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Television viewing and self-esteem among ethnic minority adolescents

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**TELEVISION VIEWING AND SELF-ESTEEM
AMONG ETHNIC MINORITY ADOLESCENTS**

A Thesis

Presented to

**the Faculty of the Department of Psychology
San Jose State University**

In Partial Fulfillment

**of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts**

by

Michelle L. Spomer

December, 1995

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ABSTRACT

TELEVISION VIEWING AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG ETHNIC MINORITY ADOLESCENTS

by Michelle L. Spomer

This study primarily examined the relationship between frequency of TV viewing and self-esteem (SE) among ethnic minority and Caucasian adolescents. Ninth and 10th grade boys ($N = 112$) and girls ($N = 108$) enrolled at a public high school in Northern California completed the Coopersmith and Rosenberg SE scales, as well as a TV viewing questionnaire. Time spent viewing TV on the day before the study occurred was negatively related to the SE of African-American adolescents. In addition, negative correlations were found between the average hours per day of TV viewing and SE of Caucasian adolescents. When the data for Caucasians were partitioned by gender, negative correlations for girls, but not boys, remained. Further, partitioning of the data by grade level resulted in negative correlations between SE and both measures of TV viewing among 9th graders. Motivations for viewing TV and viewer perceptions of minority portrayals on TV were also evaluated.

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Television Viewing and
Self-Esteem Among Ethnic Minority Adolescents

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Footnotes

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Abstract

Television is recognized as a potentially important factor in the socialization of children and may be expected to influence the self-esteem (SE) of minority youth. Researchers have postulated that the dearth of minority portrayals on TV has a detrimental effect on the SE of minority children due to TV's failure to acknowledge or validate their existence. However, the few studies that have investigated the relationship between TV viewing and SE among African-American and Caucasian children and adults have produced ambiguous or inconsistent findings (Dominick, 1984; Tan & Tan, 1979).

This study examined the relationship between frequency of TV viewing and SE among African-American, Asian, Caucasian, Filipino, and Mexican-American adolescents. It was hypothesized that TV viewing frequency would be negatively related to the SE of minority adolescents, and unrelated to that of majority adolescents. Ninth and 10th grade boys ($N = 112$) and girls ($N = 108$) from required English and History classes at a public high school in Northern California completed the Coopersmith (CS) and Rosenberg (RB) SE scales, and indicated both the average hours per day of TV they generally viewed and the number of hours viewed on the day before the study occurred.

Time spent viewing TV on the day before the study occurred was negatively related to the SE of African-American adolescents only, $r = -.55$ and $r = -.62$, $p < .05$ for the CS and RB, respectively. Surprisingly, negative correlations were found between the average hours per day of TV viewing and SE of Caucasian adolescents as measured by both the CS, $r = -.34$, and $r = -.24$, $p < .05$. When the data for Caucasians were partitioned by gender, negative correlations for girls, but not boys, remained, $r = -.49$ (CS) and $r = -.39$ (RB), $p < .05$. Further, partitioning of the data by grade level resulted in negative correlations between SE and both average time viewing TV and time spent viewing on the day before the study occurred among 9th graders, r (CS) = $-.40$ and r (RB) = $-.44$, $p < .05$. These results suggest that TV viewing is associated with undesirable consequences for African-American and certain Caucasian adolescents. Given these findings, the need for educated and informed viewing choices is indicated.

Television Viewing and Self-Esteem Among Ethnic Minority Adolescents

Ninety-nine percent of homes in the U.S. have televisions (Condry, 1989) and children, on average, spend from 21 to 28 hours per week viewing them (Stroman, 1984). These numbers are certainly put into the proper perspective when one considers that by the time the average child reaches 18 years of age, he or she has spent 22,000 hours watching television as compared with 11,000 hours spent in school (Staples & Jones, 1985). Based on these figures alone, it is evident that television plays an important role in the lives of children today. In fact, television has become increasingly recognized as a major agent in the socialization of children, or the process by which children learn information, develop cognitive processes, values, attitudes, social roles, self-concepts, and behaviors that are generally accepted within American society (Berger & Luckman 1967; Stroman, 1984).

As a major socializer, television has the potential to influence children in a variety of ways. While a great deal of media research has concentrated on television and its effects on imitation, modeling, aggressive behavior, and academic achievement, comparatively little research has been conducted to determine the effects of television on the self-esteem of children and adolescents. Furthermore, of the few studies that have been conducted, none has used samples that consist of children or adolescents from ethnic backgrounds other than White or African-American (Dimas, 1970; Dominick, 1984; Stroman, 1986; Tan & Tan, 1979). In addition, relatively little research has been directed toward identifying the frequency of television viewing among ethnically diverse children and

adolescents. Therefore, the focus of the present study will be on describing the viewing patterns of different ethnic groups as well as on examining the relationship between television viewing and self-esteem among children and adolescents of ethnically diverse backgrounds.

It does not seem unrealistic, as will be seen, to argue that television images affect the self-concept of ethnic minority children. Self-concept refers to the ideas, perceptions, values, and feelings that are characteristic of oneself (Kaluger, 1984). For the minority child, the development of ethnic awareness and identity are an integral and perhaps inseparable part of overall self-concept. Ethnic awareness is the child's understanding of his/her own group as well as other ethnic groups (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987) and includes knowledge about their critical and defining attributes, characteristics, and customs. According to Powell (1982), ethnic awareness also includes the learning of social attitudes toward one's own and other ethnic groups. The more specific ability of a child to label himself or herself accurately and consistently as a member of a particular ethnic group is known as ethnic self-identification (Aboud, 1987; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987).

As stated before, the development of ethnic self-identification is an integral part of a minority child's total self-concept. The development of both ethnic self-identification and overall self-concept occur as a result of and changes with experience, exposure to new information, and developing cognitive abilities of the child. Although not surprising, it seems important to emphasize that, for the minority child, the development of this overall self-concept cannot be separated from the broader social context, or borrowing from Powell (1987), "social milieu" in which it occurs. Unfortunately, the current "social milieu" is one characterized

by racism, ethnic prejudice, and bigotry which are, often times, reflected in the images of television.

In general, ethnic identity, which is a very important component of a minority child's total self-concept, begins to develop around three years of age and is developed more fully at around the age of 7 or 8 years (Aboud, 1987; Rotheram & Phinney, 1987). It is interesting to note that children as early as two years of age begin viewing television regularly as a habit (Condry, 1989). So, in essence, children are becoming aware of the differences between themselves and others (including ethnic differences and the social attitudes toward these differences) at just about the same time they are beginning to spend, on average, 3 to 4 hours a day viewing television. Furthermore, the amount of time children spend watching television increases throughout childhood, peaks at preadolescence, and then declines and levels off at high school age (Condry, 1989; Liebert & Sprafkin, 1988; Lyle & Hoffman, 1972; Tangney & Feschbach, 1988). Therefore, minority children's developing self-concept may be influenced due to the manner in which ethnic groups are portrayed on television and via television's continuing presence in their lives.

It is quite apparent that the majority of characters on television are white, male, and middle class. Perhaps less obvious is that those who do not fit this ideal are often times portrayed in a less than respectable manner. In fact, content analyses of television programs confirm these notions. For example, content analyses of programs indicate that members of ethnic minority groups are underrepresented. One of the most recent analyses of ethnic minority portrayals was conducted by Williams and Condry (cited in Condry, 1989) who analyzed 72

hours of broadcast programming on the three national networks drawn from a representative sample of 1987 programming of which children as well as adults comprised a large percentage of the audience. These researchers found "approximately 90.3% White, 7.7% Black, 1.3% Asian, and 0.6% Hispanic characters" (p.72). These figures are similar to those found in programming designed specifically for children as well (Barcus & Wolkin, 1977). According to 1990 U.S. Census, the United States population contained 80.3% Whites, 12.1% Blacks, 2.9% Asians, and 9.0% Hispanics. Although these numbers for minorities are somewhat higher than they were in the 1950s, it is clear that ethnic minority groups, especially Hispanics, are underrepresented relative to their actual percentages in the population.

Furthermore, when ethnic minorities are represented on television, they are segregated in specific types of content and are often portrayed in narrow or stereotypical ways (Condry, 1989; Graves, 1993; Stroman, 1984). For example, an analysis of prime-time and Saturday morning programming in 1977 revealed that three-fourths of all Black actors and actresses appeared in situation comedies or in cartoons (Greenberg & Baptista-Fernandez, 1980). It can be argued that these types of portrayals hardly suggest that Blacks are to be taken seriously or seen as individuals with serious goals.

