

Summary of Journal Article:

Quantitative Depictions of Threatening Phenomena in News Reports

G. W.

Speech 10, Interpersonal Communication

Professor Kahn

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Additionally, on the page following the news stories, the students answered a series of questions that assessed their apprehension and victimization risk levels. The questions asked their estimation of the likelihood they would become the victim of a burglary. The choices given ranged from good-bad, calm-anxious, not scare-scared, and concerned-unconcerned.

A majority of the students answered that they felt their chances were good that they would become a victim of a burglary. Furthermore, a majority of the students indicated that they were anxious, scared, and were concerned that a burglar would victimize them.

Although the added increased population data only moderately decreased apprehension levels (particularly among the male students), the results seem to indicate that frequent exposure to news stories depicting an increase in threatening occurrences increases a person's level of apprehension, and manifest higher levels of perceived victimization risk.

Article Strengths and Weaknesses

The strength of this article was that the experiments conducted helped to allow conclusions based on a cause-and-effect relationship. Another strength was the circumstances, or amount of frequency data presented, were fairly controlled. This allowed the experiments to observe any changes in the apprehension or perceived risk of victimization levels of the participants.

However, a weakness observed in the article was that the experiments should only be used when it is practical and ethical for the researcher to manipulate condition. For instance, a researcher might influence a student to believe that due to economic conditions, the threat of burglaries in their area were relatively high. Also, it would not be practical or ethical to make the students feel more apprehensive than normal or create a certain level of victimization, in order to see how they might react.

Recommendations for Future Research