



## Media violence and aggression among Young Adults

*Rupali Saxena<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Roopali Sharma<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup>Enrolment number: A1506921014

Programme: BA (Hons) Applied Psychology

<sup>2</sup> Designation: Professor

AMITY INSTITUTE OF PSYCHOLOGY AND ALLIED SCIENCES

AMITY UNIVERSITY, NOIDA, UTTAR PRADESH-201301

### ABSTRACT :

Any visual depiction of one person or character engaging in some kind of violent physical activity or behaviour against one person, or another is considered as media violence. Both the behaviour of adults in our society and that of students is severely impacted by violence in the media. Adults and students in contemporary society may behave violently and aggressively because of violent media content. Children and adolescents who are exposed to violent media, such as television, movies, music, and video games have a serious risk to their health. Numerous studies have shown that violent media can exacerbate aggressive tendencies, desensitisation to violence, nightmares, and the fear of suffering harm. Paediatricians should determine how much media their patients are exposed to and take appropriate action to reduce any health hazards. By promoting media literacy, more deliberate and proactive media use by kids and their parents, more responsible media portrayals of violence, and more insightful and successful media ratings, paediatricians and other child health care professionals can promote a safer media environment for kids.

### Introduction:

In today's digital age, the pervasive influence of mass media on the behaviour and development of young adults cannot be overstated. With the advent of various forms of electronic media such as television, movies, video games, and the internet, the exposure to violent content has become an unavoidable aspect of daily life for many youths. This phenomenon has raised concerns regarding its potential impact on the prevalence of aggression and violence among young adults.

Violence, as defined by the World Health Organization, encompasses the deliberate use of physical force or power against oneself, others, or a community, resulting in harm to physical or mental health, maldevelopment, deprivation, or injury. This definition underscores the multifaceted nature of violence, highlighting its potential to manifest in different forms and contexts.

The concept of mass media, as elucidated by McKechnie (1976), encompasses any form of communication that reaches and influences a broad population, notably through newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. In contemporary society, the proliferation of electronic media has expanded this definition to include various digital platforms such as social media networks, streaming services, and online gaming platforms. Consequently, the exposure to violent content has become increasingly prevalent across multiple mediums, posing significant challenges for understanding its implications on young adult behaviour.

Media violence, often characterized by the portrayal of aggressive acts in films, television shows, video games, and other forms of entertainment, has emerged as a contentious issue in contemporary discourse. While electronic media serves as a source of amusement and information for many individuals, the prevalence of violent imagery raises questions about its potential influence on shaping attitudes and behaviours, particularly among impressionable young adults.

Numerous studies have highlighted the correlation between exposure to media violence and the likelihood of aggressive behaviour among young adults. Research by Huesman (2007) emphasizes the role of media in perpetuating aggressive tendencies through the normalization and glamorization of violent acts. Moreover, socio-economic factors, family dynamics, and individual characteristics further compound the risk of aggressive behaviour among this demographic.

As the future generation of society, young adults represent a critical demographic whose well-being and development are paramount. Addressing the complex interplay between media violence and aggression requires a comprehensive understanding of the underlying factors and mechanisms at play. By examining the impact of media violence on young adult behaviour, this report seeks to shed light on this pressing issue and explore potential avenues for intervention and mitigation.

In the subsequent sections, we will delve into the empirical evidence surrounding media violence and its association with aggression among young adults. Through a multidimensional analysis, we aim to elucidate the underlying mechanisms driving this phenomenon and propose strategies for fostering healthier media consumption habits among the youth.

---

### **Problems and effects of media violence**

One significant effect that has emerged from numerous studies conducted on the impact of violence in society is that a person or a child will imitate exactly what they see on television. Whether they do something out of curiosity because they do not believe it is wrong, or just because they like the way it looks, most of the time they are unaware of the consequences because the media rarely discusses them. This is a matter of concern because there are annual killings that have clear ties to television shows, motion pictures, and comic books.

