

THE ROLE OF VIOLENT MEDIA EXPOSURE ON YOUTH VIOLENCE AND
AGGRESSION

Stephanie Hammock-Dillard
B.S., California State University, Sacramento, 2007

PROJECT

Submitted in partial satisfaction of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

at

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

SPRING
2011

THE ROLE OF VIOLENT MEDIA EXPOSURE ON YOUTH VIOLENCE AND
AGGRESSION

A Project

by

Stephanie Hammock-Dillard

Approved by:

_____, Committee Chair
Maura O'Keefe, Ph. D., LCSW

Date

Student: Stephanie Hammock-Dillard

I certify that this student has met the requirements for format contained in the University format manual, and that this project is suitable for shelving in the Library and credit is to be awarded for the Project.

_____, Graduate Coordinator
Teiahsha Bankhead, Ph.D., LCSW

Date

Division of Social Work

Abstract

of

THE ROLE OF VIOLENT MEDIA EXPOSURE ON YOUTH VIOLENCE AND
AGGRESSION

by

Stephanie Hammock-Dillard

Youth violence is very serious and needs to be addressed. With the rise of technology and our heavy reliance on technology more youth are being exposed to violent media. This project examined the role of violent media exposure on youth violence and aggression. This project aimed to examine if frequent exposure to violent media and lack of parental supervision and monitoring correlated with behavior problems and aggression in youth. Data for this project derived from study participants who were parents of children between the ages of 4 to 18. Study findings indicate that there was a significant correlation between violent media exposure and youth violence and aggression. A significant correlation was also found between lack of parental monitoring of violent media and youth violence and aggression. Based on data collected, this researcher was able to conclude that

frequent exposure to violent media and lack of parental monitoring and supervision can have an impact on youth violence and aggression.

_____, Committee Chair
Maura O'Keefe, Ph. D., LCSW

Date

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I would like to thank God for allowing me to pursue my dreams and to have the drive to get through this graduate school experience and thesis completion.

Secondly, I would like to thank my loving and supportive husband Jesse for being my rock these past two years of this graduate school experience. Thank you for your patience, love, and support, I could not have done this without you. Thank you for holding down the fort and being a provider while allowing me to chase my dreams.

To my parents words can not express how much you mean to me. Thank you for always teaching me to follow my dreams and pursue higher education.

Thank you to my friends and family that have prayed for me and wished me well during this journey. Thank you for being a shoulder to lean on and being understanding when I had school obligations. I love you guys.

Lastly, thank you to my thesis advisor for all the help, guidance, and assistance for this project. You have been a joy to work with and I respect your knowledge and expertise of research, you are awesome.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Acknowledgments.....	vi
List of Tables	ix
List of Figures	x
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
The Problem.....	1
Purpose of Study	3
Research Questions.....	3
Background of the problem	3
Definition of Terms	6
Theoretical Framework.....	8
Assumptions.....	11
Justification	11
Limitations	12
2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE	13
Introduction.....	13
Technology Influence	14
Family dynamics and supervision.....	23
Summary	35
3. METHODOLOGY	36
Introduction.....	36
Conceptual Framework.....	36
Research Questions.....	37
Hypothesis	37
Study Design.....	37
Variables and Instrumentation	38

Study Sample	40
Data Gathering Procedures	40
Data Analysis	41
Protection of Human Subjects	41
4. DATA ANALYSIS.....	43
Introduction.....	43
Demographics	43
Media Exposure Findings	46
Supervision Findings	49
Results of Hypothesis Testing	53
Summary	55
5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	56
Conclusion	56
Implications for Social Work Profession.....	59
Review of Findings and Relevance	61
Recommendations.....	62
Appendix A. Consent to Participate in Research Study	66
Appendix B. Study Questionnaire	69
References.....	75

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1. Table 1 Socio/Demographics of Sample	44
2. Table 2 Socio/Demographics of Child	45
3. Table 3 Media Exposure	46
4. Table 4 Violent Media Exposure	47
5. Table 5 Correlations	54

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
1. Figure 1 Does Child Play Aggressive Games	48
2. Figure 2 Does Child Have Grand Theft Auto	48
3. Figure 3 Success Supervising Media Content	50
4. Figure 4 Importance of Using Parental Controls	51
5. Figure 5 Importance of Monitoring What Child Watches	51
6. Figure 6 Importance of Not Purchasing Games That Are Not Age Appropriate	52
7. Figure 7 Importance of Not Purchasing Movies That Are Not Age Appropriate	52
8. Figure 8 Importance of Clear Rules Regarding What Child Watches on TV	53

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Youth violence and aggression has increased over the past decade. It is no longer a surprise to hear stories regarding youth committing crimes just as violent, if not more so than adults. What has happened to our youth? What factors are causing youth to engage in violent and aggressive behavior? Whether the causes are lack of parental supervision, peer pressure, or media exposure, youth violence is an important issue that needs to be addressed. Our youth are the future of our country, if we do not address and find solutions to youth violence and aggression we are at risk of becoming a more violent and aggressive society. It is up to us as a society to find ways to combat youth violence and aggression so that our youth are self-sufficient and move on to have productive lives.

The topic, the effects of exposure to violent media on youth violence and aggression, is important to this researcher because of her concern about the major influence technology has on our society. Technology has been integrated and instilled so greatly into the American lifestyle that our customs and way of life are now highly centered around the use of technology. Obesity is on the rise and it is safe to say that our lifestyle has a major influence on its growing numbers. Youth are no longer going outside for recreational activities. Instead they sit in front of the television or computer being exposed to violent media. This exposure can be in the form of watching television or movies, playing video games, or surfing the internet. Our society has allowed the media

to take the place of human interaction and youth are being exposed to larger amounts of violent media. Whether it is music videos, video games, or television, youth are bombarded with negative images several times throughout the day. It is likely that these forms of entertainment undermine youth's perceptions, attitudes, and actions.

Youth violence is very serious and needs to be addressed. According to (National Center for Injury and Prevention Control [NCIPC], 2007) 33% of youth were involved in a physical altercation one or more times within the past year. This study also showed that 30% of youth were recipients or participants of bullying. This information indicates how prevalent youth violence has become in our society which is why this topic is so relevant and important to the field of social work. American culture has changed. This change is highly influenced by the rise of technology and our heavy reliance on technology. As a result of this rise in technology, youth are exposed to two main types of media interactive visual media and passive visual media. While they both differ, the influence they both have on youth is alarming (Anderson et al., 2003). In recent years interactive visual media has dramatically increased. The rise of interactive visual media has made it more difficult for parents to monitor their child's level and amount of violent media exposure.

The present study is aimed at tackling the issue of youth violence and aggression. Specifically, it examines whether there is an association between violent media exposure and youth violence and aggression. This study focuses on not only media exposure but also on parental monitoring and supervision of media exposure. Both are extremely important to the field of social work and American society. Two theories will guide this

study: social learning theory and feminist theory. Both theories are used to better understand how critical media exposure is to the livelihood of youth.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to understand the impact, if any, violent media exposure has on youth violence and aggression. Although violent media may not cause youth violence and aggression, in this study the researcher hypothesizes that frequent exposure to violent media can be a contributing factor to youth violence and aggression. Prior research shows that youth who are exposed to violent media display more aggression than youth who are not exposed to it (Anderson et al., 2003) and this study will reexamine this association.

Research Questions

This study asks two questions:

- 1) Do children who are exposed to more violent media exhibit more behavior problems?
- 2) Does lack of parental supervision of violent media contribute to a greater likelihood of youth violence and aggression?

Background of the problem

Youth violence is very prevalent in society today and has become an increasing concern in the United States. In 2003, 5,570 youth between the ages of 10 to 24 were murdered (NCIPC, 2007). According to National Center for Injury and Prevention Control (2007) in 2004, more than 750,000 young people ages 10 to 24 were treated in emergency departments for injuries sustained due to violence. Studies also show that by

the age of 18 youth in America will have viewed 16,000 simulated murders and 200,000 acts of violence through media exposure (Congressional Digest, 1999). These figures alone are a clear indication that something must be done to protect our youth and to ensure they are living productive lives. Regardless of the risk factors involved, youth violence and aggression is a major concern and active measures must be taken to protect this population.

Society today is different than it was a decade ago. As a society, we have come to rely on technology and it has become a major component in our lifestyle. As a result, media exposure has become a part of our daily lives. The United States has a violent history (Guadalupe & Bein, 2001). As a result of this history, children have begun to mirror the behavior that has been exposed to them. As a society we have always used violence as a means for survival and a way to control others. Some examples of this form of violence are slavery, colonization, and war.

The United States is a society where those who have the power to define have the power to control (K. Guadalupe, personal communication, Spring 2010). Meaning those that are in a position of power such as politicians are controlling the lives of citizens. As a result, control has been obtained in the form of violence. No matter what the reasoning has been for the United States to engage in violence, it has always been fueled by controlling others. This view of taking charge through violence has in turned affected youth. Violence is all around youth. It is around youth by the war that our government is funding, the communities youth reside in, and the violent media youth are exposed to.

Guadalupe and Bein (2001) argue that constantly witnessing and being exposed to violence is a factor in the rise of youth violence. In addition to the violent history of our country, there are also micro issues within families and communities that can have an impact on youth violence. The way we raise our children, parental involvement, lack of supervision, and media exposure are several risk factors that can lead to youth violence and aggression (NCIPC, 2007). Constant exposure to youth violence can teach children that violence against others is acceptable. In fact, according to Anderson et al. (2003) research has shown that the likelihood of youth engaging in physical aggression is increased among youth who feel that violence against others is acceptable. This fact alone shows how much of a violent society we have become. Violence is common in America, and through violent media exposure youth are being reminded that violence is acceptable.

According to McIlhaney (2005) media exposure influences “the way children perceive their environment, their relationships, their bodies, and various risk behaviors” (p. 327). These reasons support the importance behind this study and the impact this study can have on society and the field of social work. While media exposure does not necessarily cause youth to engage in aggressive behavior, studies show that frequent exposure of violence in the media creates a risk factor for youth to engage in violence (McIlhaney, 2005; Boxer, Huesmann, Bushman, O’Brien, & Moceris, 2009).

Violent media can influence aggression in youth on a short term basis as well as a long term basis. In fact, Anderson et al. (2003) argue that exposure to violent media can cause an immediate increase in aggression in youth as well as long term tolerance and

acceptance of violence. Violent media exposure may not cause youth violence and aggression but the risk factor it has is great enough to be studied. According to Boxer et al. (2009) the relationship between violent media exposure and violence and aggression is similar to if not greater than the relationship between smoking and lung cancer. While the two examples, do not cause the end result they can heavily influence the likelihood of it occurring.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study it is important to define key terms that will be used. In order to adequately articulate the main points and ideas of this study, key terms need to be understood by all readers. The key terms are defined below.

Aggression - Any behavior that is intended to cause harm to others which includes bullying, intimidation, hitting, pushing, shoving, fighting, throwing of objects, property destruction, and use of weapons.

Bullying - The act of intimidating others that are seen as weak or lesser than. Bullying is also defined as an act of intentional aggression.

Grand Theft Auto - A popular video game series first released in 1997. This video game contains violence, sexual content, profanity, and graphic content. Grand Theft Auto is rated “M” by the Entertainment Software Review Board (ESRB). “M” stands for mature in which this game may not be suitable for youth under the age of 17.

Interactive Visual Media - Consists of video games and the internet.

Media - A means of communication such as television, video games, internet, movies, music and music videos.

Mortal Kombat - A popular fighting video game series first released in 1992. This video game contains blood, gore, and violence. The Entertainment Software Review Board (ESRB) was established as a result of the violent content in this video game. Mortal Kombat is rated “T” and “M” by ESRB depending on the series. “T” stands for teen in which this game may not be suitable for youth under the age of 13. “M” stands for mature in which this game may not be suitable for youth under the age of 17.

Parental Monitoring – The act of parents monitoring and setting rules on their child’s level of media exposure and media content. Parental Monitoring also consist of parents utilizing parental controls to block or limit their child’s access to certain forms of media.

Passive Visual Media – Consists of television, movies, and music videos.

Risk Factor - Any characteristic or experience that can increase the likelihood of a negative end result.

Violence - An extreme form of physical aggression that can seriously injure another party. Violence is also defined as physical force that can injure and cause harm to others. Examples of violence include but are not limited to assault, sexual assault, burglary, theft, robbery, and murder.

Violent Media - A means of communication such as television, video games, internet, movies, music and music videos that contains violence.

Youth/Children – Any individual under the age of eighteen.

Theoretical Framework

The main theories this study will utilize are social learning theory and feminist theory. Both theoretical frameworks will aid in a better understanding of youth violence and aggression and the effect that violent media exposure has on youth.

