

Learning about the World from Media

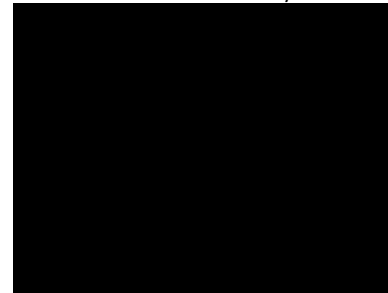
In Review...

- Uses & Gratification Theory useful as a first step—to *describe* media use, to understand the motivations for consuming media.
- Today's theories are *predictive* theories.

Cultivation Theory: Beliefs & Attitudes

- Created by **George Gerbner**. Primary premise: People learn from communication, both interpersonal (family, friends, school) and through Mass Media.
- TV & Film are our biggest “Cultural Storytellers” with average home viewing 7 hours of TV per day.
- Stories include **Characters** (who is in the world & what they are like?), **Plots** (what happens in the world?), and **Values** (what moral lessons do we learn?).

Cultivation Theory



The Specific Cultivation Hypothesis

- The more TV you watch, the more you believe the Real World (RW) = TV World.
- “Heavy” Viewers (≥ 4 hours per day)
- “Medium” Viewers (2 to 3.9 hours per day)
- “Light” Viewers (< 2 hours per day)
- About 1/3rd of all Adults are Heavy Viewers.

How is TV Reality different from RW?

- It's a man's world (men outnumber women 3 to 1)
- Much more violent than RW.
- Careers: Very few careers portrayed, with disproportionate professional jobs. One study documented that heavy-viewing teens expect high paying careers with lots of free time.
- Families: Now over-represent single-parent families, and definitely over-represents higher income levels. Leads to distorted understanding of poverty.

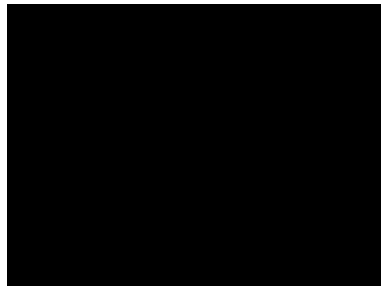
Cultivation Research Findings

- Depoliticization: HVs tend to see themselves as non-political, reinforcing the image of citizen-spectators rather than participants.
- Overall Knowledge: HVs less knowledgeable about environmental issues, and fearful of science.
- Sports Viewing: UM research (Johnson) documents that macho sports correlate to macho attitudes.
Note: This raises a chicken & egg dilemma that often faces cultivation research. "Reverse causality" possible in some areas but not all.

Cultivation Research Findings

- Racial Attitudes: TV underrepresents minorities (except for black men). HVs have more negative views of African-Americans, *especially* among those with little personal contact.
- The "contact" issue is important. You can learn from direct contact. If not, from "parasocial" contact.
- U of Wisconsin study = college students with little or no contact with African-Americans rely on TV portrayals, tend to have more negative attitudes.
- Jhally & Lewis on *Cosby Show*; increased positive attitudes toward AAs, but some interpreted show as "proof" that racism is a thing of the past.

Mean World Syndrome



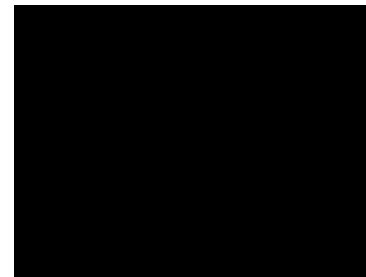
Mean World Syndrome

- Basic premise: TV makes the world seem far more dangerous than it is, on average.
- 1% of population experience violent crime, but 50% of TV World does.
- HV = Overestimate prevalence of crime, score higher on Mean World Index, believe people cannot be trusted, see everyone as "looking out for themselves."
- Exaggerates juvenile crime.
- Believes prison is better than rehabilitation.

Can TV/Film Alter Political Beliefs?

- The answer is Yes, though we should add "under certain circumstances."
- Michael Moore's *Sicko* is a good example. Research here at the U of M (Schiappa, et al.) found that viewing *Sicko* increased belief that health insurance reform is needed, and increased support for "Obamacare."
- Interestingly, those whose beliefs changed the *most* were self-identified conservatives.

