

Children TV Watching Habits: A Case Study of Pakistan

Abstract: *This research article deals with the TV viewing habits of children and their effects. The study was based on a survey research technique to explore and investigate the Children's TV programs effects. The sample size for this research study was 500 children belonging to different age groups and studying in different schools and colleges in Bahawalpur. Therefore, the population of the study was children studying in Bahawalpur. A close-ended questionnaire was used for data collection. Children who have aged between 3 to 6 and are unable to fill out the questionnaire. Their parents were asked to fill in the questions according to their habits of watching different TV programs related to children. The data were analyzed through SPSS. The exclusive analysis of the data reveals that the overall majority of children watch TV programs for 2 to 4 hours a day. The empirical analysis of the data reveals that overall majority of the children agree that their parents guide them on which program to watch and which is not. It is also worth noting that overall majority of the children are of the view that entertainment TV programs for children increase their healthy relationship with their parents.*

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Key Words: Children's TV Programs, Watching Habits, Parental Control, Screen Time, Heavy Viewing, Parental Guidance, Co-watching, Healthy relation with Parents, TV Best Source of Entertainment

Introduction

Today all children and houses under five have access to a variety of television programs through video content, Netflix and amazon. YouTube is enjoying fame among preschoolers and youth equally. YouTube is the favourite app for children under five. YouTube is competing with CBeebies, Nickelodeon and Disney. The British government has decided to invest £60 million in children's TV

to compete with YouTube channels. YouTube channels are competing with children's media multinationals equally. Although; there is criticism raised on YouTube Kids' programs.

Government funding for children's TV programming has decreased in past years. However; children's programming has a choice of a large number of series available. The Children's Media Industry has been distributed in all areas

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of the world due to the availability of YouTube channels. The digital revolution brought limitless choices for children's entertainment content that has been available ever before. Keith Chapman the originator of the popular hit series Paw Patrol says it's difficult to produce something hit in the contemporary age due to the availability of numerous channels, streams and shows. Now it is harder to dominate the market and generate a billion dollars from a hit program.

The government's support and growth of homegrown content help accelerate the availability of quality content. This optimistic aspect is attached to technological empowerment.

The advancement of technology makes the parents responsibility to be more vigilant in the selection of content. The parents should control, guide and monitor content selection. They must be keen on learning about their children from media programs and the presented world available around them. (TV Online and on-demand: Children's Changing Viewing habits in the digital age).

A report has reported that children have become vigilant in the use of advanced technologies. It's expected that sooner all preschool children will have their personal connected tablets, phones, PCs and laptops. Besides, the technological advancement and availability of web and YouTube Channels. It's surprising that children one to four are increasing their TV-watching time. They are consuming TV 3 hours a day regularly (CHILD WISE Pre-school Report 2018).

Preschool children are spending their maximum quality time in front of a screen instead of the real world which affects their imaginative play, interpersonal interactions, physical activity and conversation with parents and peers. All the above mention activities strengthen physical and mental development. Screen time affects language development severely. Language growth is strengthened by a conversation with parents, caregivers and peers. (Wooldridge & Shapka, 2012).

It's the parent's responsibility to keep a check that their children are not exposed to appropriate content. Because; they are unable to process that information. Children should be protected to

view sexual, violent and problematic content. It's only possible through parental control. TV can prove a useful tool if it will be used in a beneficial way. It can bring fruitful results if used in a controlled manner. Parents should watch TV with their children. They will come to know what kinds of topics and themes are encountered by the children (Parental Control: Keeping Your Children Safe When Watching).

Literature Review

Nielson Media Research has reported that children and teenagers spent 3 hours in front of the TV daily. Another research study revealed that 32% of 2-7 years old children and 65% of eight to eighteen years old have TV sets in their personal bedrooms. TV watching affects healthy activities like reading, exercise and play.

