

ADOLESCENT PERCEPTIONS ON THE PRESENCE OF THE SEVEN
CONTEXTUAL FEATURES OF ANIMATION VIOLENCE AS AN INDICATOR OF
AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

By

JOSHUA HIRSCH

A THESIS PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF SCIENCE

UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

2005

Copyright 2005

by

Joshua Hirsch

I would like to dedicate this paper to Homer J. Simpson. Without him, none of this would have been possible. D'oh.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank the many people who have contributed to my success and development as a student and as an individual. First, I would like to thank Dr. Rose Barnett for being my thesis chair and providing me guidance and direction with not only my study but life itself. I would also like to extend my thanks to my other committee members Dr. Gerald Culen, Dr. Heather Gibson and Dr. Joy Jordan for their continued support, insight and constant belief in me and in my work. It was invaluable to me to have all four committee members' continued support. I would also like to thank Dr. Ken Portier and Dr. Glen Israel for their assistance. When it came down to it, they shed the light on my statistics darkness. I would also like to thank my family: Terry, Elissa, Jonathan and Lindsey. With all of their love, care and support I was able to finish this journey. Lastly I would like to thank my Alyssa. My life would not be the same without her.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>page</u>
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	viii
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER	
1 INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose/Significance of the Study	1
Definition of Terms	4
Research Questions	5
Primary Research Questions	5
Secondary Research Questions	5
Hypotheses	5
Assumptions	6
2 LITERATURE REVIEW	7
Introduction	7
Adolescence	7
Aggression and Violence	10
The Problem	12
Adolescent Patterns of Media Use	12
Theories	14
Social Learning Theory	14
Cognitive Priming Theory	16
Media Cultivation Effects Theory	18
Program Content Research	19
The Simpsons	22
Personal Characteristics and Environmental Conditions	24
Desensitization	26
Summary	27
3 METHODS	30
Population and Sample	30

Settings	32
Research Design and Subject Recruitment.....	33
Instrumentation	33
Television Viewing	34
Beliefs and Perceptions	35
Cartoon Viewing	35
<i>The Simpsons</i>	37
General Information	38
Descriptive Results	39
Age	40
School Classification.....	40
Television Viewing	40
Beliefs and Perceptions	41
Cartoon Viewing	42
The Simpsons	42
Statistical Analysis.....	43
Primary Research Questions.....	43
Secondary Research Questions.....	43
4 RESULTS	44
Analysis of Research Questions	44
Primary Research Questions.....	44
Secondary Research Questions.....	58
Other Significant Findings.....	72
Summary.....	73
5 DISCUSSION.....	74
Primary Research Questions.....	74
Secondary Research Questions.....	74
Television Viewing Habits	75
Viewing Violence on Television	75
Viewing Violence in Animation.....	76
Viewing Violence on <i>The Simpsons</i>	78
Television Produces an Unrealistic View of Violence in the Real World	79
<i>The Simpsons</i> Produces an Unrealistic View of Violence in the Real World	80
Violence Portrayed on <i>The Simpsons</i> is Justified.....	81
Summary.....	82
Limitations.....	82
Delimitations.....	82
Implications for Practice.....	84
Recommendations for Future Research.....	88
APPENDIX	
A INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTERS.....	90

B	INFORMED CONSENT FORM.....	92
C	SURVEY INSTRUMENT.....	94
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	102
	BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.....	109

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>page</u>
3-1 Participant gender.....	39
3-2 Participant ages.	40
3-3 School type.....	40
4-1 Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence on television and boys are more affected by television violence Crosstabulation.....	46
4-2 Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence on television and after watching violence on television, it bothers me Crosstabulation.....	47
4-3 Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence on television and after watching violence on television, it makes me angry Crosstabulation.....	48
4-4 Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in cartoons and my favorite type of television program is funny Crosstabulation.	50
4-5 Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in cartoons and boys are more affected by cartoon violence Crosstabulation.	51
4-6 Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in cartoons and violence goes unpunished in my favorite cartoon show Crosstabulation.....	52
4-7 Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in cartoons and I like cartoon violence Crosstabulation.	53
4-8 Comparison of after I watch violence on The Simpsons I become aggressive and after I watch violence on The Simpsons, I become angry Crosstabulation.	55
4-9 Comparison of after I watch violence on The Simpsons I become aggressive and shortly after I see violence on The Simpsons I become violent Crosstabulation.....	56
4-10 Comparison of after I watch violence on The Simpsons I become aggressive and violence on The Simpsons is realistic Crosstabulation.	57

4-11	Comparison of after I watch violence on The Simpsons I become aggressive and when I see violence on The Simpsons, it bothers me Crosstabulation.	58
4-12	Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life and the older I get, the more I get used to experiencing violence Crosstabulation. .	60
4-13	Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life and when I get mad at someone, I use violence to solve a problem Crosstabulation.....	61
4-14	Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life and I have used aggressive actions seen on television as a way to deal with some of my problems Crosstabulation.	62
4-15	Comparison of violence on The Simpsons is realistic and after watching violence in a cartoon, I feel angry Crosstabulation.	64
4-16	Comparison of violence on The Simpsons is realistic and shortly after I see violence on The Simpsons I become violent Crosstabulation.....	65
4-17	Comparison of violence on The Simpsons is realistic and after I watch violence on The Simpsons, I become aggressive Crosstabulation.	66
4-18	Comparison of violence on The Simpsons is realistic and after I watch violence on The Simpsons, I feel angry Crosstabulation.....	67
4-19	Comparison of violence on The Simpsons is realistic and after I watch violence on The Simpsons, I feel calm Crosstabulation.	68
4-20	Comparison of violence on The Simpsons is realistic and after I watch violence on The Simpsons, it bothers me Crosstabulation.	69
4-21	Comparison of violence on The Simpsons is realistic and after I watch violence on The Simpsons, I look away Crosstabulation.	70
4-22	Comparison of I think violence is justified on The Simpsons and I think it is acceptable for my favorite character on The Simpsons to use violence to solve his/her problems Crosstabulation	72

Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School
of the University of Florida in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Science

ADOLESCENT PERCEPTIONS ON THE PRESENCE OF THE SEVEN
CONTEXTUAL FEATURES OF ANIMATION VIOLENCE AS AN INDICATOR OF
AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIORS

By

Joshua Hirsch

December 2005

Chair: Rosemary V. Barnett

Cochair: Gerald Culen

Major Department: Family, Youth, and Community Sciences

The purpose of this study was to examine the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents on whether or not viewing violence on television contributes to an increase in adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, as well as the effects humor and satire used on the animated television series *The Simpsons* have on adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors. This study also explored to what extent the violence portrayed in *The Simpsons* is believed to be realistic and justified by adolescents viewing the show.

Two hundred forty-five research participants between the ages of 13 and 17 attending the 2005 State 4-H Congress participated in my study. A survey instrument was created, revised, pilot-tested, edited and then administered in dorms during a floor meeting. The demographic portion of the survey requested information related to gender,

age, and school classification. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and frequency chi-square tests.

Results showed exposure to violent content by viewing it on television, animation and *The Simpsons* does not have effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors. Results also showed adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed on television, animation and *The Simpsons* do not produce an unrealistic view of violence in the real world. The study has implications for understanding adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of television violence, animation violence and violence on *The Simpsons*. Recommendations for future research include exploring the effects of school environment on adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of television violence, animation violence and violence on *The Simpsons*.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

When children and adolescents are exposed to violent content in the media, they have a greater chance of exhibiting violent and aggressive behavior later in life, than children who have not been exposed to violent content in the media (Congressional Public Health Summit, 2000). In a longitudinal study, television viewing habits and aggressive behavior of participants were measured at three different points in time: at the age of 8, 19 and 30 years (Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1984). The results of the study revealed that among boys, the relationship between viewing television violence in the third grade and aggressive behavior 10 years later was positive and highly significant. Exposure to violent content on television during early childhood was predictive of higher levels of aggression at age 19 (Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, & Walder). In contrast to violent content of television exposure at an early age leading to higher levels of aggression at a later age, aggressive behavior in the third grade was not predictive of violent television consumption at age 19.

Purpose/Significance of the Study

This study assessed the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents on three separate levels. The first level is whether or not viewing violence on television contributes to an increase in adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors. The second level explored the effects that humor and satire used on the animated television series *The Simpsons* have on adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors. The

final level explored to what extent the violence portrayed in the show is believed to be realistic and justified by adolescents viewing the show.

Numerous researches have studied the effects of television and violence (Belson, 1978; Cantor, 1998; Congressional Public Health Summit, 2000; DuRant, Treiber, Goodman, & Woods, 1996; Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz, & Walder, 1984; McIntyre & Teevan, 1972; Rich, 2000;). Rich concluded that repeated exposure to violent content in electronic media can lead to increased feelings of hostility, expectations that others will behave aggressively, desensitization to the pain of others, and increased likelihood of interacting and responding to others with violence. A study conducted by DuRant and colleagues found that the strongest single correlate of violent behavior was previous exposure to violence. Results of correlational studies concluded that children whose favorite programs were more violent also were higher in overall aggressive and delinquent behavior (McIntyre & Teevan). Another study found that higher exposure to violent content on television was positively associated with higher levels of aggressive behavior (Belson). Research has also found that when children and adolescents are exposed to violent content in the media, they have a greater chance of exhibiting violent and aggressive behavior later in life, than children who have not been exposed to violent content in the media (Congressional Public Health Summit). An example of this can be seen in a study conducted by Huesmann, Eron, Lefkowitz and Walder in which they concluded exposure to violent content on television during early childhood was predictive of higher levels of aggression at age 19.

Other studies have focused on the contextual features of violence (Atkin, 1983; Baron, 1978; Berkowitz, 1990; Geen, 1981; Liss, Reinhardt, & Fredriksen, 1983; Wilson

et al., 1997; Wotring & Greenberg, 1973;). Wilson and colleagues identified seven contextual features of violence that affect the likelihood that a viewer will learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors from a portrayal. The first is an attractive perpetrator increases the risk of learning aggression. The second contextual feature of violence is the motive or reason for violence is important. The third feature of violence is the presence of weapons in a portrayal, particularly conventional ones such as guns and knives, which can enhance aggressive responses among viewers. The fourth contextual feature of violence is violence that seems realistic can promote the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors among viewers (Atkin, 1983). The fifth feature refers to Bandura's (1965) social learning theory and how violence that is explicitly rewarded or that simply goes unpunished increases the risk of imitative aggression, whereas violence that is condemned decreases the risk. The sixth feature is the consequences of violence for the victim are an important contextual cue; explicit portrayals of a victim's physical injury and pain actually can decrease or inhibit the learning of aggression among viewers (Wotring & Greenberg, 1973). The final contextual feature is violence that is portrayed as humorous can increase aggression in viewers (Baron, 1978).

Despite the substantial body of knowledge on the general link between television and violence, there is a lack of research on the effects of violence in humorous situations on television programming. In order to better understand the effects of cartoon violence on youth, there is a need for more studies (Hapkiewicz, 1979 and Wilson, Smith & Potter, 2002). This study added to the existing body of knowledge from past research on adolescents' desensitization towards violent content on cartoon shows for children and adolescents by focusing on to what extent exposure to violent content on television and

on the animated television series *The Simpsons* has on adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors. It also focused on adolescents' perceptions of violence in the real world.

Definition of Terms

- Adolescence: the transition between childhood and adulthood. The exact period of adolescence, which varies from person to person, falls approximately between the ages 12 and 20 and encompasses both physiological and psychological changes. Psychological changes generally include questioning of identity and achievement of an appropriate gender role; movement toward personal independence; and social changes in which, for a time, the most important factor is peer group relations. (Steinberg, 1999)
- Aggression: behavior designed to harm or injure another person (Dictionary.com, 2005)
- Animation: the creation of artificial moving images (Dictionary.com, 2005)
- Cartoon: a drawing depicting a humorous situation, often accompanied by a caption (Dictionary.com, 2005)
- Cognitive priming theory: a theory of youth development that posits a violent stimuli in the media can activate or elicit aggressive thoughts in a viewer (Jo & Berkowitz, 1994)
- Desensitization: to render insensitive or less sensitive (Dictionary.com, 2005)
- Humor: that which is intended to induce laughter or amusement (Dictionary.com, 2005)
- Media: a means of mass communication, such as newspapers, magazines, radio, or television (Dictionary.com, 2005)
- Social learning theory: a theory of youth development that posits children can learn new behaviors in one of two ways: by direct experience through trial and error or by observing and imitating others in their social environment (Bandura, 1977)
- Television violence: any overt depiction of the use of physical force or credible threat of physical force intended to physically harm an animate being or group of beings (National Television Violence Study, Executive Summary, 1996)
- Violence: the exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse (Dictionary, 2005)

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to determine the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents as to whether exposure to violent content on television and the animated television series *The Simpsons* has an effect on the abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors of participants ages 13-17.

Primary Research Questions

1. To what extent are adolescents' beliefs and perceptions affected regarding the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors through exposure to violence by viewing it on television?
2. To what extent are adolescents' beliefs and perceptions affected regarding the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors through exposure to violence in animation on television?
3. To what extent are adolescents' beliefs and perceptions affected regarding the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors through exposure to violence by viewing it in animation in *The Simpsons*?

Secondary Research Questions

4. Do adolescents perceive violence portrayed on television produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world?
5. Do adolescents perceive the violence portrayed in animation/*The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world?
6. Do adolescents perceive the violence portrayed in *The Simpsons* is justified?
7. Does gender play a role in the varying perceptions of violence in *The Simpsons*?
8. Does age play a role in the varying perceptions of violence in *The Simpsons*?

Hypotheses

1. Exposure to violent content by viewing it on television has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors.
2. Exposure to violent content by viewing it in animation in *The Simpsons* has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors.

3. Adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed in *The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world.
4. Adolescents perceive the violence portrayed in *The Simpsons* to be justified.
5. Gender plays a role in the varying perceptions of violence in *The Simpsons*.
6. Age plays a role in the varying perceptions of violence in *The Simpsons*.

Assumptions

It is assumed that all adolescents participating in this study have a desire to make a change in their community. It can also be assumed that all adolescents participating in the study are accurately reporting their perceptions of television violence. The final assumption is that a census sample will provide significant results.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a literature review on adolescence and television violence. The review includes the following topics: developmental indicators of adolescence, adolescents' perceptions of television violence, aggression and violence, adolescents' patterns of media use, developmental theories associated with youth development, program content, *The Simpsons*, and other potential risk factors associated with desensitization to television violence and the abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors. The chapter concludes with a summary linking these areas together to set a research rationale for the present study.

Adolescence

Adolescence is often characterized as a time of challenge and turbulence (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2000). This is a time in which adolescents experience many changes in their life. They undergo many physical, as well as psychological, changes with the onset of puberty and throughout. There are several developmental indicators of adolescence. Identity formation is one of the main indicators of adolescence. Boys and girls begin to ask questions about who they are and how they differ from their parents (Brown, 2000). The second indicator is increased independence. During this time, adolescents have more responsibilities inside and outside of the home. They begin to get jobs and with the ability to drive at age 16, they no longer need their parents to take them places. Larson, Richards, Moneta, Holmbeck, and Duckett (1996), found the percentage of waking hours

that teens spent with their families fell from 33% to 14% between the 5th and 12th grade. Adolescents also are more susceptible to antisocial peer pressure when they have poorer relationships with their parents (Dishion, 1990). This proves to be a problem since teens that spend less dinner time with parents have been found to have significantly higher rates of smoking, drinking, marijuana use, and getting into serious fights (Council of Economic Advisors, 2000).

Peers are also a very important developmental indicator in an adolescent's life. Adolescents spend a great deal of time with friends and place a high value on these relationships. Peers are so influential in an adolescents' life that they will engage in reckless behavior in order to be accepted by a peer group (Arnett, 1992). This desire for acceptance can cause adolescents to participate in activities they normally would otherwise not. One example of this would be membership in a gang.

The media has become a developmental indicator in adolescent's lives. Strasburger (1997) proposed that the media should now be considered a "super-peer." According to Strasburger, the messages that are both portrayed in the media and conveyed by the adolescent are a form of influence or peer pressure. These messages can come in the form of a negative influence when violence is portrayed in a humorous or rewarding situation. Adolescents can convey these messages to be acceptable forms of behavior. Youth spend their time using electronic media an average of six hours and 32 minutes each day (Kaiser Family Foundation, 1999). When considering the amount of time media consumes in an adolescent's life and Bandura's (1994) Social Learning Theory, it is understandable to see why Strasburger makes the argument for the media to be considered a "super-peer."

The fourth developmental indicator of adolescence is risk taking. This is a time of experimentation with reckless activities (Arnett, 1992). The Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (1999) found that 17% of the teens surveyed in the study carried a weapon during the 30 days preceding the survey, 50% had drunk alcohol, 27% had used marijuana, and 42% of sexually active students had not used a condom. With findings from this study and the fact that adolescents tend to believe they are invulnerable to negative consequences (Greene, Krmar, Walters, Rubin, & Hale, 2000), it is not hard to understand why adolescence is such a trying time.