With respect to employment and occupational status on television, Williams and Condry (cited in Condry, 1989) found that minorities and Whites were equally likely to be employed. However, minorities were less likely to be portrayed in professional or managerial positions than Whites, despite the tendency for most television characters in general to be portrayed as having occupational levels

higher than that of the general population. Rather, Blacks, Asians, and Hispanics on television were more often cast as blue-collar workers and public safety personnel. In contrast, it was found that Blacks and Whites were equally likely to be professionals or managers (Barcus, 1983) in children's television programming. In a study specifically of Hispanic-American portrayals, Greenberg and Baptista-Fernandez (1980) found that Hispanics were portrayed as not showing much concern for their futures, as having very little education, and as having jobs which reflect this lack of education.

Social interaction patterns between Whites and minorities on television leave much to be desired. Because African-American characters are so frequently segregated in all-minority situation comedies, there is little chance for cross-ethnic interactions to be shown on television. Most cross-ethnic interactions that are shown are generally positive, although they tend to take place in job-related rather than social contexts where adults are concerned. Among inter-ethnic interactions involving children, non-White youth are more likely to initiate positive interactions with Whites than non-White adults are (Williams & Condry, cited in Condry, 1989). These findings seem to suggest that inter-ethnic relationships are "o.k." as long as they are confined to the workplace; personal and social relationships are another matter.

With respect to African-American portrayals, content analyses of television programming throughout the late 70s to 80s, show that portrayals of African-Americans are lacking in both number and quality. However, it should be noted that the findings of the content analyses presented above are somewhat dated. In the absence of empirical data, it at least appears that television portrayals

have improved with respect to their treatment of ethnic minority characters, especially those who are of African-American heritage. Portrayals of African-Americans on television seem to be not only more frequent, but perhaps, more importantly, much more positive. Unlike portrayals of the past, there are now several programs such as "The Cosby Show," "Fresh Prince of Bel Aire," "Martin," and "Living Single" which feature primarily African-American characters. Portrayals of the African-American characters in these programs now more closely resemble those typical of Caucasian portrayals: lawyers, doctors, families living in Beverly Hills, etc. Thus, although there is still room for improvement, television seems to have become more sensitive in its portrayals of African-Americans.

While TV has become more responsive to its portrayals of African-Americans, this does not appear to be the case for other ethnic minority groups. More recent content analyses show that when non-Black minorities appear on television, they are portrayed in an unfavorable light as either villains or victims of violence (Liebert & Sprafkin, 1988). In terms of television's portrayal of Hispanics, most characters are men; female Hispanics are virtually unrepresented and treated as insignificant (Greenberg & Baptista-Fernandez, 1980). However, there are fewer female than males characters on television, regardless of ethnicity; males outnumber females 3 to 2 (Signiorelli, 1985; Steinem, 1988). In a content analysis of 1987 programming conducted by Williams and Condry (cited in Condry, 1989), none of the Hispanic characters were cast as a friend or a neighbor, while their criminal delinquency rate was the highest of all racial groups. The results of these television content analyses

conducted by Williams and Condry are remarkably similar to those by Greenberg and Baptista-Fernandez (1980) which showed that during the years 1975-1977, the most common vocation among Hispanic characters was that of a crook.

While the effects of television on the self-esteem of all children are of great import and worthy of study, there is reason to believe that television might especially influence the self-concept of minority children due to the fact that these children show a distinctive orientation compared to non-minority children toward television and television viewing. For instance, Blacks watch considerably more television than Whites, a difference that appears to be due to ethnicity alone (Condry, 1989; Greenberg & Atkin, 1982). For example, Greenberg and Dervin (1970) found that viewing was greater by Black than by White children and adolescents, even when the Black and White families appeared to be comparably low in socioeconomic status. In addition, Black children appear to identify with Black characters to a much greater degree than White children do, although both Black and White children identify with White characters to the same degree (Greenberg & Atkin, 1982). Both Bower (1973) and Huston (1992) found that Blacks, as a group, expressed a greater liking for and more favorable attitudes toward television than their non-White counterparts.

Minority children may also be at a greater risk for being affected by television because they often use it as a source of information. For example, Bower (1973) found that persons of lower socioeconomic status, who are disproportionately minority, more often cite learning as a motive for television viewing. In addition, Greenberg and Atkin (1982) reported that a greater proportion of Blacks than Whites (50% and 38%, respectively) said they watch

television to learn how different people behave, talk, dress, and look. Likewise, proportionately more Blacks (52%) than Whites (39%) said they watch television to learn about different occupational roles (Greenberg & Atkin, 1982).

Researchers have also found that Black children view television with the expectation of learning how to act in social situations to a greater extent than majority group children do (Comstock & Cobbey, 1979). Similarly, Gerson (1966) reported that Black teenagers relied more on television than did White teenagers for information about how to behave with the opposite sex. Perhaps most importantly, both Black elementary and high school students appear to be more accepting than Whites of the messages that television sends out. That is to say, they believe that television accurately portrays life to a greater extent than Whites of similar economic status believe it does (Greenberg & Dervin, 1970), and they also perceive television to be fairer to minority groups than do majority children (Greenberg & Atkin, 1982).

It is interesting to note that these findings contradict the theory and speculation of some researchers about the effects of television on the self-esteem of minorities. For example, Allen (cited in Staples & Jones, 1985), a researcher on minorities' use of television, argued that ethnic minorities are not so easily affected by the negative images of television. His assertion is based on the belief that Blacks are very critical of the programming they watch; they filter what they view, accepting some of what they see, while viewing other parts of what they see as mere fun with no socially redeeming value.

Given the findings above, it appears that minority children (or at least Black children) may bring with them to the television screen particular characteristics

that put them at greater risk than other children for being adversely affected by television's images. More specifically, these children may be at a greater risk in terms of the potential effects that television may have on their developing self-concept. As pointed out previously, it is unknown (with the exception of greater television viewing among Blacks) whether or not the majority of the findings presented above represent differences due to ethnicity or to another factor that encompasses members of many different ethnicities--low socioeconomic status. Furthermore, findings in this area are based only on research conducted with White and African-American viewers. It cannot be assumed that the viewing habits, attitudes toward television and motivations for viewing are the same for members of other ethnic minorities, although it seems likely, especially since persons of lower socioeconomic status are more frequently minorities. With respect to the specific differences between Black and White children and socioeconomic status cited above, Anderson and Williams (1983) have pointed out that "Black families are often times poor, less mobile, and less able to afford alternative forms of entertainment and baby sitters, which are available to their White counterparts" (p.28). Therefore, Black children often rely on television as a source of information about the world.

Several researchers have speculated as to what television's impact on the self-esteem of children might be. For example, Clark (cited in Liebert & Sprafkin, 1988) contended that "the mass media commit violence by virtue of their effects on the black self-image" (p.189). Clark proposed that television deprives Blacks of recognition due to their infrequent appearance on television. This lack of recognition sends a message to minorities that they are not important and thus are

not deserving of mention. In addition, Clark emphasized that ethnic minority members are deprived of respect; they are rarely accorded status and importance on television, but rather, they are presented in a way that connotes low status. Both recognition and respect are thought to be essential ingredients in the process of self-affirmation. In accordance with Clark's theory, if minorities are non-existent or lacking on television, the self-esteem of minority children will be affected. Similarly, Graves (1993) purports that the relationship between television content and self-concept is such that both the absence of minorities, such as African-Americans, and exposure to negative same-group portrayals would result in a more negative self-concept among ethnic minority youth.

Staples and Jones (1985) also addressed the effects that negative images might have specifically on children. These authors felt that television is damaging to Black children in that most of the people they see doing interesting and important things are White, and when Black people are seen, it is likely to be in a stereotyped role. Beyond the more typical socializing role that television plays, Palmer, Smith, and Strawser (1993) suggested that television teaches ethnic minority children subtle lessons about themselves and how they are perceived by others. These researchers are of the opinion that prolonged exposure to negative, stereotypical images results in the experience of a lowered self-concept and inhibits minority children's interest in wanting to be part of a larger host society. Furthermore, Poussaint (1974), a Harvard medical school professor of psychiatry, contended that a child's sense of self is affected by how he or she views the environment, both through direct involvement and through various media presentations. Poussaint (1974) warned that White society, so often portrayed

through various media presentations including television, must not be the only "looking glass" for Black children. Furthermore, he asserted that minority children may see no representation of their community or life-style and acquire the impression that they do not count in this society. These children might decide that the only worthwhile people are those who live in the middle-class homes and neighborhoods that are portrayed on television.

With respect to speculation about television's influence on ethnic minorities then, the most prominent conclusion is that it probably has a negative influence. With the exception of a few researchers, the majority of researchers and psychologists tend to believe that television has many negative effects on the self-concept of ethnic minority children. For most, these beliefs center around the observation that some minorities have been underrepresented and portrayed in a negative manner. Although portrayals of ethnic minorities such as Blacks have increased in the last few years, it is important to note that recognition does not necessarily imply respect.

