

# GCSE psychology – Unit 2: Social and Biological Psychological Debates

## Topic C: Do TV and video games affect young people’s behaviour?

Theories about aggression		Research Method	The job of an Educational psychologist										
<b>Biological theory</b> Aggression has a genetic cause:	<b>Social Learning Theory</b> Aggression has a social cause	<b>Content Analysis</b>  A way of measuring how often a behaviour occurs. Can be used to study how much aggression there is in TV programmes.	Focuses on children and their learning.										
<b>The role of the brain</b>	<b>Learning from others</b>												
<b>Evidence:</b> Amygdala in the brain = recognizes emotion. It produces a fear response such as anger. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Case study</b> – Charles Whitman – killed 13 people = brain tumour pressing on his amygdala.</li> <li>- <b>Animal studies</b> – removal of amygdala = more aggression in the animal.</li> </ul>	This theory suggests we learn our aggression by copying the behaviour of our role models.	<b>How to conduct a content analysis.</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Decide what you mean by aggression.</li> <li>2. Create a list of aggressive behaviours to look out for. This will be your tally chart.</li> <li>3. Decide on which TV programmes you are going to watch (your sample) and when.</li> <li>4. Watch the programmes and for each programme tally every time an aggressive behavior occurs.</li> <li>5. Add up your tallies for each programme and compare how much aggression there is in each programme – could do this as a chart or table.</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carry out assessments of children with special educational needs (a legal requirement).</li> </ul>										
<b>Evidence</b> Limbic System – responsible for emotions like fear and aggression and helps us control our aggression.	<b>How social Learning Theory works</b>  We learn by observing others <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Attention</b> – we pay attention to what that person is doing.</li> <li>2. <b>Memory</b> – we remember the behaviour we have seen.</li> <li>3. <b>Reproduction</b> – we act out the behaviour we have seen</li> <li>4. <b>Motivation</b> – we want to copy the behaviour we have seen</li> </ol>			<b>What a tally chart looks like.</b> <table border="1" style="margin: 10px auto;"> <tr> <td>Programme:</td> <td>date/time</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Category</b></td> <td><b>Tallies</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Kicking</td> <td>IIII = 4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Punching</td> <td>III = 3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Total</td> <td>7</td> </tr> </table> <p><b>Remember</b> – each time you record the behaviour you add a tally (mark) against the behaviour – you only add them up at the end.</p>	Programme:	date/time	<b>Category</b>	<b>Tallies</b>	Kicking	IIII = 4	Punching	III = 3	Total
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Kicking	IIII = 4												
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Total	7												
<b>Evaluation</b> Strengths – see studies for amygdala – they show it is linked to aggression.	<b>Evaluation</b> Weakness – case studies are unreliable – it only looks at aggression in one person. Weakness – It is difficult to compare the results of animal studies with humans – we are more complex and may be influenced by Social Learning.	<b>What an Ed psych has to do:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Training – to train teachers and children</li> <li>2. Research – to help them understand different children better</li> <li>3. Multi-agency work – work with health service, social services etc... to help the child.</li> <li>4. Keeping up-to date – be aware of new research and methods.</li> </ol>											
			<b>Becoming and Ed psych</b>  <b>Skills:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listening</li> <li>• Understanding</li> </ul>										

