

1995

## Television violence: An American and Japanese comparison

Tanya I. Clausen  
*University of Northern Iowa*

*Let us know how access to this document benefits you*

Copyright ©1995 Tanya I. Clausen

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/etd>



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Clausen, Tanya I., "Television violence: An American and Japanese comparison" (1995). *Dissertations and Theses @ UNI*. 1437.

<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/etd/1437>

This Open Access Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Work at UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Dissertations and Theses @ UNI by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@uni.edu](mailto:scholarworks@uni.edu).

**Offensive Materials Statement:** Materials located in UNI ScholarWorks come from a broad range of sources and time periods. Some of these materials may contain offensive stereotypes, ideas, visuals, or language.

TELEVISION VIOLENCE:  
AN AMERICAN AND JAPANESE COMPARISON

An Abstract of a Thesis  
Submitted  
In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Specialist in Education

Tanya I. Clausen  
University of Northern Iowa  
July 1995

This study by: Tanya I. Clausen

Entitled: Television Violence: An American and Japanese  
Comparison

has been approved as meeting the thesis requirement for the  
Degree of Specialist in Education.

7/7/95

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Ralph Scott, Chair, Thesis Committee

7/7/95

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Bruce Rogers, Committee Member

7/7/95

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Dr. Mary Franken, Committee Member

7-31-95

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Dr. John W. Somervill, Dean, Graduate College

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the incidents of violence broadcast by American and Japanese television networks, as measured by the Index of Television Violence (ITV), to determine if they differed with respect to (a) the variation between the broadcast networks observed in each country, (b) the variation between the day observed in each country, (c) the variation between the day and the broadcast network observed, (d) the observed incidents of televised violence, and (e) the types of televised violence.

Data were gathered from three national broadcast networks in each country on three alternate nights from the hours of 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.--yielding 18 hours of examined television per country. Statistical analysis using chi-square indicates that there were differences between the number of incidents of televised violence shown on the three broadcast networks in the United States and differences between the number of incidents of televised violence shown on the three broadcast networks in Japan. In addition, differences were noted in both countries with respect to the day violence was televised. However, the two countries did not differ on the number and type of televised violence to property. Nonetheless, differences were found between the countries on the type of verbal violence to people and on the number of incidents of nonverbal violence to people. The observed variations may be explained by the limited sample of hours that were observed.

This study provided comparisons of television violence between the two countries. Implied is that on Saturday, when children are likely to be watching, the broadcast networks are showing more violence. Further, in the United States viewers are subjected to issues which are addressed with raised voices, whereas in Japan, issues are addressed using a normal voice tone. In addition, in the United States viewers are being subjected to television programs which portray using physical violence. Future research is needed to compare cross-cultural components of television violence.

TELEVISION VIOLENCE:  
AN AMERICAN AND JAPANESE COMPARISON

A Thesis  
Submitted  
In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Specialist in Education

Tanya I. Clausen  
University of Northern Iowa

July 1995

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the members of my committee, Dr. Bruce Rogers, Dr. Mary Franken, and especially Dr. Ralph Scott. They provided me their guidance, wisdom, expertise, and support which has made it possible to complete this thesis.

A great deal of thanks goes to my colleagues, Elizabeth Barton and Beth Thompson, who provided their sense of humors and inspired me to complete this thesis. In addition, I am grateful for their kindness and friendship.

I would also like to acknowledge my brother, Matt, and his wife, Traci, who provided me with support, guidance, laughter, and sympathetic ears.

Thanks also goes to my father, John, who has stayed by my side and continued to offer me never ending love, support, encouragement, patience, and understanding.

Lastly, thanks goes to my mother, Patricia, to whom this thesis is dedicated. She instilled in me the desire to learn, taught me to always do my best, and to look at each challenge as a new opportunity. Mother may be gone, but her memory will live with me forever.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....  | iii  |
| LIST OF TABLES.....  | vi   |
| CHAPTER 1--INTRODUCTION.....                                     | 1    |
| Statement of the Problem.....                                    | 2    |
| Significance of the Study.....                                   | 3    |
| Questions to be Answered.....                                    | 3    |
| Assumptions of the Study.....                                    | 4    |
| Limitations of the Study.....                                    | 4    |
| Definition of Terms.....   | 5    |
| CHAPTER 2--REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....                             | 6    |
| Television Violence From Past to Present...                      | 7    |
| Television Statistics.....                                       | 9    |
| Children and Television.....                                     | 11   |
| Legislation.....   | 13   |
| Television Violence Across Countries.....                        | 15   |
| CHAPTER 3--METHODOLOGY.....                                      | 16   |
| Sample.....  | 16   |
| Instrument.....  | 16   |
| Procedures.....  | 17   |
| CHAPTER 4--RESULTS.....  | 19   |
| Number of Violent Scenes by Day and by<br>Broadcast Network..... | 19   |
| Number of Violent Scenes by Categories.....                      | 21   |



| Chapter                                       | Page |
|---|------|
| CHAPTER 5--SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION.....        | 25   |
| Findings of Study.....                        | 25   |
| Implications of Study.....                    | 27   |
| Suggestions for Future Research.....          | 28   |
| REFERENCES.....                               | 30   |
| APPENDIX A--Index of Television Violence..... | 33   |