Television interferes with the development of intelligence, thinking skills and imagination (Kinderstart, 2000). A crucial element of thinking is being able to extrapolate from what you know and determine how it applies in a new situation. School requires this method of thinking, while television does not. Adolescents who socialize to learn from television have lower than normal expectations about the amount of mental effort required to learn from written texts, and tend to read less and perform relatively poorly in school. Habitual television viewing denies the opportunities for adolescents' imagination to develop (Kinderstart, 2000). They need unstructured time to allow their imagination skills to form by thinking about a book read or a story heard, a conversation in the home, or an event in school. The persistence of television sound and rapidly changing images can condition a child to expect that level of dual stimulation in other circumstances. The average length of a program between commercial breaks is seven minutes. This can condition adolescents to have lower level attention spans (Kinderstart, 2000).

Aggression and Violence

There are many different perceptions of the definitions of aggression and violence. To some individuals, aggression is transferring their emotions into hard work through exercise. To others, aggression is yelling at the top of their lungs at someone or something. Aggression is generally defined by research literature as behavior designed to harm or injure another person. The intent to harm another distinguishes violence from accidents. Violence is a more serious form of aggression that causes serious harm. Dictionary.com (2005) defines violence as the exertion of physical force so as to injure or abuse. Violence is also intense, turbulent, furious and often destructive actions or forces and can also be vehement feelings or expressions. The National Cable Television Association (1996) defines television violence as “Any overt depiction of the use of physical force or credible threat of physical force intended to physically harm an animate being or group of beings. Violence also includes certain depictions of physically harmful consequences against an animate being or group that occur as a result of unseen violent means” (National Television Violence Study, Executive Summary, 1996).

Correlational studies were conducted in the 1970s to determine if children and adolescents who were heavy users of violent television content also reported higher levels of aggression. One study that surveyed 2,300 junior and senior high school students in Maryland asked them to list their four favorite television programs. These programs were analyzed for violent content and measures of aggression were compiled from a self-reported checklist of activities using five scales that ranged from aggressive acts (e.g., fighting at school) to serious delinquency (involvement with the law). Results of the study concluded that children whose favorite programs were more violent also were higher in overall aggressive and delinquent behavior (McIntyre & Teevan, 1972).

Higher exposure to violent content on television has been positively associated with higher levels of aggressive behavior (Belson, 1978). In a correlational study conducted by McLeod, Atkin and Chaffee (1972), peer ratings were used to measure levels of aggression as well as self-reports of willingness to use violence in hypothetical situations (Dominick & Greenberg, 1972). The findings of these studies conducted across different areas of the country were consistent. The large sample sizes and representativeness used in these studies suggest that the causal effects observed can be generalized to a greater degree.

Not one single causal factor has been linked to episodes of violence. For children under the age of 13, the most important factors include: early involvement in serious criminal behavior, early substance use and abuse, being male, a history of physical aggression toward others, low parent education levels or poverty, and parent involvement in illegal activities have been identified as predictors of violent behavior. As adolescents grow older: the importance of friends and peers are much greater, friendships with antisocial or delinquent peers, membership in a gang, and involvement in other criminal activity (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). In adolescents between the ages of 15 and 18, the strongest predictors of violence are: weak ties to conventional peers, ties to antisocial or delinquent peers, gang membership, involvement in other criminal acts, and substance use and abuse. Possibly one of the most influential factors on adolescent violence is violent content in the media (Mental Health, 2004), yet research is still being conducted to investigate its real effect.

The Problem

Children and adolescents are influenced and affected by media that they observe and interests them. As they develop, they learn by observing, imitating, and making these observed behaviors their own. Adolescents learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors by imitating observed models of violence and aggression (DuRant et al., 1996). Repeated exposure to violent content in the media can, therefore, lead to increased feelings of hostility, expectations that others will behave aggressively, desensitization to the pain of others, and increased likelihood of interacting and responding to others with violence (Rich, 2000).

This repeated exposure can also cause adolescents to become desensitized to the point where they lose their ability to empathize with both the victim and the aggressor. This is known as the “mean-world” syndrome (Bryant, Carveth & Brown, 1981). Other predictors of desensitization to violence and the learning of aggressive behaviors are the presence of the seven contextual features of violence, exposure to violent television as well as humorous violent television content, age and gender.

The more realistically violence is portrayed, the greater likelihood that it will be tolerated and learned (Cantor, 1998). Studies have found that there is a wide range of violent behaviors children and adolescents can exhibit. These consist of: explosive temper tantrums, physical aggression, fighting, threats or attempts to hurt others, use of weapons, cruelty towards animals, fire setting, intentional destruction of property and vandalism (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2004).

Adolescent Patterns of Media Use

In 1950, only 10% of American homes had a television while today, a television can be found in 99% of homes (Nielsen Media Research, 1995). In a national study

conducted by Roberts, Foehr, Rideout, and Brodie (1999), an in-depth examination of the media habits of more than 3,000 American children ages 2 to 18 was conducted. The average child in the United States lives in a home with three televisions, three tape players, three radios, two videocassette recorders, two compact disc players, one video game player, and one computer. More than half of all children in the United States have a television in their room and nearly 30% have a videocassette recorder. The average child and adolescent in the United States spends an average of six hours and 32 minutes each day using electronic media (Kaiser, 1999). This is more time than they spend on any other activity, with the exception of sleeping. The average child watches more than two and one-half hours of television per day; one out of every six children in this country watches more than five hours of television a day (Roberts et al., 1999). When multiple forms of media are used simultaneously the exposure increases to eight hours a day. By the time an average American adolescent is 18 years old, they will have viewed more than 200,000 acts of violence, including more than 16,000 murders (American Academy of Pediatrics, 1995).

The highest proportion of violence was found in children's shows. In programs targeted to children, of which nearly all are cartoons, violence is far more prevalent. Roughly seven out of ten children's shows contained some violence, as opposed to non-children's shows containing six out of ten incidents (Wilson, Smith, et al., 2002). A typical hour of children's programming contained 14 different violent incidents, or one incident every four minutes. On the other hand, non-children's programming featured about six violent incidents per hour, or one every 12 minutes. Children's programs were also shown to be substantially more likely than other types of programming to depict

unrealistically low levels of harm to victims compared with what would happen in real life (Wilson, Smith, et al., 2002).

Theories

Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory posits that children can learn new behaviors in one of two ways: by direct experience through trial and error or by observing and imitating others in their social environment (Bandura, 1977). Social learning theory posits a child observes a model enact a behavior and also witnesses the reinforcements vicariously. If the model is rewarded, the child too feels reinforced and will imitate or perform the same behavior, although the actions may still be stored in memory and performed at a later date (Bandura, 1965).

Besides imitation, early research showed that the media could encourage children to act aggressively in ways that differed from the precise behaviors seen in a portrayal. An example of this can be seen in a study conducted by Lovaas (1961). In this study, nursery school children viewed either a violent or a nonviolent cartoon and then were given two toys with which to play. One toy had a lever that caused a doll to hit another doll over the head with a stick; the other toy consisted of a wooden ball that maneuvered through obstacles inside a cage. Compared with those in the nonviolent condition, children who had seen the violent cartoon used the hitting doll more frequently. This process, known as “disinhibition”, shows that exposure to violent content in the media can weaken a child’s normal inhibitions or restraints against behaving aggressively, resulting in acts of violence that are similar but not identical to what was seen in a program (Bandura, 1965).

Bandura divides the observational learning process into four sub-processes. The first component is the attentional processes. The only way an individual can imitate a model is by observing and paying attention to the model. Models often attract our attention because they are distinctive, or because they possess the trappings of success, prestige, power, and other winsome qualities (Bandura, 1977). Television is especially successful at presenting models with engaging characteristics and exerts a powerful influence on our lives (Bandura, 1977). The second component of observational learning is retention processes. Stimulus contiguity is the associations among stimuli that occur together. Bandura (1965) thinks of symbolic processes in terms of stimulus contiguity. He summarizes experimental evidence that suggests that models can help children learn to use verbal rehearsal and other techniques (Bandura, 1986).

The third component of observational learning is motor reproduction processes. To reproduce behavior accurately, the person must have the necessary motor skills (Bandura, 1977). For example, a son might watch his father use a saw but find that he cannot imitate very well because he lacks the physical strength and agility. From observation alone, he picks up a new pattern of response but no new physical abilities.

The final component of observational learning is reinforcement and motivational processes. Bandura distinguishes between the acquisition and the performance of a new response. One can observe a model, and thereby acquire new knowledge, but one may or may not perform the responses (Bandura, 1977). Performances are governed by reinforcement and motivational variables; we will actually imitate another if we are likely to gain a reward. Performances are also influenced by vicarious reinforcements; the consequences one sees accrue to the model (Bandura, 1977).

Interactive participation increases effective learning (Griffiths & Hunt, 1998).

Video games are an ideal environment in which to learn violence. They place the player in the role of the aggressor and reward him or her for successful violent behavior. Rather than passively observing part of a violent interaction, video games allow the player to rehearse an entire behavioral script, from provocation, to choosing to respond violently, to resolution of the conflict. Since video games have been found to be addictive, the repetition of playing them increases their negative effects (Griffiths & Hunt).

Bandura's original social learning theory was criticized for being too behavioristic, focusing mostly on reinforcements and how people act. The evolution of his original theory became known as social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986). Social cognitive theory acknowledges that cognitive processes such as attention and retention are involved in observational learning. These mental activities place more emphasis on how children symbolically construe or make sense of a model's behavior. Children selectively pay attention to different features of a model's behavior, bring forth different experiences to interpret and evaluate the model's actions, and store different information in memory. These types of cognitive processes can be used to help explain why some children might imitate a model but others do not (Bandura, 1986).

Cognitive Priming Theory

Cognitive priming is a theoretical perspective developed by Berkowitz and his colleagues to explain short-term reactions to media violence (Jo & Berkowitz, 1994). Cognitive priming theory posits violent stimuli in the media can activate or elicit aggressive thoughts in a viewer. These thoughts can then "prime" other closely related thoughts, feelings, and even motor tendencies stored in memory. For a short time after exposure, a person is in a state of activation whereby hostile thoughts and action

tendencies are at the forefront of the mind (Jo & Berkowitz, 1994). Findings from other studies support the idea that violent media content can “prime” aggressive thoughts in people (Bushman & Geen, 1990). An example of the cognitive priming theory can be seen in a study conducted by Anderson, Benjamin, and Bartholow (1998). In this study, college students viewed images of guns and other weapons on a computer screen. The appearance of the guns and other weapons primed aggressive-related thoughts in the college students.

There are several conditions associated with aggressive thoughts and feelings progressing into aggressive behavior. The first condition is the person’s emotional state. Individuals who are experiencing negative affect, particularly anger or frustration, are more likely to be primed to act aggressively by the media because they are in a state of readiness to respond in a fight-or-flight manner (Berkowitz, 1990). Angered individuals have been shown to be influenced strongly by media violence (Paik & Comstock, 1994).

The second condition associated with aggressive thoughts and feelings progressing into aggressive behavior is justification. When violent content in the media is shown to be morally proper, it can help to reduce a person’s inhibitions against aggression for a short time afterward, making it easier to act out such behavior. Violent content in the media that is justified can lead an individual to rationalize his or her own aggression (Jo & Berkowitz, 1994). Paik and Comstock found evidence indicating that justified violence can facilitate aggression in individuals.

The final condition associated with aggressive thoughts and feelings progressing into aggressive behavior are cues in the environment that remind people of the media violence they have just seen and can trigger aggressive behavior (Jo & Berkowitz, 1994).

These cues help to reactivate and sustain the previously primed aggressive thoughts and tendencies. The reactivation of these primed aggressive thoughts and tendencies leads to the prolonging influence of the violent content in the media (Jo & Berkowitz, 1994). One example of this reactivation of previously primed aggressive thoughts and tendencies can be seen in a study conducted by Josephson (1987).

In this study, cueing was demonstrated by exposing second- and third-grade boys to either a violent or a nonviolent television program. The violent program prominently featured walkie-talkies in the plot. Immediately afterward, the boys were taken to a school gymnasium to play a game of floor hockey. At the start of the game, an adult referee interviewed each boy using a walkie-talkie or a microphone. Results revealed that aggression-prone boys who had viewed the violent program and then saw the real walkie-talkie were more aggressive during the hockey game than were those in any other condition, including boys who had seen the violent shows but no real walkie-talkie (Josephson, 1987). In accordance with cognitive priming theory, the walkie-talkie served as a cue to reactivate aggressive thoughts and ideas that had been primed by the earlier violent program (Josephson, 1987).

Media Cultivation Effects Theory

“Media cultivation effects” theory suggests that television influences people’s perceptions of the real world. When adolescents watch an exorbitant amount of violent content on television they develop an exaggerated fear of being victimized and believe the world is much more violent than it actually is. This perception of the world as a dangerous place is known as the “mean world” syndrome (Bryant, Carveth & Brown, 1981). A strong motivation for some adolescents to carry a weapon, to be more aggressive, and to “get them before they get me” is the fear of being the victim of

violence (Rich, 2000). In some adolescents, prolonged exposure to violent visual electronic media leads to symptoms of anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress disorder further enhancing their fear of the world around them (Singer et al., 1998).

Program Content Research

The *Television Violence Monitoring Project* conducted from 1995 through 1997 examined the amount of interpersonal violence on American television as well as contextual variables that may make it more likely for aggression and violence to be accepted, learned, and imitated. Of all television program examined, 61% contain some violence and only 4% of television with violent content feature an antiviolence theme (Federman, 1997). As well as such a low proportion of antiviolence themes, 75% of violent scenes on television feature no immediate punishment for or condemnation of their violence and only 40% of programs feature “bad” characters that are rarely punished for their aggressive acts (Smith & Donnerstein, 1998).

The *National Television Violence Study* (1998) was conducted to assess the violent content of programming on broadcast as well as cable television (Smith & Donnerstein). Researchers randomly selected programming during a nine-month period across 23 channels from 6:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. seven days a week. This method produced a composite week of television consisting of more than 2,500 hours of content each year. For three consecutive years (1996-1998), the researchers found that a steady 60% of all program contained some violence. More than 80% of the programs on premium cable channels featured violence, as opposed to the programming on public broadcasting that contained less than 20%.

Smith and Donnerstein also examined contextual features of violence. Some examples of these contextual features are who commits the aggression, whether the

violence is rewarded or punished, and whether it results in negative consequences. Three general conclusions resulted from the findings. The first conclusion was violence on television is frequently glamorized. “Good” characters that can serve as role models for viewers perpetrated 40% of the violent incidents. More than 70% of all violent scenes on television contained no remorse, criticism, or penalty for violence. The second conclusion was violence on television is frequently sanitized. Close to half of the violent incidents on television showed no physical harm or pain to the victim. Less than 20% of the violent programs portrayed the long-term negative repercussions of violence for family and friends of the victim. The final conclusion is violence on television is often trivialized. More than half of the violent incidents featured intense forms of aggression that would be deadly if they were to occur in real life. Despite such serious aggression, 40% of the violent scenes on television included some type of humor.

Other studies have looked at the contextual features of violence. In one such study, seven contextual features of violence that affect the likelihood that a viewer will learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors from a portrayal were identified (Wilson et al., 1997). The first contextual feature of violence is that an attractive perpetrator, or good-looking character, increases the risk of learning aggression. According to Bandura’s (1994) social learning theory, children as well as adults are more likely to attend to, identify with, and learn from attractive role models than unattractive ones. Liss and colleagues (1983) note the most obvious way to make a perpetrator appealing is to make him or her a hero. Research has shown children are more likely to imitate peer rather than adult models (Hicks, 1965).

The second contextual feature of violence is the motive or reason for violence is important. Consistent with the cognitive priming theory, violent actions that seem justified or morally defensible can facilitate viewer aggression, whereas unjustified violence can actually diminish the risk of learning aggression (Geen, 1981). Meaning when a character has a good reason to justify the use of violence, it can lead to the learning of aggressive behaviors. The third feature is the presence of weapons in a portrayal, particularly conventional ones such as guns and knives, can enhance aggressive responding among viewers. Weapons are assumed to function as a violent cue that can prime aggressive thoughts in a viewer (Berkowitz, 1990).

