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The Relationship between Watching Television and Academic Achievement in 9th Graders Students

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between watching television and academic achievement of school going 9th-grade students in Kurdistan region of Iraq. After a brief review of some related research and programs the ground realities and problems prevails in Kurdistan region of Iraq society regarding students spending time watching television, their life will be shaped by television, and this affects their academic achievements. The researcher used a quantitative Causal-Comparative research methodology, and 240 9th graders students selected in three different schools. Non-random purposive sampling was used to collect the data. in general, this study finds that television viewing has a moderately negative effect on the academic achievement. This means the more students spent time watching Television the less grade they will achieve in their school. Finally, there are some recommendations provided that should be taken by families and educators including, watching certain programs, co-viewing, having only one television at home.

Keywords: *Academic achievement, watching television, Students, Education*

1. Introduction

Since the invention of the medium of television in the mid-1920's and its later proliferation around the world, television has become the most influential means of mass communication. As a consequence, its use has been studied, critiqued, and debated by literally thousands of scholars, including sociologists and psychologists. Few would argue that television has not radically changed the lifestyles of people and their cultures. It has changed the lifestyle of people and become a major influence on the culture. Some students use Television and an educational tool, on the other hand, some uses it as a leisure tool. In particular, televisions impact on young people has garnered the most attention by academia and has been one area of intense study and debate. In fact, there are thousands of studies about television and its impact on young children and adolescence teenagers. For example, scholars know how many hours of television children and young students' alike watch each day and how many television sets are in the average household. Moreover, they know where in the household these devices are located and much about children's access to them. They know the types of programming they view and what kinds of programming different groups prefer. According to recent studies, almost every single student in the world watches television each and every day. Nearly all students live in a home with a television set. Half of the homes have additional two or three television devices. One study claims that nearly one-third of students have a television in their own bedrooms (Rideout, Vandewater & Wartella, 2003).

Many studies like one conducted by Reeks and Walsh (n.d) maintain that watching television will increase "aggressive manners", particularly in children. For some psychologists like (Chonchaiya, & Pruksananonda, 2008) television is responsible for delayed language development in infants and lower academic achievement. Countless other studies attest to television's negative impact on children and adolescents. On the other hand, many studies like one conducted by Paavonen, Roine, Pennonen, & Lahikainest, (2009) maintain that through the proper use of educational shows offered by producers like Disney and Discovery, as well as countless others, that television can be a source of important information and improve student's academic performance. How to weigh the positive benefits of television viewing against the negative consequences of too much television "watching" is often at the center of the debate about how to use television. There are many students around the world that spend many hours watching television. There are many researchers who have shown that students waste time watching television. Moreover, they have a television in their bedrooms, and they can watch anything they want without their families' knowledge. For instance, they can watch comedy movies, sexy movies, cartoons, violent movies and educational programs or movies. Almost every single student in today's world watches television each and every day. Nearly all students live in a home with a television set. Half of the homes have an additional two or three or televisions. One-third of students have a television in their own bedrooms (Rideout, Vandewater & Wartella, 2003). According to the Reeks and Walsh's article (n.d.) watching television will increase aggressive manners,

particularly on kids. On the other hand, television provides information about the world, which will be helpful for our students to be successful in the school. In Kurdistan today almost every young child and adolescent has access to a television set. There are many programs on television that offer Kurdish students and young children educational programming like the Disney and Discovery channels and also in the Kurdistan region of Iraq channels such as Parwarda, Niga kids, palistank, Kurdmax and papula have some educational programs for our students. However, until recently there have been few if any, major studies about the effects of televisions programming on Kurdish children and adolescents. In fact, we are not sure about the how the medium of television is affecting our young people and its impact on our society at large. Although, we are aware of the major growth in television viewing and now, access to the internet, we have yet to thoroughly investigate these topics from both a psychological or sociological perspective (Vedadi et al., 2013).

Moreover, television has been proven to affect teenagers both negatively and positively. Some of the negative effects of television that research has identified can be seen throughout a wide spectrum of the younger population. For example, many psychologists believe that television is responsible for delayed language development in infants and academic achievement (Chonchaiya, & Pruksananonda, 2008). On the other hand, Paavonen, Roine, Pennonen, & Lahikainest, (2009), suggest that proper television viewing can dramatically alter children academically and socially. Therefore, this study will seek to answer the following questions.

