

Television Viewing and Academic Achievement: An Analysis of Research Trends

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Abstract

Over the last six decades the interconnection between television viewing and children's academic achievement has been researched copiously producing contrasting findings. Many factors such as time spending on television viewing, type of programme, cultural settings, academic environment, family norms and demographic variables are found to predict the association between television use and academic achievement in different ways. This paper reviews the past studies to explore the trends in research tradition as well as the fluctuating nature of the predictors. This review reveals that extreme use of television among children has negative impact on their academic performance irrespective of the socio cultural settings where the studies were conducted. More so it is found that most studies underline that educational programmes are positively associated with children's performance at the schools. Parent's education, socioeconomic status and television content were also identified as main indicators influencing students' performance.

Keywords

Television, academic achievement, television and children, media effect studies

Introduction

Television plays a vital role in children's lives, especially in their academic performance and behaviour. Studies on influence of television produced results of

positive and negative effect leading to arguments that support total rejection of television from human life or embracing it as fruitful learning apparatus. This conflicting nature of the relationship between television viewing and academic achievement, and other variables such as age, home environment and the like are complex, multidimensional and inconclusive (Beentjes & Voort, 1988). This paper summarizes the past studies on television and academic achievement. It includes television viewing spending time, television content, family environment etc.

Identification of the literature

The relevant literature on television and academic achievement were obtained from the e-journal repository of the CHMK Library, University of Calicut. The studies were retrieved from repositories such as Sage Journals, Oxford Journals and Taylor and Francis Online using two main keywords – Television and Academic achievement. 21 papers directly related to television and academic achievements were selected for the review.

Table 1 details the features of the study including author, year and location, sample profile, measurement systems and key findings.

Summary of studies on television and academic achievement

Author/Location	Respondents	Instruments	Findings
Michael Morgan and Larry Gross (1980) new jersey	625 students (48%male & 52%female, 6-8 grade)	CAT (California Achievement Test), Interview	Television viewing adversely affects the academic achievement and IQ
Jigisha Shastri a & Prerana Mohite (1997), Baroda, India	727 (382 boys & 345 girls) 2-4 grade	Questionnaire survey Teacher's rating scale (TRS) Graded Word Test (GWT) Reading Analysis Test (RAT) School Records (SR)	Moderate viewing is helpful for children's academic performance and selected cognitive skills.

Stephen J. Caldas & Carl Bankston (1999) USA	42000 (African-American & White students)	Examination score	TV viewing has a Moderate negative effect on the academic achievement of whites and has no effect on the African American.
Stephen J. Caldas & Carl Bankston (1999) USA	42000 (10grade students)	Examination score	Television viewing has a moderate negative effect on the academic achievement of the advantaged group (Whites), but has no positive effect on the achievement of the disadvantaged group (African-Americans)
Varghese Nellisseri (2001) India (Kerala)	300 (156 boys & 142 girls)	Questionnaire survey	Television does not seriously affect the academic achievement of children
Suman Verma and Reed W. Larson (2002) India	100 middle class Indian families	Questionnaire survey	TV viewing of middle class Indian youth is typically a relaxed antidote to stresses of the day that they share with the family
Marina M Pool, Cees M Koolstra, & Tom H A van der voort (2003) Netherlands	160 (80 boys & 80 girls) 8 grade	Experimental method	background television is more likely to interfere with homework performance than background radio
Dimitri A. Christakis, Michelle M Garrison & Frederick J Zimmerman (2004) USA	Child care centre directors (N=2089) & home based child care	CATI (computer assisted telephone interviewing)	Early exposure to television was too associated with subsequent attention problems of children.

	providers (N=583)		
Elizabeth A Vandewater, David S Bickham (2004) USA	310 children	Questionnaire Survey	family conflict negatively and educational media use positively influences the children's reading skills
B R Shejwal and Joy Purayidathil (2006) India (Maharashtra)	654 higher secondary students (368 boys & 286 girls)	Questionnaire survey	Excessive television viewing is harmful for student's academic achievement
Sarem ozdemir (2006) Turki	250 (children and adolescents)	Questionnaire survey	Children and adolescents are spending the majority of their time with television. And Mostly they esteem a character and want to act like their famous character.
Carl Erik Landhuis, Richie Poulton, David Welch and Robert John Hancox (2007) New Zealand	1037 children	Psychometric assessment & Composite measure of television viewing	Excessive television viewing may lead to children and adolescence attention problems
Natascha Notten and Gerbert Kraaykamp (2009) Netherland	345,967 students from 53 countries	Questionnaire, International students assessment report	Home media can influence both positively and negatively on science performance of the children.
Rahila P Gowon (2009) Nigeria	100 students	Survey & Experimental design	Television and radio have a positive influence on speaking

