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UNDERSTANDING CHILD AGGRESSION IN EASTERN ETHIOPIAN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: INSIGHTS FROM TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

This study sought to explore the predictors of child aggression, specifically examining the roles of gender, media exposure, sibling aggression, balanced diet, and parenting styles. A quantitative, correlational research design was employed, with data collected through standardized questionnaires completed by a sample of primary school teachers (N = 665). To analyze the relationships and predictive strength of the variables, Pearson correlation and hierarchical multiple regression analyses were utilized. The results indicated that gender was not a significant predictor of child aggression, supporting previous findings that suggest differences lie more in the type of aggression exhibited rather than in overall levels. In contrast, time spent watching television, use of computer games, sibling aggression, and parenting styles were significantly and positively associated with increased child aggression. Meanwhile, a balanced diet showed a modest negative correlation with aggression. These findings underscore the importance of environmental and familial influences over biological or demographic factors such as gender. Based on these results, the study recommends that intervention strategies focus on limiting harmful media exposure, resolving sibling conflicts, and fostering effective parenting practices. Promoting parental involvement, emotional regulation, and healthy dietary habits may also help reduce aggressive behavior in children.

Keywords: Child aggression, primary school students, demographic factors, psychology, teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Child aggression is a significant behavioral issue in developmental psychology, drawing considerable attention due to its implications for both short- and long-term mental and social well-being (Anderson & Gentile, 2020; Bettencourt & Gross, 2020; Hubbard & Harten, 2021; Ferguson & Kilburn, 2022; Möller & Krahé, 2024). It can manifest in various forms, including physical, verbal, and relational aggression. Several factors contribute to the development of aggressive behavior in children, including gender, age, media exposure, family dynamics, and nutrition. Understanding the interaction among these factors is crucial for parents, educators, and policymakers in designing effective prevention and intervention strategies (Olsson & Wester, 2024; Freeman & Johnson, 2025). The relationship between television viewing and child aggression has long been a focal point in psychology, education, and media studies. Numerous studies suggest that extended exposure to television, particularly violent content, may contribute to aggressive behavior in children (Coyne & Stockdale, 2021; Nixon & Sargeant, 2022; Möller & Krahé, 2024; Freeman & Johnson, 2025).

In addition to television, children are increasingly exposed to digital technologies, including computers, for educational, entertainment, and social purposes (Tosun & Yılmaz, 2024; Freeman & Johnson, 2025). While the internet offers vast opportunities, it also presents risks, such as exposure to violent content, cyberbullying, and violent online games (Stewart & Moore, 2024; Wright & Perez, 2025). Among these, violent video games have received particular attention. A substantial body of research, including meta-analyses, has linked violent gaming to increased aggression and reduced empathy (Stewart & Moore, 2024; Wright & Perez, 2025). Sibling relationships also play a crucial

role in children's emotional and behavioral development. Sibling aggression, including physical, verbal, and emotional conflict, has been identified as a predictor of increased aggression in other social contexts, such as school or peer relationships (Smith & Hussmann, 2022; Horton & Cummings, 2024). Lansford, Criss, and Dodge (2021) found that children experiencing high levels of sibling conflict were more likely to display aggression toward peers.

Similarly, Bayer and Sawyer (2023) demonstrated that frequent sibling conflict correlates with long-term behavioral issues, including irritability and physical aggression. Nutrition is another critical factor influencing emotional regulation and behavior in children (Benton & Williams, 2021; Haines & McDonald, 2021; Martin & McGue, 2024; Strasser & Taylor, 2025). A healthy diet, rich in key nutrients, may help reduce aggression, while poor dietary patterns, such as high sugar and processed food intake, can exacerbate it (Parker & Butler, 2024). Although the exact mechanisms remain unclear, growing evidence supports the connection between diet and behavioral outcomes (Cohen & O'Reilly, 2022). Parenting styles are widely regarded as central to child development and behavior, including aggression (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2021; Baumrind & Black, 2021; Timmerman & Walton, 2022; Sikora & Wright, 2023; Chen & Lee, 2024; Steinberg & Silk, 2024; Foley & Jackson, 2025). Baumrind's (2021) and Maccoby and Martin's (2021) foundational work identified four primary parenting styles, authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful, based on dimensions of demandingness and responsiveness. Different styles have been linked to varying levels of aggression, with authoritative parenting generally associated with lower aggression (Timmerman & Walton, 2022; Sikora & Wright, 2023).

