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## **The Effects of Violent Content and Competition within Videogames on the Development of Hostility and Aggressive Behaviors**

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Poster Presentation P28

**THE EFFECTS OF VIOLENT CONTENT AND COMPETITION WITHIN  
VIDEOGAMES ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HOSTILITY AND AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIORS**

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Research has shown that exposure to violent video games can lead to increases in hostility and aggressive thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Previous studies have commonly manipulated exposure to violence by assigning participants to play different video games that were considered to be either more or less violent. The current study utilized specially designed video game levels that allowed for a more precise manipulation of game violence. All participants played a video game that required exploration and shooting targets. However, participants were randomly assigned to shoot at inanimate objects (less violent condition) or to shoot at human characters (more violent condition). It was hypothesized that participants in the more violent condition would express more aggressive thoughts and feelings after playing the video game. The second issue examined in this study was the influence of competition. Video games often combine aspects of competition as well as violence. This study sought to examine each factor independently. Competition was manipulated by assigning participants to a more competitive condition where they were rewarded for outperforming other players, or a less competitive condition where they were randomly selected to receive a reward regardless of performance. Results show a significant three-way interaction between competition, violent content, and gender. Males in the more violent and more competitive condition reported significantly greater hostility following exposure to the game. Females showed significantly greater hostility in response to competition but no evidence of greater hostility in response to violence.