

TELEVISION VIEWING PRACTICES OF
KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

This study was designed to examine the amount of time children spend watching television in relation to the type of dwelling in which they reside. People interested in human development have come to realize how pervasive television has become in the lives of individuals of all ages. This investigator is particularly interested in young children and has observed that children entering kindergarten seem to consider watching television as a regular part of their lives. This study examined the activities of kindergarten children living in apartments and in one-family homes to compare the number of hours they spent watching television, the types of programs they watched, and whether parents indicated approval of the child's television viewing practices.

Need for the Study

Many educators and parents are concerned about the cumulative effects of television on the personalities of children. Morrisett (40) reported that the lives which have been most changed by the age of television are the lives of children. Haney (25) stated, "We are rightly concerned about the effect of such massive stimuli on a child's value system" (p. 51). In order to evaluate any plans for changes in educational policies or parental guidance, it is necessary to have up-to-date and reliable information.

Importance of Studying Young Children

The first major research project on children's television viewing practices was by Himmelweit, et al. (31), who emphasized the need for information about young children when she wrote:

We should like to see more studies of other age groups, especially of young children. The mothers' observations on the under-sevens, which we collected, suggest that young children learn much from television, and are also especially responsive to the leads offered by children's programmes. It would be interesting to see whether with this age group the programmes specifically designed for them make less impact than those aimed at older children; this would be in line with our findings for the two older age groups, with whom adult programmes were more popular than children's programmes. (p. 407)

Another major research by Schramm, et al. (46), noted that it is in the early years before a child learns to read, that television has its greatest impact.

Time Children Spend Watching Television

Limited empirical evidence has been obtained since the Himmelweit (31) and Schramm (46) research concerning the time spent by young children viewing television. According to the 1960 findings of Schramm, the three-year-old averaged about 45 minutes each weekday viewing television. He found this time increased to about two hours per weekday at age five or six. The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (54) issued a 1969 statement that:

A Nielsen study showed many evening shows having a larger number of 2 to 5-year olds watching than did any daytime show, over 5 million children under age 12 still watching between 10:30 and 11 P.M. one Monday night. (p. 55)

This Committee, also, reported that there had been a substantial increase in children's viewing time in 1968 over the approximately 21

hours per week reported in earlier surveys. Kirshner (33) agreed, reporting in 1969 that watching time of preschoolers had then doubled in the seven years since the last comprehensive survey. Hennessy (30) quoted a Nielsen index "showing that children under the age of six spend upwards of 54 hours a week watching television" (p. 1087). Cooney (13) stated in 1969 that ". . . sets are turned on from 55 to 60 hours a week in homes with preschool children" (p. 13). A startling statement by Looney (53) in 1972 reinforced the opinion that viewing time by preschoolers has increased. He reported that three- to five-year-olds watch television on an average of 54 hours a week--nearly 64 percent of their waking time. He pointed out that in the two years before a child enters kindergarten, he spends more time in front of television than a liberal arts college student spends in the classroom throughout his four college years. The literature indicates a need to focus on the period of early childhood and to determine whether the reported increase in the time spent watching television is supported by empirical evidence.

Need to Identify Types of Programs Being Watched

Harrison and Scriven (27) noted that television holds a great fascination for young children, and it has become a major source of recreation for them. Ridder (44) found that children prefer recreational television to educational television. Gray (24) stated: "When children are free to select programs, their choice overwhelmingly favors fantasy over reality" (p. 303). Endsley and Osborn (17) felt it was significant that eight out of ten dramatic programs contained some violence. The National Commission on Violence (54) reported:

Younger children, between the ages of three and eight, are

particularly susceptible to observational learning What younger children see on television is peculiarly 'real', for they are still in the process of learning to discriminate between fantasy and reality . . . television helps to create what children expect of themselves and of others, and of what constitutes the standards of civilized society. (p. 56)

Himmelweit (31) pointed out that a child should see a variety of types of programs to keep a balance and a diversity in his viewing. In view of these statements, it should be worthwhile to answer the question: What types of programs do children view on television?

Need to Determine Parental Approval of Children's Televiewing Practices

Harrison and Scriven (27) pointed out that one reason why a relatively small amount of research on television's effect on youth has been conducted since the Himmelweit (31) and Schramm (46) studies is that it is necessary to expand experimental and clinical research in order to make the difficult assessments related to values, personality and attitudes. If parents approve of the present viewing practices of children, they will feel no need for focusing attention on the subject. Barcus (2), on the other hand, indicated that it may not be reasonable to expect that parents will have the training necessary to interpret and judge the program content. He suggested that when research has more positively established the nature of the effect of television's impact on children, then it may become important to demonstrate to parents that all children's television programming should live up to what they believe their children should see. Witty (56) stated: ". . . research that is most helpful and decisive should involve parents and teachers. These efforts will require a much greater concern than many parents and

teachers now show over the results of televiewing" (p. 140).

Need to Study Children's Viewing Practices in
Relation to Type of Dwelling
in Which They Reside

The literature does not provide information concerning the relationship between the type of dwelling in which children reside and their television viewing practices. The trend toward urban living and increased family mobility has resulted in many young children living in apartments where they may not have the space for play activities which traditional single-family dwellings provide. It should be worthwhile to determine whether a limitation of possible alternative activities causes children to spend more time viewing television. Therefore, a need exists to examine this relationship.

The Purpose

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the type of dwelling in which children reside and their television viewing practices according to the number of hours per week spent watching television, the types of programs being watched, and whether parents give approval of their children's television viewing practices.

