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PARENTS' BIASED PERCEPTIONS ABOUT MEDIA INFLUENCE: EXAMINING PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON ONE'S OWN CHILD, OTHER CHILDREN, AND OTHER PARENTS FROM VIOLENT TV ADS AND PSA'S TO STOP CYBERBULLYING

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PARENTS' BIASED PERCEPTIONS ABOUT MEDIA INFLUENCE: EXAMINING PERCEIVED EFFECTS ON ONE'S OWN CHILD, OTHER CHILDREN, AND OTHER PARENTS FROM VIOLENT TV ADS AND PSA'S TO STOP CYBERBULLYING

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Lovingly dedicated to my parents, Gerald and Marie Ozment

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Abstract

This study observed within a large, demographically diverse sample of American parents evidence of a parental third-person effect and a parental first-person effect. This was regardless of whether the respondent was a mother or father. Parents' perceptions of influence seem to be a function of their perception of the child's likely exposure to the message. A belief that the child was predisposed toward physical aggression was important in producing influence judgments from violent TV ads. A belief that the child was predisposed toward the teasing behavior was more important than perceived exposure in producing influence judgments about the PSAs to stop cyberbullying. Parents were willing to monitor their child's TV viewing and expand dissemination of the PSAs based on these influences biases.

Introduction

New media technology (e.g., cell phones, personal data assistants, and computers with links to the Internet) open additional channels for connection that help parents feel safe about their child's whereabouts and help children link to friends in locations around world. The new lines of communication, however, open kids to a growing threat of harassment. Wolak, Mitchell, and Finkelhor (2006) reported a 50% increase in the percentage of youth stating they had been harassed on the Internet between 2000 and 2005. Some studies rate victimization from cyber-bullying as high as one-third of the American adolescent population (Kowalski & Limber, 2007). Experts agree that a growing public health problem is emerging in the form of electronic aggression, but also agree that physical and face-to-face verbal aggression is far more prevalent (David-Ferdon & Feldman Hertz, 2007; Williams & Guerra, 2005). The present study examines parents' willingness to restrict access to television messages that place physical aggression in a positive light and, by contrast, their willingness to support the funding and dissemination of Public Service Announcements that discourage aggression on the Internet. The study examines whether parents' support to restrict or expand access to these messages is contingent on some biased perceptions about media influence. Guided by Davison's (1983) hypothesis of the third-person effect and recent research of the "parental third-person perception" (Meirick, Sims, Gilchrist, & Croucher, 2009), the present study hypothesizes that parents will perceive their child to be more

influenced by the PSAs to stop cyber-bullying and less influenced by violent television advertisements.

The study sets out to answer an applied question: In what way do influence judgments impact parents' willingness to support funding and dissemination of anti-bullying messages. Medical professionals in the field of adolescent health have encouraged community service organizations to raise awareness about bullying and incorporate anti-bullying messages in their service programs in order to "prevent bullying behavior and to change the perception that such behavior is normative" (Eisenberg & Aalsma, 2005, p. 89). Experts in the field of school-based anti-violence and anti-aggression programs acknowledge the supportive role that media play in producing and disseminating these kinds of messages (Dusenbury, Falco et al., 1997). Therefore, it is important to know the conditions under which parents are likely to support expanding the dissemination of pro-social media messages.

This research may contribute theoretically and empirically to the field. A relatively small collection of studies document parental third-person perceptions (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2002; Nathanson, Eveland, Park, & Paul, 2002; Tsfati, Ribak, & Cohen, 2005), and only one provides evidence of a parental first-person perception (Meirick, Sims, Gilchrist, & Croucher, 2009). Scholars have yet to settle on a single explanation for the phenomena, therefore two plausible logics are considered here: causal inference and self-enhancement. The implications of influence biases on parents' intentions to expand or restrict access to the messages

are examined. The theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and its component variable, perceived norms.

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the theoretical and empirical advancements in perceived media effects research generally and the parental third-person perception research, specifically. Hypotheses are generated from the overview of perceived effects literature, from the few studies to date to examine parental third-person perceptions, and from the two theoretical explanations.

An Overview of Davison's Third-Person Perception

There are several examples of cases in which individuals and groups have expressed concern about the influence of mass communication messages. In the 1980s, former Vice President Al Gore's then-wife, Tipper, with the Parents' Music Resource Center, criticized the American music recording industry, arguing that violent and sexually explicit song lyrics contributed to harmful effects on children (Ifill, 1986). When the documentary Fahrenheit 9/11, which was critical of then-President George W. Bush, was released in the summer of 2004, members of the Republican Party feared that the documentary would sway the opinion of voters in the 2004 presidential election (Billhartz, 2004). In 2011, the Parents Television Council sent an "urgent alert" to its subscribers. The PTC labeled MTV's new teen drama *Skins* child pornography for its dramatic portrayal of underage youth "drinking, smoking marijuana, and … having irresponsible sex" (parentstv.org, 2011). Fearing a consumer backlash, the fast food chain Taco Bell removed its advertisements from the *Skins* time block, which prompted the defection of other

advertisers from the cable channel (hollywoodreporter.com, 2011). When a flush of digital images were leaked in 2005, showing a group of American soldiers abusing Afghan prisoners, the U.S. Department of Defense expressed concern that publication of the images would put soldiers in danger of retaliation from Afghan civilians. At the time of this study, American military leaders were protesting the dissemination of photos of dead Afghans, arguing the images could prompt acts of vengeance. In these cases and in others, individuals and groups have claimed that mass media messages exert a great power to influence other people's attitudes and behaviors. However, the concern for society is rarely matched by critics conceding their own susceptibility to influence.

Sociologist and journalism professor W. Phillips Davison was one of the first to observe that people tend to err when estimating the effect of communication messages and media content. Davison hypothesized that people tend to think that a message will not influence them, but will influence others. In 1983, Davison published the results of three small studies in support of this hypothesis in *Public Opinion Quarterly,* the flagship journal of the American Association for Public Opinion Research. He named what he observed the third-person effect (TPE). Borrowing a metaphor from English grammar, Davison explains, "In the view of those trying to evaluate the effects of a communication, its greatest impact will not be on 'me' or 'you,' but on 'them'—the third persons" (1983, p. 3). Davison's studies examined self-to-other comparisons of messages expected to produce

effects such as persuasion from war propaganda, the influence of advertising on children, and the influence of public claims of candidates for political office.

From its original explanation 28 years ago, the idea of TPE has engaged many scholars from a variety of disciplines and initiated more than 200 refereed and published studies. The work has employed both experimental and survey designs. Three meta-analyses have been conducted (Paul, Salwen, & Dupagne, 2000; Sun, Pan, & Shen, 2008; Xu & Gonzenbach, 2008) along with the publication of three critical summaries of TPE's theoretical underpinnings and scientific advancements (Andsager & White, 2007; Perloff, 1993; 1999).

It is worth emphasizing that the third-person effect is unlike other media effects theory in that it posits *perceived* or anticipated media influence rather than the process by which influence takes place. Whereas, for example, media theories of agenda-setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1970) and cultivation (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980) explain how cumulative effects occur over time through repeated exposure, TPE is about *perceived* media influence and how discrepant perceptions concerning influence link to behavioral intention (Golan & Day, 2008; Huh, DeLorme, & Reid, 2004; Xu & Gonzenbach, 2008).

The Effect (Perceptual Component)

Two hypotheses have been formed in TPE research. The first hypothesis is that people routinely perceive that mass media affect others but not themselves. Of the TPE framework, this is the perceptual component, referred to as the third-person perception (TPP for short) (Perloff, 1993). Scholars should look at the third-

person perception component as one offering a sophisticated model for thinking about perceived media effects rather than a theoretical explanation. What is more, as Perloff (1999) explains, the focus of the TPE construct is a relational one rather than a focus on an individual level variable. Therefore, the emphasis is not on an increase or decrease in, say, perceived effect ”but on the relationship between, specifically the connection between perceptions of self and perceptions of others” (p. 355).

Typically, TPP researchers ask people to estimate how much they believe a media message affects others either in terms of persuasion, influencing attitudes, or producing changes in behavior. Then, participants are asked to report the effect that message likely has on them. Although not all research has supported the occurrence of the third-person perception (Glynn & Ostmann, 1988), empirical findings consistently demonstrate a perceptual gap between individuals' beliefs about mass media influence on themselves and its effect on others (Chapin, 2000; Cohen & Davis, 1991; Cohen, Mutz, Price, & Gunther, 1988; Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 1991; Faber & Youn, 1999; Gibbon & Durkin, 1995; Gunther & Christen, 2002; Gunther & Thorson, 1992; Innes & Zeitz, 1988; Meirick, 2006; Sharrer, 2002; Tsfati & Cohen, 2004; Willnat, 1996; Zhang, 2010).

Third-person perceptions consistently appear in the research (Sun, Pan, & Shen, 2008). The phenomenon has been observed in a variety of populations, including Australian voters (Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 1995), American children (Henricksen & Flora, 1999), Israeli parents (Tsfati, Ribak, & Cohen, 2005), and

Hong Kong college undergraduate students (Willnat, 1996). Third-person effects have emerged, for example, from defamatory newspaper articles (Cohen, Mutz, Price, & Gunther, 1988), the dramatic portrayal of a Soviet take-over in *Amerika* (Lasorsa, 1989), as well as Internet-based pornography (Lee & Tamborini, 2005). The effect is consistently present regardless of whether the *others* are defined as urban minority youth (Chapin, 2000), family and friends (Christen & Gunther, 2004) or even when parents are asked to estimate the influence of mass media on behalf of their small children (Meirick, Sims, Gilchrist, & Croucher, 2009).

Message desirability. The size and the direction of the gap appear to be a function of the perceived social desirability of the message. Researchers have examined peoples' influence judgments of messages presumed to have negative undesirable influence as well as messages presumed to be pro-social and "smart to be influenced by" (Gunther & Thorson, 1992). Experimenters have found that when exposed to a socially undesirable message in, for example, a defamatory newspaper articles or violent, misogynistic song lyrics, people tend to assume greater influence on others. However, in experiments where participants were exposed to the socially desirable messages of public service announcements (PSAs) concerning, for example, how to tan or drive safely, people tended to assume greater message influence on themselves rather than others (Gunther & Mundy, 1993; Gunther & Thorson, 1992; Hoorens & Ruiter, 1996).

Several studies have manipulated message desirability, resulting in smaller third-person perceptions (Eveland & McLeod, 1999; Gunther & Thorson, 1992;

Innes & Zeits, 1988) and first-person perceptions (Cohen & Davis, 1991; Henriksen & Flora, 1999; Hoorens & Reuter, 1996; Price, Tewsbury & Huang, 1998). The observation of first-person perceptions, to estimate greater influence on self of socially desirable media messages, is now well established in the third-person perception literature.

Social Distance. As described earlier third person effect studies ask people to make influence judgments about the amount of effect a message will have on them self, while estimating the amount of influence the same message will have on others. The various ways in which "others" have been defined by researchers are almost as numerous as the number of third-person effect studies. Investigators have employed the terms, for example: "family," "other Californians," "other voters," "the average person," and "the public in general." These studies have shown that the gap between people's perception of influence for self compared to others increases when others are described as geographically or socially distant from the self.

The moderating role of social distance has been documented in a number of studies (Cohen, et al, 1988; White, 1997). Gibbon and Durkin (1995) reported a strong linear trend in people's perception of influence from an Australian soap opera, where greatest influence was perceived on others in general and subsequently less influence on other Australians, other individuals in the state, neighbors, family, and the self. Lambe and McLeod (2005) found evidence that age-based social distance moderated the third-person effect, with the respondents

(whose average age was 49 years old) perceiving greatest influence on 18- to 24-year old adults, less on other 40- to 50-year old adults, and least on themselves. Similarly, Jensen and Hurley (2005) found that environmental newspaper articles were perceived to pose the greatest influence on state residents, less so on local residents, and still less for the respondents' college classmates. Social distance has been so consistently linked to first- and third-person effects that scholars have posed the social-distance corollary to the third-person hypothesis.

The concept of social distance has been short-changed in many third-person effects studies. Meirick (2004) argued that heretofore third-person effect researchers have operationalized others in terms of increasing generality and geographical distance, but have largely ignored the relevant component of perceived "likeness and difference from the self" (p. 235). Meirick further argued that some topic-relevant dimensions of difference, such as race, gender, and politics, need a conceptualization of social distance that acknowledges in- versus out-group memberships. Duck, Hogg, and Terry (1995; 1998) made a similar argument that the third-person perceptual phenomena may be the result of perceivers estimating the persuasability for the members of their own social group and others outside their group instead of making a self-to-other comparison.

Behavioral Component

The belief that others are more affected by mass media messages than we are has been linked to the tendency of individuals to act on the belief (Perloff, 1993). Researchers have linked the perception that others are more influenced by

socially undesirable messages to one's willingness to support censorship (Shah, Faber, & Youn, 1999), support government regulation (Salwen & Driscoll, 1997; Wan & Youn, 2004), and vote for political candidates (Golan, Banning, & Lundy, 2008).

Most of the empirical findings linking perceived effects on others to behavioral intentions for the self comes from research on people's willingness to censor. Censorship support has been positively related to perceived negative effects from television programs (Hoffner & Buchanaon, 2002; Gunther & Hwa (1996), violent and misogynistic song lyrics (McLeod, Eveland, & Nathanson, 1997) as well as pornographic material (Lee & Tamborini, 2005; Rojas et al. 1992; Wu & Koo, 2001).

The relationship is strongest in cases where the message is perceived to have a strong negative effect and the target of the effect is a specified individual or group. Perceived effect specifically on the self has positively predicted support for censorship (Gunther & Hwa, 1996; Lee & Tamborini, 2005; Lo & Paddon, 2001).

Conversely, researchers have linked first-person perceptions—a perception that self more than others will be influenced by a socially desirable media message—to self-reports of hours willing to volunteer (Andsager & White, 2007) and engage in other socially desirable behaviors such as donating money and goods to a charity (Golan & Banning, 2008).

Parental third-person perception

In a recent set of ground-breaking studies, parents and caregivers have shown a tendency to perceive their offspring, compared to other children, much less likely to be influenced by violent, sexually explicit TV content (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2002; Nathanson, Eveland, Park, & Paul, 2002; Tsfati, Ribak, & Cohen, 2005). In addition, researchers have recently reported a parental third-person perception for materialism effects from commercial television programming (Meirick, Sims, Gilchrist, & Croucher, 2009). Parents' perception of influence on behalf of their child in comparison to other children offers an extension to the third-person perception framework (Nathanson et al., 2002). In the following paragraphs, I summarize the preliminary findings.

Hoffner and Buchanan

Hoffner and Buchanan (2002) questioned a sample of parents whose children ranged in ages from 3 to 18. The investigators asked the parents to rate three potential effects of television violence on their own child and other children in their child's age group. The three potential effects from viewing television violence included: a) believing the world a scary and dangerous place, b) holding a positive attitude toward aggression, and c) exhibiting aggressive behavior. The investigators employed a mixed analysis of variance design to compare the mean scores of perceived effects of viewing television violence, with the within-subjects factors the target (own child versus other child) and TV viewing effects (mean-world beliefs, aggression approval, and aggressive behavior).

Hoffner and Buchnan reported that parents perceived that viewing TV violence influenced other children more than the parents' own child, judging other children to hold greater mean-world beliefs, positive attitudes toward aggression, and likelihood to exhibit aggressive behavior. The researchers reported that the effects were strongest for the socially undesirable media effects of holding positive attitudes toward aggression and engaging in aggressive behavior.

The results indicated that parental third-person perceptions predicted an increase in parental mediation of violent television and that this was strongest for parents of boys and younger children. The study also demonstrated that parents' perception that TV viewing effects other children's aggression was positively associated with parents' willingness to restrict their own child's TV viewing, the first reported indication of a perceived process of two-step flow of influence (from television-to-peers and ultimately to one's own child).

Nathanson, Eveland, Park and Paul

Nathanson, Eveland, Park, and Paul (2002) surveyed primary caregivers of 2nd through 8th graders. The resarchers were interested in the likelihood of the caregivers to engage in a variety of protective behaviors based on perceptions of media influence. Primary caregivers were defined as the "person in the family who has the most responsibility for taking care of the children" (p. 392). The protective behaviors ranged from the relatively passive act of talking to their child (active mediation), restricting access to objectionable television content (restrictive mediation), and/or support for policies in favor of censorship. Primary caregivers'

demographics, television viewing, and the perceived efficacy the caregivers' held for each protective behavior also were recorded. The researchers asked the primary caregivers' to estimate the likelihood that their own and other children's attitudes and behaviors would be affected by the violent and sexual content in police/crime shows, situation comedies, and nighttime soap operas.

