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## Violent movie contents and manifestation of aggressive behavior among secondary school students in Bauchi metropolitan, Nigeria

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### Abstract

*This study examined the relationship between media violence and aggressive behavior among secondary school students in Gamawa, Bauchi State, Nigeria. Three hypotheses were tested to guide the study. The research was conducted in two selected secondary schools in Gamawa local government area, Bauchi State, eighty (80) participants made of 38 female and 42 males were drawn from student population to get responses on the influence of violent movies and subsequent aggression that manifest as behaviour. Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Independent Sample t-test were used to analyses the data. Results obtained indicates that there is significant relationship between violent movie contents and subsequent manifestation of aggression in children's behavior at 0.259,  $p < 0.05$ . The results further indicates that female students exposed to violent media contents depicts higher levels of aggression than their male counterparts at -2.103,  $p < 0.05$ . Overall, the result suggests that, anti-social behavior such as stealing, cheating, smoking, rape, fighting is found among children who are exposed to violent media violent.*

**Keyword:** Aggressive Behavior, Media Violence

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### 1. Introduction

Violence occurs in all societies, constituting both psychosocial problems across a globe regardless of tribe and religion (Tharp, Simon, & Saul, 2012). Violence tends to generate more aggressive behaviors such as school bullying which causes multiple social problems. This in turn creates obstacles to the integral development of population, especially children and adolescents (Orue et al., 2011). Almost all of our educational institutions are not free from social intimidation or bullying, a common menace among early youth. Young people need to feel accepted by peers in school, where adolescents spend a large amount of time and maintain personal relationships (Ismail, Jaafar, Sidi, Midin, & Shah, 2014). Nowadays; large amount of violence is

daily depicted in different forms of popular media. Media field is ever changing; with new technology, different media forms such as TV, movies, videogames, social media websites, and internet became very attractive (Media Violence Commission, 2012). Media represent one of the most significant and powerful tools that influences children and adolescents' development and health. They have unstable developmental status, adding to that considerable long time to spend with different forms of violent media, which make them more susceptible (Ukoha, 2013). Exposure to media violence has been related to aggressive behavior, hence; it is plausible that it will lead to bullying as less severe form of aggressive behavior (Dittrick, Beran, Mishna, Hetherington, & Shariff, 2013). Bullying is considered a

significant social problem worldwide (Hong & Espelage, 2012). Much of the recent research examining media violence effects on aggression has been guided by the General Aggressive Model (GAM; Anderson 2014; Dewall, Bushman, 2011). Despite GAM and CM hold opposite views on the relationship between violent video games and aggression, both of the two models imply the same idea that aggression cannot be separated from internal and external factors, while emphasizing on negative effects of violent video games on adolescents' behavior, the GAM uses internal factors to explain the influencing mechanism, including aggressive beliefs. Aggressive behavior scripts and aggressive personality (bushman & Anderson, 2013; Anderson & carnage, 2014). Although the CM considers that there is no significant relation between video games and aggression, it also acknowledges the role of external factors such as violent video games and family violence.

## 2. Literature Review

Consistent and different findings confirm the effect of exposure to violent video games on adolescent aggression and can be explained by the GAM. According to the GAM (Bushman & Anderson, 2013; Anderson & carnage 2014), violent video games can make teenagers acquire, repeat, and reinforce aggression-related knowledge structures, including aggressive beliefs and attitude, aggressive perceptual schemata, aggressive behavior scripts, and aggressive desensitization. Therefore, aggressive personality is promoted, increasing the personality of aggressive behavior. Recent research has shown that connection between children watching violence action can cause later aggressive behavior. Everything that children see or hear in the media are early in their lives affects them in some way (Tompkins, 2003; Yalda, 2012). According to Teanne, Heidi, Trace Jennifer (2004) they argued that the active nature of playing video games,

intense engagement and tendency to be translated into fantasy play may explain negative impact, though causality was not investigated in the present design. Positive parenting role models indicate that the interest of our most popular forms of entrainment over sixty percent movies shows being show in prime is some form of violence (Tompkins, 2003).

In one of the past studies by John (2002) revealed that children who watch one to three hours of television each day when they were 14-16 years old were more likely to be involved in assault and fight as adult than those that watch less television programmed. Research shows that performing violent act in video games may be more contributing to children aggressive behavior than passively watching violent film. According to this view, the more children practice violent acts, the more aggressive they become (Caserone, 1994). It is believed that acting violent as opposed to just viewing the violence can be cause the children to become more familiar with how to act out violent without consequences.