However, empirical research in this area has not led to any solid conclusions about the assumed relationship between television use and negative self-concept. As will be seen, the number of empirical investigations assessing this relationship in both children and adults is close to nil. Furthermore, each of the studies focused on this issue has been conducted with a slightly different bent, so a basis for comparison of their findings is somewhat lacking.

Stroman (1986) is one of the few researchers who has attempted to examine the influence of television exposure on ethnic minority children's self-concept. Stroman hypothesized that a negative relationship would exist between amount of

television viewing and self-concept, such that a greater amount of viewing would be associated with a lower self-concept. In this study, self-report questionnaires were utilized to obtain a measure of television exposure. In addition, self-concept was measured via the Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale (Piers, cited in Stroman, 1986) which consists of yes-no items that measure how children feel about their behavior, school-related status, physical appearance, and happiness. Data were collected from 102 third to sixth grade Black children who attended an all-black school in Washington, D.C. The results of this study did not support uniformly the hypothesis; television viewing was significantly and positively related to the self-concept of Black girls, but not Black boys. According to Stroman's (1986) findings, the amount of time spent watching television is not associated with low self-concepts among Black children.

In a study primarily designed to investigate the relationships among television viewing, videogame playing and self-esteem and aggression, Dominick (1984) sampled 110 boys and 140 girls in the 10th and 11th grades. Self-esteem was assessed using a measure based on the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, while general television viewing was measured by asking students to estimate the number of hours they spend watching television on an average day, as well as the number of hours they actually spent viewing television on the day before the survey was conducted. Dominick (1984) found that television viewing on an average day was related significantly and negatively to the self-esteem of boys, and unrelated to the self-esteem of girls. However, no mention of ethnicity was made in this study. Therefore, it is impossible to determine whether or not this

negative relationship between television viewing and self-esteem would hold for minority boys as well.

Dimas (1970) conducted an experiment with 137 Black fourth graders and 117 Black sixth graders randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Dimas hypothesized that Black students who view motion pictures portraying Black models will have a more positive self-concept than will Black students who view motion pictures portraying White models. Self-concept was measured using the Self Social Symbols Tasks (Ziller, Long, & Henderson, cited in Dimas, 1970), which consists of separate measures of self such as individuation, power, esteem, centrality and others. Dimas showed children in the experimental group approximately 60 minutes of motion picture film clips featuring Blacks in several positive social situations and roles (e.g., Black family spending time together, portrayal of the life of Martin Luther King, portrayal of a Black mailman, successful Black athletes, and musicians). The Black control group viewed similar films that utilized comparable White models. Dimas (1970) found that there were significant differences between control and experimental groups for the fourth and sixth graders on several dimensions that the Self Social Symbols Task measures. These results can be interpreted as suggesting that positive changes in Black children's self concept can occur from watching only one hour's worth of positive same-group programming. However, as Dimas (1970) points out, it would be naive to believe that such effects are lasting, and several studies need to be conducted to determine whether a relatively permanent change could be affected among Black children, given regular presentation of these films.

In a related study, Tan and Tan (1979) assessed the correlational relationship between television use and self-esteem of Black adults, as a first step in attempting to establish a causal relationship. Using data collected from 176 black and 157 white adults, these researchers computed correlations for self-esteem by TV use, age, and education. They found that for Blacks, television viewing and age were related significantly and negatively to self-esteem, whereas education and self-esteem were related significantly and positively. Furthermore, the negative effects of self-esteem held even when the effects of age and education were partialled out. In contrast, there was no significant relationship among television use and self-esteem found in Whites. Thus, Tan and Tan's (1979) results strongly suggest that heavy television viewing leads to low self-esteem in Black adults. These researchers posit that the low self-esteem observed in this sample of Blacks could have resulted from blacks viewing of television programming in which Blacks are absent or are treated negatively.

Overall, the previously mentioned studies show that there is a negative impact of television viewing on the self-esteem of Black and White boys and of Black adults of both genders, although it is unclear how factors such as age, socioeconomic status, and education may moderate the relationship. What is clear, however, is that minority children and adolescents, in contrast to majority children and adolescents, appear to be, for a variety of reasons outlined in this paper, more susceptible to any negative effects that television viewing might have on their self-esteem. Therefore, based on both empirical research and speculation about the effects of television's negative portrayals of minorities, the present study will focus on the following hypotheses:

H₁: Minority adolescents will view significantly more hours per day of television than majority adolescents.

H₂: Television viewing will be negatively related to the self-esteem of minority adolescents.

H₃: Television viewing will be positively or unrelated to the self-esteem of majority adolescents.

H₄: Minority and majority children will differ significantly with respect to their motivations for watching television.

H₅: Minority and majority adolescents will differ significantly with respect to their perceptions of their own group's portrayals on television.

Method

Participants

Approximately 270 students recruited from a South Bay high school in Santa Clara County served as participants for this study. Of these 270 participants, 220 participants (112 boys and 108 girls) provided complete data for the TV viewing and self-esteem measures. The sample was composed of 123 9th and 97 10th graders. The age range of participants was from 14 to 17 years. The mean age was 14.89 years, and 99.5% of the participants were from 14 to 16 years of age. Approximately 6% of the participants were African-American, 13% were Asian, and 19% were Filipino, 30% were Mexican-American, and 32% were Caucasian.

Materials

Self-Esteem: Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE). Rosenberg's (1965) self-report scale (see Appendix A) was used to assess global or "overall"

self-esteem or more specifically, the self-acceptance aspect of self-esteem. This scale was developed specifically for use with high school students and is appropriate for individual or group administration. The RSE consists of 10 items answered on a 4-point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The RSE was originally designed to be a Guttman Scale comprised of seven "contrived items," but can be scored by summing across the 10 items, scoring disagreements with negative items positively (Crandall, 1973; Wylie, 1989). Higher scores on the RSE indicate a higher level of self-esteem.

RSE scores from Rosenberg's original sample of 5,024 junior and senior level students from 10 randomly chosen New York State high schools produced a reproducibility coefficient of .92 and a Cronbach's alpha of .77. Test-retest reliability for a two week period using small college samples was .85 by Silber and Tippet (1965) and .88 by McCullough (cited in Rosenberg, 1979). Convergent validity of the RSE with the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory was .59 when scored for Guttman scalability and .60 when scored as ten items (Crandall, 1973). Since its development, the RSE has been widely used and has been reliable and valid with participants from a range of nationalities, ages, socioeconomic levels and ethnicities (Wylie, 1989).

Self-Esteem: Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI). Coopersmith's (1967) Self-Esteem Inventory (see Appendix B) was used to assess global as well as specific components of self-esteem. The SEI School Form is a self-report measure designed for use with children and adolescents aged 8 to 15 years old. The school form consists of 50 items measuring self-esteem and an additional 8

items as a lie scale. Items contained in the SEI are presented as written statements to which participants respond as "like me" or "unlike me". The inventory yields scores for the following five subscales: General Self, Social Self-Peers, Home-Parents, School-Academic, and Total Self.

The maximum possible score for each of the subscales is as follows: General-Self, 52; Social Self-Peers, 16; Home-Parents, 16; School-Academic, 16; and Total Self, 100. Higher scores indicate higher levels of self-esteem. There are no exact criteria for high, medium, and low levels of self-esteem. However, position in the group may be used as an index of relative self-appraisal, with the upper quartile considered indicative of high self-esteem, the lower quartile considered indicative of low self-esteem, and the interquartile range indicative of medium self-esteem. Items on the Lie Scale are positively worded (e.g., "I always do the right thing") and are awarded one point each if they are answered "unlike me", indicating that the respondent was being honest and forthright in his or her self-appraisal. The total score for the Lie Scale (maximum = 8) is obtained by summing the points awarded for each of the eight items. A high Lie Scale score suggests defensiveness in a participant's responses.

The reliability and validity of the SEI School Form have been shown to be quite impressive. Coopersmith's original sample contained 87 male and female 5th and 6th graders. The Total Self-Esteem scores ranged from 40 to 100, with a mean of 82.3 and a standard deviation of 11.6. Test-retest reliability after a three-year interval with a sample of 56 children from this population was .70. Estimates of internal consistency, as demonstrated by Kuder-Richardson reliability estimates (KR-20), for the School Form have been found to be .81, .86, and .80

for grades 5, 9 and 12, respectively (Spatz & Johnston, 1973) and to range from .87 to .92 for grades 4-8 (Kimball, 1972). In addition, other studies have confirmed the construct validity of the subscales, indicating that they do indeed measure the different sources of self-esteem as proposed by Coopersmith (Kokenes, 1974, 1978).

