

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Research regarding the influences of television on children reported that images of violence and sexual content exposed to children viewers can model their perceptions and values and will affect their action when they grow up. (Walsh & Gentile, 2001) The Relationship between media exposure and fear anxieties and sleep disturbance in a child was also confirmed in many studies (Bushman & Cantor, 2003) Most of favorite programs for adolescent such as music video demonstrated significant association with alcohol use. One incident was that young children died in fire because they imitated animated cartoon on a TV music channel which started a fire while chanting “Fire, fire, fire” (Ho, 1994 cited in Roberts & Warren, 1998) Many parents are worried that their children’s watching too much television may be stimulated to use impolite or taboo language (Bushman & Cantor, 2003)

A similar situation has also happened in Thailand; a recent poll reported that most Thai children have been too exposed to obscene language, rape, fights and bodily attacks shown on TV scenes. (Mayuree Sukyingcharoenwong 2007) The fear of the effect of inappropriate content broadcast on TV screens toward children has becomes a concern of parents, teachers, politicians and social scientists since television was introduced and continues today.

The idea of establishing a television rating system in Thailand was structured in 2003 by the Minister of Education. Television channels were requested to broadcast healthy programs for children for at least one hour per day from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. This policy was generally accepted at the time it was released, later on the television channels failed to maintain this voluntary activity. Then in 2006, the Thai government through the Government Public Relations Department under the support of the Culture Ministry introduced the first Thai television rating system, recommended age group viewers as a self-regulated system, and actively enforced on

December 1st, 2007. The rating complies with four (4) main classifications with seven (7) symbols; see Appendix A and B. (The Government Public Relations Department, 2006).

The labels will be shown on the screen for five seconds before the program starts and occasionally repeatedly shown while the program's on air.

Even the rating has been set up to give guidance to viewers on whether to decide which program is appropriate for which age range. The rating itself can encourage or not recommend viewers to expose to the program. Natachan and Cantor (1998) mentioned in their article that children tend to see programs which indicate the age of the viewer because it is restrictive. Another reason is that the more parents want to prohibit them from certain programs they should not see, the more children are eager to see them. In *Media Rating for Violence and Sex: Implication for Policymaker and Parents* a paper by Bushman and Cantor, 2003, rating affects on viewer interest in a program which is considered as forbidden fruit for children. It supports the idea that children have an inadequate ability to decide by themselves which program they should or should not see.

A research paper mentioned parents believed that television has an affective-level effect on their children's behaviour (Natashan, 2001). A Kaiser survey in 2004 presented the contents that parents were concerned about their risk were ranked; sexual content (60%), violent content (53%), and adult language (49%). More than 50% of parents also believed that sex and violence on the screen intensively affected children behaviour. However, although 89% of parents were worried about the exposure of their children to inappropriate entertainment media especially on TV, only 50% of parents who answered this questionnaire used the TV rating (Larule, 2004). Moreover, the report of Parental Media Mediation Styles for Children Aged 2 to 11 Years mentioned its idea that although people realized the children watch television more than a regulary at 2 hours per day, there was no investigation of the reaction of parents toward this situation. (Barkin & Ip, 2006) These two ideas reflect a

public belief that parents having no obvious role in preventing their children from such an unhealthy medium.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- Is there an understanding of the television rating system among parents?
- Do parents with a higher education have a better understanding of the rating than the parents with a lower education?
- Is there a serious application of the television rating system by parents to control their children's television viewing?
- Do parents of younger children use the television rating system more than parents of older children?
- Do parents who allow televisions in children's bedroom use the television rating system less than parents who do not?
- Do parents who co-watch television with their children use the television rating system more than the parents who do not?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This research will evaluate the understanding of parents, who have the potential to direct their children, toward the television rating and their applications in all its aspects control their children's television viewing behaviour.

