PARENTHOOD AND MEDIA: TELEVISION INFLUENCES COLLEGE STUDENTS'

PERCEPTIONS OF PARENTHOOD

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A Thesis

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by

Amber M. Giacona

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this to my parents who have supported me in my

education since my first day of Kindergarten and my dreams since I have been born.

ABSTRACT

Giacona, Amber M., *Parenthood and media: Television influences college students' perceptions of parenthood*. Master of Arts (Psychology), May, 2018, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

More couples are opting to delay childbearing or skip it altogether (Mather & Lavery, 2010). The shift in the parenthood dynamics may be due to social influence from media or television. Using Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory and Brofenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory as a basis, the current study sought to understand the link between immediate changes in parenthood perception and television. College students were asked to take a baseline Perceptions of Parenting Inventory (POPI), watch either a positive, negative, or neutral television show, and then complete the POPI a second time. Two weeks later, the participants were asked to complete the POPI a third time. Results showed that there were no differences across inventories for the positive or negative groups, but that the neutral group had a positive increase from the immediate to delayed inventories. Implications and reasoning for these results were discussed.

KEY WORDS: Parenting perceptions, Media, Television, POPI

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

For many years, parenthood has been considered a preference and an innate desire

based on societal norms and evolutionary aspects. Increasingly, the dynamics of the

desire to have parenthood are changing due to America's continued development. More

couples are opting to delay childbearing or skip it altogether (Mather & Lavery, 2010;

Schoen, Kim, Nathanson, Fields, & Astone, 1997). Furthermore, young adults are

placing less value on parenthood. Only 10.4% of young adults consider having a child to

be "extremely important," whereas 55.1% of young adults deemed having a child as "not

important" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). The shift in the parenthood dynamics may be

due to social influence from media or television. The current study sought to understand

the link between immediate changes in parenthood perception and television.

For the purpose of this study, perception of parenting was operationalized.

Perception of parenting, in this context, encompasses both the desire to become a parent

as well as attitudes about the perceived value of a child (Lawson, 2004). These

perceptions are based on perceived social support, instrumental costs, enrichment, social

isolation, and continuity, meaning caring for the child after his or her 18th birthday.

Because the current study focused on the immediate effects of television on

parenthood perceptions, we used a repeated measures design. In order to test this theory,

participants completed a Perceptions of Parenting Inventory (POPI; Lawson, 2004) as a

pretest. Immediately after, participants were asked to watch an excerpt video from a

television show in one of three conditions (i.e., positive, negative, control). Immediately

after viewing the videos, participants completed the POPI (Lawson, 2004) again. After

two weeks, the participants completed the final, delayed POPI test. My hypothesis was

that those in the control would have no change in their perceptions of parenthood.

However, those in the positive condition would have increased scores on perceptions of

parenting, while those in the negative condition would have lower perceptions of

parenting.

Sometimes when encountering an unruly or troublesome child in a grocery store

or public place, people will make negative statements that elude to delaying childbirth, at

least immediately. Knowing that people have made similar statements or comments, a

review of the literature was conducted to determine empirical evidence for this

phenomenon. Unfortunately, this seems to be an area of psychology that people have yet

to explore in detail. Despite many studies on populations that do not have natural born

children (i.e., adoptive parents, parents undergoing in-vitro fertilization, those in same-

sex relationships) and their desire to have children, less research has informed how the

population, in general, perceives parenthood or the desire to be a parent. Perhaps it is

because parenthood has long been widely considered a drive from an evolutionary point

of view, but there is little to no literature about what affects people's perceptions of

parenthood. Furthermore, there are many studies on television and its impact on society

(i.e., prejudice and body satisfaction) but little on how it affects parenting, let alone

perceptions of parenting specifically.

   As America, and the world, continues to move in a technologically advanced direction where people need to rely less and less on natural forms of conception, people can opt to wait longer periods before having children or skip the experience as a whole. By studying the influence of television on the perceptions of parenting, we sought to increase understanding in one small part of this changing parenthood dynamic.

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

Parenting dynamics of current young adults are much different than previous generations (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2017), young adults are valuing education and economic accomplishments more so than marriage and parenting achievements. The average age to get married in America has been delayed to 27 and 29 for women and men, respectively, and 40% of women who did have children had them out of wedlock. In 1976, 57% of women were married in their early 20s; as of 2014, only 17% of women between the ages of 20-24 years were married. Perceptions and values of parenting are changing over time as shown by the statistics provided by the U.S. Census Bureau (2017).

Parenthood Desire

Hadley and Hanley (2011) conducted a study about childless men and their desire to have children. The researchers used a qualitative approach to gather information by conducting a semi structured interview face-to-face. They used a sample of ten male participants; all men were white, 33-years-old or older, and employed. Six of the men were in a relationship, while four were not; none of the men were disabled (Hadley & Hanley, 2011). Although 10 participants are considered a small sample size, men are harder to recruit for participation in studies, as stated by Throsby and Gill (2004). Through these interviews, the researchers found that most of the participants discussed the differences in the fantasies and realities surrounding fatherhood. Many of the younger participants feared fatherhood, and the older participants regretted not having tried for it. Two of the men were stepfathers and claimed that they still felt the loss of not

having had children of their own. This suggests a lack of fulfillment, unlike parents who had adopted children (Daniluk, 2001; Hadley & Hanley, 2011). Furthermore, each of the participants listed family, societal, and religious pressures for not having had children as issues that caused a strain on personal relationships in their lives. The researchers suggested that childless men may share experiences to those who have had infertility treatment: "sense of loss, depression, isolation, risk-taking behaviors, and exclusion" (Hadley & Hanley, 2011, p. 65). The general timeline for fatherhood desire peaked in participants' 30s and reduced with age until they finally accepted their missed opportunity. Participants felt sorrow for not having children, and some even felt as if their work performance was stunted because of it.