## LIST OF TABLES

|  | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. United States--Number of Violent Scenes<br>By Day and By Broadcast Network..... | 20   |
| 2. Japan--Number of Violent Scenes<br>By Day and By Broadcast Network.....         | 21   |
| 3. Violence to Property by Country.....  | 22   |
| 4. Verbal Violence to People by Country.....                                       | 23   |
| 5. Nonverbal Violence to People by Country.....                                    | 24   |

## CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Television violence and its possible effects on societal violence is an issue that has been extensively debated in the United States for years. In addition, over the past few years, there has been a startling rise in the incidence of violence (Vooijs & van der Voort, 1993). Every day, numerous American children are victims or perpetrators of violent acts and/or mistreatment, negligence, or personal assault (National Association for the Education of Young Children [NAEYC], 1990). Due to this violence, steps are being taken to view television violence as one of many relevant public health issues (Stevens, 1994). In this context, the sources of violence in American society are indeed complicated, related, and include the following: poverty, racism, unemployment, illegal drugs, insufficient or abusive parenting practices, and real-life adult models of violent problem-solving behavior (NAEYC, 1990).

Consistent with an increase in the number of documented violent acts directed at children, there has been a rise in the amount and intensity of violent acts observed by children through the media, including television (Eron & Huesmann, 1987). According to Eron and Huesmann, a child's social development can be affected by exposure to particular types of media programming. These effects possibly have a long-lasting influence on personality development. Concern about harmful effects of television violence on viewers' behavior

and on their beliefs about social reality has led to increasing interest in the measurement of violence on television programs (Mustonen & Pulkkinen, 1993).

Ellerbe (1993) believes that no one is affirming that television is the only antecedent of violence in society. Unfortunately, individuals today are living in a world of destitution, overcrowding, famine, joblessness, drug addiction, and easy accessibility to guns. In spite of the violence in society, television continues to broadcast more violence (Turner, 1994).

Zoglin (1990) found that television educates children more about society than has been the case of any other lifetime. In addition, Zoglin noted that observation of televised violence may be related to increased aggressive behavior. He argues that television may be accountable for children being less well-informed, more agitated, and less effective learners. Thus, according to Zoglin, television's influence is extensive and to a large degree unavoidable.

#### Statement of the Problem

During the past several decades, empirical investigations have demonstrated relationships between television viewing and the subsequent attitudes and actions of viewers. However, relatively little cross-cultural research has been done examining the incidents of reported violent acts on broadcast network television programs.

While a good deal of evidence exists about television in various nations, less of that evidence is comparative across

cultures. Yet, on the global level, the large amount of political, economic, cultural, and technological developments taking place in the early 1990s suggest it is critical to understand the ways in which the media functions in various societies (Shanahan & Morgan, 1992). However, relatively little is known about how television effects societies other than our own. Since Japan is the world leader in electronic production of televisions and other electronic equipment, where televisions are frequently used, this investigation was an attempt to examine the quantity and type of televised violence in Japan and the United States.

#### Significance of the Study

Given the emphasis placed on the effects of television violence, it is surprising that the issue has rarely been the target of cross-cultural investigations. An understanding of the effects of television violence across nations may lead to an understanding of the contribution that television violence plays on society. Several literature searches did not identify a single cross-cultural investigation which examined the quantity and the type of televised violence in the United States and another country. The present study compared the incidents of violence as shown by American and Japanese television broadcasting networks as measured by the Index of Television Violence (ITV) (see Appendix A).

#### Questions to be Answered

Does televised violence in the United States and Japan differ with respect to the following: (a) the variation

between the broadcast networks observed in each country, (b) the variation between the day observed in each country, (c) the variation between the day and the broadcast network observed, (d) the observed incidents of televised violence, and (e) the types of televised violence?

#### Assumptions of the Study

This study is based on the following assumptions:

1. The ITV was understood by the recorders in the United States and Japan.
2. Recorders in Japan were properly trained for valid administration of the ITV.
3. The recorders in Japan and the United States were accurate at recording violence at two-minute intervals.
4. Recorders in both countries were accurate and honest when recording incidents of violence.

#### Limitations of the Study

The following limitations exist in this study:

1. The study was restricted to two countries, the United States and Japan. Therefore, care should be utilized when generalizing results to other countries.
2. The study only examined 18 hours of prime-time television in each country.
3. Broadcast network programs were viewed, but the study did not include cable or public television networks.
4. Daytime television was not included in the study.
5. Data were gathered one week apart due to conflicting holiday schedules.

### Definition of Terms

1. Violence--Any physical or powerful force used to injure or abuse. This injury may be in the form of revoking, rejection, distortion, infringement, or violation to a person, place, thing, notion, or quality which is valued or observed. Violence may also include intense, extreme, furious, or forceful acts (Webster, 1961, 1984).

2. Television violence--Violence portrayed on television.

3. Aggression--The delivery of a noxious response to a person or property (Singer & Singer, 1986).

4. Broadcast networks--The three most popular commercial television stations in a country. In the current study this would include ABC, CBS, and NBC in the United States and CBC, CTV, and THK in Japan.