Nathanson and her colleagues reported that primary caregivers judged other children, compared to their own child, to be more vulnerable to the negative influence of violent and sexual content. The authors are the first to apply the explanation of self-enhancement as a motivation for the parental third-person effect. As Nathanson et al. states "if primary caregivers believe that their children are extensions of themselves, then they may extend their perceptions of personal invulnerability to their offspring" (p. 402). In the study, primary caregivers reported that regardless if they perceived their own or other children to be in greatest risk to negative influence from television, the caregivers were likely to engage in active mediation, restrictive mediation, and support for censorship.

Tsfati, Ribak and Cohen

Tsfati, Ribak, and Cohen (2005) considered the concept of parental mediation more broadly in the context of a host of other monitoring behaviors in which parents engage in order to shape and direct the ecology of the child. The investigators hypothesized that, in addition to active and restrictive mediation and support for censorship, parents, based on perceptions of media influence, may also monitor their child's choice for friends. Tsfati and colleagues interviewed 132

Israeli parents of 4th to 8th graders about the parents' perceptions of influence from viewing a controversial television drama that was targeted toward teens. The teen soap opera, entitled *Rebelde Way*, depicted young people frequently engaging in delinquent, violent, and/or sexual behavior. The program had raised such controversy that the Israeli government allowed broadcast of the drama only after censoring portions of it and issuing a disclaimer that the program was not appropriate for younger viewers. For this reason, Tsfati et al. treated the content as socially undesirable and did not measure message desirability in the study.

Tsfati et al. (2005) employed a repeated measures ANOVA to assess the difference in mean scores for perceived influence in their child, their child's friend, and Israeli kids in general. The investigation revealed support for the parental third-person effect, with parents perceiving less influence in their child compared to their child's friends and Israeli kids in general. The findings also supported the social distance corollary to the third-person hypothesis, with parents perceiving greater influence on Israeli kids in general, comparatively less on young friends close to their child, and the least amount of influence on their own child.

Tsfati and colleagues were most interested in exploring the behavioral correlates to parental third-person perceptions. To evaluate the behavioral hypothesis, parents' behavioral intention (television monitoring and peer-relationship monitoring) scores were regressed hierarchically first on the block of scores for parents' age, sex, and control-orientation and then a block of scores for parents' perceived influence on parents' own child, the child's friends, and Israeli

kids in general. The authors reported that control-orientation and perceived influence on one's own child accounted for significant variation in the prediction of parents' television and peer-relationship monitoring.

Specifically, the authors reported a strong negative association between third-person perceptions (the gap between perceived influence on own child versus Israeli kids in general) and parent's total monitoring behaviors. The more parents' perceived their child was less influenced by viewing *Rebelde Way* the less parents' reported they would monitor both their child's viewing or choice for friends. The authors reported, "Perceived influence on one's own child was the only significant predictor of monitoring behaviors" (p. 15). Additionally, parents perceptions of media influence on Israeli kids in general was not associated with parents' TV monitoring behaviors. However, third-person perceptions were positively associated with monitoring peer-relationships when peer-relationship monitoring was examined alone. The authors also found, not surprisingly, a positive association between parents' control orientation and total monitoring behaviors. Parents with a higher control orientation tended more to monitor their child's peer relationships.

As stated, perceiving that one's own child was influenced by watching *Rebelde Way* was associated with restricting the child's access to the objectionable content, whereas perceiving that other children were influenced was associated with restricting or intervening in the child's choice for friends. The findings demonstrate that parents' response to their perceptions of media influence include

not only active and restrictive monitoring of their child's television viewing and their own support for censorship, but also that parents may monitor their child's social environment based on perceptions of media influence. The researchers concluded that parents' influence judgments and resulting media choices make important contributions to the psychology literature.

Meirick, Sims, Gilchrist and Croucher

Parents' perceptions of media effects on their own and other children have been operationalized in a variety of ways in the literature, with a majority presuming predominantly negative outcomes. As described above, scholars have presumed effects from viewing violent and/or sexual content to include increased attitudes in favor of aggression and the adoption of aggressive behaviors. Meirick, Sims, Gilchrist, and Croucher (2009) examined whether an additional perceived outcome from viewing commercial television programming would be an increase in materialistic beliefs among young viewers. In their survey of 171 parents of children ages 4 to 12, the authors sought to examine this potential perceived effect from viewing socially undesirable content, and did so by assessing parents' individual score on a materialism measure. This was a way to assess whether parents indeed perceived materialism effects on their own child an undesirable prospect. As such, Meirick et al. was the first in the parental TPE series to indirectly measure message desirability.

In addition, the authors examined perceived educational effects from viewing public television. This was the first time that scholars had examined

parents' perception of the effect of desirable media content on children and the first to test whether parental third-person perceptions attenuate or reverse for socially desirable media. Finally, the authors looked at an additional behavioral correlate to third-person perceptions; that is, support for regulations of commercial and/or educational broadcasting.

Meirick et al. (2009) reported that parents perceived a greater materialism effect on other children compared to their own, but there was no observed relationship between the parents' individual materialism score and perceived effects on own and other children. That is to say, it didn't appear that message desirability scores were related to parents' media influence biases. This finding is somewhat inconsistent with Hoffner et al. (2001) in which the researchers observed that people, who found the message of violence on TV desirable, tended to hold greater third-person perceptions about TV's influence on mean world perceptions. As the authors explain "The more people liked violent television, the less effect they saw on themselves.... In addition, people who liked violence more believed that it affected both themselves and others less" (p. 295).

As stated, Meirick et al. (2009) study was the first to examine parental perceived effects from socially desirable content, specifically educational effects from viewing public television programming. Meirick et al. found no overall difference in perceived effects on one's own or other children. The authors did find an interaction between educational subject matter and perceived effects such that perceived education was greater for one's own child for advanced subject matter,

the first evidence for a parental first-person perception that influence would be perceived to be greatest on one's child more than other children.

Consistent with Hoffner and Buchannan (2002) and Nathanson et al. (2002), Meirick and his colleagues reported that parents who perceived materialism effects on their own children tended to monitor their child's access to commercial TV. Parents did not support restrictions of commercial content regardless of whether perceived effects were on their own or other children. The researchers conceded that this finding may have been a function of the parents' political ideology and beliefs about free speech—variables unanalized in this study. Parents did, however, exhibit a greater tendency toward supporting regulations in favor of broadening educational content, especially when they perceived an educational effect on their own child.

The mean-world beliefs and aggressive attitudes and behaviors study by Hoffner and Buchanan (2002), the protective behaviors study by Nathanson et al. (2002), and Tsfati, Ribak, and Cohen's (2003) study of the influence of *Rebelde Way,* all reported third-person perceptions. Likewise, Meirick and colleagues' (2009) study of materialism effects also reported third-person perceptions. Together, these studies support that parents tend to perceive that objectionable media content influences other children more than their own child. What is more, Tsfati and colleagues found evidence in favor of the social distance corollary to the third-person effect, observing a parental perception of influence greatest for Israeli

kids who were socially remote to the parents compared to friends close to the parents' child.

Three of the four studies reported an association between parental third-person effects for socially undesirable content and parental television monitoring. Only Tsfati, Ribak, and Cohen (2003) found no such association. Meirick et al. (2009) was the first to examine perceived effects of watching socially desirable media content in public television programming and reported evidence of parental first-person perceptions as well as second-person perceptions in which the parents perceived influence for both other children and their own child.

Theoretical Framework

This research considers two of the more prominent explanations for third-person perceptions and first-person perceptions, ones that can be reasonably applied to the parent-to-child context. These include causal inference and self enhancement. Generally, the two explanations focus on different aspects of the judgment situation. Causal inference explanations focus on the often-times stereotypical beliefs parents have about children, their own and others. Self-enhancement focuses on parents and their presumed motivation to improve self-esteem. As parental TPE research is quite new, each explanation and its applicability to parents' media influence judgments requires a detailed review.

Causal Inference

The first explanation for parental third-person perceptions contends that people make a series of inferences about the message in question and the likely

audience for the message and from this form a judgment about influence for both self and others. Specifically with respect to parents, the argument is that parents consider the message, the likelihood of exposure to the message for their child in comparison to other children, as well as the two groups' predisposition toward the behavior targeted by the message.

This view takes its basis from attribution theory, which is credited to Fritz Heider (1958). Heider argued that because people "are not content simply registering the facts and events around them, they are driven to refer to them, as far as possible, as the invariance's of his [or her] environment" (p. 81). As a way to add meaning to, predict, and even influence human actions, we routinely make sense by making inferences about the causes for actions, our own actions and others' (p. 123). These inferences allow us to see the acts of others as meaningful and predictable parts of a larger pattern. Heider argued that the tendency to make sense by making inference is so automatic that people often infer relationships based on little to no information. Perhaps that is why it should come as no surprise that research has shown that people's causal inferences are fraught with a type of judgment bias.

Attentiveness to situational factors. Referred to as the fundamental attribution error, this perceptual bias indicates that while we make causal inferences about our own and other people's behavior, we do not necessarily attribute the same cause to our own actions and the actions of others. Research shows people tend to attribute their behavior to situational variables (elements external to the self)

and attribute the behavior of others to dispositional variables (elements internal to the other) (Ross & Fletcher 1985). An example in line with the fundamental attribution error would be explaining the late arrival of one's coworker to being a poor planner, but saying we were late because traffic was jammed. As Gunther (1991) explains, "people assume their own actions are a response to the circumstances and situations at hand, whereas they attribute the actions of others to personal dispositions" (p. 357). What is important to observe is that we are prone to underestimate the impact of situational factors on others (Ross, 1977, p. 183).

Some researchers have gone so far as to suggest that the third-person perception is a type of the broader fundamental attribution error (Gunther, 1991; Mutz, Price, & Gunther, 1989). They argue that the third-person perception results from people attributing their own media invulnerability to their sensitivity to situational variables such as the untrustworthiness of the source and by contrast attributing others' media vulnerability to dispositional variables such as the others' inexperience. Reid and Hogg (2005) summarize it this way: "Others are influenced because they are the kind of people who are easily influenced; they are gullible or naïve and therefore as a rule always more easily influenced. Self is influenced by the nature of the information and the influence situation" (p. 130).

There are conceptual and empirical reasons to challenge any explanation of third-person perception as a type of attribution error. First, Hoorens and Ruiter (1996) observed that in order for one to accept that third-person perceptions are the product of believing that others are inattentive to situational cues, such as the

trustworthiness of the source or the hostile nature of the content, we must also believe that others are inattentive to the situation of mere message exposure. From this belief, we would anticipate that others would be inattentive to the message and therefore we would anticipate less—not more—message influence. This would produce an attenuated third- , or perhaps, a first-person perception. Furthermore, while Gunther (1991) found support for his hypothesis that participants would perceive greater media influence on others than themselves from a defamatory article appearing in a presumably disreputable supermarket tabloid, Cohen, Mutz, Price and Gunther (1988) observed perceived influence on both the self and others. The authors observed greater message influence on the self when the source appeared unbiased toward a public figure and perceived greater message influence on others when the source appeared biased toward the public figure. Taken together, it is not clear that third-person perceptions are a miscalculation of others' (in)attentiveness to situational characteristics in the message.

The role of inference. Despite the problems of claiming third-person perception as a type of the fundamental attribution error, it is undisputed that people tend to make sense of social information through causal inferences, and some scholars have argued that first- and third-person perceptions are, at root, inferences we form based on beliefs about others. For example, following the work of McLeod and colleagues, Meirick (2008) linked four theoretical assumptions underlying the target corollary to third-person effects of which Meirick argued inference was foundational.

Meirick argued that people are motivated to make sense of their social environment by making inferences about the causes of their own and other people's behavior (as described above). Second, people tend to hold a Hypodermic Model-type lay theory about mass media effects and anticipate that media exposure will produce strong media effects. Third, people also tend to carry stereotypical beliefs about the likely audience for certain types of mass media, anticipating that certain types of content are made for and are attended to by certain groups of people. From this, people form an account of message influence based on a simple heuristic of those most likely exposed and therefore most likely influenced. Attribution theory, in this view, offers an explanation for TPP in that it suggests that people tend to err in estimating message effects on self and others because people tend to infer (sometimes erroneously) relationships between media influence and certain types of people and content.

Evidence supports this explanation. Lambe and McLeod (2005) found third-person perceptions especially for age-based comparison groups, which the respondents perceived were susceptible to influence from such messages as "beer ads encouraging consumption," "movies with gratuitous violence," and "negative political ads." (p. 285). Similarly, Reid and Hogg (2003) observed greater perceived influence on university students, bankers, and "trailer trash" from media categories (i.e., MTV, CNBC's Financial News, and The Jerry Springer Show) that the participants judged normative for the respective groups.

Inferences based on perceived norms for the social group make sense. A norm is a standard of behavior for the social group. There are numerous typologies, but the most relevant to the current work is summarized by Lapinski and Rimal (2005). The authors distinguish between collective norms and perceived norms. Perceived norms are the individual's "interpretation of the prevailing collective norm" or "code of conduct" for the group. Perceived norms make up the defining attributes or what is prototypical for the group. The perception of what is normal for a group may be based on real-world experience (Meirick, 2005) or a stereotype.

Stereotypes are mental representations that "contain our knowledge, beliefs, and expectations about a social group" (Kunda, 1999, p. 315). Scharrer's (2002) study of American adults' perceptions about the social-groups most vulnerable to the negative influence from television violence showed that perceptions of influence were greatest for social-groups perceived to vary in terms of status or marginalization, including children, teens, those with less education and those with less income. Sharrer concluded that "We believe these results … suggest negative stereotypes of marginalized groups … may explain unfavorable views of some social groups as susceptible to media influence" (p. 697). Lambe and McLeod concluded by arguing that even "judgments of perceived exposure may themselves be subject to stereotyping and/or a self (on in-group) enhancement bias" (p. 288). The role of self-enhancements motivations will be discussed in a subsequent section.

As Meirick (2008) summarized, people infer a relationship between certain types of media and the likely exposure of certain types of audiences. Several studies have observed that people's perceptions of comparison groups and respective anticipated exposure to violent and misogynistic song lyrics were a greater predictor of third-person perception than perceived similarity between self and others--(the social distance corollary described in the first section of this chapter) (Eveland, Nathanson, Detenber, & McLeod, 1999; McLeod, Detenber, & Eveland; 2001; McLeod, Eveland, & Nathanson, 1997). One problem for these findings, however, is that the previously cited studies, while providing evidence to support the perceived exposure explanation, only dealt with antisocial messages.

In Meirick's (2005) examination of perceived effects of tobacco advertisements and anti-smoking and anti-drunk driving public service announcements (PSAs), the author found that perceived exposure positively predicted perceived undesirable effects for the smoking advertisements, but not for the anti-smoking and anti-drunk-driving PSAs. Instead, in both cases, a group's perceived predisposition toward smoking or driving drunk predicted perceived effects.

In Meirick (2008) perceived predispositions did not outperform perceived exposure, but it did predict perceived effects for ‘‘people your age’’ for three of the four desirable messages. The idea that people's first-person perceptions would be driven by their beliefs about others' predisposition toward the message and specifically the behavior advocated or discouraged in the message follows a similar

logic as that described above by Meirick for the target corollary: people infer messge influence based on a belief that media have powerful effects on those most exposed and that certain types of people are both more exposed to and predisposed toward the behavior in the message.

Self-Enhancement

The self-enhancement explanation focuses on the individual. Shelly Taylor and her colleagues observed that, even among crime victims and patients of terminal illness, the tendency is strong for individuals to construe “certain distortions of their situation” (1989, ix). Referred to as *positive illusions*, these self-enhancing beliefs are the hallmark of healthy cognitive functioning. In the social psychology literature, Taylor and Brown (1988) found numerous ways in which people accomplish an enhanced self-image. People do this by holding overly positive views about the self, believing in one's ability to control their environment, and holding an optimistic bias about one’s future.

Research shows that more favorable beliefs about the self consistently appear in studies in which people are asked to rate themselves and others on a valued trait or quality (Baumeister,1993; Hoorens, 1993). One often-cited example is in a study of Finnish car owners, which reported that 90 percent of the owners believed themselves to be better than the average driver (as cited by Lindeman, 1997). The related phenomenon of people holding illusions of control have appeared mostly in studies in which people were placed in situations of chance, but behaved as if they could determine the outcome in their favor (Langer 1975). The

phenomenon of optimistic bias is the self-enhancing belief that we, much more than others, are likely to be the recipient of positive events (like seeing one's home increase in value or getting a job), while at the same time believing that others are more likely to experience negative life events (like divorce or being the victim of a crime).

Positive illusions and optimistic biases relate to the third-person perception. Just as people tend to believe that they much more than others are above average, in for example, their ability to get along with others or safely drive a vehicle, they tend also to believe they possess above average personal characteristics that make them able to stave off the effects of unwanted media influence. People claim they possess superior intellect, are more educated, or are more experienced on the subject matter and, thus, would not be influenced (Andsager & White, 2007). Third-person perceptions can also be explained by the self-enhancing belief that we are unlikely to experience negative life events, the optimistic bias. Assuming that influence from a socially undesirable message is unwanted, the prospect of being influenced would be a negative outcome and something more likely to happen to others.