John and Michael (2014) describe that TV watching habit has a negative effect on adolescents. It makes them desensitized towards the suffering of others. The negative effects of children's TV-watching practice are related to screen time duration, Individuals children's academic performance and their relationship with associates. It was acclaimed that more than 20 hours of children's TV weekly watching results in negative effects on a tiny audience.

Anjum (2004) has informed that the development of cable TV altered the watching habits of teens. They watch TV for entertainment. They do not have any learning intention behind this activity. But; they prefer to avoid immoral and obscenity in content. Although; this TV-watching habit brings positive results in teens. It affects their conversation and healthy relationship with their parents. Youth get exposure to different social classes and social and political issues.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (2001) has suggested that children above two years old should not watch TV for 1 to 2 hours daily. Whereas; children under the age of 2 must have restrictions over TV screen exposure. It's a critical time for children's brain development that effects by screen exposure (The American Academy of Paediatrics, 2001). The research resulted that TV watching habit alters sleep patterns. It makes children excited at night. Exposure to screens increases melatonin

chemical flow in the brain which makes children hyper at night and creates insomnia. (Thompson & Christakis, [2005](#)) (Higuchi, Motohashi, Liu, Ahara, & Kaneko, [2003](#)).

Peter et, al, (1991), described that parents' TV-watching habits influence children TV watching behaviour. The advancement of technology declined TV-watching habits. The encouraging parent's children prefer to watch informative programs. The children of critical parents watched fewer entertainment programs. The encouraging parents prefer to co-view with their children. Parents watching habit, content selection and direction results in the growth of informative content watching with or without parents.

Television Family and Community Development Committee (2000) informed that TV programming cannot be charged by its user as moral or immoral. The outcomes are related to how this medium is employed by the user. Children are not passive in TV-watching habits. They are active and enthusiastic in program selection and keenly watch. They select programs according to their choice. The children's TV-watching habit is associated with a family environment, social class, and family norms. These early years of children's TV-watching habits identify the future consumption pattern of TV medium in their adult age. The sibling and parents are creating meaning for this activity. A child relates their activity with their elders. The working mother-child watches fewer TV programs as compared to housewives.

Kaiser family foundation informed that parents are showing their toddlers to television at a very early age in spite of the AAP's recommendations. Wakefield, et al.,([2003](#)) reported that in the USA an average teen spends 2.5 hours in front of the TV daily.

Livingstone ([2002](#)) discovered that children aged 6 to 8 years old are busy with TV-watching practice. This watching habit affects their social development. It is their parent's responsibility to check them and engage them in productive and physical activities like clubs and games etc. They must have exposure to socialization practices outside their home.

James & Tamara, ([2009](#)) described that there is parental control instruction for the portrayal of

TV programs rating, "TV -Y", TV-Y7, TV-G, TV_PG, TV-14 and TV-M. A study was conducted on 203 grade 4th and 5th children. They have come to know that children have no information about these rating codes. The girls are watching age-appropriate programming. They follow their parent's instructions in program selection. The children of careless parents watch less TV as compared to concerned parents. Parents can control their children's screen time if children are wasting their excessive time watching practice. This habit can be controlled by parents' bonding and control. The parents must focus to change the family relationship and family environment (Pearson et.al, [2011](#)).

Chiu et, al, ([2017](#)) reported that unnecessary TV watching results in undesirable mental & physical development, health and behaviour. This research has scrutinised the effects of an infant's TV exposure and parents' watching habit that influences grown-up age. The study was conducted over 18577 babies aged 18 to 66 months babies born in the Taiwan Birth Cohort study (2005). The study has focused on infants' TV-watching habits. 'Multinomial logistic regression' was employed to study the effect of parents' TV-watching habits on their children's TV-watching lines. The ratio of children decreasing into the TV-watching paths that were recognized was low (20%), increasing (46.5%) and high (33.5%). Children's TV-watching habit is strongly linked to gender, parents' financial status, Parents' qualification, and restrictions on children's TV-watching practice. The study revealed that the children's amount of TV watching is linked with infants' and parents' TV-watching practice and restricted exposure to TV in the infancy period.

