

Media violence literature review

[Sociology](#), [Violence](#)



Introduction

Aggression is hostile behavior aimed at causing physical or psychological harm. Aggression can be indirect or direct, verbal or physical and active or passive.

There are several social factors that cause aggression. These factors include media violence, Stereotype and social identity, threat Collective narcissism, Status, competition and mating motives personal characteristics, cultural factors direct provocation and frustration among others.

When an individual watches media, observational learning takes place. This brings the indication that excessive exposure to media violence increases probability of any individual to behave aggressively. (Barbara et al, 2010). Metaanalysis and reviews have indicated that this effect is felt both in short run and long run.(Anderson et al). In observational learning, one acquires cognitive structures which make an individual to exhibit behavior similar to the one observed. The characters heroic aggressive action instigates the entire process.

Several professional groups have addressed the relevance of media violence. For example a health summit held by public health and medical professionals on July 26th, 2000 came to conclusion that, “ entertainment violence can lead to increases in aggressive attitudes, values, and behaviors particularly in children”.

Extensive research on violent films, televisions and video games have asserted that media violence increases likely hood of violent behavior and aggression in long term and immediate context (Anderson et al., 2003)

Research has further asserted that continuous exposure to violence reduces restless arousal in response to practical violence. This means that the longer the time one spends watching violent movies the less one becomes emotionally responsive to all sorts of violence. Koriat and

Lazarus (1972). Inadition they show little sympathy to victims of violence because their mental orientation has been altered. When a person engages in playing violent games and emerges the winner the more likely that person will be involved in violence in real world. This may be due to the fact that they play these games habitually and it becomes part of their life.

Watching violent pornography in many cases triggers aggression behavior. (Baron 2006). This violent phonographic media has more effect than normal violence due to the emotional involvement and sexual arousal. This aggression is mainly shown by men towards women.

Stereotype and social identity threat

A stereotype can be regarded as a generally held mental image by a group of people or a social class. Stereotype threat is a state in which individuals are in risk of confirming negative stereotype for ones group. Coping with stress associated with stereotype threat leaves an individual in a depleted vulnerable state. Under these circumstances, individuals may not exercise full self control mechanisms. It is also possible that individuals are judged

according to negative stereotypes of the groups they belong. The stereotypes affect performance of individuals in cases where they consider these stereotypes targeting their group. The situation is worsened by other environmental factors. In this case, individuals realize that they are vulnerable to depression due to their social identity. They feel as victims of social identity threat.

Walton and Cohen (2007). Individuals maintain positive discernment of the groups they belong. The positive perception of the group is sometimes challenged resulting to social identity threat which may be manifested in terms of negative emotions. Sometimes they feel that their groups are evaluated negatively. In this case, they feel that their social identity is being threatened. (Inzlicht and Kang, 2010).

Threats due to stereotypes and social identity have greater influence. They result to aggression, affect decision making, eating habits and level of attention. Individual appraisal to the social identity and stereotype threat results to emotional, behavioral, physiological and cognitive reactions that can be distinguished based on reflex and non reflexive behaviors. Once individuals make an appraisal to the identity threat, they are accompanied by series of reflexive stress responses. The involuntary reactions are followed by voluntary strategies for coping with the stress. Individuals act towards disconfirming the negative stimulus. Steele and Aronson (1995). They react to possible act of failing their groups by containing their thoughts and disown unpleasant feelings. (Inzlicht and Kang, 2010).

Stereotype threat reduces individual's ability to exercise self control to tempting situations or in managing stress. Stress in many times is implied by inner or outer directed aggression. Self control failure due to stereotype threat would lead to aggression. Self control is a mental energy that is used to override emotions, desires and reflexive response tendencies. It is an exhaustible and a limited resource. Muraven and Baumeister (2000). Coping with stereotype threat put pressure on the self control, however, the self control is a limited resource. Coping with stereotype threat is depleting and therefore leaves people with less volitional resources to deal with task. This extends to non stereotyped task. Improper coping strategies can result to maladaptive behaviors and reactions. The way individuals deal with threat is what contributes to spillover.

Aggressive impulses are kept under check by self control. Whenever the self control is depleted, these impulses are left uncontrolled resulting to aggressive behaviors. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990). Individuals will be more aggressive when they have a prior experience with the stereotype threat. A research by Inzlicht and Kang indicated that the more people they care about the stereotype threat, they have a high likely hood of being more aggressive towards their groups. This is accounted by the improper mechanism for coping with the stereotype threat, which results to self control failure. (Inzlicht and Kang, 2010).

Collective narcissism

Collective narcissism involves individuals investing in idealistic beliefs of group greatness. It reveals how individuals are influence by the feeling of the

groups they belong in aggression to other groups. Narcissism can predict intergroup aggression and apparent threat from external groups, partiality of military aggression to social dominance. It is related to collective self and group esteem. Collective narcissism is linked to aggressiveness through perceived threats from other groups and expected insult from these external groups. Collective narcissism is an expansion of individual narcissism; this is an extension to the self aspects of social life. The in-group which the individual belongs is idealized rather than the individual. Collective narcissism and individual narcissism are related. This is because the self concepts result from the individual self and identities that are obtained from the group setting. Individual idealization is followed by the in-group idealization.

High self esteem enables individuals to have a positive evaluation of their group, unlike those with low self esteem. Gaertner and Gramzow (2005). Collective narcissism predicts that people should recognize individual and in-group greatness. (Eidelson et al, 2009).