Our numbness to what we are truly witnessing is another factor contributing to our concerns with the violence. Our children's increased levels of hostility and desensitisation are directly related to their repeated exposure to violent media, particularly when it comes to television. It is not disrespectful that someone is being killed in front of us; in fact, we might not even be aware of it anymore. This is the result of living in a world where there is far too much bloodshed, gore, and violence.

Children are highly impressionable, and television has taken on the role of a third parent in their eyes, which is one of the reasons they are so vulnerable to violence in the media, particularly on television.

It is much simpler for parents in today's hectic lives to place their kids in front of the TV and get some work done. Cartoons frequently turn into extremely dangerous scenarios, but the repercussions in real life are rarely depicted. There are frequently violent program previewers for later airing shows that the parents may be viewing, even if they are not always under close supervision.

Comedic elements appear in at least 40% of violent television situations. These characters frequently exhibit physical hostility that, in actual life, would be fatal. There is an issue with the way violence is portrayed, and there should be an examination of the quantity of violent situations on television.

The mainstream media can be instructive and amusing, but it can also have a harmful influence, especially on children. There is a lot of violence in dramas and movies. Violence may be portrayed as the solution to solve issues in some dramas or movies. It is possible to portray violent characters as heroic. This could incite more violence in society. It is thought that kids do copy certain scenes.

Today, among TV show creators, broadcasters, and psychiatrists, TV violence has emerged as the most contentious issue. TV hosts may argue that television shows don't exist. Nonetheless, psychoanalysts and psychologists assert that these violent television shows cause aggressive behaviour in kids and are contributing to the rise in crime rates in our communities. For many years, psychologists have investigated the consequences of violent and aggressive programming. Despite a growing body of evidence, psychologists still dispute the connection between children's aggressive behaviour and watching violent television. There is insufficient data, according to some broadcasters, to demonstrate that violence on television is damaging. However, the psychologist who has researched this matter asserts that hostility and violent TV shows are directly related.

Given that almost everyone watches some form of media every day, this problem unquestionably affects almost everyone. It appears that children are becoming more and more violent in the media and that they are committing crimes of a more serious nature. Seeing an R rated film with an eight-year-old or a fourteen-year-old watching Power Rangers suggests that the younger generation is the main source of our problems.

#### ***Does media violence really influence human behaviour?***

Television is the primary source of violence exposure for children. Young children are exposed to levels of violence in video games, TV shows, and television -edited movies that were unthinkable only a few years ago. Before graduating from elementary school, the typical child witnesses 1,00,000 violent crimes and 8,000 broadcast killings. By the time he or she is 18, that number has more than doubled.

There is more violent content on TV than just the 22-minute shows that the networks air. Children are witnessing levels of violence and mayhem at an early age that, in the past, may have only been seen by a small number of military people and police officers. Every day, violent shows like TV bring daily incidents of stabbings, shootings, dismemberments, and beatings into households.

There is a correlation between increased violence in society and violent imagery on television and in movies. Common sense and sociological research demand that we take action to reduce media violence before it causes further harm to society.

Television encourages both fear and violence. Every year, thousands of TV killings are shown to children. Additionally, the behaviour influence is predictable. Over the past 20 years, the Surgeon General has linked violent media to aggressive conduct in kids and teenagers. The National Institute of Mental Health also released a 94 paged paper titled "television and Behaviour: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties". They discovered "overwhelming" scientific proof that "excessive" violence on TV had a negative impact. In research involving 732 kids over a five

year period “several kinds of aggression (such as conflicts with parents, fighting, and delinquency) were all positively correlated with the total amount of television viewing”.

Children and adults both are subtly impacted by violence on television. TV violence may not touch us, but we still need to pay attention to the increasing amount of evidence that demonstrates it does have an impact on our perceptions and actions.

Clearly, something needs to be done. To stop the rising violence in our culture, responsible action by parents, programmers, and other individuals is required. Our society is becoming more and more violent because of violent families, violent television shows, violent movies, and violent educational institutions. It is our duty to change things and put the right ideas into practice to stop the violence that is rampant in our society.