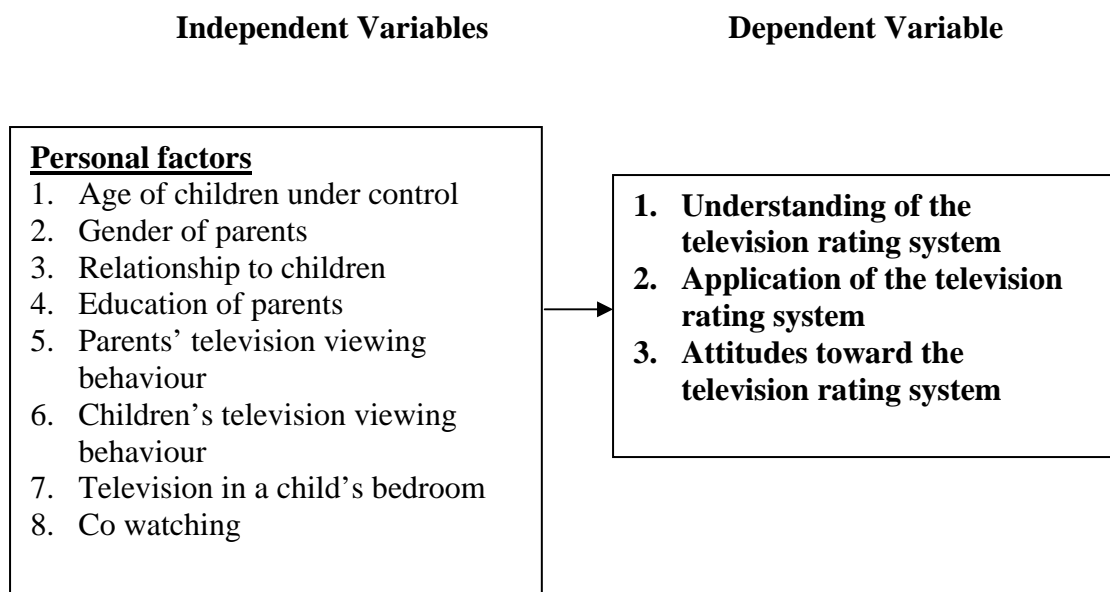
1.4 VARIABLES AND DEFINITIONS

This research studied the concept of distance learning as well as the concept of satisfaction. Besides, the research was conducted in order to find the relationships

among a set of independent variables towards the dependent variable which are presented below.

1.4.1 Variables

Figure 1. Conceptual framework showing the relationship between independent and dependent variables.



1.4.2 Definitions

In order to understand the terms used in this survey, the researcher provides the definitions of the terms as follows:

- **Parents:** Parents in this study are father, mother, sibling, relative guardian (grandparents, uncle, and aunt) or non-relatives guardians such as a hired-nanny.

- **Television rating system:** The system initiated by the Government Public Relations Department of Thailand announced on 30th November 2006 only.

- **Understanding of the television rating system:** Subjected parents' level of understanding of the TV rating measured by points gained from correct answers given in the questionnaire part 2.
- **Application of the television rating system:** Parents' usage of the TV rating to control their children's television viewing behaviour measured by the frequency level given to answers in part 3 of the questionnaire, evaluated by the 5-point Likert scale: 5) Always 4) Often 3) Sometime 2) Rarely 1) Never
- **Attitudes toward the television rating system:** A state of mind in which parents' beliefs and values of the television rating system have been met, measured by the 5-point Likert scale: 5) Very much 4) Much 3) May be 2) Little 1) Not at all, in part 4 of the questionnaire.

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This survey of parents' understanding and application of the television rating systems focuses only on adult residing in a family which contains at least one child, in the Bangkok area. They will be asked to present their understanding, frequency of usage and attitude toward the television rating labels officially announced by the Public Relations Department of Thailand on 1st December 2006 only.

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This survey will represent the feedback from parents in the Bangkok area regards their understanding, frequency of usage and attitudes and whether they discover any reliability or the usefulness of this television rating set up by the Public Relations Department of Thailand. Results of this survey will indicate the response of parents toward this campaign; whether they can understand or not the label of each rating given and what the factors are of any misunderstanding. Not only will it reveal the frequency of usage by parents but this survey will also ascertain if personal

factors contribute to this diversity of use. Moreover, this research will also provide the attitudes of parents toward the rating. These three main findings will reflect absolutely the overall response to this campaign and trends of protection from unhealthy programs given to children by their parents' usage of the television rating.

1.7 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

The survey of parents' understanding and application of the television rating system is divided into five chapters. Chapter One includes the background of the topic and statement of the problem, which led to the objectives, the scope of the study, the definitions of terms, and the significance of the study, respectively. Chapter Two is designed to review the previous studies concerning television rating in its aspects of influences and usages of parents and children conducted abroad. Chapter Three provides a description of the research process identifying subjects, materials, procedures, and data analysis. Chapter Four presents the findings of the survey. Chapter Five includes a summary of the survey, its findings, discussions, conclusions, and recommendations for further study.

The questionnaire in Thai which was used for data collection from the sampling group is also included in the appendix.