Social learning theory argues that behavior is learned and people learn through observation, imitating, and modeling (Bandura, 1977). Modeling refers to an individual observing an action and repeating that action based on the status of the person demonstrating the behavior. Social learning theory espouses the view that human behavior is influenced by exchanges of personal influences, behavior, and environmental factors. Behaviors and actions influence the individual in which people learn through observing and modeling. This observation can be personal experiences or observations made of others and the environment. The process of learning through observation consists of four elements which are attention, retention, production, and motivation (Robbins, Chatterjee, & Canda, 2006). Attention refers to the youth paying attention to the observed behavior. Retention refers to the youth remembering the observed behavior. Production refers to the child producing or imitation of the observed behavior. Motivation refers to having a reason to imitate the observed behavior.

Due to the high status of the observed behavior when children are exposed to violent media it is easy for the child to master the four elements of modeling. Studies show that youth are more likely to imitate models that are high status and receive recognition and rewards for their actions (Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski, and Eron,

2003). Youth are less likely to model those that are punished for their actions. In both passive interactive media and visual interactive media characters are rarely punished for their actions, which increase the likelihood of learning violent behavior.

The positive and negative responses from observing and modeling are a part of the learning process. According to Boyle, Hull, Mather, Smith & Farley (2009) reinforcement plays a major role in learning. A positive or negative response to observed and modeled actions will determine if the occurrence will increase or decrease the likelihood of the action occurring again. It is important to note that while modeling is an important factor, the responses observed play a major role. If there is a negative response to observed actions it will most likely have a deterrent effect on the individual. If the response is positive it will reinforce the action was proper, and thus encourage the individual to model the observed action.

Social learning theory applies to this study in many ways. By observing negative images and violence through the media youth are becoming desensitized to violence. In addition to being desensitized, youth are also beginning to view violence as acceptable behavior which explains why youth violence is prevalent in society today. By constantly being exposed to violence youth are at a higher risk for becoming violent and aggressive because they can start to believe that violence is a normal part of life. Also, because there is no negative response that occurs while viewing the acts of violence youth are internalizing violence to be acceptable. Learning is accomplished by observing the behavior of others and the outcomes of those behaviors. The characters youth are exposed

to in violent media are modeling that violence is acceptable. In fact, aggression can be learned through modeling and observing others. Research suggests that children become more aggressive when they observed aggressive or violent models (Ormrod, 1999). The status and infatuation youth have of television characters makes them high status models. The higher the status the more likely the behavior will be modeled.

Another theory that supports this study is feminist theory. Feminist theory aims to raise consciousness and advocacy. This theory examines oppressive forces within society with the goals to promote consciousness-raising in order to promote change. Feminist theory also examines power blocks and social action within society. Feminist theory would argue that violence is engrained into our society and national culture due to patriarchal customs and that violence is a part of the identity of the United States (Green, 2008). In the case of youth violence and aggression it is constructed within the context of the violent country within which youth live, a country which idealizes competition and glorifies combat through the television (Guadalupe & Bein, 2001).

As a colony, American fought in a war to be free to revolt from our parent country. Brother fought brother in the war against the states. Since then there have been more wars, battles, and death; usually in the name of peace (Guadalupe & Bein, 2001). Violence is a part of the identity of the United States- feminist theorists would say that a youth's identity is not constructed within the vacuum of the family (Green, 2008). In the case of youth violence and aggression, those identities are constructed within the context of the violent country within which they live; a country which idealizes competition and

glorifies combat through the television. In the communities where violence is rampant a goal of consciousness-raising to create a cultural revolution and to lessen the extreme numbers of youth violence would be implemented.

Additionally, feminist theory believes that the person is political, and visa versa (Guadalupe & Bein, 2001). Many social policies are created by those who are marginalized populations and who do not feel the effects of that policy. The populations at higher risk for violence are often impoverished, undereducated, and raised in a setting where violence is the norm; not exactly those who are in a position to be lobbyists or legislators (NCIPC, 2007). These are also the populations where parents do not have the time or resources to supervise their media content, which increases the likelihood that they will be exposed to violent media.

Assumptions

The assumptions to be considered in this study include: 1) Youth violence is highly prevalent in the United States today; 2) Violent media exposure and parental monitoring can have a major impact on youth engaging in youth violence and aggression.

Justification

The purpose of this study is to explore the impact violent media has on youth violence and aggression. By being aware of the impact violent media has on youth it is hoped that active measures are taken to address the issue. Some active measures that this researcher desires is policy mandating and regulating violent media, more parental supervision, and the development of more age appropriate media.

The goal of this study is to also bring awareness to the issue, so that society and professionals are aware of how influential the media is on the lives of youth. Although it is clear that the media alone does not cause youth violence and aggression, we must not ignore the fact that the media is an important factor.

Parental supervision is critical to combating violent media exposure and youth violence and aggression. It is hoped that this research study motivates the participants to enforce supervision of media content and limit the amount of violent media their children are exposed to. It is also hoped that the social work profession continues to advocate for youth and continue to articulate these issues to legislators that are in control of policies that are being implemented.

Limitations

The study was conducted with a non-probability convenient sample with parents in the Sacramento area. The sample is small and only surveys parents. The participants in this may not be fully aware or knowledgeable of their children's exposure. Furthermore, this researcher is only looking at a few variables. There are a host of other variables associated with youth violence – e.g, poverty, violence in family, quality of schools and this researcher is only examining violent media exposure and parental supervision. You cannot assume causality. The findings cannot be generalized to other population

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

As a society we have failed our youth. Research supports the widespread belief that youth have become dangerously violent and active measures must be taken to keep youth and society safe (NCIPC, 2007). In fact, according to Congressional Digest (1999) youth are shooting people and engaging in violence at a much higher rate than any time in the history of our country. Our society today is different than it was decades ago. Traditional family dynamics have changed which has in turn had an effect on our youth. Through our reliance on and increased use of technology youth are being exposed to violence more frequently and as a result youth violence is on the rise.

Youth violence does not just affect youth and their families, it affects communities as well. Youth violence and aggression can cause an increase in health care, decrease property values, and disrupt social services (NCIPC, 2007). Youth violence affects society as a whole whether directly or indirectly and is greatly important to the field of social work. It is imperative that social service professionals and society as a whole take the necessary steps to combat youth violence and provide solutions for moving forward. This study is a step toward accomplishing that goal.

This study is aimed at addressing the impact the media has on youth violence and aggression. The media is very prevalent in the lives of Americans and research on this topic is vital to social services. As a society we have become consumed by the media and

technology which has its advantages and disadvantages. It is important that we are aware of the short term and long term effects the media can have on youth so that we can combat it head on.

This chapter will provide a review of existing literature pertaining to the impact the media has on youth violence and aggression. This review of literature will be organized into two sections. One section will explore technology influence on youth violence and aggression and the other section will explore family dynamics and supervision and their effects on youth violence and aggression.

Technology Influence

Years ago, technology was not a major part of our lives. In fact, the growth of technology and television did not occur until the 1950s (Anderson & Gentile, 2008). Since the 1950's technology has become a normal part of our lives, and as a result youth are being exposed to violence more frequently. The media's impact on youth violence has been an issue for several years. In fact, the United States government has conducted several studies and investigations in attempt to identify what impact the media has, if any, on youth violence and aggression (Anderson et al., 2003). The 1954 Kefauver hearings, the 1969 National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence, and the 1972 U.S. Surgeon General were all studies aimed at addressing the impact of the media society. The 1972 U.S. Surgeon General study found that televised violence does have an effect on society. According to Congressional Digest (1999) "if hypothetically, television and technology had never been developed, there would be 10,000 fewer

homicides each year in the United States” (p. 267). This article also argues that without the rise in technology “violent crime would be half of what it is” (p. 267).

Technology has had a major influence on American society. Whether it is watching television, playing video games, or the internet, technology is a major part of our lives. While the rise in technology affects everyone in society, the population that has the greatest risk is youth. Several cross-sectional studies of the effects of media exposure on youth have been conducted over the past forty years. These studies found that the present physical and verbal aggression and aggressive thoughts and attitudes of youth are related to the amount of television and film violence they watch on a regular basis (Anderson et al., 2003). In fact, the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation (Smith & Donnerstein, 2003) conducted a nationwide survey in 1999 to tackle the issue of youth violence. The study found that children spend more time playing video games and watching television, than they do studying. This is largely due to the rise in technology, in which the majority of households in America have televisions in their home. In fact, Smith and Donnerstein (2003) state, that “Nielson data reveals that 98% of the households in this country have at least one television set and 76% have more than one” (p.66). This gives children more opportunities to have the media in their lives, which may be able to explain youth violence and aggression. Studies also show that 56% of children ages 8 to 16 have a television in their rooms. Children are no longer going outdoors to engage in recreational activity; instead they are finding entertainment inside their homes with the media.

Since the 1950s several forms of media have become available to children. One particular form of media that has become a growing concern is new media (Anderson et al., 2003). New media consists of the internet and video games; media that is particular new to American society. According to Gentile, Lynch, Linder, and Walsh (2004) video game system sales have reached \$20 billion worldwide. In fact, video game sales have surpassed annual movie ticket sales (Bartholow & Anderson, 2002). Video games are a growing area of technology that many children are being exposed to. With this new form of technology children are not only being exposed to violence through television and movies, children are also being exposed to violence while playing video games.

The number of youth who play video games have increased in recent years. Studies show that 84% of youth in the United States regularly play video games (Bartholow & Anderson, 2002). According to Gentile et al. (as cited in Gentile & Walsh, 2002) American youth, age 2 to 17 play video games seven hours a week. One of the major concerns of youth who regularly play video games is the amount of aggression and violence in the type of games that they are interested in. Many of the video games that youth play are overloaded with violence and include brutal killings and fighting that produce great bodily harm as the main strategy for winning the game. Of the video games that are available 87% include some type of violence (Mierlo & Bulck, 2004). Youth who play video games select the type of game they would like to play; in which many of these games contain some form of violence. According to Heintz-Knowles (as cited in Mierlo

& Bulck, 2004) 59% of fourth grade girls and 73% of fourth grade boys have favorite games that contain violence.

An example of a video game that many youth play that involves a lot of aggression and violence is Grand Theft Auto. The characters in this game frequently engage in violent and aggressive behaviors. Some examples of the form of aggression and violence displayed in Grand Theft Auto are robberies, use of weapons, sexualized behaviors, and fighting. Children who are exposed to this form of media can be negatively affected on a short term basis as well as a long term basis. Studies show that 65% of seventh through twelfth graders reported playing the Grand Theft Auto game (Anderson & Gentile, 2008). In addition to Grand Theft Auto another popular violent video game is Mortal Combat. Since its release in the early 1990's Mortal Combat has continued to be one of the most popular video games (Bartholow & Anderson, 2002). Like Grand Theft Auto this game involves a lot of violence and aggression, in which the object of the game is to produce the best fighting moves and weapons to defeat the other opponent.

Youth who play violent video games can be at risk for violent and aggressive behavior. Video games are a growing concern because the nature in which the violence and aggression is inflicted. Video games can be more harmful to children because as opposed to youth viewing violence on television shows and movies, youth are actually executing the violence themselves in video games. In fact, youth who play violent video games must learn the violent strategies and implement them in order to win the game

(Funk, Baldacci, Pasold, & Baumgardner, 2004). The youth is in charge of the violence inflicted; they are in charge of destroying the character and using violence to defeat the game (Mierlo & Bulck, 2004). This becomes a problem because youth are being brainwashed and desensitized by video games in which they can start to believe that violence is acceptable and normal behavior. By being in control of the violence inflicted on characters in the video game youth can start to become desensitized to violence and develop the view that violence is okay if it is justified. Also by being in control of the violence inflicted youth can try to imitate these actions in real life. According to Anderson (2004) there have been several instances where a crime has been linked to video game play. School shootings, shooting sprees, sniper attacks, and mass homicides, are all crimes that have been associated with video game play.

Video games are a major factor in regard to the media's influence on youth violence and aggression. Through constant exposure to violence video games such as Grand Theft Auto and Mortal Kombat youth can begin to become desensitized to violence. Research suggests that repeated exposure to real-life and entertainment violence can have an effect on cognitive and behavioral processes, as well as lead to desensitization (Funk et al., 2004). A study by Molitor and Hirsh (1994) found that repeated exposure to violence can increase tolerance for violent behavior. Another study found that children who are repeatedly exposed to violence experience increased aggression as a result of being desensitized. Becoming desensitized is a result of repeatedly being exposed to violence in which youth start to view violence as normal

behavior. In fact, according to Werle (2006) through repeated exposure to simulated acts of violence and murders from video games youth gain the skill and desire to kill.

