
The Impact of Media Violence on Adolescent Behavior

The world we live in thrives on media use; it is useful in all aspects of life. Children spend lots of time watching television, playing video games, listening to music and using the internet. The average U.S child spends about four and a half hours listening to music, four and a half hours watching television or movies and seven hours a day on social media. Media violence is a threat to adolescents and it increases violence and aggression. "Exposure to violence in media, including television, movies, music, and video games, represents a significant risk to the health of children and adolescents. Extensive research evidence indicates that media violence can contribute to aggressive behavior, desensitization to violence, nightmares, and fear of being harmed." While many think that violent media doesn't have an impact on adolescents because it isn't real, adolescent behavior is in fact affected by aggressive media.

Digesting violent or aggressive activity regularly negatively affects a child's subconscious mind. Repeatedly viewing such behaviors embed certain ideas in the subconscious mind to be considered good, even if it is not. People and Society explain how to positively impact a child's subconscious mind, "Children are very receptive during these ages (zero to eight) when their right brains are active and their left brains - which includes critical thinking - are not yet fully functional. It is during those formative years that subconscious mind programming naturally occurs. It is how people sabotage their success the hurtful words." One's subconscious mind is their auto function, it allows one to breathe, holds fight or flight mechanisms, and beliefs. Children and adolescents shouldn't view violent media because they will, in turn, develop the skill of being aggressive towards others.

Adolescents that are exposed to violent movies repeatedly are exposed to scenes and images that could lead to desensitization. Many individuals don't think about the effect of violent movies, but these movies have been known to lead to bullying or violent behavior. Dafna Lemish (Tel Aviv University) conducted a study on the effect of watching the World Wrestling Federation (WWF) "Children aged 7-12 years evaluated their own and their peers' behaviour. Those who watched WWF were thought to be more violent in school, and those children already predisposed to violence were more likely to imitate the behaviour they saw on television." In the short term, media violence (more specifically movies) contributes to aggression but only about 5-10% of children's aggression. Normalizing cruel and violent behavior, makes the children lose sympathy for themselves or others.

Some adolescents do not understand that what they are watching is fiction and believe they should relate it to their lives. They are inclined to act out what they are viewing, even though they have a sense of morality when one is shown that violence is okay all sense of morality

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goes out the door. “A staged fantasy, a concept that many children have difficulty comprehending because they lack the cognitive and literacy skills necessary to interpret what they are seeing.” Because it’s difficult for them to comprehend what’s happening, they act on what they’ve seen in their lives. In turn, violent movies or television shows have a negative impact.

Music plays a key role in the socialization of children and adolescents. Popular music is present almost everywhere and is easily accessible via radio, various records, the internet, and new technologies, enabling teenagers to hear it in a variety of settings and circumstances, alone or with friends. Over the years, particularly in certain genres, songs have become more overt in their references to alcohol, sex, and violence. As with popular music, the interpretation and impact of music-video messages are important because research has shown that exposure to violence, sexual messages, sexual stereotypes, and the use of abusive substances in music videos that result in significant changes in young viewers' behaviors and attitudes. Songs with violent lyrics increase aggression-related thoughts and emotions, and according to a new study published by the American Psychological Association (APA), this effect is directly related to the violence in the lyrics. Iowa State University and the Texas Department of Human Services conducted a study that uses seven violent songs and eight non-violent songs to examine their effects on adolescents,

Violent songs led to more aggressive interpretations of ambiguously aggressive words, increased the relative speed with which people read aggressive vs. nonaggressive words, and increased the proportion of word fragments that were filled in to make aggressive words. The violent songs increased feelings of hostility without provocation or threat, according to the authors, and this effect was not the result of differences in musical style, specific performing artist or arousal properties of the songs.

Constantly listening to violent music speeds up the rate at which your brain reads aggressive words rather than non-aggressive words. Violent music increases the feelings of real-world implications and aggressive thoughts. The violent song produced higher levels of state hostility rather than the non-violent songs. These numbers measure brain waves and heart activity; Researchers use these two numbers to measure if you're having aggressive thoughts. If the number is above five then you're having more aggressive thoughts, but if the number is below five you're having less aggressive thoughts.