The study also listed multiple limitations, the most prominent being a lack of participants. This is an issue with using male test participants and should be considered in the recruitment process. Possible solutions could include using a variety of mediums to conduct the interview for added convenience as well as reaching out to a variety of places rather than just using flyers. Another issue was the lack of a representative sample. The youngest participant was 33 years old, which cuts out a large portion of the age range. It also only used white participants, so diversity was nonexistent. Limitations aside, this study acquired an in-depth look at the male population, citing their desire for childhood, which has little research.

Riskind and Patterson (2010) conducted a study using data from the 2002 National Survey of Family Growth to compare desire to have children between genders and sexual orientation. There were 294 participants, all childless, and were comprised of lesbian females, gay males, and heterosexual male and females. There were no statistical

differences between heterosexual and homosexual men and women concerning

demographics such as age or education level. The researchers found that lesbian women

and gay men were less likely than heterosexual men and women to desire parenthood.

Gay men who reported a desire to have children were less likely than heterosexual men to

report intention of having children. The significant difference between homosexual

men's desire to have children and intention to have children was an unexpected finding

that the researchers had no theory to explain. This was not expressed in lesbian women,

who expressed the same rates of intention as heterosexual women. Even after controlling

for age, race, and education, homosexual persons were less likely than heterosexual

persons to report a desire or intention to have children. Both gay men and lesbian women

upheld the value of parenthood just as firmly as heterosexual men and women, regardless

if they planned to partake in it personally (Riskind & Patterson, 2010).

In accordance with the previous study, a study conducted by Baiocco and Laghi

(2013) analyzed sexual orientation and the desires and intentions to become parents in

Italy. The study used a sample of 930 participants: 301 heterosexual females, 216

heterosexual males, 201 lesbian females, 199 gay males (Baiocco & Laghi, 2013). The

participants had an average education equal to the first year of college and were aged

between 18 and 35 years old. They asked one desire to have children question and one

parenting intention questions prior to using the Perceptions of Parenting Inventory (POPI;

Lawson, 2004), a 28-item scale used to indicate the desire and perceptions of parenting.

The researchers found that gay and lesbian men and women were less likely than

heterosexual men and women to report a desire to have children. Furthermore, of the

participants who reported a desire to have children, non-heterosexual people reported a

significantly lower intention to have children than their heterosexual counterparts. Baiocco and Laghi (2013) discussed and compared their results to the previous study by Riskind and Patterson (2010). One major difference found a disparity in Italian lesbians' and American lesbians' desire to have children. Sixty-one percent of Italian women reportedly desired to have children, while only 37% of the American lesbian sample wanted children. Lesbian and gay participants also reported a lower level of social support and available resources to them as factors in wanting children. Based on these results, the study found that "…sexual orientation is the best predictor of desires and intentions both for women and male participants" (Baiocco & Laghi, 2013, p. 96). One of the limitations of this study is the issue that it was conducted in Italy and may not generalize to other countries like the United States. Another limitation is the fact that they used convenience samples, so there may be an underlying bias present in their sample.

Having children has been a previously common expectation of couples, but in modern societies, it is becoming less and less the social norm. A limitation of the research on parenting perceptions and desires is the population that is studied. There has been much research on childless mothers and populations that cannot conceive children without external help, but less research has been conducted on more general samples. Similarly, there is an abundance of research about women with HIV, homosexual individuals, and infertile individuals, but less research on heterosexual samples. Furthermore, there has been little research published on the changing dynamics of parenting perception. Other than the annual U.S. Census Bureau report (2017) that states the average age of parenthood and marriage, there has been little research on this change.

It is important to note that the views and cultural expectations of society have changed and are still changing today. It is not as important to get married at an early age, and due to the career driven nature of society, a large portion of people are wanting to put off having children until later in life. The added resources for reproductive options such as adoption, in vitro fertilization, and surrogacy are also changing who has children and how it is done. Research should be conducted on desires of parenthood as a whole in order to see the full effect of the phenomenon rather than just looking at small portions.

Effects of Watching Television

Television is now an integrated part of culture. Televisions can be found in most houses, restaurants, shopping malls, and even restrooms in the United States. Most television programs can be viewed via laptops and cellular devices as well, allowing for constant viewing and the ability to stay updated on information instantly. With all these constant interactions, does it affect people's perceptions? Yes. The media and television has been often cited by numerous researchers as influencing viewer's perceptions from prejudice views to weight and body dissatisfaction (Boothroyd et al., 2016; Eisenberg, Carlson-McGuire, Gollust, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2015; Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski, & Eron, 2003; Punyanunt-Carter, 2008).

Prejudice in Television

Mastro and Tropp (2004) conducted a study aimed at understanding White participants' perceptions of Black characters and how much the media encourages stereotyping prejudices. In their study, 194 White males and females participated. They were given a baseline questionnaire about their prejudice towards Black Americans and intergroup prejudice. Participants were randomly selected to be in one of two conditions:

either the stereotype condition or the non-stereotype condition. Both conditions were taken from a popular all Black show and involved the main character; the difference was the situation of the character. The stereotype condition showcased a 12-minute clip involving dating and sexual relationships. The non-stereotype condition involved a 14-minute clip about the main character working with her peers in an extracurricular activity. Following the viewing of the clip, participants were asked to complete another questionnaire, but this one asked about their enjoyment of the clip and the judgement and content of the character and show. Based on the results, regardless of their level of contact with Black Americans or their level of prejudice towards them, those who viewed stereotypical television portrayals rated Black characters more negatively. Mastro and Tropp (2004) found that the stereotypical portrayal of Black characters may reinforce those with preexisting, negative prejudices, while overriding the positive prejudices that stem from interacting with the members of the outgroup.

