MEDIA BEHAVIOUR OF ADOLESCENT SCHOOL CHILDREN – A STUDY ON THE TELEVISION VIEWING HABITS OF THE CHILDREN OF TAMILNADU

Synopsis

Television is the most extraordinary and powerful medium of mass communication on earth. Television is an important communication medium because it gives mass appeal in our present society. Because of television the masses know about different cultures, traditions, fashions, languages, and behaviours and they learn all these from Television. Today we can see all events at our doo steps. Television has become a domestic companion of the family members. It provides the people entertainment, information, education and knowledge right in their homes.

Television attracts people of all ages. In this thesis the researcher makes an attempt to understand how the eighth, ninth and tenth standard students make use of television as compared to other mass media like newspaper, radio, cinema and internet.

The Objectives

Television is the major entertainment source for the middle class family members. The following are the objectives of the research:

- To identify the usage of Mass Media by adolescents
- To find out why the television occupies a unique place in mass media.
- To analyze the relationship between the demographic factors and their influence on television viewing habits.
- To identify the effects of television viewing in their day to day life.
- To identify the decision-making process with respect to the viewing of television programmes.
- To find out how contents of television programmes influence the selection of the programmes.
- To find out how far the television is emerging as an agency of socialisation with regard to adolescents.
The Design of the study

A descriptive research design was adopted particularly by *Ex Post Facto research* that is the researcher has no control over the variable; she can only report what had happened or what is happening in the behavior of adolescent school children. The survey method was used, for collecting data from the school children.

By television viewing we may be referred to watching television programmes regularly. The word impact refers to the change that one experiences in his/her attitudes, perceptions and behaviour with regard to a set of selected aspects of the social structure. ‘Adolescence’ refers to the students who are in the age group between thirteen and nineteen years. In this research the researcher has divided adolescent television viewers into three groups (8th, 9th, 10th std.) on the basis of the class they study in and around the locality (Aided / Matriculation) of the schools in Madurai and the educational system they follow {State board (Govt. aided) / Matriculation (self finance)}. The researcher selected co-education school students irrespective of the type of school they attend to.

With a view of providing equal representation to each school, the researcher has decided to select 50 students from 8th, 9th, and 10th classes in the schools. The selection was done through the following steps (a) by interacting with the students it was ensured that all of them have cable connection in their homes. (b) by checking their knowledge about TV programmes by asking them some basic questions

1. How many television sets do you have in your home?
2. Which television channel do you prefer the most?
3. Which is your favourite programme?
4. Who accompanies you when you watch television?
5. State two programmes you like the most.
6. State the time of watching television.

500 school students were given the questionnaires. The information collected from all the students have been tabulated for the present research.
Data Sources

The primary data were for the study collected through closed ended questionnaires from adolescent school children. The secondary data were collected from relevant books, journal articles, reports, websites, CDs, online journals and articles.

Statistical analysis

Data were entered in MS Excel and exported into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) software for further analysis. The data was checked for its missing values, skewness and kurtosis. Missing values were imputed using the mean of the particular variables. If the data has more than 10% missing values, the variable was not considered for further analysis. Frequency analysis was used to check the missing values and also to identify the number and percentage across the variables. In order to find out the association between dependent and independent variables, cross tab and regression analysis were used. ‘p’ value less than 0.05 was considered as significant.

Findings and Conclusions

The aim of this study is to understand the impact of television on the adolescent school children. All the findings of the study were compiled. These results were discussed on the basis of present society, past literature and the experience gained by the researcher during her field work. Some of the major findings and conclusions are:

- Aided school students prefer Tamil newspaper and matric students prefer English newspapers. Particularly matric students prefer sports news and aided students prefer knowledge based news.
- Both aided and matric school students favoured ‘Radio Mirchy’ and ‘Suriyan FM’ for hearing cine songs.
- With regard to the Internet surfing, most of the students particularly 10th standard students depend on computer centers. 10th Matric students prefer to use the computer individually. Boys prefer computer center for games, girls surf for knowledge purpose.
Most of the students prefer to spend their leisure time in front of the Television rather than playing and chatting.

Adolescents are influenced and they react quickly to the Television programmes. Involvement in viewing the television showed a highly reactive behavioural response among children.

Boys and girls prefer Tamil channel programmes in evening and nights. Most of them watch cartoon during weekends and in the afternoons.

To know about the programme schedule, the aided school children watch Television. Matric female students watch selected programme. Both sex watch favourite programmes according to their wish.

Most of the male students say that watching Television programmes is controlled by their parents. But they mostly prefer brothers/sisters as a companion to watch Television programmes.

Majority of the students watch Television at the time of eating or while lying down. They are of the opinion that television programmes are not bad and they watch only for entertainment purpose.

Most of the students debate about the programme with their brothers/sisters. In contrast some of the male students discuss with their mothers.

Most of the students are of the opinion that playing is affected due to TV viewing. But they do not know that too much of watching TV leads to diseases like obesity, eye problems, and mental depression and so on.

Both boys and girls of all classes consider ‘cricket’ as their favourite sport. But some of the matric boys prefer ‘Football’ and girls prefer ‘Tennis’.

With regard to advertisements, though they like movie stars featuring advertisements, they buy the product only based on its quality. And the students want something new and they like catchy words.

Regarding learning from ads, girls said they learned about Cleanliness and education, but boys said for education and savings purpose. Compared to nuclear family, the saving tendency is more in joint family students.
• Most of the students want to improve their pronunciation/accent and knowledge by viewing English Channel. They said news of good quality validity and reliability must have all the attracting feature (like – graphics, special bulletin, readers pronunciation and so on) which make them select a particular channel

• Regarding cartoons most of them like Tom and Jerry and they feel happy to watch the two characters fighting. There are three types of cartoons like animated characters, line drawing and human actors are shown in cartoon channels. The students prefer graphic art and drawn cartoons like Tom and Jerry and Ben 10 series.

Chapterisation

The present research has six chapters. The first chapter deals with the introduction of the study. The second chapter concentrates on literary review available in the area of television viewing behaviour. The third chapter describes the methodology and it is followed by fourth chapter findings. The fifth chapter carries discussion on the results and the last chapter deals with conclusions and suggestions of the study. A list of bibliography of the materials used for the study is indexed. The questionnaire and relevant survey materials are attached in the Appendix.

The present study has new social dimensions as it relates to ‘television culture’ and adolescent culture.