

**The Lecture Contains:**

- ☰ Cognitive theories of aggression
- ☰ Scripts for current situation
- ☰ Appraisal of others' behaviour
- ☰ Memories and associations elicited by aggressive cues
- ☰ Current affective states
- ☰ Excitation Transfer theory (Zillman, 1988)
- ☰ Social learning theory
- ☰ Effect of media violence

### Cognitive theories of aggression

- The personal causes of aggression primarily involve the cognitive processes that besides the impact of media violence involve
  - Scripts for current situation
  - Appraisal of others' behaviour
  - Current affective states
  - Memories and associations elicited by aggressive cues
- For the sake of clarity about these concepts, we shall take the example of a college student who was pushed to the ground by two strangers while he had just entered the premises of the cultural festival of a college.

### Scripts for current situation

- Script of a situation means the cognitive programmes for the events that one expects to happen in a particular setting. In our example of the college student who was pushed to the ground, he might not have expected an (apparent) assault at a place like a college's cultural festival. Had it been some other place such as a football ground, he might have thought of retaliating. But, at the college fest, a lack of such an expectation of being hit might not lead to retaliation his part.

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### Appraisal of others' behaviour

- Appraisal of others' behaviour arises out the questions related to the intentions of the person. Quite a useful information could be whether the other person is feeling apologetic or not. In case, the strangers' intention was perceived to be of hurting the college student, a reappraisal of the current setting would take place. For example, the college student would reconsider retaliating as that would might mean being shown the door by the festival organizers.

### **Memories and associations elicited by aggressive cues**

- The college student's reaction to being pushed by the strangers might not only be about the current concerns about retaliation but he might also be faced with the memories of such an incident in the past. It is quite possible that negative memory associations with the college, the cultural festival or being hit in the past might urge him to retaliate.

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### Current affective states

- As Berkowitz (1989) has pointed out, negative emotional states are strongly associated with aggressive behaviour. Besides, the above mentioned cognitive process, the current emotional state of the person may play a significant role in the decision to retaliate. For example, the college student might want to agree if he already was facing a letdown by a friend before coming to participate in the college festival.

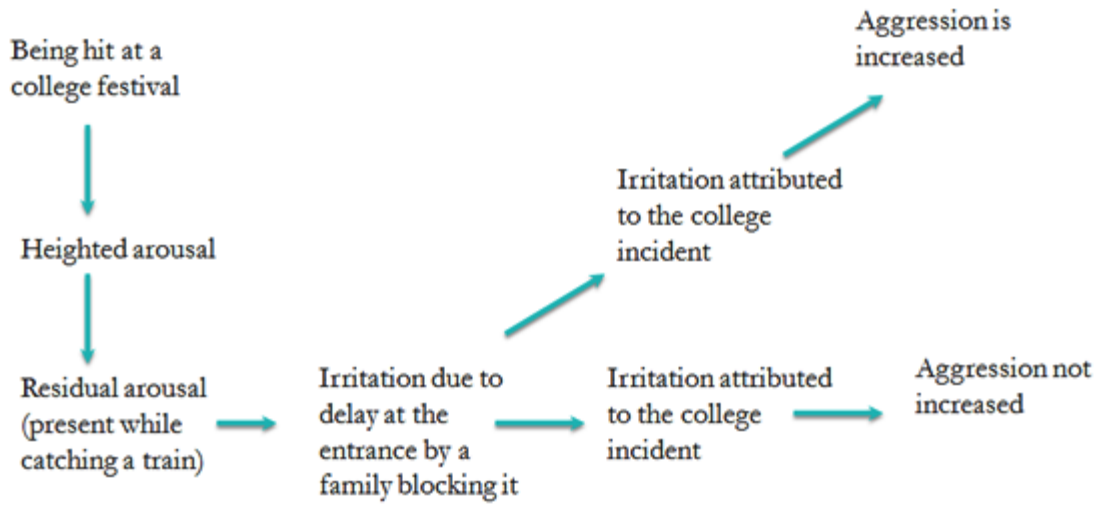
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### **Excitation Transfer theory (Zillman, 1988)**

- Zillman's excitation transfer theory states that if the reasons for arousal and irritation in the current incident are attributed to a past incident of heightened arousal, then the irritation or aggression is not increased but if the same are attributed to the current incident then the irritation or aggression gets increased. Let us take the example of the same college boy in the previous example and also assume that after being hit in the college festival, he had to catch a train.

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### Social learning theory





### Effect of media violence

- Several experiments, correlational studies and longitudinal studies have shown a positive relationship between media violence and aggression. What is particularly damaging is such an impact on children who discover ways to justifying their aggressive acts from what they watch in the media violence.

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