

Aggression

Any form of behavior that is directed toward the goal of harming a human being who is motivated to avoid such treatment.

Drive Approaches to Aggression

- Drive Approach:
- All animals are born with a drive to aggress under certain circumstances; if the drive isn't satisfied the animal will aggress somehow, to reduce the drive.
 - Instinct theories
 - Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis
 - Cognitive-Neoassociationistic Approach

Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

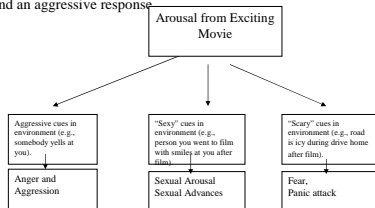
- Frustration: anything blocking a goal.
- Frustration activates a drive to aggress against others.
- If drive is not satisfied through aggression, it builds up until it is released.
- Catharsis will reduce the drive.
- Stronger the motivation to attain goal, more frustration when blocked.
 - Kulik & Brown phone donation study – high motivation, more rudeness
- Closer one is to the goal, more frustration when blocked.
 - Line-cutting study – closer to front of line, more aggression
- No support for catharsis approach

Cognitive Mediation of Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis

- Subsequent research indicated that the frustration-aggression link was mediated by cognition
 - If one who frustrated you isn't responsible, they may not be aggressed against – limping pedestrian isn't honked at
 - Cognitive mediation of drive introduced

Environmental Cues Approach: Leonard Berkowitz

- Physiological arousal + Cognitive labeling = emotion (Schachter's theory)
- Arousal in the presence of aggressive stimuli leads to an experience of anger and an aggressive response



Berkowitz's Weapons Effect Research

- Person is insulted by confederate.
- Person has opportunity to shock confederate.
 - If 2 badminton rackets are present in room: low rate of shocking.
 - If 2 rifles are in room: high rate of shocking.
- Guns are a cue to aggression; one's own arousal is interpreted more as aggression when guns are present.
- The Trigger Pulls the Finger
- What real-live examples of this exist?
- Horn-honking study: mean bumper stickers elicit more horn honking than nice ones when you drive bad.

Cognitive Neoassociationist Model More Recent Berkowitz Work

- “Raise your Hand for 6 Minutes” experiments
- Similar to environmental cues theory
- Focuses on negative affect
- Negative experiences – pain, discomfort make us more attentive to negative cues in environment, activate aggression scripts and memories
- Vague emotional experience + cognitive labeling based on environment produces flight response or fight response of aggression.
- Uncomfortable environments can help produce aggression.

Media Violence

- Competing approaches related to drive theory:
- **Excitation transfer theory (Zillman, 1988):**
- **Similar to environmental cues approach**
 - Any kind of arousal, including sexual arousal from erotica, can lead to increased aggression while the person is aroused.
- **Cognitive structural model (e.g., Donnerstein)** – different **behavioral scripts** are activated depending on type of arousal – violent arousing stimuli produce aggression; non-violent arousing stimuli won't produce aggression
- Most research supports Donnerstein – sexuality or violence alone in a film doesn't produce sexual aggression; sexuality and violence does increase sexual aggression.