Hypotheses

The statistical hypothesis examined was:

1. There is no significant difference in the television viewing practices of children living in apartment-type dwellings and children living in one-family dwellings according to the number of hours spent

viewing.

Two other hypotheses from the descriptive data obtained were examined:

2. There is no difference between the types of programs viewed by children living in apartment-type dwellings and one-family dwellings.

3. There is no difference between parental approval of various types of programs according to residence in apartment-type dwellings and one-family dwellings.

Definitions

The following definitions are presented to clarify for the reader the types of homes treated in this study:

Apartment dwelling - one unit of a multiple residential building, having little or no yard space provided for children's play.

One-family dwelling - a traditional city lot with house, garage, yard, and accompanying space.

CHAPTER II

RELATED LITERATURE

Television Viewing Practices of Older Children and Adults

According to Schramm (46), the child's televiewing time slowly increased from the age of 6 to 13, when the average child was viewing about three hours a day. From age 13 to 16, the viewing time decreased to about two hours a day. Long and Henderson (35) found that fifth graders spent a large block of time in their day watching television and read relatively rarely. Witty's (57) fourteen year study (1949-1963) provides information on older children and adults. He found that television consumes an average of 21 hours per week of the time of first and second graders. Fifth and sixth graders watch 25 hours a week, and adolescents watch an average of 14 hours a week. Adults reported watching about 20 hours a week, but teachers reported only 14 hours. Sorelle and Walker (49) made a longitudinal study on a group of students who watched television 24 hours per week at junior high age and only 18 hours per week by the time they reached senior high school. Brian (7) surveyed 120 senior high students who said they spent about 18 hours a week watching television. Excerpts from a statement by the National Commission of the Causes and Prevention of Violence (54) showed:

All surveys indicate that children and adolescents are the heaviest viewers of television. Depending on their

particular social stratum, children and adolescents spend on an average anywhere from one-fourth to as much as one-half of their waking day before a television screen--as much or more time than they spend in school. (p. 55)

Kirshner (33) stated: "An average American adult will spend from ten to fifteen years of his life watching TV" (p. 956).

Positive Effects of Television

Early fears that watching television might cause eyestrain, excessive loss of sleep, and limited physical activity have seemed to be unfounded. Harrison and Scriven (27) reported that virtually all the research evidence on such harmful physical effects of television does not support these fears.

There were optimistic predictions as television became popular that it had great educational potential. Schramm (46) confirmed that young children are now exposed to much more information about the world beyond their own neighborhood than before television. His study showed increased vocabularies as children entered school, although the advantage did not last beyond sixth grade. Witty (56) and Mason (37) confirmed this vocabulary advantage. Evans (19) said:

We cannot deny that the child will learn much from good informative programs. Too, the most noticeable effect of television on the child is reflected in his vocabulary. This effect, of course, may be good or bad, depending on the quality of the program. (p. 542)

Zeiger (59) stated that:

TV . . . has been proved effective in extending and enriching vocabulary, fostering interest in reading, and affording some arithmetic learnings. Remember that children have seen men go to the moon and back, the assassinations of Kennedy and King, and all human endeavor in some form. (p. 18)

Harrell (26) and Haney (25) emphasized that television promotes an

awareness of the world by making contemporary scientific achievements immediately available. Carskadon (10) pointed out the importance of television this way:

A part of the ability to form abstract ideas and to discriminate reality comes from sheer growth in mental power, but another source is the breadth and extent of experience. . . . It is in just this connection that television becomes so important. It holds a great potential for affording many new experiences easily and quickly. It gives the child ideas with which to solve problems. It is vivid, realistic, dramatic and emotionally appealing. (p. 37)

Instructional Television

Breitenfeld (6) wrote that children can be exposed to educational television programs at home where they watch voluntarily, or in classrooms as a part of school curricula. The latter is usually called instructional television. He estimated that one-fifth to one-half of the student population is exposed to television in classrooms. He stressed that efficient and effective use of this media is important. Richardson (43) and Haney (25) noted that teacher use of televised instruction for enrichment has increased, and teachers are supplementing it with the use of careful preparation, questions, guidance, and review. Culkin (14), Haney (25), and Hatchett (28) all suggested that one important responsibility of teachers was to help children to develop habits of perception, discrimination, interpretation, and selectivity concerning information and ideas received from television.

Rutstein (45) indicated that it would be folly for teachers to ignore the fact that children start school after massive television exposure during their most impressionable years. The teacher will be called upon to accept the challenge presented by such a shaping force.

It may involve a change in focus and in teaching methods. Bruner (9) asked teachers to recall that television is the ideal medium to work on the relationship between the presentation of ideas in language and imagery.

Consistent with Schramm's (46) findings was Barrington's (3) study, concluding that more able students may be expected to learn more from instructional television than less able students. Ayers (1) discovered that, fortunately, the attitudes of elementary school students were very favorable toward instructional television.

Educational Television Programs

Breitenfeld (6) classified the non-commercial Educational Television (ETV) stations as those licensed by school systems, communities, state authorities, or private community corporations. Hayward (29) and Morris (39) noted the general criticism of television programming for children and cited the few notable exceptions of educational programs such as Sesame Street, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, and Captain Kangaroo.

