Media en pubergedrag: groeipijnen

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Information Overload – Ein massenhaftes Problem

Das Phänomen Information Overload erfreut sich gegenwärtig hoher Aufmerksamkeit:

z.B. Der Spiegel 33/2008: "Macht das Internet doof?" Vernetzt, verquatscht, verloren ...
The Internet ...

„Does the Internet make us stupid?“

Lazy, uncritical, desensitized, poor in reading and writing skills, addicted, lonely, anonymous bullies, sexists, poor in performance, ...

3 characteristics of public concerns media panics – moral panics

1. Uncertainty
   No established usage pattern and norms

2. Normative
   Moral values, cultural values

3. Often focused on vulnerable groups
   Children, adolescents („youth“)
Adolescents and Media

- Adolescents most avid users of media
- Adolescence sensitive period for developing brain and cognition
  - Hormonal, emotional, social, moral
  - Social skills, identity, self-knowledge
- Adolescents most susceptible to media influence

Media Use and Adolescents Today: Four Topics

- Aggression from gameplay
- Moral permissibility
- Cyberbullying
- Addiction
Do violent video games cause aggression?

Public concerns

Winnenden High School
Shooting
11th March 2009
1. Research on media violence

- Media Violence:
  - prolonged exposure to violent media content
  - violent games

- Main effects on Aggression

- Hotly debated

- Measurement of aggression

Study 1.A. Who is at risk?

- Susceptibility as function of cognitive development
- Educational ability level
- Who plays what, why?

  • Types of games (stand-alone, MMORPG)
  • Types of players (education level, age, gender)
  • Motivations that drive distinct player-types
  • Specific features they find especially attractive.
Method: Cross-sectional

- Participants:
  \[ N = 830, \text{Dutch boys (}M_{age} = 13.9, SD = 1.38\) \]

- Education level:
  - 33.4 % Low (VMBO)
  - 33.0 % Middle (HAVO)
  - 33.6 % High (VWO)

- Measurements
  - Three favorite video games
  - Motivations (22 items, 7 factors)
  - Attractiveness of Game Features
  - Traits (Sensation seeking, Trait aggressiveness)
  - Hours of game play, demographics

Results Study 1.A.

- Boys at lower educational ability level
- Higher in Sensation seeking and
- Higher in Trait aggressiveness
  than boys at the middle \(p’s < .0001\)
  and high education level \(p’s < .0001\).

- Lowest ability boys played more violent games
  than boys at the middle \(p < .0001\)
  and higher ability levels \(p < .0001\).
Lowest ability boys more attracted to violent and realistic game features, preferred wishful identification more than boys at middle ($p < .0001$) and high ($p < .0001$) levels.

Higher educated boys had stronger social motivations to play their favorite game, than middle ($p < .0001$), and higher educated boys ($p < .0001$).


**Conclusion & Discussion**

- Thus, lower educated adolescent boys most susceptible

- Assess *causal* relationship playing violent games and aggression

- Experiment designed to test causality within this developmental stage of adolescence

- And lower educated adolescent boys

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**Study 1.B. ‘I wish I were a Warrior’**

The role of wishful identification in the effects of violent video games on aggression in lower educated adolescent boys

- Developmental Theory
- Social Learning Theory
Experimental Design:
- 2 (violent vs non-violent) * 2 (realistic vs fantasy)
- 3 of each = 12 games

Participants
- Male adolescents at VMBO
- N = 112; M-age = 14.0; SD = 1.05

Procedure
- Personality traits 2 weeks before
- Individual treatment
- Play 20 minutes

Materials: Pre-test selection video games

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Want to play this game</th>
<th>Violent fantasy (e.g., Doom3, Quake)</th>
<th>Violent realistic (e.g., America’s Army, Killzone)</th>
<th>Nonviolent fantasy (e.g., Mario Kart, Final Fantasy)</th>
<th>Nonviolent realistic (e.g., The Sims2, Tony Hawk’s Underground)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Realistic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Rating
Measuring aggression

- **Competitive Reaction Time Task (CRTT) = ‘Noise blast’**
  - Ostensible partner, same sex
  - Winner blasts loser with ‘white noise’ through headphone
  - Selected intensity of noise as measure of aggression (60 dB (lev1) & 105 dB (lev10)
  - 9 trials (but only 1st trial used, avoid tit-for-tat responding)

Aggression Measure Improvements

- Crucial aspect of aggressive behavior is the **intention** underlying the behavior

- Two additions to `noise blast`:
  1. Prior training: exposure to and rate noise levels
  2. Warning: level 8 and beyond cause serious hearing damage

“I blasted him with level 10! I know he probably has hearing damage now, but I don’t care!”

*(Boy, age 13)*
RESULTS: Wishful-Identification * Violent game → Aggressive Behavior ($p < .005$)

![Graph showing the relationship between wishful identification and aggression levels for violent and non-violent games.](image)

**Participant (boy, 15 yr) said:**

“I like GTA a lot because you can shoot at people and drive fast in cars. When I am older I can do such things too. I would love to do all those things right now!”
Conclusion & Discussion

- Wishful identification important factor for game-related aggression.
  - Those who wishfully identify with the aggressor while playing a violent video game become more aggressive themselves than those who don’t.