The motivation to boost self-esteem by viewing one’s self in a positive light and believing one’s self to be the beneficiary of only positive outcomes has explained third-person perceptions when the message is socially undesirable and smart for one to reject. The self-serving motive also has explained perceived effects for socially desirable content when the message is smart for one to follow. When

the message is of a positive nature, people tend to be motivated in a self-serving way to believe that we much more than others are wise and see the virtue in being influenced by the message and optimistic about our chances to receive greater benefit from the pro-social message to, for example, drive safely or give to charity (Gunther & Thorson, 1992; Hoorens & Ruiter, 1993).

The empirical findings have generally borne out these predictions, with third-person perceptions of socially undesirable messages and either attenuated or reversed so-called first-person perceptions appearing for desirable messages (Meirick, 2008/2009; Tal-Or & Tsfati, 2007). Because generally in Western cultures, influence of even a positive, socially desirable message is unsought and unwanted, effects are often weaker.

Projected illusions. In order to understand how specifically parents derive self-enhancing benefit from perceiving their child less vulnerable to media influence compared to other children, it's helpful to consider what social personality-psychologists understand about the self construct. The self structure is generally thought to be a representation of not only one's traits, abilities, preferences, interests, goals and experiences, but also of elements in the individual's social world. Individuals form part of their identity from social contexts in which they adopt and practice behavior. They form identity from their affiliation with other groups and with close significant others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). As a result, parents, for example, think about or define themselves, at least

in part, by their roles as parents, their membership in parent-related groups, and by their children (Cross, Bacon, & Morris, 2000).

Scholars who employ the self-enhancement explanation for parental third-person perceptions presume that the self-esteem derived from parents' illusions of personal grandeur are also derived from projecting grandiose beliefs onto their child. The argument is: we feel good about ourselves believing good things about our offspring. This idea appears repeatedly in the parenting literature. Taylor (1989) states that the self-enhancing tendency of parents to project positive illusions on to their children's abilities and future opportunities is part of a set of "hopeful behaviors" in which parents engage in order to help their offspring realize their potential. In an oft-cited musing, Tiger explains how holding optimistic views about one's children helps parents make the sacrifices they otherwise rationally would not consider (as cited by Taylor 1989).

And, the research supports that parents hold "projected illusions" about their children's attractiveness, their child's talents, and the child's prospects for the future (Aron, Aron, Tudor, & Nelson, 1991; Cohen & Fowers, 2004; Wenger, 1999). Likewise, as described in previous sections, there is some research to indicate that parents also tend to perceive that their child is much better able than other children to defend against the unwanted influence of mass media (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2002; Nathanson, Eveland, Park, & Paul, 2002; Tsfati, Ribak, & Cohen, 2005). In addition, researchers have recently reported a parental first-person perception that one's own child is much better able to see the virtue in being

influenced by a socially desirable message in educational programming (Meirick, Sims, Gilchrist, & Croucher, 2009).

*Sex differences.*It is possible that parental third-person perceptions may be greater for mothers and women caregivers. Cross and Madson (1997) observed that self-constructs for men and women differ. Baumeister and Sommer (1997) specifically argue that these differences manifest in the degree to which men and women perceive themselves interdependent to others. They argue that, while men form their self-concept from relevant social categories in, say, their membership in a sporting group, women define themselves by interpersonal attachments in family and friends. Weng and Mowen's work on the moderating effect of self-construal on advertisement effectiveness demonstrates that American women exhibit a stronger connectedness self-schemata, whereas men show a separated self structure (Weng, Bristol, Mowen, & Chakraborty, 2000; Weng & Mowen, 1997).

Researchers have found that women have a greater interest in, knowledge about, and empathy for others (Chodorow, 1987; Hoffman, 1977), and as a result, may lose a sense of self with the loss of a significant close other (Miller, 1986). Because women's sense of self is organized around important relationships and associations, it is hypothesized that women more than men will derive greater self-enhancing benefit from projecting positive illusions on to their children and, thus, perceive that their child will receive less influence from a socially undesirable media message, while at the same time, perceiving more influence from a socially desirable message. Research on the third-person effect and specifically parents'

third-person-like perceptions have not endeavored to examine the differences in perceived influence in mothers versus fathers and male versus female caregivers.

The previous section has offered two explanations for parent's first- and third-person perceptions. One is that parents infer message influence based on a belief that media have powerful effects on children most exposed and that certain groups of children are both more exposed to the message and predisposed toward the behavior in the message. Another way of looking at this is through the lenses of self-enhancement.

Proponents of this view argue that parents derive improved self-esteem from believing that their child is less vulnerable to influence from socially undesirable messages at the same time more likely to receive persuasive benefit from socially desirable messages. Inference is a cognitive process in which people make connections between pieces of information whereas self-serving beliefs about media influence are motivational. Still, there is some evidence to suggest that inferences also are self-serving in nature. The two views explain perceptions of both positive and negative influence and perceptions of influence for self and other and parents' own child and other children. The next section considers the implications of these perceptions on behavioral intetnion by first looking at the empirical findings supporting a link between first- and third-person perceptions and people's self-reported intention to take action. The subsequent section also applies a theory to explain this relationship, as the field has not consistently employed theory to explain or predict behavioral intention.

Behavioral Component

The current research seeks to examine the behavioral correlates to third- and first-person perceptions and apply, as Golan and Banning (2008), the theory of planned behavior to the context of parents' assessments of media messages. The research follows previous parental third-person effects research in examining parents' willingness to talk with their children about, restrict access to, and support government regulation of socially undesirable messages. The current research also looks at parents' perceived likelihood to support funding and dissemination of a socially desirable message.

Arguably one of the most cited examples of the third-person perception and its potential for producing behavioral intentions is described in Davison (1983). Davison recounts how in World War II white U.S. Marine Corp officers moved a unit of troops based on the belief that Japanese propaganda would incite insurrection within the ranks. The Japanese had dropped leaflets over the troops' location that encouraged the black troops to surrender, stating that the Japanese government had no quarrel with the black troops and that there was no need to risk one's life for the "white man" (Davidson, 1983, p. 1). Although the leaflets were aimed at the black troops, the message compelled the behavior of the officers and effectively resulted in the officers moving the unit of troops. Davison's original work offers a number of these kinds of plain but persuasive examples of how the perception that others will be influenced by a message can affect the behaviors of onlookers. Scholars have argued as to why this is so, but the general belief is that

people may either want to prevent the perceived (typically) negative effect on others (Perloff, 2002) or want to protect themselves from being an unwitting bystander (Banning, 2006; Banning & Lundy, 2008).

Influence Biases and Links to Behavioral Intention

Evidence supporting a linkage between perceived effects on others and corresponding behavioral intentions for the self comes from research on people's willingness to censor. For example, people's support of censorship has been strongly and positively related to perceived negative effects from content on television (Hoffner& Buchanan, 2002; Gunther &Hwa 1996), pornographic material (Lee & Tamborini, 2005; Rojas et al. 1996; Wu & Koo, 2001), and violent and misogynistic song lyrics (McLeod, Eveland, & Nathanson, 1997).

The association between perceived effects on others and one's support for censorship is not always substantiated. Xu and Ganzenbach (2008) observed that the correlation between the magnitude of the third-person perception and self-report in favor of censorship is not as strong for content perceived to be marginally harmful. The authors observed no such strong and positive relationship for news coverage of terrorism (Haridakis & Rubin, 2005), celebrity criminal trials (Salwen & Driscoll, 1997; Salwen & Dupagne, 1997) or in the case of advertisements (Hu, DeLorme, & Reid, 2004; Youn, Faber, & Shah, 2000; Wan and Youn, 2004). Rather, it is consistently observed that the TPE-censorship association appears most when the perceived effect from the message is negative. As Xu and Gonzenbach

conclude, people's perceptions of effects especially harmful ones "propel people to act" (p. 375).

While this may be so, there are contingent conditions. Chia, Liu, and McLeod (2004) reported a stronger positive correlation between third-person perceptions and the likelihood to support censorship, specifically when the perceived negative influence was on a specified individual or group versus a generalized other as in the public or other voters. For example, in the case of pornography, perceived effect on the self has shown to more strongly predict support for censorship (Gunther & Hwa, 1996; Lee & Tamporini, 2005; Lo & Paddon, 2000). Similarly, Jensen and Hurley (2005) observed a strong relationship between perceived influence on self and intention to act on stories of environmental news.

Adding some complexity to the TPE-censorship picture has been the mixed findings that willingness to restrict content has been correlated to perceived effects on the generalized other for political news and a variety of advertising messages (Salwen, 1998; Youn, Faber, & Shah, 2000). And, yet more frustrating, McLeod (2001) found perceived effects on self and other to be equally important in predicting support for censorship. Meanwhile, people's demographic characteristics have shown little help in predicting one's support for censorship (Huh, DeLorme, & Reid; 2004; Salwen, 1998). Salwen and Driscol (1997) in their study of behavioral consequences to third-person perceptions of news of the O.J. Simpson

trial found that while education level helped in predicting censorship support, the age, gender, and race of the participants did not.

One's willingness to censor has been the most studied behavioral outcome, but other responses have been examined as potential effects from third-person perceptions. Cohen, Mutz, Price, and Gunther (1988) reported that people were more likely to judge against a newspaper accused of defamation based on third-person perceptions. Third-person perceptions also have influenced choices to diet and seek plastic surgery (Wan, 2002), and people's voting choices in political campaigns have been associated with people's prior third-person perceptions (Golan, Banning, & Lundy, 2008; Griswold, 1992; Gunther & Storey, 2003). Tsfati, Ribak and Cohen (2005) reported that Israeli parents who perceived a greater negative media effect on other children were more likely to restrict the friends their child was allowed to hang out with. So, the third-person perception appears to compel behaviors other than censorship, including legal judgments, voting choices, and parental mediation. However, it is worth noting that in a 2008 meta-analysis of studies examining the behavior component to TPP, Xu and Gonzenbach offered example studies in which influence judgments showed either a weak link to non-censorship behavioral intentions (Golan, Banning, Lunday, 2008) or no such link (Atwood, 1994; Tewksbury, Moy, & Weis, 2004).

There are few studies that show behavioral correlates to first-person perceptions. Researchers have linked first-person perceptions—the perception that self more than others will be influenced by a socially desirable media message—to

self-reports of hours willing to volunteer (Andsager & White, 2007), willingness to donate money and goods to a charity (Golan & Banning, 2008), and one's support of pro-social legislation (Day, 2008). Hoffner and Buchanan (2002) reported that a small group of American parents were more likely to talk to their children about negative TV content when they perceived the effects were greatest on their own child. Similarly, Meirick, Sims, Gilchrist, and Croucher (2009) reported parents' support for funding of public television when the parents perceived their child was, more than other children, influenced by the advanced educational content.

Some researchers have begun to look at variables associated with the participants' personality traits. McLeod, Detenber, and Eveland (2001) reported a positive relationship between support for censorship and paternalism, the enduring personality trait inclined toward protecting others. Similarly, Tsfati, Ribak, & Cohen (2005) found a positive relationship between Israeli parents' strong control orientation and willingness to restrict their child's exposure to negative media content. Willingness to restrict media content has also been related to greater levels of a person's distrust of media (Huh et al., 2004) and a conservative outlook (McLeod et al., 2007). A finding that seems to lend credibility to the idea that support for censorship is inversely related to openmindedness appears in Andsager, Wyatt, and Martin (2004) in which the authors examined people's support for censorship without looking at media influence judgments. The authors found that the participants were less inclined to support censorship when they held views favoring media rights.

In summary, scholars have found that both first- and third-person perceptions relate to certain behavioral consequences. Most of the research demonstrating this relationship has been on the topic of censorship, with a smaller set of studies examining other non-censorship behaviors. Individuals' demographic characteristics have shown limited help in explaining people's support for censorship based on third-person perceptions. However, perceived negative impact from influence and the specificity of the target (me/my friend versus generalized other) have consistently explained third-person behavioral intentions. And, individuals' personality traits have offered a new and promising area to explore these behavioral correlates.

The TPE-behavioral intention link and parents. As it relates to the potential behavioral intentions stemming from *parental* first- and third-person perceptions, the research is limited, but four recently published studies suggest a relationship between parents' third-person perceptions and such behaviors as willingness to talk with their children about, restrict access to, and support government regulations of mass media content that parents judge objectionable for children. In addition, Tsfati, Ribak, and Cohen (2005) reported that third-person perceptions also led parents to restrict the friends their child was allowed to hang out with. For socially desirable messages, Meirick et al., (2009) reported a willingness of parents to support government funding of educational programming when parents perceived their own child was the greater beneficiary of its advanced educational content.

Theory of Planned Behavior

Although the empirical evidence exits to support a link between first- and third-person perceptions and behavioral intentions, scholars have noted that few studies have employed behavioral theory to explain the relationship (Neuwirth et al., 2002; Perloff, 1999; 2003). The few studies to apply theory have used such frameworks as paternalism theory (McLeod et al., 1997), the theory of protection motivation (Nathanson, Eveland, Park, & Paul, 2002), and systematic and heuristic processing strategies (Neuwirth et al., 2002). These studies have been used to explain how it is that individuals, who perceive a socially undesirable message to be more influentially powerful on others, will want to censor or restrict the message for everyone. The current research employs the theory of planned behavior (TPB) (Ajzen, 1991), which has been used to explain the third-person perception of socially desirable messages and its potential for behavioral consequences. TPB has not been used to explain intention toward parental mediation.

Social psychologists have used the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991) and an earlier version of the model, the theory of reasoned action (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), to predict a wide range of behaviors, including intent to prevent the spread of HIV through condom use, register as an organ donor, donate one's cornea, purchase recyclable products, and participate in sports and other physical activities (Bae, 2008; Bresnahan et al., 2007; Chatzisarantis, Hagger, Wang, Thøgersen-Ntoumani, 2009; Sparks & Shepherd, 1992). The theory of planned behavior (TPB) assumes rational decision-making and proposes that human behavior is driven by intention. Intention is the amount of effort one is willing to

apply toward engaging in a future behavior (Ajzen, 1991). The theory of planned behavior proposes that intention is a rational choice formed from a culmination of three basic assessments: one's attitudes (positive or negative) toward performing the behavior in question; perceived subjective norm or the influence one perceives peers will exert about the performance of the behavior; and perceived behavioral control or the perception that one can effectively perform the behavior. The current study considers the behavioral consequences to parental first- and third-person perceptions in relation to perceived subjective norm. So, the focus is on parents' perceived effects (first- or third-person), subjective norm and intention toward behavior.

Subjective norm and the referent. Norms are powerful because they influence behavior in two ways that play on the human need for affiliation. As Ajzen (1989) explains, some norms exert their influence by suggesting what the members of one's social group ought to do (called injunctive norms), while some norms suggest what the members of one's social group are actually doing (called descriptive norms). Injunctive norms imply some sanction for failing to comply with the social norm. The perceived injunctive norm is the pressure one feels their social group places on them to engage in the normative behavior. The perceived descriptive norm is one's perception of how prevalent significant others are engaging in the behavior. A social group's injunctive and descriptive norms can be complementary. In such a case the behavior is both discouraged and avoided. But, a groups norms can be contradictory, where the pressure is felt to avoid (or adopt) a

behavior, but the members in aggregate do not comply (Rimal & Real, 2003). Also it is possible that a behavior can be both normative and non-normative based on the salient referent other. In the case of parents, one's child is a significant other to whom parents may look for cues of normative behavior or parents may look to additional significant others, such as a physician, pastor, or fellow parent.

In examining perceived effects of public service announcements for the Boys and Girls Club, United Way, and the Red Cross, Golan and Banning (2008) focused on the perceived subjective norm component of the TPB model. The authors reported third-person perceptions for all three PSA messages. The authors also reported a positive correlation between an index of these with the perceived likelihood of self to engage in socially desirable actions. The findings suggested that the more individuals perceived that others were affected by the socially desirable PSAs, the more the research participants reported being likely to engage in the socially desirable behaviors in the survey. Golan and Banning (2008) concluded: "A rational desire to meet the social expectations of others explains why a person would feel that others were more affected by a charity ad, while at the same time expressing the opinion that they themselves were more likely to engage in socially desirable behavior" (p. 220).

There are conceptual and empirical problems for Golan and Banning's (2008) approach of treating TPE as a type of indication of perceived subjective norm for parents. First, the perception of what is normative behavior shifts based on the salience of the referent significant other. Restricting access to violent

cartoons would potentially be somewhat normative for fellow parents and non-normative if the significant other is one's child. Second, among scholars who have employed the theory of planned behavior, it has been consistently observed that attitudes and perceived behavioral control explain a significant amount of variation in intention and likelihood of one to engage in behavior (Armitage & Conner, 2001; Chatzisarantis & Hagger, 2005; Webb & Sheeran, 2006), whereas perceived subjective norm alone has not (Armitage & Conner, 2001).