Garey, ([2021](#)) describes the importance of 'co-viewing', 'role modelling', and 'active viewing'. The parents should engage children in a dialogue about what they are seeing on screen. It should be discussed after watching the experience for a long-lasting impression on their mind. The parents can use the strategy to ask an open-ended question during TV watching habit and pause the play to ask the questions from children what they were viewing. Parents should try to create interactive relationships with their

children. When parents watch TV with their kids and start a dialogue about the program. They involve their children in a discussion by asking a different questions. This phenomenon is called co-viewing. It means that you are watching the same show. The parent's behaviour should be polite in this co-viewing habit. They should not be assertive, harsh and dominating. They must start a role-playing discussion about the broadcasted program. Parents should guide their children that what kind of TV programs chosen to watch that promote the lesson of kindness. Because; the children start to imitate the character's behaviour and dialogues they used to watch in their favourite programs like Peg +Cat. This educational program not only teaches about figures and shapes. It is also imparting how children should manage stress in any challenging situation. She starts counting in backward 5,4,3,2,1. The message is delivered about 'emotional self-regulation'. The parents informed that children not only learn counting from this program but they also imitated the 'technique of self-regulation.

Significance of the Study

This research study will explore the importance of children's TV-watching habits. The time children spend in front of the TV. What kind of results are produced with this watching activity? Is it strengthening behaviour or results in deterioration of character? TV-watching time duration affects behaviour in a positive or negative manner. The importance of parental control over screen time. The parents must direct their children during watching practice. The parents' co-viewing with children can bring the best results. The importance of TV with technological advancement that how this box is competing with advanced gadgets.

Objectives of the Study

This research study will explore the following Objectives:

- Children's TV Watching habit.
- The time duration children spend in TV watching practice.
- Parental Control on TV screen time.

- Are children aware that more than 2 hours of TV watching habit results in behavioural and psychological problems?
- Importance of parent's guidance in children's TV watching habit.
- Is children's TV co-watching with parents results in a healthy relationship with parents?
- Children's TV programs are the best source of entertainment.

Theoretical Frame Work

The theoretical framework provides a base to study any problem. The researcher finds the answer to the raised problem. The researcher accumulates data in light of a particular theoretical framework. He discards information that is beyond his selected theoretical parameter. Therefore; the theoretical framework provides guidelines, and boundary and restrict the researcher on the focus of analysis. This research study is investigated in light of social learning theory. The social learning theory was presented by Albert Bandura. He states that between the exposure to stimulus and response certain factors play an important role like attention, the mediation process, the duration of exposure and willingness to adopt or reject a certain action or behaviour. Children are influenced by TV exposure. They imitate the watching habits of their parents and siblings. They prefer to select the kind of programs watched by their siblings and parents. The use of TV media and the adoption of positive or negative behaviour is strongly related to a child's parents' concerns, social class and socioeconomic status. (Bandura & Walters ,1977).

Research Methodology

Research methods can be different in their procedures in different conditions and situations. Though, procedures and steps in all research studies have a shared property known as a scientific process which makes the work not only logical but also standard and verifiable to the research community.

The populace for this research study was children learning in different schools in Bahawalpur city. The sample size for this particular research study was 500 participants belonging to diverse age groups i.e. (3-6),(6-

12),(13-19). The researchers selected famous cartoon programs broadcast on TV channels like Nickelodeon, Nick Jr, Teen Nick, and Nick Toon. The researchers used the probability sampling method to collect data from an appropriate sample. A consistent questionnaire was designed as a tool for data collection which is based on an open-ended and Likert Scale style method. It is

also worth mentioning that the children between the age of 3 to 6 was unable to fill out or responds to the questionnaire, therefore, their parents were selected as participants for the purpose of 'validity and reliability in the research. Additionally, the composing data was scrutinized by using SPSS software to find implications.