#### **Some suggestions for dealing with violence in the media.**

The problem of violence in the media must be addressed. Here are some suggestions for handling violence.

- Study up on the effects of our culture. Share this material with all members, including elders. Assist them in realizing the significance of this matter to themselves and their community.
- Establish a secure atmosphere- families deal with violence daily. For our families’ safety, we must make our homes secure. A child ought to have a sense of security in the world. The obvious initial tasks are to provide care and protection. However, parents also need to set boundaries, offer emotional support, and instill morality and values in their children.
- The amount of media that parents allow in their homes should be restricted. The typical youth watches too much violence in movies and on TVs. Limit the content that a youngster can view and assess the amount and calibre of media they consume. Concentrate on that which is wonderful, commendable, respectable, truthful, lovely, and pure.
- Watch TV with kids- It goes without saying that we ought to restrict our kids’ TV viewing. However, we ought to try to watch TV with children when they do. During the programs, we can promote conversation with the children.

---

#### **Literature Review**

1. Yan Zhang (2023) researched on “**Causes of Violence among students and its impact on their academic performance at higher secondary schools**”. This research aims to study the causes of student violence in higher secondary schools and its impact on academic performance. Survey method was used where the sample consisted of 300 students (155 male and 145 female) from Hazara district of Pakistan and was selected through random stratified sampling. A 27-item questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used to collect the data. The results revealed that psychological factors such as depression, anxiety, impulsivity, and a history of trauma or abuse, as well as social factors such as family, peers, and community, played a significant role in the incidence of violence among students.
2. Yasmina Adlina Heraputri Utami (2023) studied the “**Effect of mindfulness on aggressive behaviour**”. This study aims to examine the effect of mindfulness on aggressive behaviour. The entire results showed a negative relationship between mindfulness and aggressive behaviour. The study obtained an effect-sized result of -.270. This implies that mindfulness and aggressive behaviour have a small effect size due to other variables, factors, and mediators.
3. Azeez Arisekola Salman et al (2024) carried out research on “**Perceived Influence of Violent Television Shows on Pupil Learning and Academic Performance**”. This study examined the perceived influence of violent television shows on pupils' academic performance in the Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. The study “adopted a descriptive survey research design, the population comprises all private and public primary school teachers. The researcher used a simple random sampling technique to select 157 public primary school teachers and 143 private primary school teachers with a total of 300 public and private primary school teachers. One instrument is tagged “Questionnaire on Violent Television Show” (QVTS). The reliability coefficient is 0.79. The findings of the study revealed that the level of the perceived influence of violent television shows on pupils' academic performance is very high in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State, and there was no significant difference in the perceived influence of Violent Television on Pupils Academic Performance based on gender.
4. Xi Deng et al (2024) studied “**Psychological distress and aggression among adolescents with internet gaming disorder symptoms**”. The present study aimed to investigate the current situation of internet gaming disorder (IGD) in Chinese adolescents and explore the impact of IGD-related factors on adolescent aggression. We hypothesized that IGD symptoms in adolescents would be associated with aggressive behaviour and that risk factors for IGD symptoms could increase the aggressive tendencies of adolescents. To verify the above hypothesis, a cross-sectional survey of junior and senior high school students from southern, southwestern, central, and eastern China was conducted. A total of 9306 valid questionnaires were collected. The results showed that the prevalence of IGD symptoms was 1.78 % among Chinese adolescents. The adolescents in the disordered gamer group had the most severe IGD symptoms, with the highest levels of psychological distress and aggression.
5. Sajid Mehmood Alvi et al (2023) researched about “**relationship between personality traits and aggression among online video gamers**”. The current study looked at the association of aggressiveness and personality traits among PUBG players who were university students. The research was carried out using a cross-sectional research approach. Research data was gathered using the survey approach

using the convenience sampling technique and data was collected through a google form. The number of PUBG players in the sample was 250. Correlation, t-test, and regression analysis was used to compute the results. The result suggests that aggression differs significantly by gender.