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication</li> </ul> <p><b>Qualifications</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Degree in psychology (recognized by British Psychological Society)</li> <li>• Experience in education</li> <li>• Three year – doctorate in educational psychology.</li> </ul> <p><b>Extra</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Become a chartered psychologist – approved by the British Psychological Society.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The role of hormones</b></p> <p><b>Testosterone</b> – male sex hormone – secreted by the testes and adrenal gland.</p>	<p>We tend to copy from the people we like or respect = <b>role model</b></p> <p><b>Identification</b> – when we copy the behaviours of our role models and become more like them.</p>	<p><b>Problems with Content analysis</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Sample could be <b>biased</b> = might have only watched programs after the watershed. Try to get a balance of programmes.</li> <li>2. <b>Unrepresentative</b> – if you only analyse one programme it is not representative of all the types of programmes on TV.</li> <li>3. <b>Reliability</b> – two people might interpret aggression in different ways so content analysis might not be reliable = might not get the same results if repeated.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Helping a child with anger management problems</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Work with school.</li> <li>2. Observe the child in the classroom (or where they get angry)</li> <li>3. Interview teachers, parents, child etc... (to get as much information as possible)</li> <li>4. Create an intervention plan – to help the child eg, relaxation techniques, avoiding the stressful situation etc...</li> <li>5. If more serious – refer to another agency (eg, health service).</li> </ol>
<p><b>Evidence</b> – males produce more testosterone than women and are often more aggressive.</p>	<p><b>Vicarious reinforcement</b> – we see our role models rewarded in some way for their behaviour so we are more likely to copy it to get similar rewards.</p>		<p><b>Censorship and the 9 o’clock watershed</b></p>
<p><b>Evidence – Animal studies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Castrating animals lowers their testosterone and makes them less aggressive. If then injected with testosterone it becomes more aggressive.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Do children copy TV and video games?</b></p> <p><b>Evidence:</b> Bandura’s study using a Bobo doll showed that children were likely to copy adult role models – they copied their aggressive behaviour and hit the Bobo doll</p> <p>Children may <b>identify</b> with aggressive characters on TV and try to copy them. As many of these characters are rewarded for their aggressive behaviour the children see them being <b>vicariously reinforced</b>.</p>		<p><b>Censorship</b> – preventing information being circulated</p> <p><b>Watershed</b> – a turning point. For example, TV watershed = 9pm after which more violent/adult themed programmes can be shown.</p> <p><b>Moral censorship</b> – deciding what material should be shown to which groups of people.</p> <p><b>Authoritarian</b> – a government which makes decisions and people have to follow them.</p> <p><b>Paternalistic</b> – a government which</p>

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<p>- <b>In humans</b> – can measure testosterone levels and compare with how a person feels or acts = <b>correlational study</b> (comparing two variables)</p>	<p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <p><b>Strengths</b> – Bandura’s study shows that children copy aggressive role models.</p> <p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <p><b>Weakness</b> – many children watch aggressive behaviour on TV but not all of them copy it.</p> <p><b>Weakness</b> – It could just be that it is aggressive children choose to watch aggressive TV – so TV isn’t actually the cause.</p>	<p><b>The ethics of psychological research</b></p> <p><b>Protection of participants</b> = people taking part in research should not be harmed either physically or psychologically.</p> <p><b>Consent</b> = people have to agree to take part in research.</p> <p><b>Right to withdraw</b> = participant should be allowed to stop taking part whenever they want and for whatever reason.</p> <p><b>Deception</b> = participants should not be told the research is about one thing but is really about something else. An example of this is Anderson and Dill’s study.</p> <p><b>Debrief</b> = all participants should be asked how they feel after taking part to make sure they are not too stressed etc ...</p> <p><b>Competence</b> = a researcher should be qualified to carry out the study. For example be a chartered psychologist and have been given approval from the British psychological Society.</p>	<p>makes decisions because they think they are the best for everyone.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <p><b>Strengths</b> – castrating animals shows clear cause and effect – testosterone is linked with aggression.</p>			<p><b>Arguments For and Against censorship and the watershed</b></p>
<p><b>Evaluation</b></p> <p><b>Weakness</b> – not all humans with high testosterone levels are aggressive (so aggression might be caused by something else as well – such as SLT)</p>			<p><b>Arguments For:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Studies have shown that children copy role models</li> <li>• Censorship protects children from seeing things they are not ready to see – violence, bad language etc...</li> <li>• Children are not little adults but individuals with their own abilities and levels of understanding.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The nature versus nurture debate about aggression</b></p>		<p><b>Psychologists must assess the risks before doing any research.</b></p>	<p><b>Arguments Against:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricts people’s freedom of choice.</li> <li>• People should be free to decide what they watch.</li> <li>• Parents should make the decision as to what their children can watch and not the government.</li> <li>• The watershed only applies to TV and not video games or the internet and so children can access violent programmes here.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Evidence to show it is nature</b></p>	<p><b>Evidence to show it is nurture</b></p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The limbic system</li> <li>- The amygdala – <b>evidence</b> = Charles Whitman</li> <li>- Testosterone – <b>evidence</b> = castration of animals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Observational learning</li> <li>- Modeling</li> <li>- Identification</li> <li>- Vicarious reinforcement</li> </ul> <p><b>Evidence</b> = Bandura’s study.</p>		