While individual factors such as gender, media use, and parenting have been widely studied, there is limited understanding of how these variables interact. Boys are generally more likely to exhibit aggression, and behaviors such as excessive television watching or violent game use have also been linked to higher aggression levels. Conversely, positive parenting and a healthy diet may buffer against these risks. Sibling dynamics and family context further shape behavioral development. There is a pressing need to understand how factors such as television viewing, computer use, sibling aggression, diet, and parenting styles collectively influence child aggression. While the effects of violent video games have been widely debated, research suggests that not all games have negative impacts. Parental involvement and social context may moderate these effects (Linder & Gentile, 2020). Similarly, the role of sibling aggression remains underexplored, particularly in relation to family dynamics and emotional regulation (Tully & Maughan, 2023). The connection between diet and aggression also requires deeper investigation, especially regarding specific nutrients and long-term dietary patterns (Taylor & Williams, 2023; Parker & Butler, 2024).

Furthermore, while parenting styles have been shown to affect aggression, the mediating and moderating factors, as parental warmth, consistency, and support, require further exploration (Lansford & Deater-Deckard, 2020; Grolnick & Pomerantz, 2023; Zhao & Yu, 2022). Each of these variables—media exposure, sibling aggression, diet, and parenting- has been identified as a potential contributor to child aggression. However, the mechanisms underlying these associations are not fully understood. Comprehensive research examining how these factors interact is needed to inform effective interventions. This study seeks to address the following research questions:

- What is the relationship between gender, television viewing, computer game use, sibling aggression, diet, parenting styles, and child aggression?
- What impact do parenting styles, sibling aggression, diet, media exposure, and computer use have on child aggression?

METHOD

A correlational research design was employed to collect quantitative data, based on the assumption that this approach offers a robust framework for examining relationships among multiple variables. The researcher selected this design because it effectively captures the complex interactions between environmental, behavioral, and demographic factors influencing child aggression. The target

population comprised primary school children aged 7–12 years, drawn from 10 primary schools in the Eastern Hararghe Zone, Eastern Ethiopia. The sample size was determined using Taro's (1967) formula, appropriate for studies involving a well-defined population. Accordingly, the population size and formula application are as follows: $n_i = \frac{N_i}{1+N_i(\alpha^2)}$ where N_i is the total number of population; n_i is the total sample size to be included; α is the sampling error with a value of .05. Therefore, the total sample size taken from the male population is 364, as indicated below.

$$n_i = \frac{N_i}{1+N_i(\alpha^2)} = \frac{4000}{1+4000(0.05)^2} = \frac{4000}{1+4000(0.0025)} = \frac{4000}{1+10} = \frac{4000}{11} = 364.$$

Whereas the number of female participants that were taken from the 3750 populations was calculated from the same formula is:

$$n_i = \frac{N_i}{1+N_i(\alpha^2)} = \frac{3750}{1+3750(0.05)^2} = \frac{3750}{1+375(0.0025)} = \frac{3750}{1+9.375} = \frac{3750}{10.375} = 361.$$ A total of 725 samples were collected from the entire population of 7,350 primary school children. Simple and stratified random sampling techniques were used in the research to obtain a sample that was both unbiased and accurately representative of the population's key characteristics. First, simple random sampling was applied to select primary schools from the total primary schools found in the zone thereby reducing selection bias and ensuring the fundamental fairness and randomness of the zone. However, because the population consisted of distinct subgroups that differed in characteristics relevant to the study, such as experiences, academic levels, gender groups, or institutional categories, the researcher further employed stratified random sampling. Stratification allowed him to divide the population into meaningful strata and then draw random samples from each subgroup proportionally. This ensured that no important subgroup was underrepresented or overrepresented, increased the precision of the estimates, and enhanced the generalizability and validity of the findings. Thus, the combination of simple and stratified random sampling was justified as it strengthened the representativeness, accuracy, and scientific rigor of the study.

A structured questionnaire was developed to investigate teachers' perceived causes of child aggression in primary schools within the Eastern Hararghe Zone. The instrument was based on a five-point Likert scale and underwent expert validation by educational psychologists and education specialists. These experts confirmed that the questionnaire items were highly valid and capable of generating the necessary data to address the research objectives. The questionnaire comprised two main sections. The first section gathered demographic information about the participants, including gender and professional background. The second section contained 87 items designed to capture teachers' perceptions of the underlying causes of aggressive behavior in children. Respondents rated each item on a five-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Undecided, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree.