Television Viewing Questionnaire. The television viewing questionnaire can be found in Appendix C. In order to obtain the most accurate measure of television viewing possible in a survey format, participants were asked on two separate items to record the average number of hours per day they spent viewing television. As a second measure of television viewing, participants were also asked to report the number of hours they spent viewing television on the day before the study took place (Dominick, 1984).

Questions designed to explore the types of programs watched and program preferences were also included on the survey. These items were adapted from those used by Albarran and Umphrey (1993). Participants were asked how many hours per week they watched the following types of programs: a) game shows, b) police/detective shows, c) talk shows, d) music programs, e) sports, f) dramatic shows/evening soap operas, g) situation comedies, h) TV movies, i) news/newsmagazines/interviews, j) educational programs/documentaries, and k) animated shows/cartoons. Participants were also asked to record the names of their five favorite television programs from most to least favorite.

Participants' motivations for viewing television were assessed via a series of questions based on those from Albarran and Umphrey (1993) such as "I watch TV

so I can forget about my problems" and "I watch TV because it helps me to learn about myself and others" to which participants responded on a continuum from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." Higher scores on these items indicate a greater degree of agreement. In an attempt to examine and describe the underlying structure of the motivation for viewing television items, a factor analysis of the items was conducted, from which motivation subscales were created for the purpose of comparing the various ethnic groups.

In order to examine viewer perceptions of television related to one's ethnicity, items regarding the character of portrayals (positive vs. negative) and the amount of characters of one's ethnicity (too few vs. many) were included. Participants were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with statements such as "Television characters of my race/ethnicity are not portrayed in a fair way" and "There are a fair amount of characters of my nationality on television." As with the television viewing motivation items, the portrayal items were factor analyzed and subscales created for comparison purposes.

Demographic data on age, gender, year in school, ethnic background, native language, grade point average, parent's occupation, and parent's highest level of education completed were also collected.

Procedure

Parental permission for adolescents to participate in this study was obtained via mail. A letter (see Appendix D) was sent to the parents of prospective participants explaining that a questionnaire on how television affects the way their children view themselves would be given to students in their classrooms during

school hours on a specific date and time. The letter was written in the native language of the parent(s) in order to ensure that the parent(s) fully understood that their children were being asked to participate in a survey. The letter stated that if parents wished their children not to participate, they should sign the letter in the space provided and return it to the researcher.

During an in-class assessment session, a very brief introduction to the study was given. Participants were told "Today you will be filling out a questionnaire having to do with television viewing. Your answers will help me know more about you and your likes and dislikes. Your answers are completely confidential and anonymous which means that no one except for myself will see your answers to the questions on the survey, and even I will not be able to tell which survey was answered by which person. Therefore, do not write your name on any part of this questionnaire." The students were told that their participation was completely voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation at any time. Following the introduction and explanation of consent forms, the questionnaires were distributed to those students who agreed to participate and had obtained parental permission to participate.

The participants were instructed to follow the directions on each page of the television viewing questionnaire. The researcher also gave more in depth verbal instructions for those items for which it was deemed necessary. In addition, verbal instructions were given for the Coopersmith and Rosenberg self-esteem measures. Following guidelines given for the administration of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (Coopersmith, 1967), introductory or explanatory remarks regarding the self-esteem questionnaires were kept to a minimum. The words self-esteem,

self-confidence, race and ethnicity were not used in an effort to prevent biased responses. For the Coopersmith, participants were instructed that "On the next page, you will find a list of statements about feelings. If a statement describes how you usually feel, put an X in the column 'Like me'. If the statement does not describe how you usually feel, put an X in the column 'Unlike me'. There are no right or wrong answers." Instructions for the Rosenberg were as follows: "On this page you will see 10 written statements. Please indicate whether you strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with each statement by circling the appropriate choice. There are no right or wrong choices."

Once the students completed their questionnaires, the researcher collected them and thanked the students for their participation. Participants were given a number where they could reach the experimenter in case they had any questions or concerns at a later time and were told that once all the data had been collected, the researcher would be happy to explain the purpose and findings of the study.

Results

Television Viewing

In order to obtain the most accurate measure of television viewing possible in a survey format, participants were asked on two separate items to record the number of hours per day, on average, they spent viewing television. The correlations between the two items were quite high for the different ethnic groups, ranging from .71 to .91. Therefore, the average of these two items was used as a measure of television viewing. The means and standard deviations, based on these two items, for the number of hours per day spent viewing television for each ethnic group are shown in Table 1. As was hypothesized, the viewing patterns of

adolescent ethnic groups differed significantly, $F(4, 197) = 2.38, p = .053$.

Complex comparisons revealed significant differences in the number of hours of television viewed per day between majority and minority adolescents as a group, $t(1) = 2.49, p = .014$, with minority adolescents viewing TV for a greater number of hours per day than Caucasians. Significant differences in viewing time were also found between Caucasian and African-American adolescents, $t(1) = 2.74, p = .007$, and Caucasian and Mexican-American adolescents $t(1) = 1.98, p = .050$, with the minority adolescents in both cases viewing television for the greater number of hours per day. No significant differences in viewing time were found, however, between Caucasian and either Asian adolescents, $t(1) = .485, n.s.$, or Filipino adolescents, $t(1) = 1.24, n.s.$

Television Viewing and Self-Esteem

The means and standard deviations for each of the ethnic groups on the Rosenberg and Coopersmith self-esteem scales also are displayed in Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficients were computed for the television and self-esteem variables in order to test the hypothesis that television viewing would be negatively related to the self-esteem of minority adolescents. Table 2 shows the correlations between the television viewing and self-esteem variables for the total sample, while Table 3 shows the correlations between the television viewing and self-esteem variables for Caucasians as well as each of the ethnic minority groups. The correlations between the television viewing and self-esteem variables for the total sample were not significant, as were the correlations between television viewing and self-esteem for each of the minority groups, with the exception of

Table 2

Correlations Among Television Viewing and Self-Esteem Variables for All Ethnicities

All Ethnicities		
	<u>Rosenberg</u>	<u>Coopersmith</u>
Avg hours per day TV viewing	-.02	-.07
<u>N</u>	205	205
Hours TV viewing yesterday	-.02	-.05
<u>N</u>	247	247

Table 3

Correlations Among Television Viewing and Self-Esteem Variables by Ethnicity

	Mexican-American		Asian		Filipino		African-American		Caucasian	
	<u>Rosen</u>	<u>Cooper</u>	<u>Rosen</u>	<u>Cooper</u>	<u>Rosen</u>	<u>Cooper</u>	<u>Rosen</u>	<u>Cooper</u>	<u>Rosen</u>	<u>Cooper</u>
Avg hours per day TV viewing	.09	.05	-.01	.05	.02	.11	-.13+	-.58+	-.24**	-.34*
N	56	56	27	27	33	35	10	10	64	62
Hours TV viewing yesterday	.07	.07	.00	.01	.22	-.09	-.62*+	-.55*+	-.04	-.21
N	72	71	29	30	41	43	15	15	73	71

Note. Rosen = Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale; Cooper = Coopersmith Self-Esteem Scale.

+Due to small N's, the correlations may be unstable.

* $p < .05$. ** $p = .052$.

African-Americans. For African-American adolescents, the actual number of hours spent viewing television on the day before the study was significantly and negatively correlated with self-esteem as measured by both the Rosenberg and the Coopersmith. In contrast, the average hours per day of television viewing did not correlate significantly with self-esteem as measured by either the Rosenberg or the Coopersmith. Thus, the hypothesis that television viewing and self-esteem would be negatively related for minority adolescents was not supported for Mexican-American, Asian or Filipino adolescents, and only partially supported for African-American adolescents. In any case, these results suggest a tentative negative relationship for African-Americans, but larger sample sizes are needed to either confirm or disconfirm these findings.

As shown in Tables 3 and 4, the results of correlational analyses failed to support the hypothesis that television exposure and self-esteem would be positively or not related at all to the self-esteem of majority adolescents. To the contrary, significant correlations emerged between the average hours per day of TV viewing and self-esteem as measured by both the Rosenberg and Coopersmith self-esteem scales. When these data were further partitioned by gender, significant correlations between average hours per day spent viewing TV and self-esteem remained for girls, but disappeared for boys. These results suggest that among girls, but not boys, those who watch a greater amount of television tend to have lower self-esteem. However, it cannot be stated that gender moderates the relationship between TV viewing and self-esteem since the critical ratios for boys and girls were not significantly different from one another ($Z < 1.10$ on both self-esteem measures). When the data on Caucasians were partitioned by grade

Table 4
Correlations Among Television Viewing and Self-Esteem Variables by Gender and Grade
for Caucasian Adolescents

	Girls		Boys		9th Graders		10th Graders	
	<u>Rosenberg</u>	<u>Coopersmith</u>	<u>Rosenberg</u>	<u>Coopersmith</u>	<u>Rosenberg</u>	<u>Coopersmith</u>	<u>Rosenberg</u>	<u>Coopersmith</u>
Avg hours per day TV viewing	-.39*	-.49*	-.12	-.29	-.27	-.40*	.17	-.15
N	27	25	37	37	33	33	24	23
Hours TV viewing yesterday	-.08	-.34	.01	-.10	-.15	-.44*	.29	.24
N	31	30	42	41	39	38	26	26

Note.

