

**TELEVISION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT:
ARE PARENTS IN CONTROL OF
THEIR CHILDREN'S VIEWING HABITS?**

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An Abstract

Presented to the
Graduate and Research Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by

Paula King Dixon

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ABSTRACT

This study was made to determine elementary aged children's parents' perceptions of their children's television viewing habits. Results were obtained from responses during a telephone survey of 100 elementary aged children.

This study ascertained that perceptions of parents included in this survey do not coincide with statistical findings from other studies.

Survey results indicate parents do not actually realize how much television their children watch with estimations off by 50 percent compared to previous research. Furthermore, four out of five parents reported limiting their children's viewing time, and all surveyed said they controlled which programs their children watched.

Half of the participants said they believed television took the place of other activities, while the other half said it did not. Additionally, all parents in this study said television helped their children in school.

Overall, data collected in this study indicate parents' perceptions contradict research in all four categories: daily viewing time, program selection, displacing other activities and enhancing scholastic achievement.

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I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Paula King Dixon entitled "Television and Academic Achievement: Are Parents in Control of Their Children's Viewing Habits?" I have examined the final copy of this paper for form and content, and I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts with a major in Speech, Communication and Theatre.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

When television began to enter the lives of Americans nearly half a century ago, many people became concerned that television viewing might have negative effects on the academic development and achievement of children. Since that time, researchers have tried to discover whether television facilitates the child's development of reading skills, inhibits the process, or has no effect (e.g. Greenstein, 1954; LaBlonde, 1967; Childers & Ross, 1973; Neuman, 1988; Krugman & Johnson, 1991). Even today, a consensus still has not been reached, but most research shows television to have a slightly negative effect, supporting the inhibition hypothesis (Peirce, 1983).

As it became evident during examination of this topic, researchers will most likely continue to disagree with one another about how much children are affected or how much children's educational shortcomings can be attributed to television viewing. Considering this conclusion, questions this researcher seeks to answer relate to the parents' role in the amount of television their children watch and which types of programs they are watching, which might contain, for example, violence, sexual content or profanity. In other words, clearly a major concern exists, but is anyone, especially parents, doing anything about it?

Rather than joining past researchers by concentrating on the debate of television's impact on children's academic achievement, this study seeks to ascertain whether parents attempt to regulate television in the lives of their children as it relates to the following hypotheses of this study:

1. Parents are less likely to regulate television viewing time of their children than not.
2. Parents are less likely to regulate which types of television programs their children watch than not.
3. Parents are more likely to believe television viewing keeps their children from other activities than not.
4. Parents are less likely to believe television viewing is scholastically beneficial than not.

This research posed no threat or risk to participants and procedures complied with the policies required by Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, Tennessee, regarding studies involving human subjects (see Appendix A).

Before moving on to the next chapter, some of the terms used throughout this paper should be defined. For the purposes of this study, children refers to individuals aged six to eleven. Inhibition means a state of hinderance or obstruction caused by television toward academic development or achievement (Beentjes & Van der Vort, 1988), and displacement means to take the place of or diverting

time away from school-helping activities, such as reading, homework or active problem solving in interaction, to television (Hornick, 1981). To move forward or promote scholastically beneficial activities through television is facilitation (Beentjes & Van der Vort, 1988). Finally, passivity means relaxed, less alert or challenged, less concentrated (Coughlin, 1990) or mentally lazy (Postman, 1982) -- all possible consequences of television.

The chapter that follows reviews studies examining possible relationships between television and academic development and achievement of elementary school aged children.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Television can simultaneously play different roles in the child's life, some of which are likely to further and others to hinder the acquisition of reading skills (Beentjes & Van der Vort, 1988). The validity of this statement is not disputed among researchers, but the degree of the individual influences is. Researchers who have studied this concept test three main hypotheses: inhibition, facilitation, and no effect. This chapter describes each of the three hypotheses and presents significant research justifying or denouncing each supposition.

The inhibition hypothesis advocates that a negative relationship exists between television viewing and development of reading skills. Negative consequences of watching television include displacing leisure reading, inducing children to become mentally lazy (Postman, 1982) or passive in their thinking, and weakening concentration (Coughlin, 1990). Most research testing the inhibition hypothesis focuses on displacement and passivity.