The fourth contextual feature is violence that seems realistic can promote the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors among viewers (Atkin, 1983). An example of this would be Bart Simpson trying to defend his sister Lisa from bullies by using karate moves to beat them up. An adolescent can associate the use of violence as an appropriate means to solve a problem and justify their behavior accordingly. The fifth feature refers to Bandura's (1965) social learning theory and how violence that is explicitly rewarded or that simply goes unpunished increases the risk of imitative aggression, whereas violence that is condemned decreases the risk. The viewing of a perpetrator by an adolescent on television committing a violent act and not getting caught and/or punished can lead to the justification by the adolescent of committing violent acts themselves, since the perpetrator was not punished. The sixth feature is the consequences of violence for the victim are an important contextual cue; explicit portrayals of a victim's physical injury and pain actually can decrease or inhibit the learning of aggression among viewers (Wotring & Greenberg, 1973). For example, the cartoon *Itchy*

& *Scratchy* seen on *The Simpsons* is a horrific cartoon depicting a cat (Scratchy) and mouse (Itchy) continually attacking and mutilating each other with a variety of deadly weapons. Both Itchy and Scratchy are fine by the next episode, no matter how mutilated they were in the previous episode. Since the actual consequences of the injuries sustained by both Itchy and Scratchy are not portrayed, this can lead to the learning of aggressive behaviors. The final feature is violence that is portrayed as humorous can increase aggression in viewers (Baron, 1978). Humor has the ability to trivialize the seriousness of violence (Gunter & Furnham, 1984) and that humor also may serve as a positive reinforcement or reward for violence (Berkowitz, 1970).

The study of humor's association with violence has continued over the years. When violent scenes involve humor either directed at the violence or used by characters involved with the violence, positive values can be assigned to viewing acts of violence and lead to acceptance of these (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). These scenes make up 43% of violent scenes observed. Violent interactions on television involving perpetrators who have some attractive qualities worthy of emulation also have positive values attributed to them and account for 44% of the violent interactions on television.

The Simpsons

This study included an examination of the perceived effects of one television show containing animated violence. The show selected for this study was *The Simpsons* because it frames violence with humor and satire and contains imbedded violence. The animated violence in *The Simpsons* is often portrayed in a humorous manner. *The Simpsons* started out as 30-second long "buffer" cartoons shown before and after commercials on *The Tracey Ullman Show* and is now the longest running animated

sitcom in primetime network television history. *The Simpsons* are the fourth longest running television program, in terms of episodes (Simpson Crazy, 2001). Whether it is being viewed in syndication on any one of numerous channels or it is Sunday's latest installment of the new *Simpson's* episode, sixteen years later it is still creating inventive storylines appealing to millions.

The Simpsons are your typical nuclear family living in Springfield, USA. Homer is a father who gives bad advice and works as the safety inspector at the Springfield Nuclear Power Plant; Marge is a loving, nurturing mother and wife who tries to keep peace in the family; Bart is a rambunctious 10-year-old; Lisa is a smart, philosophical 8-year-old, who loves to play the saxophone; and Maggie is the baby, who communicates by sucking her pacifier (Simpson Crazy, 2001). The cartoon is filled with political satire and topical commentary, written by Harvard and Yale graduates, marketed towards youth, and enjoyed by adults. Over the past 16 seasons in the town of Springfield, USA *The Simpsons* have not aged a day. It is this agelessness that allows for *The Simpsons* to be enjoyed by fans of any age (Simpson Crazy, 2001).

The first half-hour episode of *The Simpsons* premiered on FOX on January 14, 1990 (Simpson Crazy, 2001). Critics and fans alike have acclaimed *The Simpsons* as one of television's truest and most hilarious portraits of the American family. The series received the 1990, 1991, 1995 and 1997 Emmy Awards for Outstanding Animated Program. *The Simpsons* has had a greater impact on the nation than most television series. The show has created such phrases as "Aye carumba!," "Eat my shorts, man!" and "Don't have a cow, man!," which have become a part of everyday language for many people (Simpson Crazy, 2001).

Satire is defined as trenchant wit, irony, or sarcasm used to expose and discredit vice or folly (Dictionary.com, 2005). *The Simpsons* uses satire, in relation to violence, as a means to both convey a message and evoke thought. The intended satirical purpose is not always the end result. Sometimes the meaning can be construed and adapted to the individuals thought process.

Personal Characteristics and Environmental Conditions

Various personal characteristics and environmental conditions have been identified that link youth to violent behavior. These factors are present not only within individuals but also in every social setting in which they find themselves: family, school, peer group, and community (Mental Health, 2004). Psychological conditions, poor parent-child relations (inadequate monitoring or supervision and low parental involvement), aggression in males, antisocial parents, antisocial attitudes and beliefs, low family socioeconomic status, abusive parents, and substance use and abuse have also been identified as influential factors. When race and ethnicity are considered mutually exclusive from other life circumstances, they are found to not be causal factors in adolescent violence. Certain situations and conditions can influence the likelihood of violence occurring. Some of these situational factors are provoking, taunting, and demeaning interactions.

Adolescents with preexisting tendencies towards aggression and violence, as well as “normal” adolescents, can both be drawn towards violent content in the media. Research has shown that certain individuals who have high levels of arousal towards “sensation seeking” will generally seek out novel and stimulating activities. Another study has shown that sensation seeking predicts exposure to violent television shows among adolescents and adults. Other studies have shown that children who are more

aggressive prefer violent television; in one specific study parents who rated their children as aggressive also rate them as more interested in violent cartoons (Cantor, 1998).

Visual electronic media normalize the carrying and using of weapons and glamorize them as a source of personal power (DuRant et al., 1997). A study of the top 50 grossing G- and PG-rated non-animated films revealed that 40% of the movies featured at least one main character carrying a firearm (Pelletier et al., 1999). Of the films reviewed, a total of 127 persons carried firearms, resulting in a median of 4 1/2 armed characters per film. Nearly all of these movies were comedies or family films likely to be seen by children. In an analysis of the data from the *National Television Violence Study*, Smith et al. (2001) found that 26% of all violent incidents in a composite week of television involve the use of a gun. Three types of programming accounted for most of this gun violence: movies (54%), dramatic series (19%), and children's shows (16%). A child viewer on average will see nearly two gun-related violent incidents every hour that he or she watches television.

Heroes on television and movies use violence as an efficient means of positive conflict resolution. They use it frequently and without regard of the consequences. Heroes become role models for adolescents because they are rewarded for their violent behavior. This misconception can lead to a justification for using violence to retaliate against perceived aggressors and a means to solve their problems.

Parents may be overburdened and self-absorbed and fail to give their children the nurturing, guidance, and control they need early in life to help them develop compassion, establish attachments, and learn boundaries (Kinderstart, 2000). This lack of parental involvement plays a critical role in the exposure of violent content in the media by

children and adolescents. Due to the fact that over half of all children have a television set in their bedrooms and the increased use of the television as a babysitter, parents are less likely to restrict what their children are being exposed to in the media (Kinderstart, 2000). Without parental guidance, adolescents are given an open doorway to the world of violent content in the media.

Desensitization

Through prolonged use of the media, adolescents can become desensitized to the point where they lose their ability to empathize with both the victim and the aggressor. One study found that boys who were heavy viewers of television exhibited less physiological arousal during selected scenes from a violent film than did light viewers (Cline, Croft, & Courrier, 1973). Another study found that both children and adults were less physiologically aroused by a scene of real-life aggression if they had previously watched a violent drama on television than if they had watched a nonviolent program (Thomas, Horton, Lippincott, & Drabman, 1977). In the book *High Tech, High Touch: Technology and Our Search for Meaning*, Naisbitt, Naisbitt, and Phillips (1999) discuss the culture of electronic violence. They say, “The images that once caused us to empathize with the pain and trauma of another human being excite a momentary adrenaline rush. To be numb to another’s pain is arguably one of the worst consequences our technological advances have wrought. That indifference transfers from the screen, television, film, Internet, and electronic games to our everyday lives through seemingly innocuous consumer technologies.”

Experiments have been conducted to determine if desensitization as a result of violent content in the media affects an individual’s willingness to help a victim in distress. Thomas and Drabman (1975) exposed first and third graders to either a violent

or a nonviolent television program. After viewing the programs, they were placed in charge of monitoring the behavior of two preschoolers at play. Older children who had seen the violent television program were significantly slower in seeking help when the preschoolers broke into a fight than were those who had seen the nonviolent show (Thomas & Drabman, 1975). Emerging adults, adolescents 18-23 years old, have been shown to become desensitized towards violence as well. A study conducted by Linz, Donnerstein, and Penrod (1988) exposed male undergraduates to five full-length “slasher” films depicting violence against women. After each film, emotional reactions, perceptions of violence in the films, and attitudes toward the women in the films were measured. In accordance with desensitization, males perceived less violence in the films and evaluated the films as less degrading to women over the course of the exposure period.

Summary

This chapter discussed the important findings surrounding adolescent’s perceptions towards violent content on television. It reported that through prolonged use of the media, adolescents could become desensitized to the point where they lose their ability to empathize with both the victim and the aggressor. This chapter also reported on research on Bandura’s Social Learning Theory and Berkowitz’s Cognitive Priming Theory, finding that adolescents learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors by imitating observed models of violence and aggression.

The focus of this study is on the effects that violent television content has on adolescents’ beliefs and perceptions. Several key factors contribute to, or predict, desensitization to violence and the learning of aggressive behavior. The first key factor is the presence of the seven contextual features of violence. Research has shown that the

presence of the seven contextual features of violence contribute to the likelihood that a viewer will learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors from a portrayal (Wilson et al., 1997). Some of the contextual features of violence are: that an attractive perpetrator increases the risk of learning aggression, the motive or reason for violence is important in facilitating viewer aggression and desensitization, the presence of weapons in a portrayal can enhance aggressive responding among viewers, and violence that seems realistic can promote the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors among viewers.

Another predictor of desensitization to violence and the learning of aggressive behavior is exposure to violent television content. According to Bandura, through the process of “disinhibition”, exposure to violent content in the media can weaken a child’s normal inhibitions or restraints against behaving aggressively. This “disinhibition” results in acts of violence that are similar but not identical to what was seen in a program. Research has also found that both children and adults were less physiologically aroused by a scene of real-life aggression if they had previously watched a violent drama on television than if they had watched a nonviolent program (Thomas, Horton, Lippincott, & Drabman, 1977).

Exposure to humorous violent television content is another predictor of desensitization to violence and the learning of aggressive behavior. In a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (2001), a major conclusion was that positive values can be assigned to viewing acts of violence and lead to acceptance of these violent scenes involving humor either directed at the violence or used by characters involved with the violence. Research has shown that when violence is portrayed as humorous, it can increase aggression in viewers (Baron, 1978). Other studies have

shown that humor has the ability to trivialize the seriousness of violence (Gunter & Furnham, 1984) and that humor also may serve as a positive reinforcement or reward for violence.

Two other important predictors of adolescents' desensitization to violence and the learning of aggressive behavior are age and gender. Perceptions of violence varies as adolescents grow older and between genders. There are many factors that can affect adolescents' desensitization towards violent television content. This study focused on examining adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of exposure to violent television content and the presence of the seven contextual features of violence (independently) and whether they affect adolescents' and their own beliefs and perceptions on desensitization towards violent television content and the ability to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors.

CHAPTER 3 METHODS

This purpose of this study was to examine the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents on whether or not viewing violence on television contributes to an increase in adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, as well as the effects humor and satire used in the animated television series *The Simpsons* have on adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors. This study also explored to what extent the violence portrayed in *The Simpsons* is believed to be realistic and justified by adolescents viewing the show. Lastly, the study examined whether there are differences in adolescent perceptions of violence in *The Simpsons* content by gender and age.

This chapter discusses the population and sampling procedure, research design, instrumentation, data collection, and statistical analyses for the present study. The information in these sections describe all procedures, methods, and analyses for the study that worked toward the study's goal of examining the effects humor and satire in *The Simpsons* have on adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of their abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors and their desensitization towards violence.

Population and Sample

The population is adolescents in 4-H ages 13-17 attending the 2005 State 4-H Congress in Gainesville at the University of Florida. 4-H is the youth education branch of the Cooperative Extension Service, a program of the United States Department of Agriculture (National 4-H Web, 2005). Cooperative Extension Service advances

knowledge for agriculture, the environment, human health and well-being, and communities through national program leadership and federal assistance (Cooperative Extension, 2005).

The total number of youth ages 5-18 participating in Florida 4-H in September 2002 through August 2003 was 241,487. There were 22,858 4-H clubs and 251,245 school enrichment programs across all of Florida's 67 counties and on the Seminole Tribes reservations in south Florida (Florida 4-H Statistics, 2004). The gender compositions of these 4-H programs were 51% (123,427) female and 49% (118,060) male. Thirty-two percent of the youth involved with Florida 4-H programs are from minority, racial or ethnic groups with 68% (164,421) White/Caucasian, 19% (46,005) Black/African American, 11% (26,741) Hispanic, 1.1% (2,809 youth) Asian, and .6% (1,511) American Indian/Pacific Islander.

These youth live in all different types of environments. The majority of youth involved with Florida 4-H, 38.6% (93,202), live in towns and cities with a population between 10,000 and 50,000 people. Towns with under 10,000 people and in open country have the second most youth involved in Florida 4-H, 27.4% (66,363). Third are youth living in central cities with populations over 50,000 people, 22% (53,327). Fourth are youth living in suburbs of cities with populations over 50,000, 8% (19,453). The least number of youth involved with Florida 4-H live on farms, 3.7% (9,142) (Florida 4-H Statistics, 2004). The majority of youth involved with Florida 4-H are in first through fifth grades, 62.8% (151,707). Next are youth in sixth through eight grades, 24.7% (59,877). Third are youth in kindergarten, 10.4% (13,960). Fourth are high school aged youth in grades ninth through twelfth, 4.6% (11,210). The fewest number of youth

involved with Florida 4-H are not in school/post high school, 1.6% (3,786) and special education, .4% (947) (Florida 4-H Statistics, 2004).

The sample for this study consisted of a group of 13- to 17-year-old adolescents attending the 2005 State 4-H Congress in Gainesville at the University of Florida, who elected to participate after the purpose of the study was introduced and explained. The final sample was 245 individuals.

Settings

The study was conducted at State 4-H Congress in Gainesville at the University of Florida. State 4-H Congress is a gathering of young people from throughout the state experiencing educational workshops, competitive events, organizational activities, and learning about life on a campus. Youth may choose to participate in Congress, but may also be selected to participate based on a district competitive event. Other youth may come to be a part of the State 4-H Council, an organization of teenagers dedicated to learning leadership. Congress participants are engaged in educational workshops, group-learning activities, and socialization process while housed at the University of Florida.

The participants were informed of the study during a floor meeting on Monday, July 25, 2005. Data were collected that same evening in the dorms during this floor meeting. The participants were briefed on the topic, benefits/risks, expected length of completion, and who to contact with questions or concerns. Prior to attending the State 4-H Congress, blanket consent forms were sent to participants' homes in informational packets. These forms acknowledged and gave permission for conference attendees to participate in studies at the State 4-H Congress. Confidentiality was ensured through the anonymous format of the survey. Participants were never asked for their name on the instrument. In addition, participants gave the completed surveys to the floor supervisors

face down. Identification numbers were later assigned for data analysis after the surveys had been randomly mixed.

Research Design and Subject Recruitment

This study is a cross-sectional which is the observation of a defined population at a single point in time or time interval. The unit of analysis, or the major entity that is being analyzed in a study, is the individual (Social Research Methods, 2005). Recruitment of subjects was on a voluntary basis. This study is considered cross-sectional because the population being observed and measured at a single point in time. The sample was limited to those youth who volunteered and consented to participate. Floor supervisors gave the participants an introduction to the topic, a list of all of the benefits and risks, the expected length of completion, and who to contact with questions or concerns. Potential participants were given the option of whether they would like to be informed of the results of the study. Participants' exposure and outcomes were measured through the instrumentation. Exposure and outcome are determined simultaneously (Bandolier, 2005).

Instrumentation

The survey instrument consisted of 84 items and is comprised of a General Information section and four content sections. The four content sections are: Television Viewing, Beliefs and Perceptions, Cartoon Viewing, and *The Simpsons*. Likert scalar response style and fill-in question types were used in the survey instrumentation. The instrument was pilot-tested by a group of four local high school students. A second revision of the instrument was pilot tested by four local high school students and a team of adolescent experts. A scale considered to have good internal consistency has a Cronbach alpha coefficient reported of .85. In the current study the Cronbach alpha

coefficient was .825. This scale can be considered to have good internal consistency for use in future studies.

Previous research studies have shown that the more realistically violence is portrayed on television, the greater likelihood it will be tolerated and learned (Cantor, 1998). This is one of the seven contextual features of violence that can lead a viewer to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors from a portrayal (Wilson et al., 1997). When any or all of the seven contextual features of violence are present in television content, the viewer has a greater chance of learning aggressive attitudes and behaviors. Specific items of this instrument focused on the seven contextual features of violence and adolescents' beliefs and perceptions as a result of these being present. Analyses of the results of these items were useful in determining adolescents' beliefs and perceptions in regards to the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors. Items were scored on a one, Strongly Disagree, to five, Strongly Agree, Likert scale. In those instances where reverse coding was needed, it was done prior to data analysis.

