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A thesis submitted to the faculty of
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Master of Science

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ABSTRACT

Media and Parents: Socializing Factors of Relational Aggression

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Exposure to relational aggression in various contexts has been found to predict relationally aggressive behavior in adolescents. Past research has examined socializing factors of relational aggression separately. The current study expounds upon this research by looking at three important contexts for socialization of relational aggression during adolescence together: media relational aggression, parental psychological control, and couple relational aggression. Specifically, this study looked at how these different socializing factors combine to predict relational aggression. Participants consisted of 423 adolescents and their parents. A person-centered approach was used to determine different profiles. Latent profile analysis found three profiles, including "average" (78%), "high psychological control" (18%), and "high couple relational aggression" (4%). The "high psychological control" group significantly predicted relational aggression in adolescents. Adolescents may be learning from their parents that it is appropriate to treat others in a relationally aggressive way. Parents need to promote a family culture of love and warmth rather than aggression.

Keywords: relational aggression, media, psychological control, parents, adolescence

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Media and Parents: Socializing Factors of Relational Aggression

Individuals use a variety of behaviors to hurt one another. For decades, the focus of research on aggression was on physical forms of aggression (e.g., hitting, kicking). Recently, research has turned to examine the predictors and outcomes of a more subtle, but harmful way of aggressing against others. *Relational aggression* is defined as aggression that is meant to harm a relationship, such as gossiping or using purposeful manipulation to hurt others (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). Relational aggression is particularly common during adolescence as compared to other developmental periods (Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1992). Adolescents may learn that relational aggression is acceptable when surrounded by the behavior in their home environment. This socialization could consist of exposure to relational aggression through the media, as a parenting strategy (i.e. psychological control), or in their parent's marriage. A number of studies have examined the socializing factors of relational aggression; however, most examine these separately. Adolescence is a vulnerable time as youth are exploring their identity and going through many transitions, making them particularly susceptible to the influences around them. This study expounds upon the current research by exploring three important and influential socializing factors for youth: the media, their parents (in the form of psychological control), and their parents' relationships. Specifically, it will look at whether and how these different socializing factors combine to predict relational aggression.

Aggression in the Media

With media becoming a larger part of daily life, it is important that consumers are aware of its potential influences. For example, studies show that viewing certain types of media is related to a number of outcomes, including prosocial behavior (Anderson, Gentile, & Dill, 2012), health (Tremblay et al., 2011), attitudes towards alcohol and tobacco (Wellman,

Sugarman, DiFranza, & Winickoff, 2006), as well as attitudes and behaviors towards sexuality

(O'Hara, Gibbons, Gerrard, Li, & Sargent, 2012). Media has become more salient for

adolescents, emerging with the widespread use of a number of media platforms (Jennings, 2017;

Rideout, 2016), making it even more necessary to understand what role media may play in the

lives of adolescents.

　　　Not only is media being introduced to children at earlier ages (Wiedeman, Black, Dolle,

Finney, & Coker, 2015), but media is also becoming more physically aggressive in nature

(Bushman, Jamieson, Weitz, & Romer, 2013) and easier to access (Wartella, Rideout, Montague,

Beaudoin-Ryan, & Lauricella, 2016). While some research appears to be mixed (Ferguson &

Colwell, 2016), most of the research findings suggest that violent media exposure is associated

with heightened aggressive behaviors (Anderson et al., 2003; Bushman, Gollwitzer, & Cruz,

2015; McDonald & Merrick, 2013; Gentile, Coyne, & Walsh, 2011; Coyne et al., 2017), and

more desensitization to violence (Browne & Hamilton-Giachritsis, 2005; Bushman & Anderson,

2009).

　　　Just as media influences physical aggression, a growing body of research shows that

relational aggression in the media might also be related to increased aggression. Coyne and

Archer (2004) found that relational aggression was found in 92% of the television shows viewed

in their sample. Many studies have found that relational aggression in the media is becoming

normalized (née Redden, 2013; Goldberg, Smith-Adcock, & Dixon, 2011), which could lead to

individuals experiencing positive emotions when viewing relational aggression as a way to relate

to the characters in the media (Coyne, Stockdale, & Nelson, 2012). Adolescents may be

processing media messages that portray relational aggression as an acceptable (Coyne, Nelson et

al., 2008) and desirable (Coyne, 2016) behavior.