The displacement effect asserts television viewing takes the place of out-of-school activities that otherwise might advance the development of reading skills and

academic achievement. However, the trend of overlapping television viewing while reading or doing homework seems to be a more reasonable assumption (Hornick, 1981; Krugman & Johnson, 1991; Searls, Mead, & Ward, 1985). Research shows individuals who habitually combine homework, reading, and other intellectually demanding activities with television viewing are not as likely to gain as much as they would without television, including interference and competing noise from background television (Armstrong & Greenberg, 1990; Michaels & Miethe, 1989). Constant television households are characterized by parents who are less likely to control, regulate or monitor their children's viewing behavior, nor question the message or content of programming (Medrich, 1979). Consequently, television dominates their children's out-of-school activities, which can significantly affect listening and writing abilities when reading activities are eliminated or dramatically reduced (Neuman, 1980a; Peirce, 1983).

Although studies do not indicate that television viewing is positive, they do conclude that no adverse effects on academic achievement are apparent until television viewing exceeds 10 hours per week (Williams, Haertel, Haertel, & Walberg, 1982; Potter, 1987). Other research advocates that television viewing beyond four hours per day yields negative impacts that are increasingly more damaging (Neuman, 1988). When controlling for a third

variable, like socioeconomic status (SES), occupational ratings of parents, age, gender, race, and intelligence quotient (IQ), results are more conclusive but remain somewhat inconsequential nonetheless (Fetler, 1984; Medrich, 1979; Scott, 1958).

The passivity effect maintains television viewing influences viewers to become relaxed and mentally lazy (Postman, 1982). In a study by Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (Coughlin, 1990), respondents reported feeling relaxed, less alert, and less concentrated on what they were doing while they were watching television. Teenagers perceive reading to take much time and effort and report lack of time and interest as top reasons given by students for not reading (Cobb-Walgren, 1990). Children perceive television as easy and print as hard, demanding more effort (Salomon, 1984). Though almost all research concerning the relationship between television and reading skills or academic achievement supports the inhibition hypothesis more than any other, findings remain relatively slight and somewhat insignificant.

Contradicting the inhibition hypothesis is the facilitation hypothesis (Reinking & Jen-Huey, 1990). Those who subscribe to this belief claim television promotes the learning process because it enhances reading skills and academic achievement by stimulating viewers to seek out the book versions of television programs and motion pictures or

to pursue further research of a topic first learned about on television. Additionally, it suggests any on-screen reading required of the viewer, such as subtitles or sports and weather information, would advance reading skills or academic achievement (Adams & Harrison, 1975).

One study revealed children watch an average of five hours of television per week day and more on weekends (Adams & Harrison, 1975). These researchers urge using television to stress printed words and supplement reading lessons and homework assignments. Another study separated students into a television group and non-television group and found students in the television group to make higher grades than their counterparts (Greenstein, 1954). However, it should be noted that findings in this study are not considered conclusive (Greenstein, 1954).

Upon reviewing 23 totally separate, major studies spanning a 26-year period of time, a 1982 evaluation concludes up to 10 hours of television viewing per week is beneficial, but increasingly more deleterious effects ensue after 10 hours and up to 40 hours per week, and additional viewing after 40 hours per week has little supplementary effect (Williams et al., 1982). Because the negative effects were only slight, Williams and others make the bold statement that television alone can not possibly be responsible for nationwide decline in measures of achievement. Finally, it was pronounced as early as 1963 that the more

Finally, it was pronounced as early as 1963 that the more we watch television, the more we read because television is the most important promoter of reading, though no research backs this hypothesis (Steinberg, 1982).