## CHAPTER 2

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Most research over the past three decades has focused on the impact of television violence and its influence on children's aggressive behavior. Nearly all studies conclude that the depiction of violence in television programs magnifies the likelihood that children watching will act aggressively themselves (Vooijs & van der Voort, 1993). According to Lefkowitz and Huesmann (1980), the consistent relation between television violence viewing and subsequent aggressive behavior has been demonstrated numerous times in laboratory and field investigations.

Research findings indicate that television may contribute to children's nervousness, dysphoria, fright of daily hazards, and to their susceptibility to aggression (Singer & Singer, 1986). According to Eron and Huesmann (1987), heavy exposure to televised violence is one of the causes of aggressive behavior, crime, and violence in society. Television influences children of all ages, of both genders, of all socio-economic statuses, and all levels of intellect.

In order to understand the implications of cross-cultural television violence, an examination of the history of television and its possible impact on violence in society is necessary. This chapter examines the history of television violence, statistics regarding television,



television's effect on children, legislation regarding television, and television violence across countries.

### Television Violence From Past to Present

Since the 1972 Surgeon General's report (U.S. Congress, 1972) tied violence on television and aggressive behavior in children and adolescents, the topic has initiated intense controversy between those who attempt to restrict television violence and those who contend that the data is still indeterminate (Time, 1982). In 1975, U.S. News and World Report reported that a typical Monday night of television consisted of three programs about police activities, back-to-back. Social dilemmas included dissolving marriages, bar fights, drunk driving, prostitution, and injuries and murders. This kind of programming was undreamed of 10 to 15 years earlier. In addition, social analysts were convinced that television had a greater influence on morals and ethics than did the home, church, and/or school (U.S. News and World Report, 1975).

Also in 1975, Congress became concerned with violence, obscenity, and sexual provocativeness on television. Therefore, Congress prevailed upon the Federal Communications Commissioner to make a change in television programming. The Federal Communications Commissioner worked with networks to establish the "family viewing hours" in the early evening. This arrangement was challenged in the courts by writers and producers who argued that it violated the First Amendment. The judge ruled in their favor, but the networks continued

the family hour on an informal basis (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1982).

In recent years the number of independent television stations and the number of cable channels has risen. Subsequently, these networks have increased the number of "reality-based" programs such as "Rescue 911," "Cops," and "Unsolved Mysteries." Most of these reality-based programs highlight crime and violence (Turner, 1994). In addition, much of the violence on television has transferred from network series to news and news-magazine shows and, especially to cable, where movies and music videos often "glorify and eroticize brutality" (Turner, 1994).

Jensen (1994) reported the results of a study that claimed television is considerably more violent today than it was two years ago. This study examined 18 hours of programming on cable and broadcast franchisees from one day in 1992 and compared it with a recent day in 1994. Data showed violent scenes had increased 41% in the two years. Broadcast network violence was said to have increased 72%, while violence on cable rose 37%. Further, the four cable networks (HBO, MTV, WTBS, USA) had 77% more violent acts, by the study's measure, than the four broadcast networks: ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox.

Others argue that television today is less violent than any time since the 1950s (Jensen & Graham, 1993). They suggest only reality has been modified. Society itself is

more violent, hence local news, network news, newspapers, and magazines reveal that violence.

Early in the history of television research, it was believed that the main objective of television for children was a foundation of imagination and escape. However, children today use television for more than escape. From television, children are educated about societal norms as well as cross-cultural norms. Therefore it is important that the knowledge acquired be reasonably correct and not promote misconstrued beliefs of the world and increased prejudice (Eron & Huesmann, 1987).

#### Television Statistics

Brief statistics regarding the viewing habits of Americans was provided in a report from A.C. Nielsen and Company (1993). The report included the following:

1. With few exceptions, the most popular television shows in the 1992-93 season were not violent.
2. 98 percent of all U.S. homes have television, 69 percent have more than one set.
3. Sunday evening is the most popular night for watching television.
4. In the average home, a television set is on seven hours, 41 minutes a day in February and six hours, 47 minutes a day in July.
5. On the average, men watch less television than women.
6. Children ages 2 to 11 watch almost six hours of television during prime time (7 to 10 p.m., Central Time) during a week, and about an hour and a half on Saturday morning.
7. The lower one's income, the more television is viewed. For example, people whose family income is \$20,000 to \$30,000 have their television sets on an average of 53 hours a week; \$30,000 to \$40,000 income, about two and one-half hours less a week, and those with income over \$60,000 watch about six and one-half hours less - or almost one hour a day less.

8. While less than half as many children ages 2 to 11 watch television from 9 to 10 p.m., Central Time in the evening as they do during the prime-time hours of 7 to 9 p.m., approximately six million children watch television during the later evening time period. (p. 1)

Other studies report the significance of television in society. Broome and Fuller (1993) reported that 98% of Americans watch some television everyday. Children ages two to five years watch an average of 22 hours per week, and children ages six to eleven years watch an average of 23 hours per week. Adolescents are inclined to watch even more --between 24 and 25 hours per week.