Sesame Street. Collins (12) recorded that Sesame Street was conceived in 1968 by Lloyd Morrisett and Joan Cooney, who formed the Children's Television Workshop. The program was primarily aimed at enriching the knowledge of so-called "disadvantaged" children. Lesser (34), one of the show's producers, stated: "Sesame Street uses direct methods to teach basic skills, but adopts indirect teaching methods to display certain social attitudes" (p. 246). Palmer (41) reported that instructional techniques used were variety in presentation, use of word play, alliteration, rhyming, and the use of nonsense words. His evaluation

showed the greatest gains by frequent watchers, and by disadvantaged children, and more gains by three-year-olds than by older children. Holt (32), Berson (4), Shayon (48), and Collins (12) criticized the program as being too cognitively oriented, phoney, high-pressured, and unmanipulative.

Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. Hayward (29) noted that this program showed genuine respect for its audience, mostly three- to eight-year-olds. The content is relevant to children's interests and needs. It shows adults as mature human beings, and viewers are urged to interact with the characters. Sharapan (47) described the program:

It is a dialog between Fred Rogers and the child, which includes exploring familiar things such as the inside of a telephone, and icing a cake . . . talking about frightening experiences such as hospitalization or a haircut; and talking about feelings, jealousy, and fear. Underneath it all is the concept of the uniqueness of each individual. (p. 18)

Captain Kangaroo. Robert Keeshan, the host of the program, was described by Morris (39) as a quiet-spoken man, who is dedicated to youngsters. His program is orderly and imaginative, using people and talking or performing animals. He thinks television performers should educate as well as entertain. Morris claimed that quality television for children must not only be entertaining but must fulfill the emotional and intellectual needs of young viewers.

Negative Effects of Television

Violence and Aggression

Overwhelming protest to the violence shown on television programs resulted in the formation of an advisory committee which reported to the Surgeon General. The Committee Report (52) stated:

. . . there can be no doubt that violence figures prominently in television entertainment in 1971 Saturday morning programming, . . . approximately three out of ten dramatic segments were 'saturated' with violence and 71 percent involved at least one instance of human violence
(p. 5)

The National Commission on the Causes and Prevention of Violence (54) reported similar findings and stated that:

Nearly half of all the leading characters who kill . . . and more than half of all the leading characters who are violent . . . achieve a clearly happy ending in the programs. To this extent, violence is portrayed as a successful means of attaining a desired end Television . . . teaches them /children/ a set of moral and social values about violence which are inconsistent with the standards of a civilized society. (p. 55)

Winston (55) cited the opinions of experts disputing the view that watching violence on television enables a child to dissipate his aggressive feelings. Harrison and Scriven (27) cited seven researchers who discredited this theory. Steuer (51) reported research indicating that preschool children who viewed aggressive television programs showed significantly greater increases in interpersonal aggression than children viewing non-aggressive programs.

Reality Versus Fantasy

Endsley and Osborn (17) showed that for the young viewer of television, the boundary between fantasy and reality is not distinct. They emphasized the difficulty of young children in distinguishing between real and fictional televised violence. Cunningham (15) said:

The child's world of possibility is far greater than the adult's because of his inexperience in coping with reality; therefore he would be more likely to accept exaggerations and misrepresentations in some television programs. (p. 31)

Maccoby (36) reflected that one purpose for a child's watching

television is fantasy fulfillment. Paul (42) wrote that television fantasy confuses the child and causes him trouble in coping with the real world. He found that very young children misinterpret what they see on television. He further stated:

The episodic nature of most programs is another kind of unreality. The problem arising in the first minutes of the show, no matter how complex, is solved by the end of the program. Without parental discussion and guidance and thorough exposure to the model of real family problems, a child may well conclude that difficulties are all susceptible to prompt, tidy solutions. (p. 306)

Blake (5) was also concerned about children's acceptance of all they see and hear as being factual when he protested that preschool children cannot distinguish between program content and commercials, or between spoofs and serious treatment of subject matter. Mead (38) cited instances in which adults can quickly sort out the truth, but which young children find contradictory. She urged that:

Better devices are needed for discriminating between fact and fiction, between unintended devastating actuality like the scene when Senator Kennedy was assassinated, and deliberate falsification Today's children need to learn--as surely as yesterday's children learned to recognize the voice that went with an ad--whether they are watching something that really happened or is just happening, or is a fictional representation of what might happen or never did or could happen. Tomorrow's children will have parents who understand this need; today's young people did not. (p. 14)

Himmelweit (31) described the conditions under which the psychological effects of television are maximized. Television's impact is strong when the values are dramatically presented, recur from program to program, relate to the child's immediate needs and interests, elicit an emotional response, and when the viewer tends to be uncritical and without an internalized set of values against which to assess the views offered on television. Garry (20) found that the young child

unquestionably viewed the world in a way quite different from the adult. He is only beginning to learn word meanings and how words relate to things. He does not have the adult's background of references. He stated that children may be confused when cause and effect relationships with which they are familiar are violated in televised episodes. Garry (21) also stated:

For children, their belief in the truth of television can lead to startling misconceptions, e.g., only bad guys bleed, or that the commercials tell you what is good to buy. Inevitably misconceptions, whatever their source, must stand the test of experience, and be corrected. Where they do not, they become a base for preconceptions and prejudice. Research shows that mass media are more likely to affect attitudes where children have no other source of information--such as direct experience or parental opinion to provide validation. (p. 10) ✓

The Surgeon General's Scientific Advisory Committee on Television and Social Behavior (52) commented on the preschoolers' inability to successfully divide their attention. As a result, ". . . what they get from television is probably generally restricted to what is taken in while viewing with full attention and is perceived bereft of a larger context" (p. 3).