A study of 140 fourth and fifth grade students found that exposure to violent video games was associated with low empathy. This study also found that children with violent video game exposure and violent media exposure had stronger pro-violence attitudes (Funk et al., 2004). This means that children exposed to video games and other violent media supported the use of violence. A two year longitudinal study found that media affects youth during childhood, as well as adolescence. This study found that the more children are exposed to violent movies and cartoons during childhood and play violent video games the higher chance they have of being delinquent teenagers (Hopf, Huber, & Weib, 2008). Studies show that youth that play video games are more likely to have an increase in aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors; these youth also experience decreases in helping behavior (Anderson, 2004).

In addition to video games, other media such as television shows, the internet and movies also put youth at risk for becoming more aggressive and engaging in violence. According to Huesmann et al. (2003) children display more aggression immediately following viewing violent films and television shows. This means that due to the violent content of the media viewed children are more aggressive afterwards. Although the aggression displayed is mostly short term, constantly viewing violent television shows and films can lead to long term aggressive behavior. Huesmann et al. (2003) also explored other studies which indicated that the amount of violence youth are regularly

exposed to through television and films is related to the amount of aggression displayed by the child; the more violence they are exposed to the more aggression that is displayed. This aggression can be targeted towards humans and objects, which can explain why the number of school fights and bullying has increased in recent years (NCIPC, 2007). Youth who are frequently exposed to the media can start to perceive the world based on what they view through their media exposure (Mierlo & Bulck, 2004).

There are several risk factors for youth who are constantly exposed to violence through the media. For those youth who are affected there are short term effects as well as long term effects (Werle, 2006). Short term effects include physical aggression, verbal aggression, aggressive thoughts, and aggressive emotions (Anderson et al., 2003).

Anderson et al. (2003) also argues that long term effects can include physical assaults later in life and long term delinquent and criminal behavior. The short term effects are a result of youth imitating what they have witnessed in the media. Long term effects are learning processes that have been engrained into the minds of youth and are much more difficult to combat and address.

According to Anderson et al. (2003) a major predictor of violent and aggressive behavior as an adult, is the presence of violent and aggressive behavior as a youth. Even if the youth does not display physical aggression as a child, this does not mean that their violent media exposure may not have an impact on them once they are adults (Huesmann et al., 2003). Youth who are exposed to a large amount of television violence are at greater risk of abusing their spouse, displaying physical aggression, engaging in criminal

activities, and having many driving infractions as adults (Huesmann et al., 2003). Studies show that children who are frequently exposed to violent media have a greater risk of displaying aggression later on in life (Hopf et al., 2008). This aggression can occur in adolescence and can also occur in adulthood. Studies also show that the media is the cause of 10% of real-life violence that occurs (Stasburger, 2009).

There are several impacts that frequent media exposure can have on youth once they enter adulthood. The way youth interpret and analyze things as youth can have a major impact on them as adults. Of adults that were exposed to television violence as children the factors as a child that influenced their aggression as adults were being exposed to television violence during the ages of six through nine, indentifying with aggressive television characters that were of the same sex of them, and believing that the television violence and content was real (Huesmann et al., 2003). This study displays how long lasting violent media exposure can have on children, and the importance of monitoring what youth are being exposed to.

Research suggests that desensitization is a major factor on youth who view media violence. It is the constant viewing of violence that can lead to violence and aggression. In fact, studies show that children who are exposed to media violence take longer to ask adults for help when they view others engaging in violence than children who are not exposed to media violence (Funk et al., 2004). This shows that while the media does not cause youth to become violent and aggressive it can contribute to youth being desensitized and accepting the violent actions of others.

Although violent media exposure does not cause youth violence and aggression studies and research suggests that is a contributing factor. In fact, according to Funk et al. (2004) children who are exposed to media violence are impacted in many ways. Violence in the media demonstrates and reinforces violent actions, can cause youth to have desensitization to real-life consequences of violence, and can alter the cognitive processing of the youth. Media exposure can also affect the moral reasoning of youth, in which the moral reasoning will vary depending on the age of the child. According to Krcmar and Cooke (2001) a child's age affects their interpretation of violent media. This level of interpretation is based on the developmental capability of the child. Violent media exposure affects children at all age levels, however, the manner in which it affects them depends on their stages of development. Although violent media affects children at all age levels, children under the age of five are affected the most (Anderson et al., 2003).

The media's impact and influence on youth can not be ignored. Hopf et al. (2008) conducted a 2 year-longitudinal study on the effects of media on public school youth. The goal of this study was to attempt to analyze the causes of violent beliefs and behaviors. This study analyzed horror/violent films, violent video games, and violent television shows. The study found that early exposure to media violence is strongly linked to later delinquent behavior. This study also found that among youth age twelve to fourteen their level of violence is influenced more strongly by horror and violent films than video games. This is largely due to the fact that many youth have been exposed to horror and violent films for longer periods than violent video games. Despite these findings Hopf et

al. (2008) found that violent video games had a more lasting effect on delinquent behavior than horror and violent films. This means that while horror and violent films can influence youth immediate display of violence, violent video games have a more long term affect in regard to delinquency.

The long term effects of youth who view media violence have influenced several studies on this topic. For instance, Huesmann et al. (2003) conducted a study on the longitudinal effects of media exposure on children. This study found that childhood exposure to media violence is a strong predictor for displaying violence as a young adult. Their findings were true for both male and females. Many studies focus on males and their level of aggression and violence, however, females must be studied and examined as well. Although many males have video game systems and are exposed to a lot of violent video games, it is also important to research and understand females level of exposure to media violence as well.

Family dynamics and supervision

In addition to the surge of technology in society, family dynamics may also be a factor in youth violence and aggression. Years ago it was common to have two parents in the home, in which the female stayed home to provide for the household and the male was the financial provider. That type of family is no longer the norm, which is largely due to American becoming a more permissive society; a society where bearing children out of wedlock and being a single parent is normal. Today, it is common to have single parent households or households where both parents are employed. Also due to the cost

of living and rise in technology raising children in America today is much more difficult than it was decades ago (Ravitch & Viteritti, 2003).

Parents who are employed have less time to monitor their children which may explain the high amount of media exposure youth are exposed to (NCIPC, 2007). Single parent households also have less time to monitor their children, because their time is stretched so thin. Single parents are not only responsible for taking care of their children and nurturing them, they are also responsible for taking care of them financially. We live in a society where both parents have to work in order to provide for their children, and as a result family dynamics have changed.

The traditional family we once knew has transitioned substantially. Due to the increased divorce rate and children being born out of wedlock there are more households consisting of a single parent. Of the households that have two parents in many cases both parents are employed. It is no longer the norm to have the female caregiver stay home to provide for the family, instead female caregivers are now going to work in order to provide for their family. This change in the family structure has in turned had an effect on youth. Parents are no longer able to supervise children as closely as other parents have in previous decades. As a result of this change in family structure youth have easier access to violent media (Werle, 2006).

Due to the current cost of living, parents are required to work long hours in order to provide for their family (Ehrenreich, 2002). In addition to working long hours, many parents also hold more than one job. According to Ehrenreich (2002) an average of 7.8

million people have two or more jobs. The shift in technology and way of life in the United States has caused society to change their parental and traditional roles. The increase in the cost of living and basic necessities and goods has lead to an increase in financial need. The current minimum wage is not enough for someone to survive and live comfortably on. One of the reasons is because wages do not align with the increased cost of living. Having a job no longer guarantees a living wage and higher living standards, mainly because the labor force associated with current economic growth shows that the jobs today do not pay enough (Craypo & Cormier, 2000). Families can no longer afford for one parent to stay at home to provide for the household and monitor their children, instead both parents have to enter the workforce. As a result, youth are being unsupervised which increases the likelihood of them making bad decisions and engaging in youth violence.

Related to youth being unsupervised youth are also being exposed to violence for longer periods which can have an effect on youth violence and aggression. In fact, studies show that the average youth spends six hours per day being exposed to the media (McIlhaney, 2005; Strasburger, 2009). This exposure is in the form of television, music videos, video games, movies, and so forth. Youth spend an average of thirty-five hours per week watching television, during these thirty five hours they are exposed to several acts of violence (Goldstein, 1996). In fact, during regular television shows there is an average of six violent acts per hour, for cartoons that number increases to thirty-five violent acts of violence per hour. This shows that the youth are being exposed to more

violence and aggression by viewing cartoons, than regular television shows or movies (Kirsh, 2006).

The amount of media violence that children are exposed to in the presence of their parents is alarming. Studies show that youth are at a greater risk of being exposed to media violence during Saturday morning cartoons than during prime time television hours (Kirsh, 2006). Many parents work Monday through Friday and they are off on the weekends; if they are employed on the weekends there is usually a caregiver in charge to supervise the children. Whether it is with the parents or caregivers Saturday mornings should not be the time period when youth are being exposed to the most violence. This is the time frame when an adult should be around and supervising and monitoring the actions and behavior of children. According to Donnerstein and Smith (2003) 61% of television programs contain some violence. This shows that of the television shows that are available most of them contain violence, which is why family dynamics and parental supervision is so important for combating the influence the media can have on today's youth. While parents are not to blame for having to provide for their children, it is important to examine the factors that contribute to youth violence and assist parents in identifying healthy parental practices to help monitor their child's media consumption.

The media's negative influence on youth is not a new issue. In fact, in 1960 (as cited in Huesmann et al., 2003) a longitudinal study was conducted on male youth in New York. The study found that early childhood viewing of television violence was statistically related to the amount of aggression and anti-social behavior displayed 10

years later. These figures show how important it is for parents to be aware of the type of content their children are exposed to. Parents may think allowing their child to watch a certain cartoon or television show is okay because it can hold the child's attention and keep them busy, however, depending on the content the cartoon or television show could be setting the child up for a life of violence and aggression. In fact, according to Nielson Media Research (Hymowitz, 2003) during the years 2000-2001 the show that ranked fourth among two to five year olds was *Friends*, with *The Simpsons* being ranked number five. *Friends* and *The Simpsons* are two television shows that are not child appropriate, however, based on studies conducted many children are viewing it. According to Hymowitz (2003) not only are youth viewing shows like *Friends* and *The Simpsons*, they are viewing it with their parents. In fact, when parents were asked about the most recent show they viewed with their children *Friends* and *The Simpsons* were among the 10 most frequently mentioned shows.

Research shows that children spend more time being exposed to media, than they do in classrooms (Smith & Donnerstein; Strasburger, 2009). In fact, according to Strasburger (2009), two-thirds of children in the United States have their own personal television set in their room, half have a VCR or DVD player, half have video game systems, and one-third have computers and internet access. These figures display how critical it is for parents and guardians to monitor their child's media exposure and content. By having access to many forms of media it increases the youth's chance of being exposed to violence as well as limits the quality of parental monitoring.

Parents can have an impact on their children even after they are exposed to violent media. This can be accomplished with parents explaining to children what they were just exposed to and teaching them that violence is not the answer. According to Hopf et al. (2008) “lack of parental monitoring together with frequent viewing of violent media promote a risky, delinquent development of young people, while parental engagement supports positive social development” (p. 91). Huesmann et al. (2003) also found that the combination of long term exposure to violence and children’s identification with characters who frequently display aggression was a major predictor of aggression. This explains why the more violence children view, the more copying and imitating they do of the violent act (Goldstein, 1996). Parents can combat this by limiting their child’s exposure to violent media as well as encouraging them to look up to positive adult figures in their life as opposed to the make believe characters on television.

Parents have to be more proactive and cautious and learn to communicate with their children. Studies show that when parents are actively involved in the media exposure of their children are less likely to be negatively influenced and impacted by it (Anderson et al., 2003). This involvement includes but is not limited to commenting and engaging in dialogue regarding what the child has viewed, justifying and explaining the actions of characters, and explaining the practicality of the material.

In addition to parental involvement and supervision of media content parents also need to monitor their child’s frequency and duration of media exposure. While parents may believe that their involvement alone will help combat aggression due to media

exposure another way parents can help decrease aggression is by limiting their child's exposure. Although having strong family ties, being involved in the community, and having close supervision is important, decreasing the negative media exposure is a major factor for preventing long-term aggression. Studies show that 58% of households in America have their television on during meal times (Hymowitz, 2003). Studies also show that 42% of household have the television on for the majority of the day. This frequent consumption of media whether indirectly and directly can have long lasting effects on youth.

According to Hymowitz (2003) parents play a major role in their child's exposure to the media. She argues that parents are encouraging their children to watch television at an early age, which can become a problem in the long run. By encouraging children to watch television and be exposed to media at a young age, the media becomes a normal part of their lives which makes it extremely difficult to prevent youth violence and aggression that is a result of media exposure. Younger children are at a higher risk of being negatively affected by media exposure because it is difficult for them to distinguish real life from make believe (Anderson et al., 2003; Brink, 2001).