Another study conducted by Punyanunt-Carter (2008) sought to understand African American portrayal in the media and its perceived realism in America. They found that perceived occupational roles and negative stereotypes to be more real or accurate, while positive stereotypes and low-achieving status was found to be less real or inaccurate. As African Americans make up a large portion of society, it makes sense that they would have diverse jobs and employment; therefore, as they are seen in real life, it is plausible that African Americans would hold diverse jobs. In contrast, African Americans' low-achieving status was considered untrue or unrealistic. This was because there are too many high profile and famous African Americans: Condoleezza Rice, Oprah, and Tyra Banks to name a few. Furthermore, in many television series and the

media in general, African Americans are portrayed as criminals (Busselle & Crandall, 2002; Punyanunt-Carter, 2008). This was considered to be representative of African Americans in the real world. Conversely, African Americans' positive stereotypes were not seen as accurate.   This is because television and media typically portrays African Americans in a negative light. It is suggested that the negative stereotyping in the media has impacted viewers' perceptions of African Americans (Punyanunt-Carter, 2008). These negative depictions often lead to continued negative stereotyping of African Americans (Mastro & Tropp, 2004; Punyanunt-Carter, 2008).

Weight and Body Dissatisfaction

Boothroyd and colleagues (2016) recruited 151 participants to study weight preferences and television usage in Nicaragua. The researchers analyzed preferences for body size in females as related to television consumption by Nicaraguan men and women. There was a sample from an urban area, a village with established television access, and a sample from a village with limited television access. The lowest body mass index (BMI) preferences were found in the urban sample, the sample with the established television access had intermediate preferences, and the highest BMI preferences were found in the village with the least amount of television access. There was also evidence that consumption of television increases the likelihood of women seeking to lose weight or go on diets. The researchers showed how television consumption changes perceptions of weight and the ideal standard of beauty.

To illustrate the implications of Boothroyd et al. (2016), the next study will discuss how often weight stigmatization is mentioned in popular adolescent television shows. Eisenberg and colleagues (2015) conducted a study about the prevalence of

weight stigma in adolescent television shows. In their study, 2,357 middle and high

school students, with a mean age of 14.4 years, ranked their favorite television shows.

After analysis, the ten most popular shows were picked, and three episodes of each show

were analyzed for weight stigmatization: Family Guy, The Simpsons, SpongeBob

SquarePants, CSI, iCarly, South Park, Two and a Half Men, That 70s Show, The Game,

and George Lopez. Researchers found that the results of this study were that of the 30

episodes, 15 of them contained at least one weight stigmatizing comment, and of those,

the percent of the comments were higher for the youth-targeted shows (55.6%) than the

adult-targeted shows (8.3%). There was no difference in the amount of weight stigma for

average or overweight characters; furthermore, only one-third of the cases elicited a

negative response while 40.9% of the cases had laughter following it (Eisenberg et al.,

2015). The messages of weight stigmatization in adolescent television shows could

potentially be harmful as they reinforce rather than stop the notion of weight shaming.

Furthermore, researchers were able to use this study to uncover that many body shaming

jokes and comments were aimed at average sized individuals, which is not commonly

known (Eisenberg et al., 2015).

This study, combined with the previous study by Boothroyd et al. (2016), the

impact of television on viewer's actions and perceptions of weight. Often people do not

realize the effect that watching television can have, but this is a major issue in American

society. Overall, these studies have showcased the effect that television has on many

different issues: racial perceptions, aggression, and even body image perception.

Theory

There are two predominant theories that can explain the influence of television on

these various issues: Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) and Bronfenbrenner's

(1979) ecological systems theory. Initially, Bandura began conducting research to

determine aggression in children while watching adults interact aggressively with a Bobo

doll (Bandura, 1961; Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963). In his study, children watched as

adults hit a Bobo doll and then produced these same actions towards the doll when they

played with it. In this experiment, he found that learning can occur by simply being

modeled by other individuals. In 1986, Bandura changed his terminology to Social

Cognitive Theory (previously Social Learning Theory) to describe the process by which

individuals can learn by observing, with minor adjustments to his original theory. He

placed more emphasis on the cognitive aspects to observational learning, such as the

thoughts of the observer and memory processes, rather than only using overt, behavioral

changes. Moreover, Ormrod (2008) highlighted the fact that learning could occur with or

without behavioral changes within the Social Cognitive Theory. Using this theory of the

modeling of behavior, the parent-child interactions were modeled by television stars and

were expected to produce learning in the observers, or participants of the current study.

Specifically, by watching various parent-child interactions, the modeling should have

influenced the perceptions of the observer.

In the ecological systems theory, there are five main systems: the individual,

microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (Bornstein &

Lamb, 2010; Ryan, 2001). The microsystem is comprised of the individual and his or her

direct environment. These are usually the family, friends, school, and neighborhood and

typically have the strongest influence on the individual. In the mesosystem, all the

microsystems interact. For instance, the individual, the family, and the school may be

interacting in the mesosystem, while only the individual and family or the individual and school would interact at the microsystem level. The exosystem is the larger system that does not directly affect the individual. In this system, mass media and television would be found. In Bronfenbrenner's theory (1979), all of these systems would constantly interact to allow the person to play an active role. This dynamic theory shows that individuals are reacting to their environment, responding to it, and changing accordingly. In the current study, the individual, or participants, would interact with their exosystem, or provided video to watch, and their views or beliefs should change to accommodate the new information.

The Current Study

The current study sought to identify the effects of media and television on perceptions of parenting. The changing parenthood dynamics may be an indicator that parenting perceptions could be malleable. This information, coupled with multiple studies about the effects of television (Boothroyd et al., 2016; Eisenberg et al., 2015; Huesmann et al., 2003; Punyanunt-Carter, 2008), is what led to the question: can television change perceptions of parenting? This is important, because television has become an everyday part of American society. Television screens are in the home, schools, stores, and even restaurants. In 2010, Rideout, Foehr, and Roberts found that young adults spend 4.5 hours a day watching television. Furthermore, researchers reported that most families had a television in their living room (98%) and in a child's bedroom (63%; Jordan, Hersey, McDivitt, & Heitzler, 2006). If television does have an impact on parenting desires and attitudes, there could be unforeseen impacts on parenting in the future from the shows that air on television today.

By using college students from Sam Houston State University, the current study tested students' perceptions of parenting on the POPI before, immediately after, and two weeks after watching one of three possible television shows. In the negative condition, students watched an episode of Toddlers & Tiaras, the positive condition had students watch an episode of Modern Family, and the neutral, or control, condition had students watch an episode of The Big Bang Theory.