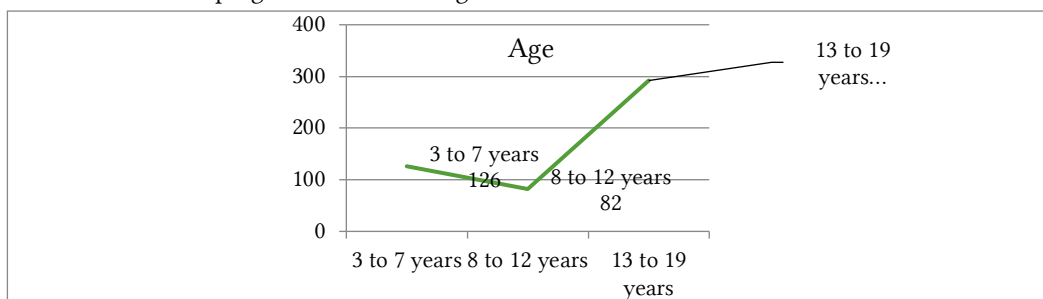
Results

Table 1. Presenting Data about Gender Contributed in Survey. (n=500)

Category	Response
Male	45.8% (229)
Female	54.2% (271)

Table 1 shows the data about children respondents who contributed to the survey. The total sample N= 500 contributed cumulatively to survey research to know the watching habit of children's TV programs. According to

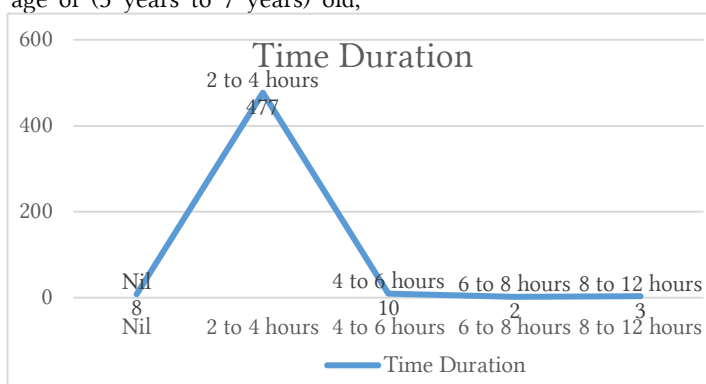
investigation outcomes collectively 229 children are male, while; 271 participants are female. The fraction lies (45.8%) male participants and 54.2% females.



Graph 1: Presenting Data about the Age Group of Respondents

Figure 1 is presenting data about different age groups that contributed to the survey. According to results inference (25.2%) of 126 contributors belongs to the age of (3 years to 7 years) old,

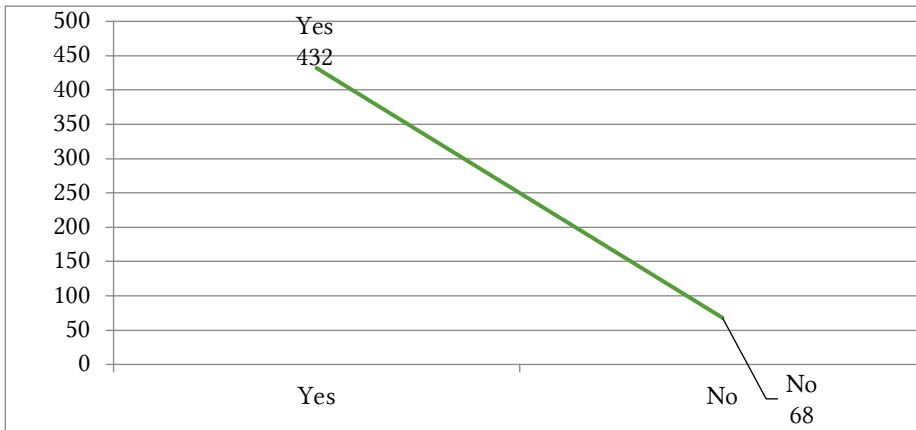
(16.4%) of 82 contributors are (8 to 12 years) old, however ; (58.4%) of 292 respondents belong to (the 13 to 19 Years) age group.