It has been hypothesized that perceived subjective norm's poor performance in explaining behavioral intent may be related to the fact that in previous studies the participants' identification with the target group was treated a priori and even lost in an aggregate operationalization of subjective norm. Chatzisarantis et al. (2009) reported evidence suggesting that perceived group norms predict attitudes and behavioral intent much more when individuals strongly identify with the group in question. As the authors explain, "When young people did not identify strongly with the group, the behavior and the attitudes encouraged by the group did not influence physical activity attitudes and behavior" (p. 65). From this, we can surmise that the social expectation of the group is important to behavior intent, especially when individuals identify highly with the group. Treating third-person perceptions as a type of proxy measure for parents' perceived subjective norm would not adequately capture the referent salient at the time or if there are cases where different referents would produce different social expectations.

The current research seeks then to follow through with Golan and Banning's (2008) work with the theory of planned behavior and apply its rationale to the context of parents' assessments of influence of socially desirable and undesirable media messages. Following previous parental third-person effects research, the current study will examine parents' self-reported likelihood to talk with their children about, restrict access to, and support government regulation of socially undesirable messages. The current research will also look at parents' reported likelihood to support funding and dissemination of socially desirable PSAs. These will be the two sets of behaviors considered for the current research.

Socially Desirable Messages. As described in previous sections, research has demonstrated that individuals tend to exhibit a first-person perceptual bias when considering the influence of a socially desirable message. We tend to think to ourselves we are wiser than others and will apprehend the virtue in being persuaded by the socially desirable content. This is particularly true when self is compared to members of the out-group. However, when individuals compare themselves to other members of their in-group, individuals tend to exhibit a third-person perception, demonstrating what Meirick called a desire to maintain "a perception of relative impersuasibility and self-determination." (This may be what was going on in Golan and Banning (2008) in which the authors found a consistent tendency of participants to hold a third-person perception about the influence of charity PSAs.)

Golan and Banning (2008) treated third-person perception as a proxy measure for perceived subjective norms, arguing that the belief that others will be

influenced by the *socially desirable* messages for Boys and Girls Club, United Way, and the Red Cross suggested the social approval of engaging in the targeted behaviors and, thus, contributed to the attitude-perceived behavioral control-perceived subjective norms platform that the theory of planned behavior says is needed for behavioral intent. Rather than infer perceived subjective norm from third-person perceptions, the current research seeks to measure perceived subjective norm outright and do so by also eliciting PSN when the salient referent is one's child versus one's peer (fellow parent).

Socially Undesirable Message. The theory of planned behavior has not been used with third-person perception research in the context of a socially undesirable message. The imprecision of the third-person perception as a measure for subjective norms (already described) becomes more clear with a socially undesirable message, especially when considering parents influence judgments in relation to their own child, other children, and other parents. Parents may deem media content, which they judge inappropriate for their child or children in general, to be less objectionable for other adults. Therefore, a greater third-person perception of influence of a socially undesirable message may compel different behavioral responses, depending on whether the other is one's own child, other children, or other parents in their social group and depending on how the content in question may or may not be objectionable in terms of its potential for negative impacts on the other.

In the case of a socially undesirable message, the relationship between third-person perceptions and behavioral intention also may be moderated by perceived negative impact of the message on the target. As summarized earlier in this section, research demonstrates that the link between TPP and behavioral intention is strongest when the impact from the content is presumed to be negative. Again, Xu and Gonzenbach (2009) summarized the literature in this area by concluding that people's perceptions of effects, especially harmful ones, compel people to act (See Haridakis & Rubin, 2005; Hu, DeLorme, & Reid, 2004; Salwen & Driscoll, 1997; Salwen & Dupagne, 1997; Wan & Youn, 2004; Youn, Faber, & Shah, 2000).

Another moderator between TPP and behavioral intentions may be the specificity of the target other. Research summarized above indicates that behavioral intentions follow third-person perceptions most when the target of the potential harmful influence is clearly specified versus when the target is a generalized other. Therefore, parents' third-person perceptions from a socially undesirable message may compel behavior intention more when the third-person perception is on one's self or own child and less so for perceptions of influence on the more generalized other children or other parents.

Hypotheses

Influence Judgments

Hypotheses 1 and 2 examine whether parents' hold biased perceptions about media influence on children, their own and others. Hypotheses 1 and 2 also examine the impact of message desirability on parents' media influence judgments. The self-serving motive is expected to produce two different perceptual gaps about influence: a parental third-person perception when the message is presumed to be socially undesirable to be influenced by (H1) and a parental first-person perception when the message is presumed to be socially desirable to be influenced by (H2).

With the self-enhancement motive explanation for perceived effects comes an implied relationship between self and one's child. The rationale here is that parents project positive beliefs on to their child, because parents construe a portion of their self-image from close significant others, their children. Therefore, we would anticipate less difference in perceived effects between parents and their child. Two hypotheses are posed about parents' influence judgments that consider the self, one's child, and other children:

H1: Parents perceived influence from violent television ads will be less for socially proximal comparison groups, with parents perceiving a greater amount of influence on other children, less on one's own child, and least on one's self.

H2: Parents' perceived influence from PSAs to stop cyber-bullying will be greater for socially proximal comparison groups, with parents perceiving a lesser amount of influence on other children, more on one's own child, and most on one's self.

The study also seeks to examine how parents' perceive media influence on fellow parents. The traditional third-person perception literature suggests that parents will perceive themselves to be less influenced than other parents by the socially undesirable violent ads and more influenced than other parents by the socially desirable PSAs. However, it is not clear where among the other target comparison groups influence for fellow parents will fall. Will parents perceive fellow parents (a relatively generalized group of others) to be influenced like other children? To explore this further, Research Question 1 is posed:

RQ1: Will perceived influence from the two study messages differ for fellow parents in comparison to other groups (self, own child, other children) and, if so, in what way?

The self-enhancement literature would suggest that women more than men construe themselves in relation to significant close others and, as such, derive self-image benefits in perceiving positive beliefs about the people emotionally close to

them. From this, Hypotheses 3 and 4 are posed about parents' influence judgments:

H3: Third-person effects from the violent TV ads will be greater among female respondents than male.

H4: First-person effects from the PSAs to stop cyber-bullying will be greater among female respondents more than male.

A logic grounded in attribution theory explains the next set of hypotheses. The argument centers around the role of inference and follows this line of reasoning: People consider the comparison group at hand, the likely exposure of that group to the message, and whether the comparison group is predisposed to the behavior advocated or discouraged by the message. From this they infer an amount of influence from the message based on a short-hand set of beliefs—either rooted in first-hand experience or often times stereotypes—about who is exposed to the message and who is predisposed toward the behavior targeted in the message.

Some evidence exists (Meirick, 2005) to suggest that perceived behavioral predisposition may do a better job than perceived exposure of predicting influence judgments when the message is presumed to provide social benefit. The idea here is that anticipated exposure to a message to, say, stop drunk driving is not expected to have much impact on someone who routinely drives drunk. The message is

presumed to have its greatest impact on those who are perceived not to exhibit the behavior. Meirick found that these perceived predispositions were a stronger driver of influence judgments for messages to quit smoking and stop driving drunk. From the preceding, then, I pose the following two hypotheses:

H5: Both perceived message exposure and predisposition toward the behavior advocated or discouraged by the message will impact perceived influence such that: a) perceived exposure will be positively related to perceived influence from the violent television ads, b) perceived predisposition toward physical aggression will be positively related to perceived influence from the violent television ads and c) perceived predisposition toward the teasing behavior will be negatively related to perceived influence from the PSAs to stop cyber-bullying.

H6: Perceived predisposition toward the teasing behavior will more strongly predict perceptions of influence from the PSAs to stop cyberbullying more than perceived message exposure.

To examine whether perceived exposure and perceived predisposition would impact influence judgments differently for the two messages, Research Question 2 was posed:

RQ2: In what way will perceived exposure impact perceptions of influence from the violent TV ads?

Behavioral Intention

The present study seeks to build on Golan and Banning's (2008) work with the theory of planned behavior. Golan and Banning treated third-person perceptions as a proxy measure for perceived social approval, arguing that the belief that others are influenced by a socially desirable message suggests the social approval of engaging in the behavior targeted in the message and, thus, would help contribute to a person's decision to want to engage in that behavior. Because the idea of treating TPP as an indication of the social norm is, on its face, questionable for parents' perception of their children's media influence, the present study measures parents' perceived social approval from both parents' peers (fellow parents) and from their child. I pose the following hypotheses:

H7: Perceived social approval will influence respondents' parenting decisions, such that a) parents' perceived social approval will positively influence willingness to monitor TV use, censor violent TV ads, and intervene in their child's choice for friends, and b) perceived social approval of fellow parents will be the stronger predictor in these relationships more than the approval of one's own child.

H8: Perceived social approval will influence respondents' parenting decisions: such that: a) social approval will relate to parents' willingness to support funding and dissemination of the PSA to stop cyber-bullying and b) the approval of one's own child will be the stronger predictor in this relationship more than the approval of fellow parents.

Perceived social approval is also expected to be related to parental third- and first-person effects. As Golan and Banning (2008) suggest, the perception that a group is influenced by a message should impact perceptions of the approval one would receive for restricting or expanding access to that message based on the presumed desirability of the message. The following relationships are hypothesized:

H9: Third-person effects from the violent TV ads will be positively associated with perceived social approval from fellow parents to monitor their child's TV viewing.

H10: First-person effects will positively relate to perceived social approval from one's child to support funding and dissemination of the stop cyber-bullying PSAs.

A good amount of evidence exists to support a relationship between perceived influence and behavioral intention. The present study tests the addition of some variables, which may provide rival explanations for the relationship between parents' perceptions of influence and their willingness to monitor TV viewing. I hypothesize that the relationship will be robust to the inclusion of the parents' demographic characteristics.

H11: Perceived effects on self and own child from the violent TV ads will explain significant variation in the prediction of parental monitoring behaviors even while accounting for parents' demographic characteristics (sex and level of education), the age of one's child, and self-rated paternalistic mindset.

The theory of planned behavior suggests that perceived social approval plays an important role in predicting behavioral intent (Ajzen, 1980). Golan and Banning (2008) treated third-person perceptions of influence from a socially desirable message to be an indication of perceived social approval. In this study, I measure perceived social approval and examine whether the relationship between perceived effects and television monitoring is robust to the impact of perceived social approval. I pose this hypothesis:

H12: Perceived effects will explain significant variation in the prediction of behavioral intention even while accounting for perceived social approval such that a) third-person perceptions will predict parental monitoring behaviors while accounting for perceived social approval from other parents and b) first-person perceptions will predict parental support for funding and dissemination of PSAs while accounting for perceived social approval from one's child.

Method

This chapter comprises the research decisions for the study, including collecting a survey sample, a set of exemplars to which respondents would be exposed, and approaches used to measure the study variables and controls. In all, a single-phase online questionnaire surveyed American parents about their demographic characteristics, attitudes and beliefs, and responses to viewing a set of television advertisements.

The Sample

The survey collected responses from American parents of children between the ages 8 and 18. This was because children in these age groups are known to watch a good deal of television. Adults perceive children in these groups to be susceptible to influence from television. These groups are associated with the behaviors examined in this study, teasing on the Internet and physical aggression. Children younger than 8 years old, however, may not be as much associated with perceived influence from a pro-social message such as the one in this study to stop Internet teasing. Another variable examined in this study is perceived social approval from one's child, which one could expect to be considerably less persuasive for a child of younger years.

Parents were recruited with the assistance of the marketing research firm Qualtrics Labs Inc. Data was collected between January 16 and 25, 2012. Qualtrics Labs sent e-mail invitations to solicit participation in the survey. The invitation went to people, who had previously identified themselves as American and having

at least one child at home. These people were identified through an online service in which members agreed to participate in Internet surveys in return for cash-value credits. Members were able to redeem the credits for free meals at restaurants and for other products and services.

The American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) recognizes this type of recruitment approach to produce an "opt-in" or "access" non-probability Internet panel. This type of panel is in contrast to those produced by the random selection of participants based on a sampling frame of pre-identified Internet users. As such, there is limited utility in reporting a response rate, which provides a calculation of sampling error due to non-response. Notwithstanding, it may be helpful to have an indication of how much effort was required to recruit panel members for this particular survey. This study follows the recommendations of AAPOR Task Force (2010) and ISO 26362 (2009), which recommend reporting a *participation rate*. The participation rate is defined as "the number of respondents who have provided a usable response divided by the total number of initial personal invitations requesting participation" (AAPOR, 2010, p. 30). The recruitment approach for this study produced 1,502 usable responses, which comprised 313 "good completes" and an additional 1,189 responses which were excluded. The 313 cases for this study had no missing data and satisfied two quotas. The remaining 1,189 cases were excluded based on missing data and quota fulfillments. I took the number of usable responses (N = 1,502) and divided this by the number of sent invitations (N=23,757). This produced a 6.3% participation rate for the

Parents Media Influence Study. The information may provide the reader a sense of the number of invitations needed to be sent in order to receive a desired number of completed surveys.

To improve the representative nature of the sample, two quotas were established for sex and level of education. Online survey research has demonstrated women more than men participate in online surveys and that people with higher more than lower levels of education participate in these surveys. The quota for sex was designed to collect responses from roughly half fathers and half mothers. According to the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2010, roughly 54 percent of American parents reported having at least some college education. The quota for level of education was set to mirror the categories in the Census Survey (some high school, a high school diploma, an associate's degree, a bachelor's degree, or an advanced degree). When quotas for certain sex and education level categories were met, subsequent completed survey responses from respondents in those categories were coded as "overquota" and were excluded from the final sample. Likewise, partially completed surveys with missing data and completed surveys in which participants reported having difficulty viewing one of the assigned clips also were excluded.

The recruitment approach produced responses from 313 parents of whom115 (37 percent) were between the age 35 and 44; 227 parents (73 percent) were married; 178 (57 percent) were mothers and 134 (43 percent) were fathers. The parents' child was on average 12 years old of whom 158 (51 percent) were

boys and 153 (49 percent) were girls. Ninety-three of the parents (30 percent) reported they were from the Midwest United States, 72 (23 percent) from the Southeast, 57 (18 percent) from the Northeast, 51 (16 percent) from the West, and 34 (11 percent) from the Southwest. Five participants (2 percent) reported being from places outside the United States.

The sample was generally well-educated. Only 23 of the parents (8 percent) reported that they were not a high school graduate, 92 (29 percent) were a high school graduate, 69 (22 percent) had some college, 31 (10 percent) had an associate's degree, 63 (20 percent) had the bachelor's degree, and 33 (11 percent) had an advanced degree. So, although an effort was made to collect responses from a sample of parents similar to the population parameter—of roughly 54 percent with some college—the resulting sample was generally more educated than most American mothers and fathers. Still, in the parental third-person perception literature, this study comes the closest to representing American parents in terms of education.

The sample also was somewhat well to do. Of the participants, 116 (37 percent) reported an average annual home income between $51,000-$75,000, 51 parents (17 percent) earned between $26,000-$50,000, 50 (16 percent) earned between $101,000-and up, 49 (16 percent) earned between $76,000-$100,000, and 42 parents (14 percent) reported earning an annual income between 0-$25,000. The number of television sets owned ranged from 1 to 6-or-more with an average of 3.2 televisions in the home.

The Exemplars

For this study, parents were asked to view two videos. The videos served as exemplars for socially undesirable and desirable messages. One video represented socially undesirable content in a television advertisement that promoted violent TV programming. The second video represented socially desirable content in a PSA to stop online teasing. The online survey was programmed to rotate the assignment of one of two exemplars for each category (advertisement and PSA). This was so that half the participants viewed socially undesirable advertisement A and half viewed socially undesirable advertisement B and likewise for the desirable PSAs. This part of the procedure was meant to stop the potential that parents' perceptions of influence were driven by a characteristic unique to a singular advertisement or PSA. As such, the alternate videos were selected for their broadness of representation of social behaviors and targeting cues presumed to identify for whom the messages were created. The total running time for each PSA video was 30 seconds and the total running time for each ad was one minute five seconds and one minute 10 seconds, respectively.

Socially undesirable TV advertisement A promoted the cable drama *Justified* and was entitled *Bloody Harlan.* The ad depicted several portrayals of violent acts, including characters punching people, holding people at gunpoint, firing guns at people, and exploding buildings in which people are presumed to be located. Socially undesirable advertisement B promoted the cable drama *Dexter*

and was entitled *How it Ends*. The ad depicts a single setting in which the lead character is physically bound in the trunk of a vehicle.