Additionally, viewing relational aggression in media has been found to influence relational aggression over time in adolescents (Coyne, 2016), and is associated with verbal and physical aggression (Coyne, Nelson et al., 2008; Gentile et al., 2011), more perpetration of aggression in romantic relationships (Coyne et al., 2011), and the activation of aggressive cognitions in the mind (Coyne, Linder, Nelson, & Gentile, 2012). A recent meta-analysis supports these claims and confirms that there are significant effects of viewing relational aggression in the media on relationally aggressive behaviors (Martins & Weaver, 2019). The literature does suggest that relational aggression in media is becoming normalized and influencing viewers in a negative way, but it is still unclear how media influences behavior in conjunction with parents' behavior.

Parental Psychological Control

The relationship an adolescent has with his or her parents plays a significant role in their behaviors and outcomes. In particular, negative parent-child relations have the potential to lead to negative outcomes. Psychological control is the attempt to hurt the psychological and emotional development of a child (Barber, 1996; Barber, Bean, & Erickson, 2002). Nelson and Crick (2002) suggested that the characteristics of psychological control (i.e. manipulation, love withdrawal) may correspond with those of relational aggression. Studies have found that parental psychological control is linked to eating disorders, risky cyber behaviors (Romm & Metzger, 2018), depression, anxiety (Ingoglia, Inguglia, Liga, & Coco, 2017), and loneliness (Koçak, Mouratidis, Sayil, Kindap-Tepe, & Uçanok, 2017). Parental psychological control has also been found to lead to aggression in youth (Murray, Dwyer, Rubin, Knighton-Wisor, & Booth-Laforce, 2014), including reactive aggression (Rathert, Fite, & Gaertner, 2011), increased relational aggression (Blossom, Fite, Frazer, Cooley & Evans, 2016; Kuppens, Grietens, Onghena & Michiels, 2009) and increased physical aggression (Blossom et al., 2016). One meta-analysis in

particular found an overall positive, although weak, association with parental psychological control and adolescent relational aggression (Kuppens, Laurent, Heyvaert, & Onghena, 2013), confirming the need for more research to be done on parental influence in this area. Because of the potential negative outcomes found among youth who experience psychological control from their parents, parental psychological control could manipulate the way youth are, in turn, influenced by relational aggression in the media.

The self-determination theory speaks to the context of parental psychological control. This theory focuses three basic needs (i.e. autonomy, competence and relatedness) and aspects that support those needs (i.e. autonomy support, structure, and involvement), outlined by human motivation (Ryan, Connell, & Deci, 1985). Autonomy support from parents includes taking their child's perspective, having open discussion, and making decisions together (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). The opposite of this is parental control, referred to as psychological control in this paper. This type of parenting behavior has been found to link to more negative outcomes, as discussed above, suggesting a need for more understanding in this area of research.

Relational Aggression in Marriage

Adolescents also learn from watching how their parents treat each other. Indeed, parental relations have been found to have substantial effects on an adolescent's psychological functioning (Cummings & Davies, 2002). Studies have shown that relational aggression is widespread in marital relationships with two distinctive subtypes: love withdrawal and social sabotage (Carroll et al., 2010). Love withdrawal incorporates behavior that is direct and removes affection or support during conflict. Social sabotage is indirect and involves gossiping or spreading rumors about one's spouse. Research has indicated that relational aggression in marriage has negative links to the well-being of each partner. For example, there are associations between marital relational aggression and negative health outcomes (Martin, Miller, Kubricht,

Yorgason, & Carroll, 2015), lower marital quality (Carroll et al., 2010; Coyne et al., 2017), and more insecure attachment (Oka, Sandberg, Bradford, & Brown, 2014; Oka, Brown, & Miller, 2016).

