

# Example of egl 1010: composite 1 research proposal

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



## **Aggressive Behavior Influence by Media Violence**

Listening to news these days, it is easy to notice that there has been an increase in teenage violent behaviors, which has led me to conclude that the increase in media violence has a hand in the aggressive behaviors of teenagers. Recently, the topic of aggression and aggressiveness became widely discussed at various levels. In addition, among psychologists, there are held many conferences, symposia on the topic. The problem of studying aggression became the subject of many studies. There has been an increase in mass school shootings, drive by shootings, rape and senseless killings of teenagers. An example of some school shootings, according to Newman, is the Oregon school shooting in Portland, the Sandy hook school shooting, the Columbine High school shooting and the Perry Hall high school shooting. This increase in teenage aggressive behavior is a result of increase in media of violence, which has led parents, instructors, elected officials, and mental health professionals to believe that aggressive behaviors are influenced by various television programs, or violent video games. Beresin implied that teenagers who have familiarity to media violence are at great risk and susceptible to aggressive behavior. Thus, the question, how can these media influences be controlled to save the lives of a future generation? This paper will prove that there can be a solution that is practicable and realistic.

But first, it is necessary to define the main concepts. The term " aggression" has long existed in different languages; however, the importance attached to it has not always been the same. Prior to the beginning of the XIX century, it meant any active aggressive behavior, both friendly and hostile.

Subsequently, the meaning of the word changed, became narrower. Under

the aggression, people began to understand the hostile behavior in relation to the surrounding people.

Thus, aggression can be defined as any behavior that contains a threat or prejudicial to the other. Certain actions can be classified as aggression if they include the intent offense or offenses, and not just leading to such consequences. Still, the term aggression can be narrowed down to attempting to inflict bodily or other physical damage. Overall, aggression is any form of behavior aimed at insulting or causing harm to another living being, not wanting such treatment.

Human tendency to aggressive actions can be explained differently. One of the first points of view emerged, according to which in animals and in humans, there is an innate instinct of aggression. Freud pointed to the instinctive basis of human desire for destruction, considering attempts to stop this process fruitless. Human aggression has its evolutionary and physiological roots. Among the physiological factors of aggression, there are sex hormones.

According to the theory of frustration, aggression is not automatically appearing in the depths of the body's desire, but is a consequence of frustration, i. e., obstacles in the way of targeted actions of the subject, or not reaching the condition, to which he/she aspired. This theory argues that, firstly, the aggression is always a consequence of frustration and, secondly, frustration always leads to aggression.

Another view of the origin of aggressive behavior is represented in social learning theory. For the aggressive behavior to emerge and spread to a particular object, there need to exist the first two conditions - that the

obstacles encountered on the way of purposeful activity caused a reaction of anger in the person and the second - as the cause of the obstruction was seen another person.

The most modern view of the origin of aggressive behavior is associated with cognitive learning theory. Aggressive actions are considered not only as a result of frustration, but also as a result of learning, role model to others. Aggressive behavior in this concept is interpreted as a result of these and other cognitive processes:

1. Subject's estimates of the consequences of his/her aggressive behavior as positive.
2. Presence of frustration.
3. Presence of emotional overstimulation of the affect or stress type, accompanied by internal stress of which a person wants to get rid.
4. Presence of suitable object of aggressive behavior that can relieve stress and eliminate frustration.

Speaking about the causes of aggression, there must be considered that aggression is heterogeneous in nature. It is necessary to identify different types and kinds of aggression. Firstly, let us distinguish reactive and spontaneous aggression. A number of important differences distinguishes between expressive, instrumental and hostile aggression. Expressive aggression is an involuntary burst of anger and rage, unfocused and quenched, and the source of disturbance of the peace is not necessarily being attacked.

The most important is distinction between hostile and instrumental aggression. The aim of the first is mainly harming another, while the second

is aimed at achieving the goal of a neutral character, and aggression is used here only as a means (e. g., in the case of blackmail, by educating penalty shot in the taking of hostages by bandit).

Instrumental aggression is subdivided into individually and socially motivated, and it is also possible to talk about the selfish and unselfish, or antisocial and prosocial aggression (Anderson, Gentile and Buckley 45).

Among the forms of aggressive reactions occurring in various sources, there are the following:

• **Physical aggression (attack) - the use of physical force against another person.**

- Indirect aggression - acts as a roundabout way directed at another person (gossip, spiteful jokes) and at no fury directed explosions (screaming, stamping one's feet, beating fists on the table, slamming doors, etc.).
- Verbal aggression - as an expression of negative feelings through the form (scream, quarrel), and through the content of the verbal responses (threats, curses).

