

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter reviews previous studies regarding television effects and television rating practice in other countries as per the following;

2.1 Young Viewers Response to Television

2.2 Parental Mediation Styles

2.3 The Television Rating System and Responses from Audience

2.4 Related Study

2.1 YOUNG VIEWERS RESPONSE TO TELEVISION

Influence of negative contents in television has been confirmed by a lot of research for decades. Images of violence and sexual content presented to children viewers can model their perceptions and values and will affect their actions when they grow up. Moreover, the relationship between media exposure and fear anxieties and sleep disturbance in children was also confirmed (Bushman & Cantor, 2003). In contrast, there was significant regression in the aggression level in children, when the exposure of television was low (Robinson, 2001). Unlimited viewing of violent television programs caused a prominent action in children of violence. Sometimes, watching a single violent program can increase aggressiveness because the show contained violence in very realistic images, frequently repeated or which left criminal unpunished. These kinds of shows impact on children because they were more likely to imitate what they have seen. The impact of violence in television may be immediately present in a child's behavior or may be revealed many years later (Szaflik, 2000). Moreover, children aged under three years with more than two hours television viewing per day on average had negative effect on the child's cognition in reading recognition, reading comprehension and digit span assessment (Zimmerman, 2005). Not only the early young viewers were affected by the inappropriate contents of television programs; the relationship in the family was also affected in some aspects. Referring to Valkenburg (2003), advertising leads to a child requesting of

product purchasing and vice versa it increased the parents' denial of product purchase. This was the main issue of parental and child conflicts.

2.2 PARENTAL MEDIATION STYLES

Parents are involved in media mediation with their children, there are three types of media mediation styles. According to Nathasan (2001), the media mediation was conceptualized into a three dimensional constructed method; the three dimensions were *active mediation* (discussing television with their children), *restrictive mediation* (setting about television viewing for children) and *co-viewing* (watching television with children). The parents who used co-viewing mediation tended to have both negative and positive attitudes toward television. The parents in this group believed that television programs contained somewhat benefit and educational content useful for their children. Even though there was some inadequate content in some kinds of television programs, with co-viewing, parent can educate their children during that time. Moreover, parents attempted to use multiple strategies mediation; restrictive, co-viewing and active by referring to Barkins (2006). The research finding showed the restrictive and active approach had a positive association which increased awareness of the negative effects. The restrictive mediation style tended more to be used with younger children. The mediation usage of parents negatively related to the numbers of hours that children were exposed to television in a day. This group of parents would allow unlimited usage of television by children as they also allowed their children to possess television sets in their bedroom. So these parents would neglect to use media mediation to guide their children's television program viewing.

2.3 THE TELEVISION RATING SYSTEM AND RESPONSES FROM AUDIENCES

Younger audiences tended to have more positive opinions and applications of the rating system than the older audiences. However, there was the same understanding and knowledge level of the ratings across all ages and genders (Greenberg, Hnilo & Ver Steeg, 1998). The researcher questioned the subjects, who

were 462 students from 4th, 8th and 10th grades in one urban school, 52% female and 48% male. They found that the younger the respondents were, the more attention and positive thoughts they paid toward the rating. To measure the understanding of television rating system, they provided the respondents 12 items to inquire about the information contained in the rating label and which show contained which rating. The items were scored either correct or incorrect and the scores of the students indicated the total score of correct answers. On average the students answered 6 items out of 12 questions correctly. It also revealed that the score were equivalent across all age groups and between the girls and the boys.

When emphasizing the parental position, parental awareness was declining and an understanding of rating was low. Bushman (2003), explored in the paper *Media Ratings for Violence and Sex; Implication for Policymakers and Parents* researched by the implementation of the media rating system, parents' use and evaluation of them and impact of the rating on children. In their paper, they used meta-analysis to review 69 research papers and studies conducted on the relationship of media ratings and parent application. For parental awareness and understanding, their finding showed that parents had low awareness and inadequate understanding of the rating. Investigating parent attitude of TV rating, the researchers found parents satisfaction with the rating but they preferred the descriptive rating to the aged-based one. This problem has been resulted in the media industry not providing the meanings in full detail for each rating, or the meanings were provided in an inconvenient place. Moreover, they also learnt that the drawback of media rating was attractive to children especially on older ones.

Miller (2004), director of Children & the Media Program of Children Now, gave testimony before the Senate Commerce Committee answering three questions with regard to the TV rating use of parents. Firstly to answer if parents were currently using the rating system, he cited polls conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation in 2004 that only half of parents said they used the TV rating and 25% of them claimed that they used it often. The second question to explore whether the rating accuracy was reliable for parents, he claimed that it was not because 40% of parents thought

that the content-based rating did not accurately reflect its contents. The aged-based rating reliability was not highly acceptable particularly for TV-PG and TV-14 in parents for 8-to-12 year-olds and 13-to-17 year-olds at 25% and 10% respectively. Finally, the third question asked if the media industry has done enough to support the ratings, the answer was again no. He recommended three tasks that the media industry should do. There were to provide more descriptive and accurate information, to increase parental awareness by showing the rating through out the course of the program and to use digital technology to provide more information to parents.

2.4 RELATED STUDY

In *Validity Test of Movie, Television and Video-Game Ratings* by Walsh and Gentile (2001), the researchers tested the validity of ratings by conducting a panel study. They gave a sample of the KidScore media evaluation system to evaluate media products, including television programs in 10 aspects i.e. amount of violence, portrayal of violence, the extent to which the fear may cause fear in children etc. The result was that when the media industry labeled the programs as inappropriate for children, the parents agreed with the rating that the media industry gave to inappropriate programs for children.