While there is not a lot of research done on the association between couple relational aggression and child relational aggression, there has been evidence that general marital conflict does link with more overt and relational aggression in adolescents (Lindsey, Chambers, Frabutt, & McKinnon-Lewis, 2009), as well as more internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Cummings & Davies, 2002), disordered eating (Bi, Haak, Gilbert, & Keller, 2017) and emotional insecurity (McCoy, Cummings, & Davies, 2009). If there are high amounts of relational aggression between a couple with these negative outcomes, there could be potential ramifications in regard to the adolescents' own relational aggression as a teenager observes their parents' relationship. The social learning theory suggests that children learn from their surroundings (Bandura, 1978). If a child is being exposed to a lot of relational aggression in their environment, this theory suggests that this child may learn that relationally aggressive behavior is normative and acceptable. One study found that parental conflict in marriage was associated with negative attitudes and beliefs about marriage later on (Cui & Fincham, 2010). Parental relational aggression is often a part of this parental conflict, so it would make sense that youth are aware of the relational aggression between their parents as well.

Theoretical background. A number of theories speak to the importance of examining multiple socializing factors in the same study. As mentioned earlier, relational aggression in the media, parental psychological control, and marital relational aggression have the potential to exacerbate relationally aggressive behavior among adolescents. All these factors are important to look at because they each provide different contexts. The family systems theory (Bowen, 1972)

describes the family as a system where the family works together and individually. In this case, there are three systems working together: the adolescent and media, the adolescent and the parent, and the parents as a couple. Each system influences the adolescent individually, but it also works with the other systems as influencers as well. Understanding how these three contexts influence youth will inform individuals of possible reasons for subsequent behavior.

Additionally, the concept of cumulative risk is also important to take into consideration in this context. If a teenager sees a frequent amount of relational aggression between their parents, experiences psychological control directly from their parents, and then that adolescent views high amounts of relational aggression in the media, the effect of exposure to relational aggression in their environment could be even more influential, suggesting cumulative risk, as discussed by Ackerman, Izard, Schoff, Youngstrom, and Kogos (1999).

Current Study

While we know that relational aggression can be influenced by a number of socializing factors, research has not yet looked at specific socializing factors that take place in the home and how they combine to predict individual relationally aggressive behavior. Because of the amount of media available and the heightened use of media during adolescence (Rideout, 2016), it is important to be aware of its influence on youth. In addition, adolescents are aware of their parents' relationships (Koçak et al., 2017), as their attitudes and behaviors are shaped by parental interaction (Cummings & Davies, 2002). Moreover, studies have shown that adolescents who have psychologically controlling parents exhibit similar behaviors towards others (Kuppens et al., 2009). All of these factors influence relational aggression separately, but no research has explored how they may predict relational aggression together. The focus of this paper is to examine how media, parental psychological control and couple relational aggression combined into different groups with varying levels play a role in the development of relational aggression.

I expect that adolescents who are exposed to high amounts of relational aggression in the media, between their parents and experience high levels of psychological control will be at the greatest risk for relationally aggressive behavior. I also expect that those who experience moderate levels of relational aggression in the media, parental psychological control and couple relational aggression will be at the lowest risk. For those individuals who have differing levels of each socializing factor, I would expect to find a mix of outcomes.

Methods

Participants

Data came from the Flourishing Families Project, which consisted of participants who were primarily selected from a city in the northwestern United States. I used interviews and data from wave 5 because participants at this time were in mid-adolescence. Research has found that relational aggression peaks during mid-adolescence (Björkqvist et al., 1992). Families who had at least one child at home between the ages of 10 and 14 were considered eligible to participate. The sample consists of 463 families (92.6% retention from Wave I) with a child within the target range. Participant children averaged 15.3 years of age, while mothers averaged 47.2 years and fathers average 49.3 years in age. Two hundred ninety-eight families were of European American ethnicity, 56 were African American, with smaller number for Hispanics (1) and Asian Americans (4). Eighty-nine families are categorized as multi-ethnic, based on a combination of two or more ethnicities among family members. In terms of parental education, 61% of mothers and approximately 70% of fathers had a bachelor's degree or higher. Related to yearly family income, 19.8% of families reported making less than $59,000; 19.8% reported income in the $60,000-99,000; 22.8% reported income in the $100,000-149,000, with another 16.2% making $150,000 or more per year. Approximately, 29.8% of single parents reported being never-

married, 46.4% divorced, 15.2% cohabiting, 4% widowed, and 4.6% not cohabiting but in a

committed relationship.

Procedure

Participants were mostly recruited using a purchased national telephone survey database

known as Polk Directories/InfoUSA. This database claimed to have around 82 million

households across the United States and had detailed information about each household,

including presence and age of children. Families identified using this directory were randomly

selected through stratification that mimicked the socio-economic and racial demographics of

reports of local school districts.