However, Eron, Huesmann, Brice, Fischer, and Mermelstein (1983) found discrepant results. They reported that the duration spent watching television daily escalates until the age of eight years and then begins to decline. According to Eron et al., the idea that television is authentic declines rapidly after the age of eight. Therefore, it was believed that since the amount of television viewed peaks at age eight and since young children of that age still believe extensively what they see on television is an accurate depiction of life, it is very plausible that television has its greatest influence on children in this age range in a number of areas other than aggression and violence.

Statistics released by the Committee on Energy and Commerce House of Representatives (1993) report that over 1,800 acts of mayhem and violence are shown on television in one day. In addition, a typical child will watch nearly

8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence before finishing elementary school. Further, by the time youngsters graduate from high school, many of them will have watched 22,000 hours of television, compared to only half that number spent in school. By age 18, they will have been exposed to as many as 18,000 televised murders and 800 suicides.

#### Children and Television

A poll conducted by Harrigan-Bodick (cited in Simon, 1993) for the Nickelodeon cable television channel, surveyed 150 children ages eight to 12 years old. Results of this survey by itself should not be conclusive, but they do suggest that violence on television causes children harm.

Their results of the survey showed that:

1. 80 percent said there is too much violence on television;
  2. 93 percent believe that their parents think there is too much violence on television;
  3. 91 percent in this age group said that when they saw violence happening to real people on television it bothered them, causing them to worry what might happen to them or their families;
  4. 87 percent favored warnings at the beginning of a television show that has violence in it;
  5. 83 percent thought 'real life' programs should have labels; 64 percent believed that police/detective programs should have labels; but only 11 percent thought that cartoons should have labels;
  6. 86 percent said that programs with real people which feature violence are more frightening than cartoons.
- (p. 1)

In addition, Ellerbee (1993) turned to children to get answers on how they perceive television. Most judged television as too violent. However, the children did state they liked "a little violence" in their shows. Many could

not say why. Some said it made things exciting, while others felt it was imperative for the "good guy" to defeat the "bad guy." Further, Ellerbee found children were offended when adults thought the children could not discriminate between cartoon violence and human violence. In addition, the children were unsure of the concept that watching violence made them more violent, but they were sure that watching violence made them scared.

According to a study by the national group Children Now (cited in Lewin, 1995), 10 to 16 year old children report that what they see on television encourages them to: (a) take part in sexual activity too soon, (b) to show disrespect for their parents, (c) to lie, and (d) to engage in aggressive behavior. This investigation revealed that more than two-thirds of the youth polled were influenced by television. Seventy-seven percent said television depicts too many sexual relations before marriage, and 62% said these sexual relations on television influence their peers to have such relations when they are too young. An overwhelming majority of young people polled also said television should help teach them values, but instead often depict people getting away with deceitful behavior or physical aggression.

Further, research by Huesmann and Eron (1986) suggests that two significant factors may determine how much influence observation of television characters has on the subsequent actions of the viewer. These factors are: (a) the extent to which the individual perceives the television depiction is

realistic and (b) the degree to which the viewer identifies with the characters. Additionally, the younger the children are, the more valid they consider television to be. Huesmann and Eron believe this is why it is essential that television not misrepresent what life is really like and not uphold inappropriate stereotypes in programming for children.

#### Legislation

Since 1952, the issue of television violence has been the topic of congressional hearings (Andersen, 1993). In 1993, broadcasters felt compelled to make some distinct recognition. Therefore, programs which networks consider potentially violent now display the warning, "Due to some violent content, parental discretion is advised" (Andersen, 1993, p. 66). Experts acknowledge it is difficult for politicians to limit sexual activities and violence on radio and television. Moreover, several United States Senators recently introduced resolutions which would prohibit violent programs during hours when children are likely to be watching (Jensen, 1994; Simon, 1994).

Also in attempt to control "indecent" television broadcasting, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) developed a federal regulation which would prohibit "indecent" material from 6:00 a.m. to midnight ("Rules Restricting," 1993). The FCC defines indecent programs as those including language or material that describes "in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards...sexual or excretory activities or organs" ("Rules

Restricting," 1993, p. B4). However, the definition did not deal with violent content. In November of 1993, a federal appeals court in Washington ruled the FCC regulation unconstitutional because it violated the First Amendment of free speech. The three-judge panel saw the FCC's intent of protecting children from indecent material as reasonable, but it also resulted in broad policies which needlessly banned speech that is protected under the First Amendment ("Rules Restricting," 1993).

Further, a number of legislators seem determined to find ways to regulate television violence, particularly on the broadcast networks, despite First Amendment obstacles. Current proposals include three important areas: (a) a "safe harbor" that bans violent shows while children are likely to be watching, (b) ordering the FCC to require broadcast station licensees and cable franchisees to label shows containing violence or unsafe gun practices, and (c) advising the FCC to circulate quarterly summaries on the amount of violence on television (Jensen & Graham, 1993).

In 1993, the Clinton administration announced it would support legislation to reduce the amount of television violence (Committee on Energy and Commerce House of Representatives, 1993). However, researchers who have examined the effects of violence in the media have concluded that "legal restrictions will not work and should not be advocated" (Froelich, 1993, p. 10).