I hypothesized that television would have an immediate effect on perceptions of parenting, and there would be a change in the POPI score of the positive and negative conditions between the pretest and posttest. Specifically, the negative condition should yield lower scores, thus having more negative perceptions of parenting, while the positive condition would have higher scores, thus having more positive perceptions of parenting. These outcomes were based on two assumptions: 1) the current generation of young adults places less emphasis on immediate parenthood; therefore, their perceptions of parenthood may be more malleable (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017), and 2) television has been shown to affect perceptions on a diverse set of topics (Boothroyd et al., 2016; Eisenberg et al., 2015; Huesmann et al., 2003; Punyanunt-Carter, 2008). Also, a study by Eyal and Kunkel (2008) had participants watch either positive or negative clips about premarital sex and found that negative consequences in the clips led to negative attitudes, whereas positive consequences in the clips led to positive attitudes. Applying the results of this study would lend support to the negative and positive conditions of the current study decreasing and increasing in attitudes of parenting, respectively.

I did not expect to find a difference between POPI scores within the neutral condition, nor did I expect to find a change between the posttest and delayed test across

any condition, meaning that the initial effect from pretest to posttest should persist throughout the two-week delay. These results were expected, because "televised influence is best defined in terms of the contents people watch rather than the sheer amount of television viewing" (Bandura, 2001, p. 137). Although heavy exposure to television is shown to shape viewer's beliefs, the content and model has an effect as well (Bandura, 2001); therefore, long-term effects were expected to be observed.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Participants

The current study used Sam Houston State University's Psychology Experimental Research Participation (PeRP) system to recruit participants. There was a screening process to ensure that no participants were already parents; therefore, all participants in this study were childless. There were 218 students that participated in this study; however, 31 participants' data had to be excluded due to a failure to have watched the video, which was determined by including a question asking participants to name a main character of the television show that they had watched. Sixty-nine participants had missing data or failed to complete the study, and overall, data from 118 students were analyzed. In the current study, there were 100 females and 18 males. The average age was 19.3 years ($SD = 1.6$) for females, 20.0 years ($SD = 3.1$) for men, and 19.4 years ($SD = 1.9$) overall. For race, 66.1% participants identified as White or Caucasian, 15.3% as Black or African American, 2.5% as Asian, and 15.3% as Other.

Design

The design used was a 3 (POPI: pretest, posttest, delayed test) x 3 (TV Show: neutral, negative, positive) mixed-factor design with POPI as the within-subjects factor and TV show as the between-subjects factor. The overall score on the perceptions of parenting inventory was the dependent variable being measured.

Materials

The current study was conducted online through Qualtrics. Participants were asked to provide their own headsets in order to hear the videos. A consent form and demographic survey were drafted for online use. Three video compilations of the same length (20 minutes) were used for the different conditions. There was one that showcased negative parent-child interactions (*Toddlers & Tiaras*), one that showed positive parent-child interactions (*Modern Family*), and one that had no parent-child interactions (*The Big Bang Theory*). Episodes of these shows were condensed into segments of identical length (20 minutes) and embedded into the Qualtrics website.

Show selection. All shows used were live-action. The show in the positive condition, *Modern Family (Season 8, Episode 3)*, was chosen due to its modern relevancy, high ratings, and relatively positive parent-child interactions. In media outlets such as The New York Times (Feiler, 2011), it has been seen as a modern take on families in America and usually has the common theme of putting family first. Multiple shows were reviewed, but Season 8, Episode 3 was chosen due to its current release as well as high volume of positive parent-child interactions. This show is about a family of multiple generations and how they interact with each other. This particular episode shows a father (Phil) support his daughter (Haley) in her new business in advertising although he does not agree with her plan. Also, a mothers (Claire and Gloria) support their sons (Luke and Manny, respectively) as they compete for student body president.

The negative condition, *Toddlers & Tiaras (Season 6, Episode 15)*, was chosen due to its modern relevancy, high ratings, and relatively controversial portrayal in the

media. Media outlets such as CNN (Henson, 2013) have condemned the parent's treatment of the children on the show. It was taken into consideration that this program may not be an actual reflection of beauty pageants and in no way criticizes families that engage in this activity; however, due to the national attention and controversial nature of the show, it was considered one of the best examples of negative parent-child interactions for the current study. Multiple episodes in the *Toddlers & Tiaras* series were reviewed, but Season 6, Episode 15 was chosen based on the high volume of negative parent-child interactions observed. This show follows the different families of pageant competitors to show their preparation in a beauty pageant. In this episode, there is a competitor that is two-weeks old, which is frowned upon by other members of the pageant. Furthermore, there is a mom that puts all five daughters in the competition, two of which are twins, so they must compete. In the show, the mom has obvious favoritism for one of the twins by showing more love and affection towards her as well as only buying new dresses for the favorite daughter. There are also multiple tantrums observed throughout the show.

The neutral show, *The Big Bang Theory (Season 10, Episode 9)*, was chosen due to its modern relevancy, high ratings, and lack of parent-child interactions. *The Big Bang Theory* follows a group of friends that are all scientists and work for a university, together, as researchers. In this episode, one of the main characters, becomes jealous because a coworker receives a prestigious grant award. Another character, Howard, finds a Stephen Hawking action figure that he created himself, which leads to him meeting Stephen Hawking in person.

Measure. The measurement used was the 28-item Perceptions of Parenting

Inventory (POPI), with permission from the author (Lawson, 2004). This scale was

created by Lawson (2004) and has six subscales: Enrichment, Isolation, Commitment,

Instrumental Costs, Continuity, and Perceived Support. Each subscale relates to a

specific aspect of parenting. There are three common themes to the subscales: positive

aspects of parenting, negative aspects of parenting, and available resources. The

reliability of this inventory was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. For the positive

group, the alphas were .91, .91, and .90 for the pretest, posttest, and delayed tests,

respectively. For the neutral group, the alphas were .85, .87, and .85 for the pretest,

posttest, and delayed tests, respectively. For the negative group, the alphas were .87, .88,

and .92 for the pretest, posttest, and delayed tests, respectively. The POPI used a Likert-

type format with a seven-point scale (1- "Strongly Disagree" to 7- "Strongly Agree").