Television Viewing

The first content section, items one through four, examined television-viewing habits of the participants. Items one through four asked about the amount of television viewed by the participants in a certain amount of time. The first item of this section, one, asked participants whether or not they watch television. This question functions as a screening item. If they answer "No" to this question, they are instructed to go to item number 81, the first item in the General Information section. The results of these items were useful in analyzing the frequency of television viewing. There is a growing trend of the television being used as a babysitter by parents, as well as the perception of the television functioning as a "super-peer" by youth (Strasburger, 1997). Item four asked

about the presence of a television in the participant's bedroom. Since a television is present in over 53% of children's bedrooms ages 2- 18-years-old, parents of these youth are less likely to restrict what their children are being exposed to in the media (Roberts et al., 1999; Kinderstart, 2000). Analyses of this entire section helped determine the viewing habits of adolescents and the relative importance placed upon television in the home.

Beliefs and Perceptions

The second content section, items five through 21, examined participants' general beliefs and perceptions on whether or not viewing violence on television contributes to an increase in adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors. Analyses of the results helped in determining participants' beliefs and perceptions on the consequences of television violence.

Cartoon Viewing

The second content section, items 22 through 50, examined cartoon violence. The first item of this section asked participants whether or not they watch cartoons. This item functions as a screener. If they answer "No" to this question, they are instructed to go to question number 81. Items 25 through 32, addressed the participants' moods during and after viewing a violent situation. Analysis of the results of these items helped in determining whether or not a correlation existed between the perception of the realism of cartoon violence and the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors. A positive attraction towards violent content being observed on television could mean not only acceptance of violent content on television, but also the violence in the content being justified since their beliefs and perceptions of the violent content is that the violence is acceptable.

Another contextual feature of violence is that an attractive perpetrator increases the risk of learning aggression. When the attractive perpetrator takes the role of a hero, the likelihood of learning aggression greatly increases (Liss et al., 1983). Also, viewers pay more attention to and identify with same-sex characters as opposed to those of the opposite-sex (Bandura, 1986). Item 39 asked whether or not the participant liked what the main character of their favorite cartoon likes like, and item 40 asked whether or not the participant liked the way the main character of their favorite cartoon behaves. Item 41 asked the participants whether or not they believed the main character of their favorite cartoon behaved in a heroic manner. The analyses of the results of these items provide a correlation between the attractiveness and acceptance of the main character of a cartoon and the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors.

The third contextual feature of violence is the presence of weapons in a portrayal, particularly conventional ones such as guns and knives, can enhance the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors (Berkowitz, 1990), items 42 through 44 address this contextual feature of violence. Item 42 asked the participants if the main character of their favorite cartoon uses weapons. The results of this item showed the frequency of use of weapons within their favorite cartoon. Item 43 asked if weapons were the answer to a problem in a cartoon. Analyses of the results of this item showed the beliefs and perceptions of participants on the acceptance of the use of weapons within participants' favorite cartoons. The analyses of the results of these items found a de-emphasis on the severity attributed to weapons and participants' beliefs and perceptions regarding the ability to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors.

The next contextual feature of violence states that when violence is explicitly rewarded or goes unpunished it can increase the risk of learning aggressive attitudes and behaviors (Bandura, 1965). Item 46 address this contextual feature of violence by asking the participants if the main character of their favorite cartoon is punished for using violence. Analysis of the results of this item helped in determining whether a relationship exists between the portrayals of violence and the results exhibited as well as showing participants' beliefs and perceptions on the justification of violence within their favorite cartoon.

The next contextual feature says that the consequences of violence for the victim are an important cue; explicit portrayals of a victim's physical injury and pain actually can inhibit the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors (Baron, 1978). The analyses of the results of item 49, which asked whether or not the results of violence are show in my favorite cartoon, showed participants' beliefs and perceptions regarding the ability to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors when any or all of the seven contextual features of violence are present.

The last item of this section asked participants whether or not they like cartoon violence. The analysis of the results of this question helped in establishing a comparison between two subsets of participants, those who like cartoon violence and those who do not. This was useful when drawing final conclusions about the characteristics of participants and their preferences.

The Simpsons

The next content section, items 51 through 80, examined participants viewing habits and perceptions of *The Simpsons*. This section is similar in comparison to the previous content section but the focus of this section is *The Simpsons*. The first item, 51

asked the participant if they have ever watched the cartoon *The Simpsons*. This question acts as a screening item. If the participant answers “No” to this question, they are instructed to skip this section and go to question number eighty-one, if the participant answers “Yes” to this question, they are instructed to continue on to the next question. Item 52 measures the participants’ frequency of viewing *The Simpsons*, analysis of the results of this item helped in determining the amount of heavy versus light viewers of *The Simpsons*.

As discussed earlier, when violence is explicitly rewarded or goes unpunished it can increase the risk of learning aggressive attitudes and behaviors. In other words, if the violence appears to be justified it contributes to learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors. Item 63 asked participants if they believe the violence on *The Simpsons* is justified. Analysis of the results of this item helped in determining a correlation between participants’ beliefs and perceptions on the portrayals of violence and whether or not they are justified.

Item 64 asked the participants’ about their beliefs and perceptions in regards to their favorite character using violence to solve their problem. As discussed earlier, presence of an attractive character contributes to learning of aggression. Analysis of the results of this item helped to determine whether a relationship exists between participants’ beliefs and perceptions on the ability to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors from an attractive character.

General Information

The first two general information items ask for the participant’s age and gender in order to conduct analyses by age and gender differences. The final question of the General Information section asks about the type of school the participant attends. This

information is useful in determining whether there are differences in perceptions and beliefs held by youth vary by type of school attended.

Descriptive Results

The sample consisted of 245 participants. A complete breakdown of the demographic characteristics of the sample can be examined in tables throughout the chapter. In addition, results were reported individually by gender and as a whole sample.

Gender

Girls made up more than three-quarters of the sample (82.2%), or 199 of the 245 participants, and boys composed less than a quarter of the sample (17.8%), or 43 of the 245 participants. The gender breakdown of this study was consistent with the assumptions created during data collection. Registered female participants, (N=288), at the 2005 State 4-H Congress outnumbered male participants, (N=140). Due to data collection occurring at the 2005 State 4-H Congress, a majority-female gender breakdown was expected. However, the higher than expected female response rate is also accounted for by an overall higher willingness by females to participate in the study, as an approximately equal opportunity for all youth participants was made available on each dorm floor.

Table 3-1. Participant gender.

Gender	Frequency	Valid Percent
Female	199	82.2
Male	43	17.8
Total	242	100.0

Age

The ages of participants in the study ranged from 13 years old to 19 years old.

Table 3-2. Participant ages.

Age	Frequency	Valid Percent
13	5	2.44
14	39	19.02
15	60	29.27
16	59	28.78
17	42	20.49
Total	205	100.0

School Classification

All of the study participants were members of 4-H and attended either public school (55.9%), private school (8.2%) or were home schooled (33.1%).

Table 3-3. School type.

School	Frequency	Valid Percent
Public	137	57.6
Private	20	8.4
Home	81	34.0
Total	238	100.0

Television Viewing

This section of the survey helped provide in-depth information on the viewing habits of participants. These specific questions include items about whether or not participants watched television, approximately how many hours of television they watch on an average day, and whether or not they have a television in their bedroom. The first item about television viewing was used as a screening question. The sample reported 218 of 239 (91.2%) participants watch television, 21 of 239 (8.8%) participants do not watch television.

Another item in this section asked participants about their approximate amount of television viewing on an average day. The highest frequency hours of television watched

in an average day was two, reported by 49 out of 206 (23.8%) participants. The second highest frequency hours of television watched in an average day was one, reported by 41 out of 206 (19.9%) participants. The third highest frequency hours of television watched in an average day was three, reported by 29 out of 245 (14.1%) participants. Twenty out of 206 (9.7%) participants answered they watched four hours of television on an average day and 18 out of 206 (8.7%) participants answered they watched five hours of television on an average day. The mean hours of television watched by girls on an average day was slightly higher than boys at 2.96 hours versus 2.68 hours. When participants were asked if they have a television in their bedroom, it was pretty much half and half: 108 out of 216 (50%) participants do not have a television in their bedroom and 106 out of 216 (50%) participants do have a television in their bedroom.

Beliefs and Perceptions

This section asked participants about their beliefs and perceptions about violence on television. Participants were asked about their favorite type of television program, how age affects their perceptions of violence, how gender affects their perceptions of violence, whether or not they display aggressive tendencies, and what they do after watching violence on television. When participants were asked whether their favorite type of television program is funny, a little more than one-third of participants 81 out of 217 (37.3%) strongly agreed, more than one-fourth of participants 60 out of 245 (27.6%) were neutral, 57 out of 217 (26.3%) participants agreed, 11 out of 217 (5.1%) participants disagreed, and eight out of 217 (3.7%) participants strongly disagreed. Participants were also asked if they believed their favorite type of television program is violent. The majority of participants either strongly disagreed or disagreed, 66 out of 214 (30.8%) and 61 out of 214 (28.5%) respectively. Forty-four out of 214 (20.6%) participants were

neutral, 32 out of 214 (15%) participants agreed, and 11 out of 214 (5.1%) participants strongly agreed.

Cartoon Viewing

This section asked participants about their cartoon viewing habits as well as their beliefs and perceptions about cartoons. As in the Television Viewing section, the first item is a filter question. The sample reported 108 out of 214 (50.5%) participants watch cartoons and 106 out of 214 (49.5%) participants do not watch cartoons.

The Simpsons

This section asked participants about their viewing habits of the cartoon *The Simpsons*. It also asked participants about their beliefs and perceptions about *The Simpsons* and *Itchy and Scratchy*, a cartoon show the Simpsons family watches often on television. As in the Television and Cartoon Viewing sections, the first item is a filter question. The sample reported 73 out of 116 (62.9%) participants watch *The Simpsons* and 43 out of 116 (37.1%) participants do not watch *The Simpsons*.

Another item in this section asked participants about their approximate amount of hours of *The Simpsons* they view in an average week. The highest frequency hours of *The Simpsons* watched in an average week was one, with 19 out of 68 (27.9%) participants. The second highest frequency hours of *The Simpsons* watched in an average week was one-half, with 11 out of 68 (16.2%) participants. The third highest frequency hours of *The Simpsons* watched in an average week was three, with nine out of 68 (13.2%) participants. Six out of 68 (8.8%) participants answered they watched two hours of television in an average week and two out of 68 (2.9%) participants answered they watched five hours of *The Simpsons* in an average week.

Statistical Analysis

Data analysis included basic descriptive statistics of all the items.

Primary Research Questions

In order to investigate the primary research questions, which ask to what extent are adolescents' beliefs and perceptions affected regarding the learning of aggressive behavior and attitudes through exposure to violence by viewing it on television/cartoons/*The Simpsons*, chi-square analysis, along with Kendall's Tau-b, was conducted.

Secondary Research Questions

In order to examine adolescents' perceptions of violence portrayed on television and in *The Simpsons* and what effects it has on their unrealistic views of violence in the real world chi-square analysis was conducted. The next secondary research question addresses adolescents' perceptions of the justification of violence portrayed in *The Simpsons*. chi-square analysis, along with Kendall's Tau-b, was conducted to examine these perceptions.

All of these statistical analyses were completed utilizing SPSS (version 12.0).

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents on whether or not viewing violence on television contributes to an increase in adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, as well as the effects humor and satire used on the animated television series *The Simpsons* have on adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors. This study also explored the extent to which the violence portrayed in *The Simpsons* is believed to be realistic and justified by adolescents viewing the show. Lastly, the study examined whether there are differences in adolescent perceptions of violence in *The Simpsons* content by gender and age. Results for all of these questions are discussed in this chapter. The chapter concludes with additional significant results that were not directly related to primary or secondary research questions.

Analysis of Research Questions

Primary Research Questions

Research Question 1. To what extent are adolescents' beliefs and perceptions affected regarding the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors through exposure to violence by viewing it on television?

Hypothesis 1. Exposure to violent content by viewing it on television has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors.

The purpose of this question was to determine if there is a relationship between participants' beliefs and perceptions and exposure to television violence. Conducting chi-square analysis on the dependent variable *The older one gets, the more used to they are seeing violence on television* and several independent variables indicated the presence of some significant relationships. The first independent variable with a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *Boys are more affected by television violence* (n=213) (Table 4-1). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. Close to half of the participants, 95, Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the item *Boys are more affected by television violence* (44.61%); 76 participants were Neutral about this item (33.68%); and 42 participants Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed (19.72%). Kendall's tau-b was used to test concordance. It has a value of .195 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *The older one gets, the more used to they are seeing violence on television*. Participants who Strongly Agree/Agree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers in relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is relatively low, .195, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is weak. Kendall's tau-b is a nonparametric measure of association based on the number of concordance and discordances in paired observations. Concordance occurs when paired observations vary together, and discordance occurs when paired observations vary differently (SAS Institute, 1999).

The chi-square value for this item is 45.612 with a $p \geq .000$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research

hypothesis, adolescents' exposure to violent content by viewing it on television has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, is rejected.

Table 4-1. Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence on television and boys are more affected by television violence Crosstabulation

	BoysTV				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree	1.41%	1.41%	.47%	.94%	0%
Disagree	.94%	0%	2.82%	2.35%	1.41%
Neutral	2.35%	2.35%	7.04%	6.57%	2.35%
Agree	2.35%	7.51%	19.72%	12.68%	4.23%
Strongly Agree	7.98%	.47%	5.63%	5.63%	8.45%

Note. $\chi^2=45.612$ DF=16 $p \geq .000$ Kendall's tau-b=.195 $p \geq .001$

By conducting chi-square analysis another significant relationship was determined between the independent variable which states *After watching violence on television, it bothers me*, and the dependent variable (n=214) (Table 4-2). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. About one-third of the participants, 70, Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the item *After watching violence on television, it bothers me* (32.71%); close to one-third of participants, 71, were Neutral about this item (33.18%); and 73 participants Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed (34.11%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of -.207 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *The older one gets, the more used to they are seeing violence on television*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers in relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for

Kendall's tau-b is relatively low, -.207, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is weak.

The chi-square value for this item is 34.087 with a $p \geq$ of .005 and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' exposure to violent content by viewing it on television has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, is rejected.

Table 4-2. Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence on television and after watching violence on television, it bothers me Crosstabulation.

	TVBother					
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
OlderTV	Strongly Disagree	0%	.93%	.93%	1.4%	1.4%
	Disagree	.47%	1.4%	2.34%	2.8%	.47%
	Neutral	2.34%	4.67%	5.61%	5.14%	2.8%
	Agree	5.14%	7.48%	18.22%	10.28%	5.61%
	Strongly Agree	7.94%	3.74%	6.07%	.93%	1.87%
	Agree					

Note. $\chi^2=34.087$ DF=16 $p \geq$.005 Kendall's tau-b=-.207 $p \geq$.000

The last independent variable determined to be of significance by conducting chi-square analysis was *After watching violence on television, it makes me angry* (n=209) (Table 4-3). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. Close to half of the participants, 100, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *After watching violence on television, it makes me angry* (47.85%); 80 participants were Neutral about this item (38.28%); and 29 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed (13.88%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of -.188 with a $p \geq$.001. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the

dependent variable *The older one gets, the more used to they are seeing violence on television*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers in relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is relatively low, -.188, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is weak.

The chi-square value for this item is 31.445 with a $p \geq .012$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' exposure to violent content by viewing it on television has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, is rejected.

Table 4-3. Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence on television and after watching violence on television, it makes me angry Crosstabulation.

	TV Angry				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree	.48%	1.44%	1.91%	0%	.48%
Disagree	.97%	.97%	4.78%	.48%	.48%
Neutral	3.83%	6.69%	7.18%	1.91%	1.44%
Agree	8.13%	10.05%	20.1%	6.22%	1.91%
Strongly Agree	10.05%	5.26%	4.31%	.48%	.48%

Note. $\chi^2=31.445$ DF=16 $p \geq .012$ Kendall's tau-b=-.188 $p \geq .001$

Research Question 2. To what extent are adolescents' beliefs and perceptions affected regarding the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors through exposure to violence in animation on television?

Hypothesis 2. Exposure to violent content by viewing it in animation has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors.

The purpose of this question was to determine if there is a relationship between participants' beliefs and perceptions and exposure to animated violence. Conducting chi-square analysis on the dependent variable *The older one gets, the more used to they are seeing violence in cartoons* and several independent variables indicated the presence of some significant relationships. The first independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *My favorite type of television program is funny* (n=212) (Table 4-4). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. About two-thirds of the participants, 135, Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the item *My favorite type of television program is funny* (63.68%); more than one-fourth of the participants, 59, were Neutral about this item (27.83%); and 18 participants Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed (8.49%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .180 with a $p \geq .002$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *The older one gets, the more used to they are seeing violence in cartoons*. Participants who Strongly Agree/Agree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is relatively low, .180, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is weak.

The chi-square value for this item is 45.383 with a $p \geq .000$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research

hypothesis, adolescents' exposure to violent content by viewing it in animation has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, is rejected.

Table 4-4. Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in cartoons and my favorite type of television program is funny Crosstabulation.