Music industry signs artists who promote violence intentionally as a way of corrupting youth minds. “An anonymous email was sent out to various members of the music and publishing industries giving an account of a meeting where it was determined that hip-hop music would be manipulated to drive up privatized prison profits.” (Homeboy Sandman) In turn, adolescents then begin to act out and proceed to take part in criminal activities which inevitably leads them

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to prison. The prisons that the adolescents go to are private; private prisons compensated based on their inmate population. People in the music industry own stock in private prisons. Inevitably making money off these individuals.

Violent video games have a significant role in the gaming industry. 85% of the video games on the market contain violence. They have become one of the most popular forms of entertainment. Throughout the years the games have become more gory and aggressive. For instance, Grand Theft Auto features protagonists involved in organized crime. Studies have shown that moderate aggressive behavior can be triggered by playing violent games. Therefore, there is always a possibility that young people who develop a habit of playing violent games will become violent or aggressive. A policy statement released in 2015 by the American Psychological Association (APA) stated that “playing violent video games contributes to more offensive moods and attitudes and detracts from the players' sense of empathy and responsiveness to violence.”

Mass shootings that have taken place in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio. Video games were identified as one of the causes of mass shootings in the U.S. Concern about video game violence raised after the shooting at Columbine High School in 1999 because teen gunmen first learned to play the arcade shooting game 'Doom.' This had induced California to ban the sale of violent video games to adolescents. In 2011 a decision that overturned California's ban on selling violent video games to minors, the Supreme Court analyzed evidence, with Justice Antonin Scalia questioning, a correlation between games and violence. A year later, after the tragedy of the Sandy Hook Elementary School, 20 boys and six teachers were murdered, the issue arose again. In 2018 a massacre a video game tournament Jacksonville, Florida. Unfortunately, there is no hard evidence that violent video games lead to mass shootings. There is a correlating pattern the more adolescence or children play and experience violent video games they've been connected back to their lives allowing them to bring real violent into the world.

Some believe it's sad and hypocritical that critics demonize popular music and video games as the source of 'youth violence.' Phillip Gaush believes that the mass shootings that have taken place are our Westernized societies fault

Individuals like the boys who massacred students at Columbine and other US schools are a product of our violent, vengeful society, which blames “violent” media for inciting these actions. In essence, the pundits seem to be drawing blame away from our own sick Western society in the same way that they have blamed drugs, relaxed sexual behavior, and even political radicalism for similar societal problems.

This statement is false. Yes our society creates and puts out violent video games but what

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parents allow their children to play and view is solely the parents responsibility therefore blaming the “community” isn’t an option. Furthermore, though there is no hard evidence many of the massacres are linked with the shooting playing a deadly video game before inevitably going out to kill numbers of innocent individuals. Gerard Jones states his opinion on desensitization, and how he doesn’t believe its harmful to adolescents,

After researchers consistently failed to demonstrate that violent entertainment causes violent behavior, some psychologists put forth the “desensitization” idea. It supported the preconceptions of people who wanted to believe that violent entertainment was harmful, and it had the advantage of being harder to disprove than the old causal hypothesis. But with time, the clinical and statistical information shows that the concept of desensitization doesn’t hold up well, either.

This statement is false. Cartoon press violence imagery desensitizes adolescents to the reality of physical pain and violence, promoting the idea that death seems to be just entertainment. Media violence includes far more 'dangerously destructive' messages than supportive 'natural' messages. Media violence is a threat to adolescents and is increases violence and aggression.

Today’s society thrives on media use, in every aspect of life. Media violence is dangerous to adolescents developing minds and it increases violence and aggression. Digesting violent or aggressive activity regularly negatively affects a child’s subconscious mind. Repeatedly viewing such behaviors embed certain ideas in the subconscious mind to be considered good, even if it is not. Adolescents that are exposed to violent movies repeatedly are exposed to scenes and images that could lead to desensitization. Adolescents relate violence in movies back to their lives and are inclined to act out what they are viewing, even though they have a sense of morality when a child is shown that violence is okay they lose their morality. Songs with violent lyrics increase aggression-related thoughts and emotions, this effect is directly related to the violence in the lyrics. Violent music increases the feelings of real-world implications and aggressive thoughts. Music industry signs artists who promote violence intentionally as a way of corrupting youth minds. Therefore, there is always a possibility that young people who develop a habit of playing violent games will become violent or aggressive. Unfortunately, there is no hard evidence that violent video games lead to mass shootings, but there is a correlating connection between the two.

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