### Television Violence Across Countries

Questions regarding television and its impact on society are not confined to the United States. According to Eron and Huesmann (1987), the citizens of Finland, Poland, Israel, and Australia are also influenced by the amount of violence they watch on television. A comparative study of United States and Finnish children illustrates the effects of watching violence on television and simultaneous aggression (Huesmann, Lagerspetz, & Eron, 1984; Mustonen & Pulkkinen, 1993).

Other research has investigated incidents of televised violence in the United States. Williams, Zabrack, and Lesley (1982), found an overall rate of 18.5 acts of aggression per program hour in which physical aggression accounted for nine acts per hour. Comedies, crime shows, and cartoons accounted for the most frequent acts of aggression.

In a study done in Britain, Cumberbatch, Lee, Hardy, and Jones (1987), found 1.7 aggressive acts per hour. In all, 30% of the programs included some violence. Violent incidents in current affair and documentary television programs were well below-average. The rate of violence for suspenseful fiction was 3.6 per hour. Violent acts were illustrated as deficient: weapons either killed or missed, but wounds were rarely shown.

A study completed in Japan by Iwao, de-Sola-Pool, and Hagiwara (1981) found seven acts of violence per hour in the Japanese television programs. However, the violent acts focused more on the victims' suffering.

### CHAPTER 3

#### METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the sample of this study, the features of the instrument used to record violence (Index of Television Violence [ITV]; see Appendix A), and the procedures by which data were gathered.

##### Sample

For the purpose of this study, the sample included six hours of television from each of the three television broadcast networks in the United States (ABC, CBS, NBC) and in Japan (CBC, CTV, and THK). Because of conflicting holiday schedules, the days observed in the United States were Tuesday, May 10; Thursday, May 12; and Saturday, May 14, 1994, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. In Japan, televised violence was recorded on Tuesday, May 17; Thursday, May 19; and Saturday, May 21, 1994, from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Alternate days of the week were chosen in order to get a sample of television during the beginning of the week, toward the end of the week, and on the weekend.

##### Instrument

The ITV rating sheet used for data collection contained two main categories of violence: first, violence to property, and second, violence to people. Violence to property consisted of (a) physical action without damage, (b) physical damage, and (c) property destruction. The second category of the ITV, violence to people, was broken down into three areas: verbal, nonverbal, and visual evidence of

violence. Verbal violence included (a) verbal criticism of a person present, without a raised voice, (b) verbal criticism of a person present, with a raised voice, and (c) verbal criticism of person absent from the scene. Nonverbal violence was categorized as (a) physical violence without apparent injury, (b) physical violence with injury, and (c) physical violence that is fatal. The final domain of violence to people, visual evidence, included seeing blood in a violent scene.

### Reliability

Reliability of the ITV was established prior to the current study. Three graduate students at the University of Northern Iowa independently recorded the incidence of violence at two-minute intervals, using a timer, on the same randomly selected television station, for a 30-minute period (7:30-8:00 p.m.). The inter-rater reliability, computed on the data using SPSS, was 0.88. The instrument was then mailed to Dr. Michio Takeuchi in Japan who trained three Japanese graduate students in the use of the ITV. The three raters were authorized to use the ITV after they had, in the judgment of Dr. Takeuchi, demonstrated requisite skills.

### Procedures

Using the ITV, in both Japan and the United States three observers recorded the incidence of various forms of television violence at two-minute intervals, using a timer. In the United States, each of the three recorders were randomly assigned to watch one of the following broadcast

networks: ABC, CBS, or NBC. Additionally, Japanese observers were randomly assigned to record events from one of the three dominant Japanese broadcast networks (CBC, CTV, and THK). Ratings were obtained on three alternate nights (Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday) from the hours of 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. Therefore, televised violence was tabulated in each country for a total of 18 hours of prime-time. The original design provided for the broadcasting of sports or music programs; however, such circumstances never arose.

## CHAPTER 4

## RESULTS

This chapter presents results of the investigation comparing television violence in Japan and the United States and examines the following: (a) the number of violent scenes by day and by broadcast network, and (b) the number of violent scenes by categories.

Number of Violent Scenes by Day and by Broadcast Network

After observations were complete, the data from the three recorders in each country were mailed to Professor Ralph Scott of the University of Northern Iowa and the number of incidents of violence by broadcast network and by day were tabulated.

Table 1 summarizes the results in the United States and shows that two of the broadcast networks were much higher than the other, with  $\chi^2 (2, N = 78) = 23.2, p < .01$ . Further, Saturday had the highest number of acts of violence, followed by Tuesday and Thursday, with  $\chi^2 (2, N = 78) = 8.6, p = .013$ . However, the three broadcast networks did not differ by their number of violent scenes by day, with  $\chi^2 (4, N = 78) = 3.7, p = .45$ .