Sample statements included "Caring for the child would bring me happiness" and

"Parenting the child would put strain on my relationship with my spouse/partner"

(Lawson, 2004). It was changed from a paper format to an electronic format through

Qualtrics in order to keep a consistent measure of time between the posttest and delayed

testing.

Procedure

The participants registered for the first part of the current study through SHSU's

PeRP system, a website program designed for research and data collection. Upon

meeting the qualifications of the experiment, students were asked to use the last four

digits of their Sam ID as an identification number and randomly assigned to a condition.

In the first part of the study, students were asked to complete a consent form. On the same screen as the consent form, it asked for the participant's age to guarantee that volunteers met the minimum age requirement (18 years old). Following the completion of the consent form, participants were asked to complete background information about race, gender, and age.

Then, participants were asked to complete the Perceptions of Parenting Inventory (POPI) online in order to gauge a baseline parenting perceptions score. After, each participant was asked to watch one of three videos (neutral, positive, negative). Prior to watching the video, participants in the positive and negative conditions were asked to "Pay attention to the parent-child interactions throughout the episode," and participants in the neutral condition were instructed to "Pay attention to the interactions between friends throughout the episode." After watching the video, the participants were asked to name a main character of the show as a manipulation check to ensure that they had watched the video. Furthermore, they were also asked to rate on a 1-5 scale with "1" being "extremely unbelievable" and "5" being "extremely believable" how realistic they found the show to be. After completing the control question, the participants immediately completed another POPI online; this was to determine if there were any immediate differences in the students' perceptions of parenting. After the questionnaire had been completed, participants clicked to another page that thanked them for their research participation and gave them a short debriefing that only explained that the questionnaire served as a baseline for their perceptions of parenting.

The second part of the study was conducted two weeks after completing the first part. By using Qualtrics, students were sent an email with a follow up POPI questionnaire. They were required to complete an additional informed consent form, and after, they were asked to complete the POPI questionnaire to determine if there were any lasting effects on parenting perceptions from the video. After completing the inventory, participants were directed to another page that thanked them for their research participation, fully debriefed them about the purpose of the study, and explained when and how they would be receiving their credit.

Statistical Analysis Plan

I planned to subject the data to a 3 (POPI: pretest, posttest, delayed test) x 3 (TV Show: positive, neutral, negative) repeated measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with POPI as the within-subjects factor and TV Show as the between-subjects factor. ANOVAs assume that the data are normally distributed and groups have equal variances, or homoscedasticity.

CHAPTER IV

Results

These data were subjected to a 3 (POPI: pretest, posttest, delayed test) x 3 (TV

Show: positive, neutral, negative) repeated measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

with POPI as the within-subjects factor and TV Show as the between-subjects factor.

The dependent variable was the overall score on the perceptions of parenting inventory

(POPI), where higher scores corresponded to more positive perceptions of parenting and

lower scores corresponded to more negative perceptions of parenting. The mean scores

can be found below in Table 1.

Table 1

Average POPI Scores for Each Group

TV Show	Pretest	Posttest	Delayed Test	Average
Positive ($n = 39$)	127.08 (21.37)	128.38 (21.83)	128.15 (21.21)	127.87 (21.29)
Neutral ($n = 46$)	126.20 (16.34)	125.67 (18.17)	128.11 (16.27)	126.66 (16.86)
Negative ($n = 33$)	124.03 (20.14)	124.85 (21.38)	127.39 (21.66)	125.42 (20.91)
Average ($n = 118$)	125.88 (19.06)	126.34 (20.22)	127.92 (19.40)	

Note. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

There was no main effect of TV show, meaning that overall, the positive, neutral,

and negative conditions scored the same on the POPI, $F(2, 115) = 0.148$, $p = .863$, $\eta^2{}_p =$

.003. There was a main effect of POPI, meaning that the overall scores were different,

$F(2, 230) = 3.714$, $p = .026$, $\eta^2_p = .031$. Follow up paired samples t-tests found that there was no statistical difference in scores between the pretest ($M = 125.9$) and posttest ($M = 126.3$), $t(117) = -0.612$, $p = .542$, but it was revealed that the delayed test ($M = 127.9$) yielded higher scores on the POPI than the pretest ($M = 125.9$), $t(117) = -2.364$, $p = .020$, and posttest ($M = 126.3$), $t(117) = -2.020$, $p = .045$. However, contrary to predictions, there was no interaction observed, $F(4, 230) = 0.801$, $p = .526$, $\eta^2_p = .014$.

Planned comparisons found that, contrary to the hypothesis, there were no differences in the scores on the positive group between the pretest and posttest, $t(38) = -0.892$, $p = .378$, or posttest and delayed test, $t(38) = 0.165$, $p = .870$. Similarly, within the negative group, there were no differences between the pretest and posttest, $t(32) = -0.644$, $p = .524$ or posttest and delayed test, $t(32) = -1.564$, $p = .128$. Furthermore, there was no difference between the scores on pretest and posttest for the neutral group, $t(45) = 0.453$, $p = .653$; however, there was a difference between the posttest and delayed test for the neutral group, $t(45) = -2.193$, $p = .034$, with the delayed test having significantly higher scores than the posttest.

After the video was viewed by the participant, they were asked to rate on a 1-5 scale with "1" being "extremely unbelievable" and "5" being "extremely believable" how realistic they thought the show they watched was. In the positive show, 15.4% of participants rated the show as either "extremely unbelievable" or "somewhat unbelievable;" 5.1% rated it as "neither believable or unbelievable," and 79.5% rated it as either "somewhat believable" or "extremely believable." In the neutral show, 13.0% of participants rated the show as either "extremely unbelievable" or "somewhat

unbelievable;" 19.6% rated it as "neither believable or unbelievable," and 67.3% rated it as either "somewhat believable" or "extremely believable." In the negative show, 24.2% of participants rated the show as either "extremely unbelievable" or "somewhat unbelievable;" 18.2% rated it as "neither believable or unbelievable," and 57.6% rated it as either "somewhat believable" or "extremely believable."