A study of preschool children found children who view media violence are more likely to play more aggressively with their toys than preschool children who have not viewed violent media (Kirsh, 2006). For instance, the children who played more aggressively with their toys displayed behaviors such as kicking and hitting dolls, stuff animals, and action figures. Family dynamics and supervision is so critical with this age

group because even if young children are exposed to media violence, parents can address this by socialization. It is proper socialization and the teaching of values that aid in reducing the effects of media exposure.

Studies show that children between the ages of two and four years watch television two hours a day (Hymowitz, 2003). In fact, according to Bushman and Huesmann (2006) long term effects of violent media exposure is greater for children than adults. Many parents may think that because they are not affected by violent media exposure their children are safe as well, however, this is not correct. Adults are better able to distinguish real life from make believe, something that is more difficult for children. Because separating real life situations from make believe situations is so difficult for children who view violent media, family dynamics is a critical key for combating it.

Several studies have found that the action following the viewing of violence has a significant impact on youth. With proper supervision parents can limit children's exposure to violence as well as explain to them that violence is not acceptable. The United States has a violent history and is a violent society and as a result violence is all around us. The presence of violence is so widespread that it is impossible for parents to prevent youth from being exposed to it. However, if parents took a more active approach to monitoring the type of media their children are exposed to they would be better able to teach them right from wrong and teach them that what they view on the media is not always the proper behavior to display.

A National Television study found that violence on television goes unpunished 73% of the time (Krcmar & Vieira, 2001). This study also found that children identify with the role model qualities of characters on television 37% of the time. In many cases the role models that youth look up to often use violence to achieve their goals. This method of using violence to achieve goals can teach youth that aggression is a quick solution that has few, if any, consequences. This can cause youth to believe that violence is the answer, as opposed to talking it out or walking away. Parents play a major role in teaching their children to talk out problems and refrain from violence; however, with the shift from the traditional family to the working family it has become more difficult to monitor children's exposure to violent media.

Although the shift in the family structure has changed, it is critical that parents find time to teach their children morals and values. Krcmar and Cooke (2001) conducted a study that found that younger children believed unpunished violence was acceptable. Older children in this study believed that provoked violence was acceptable. This study also found that when youth were given a chance to put their own ending to a story line that involved conflict many children selected a violent ending. This form of violence examined in the above study is considered justified violence. Because children view the characters on television and cartoons as heroes and role models it is easy to believe that their use of violence is justified by their situation. In fact, the National Television in Violence Study found that the justification of violence is one of the strongest factors on whether viewers of the violent media act aggressively themselves. As a result of this

youth are perceiving violence that is rewarded or unpunished as moral (Kirsh, 2006).

According to Kirsh (2006) two of the most common factors that influence the perceived level of violence viewed in the media are consequences and legitimization. When media violence is seen as morally correct and acceptable, viewers are more likely to act aggressively because they see no harm in their actions (Huesmann et al., 2003).

Parental supervision is just one factor of family dynamics, family values are also extremely important. Because parents can not supervise their children twenty-four hours a day parents can teach children positive values. By teaching children at an early age that violence will not be tolerated children may not be as negatively affected by violent media exposure. Family child rearing practices, values, morals, and spirituality are all protective factors that can steer youth from engaging in aggressive and violent behavior (Huesmann et al., 2003; Krcmar & Vieira, 2005; NCIPC, 2007). When parents instill strong values in their children and do not tolerate violence it helps their children make good choices and refrain from violence.

Bullying is prevalent in schools today. One of the many forms of aggression displayed as a result of media exposure is bullying. According to Goldstein (1996) 60% of bullies in sixth to ninth grade end up with at least one conviction on their criminal record by the age of 24. There are different types of ways that aggression can be displayed with bullying which varies depending on gender. Male youth engage in bullying in a more physical and threatening type of way. Female youth engage in bullying in a more verbal and isolating type of way. Regardless of the manner in which

bullying and aggression are displayed media exposure plays a major role. While studies show that males tend to imitate aggression and bullying due to media exposure more than females, its impact on youth can not be disregarded. Male or female youth violence and aggression is on the rise. Due to changes in family structure the age and time period where children are supposed to be nurtured and protected has turned into the age and time period where children are learning violence, aggression, and hate.

Hate begins to develop in children during elementary school and it is up to parents to monitor hate development in their children so that aggressive and violent behavior can be tackled early on. Because hate begins to develop at such an early age, parents have to monitor their child's level of aggression and violent behavior early on. It is very difficult to modify behavior once it is learned and embedded into the minds and lifestyles of youth, so preventing and monitoring it early on is critical (Strasburger, 2009). According to Hopf et al. (2008) aggressive emotions begin to form in elementary school, the same time period that many children are being exposed to violent media. It is also during elementary school that children are exposed to horror and violent films; films that can activate hate and power in youth. Many times parents can contribute to their child's exposure to violent media without being aware. By purchasing horror films, cartoons with violent content, and other movies with violent content parents are exposing children to material that can be harmful to them later on.

Violent media exposure can affect youth in many ways. Some youth may engage in violence and display aggressive behavior. Others may have internal aggression where

their thought processes and attitudes are aggressive. In fact, research shows that exposure to media violence is associated with an increase in aggressive behavior as well as aggressive attitudes and beliefs (Bartholow & Anderson, 2002). Many parents may feel that their child's level of media exposure is not harmful because they may not display aggressive behavior. However, that does not mean that the child can not develop aggressive attitudes and beliefs, which parents play a major role in shaping. The amount of quality time and interaction that parents invest in their children, is a major component of how much influence the media can have on their family and offspring.

The risk factor of youth being exposed to violence through the media is not a new topic in society, however, more research must be done on its long term and short term effects. Parents play a major role in the amount of media exposure their children are exposed to. While it is clear that because parents have to work in order to provide for their children, this does not excuse them from ensuring that their children are protected. Parents can control what media their children are exposed to, however, many fail to take the necessary steps to ensure children are viewing age appropriate images. Parents have to set boundaries and rules and enforce them. According to Hymowitz (2003) many parents have rules in place regarding media content and however they fail to enforce it. According to Anderson & Gentile (2008) approximately three quarters of parents in the United States agree that viewing violence can be a risk factor for violence and aggression among their children, however, only 13% of households in the United States take the necessary steps or set guidelines for what media their children are exposed to.

Although United States culture believes that people are responsible for their actions, we can not give youth the same standards. Youth are products of their environment. The things that they encounter and are exposed to have long lasting effects on their lives and development. While it is true that behavior is internally caused; constantly being exposed to violent media can have drastic affects on the internal processes of youth (Bartholow & Anderson, 2002).

Summary

The United States has a violent history, and as a result of this violent history violence has become a normal part of society. Whether it is through technology influence or family dynamics we must be aware that youth are being exposed to violence at alarming rates. The media's impact on youth is an important issue. Due to the importance of this issue there have been several studies on the topic, as well a wide spectrum of literature. Based on the literature explored in this chapter it is clear that the media can have a negative impact on youth. Of the studies explored in this chapter it is evident that exposure to violence through television, films, video games, and the internet can cause violence and aggression in youth. Whether this impact is directly or indirectly, this topic can not be ignored. Although there is a wide spectrum of literature and studies that have been conducted on this topic more research needs to be done. With more research and studies we will be better able to pinpoint just how destructive the media can be on youth and develop ways minimize youth exposure.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter discusses the research methods used for this research study including a discussion of the research design, data collection techniques, data analysis and the study sample. In addition, this chapter also includes the steps taken to ensure the protection of the human subjects participating in this study. This study examined the role of violent media exposure as a contributing factor to youth violence and aggression. It also explored whether parental monitoring of their child's media exposure is associated with better child outcomes. The underlying principle for this study is that it is important to be aware of the type of media youth are exposed to and the importance of parental monitoring.

Conceptual Framework

This study explored the relationship between violent media exposure and youth violence and aggression. Specifically, the goal of this study was to examine the extent to which violent media exposure is associated with youth violence and aggression. Studying this topic is important because youth violence is an important issue in society today. By pinpointing risk factors to youth violence and aggression, social workers are better prepared to address this issue and make change as a society. There is no one solution to youth violence and aggression, however, addressing the influence of violent media will aid us in taking the necessary steps to make the appropriate changes.

Research Questions

This study is aimed at answering the following two questions:

- 1) Does violent media exposure impact youth violence and aggression?
- 2) Does lack of parental supervision of violent media contribute to a greater likelihood of youth violence and aggression?

Hypothesis

Two hypotheses are proffered:

H1: More frequent violent media exposure increases the likelihood of youth violence and aggression.

H2: Lack of parental monitoring and supervision of violent media exposure will increase the likelihood of youth violence and aggression.

Study Design

The study design for this study is considered a quantitative descriptive design. The purpose of utilizing this design is to allow the researcher to study several respondents and numerically analyze their responses. Utilizing the quantitative descriptive method will allow this researcher to summarize the information from the respondents in a way that the information gathered can be easily understood (Royse, 2008). A descriptive design aims to provide precise information in an attempt to gain a better understanding of a certain population.

Using a quantitative descriptive design also allows this researcher to compare and contrast the data collected from the respondents. This will better assist this researcher in

analyzing the data and determine if the null hypothesis can be rejected. Quantitative designs use research instruments to measure the concepts and contents of the study (Royse, 2008). By using a quantitative methodology, this researcher tested whether there is a relationship between frequent exposure to violence through the media and youth violence and aggression. The research question that is being answered in this study is based on deduction. Deduction allows this researcher to hypothesize that frequent media exposure has negative effects on youth.

Variables and Instrumentation

The analysis for this study uses dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable is youth violence and aggression; the independent variables are the amount of violent media exposure and the amount of parental monitoring.

The following discusses how each of the variables in the study were measured:

Youth violence and aggression. Youth violence was measured by asking participants to indicate how often their child engaged in a number of problem behavior on a Likert scale. The Likert scale asked participants to indicate their child's problem behaviors from 0 to 2 with 0 = not true, 1 = somewhat true, and 2 = often true. Some examples of the problem behaviors participants were asked to identify were tantrums, destroy things, fights others and so forth. A total violence and aggression score was calculated by adding the 15 items. See Section 3, question 4 in the appendix.

The scale used to measure youth violence and aggression was a modification of the Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) scale (Achenbach, 2001). The CBCL is a well

established scale with reliability and validity and the scale items selected for this researcher's questionnaire were pivotal in answering the two research questions posed.

Amount of media exposure. The amount of media exposure was measured by asking participants to indicate the number of hours their child viewed violent media on television, movies, video games, school days, and non school days. A total score was calculated by adding five items. See Appendix Section 2, questions one through five.

Parental monitoring. Parental monitoring was measured by asking participants three questions on a Likert scale regarding their supervision of media exposure, all of which were totaled. Question 1 asked participants how successful they have been in supervising their child's media exposure. The Likert scale asked participants to indicate their success with supervision and monitoring on a scale from 0 to 4, with 1 = not successful, 2 = somewhat successful, 3 = successful, and 4 = extremely successful. Question two used a Likert scale from 1 to 5 on the importance of various aspects of monitoring their child's media exposure. The Likert scale measured importance with 1 = unimportant, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = neither important or unimportant, 4 = important, and 5 = very important. Question three used a Likert scale to asked how successful with implementing the supervision methods listed in question two. The Likert scale asked participants to indicate on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 = not successful, 2 = somewhat successful, 3 = successful, and 4 = extremely successful. A total score was calculated by adding all the items together. See Appendix Section 3, questions one to three.

Other variables used in this study were socio demographics such as gender, age, employment, number of children, type of household, and so forth.

Study Sample

Participants for this study include parents of youth between the ages of four and eighteen. Participants were recruited from California State University, Sacramento, The Effort, and The Father's Resource Center. There were a total of participants for the entire study. There were a total of 9 participants from California State University, Sacramento, 26 participants from The Effort, and 40 participants from The Father's resource Center. There were also 4 participants retrieved from the community. Of the 79 surveys received four were discarded due to being incomplete.

Data Gathering Procedures

Research subjects were obtained from several sources. For California State University, Sacramento Master of Social Work students, this researcher obtained approval from their practice professor. For the parents at The Effort and The Father's Resource Center, approval was obtained by the agencies administrators. This researcher selected California State University, Sacramento because this is where this researcher attends and it was easily accessible. This researcher selected The Effort and The Father's Resource Center to distribute this survey because they offer parenting classes to a diverse population. There were no inducements offered for this study.