Recruitment was done first by sending an introduction letter to potential families. Next,

research assistants visited home and made phone calls to confirm eligibility and willingness to

participate. Last, research assistants made an appointment to come to the family's home to

perform an assessment interview that included video-taped interactions and questionnaires that

were completed in the home. If participants declined, the most common reasons were because of

lack of time and concern about privacy. Research assistants screened questionnaires after

appointments for any missing answers or other problems to make sure there were limited missing

data.

Measures

Media relational aggression. Self-reports were used to assess children's aggressive

media consumption, first by looking at their media preferences using items taken from the

measure developed by Coyne, Meng, Harper, Nelson, and Keister (2008). Children were asked to

list their three favorite television shows and rate how frequently they viewed each program on a

scale of 1 (*not frequently*) to 5 (*extremely frequently*). Programs were reviewed by 752

independent raters (37% male, M age = 23.67, SD = 8.69), who were asked to rate how much

relational aggression was in each program they had viewed regularly. Raters were recruited

through online postings, word-of-mouth, or fliers on campus from a variety of high schools and

universities across the United States. Raters then completed the ratings online. They were given

full definitions and several examples of relational aggression (i.e. "Relational aggression is a

mean and often secret type of aggression that hurts others' relationships or friendships. Examples

include gossiping, spreading rumors, backbiting, destroying relationships, social exclusion,

giving dirty looks, leaving mean phone calls, "stealing" another person's friend, etc.). Ratings of

aggression were based on a Likert scale from 1 (e.g., *not relationally aggressive*) to 5 (e.g.,

extremely relationally aggressive).

In total, the raters evaluated 352 different programs (those listed by at least 1% of the

sample), and the mean ratings given by the raters (at least two raters per show) were determined

for each show. Intercoder reliability was assessed using interclass correlations (ICC) which are

specifically appropriate when using continuous data (e.g., Shrout & Fleiss, 1979). Interclass

correlations showed moderate to strong reliability in the current study (relational aggression ICC

= .75). Averages across the three shows were used for relationally aggressive content, with

higher scores indicating more aggressive content overall. An examination of the aggression in

television shows reveals a fairly normal distribution with a full range of possibilities. Television

programs rated as highly relationally aggressive include *Pretty Little Liars, Bad Girls Club,*

Gossip Girl, and *Jersey Shore*. For the analyses, the effects of content of media relational

aggression will be independently estimated.

Parental psychological control. Parental psychological control was measured with eight

items using the Psychological Control Scale-Youth Self Report (Barber, 1996). Adolescent

participants reported how true items were for each parent on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from

1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*). Sample items included: "My parent interrupts me" and "My parent will avoid looking at me when I have disappointed her/him." Responses ranged from 1 (*never*) to 5 (*very often*), with higher scores indicating a higher use of parental psychological control. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficients for this measure were found to be .83 for both parents.

Couple relational aggression. Relational aggression was measured using an adapted version of the *Self-Report of Couples Relational Aggression and Victimization Scale* (CRAViS, Nelson & Carroll, 2006). Based on items from other measures (Linder, Crick, & Collins, 2002; Morales & Crick, 1998), the CRAViS assesses aggression in committed couples. The first half of the twelve items represented the social sabotage subscale, and the latter half represented the love withdrawal subscale. The social sabotage subscale includes six items measuring the degree to which partners feel that their spouse uses socially aggressive tactics during conflict or disagreements. Items include, "My partner has gone 'behind my back' and shared private information about me with other people." The love withdrawal subscale includes six items measuring the how much partners feel their spouse withdraws affection and support when there is conflict or disagreement. Items include, "My partner gives me the silent treatment when I hurt his/her feelings in some way." Both scales are measured on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*not at all true*) to 7 (*very true*). Higher scores indicate higher perceived relational aggression from their spouse. For the analysis, the overall scale is used. Reliability tests produced a Cronbach's Alpha of .903 for the first parent and .890 for the second parent in the overall scale.

Child relational aggression. A six-item measure was created for this study in order to assess the child's relationally aggressive behavior. Items were modified from other assessments of relational aggression (e.g., Morales & Crick, 1998) that were focused on a younger, pre-adolescent population. Participants rated themselves on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1

(*never true*) to 5 (*almost always true*). Sample items include "I do not invite everyone to a party or other social event, even if I know that others would want to go," and "When mad at a person, I try to make sure that the person is left out from group activities." Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was found to be .752.

