

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										
Biological theory Aggression has a genetic cause:	Social Learning Theory Aggression has a social cause	Content Analysis 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.										
The role of the brain	Learning from others												
Evidence: Amygdala in the brain = recognizes emotion. It produces a fear response such as anger. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Case study – Charles Whitman – killed 13 people = brain tumour pressing on his amygdala. - Animal studies – removal of amygdala = more aggression in the animal. 	This theory suggests we learn our aggression by copying the behaviour of our role models.	How to conduct a content analysis. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decide what you mean by aggression. 2. Create a list of aggressive behaviours to look out for. This will be your tally chart. 3. Decide on which TV programmes you are going to watch (your sample) and when. 4. Watch the programmes and for each programme tally every time an aggressive behavior occurs. 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out assessments of children with special educational needs (a legal requirement). 										
Evidence Limbic System – responsible for emotions like fear and aggression and helps us control our aggression.	How social Learning Theory works We learn by observing others <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attention – we pay attention to what that person is doing. 2. Memory – we remember the behaviour we have seen. 3. Reproduction – we act out the behaviour we have seen 4. Motivation – we want to copy the behaviour we have seen 			Attached to several schools and: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meet with teachers and other staff 2. Work with SEN co-ordinator 3. Assess individual children <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. IQ tests b. Literacy tests c. Numeracy tests d. Dyslexia = standardized tests so they can compare results with other children. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Interview individual children – often using open questions. 5. Plan intervention – planning a way to solve a problem. 6. Monitoring the intervention. 									
Evaluation Strengths – see studies for amygdala – they show it is linked to aggression.		What a tally chart looks like. <table border="1" style="margin: 10px auto;"> <tr> <td>Programme:</td> <td>date/time</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Category</td> <td>Tallies</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>	Programme:		date/time	Category	Tallies	Kicking	IIII = 4	Punching	III = 3	Total	7
Programme:			date/time										
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Evaluation 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.	Remember – each time you record the behaviour you add a tally (mark) against the behaviour – you only add them up at the end.	Becoming and Ed psych Skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening • Understanding 											

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

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	<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Strengths – Bandura’s study shows that children copy aggressive role models.</p> <p>Evaluation</p> <p>Weakness – many children watch aggressive behaviour on TV but not all of them copy it.</p> <p>Weakness – It could just be that it is aggressive children choose to watch aggressive TV – so TV isn’t actually the cause.</p>		<p>makes decisions because they think they are the best for everyone.</p>
<p>- In humans – can measure testosterone levels and compare with how a person feels or acts = correlational study (comparing two variables)</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">The ethics of psychological research</p> <p>Protection of participants = people taking part in research should not be harmed either physically or psychologically.</p> <p>Consent = people have to agree to take part in research.</p> <p>Right to withdraw = participant should be allowed to stop taking part whenever they want and for whatever reason.</p> <p>Deception = 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>Debrief = all participants should be asked how they feel after taking part to make sure they are not too stressed etc ...</p> <p>Competence = 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 style="text-align: center;">Arguments For and Against censorship and the watershed</p>
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Strengths – castrating animals shows clear cause and effect – testosterone is linked with aggression.</p>			<p>Arguments For:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies have shown that children copy role models • Censorship protects children from seeing things they are not ready to see – violence, bad language etc... • Children are not little adults but individuals with their own abilities and levels of understanding.
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>Weakness – not all humans with high testosterone levels are aggressive (so aggression might be caused by something else as well – such as SLT)</p>			<p>Arguments Against:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restricts people’s freedom of choice. • People should be free to decide what they watch. • Parents should make the decision as to what their children can watch and not the government. • The watershed only applies to TV and not video games or the internet and so children can access violent programmes here.
<p>The nature versus nurture debate about aggression</p>		<p>Psychologists must assess the risks before doing any research.</p>	
<p>Evidence to show it is nature</p>	<p>Evidence to show it is nurture</p>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The limbic system - The amygdala – evidence = Charles Whitman - Testosterone – evidence = castration of animals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Observational learning - Modeling - Identification - Vicarious reinforcement <p>Evidence = 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>Aim: to find out if aggression varied between cultures.</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 400 psychology students (volunteered) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 200 from Japan 200 from Spain All completed questionnaire – different types of aggression – five point rating scale (quantitative data) <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Japanese – more physical aggression than Spanish Spanish – more verbal aggression than Japanese Males (in both) – more physical and verbal aggression than females <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggression does vary between cultures Males in all cultures are more aggressive than females <p>Went against the cultural stereotype of Japanese males being shy.</p>	<p>Aim: do violent video games make people aggressive?</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lab experiment – 210 psychology students split into 2 groups (independent measures) IV = type of video game played. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Myst – non-violent game Wolfenstein – violent game DV = level of aggression shown Participants told the study was about motor skills and not aggression = unethical (deception) Played video game (15 mins) – then played reaction test game with an opponent – winner give loser a blast of noise. All participants given a full debrief at the end – ethical. <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loudest and longest blasts by groups who played the violent video game. Women – greater punishment than men! <p>Conclusion</p> <p>Playing violent video games increases aggression – particularly in women.</p>	<p>Aim: investigate effects of television on children</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural experiment – the researchers did not set up the experiment – just studied what was happening naturally. 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. IV – television (before and after it was introduced) DV – children’s behaviour <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>Conclusion</p> <p>TV did not really affect behaviour even if the programmes watched were violent.</p>	<p>Aim: measure children’s behaviour before and after TV introduced.</p> <p>Procedure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Natural experiment Range of behaviours measured before and after TV introduced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggression in the playground Leisure activities done in the community. Intelligence of children Creativity and reading ability of children Compared findings with two other towns <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notel – the town with no television Unitel – town had one television Multitel – had many channels <p>Findings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children twice as aggressive after the introduction of TV. IQ scores dropped slightly after TV introduced. Children became less creative. <p>Conclusion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notel = TV increased levels of aggression. - TV = meant people spent less time on being creative.
Evaluation of Ramirez et al’s study	Evaluation of Anderson and Dill study	Evaluation of Charlton’s study	Evaluation of Williams et al
<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The questionnaire produced quantitative data so it cannot be interpreted differently by the researchers. All students volunteered - given their consent – it was ethical 	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lab experiment – lots of control = all participants got the same instructions. Only diff = game played. Findings – useful in real world = shows dangers of playing violent video games on young therefore = age restricted games. 	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study a natural experiment – shows what is happening in a real situation (naturally) The observations were done with discreet cameras – so behaviour was natural. 	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A natural experiment – shows behaviour happening in a real setting and not a lab. The same children studied before and after TV introduced – could compare the effects.
<p>Weaknesses</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>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants might have guessed the aims of the study as they were psychology students = demand characteristics. Participants were deceived (told it was about motor skills) so – unethical. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results might have been because the TV programmes they watched were less violent than the ones watched on the mainland. Parents might not have wanted to report aggressive behaviour – create the wrong impression of the island. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How much TV watched was not controlled or supervised - so might have been watching more aggressive adult TV. The observers might have been biased – recording what they wanted to support their study.
Comparing these two studies			
Similarities		Differences.	
• 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	