The sample is a convenience sample and included students in the social work department and parents enrolled in parenting classes. Respondents were first provided an

informed consent form with information regarding this study and information regarding their participation. After signing the informed consent form and consenting to participating in this survey this researcher then distributed the survey questionnaire. At California State University, Sacramento they were distributed to students at the conclusion of class and administered and collected by this researcher. At The Effort and The Father's Resource Center key informants at both agencies agreed to distribute the survey to participants and follow the written and oral directions provided by this researcher. After the surveys were completed this researcher returned to the agencies to collect the surveys and informed consent forms.

Data Analysis

Once the data were collected it was entered analyzed using SPSS. The statistical analyses used included descriptive statistics to describe the sample.

To test H1, more frequent violent media exposure increases the likelihood of youth violence and aggression, a bivariate correlation was conducted between amount of media exposure and child aggression scores.

To test H2, lack of parental monitoring and supervision of violent media exposure will increase the likelihood of youth violence and aggression, a bivariate correlation was conducted between supervision and child aggression scores.

Protection of Human Subjects

Before this researcher began data collection, this researcher obtained approval from the California State University, Sacramento Division of Social Work Human

Subjects Review Board. The study was approved as a minimal risk study. The study did not ask any information that could be used to identify participants and the survey responses provided to the researcher were completely confidential. This researcher obtained informed consent from all participants before distributing questionnaire. After distributing the survey the informed consent forms and completed questionnaires were kept in a secure filing cabinet only accessible by this researcher. After the data was analyzed in SPSS both the informed consent and questionnaires were destroyed.

Chapter 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

This study examined children's media exposure and supervision by surveying parents. This chapter presents the findings of the data analysis using the responses from the questionnaires distributed to the participants. The data were entered and analyzed into SPSS by this researcher. Participants were recruited from California State University, Sacramento, The Effort, and the Father's Resource Center. The questions consisted of closed ended questions and likert scale questions.

Demographics

The participants involved in this research study consisted of 75 parents in the Sacramento area. The participants ages ranged from 22 to 58. The Socio/Demographics characteristics of the sample are displayed in Table 1.

As presented in Table 1, 45 fathers participated in this study (60%) and 30 mothers participated (40%). The mean age of the sample was 35.1. The majority of the participants were employed (56%), with 41.3% employed full-time and 14.7% employed part-time. The total number of children of the parents in the sample range from 1 to 7 with a mean of 2.6 children. With regard to household the type of household, was almost equally divided with 49.3% of the sample consisting of two parent homes and 50.7% consisting of single parent homes. The mean income of participants was \$47,603.

Table 1

Socio/Demographics of Sample

Participants	N	%
Gender		
Male (Father)	45	60
Female (Mother)	30	40
Age	Mean = 35.1 SD = 8.43	
Employment	42	56
Part Time	11	14.7
Full Time	33	41.3
Number of Children	Mean = 2.64 SD = 1.59	
Household		
Two Parent	37	49.3
Single Parent	38	50.7
Annual Income	Mean = \$47,603	
Educational Level		
Some High School	4	5.3
High School Graduate/GED	17	22.7
Some College	31	41.3
Associates Degree	7	9.3
Bachelors Degree	14	18.7
Masters Degree	0	0
Doctorate Degree	2	2.7

The mean age of the child selected for the questionnaire was 8.9. The range of the ages of the children selected for the questionnaire was from 4 to 18. With regard to the child selected for the questionnaire and study 44 were males (58.7%) and 31 were females (41.3%). The ethnicity of the children selected in the sample was pretty close to that of the general population with White (40%), African American (20%), Hispanic (16%), Asian (2.7%), American Indian (1.3%).

Table 2

Socio/Demographics of Child

Participants	N	%
Gender		
Male	44	58.7
Female	31	41.3
Age	Mean = 8.9 SD = 4.15	
Ethnicity		
White	30	40
Black	15	20
Hispanic/Latino	12	16
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	2.7
American Indian/Alaskan Native	1	1.3
Mixed Race/Ethnicity	15	

Media Exposure Findings

The amount of media exposure the selected child was exposed to was measured in several ways (Table 3). In regards to the number of hours per day the specific child watched television and cartoons on school days, the range was from 0 to 15 with a mean of 3.05. The range for hours per day viewing television and cartoons on non school days had a slight increase with a range from 0 to 16 and a mean of 4.19. In regard to the number of hours per week the specific child watched movies the range was from 0 to 40 with a mean of 6.56. The number of hours per day the specific child played video games on school days ranged from 0 to 12 with a mean of 1.05. The number of hours per day the specific child played video games on non-school days ranged from 0 to 14 with a mean of 2.38.

Table 3

Media Exposure

Media Exposure in Hours	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
Hours per day viewing television/cartoons on school days	0 - 15	3.05	2.6
Hours per day viewing television/cartoons non school days	0 - 16	4.19	2.9
Hours per week watching movies	0 - 40	6.56	7.3
Hours per day playing video games on school days	0 - 12	1.05	2.04
Hours per day playing video games non school days	0 - 14	2.38	3.19

The amount of violent media exposure the selected child was exposed to was measured in several ways (Table 4). In regards to the number of hours per day the specific child watched violent television and cartoons on school days the range was from 0 to 8 with a mean of 0.68. The range for hours per day the child viewed violent television and cartoons on non school days d from 0 to 10 and a mean of 1.31. In regard to the number of hours per week the specific child watched violent movies the range was from 0 to 30 with a mean of 2.41.

Table 4

Violent Media Exposure

Violent Media Exposure in Hours	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
Hours per day viewing violent television/cartoons on school days	0 - 8	0.68	1.3
Hours per day viewing violent television/cartoons non school days	0 - 10	1.31	2.4
Hours per week watching violent movies	0 - 30	2.41	4.4

This researcher also examined exposure to violent video games. When asked if their child plays any games that are considered aggressive, 35.3% replied “Yes” and 66.7% replied “No”. Figure 1 presents this visually for the reader. When asked if their child has the video game Grand Theft Auto 13.3% replied “Yes” and 86.7% replied “No”. Figure 2 presents this visually for the reader.

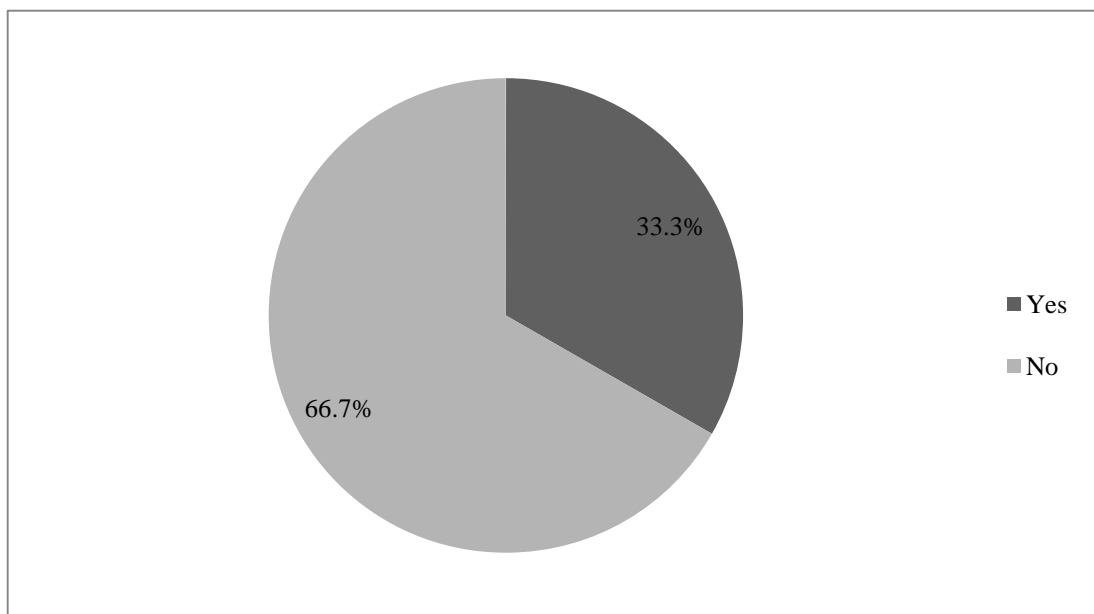


Figure 1. Does Child Play Aggressive Games

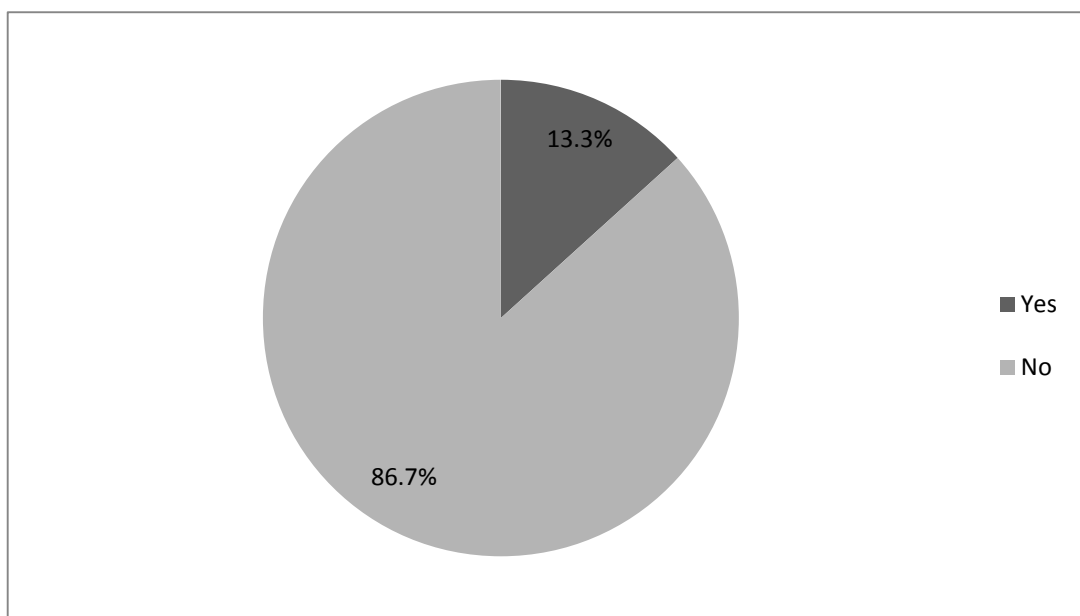


Figure 2. Does Child Have Grand Theft Auto

Supervision Findings

This researcher examined the participants' (parents) views on how successful they have been with supervising media content (Figure 3). When asked how successful they have been with supervising media content 2.7% replied not successful, 22.7% replied somewhat successful, 52% replied successful, and 22.7% replied extremely successful.

Additionally, this researcher also examined parents' views on the importance of several supervision techniques. This includes the parental controls, monitoring what child watches, not purchasing games or movies that are not age appropriate, and clear rules regarding what child watches on television. When asked the importance of using parental controls 6.7% replied unimportant, 4% replied somewhat important, 14.7% replied neither important or unimportant, 21.3% replied important, and 53.3% replied very important (Figure 4). When asked the importance of monitoring what their child watches 0% replied unimportant, 4% replied somewhat important, 5.3% replied neither important or unimportant, 28% replied important, and 62.7% replied very important (Figure 5). When asked the importance of not purchasing games that are not age appropriate 5.4% replied unimportant, 6.8% replied somewhat important, 6.8% replied neither important or unimportant, 21.6% replied important, and 59.5% replied very important (Figure 6). When asked the importance of not purchasing movies that are not age appropriate 2.7% replied unimportant, 5.3% replied somewhat important, 8% replied neither important or unimportant, 25.3% replied important, and 56% replied very important (Figure 7). When asked the importance of having clear rules regarding what their child watches on

television 0% replied unimportant, 5.3% replied somewhat important, 2.7% replied neither important or unimportant, 38.7% replied important, and 53.3% replied very important (Figure 8).

