

# Scientific journal summary essay

[Entertainment](#), [Journalism](#)



Leonard Eron is an expert when it comes to the “ effects of television on aggressive behavior” in children (48). Since television was introduced, an increase in the violent and aggressive nature of young children has risen. Eron has been researching this subject for most of his 40 academic years. Eron used the correlational research of, “ over 25 years of scientific research on media violence and aggression,” (48) to help develop the hypothesis of his study on aggressive children. Eron postulated that more aggressive children watch more violent television than non aggressive children.

Eron’s methodology took into account such things as social status, independent variable of violence on television and dependent variable of the children’s aggressiveness. The empirical evidence gathered by Eron concluded that television does cause aggressiveness in children. The results of Eron’s study clearly shows that aggression level in children does increase with the violence they watch on television. In addition, Eron’s study gave the pundits the necessary evidence needed to draw strong conclusions and form a model for academic and governmental debates. Eron discovered through the 700 child participants in the study, that his hypothesis is supported by the outcome of the evidence measured.

The findings from Eron’s study have given contemporary researchers a strong basis to develop more complex experiments with current statistically significant tests in the behavioral sciences. The implication of the pioneering work in the field of television violence on children of Leonard Eron is a testament that psychology is moving in the right direction. Media Report Evaluation.

In a 1995 television segment titled “ Does TV Kill,” on the show Frontline, Leonard Eron is quoted as saying, “ we found that the more violent the programs that kids watched at home, the more aggressive they were in school. ” In addition, Eron testified in front of the 1999 Senate Committee hearings into television violence, an extension of the Frontline segment, where his work and forty years of behavioral science research found that they have, “ validated the causal connection between the observation of television violence and the subsequent violent behavior of young viewers, with a significant carryover into adulthood” (Testimony 1999). Fourteen years previous to his senate committee testimony, and nine years before the Frontline program, Eron conducted an experiment titled, Television and the aggressive child.

How accurate is the Frontline story in relation to Eron’s original study? Al Austin, the correspondent on the Frontline story, did a good job amalgamating Eron’s study into a good piece of investigative journalism. Austin, like Eron, took surveillance observation of third graders and studied the relation between TV violence and aggression. Austin linked the studies to over 3000 other similar research stories. Although Austin’s study was not scientific, he found a connection to increased aggressive behavior in children after watching violence on TV.

In both cases, Austin and Eron, the conclusion was similar: Watching television violence does increase the aggressive behavior of children. It is easy to suggest that Austin could have presented his results and their significance more appropriately; however, in complex studies, such as the

ones previously mentioned, a definitive answer does not come in one testing. The answer to this type of complex question comes from empirical evidence accumulated over many years of experimentation. Austin and Eron are mere building blocks to a greater understanding. Research Proposal Abstract The next step in the research process on television aggression in children should include the isolation of children from different social classes.

The conceptual framework from Eron's study may be expanded to the study of children who live in poverty, and are exposed to violence on television (TV), to see if they are more likely to engage in aggressive behavior than wealthy children exposed to the same situation. A study of two separate elementary schools, one from a poor neighborhood and one from a wealthy neighborhood, will be undertaken. The subjects will be observed in a true experiment using a 2X2 factorial design. The children will be separated into two groups, according to their economic wealth, and will be monitored on aggression levels in relation to watching violent versus non-violent television. The findings from this study should lead to the conclusion that a higher concurrence of aggressive behavior comes from the children of poverty after exposure to violence on television. Does Television Violence Cause More Aggression in Children Who Live in Poverty? When exposed to violence on TV, do poor children show more aggression after watching a TV program(s) than wealthy children? A study on chronic exposure to violence and poverty (Greene, 1993), may show a link to heightened aggression in poor children who watch violence on TV. Further studies, such as (Singer, 1999), document the violent nature youth have in North America. Singer's

study shows that physical aggression and violent behavior are frequent and pervasive in children's lives.