Sicko



Attitudes about Organ Donation

- Quick, Morgan, LaVoie, & Bosch (Comm Research, July '14) studied story lines in *Grey's Anatomy* that portrayed OD negatively (e.g., doctors as "vultures" eager to declare patients dead to harvest organs).
- Surveyed 600 viewers of *Grey's Anatomy* and found modest to moderate correlations to between the "perceived realism" of GA and negative attitudes concerning OD.

2021 Meta-Analysis of Cultivation Research

- Hermann, Morgan, & Shanahan, *Journal of Communication*, 71 (2021): 515-544.
- 3842 variables from 406 independent samples.
- Overall Effect Size of 10.7, which is consistent with earlier (1999) meta-analysis.
- Included studies of overall TV viewing and of genre-specific viewing.

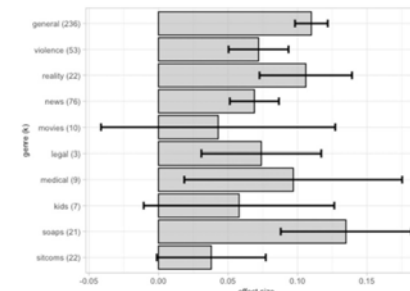
2021 Meta-Analysis Dependent Variables

Table 1 Cultivation Effects of TV Viewing on Dependent Variables

Dependent variable	k	#ES	r	95% CI	I^2 -L2	I^2 -L3	p
Violence	80	482	.118	[.099, .137]	44%	44%	.189
"Mean world"	47	205	.078	[.053, .102]	48%	45%	.024
Fear	63	195	.085	[.071, .099]	55%	20%	.462
Sex/gender roles	27	108	.110	[.068, .151]	40%	50%	.884
Politics/ideology	49	224	.081	[.063, .099]	75%	15%	.196
Family/marriage	24	124	.106	[.074, .139]	66%	18%	.502
Occupations	24	118	.153	[.108, .198]	55%	33%	.031
Health	28	82	.136	[.095, .177]	30%	63%	.053
Life satisfaction	26	57	.070	[.044, .096]	83%	6%	.051
Science/environment	17	79	.109	[.085, .133]	90%	0%	.920
Materialism	55	148	.132	[.101, .162]	26%	72%	.125
Sex	18	75	.082	[.053, .111]	88%	0%	.356
Body image	13	46	.092	[.041, .144]	32%	55%	.778
Race	12	47	.082	[.072, .092]	73%	0%	.871

Notes: L2 = level 2 (i.e., within samples); L3 = level 3 (i.e., between samples); p represents the significance of the difference between that dependent variable compared with all other dependent variables. All ES were significantly different from zero at $p < 0.010$ within their own category.

Genres as Independent Variables



Demographic Independent Variables

Table 2 Cultivation Effect Sizes Across Subgroups/Overall

Subgroup	k	#ES	r	95% CI	I^2 -L2	I^2 -L3	p
Overall	333	2,127	.107	[.098, .117]	51%	42%	
Males	68	292	.110	[.091, .128]	44%	31%	.330
Females	84	396	.122	[.102, .142]	38%	44%	
Kids	11	64	.079	[.042, .115]	23%	34%	.269
Adolescents	13	75	.106	[.071, .142]	29%	33%	
Young adults	22	54	.095	[.075, .116]	65%	0%	
Middle age	20	44	.084	[.061, .106]	15%	48%	
Older	21	52	.059	[.033, .086]	51%	24%	
Low income	13	28	.054	[.023, .085]	62%	14%	.033
Medium income	10	18	.084	[.064, .103]	38%	0%	
High income	12	25	.090	[.064, .115]	10%	23%	
Low education	27	83	.058	[.040, .076]	42%	28%	<.001
High education	27	73	.087	[.074, .100]	7%	22%	
Low SES	15	44	.061	[.033, .089]	33%	16%	.084
High SES	15	46	.102	[.051, .152]	77%	7%	
Liberal	19	60	.134	[.110, .158]	52%	13%	<.001
Moderate	19	60	.069	[.040, .098]	27%	47%	
Conservative	19	60	.050	[.038, .062]	69%	0%	
White	20	48	.095	[.075, .115]	38%	34%	.251
Nonwhite	33	155	.098	[.061, .134]	42%	38%	

Notes: L2 = level 2 (i.e., within samples); L3 = level 3 (i.e., between samples); p denotes whether the subgroups are significantly different from each other. All ES were significantly different from zero at $p < .010$ within their own subgroup.