Table 1

United States--Number of Violent Scenes By Day and By Broadcast Network

|          | Network 1 | Network 2 | Network 3 | Total |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Tuesday  | 2         | 7         | 13        | 22    |
| Thursday | 2         | 7         | 9         | 18    |
| Saturday | 2         | 21        | 15        | 38    |
| Total    | 6         | 35        | 37        | 78    |

Comparable Japanese findings are summarized in Table 2 which indicates that two of the broadcast networks were much higher than the other, with  $\chi^2 (2, N = 70) = 25.3, p < .01$ . Furthermore, Saturday had the highest number of acts of violence followed by Tuesday and Thursday, with  $\chi^2 (2, N = 70) = 8.6, p = .014$ . In addition, the three broadcast networks differed in their number of violent scenes by day with one network being heavily loaded on Tuesday, one on Saturday and the other on none of the days, with  $\chi^2 (4, N = 70) = 45.3, p < .01$ .

Table 2

Japan--Number of Violent Scenes By Day and By BroadcastNetwork

|          | Network 4 | Network 5 | Network 6 | Total |
|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Tuesday  | 20        | 2         | 5         | 27    |
| Thursday | 4         | 8         | 0         | 12    |
| Saturday | 2         | 29        | 0         | 31    |
| Total    | 26        | 39        | 5         | 70    |

Together, Tables 1 and 2 indicate that there were no statistically significant difference between the two countries with respect to the pattern of violence across days, with  $\chi^2 (2, N = 148) = 1.99, p = .37$ .

Number of Violent Scenes by CategoriesViolence to Property

Table 3 shows that there were no statistically significant differences between the two countries with respect to the Total incidents of Violence to Property, with  $\chi^2 (1, N = 21) = 1.2, p = .28$ . In addition, no statistically significant differences were noted between the two countries with respect to the type of violence to property, with  $\chi^2 (2, N = 21) = .33, p = .85$ .

Table 3

Violence to Property by Country

| Type                              | Number of scenes |       |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|-------|
|                                   | United States    | Japan |
| 1. Physical action without damage | 3                | 5     |
| 2. Physical damage                | 3                | 6     |
| 3. Property destruction           | 2                | 2     |
| Total                             | 8                | 13    |

Verbal Violence to People

Table 4 indicates that the Total incidents of Verbal Violence to People did not differ with respect to the two countries, with  $\chi^2 (1, N = 67) = 1.2, p = .27$ . However, statistically significant differences were noted with respect to the types of verbal violence to people between the two countries, with  $\chi^2 (2, N = 67) = 17.25, p < .01$ . The Pearson chi-square fails to discern which specific relationships may explain the statistically significant differences within the total design. Thus, due to the small sample size, the statistical power of the test was limited. Nonetheless, inferences appear appropriate. It appears that verbal



violence in the United States tends to predominate with raised voices and in Japan with a normal tone of voice.

Table 4

Verbal Violence to People by Country

| Type  | Number of scenes |       |
|---|------------------|-------|
|   | United States    | Japan |
| 1. Verbal criticism of person present, without raised voice | 2                | 19    |
| 2. Verbal criticism of person present, with raised voice    | 25               | 14    |
| 3. Verbal criticism of person absent from scene             | 2                | 5     |
| Total   | 29               | 38    |

Nonverbal Violence to People

As shown in Table 5, the Total incidents of Nonverbal Violence to People was significantly higher in Japan, with  $\chi^2(1, N = 58) = 9.9, p < .01$ . However, the profile of nonverbal violence did not differ between the two countries, with  $\chi^2(2, N = 58) = .56, p = .76$ .

Table 5

Nonverbal Violence to People by Country

| Type   | Number of scenes |       |
|--|------------------|-------|
|  | United States    | Japan |
| 1. Physical violence without apparent injury | 30               | 14    |
| 2. Physical violence with injury             | 4                | 1     |
| 3. Fatal physical violence                   | 7                | 2     |
| Total  | 41               | 17    |

Visual Evidence of Violence

The recorders were asked to report the number of scenes in which visual evidence of violence was present. However, the raters reported none in the United States and only two in Japan, so no analysis was done.

## CHAPTER 5

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

Television violence and its possible effects on society is a controversial issue that has been examined for years. Since Japan is a technologically advanced country and televisions are frequently used there, as well as in the United States, this study compared television violence as shown on American and Japanese broadcasting networks. Data were gathered in each country on three alternate nights from the hours of 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.--yielding 18 hours of examined television per country. Employing the Index of Television Violence (ITV) (see Appendix A), television violence was examined along the following dimensions: (a) violence to property and (b) violence to people. This chapter summarizes basic findings and implications of this study, and explores suggestions for future research.

Findings of Study

After data were collected, they were analyzed to determine if there were differences between: (a) the number of incidents of violence observed on each broadcast network in each country, (b) the day television violence was observed in each country, (c) the countries with respect to the number of violent scenes, by day on each of the three broadcast networks, (d) the number of incidents of violence by categories and by country, and (e) the countries with respect to the types of televised violence.

First, differences were found between the number of incidents of televised violence shown on the three broadcast networks in the United States and the three broadcast networks in Japan. In each country, two of the networks showed significantly more violence than the other one. However, this may be explained by the limited sample size that was used.

Second, differences were noted in the United States and Japan with respect to the day violence was televised. It was found that in both countries, more violence was televised on Saturday than during the week. The observed variations during the week may be explained by sampling error.