Group narcissistic idealization may be seen as a means of protecting ego that has been weakened and threatened. Adorno (1998). This concept of narcissism emerges from cultural and social contexts, where individual identify with their groups. It socializes and reduces individual ego to prioritize their group, emotions, attention and actions in their lives. Lipset and Raab (1970). Individual narcissism accounts for individual actions and attitudes, while collective narcissism can predict in-group actions and attitudes. (Eidelson et al, 2009).

Individual narcissism is related to interpersonal hostility and aggression. Threatened egoism theory asserts that it contributes to brutal and aggressive reactions to perceived frustrations. This may be due to unfair treatment, insults, criticism and doubts. As a means of protecting the ostentatious self image, individuals result to interpersonal aggression. Narcissists are highly belief on their opinion and they expect others to submit to their opinions. In this way, they need constant substantiation to their unrealistic self greatness. In so doing they face their self image is threatened. Baumeister et al. (1996). Individual narcissist has high unstable self esteem. This makes them vulnerable to sudden emotional drops resulting to heightened sensitivity leading to ego threats. This is replicated in hostile reactions. Kernies (1993). It associated to emotional and motivational function limiting development of interpersonal relations. In addition, is related to subjective well being. (Eidelson et al, 2009).

According to the threatened egotism theory, asserts that there is a link between retaliatory and individual aggression. On the other hand, collective narcissism accounts for intergroup aggression and brutal reaction. Collective narcissists invest highly emotionally on the image of their group. The image requires constant validation from within the group and outside or outer groups. It therefore subject to internal and external criticism. To protect the group image, those affiliated to the group result to intergroup aggression and hostility. Collective narcissist responds violently and aggressively to criticism and situations that seem to threaten the groups positive image. They see treatment in an intergroup context as an unfair and unjust. This is because they do not find any treatment good for the in-group. To them,

forgiving and forgetting of previous insults is unrealistic. They keep perfect history of wrong doings of other outer groups. This makes them to hold prejudice to outer groups. They prefer brutal and coercive reactions in inter group disagreements. They foresee intergroup situations as being full of conflict. (Eidelson et al, 2009).

Status, competition and mating motives

Status and mating motives can influence women and men's aggressive behaviors. It is possible that mating goals underlie behaviors such as aggression, altruism or creativity. Griskevicius et al. (2007). According to evolution, aggression of human beings is highly affected by social context. It is shaped by sexual and natural selection. Aggression has a long history of evolution. Human remains having hallmarks of piercing weapons have been dug out. Humans carefully evolve to aggress. Aggression endures the possibility of retaliation that may result to injury.

Aggression may promote or decrease the chances of survival. Evolution theories suggest that may have evolved as a means of self defense against external threats. In addition, it's functional in acquiring essential property such as food, tools or land.(douglas et al. , 2009).

Physical aggression may be used to enhance survival, but, some people exhibit this behavior even when they are sure that they will not get any survival benefit. This can be exhibited by people who fight with someone due to a simple insult. This kind of behavior does not enhance survival in any way.

Sexual selection entails choosing of partners of the opposite sex and the competition to access between members of the opposite sex. The male sex is more aggressive and competitive. Sexual selections can account for the differentiated aggression in humans, though not the only source of explanation. The male sex is more competitive due to their low parental investment. They contribute very little towards enhancing chances of survival of offspring's. Ecological constraints determine extend to which a specific sex competes and monopolizes the access to the other opposite sex. Emlen and Oring (1977). The fundamental principle in evolution is the analysis of costs and benefits of reactions or behaviors are determined by natural selection. The male sex only derides success through effective reproduction and the associated costs due to injuries. Few resources can engage a man in challenge and risk injuries in possible encounters, in order to have successful mating. Daly and Wilson (1990). Female sex access to mates depends very little on within-sex competition. They have a lot to lose in reproductive fitness in destructive confrontations. (John, 2009).

Physical aggression presents more difference in sexes than for direct verbal aggression. In direct aggression present less danger in attracting immediate retaliation. Men in most cases engage in aggression than women, however this is only incase of face to face confrontation. Women engage in less costly types of aggression. In this case, they compete for status and mates. Women have a high desire to retaliate using indirect aggression as opposed to direct aggression. Griskevicius et al. (2007).

Cultural factors

Some cultural beliefs condone some degree of aggression. In some communities men are expected to show aggression resulting from infidelity in the family. In these communities it is widely acceptable for a person to behave aggressively when stated behavior is prohibited. This allowance and mental orientation cause one to behave aggressively because his or her consciousness is clear on how to react on occurrence of certain behavior. (Baron, 2006).

Personal characteristics

There are two types of individuals in the society i. e. type A and type B. type A people are the ones who set for themselves high standards to achieve, they feel jealous on achievement of another person, they keep time strictly. This people are more likely to express aggression behavior to any one who stands on their way. While type B may never behave aggressively due to their character, for example, they don't strictly keep time their fore they can condone others who may illustrate same behavior. (Baron, 2006).

Frustrations

The frustration aggression hypothesis suggests that all frustrations may not trigger aggression except unjustified aggression. The amount of aggression demonstrated by individual relates directly to the amount of frustrations experienced. Dollard et al, (1993).

When an individual does not achieve required objective and he expects some punishment out of the failure then such person may act aggressively depending on the level of expected punishment. (Baron, 2006).

Direct provocation

Extinction transfer theory proposes that an arousal produced in certain field can easily persist and intensify emotional reaction which occurs later.

When a person is directly provoked he or she may feel bitter about it but fail to respond immediately. Such person may then later behave aggression towards another provocation some days later. (Baron, 2006).

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