Socially desirable PSA A was produced, in conjunction with the National Crime Prevention Council and the Ad Council, by New York advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi. The PSA was entitled *Talent Show Revised*. The PSA depicts a child making unkind statements about another child before an auditorium of other children. The video closes with the tagline “If you wouldn’t say it in person, why would you say it online? Delete Cyberbullying. Don't write it. Don't Forward it.” Socially desirable PSA B also was aimed at reducing teasing on the Internet, entitled *Take a Bite Out of Online Bullying* and also was produced by the National Crime Prevention Council. The video features images of a chicken and draws parallels between the acts of a bully on the Internet and acts of someone who behaves like a “chicken.”

The use of these videos without payment to, or permission from, the copyright holders was appropriate under fair use protections within the Copyright Clause of the U.S. Constitution (Article I, Section 8, Clause 8 of the United States Constitution). While the four videos in this study are more creative than, say, a news broadcast or political debate, the use of these videos are transformative, placing the original content in a non-commercial, research context and in such a way that does not compete with the copyright owners ability to capitalize on his or her creative work (Center for Social Media, 2010). A fraction of the potential audience for such works was exposed during the course of this study. In addition,

the study used only what was needed for the research. The videos were acquired legally and in good faith from public online video consortia. For a detailed treatment of the copyright doctrine of fair use, see the *Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Scholarly Research in Communication* published by the American University Center for Social Media and the International Communication Association.

The Questionnaire

Data for this study was collected from one online questionnaire. The recruitment tools and protocol for this study were approved first by the university Institutional Review Board. In lieu of signed written consent, respondents were asked to read a web-based information page and indicate they had "read the information about the study and wish to participate" or they "read the information about the study and do not wish to participate." Upon consent, respondents proceeded through the pages of the online survey.

Parents with multiple children were asked to think about their child whose birthday was closest "to today's date" and to complete the items of the survey thinking about this child (Salmon & Nichols, 1983). The online questionnaire took approximately 30 minutes to complete. The survey instructions and list of questionnaire items are included in Appendix A.

Measures

*Perceived influence.*Four-items were used to capture parents' perception of influence from the public service campaign to stop online bullying for themselves,

their own child, other children, and other parents. Parents were asked how much they believed the PSA they just viewed would make an impact on their decision and the decisions of the three comparison groups to "refrain from making mean-spirited jokes about others online," "ask family and friends to refrain from posting unflattering comments and pictures about others online," “refrain from sharing rumors about others on the Internet,” and "take a public pledge to refrain from teasing others online during the next year." Items were rated on a five-point scale from 1 (impact not at all) to 5 (impact very much).The measure for perceived influence from viewing the online teasing PSA produced good reliability for the self (*M* = 3.87, *SD* = 1.14, *alpha* = 0.92), own child (*M* = 3.83, *SD* = 1.04, *alpha* = 0.92), other children (*M* = 3.57, *SD* = 1.01, *alpha* = 0.92),and other parents (*M* = 3.72, *SD* = 1.02, *alpha* = .92).

Parents rated perceived influence from watching violent television program advertisements for themselves and the three comparison groups. These potential influences from watching violence on TV were measured: a) viewing the world a dangerous place, b) believing aggression is acceptable, and c) behaving aggressively (Hoffner et al. 2001; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2002). Items for perceived influence from watching violence on television include: "How much do you think watching violence on TV has led you, your child, other children, and other parents to see the world a more dangerous place?," "How much do you think watching violence on TV has led you, your child, other children, and other parents to distrust others?,” "How much do you think watching violent content on TV has led you to

think it’s ok to do those things, too?," and "How much do you think watching violence on TV has led you to be more aggressive?" Parents used a 5-point scale, ranging from 0 (not at all led) to 5 (very much led). Although Hoffner and Buchanan (2002) did not aggregate their items, a test of reliability for the set produced adequate Chronbach’s coefficient alphas for the present study for the self (*M* = 2.61, *SD* = 1.05, *alpha* = 0.80), own child (*M* = 2.74, *SD* = 1.04, *alpha* = 0.83), other children (*M* = 3.10, *SD* = 0.91, *alpha* = 0.80), and other parents (*M* = 2.98, *SD* = 0.91, *alpha* = 0.77).

Predisposition. The measure to capture predisposition toward online teasing was adapted from the development of theory and measurement for the construct moral disengagement (Bandura, 1999; McAllister, 2001). The five-item measure was constructed to assess when the parents (and three comparison groups) would accept that teasing on the Internet would be okay. A willingness to accept some teasing under justified conditions would give a sense of the predisposition toward the behavior.

In line with McAlister (2001), the question set was introduced with an euphemistic label so that the behavior seems more acceptable. The term cyber-bullying was replaced with teasing on the Internet. Researching people's moral disengagement from the use of war, McAlister explains "'Use of armed forces' is a euphemistic label for war, i.e. organized mass killing, terror and destruction of property" (p. 97). People who avoid moral disengagement will not accept the injury or murder of others in war (or teasing on the Internet) no matter what label is used

and will be critical of excuses that try to justify harm to others. It is anticipated that the euphemistic label "teasing on the Internet" should provide some help to those who are predisposed to believe that teasing on the Internet is okay.

Parents were asked to indicate on a seven-point scale (where 1 means strongly disagree and 7 means strongly agree) how much he or she and the three comparison groups would approve of statements about teasing on the Internet. Items 1 and 5 concern the distortion of the consequences of the effects of online bullying: (I/my child/other children/other parents) would say “teasing others on the Internet does not really hurt them" and “Insults among children do not hurt anyone.” Items 2 and 3 concern the process of advantageous comparison. Item 2 states “It is okay to insult a classmate on the Internet because beating him/her is worse.” Item 3 states “Children do not mind being teased on the Internet because it shows interest in them.” Item 4 concerns the process of moral justification. Item 4 states “Kids who get mistreated on the Internet usually do things that deserve it.”

Five items from the measurement of moral disengagement were selected to tap a predisposition toward aggression. Both items 1 “Slapping and shoving someone is just a way of joking” and 2 “To hit obnoxious classmates is just giving them "a lesson" use euphemistic language to justify aggression toward others. Item 3 concerns the process of diffusion of responsibility for the consequences of aggression. Item 3 states “If a group decides together to do something harmful it is unfair to blame any kid in the group for it.” Item 4 also uses euphemistic language “Talking about people behind their backs is just part of the game.” Item 5 “Some

people have to be treated roughly because they lack feelings that can be hurt" concerns the process of distorting the consequences of aggressing towards others.

Parents were asked to estimate their own agreement or disagreement with these statements and that of their child, other children in their child's age range and for other parents. Therefore, the consistency of the measure was examined for each group. The five-item measure for predisposition toward teasing on the Internet produced good reliability (Kline, 2005) for the self (*M* = 1.75, *SD* = 0.93, *alpha* = 0.82), own child (*M* = 2.01, *SD* = 0.18, *alpha* = 0.86), other children (*M* = 2.60, *SD* = 1.20, *alpha* = 0.88), and other parents (*M* = 2.21, *SD* = 1.13, *alpha* = 0.87). The five-item measure for predisposition toward aggression produced less adequate reliability for the self (*M* = 1.97, *SD* = 0.92, *alpha* = 0.68), own child (*M* = 2.37, *SD* = 1.13, *alpha* = .77), other children (*M* = 2.83, *SD* = 1.30, *alpha* = 0.83), and other parents (*M* = 2.36, *SD* = 1.11, *alpha* = 0.82).

Perceived likelihood of exposure. For the stop online teasing Public Service Announcements and for the television program advertisements, parents were asked "For you, your child, other children, and other parents, estimate how much you believe each is exposed to ads like the one you just watched." The scale for perceived likelihood of exposure ranged from 0 (never exposed) to 6 (very often exposed).

Television and Social Environment Monitoring. The study employs a scale from Tsfati, Ribak, and Cohen (2005) and asks parents how much they use the following approaches to their child's television viewing on a scale from 1 (not at

all) to 7 (very much) (Meirick, et al., 2009, p. 227). The possible approaches include: a) prohibit their child to view violence on TV; b) limit the time their child spends viewing violence on TV; c) limit other activities associated with questionable TV programming (e.g., browsing fan web sites); d) express concern about violent content with their child; e) watch the program in question with their child; f) talk about the program with their child; g) talk about the program with their spouse; h) talk about the program with other adults; and i) ask for advice from teachers, school counselors or other sources (adapted from Tsfati, et al., 2005). The nine items produced good reliability (M = 4.69, SD = .69, *alpha* = .88). The item scores were averaged to create an index of parents' television monitoring.

Tsfati et al (2005) found that in addition to greater television monitoring behaviors, parents also tend to restrict their child's social environment based on parents' media influence biases. In this study, parents were asked to report, using a seven-point scale from 1 (not at all likely) to 7 (very likely) how much they use four approaches to their child's friendships. The approaches included: "Try to influence my child against hanging out with friends I do not approve of," "Forbid my child from participating in activities with children I do not approve of," "Insist I supervise activities in which my child will be hanging out with children I do not approve of," and "Arrange for my child activities that I think are appropriate for his or her maturity." The four items produced adequate reliability (M = 5.68, SD = 1.16, *alpha* = .83). The item scores were averaged to create an index of parents' social environment monitoring.

Support for Censorship. A five-item scale, adapted from McLeod, Eveland, and Nathanson (1995), measured support for censorship of television violence. Parents were given a list of options that have been taken to deal with adult content on TV such as portrayals of sexual and/or violent behavior and asked how much they supported each option, using a seven-point scale ranging from 1 (strongly oppose) to 7 (strongly favor). The options included: "banning sexual and violent content during hours when children might be watching," "banning the content during all time periods," "banning the content from network television," "encouraging self-censorship by television writers and producers," and "requiring more prominent ratings and advisories." The five items produced good reliability (M = 4.70, SD = 1.60, *alpha* = .86). The item scores were averaged to create an index of support for censorship.

Behavioral intention from viewing the stop online teasing PSA. Parents were asked to report, using a seven-point scale ranging from 1 not likely to 7 very likely, how much they would consider taking six actions after viewing the stop online bullying message. The six actions included: “View the PSA additional times,” “Talk about the PSA with friends and/or family,” “Forward a link to the PSA to friends and/or family,” “’Like’ and/or comment about the PSA on Facebook,” “Share the PSA on Facebook,” and “Support government legislation to allocate more money for these types of PSAs.” The six items produced an good reliability (M = 4.55, SD = 1.77, *alpha* = .92. The item scores were averaged to create an index for behavioral intention from the stop online teasing PSA.

Perceived social approval. The previously described behavioral intention was expected to be related to the social approval parents' perceive for each behavior. Perceived social approval was captured with a set of items adapted from the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1980; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975) and the construct of injunctive subjective norm. The injunctive subjective norm is the pressure one feels by others to perform a specific behavior. Research suggests that the injunctive subjective norm can change with the saliency of the referent other. With this in mind, two referents were considered: the parent's own child and the parent's peers in fellow parents.

On a five-point scale, where 1 indicated strong disagreement and 5 indicated strong agreement, parents were asked to evaluate four statements about their child and the prospect of expanding access to messages to stop online teasing. The four statements included: "My child would want me to approve of stop online bullying messages," "My child would want me to share a stop online bullying message with others," "My child would approve if I gave of my time to support dissemination of stop online bullying messages," and "My child would approve if I gave some of my money to support funding stop online bullying messages." The four items produced good reliability (M = 5.63, SD = 1.28, *alpha* = 0.91). Parents also were asked to evaluate on a five-point scale the same set of statements with "fellow parents" as the referent. The four items produced good reliability (M = 5.62, SD = 1.18, *alpha* = 0.95).

On a five-point scale, where 1 indicated strong disagreement and 5 indicated strong agreement, parents were asked to evaluate four statements about their child and the prospect of restricting access to violent content on TV. The four statements included: "My child would want me to always talk with them about the violence they see on TV," "My child would approve if I often gave of my time to support censorship of violence on TV," "My child would approve if I often gave of my money to support censorship of violence on TV," and "My child would want me to restrict their access to violence on TV." The four items produced good reliability (*M* = 3.13, *SD* = .96, *alpha* = 0.85). Parents also were asked to evaluate on a five-point scale the same set of statements with "fellow parents" as the referent. The four items produced good reliability (*M* = 3.59, *SD* = 0.88, *alpha* = 0.92).

Paternalism. The paternalism scale was constructed based on McLeod, Detenber, and Eveland, (2001), in which the authors constructed a five-item measure attempting to capture the degree to which individuals support a type of beneficence or fatherly mindset toward attending to the needs of others without giving those others rights (pgs. 683-684). Using a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 means strongly disagree and 5 means strongly agree, parents were asked to indicate how much he or she agreed or disagreed with the statements: "Sometimes it is necessary to protect people from doing harm to them selves," "It is important for the government to take steps to ensure the well-being of citizens," "If people are unable to help themselves, it is the responsibility of others to help them," "Some people

are better than others at recognizing harmful influences," "Just because people are unable to help themselves doesn't mean the government should step in and try to help them" (reverse code). The five-item scale produced less reliability (*M* = 3.37, *SD* = 0.47, *alpha* = 0.62). McLeod et al. reported a Chronbach's coefficient alpha of 0.70 for the set.

Results

The hypotheses for this study follow two theoretically driven themes. The first theme is the perceptual component, which examines study participants' perceived effects from the violent TV ads and the PSAs to stop Internet teasing. The second theme is the behavioral component, which examines the relationship between perceived effects and a range of parenting behaviors, including parents' willingness to restrict their child's access to the violent TV ads and willingness to expand general access to the PSAs. As indicated, perceived effects, specifically parental first- and third-person perceptions are treated as dependent variables in the first six hypotheses and then are treated as independent variables in the final set.

Throughout this section the term perceived influence is used to designate parents' perceptions about how much they think the messages influenced them self, their child, other children, and fellow parents. As a variable, perceived influence is simply the mean score on influence for that particular comparison group. The term perceived effects refers to how respondents perceive greater influence of a message on others compared to them self (third-person effects) or perceived less influence of a message on others rather than them self (first-person effects). Perceived effect is computed by subtracting the mean score on "influence on self" from the mean score on "influence on others". A positive score indicates third-person effects. A negative score indicates first person effects.

A tertiary theme in this section and, which is articulated in the hypotheses, is the idea of the perceived social desirability of the message. Albeit treated a

priori, the violent TV ads represent messages presumed to be socially undesirable to be influenced by, whereas by contrast, the PSAs to stop teasing on the Internet are presumed to be socially desirable to be influenced by. Throughout the section, hypotheses are tested for both socially undesirable messages (the TV ads) and desirable ones (the PSAs).

The Perceptual Component

Hypothesis 1 predicted that parents' perceived influence from violent television ads would be less for socially proximal comparison groups, with parents perceiving a greater amount of influence on other children, less on one's own child, and least on one's self. By contrast, Hypothesis 2 predicted that parents' perceived influence from PSAs to stop cyber-bullying would be *greater* for socially proximal comparison groups, with parents perceiving a lesser amount of influence on other children, more on one's own child, and most on one's self.

To test whether perceived effects from the violent TV ad and the PSA to stop Internet teasing differed based on the target comparison groups, two within-subjects ANOVAs were performed with the targets (self versus one's own child, other children, and other parents) as the independent variables and perceived influence as the dependent variable. The *F tests* reported here are adjusted for violations to the assumption of equal variances between treatment conditions—in this case group comparisons—or sphericity. The Greenhouse-Geisser adjustment was used in both. Follow-up comparisons of means employed analyses of *Fisher's Protected t*.

The results of the first omnibus ANOVA indicated that perceived effects from the violent TV ad differed significantly, $F(2.28, 713.88) = 59.95$, $p < .001$), based on the target comparison group. Respondents made significantly, $t(312) = -9.40$, $p < .001$, larger estimates of influence for other children ($M = 3.10$, $SD = .91$) compared to their own child ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 1.04$), and estimates of influence for own child were significantly larger, $t(312) = -3.53$, $p<.001$, compared to those for one's self (M = 2.61, SD = 1.05). Hypothesis 1 was supported. As Table 1 illustrates, parents perceived a greater amount of influence from the violent TV ad on other children, less on one's own child, and least on one's self.

Table 1: Perceived influence for own and other children

	Ads		***PSAs***	
	M	***SD***	***M***	***SD***
Self	2.61	1.05	3.87	1.14
Own Child	2.74	1.04	3.82	1.04
Other Children	3.10	.91	3.56	1.01

The second ANOVA indicated that perceived effects from the PSA to stop teasing on the Internet also differed significantly, $F(2.23, 696.29) = 20.81$, $p < .001$), based on the target comparison group. Here, parents made non-significantly, $t(312) = 1.37$, *ns*, different estimates of influence for them self (M=3.87, SD=1.14) compared to their own child ($M = 3.82$, $SD = 1.04$), but significantly, $t(312) = 5.77$,

$p < .001$, smaller estimates for other children (M=3.56, SD = 1.01). Hypothesis 2 predicted that parents would perceive a lesser amount of influence from the PSA to stop cyber-bullying on other children, more on one's own child, and most on one's self. As Table 1 indicates, the means for perceived influence did not fully follow the hypothesized pattern. Parents perceived influence to be the same for them self and their child. Hypothesis 2 was partially supported.