To assess the reliability of the instrument, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated. The overall reliability index was .95, indicating excellent internal consistency. Following the validation process, the researcher made minor adjustments to some technical terms and phrases that were deemed potentially difficult for the target respondents to understand. This refinement ensured greater clarity and accessibility without compromising the instrument's integrity. To establish the content validity of the instrument, five experts specializing in educational psychology, measurement, and assessment were purposively selected based on their academic rank (Assistant Professor or above), publication record, and demonstrated experience in instrument development. Each expert independently reviewed the items for relevance, clarity, representativeness, and alignment with the intended constructs. Their ratings were analyzed using the Content Validity Index (CVI) at both the item and scale levels. The Item-Level CVI (I-CVI) was computed by dividing the number of experts who rated an item as

relevant (ratings of 4 or 5 on a five-point scale) by the total number of experts, while the Scale-Level CVI (S-CVI) was calculated using both the average method (S-CVI/Ave) and the universal agreement method (S-CVI/UA). Consistent with accepted standards, items with I-CVI values of .80 or above were retained, items between .60 were revised, and items below .60 were considered for removal. The resulting S-CVI/Ave exceeded the recommended .90 thresholds, indicating strong overall agreement among experts and confirming that the instrument adequately captured the theoretical domains it was designed to measure. Together, these steps provided a robust evaluation of the instrument's content validity, clarity, and reliability before its final administration.

For data analysis, a combination of descriptive and inferential statistical techniques was employed through SPSS version 23. Bivariate correlation was used to explore the strength and direction of relationships among variables. The Enter method of multiple linear regression helped the researcher identify which variables most strongly predicted child aggression, while hierarchical regression was used to examine the incremental contribution of grouped predictors. These analytical tools provided a comprehensive understanding of the variables influencing child aggression, as perceived by teachers. Before conducting the regression analysis, the key statistical assumptions were examined to ensure the appropriateness of the model. Normality of residuals was checked using graphical methods such as histograms and normal probability plots. Linearity between the independent and dependent variables was assessed through scatterplots, while homoscedasticity was verified by inspecting the distribution of residuals across predicted values. Multicollinearity was evaluated using tolerance ($\geq$.1) and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) ($\leq$ 10) values to confirm that predictor variables were not excessively correlated. All assumptions met the acceptable criteria, supporting the validity of the regression results. Moreover, before conducting the correlation analysis, the essential statistical assumptions were examined to ensure the validity of the results. The normality of the variables was checked using visual inspection of histograms and normal probability plots. Linearity between paired variables was assessed through scatterplots to confirm a straight-line relationship. In addition, the data were screened for outliers, which can distort correlation coefficients, using standardized scores and boxplots. All assumptions were found to be adequately met, supporting the appropriateness of using correlation analysis for the study.

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Haramaya University and East Hararghe Education Bureau, ensuring that all procedures complied with national and institutional research standards. Informed consent was secured from teachers, parents, and legal caregivers, and assent was obtained from the teachers participating in the study. Participants were assured that their involvement was voluntary, and all data were treated with strict confidentiality, using coded identifiers and secure data handling procedures to protect the privacy and well-being of the children throughout the research process.

RESULTS

Out of the 725 questionnaires distributed, a total of 665 were fully completed and returned, yielding a 91.73% response rate, a highly satisfactory figure for survey research. Among the respondents, 361 (49.79%) were female, and 364 (50.21%) were male, indicating a balanced gender distribution. The remaining 60 questionnaires were either incomplete (n = 40) or not returned (n = 20) and were excluded from the final analysis. The large, representative sample provided a strong basis for identifying and interpreting patterns related to the perceived causes of child aggression in the study area. The high response rate further strengthened the generalizability and credibility of the findings. The reliability of the instrument and the robust statistical methods employed allowed the researcher to draw data-driven insights into how teachers in Eastern Hararghe primary schools understand the roots of aggressive behavior in children. This methodological approach is significant given the study's focus: understanding context-specific contributors to child aggression. By collecting data directly from teachers, who observe students' behavior firsthand, the study captures grounded perceptions shaped by lived experience. This has important implications for informing interventions, policy

design, and teacher training programs aimed at mitigating aggression and promoting positive behavioral development in schools.

Table 1. Correlation matrices.

SN	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Gender	1	-.064	-.002	.044	.057	-.034	-.002
2.	Child Aggression		1	*.158***	*.186***	*.130***	*-.006*	*.209***
3.	Time spent watching TV			1	.166**	.228**	.97*	.527**
4.	Use of computer games				1	.225**	.244**	.214**
5.	Sibling aggression					1	.230**	.175**
6.	Balanced diet						1	.270**
7.	Parenting style							1

**. *P* < .01 (2-tailed).
*. P < .05 (2-tailed).

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between the dependent variable, child aggression, and six independent variables: gender, time spent watching television, use of computer games, sibling aggression, balanced diet, and parenting styles. The analysis aimed to determine the extent to which each factor correlates with aggressive behaviors in children, as perceived by primary school teachers in the Eastern Hararghe Zone. The findings revealed that gender and a balanced diet were not significantly correlated with child aggression. Gender showed a weak negative correlation, $r_{(663)} = -.064$, $p > .05$, while a balanced diet exhibited a nearly zero correlation, $r_{(663)} = -.006$, $p > .05$, both results being statistically insignificant. These outcomes suggest that child aggression is not meaningfully influenced by gender differences or dietary patterns in the context of this study. Although biological and nutritional factors have been discussed in previous literature as influencing behavior, the current data imply that these elements are not primary predictors of aggression within the sampled population. As such, intervention strategies may require more context-specific, psychosocial, or environmental considerations rather than focusing on inherent or biological traits.