6. Hussain Z et al (2023) studied “**The role of aggression in the association of cyberbullying victimization with cyberbullying perpetration and problematic social media use among adolescents**”. The purpose of the present study was to test the direct and indirect association of cyberbullying victimization with cyberbullying perpetration and problematic social media use via aggression. A total of 496 students completed a survey comprising psychometric instruments. The results revealed that cyberbullying victimization was directly and indirectly related to cyberbullying perpetration and problematic social media use. The findings of the present study suggest that being a cyberbullying victim is related to elevated levels of problematic social media use and cyberbullying perpetration among adolescents.
7. Chelsea Halle et al (2020) conducted research on “**The link between mental health, crime and violence**”. This study examines the relationship between mental health, violence, and crime in a more representative community-based sample. One hundred and twenty-one individuals with and without a mental health disorder reported their involvement in crime and completed an aggression questionnaire. The results revealed that there is no statistically significant difference in terms of violence and crime involvement between individuals with a mental health diagnosis and those without. Moreover, the study did not find any statistically significant associations between specific mental health disorders and specific crime offences. The findings suggest that certain mental health disorders do not strongly contribute to crime violence and involvement.
8. Laura M. Padilla Walker et al (2020) researched about the “**Associations between parental media monitoring style, information management, and prosocial and aggressive behaviours**” . The current study sought to explore the links between parental media monitoring and adolescent behaviours in adolescents’ levels of media disclosure and secrecy. Participants included a national sample of 945 adolescents aged 10–18 years (49% female, 69% European American) taken from a study of adolescent media use. Results suggested that autonomy supportive active and restrictive monitoring were associated with higher levels of media disclosure and lower levels of media secrecy (active only).
9. Nuray Caner et al (2021) studied “**Digital risks and adolescents: The relationship between digital game addiction, emotional eating, and aggression**”. This cross-sectional study aimed to evaluate the relationships between emotional eating behaviour and digital game addiction, which can cause stress and aggression in adolescents. This study was conducted with 856 adolescents from the Mediterranean region of Turkey. The data were collected using a personal information form, the Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ), the Digital Game Addiction Scale (DGAS-7), and the Emotional Eating Scale (EES). In this study, 32.4% of the adolescents were addicted to digital games. The male adolescents had higher BPAQ, DGAS, and EES mean scores. There was also a relationship between digital game addiction, aggressive behaviour, and emotional eating. This is a significant study because it shows that digital game addiction and aggressive behaviour are important determinants of emotional eating. The results of this study indicate that emotional eating is a component of digital game addiction that increases the risk of adolescent obesity.
10. Anna Vannucci et al (2020) researched on the topic “**Social media use and risky behaviours in adolescents**”. This study aimed to examine the association between social media use and risky behaviours during adolescence, and evaluated study characteristics (e.g., sample age, type of social media platform assessed) that may moderate these relationships. The final sample included 27 independent cross-sectional studies with a total of 67,407 adolescents ( $M_{age} = 15.5$ , range: 12.6–18.0 years; 51.7% girls; 57.2% White). Results from random effects models indicated that there were positive, small-to-medium correlations between social media use and engagement in risky behaviours generally ( $r = 0.21$ , 95% CI = 0.16-0.25), substance use ( $r = 0.19$ , 95% CI = 0.12-0.26), and risky sexual behaviours ( $r = 0.21$ , 95% CI = 0.15-0.28). There were an insufficient number of independent samples available to conduct a random effect model for violence-related behaviours ( $k = 3$ ).

---

## Research Methodology

### Method

Purposive sampling method using descriptive statistics was used to determine the relationship between aggression and media violence among individuals. The key variable targeted in this research is aggression and violent media.

### Objectives

- To understand the level of the Media violence and Aggressive Behaviour among young adults.
- To understand the relationship of Media violence and Aggressive Behaviour among young adults.

### Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between media violence and aggressive behaviour among young adults.

The study has used correlational design to find out the relationship of violent media and aggressive behaviour on young adults. This study adopts a correlational research design to investigate the relationship between exposure to violent media and aggressive behaviour among young adults. Correlational studies are well-suited for exploring associations between variables without manipulating them, making them ideal for examining the potential link between media consumption and behavioural outcomes in a naturalistic setting. By collecting data on both exposure to violent media and levels of aggression among young adults, this research aims to discern any patterns or trends that may exist between these variables.

