

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter is divided into 5 parts: 1) a summary of the study, 2) a summary of the findings, 3) discussions of parents' understanding and application of the television rating system 4) conclusions, and 5) recommendations for further research.

#### **5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY**

The television rating system was adopted in Thailand in 2006 as per the demand of concerned parents about their children being influenced by unhealthy TV programs. Parents are subject to this voluntary system as they have the potential to guide their children watching behaviors.

##### **5.1.1 Objectives of the Study**

The study of the parents' understanding and application of the television rating system: a survey of parents in the Bangkok area aims to investigate the understanding and application of parents toward television rating.

##### **5.1.2 Subjects, Materials, and Procedures**

The subjects used in this study were 159 parents living in the Bangkok area who were somewhat related to children living together in the family. The randomly sampled respondents were required to respond to a self-administered questionnaire containing five parts or groups of questions regarding demographics, rating understanding, usage, attitude toward rating system and comments. They were found in food courts in department stores or market places in various areas of Bangkok. All data received from the study were analyzed by the SPSS Version 12 program.

#### **5.2 SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS**

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

### **5.2.1 General Information Result**

From the study, it was found that the respondents' were 35 fathers, 55 mothers, 22 siblings, 44 relative guardians and 3 non-relative guardians. There were parents of 0-6 year old children, 6-12 year old children and 12-18 year old children. Moreover, two major groups of parents possessed Matthayom 6 degree or equivalent and Bachelor degree. Most of parents co-watched TV programs with their children and did not allow their children to have a television in child's bedroom.

### **5.2.2 Parents' Understanding and Application Result**

It was noticeable that parents had an understanding of the rating Dor Dek, Nor Nhu 13 and Thor Taharn as a majority of them could give correct answers, while they did not do well in questions asking about Gor Gai and Chor Ching. There was no relationship between the parents level of education and understanding levels reported.

In general, respondents applied the television rating system to control their children's television watching behaviour. They review the rating, use the rating to assist them to choose program, introduce a program with the appropriate rating, check the rating before allowing or prohibiting their child to watch, discuss it with their child, explain the meaning, teach their child to use ratings to select the programs, explain the reasons about a particular program receiving a particular rating and stop their child in the middle of it if they found the program was not appropriately rated.

The average percentage of parents' usage of television ratings was slightly different according to their children's ages group as the parents of 6-12 year old children were the most frequent rating users. Moreover, parents who allowed children to have televisions in the bedroom used ratings to control their children less than the parents who do not permit their children to watch television by themselves.

The result shows that parents who co-watched used the rating system at the “Always” level higher than for parents who did not co-watch. However, most of the parents used the “Sometime” level.

### **5.2.3 Parents’ Attitudes toward the Television Rating System**

The respondents had positive attitudes toward the rating system in all its aspects. They felt that the rating contributed to parents’ decision making, accurate, reliable, easy to understand and the description below the label was useful.

### **5.2.3 Parents’ Comments on the Television Rating System**

The parents who answered this questionnaire marked their comments on the rating system. They recommended the most urgent issue for improvement was to publicize the idea of the rating system; following by an improvement in the label’s appearance, increase the period of appearance while the program is on air and the description given in the label.

## **5.3 DISCUSSIONS**

This section concerns how the findings of the study match earlier researches. Therefore, the discussions are as follows:

This research addressed several issues relating to the understanding and application of parents toward the television rating system. The researcher aimed to find out if any factors resulted from those two aspects.