Tharp, Simon, & Saul, (2012) and Leflaowitz (1999) state that boy who watched more violent TV was more likely to act aggressively in real world. He said that the violent boy watched at age eight (8), the more aggressive he would act at age eighteen (18). The academy of pediatrics says exposure to media violence increase the risks of aggressive behavior in certain children, desensitize them to violence and make them believe that the world is a meaner scarier than it is; if children begin to think that this type of violence is normal behavior, this thought are often said to be difficult to change later in life. This is similar to the studies of violence were offender or victims becomes because they believed that what they are exposed to is the norms (Yalda, 2012).



In contrast to the aforementioned positions, earlier findings by Bandura, (1973) found that children learn from reasoning and situation by means of imitation and reinforcement. These effects tend to be pro-social or anti-social; behavior through social learning of aggressive behaviors. It can be pro-social when the child empathizes with a violent situation of victims. Pro-social behavior early in childhood. Children often help others, share belongings and food and often comfort; such empathetic behavior emerges at a time when children are increasingly able to work representatively (Zetter, 2009). Also watching violence of films makes children more aggressive and antisocial (Donner, 2011). This could be shown in form of rape, gangsters' assassination and robbery. Huesmann (1986) tries to put two explanations involving the cognitive processing of the child, one explanation involving behavioral script which converts television image into guide for behavior. According to Donner (2011) he states that when children use more than 90 hours a month watching television especially violent movies, video games and violence computer games, it produces adverse effects on them, that is, it spurs violence. He also says children internalize the values and behavior pattern of their primary role model, that is, children who grow up in violent families, or associated with violent peer or neighbor are more likely to be exposed to the effects of violence.

Moreover, current researches tend to agree with the proponent who argues that media violence is associated with aggressive behavior. Risky behavior by children and young adults can include violence against others, lack of remorse for consequence (Gross, 2004; Rishante & Yakubu, 2014; Venssa Schipani, 2018; Rey et al., 2017). Children who view violence are more likely to have increased feelings of hostility, decreased emotional response to the portrayal of violence and injury that lead to

violent behavior through imitation (Tompkins, 2003). According to Gross, (2004), and it is encouraging that the rate of crime of violence in the United States has dropped about 15 percent since 1999 (U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2001). However, self-report violence offense by American youth has not declined (U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 2001). In the same vein, exposure to media violence has been implicated as one cause of subsequent aggression and violence. It is believed that repeated exposure to real life and entertainment violence may alter cognitive affection and behavioral processes (Edge, 2017; Chen, Kaewkitipong & Ractham, 2016; Lowisz, 2014; Chukwuere, & Onyebukwa, 2017).

In another study carried out by Smiths (2010) says most children who witness some form of media violence almost every day, whether on the news, in a cartoon, on the internet, in a TV show or in a movie; this exposure whether in short term or long term, can have negative psychological effects, including an increase in aggressive behavior and a diminished level of excitement towards violence acts. Donner (2011) further says that children who grow up in a sub-culture environment are vulnerable to violent behavior even if they don't view media violence. It is possible that emotional responses may be attenuated when pictures are seen for a second time (Ishail et al. 2010; Lowisz, 2014). However, this habituation effect applies equally to both picture conditions and should not affect the differences between conditions (Anderson et al. 2014). And the reactions to both by the media audience have no precise variation except that other external influential factors make the difference (Ojo et al. 2011). As studies (Anderson et al. 2003); Neely et al., 2013; Lowisz, 2014) established the media violence effect (particularly television) on the media audience, so also sensationalism and propaganda affect audience perceptual evaluation of events related to the

newspaper stories since every media output stimulate responses from the media audience. The audio-visual characteristic of television, video or motion picture and online media aggravate more the effect of relative behavior in the audience than those of print journalism as revealed in Adelakun (2018) additional findings showed that physically aggressive children were possibly more than non-physically aggressive children to watch violence movies (Smiths, 2010).

### **Theoretical Review**

1. Social learning theory originated with Bandura's which suggests that children may learn aggression from viewing others. The findings of Bandura experiment suggest that children tended to model the behavior they witnessed in the video. This has been often taken to imply that children may imitate aggressive behaviors witnessed in media. However, Bandura's experiments have been criticized (Gauntlett, 1995) on several grounds. Given that some scholars estimate that children's viewing of violence in media is quite common, concerns about media often follow social learning theoretical approaches. The social learning theory is a behavioral theory most relevant to criminology. (Bandura 1976) believed that aggression is learned through a process call behavior modeling. He believes that individuals do not actually inherit violent tendencies but they modeled them after three principles. Albert Bandura argued that individual especially children learned aggressive responses from observing other, either personally or through media and environment. He also stated that many individuals believe that aggression will produce reinforcement. This reinforcement can formulate into reduction of tension, gaining rewards or gaining praise of others or building self-esteem (Siege 1972).