Taking its place between inhibition and facilitation is the no-effect hypothesis. It consists of three versions, all offering possible reasons why researchers can not settle on an undisputed verdict (Morgan & Gross, 1980; Himmelweit, Oppenheim, & Vince, 1958). The first version simply claims no effects exist, and the second version addresses the methodology by presenting the idea that researchers are unable to find any effects though they might exist (Neuman, 1980b). The last version suggests a counterbalancing impact. What detrimental effects might be present are canceled by the benefits (Hornick, 1978, 1981). When comparing grade point averages to television viewing habits, no significant relationship was found (Childers, 1973; Collison, 1989; Gaddy, 1986; Neuman, 1988; Reinking & Jen-Huey, 1990; Ritchie, Price, & Roberts, 1987).

To summarize what researchers have discovered, no overwhelming evidence has been uncovered to suggest significant negative effects in the relationship between television viewing and academic achievement or reading skills, but as researcher George Comstock puts it, heavy viewing is scholastically unproductive (Gaddy, 1986). The influences it does seem to have are considered only slight by

researchers and experts in the field (Childers & Ross, 1973; Gaddy, 1986).

In what direction, then, should future examinations go? Many notable researchers suggest concentration be placed on other aspects of children's surroundings. Justifying this consideration, Neuman (1988) offers some statistical information on the large amounts of time children spend watching television, including high school students spending 50 percent more of their time watching television than attending school, and the majority of children's leisure time, more than 26 hours per week, devoted greatly to television. Children ages three to five average 20 to 24 hours per week, and preschoolers spend 64 percent of their time before a television set (Neuman, 1980a).

In addition, Robinson (1990) points out an increase in the amount of television viewing time among non-employed people, specifically women, who invest more than 20 hours per week, up three hours per week in ten years. This feature of a child's home environment could come into play. As Reinking and Jen-Huey (1990) contend the home environment should be a key concern, especially behavior modeled after parents. Cobb-Walgren (1990) agrees by reminding us the passivity of today's young people and the home environment they face calls for more attention. Medrich (1979) goes as far as to present three alternatives for altering

the relationship between children and television and endorses the last: more sensitivity from the industry and advertisers, federal government regulation, or parental control of children's viewing habits. Finally, Steinberg (1982) warns parents against using television as a babysitter because it allows value systems of unrealistic characters in television programming to be impressed upon their children.

Considering that these experts are recommending a more nontraditional approach for future studies, this researcher proposed a study of parents' perceptions of their children's television viewing habits. If the direction of research to come proposes to examine a more personal side of this issue, then it seemed logical and relevant that the part parents play in regulating what types of programs and how much television their children watch would be a factor. In the next chapter, the methodology for this research is explained.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

During the spring of 1992, a questionnaire (see Appendix B) was designed to assess how parents attempt to regulate their children's television viewing habits. Specifically, this research focused on parents' perceptions of the amount of time their children spent watching television and what types of programs were being watched. This survey was conducted by telephone the weekend of April 4 and 5, 1992, in Clarksville, Tennessee, and the telephone numbers called were chosen randomly from student directories of Barksdale Elementary and East Montgomery County Elementary schools in Clarksville-Montgomery County, Tennessee.

The total number of entries contained in the student directories was 812, and the sample size of this survey was 100, which made the interval number eight. This meant every eighth entry in the directory was chosen to be a part of this study. To determine which entry would be chosen first, eight separate slips of paper were placed in a bowl. Each slip of paper contained a number ranging from one to eight, which gave each number an equal chance of being chosen. Next, a friend drew one slip of paper from the bowl without looking. The slip selected contained the

number seven, meaning the selection process would begin with the seventh entry and would include every eighth proceeding entry contained within both student directories. When the counting process was complete, 101 entries had been chosen.

Austin Peay State University's policy regarding research involving human subjects required a consent statement be read to each participant of the survey at the beginning of every telephone call. It identified the caller conducting the survey as a graduate student from the university, requested permission to ask questions and stated the purpose of the survey. Each respondent was assured confidentiality, anonymity, and no risk. Participation was strictly voluntary and could be terminated at any time during the telephone call without penalty (see Appendix A). When the survey process was complete, participants were graciously thanked for their time and cooperation.

Of course, just because a telephone number had been selected did not mean each call would be answered. If the number was busy, that entry was circled and called later the same day. If no one answered within three rings, the entry located directly below the selected entry was called instead. The entire calling process took a total of seven and one half hours spread over a period of two days. Only three parents telephoned said they were not willing to

participate, so the names listed directly under them were added to replace them.