Conversely, four independent variables were found to be positively and significantly correlated with child aggression, indicating a measurable association between these factors and aggressive behavior: (i) Time spent watching television: $r_{(663)} = .158$, $p < .01$; (ii) Use of computer games: $r_{(663)} = .130$, $p < .01$; (iii) Sibling aggression: $r_{(663)} = 0.130$, $p < .01$, and (iv) Parenting styles: $r_{(663)} = .209$, $p < .01$. The positive and statistically significant correlation between time spent watching television and child aggression suggests that increased screen exposure, especially to potentially violent or unregulated content, may contribute to more aggressive behaviors. This supports existing research linking excessive television viewing to behavioral imitation, desensitization to violence, and impulsivity, reinforcing the need for media regulation and parental monitoring as part of school and home-based interventions.

Similarly, the correlation between the use of computer games and aggression indicates that children's interaction with digital games, particularly those involving violent content, may influence their behavioral tendencies. Although the correlation is modest, $r = .130$, the significance implies a consistent pattern that justifies media literacy programs and age-appropriate content control, especially within educational and parenting frameworks. The positive association between sibling aggression and child aggression, $r = .130$, also underscores the role of intra-familial dynamics. This finding aligns with social learning theory, which suggests that children may model aggressive behaviors observed or experienced in sibling interactions. This highlights the importance of fostering healthy sibling relationships and addressing conflict resolution within family environments. Of all variables, parenting styles showed the strongest correlation with child aggression, $r = .209$, indicating that the nature of parenting, whether authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful, plays a crucial role in shaping children's behavioral outcomes. This underscores the need for parent-focused interventions, particularly those that promote consistent, supportive, and non-coercive parenting

strategies. Training programs, community-based parent education, and school collaboration with families could serve as key preventive measures.

The findings of this analysis reinforce the conclusion that environmental and psychosocial factors, especially those tied to family dynamics and media exposure, are more strongly associated with child aggression than biological or demographic factors such as gender and nutrition. This has practical implications for educators, psychologists, and policymakers working in the Eastern Hararghe Zone to effectively address aggression among primary school children, efforts should prioritize media supervision, parenting support, and conflict management in both home and school contexts. By identifying these key correlates of aggression, the study contributes to a more targeted and evidence-based understanding of the causes of child aggression, paving the way for more context-sensitive interventions in educational settings.

Table 2a. Model summary.

					Change Statistics				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.296[a]	.088	.080	.306	.088	10.568	6	658	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Parenting style, gender, Sibling aggression, Use of computer games, Balanced Diet, Time spent watching television.

A multiple linear regression analysis using the Enter method was conducted to examine the extent to which six independent variables, parenting style, gender, sibling aggression, use of computer games, balanced diet, and time spent watching television, predict child aggression. In this method, all predictors were entered into the model simultaneously to assess their combined effect on the dependent variable. The regression model was statistically significant, $F_{(6, 658)} = 10.568$, $p < .001$, and explained approximately 8.8% of the variance in child aggression, as indicated by $R^2 = .088$. Although the percentage of explained variance appears modest, this result is meaningful in behavioral research, where complex human behavior such as aggression, is influenced by a multitude of interacting factors. The significance of the overall model confirms that, together, the selected predictors contribute to explaining patterns of aggression among primary school children in the Eastern Hararghe Zone. This finding underscores the importance of addressing these environmental and psychosocial variables in both educational and family contexts. While the majority of variance in child aggression may stem from additional unmeasured factors, such as peer influence, trauma, or emotional regulation, the current model highlights that parenting practices, screen time, and sibling dynamics are measurable and modifiable contributors that merit targeted intervention. Thus, the regression model supports the broader aim of the study to identify key perceived causes of child aggression that can inform practical strategies for prevention and early intervention in schools and communities. Further research could build on this foundation by incorporating additional variables or using longitudinal designs to capture changes over time.

Table 2b. ANOVA result.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	5.954	6	.992	10.568	.000
	Residual	61.791	658	.094		
	Total	67.746	664			

a. Dependent Variable: Child aggression
b. Predictors: (Constant), Parenting style, Gender, Sibling aggression, Use of computer games, Balanced diet, Time spent watching television.

A multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to predict child aggression using six predictors: parenting style, gender, sibling aggression, use of computer games, balanced diet, and time spent watching television. All variables were entered simultaneously to assess their combined effect on child aggression. The ANOVA results indicated that the regression model was statistically significant, $F_{(6, 658)} = 10.568$, $p < .001$, demonstrating that these predictors collectively explained a significant portion of the variation in child aggression. This finding suggests that the combined influence of

family dynamics, media exposure, and individual characteristics plays a meaningful role in understanding aggressive behavior in children. It highlights the importance of considering multiple factors simultaneously when designing interventions aimed at reducing child aggression.