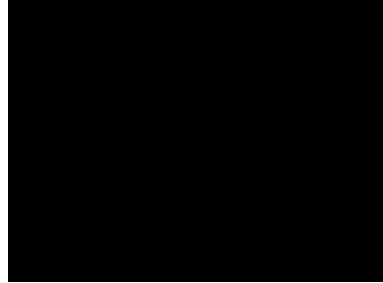
Social Learning Theory

- Albert Bandura is most associated with this theory.
- Also called Social Cognition, Observational Learning, or Vicarious Operant Conditioning.
- Like Cultivation, SLT assumes we learn from TV.
- Part of the learning process is pure *imitation*.

Examples:

- Criminal acts directly imitated from crime shows.
- Children hurt or killed by imitating Wrestling shows.

How I put on my shoes/socks from *All in the Family*



Imitation Can Be Deadly

- Media can fuel “social contagions,” the most dangerous of which is suicide.
- Suicides increase after celebrity suicides.
- Study in the *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry* (2019) documented an increase in teen suicide after the airing of “13 Reasons Why.”

“Vicarious Operant Conditioning”

- Remember Operant Conditioning from Psychology?
- Behavior rewarded is likely to be repeated; behavior punished is likely to decrease.
- “Vicarious” operant conditioning is a form of social learning: You see behavior rewarded or punished via mass media, you learn from that and increase or decrease your behavior accordingly.

The Power of Social Learning

- “Virtually all behavioral, cognitive, and affective [emotional] learning [that] comes from direct experience can be achieved *vicariously* by observing people’s actions and the consequences for them” (Bandura, 2002).
- Though this theory was developed in response to TV, obviously it applies to any & all mass media.
- We’ll look at research about Violence today; next class period, gender roles & intergroup learning.

Learning interest in Chess?



The NETFLIX Effect

- October 23, 2020, *Queens Gambit* debuts on Netflix
- To date, 62 million households have watched the show
- Inquiries for “chess sets” are up 250% on eBay
- Google search queries for “how to play chess” has hit an all-time high in 9 years
- The original novel *The Queen's Gambit* is now a *New York Times* bestseller 37 years after its release
- The number of new players on *chess.com* has 5x

TV Violence

- TV Content very violent: APA suggests the average child sees 8000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence *before finishing grade school*. Double that by age 18.
- Overall, the research is overwhelming. TV violence increases RW violence, *for certain people some of the time*.
- Part of this is Imitation, part of this is Vicarious Operant Conditioning.
- Bandura’s famous Bobo Doll experiments started this line of research.

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Poor Mister Bobo



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Longitudinal Study #1

Table 1. Television viewing at mean age 14 and aggressive acts reported at mean age 16 or 22 ($n = 707$)