CHAPTER V

Discussion

I hypothesized that television would have an effect on perceptions of parenting. Specifically, the negative condition was expected to yield lower scores after having to watch a negative television show, thus having more negative perceptions of parenting, whereas the positive condition was predicted to have higher scores, thus having more positive perceptions of parenting. These expectations were based on assumptions that the current generation of young adults places less emphasis on immediate parenthood; therefore, their perceptions of parenthood may be more malleable (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017), and television has affected perceptions on a diverse set of topics (Boothroyd et al., 2016; Eisenberg et al., 2015; Huesmann et al., 2003; Punyanunt-Carter, 2008). It was also predicted that the neutral condition would have no changes in score between any of the tests.

The results of the current study were contrary to most of these predictions. Overall, there was no difference in the television show used, meaning that participants' scores were the same regardless of which television show they watched. Moreover, there was a difference in the test overall; the delayed test had higher scores on the POPI than the pretest or posttests. More specifically, it was found that the positive and negative conditions stayed the same from pretest to posttest to delayed tests, whereas the neutral condition stayed the same from pretest to posttests but then had higher scores on the delayed test.

There are many possible reasons why these results were not consistent with the predictions. Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) was the theory used as the reasoning for why there would be an impact from the differing television shows. In this theory, a model, the parents from the television shows, is required to model a behavior, the positive or negative parent-child interactions, and the observer, the participants, learns from this modelled behavior. Since there was no effect of the television show, it could be due to the fact that the participants did not relate to the models; therefore, they did not learn from them. The parents from the positive show were on a sitcom, and their problems, while realistic, can sometimes be over-the-top compared to everyday life. This may have led participants to connect less to the models. For the negative television show, the models were reality television parents that put their children in beauty pageants. While the majority of participants found this show to be realistic, they may not have viewed these parents as models for their own parenting style. For instance, participants may have recognized that the parents from the negative show were parents that truly exist, they may not have considered them models for their parenting style and, in turn, may not have shown learning to have occurred as a result of watching these models. In order for learning to occur, it appears that the participant would need to connect or relate to the model so that their behaviors may be learned by the participant. Furthermore, ethnicity of the participant and television model may have affected whether the participant related to the model or not. The characters were predominately White/Caucasian, so although 66.1% of participants were White/Caucasian, so different ethnicities and cultures have different parenting styles and may have resulting in the model not connecting to them.

Another result that was inconsistent with predictions was the neutral condition scores increasing from the pretest and posttests to the delayed test. One potential reason for these results is that because the neutral condition did not have a parent model in their television shows, they were able to reflect on their own personal views of parenting rather than using information from the given models. In the neutral condition, there was no mention of parenting or children at all. This could have elicited more positive thoughts because it did not give any situations involving children. For instance, in the positive condition, the parent-child interactions were positive, but this does not mean that there were not issues or drama involving the parents and children; it just means that the parents were supportive and encouraging to their children. Because there may have been instances of negative situations involving parent and children, the participants may not have been persuaded to want to have children more. However, because the neutral condition had no situations, positive or negative, involving children, that may have resulted in them having higher scores on the delayed test.

Another potential reason for the current results is the cultivation hypothesis (Gerbner, 1969 as cited by Vogel, Gentile, & Kaplan, 2008), which states that exposure to television shapes the viewer's perceptions of reality toward the issue or group portrayed on the show. This theory suggests that it is the length and frequency of exposure to a television show that can influence the viewer's perception of society and societal norms (Vogel et al., 2008). This would explain why only showing one television show would not have elicited the predicted expectations for the current study. Instead, perhaps categorizing participants by the type of show they frequently watch in a quasi-

experiment may demonstrate results closer to the hypotheses. This would allow for the cultivation theory of television exposure to be factored into the experimental design.

Limitations of the current study may also have been a reason for the unexpected results. The television shows were chosen out of accessibility and had no prior ratings on how realistic the shows were. Although the current study had participants rate their realism, future studies should have independent raters prior to testing to ensure that the show is eliciting the desired effect. Furthermore, another issue with the show selection was that the positive and neutral shows were sitcoms, whereas the negative show was a reality show. Future studies should try to make these as consistent as possible. More consistency could lend more support to differences found between groups. With respect to the procedure of the current study, participants should be tested in a face-to-face setting rather than doing an online study. Although there was a manipulation check to make sure that participants watched the video, only face-to-face settings can truly ensure that participants were actively engaged, or attentive, in watching the videos.

The effects of television shows can be seen in a myriad of different studies (Boothroyd et al., 2016; Eisenberg et al., 2015; Huesmann et al., 2003; Punyanunt-Carter, 2008). Unfortunately, the results were not as clear as hoped in the current study. The current study has shown that there is a delayed effect in increasing positive perceptions of parenting from watching a neutral television show. This means that further testing is needed in this area to fully understand how parenting perceptions and television shows interact. With larger samples sizes and an improved procedure, there could be effects that were missed in this study. Television is intertwined with everyday life, but we do not fully understand how this could affect different aspects of our society.

Further experimentation should be conducted to better understand the relationship between parenting perceptions and television.

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APPENDIX A

Informed Consent

My name is Amber Giacona, and I am a graduate student in the Psychology and Philosophy Department at Sam Houston State University. I would like to invite you to participate in a research study about the perceptions of parenting based on parent-child interactions in television. Please be aware that you must be at least 18 years of age to participate.

The research is fairly straightforward, and there is not expected to be any risk to the volunteer participants. If you would like to participate in this research, you will be asked to complete an online survey. Any data obtained from you will only be used for the purpose of analyzing. Under no circumstances will you or any other participants who participated in this research be identified. In addition, your data will remain confidential. This research will require about 45 minutes of your time. Participants will be compensated with PeRP credit for their participation.

Participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate in this research, your decision will not affect any future relations with Sam Houston State University. Furthermore, if at any point during the research you decide to withdraw or do not wish to participate in the remainder of the study, you are free to withdraw your permission and discontinue participation at any time. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me via the contact information below. The results of this study will be available at the conclusion of the project.

Your survey response will be kept confidential to the extent of the technology being used. Qualtrics collects IP addresses for respondents to surveys they host; however, the ability to connect your survey responses to your IP address has been disabled for this survey. You should be aware that answers to specific questions may make you more easily identifiable. The security and privacy policy Qualtrics can be viewed at https://www.qualtrics.com/privacy-statement/.

If you have any questions about this research, please feel free to contact me, Amber Giacona, or my faculty sponsor, Dr. Marsha Harman using our contact information below. Information for the Sam Houston State University Counseling Center is also provided below.

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Phone: (936) 294-1720

APPENDIX B

The following items ask about your attitudes towards various aspects of parenting. Please imagine that you have just become the parent of a child. While thinking about what parenting a child would be like, please carefully read the following statements, and rate the extent to which you agree with the statements based on your own opinions or perceptions about parenting. Please indicate your level of agreement by circling the appropriate response on the scale provided.

	Strongly Disagree	Mostly Disagree	Slightly Disagree	No Opinion	Slightly Agree	Mostly Agree	Strongly Agree
1. Meeting the child's needs would be financially expensive.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Caring for the child would emotionally exhaust me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My family and friends would provide social support to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. The child would provide me with financial security in my old age.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. I would worry about the child's future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. As a result of caring for the child, I would have less time to spend doing what I enjoy.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Caring for the child would bring me happiness.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

8. Caring for the child would be a 24-hour a day responsibility.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. The child would be a source of pride for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Parenting the child would put strain on my relationship with my spouse/partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. If I had other children, they would benefit from the addition of the child to the family.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Providing for the child's needs would result in extra financial expenses.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. Caring for the child would be fun	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. Parenting the child would make me a better person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. My community would provide social support to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. Caring for the child would be a neverending responsibility.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

17. I would need to provide care for the child for the rest of my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. My spouse/partner and I would grow closer together through the experience	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I would enjoy watching the child grow up	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. Caring for the child would interfere with me spending time with my friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. My friends and family would help me to care for the child.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. The child would carry on the family line and traditions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. Caring for the child would physically exhaust me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. Caring for the child would be rewarding.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25. Caring for the child would interfere with the time I wanted to spend with my partner/spouse.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

26. My relationship with the child would change over the years from one of parent to one of friend	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27. I would look forward to being a grandparent in the future.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28. The child would be dependent on me for the rest of my life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

<div align="center">

VITA

Amber Giacona

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EDUCATION

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Master of Arts in General Psychology   May 2018
  GPA: 3.80

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
Bachelor of Science in Psychology, Minor in Sociology   May 2016
  GPA: 3.34

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Graduate Research Assistant, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
August 2017 - Present

- Serving as a graduate research assistant in the Cognition Laboratory under the supervision of Dr. Jeffrey Anastasi.
- Assisting all aspects of research including IRB preparation, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript preparation for three projects. Reviewing articles and conducting SPSS analyses weekly.
- Serving as the primary investigator on a study evaluating eyewitness identification, expert testimony, and juror education level on conviction rates. Assisting two other studies. One study is investigating the influence of photograph presentation on belief in fake news and social media, while the other is evaluating the influence of photographs on the acceptance of product and scientific claims.

Graduate Research Assistant, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
May 2017 - Present

- Serving as a graduate research assistant in the Family Collaboration with Tiered School Supports (FaCTS^2) Laboratory under the supervision of Dr. Courtney Banks.
- Conducting literature reviews and annotated bibliographies for projects. Running data analyses and assisting with manuscript preparation for a project looking at differences in parent responses to bullying and anti-bullying techniques based on parent ethnicity, gender, and grade of child (4th-8th grade).

Undergraduate Research Assistant, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX
December 2015 - February 2016

- Served as an undergraduate research assistant under the supervision of Dr. Amanda Venta.
- Assisted with a literature review and provided APA styled in-text citations and references. Aided with preparation of chapters for publication.

SCHOLARLY WORK

In Progress
- **Giacona, A. M**. & Anastasi, J. S. (2018). *Eyewitness testimony in court: Expert testimony, eyewitness confidence, and juror education.*
- **Giacona, A. M.**, Anastasi, J. S., Burke, J. L., & Lee, J. R. (2018). *The effects of photographs on the acceptance of product and scientific claims.*
- **Giacona, A. M**. & Anastasi, J. S. (2018). *The effects of the own-age bias on product claim believability.*
- Horgan, M., **Giacona, A. M.**, & Banks, C. S. (2018). *Parent perceptions of bullying responses*.
- Burke, J. L., Shehadeh, K. K., **Giacona, A. M.**, & Anastasi, J. S. (2018). *Social media vs. news articles: The influence of photographs on false memories.*

Master's Thesis
- **Giacona, A. M.** (2018). *Parenthood and media: Television influences college students' perceptions of parenthood.*

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

- **Giacona, A. M.** (2018). Parenthood and media: Television influences college students' perceptions of parenthood. Research presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwestern Psychological Association, Houston, TX, April 13-15, 2018.

- **Giacona, A. M.**, Anastasi, J. S., Lee, J. R., & Burke, J. L. (2018). The effects of photographs on the acceptance of product and scientific claims. Research presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwestern Psychological Association, Houston, TX, April 13-15, 2018.

- Burke, J. L., Shehadeh, K. K., Lee, J. R. Anastasi, J. S. & **Giacona, A. M.** (2018). Social media vs. news articles: The influence of photographs on false memories. Research presented at the Annual Meeting of the Southwestern Psychological Association, Houston, TX, April 13-15, 2018.

- **Giacona, A. M.**, Anastasi, J. S., Lee, J. R., & Burke, J. L. (2018). The effects of photographs on the acceptance of product and scientific claims. Research presented at the Association of Psychological Science, San Francisco, May 24-27, 2018.