Glynn (23) questioned television's effect on character formation. He felt that television fosters traits of passivity and dependence, such as being fed, taking in and absorbing what is offered. He said that television shapes the viewer's character, and its chief danger is that passive-dependent characteristics may become fixed through excessive exposure. He raised the question of whether television ultimately blunts and destroys children's sensibilities.

Commercials, Bad Dreams, and Hyperactivity

Schramm (46) emphasized that commercials on children's programs are

designed to create an interest and demand for toys, special types of clothing, food, and other products. It is a challenge for the parent to be able to say "no" comfortably in a manner the child can accept.

Choate (11) stated:

Television's tidal wave of nutritional miseducation affects us all. With no accompanying warnings, a child is invited ten times an hour to establish food habits which his dentist or doctor will later deplore. (p. 147)

Ervy (18) reported research on children who had watched frightening television shows before bedtime. Over half of 2000 children had bad dreams about the programs.

Glasser (22) asserted that a cause and effect relationship exists between excess television viewing at a young age and the recent hyperactivity syndrome of elementary school children. A popular explanation for this hyperactivity is that a brain abnormality stimulates the child to bursts of erratic nervous energy. Glasser believed that the cause of the abnormal brain activity may be frustration of the neural need for involvement which is left unsatisfied when the child watches too much television.

Activities Which Children Are Missing

Shayon (48) stated:

Knowledge, adventure, excitement, contact with the grown-up world, status, freedom from restriction--these, then, are all our children's important emotional needs. To satisfy them they follow the Pied Piper--television. They followed him 'excessively'. . . . Television, like all other mass media, does not really satisfy these hungers of our children. If it did, they would not sit for long periods, passively before screens, . . . in search and unfulfillment. The reason for this is plain: television cannot satisfy these hungers--it is not a genuine experience, but merely a substitute for genuine experience. (p. 30)

Bronfenbrenner (8) said that:

The primary danger of the television screen lies not so much in the behavior it produces--although there is danger there --as in the behavior it prevents; the talks, the games, the family festivities and arguments through which much of the child's learning takes place and through which his character is formed. Turning on the television set can turn off the process that transforms children into people. (p. 157)

Harrison and Scriven (27) quoted Gratjohn, a psychiatrist, speaking before the United States Senate:

All that we have to do is sit passively in front of the screen which lives, thinks, sees and hears for us and gives us the proper conclusion. This leads to such increase of all dependent tendencies that it hampers the free development of people into independent individuals capable and willing to form their own opinions, to develop their own personality, and to live actively. (p. 87)

Gray (24) suggested that, "While it is true that the child needs a certain amount of escape and entertainment, it should be provided through other media as well as through television" (p. 303). She questioned ". . . whether the experiences children get from television are teaching them more than experiences they might be having if they were not watching television" (p. 304). She indicated that television tends to replace reading, physical activity, hobbies and conversation.

Davidson and Borgenicht (16) reported young children finding great appeal in adult dramas which require no use of imagination and ask no personal involvement. They felt that unimaginative entertainment stunts children's intellectual growth.

Evans (19) warned against using television as a "baby sitter." She also indicated that use of television at mealtimes should be regulated, since this is a time when the family is usually together, a time which should be reserved for intimate family talk, good feelings, and enjoyment of food. Children should not be denied such experience.

Endsley and Osborn (17) reviewed the work of Maccoby concerning the activities that are displaced by watching television, in which her findings were that children stay up later and sleep less than they did before the advent of television. Steiner (50) reported that it was of concern to some parents that children were missing associations with other children and outdoor play while they were sitting with television.

Glasser (22) saw television as:

. . . a danger to children between ages two and five because they should be learning, by playing with each other, to socialize and communicate. Few parents realize how much their preschool child watches television. (p. 136)

Winston (55) quoted Hayakawa, the noted semanticist and acting president of San Francisco State College, who said:

Even if preschool children do learn some things from TV, consider what they do not learn. The child who watches television for four hours daily . . . spends something like 22,000 hours in passive contemplation of the screen--hours stolen from the time needed to relate to siblings, playmates, parents, grandparents, or strangers. (p. 9)

Witty (58) reported that watching television will lead to a decrease of interest in other worthwhile activities. The areas most likely to be neglected are outdoor recreation, creative activities, and reading.

Summary

Findings from the literature indicate that kindergartners may be spending as many hours watching television daily as they spend in school. This observation has implications for the present study: (1) parents need to be aware of the amount of time children are viewing television; (2) parents may play an important role in determining whether effects of television are beneficial or harmful if they know the types of programs viewed and provide guidance in selections; (3) it is

important to consider the provision of alternative activities if parents do not approve of their children's television viewing practices.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

Selection of Subjects

Permission was granted from the Research, Planning and Development Department of a large public school system in Oklahoma to secure data from kindergarten children enrolled in the fall of 1973. Specific schools were designated for sampling by the Research, Planning and Development Department in which the enrollment was representative of both apartments and one-family dwellings. The names and addresses of all kindergarten children's parents were supplied by the principals in each of the six schools (416 children).

Development of the Checklist

A checklist (Appendix A) was developed to obtain information as to whether the child's family lived in an apartment or a single-family dwelling; the number of hours per week the subjects viewed television; which channel was watched in order to determine the program viewed to establish its type; and whether parents indicated approval of the child's television viewing practices. A jury of five mothers tested the checklist to determine its useability and clarity and accepted it in its proposed form.