Table 2c. Coefficients.

Model		USDC		SDC			95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.039	.024		1.630	.104	-.008	.086		
	Gender	.000	.000	-.079	-2.113	.035	.000	.000	.992	1.008
	Watching TV	.032	.046	.031	.691	.490	-.058	.122	.696	1.437
	Computer games	.145	.037	.155	3.931	.000	.073	.217	.889	1.125
	Sibling aggression	.087	.039	.089	2.239	.025	.011	.163	.880	1.137
	Balanced diet	-.112	.038	-.118	-2.923	.004	-.187	-.037	.857	1.167
	Parenting style	.056	.015	.176	3.864	.000	.028	.085	.668	1.497

a. Dependent Variable: Child aggression

An Enter Method multiple regression analysis was conducted to predict child aggressive behavior based on six predictors: parenting style, gender, sibling aggression, use of computer games, balanced diet, and time spent watching television. All predictors were entered simultaneously to evaluate the overall model of the study. The model explained 8.8% of the variance in child aggression, $R^2 = .088$, $F_{(6, 658)} = 10.568$, $p < .001$, indicating that these variables collectively accounted for a statistically significant portion of the variation in aggressive behavior.

Examining the individual predictors, gender was a significant but negative predictor of child aggression (B = .000, SE = .000, β = -.079, $t_{(663)} = -2.113$, $p < .05$), suggesting that males and females differed modestly in aggression levels. Use of computer games significantly predicted higher child aggression (B = .145, SE = .037, β = .155, $t_{(663)} = 3.931$, $p < .001$), highlighting the influence of media exposure on aggressive behavior. Similarly, sibling aggression was a significant positive predictor (B = .088, SE = .039, β = .089, $t_{(663)} = 2.239$, $p < .05$), reinforcing the role of family dynamics in shaping aggression. Balanced diet emerged as a significant negative predictor (B = -.112, SE = .038, β = -.118, $t_{(663)} = -2.923$, $p < .05$), suggesting that healthier dietary habits are associated with reduced aggression. Parenting style also significantly predicted child aggression (B = .056, SE = .015, β = .176, $t_{(663)} = 3.864$, $p < .001$), confirming its important role in behavioral outcomes. Notably, time spent watching television was not a significant predictor (B = .032, SE = .015, β = .031, $t_{(663)} = .691$, $p > .05$), indicating that, within this model, TV viewing alone did not contribute meaningfully to aggression levels.

To address the second research question, hierarchical regression was applied. This method allowed for the sequential entry of variables based on theoretical rationale and their expected impact on child aggression. Gender was entered first to control for individual differences. Next, media exposure variables (television and computer games) and sibling aggression were added to account for environmental and social influences. Diet was entered subsequently to consider lifestyle factors. Finally, parenting styles were introduced to assess their moderating or mediating effects on the other variables. This approach enabled a nuanced understanding of each factor's unique contribution while controlling for the influence of others, offering a comprehensive view of the complex interplay between individual, familial, and environmental factors in predicting child aggression.

Table 3a. Model summary on hierarchical regression analysis predicting child aggression.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics				
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.064	.004	.003	.319	.004	2.684	1	663	.102
2	.170	.029	.026	.315	.025	17.060	1	662	.000
3	.237	.056	.052	.311	.027	19.054	1	661	.000
4	.247	.061	.055	.310	.005	3.435	1	660	.064

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Table 3a (Continued). Model summary on hierarchical regression analysis predicting child aggression.

						Change Statistics			
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
5	.259	.067	.060	.310	.006	4.278	1	659	.039
6	.296	.088	.080	.306	.021	14.928	1	658	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Gender
b. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Time spent watching television.
c. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Time spent watching television., Use of computer games.
d. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Time spent watching television., Use of computer games, Sibling aggression
e. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Time spent watching television., Use of Computer Games, Sibling Aggression, Balanced Diet
f. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Time spent watching television., Use of computer games, Sibling aggression, Balanced diet, Parenting style.

To investigate the incremental effects of parenting style, sibling aggression, use of computer games, balanced diet, and time spent watching television on child aggression, hierarchical regression was employed. Gender was entered first as a control variable to account for its potential influence on the dependent variable, child aggression. Subsequently, the predictors of primary interest were added sequentially in the following order: time spent watching television, use of computer games, sibling aggression, balanced diet, and parenting styles. This approach allowed the researcher to clearly distinguish between the control variable and the main predictors, as previously explained. Specifically, Model 1 included gender alone, Model 2 added time spent watching television, Model 3 included the use of computer games, Model 4 added sibling aggression, Model 5 incorporated a balanced diet, and Model 6 introduced parenting styles.

