

VIOLENCE AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

Posted on January 12, 2022 by Burcak Unal



Category: [Blog](#)

Tags: [aggression](#), [Institute for Asian Crime and Security](#) [Institute for Asian Crime and Security](#), [uncontrollable behavior](#), [violence](#)

Aggression is uncontrollable behavior which routinely involves the release of the emotion of anger. Uncontrollable aggression and violent behavior can create serious costs for society. There are various theoretical approaches to the psychological origin of violence. Violence is generally a learned action, according to behaviorists, and violence involves a motive that occurs because of obstruction, not due to instinct, according to the basic assumptions of aggression. The obstacles that are placed in front of the individual during their development force them to adapt to society. In time, this push often directs the individual away and alienates them. As the individual being impacted by this pressure is blocked, their motivation drives them to violence (Bandura, 1973). According to the 'instinct theory,' violence is an instinct and does not necessarily have to be a response to external stimuli (Güleç, Topaloğlu, Ünsal & Altıntaş, 2012). According to Konrad Lorenz, Sigmund Freud, and Donald Woods Winnicott, aggression is natural. According to these theorists, inner-

mannered violence is like a monster waiting to come out of the human body when it finds the necessary conditions. In fact, it is not sufficient to explain violence with one theory. So, in light of all theories, it would be a more accurate approach to address this phenomenon in a multidirectional way from social, biological, and psychological perspectives.

People are reflections of relationships established within their environment. The period between birth and 6 years of age is the most critical period for personality development in human life (Güneş, 2017). The trauma of this period leads the child to develop anger, aggression, and social retreat, and consequently identify the outside world and people as unreliable. A study was conducted on 100 people convicted of murder in first-degree crimes on how "childhood traumas affect the state of domination" and the result of this study found that anger was closely related to childhood trauma. In addition, these traumatic experiences have been found to be the risk factor in criminal and other anti-social behaviors. In light of all this, the chain of events such as somatic disorders, personality disorders, increased violence, sexual disorders, and problems in social communication trigger each other as a result of the traumatic child losing self-esteem (Öztürk, 2020). The results of the research by Corder and his colleagues (1976), which examined familial factors involving physical abuse in the history of young killers, sexual abuse, instability of the caregiver's condition/residence, absence of the father, and parental alcohol/drug use, found that the parent had exhibited eight negative family factors, including possessing a psychiatric history, a criminal history, and had previously engaged in domestic violence. Witnessing physical abuse and violence at home are the two most important factors. Physical abuse and exposure to violence may have affected individuals in two different ways. Firstly, children living in homes where abuse and violence are or had been common may not experience adequate care and socialization from caregivers (Corder, Ball, Haizlip, Rollins & Beaumont, 1976). Over time, these children can search for immediate sources of satisfaction, which periodically results in violent explosions when they feel blocked. Secondly, it can produce the effects of violence, modeling, and normalization within the household (Sorrells, 1977). The ability to solve problems in untraumatized children involves communicating, socializing, and age-appropriate development, while more aggressive attitudes emerge instead of effectively communicating to solve problems in traumatized individuals. At a later age, this behavior is reinforced and the individual's character is shaped accordingly. The results of White and Widom's study in 2003 showed us that the rates of abusing their wives in the future of children who witnessed or were subjected to violence in the family (White & Widom, 2003) were more evident. Therefore, victims of aggressive childhood traumatization are likely to become violent later in life (Mihalic & Elliott, 1997).

The onset of adolescence, followed by incompetence in problem-solving, difficulty in communicating, failure in making rational decisions, and the lack of socialization and loneliness will bring about and further drive violence in such individuals (Güleç et. all., 2012). In the history of substance abuse, 31% of women and 50% of men were found to have been victims of childhood physical and/or sexual abuse (Clarke, Stein, Sobota, Marisi & Hanna, 1999). In light of all this, when we look out the window, the claim that aggression exists in nature is accurate to some extent. On the other hand, humans are learning entities, and violence is a learned behavior and it is a developmental phenomenon according to social learning theorists. Bandura, one of the premier experts in the field, strongly supported the position that this aggressive phenomenon can be developed by witnessing violence, copying and eventually learning that misbehavior. "Learning has two ways: we learn from the environment and the environment changes itself through our actions" (Bandura & Walters, 1977). When we look at the content of the phenomenon of aggression, abuses that begin in a family at a young age cause psychologically serious trauma, adolescent behavioral disorders, fuels hatred, and normalize these

feelings as time goes by. In fact, these behaviors will be copied by the child and continue in various ways throughout their life. Ultimately, the phenomena that determine how violence will be displayed after birth are society and family.

References

- Bandura, A. (1973). *Aggression: A social learning analysis*. Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Bandura, A., & Walters, R. H. (1977). *Social learning theory* (Vol. 1). Prentice Hall: Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.
- Clarke, J., Stein, M. D., Sobota, M., Marisi, M., & Hanna, L. (1999). Victims as victimizers: physical aggression by persons with a history of childhood abuse. *Archives of internal medicine*, 159(16), 1920–1924.
<https://doi.org/10.1001/archinte.159.16.1920>
- Corder, B. F., Ball, B. C., Haizlip, T. M., Rollins, R., & Beaumont, R. (1976). Adolescent parricide: a comparison with other adolescent murder. *The American journal of psychiatry*.
- Güleç, H., Topaloğlu, M., Ünsal, D., & ALTINTAŞ, M. (2012). Bir kısır döngü olarak şiddet. *Psikiyatride Güncel Yaklaşımlar*, 4(1), 112-137.
- Güneş, N. (2017). 0-6 yaş arası çocukların gelişim düzeyleri ile annelerinin aile işlevleri ve yaşam doyumları arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi.
- Mihalic, S. W., & Elliott, D. (1997). Short-and long-term consequences of adolescent work. *Youth & Society*, 28(4), 464-498.
- Öztürk, E. (2020). Psikotarih, travma ve dissosiyasyon: Çocukluk çağı travmaları, savaşlar ve dissosiyasyonun anamnezi. *Psikotarih içinde (1-21)*. Ankara: Türkiye Klinikleri.
- Sorrells, J. M. (1977). Kids who kill. *Crime & Delinquency*, 23(3), 312-320.
- White, H. R., & Widom, C. S. (2003). Intimate partner violence among abused and neglected children in young adulthood: The mediating effects of early aggression, antisocial personality, hostility and alcohol problems. *Aggressive behavior: Official journal of the international society for research on aggression*, 29(4), 332-345.

About the Author: *Burcak Unal is an intern with the IACS. She is a Criminal Justice and Law Enforcement Administration student with the Colorado State University, USA. Currently, she is based in Ankara, Turkey.*

Featured Image: By [Elopde](#)