2. Social cognitive theories build upon social learning theory, but suggest that aggression may be activated by learning and priming aggressive scripts. Desensitization and arousal or excitations are also included in latter social cognitive theories. It is theorized that with repeated exposure to media violence, a psychological saturation or emotional adjustment takes place such that initial levels of anxiety and disgust diminish or weaken. Recent scholarship has suggested that social cognitive theories of aggression are outdated and should be retired. Some scholars also argue that the continuous viewing of violent acts makes teenagers more susceptible to becoming violent themselves.

However, cognitive theory of aggression has been developed in an attempt to explain violence, suicide bombing, and the continual wars among nations. Cognitive theories believed that our belief, strongly influence the likelihood that will commit violence and war (Bush man et al, 2007; Eiderson & Eiderson, 2003). Additionally, the frustration aggressive theory proposes that aggression occur as a result of frustration. The inferences are that if individual is frustrated in achieving their aims, the most likely response is aggression. Such individual is motivated to be aggressive toward whoever that is standing in their way. While frustration often led to feeling aggression, other psychologist like Freud believed that aggression is an inborn part of human nature but they do not agree that it stems from an ever-present instinctual need to aggression. Rather they believe that aggression is a natural reaction to the frustration (blocking) of important motives. Berkowitz (1993) and Dollard et al (1939) suggest that child who takes away a toy from another child could get punch in the nose or that a nation that frustrates another nation desire for oil or for the seaport might

become a target of war. People and nation who are frustrated react with anger and aggression (Berkowitz, 1993).

Aggression can be a problem to a child both normal and those with psychological disturbance. Violence causes or leads to traumatic situation to humans. Children who watched media violent films behave aggressively towards others and they are very anti-social. The anti-social and aggressive behavior noted in this study's view in the observation of others, feelings of regret, being destructive, disobedience at school and having trouble with teachers.

Watching media violence makes children to be very disobedient to their parents, teacher, and society at large by exhibiting unusual attitude and behavior that are not in line with societal norms and conventions Donner (2011). They exhibit violence on others by cheating and exploiting them, they react negatively towards fellow children by beating them up and snatching their belongings which is a very big problem to their parent and society. Exposing children to media violent makes them to be very stubborn, lack guilt about violating societal rules and law and taking advantage of others. Negative media violent impact negatively in the life of children by exploiting others and lack of genuine concern for others because they view violence as an acceptable way of living (Tharp, Simon, & Saul, 2012).

The psychological effect of media violence on children behavior is that which consequently makes the child more physically active, fighting with other in streets, getting into trouble with others having rough play with peer and loss feeling for hostility and decrease emotional response in children. Exposing children to media violent have increase the level of risky behavior among children, and they now engage themselves in practicing what they observed privately at a concern and

they are finally expose to more severe criminal activities in the society.

Despite all the previous studies carried out on relationship between Media Violence and Aggressive Behavior both in international and national literatures (Donner (2011; Tharp, Simon, & Saul, 2012; Edge, 2017; Chen, Kaewkitipong & Ractham, 2016; Lowisz, 2014; Chukwuere, & Onyebukwa, 2017), yet such studies where not extended among the secondary school students, especially in Bauchi metropolitan. Therefore, these studies intend among secondary school students in Bauchi metropolitan in other to provide a better understanding of the role of cyberbullying, social media usage among the secondary school students in their adolescent period.

### **Objectives of the study**

The main aims of this study to examine the Relationship between Media Violence and Aggressive behavior among Secondary School Students in Gamawa Local Government).

#### **The specific objectives are: -**

1. To find out the relationship between media violence on students' aggressive behavior
2. To find out the pattern of aggressive behavior among students based on age and gender
3. To examine the influence of age, gender and media violence have on student's aggressive behavior.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There will be a significant relationship between media violence on aggressive behavior of secondary school students'
2. Female students will more significantly be influence by media violence than male
3. Young students will more significantly be influence by media violence than old once.



### 3. Methodology

#### Study Design

A descriptive survey design using Pearson correlation coefficient statistics was used for this study, because the research seeks to find out a relationship between the studies variables. The used of t-test for seeking the differences between two variables was also appropriate.