Third, no differences were revealed between the two countries with respect to the pattern of violence across days. This also may be explained by the limited sample size.

Fourth, the two countries did not differ with respect to the number of incidents of violence to property or the number of incidents of verbal violence to people. However, differences were noted between the two countries with respect to the number of incidents of nonverbal violence to people. It was found that the number of incidents of nonverbal violence to people was higher in the United States than in Japan. This is similar to Williams et al. (1982) findings of 18.5 televised acts of aggression per hour in the United States, in which physical aggression accounted for nine acts per hour. Whereas in Japan, Iwao et al. (1981) found seven

acts of violence per hour in the Japanese television programs, focusing mainly on the victims' suffering.

Fifth, no differences were found between the countries with respect to the type of violence to property or the type of nonverbal violence to people. Nonetheless, differences were found between the countries with respect to the type of verbal violence to people. It was found that in the United States verbal violence tends to predominate with raised voices, where in Japan people tend to use a normal voice tone.

#### Implications of Study

Although the findings of the study are limited due to the small sample size, they may be useful if the impact of television violence is to be compacted within an international framework. Results of this evaluation suggest that differences between the two countries with respect to the total incidence of televised violence is relatively small. However, three major implications stand out. First, it appears that on Saturday, when children are likely to be watching, the broadcast networks are showing more violence. Second, in the United States viewers are subjected to issues being addressed with raised voices (such as shouting), whereas in Japan, issues are addressed using a normal tone of voice. Finally, viewers in the United States are being subjected to television programs which portray using physical violence.

### Suggestions for Future Research

This study compared television violence in Japan and the United States and assessed the quantity and type of televised violence in both countries. Previous studies have shown the relationship between television viewing and the subsequent attitudes and actions of viewers, giving added attention to the effect of televised violence. However, relatively little is known concerning the difference between incidents of reported violent acts on network television programs across countries. Through future research, more meaning and insight can be provided regarding cross-cultural television violence and the impact it has on societies other than our own. This study is a first step in studying cross-cultural television violence. Results of this study must be cautiously interpreted and replication investigations are needed before definitive conclusions can be made.

Future research may examine the object of the violence. This area may include the following: husband, wife, children, neighbor, colleague at work, criminal, police officer, boyfriend, girlfriend, brother, sister, father, mother, grandfather, and grandmother.

In addition, replication studies should examine the types of violence as reported in the news, to determine if they are comparable to the types of violence as shown on television programs. This study reveals the potential effects of cross-cultural television violence; future studies

should explore other countries and the number of incidents of televised violence.

Findings of this investigation suggest that the ITV instrument may enable cross-cultural research into the components as well as the incidence of televised violence. Future research should investigate modifications of the ITV, such as visual evidence of violence and examination of the object of the violence. Television data should be video taped in order to examine inter-rater reliability.

Further, replication studies should define an age range of interest and gather television information related to that age range. Various days of the week and time of day should be examined--including Sunday evening which, according to A.C. Nielsen and Company's 1993 report, is the most popular night for watching television. Overall, future studies would add to the understanding of the incidence of television violence.

## REFERENCES

- Andersen, K. (1993, July 12). The great TV violence hype. Time, 66.
- Broome, J., & Fuller, L. (1993). What you need to know about children and television. PTA Today, 18(7), 10-11.
- Committee on Energy and Commerce House of Representatives. (1993, May 12). Violence on television. 103rd Congress, First Session. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- Cumberbatch, G., Lee, M., Hardy, G., & Jones, I. (1987). Portrayal of violence on British television. London: British Broadcasting Corporation.
- Ellerbee, L. (1993, November 14). The kids' views on TV violence. Des Moines Register, p. 3.
- Eron, L. D., & Huesmann, L. R. (1987). Television as a source of maltreatment of children. School Psychology Review, 16(2), 195-202.
- Eron, L. D., Huesmann, L. R., Brice, P., Fischer, P., & Mermelstein, R. (1983). Age trends in the development of aggression, sex typing and related television habits. Developmental Psychology, 9, 71-77.
- Froelich, J. D. (1993, December 26). U.S. policing of TV: 'Lip service' lax enforcement and First Amendment concerns keep violent programs a viable option for TV networks. Des Moines Register, p. 10.
- Huesmann, L. R., & Eron, L. D. (1986). Television and the aggressive child. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Huesmann, L. R., Lagerspetz, K., & Eron, L. D. (1984). Intervening variables in the TV-violence-aggression relation: Evidence from two countries. Developmental Psychology, 20(5), 746-775.
- Iwao, S., de-Sola-Pool, I., & Hagiwara, S. (1981). Japanese and U.S. media: Some cross cultural insights into TV violence. Journal of Communication Disorders, 31(2), 28-36.



