cue dramatically increased aggressive behaviour in boys who were previously evaluated as often hostile by their

instructor. Randomised tests with preschoolers and older delinquent teens revealed similar patterns, with both groups more likely to engage in physical aggression against one another after seeing violent media.”

Irwin and Gross conducted a randomised study comparing the effects of playing a violent video game vs playing a peaceful video game on boys' levels of physical aggressiveness. Players of the violent computer game were more likely to resort to physical force when interacting with their friends. The likelihood of aggressive behaviour among college students after playing (or not playing) a violent video game has been examined in other randomised research. Male and female university students who participated in a violent game were found to have punished a classmate more harshly than those who had played a nonviolent game by a factor of more than 2.5. Other studies have shown which it is the actual act of playing violent video games, and not the ensuing euphoria, that leads to an increase in aggressive behaviour.

Experiments reveal conclusively that there is an increased risk of major aggressive behaviour against others in the immediate aftermath of exposure to violent media such as movies, cartoons, TV shows, and video games. This is true for people of all ages, from infants to high school seniors to college freshmen to working professionals. People who see the violent video are more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour and to develop "accepting" attitudes towards violence than those who view the non-violent clips.

It's important to highlight another semi-experiment that the video game industry regularly refers to. Researchers Williams and Skoric found no evidence of negative long-term impacts of playing a violent games on the behaviour of adults in their research of cooperative online gaming. However, the study's validity is seriously called into doubt due to its poor statistical power and multiple methodological faults (self-selection of a biased sample, absence of an appropriate control group, and lack of acceptable behavioural measurements). The fact that the subjects were all adults further mitigates any potential for unintended consequences.

### **Long Term and Short Term Impact of Gaming**

Although experimental studies are the gold standard for testing causation, empirical longitudinal and cross-sectional investigations of youth behaviour and violent media consumption in natural settings provide substantial proof that the causal processes shown in experiments generalise to violence seen in the real world and have major impacts on violent behaviour. The vast majority of well-executed, single-survey studies have shown that children who regularly expose themselves to media violence also regularly engage in violent behaviour [18], as indicated in the discussion on meta-analyses above. While the correlations discovered are typically between .15 and .30, they are nonetheless big enough to be socially meaningful and far weaker than those shown in laboratory tests. In addition, the association is highly repeatable across nations and scholars who differ on the causes behind the relationship.

Longitudinal, field-based studies have corroborated the correlation between young people's familiarity with violent media and later aggressive behaviour. These studies show that consistent exposure to violent media from middle childhood predicts increased aggressiveness at "1, 3, 10, 15, and 22 years of age", even after controlling for early aggression. As aggressive conduct is a less reliable signal of greater future seeing violence when initial seeing of violence is accounted for, it seems doubtful that the association between aggressiveness and violent viewing of media was primarily due to aggressive youngsters watching more violence. As will be described in further depth below, this pattern of findings shows that violent media exposure increases aggressiveness, but that more aggressive individuals may also be more likely to seek out violent media.

### **Moderating the Impact of Media Violence**

Obviously, not everyone is impacted in the same way by seeing acts of violence. To what extent children are affected by exposure to media violence depends on factors such as the presentation's ability to attract and hold the viewer's attention, the viewer's personality traits (such as their inclination towards aggression), and the social and environmental context to which the children are exposed.

Characteristics of the storyline that boost media violence's impact on generating aggressiveness include depictions of violence as justified and the presentation of incentives (or the absence of sanctions) for violence. For example, viewers who believe the violence is more realistically shown and who empathise with the violent character in the story are more

likely to be inspired to engage in violent behaviour themselves. This information suggests that violent actions committed by charismatic protagonists that look justified & are rewarded are the most likely to raise viewer hostility.

A number of scholars have argued that, “regardless of the story, only aggressive spectators or participants should be impacted. This is simply not correct. While it's true that a youngster who is already aggressive may grow up to be the most aggressive adult, studies demonstrate that even children who aren't naturally aggressive may become hostile after being exposed to media violence. Short-term impacts tend to be greater in older children, maybe because one has to have previously learnt aggressive scripts in order to have them triggered by violent displays, whereas long-term effects appear to be stronger in younger children. Forty years ago, the impacts may have seemed less significant for women than they do now.”

Researchers have shown that individual long-term responses to media violence depend on their openness to challenging their own deeply held assumptions and ideas about the world. However, it is already clear that some of the mediators include preconceived notions of what constitutes acceptable social behaviour, world buildings that lead to opposed or pseudo-hostile attributions about the intentions of other people, and social norms that regulate behaviour in society immediately once they are well learned.

### **Conclusion**

Therefore, it is reasonable to conclude that the likelihood that a viewer or player would behave more aggressively in the future is significantly increased by exposure to violent media. Multiple large-scale randomised controlled experiments have shown that exposure to violent media increases the probability of aggressive conduct in both children and adults. The process of priming is likely at the heart of this, with imitation and increased arousal also playing important roles. Researchers have shown that both short-term and long-term exposure to violent media, including violent games, raises the likelihood for hostile and violent conduct. Neuroscientists and psychologists have recently shown that strong processes of observational acquisition and desensitisation occur spontaneously in the growing human brain, accounting for these long-lasting effects. Children pick up on the underlying emotional states and social cognitions of the people and situations they see in real life and in the media without any conscious effort on their part.

Long-term exposure to violent media is associated with an increase in both the frequency and severity of aggressive behaviours in children and adolescents. As a risk factor, it is on par with many others that have been identified as serious threats to public health. While some youngsters who aren't subjected to this risk may go on to exhibit violent tendencies, the same cannot be said for those who are. This, however, does not decrease the critical nature of addressing the threat.

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