* $p < .05$.

level, significant correlations for 9th graders were found between TV exposure and self-esteem as measured by the Coopersmith, but not the Rosenberg. Although the latter correlation was not significant, there appeared to be a trend in the negative direction. For 10th graders, the correlations between the TV viewing and self-esteem variables were not significant. In an attempt to understand these differences, the viewing patterns of 9th and 10th graders were examined. A post hoc t-test revealed significant differences in the amount of daily viewing by 9th graders ($M = 3.38$) and 10th graders ($M = 2.38$), $t(58) = 2.46$, $p = .017$.

Motivations for Television Viewing

Factor Analysis

A principal components factor analysis was conducted to examine and simplify the underlying structure of the motivations for viewing television questionnaire. Six factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were extracted and subjected to varimax (orthogonal) rotation. These six factors accounted for 63.6% of the variance in television viewing motivations.

The loadings of the six rotated factors are presented in Table 5. The first factor accounted for 24.8% of the total variance and was defined by motivations for television viewing related to learning about oneself or others. The second factor accounted for 16.9% of the variance and appeared to reflect motivations for viewing related to escaping one's problems or relaxing. The third factor accounted for 7.7% of the variance and was defined by motivations for viewing characterized by entertainment or excitement. The fourth factor accounted for 5.4% of the variance and reflected motivations for TV viewing related to boredom or having nothing better to do. The fifth factor accounted for 4.8% of the variance and

Table 5

Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix for Motivation for Viewing Television Items

Factor Name (No. of items)	Item No.	Item	Learning 1	Escape 2	Entertain 3	Boredom 4	Social 5	Lonely 6
Learning (8)		I watch TV:						
	25	to learn what other people's lives are like	.84	.05	.13	.05	-.02	.10
	7	to learn about how other people act.	.81	.10	.13	.00	.03	-.04
	2	to learn how other people live	.81	-.02	.05	-.07	.09	-.04
	11	to learn new things	.80	-.01	.02	.06	-.00	.01
	4	it helps me to learn about myself and others	.77	.16	.14	-.13	.12	.03
	22	because I can learn how to do things which I haven't done before	.74	.06	.00	-.00	.09	.18
	16	so I can learn what could happen to me.	.69	.02	.09	-.03	.14	.21
Forget Problems/Relax (5)	6	to keep aware of current events.	.57	-.02	-.24	.00	.17	-.28
	5	so I can forget about my problems.	.09	.75	.10	.09	.05	.22
(Cont'd)	1	to unwind.	.11	.70	.20	-.03	.23	-.03

Table 5

Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix For Motivation for Viewing Television Items

Factor Name (No. of items)	Item No.	Item	Learning 1	Escape 2	Entertain 3	Boredom 4	Social 5	Lonely 6
Forget Problems/Relax (Cont'd)								
		I watch TV:						
	18	so I can forget about school or other things.	-.02	.68	.11	.30	.05	.22
	9	because it relaxes me.	.08	.67	.41	.20	.10	-.16
	24	so I can get away from the rest of family or others.	.01	.58	-.13	.40	-.15	.15
Entertainment/ Excitement (4)								
	23	because it's exciting.	.13	.14	.83	.09	.09	.16
	17	because it's thrilling.	.24	.04	.80	.04	.00	.17
	8	because it is enjoyable	-.05	.29	.64	.35	.10	-.19
	3	it entertains me.	.03	.20	.58	.30	.18	-.31
Bored (4)								
	21	because it passes the time away, particularly when I'm bored.	.10	.27	.22	.68	.03	.10
	14	because it is there.	.01	.08	-.02	.68	.33	.10

(Cont'd)

Table 5

Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix For Motivation for Viewing Television Items

Factor Name (No. of items)	Item No.	Item Stem	Learning 1	Escape 2	Entertain 3	Boredom 4	Social 5	Lonely 6
Bored (Cont'd)		I watch TV:						
	10	there is nothing better to do.	-.18	.03	.16	.66	-.05	.35
	20	because I just like to watch.	-.10	.21	.31	.62	.08	-.04
Social (3)								
	15	it's something to do when friends come over.	.01	.17	.06	.26	.74	-.03
	12	it is something to do with friends or family.	.22	-.05	.12	.06	.70	.17
	26	so I can be with other family members or friends who are watching.	.31	.27	.13	-.09	.57	.36
Lonely (2)								
	13	so I won't have to be alone.	.16	.22	.01	.25	.32	.68
	19	because there is no one else to talk to or be with.	.12	.31	-.01	.39	.16	.63

(Cont'd)

Table 5

Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix For Motivation for Viewing Television Items

	Learning 1	Escape 2	Entertain 3	Boredom 4	Social 5	Lonely 6
Eigenvalues	6.45	4.38	2.00	1.42	1.25	1.03
% of Variance Accounted for	24.80	16.90	7.70	5.40	4.80	4.0
Reliability (α)	.90	.77	.78	.71	.63	.80

Total % of Variance Accounted for = 63.6%

Total % of Variance Accounted for by Factors 1-4 = 54.8%

appeared to be defined by being social with friends or family. Lastly, the sixth factor accounted for 4.0% of the variance and appeared to reflect motivations for viewing due to loneliness. Further evidence for the internal reliability for the factors is presented in Table 5.

Subscales for Motivation by Ethnicity

The descriptive statistics for the motivation for viewing subscales created based on the factors described above can be found in Table 6. In order to test the hypothesis that majority and minority adolescents would differ significantly in their motivations for television viewing, a MANOVA was performed using ethnicity as the independent variable and the scores for the seven motivation subscales as the dependent variables. The omnibus F's for the Escape, Entertainment, Boredom, Social and Alone subscales were not significant, indicating that there were no differences between majority and minority adolescents' motivations for viewing television in these areas. However, analyses revealed significant differences between the ethnic groups on the Total Motivation for Viewing scale $F(4,213) = 3.04, p = .018$ and the Learning subscale, $F(4, 213) = 3.68, p = .006$. With respect to the Total Motivation for Viewing scale, a complex comparison showed that majority adolescents differed marginally from minority adolescents as a group, $t(1) = 1.93, p = .055$. Simple comparisons showed that Caucasian adolescents differed significantly from both Mexican-American adolescents, $t(1) = 2.16, p = .03$, and Filipino adolescents, $t(1) = 2.94, p = .004$ on the Total motivation for viewing subscale. In all instances, the ethnic minority group adolescents scored higher on the Total Motivation scale than Caucasian adolescents. Simple comparisons between

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Motivation for TV Viewing Subscales by Ethnicity

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Motivation for TV Viewing</u>											
	<u>Total</u>			<u>Learning</u>			<u>Escape</u>			<u>Entertain</u>		
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>
All	100.29	17.28	233	28.48	8.17	250	19.18	5.31	256	18.84	3.35	252
African-American	94.19	16.08	16	26.00	8.16	17	16.88	4.81	17	17.71	3.74	17
Caucasian	96.24	16.08	72	25.66	8.66	77	19.23	5.48	77	18.84	3.81	76
Mexican-American	102.79	17.21	61	29.86	7.95	69	19.40	5.72	72	18.96	2.97	69
Asian	101.79	11.69	29	30.07	6.18	29	19.43	4.53	30	19.07	2.82	30
Filipino	106.23	19.12	40	30.57	8.03	42	20.14	4.92	43	19.07	3.37	44
F	3.04*			3.68**			1.38			.55		2.00

Note. Total = All subscales combined; Learning = Viewing TV to learn about self or others; Escape = Viewing TV to forget one's problems or relax; Entertain = Viewing TV for entertainment or excitement; Boredom = Viewing TV because one is bored or there is nothing better to do. Social = Viewing TV to be social with friends or family; Lonely = Viewing TV due to loneliness. Higher scores indicate greater agreement. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviations for Motivation for TV Viewing Subscales by Ethnicity

<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Motivation for TV Viewing</u>					
	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>N</u>
All	10.58	3.11	258	6.30	2.80	259
African-American	9.88	3.32	16	5.06	2.75	17
Caucasian	10.41	3.23	80	6.19	2.84	80
Mexican-American	10.70	3.23	71	6.63	2.83	72
Asian	9.97	2.40	30	6.53	2.76	30
Filipino	11.54	2.83	44	6.44	2.53	43
F	1.51			1.24		

Note. Social = Viewing TV to be social with friends or family; Lonely = Viewing TV due to loneliness. Higher scores indicate greater agreement.
* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Caucasian and African-Americans and Caucasian and Asian groups showed no significant differences in the Total Motivation scores of these groups, $t(1) = .43$ and 1.47 , n.s., respectively.