• **Tendency to irritation - a willingness to exercise the slightest excited temper, sharpness, roughness.**

- Negativism - opposition demeanor, usually directed against the authority or leadership. Can grow from passive resistance to active struggle against the established laws and customs.

**Among the forms of hostile reactions, there are observed:**

- Resentment - envy and hatred towards others due to a sense of bitterness, anger at the world for real or imaginary suffering.

· **Suspicion - distrust and caution against people based on the belief that others intend to cause harm.**

The causes of aggression are very diverse. Crafted in the literature, there are several major causes of aggression in adolescents:

- Worsening social conditions of life of children;
- Crisis in family education;
- School inattention to the neuro-mental state of children.
- Many scenes of violence in the media and movies.

Aggression as well is very diverse. There are two basic types of aggressive manifestations: targeted aggression; instrumental aggression. Target aggression acts as the implementation of aggression as a pre-planned act, the purpose of which - harm or damage to the object. Instrumental aggression is committed as a means to achieve a certain result, which in itself is not an aggressive act.

**Aggressive manifestations differ in their structure:**

1. By directions:

- Aggression directed outward;
- Autoaggression - directed at oneself.

2. By purposes:

- Intellectual aggression;
- Hostile aggression.

3. According to the method of expression:

- Physical aggression;
- Verbal aggression.

4. According to the degree of severity:

- Direct aggression;
- Indirect aggression.

5. According to the presence of the initiative:

- Initiative aggression;
- Defensive aggression.

The main source of the teenage aggression is severe physical punishment and verbal humiliation, which is subjected to the child's parents and carers.

The person who is used to beatings and humiliation becomes more cynical and rude; empathy for the suffering of others becomes alien to him/her.

Eventually he will punish weaker (small animals, children and the elderly) for their many grievances. He/she will become aggressive because of the desire to avenge his/her parents, who were excessively harsh.

The second source - the media, glut of modern films and television scenes with violence and physical aggression. If the child looks very fist fights and fighters, in which the characters are killed dozens of their kind, and no one even expresses bitterness about their suffering and death, the child's ability to empathize with others is dulled. For him/her, it is becoming a norm to use force to resolve problems.

The third source is a low self-esteem of a teenager, who look up to the leader and becomes a wolf in the pack. Where everyone is - there he is. What will the leader say, then he will perform. Children with proper self-esteem are able to say, " No. Thank you, I will not go with you." These teens quietly abandon the proposed drug or cigarettes. They have their opinion, they are not afraid that they deem sissy.

The fourth source – teenagers' inherent desire to unite and show the older

generation that the time of parents passed, that there comes a new tribe, bolder, stronger, more daring, more adventurous.

The fifth source - the desire to cause delight in young girlfriend. Young people want to seem stronger and more fearless in the eyes of the beloved.

The sixth source - unconscious fear of death, which are a reminder of the old people. Teens want to live forever, to be forever young and strong!

Teenagers have inherent aversion to ugly old age.

According to the early psychoanalytic theories of Freud, many of our actions are determined by instincts, in particular - the sexual instinct. When the expression of these instincts are suppressed (frustrating), there is a need for aggression. Later scholars have extended this hypothesis of psychoanalysts frustrating aggression to the following provisions: whenever a person's efforts to achieve any goal is blocked, there is an aggressive impulse that motivates behavior in harm to the obstacle (person or object) that caused frustration.

So, what can we do to change this situation? First and foremost, parents should increase involvement in the teenager's activities. It requires a determined effort on the part of the parents and teen to want to succeed. Often we hear the older population say things like "you are what you watch." Nauert stated that teenagers find themselves leisurely spending time by watching television or playing violent games. Parents need to control what their teenagers watch so they can point out violent activities that are wrong and instantly make the correction without allowing what they see set in their subconscious minds. They immediately are able to differentiate the fantasy and reality and teach that using violence will not allow reaching the



same outcome in problem solving as portrayed by the media. So, parental support or guidance with positive role model help the aggressive teen to soften up and be more sensitive to the feelings of others.