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Studies into aggression			
Ramirez et al (2001) – Culture and aggression	Anderson and Dill (2000): Video games and aggression	Charlton et al (2000): St Helena study	Williams et al (1981): does TV affect children’s behaviour?
<p><b>Aim:</b> to find out if aggression varied between cultures.</p> <p><b>Procedure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>400 psychology students (volunteered)                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>200 from Japan</li> <li>200 from Spain</li> </ul> </li> <li>All completed <b>questionnaire</b> – different types of aggression – five point rating scale (quantitative data)</li> </ul> <p><b>Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Japanese – more physical aggression than Spanish</li> <li>Spanish – more verbal aggression than Japanese</li> <li>Males (in both) – more physical and verbal aggression than females</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aggression does vary between cultures</li> <li>Males in all cultures are more aggressive than females</li> </ul> <p>Went against the cultural stereotype of Japanese males being shy.</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> do violent video games make people aggressive?</p> <p><b>Procedure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Lab experiment</b> – 210 psychology students split into 2 groups (independent measures)</li> <li>IV = type of video game played.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Myst – non-violent game</li> <li>Wolfenstein – violent game</li> </ul> </li> <li>DV = level of aggression shown</li> <li>Participants told the study was about motor skills and not aggression = unethical (deception)</li> <li>Played video game (15 mins) – then played reaction test game with an opponent – winner give loser a blast of noise.</li> <li>All participants given a full debrief at the end – ethical.</li> </ul> <p><b>Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loudest and longest blasts by groups who played the violent video game. Women – greater punishment than men!</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>Playing violent video games increases aggression – particularly in women.</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> investigate effects of television on children</p> <p><b>Procedure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Natural experiment</b> – the researchers did not set up the experiment – just studied what was happening naturally.</li> <li>Compared the aggression of children before and after the introduction of TV on the island of St Helena – questionnaires, observation in playground and interviews of parents.</li> <li>IV – television (before and after it was introduced)</li> <li>DV – children’s behaviour</li> </ul> <p><b>Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very little difference in behaviour before and after. This could have been due to the small community and parents having a high level of control over the children.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <p>TV did not really affect behaviour even if the programmes watched were violent.</p>	<p><b>Aim:</b> measure children’s behaviour before and after TV introduced.</p> <p><b>Procedure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Natural experiment</li> <li>Range of behaviours measured before and after TV introduced                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aggression in the playground</li> <li>Leisure activities done in the community.</li> <li>Intelligence of children</li> <li>Creativity and reading ability of children</li> </ul> </li> <li>Compared findings with two other towns                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notel – the town with no television</li> <li>Unitel – town had one television</li> <li>Multitel – had many channels</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children twice as aggressive after the introduction of TV.</li> <li>IQ scores dropped slightly after TV introduced.</li> <li>Children became less creative.</li> </ul> <p><b>Conclusion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notel = TV increased levels of aggression.</li> <li>- TV = meant people spent less time on being creative.</li> </ul>
<b>Evaluation of Ramirez et al’s study</b>	<b>Evaluation of Anderson and Dill study</b>	<b>Evaluation of Charlton’s study</b>	<b>Evaluation of Williams et al</b>
<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The questionnaire produced <b>quantitative</b> data so it cannot be interpreted differently by the researchers.</li> </ul> <p>All students <b>volunteered</b> - given their <b>consent</b> – it was <b>ethical</b></p>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lab experiment – lots of control = all participants got the same instructions. Only diff = game played.</li> <li>Findings – useful in real world = shows dangers of playing violent video games on young therefore = age restricted games.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Study a natural experiment – shows what is happening in a real situation (naturally)</li> </ul> <p>The observations were done with discreet cameras – so behaviour was natural.</p>	<p><b>Strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A natural experiment – shows behaviour happening in a real setting and not a lab.</li> <li>The same children studied before and after TV introduced – could compare the effects.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <p>May have been response bias – all students studied psychology – may have known what information the psychologist wanted and so answered the questions to give them this information</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participants might have guessed the aims of the study as they were psychology students = <b>demand characteristics</b>.</li> </ul> <p>Participants were <b>deceived</b> (told it was about motor skills) so – <b>unethical</b>.</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Results might have been because the TV programmes they watched were less violent than the ones watched on the mainland.</li> </ul> <p>Parents might not have wanted to report aggressive behaviour – create the wrong impression of the island.</p>	<p><b>Weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How much TV watched was not controlled or supervised - so might have been watching more aggressive adult TV.</li> <li>The observers might have been biased – recording what they wanted to support their study.</li> </ul>
<b>Comparing these two studies</b>			
<b>Similarities</b>		<b>Differences.</b>	
• Natural experiments		• Island versus mainland	
• Real communities		• Different sense of community.	
• Compared before and after TV introduced		• Parental guidance different	
• Used questionnaire and observational methods		• Cultural differences	