



Parental Mediation on Children's Television Viewing Habits in Malaysia

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Abstract

This study will discuss the social uses of television within the family, children and media, family conflict with a specific focus on the use of television. It will examine how important parental mediation is in monitoring children viewing habits. The study will look at four types of mediation which are instructive mediation, restrictive mediation, social co-viewing and unstructured mediation. Research would be conducted on twelve Malay parents, all of whom are from Malaysia. They will be asked to answer questions about watching television in their home. Data collection will include participants completing a daily diary (solicited diary) over a one week period on how they mediate their children's television viewing. Upon completion of the solicited diary, a one-on-one semi-structured interview will be conducted through webcam. The themes that were found are *religion*, *television is educational*, *parents advise children through television* and *television is used for families to get together*.

Methodology

This research study utilizes qualitative research methods to investigate the following:

- RQ1 : How do Malaysian mothers and fathers engage in parental mediation of children's television viewing?
RQ2 : How do these mediation styles compare to the mediation types established in the research literature?
RQ3 : What are the self-described motivations for parental television viewing mediation given by parents?

The research participants in this study consisted of twelve ethnically Malay parents. Inclusionary criteria are parents between the ages of 30 and 50 years old, with children who ranged from 18 months to 12 year olds. Parents were asked to participate by writing in a diary, as well as attending a semi structure online interview with the researcher.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine how parents monitor or mediate their children's viewing habits in Malaysian families. It is to determine how television is used within the family in Malaysia and how parents mediate their children's viewing habits. This is because television is an information technology that is not easily controlled or censored by parents compared to methods such as books and storytelling. Because of this, many worry that parents have largely lost the ability to shape their children's values (Erica Austin, 1993).

Component of Data Analysis

Diaries as well as interviews were conducted in Malay. Interviews were translated from Malay language into English. To increase reliability and validity, all of the diaries and one fourth of the interviews were translated a repeated time by a native Malay speaker and the English translations were checked for accuracy. One diary and one interview was also back-translated where the English transcript was be given to a native Malay speaker who then recreated the transcript in Malay by translating from the English version. The two Malay transcripts (the translated and the back-translated) were compared for accuracy. Diaries as well as interviews were coded for themes.

Results

In descending order, the themes that were found to be the most important are *religion*, *television is educational*, *parents advise children through television* and *television is used for families to get together*. Under the religion theme itself, there are *religion permeates everyday life*, *religion used to advise children*, *religion used to educate children*, *parents' thoughts in regards to television programs*, *limit children's television viewing*, and *avoidance*.

Religion - From the interviews, participants have said that the reason they use religion in their everyday teaching is so that so their children will not forget the Islamic teachings as they live their daily lives. They teach their children through television so that it is easier for the children to implement the teachings themselves.