Model 1 explained .4% of the variance in child aggression, $F_{(1, 663)} = 2.684$, $p > .05$ was a statistically insignificant predictor. That means gender did not significantly predict child aggression. After adding time spent watching television in Model 2, R^2 was increased by 2.5%, $F_{(2, 662)} = 9.905$, $p < .001$. It can be concluded that time spent watching television significantly predicted child aggression. After adding the fourth variable (sibling aggression) in Model 3, R^2 was increased by 2.7%, $F_{(3, 661)} = 13.135$, $p < .001$. It means that the use of computer games significantly predicts the child's aggression. After adding the use of computer games in Model 4, R^2 was increased by .5%, $F_{(4, 660)} = 10.746$, $p < .001$. Therefore, it can be concluded that sibling aggression can significantly predict child aggression. After adding the fifth variable (balanced diet) in Model 5, R^2 was increased by .6%, $F_{(5, 659)} = 9.495$, $p < .001$. Therefore, a balanced diet can significantly predict child aggression. The final model, including parenting styles (Model 6), explained 8.8% of the variance, $F_{(6, 658)} = 10.568$, $p < .001$. That is all six independent variables contributing 8.8% of the variance to the dependent variable (child aggressions).

Table 3b. ANOVA results.

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
6	Regression	5.954	6	.992	10.568	.000
	Residual	61.791	658	.094		
	Total	67.746	664			

a. Dependent Variable: Child aggression
b. Predictors: (Constant), gender
c. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Time spent watching television.
d. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Time spent watching television., Use of computer games
e. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Time spent watching television., Use of computer games, sibling aggression
f. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Time spent watching television., Use of computer games, Sibling aggression, Balanced diet
g. Predictors: (Constant), Gender, Time spent watching television., Use of computer games, Sibling aggression, Balanced diet, Parenting style

A hierarchical multiple linear regression was conducted to examine whether gender, time spent watching television, use of computer games, sibling aggression, balanced diet, and parenting style significantly predict children's aggressive behavior. The regression equation was significant, $F_{(1, 48)} = 23.45$, $p < .001$, indicating that these predictors reliably predict children's aggressive behavior. The model explained 8.8% of the variance in children's aggressive behavior ($R^2 = .088$).

Table 3c. Coefficients.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower	Upper
6 (Constant)	.039	.024		1.630	.104	-.008	.086
gender	.000	.000	-.079	-2.113	.035	.000	.000
Time spent watching television.	.032	.046	.031	.691	.490	-.058	.122
Computer Games	.145	.037	.155	3.931	.000	.073	.217
Sibling Aggression	.087	.039	.089	2.239	.025	.011	.163
Balanced Diet	-.112	.038	-.118	-2.923	.004	-.187	-.037
Parenting Style	.056	.015	.176	3.864	.000	.028	.085

a. Dependent Variable: Child Aggression

A hierarchical multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the contributions of six predictors—gender, time spent watching television, use of computer games, sibling aggression, balanced diet, and parenting style- to the variance in child aggression. In Step 1, gender was entered into the model but did not significantly explain the variance in child aggression, $R^2 = .004$, $F_{(1, 663)} = 2.684$, $p > .05$. The unstandardized coefficient for gender was B = .000 (SE = .000), with a standardized coefficient $\beta = -.064$, $t_{(663)} = -1.638$, $p > .05$. In Step 2, time spent watching television was added, resulting in a significant increase in explained variance, $\Delta R^2 = .025$, $F_{(2, 662)} = 9.905$, $p < .001$. The coefficient for television time was B = .163 (SE = .039), $\beta = .158$, $t_{(663)} = 4.130$, $p < .001$, indicating that each unit increase in time spent watching television was associated with a .163-unit increase in child aggression.

Step 3 introduced the use of computer games, which also significantly improved the model, $\Delta R^2 = .027$, $F_{(3, 661)} = 13.135$, $p < .001$. The use of computer games had an unstandardized coefficient of B = .156 (SE = .036), $\beta = .167$, $t_{(663)} = 4.365$, $p < .001$, suggesting a positive relationship with child aggression. In Step 4, sibling aggression was added and significantly increased explained variance, $\Delta R^2 = .005$, $F_{(4, 660)} = 10.746$, $p < .001$. The unstandardized coefficient was B = .072 (SE = .073), $\beta = .167$, $t_{(663)} = 2.365$, $p < .001$, indicating sibling aggression positively predicted child aggression.