In order to insure validity of the responses of the parents the

checklists were anonymous. No assessment of the reliability of the responses was made; however, reports of a child's televiewing were obtained over a 14-day period so that the measure obtained in a given single day which was atypical would not seriously affect the total scores obtained.

Administration of the Checklist

A letter (Appendix A) explaining the study was mailed with the checklists to the 416 parents. A stamped, self-addressed envelope was provided for the return after a two-week period of marking the checklist. Checklists were returned from 92 parents; 31 apartment-dwelling families, and 61 from one-family homes.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The overall purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the type of dwelling in which kindergarten children reside and their television viewing practices according to the number of hours per week spent watching television, the types of programs watched, and whether parents gave their approval of their children's television-viewing practices.

The subjects for this study were 92 children enrolled in six selected public school kindergartens whose parents had responded to a checklist (Appendix A) which the investigator had mailed to them. The checklist was mailed to the parents of 416 children from the six schools designated by the authorities who granted permission to obtain the data. The returned checklists (92) comprised approximately 22 percent of the 416 children. The final subjects were 31 apartment dwellers and 61 one-family home dwellers.

Findings

Data are presented in the following tables to indicate differences in responses of parents according to place of residence: apartment dwellings or one-family dwellings.

Hypothesis I. There is no significant difference in the television viewing practices of children living in apartment-type dwellings and

children living in one-family dwellings according to the number of hours spent viewing. The findings from literature indicated that many children are watching television as much as 54 hours per week, which is far more time than is spent in school. The findings from this study in relation to the amount of time were 20 hours per week on the average for apartment dwellers and 16 hours per week on the average for one-family home dwellers. This is more time than the $12\frac{1}{2}$ hours per week spent in school. Table I indicates no significant difference ($p = .10$), and on this basis the hypothesis is held tenable. The two hypotheses examined in light of descriptive data are listed Numbers II and III.

TABLE I

t TEST REFLECTING DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AMOUNT OF TELEVISION VIEWING TIME OF CHILDREN LIVING IN APARTMENT-TYPE DWELLINGS AND CHILDREN LIVING IN ONE-FAMILY TYPE DWELLINGS
(N = 92)

Housing	Mean Hours per Week	t	Level of Significance
Apartment dwellings (N = 31)	20.30	1.76	N.S.
One-family dwellings (N = 61)	16.38		

Hypothesis II. There is no difference between the types of programs viewed by children living in apartment-type dwellings and

one-family dwellings. Classification of program types was taken from T V Guide for the two weeks studied. Table II reveals that children in one-family homes watched more educational, children's and cartoon-type programs than did children in apartment-type dwellings. Children in apartment dwellings watched more adult comedy, drama, crime, and news than did one-family dwelling children. The other classifications of programs were approximately the same regardless of place of residence. Games, religious, and special programs were watched very little by either group.

TABLE II
PERCENTAGES REFLECTING TOTAL VIEWING TIME
FOR EACH TYPE OF PROGRAM

Types of Programs	Apartments (N = 31)	Homes (N = 61)
	%	%
Educational	11	18
Children's	14	19
Cartoons	16	20
Drama	20	15
Adult Comedy	15	10
Crime	8	6
Musical	3	4
Sports	3	3
News	5	3
Game Shows	3	1
Religious	1	1
Specials and Variety	3	1

Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest number.

Hypotheses III. There is no difference in frequency of parental approval of various types of programs between residents in apartment dwellings and one-family dwellings. The highest percentage of approval for one-family dwellings was for educational programs, children's programs and cartoons (see Table III). Data in this table reveal that there were relatively few differences between residents of apartments and one-family homes in terms of disapproval of television programs which the children viewed.

Many parents added comments to the checklist concerning their attention to their children's television viewing habits, feelings about the quality of television for children, and their own child's reactions. Representative comments are included in Appendix C.

TABLE III
PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN'S TOTAL VIEWING TIME
WHICH PARENTS APPROVED OR DISAPPROVED

Types of Programs	Apartments (N = 31)		One-Family Homes (N = 61)	
	Approve %	Disapprove %	Approve %	Disapprove %
Educational	10	1	17	1
Children's	12	1	16	3
Cartoons	10	6	12	7
Drama	10	10	10	5
Adult Comedy	10	5	7	2
Crime	3	4	4	3
Musical	2	1	3	1
Sports	2	1	2	1
News	2	3	1	1
Game Shows	2	1	1	1
Religious	1	1	1	1
Specials and Variety	1	1	1	1
Totals	65	35	75	27

Note: Percentages have been rounded to the nearest number.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to determine the relationship between the type of dwelling in which kindergarten children reside and their television viewing practices according to the number of hours spent per week watching television, the types of programs viewed, and whether parents gave their approval of the programs their children watched.

The subjects for this study were 92 children enrolled in six selected public school kindergartens whose parents had responded to a checklist which the investigator had mailed to them. The checklist was developed to obtain information concerning the type of home the subjects lived in, such as an apartment dwelling or in a one-family dwelling, the number of hours per week the subjects viewed television, which channel was watched in order to determine the types of programs being viewed, and whether parents indicated approval of the child's television viewing practices.

Findings

1. There was no significant difference in the time spent watching television between apartment dwellers and one-family home dwellers ($p = .10$).