Graph 2: Presenting the Time Duration Children Watch TV Entertainment Programs Every day.

Figure 2 the overhead symbol is presenting the time period in that children watch television entertainment programs daily. Conferring to results 417 (83.4%) children watch 2 to 4 hours of television entertainment programs daily, 10

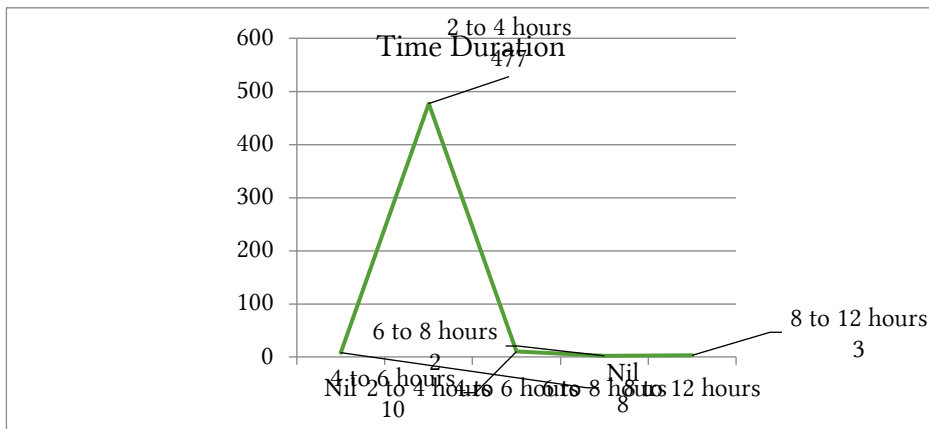
children (2%) watch 4 to 6 hours of television entertaining programs daily, 2 children watching 6 to 8 hours and left over 3 children watching 8 to 12 hours TV entertaining programs daily. They are in danger due to extreme watching habit



Graph 3: Displaying Info about Children’s Habit of Watching Television Entertainment Programs.

Figure 3 presents the watching habit of children's television entertaining programs. The findings discovered that 432 (86.4%) kids from the random

sample used to watch television entertainment programs and the leftover 68 (13.6%) don't watch children's television entertaining programs



Graph 4: Displaying the Time Duration Children Watch TV Entertainment Programs Daily.

Figure 4 The above figure is showing the time duration that children watch television entertainment programs daily. Conferring to results 417 (83.4%) children watch 2 to 4 hours of TV entertaining programs daily, 10 children (2%)

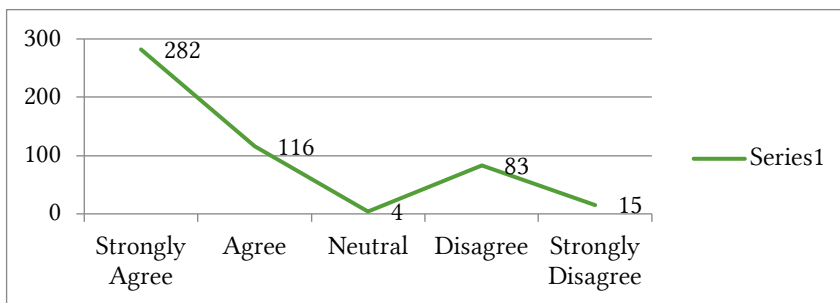
view 4 to 6 hours of television entertainment programs daily, 2 children watch 6 to 8 hours and the remaining 3 children watching 8 to 12 hours TV entertaining programs every day. They are in danger due to excessive watching habits.