Control variables. I used adolescent age as an independent control variable. Age seems to play an important role in how individuals process what they see around them and internalize their surroundings (Casas & Bower, 2018). I also used gender as a control. Though there is inconsistency regarding the effect of gender, I included it as a control to see if there were differences between adolescent boys and girls.

Analysis Plan

For this paper, I used latent profile analysis in Mplus version 8.1. Person-centered approaches are used to identify groups who are similar or share a set of traits. I used this method to identify profiles of adolescents who might be different based on relational aggression in the media, parental psychological control, and couple relational aggression. To find appropriate profiles, I started with one profile and added more profiles as the model fit improved. I used the Akaike information criterion (AIC), the Bayesian information criterion (BIC), and the sample size–adjusted Bayesian information criterion (SSABIC) (Burnham & Anderson, 2004) as standard fit indices to compare models. For these indices, the lowest values indicated better model fit. In addition, I looked at entropy in order to evaluate discrimination among latent profiles, with values closer to 1 indicating better classification of profiles (Ramaswamy, DeSarbo, Reibstein, & Robinson, 1993). I, then, used the Vuong-Lo-Mendell-Rubin test (VLMR) and the Lo-Mendell-Rubin test (LMR), which compares two models and gives significance of model fit with an added profile (Lo, Mendell, & Rubin, 2001). Lastly, I implicated the R3step procedure to note likely profile membership with gender and age. I also

used the du3step auxiliary procedure to look at differences in the mean of relational aggression as a function of profile membership (Asparouhov & Muthén, 2014).

Results

Preliminary Analysis

Descriptive statistics and correlations are shown in Table 1. Furthermore, there was a positive correlation between adolescent relational aggression and the parental psychological control ($r = .41$, $p < .001$) and couple relational aggression ($r = .19$, $p < .001$). Parental psychological control was positively correlated with couple relational aggression ($r = .23$, $p < .001$). Lastly, age was correlated with relational aggression in the media ($r = .11$, $p < .05$). A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to examine gender differences for the main independent variables, with no significant multivariate effect found ($F(3, 344) = .16$, $p = .93$).

I also ran a multivariate regression in order to look at how each relational aggression in the media, parental psychological control, and couple relational aggression, as well as age and gender, predicted relational aggression in adolescents (see Table 2). Model fit was adequate ($R^2 = .22$, $F(5, 342) = 13.42$, $p < .001$). In the model, parental psychological control significantly predicted adolescent relational aggression ($\beta = .42$, $t = 6.44$, $p < .001$). Relational aggression in the media ($\beta = .08$, $t = 2.52$, $p = .01$) and age ($\beta = -.06$, $t = -2.07$, $p = .04$) also significantly predicted adolescent relational aggression.

Latent Profile Analysis

Latent profiles were selected using relational aggression in the media, parental psychological control, and couple relational aggression. Fit statistics (see Table 3 for fit indices) showed improvement from two to three profiles. For the models with four and five profiles, the AIC, BIC, and SSABIC continued to decrease, but there was no significant improvement when

looking at the LMR and VLMR. Because of these fit indices, and based on past research and theory, final models included three profiles in the analyses.

Before interpreting all of the profiles, entropy was explored to see which socializing factors contributed most to distinguishing profiles. Results indicated that parental psychological control was contributing most to distinguishing between profiles (.72). Couple relational aggression was next (.55), with relational aggression in the media contributing the least (.42).

The three-profile solution is presented in Figure 1. The first profile (78%, n = 365) consisted of similar levels of parental psychological control and couple relational aggression that were just below the mean and relational aggression in the media with levels near the mean. Because levels of all three variables were right around the mean for that variable, this group was named "average." The second profile (18%, n = 84) included levels that were above the mean for all three variables, particularly for psychological control, and post hoc analyses confirmed that the variables did differ. This profile was named "high psychological control." The third profile (4%, n = 19) had very high levels of couple relational aggression, levels slightly above the mean for psychological control, and levels near the mean for relational aggression in the media, but post hoc analyses did not confirm differences between variables; however, this group was called "high couple relational aggression."