It was not clear how parents would perceive influence from the socially undesirable and desirable messages for other parents. Therefore, Research Question 1 sought to examine how perceived influence on other parents might differ in comparison to the other groups.

Table 2: Perceived influence based on comparison group

	Ads		***PSAs***	
	M	***SD***	***M***	***SD***
Self	2.61	1.05	3.87	1.14
Own Child	2.74	1.04	3.82	1.04
Other Children	3.10	.91	3.56	1.01
Fellow Parents	2.98	.91	3.72	1.02

As Table 2 indicates, parents' perceptions of influence on other parents appeared to be most like the perceptions they held for other children. Respondents believed fellow parents to be more influenced by the undesirable violent TV ads

than one's self and their own child and less influenced by the desirable PSAs to stop Internet teasing than self and their own child.

Sex differences. Hypothesis 3 predicted that third-person effects from the violent TV ads would be greater among female respondents more than male. Hypothesis 4 predicted that first-person effects from the PSAs to stop cyber-bullying would be greater among female respondents more than male. Independent sample t-tests were conducted to compare mean difference scores (parents' perceived influence on other children minus influence on own child) for fathers and mothers. For the ads, the difference scores for fathers (M = .16, SD = 0.42) were not significantly different from difference scores for mothers (M = .22, SD = .42), $t(299) = -0.122$, *ns*. For the PSA's, the difference scores for fathers (M = - .17, SD = .36) were not significantly different from the difference scores for mothers (M = - .17, SD = 0.54), $t(302.28) = .02$, *ns*. Hypotheses 3 and 4 were not supported.

Inferring from perceived likly exposure and predisposition. The next set of hypotheses predicted that both perceived exposure and predisposition toward the behavior advocated or discouraged by the message would be related to perceived influence. Perceived predisposition toward physical aggression was expected to be positively related to perceived influence from the violent ad, and perceived predisposition toward the teasing behavior was expected to be negatively related to perceived influence from the PSAs to stop Internet teasing.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that perceived exposure and perceived predisposition would impact influence judgments differently for the two messages

such that a) perceived exposure would more strongly predict perceptions of influence from the violent TV ads more than perceived predisposition, and b) perceived predisposition toward the teasing behavior would more strongly predict perceptions of influence from the PSAs to stop cyberbullying more than perceived message exposure. To test the relationships between perceived exposure, predisposition, and influence, I conducted a series of multiple linear regressions with perceived exposure and predisposition as the predictor variables and perceived influence as the criterion. Eight models were tested; one for each message (ad and PSA) and one for each comparison group. The resulting unstandardized regression coefficients, standard errors, and beta weights are presented in Tables 3 and 4 along with the 95% confidence intervals constructed around the point estimates.

Table 3: Predictors of perceived influence from the violent TV ads

	Exposure				**Predisposition**			
		95% CI				***95% CI***		
	B (SE b)	***LL***	***UL***	***β***	***B (SE b)***	***LL***	***UL***	***β***
Self	.05 (.03)	-.00	.10	.11	.17 (.06)	.04	.29	.15**
Child	.11 (.03)	.06	.16	.23***	.14 (.05)	.04	.24	.15*
Children	.12 (.03)	.07	.17	.27***	.08 (.04)	.00	.16	.11*
Parents	.11(.03)	.06	.16	.24***	.09(.05)	-.00	.18	.11

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

From a social distance perspective, the traditional self-to-other comparison in TPP research is, in this study, the parents' perception of influence on behalf of their own child in comparison to other children. I start by examining these models for own child and other children concerning the violent TV ads. The parents' estimates of their own child's exposure to violent TV ads and the child's predisposition toward physical aggression contributed significantly to parents' perceptions of influence from the ads, $F(2, 310) = 12.28$, $p = .001$, $R^2 = .07$; wherein perceived exposure was significant, $\beta = .23$, $t(310) = 4.13$, $p < .001$ and predisposition toward physical aggression was significant, $\beta = .15$, $t(310) = 2.76$, $p < .05$.

As a set, perceived exposure to the violent ads and predisposition toward physical aggression contributed significantly to parents' perceptions of influence on other children, $F(2, 309) = 13.40$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .07$. Perceived exposure to violent ads was significant, $\beta = .27$, $t(309) = 4.86$, $p < .001$ and predisposition was significant, $\beta = .11$, $t(309) = 2.07$, $p < .05$.

Next, I examine the models for parents' perceptions of influence for them self and other parents concerning the violent TV ads. Parents' self-report of their exposure to the violent TV ads and their predisposition toward physical aggression contributed significantly to parents' judgments about their susceptibility to influence, $F(2, 309) = 4.98$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .03$), wherein anticipated exposure was near significance, $\beta = .11$, $t(309) = 1.92$, $p = .056$ and predisposition was significant, $\beta = .15$, $t(309) = 2.60$, $p < .01$.

Parents' estimates of the exposure of fellow parents to the violent television ads and predisposition toward physical aggression together also contributed significantly to perceived influence on fellow parents $F(2, 309) = 10.23)$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .06$. Here, perceived exposure was significant, $\beta = .24$, $t(309) = 4.27$, $p < .001$. Perceived predisposition was near significance, $\beta = .11$, $t(309) = 1.92$, $p = .056$.

Table 4: Predictors of perceived influence from the PSAs

	Exposure				**Predisposition**			
		95% CI				***95% CI***		
	B(SE b)	***LL***	***UL***	***β***	***B(SE b)***	***LL***	***UL***	***β***
Self	.13(.04)	.06	.19	.19***	-.30(.07)	-.43	-.17	-.24***
Child	.10(.03)	.04	.16	.17**	-.25(.05)	-.35	-.15	-.27***
Children	.09(.03)	.03	.15	.17**	-.24(.04)	-.32	-.16	-.31***
Parents	.11(.03)	.05	.18	.18***	-.29(.05)	-.39	-.19	-.32***

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

Meanwhile for the PSAs, parents' estimates of their own child's exposure to the PSAs to stop Internet teasing and predisposition toward the teasing behavior together contributed significantly to parents' judgments about their own child's influence, $F(2, 310) = 16.41$, $p = .001$, $R^2 = .10$, with their child's predisposition toward the teasing behavior significant, $\beta = -.27$, $t(310) = -4.91$, $p < .001$ and

perceived liklihood of exposure also significant, $\beta = .17$, $t(310) = 3.16$, $p < .01$. Together, exposure and predisposition contributed significantly to parents' estimates of influence on other children, $F(2, 308) = 22.48$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .12$. Perceived predisposition of other children was significant, $\beta = -.31$, $t(308) = -5.88$, $p < .001$ and exposure was significant, $\beta = .17$, $t(309) = 3.10$, $p < .01$.

I look next at parents' perceptions about themselves as well as other parents. The patterns again follow Meirick (2005). As a set, parents' self-report of exposure to the stop Internet teasing PSAs and predisposition toward the teasing behavior contributed significantly to parents' judgments about their own influence, $F(2, 310) = 15.63$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .09$, with predisposition significant, $\beta = -.24$, $t(310) = -4.50$, $p < .001$, and exposure significant, $\beta = .19$, $t(310) = 3.56$, $p < .001$. Perceived exposure and predisposition together contributed significantly to parents' beliefs that the PSAs influenced other parents, $F(2, 306) = 24.34$), $p < .001$, $R^2 = .13$. Here, the perceived predisposition of other parents toward the teasing behavior also was significant, $\beta = -.32$, $t(306) = -6.03$, $p < .001$ and perceived exposure was significant, $\beta = .18$, $t(309) = 3.43$, $p = .001$.

Hypothesis 5 predicted that both perceived message exposure and predisposition toward the behavior advocated or discouraged by the message would impact perceived influence such that: a) perceived predisposition toward physical aggression would be positively related to perceived influence from the violent television ads and b) perceived predisposition toward the teasing behavior would be negatively related to perceived influence from the PSAs to stop cyber-bullying. The

relationships between exposure and influence were positive and the relationships between predisposition and influence were positive for the socially undesirable violent TV ads and were negative for the socially desirable PSAs to stop online teasing. Hypothesis 5 was supported.

Hypothesis 6 predicted that perceived exposure and perceived predisposition would impact influence judgments differently for the two messages such that a) perceived exposure would more strongly predict perceptions of influence from the violent TV ads more than perceived predisposition, and b) perceived predisposition toward the teasing behavior would more strongly predict perceptions of influence from the PSAs to stop cyberbullying more than perceived message exposure. Guided by Cumming and Finch (2005), the confidence intervals around the point estimates of perceived exposure and predisposition were examined for overlap (see Tables 3 and 4).

Absent of any overlap between the intervals for perceived exposure and predisposition for the four comparison groups, it may be said that we are 95% confident that the unstandardized regression coefficients for perceived exposure and behavioral predisposition are significantly different for each group. Hypothesis 6a was not supported. The confidence intervals around the coefficients for perceived exposure were not significantly different from the ones for perceived behavioral predisposition. Hypothesis 6b was supported. Here, the confidence intervals around the estimates of perceived exposure and predisposition in predicting perceived influence from the PSAs did not overlap. Perceived behavioral

predisposition was a stronger predictor of perceived influence from the anti-cyberbullying messages.

Behavioral Intention

Hypotheses 7 and 8 posit relationships between perceived social approval and parents' self report of their willingness to engage in parenting behaviors. To test the relationships, a series of linear regression equations were constructed. The resulting standardized regression coefficients are presented in Table 5.

Hypothesis 7 predicted that perceived social approval would influence respondents' parenting decisions, such that a) parents' perceived social approval would positively influence willingness to monitor TV use, censor violent TV ads, and intervene in their child's choice for friends, and b) perceived social approval of fellow parents would be the stronger predictor in these relationships more than the approval of one's own child. Three regression models were examined.

Together, approval from one's child and from fellow parents accounted for 38% of variation in willingness to engage in television monitoring behaviors, such as talking with one's child about, or restricting access to, objectionable TV content. The joint contribution of approval from one's own child and fellow parents in the prediction of parental monitoring behaviors was significant, $F(2, 310) = 96.95$, $p < .001$. The individual contribution of perceived approval from one's child was significant, $\beta = .48$, $t(310) = 9.38$, $p < .001$, and was the stronger predictor of parental monitoring more than approval from fellow parents, $\beta = .22$, $t(310) = 4.19$, $p < .001$, which also was significant.

Table 5: Perceived social approval as predictors of behavioral intention

	Own Child			*Fellow Parents*			
Intentions	***B b***	***SE***	***β***	***B b***	***SE***	***β***	***Adj. R^2***
Parental Monitoring	.70	.07	.48***	.34	.08	.22***	.38
Support for Censorship	.71	.10	.42***	.21	.10	.12*	.24
Social Environment Monitoring	.39 .07		.32***	.07	.08	.05	.12
PSA Behaviors	.52	.08	.38***	.42	.09	.28***	.35

Note: *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$.

Parents' self-rated willingness to support regulations to censor objectionable television content proved to be driven both by perceived social approval from one's own child and from fellow parents, together accounting for 24% of the variability in censorship support. Approval from one's child was significant, $\beta = .42$, $t(310) = 7.40$, $p < .001$, and was the larger predictor in the model more than approval from fellow parents, $\beta = .12$, which also was significant, $t(310) = 2.06$, $p < .05$.

The degree to which parents were willing to monitor their child's choice for friends—what Tsfati, Ribak, and Cohen referred to as social environment monitoring—was driven both by perceived approval from one's child and from fellow parents, which together accounted for 12% of variability in social environment monitoring. Approval from one's child was significant, $\beta = .32$, $t(310) = 5.18$, $p < .001$, and was the stronger predictor in the model more than approval from fellow parents, which was not statistically significant, $\beta = .05$, $t(310) = .89$, *ns*.

Hypothesis 7a was supported; however, contrary to Hypothesis 7b, perceived social approval from one's own child was the stronger predictor more than approval from fellow parents for respondents' willingness to monitor TV use in the home, support censorship, and monitor their child's choice for friends. Hypothesis 7b was not supported.

Hypothesis 8 posited that perceived social approval would be related to parents' willingness to support funding and dissemination of the PSA to stop Internet teasing and that the approval of one's own child would be the stronger predictor in this relationship more than the approval of fellow parents. In the first model, willingness to support funding and dissemination of PSAs to stop Internet teasing was regressed onto perceived social approval from one's own child and from fellow parents. Own child and fellow parents, as a set, accounted for almost 35% of variation in willingness to support funding and dissemination of the PSAs, which was statistically significant $F(2, 309) = 83.84$, $p < .001$. Approval from one's

child was significant, β = .38, t(309) = 6.36, p< .001, and was the larger predictor in the model more than approval from fellow parents, β = .28, t(309) = 4.66, p< .001, which also was significant. Hypothesis 8 was supported.

Social approval and perceived effects. Hypothesis 9 predicted that perceived social approval from fellow parents to talk with their child about and restrict access to objectionable TV content would be positively associated with perceived third-person effects from these ads. Hypothesis 10 predicted that perceived social approval from one's child to support funding and dissemination of PSAs like the ones to stop teasing on the Internet would be positively associated with perceived first-person effects. To test these relationships simple bivariate correlations between social approval and perceived effects were performed. The relationship between perceived social approval from fellow parents and third-person effects was non-significant, N = 302, r = - .09, *ns*. Hypothesis 9 was not supported. The relationship between perceived social approval from one's child and first-person effects was significant, N = 313, r = .235, p< .001. Hypothesis 10 was supported.

Testing the perceived influence-to-behavioral intention relationship. Hypothesis 11 predicted that perceived effects on self and own child from the violent TV ads would explain significant variation in the prediction of parental monitoring behaviors even while accounting for parents' demographic characteristics (sex and level of education), the child's age, and parents' self-rated paternalistic mindset. To test this hypothesis hierarchical multiple regression was

used such that respondents' sex, level of education, their child's age, and the parents' score on a paternalism scale were entered into the regression model as a first block of predictors and perceived influence of the violent TV ads on self and own child entered into the regression as a second block.

Model results are presented in Table 6. As a set, respondents' sex, education, child's age, and paternalism score contributed significantly to the prediction of parental monitoring, $F(4, 203) = 10.11$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .15$. This block added next with the block of perceived influence on self and own child also contributed significantly to the prediction of parental monitoring, $F(6, 201) = 8.92$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .19$, with perceived influence explaining an additional 4% of variation in the outcome variable. The R-square change from the first to second model was statistically significant, $F(2,201) = 5.36$, $p < .01$. Hypothesis 11 was supported.

The primary objective for the use of hierarchical multiple regression is to identify whether a predictor or set of predictors adds significant explanation to the variability in predicting the criterion over that explained by a set of controls (Petrocelli, 2002). Even still, examining the standardized regression coefficients in the final model is instructive. In the prediction of parents' TV monitoring behaviors, the contribution of parents' demographic characteristics was mixed. Parents' paternalism score was significant, $\beta = .28$, $t(298) = 4.35$, $p < .001$, and was the strongest predictor in the full model. The child's age was significant and had a negative relationship to parental monitoring intention, $\beta = -.24$, $t(298) = -3.83$, $p < .001$. Parents' level of education was significant, $\beta = .13$, $t(298) = 1.98$, $p < .05$, but

was weaker, as a predictor. And, the contribution of parents' sex was not significant at all, $\beta = .10$, $t(298) = 1.56$, *ns*, a finding consistent with the tests of Hypotheses 3 and 4 above.

Table 6: Predictorsof Parental Monitoring Intention

Block and predictor	*B*	*SE b*	*Beta*
Block 1		$R^2 = .15$***	
Education	.14	.06	.15*
Sex	.24	.18	.09
Age of Child	-.08	.02	-.24***
Paternalism	.98	.20	.32***
Block 2		$\Delta R^2 = .04$**	
Education	.11	.06	.13*
Sex	.26	.17	.10
Age of Child	-.08	.02	-.24***
Paternalism	.88	.20	.28***
Perceived influence on self	.26	.14	.19
Perceived influence on own child	.02	.14	.02

Note: Sex coded 1 = male, 2 = female

*$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Perceived influence of the violent ad on self was near significance, β = .19, $t(298) = 1.85$, p= .065, and was stronger in predicting parental monitoring behaviors more than perceived influence on one's own child, the contribution of which also was non-significant, β = .02, $t(298) = .16$, *ns*. Hypothesis 11 was not supported in that perceived influence on self and on own child did not contribute significant explained variation in the prediction of parental monitoring while accounting for the controls of demographic characteristics and mothers' and fathers' paternalistic mindset.The parents' paternalism score and the child's age (less) predicted parents' intention to monitor the violent TV ads.