	FavTVFunny				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
OlderCartoons Strongly Disagree	1.89%	.47%	2.83%	2.36%	1.42%
OlderCartoons Disagree	0%	1.42%	4.72%	5.19%	4.25%
OlderCartoons Neutral	.47%	1.42%	9.91%	5.19%	12.26%
OlderCartoons Agree	.94%	1.42%	6.6%	12.26%	9.43%
OlderCartoons Strongly Agree	0%	.47%	3.77%	1.42%	9.91%

Note. $\chi^2=45.383$ DF=16 $p \geq .000$ Kendall's tau-b=.180 $p \geq .002$

The second independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *Boys are more affected by cartoon violence* (n=211) (Table 4-5). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. More than one-fourth of the participants, 60, Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the item *Boys are more affected by cartoon violence* (28.44%); 90 participants were Neutral about this item (42.65%); and 61 participants Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed (28.91%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .209 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *The older one gets, the more used to they are seeing violence in cartoons*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is relatively low, .209, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is weak.

The chi-square value for this item is 30.304 with a $p \geq .016$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' exposure to violent content by viewing it in animation has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, is rejected.

Table 4-5. Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in cartoons and boys are more affected by cartoon violence Crosstabulation.

	BoysCartoon				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
OlderCartoons	Strongly Disagree 1.89%	2.84 %	1.89%	1.89%	%
Disagree	.95%	5.21%	6.64%	2.37%	%
Neutral	2.84%	6.16%	13.27%	4.74%	1.89%
Agree	3.32%	3.79%	14.69%	6.64%	2.37%
Strongly Agree	.95%	.95%	6.13%	3.32%	4.27%

Note. $\chi^2=30.304$ DF=16 $p \geq .016$ Kendall's tau-b=.209 $p \geq .000$

Another independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable is *Violence goes unpunished in my favorite cartoon show* (n=106) (Table 4-6). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. Only 11 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the item *Violence goes unpunished in my favorite cartoon show* (10.38%); about one-third of participants, 32, were Neutral about this item (30.19%); and more than half of the participants, 63, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed (59.43%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .290 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *The older one gets, the more used to they are seeing violence in cartoons*. Participants who Strongly

Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is relatively low, .290, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is weak.

The chi-square value for this item is 30.696 with a $p \geq .015$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' exposure to violent content by viewing it in animation has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, is rejected.

Table 4-6. Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in cartoons and violence goes unpunished in my favorite cartoon show
Crosstabulation.

	ViolenceUnpunished				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree	5.66%	.94%	0%	0%	0%
Disagree	6.6%	5.66%	.94%	.94%	0%
Neutral	9.43%	9.43%	11.32%	2.83%	0%
Agree	8.49%	8.49%	10.38%	3.77%	0%
Strongly Agree	2.83%	1.89%	7.55%	.94%	1.89%

Note. $\chi^2=30.696$ DF=16 $p \geq .015$ Kendall's tau-b=.290 $p \geq .000$

The last independent variable indicating a relationship with the dependent variable is *I like cartoon violence* (n=107) (Table 4-7). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. Only 16 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the item *I like cartoon violence* (14.959%); more than one-fourth of the participants, 31, were Neutral about this item (28.97%); and more than half of the participants, 60, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed (50.07%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .210 with a $p \geq .018$. This

indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *The older one gets, the more used to they are seeing violence in cartoons*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is relatively low, .210, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is weak.

The chi-square value for this item is 27.594 with a $p \geq .035$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' exposure to violent content by viewing it in animation has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, is rejected.

Table 4-7. Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in cartoons and I like cartoon violence Crosstabulation.

	LikeViolence				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree	4.67%	0%	0%	.93%	.93%
Disagree	10.28%	.93%	1.87%	.93%	0%
Neutral	11.21%	6.54%	14.95%	.93%	0%
Agree	10.28%	4.67%	9.35%	2.8%	3.74%
Strongly Agree	5.61%	1.87%	2.8%	.93%	3.74%

Note. $\chi^2=27.594$ DF=16 $p \geq .035$ Kendall's tau-b=.210 $p \geq .018$

Research question 3. To what extent are adolescents' beliefs and perceptions affected regarding the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors through exposure to violence by viewing it in animation in *The Simpsons*?

Hypothesis 3. Exposure to violent content by viewing it in animation in *The Simpsons* has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors.

The purpose of this question was to determine if there is a relationship between participants' beliefs and perceptions and exposure to animated violence in *The Simpsons*. By conducting chi-square analysis on the dependent variable *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I become aggressive* and several independent variables indicated the presence of some significant relationships. The first independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I feel angry* (n=69) (Table 4-8). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. Close to three-fourths of participants, 50, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I feel angry* (72.46%); about one-fourth of the participants, 16, were Neutral on this item (23.19%); and 3 respondents Strongly Agreed/Agreed (4.35%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .445 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I become aggressive*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is moderately high, .445, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is strong.

The chi-square value for this item is 74.362 with a $p \geq .000$ and 12 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 12 DF is 21.03. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research

hypothesis, adolescents' exposure to violent content by viewing it in animation in *The Simpsons* has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, is rejected.

Table 4-8. Comparison of after I watch violence on The Simpsons I become aggressive and after I watch violence on The Simpsons, I become angry Crosstabulation.

	SimpsonsAngry				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree	42.03%	13.04%	10.15%	1.45%	1.45%
Disagree	0%	13.04%	1.45%	0%	0%
Neutral	2.89%	1.45%	11.59%	0%	0%
Agree	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.45%

Note. $\chi^2=74.362$ DF=12 $p \geq .000$ Kendall's tau-b=.445 $p \geq .000$

The second independent variable indicating a very significant relationship with the dependent variable was *Shortly after I see violence on The Simpsons, I become violent* (n=70) (Table 4-9). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. More than three-fourths of participants, 60, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *Shortly after I see violence on The Simpsons I become violent* (85.71%); 9 participants were Neutral on this item (12.86%); and 1 respondent Strongly Agreed/Agreed (1.43%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .846 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I become aggressive*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is extremely high, .846, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is very strong.

The chi-square value for this item is 161.034 with a $p \geq .000$ and 9 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 9 DF is 16.92. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' exposure to violent content by viewing it in animation in *The Simpsons* has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, is rejected.

Table 4-9. Comparison of after I watch violence on The Simpsons I become aggressive and shortly after I see violence on The Simpsons I become violent Crosstabulation.

	SimpsonsViolent			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Strongly Disagree	67.14%	0%	0%	0%
Disagree	4.29%	10%	0%	0%
Neutral	2.86%	1.43%	12.86%	0%
Agree	0%	0%	0%	1.43%

Note. $\chi^2=161.034$ DF=9 $p \geq .000$ Kendall's tau-b=.846 $p \geq .000$

The next independent variable with significant relationship with the dependent variable was *Violence on The Simpsons is realistic* (n=70) (Table 4-10). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. More than three-fourths of participants, 54, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *Violence on The Simpsons is realistic* (77.14%); 12 participants were Neutral on this item (17.14%); and 4 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed (5.41%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .387 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I become aggressive*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with

relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is moderate, .387, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is slightly strong.

The chi-square value for this item is 26.264 with a $p \geq .010$ and 12 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 12 DF is 21.03. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' exposure to violent content by viewing it in animation in *The Simpsons* has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, is rejected.

Table 4-10. Comparison of after I watch violence on The Simpsons I become aggressive and violence on The Simpsons is realistic Crosstabulation.

	SimpsonsRealistic					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Strongly Disagree	41.43%	17.14%	7.14%	1.43%	0%	
Disagree	2.86%	7.14%	2.86%	1.43%	0%	
Neutral	4.29%	4.29%	5.71%	0%	2.86%	
Agree	0%	0%	1.43%	0%	0%	

Note. $\chi^2=26.264$ DF=12 $p \geq .010$ Kendall's tau-b=.387 $p \geq .000$

The final independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *When I see violence on The Simpsons, it bothers me* (n=70) (Table 4-11). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. Close to half of the participants, 32, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *When I see violence on The Simpsons, it bothers me* (45.71%); 16 participants were Neutral on this item (22.86%); and 12 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed (17.14%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of -.293 with a $p \geq .004$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I become aggressive*.

Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is slightly moderate, -.293, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is not too weak.

The chi-square value for this item is 41.080 with a $p \geq .000$ and 12 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 12 DF is 21.03. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' exposure to violent content by viewing it in animation in *The Simpsons* has effects on the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, is rejected.

Table 4-11. Comparison of after I watch violence on The Simpsons I become aggressive and when I see violence on The Simpsons, it bothers me Crosstabulation.

	SimpsonsBother				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree	35.71%	12.86%	11.43%	4.29%	2.86%
Disagree	1.43%	4.29%	1.43%	5.71%	1.43%
Neutral	5.71%	0%	10%	1.43%	0%
Agree	0%	0%	0%	0%	1.43%

Note. $\chi^2=41.080$ DF=12 $p \geq .000$ Kendall's tau-b=-.293 $p \geq .004$

Secondary Research Questions

Research Question 1. Do adolescents perceive that violence portrayed on television produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world?

Hypothesis 1. Adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed on television produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world.

The purpose of this question is to determine participants' perceptions of violence in the real world. By conducting chi-square analysis on the dependent variable *The older I*

get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life and several independent variables indicated the presence of some significant relationships. The first independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *The older I get, the more I get used to experiencing violence* (n=212) (Tables 4-12). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. About one-fourth of the participants, 52, Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the item *The older I get, the more I get used to experiencing violence* (24.53%); more than one-fourth of the participants, 58, were Neutral on this item (27.36%); and close to one-half of the participants, 102, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed (48.11%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .510 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *The older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is high, .510, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is strong.

The chi-square value for this item is 152.269 with a $p \geq .000$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed on television produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world, is rejected.

Table 4-12. Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life and the older I get, the more I get used to experiencing violence Crosstabulation.

	OlderExperience					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Strongly Disagree	9.43%	.94%	.47%	0 %	0%	
Disagree	8.49%	9.43 %	1.42%	.94%	0%	
Neutral	3.3%	2.83%	11.79%	1.89%	1.42%	
Agree	2.83%	8.02%	9.43%	9.91%	1.42%	
Strongly Agree	1.42%	1.42%	4.25%	2.8%	6.13%	

Note. $\chi^2=152.269$ DF=16 $p \geq .000$ Kendall's tau-b=.510 $p \geq .000$

The second independent variable indicating a relationship with the dependent variable was *When I get mad at someone, I use violence to solve a problem* (n=213) (Table 4-13). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. Only 7 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the item *When I get mad at someone, I use violence to solve a problem* (3.29%); 29 participants were Neutral about this item (13.62%); and more than three-fourths of the participants, 177, participants Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed (83.09%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .266 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *The older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is relatively low, .266, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is weak.

The chi-square value for this item is 51.038 with a $p \geq .000$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research

hypothesis, adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed on television produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world, is rejected.

Table 4-13. Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life and when I get mad at someone, I use violence to solve a problem Crosstabulation.

		MadUse				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
OlderLife	Strongly Disagree	9.86%	.94%	0%	0%	0%
	Disagree	15.96%	3.29%	.47%	0%	0%
	Neutral	10.79%	3.76%	6.1%	0%	.47%
	Agree	20.19%	8.92%	2.82%	.47%	0%
	Strongly Agree	6.1%	3.29%	4.23%	1.41%	.94%
	Agree					

Note. $\chi^2=51.038$ DF=16 $p \geq .000$ Kendall's tau-b=.266 $p \geq .000$

The final independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *I have used aggressive actions seen on television as a way to deal with some of my problems* (n=216) (Table 4-14). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. Only 8 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed with the item *I have used aggressive actions seen on television as a way to deal with some of my problems* (3.7%); 24 participants were Neutral on this item (11.11%); and more than three-fourths of the participants, 184, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed (85.19%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .217 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *The older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is low, .217, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is weak.

The chi-square value for this item is 52.270 with a $p \geq .000$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed on television produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world, is rejected.

Table 4-14. Comparison of the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life and I have used aggressive actions seen on television as a way to deal with some of my problems Crosstabulation.

	TVUse				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
OlderLife	9.72%	.46%	.46%	0%	0%
Strongly Disagree	15.28%	4.63%	0%	0%	0%
Disagree	10.19%	3.7%	6.48%	1.39%	0%
Neutral	18.52%	10.65%	2.31%	0%	.46%
Agree	6.48%	5.56%	1.85%	1.39%	.46%
Strongly Agree					

Note. $\chi^2=52.270$ DF=16 $p \geq .000$ Kendall's tau-b=.217 $p \geq .000$

Research question 2. Do adolescents perceive that the violence portrayed in animation/*The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world?

Hypothesis 2. Adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed in animation/*The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world.

The purpose of this question was to determine participants' beliefs and perceptions on their view of violence in the real world. By conducting chi-square analysis on the dependent variable *Violence on The Simpsons is realistic* several independent variables indicated the presence of some significant relationships. The first independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *After watching violence in a cartoon, I feel angry* (n=65) (Table 4-15). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly

Disagree, Disagree. Close to two-thirds of the participants, 40, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *After watching violence in a cartoon, I feel angry* (61.54%); more than one-fourth of the participants, 19, were Neutral about this item (29.23%); and 6 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed (9.23%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .351 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *Violence on The Simpsons is realistic*.

Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is moderate, .351, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is slightly strong.

The chi-square value for this item is 25.681 with a $p \geq .012$ and 12 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 12 DF is 21.03. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed in animation/*The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world, is rejected.

Table 4-15. Comparison of violence on The Simpsons is realistic and after watching violence in a cartoon, I feel angry Crosstabulation.

	CartoonAngry			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
SimpsonsRealistic	Strongly Disagree 23.08%	15.38%	9.23%	0%
Disagree	4.62%	6.15%	12.31%	6.15%
Neutral	3.08%	7.69%	6.15%	0%
Agree	0%	1.54%	0%	1.54%
Strongly Agree	0%	0%	1.54%	1.54%

Note. $\chi^2=25.681$ DF=12 $p \geq .012$ Kendall's tau-b=.351 $p \geq .000$

The next independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *Shortly after I see violence on The Simpsons I become violent* (n=71) (Table 4-16). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. More than three-fourths of participants, 61, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *Shortly after I see violence on The Simpsons I become violent* (85.92%); 9 participants were Neutral on this item (12.68%); and 1 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed (1.41%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .455 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *Violence on The Simpsons is realistic*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is moderately high, .455, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is strong.

The chi-square value for this item is 41.351 with a $p \geq .000$ and 12 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 12 DF is 21.03. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research

hypothesis, adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed in animation/*The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world, is rejected.

Table 4-16. Comparison of violence on *The Simpsons* is realistic and shortly after I see violence on *The Simpsons* I become violent Crosstabulation.

	SimpsonsViolent			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Strongly Disagree	46.48%	0%	2.82 %	0%
Disagree	18.31%	8.45%	1.41%	0%
Neutral	8.45%	1.41%	5.63%	1.41%
Agree	1.41%	1.41%	0%	0%
Strongly Agree	0%	0%	2.82%	0%

Note. $\chi^2=41.351$ DF=12 $p \geq .000$ Kendall's tau-b=.455 $p \geq .000$

By conducting chi-square analysis another independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I become aggressive* (n=70) (Table 4-17). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. More than three-fourths of participants, 57, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I become aggressive* (81.43%); 12 participants were Neutral about this item (17.14%); and 1 participant Strongly Agreed/Agreed (1.43%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .387 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *Violence on The Simpsons is realistic*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is moderate, .387, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is slightly strong.

The chi-square value for this item is 26.264 with a $p \geq .010$ and 12 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 12 DF is 21.03. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed in animation/*The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world, is rejected.

Table 4-17. Comparison of violence on *The Simpsons* is realistic and after I watch violence on *The Simpsons*, I become aggressive Crosstabulation.

	SimpsonsAggressive			
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
Strongly Disagree	41.43%	2.86%	4.29%	0%
Disagree	17.14%	7.14%	4.29%	0%
Neutral	7.14%	2.86%	5.71%	1.43%
Agree	1.43%	1.43%	0%	0%
Strongly Agree	0%	0%	2.86%	0%

Note. $\chi^2=26.264$ DF=12 $p \geq .010$ Kendall's tau-b=.387 $p \geq .000$

Another independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I feel angry* (n=70) (Table 4-18). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. Close to three-fourths of participants, 51, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I feel angry* (72.86%); 16 participants were Neutral about this item (22.86%); and 3 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed (4.29%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .441 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *Violence on The Simpsons is realistic*.

Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance

in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is moderately high, .441, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is strong.

The chi-square value for this item is 63.245 with a $p \geq .000$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed in animation/*The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world, is rejected.

Table 4-18. Comparison of violence on *The Simpsons* is realistic and after I watch violence on *The Simpsons*, I feel angry Crosstabulation.