#### Study Setting

The location of this research is in Bauchi metropolitan in Nigeria. The participants were drawn from Government Day secondary school army barrack and Pilot secondary school located in Bauchi town. These schools were choosing because of their heterogeneity where every ethnic and religious are present. The target populations were students of Government secondary school only with the total sample population of 80, thirty-eight (38) males and forty-two (42) females randomly selected from Christian and Muslim families respectively within 12-18 years. Brief aggression questionnaire develops by Perry and Buss (1992) consisting of 29-items with a psychometric property 0.710 was used to measure trait aggression. It consists of four domains which are physical aggression, verbal aggression anger, and hostility.

Media violence scale develops by Comstock and Bender (1995) was used to measure individuals' feeling about the effects of media violence on causing aggression in children. It consists of 10 items with a psychometric property of 0.764 reliable. The questionnaires consist of two sections A & B. The first section consists of demographic data (personal data) about children age, gender, class and religion while the second section consist of questions on the influence of media violent, such as film, video game and music on children's behavior. The respondents were requiring choosing of options that best describe their level of aggressiveness. High

score in aggression scale means that the individual exhibits a high level of aggression while low score on the scale means that the individual exhibits low level of aggression. Pearson product moment correlation was used to test hypothesis 1, independent sample t-test for testing hypothesis 2 and 3.

### 4. Results and Discussion

#### 4.1 Results

The data collected in this study were analyzed and interpreted in line with the stated hypotheses. Statistical Package for Social Science version 20 was used to analysis the data. The descriptive statistics used were Frequency, percentages, means and standard deviations while the inferential statistics used for the test of hypotheses were Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Independent Sample t-test.

#### Demographic Variables

**Table 1: Characteristics of the Respondents**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender:</b>		
Male	41	51.2
Female	39	48.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age:</b>		
10-14 Years	59	73.8
15-18 Years	21	26.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Religion:</b>		
<b>Muslim</b>	53	66.2
<b>Christianity</b>	27	33.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 shows the characteristics of 80 respondents where 41 Males and 39 females; age: 10-14 years (N= 59; 73.8%) and 15-18 years (N= 21; 26.3%) and Religion: Muslim (N= 53, 66.3%) and Christianity (N= 27, 33.8%).

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1:** There will be significant relationship between media violence and aggressive behavior of secondary school students. This hypothesis was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation in table 2.

**Table 2: Summary Result of the Relationship between Media Violence and Aggressive Behavior among Students**

Variables	Mean	SD	Df	R	P.
Media Violence	34.64	5.556	78	0.259	.020
Aggressive Behavior	39.57	7.434			

Sig. Level:  $P < .05$

Table 2 presents the mean scores on the relationship between media violence and aggressive behavior among students. The results shows that media violence ( $M=34.64$ ;  $SD=5.556$ ) and aggressive behavior ( $M=39.57$ ;  $SD=7.434$ ). Further analysis of Pearson correlation test revealed a statistically significant  $r(78) = 0.259$ ,  $p < 0.05$  positive relationship between media violence and aggressive behavior among secondary school students. Thus, the hypothesis was retained in this study.

**Hypothesis 2:** Female students will more significantly be influence by media violence than male students. This hypothesis was tested using independent sample t-test in table 3.

**Table 3: Influence of Media violence between Female and male Students**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	P
Male	41	33.39	6.053	78	-2.103	.039
Female	39	35.95	4.707			

Sig. Level:  $P < .05$

Table 3 presents the mean difference between male and female students on media

violence. The results revealed the mean scores for male ( $M=33.39$ ;  $SD=6.053$ ) and female ( $M=35.95$ ;  $SD=4.707$ ). Further analysis of t-test shows a statistically significant difference  $t(78) = -2.103$ ,  $p < 0.05$  on media violence. Thus, the hypothesis was retained in this study.

**Hypothesis 3:** Young students will more significantly be influence by media violence than old students. This hypothesis was tested using independent sample t-test in table 4.

**Table 4: Influence of Media violence between Young and Old Students**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t	P
Young (10-14 years)	59	34.25	5.967	78	-1.035	.304
Old (15-18 years)	21	35.71	4.125			

Sig. Level:  $P > .05$

Table 4 presents the mean difference between young and old students on media violence. The results show the mean scores for young students ( $M=34.25$ ;  $SD=6.053$ ) and old students ( $M=35.71$ ;  $SD=4.125$ ). Further analysis of t-test shows a statistically significant difference  $t(78) = -1.035$ ,  $p > 0.05$  on media violence. Thus, the hypothesis was rejected in this study.

