

## Effects of violent movies on drawing symbols in seven to eleven years old boys

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Received for publication: 30 March 2014.

Accepted for publication: 10 July 2014.

### Abstract

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of violence watching on aggression expression in drawing symbols (paintings) of school children. The study population consisted of 50 male students of elementary schools in the city of Semnan (Miaad School) selected by multistage cluster sampling and then divided into two groups (experimental and control), each consisted of 25 participants. First, the experimental group watched violent movie scenes (full of fight) and then a drawing test was taken from them (free topic painting). After that, the control group that didn't watch movies takes drawing test. Both paintings were examined using paint analysis. Three variables of angled and bold lines and tricolor (green, red and black) are the sign of arousal and anger expression in children's drawings. After analyzing and comparing the painting of both group, the results of statistical analysis showed symbols of anger in the experimental group was significantly higher than the painting of the control group. Conclusion: Watching violent films affects the drawing symbols of children.

**Keywords:** School Children / Analysis painting / drawing symbols / violence

### Introduction

Aggression in children is a common problem in the world that needs a lot of attention. Effective strategies evaluation has created enormous challenges for the professionals (Nissimov Nahum, E, 2009). Different definition of aggression and violence are presented. In Amid dictionary, the word violence means coarse, rough, anti-soft, sense of fighting and aggressive, anger, blame, battle and fight (AMID dictionary, 1981). Some scholars mean aggression as instinctive reaction to disappointing and as competition for access to resources which is manifested through the body (Argyle, M, 1993). Fromm defined aggression as all actions that cause harm to a person, object or other animals or with this intention, (Fromm, 1981 translated by Soltani, Smith and Bond, 1993; Baron, 1977). Different behavioral disorders have different stabilities and aggression is one of the most stable disorders (Seif Naraghi Naderi, 2000). In another definition of aggression, aggressive behavior is observed as a behavior with intent to cause damage or harm to another person disregarded the safety of others and probably self-person, the result of aggression may be physical or psychological (Coakley, Jay, J 1998).

Some scholars, especially those in the field of domestic violence have claimed that violence is two-dimensional because it can well be extended to unjust and oppressive political, social and economical systems (Greiner, G, 1988). The most common differentiation and classification of

aggression is its binary division into two types of reflection and implemental. Hostile or reflection aggression is done to harm physically or mentally (Alderman R. B, 1974; Wiggins, J. A et al., 1994). According to Leonard, this type of aggression is essentially emotional and its purpose is to damage to another (Leonard, W, M, 1988) Berquitz, (1975), calls this type of aggression " angry aggression "that during its period aggressive person becomes angry and upset because he considers another / others as threatening or harmful stimulus (quoting Blanchard, K, 1985 ).

Every day, many children watch many examples of violence in the news, children's programs, and internet. Short-term or long -term exposure to these programs causes the negative psychological effects such as aggression (Smith, 2010). Violence and aggression imposed the painting topic and specific operation or procedures of individual's. Painted lines are bold, angled, colorful and full of excitation. Face Details of dummy express anger (cut eyes, nose with open blades and thick lips). Sometimes tooth and nail (even feet nails) are plotted. The colors are Sharp and hot, red with green (anger sign) or in combination with black (a sign of guilt, combined with aggressive tendencies) dominates (Attorney, 2006).

The influence of violent films is to the extent that it can encourage young people to take up arms to satisfy their desires or play violent scenes that they have watched in movies. Many theorists believe that being sensitive to violence increases aggression ( Bartolo, 2011 ) .

Effects of violent movies on aggressive behavior have been confirmed in research studies (Akbari, 2002). The results of scientific and statistical research of Eron , Malamut and Husmann in 1986, Rapaczynski in 1984, Dorothy Singer and Yerom Singer in 1981 and Professor Singer in 1987 showed that children who regularly watch television and children who watch crime and violence in films and television suffer from mental disorders and are at risk of extinction , or at least disorders in their personality, they could not distinguish between good and evil, and they are aggressive, angry , lopsided, they have no power concentration and they are forgetful, heartless and stupid. Such children suffer to be in classroom and prefer to escape from there because they don't have enough power to learn (quoting Akbari , 2002).