Aggressive acts reported at mean age 16 or 22	Study group	Television viewing at mean age 14			Adjusted odds ratio (95% CI)
		<1 hour/day	1 to 3 hours/day	>3 hours/day	
Assault or physical fights resulting in injury	Total sample	5.7 (5.0-6.6)*	18.4 (17.1-19.8)	25.3 (23.8-27.0)	1.57 (1.13-2.19)*
	Males	8.4 (7.4-9.5)*	22.3 (20.9-23.7)	41.7 (38.7-44.7)	1.91 (1.38-2.63)*
	Females	2.3 (1.4-4.0)	8.6 (5.6-13.6)	9.3 (5.1-16.5)	1.29 (0.72-2.34)
Robbery, threats to injure someone, or weapon used to control a crime	Total sample	3.6 (3.1-4.2)*	9.6 (9.1-10.2)	14.6 (13.4-15.9)	1.58 (1.14-2.19)*
	Males	6.7 (5.4-8.3)	14.0 (12.8-15.3)	20.9 (19.4-22.5)	1.46 (1.04-2.05)
	Females	0.9 (0.4-1.9)	4.8 (3.0-7.8)	8.5 (5.1-14.1)	2.44 (1.41-4.19)
Any aggression not against another person	Total sample	5.7 (5.0-6.6)*	22.3 (20.9-23.7)	28.4 (26.7-30.1)	1.58 (1.14-2.19)*
	Males	8.9 (7.4-10.7)	22.3 (20.9-23.7)	42.7 (39.7-45.7)	1.57 (1.13-2.19)*
	Females	2.3 (1.4-4.0)	7.9 (5.0-12.9)	12.7 (7.1-22.2)	1.32 (0.72-2.34)

*Significantly higher level of subsequent aggression in comparison with individuals who spent most time watching television at mean age 14. Significant association after controlling for the variables that were significantly associated with television viewing and subsequent aggression: sex, age, race, ethnicity, the amount of time spent watching television at mean age 14, and family income.

Table 2. Television viewing at mean age 22 and aggressive acts reported at mean age 16 or 22 ($n = 707$)

Aggressive acts reported at mean age 16	Study group	Television viewing at mean age 22 (hours/week)			Adjusted odds ratio (95% CI)
		<1 hr/week	1 to 3 hr/week	>3 hr/week	
Assault or physical fights resulting in injury	Total sample	1.2% (1.0-1.5)*	2.7% (2.3-3.1)*	10.8% (9.5-12.1)*	2.62 (1.58-4.33)*
	Males	2.4% (1.4-4.1)	3.9% (3.0-5.0)	13.4% (11.4-15.3)*	1.78 (0.71-4.10)
	Females	0% (0-0.4)	1.5% (0.1-2.9)	7.9% (3.4-15.7)*	4.27 (1.00-17.28)*
Robbery, threats to injure someone, or weapon used to control a crime	Total sample	6.7% (5.4-8.3)	7.8% (7.2-8.4)	16.8% (15.1-18.5)	1.28 (0.80-1.78)
	Males	12.2% (9.4-15.0)	11.9% (10.2-13.6)	24.9% (21.7-28.1)	0.88 (0.61-1.26)
	Females	0% (0-0.4)	3.9% (2.0-5.8)	11.9% (7.2-19.7)*	3.94 (1.25-12.37)*
Any aggression not against another person	Total sample	7.9% (6.4-9.5)	9.5% (8.7-10.3)	18.6% (16.7-20.5)*	1.57 (1.04-2.36)*
	Males	14.6% (10.4-19.8)	14.0% (12.8-15.3)	28.4% (26.7-30.1)	1.00 (0.61-1.65)
	Females	0% (0-0.4)	5.6% (3.0-9.2)	16.8% (11.4-24.2)*	4.77 (1.81-12.92)*

*Significantly higher level of subsequent aggression in comparison with individuals who spent less time watching television at mean age 22. Significant association after controlling for the variables that were significantly associated with television viewing and subsequent aggression: sex, age, race, ethnicity, the amount of time spent watching television at mean age 14, and family income.

Longitudinal Study #1

Television Viewing and Aggressive Behavior During Adolescence and Adulthood

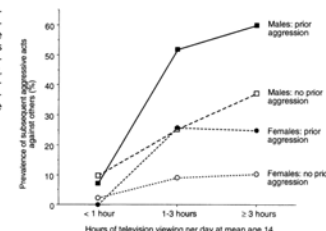
Jeffrey G. Johnson,^{1*} Patricia Cohen,¹ Elizabeth M. Smalles,¹ Stephanie Kasen,¹ Judith S. Brook²

Television viewing and aggressive behavior were assessed over a 17-year interval in a community sample of 707 individuals. There was a significant association between the amount of time spent watching television during adolescence and early adulthood and the likelihood of subsequent aggressive acts against others. This association remained significant after previous aggressive behavior, childhood neglect, family income, neighborhood violence, parental education, and psychiatric disorders were controlled statistically.