Predicting Adolescent Relational Aggression with Latent Profiles

After creating and examining the different profiles, I ran a logistic regression analysis to determine if adolescent gender and age predicted membership in the profiles. Neither age nor gender predicted membership in any of the three profiles.

Lastly, I evaluated mean differences between the latent profiles and their association with adolescent relational aggression (see Table 4). Those in the high psychological control group had

the highest levels of relationally aggressive behavior. There was no significant difference between the average group and high couple relational aggression group.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore different profiles made up of different socializing factors that serve as important influencers among adolescents. This study is the first to examine how relational aggression in the media, parental psychological control, and couple relational aggression simultaneously predict relational aggression in adolescents. Person-centered approaches allows for heterogeneity in the population, so results are able to look at the individual differences between participants, making this method particularly unique. While past research has looked at how socializing factors predict relational aggression, none of the current literature explores how socializing factors might combine to predict behavior. Therefore, this study adds a new dimension to the literature by looking at how different combinations may influence an individual.

The analysis suggested three different profiles of adolescents. I expected to find a group that consisted of higher levels, one with more moderate levels and a group that had a mix of levels. Overall, the profiles of adolescents were a lot more variable than expected.

The first group of adolescents (78%) consisted of moderate relational aggression in the media, low parental psychological control and low couple relational aggression, confirming my expectation of having a group with lower, more average levels. This group is fairly typical of a majority of adolescents in that most individuals this age are experiencing moderate amounts of media relational aggression, with lower amounts of psychological control from their parents and lower amounts of relational aggression that they witness between their own parents.

The second group (18%) included levels that were above average for all three variables, most notably for psychological control. This group contains adolescents whose parents are more psychologically controlling in the relationship. This was the only group where membership was predictive of adolescent relational aggression.

While I had expected that the group of adolescents with the highest levels of media relational aggression, parental psychological control and couple relational aggression, findings suggested that the group with more moderate viewing of relational aggression in the media with some couple relational aggression and high levels of parental psychological control was the best at predicting relationally aggressive behavior among adolescents. Past studies have suggested that high psychological control by parents may predict more relationally aggressive behavior in their children (Blossom et al., 2016; Kuppens et al., 2009; Kuppens et al., 2013), supporting this finding as well. Combined with moderate relational aggression in the media and couple relational aggression, psychological control may be particularly toxic to adolescents.

One reason that adolescents may be more susceptible to relationally aggressive behavior in this group could be because they are experiencing a very direct form of aggression. They are experiencing psychological control directly from their parents, who are supposed to love and support their children, teaching them that this form of behavior is acceptable and normal to engage in among relationships. Research has suggested that parents may use psychological control as a way to get compliance from their children, again reiterating to adolescents that relational aggression is acceptable and effective to get what they want (Nelson & Crick, 2002). The theory of self-determination supports this idea, particularly the aspect of autonomy support (Ryan et al., 1985). As noted earlier, autonomy support from parents includes having open parent-child discussion, using empathy, and making joint decisions (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989).

Psychological control is the opposite of this positive parent-child interaction. The motivation to control and manipulate a child could be, again, demonstrating a behavior that is taught to be normal and acceptable. Baumgardner and Boyatzis (2018) found in a sample of emerging adults that parental psychological control had an impact on the quality of their friendships. Adolescents may be learning that relational aggression is appropriate and implementing that behavior in their own relationships.

The family systems theory suggests that the family system works individually and together (Bowen, 1972). As discussed previously, there are three proposed systems working together and individually: the adolescent and media, the adolescent and the parent, and the parents as a couple. The system involving the adolescent and the parent appears to play a larger role in how the adolescent's behavior is influenced more so than the other mentioned systems, at least in terms of the development of relational aggression.

The last profile (4%) had very high levels of couple relational aggression, while parental psychological control and relational aggression in the media were more moderate. In other words, this group had parents whose relationships elicited high amounts of relational aggression. While this group had very high levels of couple relational aggression, it did not predict relationally aggressive behavior in adolescents. There is very little research done on how couple relational aggression impacts their youth, but one possibility could be that this socializing factor might simply be too subtle for adolescents to pick up on. A lot of relational aggression between parents may be done privately or in situations that are away from their children, so adolescents may have parents who are very relationally aggressive towards each other, but they may not know it. In addition, since the relationship is between parents, it may not be a form of aggression direct enough to have an impact on an adolescent's own behavior. Love withdrawal is a more

direct form of relational aggression (Carroll et al., 2010) that is used more often than social sabotage (Coyne et al., 2017). It is possible that adolescents may be able to pick up on love withdrawal between their parents due to its more direct and frequent nature. Because it was beyond the scope of this study, future research should look at subtypes of couple relational aggression to see if love withdrawal predicts behavior differently than social sabotage.