Concerning responses to open-ended questions which asked how parents tried to control their children's viewing habits, only the first answer given was recorded. Inevitably, more than one answer was given. However, in order to calculate what percentage of parents used which type of methods, only one answer was needed to accomplish the goals of this research.

In computing survey results, all answers were categorized and responses were counted. Actual figures were calculated using standard formulas to determine mode (M_o), median (M_{dn}), mean (\bar{x}), range (R), variance (s^2), standard deviation (s) and standard score (z) (Wimmer & Dominick, 1987). Finally, figures were converted to percentages in an attempt to describe data in a manner easier to comprehend.

In the next chapter, survey participants' answers about their children's television viewing habits are quantified and explained in detail.

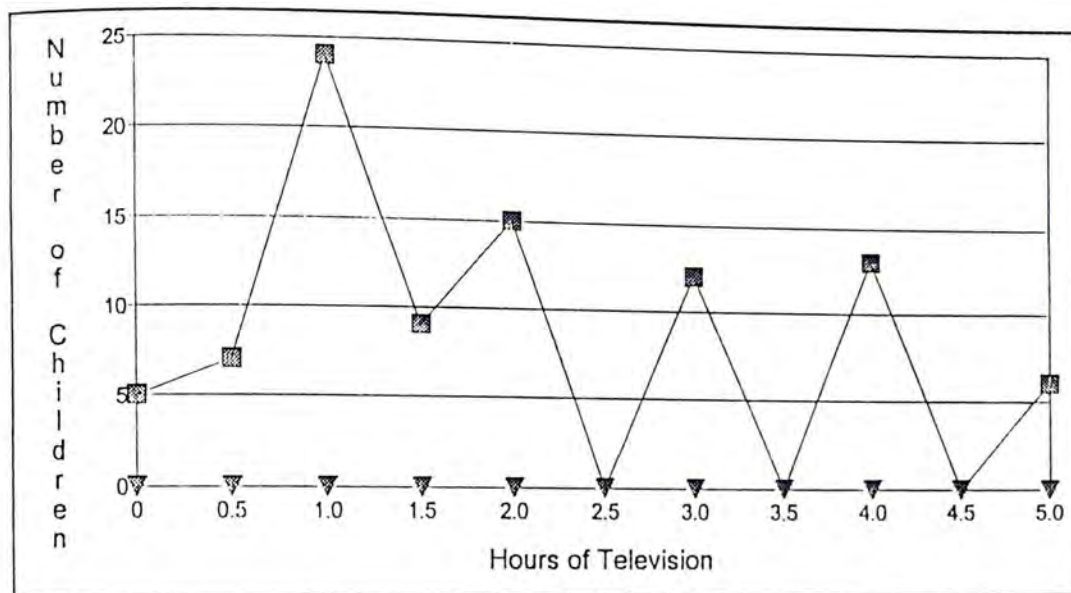
CHAPTER 4

Results

This research concentrates on action taken by parents in the study to regulate their children's television viewing habits. This survey also sought to collect information including participants' perceptions concerning their children's viewing behavior to learn how their estimations compare to other studies. Although this study has built on past research of the relationship between television viewing and academic achievement, data collected in this study did not examine such a relationship.

The first survey question inquired whether parents were aware of how many hours their children spent watching television the preceding day. Of the 100 parents surveyed, only nine answered no to this question. The remaining 91 parents reported a mean of two hours and four minutes with answers ranging from 0-5 hours. The mode was one hour, and the median was two hours. The mode value is less than the median value, which means this sampling distribution had a positive skew (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Number of Children Who Watched Television and the Number of Hours They Watched Per Day, According to Their Parents.



The second survey question asked whether parents attempt to limit the amount of television their children watch: 82 answered yes, 18 answered no. The responses of those answering yes have been grouped into six categories as shown in Table 1.