Hypothesis 12 predicted that perceived effects would explain significant variation in the prediction of behavioral intention even while accounting for perceived social approval such that a) third-person perceptions would predict parental monitoring behaviors while accounting for perceived social approval from other parents and b) first-person perceptions would predict parental support for funding and dissemination of PSAs while accounting for perceived social approval from one's child. To test this hypothesis hierarchical multiple regression was used. Model results and coefficients are presented in Tables 7-9.

These models include two values for perceived effects as predictors. The first is the traditional other minus self difference score for 3PE/1PE (depending on the sign) and represents the gap in perceived influence on self compared to others. The second value follows the diamond method offered by (Whitt, 1983) and since adopted by third-person perception researchers (e.g., Eveland et al., 1999; McLeod

et al., 1997; Neuwirth & Frederick, 2002). This value provides an additive score of perceived effects on self and others and represents the respondents' perception of effects jointly shared by both. Shared effects more recently have been referred to by Neuwirth, Frederick, and Mayo (2002) as second-person effects defining them as a "judgment or belief that the media have a similar influence on self and others" (p. 332). By including this additional predictor in the regression equation, the researcher is able to examine the relationship between the perceptual gap (3PE/1PE) and the behavioral intention variable while parceling the impact of perceived joint effects on self and other.

As a set, perceived shared influence (second-person perceptions) from the violent TV ads and perceived social approval from fellow parents contributed significantly to respondents' willingness to monitor their child's TV viewing $F(2, 310) = 49.93$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .24$. This block added with perceived third-person effects also contributed significantly to the variability in parents' monitoring behaviors $F(3, 309) = 36.69$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .26$. In the second model, perceived third-person effects provided an additional 2% of variation explained in the behavioral outcome. And, the *R*-square change from the first to second model was statistically significant, $F(1,309) = 7.97$, $p < .01$. Hypothesis 12a was supported.

I look next at the standardized regression coefficients. In the prediction of parents' TV monitoring behaviors, perceived social approval from fellow parents was significant, $\beta = .41$, $t(309) = 7.93$, $p < .001$, and was the strongest predictor in the model, followed by second-person effects, $\beta = .22$, $t(309) = 4.23$, $p < .001$, and

third-person effects, $\beta = .14$, $t(309) = 2.83$, $p < .01$, respectively. Although third-person perceptions contributed to the variation in willingness to monitor TV over the controls of social approval from parents and perceived joint effects, parental 3PE was not stronger than parental 2PE.

The reader may recall that, in the test of Hypothesis 7, perceived social approval from fellow parents was, in fact, the weaker predictor of parental monitoring compared to perceived social approval from one's child. Therefore, a more rigorous test of the relationship between third-person perceptions and parental monitoring would be to add perceived social approval from one's child as the control in the multiple hierarchical regression.

Table 7: Social approval (fellow parents) and parental monitoring intention

Block and predictors	*B*	*SE b*	*Beta*
Block 1		$R^2 = .24$***	
Perceived Social Approval (Fellow Parents)	.63	.08	.40***
Second-Person Effects	.15	.04	.19***
Block 2		$\Delta R^2 = .02$**	
Perceived Social Approval (Fellow Parents)	.63	.08	.41***
Second-Person Effects	.17	.04	.22***
Third-Person Effects	.29	.10	.14**

Note: *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

Table 8: Social approval (own child) and parental monitoring intention

Block and predictors	*B*	*SE b*	*Beta*
Block 1		R^2 = .36***	
Perceived Social Approval (Own Child)	.79	.07	.55***
Second-Person Effects	.09	.04	.12**
Block 2		ΔR^2 = .01**	
Perceived Social Approval (Own Child)	.78	.07	.55***
Second-Person Effects	.11	.04	.15**
Third-Person Effects	.22	.09	.11*

Note: *p < .05, **p < .01, ***p < .001

As a set, perceived shared influence (second-person perceptions) from the violent TV ads and perceived social approval from one's child contributed significantly to respondents' willingness to monitor their child's TV viewing F(2, 310) = 88.36, p< .001, R^2 = .36. This block added with third-person effects also contributed significantly to the variability in parents' monitoring behaviors F(3, 309) = 61.62, p< .001, R^2 = .37. In the final model, perceived third-person effects provided an additional 1% of variation explained in the behavioral outcome. And, the *R*-square change from the first to second model was statistically significant, F(1,309) = 5.53, p< .05. Hypothesis 12a was again supported.

In the final model, the contribution of perceived social approval from one's child was significant, $\beta = .55$, $t(309) = 11.37$, $p < .001$, and was the strongest predictor in driving parental monitoring. Second-person effects also was significant, $\beta = .15$, $t(309) = 2.98$, $p < .01$ and, in fact, was stronger in predicting parental monitoring more than third-person effects, which also was a significant predictor, $\beta = .11$, $t(309) = 2.35$, $p < .05$.

Table 9: Predicting intention to stop cyberbullying

Block and predictors	*B*	*SE b*	*Beta*
Block 1		$R^2 = .39$***	
Perceived Social Approval (Own Child)	.54	.07	.39***
Second-Person Effects	.31	.05	.34***
Block 2		$\Delta R^2 = .00$	
Perceived Social Approval (Own Child)	.53	.07	.39***
Second-Person Effects	.31	.05	.34***
First-Person Effects	- .05	- .12	- .02

Note: *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$, ***$p < .001$

I look next at the relationships between perceived effects and the behavioral outcomes concerning the PSAs to stop Internet teasing. Together, perceived joint effects from the PSAs to stop Internet teasing and perceived social approval from

one's child contributed significantly to respondents' willingness to support funding and dissemination of the PSAs, $F(2, 309) = 100.04$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .39$. This block added with perceived first-person perceptions also contributed significantly to the explanation of respondents' willingness to expand access to the stop Internet teasing PSAs, $F(3, 308) = 66.60$, $p < .01$, $R^2 = .39$; however, first-person perceptions added no statistically significant amount of variation explained in the behavioral outcome. The R-square change from the first to second model was non-significant, $F(1, 308) = .171$, *ns*. Hypothesis 12b was not supported.

Examining the standardized regression coefficients reveals that perceived social approval from one's child was significant, $\beta = .38$, $t(308) = 7.22$, $p < .001$, and was the strongest predictor of parents' willingness to support funding and dissemination of the PSAs. The belief that the PSAs had a similar influence on one's child and other children was a significant predictor in the model and was, in fact, a stronger predictor, $\beta = .34$, $t(308) = 6.65$, $p < .001$, than perceived first-person perceptions, $\beta = -.019$, $t(308) = .41$, *ns.*

The 12 hypotheses and one research question in this study examined whether parental third-person perceptions could be replicated in a larger, more demographically diverse sample of American parents. The data supported nine of the hypotheses and failed to support three. Perceived exposure, perceived predisposition toward the behavior advocated or discouraged by the message, and perceived social approval made important impacts on perceived influence and respondents' willingness to restrict access to socially undesirable messages and

expand access to socially desirable ones. The next chapter considers these findings in the context of the present TPP research and specifically the parental third-person effects literature.

Discussion

Findings from this study suggest some conditions under which parents are likely to support restricting violent television advertisements and support expanding dissemination of PSAs to stop cyber-bullying. The study provides empirical support for the existence of parental first- and third-person perceptions and provides additional evidence that perceived exposure and perceived predisposition toward the behavior discouraged or advocated in the message are a part of parents' estimates of influence for them self and others.

Parental third- and first-person perceptions. Based on an argument rooted in the theory of self-enhancement, it was expected that parents would anticipate greater influence of the advertisements to promote the violent TV dramas *Dexter* and *Justified* on other children and anticipate smaller influence of these ads on their own child. The argument is that parents derive self-image benefits by projecting positive beliefs onto their child. And, indeed, parents have shown this bias in estimating their child's attractiveness, talents, and opportunities for the future (Aron, Aron, & Tudor, 1991; Cohen &Fowers, 2004; Wenger, 1999). Furthermore, parents have shown a tendency to believe that their child is able to avoid unwanted influence from mass media (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2002; Nathanson, Eveland, Park, & Paul, 2002; Tsfati, Ribak, & Cohen, 2005). Meirick, Sims, Gilchrist, and Croucher (2009) reported a tendency among parents to perceive one's own child to be less susceptible to materialism effects from commercial television. The findings from the present study support this pattern. Parents perceived that their child was

able to resist influence from the violent television ads, but that other children were not as resistant.

Meirick, Sims, Gilchrist, and Croucher (2009) was the first to examine the impact of a socially desirable message on this perceptual bias. If the message were of a positive nature, would parents anticipate greater media influence still on other children? Meirick and his colleagues found that parents perceived the educational benefit from public television programming to be greater on their own child and smaller on other children. This was specifically true for advanced educational benefits. The researchers were the first to report evidence of a parental first-person effect. The findings of the present study provide supportive evidence that when the message is presumed to provide social benefit, parents are willing to concede influence on their child. Parents perceived greater influence on their own child than on other children of the PSAs to stop cyber-bullying. Several parents who participated in this study commented that they wished that these types of PSAs to stop teasing on the Internet were played in schools and were more readily accessible, demonstrating that, while parents perceive the social benefit of these message, parents did not necessarily perceive the influence biases they hold and, in fact, demonstrated in the study.

Consistent with the self-enhancement explanation for third- and first-person effects is an assumption that parents perceive themselves close to their child. Parental third- and first-person effects are self-serving biases. Therefore, it was expected that parents would perceive influence from the violent TV ads to be

similar between self and own child and likewise influence from the PSAs would be similar between self and child. Mean scores on influence from the violent TV ads were significantly different for parents and their child, but were more close than compared to other children or other parents. Mean scores on perceived influence for self and own child from the PSAs were not significantly different. Parents perceived themselves to receive influence much like their own child from the messages to not write, not forward, and delete bullying on the Internet.

Since Davison's (1983) observation of the third-person effect, numerous studies have demonstrated that people tend to see media influence differently for themselves and others. The findings here that parents assume greater influence from the violent TV ads on other parents than themselves joins a body of empirical support for the third-person effect (Chapin, 2000; Cohen & Davis, 1991; Cohen, Mutz, Price, & Gunther, 1988; Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 1991; Faber & Youn, 1999; Gibbon & Durkin, 1995; Gunther & Christen, 2002; Gunther & Thorson, 1992; Innes & Zeitz, 1988; Meirick, 2006; Sharrer, 2002; Tsfati & Cohen, 2004; Willnat, 1996; Zhang, 2010). And, the finding that parents assumed greater influence from the PSAs on themselves compared to fellow parents adds to studies documenting the first-person perception s(Cohen & Davis, 1991; Henriksen & Flora, 1999; Hoorens & Reuter, 1996; Price, Tewsbury & Huang, 1998).

This study offers novel findings about how perceptions of influence differed for parents and their child in relation to influence judgments about other parents. From the violent TV ads, respondents assumed greater influence on fellow parents,

but estimated a smaller amount of influence on themselves and on their child. From the PSAs to stop cyber-bullying, respondents estimated greater influence on themselves and their child, but assumed a smaller amount of influence on fellow parents. In fact, it looked like parents perceived influence on fellow parents to be similar to what they would expect for other children. Was this an artifact of the generalized nature of the two labels: fellow parents and other children? Arguably not, as mean scores for influence on the two groups were significantly different. Rather, it appears that parents viewed themselves and their child to be more discerning than other parents. Parents believed that they were and that their child was able to defend against mass media influence when it was unwanted and keen to receive media influence when it was wanted.

*Self-enhancement and sex differences.*The present study drew from the body of scholarly work in personality psychology, which is concerned with self-construal. Scholars in this area have argued that women more than men derive a sense of self from the relationships they hold with close, significant others (Cross, Morris, & Gore, 2002). This work has demonstrated that, for example, American women more than men possess a self-schemata of personal connections (Weng & Mowen, 1997). Researchers have found that women show a greater interest in, knowledge about, and empathy for others (Chodorow, 1987; Hoffman, 1977). It was anticipated that women more than men would derive a sense a self from their connection to their child and, thus, achieve greater self-image benefit from projecting positive illusions on to their own child about the child's imperviousness

to media influence. From this, it was anticipated that mothers more than fathers would exhibit third- and first-person perceptions. However, perceived effects were not significantly different between mothers and fathers. Mothers and fathers held virtually the same influence biases.

Do the no sex differences in the present study give reason to challenge the self-enhancement logic. Or, are fathers' identities changing? DeGarmo (2010) observed some identity change over time within a small group of recently divorced fathers living in the Pacific Northwest. DeGarmo examined the number of daily contacts, overnight visits as well as father-to-child interactions and observed that these variables over time played some, albeit mixed roles, in predicting the importance of the respondents' fathering identity. Perhaps, the changing roles fathers are playing in the life of their offspring is impacting their own identity such that fathers are similarly projecting on to their child the positive illusions that heretofore theorists would have expected of only mothers.

Thinking Again about the Target Corollary. Based on a line of reasoning derived from attribution theory, it was expected that parents' perception of group exposure would relate to perceived effects. Often referred to as the target corollary to the third-person perception, the argument is that people hold a "media is powerful" schema and infer from this strong effects on those who are most exposed (Eveland, Nathanson, Detenber, & McLeod, 1999; McLeod, Detenber, & Eveland; 2001; McLeod, Eveland, & Nathanson, 1997). McLeod and his colleagues observed this of perceived effects from violent, misogynistic song lyrics. Those

perceived to be most exposed to the songs were perceived to be most influenced. The findings in the present study support that perceived exposure helps explain perceived effects. A group's perceived exposure to the violent television ads and the PSAs was, in fact, a significant predictor in perceived effects for self, one's child, other children, and fellow parents (see Tables 2 and 3).

However, perceived predisposition toward the behavior advocated or discouraged by the message was expected to do a better job than perceived exposure in explaining perceived effects from a pro-social campaign. Basically the same logic guided this forecast. Just as people infer a relationship between those likely exposed and likely influenced, it was expected that parents would infer a positive relationship between those likely to engage in physical aggression and effects from the violent TV ads and a negative relationship between those likely to engage in the Internet teasing behavior and effects from the PSAs to stop cyber-bullying. The present study supported that perceived predisposition helps explain perceived effects for both message types. And, perceived behavioral predisposition contributed more than perceived exposure in explaining perceived effects for the PSAs. The findings support a pattern Meirick (2005) observed of anti-tobacco and anti-drunk driving messages and support some observations by researchers that influence biases are linked to perceptions about what is normal for the target group (Lambe & McLeod, 2005; Reid & Hogg, 2003; Scharrer, 2002).

Unlike Meirick (2005), this study found perceived exposure did a good job in predicting perceived effects for PSAs just not as good as predisposition (see

Table 3). Perhaps, this can be explained by social distance. Meirick examined the influence perceptions that college students had for different groups of peers and, based on some first-hand experience, may have under-judged peers likely exposure. It may be that features in the messages (child performers and chickens) may have suggested for whom the messages were created, which may have contributed to parents' exposure estimates. The data provides some support for both thoughts. Parents' mean estimates of exposure were less for self (M = 2.71) and greater for other children (M = 3.84). However, exposure estimates for other parents (M = 3.26) were virtually indistinguishable from that for one's own child (M = 3.24), which are more difficult to interpret.

Behavioral intention and perceived social approval. Guided by the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1991), it was expected that perceived social approval would contribute to parents willingness to restrict access to the violent TV ads and expand access to the PSAs. Prior research has demonstrated that the salience of the referent can impact the importance of perceived social approval on behavioral intent, so it was also expected that fellow parents might exert meaningful social pressure at times and the respondents' child may exert important pressure at other times. The findings of this study were that parents' willingness to restrict access to the ads and expand dissemination of the PSAs were both driven by perceived social approval of the parents' child. The finding, at first glance, seemed counter-intuitive: Parents' willingness to restrict access to messages presumed to be socially undesirable to be influenced by would seem to be a "parenting behavior" and one

that parents would presume other parents would want them to do. However, reconsidering the research, which has previously used the theory of planned behavior, shows that perceived social approval contributes more to the explanation of behavioral intent when the respondent identifies highly with the referent (Chatzisarantis et al., 2009). It may be that the generalized "fellow parent" was too general for parents to gauge a social norm.

It was anticipated that third-person effects from the violent TV ads would be positively associated with perceived social approval from fellow parents to monitor their child's TV viewing. It seemed plausible that the more other children were perceived to be affected by the violent ads, the more respondents might perceive that fellow parents would want the ads to be restricted. However, perceived effects from the violent TV ads showed no relationship to perceived social approval from fellow parents. Again, perceived social approval from the generalized "fellow parents" may have been difficult for respondents to gauge. It also may be that parents perceived that fellow parents just weren't that concerned about violence. Looking at the mean scores for perceived predisposition toward physical aggression shows that scores for fellow parents were less than for other children but greater than for self and own child. The perception that fellow parents were more predisposed toward physical aggression might have suppressed the relationship between perceived effects and social approval.