For the Learning subscale, a complex comparison showed that minority adolescents as a group differed significantly from majority adolescents, $t(1) = 2.96$, $p = .003$, with minority adolescents scoring higher on this subscale. Simple comparisons showed Caucasian adolescents differed from Mexican-American adolescents, $t(1) = 3.15$, $p = .002$, Asian adolescents, $t(1) = 2.52$, $p = .013$, and Filipino adolescents, $t(1) = 3.19$, $p = .002$, with the minority groups in each instance scoring higher on the Learning subscale than the majority group. These results indicate that Mexican-American, Asian, and Filipino adolescents view TV for learning purposes to a greater extent than do Caucasian adolescents.

Perceptions of Minority Portrayals

Factor Analysis

A principal components factor analysis was conducted to examine the underlying structure of the seven television portrayal items. Two factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 were extracted and subjected to varimax (orthogonal) rotation. These two factors accounted for 61.1% of the variance in attitudes toward television portrayals.

The loadings of the two rotated factors are presented in Table 7. The first factor accounted for 45.5% of the total variance and was defined by items about the positive portrayal or sufficient amount of characters of one's own ethnic background on TV. The second factor accounted for 15.7% of the

Table 7

Varimax Rotated Factor Matrix for Television Portrayal Items

Factor Name (No. of items)	Item No.	Item	Positive 1	Negative 2
Positive Portrayal/Amount (4)				
	5	Characters of my ethnic background are portrayed fairly on television.	.74	.29
	1	Television portrays members of my own ethnic group in a positive way.	.73	-.09
	4	There are a fair amount of characters on television that are of my nationality.	.72	.37
	6	There are too many characters on television that are of the same ethnic background as I am.	.65	.30
Negative Portrayal/Amount (3)				
	3	Television reflects negatively on people of my ethnicity.	.07	.83
	7	TV characters of my race/ethnicity are not portrayed in a fair way.	.16	.76
	2	There are too few characters of my nationality/ethnic background on television.	.35	.72
Eigenvalues			3.18	1.10
% of Variance Accounted for			45.5	15.7
Reliability (α)			.73	.73
Total % of Variance Accounted for = 61.1%				

variance and was defined by items about the negative portrayal or insufficient amount of character of one's own ethnic background on TV. Cronbach's alpha coefficients for both factors was .73, perhaps due to the small number of items loading on each factor.

Ethnic Satisfaction of Television Portrayals

The means and standard deviations for the Positive Portrayal and Negative Portrayal scales are shown in Table 8. The hypothesis that majority and minority adolescents would differ significantly with respect to their perceptions of minority portrayals on television was supported. A oneway analysis of variance showed differences between the groups on the Positive Portrayal scale,

$F(4, 228) = 14.21, p = .001$. A complex comparison showed a significant difference between Caucasian adolescents and minority adolescents as a group, $t(1) = 6.88, p = .001$, with minority adolescents scoring lower than majority adolescents on the Positive Portrayal scale. Further simple comparisons also revealed significant differences between Caucasians and African-Americans, $t(1) = 3.24, p = .001$, Caucasians and Mexican-Americans, $t(1) = 6.66, p = .001$, Caucasians and Asians, $t(1) = 5.31, p = .001$, and Caucasians and Filipinos, $t(1) = 4.71, p = .001$. In all cases, the differences observed were such that the minority groups scored lower on the Positive Portrayal subscale. The results indicate that adolescents belonging to the different ethnic minority groups examined believed members of their own ethnic background were portrayed less positively in terms of the nature and amount of portrayals than Caucasians believed themselves to be.

As expected, differences between ethnic groups emerged on the Negative Portrayal subscale, $F(226) = 23.07, p = .001$. As with the Positive Portrayal

Table 8

Means and Standard Deviations for Television Portrayals by Ethnicity

Ethnicity	Positive Portrayal*			Negative Portrayal*		
	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	N	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	N
All	13.06	4.20	246	10.38	3.55	248
African-American	12.53	3.94	15	8.29	3.92	17
Caucasian	15.96	3.67	74	13.19	3.13	72
Mexican-American	11.81	3.67	70	8.90	3.35	70
Asian	11.62	3.79	29	9.00	2.12	30
Filipino	12.54	3.84	41	9.90	2.58	42
F		14.21***			23.07***	

*Note. Higher scores on the Positive Portrayal Scale indicate more agreement; lower scores on the Negative Portrayal scale indicate more agreement.
 ***p < .001.

subscale, Caucasian adolescents differed significantly from minority adolescents as a group, $t(1) = 9.18$, $p = .001$. In addition, significant differences were found between Caucasians and African-Americans, $t(1) = 5.94$, $p = .001$, Caucasians and Mexican-Americans, $t(1) = 8.36$, $p = .001$, Caucasians and Asians, $t(1) = 6.31$, $p = .001$, and Caucasians and Filipinos, $t(1) = 5.54$, $p = .001$. For each comparison, the difference observed between Caucasians and the minority group was such that the minority group scored lower than Caucasians on the Negative Portrayal subscale. These results indicate that ethnic minority adolescents believe that their particular ethnic group is portrayed more negatively with respect to nature and amount of portrayals on television than Caucasian adolescents believe members of their own group to be.

Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between television viewing and self-esteem in ethnic minority and Caucasian adolescents. In addition, TV viewing patterns, motivations for viewing TV and perceptions of TV portrayals among minority and majority adolescents were also examined. It was hypothesized that majority and minority adolescents would differ significantly in their television viewing patterns (H_1). The results of this study support this hypothesis and show that Mexican-American adolescents watch approximately 3/4 of an hour more per day of television than do Caucasians, while African-Americans watch over one hour more per day. These findings are similar to those of previous researchers who have found African-Americans watch significantly more television than other ethnic groups (Condry, 1989;

Greenberg & Atkin, 1982; Greenberg & Dervin, 1970). Future research should seek to examine whether or not differences like those observed in this sample are due solely to ethnicity, socioeconomic status or a combination of both.

A primary hypothesis investigated in this research was that television exposure would be negatively related to the self-esteem of minority adolescents (H_2). However, the data do not support this hypothesis, except in the case of African-American adolescents. Several explanations can be offered for the lack of support of the hypothesis with Mexican-American, Asian, and Filipino adolescents. For one, it may be that TV portrayals of these ethnic groups are so few and infrequent that they may have a negligible effect on the self-esteem of these adolescents, in spite of the fact that they are negative in nature. A second, more likely explanation for this finding is that the negative, stereotyped images of these ethnic groups on television are not internalized by minority adolescent viewers. For example, even though minority adolescents appear to be aware that there are few TV characters of their own ethnic backgrounds and that those that do exist are generally portrayed negatively (as results from this study clearly indicate), they may not necessarily accept them. In fact, for minority groups to accept these negative portrayals as "true to life" would seem to be in conflict with their daily experiences with other minority group members. The intimate experiences that minority adolescents have with members of their own ethnic group may buffer the negative effects of TV on their self-esteem. In other words, these experiences provide a standard against which to judge TV portrayals so that minority adolescents are not as likely to internalize negative ethnic portrayals as a reflection or extension of themselves. It makes sense then, as suggested by

Stroman (1991) and others that "Television is likely to have its greatest impact if parents, friends, and teachers do not supply children and adolescents with a standard against which to assess the views offered by television" (p. 321; Berry & Mitchell-Kernan, 1982; Dorr, 1982).

In the case of African-American adolescents, the results of this study lend limited support for the hypothesis that TV exposure is negatively related to self-esteem. To reiterate, it was found that the actual number of hours of TV viewed on the day before the study took place was significantly and negatively correlated with self-esteem of African-American adolescents. In this respect the results of this study are dissimilar to those of Stroman (1986) who found that television viewing was positively correlated with the self-esteem of girls and unrelated to that of boys, and similar to those of Tan and Tan (1979) who found that TV viewing was negatively related to the self-esteem of African-American adults. Several explanations exist for this finding. For one, it is certainly plausible to suggest that the negative relationship among African-Americans observed in this study may be due to error in measurement. It is possible that because of the small sample size of African-Americans in this study, the correlations observed may be somewhat unstable and subject to change given a larger sample size. The correlations may also be questionable due to the fact that self-esteem was shown only to be significantly correlated with the number of hours of TV viewed on the day before the study took place and not the average number of hours of TV viewed per day. However, it should be noted that while the latter correlations were not significant, they follow a trend in the negative direction. In any case, the negative relationship between TV viewing and

self-esteem in this sample of African-Americans should not be dismissed.

