Assignment One

Children and Adolescents in the Media

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The portrayal of adolescents in the media shows a segment of society through a limited and exclusive lens, that will portray what the author intends to. However, with a level of scrutiny and critical analysis, issues within the community and solutions can be drawn from an article. The issues that arise during adolescence can be, and often are, very impactful on the development and future of any individual. Further, their portrayal, when either misinterpreted or misleading, can have damaging effects on the individuals or groups and the biases others associate with them.

The article discusses, in detail, the emotional trauma experienced by the victim of a home invasion at length to elicit a sympathetic emotional response by the reader. The article provides an image of the women, whose home was broken into, and provides details about how the teenagers took car keys from her bedside table whilst they were sleeping and entered their two-year-old daughter's room, whilst she was sleeping there. This further allows the reader to relate to the personalised experience that the family endured.

The article uses statistical data to provide an "objective" perspective, although often these statistics will be selectively chosen to promote a particular argument without a wholistic perspective and further adds anecdotal reference to the death of a motorcyclist in a hit-and-run involving a "car full of teenagers". This is again used to evoke a strong emotional response by the reader to condemn the actions of the adolescents involved.

The cause of many of these incidents is identified as domestic violence with no other alternative provided by the article to the reader. This is done through reporting the statistical

analysis of a "spike" to a seven-year high. The article further explains that as the youths do not have a bed to sleep in or experience violence in the home, therefore they are displaying anti-social behaviour outside in the community.

Children and adolescents that experience violence within their homes suffer from emotional and social issues that can cause an increased risk of being separated from traditional educational cohorts. Whilst it is difficult to accurately identify whether specific students act out due to peer-pressure or the student causes others to misbehave, students that have a heightened experience of domestic violence; firstly, have a reduced performance in maths and reading scores, but importantly, reduce the performance of a classroom and increase the incidents of misbehaviour. (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2010).

For children and adolescents, that have, either directly or indirectly, experienced domestic violence, the rates at which they are likely to depart from formal informal education is significantly increased. This compounds the effects of the domestic violence such as social isolation, depression and anxiety, with further separation from peers or social groups, which can further lead to substance abuse, violence and other anti-social and criminal activities, which critically affect the development of a child or adolescent into adulthood.

School-based and community-based policing programs can and do have varied effects on influencing student behaviour and outcomes. Some community-based programs that are conducted during the short-term have limited evidence to their efficacy and the change in behaviour, of the target audience, is also limited to small groups of individuals, rather than an improved perception of others. For example, students within the target audience will have an

improved opinion of the police officers and other minority members within their immediate group rather than in the broader context. (Anderson, et al., 2007).

In order to combat increased crime rates, police departments conduct aggressive policing strategies in an attempt to reduce crime within the community. Legewie & Fagan (2019) discuss how the increase in involuntary contact with the criminal justice system, by adolescents reduces the academic outcomes of African American boys, however, does not significantly influence the academic outcomes of African American girls or Hispanic students. However, the incidents of violent crime also were found to have a significant effect on the academic outcomes within a community, as the influence of these events have effects beyond the individuals that directly experienced them.

The method and execution of community- and school-based policing programs is critical to the outcomes of the students' academic performance, their attendance and the wider community. Without critical analysis of these techniques or procedures, the policing activities are either ineffective or possible have a negative effect on the community they are designed to assist, supporting the concept that youths are particularly disadvantaged by poverty and racism. (McCrea, et al., 2019)

Children that a chronically exposed to or exposed in extreme occurrences are likely to develop a learned behaviour that aggression is a fundamental part of an intimate relationship. This development within children, whilst is difficult to modify or retaught, can, to a degree, be permanent. This creates a greater issue for the future development of the child, that they may endure greater difficulty in further mental and social development, that will also significantly impact their educational development. This can be compounded by the reduced

verbal development of the child, through poor relationships within their close family that may be victims or perpetrators of domestic violence. This stunt or obstacle in a child or adolescent's development, during the critical period is likely to affect the outcomes of them into adulthood. (Holt, et al., 2008. Herrenkohl, et al., 2008)

During the critical period of development, from birth to two years old, the safety and security provided by primary care givers establishes an attachment relationship. This is a period that is considered crucial to the development of social and emotional behaviours on the brain. The brain is also considerably receptive to sensory information during this period, and as such, is more receptive to negative behaviours and stimuli. In a practical perspective, the brains of children, at the age of three, can be noticeably seen to have significantly reduced size and development. This comparison also determined that the cause of the reduced development was due to psychological neglect rather than nutritional deprivation. The youths described in the article, could have been displaying behaviours as a result of early childhood psychological neglect. (Duchesne & McMaugh, 2018).