Table 2. Directs Parent's Control of Screen Time over Children's TV Entertainment Watching Practice. (n=500)

Category	Response
Yes	92.0% (460)
No	8.0% (40)

Table 2 presents the parent's control of screen time of children for watching TV entertaining programs; 460 (92%) children communicated that their parents have control over their TV-

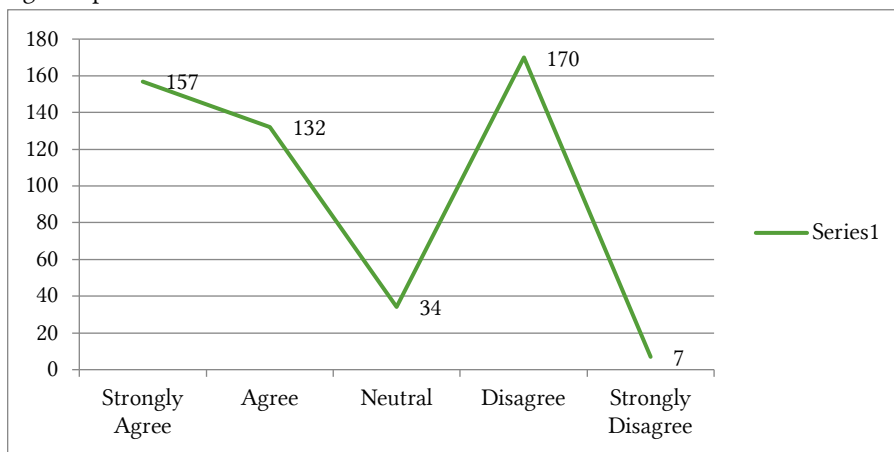
watching habit and left over 40 (8%) children expressed that their parents do not notice their children TV watching duration.



Graph 5: TV Viewing More than Two Hours Generates 'Behavioral and Psychological Problems'.

Figure 5 is showing results of the total sample populace for the statement that more than two hours of TV viewing creates behavioural and psychological problems. From the total 500

children 282 (56.4%) strongly agree with the declaration, 116 (23.2%) children only agree and 83 (16.6%) disagree with the asked account.



Graph 6: Children's Requirement of 'Parental Guidance' in Watching Kids TV Programs.

Figure 6 Presenting response of the total sample populace for the variable parental direction needed in viewing some of the children's TV programs. From the total 500 children, 282 (56.4%) children strongly agree with the

statement, 116 (23.2%) children agree, and 83 (16.6%) disagree with the ideology that they have required any parental supervision in TV watching activity.

Table 3. Children's TV Programs Support Healthy Relationships with Parents.

Category	Response
Strongly Agree	24.6% (123)
Agree	50.8%(254)
Neutral	10.2%(51)
Disagree	12.0% (60)
Strongly Disagree	2 % (12)

Table 3 the above table is presenting response of the overall sample population towards the study that children's entertainment programs encourage a strong connection with parents.

From the total 500 samples, 123 (24.6%) children strongly agree, 254 (50.8%) agree, 51 (10.2%) are neutral, 60 (12%) disagree and 12 (2.4%) strongly disagree with the asked question.

Table 4. Children's TV Programs Confirmed as Best Source of Entertainment.

Category	Response
Strongly Agree	26.8% (134)
Agree	55.8% (279)
Neutral	7.0% (35)
Disagree	10.0% (50)
Strongly Disagree	.4% (2)

Table 4 the overhead table is presenting answers to the total sample populace for the statement. From the total 500 samples, 134 (26.8%) children strongly agree, 279 (55.8%) agree, 35 (7%) are

neutral, 50 (10%) disagree and 2 (.4%) strongly disagree with the view that Children TV series is the best source of entertainment.