Rather, future research should seek to replicate these findings or provide others by using larger sample sizes.

Interestingly, the results of this study did not provide support for the hypothesis that television viewing is positively or non-related to the self-esteem of majority adolescents (H_3). To the contrary, it was found that those Caucasian adolescents who watched greater amounts of TV tended to have lower self-esteem. These findings lead one to question why it is the case that Caucasians who are generally portrayed in a positive manner (relative to Mexican-Americans, Asians, and Filipinos) tend to have lower self-esteem as a result of viewing TV, while these other minority groups who are generally portrayed in a negative manner (relative to Caucasians) should seem to be unaffected in terms of self-esteem? Based on results presented earlier, simple differences in viewing time between majority and minority adolescents do not provide adequate explanation for the differential the effects of TV on self-esteem of minority and majority adolescents; although Asian and Filipino adolescents watched less TV than Caucasians, Mexican-American and African-American adolescents viewed significantly more TV than Caucasians, yet they do not appear to be influenced by the negative portrayals of their respective groups. A possible explanation for this somewhat unexpected finding may lie in the principle of social comparison. According to Pettigrew (1967), "The basic tenet of social evaluation theory is that human beings learn about themselves by comparing themselves to others. A second tenet is that the process of social evaluation leads to positive, neutral, or negative

self-ratings which are relative to the standards set by the individuals employed for comparison" (p. 243). Assuming that Caucasian adolescents use other Caucasians as their referent group, they may engage in social comparison processes that lead to negative self-evaluation. Consider that television content analyses have found that a greater proportion of Caucasians on TV are generally portrayed as being of higher SES than those in real life. Consider also the manner in which Caucasian adolescents are portrayed, for example, on "Beverly Hills 90210" (one of the programs reported as a favorite by many Caucasians in this sample). Not only are the Caucasian cast portrayed as generally intelligent, popular, wealthy and living in Beverly Hills, but they are also good looking to boot! Thus, the standard set by many or most television portrayals of Caucasians may be one that is somewhat difficult for the average, real life Caucasian adolescent to live up to. Given this scenario, it is not difficult to understand the negative relationship between TV viewing and low self-esteem found for majority adolescents in this sample. But, this is hindsight, and only future research will determine this more definitively.

The principle of social comparison may also be invoked as a means for explaining the negative correlation between TV viewing and low self-esteem found among African-Americans in this sample. While the frequency and character of African-American portrayals may not yet be up to par with those of Caucasians, they are becoming increasingly more frequent and more positive in nature. And, as is the case for Caucasians, the portrayals of African-Americans on television are of highly successful, affluent, and good looking people to which real life African-Americans may not compare as favorably as these portrayals themselves suggest they should.

With respect to Caucasians, social comparison theory only partially explains the finding that TV viewing is negatively related with the self-esteem of girls, but not boys. The observation that Caucasian girls are portrayed even more unrealistically than are boys, in terms of physical beauty, may explain these differences. However, it is likely that other variables not measured in this study may account for these gender differences as well. As Stroman (1986) suggested, variables such as identification and perceived reality of television content may mediate the influence of television on the self-esteem of African-American girls and boys. It is equally plausible to posit that this may well be the case for girls and boys, independent of race. For example, it could be that Caucasian girls, relative to Caucasian boys, believe in the reality of television to a greater extent, and so are influenced by television to a greater extent than are boys. Or, perhaps Caucasian girls identify with Caucasian portrayals to a greater extent than do boys, and so are more susceptible to the influence of TV on their self-esteem. Future research should seek to examine these and other possible variables which may mediate the effects of TV on self-esteem.

Differential effects of television on the self-esteem of Caucasian 9th and 10th graders were also observed in this study. These findings may simply be due to differences in amount of exposure to television. For example, 9th graders as a group watched, on average, one hour per day more of television than did 10th graders. While a difference of one hour per day may not appear to be particularly eyebrow-raising, and additional 365 hours of television exposure over the course one year may compound the cumulative effects of television on the self-esteem of its adolescent viewers. Further, as was the case with gender differences, it is

additionally likely that identification, perceived reality and a variety of other variables not included in this study mediate the influence of television on the self-esteem of adolescents who are of different age groups and/or grade levels. Perhaps as adolescents mature, they tend to be less willing to believe and buy into the portrayals presented on television. Future investigations that are cross-sectional or longitudinal in nature would be helpful in delineating television's effect on the development and maintenance of self-esteem in all children and adolescents, regardless of ethnicity.

With respect to attempting to explain the negative relationship between television viewing and self-esteem among the aforementioned groups, it is, of course, likely that many other factors besides television content and viewing frequency affect adolescents' self-esteem. While beyond the scope of this study, it is interesting to speculate as to the personal, familial and sociocultural factors that might influence the relationship between television viewing and low self-esteem. Perhaps increased television viewing may cause little social activity and low motivation, leading to lower self-esteem (or vice versa).

In terms of motivations for viewing television, the results of this study provide partial support for the hypothesis that minority and majority adolescents differ in their motivation for viewing television (H₄). Mexican-American, Asian and Filipino adolescents appear to be more likely than Caucasians to view for learning purposes, whereas African-Americans appear to be no different from Caucasians in this respect. The latter finding is somewhat surprising, given that several researchers have shown African-Americans to view TV for learning or informational purposes to a greater extent than Caucasians (Bower, 1973;

Comstock & Cobbey, 1970; Gerson, 1966; Greenberg & Atkin, 1982). As was the case with differences in TV viewing time between majority and minority groups, it is not clear whether the differences in learning as a motivation for viewing TV represent differences due to ethnicity alone. Further research is needed to clarify the relationship of socioeconomic status to motivations for viewing. Not so surprising is the finding that majority and minority children do not seem to differ in their motivations for viewing related to entertainment, the desire to escape school or family problems, or due to boredom or loneliness. It is likely that these motivations for viewing television are universal among adolescents of all ethnicities.

The hypothesis that minority and majority adolescents would differ with respect to their perceptions of their own group's portrayals on television (H_5) was clearly supported. All minority groups studied were more likely than Caucasians to agree with statements referring to the inadequate number of television portrayals of members of their own respective ethnic groups and to the negativity of existing portrayals. Conversely, all minority groups studied were less likely than Caucasians to agree with statements referring to the adequate number of television portrayals of members of their own respective ethnic groups and to the positive character of those that do exist. Thus, minority adolescents in this sample are aware that there are few representations of themselves on television and feel that those that do exist do not reflect positively on people of their own respective groups. Interestingly, these minority adolescents are fully aware of the state of their group's portrayals on TV, and yet, with the possible exception of

African-American adolescents, their self-esteem appears to be unaffected.

Accordingly, as Rosenberg commented on minorities and self-esteem, "...even if the minority group member agreed that his group was inferior or was characterized by negative stereotypes, this would not oblige him to conclude that *he* was inferior or possessed these negative characteristics" (p. 167).

This study provides insight into the relationship between television viewing and self-esteem. The findings suggest that the relationship between television viewing and self-esteem is affected or moderated by a variety of personal and environmental factors. While assessing the effects of television on self-esteem requires a more in-depth analysis than was possible with the sample and data of this study, this study provides a foundation and direction for future research. In order to understand the process by which TV affects the self-esteem of minority and majority adolescents, future research should examine how socioeconomic status may affect this relationship. Future studies aimed at examining identification with and perceived reality of television characters and content are also needed. In addition, it would be helpful to examine how acculturation and assimilation of ethnic minority group members and exposure to other than English-language programming might mediate the relationship between television viewing and self-esteem.

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Appendix A

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Inventory

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	SA	A	D	SD
2. At times I think I am no good at all.	SA	A	D	SD
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	SA	A	D	SD
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	SA	A	D	SD
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	SA	A	D	SD
6. I certainly feel useless at times.	SA	A	D	SD
7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	SA	A	D	SD
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	SA	A	D	SD
9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	SA	A	D	SD
10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	SA	A	D	SD

SA = Strongly Agree

A = Agree

D = Disagree

SD = Strongly Disagree

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Appendix B
Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inv.
Pages 57 & 58

Appendix C

Demographic Questionnaire

Please provide the following student information:

1. Age _____
2. Gender (M or F) _____
3. Grade level (9, 10, 11 or 12) _____
4. What is your racial/ethnic identity? African-American _____
Caucasian/White _____
Mexican-American _____ Other Hispanic _____ Asian _____ Filipino _____
American-Indian _____ Pacific Islander _____ Other (describe) _____
5. What is your current GPA? _____
6. What is your current parent/step parent/guardian's occupation?