As the final stages of brain growth do not complete until as late as 25, and occurring later in males than females, due to generally later occurrence of puberty than in females, adolescents do not have fully developed cognitive abilities. As such reactions to their situation or circumstances may be perceived in any number of ways, such as too significant or insignificant, more or less personal or focused on an individual or group, et cetera, than the events actually are. In many people's development, the environment or situations can provide greater context for appropriate responses. However, in some circumstances, the environment or situation does not provide a health development of an individual's sense of self and foster a greater understanding of their social environment.

This perception can then lead to reactions that broader society find unacceptable and even abhorrent. Examples of this are found in the article discussed above. In the same way that adolescents lack context to frame an issue, often, News and journalism, fail to frame an issue with sufficient context; this article, however, has given possible reasons why the situation in Alice Springs is developing in the manner explained. This allows the readers to understand the circumstances the perpetrators are found in, can be explained as causes of the behaviour exhibited, and identify opportunities to rectify the unsatisfactory situations, therefore relieving some pressure among the community.

Experiential learning theory emphasises the importance and focus on experience in the learning process. Experience is crucial to the learner in this theory. The affect that the situation and what each individual has experienced, in the article, has shaped their perception of the environment they live in and, thus, shaped their behaviour within it. Therefore, it could be surmised that the behaviour they are displaying is a reaction to their environment and situation. Whilst this does not excuse their actions, it provides some explanation behind the cause of them. This further can be developed to identify and design solutions to change their environment, in order to change their behaviour. However, in the same manner that their behaviour has been developed over a number of years, the new behaviour must also be cultivated over a lengthy period, often longer than the initial behaviour development took place. (Sternberg & Zhang, 2014)

Early education experiences are critical in shaping the young people's learning style by teaching children how to learn. When the inconsistency of education is prevalent, adolescents will learn the majority of their behaviour from family or their social environment. This can be problematic if the situation is not conducive to a healthy relationship with family and society.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs provides a theory that people are motivated, in order of priority, by 5 basic categories. In order is physiological, safety, love, esteem and self-actualisation, and in order to reach the final category, the individual's needs must be meet of each proceeding and successively. With regard to the youths in the article, it may be assumed that some of the physiological needs are being met, however it is unlikely that all are. They are being seen out at night, therefore unlikely to be achieving appropriate levels of sleep. Further due to domestic situations they may not have suitable access to shelter, which then leads to Safety. Some of these adolescents have been identified to not having suitable safety within their own home, lack resources and may also have poor health.

Further, the Love needs level is not being met, as their close family are not providing intimacy, family connections and friendships they need to develop further in education and socially. Without the foundation of lower categories within Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, individuals cannot progress to the pinnacle of self-actualisation. This also includes lapses toward the final goal, where individuals cannot fully achieve intermediate steps including their development through education.

Social Learning Theory discusses the function of children and adolescents to learn through observation. It also discusses the identification of gender roles and behaviours associated with them. Whilst not specified, boys are visible in the video of the home invasion and are assumed to be committing the majority of the anti-social activity. Through Bandura's Social Learning Theory, it can be assumed that the individuals have learnt this behaviour from a significant male figure that is either related to them or living within the same residence. (Bandura, 1969)

Prior to commencing a degree in education, I would have been of the opinion that the anti-social and somewhat lawless behaviour of these youths or delinquents should be met with severe punishment from the justice system. Whilst I still firmly believe that the poor domestic situation is no excuse for this behaviour, through a number of critical reflections I have begun to sympathise with their situation. During a period in their lives, when young people and children should feel safe and be provided with all the basic requirements needed for their development. The situation is complex and multifaceted, therefore cannot be solved by removing children from the situation, as suggested by Michael Liddle. Nor increase punishments for repeat offenders and enforce Family Responsibility Agreements, which potentially punish parents and carers for the actions of their children.

The article leaves some strong final sentiments, by reminding readers, that the actions taken by government and non-government organisations are occurring while real people are dealing with the issues firsthand and being affected deeply. It further prompts readers to question the future of towns such as Alice Spring, where families will move away to escape the violence.

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