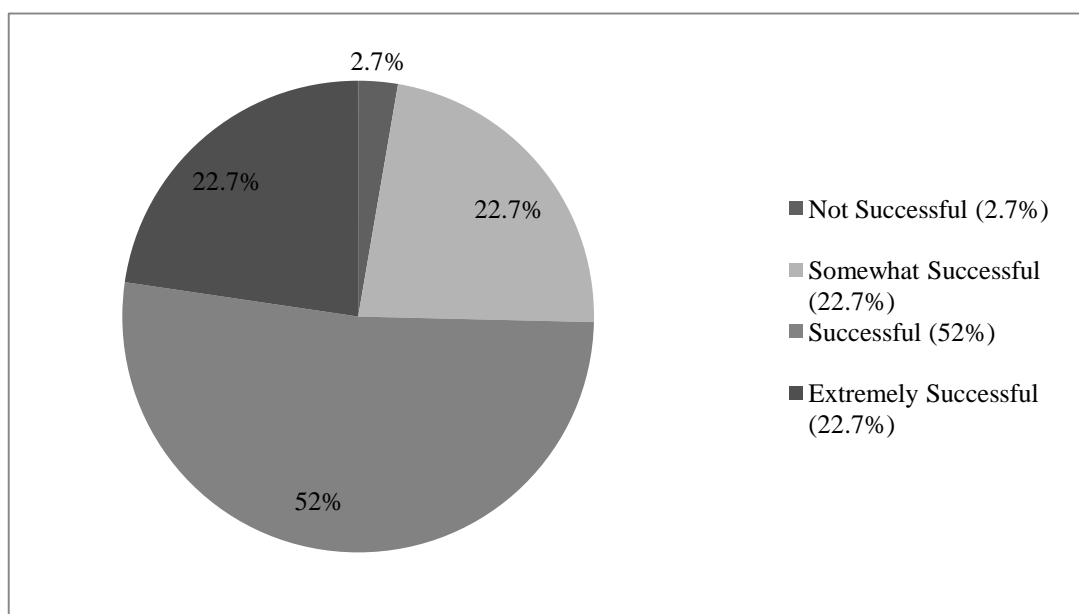


Figure 3. Success Supervising Media Content

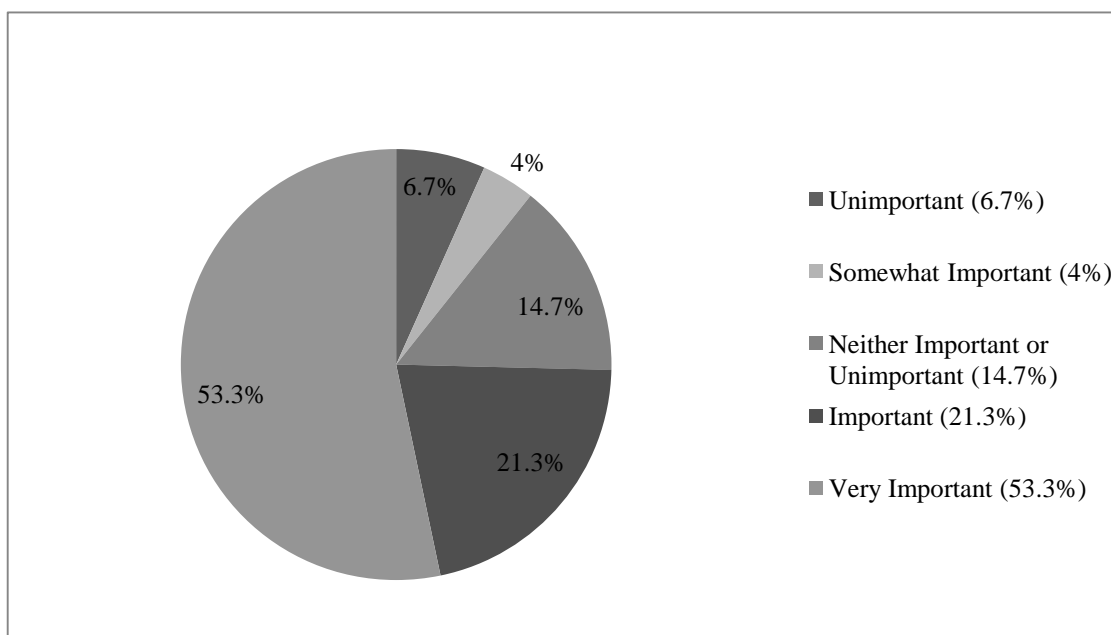


Figure 4. Importance of Using Parental Controls

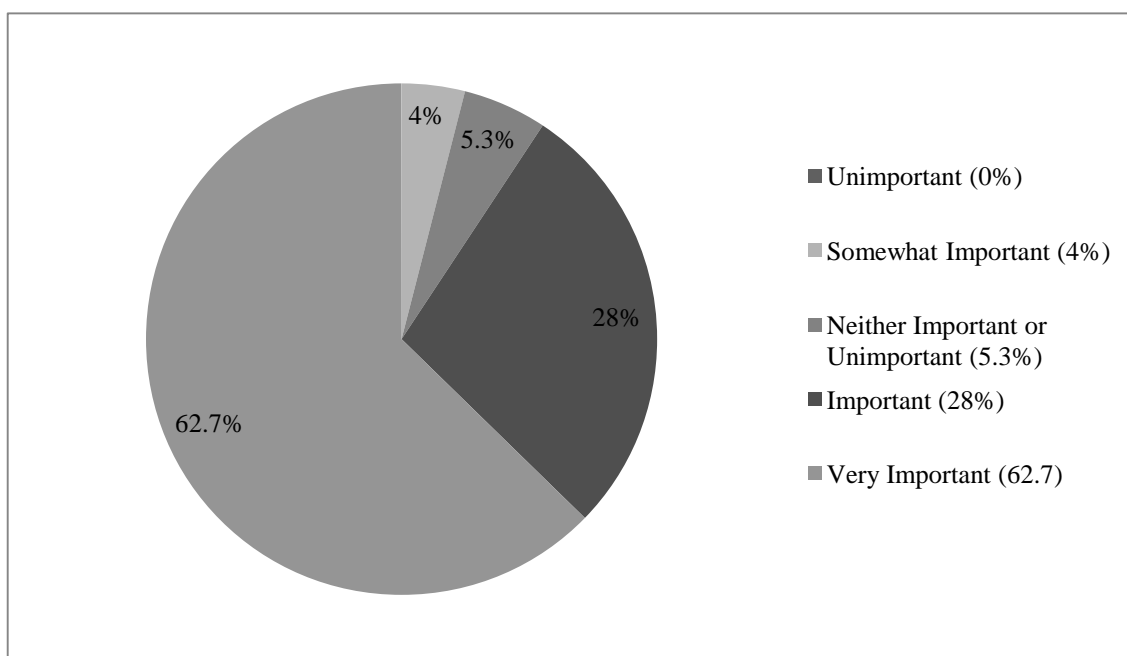


Figure 5. Importance of Monitoring What Child Watches

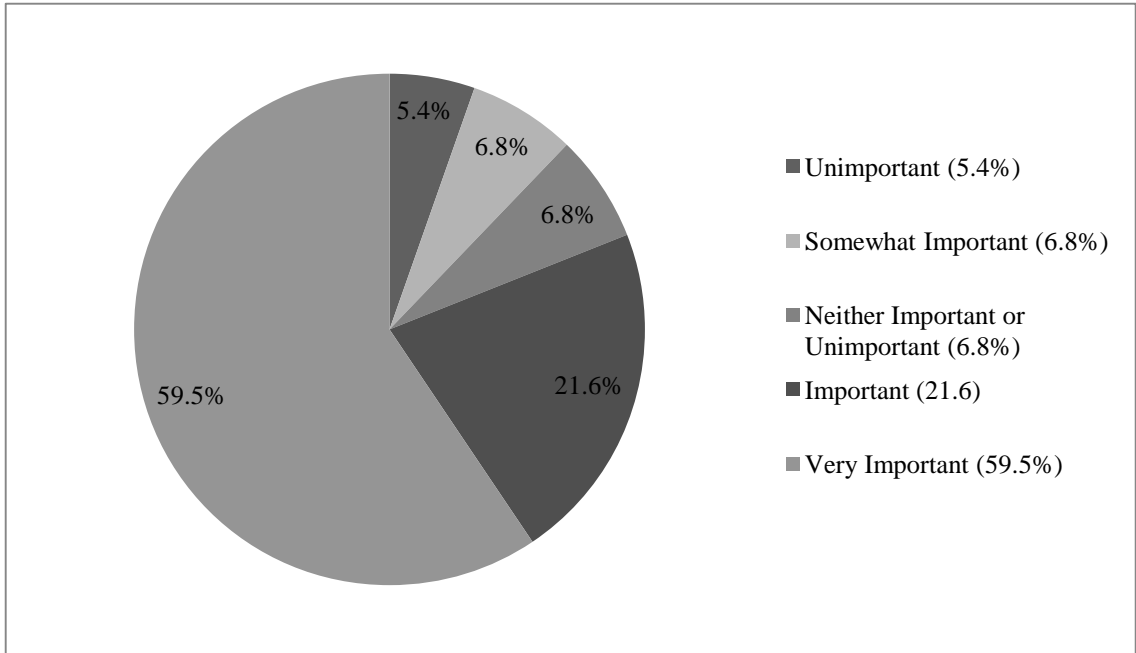


Figure 6. Importance of Not Purchasing Games That Are Not Age Appropriate

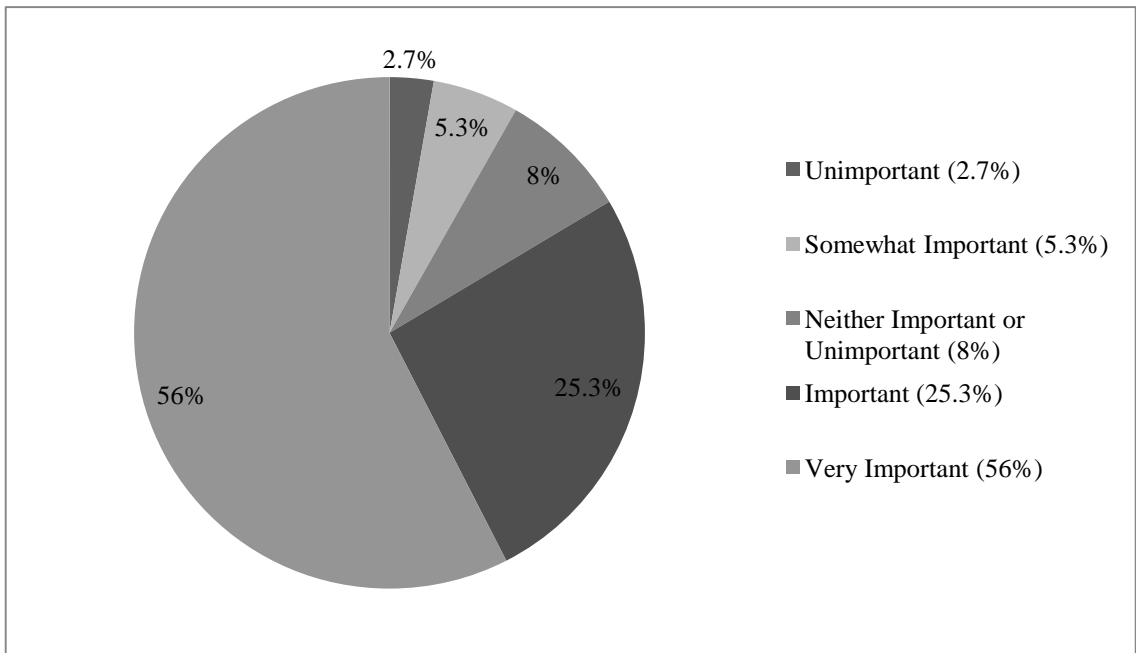


Figure 7. Importance of Not Purchasing Movies That Are Not Age Appropriate

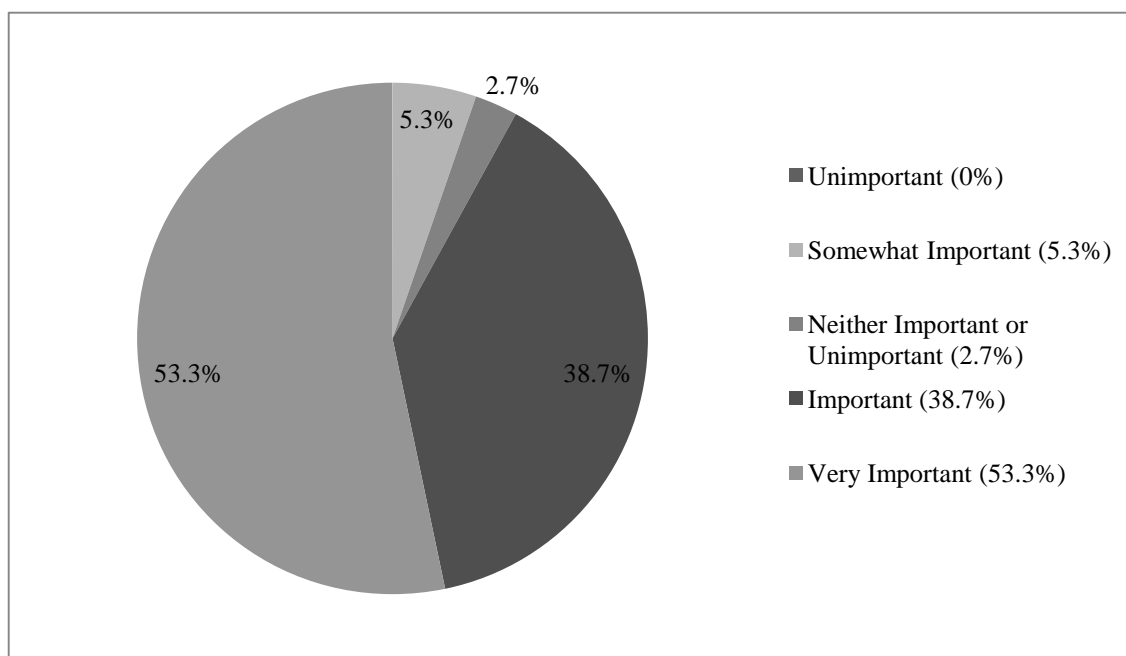


Figure 8. Importance of Clear Rules Regarding What Child Watches on TV

Results of Hypothesis Testing

This researcher tested two. Hypothesis 1 was to determine if there was a significant relationship between amount of violent media exposure and child behavior problems Pearson Correlations were conducted. Results indicate there was a significant association between the two variables. Pearson $R = .39$; $p = .001$. See Table 5.