- Realistic games increase wishful identification, more so than fantasy games.

- Yet, we have a debate ....

Public debate on media violence

Yes, media mayhem affect kids!
→ It’s the media’s responsibility!?

No, kids know how to handle this?!
→ It’s all just make-believe…
→ would I shoot my class-mate after playing Manhunt?!

What do kids and parents think?
→ It’s parents’ responsibility!?
→ Or forbid?!!
Ban on violent games may boomerang? Let’s test!

Experiment: Presenting game descriptions accompanied by:

1. PEGI age labels

2. Content labels

3. Three age groups:
   - 26.1% 7-8 year olds
   - 39.7% 12-13 year olds
   - 34.2% 16-17 year olds

N-total = 310 children/youngsters

Results-1

Each next, higher age label significantly increased the likeability of games as compared to the previous, lower age label.

\[ F(1,304)= 469.368, \ p<.0001, \ \eta^2 = .61. \]

Violence content label significantly more attractive than the non-violence content label and the NO label control condition $F(1,304) = 254.046, p < .0001, \eta^2 = .46$


In Conclusion

Adding Warning and Age labels to video games have a boomerang effect on children and adolescents,
- Both boys and girls,
- Including the very young ones (7-8 yr).

Thus, to forbid violent video games will make them even more attractive.

Both Reactance and Trait Aggressiveness increased attraction to games with a violence content label.

2010: Ministers of the interior call for restriction → many parties against restriction of violent games.

2011: Political decision against restriction.

In Sum

• Media violence effects not 1-to-1 effects!
• Media do not affect everyone the same way under all circumstances.
• To forbid violent games may make them even more attractive to youngsters.
• Individual differences
• Underlying mechanisms
Study: Morality?

• Mediator = Moral justification of antisocial media content increases media preferences?

Peer context: susceptible by social rejection

• Being rejected by peers 😞
Proposed causal effects

Cyberball

State
anger
(STAXI)

Media, Morality, and Youth Questionnaire (MMaYQue)

74 Adolescents
(between 12 – 16 yrs)

75 Young Adults
(between 18 - 27 yrs)

Results Morality - Media

Adolescents:
Peer rejection → Anger → Moral Judgment → Anti-social media preference

Young Adults:
Peer rejection → Anger → Moral Judgment → Anti-social media preference
Media Use and Cyberbullying

Cyclic Process Model in Cyberbullying

Victimization \[ \rightarrow \] Anger/frustration \[ \rightarrow \] Cyberbullying
Method

- 892 adolescents (57% boys, $M_{\text{age}}=13.73$, $SD_{\text{age}}=1.36$)
- Variables measured:
  - Face-to-face victimization
  - Anger and frustration
  - Cyberbullying behavior
  - Exposure to media with antisocial content: C-ME

Results Media Use in Cyberbullying

892 adolescents (57% boys, $M_{\text{age}}=13.73$, $SD_{\text{age}}=1.36$)  
Good model fit: $\chi^2(688)=1920.13; p=\text{ns}; CFI=.90, \text{RMSEA}=.05$
Cyclic Process Model in Cyberbullying
Does it hold over time?

Exposure to media with antisocial and risk behavior content

Cyberbullying behavior

Longitudinal design: 3 waves ($N = 1005$)
Secondary schools, classes 1–4
$M$-age = 13.65, $SD = 1.07$

RESULTS LONGITUDINAL

Cyberbullying

- High exposure
- Low exposure

Time 1  Time 2  Time 3
IMPLICATIONS AND DISCUSSION

- Role media in cyberbullying
- Amplifying effect
- Over time
- Controlled for trait aggressiveness
- 1 year vs. 10 year?
- Developmental differences in boys & girls?
Gaming Addiction?

Debate pro and con:

- Excessive gaming = enthusiast obsession? (i.e., metaphor)
  cf. “I’m addicted to chocolate”
- vs.
- Psychopathological disorder (DSM-IV) (i.e., literally)?
  - cf. Addicted to alcohol or drugs
Test Gaming Addiction?

- Excessive game play * Addiction in DSM-IV?
- Three Addiction subscales
  of the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory-2 (MMPI-2)
- Excessive gaming scales
  psychological + physical symptoms

- Sample of 1004 Dutch adolescent boys
  Age: 11 – 18; $M$-age =14.18, $SD = 1.36$

Results

- Problematic gaming behavior significantly related to all three substance abuse scales of the MMPI-2.
- 8.57% boys showed problematic gaming behavior.
- For them, non-chemical addictions may be similar to substance addictions. Yet,
- X-Game exposure as such ≠ pathological
- Pathological gaming should be clearly distinguished from ‘just’ excessive gaming.
Sum: Media Use and Adolescents

- Wishful identification moderator for Aggression from violent gameplay.
- Social rejection by peers and Moral permissibility antecedents of media preferences.
- Victimization drives antisocial media use, which amplifies Cyberbullying, over time.
- Addiction, personality vs gaming

Thank You

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Media Psychology
Dept. of Communication Science and LEARN!
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Readings - 1


Readings - 2