2. Kindergarten children spent more time watching television than the $12\frac{1}{2}$ hours they spent in school each week. For apartment dwellers

the average viewing time was 20 hours weekly, and for one-family home dwellers the average time was 16 hours weekly.

3. A greater proportion of children in one-family homes watched educational, children's and cartoon-type programs than did children in apartments.

4. A greater proportion of children in apartments watched drama, adult comedy, crime, and news programs than did children in one-family homes.

5. Game, religious, and special programs were watched very little by either group.

6. Parents from one-family homes approved more frequently educational and children's programs, and cartoons than did parents living in apartments.

7. There were relatively few differences between residents of apartments and one-family homes in terms of disapproval of television programs which their children viewed.

Recommendations for Further Research

Although there were no significant differences between apartment-type dwellers and one-family home dwellers, there were enough differences to warrant further research on a larger sample of subjects over a longer period of time.

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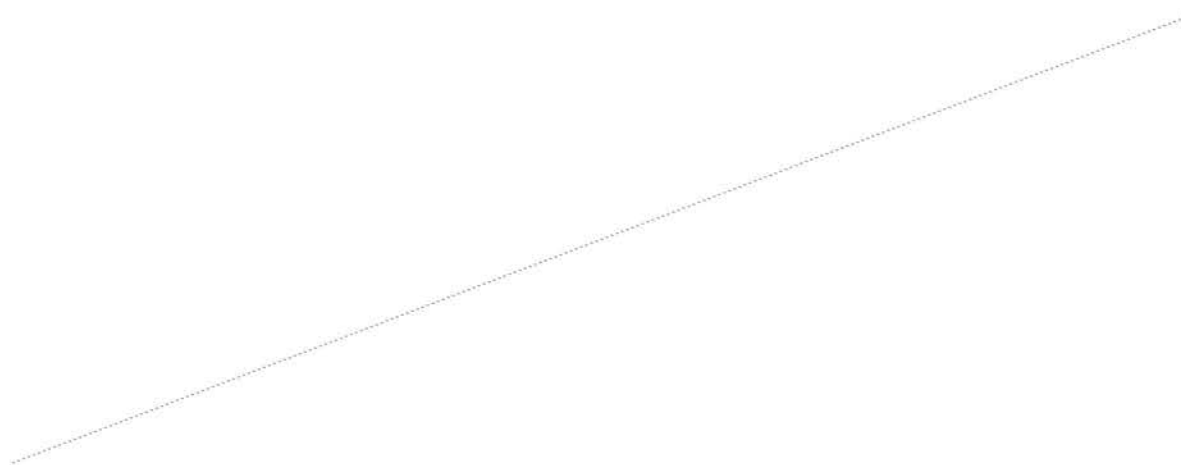
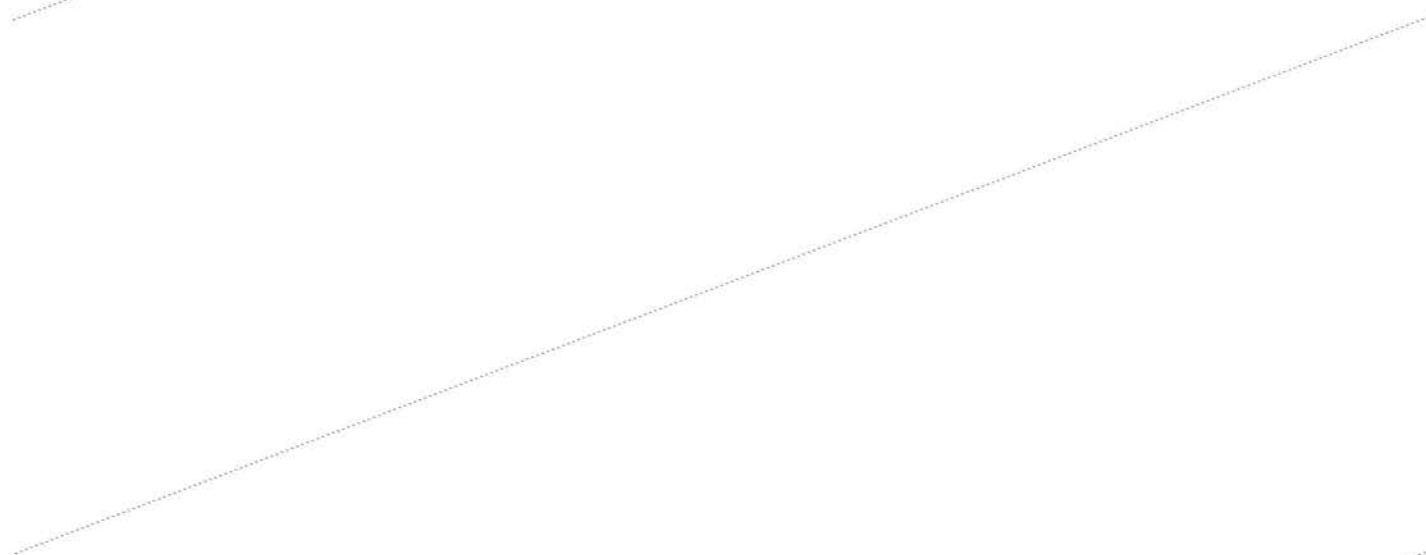
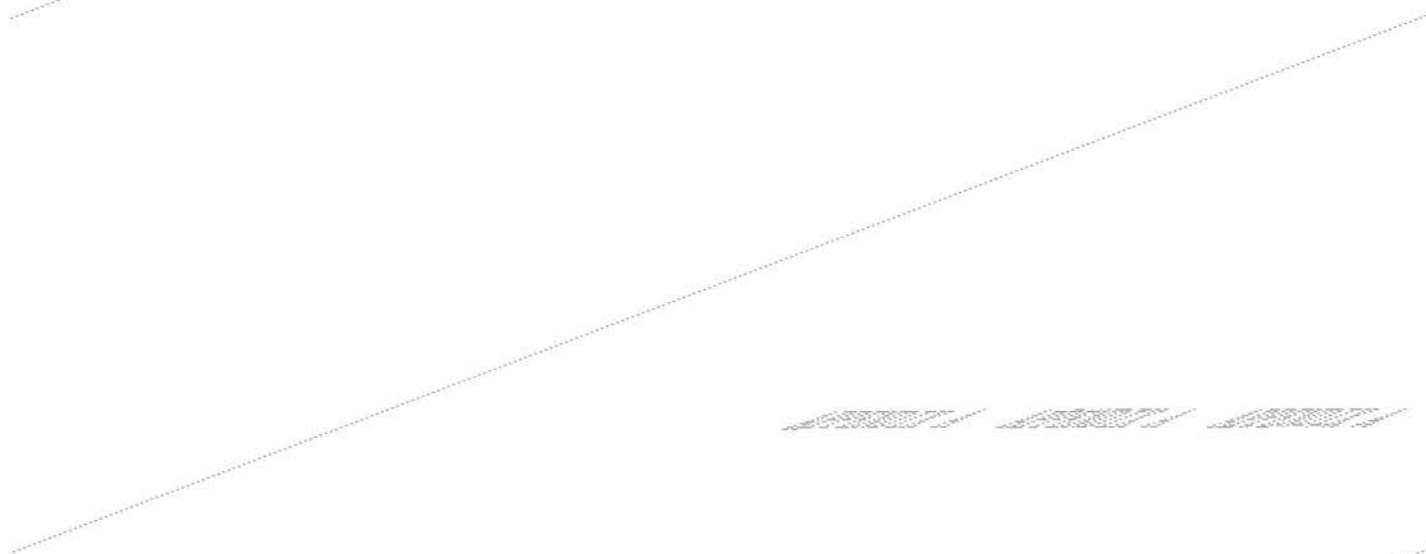
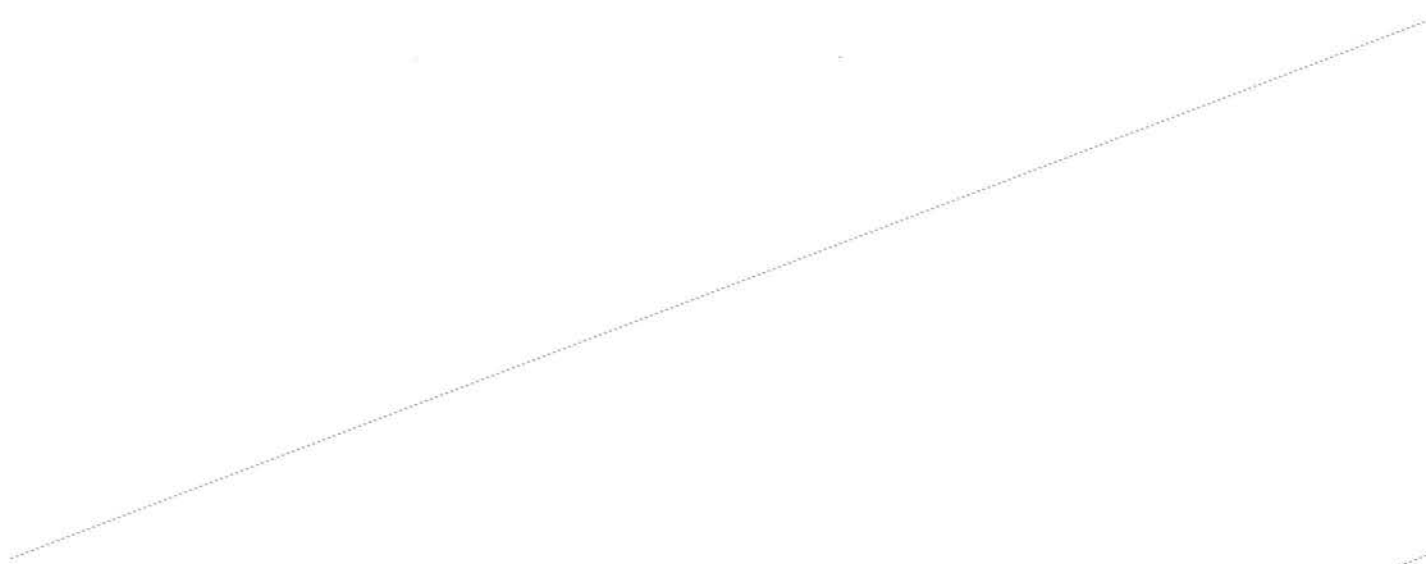
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Dear Parents:

As a graduate student at Oklahoma State University, I am conducting a study of the television viewing practices of kindergarten children. Educators are increasingly interested in finding out how much time children spend watching television, what types of programs they view, and whether parents approve of their children's television viewing practices.

You are not required to participate in this survey. It will, however, help me with my study if you will complete the attached checklist during the two-week period indicated. It will not require much of your time, but your daily attention will assure the best results.