	SimpsonsAngry				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree	34.29%	8.57%	5.71%	0%	1.43%
Disagree	7.14%	14.29%	5.71%	0%	0%
Neutral	4.29%	2.86%	8.57%	0%	1.43%
Agree	0%	1.43%	0%	1.43%	0%
Strongly Agree	0%	0%	2.86%	0%	0%

Note. $\chi^2=63.245$ DF=16 $p \geq .000$ Kendall's tau-b=.441 $p \geq .000$

By conducting chi-square analysis another independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I feel calm* (n=70) (Table 4-19). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. More than half of the participants, 37, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *After I watching violence on The Simpsons, I feel calm* (52.86%); more than one-third of participants, 26, were Neutral about this item (37.14%); and 7 participants Strongly

Agreed/Agreed (10%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .306 with a $p \geq .001$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *Violence on The Simpsons is realistic*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is low, .306, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is moderately weak.

The chi-square value for this item is 37.449 with a $p \geq .002$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed in animation/*The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world, is rejected.

Table 4-19. Comparison of violence on The Simpsons is realistic and after I watch violence on The Simpsons, I feel calm Crosstabulation.

	SimpsonsCalm				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree	21.43%	10%	17.14%	0%	1.43%
Disagree	2.86%	11.43%	7.14%	5.71%	0%
Neutral	0%	2.86%	11.43%	0%	2.86%
Agree	0%	2.86%	0%	0%	0%
Strongly Agree	0%	1.43%	1.43%	0%	0%

Note. $\chi^2=37.449$ DF=16 $p \geq .002$ Kendall's tau-b=.306 $p \geq .001$

The next independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *When I see violence on The Simpsons, it bothers me* (n=71) (Table 4-20). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. More than half of the

participants, 43, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *When I see violence on The Simpsons, it bothers me* (60.56%); 16 participants were Neutral on this item (22.54%); and 12 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed (4.19%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of $-.340$ with a $p \geq .002$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *Violence on The Simpsons is realistic*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is low, $-.340$, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is moderately weak.

The chi-square value for this item is 31.556 with a $p \geq .011$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed in animation/*The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world, is rejected.

Table 4-20. Comparison of violence on The Simpsons is realistic and after I watch violence on The Simpsons, it bothers me Crosstabulation.

	SimpsonsBother					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	
Strongly Disagree	29.58%	8.45%	7.04%	1.41%	2.82%	
Disagree	7.04%	8.45%	9.86%	2.82%	0%	
Neutral	5.63%	0%	5.63%	4.23%	1.41%	
Agree	0%	0%	0%	1.41%	1.41%	
Strongly Agree	1.41%	0%	0%	1.41%	0%	

Note. $\chi^2=31.556$ DF=16 $p \geq .011$ Kendall's tau-b= $-.340$ $p \geq .002$

The final independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *When I see violence on The Simpsons, I look away* (n=71) (Table

4-21). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. Close to two-thirds of the participants, 46, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *when I see violence on The Simpsons, I look away* (64.79%); one-fourth of the participants, 18, were Neutral about this item (25.35%); and 7 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed (9.86%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of $-.320$ with a $p \geq .003$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *Violence on The Simpsons is realistic*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is low, $-.320$, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is moderately weak.

The chi-square value for this item is 32.647 with a $p \geq .008$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' beliefs and perceptions of the violence portrayed in animation/*The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world, is rejected.

Table 4-21. Comparison of violence on The Simpsons is realistic and after I watch violence on The Simpsons, I look away Crosstabulation.

	SimpsonsLook				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree	28.17%	9.86%	7.04%	1.41%	2.82%
Disagree	5.64%	14.08%	7.04%	1.41%	0%
Neutral	4.23%	1.41%	8.45%	1.41%	1.41%
Agree	0%	0%	2.82%	0%	0%
Strongly Agree	1.41%	0%	0%	1.41%	0%

Note. $\chi^2=32.647$ DF=16 $p \geq .008$ Kendall's tau-b=-.320 $p \geq .003$

Research question 3. Do adolescents perceive that the violence portrayed on *The Simpsons* is justified?

Hypothesis 3. Adolescents perceive the violence portrayed in *The Simpsons* to be justified.

The purpose of this question was to determine participants' beliefs and perceptions on the justification of violence on *The Simpsons*. By conducting chi-square analysis on the dependent variable *I think violence is justified on The Simpsons*, an independent variable indicated the presence of some significant relationships. The independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *I think it is acceptable for my favorite character on The Simpsons to use violence to solve his/her problems* (n=69) (Table 4-22). Participants' responses were broken down into three categories: Strongly Agree/Agree, Neutral, and Strongly Disagree, Disagree. More than half of the participants, 41, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *I think it is acceptable for my favorite character on The Simpsons to use violence to solve his/her problems* (59.42%); about one-third of the participants, 22, were Neutral on this item (31.88%); and 6 participants Strongly Agreed/Agreed (8.69%). Kendall's tau-b was determined to have a value of .594 with a $p \geq .000$. This indicates there is a statistical correlation with the dependent variable *I think violence is justified on The Simpsons*. Participants who Strongly Disagree/Disagree with this item will have linear concordance in their answers with relation to the dependent variable. Since the value for Kendall's tau-b is high, .594, the relationship between the dependent variable and this item is strong.

The chi-square value for this item is 55.210 with a $p \geq .000$ and 16 DF. The chi-square value at the 95th percentile with 16 DF is 26.30. Since the computed chi-square value is greater than the chi-square value in the table of distribution, the research hypothesis, adolescents' perceive the violence portrayed in *The Simpsons* to be justified, is rejected.

Table 4-22. Comparison of I think violence is justified on The Simpsons and I think it is acceptable for my favorite character on The Simpsons to use violence to solve his/her problems Crosstabulation

	SimpsonsSolve				
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Strongly Disagree	34.78%	2.89%	2.89%	0%	1.45%
Disagree	5.79%	7.25%	1.45%	1.45%	1.45%
Neutral	4.35%	4.35%	21.74%	1.45%	1.45%
Agree	0%	0%	4.35%	0%	0%
Strongly Agree	0%	0%	1.45%	0%	1.45%

Note. $\chi^2=55.210$ DF=16 $p \geq .000$ Kendall's tau-b=.594 $p \geq .000$

Other Significant Findings

Spearman's Rank Order Correlation (ρ) is used to calculate the strength of the relationship between two continuous variables. Several scale scores were created from various items to compare adolescents' beliefs and perceptions on various forms of violence. Two scales were determined to have significance correlations coefficients. The first scale is the cartoon violence scale, which produced a mean score for adolescents' beliefs and perceptions on the effects of cartoon violence. The cartoon violence scale was determined to have a Spearman's ρ correlation coefficient of .311 when compared to the dependent variable, *the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in cartoons*. Although this is not a strong correlation, it can still be determined that if an adolescent has a high cartoon violence scale score, there is a positive correlation with the

dependent variable. The second scale is the unrealistic view of violence scale, which produced a mean score for adolescents' beliefs and perceptions on the effects of violence creating an unrealistic view of violence in the real world. The unrealistic view of violence scale was determined to have a Spearman's rho correlation coefficient of .492 when compared to the dependent variable, *the older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life*. This is considered to be a moderately positive correlation with the dependent variable, therefore, if an adolescent has a high unrealistic view of violence scale score, there will be a positive correlation with the dependent variable.

Summary

This chapter provided information on the results related to the primary and secondary research questions stated in Chapter 1. The following chapter will discuss in-depth the results related to the primary and secondary research questions.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION

This study was designed to examine the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents on whether or not viewing violence on television contributes to an increase in adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, as well as the effects humor and satire used on the animated television series *The Simpsons* have on adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors. This study also explored to what extent the violence portrayed in *The Simpsons* is believed to be realistic and justified by adolescents viewing the show. Lastly, the study examined whether there are differences in adolescent perceptions of violence in *The Simpsons* content by gender and age.

Primary Research Questions

- To what extent are adolescents' beliefs and perceptions affected regarding the learning of aggressive behavior and attitudes through exposure to violence by viewing it on television?
- To what extent are adolescents' beliefs and perceptions affected regarding the learning of aggressive behavior and attitudes through exposure to violence in animation on television?
- To what extent are adolescents' beliefs and perceptions affected regarding the learning of aggressive behavior and attitudes through exposure to violence by viewing it in animation in *The Simpsons*?

Secondary Research Questions

1. Do adolescents perceive that violence portrayed on televisions produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world?
- Do adolescents perceive that the violence portrayed in animation/*The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world?

- Do adolescents perceive that the violence portrayed in *The Simpsons* is justified?
- Does gender play a role in the varying perceptions of violence in *The Simpsons*?
- Does age play a role in the varying perceptions of violence in *The Simpsons*?

Chi-square analyses were used to analyze and answer each of these research questions. The group of interest used to analyze the research questions was only those participants who responded positively to watching television (N=218).

Television Viewing Habits

In order to get a better perception of participants' television viewing habits, the survey contained items to determine their habits. After participants answered positively to whether or not they watch television (N=218), participants were asked to approximate how many hours of television they watch on an average day. Most participants reported that they watched an average of two hours of television per day. This amount of television viewing is slightly less than the national average. The average child watches more than two and one-half hours of television per day; while one out of every six children watches more than five hours of television a day (Roberts et al., 1999). In this study, only 18 participants responded they watch 5 hours of television on an average day. Over half of all children have a television in their bedroom (Kinderstart, 2000), which was also observed in this study.

Viewing Violence on Television

In order to determine what extent adolescents' beliefs and perceptions are affected regarding the learning of aggressive behavior and attitudes through exposure to violence by viewing it on television, chi-square analysis was conducted on several independent variables. Three independent variables were determined to have significant relationships with the dependent variable. Close to half of the participants, 95, Strongly

Agreed/Agreed with the item *Boys are more affected by television violence* (44.61%).

Participants' responses have a linear concordance with the items which state *After watching violence on television, it bothers me* and *After watching violence on television makes me angry*, and the dependent variable. This study can conclude there is a linear concordance between participants' beliefs and perceptions with these items and participants' beliefs and perceptions on the dependent variable; *The older one gets, the more used to they are seeing violence on television*.

Viewing Violence in Animation

In order to determine what extent adolescents' beliefs and perceptions are affected regarding the learning of aggressive behavior and attitudes through exposure to violence in animation chi-square analysis was conducted on several independent variables. Seven independent variables were determined to have significant relationships with the dependent variable; *The older one gets, the more used to they are seeing violence in cartoons*. The first independent variable to have a significant relationship with the dependent variable is *My favorite type of television program is funny*. Participants' beliefs and perceptions are consistent with previous research on the seven contextual features of animated violence which states; violence that is portrayed as humorous can increase aggression in viewers (Baron, 1978). This study can conclude there is a linear concordance between participants' beliefs and perceptions between this item and the dependent variable. The next independent variable to have a significant relationship with the dependent variable is *Boys are more affected by cartoon violence* with more than one-fourth of the participants, 61, who Strongly Agreed/Agreed (28.91%). This study can conclude there is linear concordance with participants' beliefs and perceptions that boys are affected more as a result of viewing violence on both television and in animation.

More than one-half of the participants, 63, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *Violence goes unpunished in my favorite cartoon show*. This is consistent with previous research conducted by Bandura (1965) and his social learning theory and how violence that is explicitly rewarded or that simply goes unpunished increases the risk of imitative aggression, whereas violence that is condemned decreases the risk. The viewing of a perpetrator by an adolescent on television committing a violent act and not getting caught and/or punished can lead to the justification by the adolescent of committing violent acts themselves, since the perpetrator was not punished. This study can conclude there is a linear concordance between participants' beliefs and perceptions with this item and the dependent variable.

Three other independent variables shown to have significant relationships with the dependent variable deal with cues in participants' environment are: *After watching violence in a cartoon, I become violent*; *After watching violence in a cartoon, I become aggressive*; and *I have used aggressive actions seen in a cartoon as a way to deal with some of my problems*. This is consistent with previous research on cues in the environment. A condition associated with aggressive thoughts and feelings progressing into aggressive behavior are cues in the environment that remind people of media violence they have just seen can trigger aggressive behavior (Jo & Berkowitz, 1994). These cues help to reactivate and sustain the previously primed aggressive thoughts and tendencies. The reactivation of these primed aggressive thoughts and tendencies leads to the prolonging influence of the violent content in the media (Jo & Berkowitz, 1994). Therefore, this study can conclude there is a linear concordance between participants' beliefs and perceptions regarding cues in their environment and the dependent variable.

The final independent variable to have a relationship with the dependent variable is *I like cartoon violence*. More than one-half of the participants, 60, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *I like cartoon violence*. This study can conclude participants' beliefs and perceptions regarding their preferences towards cartoon violence has a linear concordance with the dependent variable *The older one gets, the more used to they are seeing violence in cartoons*.

Viewing Violence on *The Simpsons*

In order to determine what extent adolescents' beliefs and perceptions are affected regarding the learning of aggressive behavior and attitudes through exposure to violence on *The Simpsons*, chi-square analysis was conducted on several independent variables. Five independent variables were determined to have a significant relationship with the dependent variable; *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I become aggressive*. As was seen with viewing violence on television and cues in participants' environment, cues also play an important role in the beliefs and perceptions of participants and violence on *The Simpsons*. Three independent variables which are positively correlated with the dependent variable dealing with cues are in the environment are: *After I watch violence on The Simpsons, I feel angry*; *When I see violence on The Simpsons, it bothers me*; and *Shortly after I see violence The Simpsons I become violent*. As was discussed earlier, the Cognitive priming theory posits a violent stimuli in the media can activate or elicit aggressive thoughts in a viewer. These thoughts can then "prime" other closely related thoughts, feelings, and even motor tendencies stored in memory. For a short time after exposure, a person is in a state of activation whereby hostile thoughts and action tendencies are at the forefront of the mind (Jo & Berkowitz, 1994). This study can conclude, consistent with previous research, participants' beliefs and perceptions

regarding cues in their environment have a linear concordance with the dependent variable.

The next independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *Violence on The Simpsons is realistic*. More than three-fourths of participants, 54, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item violence on *The Simpsons* is realistic (77.14%). Previous research has shown violence that seems realistic can promote the learning of aggressive attitudes and behaviors among viewers (Atkin, 1983). This study can conclude there is a linear concordance between this item and the dependent variable.

Television Produces an Unrealistic View of Violence in the Real World

In order to determine what extent adolescents' beliefs and perceptions are affected regarding television producing an unrealistic view of violence in the real world, chi-square analysis was conducted on several independent variables. Three independent variables were determined to have a significant relationship with the dependent variable. The first independent variable to have a significant relationship with the dependent variable is *The older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life*. "Media cultivation effects" theory suggests that television influences people's perceptions of the real world. When adolescents watch an exorbitant amount of violent content on television they develop an exaggerated fear of being victimized and believe the world is much more violent than it actually is. This perception of the world as a dangerous place is known as the "mean world" syndrome (Bryant, Carveth & Brown, 1981). Participants' beliefs and perceptions regarding the independent variable *The older I get, the more I get used to experiencing violence* is consistent with previous research. Close to one-half of the participants, 102, Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *The older I get, the*

more I get used to experiencing violence (48.11%). This study can conclude there is a linear concordance between participants' beliefs and perceptions regarding an unrealistic view of violence in the real world and how age can be a factor.

The last two independent variables indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable are *When I get mad at someone, I use violence to solve a problem* and *I have used aggressive actions seen on television as a way to deal with some of my problems*. As was observed earlier, cues in the environment play an important role in participants' beliefs and perceptions. This is consistent with previous research and therefore, this study can conclude there is a linear concordance between participants' beliefs and perceptions regarding cues in their environment and their ensuing behavior as a result of these cues.

The Simpsons Produces an Unrealistic View of Violence in the Real World

In order to determine what extent adolescents' beliefs and perceptions are affected regarding *The Simpsons* producing an unrealistic view of violence in the real world chi-square analysis was conducted on several independent variables. Six independent variables were determined to have a significant relationship with the dependent variable; violence on *The Simpsons* is realistic. These independent variables deal with participants' beliefs and perceptions of their physical reactions both while watching and after viewing violence on *The Simpsons*. The two independent variables regarding participants' beliefs and perceptions of their physical reactions while watching *The Simpsons* are: *When I see violence on The Simpsons, it bothers me* and *When I see violence The Simpsons, I look away*. The other four independent variable regarding participants' beliefs and perceptions of their physical reactions after watching *The Simpsons* are: *Shortly after I see violence on The Simpsons I become violent; After I*

watch violence on The Simpsons, I become aggressive; After I watching violence on The Simpsons, I feel angry; and After I watching violence on The Simpsons, I feel calm.

Consistent with previous research, cues in participants' environments affect their beliefs and perceptions regarding how viewing violence on *The Simpsons* produces an unrealistic view of violence in the real world. Research has shown for aggressive thoughts and feelings to progress into aggressive behavior, cues in the environment that remind people of the media violence they have just seen and can trigger aggressive behavior (Jo & Berkowitz, 1994). These cues help to reactivate and sustain the previously primed aggressive thoughts and tendencies. The reactivation of these primed aggressive thoughts and tendencies leads to the prolonging influence of the violent content in the media (Jo & Berkowitz, 1994). This study can conclude there is a linear concordance between these independent variables and the dependent variable.