There is no doubt that the current knowledge that human has ever achieved is not enough alone to achieve success. New fields of science and technology and inconceivable manifestations of various aspects of technology have been created. Definitions and criteria of moral, social and emotional functioning changes so that many psychologists and experts believe that in order to comply with this fundamental change, person in addition to increase his current knowledge, should enhance other non-cognitive skills and abilities to have his best performance

The problem can be stated in the social learning theory in this manner: the aggression in children is a result of aggressive behavior of others and imitation of their behavior. Bandura observations show that children use learnt aggression to solve their future problems. He also indicated that boys are more aggressive than girls, as well as society considers aggressive as a masculine behavior, and it even praised the aggressive behavior. Moreover, Bandera's experiment shows every child learns aggressive from their same gender rather than his/her heterosexual model ( Alavi , 2010).

Some behavioral scientists such as Freud and Lorenz believed that aggressive behavior is rooted in human nature. They believe that aggression is a hidden force in human that is gradually compacted and eventually will need to be discharged. Lorenz believed that , this energy can be practical if this energy discharge into the desired and proper shape, for example, be discharged through sports and games otherwise it can be discharged in a manner that would be detrimental and may apply through murder, mayhem, destruction and so on. Freud believed aggression is representative of death instinct in the face of life's instinct. That means as the instinct of life helps us to meet our needs, the death instinct leads to aggressive attempts to destroy and to pay damages and

if it could not kill people and destroy others, it will come back to the person and it is manifested by self-abuse, suicidal, self-criticism, depression, addiction and risk and unnecessary activity such as gambling. If the aggression is noticed by others, it will be displayed as anger, hatred, prejudice, verbal abuse, brutality, and eye rivalry, revenge, murder and war. So in his idea the aggression is destructive and negative (Akbari, 2002).

Another study in 2011, on those who played the violent game for several years showed their brain response to the violent scenes are less and this less brain's response causes that their violence increases (Adachi, P. J. C., Willoughby, T, 2011). Prior to 1995, studies were focused exclusively on acts of physical aggression, without focusing on others aggressive actions (Adams, 2008). Further research on childhood aggression, are focused on overt and physical aggression which is often seen in boys. (Schmeelk K.M, 2007). However, in recent years, more attention to other aspects of aggression that may be common in girls was performed (Creek and oak – Vaklr, 2003).

From studies done in the field of aggression in media it can be concluded that some researchers such as Freud assumed watching violence as a positive action and believed that observing violence reduces the results of aggression. Freud's theory of instinctual aggression says: "the aggressive intensity could reduce by creation positive emotional interests in the people such as providing loopholes like watching BOXERS who earn money to win, or doing Sports-and-Hobbies". However, researchers and scholars often emphasize the negative effects of violent films. Social learning theory believes that "learning violence and aggression can be created through television, cinema, internet, and computer games."

Albert Bandura's (1986) research on student groups confirmed this hypothesis. Bandura believes that newspapers, television and cinema are very informative, but they can also be very destructive. The main destructive effect of media, especially cinema and television is their aggression creation. Bandura conclusion about aggression in television programs is: "The results of TV programs analysis shows that the violence action usually shows as a reasonable, success and permitted action. In most movies and programs the violence solution accentuates more than its alternatives. Not only it shows that violence receives prize and award but also superheroes are shown as humans who destroy their enemies fast and easy and the life of people are worthless for them (Bandura, 1986).

Violent movies and TV series have much attraction for kids, especially boys. Some theories say violent video could be a mental drain because people will identify with the characters and discharge their disappointment with character's behavior. Yet another psychology theory states that when the field of poverty and unemployment would be ready, violent movies and serials that show death and torture lead to increased violence and violent behavior patterning and generally stimulate aggressive feelings in the viewer so that he wants to do what he saw. This research has three hypotheses: the first hypothesis, watching violent movies causes painting is drawn with bold lines , the second hypothesis, watching violent movies causes the painting is drawn with sharp angles and the third hypothesis, watching violent films increases the possibility of using three colors ( green , red and black ) that are symbols of anger.

### **Methodology**

This study is experimental. The study population consisted of boy students of elementary schools in Semnan city. The sample included 50 boys of Miaad primary school and sampling method is multistage cluster sampling. After that 50 subjects were randomly selected, they were randomly divided into two groups each consisted of 25 participants (control and experimental) group. First, the experimental group watched about half an hour violent movie scenes in the school hall and then drawing test was taken from them (free topic painting). Then drawing test was taken

from controls with the same conditions except watching movies. Paintings of both groups were examined using the method of analysis. Then paintings of two groups were compared.