Strategies Parents Used To Limit the Amount of Television
Their Children Watch

Strategy & Percentage	Includes	Number & Cum		Category Percentage
Verbally Limit 33.3	1. Hours 2. Programs 3. Channels	17 9 <u>1</u> 27	27	62.9 33.3 <u>3.8</u> 100.0
Plan Other Activities 29.3	1. Games 2. Family Time 3. Reading 4. Teaching	12 7 4 <u>1</u> 24	51	50.0 29.2 16.6 <u>4.2</u> 100.0
Turn Off Television 14.6		12	63	100.0
Monitor 8.5		7	70	100.0
Play Outside 8.5	1. Exercise 2. Socialize 3. Sports	4 1 <u>1</u> 6	76	66.6 16.7 <u>16.7</u> 100.0
Fulfill Duties 7.3	1. Chores 2. Homework	3 <u>3</u> 6	82	50.0 <u>50.0</u> 100.0

Responses of parents who said they simply told their children how much television they were allowed to watch per day were coded under the Verbally Limit strategy. For parents to verbally limit their children meant to vocally instruct them that television can be viewed only during

designated hours of the day, only if certain programs were being watched or only if a certain channel was being viewed.

The Plan Other Activities strategy included responses from parents who deliberately made arrangements for their children to participate in alternative projects or tasks, including playing games, spending time in family-oriented projects, having their children read silently or aloud and reading to their children, or teaching their children how to do various things of interest or significance and helping them study or complete homework assignments.

The next two strategies, Turn Off Television and Monitor, are self-explanatory. When 12 parents felt too much of their children's time was spent watching television, they merely turned off the power to the television. Another seven parents said they watched television with their children to ensure programs being watched were appropriate.

The strategy Play Outside was chosen by some surveyed parents because it got the children away from the television and with other children, they said.

The last strategy, Fulfill Duties, includes responsibilities assigned to the children. The two mentioned by parents were household chores and completing homework lessons. Survey question three inquired whether parents were aware what types of programs their children watch, and

all 100 answered yes. When asked whether they attempt to control which programs were and were not watched, all 100 parents again said yes. In describing how they attempted to regulate program selection, five strategies were revealed as Table 2 illustrates:

Table 2

Strategies Parents Used in Attempting To Control Their Children's Program Selection

Strategy	Number	Percentage
Monitor	41	41.0
Verbally Limit	22	22.0
Blockout	16	16.0
Turn Off Television	15	15.0
Switch Channels	6	6.0
Totals	100	100.0

About two-fifths of parents surveyed claimed they took an active part in their children's consumption of television by watching it with them, and about one-fifth said they attempted to control their children's program selection through verbal instruction. The remaining two-fifths said they tried other methods, ranging from cutting the power to the television to changing the channel to which it was tuned. The blockout strategy used by surveyed parents was the only alternative which most nearly guaranteed the parents total control over which channels their children were watching, and 16 percent said this is the approach

they chose. Blockout means to electronically program a remote control or television so that specified television channels can be tuned only when the correct secret code is entered.

The fourth question in the survey was whether parents believed television took the place of other activities. Response to this question was split with 51 answering no and 49 answering yes. Of the 49 parents who answered yes, more than a third said their children's television viewing takes the place of playing outside. At the same time about a third said they were not sure exactly what activities television viewing suspends, as shown below in Table 3.

Table 3

Parents Believed Television Viewing To Take the Place of These Activities in Which Their Children Might Otherwise Participate

Activity	Number	Percentage
Play Outside	19	38.8
Do Not Know	18	36.7
Homework	7	14.3
Reading	3	6.1
Family Time	<u>2</u>	<u>4.1</u>
Totals	49	100.0

Other activities which study participants said their children curtailed due to television viewing are homework, reading, and family time.

The final survey question asked parents whether they thought television viewing helped their children scholastically. Again, responses were mixed. While 21 parents said television did not help their children in school, 79 said it did. The 79 parents cited specific programs and television channels as offering valuable information which helped their children in school. Table 4 below displays parents' responses.