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Longitudinal Study #1

Fig. 1. Association between time spent watching television at mean age 14 by males and females with and without a history of aggressive behavior, and the prevalence of aggressive acts against others, reported at mean age 16 or 22.



When is Violent Behavior Most Likely?

- First, violent characters must be perceived as *attractive* (socially or physically) to viewers--especially children.
- Second, the use of violence must be viewed as *rewarded* (or at least not punished).
- If both conditions are met, RW violence more likely. The link is not unlike tobacco & health problems--no one denies it except the Industry.
- Again, no reason for us to limit this finding to TV.

Huesmann et al., Longitudinal Research

- Study followed 500+ Chicago area youth from a variety of socio-economic & educational backgrounds from 1977-1992.
- This is known as longitudinal research: The most difficult to do, but also the most useful.
- Collected data on early childhood TV viewing: How much total, how much violent TV, and to what extent the children "identified" with the main characters.
- RL Violence measured by public records, self-reports, & reports of family & friends.

What did they find?

- Violence measured included spouse abuse, shoving, punching, beating, choking others.
- Results: Violent TV viewing between ages of 6-9, children's identification with aggressive same-sex TV characters, and perceptions that TV is realistic, were significantly correlated with adult aggression.
- Strong evidence of Vicarious Operant Conditioning: Children learned from TV that violence is a successful means of accomplishing goals.
- Parents can help! Monitor use, reduce identification, perceptions of TV reality, stop rehearsal/enactment.

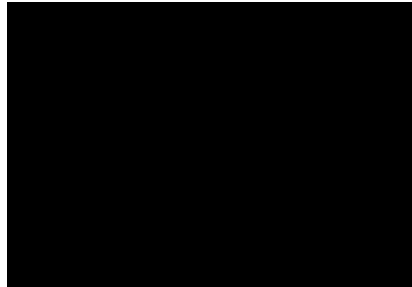
Kids are the Key

"Media violence may have short-term effects on adults, but the real long-term effects seem to occur only with children."

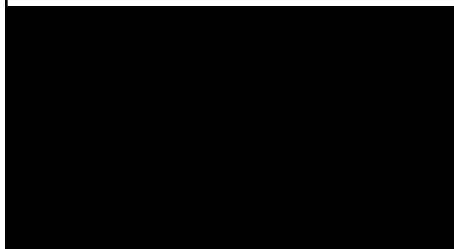
"media violence can affect any child from any family."

"What type of violent scene is the child most likely to use as a model for violent behavior? It is one in which the child identifies with the perpetrator of the violence, the child perceives the scene as telling about life like it is, and the perpetrator is rewarded for the violence."

Starsky & Hutch



The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers



Experimental Design Study Results

2 Groups: Control Group & Treatment Group (8 year olds):

Expressed as a ratio, for every 1 aggressive act by control group children there were 7 by children who viewed "The Power Rangers" episode. Boys committed significantly more aggressive acts than girls. This study corroborates the causal link between TV violence and real-life aggression, and reasons for "The Power Rangers" effect on aggression are presented.

Boyatzis, Chris J. "Effects of 'The Mighty Morphin Power Rangers' on Children's Aggression with Peers." Child study journal 25.1 (1995): 45-57.

Overall effect small, but significant

From Sparks, chapter 5:

Substance Abuse	.30	(large)
Being a Male	.26	(moderate)
Antisocial Parents	.23	(moderate)
Weak Social Ties	.15	(small)
Media Violence	.13	(small)
Low IQ	.12	(small)
Broken Home	.09	(small)
Abusive Parents	.07	(small)
Antisocial Peers	.04	(small)

A Plethora of Theories

- Each theory has strengths and weaknesses.
- Though most developed in response to TV or film, all can be applied to fan consumption of popular culture, such as computer use, mobile phones, video games, etc.
- A theory or framework should be considered heuristic; that is, to help us to understand the potential & actual consequences of a particular practice or text.

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Fall 2024

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