Notably, media did not seem to play a major role in group membership, with levels being similar across the three profiles. This was surprising because media use is so salient among adolescents (Rideout, 2016). However, it could be that the relational aggression in the media is not direct enough when compared to the influence of parental psychological control and couple relational aggression. Past research has found that direct exposure to violence does have a small link with aggressive behavior (Dubow et al., 2009), suggesting that the context around experiencing relational aggression may be important to consider. What is on screen involves characters of stories that do not typically involve viewers, so media may have a lesser impact as adolescents are not directly experiencing relational aggression. In addition, a plethora of research has found links between relational aggression in the media and relationally aggressive behavior (Coyne, 2016; Coyne, Nelson et al., 2008; Gentile et al., 2011), but this finding suggests that media content may not be as salient when placed in a family context.

Additionally, neither age nor gender predicted membership in any of the profiles. This suggests that the effects remain the same for adolescents regardless of being older or younger or being male or female. This finding supports the previous finding that there were no gender differences among the variables, helping explain why gender, specifically, did not predict membership. In sum, gender and age do not alter with which group an adolescent identifies.

Although this is the first study to examine relational aggression in the media, parental psychological control, and couple relational aggression as three influential socializing factors among adolescents, there are still notable limitations. First, the data was taken from a fairly homogenous sample, which is problematic because the method used allows to look at heterogeneity. Future research using these methods should attempt to have a more diverse population in order to get a better idea of how the combination of socializing factors may influence other types of populations. Self-report on the measures from children and parents on relational aggression, as well as child report on parental psychological control, is also a limitation. Because report is limited, there is potential bias that could be present in participant responses. Though children and parents have important perspectives, future research should attempt to have multiple reports on these measures. However, the measure for couple relational aggression was partner report and the measure for media used external ratings, adding another strength to the study. Additionally, this study was cross-sectional, so results cannot infer the relationship between the main socializing factors and adolescent relational aggression over time. Future studies should look at how these factors influence relationally aggressive behavior over time. Furthermore, research has found links to relational aggression in the contexts of peers (Sandstrom, 2018), school climate (Espelage, Hong, & Merrin, 2018) and siblings (Campione-Barr, Giron, & Odudu, 2018). Future research would benefit from looking at these other socializing factors that may have an impact on adolescent behavior as well, rather than just the ones examined in the current study.

Regardless of these limitations, this study is the first to look at groups of socializing factors and how they may associate with relationally aggressive behavior. No other study has been able to show how relational aggression in the media, parental psychological control, and

couple relational aggression might combine to influence an individual's behavior. It suggests that

parents do play an important and vital part when inadvertently demonstrating aggressive

behaviors that are acceptable and normal. Youth are especially vulnerable when it comes to what

they are being exposed to, whether it be at home, in the media, or from peers. Parents should be

aware of how they interact with and treat their children, because parents who are more

psychologically controlling are sending a message that relational aggression is normal and

acceptable in relationships. Family culture begins with the parents and when parents encourage a

family culture of relational aggression, there are negative outcomes for their children. It is

parents' responsibility to create a climate of love and warmth rather than aggression and control

so that youth learn to treat others with love and kindness.