**4.2 Discussion of Results**

The result of the first hypothesis which stated that there will be a significant relationship between media violence and aggressive behavior of secondary school students was confirmed. This result runs contrary to the result of empirical study conducted by Anderson and Bushman, 2001 found that across 54 independent tests of the relation between media violent and aggression, involving 4,262 participants, they appear to be five consistent results of media with violent content. This researcher reported that media violence increases aggressive cognition, aggressive emotion and physiological arousal and decrease pro-

social behavior. The finding of this result was supported by (Murry, 2017; Chukwuere, & Onyebukwa, 2017; Edge, 2017; Lowisz, 2014). Banduru (1973) indicate that someone, watching a single violent film can increase anti-social behavior.

The result of the second hypothesis which stated that female students will more significantly be influenced by media violence than male students was accepted. This finding was supported by the result of the study conducted by Fernandez-Villanueva et al (2009) and Chen, Kaewkitipong and Ractham. (2016).

The result shows that the violence was predominantly masculine and serious violence as victims, while women's aggressions were shown with mere positive consequences and less legitimization. These findings are consistent with those of sink and Masro (2016), who state that men were more likely to appear as police, crime prevention, and military officers (22.3% of Male characters,  $n = 169$  vs 10.3% of female characters,  $n = 51$ ) and that man were significantly more verbally and physically aggressive, were likely to bury, and more dominant in their interaction.

The third hypothesis which stated that young students will more significantly be influence by media violence than old students this hypothesis was tested and was rejected in this study. This result agrees with the empirical review of (Makinde et al., 2016; Strasburger, 1997; Lowisz, 2014) which stated exposure to media violence has had a major impact on children, young adults as well as a number of adults, contributing to the few cases associated with violent crime within the society. (Stasburger, 1997). The proverbial saying that states that a person is what he or she watches has proven true in the recent past with majority of individuals being exposed to high level of violence.

## **5. Conclusion and Recommendation**

### **5.1 Conclusion**

The first hypothesis was confirmed as statistically significant; therefore, we reject the null-hypothesis and concluded that there is a statistically significant relationship between media violence and aggressive behavior of secondary school students. The second hypothesis was confirmed to be statistically significant; therefore, we reject the null-hypothesis and concluded that female students are more significantly influenced by media violence than male students. The third hypothesis was not confirmed to be statistically significant; therefore, we retained the null-hypothesis and concluded that young students are not more significantly influenced by media violence than old students.

There have been many debates over whether or not violence on television causes aggressive behavior in children. In this study, the result indicates that children developed anti-social as a result of watching violent television films. They do this by imitating their film role models. It appears that a television is a good form of educating and positive role modeling to both adult and children. Despite some of the criticisms, social learning theory should be seen as important in the study and influencing aggression and criminal behavior. In line with results of media violence films on children's aggressive behavior, several solutions have been taken to prevent negatively modelling film to occur. It is only proper for one to recommend to appropriate authorities on acceptable standard to promote desirable behavior hence this study recommends that "the kind of film watched by children should be properly censored to suit their age of development".



## 5.2 Recommendation

In line with results of media violence films on children's aggressive behavior, several solutions have been taken to prevent negatively modelling film to occur. It is only proper for one to recommend to appropriate authorities on acceptable standard to promote desirable behavior hence this study recommends that "the kind of film watched by children should be properly censored to suit their age of development". These entitle that parent through the family as the first agent of socialization should do its best by exposing them to the importance of television as well as trying to monitor what the children watch.

This is to ensure that they keep track of effect a particular kind of violent film would have on their children's behavior. Parent can minimize the effect of media violent on their children by creating a family culture of empathy respect and non-violence. Limit your child exposure to media violent especially while they are young and more vulnerable, according to media awareness network. If your child has problem with aggressive or violent behavior, he should not view or play media violent. There is need for Federal Government Authority to regulate the issue of movie adolescent should watch, there is need for the movie industry to inform the general society the kind of movie that is made for children to watch. There is need for experimental study using self-concept assertiveness training skills and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) for some students who have high level of aggressive behavior.

Society must prevail on the media to reduce violent programming because no government regulations are powerful enough to completely eliminate acts of violence from television films. Therefore, parents and other concerned adults should

do is to channel their best energy and efforts into areas such as commercial and "school programming" that will help educate children on understanding that what they see is not always reality or the right way of doing things, therefore television stations should release a special broadcast before a film, stating the non-reality of the film. Parent should also schedule time for when watching of films is allowed. Conclusively, children should be conserved and encouraged by their parents, teachers and care giver on the kind of films they watch and insist that they spend more of their time watching educational films that would help build them up mentally and morally. However, in order for this to effectively work, the parents of today also need to be equally educated.

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