- Burke, J. L., Shehadeh, K. K., Lee, J. R. Anastasi, J. S. & **Giacona, A. M.** (2018). Social media vs. news articles: The influence of photographs on false memories. Research presented at the Association of Psychological Science, San Francisco, May 24-27, 2018.

WORK EXPERIENCE

Teaching Assistant, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

Intro to Research Methods Lab   Spring 2018
- Serving as a graduate teaching assistant under the supervision of Dr. Jeffrey Anastasi.
- Teaching one, 3-hour lab on methodology and research design.
- I demonstrate all aspects of manuscript preparation, APA formatting, Microsoft Excel and Word skills, and SPSS data analysis.
- Duties include holding office hours to provide additional assistance for students with manuscript preparation and running data analyses, as well as providing thorough and timely feedback on assignments.

Intro to Research Methods Lab   Fall 2017
- Served as a graduate teaching assistant under the supervision of Dr. Jeffrey Anastasi.
- Taught two, 3-hour labs on research design and methodology.
- In the labs, I demonstrated manuscript preparation, APA style, Microsoft Excel and Word, and SPSS data analysis.
- Duties included holding office hours to provide additional assistance for students with manuscript preparation and running data analyses, as well as providing thorough and timely feedback on assignments.

Intro to Research Methods Lab   Summer II, 2017
- Served as a graduate teaching assistant under the supervision of Jessica Lee.
- Taught research design and methodology during the 3-hour lab, including manuscript preparation, APA style, Microsoft Excel and Word, and SPSS data analysis.
- Additional duties were providing manuscript preparation and data analysis assistance with students outside of class, as well as grading assignments.

Intro to Research Methods Lab   Summer I, 2017
- Served as a graduate teaching assistant under the supervision of Dr. Jeffrey Anastasi.
- Taught research design and methodology for the 3-hour lab each week, which also encompassed manuscript preparation, APA style, Microsoft Excel and Word, and SPSS data analysis.
- Duties included holding office hours to provide additional assistance for students with manuscript preparation and running data analyses, as well as grading in-class assignments and research manuscripts.

Editor, Huntsville, TX   March 2017- Present
- I provide editing services to professors and other professionals ranging from backgrounds from education to graphic designing.
- My primary editing is manuscript preparation for journals, specifically by ensuring documents meet APA guidelines as well as checking for grammar and conciseness throughout the article. I have edited manuscripts that have been published in refereed education journals such as *The Dialog, TASH Connections,* and *Journal of*

Universality of Global Issues.
- My editing is not limited to manuscript publication and has recently expanded to include chapter editing, topic proposals for conference, and grant submissions.

Writing Tutor, SHSU Academic Success Center, Huntsville, TX   Aug. 2016 - Present
- Working 20 hours per week as a reading, writing, speech, online, and group tutor.
- My special tutoring skills involve presentation critiques, APA and Chicago formatting, psychology statistics tutoring, and tutoring for developmental and ESL students.
- Piloted a program where I worked closely with ESL doctoral students in the psychology department to improve their clinical and forensic reports for the psychological services clinic on campus as well as their writing in general.
- Currently assisting a developmental Integrated Reading and Writing (INRW) class for 1.5 hours a week to supplement the instruction from their English class by providing more personalized feedback and instruction opportunities.
- Designed and led new tutor training, as well as refresher training for existing tutors.
- Constructed and presented an APA formatting presentation and an annotated bibliography presentation to guest lecture for different classes in the Education, History, Fashion, and English departments.
- Updated handouts for APA page formatting, in-text citations, and references.
- Created APA and Chicago sample papers.

CERTIFICATIONS

Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX

College Reading and Learning Association Certification Level Three   May 2018
- Will receive certification upon completion of an additional 25 hours (75 cumulative) of face-to-face tutoring, 10 hours of professional training (30 cumulative), professional development, and leading/creating workshops.

College Reading and Learning Association Certification Level Two   Aug. 2017
- Completed additional 25 hours (50 cumulative) of face-to-face tutoring and 10 additional hours of professional training (20 cumulative) with special regards to special tutoring sessions and resource management.

College Reading and Learning Association Certification Level One   May. 2016
- Received certification based on training, work experience and assessment. Completed 25 hours of face-to-face tutoring, 10 hours of professional training, and completed necessary assessments.

CITI Research with Human Subjects Training   June 2015
- Received certification based on one hour of training regarding the history, regulations, and definition of ethical behavior when working with human subjects.
- Training expires June 2020.

OTHER EXPERIENCES

First Baptist Church, Huntsville, TX

Youth Small Group Leader   Sept. 2017 - Present
- Leading and facilitating discussion with a group of 5-10 middle and high school students. Providing the students with support, counsel, and mentorship weekly.

Wednesday Night Life   Sept. 2017 – Present
- Developing and facilitating unique, recreational games for children in 1st-6th grade weekly.

Upward Basketball Referee   June - August 2017
- Volunteered every Saturday morning to referee co-ed basketball games for 1st-6th graders. Other duties included score keeping, running the clock, setting up the halftime show, and leading the players in prayer.

Other   Feb. 2016 – Present
- Working in the nursery once a month taking care of 0-4-year-olds. This encompasses mixing formula, changing diapers, and encouraging verbal skills while the parents attend church service.

- Volunteer at multiple events throughout the year including running the inflatable house at Fair on the Square, chaperoning all night lock-ins for the youth, and working at Vacation Bible School.

Richards Volunteer Fire Department, Richards, TX

Volunteer Fire Fighter   Nov. 2012 – Aug. 2013
                                                                              Sept. 2014 – March 2016
- Certified in National Incident Management System (NIMS) 100, 200, 700, and 800.
- Attended weekly trainings centered on first responding, pump truck operating, extrication, and rescue, as well as additional structure fire specific training.
- Responded to multiple car crashes involving life flight, medical emergencies requiring life flight, grassfires that necessitated mutual aid with multiple departments, and three separate structure fires.