Table 4

Television Channels and Programs Which Parents Thought Were Scholastically Beneficial for Their Children

Category & Percentage	Name	Number & Cum		Group Percentage
Channels 38.0	1. Nickelodeon	7		23.3
	2. Discovery	<u>23</u>		<u>76.7</u>
		30	30	100.0
Programs 62.0	1. <u>Sesame Street</u>	47		96.0
	2. <u>Rescue 911</u>	1		2.0
	3. <u>America's</u>	<u>1</u>		<u>2.0</u>
	<u>Funniest Home Videos</u>	49	79	100.0

Most parents cited certain programs, Sesame Street in particular, as useful resources for their children's scholastic development.

This survey inquired about the gender and age of each child. The breakdown was sixty-one females and thirty-nine males ranging from six to 11 years of age.

To compare findings to the hypotheses of this study, data collected in this survey do not fully support any one of the four hypotheses. This study hypothesized parents are less likely to regulate television viewing time of their children than not, but participants in this study said they did regulate viewing time. The second hypothesis stated parents are less likely to regulate which types of television programs their children watch than not, but participants in this study said they did regulate program selection. The third hypothesis stated parents are more likely to believe television viewing keeps their children from other activities than not, but half of the participants in this study said it did not. Finally, the last hypothesis stated parents are less likely to believe television is scholastically beneficial than not, but this study's participants said it was.

In the chapter that follows, the collected data from this study reflecting how parents' perceptions about their children's television viewing habits will be compared to what researchers have discovered in past studies about actual viewing time, program content, and whether or not television proved to be scholastically beneficial.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

Hours spent with television affect individuals in many ways, some of which are relevant to schooling (Hornick, 1981). In contrast, this study is concerned with parents' perceptions of television as it relates to their children and how those perceptions compare to what researchers tell us. It focuses on the role parents perceive themselves to play in regulating television in the lives of their children and seeks to answer these four hypotheses:

1. Parents are less likely to regulate television viewing time of their children than not.
2. Parents are less likely to regulate which types of television programs are watched by their children than not.
3. Parents are more likely to believe television keeps their children from other activities than not.
4. Parents are less likely to believe television viewing is scholastically beneficial than not.

This paper reviews the research of other studies and summarizes their findings. Those data are compared to the findings of this study.

Neuman (1988) agrees with researchers Comstock, Chaffee, Katzman, McCombs, and Roberts when she reports in

her 1988 study that children devote more than 27 hours per week to watching television. Dividing that figure by seven into daily viewing, it equals nearly four hours per day children spend watching television. Comparing that with this study's reported average of about two hours per day (see Table 1) reveals the estimations of parents in this study are lower by 50%. As Neuman (1988) puts it, time that is unaccounted for is an unwritten assumption that without television, children would spend time on more worthwhile pursuits.

It is interesting to note that 82% of the parents in this study said they limit the amount of their children's television viewing, and 100% said they control program selection. However, they are apparently oblivious to the other two hours per day children watch television.

Only 49% reported television taking the place of other activities, which is in line with Neuman (1988), and Comstock et al. (1978). On the other hand, 51% said it did not. Again, perceptions gathered in this study do not correspond with research findings. Hornick (1981) tells us children overlap doing homework and watching television. He also reminds us that does not account for all the difference between television time and non-television time, which is about an hour per day (Hornick, 1981).

Finally, the majority of this study's participants said they thought television helped their children in

school. These answers support the facilitation hypothesis, which promotes television as an enhancing tool for reading skills and academic achievement (Adams & Harrison, 1975; Peirce, 1983). However, upon review of the literature, the hypothesis gathering the most support from researchers is inhibition. It advocates that a negative relationship exists between television viewing and development of reading skills and academic achievement (Gaddy, 1986; Armstrong & Greenberg, 1990). Once again, 79% of parents in this study contradict what researchers tell us about tele-vision viewing and scholastic accomplishments.

Considering the data gathered in this study, perceptions of parents clearly do not coincide with the findings of other researchers. In reference to the four hypotheses of this study, parents in this study said they regulate television viewing time, but other research indicates they do not (Medrich, 1979). Parents in this study said they govern which programs are watched, but other research shows they do not (Newman, 1988). Research says television keeps children from other activities, but half the parents in this study said it does not (Hornick, 1981). And lastly, other research points to television as not being scholastically beneficial, but most parents in this study said it was (Gaddy, 1986).