Mother Father
7. What is the highest level of education your parent/step parent/ guardian has completed?
Mother (Stepmother): Father (Stepfather):
Some High School _____ Some High School _____
High School Diploma _____ High School Diploma _____
Vocational School _____ Vocational School _____
Some College _____ Some College _____
College Degree-- Bachelor's _____ College Degree--Bachelor's _____
College Degree--Master's _____ College Degree--Master's _____
College Degree--Doctorate _____ College Degree--Doctorate _____
8. What is your native language? _____
9. If English is your 2nd language, how many years have you spoken it? _

Appendix C (cont'd)

Television Viewing Questionnaire

1. How many hours per day (on average) do you spend watching television?

2. How many hours did you actually spend watching television yesterday? _____
3. About how many hours per day, at each of the following time periods, do you spend watching television:
 - a. before going to school _____
 - b. after school to 6 p.m. _____
 - c. from 6 p.m. until the time you go to bed _____
 - d. on Saturdays and Sundays _____

Please respond to the questions below by writing the appropriate number in the blank:

- | | Number of Hours (rounded to the
Per Day nearest 1/2 hour) |
|--|---|
| 1. How often do you watch VCR videos? | _____ |
| 2. How often do you watch TV while you are
doing something else at the same time? | _____ |
| 3. How often do you watch TV by yourself? | _____ |
| 4. If English is your 2nd language, how often do
you watch television programs (of any type)
that are broadcast in your native language? | _____ (Skip this question
if English is not your
second language) |
| 5. How often do you watch television? | _____ |
| 6. How often do you watch TV with others? | _____ |

Appendix C (cont'd)

7. Please respond to the following statements using the scale below.

SA = Strongly Agree A = Agree SLA = Slightly Agree
 SD = Strongly Disagree D = Disagree SLD = Slightly Disagree

	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
I watch TV (because)...						
a. it allows me to unwind	1	2	3	4	5	6
b. to learn about how other people live	1	2	3	4	5	6
c. it entertains me	1	2	3	4	5	6
d. it helps me to learn about myself and others	1	2	3	4	5	6
e. so I can forget about my problems	1	2	3	4	5	6
f. to keep aware of current events	1	2	3	4	5	6
g. to learn about how other people act	1	2	3	4	5	6
h. it is enjoyable	1	2	3	4	5	6
i. it relaxes me	1	2	3	4	5	6
j. there is nothing better to do	1	2	3	4	5	6
k. to learn about new things	1	2	3	4	5	6
l. it is something to do with friends or family	1	2	3	4	5	6
m. so I won't have to be alone	1	2	3	4	5	6
n. because it is there	1	2	3	4	5	6
o. it's something to do when friends come over	1	2	3	4	5	6
p. so I can learn what could happen to me	1	2	3	4	5	6
q. because it's thrilling	1	2	3	4	5	6

Appendix C (cont'd)

	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
r. so I can forget about school or other things	1	2	3	4	5	6
s. because there is no one else to talk to	1	2	3	4	5	6
t. because I just like to watch	1	2	3	4	5	6
u. because it passes the time away, particularly when I'm bored	1	2	3	4	5	6
v. so I can learn about things which I haven't done before.	1	2	3	4	5	6
w. it's exciting	1	2	3	4	5	6
x. so I can get away from the rest of the family or others	1	2	3	4	5	6
y. to learn what other people's lives are like	1	2	3	4	5	6
z. so I can be with other family members or friends who are watching	1	2	3	4	5	6

8. Please indicate the number of hours per week that you watch the following types of programs (rounded to the nearest 1/2 hour):

_____ Game shows	_____ Educational Programs/
_____ Police/Detective Shows	_____ Documentaries
_____ Talk Shows	_____ Animated Shows/Cartoons
_____ Music Programs	
_____ Sports	_____ News/Newsmagazines/Interviews
_____ Dramatic Shows/Evening Soap Operas	
_____ Sitcoms	

_____ TV Movies

Appendix C (cont'd)

Please respond to the statements below using the following scale:

	SA	A	SLA	SLD	D	SD
9. Television portrays members of my own ethnic group in a positive way.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10. There are too few characters of my nationality/ethnic background on television.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Television reflects negatively on people of my ethnicity.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. There are a fair amount of characters on television that are of my nationality.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Characters of my ethnic background are portrayed fairly on television.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. There are too many characters on television that are of the same ethnic background as I am.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. TV characters of my race/ethnicity are not portrayed in a fair way.	1	2	3	4	5	6

16. My top 5 favorite television programs (in order of preference) are:

1. _____ 2. _____

3. _____ 4. _____

5. _____

Appendix D

Dear Parent or Guardian:

I am a graduate student in the Master's Program at San Jose State University. As part of the requirements for obtaining my degree, I am currently working on a research project entitled "Television and Attitudes." I would like to ask your permission for your son or daughter to help me with this project by participating in my study.

Teenagers who participate will be asked to spend a total of about 25-30 minutes completing a survey. This survey includes questions about television viewing, program preferences, and attitudes toward what they view on television. The information provided by this study should help parents, teachers, and educators to better understand the role of television in the lives of adolescents. Participating in this study may also encourage teenagers to think about television, why and how often they view it, and also how it might affect their attitudes.

Your son's or daughter's participation in this study is completely voluntary and his or her responses to the survey will be completely confidential. There will be no penalty if you do not wish your son or daughter to be in this study, and he or she may withdraw at any time during the study. This project has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at San Jose State University, and also by your teenager's high school.

Please find enclosed the "Agreement to Participate in Research" on the next page. The non-return of this form indicates permission for your son or daughter to participate. However, if you do not wish your son or daughter to participate in this study, please sign and date the form and return in to me at the address below by _____. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Ms. Spomer (408-866-1691) or Dr. Greg Feist (408-924-5643).

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Michelle L. Spomer, MA
Graduate Student

San Jose State University
Department of Psychology
One Washington Square
San Jose, CA 95192-0120

Appendix D

Agreement to Participate in Research

Responsible Investigator: Michelle L. Spomer, M.A. Student

Title of Protocol: Television and Attitudes

My child has been asked to participate in a research study investigating the relationship between television viewing and how it affects his or her attitudes toward himself or herself and others. My child will be asked to complete a short questionnaire during his or her class time on ____.

There are no risks in completing this questionnaire. Both parents and their adolescents are expected to benefit from the valuable knowledge gained by this study (e.g., about the role of TV in their lives, including its potential effects, and insight into how TV may affect the way they view themselves and others). Copies of the results of this investigation will be made available to those parents and students who request it.

The results of this study may be published. However, because participants will be asked not to write their name on the questionnaires, their responses will be completely confidential and no information that could identify any of the participants will be included. Questions about this research may be addressed to Michelle L. Spomer or Greg Feist, Ph.D. at (408) 924-5643.

Complaints or concerns about the research may be directed to Robert Cooper, Chairperson, Department of Psychology, San Jose State University, (408) 924-5600. Questions or complaints about research, participants' rights, or research-related injury may be presented to Serena Stanford, Ph.D., Associate Academic Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research, at (408) 924-2480.

Consent for your child participating in this study is voluntarily given, and you may refuse your child to participate in the study or in any part of the study. If your child decides to participate in this study, he or she is free to withdraw at any time without prejudice to his or her relations to San Jose State University. If you wish your child **not** to participate in this study, please sign this form on the appropriate line below and return this form to the researcher at the address provided on the previous page.

- **The non-return of this form to the researcher indicates agreement for your child to participate in this study, agreement by the researcher to include the above named participant in the research, and attestation that the participant/participant's parents have been fully informed of their rights.**
- **The return of this signed form indicates non-agreement for your child to participate in this study.**

Parent's Signature

Date

Appendix D

Participant/Non-Participant Informed Consent

Responsible Investigator: Michelle L. Spomer, M.A. Student

Title of Protocol: Television and Attitudes

I have been asked to participate in a research study investigating the relationship between television viewing and attitudes. In order to participate in this study I will be completing a short questionnaire during class time on _____.

There are no risks in completing this questionnaire. Participants are expected to benefit from the valuable knowledge gained by this study. Participants will not receive compensation for participating in this study. Copies of the results of this investigation will be made available to those students who request it.

The results of this study may be published. However, because participants will be asked not to write their name on the questionnaires, their responses will be completely confidential and no information that could identify any of the participants will be included. Questions about this research may be addressed to Michelle L. Spomer or Greg Feist, Ph.D. at (408) 924-5643. Complaints or concerns about the research may be directed to Robert Cooper, Chairperson, Department of Psychology, San Jose State University, (408) 924-5600. Questions or complaints about research, participants' rights, or research-related injury may be presented to Serena Stanford, Ph.D., Associate Academic Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research, at (408) 924-2480.

Consent for participating in this study is voluntarily given, and you may refuse to participate in the study or in any part of the study. If you decide to participate in this study, you are free to withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations to San Jose State University.