Your name will not appear on the checklist. No value judgments are being made, since I am trying to learn only what children view. Your cooperation will help me to secure a more complete analysis of what programs kindergartners are watching.

At the end of the two-week period, please return the completed checklist in the stamped envelope which is enclosed.

Yours truly,

Ruth N. Browne

CHILDREN'S TELEVISION CHECKLIST

Instructions:

1. Check (✓) the correct space: We live in a one-family home _____.
We live in an apartment _____.
2. Please begin checking this sheet on _____ and
continue marking it each day for 2 weeks.
3. Each day, when your child watches television, write in the number
of the channel he watched, in the space across from the hour.
4. Please draw a circle around the channel number (Ⓒ) if you approved
of the program. If you did not approve, leave it uncircled.

[illegible]

APPENDIX B APPENDIX B APPENDIX B

September 18, 1973

Dr. Josephine Hoffer
Department of Family Relations
and Child Development
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

Dear Dr. Hoffer:

Your request for Mrs. Ruth N. Browne to conduct a questionnaire survey of parents concerning their kindergarten pupils' television viewing practices has been approved, subject to the following conditions:

1. All materials are to be sent by U. S. Mail to the parents' home address, with a stamped envelope provided for the return of the questionnaire to Mrs. Browne.
- * 2. Names and mailing addresses of the parents of all kindergarten children in the designated schools will be sent by principals to the Assistant to Superintendent for Research, Planning and Development, who will then release them to Mrs. Browne.
3. The revised list of schools is as follows: Marshall, Reed, Remington, Lanier, Phillips and Salk.
4. There is to be no mention of the Tulsa Public Schools in any of the material. (See revised letter to parents.)

I hope this will allow Mrs. Browne to secure the data she needs. We ask that the Superintendent and each participating principal be sent a copy of the abstract of her thesis when it is completed.

Sincerely,

Paul I. McCloud, Assistant to Superintendent
Research, Planning and Development

PIM:bjb
Enc.

* Mrs. Browne,

I've asked the principals to send me the lists within the next ten days. I'll send them to you at Lindbergh as soon as I get them.

P. M.

APPENDIX C APPENDIX C APPENDIX C

SELECTED PARENTAL COMMENTS

Many parents wrote comments on the returned television checklists.

Typical quotations relating to the time children spent viewing follow:

"I think your survey was very beneficial in that I have learned that my child watches more TV than I was aware of and I'm hoping we can cut down on it."

"I was really surprised at how little my child watches TV. Even when it is on she usually always does something else."

"As it gets colder and she is inside more she will probably watch more TV. As a rule though she would rather be playing than watching."

"Tom's TV habits change with the time of year. He plays outside more now than he will in cold weather."

"My child shows very little interest in TV, cartoons or otherwise."

"We do not have a television set. We have a 5-year-old and a 7-year-old. They are happy without a TV."

"There were also a few days when she was sick when I encouraged TV because it kept her quiet and resting."

Regarding types of programs and their content, comments from parents noted:

"The people who program these things need help. They are so ignorant as to put Carnal Knowledge or The Graduate on at 6:30 or 8:00."

". . . some programs which he watches with the family are in my opinion less objectionable than the others in that time slot."

"My 5-year-old boy only asks for cartoons."

"Haven't figured a way to wean the children off those early cartoons. Since they get all their required assigned duties done first--they enjoy that time."

"There has been a reduction in our TV viewing recently. One of the school officials pointed out that aside from counting and the alphabet, what children learned from Sesame Street was to shout. My own feeling was they also learned name calling--'dummy', 'stupid', etc. It was explained that every time my son used such words he would lose Sesame Street privileges. He hasn't watched it since. Wish I had an equally effective way to eliminate cartoons."

"That channel has such sorry programs. Should be banned!"

The following comments relate even more directly to parental approval or disapproval of their children's viewing:

"I never allow more than one hour of programs which I do not approve."

"I am very strict about what the children watch on TV. My kindergarten often stops other activities to watch the commercials."

"We do take care of all our children's TV shows. Most television programming is useless as entertainment."

"He is not allowed to turn the TV on or to watch alone."

"We do guide her TV watching and do not turn on shows we feel could cause her harm before 8 p.m., even though she doesn't appear to be listening. (I miss several good shows each week we would enjoy watching, for example, Mannix.)"

"I disapprove of a lot of the programs being shown on television. It was shocking to hear 'God Damn It' from Archie Bunker on Family

Affair. I am uncomfortable when I hear such language plus the fact my children hear it too. . . . when they invade one's home that is impudent and distasteful and damaging in raising of children and teenagers."

2
VITA

Ruth N. Browne

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: TELEVISION VIEWING PRACTICES OF KINDERGARTEN CHILDREN

Major Field: Family Relations and Child Development

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Mercedes, Texas, December 16, 1921, the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Wesley S. Neal; married to Joe E. Browne, July 18, 1942.

Education: Graduated from Malakoff High School, Malakoff, Texas, in May, 1938; attended Rice Institute; received Bachelor of Science degree in Home Economics from The University of Texas in 1942; attended Tulsa University; attended Oklahoma City University; completed requirements for the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1974.

Professional Experience: Teacher, Campus Nursery School, Orange, Texas, 1944-45; kindergarten teacher, Tulsa Public Schools, Tulsa, Oklahoma, from 1963-74.

Professional Organizations: Oklahoma Education Association; Southern Association on Children Under Six; Oklahoma Association on Children Under Six; Oklahoma Kindergarten Association.