The participants for this study will consist of a diverse sample of young adults aged 18 to 30 recruited from various educational institutions, workplaces, and community settings. Data will be gathered through self-report measures, including surveys and questionnaires, designed to assess participants' exposure to different forms of violent media (e.g., television, movies, video games) and their self-reported levels of aggression. Additionally, demographic information such as age, gender, socioeconomic status, and prior history of aggressive behaviour will be collected to control for potential confounding variables.

Statistical analyses, such as correlation coefficients and regression analyses, will be employed to examine the strength and direction of the relationship between exposure to violent media and aggressive behaviour among young adults. Furthermore, potential moderating variables, such as gender differences or prior exposure to violence, will be explored to elucidate any nuanced effects on the observed relationship. By utilizing a correlational research design, this study seeks to contribute to the existing literature on media effects and inform interventions aimed at mitigating the potential negative impact of violent media on young adult behaviour.

### Participants

A sample of 80 young adults (n= 40 males and 40 females), between the age group of 18-30 from Delhi-NCR were selected based on purposive sampling technique. The sample included students from different colleges and universities.

### Tools used for data collection

1. **Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire** including 29 items (physical aggression 1-9 items, verbal aggression 10-14 items, anger 15-21 items, hostility 22-29 items) and the aggression scale.
2. **Content based media exposure scale-** It includes 17 items which assess exposure to anti-social and neutral media content. It was developed by A.H. Den Hermer and B.J. Bushman.
3. **Socio-demographic data sheet-** The socio-demographic data sheet includes information such as name, age, gender, occupation etc.

### Procedure

The participants in the study were selected based on purposive sampling technique. Informed consent was obtained from all the respondents before collecting the data. Two questionnaires regarding the aggression and violent media were administered to them along with the socio-demographic data sheet. The scale was administered to the participants through google forms. The respondents were given assurance based on the ethical guidelines of this study.

### Results

1. There is a significant relationship between aggression and the violent media among young adults.
2. The result shown rejects the null hypothesis and proves the alternative hypothesis.

### Descriptive statistics

**Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of obtained sample.**

	Sample	Mean	St. Deviation
Aggression	40	62.80	8.27
Violence	40	61.00	9.14

**Table 2: Correlation between Media violence and Aggression**

	Media Violence	Aggression
Pearson correlation	1	0.024
Media violence		0.831
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	80	80
Pearson correlation	0.024	1
Aggression violence	0.831	
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	80	80

---

## Discussion

According to the study's findings, children are the most influenced by media and they learn these skills by observing, imitating, and making behaviours of their own. Children under the age of 8 cannot distinguish between fantasy and reality, making them more susceptible to absorbing and taking on the situations, attitudes, and behaviours that are portrayed in entertainment media as fact.

As per the current study, 15% of music videos contain interpersonal violence. The internet and video games are just another new form of exposure to violence. Although there is little information available about the prevalence of violence on the internet, there are concerns regarding websites that might promote violence, offer instructions for making explosive devices, or disclose where to get guns. Furthermore, not much research has been done on the effects of violent video games.

Children's lives are dominated by traditional media, such as television as well as newer media, such as social media, smartphones, tablets, and the internet. Even though children and teenagers still primarily use television, new technologies are becoming more and more common. Evidence on the possible negative impacts of media messages and pictures continues to worry the American Academy of Paediatrics (AAP), but there are also significant positive and practically useful benefits of media use that should be acknowledged. Creating a family media plan at home is advised for parents. Educational institutions, legislators, product advertisers, and entertainment creators should all be aware of the effects that media has on kids and teenagers.