			skill of students but no effect on writing skill
Iman Sharif, Thomas A. Wills & James D. Sargent (2010) Wilmington	6486 youth (10 - 14 years.)	Telephone survey	Screen exposure time and content had adverse effect on school performance
M.S. Farooq, AH Chaudhry, M Shafiq & G Berhanu (2011) Pakistan	600 students from 10 th grade. (300 male & 300 female)	A questionnaire survey	Higher level of socio economic status is the best indicator contributing towards the quality of academic achievement of the students.
Nicola A. Conners-Burrow and Lorraine M. McKelvey (2011) Canada	92 low income pre-kindergarten age children	Survey (parents reports media viewing habits) and Interview (teacher reports classroom behaviour)	Viewing of inappropriate content was associated with higher hyperactivity and aggression scores and lower social skills rating, where as the amount of viewing was not related to these class room outcomes
Nicole Martins and Kristen Harrison (2012) USA	396 White and Black preadolescent boys and girls.	longitudinal panel survey	Television consumption has a great impact on children's self-esteem.
Anilkumar Verma and Ram Kalap Tiwari (2012), Faizabad, India	100 students of class 6-8 grade (50 boys & 50 girls)	Media status Questionnaire, us of media (daily diary), Annual examination score	Excessive television viewing is dangerous to the scholastic performance of the school students
Ravi Kant (2012) Bihar, India	400 students (CBSE 200 & UP board 200) 100 lower and	Verbal test of creativity & TV viewing habit Questionnaire	Creativity and TV viewing was positive overall, but insignificant

	100 higher students		
Avosa Arthur Ahinda, Zadock Obuchere Murundu, Michael Okello Okwara, Benson Chrles Odongo&Joel Okutoyi (2014) Kenya	40 teachers and 132 parents from 20 pre-schools	Questionnaire survey	Television viewing has a harmful effect on both academic performance and language acquisition of pre- school children

Television viewing has an important role in everyday activities of children since they spend more time watching television than any other activity except sleeping. American children, ages 2-17, watch television on an average of 25 hours per week or 3.5 hours a day. Almost one in five watch more than 35 hours TV each week (Gentile & Walsh, 2002). Children watch an average of 2.2 hours per day at age one and 3.6 hours per week at the age of three. And early exposure to television was too associated with subsequent attention problems in children (Christakis et al., 2004). Ozdemir (2006) found that children and adolescents are spending most of their time in front of the Television. African-American students watch television more than their White counterparts (Caldas & Bankston, 1999).

Conners-Burrow & McKelvey (2011) shows that children watch television more than three hours a day and most of them are watching cartoon programmes. Time spent on television viewing and creativity of high achiever students was negatively related. They spent more than two hours per day for watching television. In case of low achiever students, there is a positive relationship between spending time to watch TV and creativity. Television viewing helps low achiever students to collect all types of information and it enhances both their learning and creativity (Ravi Kant, 2012). Arya (2004) found that, children watch an average of 1-3 hours in a day and television increases the knowledge value of the children.

Television programme and academic achievement

Sometimes Television content also influences the academic performance of the students. Screen exposure time and content had adverse effect on school performance and it had an indirect effect on poor school performance through its increased sensation seeking. Heavy viewing had an indirect effect on poor school performance through its increased school behavior problems (Shariff et al., 2010). One longitudinal study (Anderson et al., 2001) reveals that adolescents who have watched educational programme as Pre-Schoolers have a positive effect on their grades, behaviour, creativity and social behaviour during later years.

Wright et al. (2001) found that viewing child audience informative programme between ages 2 and 3 predicted higher academic performances of low

income children. They also revealed that the effects of television viewing depend on program content and genre. For very young children, viewing informative programming designed for children was associated with subsequent letter-word skills, number skills, receptive vocabulary, and school readiness. Individual differences in these skills were fairly stable through the pre-school years, suggesting that early effects of viewing can be lasting. These patterns occurred in a multiethnic and multilingual sample of children from low to moderate income families, groups that may be especially likely to benefit from educational television. Vandewater and Bickham (2004) found that, family conflict negatively and educational media use positively influences the children's reading skills.

