

From Pixels to Reality: The Link between Violent Media and Behaviour

Many people have always had an interest in how the media plays a role in violence and aggression. With television and video games and music making a rise in society, it has become particularly important to understand the potential effects of media consumption on behaviour. While media can often be a source of entertainment and education for many, it also exposes individuals to violent and explicit content that may influence one's thoughts and behaviours. One of the most influential theories that help someone have a better understanding between media and aggression is called the social learning theory. This theory suggests that people can learn or adapt to others' behaviour by observing others, and the media can often be a platform that aids in the observation of violent behaviour. When individuals are consistently exposed to violent or explicit behaviour, it can cause them to be desensitized to violence, which can make it feel more acceptable and increase the chances of someone thinking violent behaviour is acceptable in society. Not only can media cause verbal aggression but it can also cause other types of aggression which include verbal aggression and relational aggression. Verbal aggression includes behaviours like yelling and insulting another. Relational aggression is when someone spreads rumours or gossip about another. Media often can play a role in all diverse types of aggression and has the biggest impact on children. While media has its advantages for young children especially in the education system, too much exposure to media, such as video games or movies and even music, can have a significant role in how an individual acts. Many people do not understand that while there are lots of benefits to having media, it also can have negative effects, especially on young children.

While many forms of media impact violent behaviours, one of the biggest forms is social media. Many people, especially adolescents, use social media daily. Social media is often used to spread positivity and help raise awareness about issues like violence or aggression and connect people who have experienced violence and get them the help they need. However, there are also lots of terrible things on social media like hate speech (Kimmel, 2019). Many people use platforms of social media to promote things such as hate speech against religion or race. Another thing many people use social media to do is cyberbully others. According to the national bullying helpline, more than 47% of kids are cyberbullied at least once by the age of 14. Studies have also found that social media is often used to coordinate violent or aggressive behaviour, using online hate groups or cyberbullying. Another way social media can influence violent behaviours is through the spread of misinformation or propaganda. Some people use social media to spread false information about another person or group which can cause an increase in hate towards other people who have done nothing wrong. Social media also sometimes tends to promote and even glorify violent behaviour, which often makes people who are easily influenced think that it is normal. While lots of propaganda and discrimination do exist on social media, social media can be used to counteract these negative influences, such as the use of fact-

checking and promoting positive messages online. While social media can have negative effects on violence, it is not necessarily bad in all cases.

Because of how many movies and shows have people getting killed or hurt in them, the media has caused violence to be desensitized. There are thousands of movies and shows that contain violence and after seeing so much of it many people often do not find it scary. When children have parents who do not spend as much time raising them, they often get exposed to violent media at a younger age, (Levin, 2008). This causes many children to become very desensitized to media and leads them into thinking that violent behaviour in society is acceptable. One experiment done by the national institute of Health showed that children who played a violent video game or watched a violent show on TV showed that their chance of performing negative behaviour increased as soon as they stop watching or playing. Another experiment showed quite different results, after letting the children play intense video games for a long time while some children showed aggression and violent behaviour immediately, others behaviour did not change at all. Many parents should be more aware of the content that they are letting their children consume and normalize conversations about how media can have negative effects on them. Many parents have found that setting limits on screen time and restricting access to violent media can be effective in reducing the amount of negative behaviour in their children's aggression.

News media coverage can also significantly impact the public perception of violence and crime. Many people do not understand that the way news outlets choose to report on violent incidents can influence the public perception of how common and severe incidents are (Busselle, 2019). Many times, coverage of violent crimes can create a perception of a person or place and make it sound like the world is a lot more dangerous place than it is. Which in hindsight, can lead to crippling anxiety and general fear among the public. On the other hand, underreporting has many negative effects of its own. Failing to give details on major crimes can lead people to have a false sense of security and a lack of awareness of the amount of violence in society. Also, many newsgroups can create stereotypes and biases about certain groups of people, which often can lead to discrimination or prejudice. While news outlets need to report on big and serious crimes, they must do so without biases or sensationalism. This can help to promote a more accurate understanding of the prevalence and nature of violence in society. News media coverage can also impact things such as law enforcement and public policy. The way that news media report on violent incidents such as gun control, policing or justice reformation can affect the way lawmakers and law enforcement officers respond to violent crimes. Additionally, it can also affect how people in society view and treat people who committed these violent crimes differently. Sensationalist coverage of violent crimes can lead to victim blaming and a lack of empathy for those who have experienced trauma (Busselle, 2019). The media need to report on violent incidents in a sensitive way. By doing so, news media can help reduce the amount of negative impact of media on public perception and promote better and more effective responses to violent crime.