---

## Conclusion

In conclusion, children and teenagers who are exposed to violent media are negatively affected. While the term 'media violence' has no universally accepted meaning, it is widely acknowledged to involve behaviours that cause harm to other people. Studies and research on demographics drawn to violent media are few and far between. Now, the only characteristics thought to be vulnerable to violent media are gender and specific personality qualities, such as a malevolent nature, high neuroticism, low likeability, and low conscientiousness. More research should be done in this field. Even though there have been several studies on the effects of violent media over the past few decades, most of these studies have concentrated on three areas that this paper will be discussing: that violent media deters prosocial conduct, increases aggressive behaviour, and desensitizes people. Research has indicated that children and teenagers may experience short and long-term consequences from violent media. Long-term exposure to violent television shows in children is associated with increased aggressive behaviour during adolescence and an increased risk of engaging in criminal activity as adults. Playing violent video games for a short while can make people less helpful or prosocial, according to social cognitive models of social behaviour. Additional research has demonstrated that exposure to violent media makes kids less able to recognise and empathise with the suffering of others, which can lead to desensitization.

---

## REFERENCES :

1. Bushman, B. J. (2001). Effects of televised violence on aggression.
2. In D. G. Singer, & J. L. Singer (Eds.) *Handbook of children and the media*, pp. 223-254.
3. Cherry, K. (March 15, 2020). Albert Bandura's Influence on the Field of Psychology. Retrieved from <https://www.verywellmind.com/albert-bandura-biography-1925-2795537>
4. Craig A. Anderson, L. B. (December 1, 2003). The Influence of Media Violence on Youth.
5. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, Vol 4, Issue 3
6. Curran James, M. G. (November 2009). *Media and Society*.
7. *Communication Book notes*, 11(1), 20-21 pg.
8. Huesmann, L. R. (2009 Jun 30). The Impact of Electronic Media Violence: Scientific Theory and Research. *J Adolescent Health.*, 41(6 Supply 1):, S6–13.
9. Anderson, C.A., & Bushman, B.J. (2001). Effects of violent video games on aggressive behaviour, aggressive cognition, aggressive affect, physiological arousal, and prosocial behaviour: A meta-analytic review of the scientific literature. *Psychological Science*, 12, 353-35
10. Bartholow, B.D., & Anderson C.A. (2002). Effects of violent video games on aggressive behaviour: Potential sex differences. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 38,283-290
11. Huesmann LR, Lagerspetz K, Eron LD. (1984). Intervening variables in the TV violence aggression relation: evidence from two countries. *Dev. Psychol.* 20: 746-7
12. Nakay, Andrea C. *Media Violence*. San Diego, California: Reference Point, n.d. Print. Compact Research.
13. Rideout, Victoria. *Parents, children & Media*. N.p.: n.p., 2007. Print.
14. Comstock G, Paik H. 1991. *Television and the American Child*. San Diego, CA.
15. Josephson WL. 1987. Television violence and children's aggression: testing the priming, social script, and disinhibition predictions. *J. Pers. Soc. Psychol.* 53:882-9
16. Paik H, Comstock G. (1994) The effects of television violence on antisocial behavior: a meta- analysis. *Commun. Res.* 21:516-4
17. Rosenthal R. (1986) Media violence, antisocial behavior, and the social consequences of small effects. *J.Soc. Issues* 42(3) : 143-5

18. Huesmann LR , Lagerspetz K, Eron LD (1984). Intervening variables in the TV violence- aggression relation:evidence from two countries. *Dev. Psychol.* 20:746-7
19. Slater MD, Henry KL, Swaim RC, Anderson LL. ( 2003) Violent media content and aggressiveness in adolescents: a downward spiral model. *Commun. Res.* 30(6) :713-3
20. Anderson CA, Bushman BJ. ( 2001) Effects of violent video games on aggressive behavior,aggressive cognition, aggressive affect, physiological arousal, and prosocial behavior: a meta- analytic review of the scientific literature. *Psychol.Sci.* 12:353-5
21. Haninger K, Thompson KM. (2003) Content and ratings of teen-rated video games. *JAMA* 291(7) :856-6
22. Irwin AR, Gross AM. (1995) Cognitive tempo, violent video games, and aggressive behavior in young boys. *J.Family Violence* 10:337-5