Assuming researchers are right in telling us television has a more negative effect on academic development

and achievement than positive (e.g. Williams et al., 1982) and supposing parents' perceptions in this study are an accurate representation, it is clear there is work to be done.

Progress demands more responsibility from parents for curbing their children's appetites for consuming television and to avoid setting a bad example by allotting large amounts of time themselves for television (Robinson, 1990). No doubt this will continue to be a concern of parents and educators (Neuman, 1988) and certainly calls for more research.

As Reinking and Jen-Huey (1990) conclude, this type of research is more complex than reflected in the methods and findings of early investigations. And while a great deal has been accomplished in this area, much more remains to be done.

As for future studies, this researcher would like to see something similar to a long-term case study of a group of children starting from the time they enter elementary school through college graduation. Some of the variables other than television and the individual child that this researcher would like to see examined would include gender, age, socioeconomic status, race, geographical region, and grades. Although grades are not necessarily within the scope of this paper, it is the opinion of this researcher that grades or academic achievement is an important and

worthwhile factor to be considered. Such a long-term study might help us to know whether the surveyed parents are accurate in their assessments of television's effect on children or whether they are simply rationalizing easy behavior.

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APPENDIX A

Consent Statement

I am a graduate student from Austin Peay State University conducting a two-minute survey concerning your child's television viewing habits. May I ask you a few questions?

The purpose of this survey is to discover whether parents of elementary-aged children attempt to regulate how much television and what types of programs their children watch.

Your responses are confidential and will not be linked to your identity. By participating in this survey, you will not be at risk and no potential hazards will occur. Any demographic information collected will be used only for the purposes of analysis.

Your cooperation is voluntary, and you are free to terminate participation at any time without penalty.

This information can be verified through Austin Peay State University's Department of Speech, Communication, and Theatre by telephoning (615) 648-7378.

Thank you very much for your participation and supporting research at Austin Peay State University.

APPENDIX B

Survey

1. a. Do you know about how many hours of television
your child watched yesterday?
yes no
- b. If yes, how many? _____
2. a. Do you attempt to limit the amount of television
your child watches?
yes no
- b. If yes, how? _____

3. a. Are you aware what types of programs your child
watches?
yes no
- b. Do you try to control which programs are watched
and which programs are not watched?
yes no
- c. If yes, in what ways? _____

4. a. Do you believe television viewing takes the place of any of other activities?

yes no

- b. If yes, what kind of activities?

5. a. Do you think television viewing helps your child scholastically?

yes no

- b. If yes, in what ways? _____

6. What is the age and gender of your child?

APPENDIX C

Guide to Calculation Symbols

(Wimmer & Dominick, 1987)

1. Σ = sum (usual symbol is Greek capital letter "sigma")
2. N = total number of scores or responses in a distribution
3. x = represents any given score
4. f = frequency; total of individual scores per interval
5. cf = cumulative frequency; running total of scores at each interval
6. Mo = mode; most frequently occurring score
7. Mdn = median; midpoint of distribution
8. \bar{x} = mean; average of scores (usual symbol is \bar{x})
9. R = range; difference between highest and lowest scores
10. s^2 = variance; degree of deviation from the mean illustrating dispersion (x squared)
11. S = standard deviation; square root of variance calibrating it to the same units of measure as original data
12. z = standard score; allows comparison of data to other methods of research

APPENDIX D

Frequency Distribution for Parents' Perceptions
of Their Children's Television Viewing Habits

Hours	f	%	cf	cf% of N	fx
0.0	5	5.5	5	5.5	0.0
0.5	7	7.7	12	13.2	3.5
1.0	24	26.4	36	39.6	24.0
1.5	9	9.9	45	49.5	13.5
2.0	15	16.5	60	66.0	30.0
2.5	0		60	66.0	0.0
3.0	12	13.2	72	79.2	36.0
3.5	0		72	79.2	0.0
4.0	13	14.3	85	93.5	52.0
4.5	0		85	93.5	0.0
5.0	<u>6</u>	<u>6.6</u>	95	100.1	<u>30.0</u>
	N=91	100.1			Efx=189.0