It was anticipated that first-person effects would positively relate to perceived social approval from one's child to support funding and dissemination of

the stop cyber-bullying PSAs. It made sense that the more the PSAs were seen to positively affect one's own child the more respondents would perceive that their child would support expanding access to them. So it went: perceived first-person effects positively related to perceived social approval from one's own child to disseminate the PSAs to stop cyber-bullying. The relationship falls in line with Golan and Banning (2008) which reported a relationship between willingness to engage in a range of pro-social behaviors and perceived effects from PSAs.

*The perceived effects-to-behavioral intention relationship.*The relationship between perceptions of influence and parents' willingness to monitor their child's television viewing held even while accounting for parents' sex, level of education, self-rated paternalistic mindset, and perceived social approval from one's child and fellow parents. The finding demonstrates again that influence biases impact behavioral intentions. But, in this study, the relationship existed between third-person perception and parental monitoring only for perceptions about the violent TV advertisements. First-person perception did not help to predict parents' willingness to fund and disseminate the PSAs to stop cyber-bullying.

One interesting finding in this study was that perceived influence on self was a greater predictor of television monitoring behaviors more than perceived influence on one's child. So the restriction of television use at home was driven more by a belief that the objectionable TV content would affect the respondent, not that it would affect their child. This taken together with the finding that willingness to monitor television use was more driven by perceived social approval from one's

child rather than the approval of fellow parents suggests that, among the parents in this sample, their children were in the driver seat about what was viewed on TV at home.

*Second-Person Perception.*In all models where it was included, the perception that "media have a similar influence on self and other," (Neuwirth, Frederick, and Mayo, 2002)—in this study own and other children—made significant contributions to the behavioral intention. For the violent TV ads, perceived second-person perception contributed less toward predicting parental monitoring behaviors than third-person perception. But, by contrast, perceived second person perception contributed more than first-person perception toward predicting willingness to fund and disseminate the stop Internet teasing PSAs. The findings demonstrate that the second-person perception is important to study beyond its entrance as a control.

Future Investigations. A total of 313 American parents of roughly half mothers and half fathers participated in this study. Participants were diverse on their level of education, annual salary, age of their child, and geographic region. However, future investigations of parents' influence judgments should include a measure of the parents' race, which was not measured in this study. It is worth noting that, in previous PTPP studies, non-white participants have accounted for less than 8 percent of the sample. It would be ideal to investigate parents' influence judgments on a sample that more represents the racial make-up of American parents in the broader population.

Participants included for this study identified themselves as having at least one child at home between the age of 8 and 18. This range in the child's age was selected to collect responses from the greatest number of parents possible during the collection period and because children in this age range are associated with the behaviors and messages examined in the study. One problem with such a broad age range is that it does not account for potential differences parents may perceive in terms of media influence for children of younger versus older age groups. Future studies could examine these relationships considering the child's age and other children in their child's age-range.

For this study, four exemplars were selected to represent violent TV advertisements and Public Service Announcements; two for each type. I wanted to address the potential that perceived effects could be a function of the unique characteristics of a single ad or PSA, so I had half the sample view one exemplar and half view the other exemplar for each type. Future studies could investigate whether the findings reported here hold for different exemplars.

In a related vein, the next level of investigation in this area should examine in what way features in the message contribute to parents' perception that the message is targeted toward a certain group and in what way these perceptions of targeting impact perceptions of influence.

Perceived social approval from one's own child contributed significantly toward predicting parents' willingness to monitor their child's television viewing. It may be that this is an answer by default as the alternate "fellow parents" was

extremely general. That said, it is a curious finding that parents would judge their willingness to talk with their child about and restrict access to objectionable TV content based on the approval of their child. Future studies could examine further in what way perceived social approval impacts behavioral intention.

Conclusion. The role of parent is one of the most important roles we perform as adults. The decisions parents make can guide a child's development and encourage her actualization. Media choices are probably some of the less important decisions, but ones to consider soberly and about which more study is needed.

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Appendix

INFORMED CONSENT FOR RESEARCH CONDUCTED THROUGH THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA-NORMAN CAMPUS

INFORMATION FOR CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

My name is Jacqueline Eckstein, and I am a doctoral student in the Department of Communication at the University of the Oklahoma. I am requesting that you volunteer to participate in a research study titled The Parents Media Influence Study. You were selected as a possible participant because you are a parent of a child between 8 and 18. Please read this information sheet and contact me to ask any questions that you may have before agreeing to take part in this study.

Purpose of the Research Study: The purpose of this study is to measure parents' reactions to advertisements.

Length of Participation: The total time required for participation is approximately 15 to 20 minutes and will be completed in a single sitting.

Procedures: If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to do the following things:

1) Respond to a set of demographic questions and questions related to your beliefs about children, other parents, and physical and Internet-based aggression.
2) Watch two short television advertisements.
3) Respond to some questions about your reactions to the advertisements you watched. Alternative Procedures: There is no alternate procedure to receive compensation.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study: The study has the following risks: You may experience some moderate anxiety after viewing the messages, but the risk is minimal. If you feel uncomfortable answering any questions, you may skip them without penalty. This study will not provide you with any direct benefits.

Compensation: Should you complete the survey, a cash-value award will be credited to your account with Clear Voice Surveys. If you complete some portion of the survey, you will receive a lesser amount according to your amount of participation. If you have questions about receiving compensation, you should contact Clear Voice Surveys directly at Clear Voice Research Com., 1675 Larimer Street, Denver, CO 80202-1520, customercare@clearvoicesurveysmail.com.

Voluntary Nature of the Study: Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether or not to participate will not result in penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or discontinue participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You may participate in the study only once and receive compensation only once.

Confidentiality: The records of this study will be kept private, and no one outside the research team will have access to your responses. In published reports, there will be no information included that will make it possible to identify you as a research participant. Your name will not be linked to your responses. Your name, e-mail address and any other identifiers will only be used for purposes of assigning compensation for your participation in this study. To ensure confidentiality, all findings will be presented in aggregate form with no identifying information. Only the two principal investigators will have access to the data stored in a password protected folder on hard disk in the principle investigators' computer.

Contacts and Questions: If you have concerns or complaints about the research, you are encouraged to contact the researcher conducting this study Jacqueline Eckstein at (405) 360 - XXXX or via e-mail at jmeckstein@ou.edu. You may also wish to contact the faculty advisor for this project, Professor Patrick C. Meirick at (405) 325-1574 or via e-mail meirick@ou.edu. You are encouraged to contact Jacqueline Eckstein, if you have any questions. In the event of a research-related injury, contact Jacqueline Eckstein at (405) 360 - XXXX or via e-mail at jmeckstein@ou.edu.

If you have any questions, concerns, or complaints about the research and wish to talk to someone other than the individuals on the research team, or if you cannot reach the research team, you may contact the University of Oklahoma – Norman Campus Institutional Review Board (OU-NC IRB) at (405) 325-8110 or irb@ou.edu.

The OU IRB has approved the content of this message but not the method of distribution.
The OU IRB has no authority to approve distribution by mass email.

The University of Oklahoma is an equal opportunity institution.

Statement of Consent
I have carefully read the above information and understand all the information presented. Please choose from 1 of the following 2 choices.
- ❍ Yes I consent to participate in the study. (1)
- ❍ No I do not consent to participate in the study. (2)

Which category best describes your education?

- ❍ Not a high school graduate (1)
- ❍ high school graduate (2)
- ❍ some college, but no degree (3)
- ❍ Associate's degree (4)
- ❍ Bachelor's degree (5)
- ❍ Advanced degree (6)

Are you...

- ❍ Male (1)
- ❍ Female (2)

If you have multiple children, between 8 and 18 years old, for the remainder of this survey, think about your child whose next birthday is closest to today’s date. May we know this child's age? (To type the answer, simply click your computer mouse on the line below. A cursor will appear inside the text entry box.)

_____

Is your child male or female?

- ❍ Male (1)
- ❍ Female (2)

Tell us how much YOU agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Sometimes it is necessary to protect people from doing harm to themselves. (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
It is important for the government to take steps to ensure the well-being of citizens. (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
If people are unable to help themselves, it is the responsibility of others to help them. (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Some people are better than others at recognizing harmful influences. (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Just because people are unable to help themselves doesn't mean the government should step in and try to help them. (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Below are statements about online communication. For each statement, please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree, and then give your best guess about how the other groups would answer. Teasing someone on the Internet does not really hurt them.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I would (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children (in my child's age range) would (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents would (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Someone who is obnoxious on the Internet does not deserve to be treated like a human being.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I would (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children (in my child's age range) would (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents would (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

It is okay to insult a classmate on the Internet because beating him/her is worse.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree or Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I would (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children (in my child's age range) would (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents would (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Children do not mind being teased on the Internet because it shows interest in them.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I would (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children (in my child's age range) would (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents would (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Kids who get mistreated on the Internet usually do things that deserve it.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I would (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children (in my child's age range) would (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents would (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Insults among children do not hurt anyone.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree or Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I would (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children (in my child's age range) would (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents would (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Now, think about how you, YOUR CHILD, OTHER CHILDREN, and OTHER PARENTS would respond to these statements. Slapping and shoving someone is just a way of joking.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I would (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My Child Would (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children (in my child's age range) would (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents would (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

To hit obnoxious classmates is just giving them "a lesson."

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I would (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children would (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents would (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

If a group decides together to do something harmful it is unfair to blame any kid in the group for it.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I would (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children would (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents would (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Talking about people behind their backs is just part of the game.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I would (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents would (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Some people have to be treated roughly because they lack feelings that can be hurt.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
I would (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children would (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents would (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Please play the video above. [Alternate PSA A]
Please play the video above. [Alternate PSA B]

For YOU, YOUR CHILD, OTHER CHILDREN, and OTHER PARENTS, estimate how much you believe each is exposed to ads like the one you just watched.

	0 Never Exposed	1	2	3	4	5	6 Very Often Exposed
I am (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child is (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children are (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents are (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How much would you say ads like the one you watched would influence you, YOUR CHILD, OTHER CHILDREN, and OTHER PARENTS. The ad would influence _____ decision(s) to refrain from making mean-spirited jokes about others online.

	1 Influence Decision Not At All (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 Influence Decision Very Much (5)
my (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
my child's (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
other children's (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
other parents' (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

The ad would influence _____ decision(s) to ask family and friends to refrain from posting unflattering comments and pictures about others online.

	Influence Decision Not At All (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Influence Decision Very Much (5)
my (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
my child's (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
other children’s (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
other parents' (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

The ad would influence _____decision(s) against sharing rumors about others on the Internet.

	1 Influence Decision Not All (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 Influence Decision Very Much (5)
my (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
my child's (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
other children’s (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
other parents' (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

The ad would influence _____ decision to take a public pledge to refrain from teasing others online during the next year.

	1 Influence Decision Not All (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 Influence Decision Very Much (5)
my (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
my child (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
other children's (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
other parents' (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Below is a list of actions one could take in response to ads like the one to stop teasing on the Internet. For each statement select the number on a 7-point scale (where 1 equals not at all and 7 equals very much) that best describes how these kinds of ads make YOU want to do the following activities. These kinds of ads make ME want to:

	Not at all (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Very Much (7)
View the ad additional times (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Talk about the ad with friends and/or family (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Forward a link to the ad to friends and/or family (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
"Like" the ad on Facebook (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Share the ad on Facebook (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Support government legislation to allocate more money for these types of ads (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about YOUR CHILD.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
My child would want me to approve of stop online teasing messages. (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would want me to share a stop online teasing message with others. (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would approve if I gave of my money to support funding and dissemination of stop online teasing messages. (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would approve if I gave of my time to support funding and dissemination of stop online teasing messages. (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about FELLOW PARENTS.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Somewhat Disagree (3)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (4)	Somewhat Agree (5)	Agree (6)	Strongly Agree (7)
Fellow parents would want me to approve of stop online teasing messages. (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Fellow parents would want me to share a stop online teasing message with others. (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Fellow parents would approve if I gave of my money to support funding and dissemination of stop online teasing messages. (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Fellow parents would approve if I gave of my time to support funding and dissemination of stop online teasing messages. (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Please play the video above. [Alternate Ad A]
Please play the video above. [Alternate Ad B]

For YOU, YOUR CHILD, OTHER CHILDREN, and OTHER PARENTS, estimate how much you believe each is exposed to ads like the one you just watched.

	Never Exposed (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Very Often Exposed (7)
I am (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child is (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children are (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents are (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How much do you think watching violence on TV has led _____ to view the world as a more dangerous place?

	Not At All (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	Very Much (5)
You (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Your child (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How much do you think watching violence on TV has led _____ to distrust others?

	Not At All (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	Very Much (5)
You (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Your child (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How much do you think watching violence on TV has led _____ to think it's ok to do those things, too?

	Not At All (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	Very Much (5)
You (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Your child (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How much do you think watching violence on TV has led _____ to act more aggressively toward others?

	Not At All (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	Very Much (5)
You (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Your child (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other children (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Other parents (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How much do you use the following approaches to your child's television viewing on a scale from 1 (not at all) to 7 (very much)?

	Not At All (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	Very Much (7)
Prohibit your child from viewing violence on TV: (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Limit the time your child spends viewing violence on TV: (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Limit other activities associated with the questionable TV content (e.g., browsing fan web sites): (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Express concern about violent content with your child: (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Watch the program in question with your child: (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Talk about the questionable program with your child: (6)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Talk about the program	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

with your spouse: (7)							
Talk about the program with other adults: (8)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Ask for advice from teachers, school counselors or other sources: (9)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Please select answer choice "7 - Very Much" (10)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Also, on a seven-point scale, where 7 means very likely and 1 means very unlikely, how likely are you to:

	Very Unlikely (1)	Unlikely (2)	Somewhat Unlikely (3)	Undecided (4)	Somewhat Likely (5)	Likely (6)	Very Likely (7)
Try to influence my child against hanging out with friends I do not approve of. (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Forbid my child from participating in activities w/ children I do not approve of. (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Insist I supervise activities in which my child will be hanging out w/ children I do not approve of. (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Arrange for my child activities that I think are appropriate for his or maturity. (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Please select answer choice number one "Very Unlikely" (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

]Below is a list of options that have been taken to deal with adult content such as portrayals of sex and/or violence on TV. For each statement select the number on a 7-point scale (where 1 equals strongly oppose and 7 equals strongly favor) that best describes how you feel about each option.

	Strongly Oppose (1)	Oppose (2)	Somewhat Oppose (3)	Neither Oppose Nor Favor (4)	Somewhat Favor (5)	Favor (6)	Strongly Favor (7)
Banning sexual and violent content during hours when children might be watching (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Banning the content during all time periods (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Banning the content from network television (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Encouraging self-censorship by television writers and producers (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Requiring more prominent ratings and advisories (5)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about YOUR CHILD.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
My child would want me to always talk with them about the violence they see on TV. (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would approve if I often gave of my time to support censorship of violence on TV. (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would approve if I often gave of my money to support censorship of violence on TV. (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
My child would want me to restrict their access to violence on TV. (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about FELLOW PARENTS.

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Fellow parents would want me to always talk with my child about the violence they see on TV. (1)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Fellow parents would approve if I often gave of my time to support censorship of violence on TV. (2)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Fellow parents would approve if I often gave of my money to support censorship of violence on TV. (3)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍
Fellow parents would want me to restrict my child access to violence on TV. (4)	❍	❍	❍	❍	❍

Which category best describes your age?
- ❍ 18 - 24 (1)
- ❍ 25 - 34 (2)
- ❍ 35 - 44 (3)
- ❍ 45 - 54 (4)
- ❍ 55 - 64 (5)

Are you
- ❍ Married (1)
- ❍ Single (2)
- ❍ Divorced (3)
- ❍ Widowed (4)
- ❍ Other (5) _____

How many televisions do you have in your home?
- ❍ 0 (1)
- ❍ 1 (2)
- ❍ 2 (3)
- ❍ 3 (4)
- ❍ 4 (5)
- ❍ 5 (6)
- ❍ 6 or more (7)

Which best describes your household income?
- ❍ 0-$25,000 (1)
- ❍ $26,000-$50,000 (2)
- ❍ $51,000-$75,000 (3)
- ❍ $76,000-$100,000 (4)
- ❍ $101,000-and up (5)



Using the map as a guide, would you say you live in the West, Southwest, Midwest, Southeast, or Northeast?

- ❍ West (1)
- ❍ Southwest (2)
- ❍ Midwest (3)
- ❍ Southeast (4)
- ❍ Northeast (7)
- ❍ Other (8) _____

Do you have comments or questions about this survey? Feel free to use the space provided to type a few lines about your experience taking this survey. Your input is appreciated. Thank you!

_____