Hypothesis 2 was to determine if there was a significant relationship between parental supervision and total aggression score. A Bivariate Correlation was conducted between child aggression and how successful parents were in supervising media content. Results indicate there was a significant negative correlation between the two variables. Less supervision in children's media exposure was found to be significantly related to more aggression problems (Pearson $R = -.30$; $p = .009$).

Table 5

Correlations

Correlation components		Total Media Violence	Total Aggression	How successful in supervising media exposure	Supervision Importance	How is child performing academically
Total Media Violence	Pearson Correlation	1	.386**	-.290*	-.274*	.219
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.012	.018	.077
Total Aggression	Pearson Correlation	.386**	1	-.302**	-.166	.423**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.009	.158	.000
How successful in supervising media exposure	Pearson Correlation	-.290*	-.302**	1	.087	-.353**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	.009		.463	.004
Supervision Importance	Pearson Correlation	-.274*	-.166	.087	1	-.082
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.018	.158	.463		.515
How is child performing academically	Pearson Correlation	.219	.423**	-.353**	-.082	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.077	.000	.004	.515	
Note. ** p< 0.01 * p<0.05, level (2-tailed).						

Interestingly, although not hypothesized a significant correlation was also found between total media violence and success in supervision media exposure, with less success significantly related to violent media exposure (Pearson $R = -.29$; $p = .01$). Also interesting is the statistical significance found with children's academic performance in school and aggression displayed (Pearson $R = .42$; $p < .000$). Lower academic performance was found to be significantly related to more aggression problems and lower academic performance also significantly related to less parental success in supervising

media exposure (Pearson $R = -.35$; $p = .004$). What is also interesting is the lack of statistical significance of supervision importance and how successful parents have been in supervising media exposure.

Summary

This chapter analyzed the data collected and the results of this study. This chapter explored the role violent media exposure has on youth violence and aggression. The data found that there was a significant correlation between violent media exposure and youth violence and aggression. A significant correlation was also found between lack of parental monitoring of violent media and youth violence and aggression. The following chapter will explore the conclusions, implications for social workers, recommendations for moving forward.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

Previous studies and findings from this study reveal that violent media exposure can impact youth violence and aggression. A statistical significance relationship was found between children's exposure to violent media and child's behavior problems and aggression. In addition, a statistical significance was found between lack of parental monitoring and children's aggression. A statistical significance was also found between academic performance and child's aggression. This study shows just how influential violent media exposure is and why parental monitoring is so critical. While the media is not the cause of youth violence, the amount of violent media children are exposed to, parental supervision, and the rise in technology have all impacted youth violence and aggression.

The media impacts youth violence by the amount of violent material youth see. Over the years, television usage has increased and youth are displaying more aggressive behavior. The rise in technology has resulted in youth frequently being exposed to passive visual media and interactive visual media. Research shows that youth spend almost six hours per day being exposed to electronic media; while they spend less than an hour a day being exposed to print media, demonstrating just influential the media is on the lives of youth (Werle, 2006). Previously print media and other forms of entertainment

were the norm, now electronic media is widespread and heavily involved in the daily lives of youth and their families.

Having several video game systems in the home and youth frequently watching violent television and movies can have negative effects on children's behavior. While children are frequently viewing violent images, the media is not showing them that there are consequences for violent and aggressive behavior. In fact, in approximately 75% of all violent scenes on television shows and movies the actors received no immediate punishment or condemnation for engaging in violence (Anderson, et al, 2003). In fact, violence is often glamorized. This causes children to believe that it is acceptable to commit violent acts, and there will be no immediate consequences, if any.

There are two major reasons why and how the media has an impact on youth violence and aggression. Funk et al. (2004) argues that frequent exposure to violent media can lead to emotional desensitization toward real life violence. Youth who constantly view violence start to think of violence as acceptable behavior. This causes youth to believe that their violent and aggressive actions are not wrong, which lead to youth committing more crimes and displaying more problematic behaviors. This also fits the criteria and views of social learning theory which argues that behavior is learned by observing the behavior of others and the rewards they receive for their behavior. The second major reason why the media has an impact on youth violence and aggression concerns parental supervision and parents having clear rules regarding media content. Parents are simply not supervising their children's exposure to violent media. This may

be due to their busy schedule or the importance of supervision and monitoring to that parent. Frequent violent media exposure and parental supervision is associated with lack of parents supervision and lack of importance regarding parental supervision. This lack of supervision may increase the risk for child aggression.

Parents play a major role in the lives of their children. They are the first teachers and role models that children look up to. A good parental foundation and appropriate parenting is critical to combating the many negative things that children are exposed to daily. While parents can not prevent children from being exposed to the media because the media is all around us, parents can set the foundation and ground rules early on what is acceptable and unacceptable forms of media.

Lack of parental supervision leaves children vulnerable for being exposed to violent media. A large number of cartoons and children movies are composed of violent graphic material (Brink, 2001). Children idolize the heroes in cartoons and movies, and most of these heroes use violence to achieve their goal. Looking up to someone who regularly uses violence, can have an impact on the level of aggression in youth who view this violent material. While it is clear that parents can not prevent their children from being exposed to violence, they can take active measures to monitor what media they are exposed to. It is very easy for a child to look up to and identify with a character from one of their favorite television shows, however, it is the responsibility of parents to be aware of the characters their children admire and to make a decision on whether the admiration is age appropriate.

This study showed that parents are saying supervision is important yet they are having little success with supervising their child's media content. What is the reason behind this? How is it that parents know how important it is to limit their child's media exposure yet they are taking little measures to actually enforce it? This researcher hypothesizes this may be due to the fact that parents are merely leaving it to technology to raise their children instead of being hands on and interactive which was practiced before the rise and technology. While this may not be intentional behavior on the part of the parent, parents are getting too comfortable with technology. Parents are allowing the media and other forms of technology to play the role of a person and little supervision is taking place. Parents are so busy with other areas of their lives that it is easy to put their child in front of a television or video game to distract them while they complete other tasks. While this is the easy way to keep children busy it is definitely not the most effective or smart method.

Implications for Social Work Profession

There are several steps that can be taken to combat youth violence and aggression and the large impact that violent media has on youth violence and aggression. Changes are needed on both a micro and macro level. More policies need to be created regulating and enforcing corporations that produce passive visual media and interactive visual media. In addition, parents need to get more involved in their children's lives and monitor the material they are being exposed to.

Media exposure alone does not cause youth violence and aggression. There are likely numerous factors that have an effect on youth violence. Some other factors are peers, neighborhood/community, family, and individual characteristics. While each can contribute to youth violence and aggression in a different way they are all important. Each of these factors is the starting point for us as social workers to address and provide solutions to youth violence. Youth are increasingly engaging in violence. Whether it is individual qualities, family influences, societal influences, or media influence we need to find solutions to youth violence and protect our youth.

Studies show that protective factors such as parental involvement, strong social connections, and involvement in social activities can help prevent youth from being violent (NCIPC, 2007). Although it is necessary for parents to work in order to maintain financial stability, there are ways that we can accomplish both. It is true that youth want to feel like they belong, and having strong protective forces in place can prevent them from resorting to violence and aggressive behavior. Homicide should not be one of the leading cause of death for youth and as a society we must improve our efforts at steering youth down the right direction.

The impact the media has on the lives of Americans is very important. It is so important that the government has taken active measure to censor the types of media that youth are being exposed to. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 was put into place to reduce the effects of violent media exposure. This act mandated that televisions be made with a V-chip that allows parents to block media that is not age appropriate or that

contains violence (Anderson et al., 2003). It is legislation such as the Telecommunications Act of 1996 that we as social workers need to advocate for. Social workers also need to utilize and take advantage of their time and interactions with families to increase protective factors and decrease risk factors.

Review of Findings and Relevance

This study found that there was a significant correlation between violent media exposure and youth aggression, as well as a significant correlation between lack of parental monitoring of violent media and youth aggression. The study found that the more violent media the youth was exposed to the higher the total aggression score and aggression displayed. The study also found that lack of parental supervision of violent media resulted in higher total aggression scores and aggression displayed. Additionally, this study found that the more aggression and behavior problems displayed, the more likely the child was to encounter problems with academic performance.

This researcher tackled this subject because of the high influence technology and media has on the lives of youth and America as a whole. With more and more forms of media being created, it is increasing the likelihood of youth being exposed to negative and violent media. It is important to discuss these issues such which are too often ignored by society. It is not up to the media and technology to raise children. Parents must take on the parental responsibilities and not rely on technology to raise their children. The negative impact frequent violent media exposure can have on youth is enough to warrant change and action.

Recommendations

Parents can help monitor their child's media content in several ways. This can be accomplished by supervising content viewed, being aware of video game and movie age ratings and recommendations, as well as utilizing parental controls on televisions and remotes. An example of a form of parental control device is a V-Chip. A V-Chip is a device that allows parents to block programs that are not age appropriate for their children (McIlhaney, 2005). In addition to utilizing the V-Chip, parents can also play a role by limiting the amount of media exposure their children are exposed to.

Although parental controls are available many parents do not utilize them. The small percentage of parents that do utilize parental controls are already actively supervising their children's media exposure and these youth are not experiencing the same type of behavior issues as other youth (Hymowitz, 2003). It is the children with little supervision and parents who do not have the time to supervise their violent media content that need to have parental controls in place because they are at greater risk of being negatively affected by media exposure. If parents can not physically monitor their children's media exposure parents can take active efforts to reduce their violent media exposure by utilizing devices such as the V-Chip or being more aware of the type of media they are purchasing for their children.

Parents can combat violent media exposure by explaining to their child that what they see on television is not real and should not be repeated. Parents can limit the type of media their children are exposed to by allowing children to only watch shows that are age

appropriate. Parents can also go the extra mile and put supervision techniques in place for when they are not present. Parents can not monitor their children 24 hours a day, but parents can also take precautions to ensure their children are protected in their absence. This can be accomplished with parental controls and devices that block material that is not age appropriate. These controls can be enforced on televisions, computers, and video games. To some parents parental controls and rules regarding media exposure may be considered too invasive but the consequences of not supervising media content outweigh and negative aspects of supervision.

Whether it is interactive media or visual media, the media is extremely influential and appealing to children. While there are many positive aspects of the media that can have positive impacts on the growth and development on children, the negative aspects of the media must not be ignored. It is true that there are media networks and forms of media that do not promote violence and encourage positive behaviors and lifestyles, however, they are outnumbered by the numerous media networks that promote youth violence. Instead of creating video games that will make a large profit because of its violent material, the media should focus on more positive entertainment for youth. While a small amount of violence in a video game is not sufficient evidence to promote youth violence, several games with violent and aggressive behavior does promote violence.

Based on the new media creations and increasing levels of youth violence, current policies are not effective, if any exist. While authorities have put age restrictions on video games, movies, and televisions now have parental controls, the influence the media has

on youth violence is still an issue. Yes, parental controls are included in the more recent television models, but youth violence and aggression is still an issue. Parents can only do so much to limit their child's consumption of violence, which means the media needs to be accountable for their actions. Instead of putting age restrictions on video games and movies, the media should also limit their production of violent material. It is easier for parents to monitor their child's consumption of media violence if the media decreases the amount of violent material. While this will not eliminate youth violence altogether, it will be the first step in making a difference in the amount of youth violence.