- Is there any significant difference between the academic achievement and school ongoing children who view more than 3 hours a day and those who view less than 3 hours a day?
- Is there any significant difference between b academic achievements of school ongoing children male and female who view TV more than 3 hours a day?
- Is there any significant difference between b academic achievement of school ongoing children male and female who view less than 3 hours a day?
- . Is there any significant difference between the academic achievement of school ongoing children of lower and upper social economic level who view TV more than 3 hours a day?
- Is there any significant difference between the academic achievement of school ongoing children of lower and upper social economic those who view less than 3 hours a day?

Objectives of this study: The purpose of this study is to find the relationship between Viewing Television and academic achievement. And, identify the effects, if any, of some variables like gender, television viewing length and Socio-economic status on that relationship.

Operational definitions:

Academic achievement: According to Annie et al. (1996), "Academic achievement is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important — procedural knowledge such as skills or declarative knowledge such as fact"(p.2-5). The academic achievement of the students involved in this study refers to the "skills attained and developed in the school subjects." The term "academic achievements" means the achievement of the students by the use of testing their academic subjects in relation to their achievements, which were measured based on testing from all the classes in the first semester. To achieve this comparison, we were allowed access to students' grades from the Directorate of Education in Soran and Principals in selected schools. Length of viewing Television in this study is defined as follows: The amount of time a 9th-grade student spends each day viewing television compared with their academic achievement or test grades. This information blank form was developed by the investigators to ascertain the viewing duration of the subjects towards television. Subjects whose viewing duration was (3 hours and above) on television viewing information blank were considered as heavy viewers, and subjects whose viewing duration was on (less than 3 hours) were considered as low viewers.

Socioeconomic: for this study, the researcher categorizes students in two socioeconomic statues which are high and low classes who view television in relation to academic achievement

Gender: the state of being male or female who views Television in relation to academic achievement.

2. Literature Review

Although the internet is quickly challenging the "traditional" hegemony of television, there is no doubt that television remains the most powerful means of mass communication in the world today. Moreover, in the vast literature on television, it can be clearly seen that the majority of theorists and researchers acknowledge that the rapid spread of television in the 20th century, continuing into the 21st century, has dramatically affected not only human societies, but also individual's personal moods, habits, and culture. This is, especially true for children. Hofferth's (2010) in his article entitled "*Home media and children's achievement and behavior. Child Development*" he asserts that television can be a positive force in student's lives and that with the proper parental supervision television can improve student's academic achievements and reinforce positive personal behaviors. According to Hofferth's article in 1950, only 9% of American families owned a TV set. However, by the 1980s 98% of American families owned a television. This massive expansion of television viewing had a dramatic effect on American society and culture according to (Hofferth, 2010). Because of this, more and more families and students had access to information. Consequently, students became increasingly connected to the world and were exposed to new knowledge about different cultures, religions, politics, and histories. According to the article, the media is the fifth pathway to social or observational learning. This means that not only older children but younger children can learn to read, write, talk and interact with other children through the medium of television. For example, shows, such as "Sesame Street," "Yo Gaba," and "Curious George" teach young children - the alphabet, the importance of being responsible, and the nutrition in their foods. These are all positive effects that television can have on children's minds. The major finding of this study claims that children with home computers and televisions have higher grades in school than those children without television and computers (Hofferth, 2010). In another study by William and Heart at el (1982) as cited in Khan (2012) there is only a minor relationship between television viewing and educational achievement. Although the study acknowledges a slight relationship between television viewing and academic achievement it is not a major factor in students overall academic performance. However, he maintains that females involved in the study showed higher academic achievements as a result of access to television in contrast to their male counterparts. Moreover, Greenstein (1954), cited in Caldas and Bankston (1999), found that those children who view television in their homes achieved higher grades in school than those without viewing television.

Shin (2004), recognized that watching television programs has the most dramatic effect on children of any other activity they are involved in. Shin also shows that television is one of the most powerful factors which effects child development both environmentally and academically. According to Hornik (1978*),* viewing television is a demonstrative method to observe class subjects more accurately and effectively. The National Institute on Media reported that preschoolers who watch educational programs will have higher grades, be involved in more reading activities and have a higher academic achievement level those students who do watch educational television. Communication is another positive factor of television. In the article, communication is defined as computers, email, and surfing the internet. The study found that with an increase in the communication levels in these technologies children's activity levels also increase. For example, children that use communication technologies at home experience a marked increase in activity at school from 8.7% to 12.8%. Once the communication level was increased, the studying and reading levels increased automatically. According to the article, the reading levels of children ages 6-12 increased by 24% from 1997 to 2003. During the same time, studying levels increased by 14%. It is clear that the more children communicate with these technologies, the higher performance scores they might achieve in school. Therefore, Hofferth (2010) suggests that these increased performance levels might enable young children to one day enter better colleges and experience greater opportunities in life (Hofferth, 2010).

