



Effects of Weapons on Aggressive Thoughts, Angry Feelings, Hostile Appraisals, and Aggressive Behavior: A Meta-Analytic Review of the Weapons Effect Literature

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Abstract

Guns are associated with aggression. A landmark 1967 study showed that simply seeing a gun can increase aggression—called the “weapons effect.” This meta-analysis integrates the findings of weapons effect studies conducted from 1967 to 2017. It includes 162 effect-size estimates from 78 independent studies involving 7,668 participants. The theoretical framework used to explain the weapons effect was the General Aggression Model (GAM), which proposes three routes to aggression—cognitive, affective, and arousal. The GAM also proposes that hostile appraisals can facilitate aggression. As predicted by the GAM, the mere presence of weapons increased aggressive thoughts, hostile appraisals, and aggression, suggesting a cognitive route from weapons to aggression. Weapons did not significantly increase angry feelings. Only one study tested the effects of weapons on arousal. These findings also contribute to the debate about social priming by showing that incidental exposure to a stimulus (weapon) can affect subsequent related behavior (aggression).

Keywords weapons effect, aggression, General Aggression Model, social priming

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Correction:

Expression of Concern

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Abstract

The Journal Editors hereby issue this note of an expression of concern for the following publication:

Benjamin, A. J., Jr., Kepes, S., & Bushman, B. J. (2017). Effects of weapons on aggressive thoughts, angry feelings, hostile appraisals, and aggressive behavior: A meta-analytic review of the weapons effect literature. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*. Advance online publication.

The authors of this manuscript contacted the editors indicating they had discovered some errors in the computation of effect sizes in their meta-analysis. Initial reanalysis suggested that at least one of the substantive conclusions of the manuscript was affected by the error; the authors now urge greater caution in interpreting the effect size of weapons on aggressive behavioral outcomes. The authors will undertake a thorough reanalysis and will modify the results and interpretations

accordingly, and this notice will be updated upon their completion of the modifications. The editorial staff appreciates the proactive efforts of the authors in this matter.

The Editors and SAGE strive to uphold the very highest standards of publication ethics and are committed to supporting the high standards of integrity of *Personality and Social Psychology Review*. Authors, reviewers, editors, and interested readers should consult the ethics section of SAGE and the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE) website for guidelines on publication ethics.