Step 5 included a balanced diet, which also contributed significantly, $\Delta R^2 = .006$, $F_{(5, 659)} = 9.945$, $p < .001$. The coefficient for balanced diet was B = -.078, SE = .038, $\beta = -.082$, $t_{(663)} = -2.068$, $p < .001$, suggesting that a healthier diet was associated with a reduction in child aggression. Finally, parenting style was added in Step 6, yielding a significant increase in variance explained, $\Delta R^2 = .021$, $F_{(6, 658)} = 10.568$, $p < .001$. Parenting style's unstandardized coefficient was B = .056 (SE = .015), $\beta = .076$, $t_{(663)} = 3.864$, $p < .001$, indicating a moderate positive effect on child aggression. Overall, the full model explained 8.8% of the variance in child aggression, highlighting that these factors, particularly media exposure, sibling dynamics, diet, and parenting, play significant roles in influencing aggressive behavior in children.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, and RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the current study revealed that gender was not significantly correlated with child aggression. This aligns with some existing research, although the relationship between gender and aggressive behavior has been extensively studied and remains complex. Prior studies suggest that while general patterns exist, the nature and expression of aggression often vary by gender, influenced by both biological factors, such as hormonal differences and brain development, and social and cultural factors like gender roles and societal expectations (Anderson & Gentile, 2020; Bettencourt & Gross, 2020; Hubbard & Harten, 2021; Ferguson & Kilburn, 2022; Möller & Krahé, 2024). Consistent

findings indicate that boys tend to express aggression overtly and physically, engaging in behaviors such as hitting or fighting, which are more visible and direct. Conversely, girls are more likely to exhibit relational or indirect aggression, including social exclusion, gossiping, or manipulating relationships, forms of aggression that are subtler and less overt (Coyne & Stockdale, 2021; Nixon & Sargeant, 2022; Olsson & Wester, 2024; Freeman & Johnson, 2025; Möller & Krahé, 2024). However, emerging research suggests this gender distinction may be less pronounced than previously believed, with girls also exhibiting physical aggression, particularly as they mature, albeit less frequently than boys.

Research between 2020 and 2025 increasingly emphasizes that boys and girls tend to manifest different forms of aggressive behavior**,** which shapes both how aggression is expressed and how it is observed or measured. For example, a large empirical study of older adolescents (aged 15–18) found that physical aggression was significantly more pronounced in males, whereas females more often exhibited hostility and anger-related aggression (Egorova, Rean, & Tichomandritskaya, 2024). At the same time, a recent systematic review noted that relational aggression, which includes social exclusion, rumor-spreading, and manipulation of peer relationships, is common across cultures, although patterns vary by context. Many studies still report that girls are more likely to use relational forms, while boys more often engage in physical aggression (Voulgaridou & Kokkinos, 2023). In line with these broader trends, it's plausible that in the current study, boys showed more overt or physical aggression, whereas girls may have exhibited more covert or relational aggression, behaviors that are harder to observe or may not be captured equally by measurement tools focused on physical aggression. This gender-linked divergence in the *form* rather than the *amount* of aggression helps situate this result within established empirical literature, rather than indicating a simple difference in aggression level.

The study also found that time spent watching television, use of computer games, sibling aggression, and parenting styles were positively and significantly correlated with child aggression. This is consistent with extensive literature linking excessive television viewing, particularly of violent content, to increased aggressive behaviors in children (Tosun & Yılmaz, 2024; Freeman & Johnson, 2025). However, this relationship is complex and often moderated by factors such as parental involvement, child temperament, and socio-environmental contexts. Interventions that enhance media literacy, encourage parental engagement, and promote emotional regulation have been identified as effective strategies to mitigate these effects (Tosun & Yılmaz, 2024; Freeman & Johnson, 2025). Similarly, the rise in computer and internet use among children has sparked concerns about its impact on behavior, including aggression. Research highlights both immediate and long-term effects of violent video games on children's aggressive thoughts and behaviors (DeCamp & Ferguson, 2020; Stewart & Moore, 2024; Wright & Perez, 2025). Short-term exposure may increase aggressive responses immediately following gameplay, while prolonged exposure can lead to desensitization to violence and normalization of aggressive behavior. Nevertheless, individual differences such as temperament, parental supervision, and the specific nature of game content critically influence these outcomes.

Sibling aggression also emerged as a significant correlate of child aggression. Literature confirms that sibling conflict can contribute to the development of aggressive behaviors, though this relationship is influenced by various moderators, including temperament, parenting practices, and the overall family environment (Bender & Schofield, 2020). Parenting styles were found to have a substantial impact on child aggression, echoing findings across numerous studies. Authoritarian, permissive, and neglectful parenting styles are generally linked to higher aggression levels, whereas authoritative parenting is associated with more adaptive behavioral outcomes (Padilla-Walker & Nelson, 2021; Maccoby & Martin, 2021; Timmerman & Walton, 2022; Steinberg & Silk, 2024; Chen & Lee, 2024). The influence of parenting styles on aggression is mediated through mechanisms such as emotional regulation, conflict resolution skills, and the quality of the parent-child relationship. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for designing effective interventions that promote positive parenting and

reduce aggressive behaviors in children (Baumrind & Black, 2021; Sikora & Wright, 2023; Foley & Jackson, 2025; Liu & Zhang, 2025).