Violence Portrayed on *The Simpsons* is Justified

In order to determine what extent adolescents' beliefs and perceptions are affected regarding violence portrayed on *The Simpsons* is justified chi-square analysis was conducted. The independent variable indicating a significant relationship with the dependent variable was *I think it is acceptable for my favorite character on The Simpsons to use violence to solve his/her problems*. Previous research has shown an attractive perpetrator, or good-looking character, increases the risk of learning aggression. According to Bandura's (1994) social learning theory, children as well as adults are more likely to attend to, identify with, and learn from attractive role models than unattractive ones. Liss and colleagues (1983) note the most obvious way to make a perpetrator appealing is to make him or her a hero. More than half of the participants, (n=41), Strongly Disagreed/Disagreed with the item *I think it is acceptable for my favorite*

character on The Simpsons to use violence to solve his/her problems (59.42%). This study can conclude there is a linear concordance between participants' beliefs and perceptions regarding this item and the dependent variable *I think it is acceptable for my favorite character on The Simpsons to use violence to solve his/her problems.*

Summary

Overall, the findings from this study provide valuable information regarding adolescents who attended the 2005 State 4-H Congress. It is important to emphasize the main findings of this study regarding participants' beliefs and perceptions of adolescents on whether or not viewing violence on television contributes to an increase in adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, as well as the effects humor and satire used on the animated television series *The Simpsons*. In addition, my study has provided insight into participants' beliefs and perceptions about television violence, unrealistic views of violence in the real world, and the justification of violence.

Limitations

The limitations associated with this present study include

- Surveys were administered by floor supervisors and not me.
- Design of instrumentation did not allow for viewing of media examples.

The delimitations associated with this present study include

Delimitations

- All subjects could choose not to participate in the study.
- Both genders were not equally represented in the study.
- There was not an equal representation of ages in the study.
- Results may be skewed due to small sample size.

- The population sampled is not representative of all adolescents' ages 13- to 17-years-old in the state of Florida.

Two limitations of this study dealt with survey administration and instrumentation design. Due to logistical constraints, floor supervisors administered surveys during the first night of the 2005 State 4-H Congress and not me. This may have contributed to the lower than expected response rate by male participants. Had I been present to administer the surveys personally and not volunteer floor supervisors, perhaps the response rate would have been higher due to my presence. In order to have gained a higher response rate, one possible solution would be to have had participants view media examples as part of the instrumentation. This would allow for more respondents on particular items as well as a more recent exposure to the media.

As with all studies, there were several delimitations encountered. The first delimitation was that all subjects could choose not to participate in the study since it was a result of voluntary participation. This may have contributed to the total number of respondents not being as high as possible. There was potential for close to twice as many participants since over 420 adolescents were registered as attending the 2005 State 4-H Congress. This could prove to be very troublesome since the sample size could be affected. Another delimitation is that both genders might not be equally represented in the study. An equal representation of both genders is helpful when making generalizations about the findings of the study. In addition, the number of registered female participants (n=199) outnumbered registered male participants (n=46) by nearly 5:1. If there were a larger representation by one gender, the comparisons made would not be very representative.

Since this study looks at whether or not age plays a role in the varying perceptions of violence in *The Simpsons*, it is necessary to have an equal representation of age groups. If there is not a representative distribution of the sample across the age groups, it will be difficult to make generalizations about the findings of the study across the various age groups, unless there is a relatively large sample size for each age group.

The final delimitation is in regards to the sample population. A census of adolescents aged 13- to 17-years old who attended the 2005 4-H Youth Congress in Gainesville, FL was conducted. The population sampled is not representative of all adolescents' ages 13- to 17-years-old in the state of Florida; therefore, the results cannot be generalized to them. However, due to large sample size and cross section of age, race, and geographic distribution, this sample may be representative of civic-minded youth in Florida.

Implications for Practice

In order to properly curb adolescent violence, the behaviors associated with violence need to be identified before they can escalate. These warning signs are: intense anger, frequent loss of temper or blow-ups, extreme irritability, extreme impulsiveness, and becoming easily frustrated (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2004). Parents and teachers have the ability to identify these behaviors early on. If a parent or other adult becomes concerned about their child's behaviors, they should arrange for a comprehensive evaluation by a qualified mental health professional. Early treatment by a professional can often help to correct the problem before it begins. The goals of treatment typically focus on helping the child to: learn how to control his/her anger; express anger and frustrations in appropriate ways; be responsible for his/her actions; and accept consequences (American Academy of Child and Adolescent

Psychiatry, 2004). Family conflicts, school problems, and community issues must be discussed as well in order to fully address the whole of the problem. Research studies have shown that much violent behavior can be decreased or even prevented if the above risk factors are significantly reduced or eliminated. The most important factor in halting violent behavior is focusing efforts at dramatically decreasing the exposure of adolescents to violence in the home, community, and through the media.

Parents and teachers are not the only individuals who can identify these behaviors. Adolescent psychiatrists, pediatricians and other physicians can play a pivotal role on impacting the effects of adolescents' beliefs and perceptions on whether or not viewing violence on television contributes to an increase in their abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors. The American Academy of Pediatrics has created a list of recommendations to address television violence. It suggests physician's talk openly with parents about the nature and extent of viewing patterns in their homes. Parents should limit television use to 1-2 hours daily and watch programs with their children. This will allow them to address any objectionable material seen and stop the use immediately if necessary.

Physicians should make parents and schools knowledgeable about media. They should understand the risks of exposure to violence and teach adolescents how to interpret what they see on television and in the movies, including the intent and content of commercials. By doing so, adolescents may be increasingly able to discern which media messages are suitable. Physicians, in their role as health promoters, should become more active in educating media to become more sensitive to the impact of violence on youth. Programming decisions need to be made with the potential

consequences to the viewing audience in mind, and that when violence is present, there are adequate warnings provided to the public.

Governmental agencies have set forth policy and laws to limit the use of violent television content by adolescents. The Federal Trade Commission has outlined some recommendations to help in decreasing the marketing of violent television content to adolescents. They feel the entertainment industries should establish or expand codes that prohibit target marketing to kids of adult-rated material and impose sanctions for violations of these codes (Federal Trade Commission, 2000). Not only do the entertainment industries need to stop marketing adult-rated material to adolescents, but retailers need to observe and enforce the ratings set forth by the industries. Of the 44 movies rate R for violence reviewed by the Federal Trade Commission, 80% were marketed to children under 17 and of 118 electronic video games rated Mature for violence, 70% targeted adolescents (Federal Trade Commission). According to a Federal Trade Commission report, just under half of movie theaters surveyed admit children aged 13- to 16-years-old to R-rated films when not accompanied by an adult, and kids the same age were able to purchase M rated electronic video games 85% of the time (Federal Trade Commission).

The National Television Violence Study and the UCLA Television Violence Report have also outlined some recommendations to the entertainment industries in regards to the portrayal of violence on television and in movies. Entertainment industries should produce more programs that do not rely upon violence as a plot device and incorporate anti-violence themes when violence is used (Children Now, 1998). There should be an increase in the depiction of punishment for violent acts and show the

alternatives to violence for resolving conflicts. The implication of justified violence should be avoided. Both the negative short-term and long-term consequences of violence for victims, aggressors and their families need to be addressed (Children Now).

Entertainment industries need to take into consideration viewing times of adolescents and schedule programs with violent themes in late prime time.

The Telecommunication Act of 1996 helped to establish a ratings system developed by the television industry in collaboration with child advocacy organizations (Federman, 1997).

The rating system is as follows:

TVY: All Children

TVY7: Directed to Older Children

TVG: General Audience

TTVPG: Parental Guidance Suggested

TV14: Parents Strongly Cautioned

TVMA: Mature Audience Only

The categories for rating are based on a combination of age related and content factors. These ratings are a system parents can base their decisions on what is appropriate for their children to watch.

The major problem with any ratings system established is the inconsistency between media. Although there may be similarities in the ratings systems of each different medium, there is no single rating system to blanket them all. This makes it difficult for parents to rely on a system to judge what their children should be exposed to. With this difficulty of use, 68% of the parents of 10- to 17-year-olds do not use the

television ratings system at all (Kaiser, 1999). A majority of parents find the ratings unreliably low. As much as 50% of television shows rated TV-14 were considered to be inappropriate by parents for their teenagers (Walsh, 2001). The ratings systems are age based. This assumes that parents agree with the raters on what is appropriate for their aged child. This is certainly untrue since not all parents would consider the same material appropriate for their child.

The creation of a general ratings system as well as observing recommendations laid forth by professional organizations will aid parents in determining what is appropriate for their child. Parents are truly the only ones who can determine what is appropriate for their child. Even if a blanket ratings system is created, there is still room for user discretion.

Recommendations for Future Research

To more fully explore the beliefs and perceptions of adolescents on whether or not viewing violence on television contributes to an increase in adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors, future studies may be elaborated in several ways. First, future studies on adolescents' beliefs and perceptions regarding television violence may focus on a larger population. This would allow for the data to be analyzed in different ways, which are not possible with a small data set, and could possibly yield detailed and expansive results. Second, future studies may use a random sample of a more representative population in order to increase the external validity and the ability to generalize on a larger scale. Since this study was conducted on the beliefs and perceptions of 13- to 17-year-olds at the 2005 State 4-H Congress, the population was not representative of all youth in Florida 4-H and all youth in 4-H nationally. Another recommendation for future studies would be to have participants view media examples as

part of the instrumentation. This would allow for a higher response rate to particular items of the instrument as well as a more recent exposure to the media. Finally, future studies examining factors contributing to adolescents' beliefs and perceptions on whether or not viewing violence on television contributes to an increase in adolescents' abilities to learn aggressive attitudes and behaviors may look at school environment. Although this study did have an item regarding school classification, this was not a central focus of this study.

APPENDIX A
INTERNAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL LETTERS



UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

Institutional Review Board

98A Psychology Bldg.
PO Box 112250
Gainesville, FL 32611-2250
Phone: (352) 392-0433
Fax: (352) 392-9234
E-mail: irb2@ufl.edu
<http://rgp.ufl.edu/irb/irb02>

DATE: July 20, 2005
TO: Josh Hirsch
3031 McCarty D
Campus
FROM: Ira S. Fischler, PhD, Chair *I. Fischler*
University of Florida
Institutional Review Board 02
SUBJECT: **Approval of Protocol #2005-U-0651**
TITLE: Adolescents' Desensitization Towards Violence Through the Use of Humor and Satire on *The Simpsons*
SPONSOR: None

I am pleased to advise you that the University of Florida Institutional Review Board has recommended approval of this protocol. Based on its review, the UFIRB determined that this research presents no more than minimal risk to participants. Given your protocol, it is essential that you obtain signed documentation of informed consent from the parent or legal guardian of each participant. When it is feasible, you should obtain signatures from both parents. Enclosed is the dated, IRB-approved informed consent to be used when recruiting participants for the research.

It is essential that the parents/guardians of your minor participants sign a copy of your approved informed consent that bears the IRB stamp and expiration date.

If you wish to make any changes to this protocol, **including the need to increase the number of participants authorized**, you must disclose your plans before you implement them so that the Board can assess their impact on your protocol. In addition, you must report to the Board any unexpected complications that affect your participants.

If you have not completed this protocol by July 19, 2006 please telephone our office (392-0433), and we will discuss the renewal process with you. It is important that you keep your Department Chair informed about the status of this research protocol.

IF:dI

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT FORM

June 17, 2005

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The media and violence have been identified as influential factors in adolescents' lives. This year at 4-H Youth Congress Florida 4-H is conducting a survey. Under the guidance of the Florida 4-H faculty, Josh Hirsch, a graduate student, will be conducting a survey to determine teen's beliefs and perceptions of television violence. The purpose of this study is to determine whether exposure to violent content on television and the animated television series *The Simpsons* leads to aggressive attitudes and behaviors of youth ages 13-17. The results of the survey will help us have better knowledge of teens' perceptions on television violence. These results may not directly help your child today, but may benefit youth in the future. With your permission, we would like to your child to participate in this survey.

All of the participating youth will complete a short survey of their beliefs and perceptions of violence on television and cartoons. Faculty and staff will administer the survey during a meeting on Monday evening of Congress. The survey should not take more than 20 minutes to complete. At no time will your child's name be recorded to keep their identity confidential to the extent provided by the law. Results will only be reported in the form of group data.

On the Participation Form you will find the Survey & Evaluation Release. By signing the Survey & Evaluation Release, you are consenting for your child to participate in this study. If you choose for your child to not participate in this study be sure to check No. This will not affect your child's experience at Congress.

You and your child have the right to withdraw consent for your child's participation at any time without consequence. There are no known risks or immediate benefits to the participants. No compensation is offered for participation. Group results of this study will be available in December upon request. If you have any questions about this research protocol, please contact the principal investigator, Josh Hirsch, at (352) 392-2201 or the faculty supervisor, Dr. Rose Barnett, at (352) 392-2201, ext. 248. Questions or concerns about your child's rights as research participant may be directed to the UFIRB office, University of Florida, Box 112250, Gainesville, FL 32611, (352) 392-0433

Josh Hirsch
Graduate Student

Dr. Marilynn Norman
Assistant Dean, State 4-H Leader

Approved By University of Florida Institutional Review Board 02 Protocol # 2005-U-0651 For Use Through 07/19/2006

APPENDIX C
SURVEY INSTRUMENT

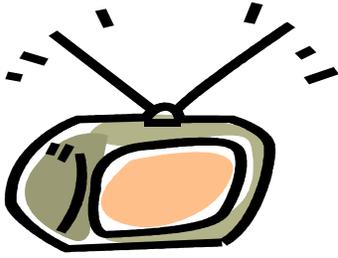
Teens' Views on TV ...

Thanks for taking part in this survey about teens current views on TV viewing and the impact of exposure to violent content on TV, especially the animated series like *The Simpsons*.

While your participation in this survey is important to us to learn more about programs we can provide. Your participation in this survey is voluntary. You may elect not to participate or stop at any time.

If you do not understand a question as you go through the survey, please ask your floor supervisor for assistance.





Television Viewing

This section asks you about your television viewing habits. Please answer all questions to the best of your ability.

1. Do you watch television?

Yes **No** (If you answered **No**, go to question 81)

2. I watch approximately _____ hours of television on an average day.

3. Rank the following types of television programs from your **Favorite** to **Least Favorite**, (1 = **Least Favorite** and 8 = **Favorite**)

- _____ **Action/Adventure**
- _____ **Animation/Cartoon**
- _____ **Comedy**
- _____ **Drama**
- _____ **Educational**
- _____ **Music Television**
- _____ **Reality**
- _____ **Sports**

4. Do you have a television in your bedroom?

Yes **No**

Beliefs and Perceptions

This section will ask you questions about your beliefs and perceptions about violence on television. Please answer all questions to the best of your ability.

For questions 5-21, place a mark in the appropriate box.

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree N=Neutral A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree

		SD	D	N	A	SA
5.	My Favorite type of television program (from question 3) is funny.					
6.	My Favorite type of television program is violent.					
7.	The older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence on television.					
8.	The older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in cartoons.					
9.	The older I get, the more I get used to seeing violence in real-life.					
		SD	D	N	A	SA
10.	The older I get, the more I get used to experiencing violence.					
11.	Boys are more affected by television violence.					
12.	Boys are more affected by cartoon violence.					
13.	Violence is the solution to a problem.					
14.	When I get mad at someone, I use violence to solve a problem.					
15.	I have used aggressive actions seen on television as a way to deal with some of my problems.					
16.	I have used aggressive actions seen in a cartoon as a way to deal with some of my problems.					
17.	After watching violence on television, I look away.					
18.	After watching violence on television, it bothers me.					
19.	After watching violence on television, it makes me angry.					
20.	After watching violence on television, it makes me laugh.					
21.	After watching violence on television, I become violent					

Cartoon Viewing

This section asks you about your cartoon viewing habits. It also asks you questions about your beliefs and perceptions about cartoons. Please answer all questions to the best of your ability. Think about your Favorite cartoon show (Question #23) to answer these items.

22. Do you watch cartoons?

___ **Yes** ___ **No** (If you answered **No**, go to question 81)

23. My **Favorite** cartoon show is _____.

24. The main character of my **Favorite** cartoon show is _____.

For questions 25-50, place a mark in the appropriate box.