Table 5. Showing the Descriptive Statistics of Total Scale Items

S. No	Item statements	Min	Max	Mean	S. D
1	Do Your Parents control your screen time?	1	2	1.08	.272
2	Do you know that more than two hours of television watching creates behavioural and psychological problems?	1	5	2.10	1.035
3	Do you need parental guidance while; watching some of the children's television programs?	1	5	1.87	1.221
	Do children's entertainment programs increase the healthy relationship with parents?	1	5	2.08	.821

The above table 20 shows the descriptive statistics of overall scale items included in the scale. The maximum value, minimum value, average and standard deviation are discussed in the table.

Chi-Square Analysis

Showing the cross-tabulation of Association between the two Statements and the Chi-square Test for the Significance of the Relationship

Independent Variable: T.V Children Programs

Dependent Variables: TV Watching Habit, Healthy Relation with Parents, TV as Best Entertainment Source

Table 6. Parental Control on Children's Screen Time

		Do you watch children's television entertainment programs?			Chi-Square	P-value
		Yes	No	Total		
Do You feel that your parents monitor your screen time?	Yes	407	53	460	21.136	0.000
	No	25	15	40		
Total		432	68	500		

Note: Chi-Square is significant at a 1% level and there is an association among the attributes of both statements.

A chi-square test was used to investigate either child is monitored by their parents while they watch different TV programs. Table 6 reveals that overall, 407 children said that their parents always check with them which type of programs

they are watching while 53 respondents said no. The analysis of the data and chi-square results signifies the relationship between the TV-watching of children and parental control.

Table 7. Children's TV Programs Promote Healthy Relationships with Parents.

		Do you watch children's television entertainment programs?			Chi-Square	P-value
		Yes	No	Total		
Do you admit that children's TV entertainment helps in the promotion of healthy bonding with parents?	Strongly Agree	109	14	123	27.940	0.000
	Agree	231	23	254		
	Neutral	42	9	51		
	Disagree	44	16	60		
	Strongly Disagree	6	6	12		
	Total	432	68	500		

Table seven indicates that children's TV programs promote a healthy relationship with parents. The table reveals that overall 231 respondents agree that children's TV programs promote a healthy relationship with parents while 109 strongly agree and 44 respondents

disagree with that. The Chi-square test was applied to investigate the significance between TV programs and children's relationship with parents. The test signifies the relationship between children's TV programs promotes a healthy relationship with parents.

Table 8. Children's TV Programs are the Best Source of Entertainment.

		Do you watch children's television entertainment programs?			Chi-Square	P-value
		Yes	No	Total		
Do you acknowledge that children's TV series is the greatest source of entertainment?	Strongly Agree	113	21	134	4.319	0.365
	Agree	248	31	279		
	Neutral	28	7	35		
	Disagree	41	9	50		
	Strongly Disagree	2	0	2		
	Total	432	68	500		

Note: Chi-Square is not significant and there is no association among the attributes of both statements.

Table eight indicates about Children's TV programs as the best source of entertainment. The table reveals that 248 respondents agree while 113 respondents strongly agree and 41 respondents disagree. The test results rejected the statement by revealing that there is no significant relationship between children's TV programs as a source of entertainment.

Conclusion

Children's TV programs are challenged by Netflix, YouTube channels and amazon. YouTube channels have provided tough competition for Ceebies, Nickelodeon and Disney. These YouTube channels are providing a variety of choices in program selection. The multinational companies' imperialism has been distributed into different parts of the world with the introduction of these channels. The presence of sexual and violent content increased the responsibility of parents in the selection of content, control and monitoring of screen time. Children's TV programs are massively challenged by children connected Pcs and Tablets. These gadgets have provided the choice of program selection according to their interest. The parents must be keen in the selection of programs that enhance children learning. Children's TV programs effects play, conversation, word selection and language development. Research has supported that children's TV-watching habits affect language learning. The development of language is associated with interpersonal communication.

