Social Psychology Research and Prosocial Behavior

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The paper I selected is “Effects of Viewing Relational Aggression on Television on Aggressive Behavior in Adolescents: A Three-Year Longitudinal Study”. This paper explains the effects of media on the behavior of an individual in adolescence. Watching the TV shows that portray relational aggression is the reason for increased physical aggression. The author tested the presented hypothesis that whether TV programs cause relational aggression or not. For this purpose, the author recruited a group of families using different local databases. The participant mentioned their favorite TV serials and rated them on the basis of how frequently they watch these TV shows or serials. Then they were asked to rate the shows based on relation aggression that each show portrays. These ratings were crosschecked with the rating from actual TV show analysts. On the other hand to measure physical aggression participants were given some objects and were asked to rate them based on aggression each object depicts. The result shows that adolescents who watched low levels of relational aggression on TV, exibit a low level of aggression in real life irrespective of their gender (Coyne, 2016).

 Although the paper has several strengths yet there are some limitations as well. Most of the participants involved were from modern and educated families and were not culturally diverse. In the study, participants were asked to rate three favorite shows to conduct research on relational aggression. Although this is a validated measure of study but this could have been improved by utilizing the daily dairy studies to get a more comprehensive view of relational aggression including all sorts of adolescent media. In addition, the study focused on the effects of media on adolescents only but the study should be further elaborated to see the effect of media on children as well because it is a possibility that exposure to any relational aggression during childhood could impact in shaping relational aggression throughout the life span of a person.

Any study that involves children and adolescents is highly sensitive and should be done under the supervision of their parents. To collect information researchers visited homes as a home is the place where children and teens feel safe. The study was done after parents gave permission to ask questions from their children. The only concern I have is that physical aggression is against our moral ethics so in front of parent-children feel shy to express themselves so it would be uncomfortable for them to rate the objects based on aggression it depicts. Adolescents are already in a state where they are changing both physically and mentally it would make them uncomfortable to share the programs they view in front of their parents.

Media influence everyone no matter what age an individual is. Specifically talking about adolescents they are changing both mentally and physically due to which they are more affected by the programs they watch on TV. Watching a program that is either relationally or physically aggressive has a great impact on teens. Mostly teens try to mimic the characters they see on TV it is, therefore, important for both parents and teachers to teach their children the impact of media. Also, the entertainment industry should make programs that focus on developing different prosocial behaviors in teens. This will help them to realize their social responsibility and they will actively take part in helping others in need (Strasburger & Wilson, 2002).

There are many theories that will help in understanding the prosocial behavior. Particularly, in the above scenario, kin selection theory is applicable as people tend to help the people who are related to them likewise parents will only focus on their children rather than others. However, discussing media influence the reciprocity norm theory will be applicable as if teens watch shows that depict kindness and empathy they will reciprocate this attitude in real life (Aronson & Sommers, 2019).

**References**

Aronson, E., Wilson, T. D., & Sommers, S. (2019). *Social psychology*.

Coyne, S. M. (2016). Effects of viewing relational aggression on television on aggressive behavior in adolescents: A three-year longitudinal study. *Developmental psychology*, *52*(2), 284.

Strasburger, V. C., & Wilson, B. J. (2002). *Children, adolescents, and the media*. Sage Publications.