Youth violence and aggression is an issue that we will continue to face as a society. In order to prevent youth violence and aggression more must be done on all levels for this change to occur. The motto "it takes a village to raise a child" must resume in order for youth to have a real chance at a productive life. This study and literature shows that violent media exposure is correlated to youth violence and aggression. Now that there is research to back up the negative influence violent media has on youth violence we must now take advantage of that information and change the status quo. We must put the welfare of children first and give them the appropriate right to life that they deserve.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Consent to Participate in Research Study

Consent to Participate in Research Study

You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by Stephanie Hammock, a second year graduate student in the Division of Social Work at California State University, Sacramento. The purpose of this study is to examine to what extent, if any, violent media exposure affects youth violence and aggression. You were selected to participate in this study because you are a parent of a child between the ages of 4 to 18.

You will be asked to complete a 10-15 minute short survey. The survey will ask you to select **one of your** children and answer questions regarding that child's level of media exposure and any type of monitoring and supervision that is enforced regarding their media exposure. Upon completion, please return survey and this informed consent in the manila folders provided.

Your participation is completely voluntary. You are free to skip any questions or discontinue your participation in this study at any time.

Your participation in this study is confidential. No identifying information will be requested. This Informed Consent and the completed survey will be separated and kept in different locations to prevent your name from being linked to the survey. Survey data will be secured and locked in a location only accessible by the researcher. Once data is processed all surveys will be destroyed.

You will not benefit directly from the study. However, it is hoped that the information you provide will increase knowledge and understanding of violent media exposure and its effects on children. Unfortunately, you will not receive any compensation for participating in this research study but your participation is greatly appreciated.

If you have any questions about this research study, you may contact Stephanie Hammock at 916-333-2464 or sthammock@yahoo.com. You may also contact my thesis advisor, Maura O’Keefe, Ph.D. LCSW, at 916-278-7067 or email okeefem@csus.edu.

If you experience any discomfort during or after taking this survey, please contact Sacramento County Mental Health Center at 916-875-1000 or CSUS Psychological Counseling Services at 916-278-6416.

You will be provided with a copy of this consent form to keep.

Your signature below indicates that you have read this page and agree to participate in this research.

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX B

Study Questionnaire

Study Questionnaire

Please complete if you are a parent of a child between the ages of 4 to 18. For sections 2, 3, and 4 please select **only one** of your children who are between the ages of 4 and 18. Use only the selected child for all questions in Sections 2, 3, and 4. Thank you.

Section 1: Background Information/Demographics

Your Gender:

_____ Male
_____ Female
_____ Decline to state

Your Age: _____

Are you employed?:

_____ Yes
_____ No
If yes:
_____ Part-Time
_____ Full Time

Number children: _____

Ages of children: _____

Type of Household:

_____ Two parent
_____ Single parent

Annual Family Income: _____

Your Educational level:

- _____ Some high school
- _____ High School Graduate/GED
- _____ Some College
- _____ Associate Degree
- _____ Bachelors Degree
- _____ Masters Degree
- _____ Doctorate Degree
- _____ Other (Please List): _____

Age of child selected: _____

Gender of child:

- _____ Male
- _____ Female

Ethnicity of Child

- _____ White
- _____ Black
- _____ Hispanic or Latino
- _____ Asian or Pacific Islander
- _____ American Indian or Alaskan Native
- _____ Other (Please List): _____

Section 2: Media Exposure

1. Approximately how many hours **per day** does your child view television or cartoons on school days? _____

Of those hours how many does your child view violent material? _____

2. Approximately how many hours **per day** does your child view television or cartoons on non- school days? _____

Of those hours how many does your child view violent material? _____

3. How many hours **per week** does your child watch movies? _____

Of those hours how many would you say your child views violent material? _____

4. How many hours **per day** does your child play video games on school days? _____

5. How many hours **per day** does your child play video games on non-school days? _____

6. Are there any games that your child plays that could be considered aggressive or not age appropriate (in regards to ratings):

_____ Yes

_____ No

If yes, please list the game(s): _____

How often does your child play this game(s): _____

7. Does your child have the game Grand Theft Auto?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If yes, how often do they play it?: _____

Section 3: Supervision and Monitoring of Media exposure/content

1. How successful have u been in supervising your child's media content/exposure? ____

1	2	3	4
Not Successful	Somewhat Successful	Successful	Extremely Successful

2. On a scale of one to five, with one being not at all important and five being very important how important is the following.

1	2	3	4	5
Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Neither Important or Unimportant	Important	Very Important

_____ Clear rules regarding what my child watches on television

_____ Use of television and internet parental controls and locks

_____ Monitoring what they watch,

_____ Not purchasing games that are not age appropriate

_____ Not purchasing movies that are not age appropriate (based on ratings)

_____ Other (if so please list): _____

3. On a scale of 1 to 4, overall how successful have you been with above statements? ____

1	2	3	4
Not Successful	Somewhat Successful	Successful	Extremely Successful

4. Please answer the following questions as it relates to your child:

0 = Not True

1 = Somewhat true

2= Often True

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Argues | <input type="checkbox"/> Fights Others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Suspended from school | <input type="checkbox"/> Use of Alcohol or drugs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Been arrested | <input type="checkbox"/> Teases others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is mean to others | <input type="checkbox"/> Steals things |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has Tantrums | <input type="checkbox"/> Screams/Yells |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Displays no guilt | <input type="checkbox"/> Runs Away |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Destroys Own Things | <input type="checkbox"/> Disobeys at school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Destroys others things | |

5. How is your child performing academically? Generally what grades does your child get from A-F?

- ☐ A
☐ B
☐ C
☐ D
☐ F
☐ Child not enrolled in school due to age

6. How would you rate your child's level of aggression on a scale of one to ten? _____

1 = Not aggressive 5 = somewhat aggressive 10 = extremely aggressive

7. On a scale of one to five, how do you rate your concern if any, on your child's level of aggression? _____

1	2	3	4
No Concern	Low Concern	Moderate Concern	High Concern

REFERENCES

- Achenbach, T.M. (2001). Child Behavior Checklist. Retrieved from
<http://vinst.umdj.edu/VAID/TestReport.asp?Code=CBCA>
- Anderson, C. A. (2004). An update on the effects of playing violent video games. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*. 27, 113-122. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2003.10.009
- Anderson, C.A., Berkowitz, L., Donnerstein, E., Huesmann, L.R., Johnson, J.D., Linz, D., Malamuth, N.M., & Wartella, E. (2003). The Influence of media violence on youth. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*. 4(3), 81-106.
- Anderson, C.A., & Gentile, D.A. (2008). Media violence, aggression, and public policy. In E. Borgida & S. Fiske (Eds.), *Beyond common sense: Psychological science in the courtroom* (pp.281-300). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. New York: General Learning Press.
- Bartholow, B.D., & Anderson, C.A. (2002). Effects of violent video games on aggressive behavior: Potential Sex Differences. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*. 38, 283-290. doi:10.1006/jesp.2001.1502
- Boxer, P., Huesmann, L.R., Bushman, B.J., O'Brien, M., & Mocer, D. (2009). The Role of violent media preference in cumulative developmental risk for violence and general aggression. *Journal of Youth Adolescence*. 38, 417-428.
doi:10.1007/s10964-008-9335-2
- Boyle, S.W., Hull, G. H., Mather, J.H., Smith, L.L., Farley, O.W. (2009). *Direct practice in social work* (2nd ed.). Boston: Ally & Bacon.

- Brink, P.J. (2001). Violence on TV and aggression in children. *Western Journal of Nursing Research*. 23(1), 5-7. doi:10.1177/01939450122044925
- Bushman, B.J., & Huesmann, L.R. (2006). Short-term and long-term effects of violent media on aggression in children and adults. *Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine*. 160, 348-352.
- Congressional Digest. (1999).
- Craypo, C., & Cormier, D. (2000). Job restructuring as a determinant of wage inequality and working-poor households. *Journal of Economic Issues*. 34(1), 21-42. doi: 10.1093/cje/24.6.691
- Ehrenreich, B. (2002). *Nickel and dimed*. New York, NY. Holt Paperbacks.
- Ferguson, C.J., Miguel, C.S., & Hartley, R. D. (2009). A Multivariate analysis of youth violence and aggression: The influence of family, peers, depression, and media violence. *The Journal of Pediatrics*. 155(6), 904-908. doi:10.1016/j.jpeds.2009.06.021
- Funk, J.B., Baldacci, H.B., Pasold, T., & Baumgardner, J. (2004). Violence exposure in real-life, video games, television, movies, and the internet: Is there desensitization. *Journal of Adolescence*. 27, 23-39. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2003.10.005
- Gentile, D.A., Lynch, P.J., Linder, J.R., and Walsh, D.A. (2004). The effects of violent

video game habits on adolescent hostility, aggressive behaviors, and school performance. *Journal of Adolescence*. 27, 5-22.

doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2003.10.002

Goldstein, A. P. (1996). *Violence in America: Lessons on understanding the aggression in our lives*. Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing.

Greene, R.R. (Ed.). (2008). *Human Behavior Theory and Social Work Practice*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.

Guadalupe, J., & Bein, A. (2001). Violence and youth: What can we learn. *Violent Youth*, 157-176.

Hopf, W.H., Huber, G.L., & Weib, R.H. (2008). Media violence and youth violence: A 2-year longitudinal study. *Journal of Media Psychology*. 20(3), 79-96. doi: 10.1027/1864-1105.20.3.79

Huesmann, L.R., Moise-Titus, J., Podolski, C., & Eron, L.D. (2003). Longitudinal relations between children's exposure to tv violence and their aggressive and violent behavior in adulthood: 1977-1992. *Developmental Psychology*. 39(2), 201-221. doi:10.1037/0012-1649.39.2.201

Hymowitz, K.S. (2003). The contradictions of parenting in a media age. In D. Ravitch & J.P. Viteritti (Eds.), *Kids stuff: Marketing sex and violence to America's children* (pp. 214-239). Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

Kirsh, S.J. (2006). Cartoon violence and aggression in youth. *Aggression and Violent Behavior*. 11, 547-557. doi:10.1016/j.avb.2005.10.002

- Krcmar, M., & Cooke, M.C. (2001). Children's moral reasoning and their perception of television violence. *Journal of Communication*. 51(2), 300-316.
doi: 10.1111/j.1460-2466.2001.tb02882.x
- Krcmar, M., & Vieira, E.T. (2005). Imitating life, imitating television: The effects of family and television models on children's moral reasoning. *Communication Research*. 32(3), 267-294. doi: 10.1177/0093650205275381
- McIlhaney, J.S. (2005). Problems and Solutions Associated with Media Consumption: The Role of the Practitioner. *Pediatrics*. 116(1), 327-328. doi:10.1542/peds.2005-0355E
- Mierlo, J.V., & Bulck, J.V. (2004). Benchmarking the cultivation approach to video game effects: A comparison of the correlates of TV viewing and game play. *Journal of Adolescence*. 27, 97-111. doi:10.1016/j.adolescence.2003.10.008
- Molitor, F., & Hirsh, K.W. (1994). Children's toleration of real-life aggression after exposure to media violence: A replication of the drabman and thomas studies. *Child Study Journal*. 24, 191-207.
- National Center for Injury and Preventative Control [NCIPC]. *Youth Violence: Fact sheet*. April, 2007.
- National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.safeyouth.org/scripts/faq/youthgang.asp>.
- Ormrod, J.E. (1999). *Human learning* (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Olson, C.K, Kutner, L.A, & Warner, D.E. (2008). The role of violent video game content

in adolescent development. *Journal of Adolescent Research*. 23, 55-75.

doi:10.1177/0743558407310713

Ravitch, D., & Viteritti, J.P. (2003). Toxic lessons: Children and popular culture. In D.

Ravitch & J.P. Viteritti (Eds.), *Kids stuff: Marketing sex and violence to*

America's children (pp. 1-18). Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

Robbins, S.P., Chatterjee, P., & Canda, E.R. (2006). *Contemporary human behavior*

theory: A critical perspective for social work (2nd ed.). Boston, MA: Ally and

Bacon.

Royse, D. (2008). *Research Methods in Social Work*. (5th ed.). Chicago: Thomson

Brooks/Cole

Smith, S.L., & Donnerstein, E. (2003). The problem of exposure: Violence, sex, drugs,

and alcohol. In D. Ravitch & J.P. Viteritti (Eds.), *Kid stuff: Marketing sex and*

violence to America's children (pp. 65-96). Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins

University Press.

Strasburger, V.C. (2009). Media and children: What needs to happen now. *Journal of*

the American Medical Association. 301(21), 2265-2266.

doi:10.1001/jama.2009.572

Werle, G.D. (2006). Taking steps to promote safer schools. *Journal of School Health*.

76(4), 156-158. doi: 10.1111/j.1746-1561.2006.00087.x