Secondly, teaching teenagers to develop activities or hobbies that are alternative to violence, by replacing violent hobbies, such as the use of guns with non-violent hobbies that require physical endurance, such as swimming. Most times, teenager are exposed to games that deal with shooting at some imaginary enemies, or games that propel an act of stealing and eluding the law, thereby leading to imaginary reckless driving. This act is depicted in television shows such as “ The Fast and furious”, or video games like “ Resident evil”, “ Grand Theft Auto” to mention only, but a few. When it comes to violence in the media and its influence on violent behavior in young people, it is evident that violent media does indeed impact adolescent behavior.

Third, security chips to block aggressive and sensitive violent programs, and video games to aggressive youths should be installed in all new makes of Television and Game casserole. Doing this will not only restrict what aggressive teens do, but it will help establish more control of media access to Teens at risk. Every household has a television, and most teenagers have TVs in their rooms, which makes it possible for them to play game consoles. Most of the games and television shows that teenagers watch are about killing, horror, and shooting. Moreover, they watch it without parental control to monitor the content. As teenagers and children continue to watch or play the television show and games, they begin to adjust to what they see and their thoughts are full of violence as they try to win the game. In addition,

they become less sensitive to observing pain and empathy for others as inferred that media violence is an instigator of violent behavior (Nauert). Lastly, allowing aggressive teenager to voice his/her feelings and attitude towards violent movies, or games can help guide parent to seek professional help at an early stage to avoid an in-built of aggressions.

Though some people may argue that the media does not encourage violence, but instead helps those who are antisocial to live up (Emmons). Teenagers look up to television programs as a role model and view it as a guide to life, as some of the channels show similar situations to the ones the viewer faced, such as bullying. Emmons views television as an up-to-date information vehicle, it presenting the rational of vision of the world and having the ability to be a culturally inspiring force. In movies and television shows, the protagonist, or “ the good guy”, is often portrayed as using violence to defeat the antagonist (bad guy) for justice. In video games, the players have to fight against the opponents in order to reach to the next level, by playing as the hero of the game, or using their first point of view. That makes the player think that what they are doing to the opponent is right, without being thoughtful about the opponent. Although the hero uses violence as a way to solve the problem, the games do not punish the hero facing the consequences for their actions, but rather the picture of a villain is endlessly imprinted in their minds.

They need to understand that because the hero was not punished for using violence, it does not mean that teenagers will not be punished for their own actions. In reality, if teenagers fight with one another, both of them are wrong and get equally punished, in regards of who started a fight, because

one of them chose to fight, and the other one chose to fight back.

Therefore, it is evident that checking the content and setting controls of television, internet, and video games can help limit the violent intake for viewers. Emmons suggests using tools, such as a V-Chip, which can block the content that is not suitable for young viewers in both television and game systems. In addition, it is a good idea to have the television and video game consoles in the living room instead of the bedroom, because parents are not aware of what their child watch in private. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) advises that parents should talk with their children about violence in the shows they watch, and limit their time on watching such programs.

Instead of watching programs that feature violence as a positive influence for teenagers, we should have programs that have little to no violence, use verbal communication (or talking) as a way to solve conflicts (also censoring vulgar language), and show a mutual understanding.

The problem of aggression in the modern world, especially in the context of breaking the established values and traditions and the formation of new ones, are extremely important, both from the point of view of science, as well as from the perspective of social practice. The importance of adolescence lies in the fact that it lays the foundation and outlines the general direction of formation of the moral and social attitudes of the individual.

In adolescence, one of the types of deviant behavior is aggressive behavior, which often takes the form of a hostile (fights, insults). For some adolescents that participate in the fights, the statement themselves with their fists is a

well-established line of conduct. The essence of teenage aggression make their peculiar to this age and certain psychological characteristics - behavioral models, specific adolescent behavioral responses to environmental influences. The situation is aggravated by the instability of society, interpersonal and intergroup conflict, as well as, of considerable importance to the occurrence of aggression in the media for adolescent children.

Most of the children in a matter of seconds can copy favorite movie hero or leader of some popular TV shows, sing rhyming advertising or tell what they learned from the media. Media offers materials for all tastes: entertainment, culture, news, sports, education, etc. They are an integral part of our lives and teach us a lot, including aggressive behaviors, and may develop fear and anxiety.

Overall, despite the fact that it is virtually impossible to keep violent teenagers in the make-believe bubble, I am confident that applying the above-mentioned steps would yield a positive outcome in controlling aggressive behaviors in teenagers, limiting the extent of their behavior and redirecting the energy into favorable outcome. The most important tool for a positive outcome is undeniably parental involvements that surely help in cocktailing an unwanted behavior.

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