- Jensen, E. (1994, August 5). One-day study finds rise in violence on TV, but research method is disputed. Wall Street Journal, p. A6.
- Jensen, E., & Graham, E. (1993, October 26). Stamping out TV violence: A losing fight. Wall Street Journal, p. B1.
- Lefkowitz, M. M., & Huesmann, L. R. (1980). Concomitants of television violence viewing in children. In E. L. Palmer & A. Dorr (Eds.), Children and the faces of television (pp. 1-36). New York: Academic Press.
- Lewin, T. (1995, February 27). TV children don't reflect reality, study says. The New York Times, p. B8.
- Mustonen, A., & Pulkkinen, L. (1993). Aggression in television programs in Finland. Aggressive Behavior, 19, 175-183.
- National Association for the Education of Young Children. (1990, July). NAEYC position statement on media violence in children's lives. Young Children, pp. 18-21.
- Nielsen, A. C., & Company. (1993). 1993 Nielsen report on television. New York: Author.
- Rules restricting indecency on TV are struck down. (1993, November 24). Wall Street Journal, p. B4.
- Shanahan, J., & Morgan, M. (1992). Adolescents, families and television in five countries: Implications for cross-cultural educational research. Journal of Educational Television, 18 (1), 35-55.
- Simon, P. (1993, September 5-11). P.S. Washington (A weekly column by U.S. Senator Paul Simon of Illinois). Washington, DC: author.
- Simon, P. (1994, February 27-March 5). P.S. Washington (A weekly column by U.S. Senator Paul Simon of Illinois). Washington, DC: author.
- Singer, J. L., & Singer, D. G. (1986). Family experiences and television viewing as predictors of children's imagination, restlessness, and aggression. Journal of Social Issues, 42(3), 107-124.

- Stevens, J. E. (1994). Treating violence as an epidemic. Technology Review, 97, 22-27.
- Time. (1982, May 17). Warning from Washington. Time, p. 77.
- Turner, J. C. (1994). Televised crime and the reality of television. Northern Iowa Today, 78(1), 35-36.
- U.S. Congress. (1972, March 21-24). Surgeon General's report by the scientific advisory committee on television and social behavior. 92nd Congress, Second Session. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (1982). Violence and aggression. Television and Behavior: Ten Years of Scientific Progress and Implications for the Eighties, 1. Rockville, MD: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- U.S. News and World Report. (1975, October 13). What's happening to American morality? U.S. News and World Report, pp. 39-41.
- Vooijs, M. W., & van der Voort, T. H. A. (1993). Learning about television violence: The impact of a critical viewing curriculum on children's attitudinal judgments of crime series. Journal of Research and Development in Education, 26(3), 133-142.
- Webster, N. (1961). Webster's third new international dictionary. Springfield, MA: Merriam Company.
- Webster, N. (1984). Webster's new world dictionary. New York: Warner Books.
- Williams, T. M., Zabrack, M. L., & Lesley, A. J. (1982). The portrayal of aggression on North American television. Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 12(5), 360-380.
- Zoglin, R. (1990, October 15). Is TV ruining our children? Time, pp. 75-76.

APPENDIX A

### Instructions for Administering the Index of Television Violence (ITV)

The ITV consists of two major categories: violence to property and violence to people, labeled A and B on the record form. Within violence to property (A), three subcategories are to be rated and these are designated 1, 2, and 3 (physical action without damage, physical damage, and property destruction). Category B also contains three subcategories, designated 1 (verbal), 2 (nonverbal), and 3 (visual evidence of violence). Verbal violence (B1) consists of three types of violence: (a) verbal criticism of person present, without raised voice; (b) verbal criticism of person present, with raised voice; and (c) verbal criticism of person absent from scene. In addition, nonverbal violence (B2) contains three types: (a) physical violence without apparent injury, (b) physical violence with injury, and (c) physical violence. The record form summarizes these categories.

Administration of the ITV requires the examiner to make a notation (for example, a simple tally mark) in the proper category; experience shows that for purposes of validity and reliability, raters should be trained to quickly make judgments. As one example of how the ITV is to be employed: if a television program has been underway for two minutes, and a television actor throws a glass of water on the person with whom he is talking, this is tallied under B2a (violence to people, nonverbal, physical violence without apparent

injury). Separately, if an actress criticizes an associate without raising her voice, this is to be rated as Bla (violence to people, verbal, verbal criticism of person present, without raised voice).

Standardization of the ITV employed ratings at two-minute intervals. However, time intervals may be adjusted to satisfy objectives of specific empirical investigations.

## Index of Television Violence

## I. Violence

## A. Violence to property

1. Physical action, without damage (i.e.,  
slamming fist on desk)
- 
- 

2. Physical damage (i.e., car crash, dish broken)
- 
- 

3. Property destruction (i.e., house burned)
- 
- 

## B. Violence to people

## 1. Verbal

- a. Verbal criticism of person present,  
without raised voice
- 
- 

- b. Verbal criticism of person present, with  
raised voice
- 
- 

- c. Verbal criticism of person absent from  
scene
- 
-

## 2. Nonverbal

- a. Physical violence without apparent injury (i.e., strike or hit a person with fist, gun, etc.)

---

---

- b. Physical violence with injury (i.e., physically injure or wound person with fist, gun, etc.)

---

---

- c. Physical violence (i.e., kill with instrument such as bomb, gun, knife)

---

---

## 3. Visual evidence of violence

- a. Blood

---

---