Painting analysis is finding method of the symbols of aggression including bold, angular, sharp and full of excitement lines and using hot colors, including red or green (anger symbol) or in combination with black (sign of feeling guilty with aggressive tendencies) in the paintings. Consequently, three variables of sharp and bold lines and colors of the anger (green, red and black) are the signs of aggression and anger expression in children's drawings. Data analyzed by comparing the symbols of aggression in experimental and control groups and using chi-square test. Analysis of drawings was done by person with more than 4 years experience in analyzing paintings of children empirically, using the children's character evaluation book that is based on Dadsetan graphical test (2006).

## Results

### *Hypothesis 1: Violent movies causes the painting with the bold lines.*

Table 1 shows the number of bold lines drawn in full color specified separately for each group. As can be seen in Table 1, bold lines in the drawing of the experimental group was significantly ( $X^2: 7.76$ ,  $SIG: 0.005$ ) higher than the control group. Given that the observed frequency (bold lines) in the experimental group is higher than the control group then it can be concluded that in confidence level of 99% violence watching increase these kinds of symbols of aggression (bold lines).

### *Hypothesis 2: A violent movie causes sharp angles in painting.*

Sharp angles depicted in Table 1 have been determined separately for each group. As can be seen in Table 1, the sharp angles of paintings in experimental group is significantly ( $X^2: 9$ ,  $SIG: 0.003$ ) higher than the control group. The observed frequency (sharp angles depicted in the painting) in the experimental group is higher than the control group. Given that the observed frequency (bold lines) in the experimental group is higher than the control group then it can be concluded that in confidence level of 99% violence watching increase drawing sharp angles in paintings which is considered as a symbol of aggression.

*Hypothesis 3: violent film increase using the tricolor symbol of the wrath (green, red and black) in painting.*

**Table 1: Chi-square test between experimental and control groups**

Variable	Group						$X^2$	SIG
	Experimental			Control				
	Observed Frequency	Predicted Frequency	Residual	Observed Frequency	Predicted Frequency	Residual		
Using three anger symbol colors	14	9	5	4	9	5	5.56	0.018
Drawing sharp angles	14	8	6	2	8	6	9	0.003
Drawing bold lines	22	14.5	7.5	7	14.5	7.5	7.76	0.005

In Table 1, the number of colors (anger symbol) is indicated separately for each group. As can be seen in Table 1, using the named paint colors in the experimental group was significantly ( $X^2: 5.56, \text{SIG: } 0.018$ ) higher than the control group. Given that the observed frequency (the colors symbolize anger) in the experimental group is higher than control group then it can be concluded that in confidence level of 99% violence watching increases this type of symbols and increase the probability of using anger tricolor symbol (green, red and black) in painting.

### Discussion

The aim of this study was to examine the effect of watching violence on aggression in children painting. The results showed that there is a relationship between watching violence and aggression in children painting. These findings are in agreement with the results of other studies. Researchers and scholars often emphasize the negative effects of violent films (Bandura, 1986).

First studies of aggression covers case studies such as the study of the movies in 1930s by Painfund, comedies analyzing comedies by Vortem (1956), research on children and television in the UK by Heimvelt (1958) and examination of the television and children in the United States and Canada by Schramm, Lille and Parker (1961). These researchers except Heimvelt concluded in their studies that media are somewhat effective in children's aggression. Heimvelt believes that media violence may reduce awareness of the consequences of violence (quoting Greiner, G, 1988). A new study in 2010 showed that violent game has no affect on anger in young people, but children are affected by these programs (Ferguson, C. J, 2010).

The results of this study indicate that violence not only has effects on children behavior, but also paintings of children which represent aware or unconscious thoughts and feelings. Children not only expressed their repressed and folded back emotions, but they also show their current mood and emotion in their paintings. In order to prevent violence at the individual, family and community are obliged to inform the children about the harmful effects of violent movies, to prevent the negative effects of the films. Fortunately, in most societies, governments have been taken special measures to avoid watching violent movies.

Additionally, families are responsible for preparing films and computer games, according to the labels indicate the age appropriate program for their child to stop the adverse consequences of violence in future. Experts say that violent cartoons can cause aggression in children and cause struggling with classmates. Experts say that it is necessary to determine age limit for movies and this age range frequently remind. our recommendations for future research is drawing attention to the fact that analysis of painting is not a single diagnostic technique, but it may be used as a method for treating aggressive children. Furthermore, this technique can also be used to diagnose other disorders in children.

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