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Appendix A

Table 1. Correlations and descriptive statistics among all variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Adolescent Relational Aggression	--				
2. Media Relational Aggression	.09	--			
3. Parental Psychological Control	.41***	.08	--		
4. Couple Relational Aggression	.19***	-.02	.23***	--	
5. Age	-.04	.11*	.08	-.05	--
M	1.85	3.23	1.90	2.04	14.29
SD	.65	.85	.69	.82	1.05

*p < .05 **p < .01 *** p < .001

Table 2. Multivariate regression showing standardized coefficients predicting relational aggression in adolescents

	β	SE
Relational Aggression in the Media	.08*	.03
Parental Psychological Control	.42***	.06
Couple Relational Aggression	.05	.04
Child Gender	.03	.06
Child Age	-.06*	.03

p < 0.05 **p<.01 ***p<.001

Table 3. Model fit by number of latent profiles

Profiles	Profile Percentage	AIC	BIC	SSABIC	LMR	VLMR	Entropy
1	100 ($n = 468$)	2679.42	2704.31	2685.27	--	--	--
2	93, 7	2599.20	2640.68	2608.95	$p = .14$	$p = .14$	.77
3	**78, 18, 4**	**2542.77**	**2600.42**	**2556.42**	**$p = .01$**	**$p = .02$**	**.81**
4	26, 66, 4, 4	2518.95	2593.63	2536.50	$p = .37$	$p = .37$	.82
5	13, 66, 9, 8, 2	2494.41	2585.67	2515.85	$p = .20$	$p = .20$	.73

Note. Information criteria values in boldface represent the best fitting profile. AIC = Akaike information criterion; BIC = Bayesian information criterion; SSABIC = sample size–adjusted Bayesian information criterion; LMR = Lo–Mendell–Rubin; VLMR = Vuong–Lo–Mendell–Rubin.

Table 4. Test of mean differences across outcome variables

Variables	Profile 1 Average	Profile 2 High Psychological Control	Profile 3 High Couple Relational Aggression	Overall χ^2	*p* Value
Adolescent Relational Aggression	1.69 (.03)$_a$	2.51 (.10)$_b$	1.80 (.28)$_a$	60.26	$p < .001$

Note. Standard errors presented in parentheses. Means with differing subscripts are statistically
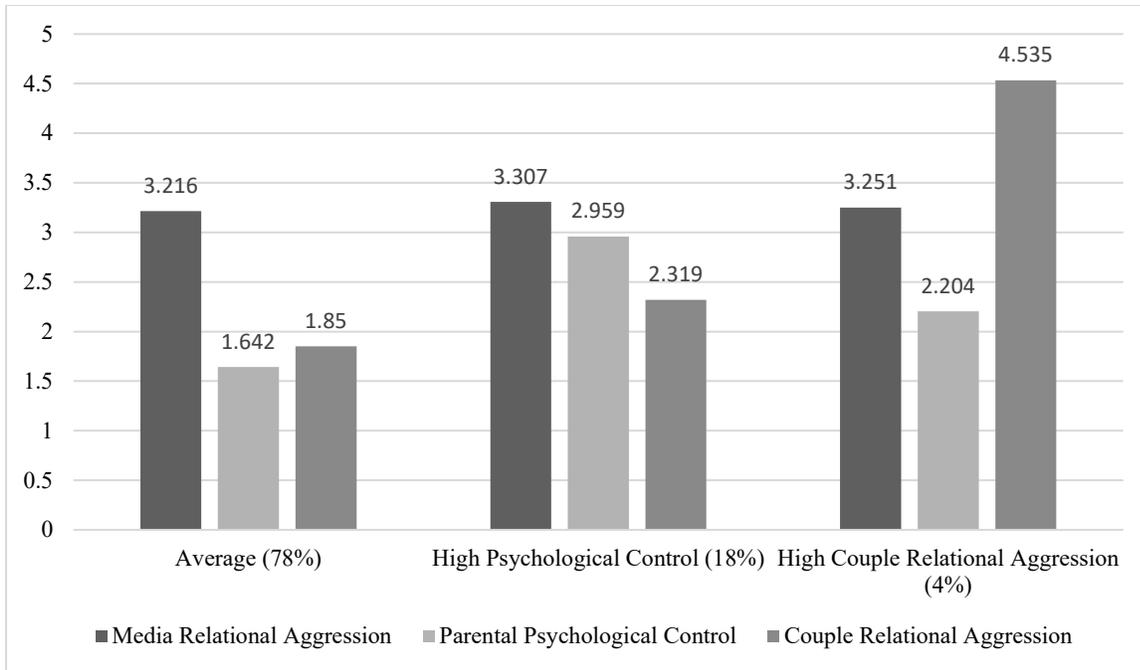
different at $p < .05$.

Figure 1. Mean scores on relational aggression in the media, parental psychological control and couple relational aggression as a function of latent profiles.