Media literacy education can mitigate the negative effects of media on aggression and violence. By teaching individuals to critically analyze and evaluate media messages, this type of education can help reduce the effects of violent media on an individual's behaviour (Rasi, 2018). Media literacy education can help individuals to recognize the ways in which media messages can shape attitudes and beliefs about violence and aggression and help develop a better understanding of the relationship

between media and behaviour. Media literacy education can also help people develop better critical thinking skills that are useful in many scenarios outside of media consumption (Rasi, 2018). Media literacy education can also help individuals develop a better understanding of the events around them and help people get more engaged and be active with other members of their community, which will cause the media to have less of an influence on them and be surrounded by more positive behaviour. Additionally, this can also teach people how to create media messages that promote positive values and behaviours, and to help use media positively as a tool for social change. Cultural and social norms also have a significant impact on media consumption and its impact on violence. Everyone in society has different beliefs and different attitudes on the role of media and how the messages are received and interpreted (Rasi, 2018). Also, cultural and societal norms play a huge role in how media messages are viewed. For example, many cultures accept and even celebrate violence, in these cultures, media messages that condone violence may be interpreted differently than in a society where violence is frowned upon. This often leads to differences in the impact of violent media on behaviour across different people. It is especially important to understand the diverse ways violent media can be viewed and the impact that media often has on aggression and violence.

Most people enjoy a good action movie, with shootouts and crazy wild fistfights. However, this often makes people believe that violence is often the best way to solve a problem when it is not. While the media does sometimes show that violent actions lead to consequences, the cons outweigh the pros. One of the biggest theories on this topic is called the social learning theory. This theory suggests that people often learn behaviours by observing others. It also states that people are more likely to copy behaviours that they see being rewarded for engaging in aggressive behaviour. Looking at how it is in the media and aggression sense, this theory suggests that people are more likely to engage in violent behaviour if they see it portrayed positively in the media or if they see other people being rewarded for engaging in aggressive or violent behaviour. An example of this would be a man in a movie saving his crush and fighting off the bad guys to make her fall in love with him. This theory also states that people are also more likely to copy violent behaviours if they see someone who they admire, or respect doing it and being rewarded for it. Another big theory that correlates media and violent behaviours is the cultivation theory. The theory suggests that people's perceptions of the world can be shaped by the media and influence their beliefs about violence. An example of this would be that people who watch a lot of crime shows may fear the outside world because the media has made it seem like the world is a lot scarier of a place than it is. This can make people who are often exposed to a lot of violent media more fearful of violence and avoid certain areas. The cultivation theory suggests that media can also reinforce harmful stereotypes and violence against women. For example, if someone who is easily influenced by media watches something where men are portrayed as aggressive and dominant and women are portrayed as submissive and weak, some men may be more likely to engage in aggressive behaviour against women. This often leads to tolerance for violence against woman and make it seem like an acceptable way to solve problems.

While most people think of media as TV, social media or video games, many people think that music is one of the most influential forms of media. Many studies have found that some people show an increase in aggressive behaviour after listening to violent music, while others have not been affected by

it. One theory states that violent music can increase psychological arousal, which in some cases, can lead to violent or aggressive behaviour. Also, some researchers say that violent music can desensitize people and make it an acceptable way to solve problems. However, it is important to note other factors like personality, upbringing and social environment can also play a huge role in the likelihood of taking part in aggressive behaviour. Often when someone is affected by violent music, it is the lyrics that play the biggest role (Pieschl, 2015). For example, one study found that people who listened to music with violent lyrics were more likely to be aggressive than people who listened to lyrics without violent lyrics. Some researchers suggest that the content of violent music can reinforce negative stereotypes and promote aggressive behaviour towards certain groups of people. Something that people do not understand is that not all violent music promotes violence and hate. Another aspect is the relationship between the mood someone is in and violent music. People have reported that when they are in a bad mood, violent music can worsen their mood (Pieschl, 2015). Some researchers believe that people who are already prone to violent behaviour are more likely to seek out violent music. However, it is important to know that not all people who listen to violent music are affected negatively by it. Many people enjoy listening to violent music for a variety of reasons, and it is not necessarily an indication of a person's behaviour.

The main reason that people have always wondered if media has played a role in violent behaviours and aggression is because it is everywhere. Whether a person turns on their TV or goes on their phone, it is always some form of media that they are viewing. There is evidence to suggest that media can have an impact on aggressive behaviour. Exposure to violent media, such as violent movies, violent video games or music, can sometimes increase the likelihood of engaging in violent or aggressive behaviour. Additionally, social media is sometimes used to glorify or promote violent or aggressive behaviours. However, it is important to keep in mind that media is quite often used in positive ways, such as awareness to raise issues about events that are happening in the world or promote positive messages and behaviours. Therefore, while media can cause aggression for some people, it does not necessarily influence everyone negatively. As with lots of things in life, moderation and critical thinking are key when it comes to consuming media, and it is important to understand the potential effects of how it can affect on behaviour and wellbeing.

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