Singer concluded that exposure to violence on TV was consistently associated with children's aggressive behavior. An article in *Social Work Journal* (Lazar, 1994) chronicled why social work should care about children exposed to TV violence. In Lazar's article he connected television violence to the heightened presence of other aggressive interactions such as home, neighborhood and school violence.

Further consideration on this topic comes from the *Pre-School Children's Journal Report* (Pillow and Stephen, 1997), in relation to the perceptual intake of a child knowing another person's knowledge. If a three to four year old child knows what another person may be thinking, is it not logical to conclude that children will not pick up aggressive behavior from violent TV shows? These examples are why psychologists should be worried about the aggressive television shows that young children watch. The 2X2 factorial design experiment is a good way to measure if the aggression level in poor versus wealthy children is affected by, violent versus non-violent television programs. This study will help understand how violent TV contributes to the violent behavior of children who live in poverty. The hypothesis of this experiment is: Poor children exposed to violence on television become more aggressive than wealthy children watching the same violent shows. Method Design A 2X2 factorial design will be used in this experiment. The independent variables (IV) are social status and violence, each varied

between subjects. Each IV has two levels: wealthy vs poor (selected), non-violent vs violent (manipulated).

Two IV, with two levels each, will give four combinations of outcomes. The dependent variable will be aggression. Operational definitions will include poor, wealthy, violence level, aggression. Poor and rich children are defined by income tax bracket in the participants section (PS). Violence is defined as: Any physical action that is harmful to another person.

Aggression is defined as oral or physical abuse. The control variables consist of subjects being assigned to conditions randomly, while controlling what, when, where, and how that will keep the experiment constant (defined in the PS). A between-subjects factorial design will be used in this experiment. Separate groups of eight will experience each condition.

The experiment requires 32 subjects to get eight responses to each of the four conditions. A between-subjects design is used because: 1. Subject (selected) variable is used. 2. Irreversible behavior (manipulated variable) is present. Participant Subjects The children selected will be from the third to eighth grade, male and female, of a mixed ethnic background.

The children will come from the same city. Parental participation will include classification of income and a signed consent form. Experimental proposal will be distributed to all participating schools that outline the procedures and ethics of the experiment. Thirty two children will be randomly selected from these schools with one seven year-old, six in each age group between eight and twelve, and one thirteen year-old. Eight boys and eight girls from poor

incomes, and eight boys and eight girls from wealthy incomes will be participants.

**Materials** A video camera to record the actions of the children from behind a two-way mirror will be used. The camera will use continuous sampling. A parabolic mike (for interpreting types of behavior) and a pencil and paper (for writing down transferable data from recording) will also be used.

A comfortable living room setting with a television, DVD, and selected material to watch will be necessary. **Procedure** The experiment will be for five days, one week, three hours a day. A chosen elementary school attendant will visit the children for two days before the experiment at the designated research site so both will become comfortable with the other. The hours of the experiment will run from 9: 00am to 12: 00pm. One hour of play time will start the session. The children, in their chosen groups, will then watch one hour of TV.

The final hour will have the children play together again. Video and parabolic recording will take place in the first and third hour. Data will be assessed and interpreted on a daily basis. Parents will be allowed to watch the experiment from behind the two way mirror. **Discussion** When the effect of violence depends on social status there will be an interaction. Specifically, violence reduces the aggression level of wealthy children, but increases aggression level of poor children.

A chart, in a real experiment, would show that poverty does raise the level of violence in poor children, in comparison to the wealthy children, when

watching violent TV shows. The experiment does have some weaknesses: 1. A between-subjects design limits the validity of the experiment.

2. An interaction shows that one variable depends on the level of the other. Nonetheless, The data, and numerous other experiments done in this field, will support this experiment and the hypothesis that there is a concern that aggression does increase in poor children when watching violent TV shows. Psychologists and psychiatrists would benefit by using the results of this study to diagnose and treat poverty stricken, overly aggressive, young children. References Eron, L.

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