Both television programme and radio programme have a positive influence on speaking skills of students, but no effect on their writing skills. The study revealed, both Television and Radio have an important role in language development (Gowon, 2009). Homework combined with watching soap opera was found to obstruct academic performance (Pool et al., 2003).

Effect of TV viewing on academic achievement

Many researchers found that television viewing had a harmful effect on the behaviour and school performance of the students. Television viewing adversely affects the academic achievement and IQ (Morgan & Gross, 1980). Shejwal and Purayidathil (2006) revealed that excessive media use of students especially, television viewing affect the academic growth. Heavy television viewing leads to poor performance compared to low viewers. Time spending for television was dangerous to language skills in students, and also it dangerous to the scholastic performance of the school students (Verma & Tiwari, 2012).

Both childhoods television viewing and adolescence television viewing independently predicts attention problems in adolescence and excessive television viewing may lead to attention problems in children and adolescence (Landhuis et al., 2007). Television viewing has a harmful effect on both academic performance and language acquisition of pre- school children (Ahinda et al., 2014).

Television's impact on reading and other academic skills depends not only on the amount of television watched, but also on what is being watched as well as the age of the child (Reinking, 1990). There was no evidence for negative effect of television on school achievement (Gaddy, 1986). Shastri and Mohite (1997) have found moderate viewing is helpful for children's academic performance and selected cognitive skills. Television does not seriously affect the academic achievement of children (Nelliseri, 2001). Kant (2012) found, for low achiever students, there is a positive relationship between spending time for television viewing and creativity. Television viewing helps low achiever students to collect all types of information and it enhances both their learning and creativity. Media assets can influence the science performance of the students and television improves the knowledge level (Notten & Kraaykamp, 2009). Television can be used to change

and reinforce attitudes of high school students towards their education, as well as a wide variety of other topics (Mullings, 2012).

Duration of TV viewing had a direct role in causing headache and eye strain; but it had no significant effect on sleep disturbances and school performance (Reddy & Sashidhar, 2013).

Urban girls watch television more than urban boys (Verma & Tiwari, 2012). Television consumption has a great impact on children's self esteems. Television increases the knowledge value of the children. Males had better knowledge value than females (Martin & Harrison, 2011). Heavy viewers of television were poor, compared to light viewers in their academic achievement and mathematical reasoning. Significant gender differences were noted both in academic achievement and mathematical reasoning (Shejwal & Purayidathil, 2006).

Family and Academic Achievement

Television viewing of middle class Indian youth is typically a relaxed cure to the stresses of the day that they share with their families (Verma & Larson, 2002). Relationships between the family environment, TV viewing and low-level activity are complex, and these behaviors are quite distinct. The study revealed that, parent's television viewing was positively associated with their children's television viewing (Salmon et al., 2005). Family influence is found to be stronger than the effect of TV on children (Nelliseri, 2001). Family conflict was the powerful stress in children's lives, reading skills and educational media use (Vandewater & Bickham, 2004).

Adolescents' television viewing rate is related to their parents' television viewing rate and is higher when mother were unemployed (Verma & Larson, 2002). Higher level of socio economic status and parent's education is the best indicator contributing towards the quality of academic achievement of the students (Farooq et al., 2011).

Discussion and Conclusion

Studies on television viewing and academic achievement reveal the gaps exist in the literature. Many researches were conducted to find out the relations between television viewing and academic achievement. But all conclusions were different. Some studies found television has a positive effect and others found it had a negative effect on academic achievement of the students.

There is no doubt that, television highly influences the children. Literature showed that children spent most of their free time in front of television. And they watched TV more than two hours a day. The studies found that television had positive and negative effects on academic achievement. On the other hand, some studies revealed that there was no relationship between television and academic

achievement. Many studies observed that there was no clear evidence to harmful effect of television on academic achievement. Programme content was the important factor for influencing academic performance. Educational programmes positively influenced the academic achievement of the students. Parent's education, socio economic status etc. had an important role in the academic performance of children. In short, these reviews reveal that controlled viewing will enhance academic performance.

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