The results showed that the parents had average levels of understanding of the television rating. More than half of the answers were correct and represented a good understanding of the rating labels of the total of five labels tested. Even though, they did not perform well about the rating Gor Gai (ㄱ) and Chor Ching (ㄷ), as they are

unfamiliar with the rating for particular programs. The rating Gor Gai recommended programs for preschool children while Chor Ching, was given to the programs inappropriate all for 18 years old and younger. These two labels were not seen regularly in prime time programs and they were broadcast in the early morning for Gor Gai rating programs and late at night for Chor Ching rated shows. Parent's educational background had no influence on the an accurate interpretation of the labels. To compare this study with previous research *Young Viewers Responses to Television Program Rating* (Greenberg et al, 1998), this study also showed no significant diversity between understanding levels and educational background of the parents. On the other hand, the lowest education group of parents, below Mattayom 6 gained, the highest percentage of correct answers compared to others. Markedly, parents who possessed the highest degree of education, higher than Bachelor, paid less attention to the correct meaning of the labels. Therefore, personally, the researcher implied that television rating was a current issue and the label of each rating was not too difficult to understand for public in general. Moreover, the result in those parents with high education answered the questionnaire may be from the assumption in that parents who paid less attention to the issue. They jumped to the conclusion of the rating meaning by predicting from the label images. So it depends on the attention that individual paying toward the issue.

The overall application that parents have been using the television rating system was at an average level. Because the 10 items, questioning with regards to the usage of the television rating, included the "Sometime" level in the Likert scale. The parents likely selected that degree of usage most. The most applicable mean of usage for the respondents was to talk to their children with regards to the rating. To compare this finding to the previous research, the active approach which is to discuss the television program with the children had a positive association which increased awareness of the negative effects of television on both parents and child (e.g. Barkins, 2006 & Nathasan, 2001). This indicates the likelihood of more practical means to protect children from inappropriate content based on the concerns of parents and child audiences about the harm of inadequate television control. However, parents did not pay high attention to selecting the appropriately rated programs for their children

which can be interpreted as the restrictive mediation method. The implication of this finding is that parents in the Bangkok area preferred to exercise the active media mediation by discussing the rating with their children in order to control their television viewing behaviour.

When focusing on the age group of children and their parents application of the rating to control their television watching behaviour, this research found differently from previous research, *Young Viewers Responses to Television Program Rating* (1998). Parents, in this study, happened to use it most when they had children aged 6 – 12 years old. This may be a resulted that children at this age were keen to watch television more than other age groups and were able to understand the rating system more than others. So parents were more concerned with this group. Another possible factor was in that the youngest age range, in this research 0-6 year old which referred to the ages categorized by each rating, it may be impossible for parents to discuss or apply the rating to control the children since they were so young. Nevertheless, the broad age range divided may not support an accurate result in this.

Regarding the influence of television in a child bedroom and their parents usage of the rating, this research revealed that parents who allow their children to watch television separately in the bedroom happened to use ratings less. The findings in response the same trend from previous research presented parents who allowed children to use television in their own bedrooms, would accordingly pay less attention to using any kind of media mediation, a voluntary rating considered as one of those (Barkins, 2006) This may be the result of fewer opportunities in which parents and children may have communication if they are co-watching. Therefore, this research finding shows that the parents who co-watch with their children use rating at always level more than parents who did not co-watch.

Parents in Bangkok responded that the descriptions provided below the rating labels were ineffective. Additionally, parents provided their comments regarding the criteria in which the Thai voluntary rating system should be urgently improved which was to publicize information about the system. Similarly, in the comments marked by

the respondents in previous similar research saying the media industry did not provide meanings in full detail for each rating, or the meanings were provided in inconvenient places (Bushman, 2003). Even though, this study did not include reasons supporting parents' comments on this, the more publicizing would increase the appreciation and understanding of parents had toward rating system.

#### **5.4 CONCLUSIONS**

- From this research finding, the conclusion can be drawn that parents in the Bangkok area had an average understanding and application of the television rating system which was introduced to Thai society in 2006.
- Their backgrounds of education did not impact the understanding they had of the system but individual interest like their children ages or their watching behaviour did.
- The public relations for the rating system should be in practiced more.

#### **5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This research was only analyzing data in terms of frequency and not including of personal opinions which can only be collected by face to face interviews of the parents. If this is possible it would help in supporting the accuracy of the data and comments. Moreover, during the time that this research was conducted, the rating system of the label was changed slightly and there was no official announcement of it. So if a next study would be conducted in the future, there should be information and comments collected from the Department of Public Relations of Thailand in order to balance the two sided of opinions: the rating establisher and the audience.