Sibling aggression and parenting style likely play a pivotal role in shaping children's aggressive behavior, and this dynamic may help explain this study's results. For example, research shows that harsh or inconsistent parenting (authoritarian, indulgent, or neglectful styles) tends to increase sibling conflict and aggression, whereas an authoritative (warm, supportive) parenting style is generally protective against sibling aggression and peer-related aggressive behaviors (Liu & Abdul Rahman, 2022; Li, Shi, Zhang, et al., 2024). More specifically, a recent longitudinal study demonstrated that children exposed to aggressive or punitive parental discipline exhibited higher rates of peer-relation problems and emotional dysregulation, pathways that often mediate later aggressive behavior (Bedwell, Harrison, & Fridley et al., 2025). Moreover, sibling relational aggression itself is not only common within families but also associated with long-term social and cognitive outcomes, including poor decision-making and difficulties in social functioning in adulthood (Bedwell, Harrison, & Fridley et al., 2024). In light of this, if children in the sample grew up in homes characterized by harsh, neglectful, or inconsistent parenting, they may have experienced either physical or relational aggression with siblings, which, over time, could normalize aggression as a conflict-resolution strategy, influence emotional regulation, and thereby increase aggressive behavior more generally. Conversely, in homes where parents used supportive or authoritative parenting, children might develop empathy, better peer relationships, and lower aggression (Li, Zhou, Zhu, & Wu, 2023. Therefore, considering sibling aggression and parenting style provides a useful explanatory framework for why aggression levels might vary among participants, underscoring the importance of family environment, beyond peer, school, or individual factors, in interpreting our findings.

Conclusions

The current study concludes that gender is not a significant predictor of child aggression, suggesting that while boys and girls may express aggression differently, gender itself does not directly influence the overall frequency or intensity of aggressive behavior. Instead, the findings highlight that environmental and social factors play a more critical role in shaping child aggression. Notably, increased time spent watching television and engaging in computer games, higher levels of sibling aggression, and certain parenting styles are all strongly associated with elevated aggression in children. These results underscore the importance of focusing on the child's immediate environment and social context when addressing aggressive behavior, rather than relying on demographic factors like gender alone.

The implications of these findings are significant for parents, educators, and policymakers aiming to reduce aggression in children. Interventions should prioritize managing children's media consumption by encouraging limits on screen time and promoting age-appropriate, non-violent content. Furthermore, fostering positive sibling relationships and adopting authoritative parenting practices that emphasize emotional regulation and healthy communication may help mitigate aggressive tendencies. Additionally, the modest negative association between a balanced diet and aggression points to the potential benefits of holistic approaches that integrate lifestyle factors into behavioral interventions. Collectively, these insights advocate for multi-dimensional strategies that address both social environments and lifestyle habits to effectively reduce child aggression.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, interventions aiming to reduce child aggression should prioritize managing children's media consumption, particularly monitoring and regulating exposure to violent television content and video games. Parents and caregivers should be encouraged to foster positive sibling relationships and adopt authoritative parenting styles that promote emotional regulation and healthy conflict resolution. Schools and community programs could offer workshops on media literacy and parenting skills, helping families understand and mitigate the risk factors associated with child aggression. Additionally, promoting healthy lifestyle habits, including balanced nutrition, may serve as a complementary strategy for reducing aggression in children. The study underscores the

importance of a multifaceted approach to addressing child aggression, emphasizing that demographic factors like gender are less predictive than environmental influences. These results highlight the need for policymakers and practitioners to develop family-centered and community-based strategies that integrate media supervision, family dynamics, and parenting education. Understanding the complex interplay between these factors can inform tailored prevention and intervention programs that reduce aggressive behavior and support positive child development. Moreover, the role of a balanced diet suggests that integrating physical health and behavioral health strategies can have additive benefits.

Limitations and future research

While the study contributes valuable insights, limitations must be acknowledged. The cross-sectional design restricts causal inferences, and self-reported measures may be subject to bias. The study sample may also limit generalizability across different cultural or socioeconomic contexts. Future research should employ longitudinal designs to better understand causal pathways and examine how these factors interact over time. Besides, exploring other moderating variables, such as peer influence, mental health status, and community environment, would provide a more comprehensive understanding of child aggression. Investigating the mechanisms by which parenting styles and media exposure impact aggression could further refine intervention efforts.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest

The author declares that he acted in accordance with ethical rules in all processes of the research. The author declares no conflict of interest with other persons, institutions or organizations.

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