Parents should protect their children from inappropriate content. They are unable to process that information which creates stress in tiny creatures. Children's TV-watching habit can bring fruitful results through its vigilant use. The parents must control their children's screen time, promote co-viewing, and start a dialogue during watching what they have observed in the program. The presence of a TV in children's bedrooms affects their physical activity, sports, reading and exercise. Research has proven that more than 20 hours of TV watching results in desensitization of emotions, poor academic grades and healthy peer relationships. TV-watching habit brings positive effects on youth. It improves their knowledge about social classes and political issues. They learn the trendy style of

life and socialization skills. Research has proven that children younger than two years old should not expose to the TV screen. These infants are unable to process the information. It affects their mental development. Screen exposure increases the melatonin level in the brain. It makes children hyperactive and results in insomnia.

Parents' TV-watching practice affects children watching behaviour. Encouraging parents' co-viewing results in informative programs selection in their presence and absence both. Children are active in their program selection. They select programs according to their interest. Children's TV watching habit is strongly related to social class, financial status and family norms. Parents' and siblings' program selection influences children's watching habits. TV watching habit affects socialization in 6 to 8 years old children. Parents must engage their children in physical activity and sports. Children's TV programs are broadcast under parental control tagging like "TV -Y", TV-Y7, TV-G, TV_PG, TV-14 and TV-M. The children have little knowledge about them. The careless parent's children watch less TV as compared to concerned parents. Heavy TV watching results in different psychological and behavioural problems. Childhood TV-watching habits bring results in adulthood. The restricted children from TV watching become a heavy viewers.

Parents should promote co-viewing and active viewing. They must start a discussion with children about the program contents, and what they are watching. They must ask open-ended questions. Parents should avoid being harsh, asserting or dominating behaviour in co-viewing practice. The parents must ask questions about the hidden message in children's TV programs to keep them active.

A survey was conducted to explore Children's TV-watching habits in Pakistan. The data was collected from 500 children aged 3-6,7-12, and 13-19 years old. The study has provided the following facts about children's TV-watching habits.

The data about the age group of participants has revealed that (25.2%) of 126 contributors belong to the age of (3 years to 7 years) old, (16.4%) of 82 contributors are (8 to 12 years) old, however ; (58.4%) of 292 respondents belong to

(13 to 19 Years) age group. The time duration children watch TV entertainment programs every day. According to results, 417 (83.4%) children watch 2 to 4 hours of television entertainment programs daily, 10 children (2%) watch 4 to 6, and 2 children watch 6 to 8 hours and left over 3 children to watch 8 to 12 hours TV entertaining programs daily. They are in danger due to extreme watching habits. Discussing children's habit of watching TV entertainment programs. The findings discovered that 432 (86.4%) kids from the random sample used to watch television entertainment programs and the leftover 68 (13.6%) don't enjoy TV-watching activities. Parent's Control of screen time over children's TV entertainment watching Practice. Conferring to the results of the total sample populace for the statement that more than two hours of TV viewing creates behavioural and psychological problems. From the total 500 children, 282 (56.4%) strongly agree with the declaration, 116 (23.2%) children only agree and

83 (16.6%) disagree with the asked account. Children need 'Parental Guidance' in Watching Kids' TV Programs. From the total 500 children, 282 (56.4%) children strongly agree with the statement, 116 (23.2%) children agree, and 83 (16.6%) disagree with the ideology that they have required any parental supervision in TV watching activity. Children's TV programs support a healthy relationship with parents. Children's entertainment programs encourage a strong connection with parents. From the total 500 samples, 123 (24.6%) children strongly agree, 254 (50.8%) agree, 51 (10.2%) are neutral, 60 (12%) disagree and 12 (2.4%) strongly disagree with the asked question. Children's TV Programs are Confirmed as the Best Source of Entertainment. From the total 500 samples, 134 (26.8%) children strongly agree, 279 (55.8%) agree, 35 (7%) are neutral, 50 (10%) disagree and 2 (.4%) strongly disagree with the view that Children TV series is the best source of entertainment.

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