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree N=Neutral A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree

		SD	D	N	A	SA
25.	After I see violence in a cartoon, I look away.					
26.	After I see violence in a cartoon, it bothers me.					
27.	After watching violence in a cartoon, it makes me laugh.					
28.	After watching violence in a cartoon, I feel calm					
29.	After watching violence in a cartoon, I feel happy.					
30.	After watching violence in a cartoon, I feel angry.					
31.	After watching violence in a cartoon, I become aggressive.					
32.	After I see violence in a cartoon, I become violent.					
33.	Cartoon violence is funny.					
34.	In cartoons, the use of humor is a good solution to violence.					
35.	Violence in cartoons is realistic.					
36.	In cartoons, violence is okay because it is not real.					
37.	My Favorite cartoon show is violent.					
38.	My Favorite cartoon show is funny.					
39.	I like what the main character of my Favorite cartoon show looks like					

40.	I like the way the main character behaves in my Favorite cartoon show.					
41.	The main character does something heroic in my Favorite cartoon show.					
42.	The main character uses weapon in my Favorite cartoon show.					
43.	In my Favorite cartoon show, the use of weapons is the solution to a problem.					
44.	The use of weapons in cartoons is cool.					
45.	Violence goes unpunished in my Favorite cartoon show.					
46.	The main character of my Favorite cartoon show is punished for using violence.					
47.	The purpose of my Favorite cartoon show is to make me laugh.					
48.	The purpose of my Favorite cartoon show is to teach violence.					
49.	The results of violence are realistically portrayed in my Favorite cartoon.					
50.	I like cartoon violence.					

The Simpsons

This section will ask you about your viewing habits of the cartoon *The Simpsons*. It also asks you questions about your beliefs and perceptions about *The Simpsons* and *Itchy and Scratchy*, a cartoon show the Simpsons family watches often on television. Please answer all questions to the best of your ability.

51. Have you watched the cartoon *The Simpsons*.

_____ **Yes** _____ **No** (If you answered **No**, go to question number 100)

52. I watch approximately _____ hours of *The Simpsons* in an average week.

My **Favorite** character on *The Simpsons* is _____.

For questions 54-65, place a mark (x) in the appropriate box.

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree N=Neutral A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree

		SD	D	N	A	SA
54.	I like to watch the cartoon show <i>The Simpsons</i> .					
55.	When I see violence on <i>The Simpsons</i> , I look away.					
56.	When I see violence on <i>The Simpsons</i> , it bothers me.					
57.	When I see violence on <i>The Simpsons</i> , it makes me laugh.					
58.	After I watch violence on <i>The Simpsons</i> , I feel calm					
59.	After I watch violence on <i>The Simpsons</i> , I feel happy.					
60.	After I watch violence on <i>The Simpsons</i> , I feel angry.					
61.	After I watch violence on <i>The Simpsons</i> , I become aggressive.					
62.	Shortly after I see violence on <i>The Simpsons</i> I become violent.					
63.	I think violence is justified on <i>The Simpsons</i> .					
64.	I think it is acceptable for my Favorite character on <i>The Simpsons</i> to use violence to solve his/her problems.					
65.	Violence on <i>The Simpsons</i> is realistic.					

Itchy and Scratchy

66. Have you seen the *Itchy and Scratchy* cartoon in *The Simpsons* cartoon show?

_____ **Yes** _____ **No** (If **No** go to question number 81)

Do you laugh when you watch The *Itchy & Scratchy* cartoon? (*Circle one*)

_____ **Yes** _____ **No**

For questions 68-80, place a mark (x) in the appropriate box.

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree N=Neutral A=Agree SA=Strongly Agree

		SD	D	N	A	SA
68.	I like to watch the cartoon show <i>Itchy & Scratchy</i> .					
69.	After I watch violence on <i>Itchy and Scratchy</i> , I look away.					
70.	After I watch violence on <i>Itchy and Scratchy</i> , it bothers me.					
71.	After I watch violence on <i>Itchy and Scratchy</i> , it makes me laugh.					
72.	After I watch violence on <i>Itchy and Scratchy</i> , I feel calm					
73.	After I watch violence on <i>Itchy and Scratchy</i> , I feel happy.					
74.	After I watch violence on <i>Itchy and Scratchy</i> , I feel angry.					
75.	After I watch violence on <i>Itchy and Scratchy</i> , I become aggressive.					
76.	After I watch violence on <i>Itchy and Scratchy</i> , I become violent.					
77.	I think violence is justified on <i>Itchy and Scratchy</i> .					
78.	Violence on <i>Itchy and Scratchy</i> is realistic.					
79.	I think <i>The Itchy and Scratchy</i> cartoon is violent.					
80.	I think <i>The Itchy and Scratchy</i> cartoon is funny.					

General Information

The final section will ask you some general demographic questions. Answer all questions to the best of your ability.

81. My age is _____. (*Write in your age*)

82. My gender is _____. (*Write in your gender*)

83. What type of school do you attend?

___ **Public** ___ **Private** ___ **Homeschool**

84. Did you attend a workshop today about television violence?

___ **Yes** ___ **No**

LIST OF REFERENCES

- American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2004). *Understanding violent behavior in children and adolescents*. Retrieved April 3, 2004, from www.aacap.org/publications/factsfam/behavior.htm 2004
- Anderson, C. A., Benjamin, A. J., Jr., & Bartholow, B. D. (1998). Does the gun pull the trigger? Automatic priming effects of weapon pictures and weapon names. *American Psychological Society, 9*, 308-314.
- Arnett, J. (1992). Reckless behavior in adolescence: A developmental perspective. *Developmental Review, 12*, 339-373.
- Atkin, C. K. (1983). Effects of realistic TV violence vs. fictional violence on aggression. *Journalism Quarterly, 60*, 615-621.
- Bandolier (2005). *Cross-sectional study*. Retrieved March 4, 2004, from <http://www.jr2.ox.ac.uk/bandolier/booth/glossary/csect.html>
- Bandura, A. (1965). Influence of models' reinforcement contingencies on the acquisition of imitative response. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1*, 589-595.
- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action. A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: prentice Hall
- Bandura, A. (1994). Social cognitive theory of mass communication. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 61-90). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum
- Baron, R. A. (1978). The influence of hostile and nonhostile humor upon physical aggression. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 4*, 77-80.
- Belson, W. A. (1978). *Television violence and the adolescent boy*. Westmead, UK: Saxon House, Teakfield Ltd.
- Berkowitz, L. (1970). Aggressive humor as a stimulus to aggressive responses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 2*, 359-369.

- Berkowitz, L. (1990). On the formation and regulation of anger and aggression: A cognitive neoassociationistic analysis. *American Psychologist*, 45, 494-503.
- Berndt, T. J. (1996). Transitions in friendship and friends' influence. In J. A. Gerber, J. Brooks-Gunn, & A. C. Petersen (Eds.), *Transitions through adolescence: Interpersonal domains and context* (pp. 57-85). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum
- Brown, J.D. (2000). Can the mass media be healthy sex educators? *Family Planning Perspectives*, 32, 255-256.
- Bryant, J. Carveth, R. A., & Brown, D. (1981). Television viewing and anxiety. An experimental examination. *Journal of Communication*, 31(1), 106-109.
- Bushman, B. J., & Geen, R. G. (1990). Role of cognitive-emotional mediators and individual differences in the effects of media violence on aggression. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58, 156-163.
- Cantor J. Mommy, (1998). *I'm Scared: How TV and Movies Frighten Children and What We Can Do to Protect Them*. New York, NY: Harcourt Brace
- Cline, V. B., Croft, R. G., & Courier, S. (1973). Desensitization of children to television violence. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35, 450-458.
- Congressional Public Health Summit (2000). *Joint statement on the impact of entertainment violence on children*. Retrieved February 17, 2005, from www.aap.org/advocacy/releases/jstmtevc.htm
- Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (2005). *Cooperative extension service*. Retrieved June 2, 2005, from <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/>
- Council of Economic Advisors. (2000). *Teens and their parents in the 21st century: An examination of trends in teen behavior and the role of parental involvement*. Retrieved September 16, 2004, from www.whitehouse.gov/media/pdf/CEAreport.pdf
- Dictionary.com (2005). Retrieved June 2, 2005 from <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=media>
- Dishion, T. J. (1990). The family ecology of boys' peer relations in middle childhood. *Child Development*, 61, 874-892.
- Drabman, R. S., & Thomas, M. H. (1974). Does media violence increase children's toleration of real-life aggression? *Developmental Psychology*, 10, 418-421.

- Dominick, J. R., & Greenberg, B. S. (1972). Attitudes toward violence: The interaction of television exposure, family attitudes, and social class. In G. A. Comstock & E. A. Rubinstein (Eds.), *Television and social behavior: Vol. 3. Television and adolescent aggressiveness* (pp. 314-335). Washington, DC: Government Printing Office
- DuRant RH, Treiber F, Goodman E, Woods ER. (1996) Intentions to use violence among young adolescents. *Pediatrics*
- DuRant, R. H., Rich, M., Emans, S. J., Rome, E. S., Allred, E., & Woods, E. R. (1997). Violence and weapon carrying in music videos: A content analysis. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, *151*, 443-448.
- Federman, J. (Ed.). (1997). *National television violence study: Vol.1 2*. Santa Barbara: University of California, Center for Communication & Social Policy.
- Florida 4-H (2004). *Florida 4-H Statistics*. Retrieved March 7, 2005 from <http://4h.ifas.ufl.edu/newsandinfo/Stats/2003/Statistics2003.htm#4-H%20Participation>
- Geen, R. G. (1981). Behavioral and physiological reactions to observed violence: Effects of prior exposure to aggressive stimuli. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, *40*, 868-875.
- Greene, K., Krcmar, M., Walters, L. H., Rubin, D. L., & Hale, J. (2000). Targeting adolescent risk-taking behaviors: The contributions of egocentrism and sensation-seeking. *Journal of Adolescence*, *23*, 439-461.
- Griffiths MD, Hunt N. (1998). Dependence on computer games by adolescents. *Psychology Representative*, *82*:475-480.
- Gunter, B., & Furnham, A. (1984). Perceptions of television violence: Effects of programme genre and type of violence on viewers' judgements of violent portrayals. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *23*, 155-164.
- Hapkiewicz, W.G. (1979). Children's reactions to cartoon violence. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, *8*, 1, 30-35
- Hicks, D. J. (1965). Imitation and retention of film-mediated aggressive peer and models. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, *2*, 97-100.
- Huesmann, L. R., Eron, L. D., Lefkowitz, M. M., & Walder, L. O. (1984). Stability of aggression over time and generations. *Developmental Psychology*, *20*, 1120-1134.

- Huston, A. C., Donnerstein, E., Fairchild, H. H., Feshbach, N. D., Katz, P. A., Murray, J. P., Rubinstein, E. A., Wilcox, B. L., & Zuckerman, D. (1992). *Big world, small screen: The role of television in American society*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press
- Jo, E., & Berkowitz, L. (1994). A priming effect analysis of media influences: An update. In J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 43-60). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum
- Josephson, W. L. (1987). Television violence and children's aggression: Testing the priming social script, and disinhibition predictions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *53*, 882-890.
- Kaiser Family Foundation. (1999). *Kids and media t the new millennium*. Menlo Park, CA: Author
- Kinderstart (2000). *TV & elementary kids*. Retrieved January 14, 2005, from http://www.kinderstart.com/frame_for_links.php?redirect=http://www.limitv.org/kids.htm
- Larson, R., Richards, M. H., Moneta, G., Holmbeck, G., & Duckett, E. (1996). Changes in adolescents' daily interactions with their families from ages 10 to 18: Disengagement and transformation. *Developmental Psychology*, *32*, 744-754.
- Linz, D., Donnerstein, E., & Penrod, S. (1988). Effects of long-term exposure to violent and sexually degrading depictions of women. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, *55*, 758-768.
- Liss, M. B., Reinhardt, L. C., & Fredriksen, S. (1983). TV heroes: The impact of rhetoric and deeds. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, *4*, 175-187.
- Lovaas, O. I. (1961). Effect of exposure to symbolic aggression on aggressive behavior. *Child Development*, *32*, 37-44.
- McIntyre, J. J., & Teevan, J. J., Jr. (1972). Television violence and deviant behavior. In G. A. Comstock & E. A. Rubinstein (Eds.), *Television and social behavior. Vol. 3, Television and adolescent aggressiveness* (pp. 383-435). Washington, DC: Government Printing Office
- McLeod, J. M., Atkin, C. K., & Chaffee, S. H. (1972). Adolescents, parents, and television use: Adolescent self-report measures from Maryland and Wisconsin samples. In G. A. Comstock & E. A. Rubinstien (Eds.), *Television and social behavior: Vol. 3. Television and adolescent aggressiveness* (pp. 173-238). Washington, DC: Government Printing Office

- Mental Health. (2004) *What you need to know about youth violence prevention*. Retrieved February 2, 2005, from www.mentalhealth.org/publications/allpubs/SVP-0054/pathways.asp
- Naisbitt, J., Naisbitt, N., & Philips, D. (1999). *High tech, high touch: Technology and our search for meaning*. New York: Broadway
- Nathanson, A. I., Cantor, J. (2000). Reducing the aggression-promoting effect of violent cartoons by increasing children's fictional involvement with the victim: A study of active mediation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, 44, 1, 125-143.
- National 4-H Web (2005). *For youth by youth*. Retrieved June 7, 2005 from <http://www.4-h.org/>
- Nielson Media Research. (1995). Retrieved March 18, 2004, from www.babybag.com/articles/amaviol.htm
- Paik, H. J., & Comstock, G. (1994). The effects of television violence on antisocial behavior: A meta-analysis. *Communication Research*, 21, 516-546.
- Pelletier, A. R., Quinlan, K. P., Sacks, J. J., Van Gilder, T. J., Gulchrist, J., & Ahluwalia, H. K. (1999). Firearm use in G- and PG-rated movies. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 282, 428.
- Rich, M. (2000). *Violent Video Games Testimony*. Retrieved February 15, 2004, from http://216.239.53.104/search?q=cache:N94j_ugDRloJ:www.aap.org/advocacy/richvideogameviolence.pdf+violent+media,+violent+behavior,+adolescents&hl=en&ie=UTF-8
- Roberts, D. F., Foehr, U. G., Rideout, V. J., & Brodie, M. (1999). *Kids and media at the new millennium: A Kaiser Family Foundation Report*. Menlo Park, CA: Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation
- Roth, J., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2000). What do adolescents need for healthy development? Implications for youth policy. *Social Policy Report*, 14, 3-19.
- Simpson Crazy (2001). Retrieved March 19, 2004, from <http://www.simpsoncrazy.com/information/articles/values.shtml>
- Singer MI, Slovak K, Frierson T, York P. (1998). Viewing preferences, symptoms of psychological trauma, and violent behaviors among children who watch television. *Journal of American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry*. 37: 1041-1048.

- Smith, S. L., & Donnerstein, E. (1998). *Harmful effects of exposure to media violence: Learning of aggression, emotional desensitization, and fear*. New York: Academic Press
- Smith, S. L., Boyson, A. R., Pieper, K. M., & Wilson, B. J. (2001, May). *Brandishing guns on American television: How often do such weapons appear and in what context?* Paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, Washington, DC
- Social Research Methods (2002). *Unit of analysis*. Retrieved June 7, 2005, from <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/unitanal.htm>
- Strasburger, V. C. (1997). "Sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll," and the media: Are the media responsible for adolescent behavior? *Adolescent Medicine: State of the Art Reviews*, 8, 403-414.
- Steinberg, L. (1999). *Adolescence* (5th ed.). Boston: McGraw-Hill College
- Thomas, M. H., & Drabman, R. S. (1975). Effects of viewing real versus fantasy violence upon interpersonal aggression. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 8, 155-160.
- Thomas, M. H., Horton, R. W., Liipincott, E. C., & Drabman, R. S. (1977). Desensitization to portrayals of real-life aggression as a function of exposure to television violence. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 35, 450-458.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2001). *Youth violence: a report of the surgeon general*. Retrieved April 2, 2005, from www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/youthviolence/report.html
- Wilson, B. J., Kunkel, D., Linz, d., Potter, W. J., Donnerstein, E., Smith, S. L., Blumenthal, E., & Gray, T. (1997). Violence in television programming overall: University of California Santa Barbara study. In *National television violence study* (Vol. 1, pp. 3-268). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Wilson, B. J., Smith, S. L., Potter, W. J., Kunkel, D., Linz, D., Colvin, C. & Donnerstein, E. I. (2002). Violence in children's television programming: Assessing the risks. *Journal of Communication*. 52(1), 5-35.
- Wotring, C. E., & Greenberg, B. S. (1973). Experiments in televised violence and verbal aggression: Two exploratory studies. *Journal of Communication*, 23, 446-460.
- Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System. (1999). *Youth risk behavior surveillance – United States, 1999*. Retrieved February 23, 2001, from www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/ss4905a1.htm

Zillmann (Eds.), *Media effects: Advances in theory and research* (pp. 61-90). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Josh Hirsch attended military school at Admiral Farragut Academy in St. Petersburg, FL. Through the student-run battalion Josh learned self-respect, self-discipline, and respect for others. After graduating valedictorian, Josh decided to attend the University of Florida. Here he got his B.S. in advertising with a minor in theater. Deciding to further his education, Josh got a M.S. in family, youth and community sciences. He plans on pursuing a career in youth development.