One of the controversial findings of the study indicates that even families who watch television excessively are not putting their children's education or development at risk. The study found that over 35% of children under six could read because of their exposure to television. (Rideout, Vandewater, & Wartella, 2003). According to the research, 72% of parents believe that using a computer or watching television helps their students learn. On the other hand, only 5% of parents thought otherwise. This shows that more and more parents support the idea of watching television because they believe it helps their children advance academically. However, Caldas and Bankston (1999), state that there is a negative relationship between time spent watching television and educational achievement. They further indicate that those individuals with

higher incomes spend less time watching television as compared to those individuals with lower incomes. Kureishi and Yoshida (2012), view that "the more television children view, the more likely it is that mothers report that a negative performance of their children in school. Finally, most of the studies focused on different groups, sex, cultures and other different areas, the present study feels that the relationship between watching television and academic achievement should be academically considered.

3. Methodology

The current study is quantitative Causal-Comparative Research. In this Strategy, the cause and the effect relationship is determined after the cause has already occurred rather than operated by the researcher. In our study, the cause of the academic performance of students i.e. television viewing has already occurred. Hence, this strategy is being used.

Population: The present study was conducted on a sample of 240 9thgrade students in three schools in Soran City-Kurdistan region of Iraq in May 2015. See the table (1).

Table 1: secondary school names

N	Schools' name	Sample size
1	Kani	91
2	Kelashin	72
3	First Xalifan-	77
T		240

Sample: The researcher chose non-random purposive sampling because the students needed special qualifications as they were required to be 9th-grade students study in general schools in Soran city and have to have taken the first-semester test.

Instruments: The researcher developed a scale to get some general information about gender, economic status and time spent on watching Television.

Method of Analysis: The data were analyzed by using descriptive statistical techniques by computing Mean, standard deviation, t-test of significance and Eta Squared.

4. Results

Table 2: Academic Achievement 3 hours &more vs less than 3 hours

	Watch	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-Test
Academic achievement	3 hours & more	123	78.01	10.36	12.28
	Less than 3 hours	117	64.03	6.79	

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the statistical differences between the academic achievement and school ongoing children who view more than 3 hours a day and those who view less than 3 hours. There was a significant difference in scores of three hours TV viewing (M= 78.01, *SD*= 10.36) and less than 3 hours TV viewing (M= 64.03, *SD*= 6.79; *t* (238) =12.28, *p*=0.27, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean differences=13.97, 95% *CI*: 11.73 to16.21). The eta squared statistic was (0.38) indicated a large effect size.

Table 3: Academic Achievement more than 3 hours Gender differences

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-test
Academic achievement More than 3 hours	Male	51	65.27	7.85	1.77
	Female	66	63.05	5.73	

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the statistical differences between b academic achievements of school ongoing children male and female who view TV more than 3 hours a day. There were no significant differences in scores of males (*M*= 65.27, *SD*= 7.85) and females (*M*=63.05, *SD*= 5.73; *t* (238) =1.77, *p*= 0.079, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean differences= 1.25, 95% *CI*: -0.26 to 4.71). (Eta squared= 0.012) indicated a small effect size.

Table 4: Academic Achievement less than 3 hours Gender differences

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T-Test
Academic achievement gender less than 3 hours	Male	79	77.88	10.25	-0.28
	Female	44	78.45	10.61	

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the statistical differences between b academic achievement of school ongoing children male and female who view less than 3 hours. There were no significant differences in scores of males (*M*=77.88, *SD*=10.25) and females (*M*= 78.45, *SD*= 10.61; *t* (238) = -0.28, *p*= 0.77, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean differences=-0.56, 95% *CI*: -4.43 to3.3). There was a very small effect size of eta squared= 0.0003)

Table 5: Academic Achievement more than 3 hours socio-economic differences

	Socio-economic	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T
Academic achievement More than 3 hours	lower	37	62.2	7.97	-1.65
	upper	80	64.64	7.11	

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the statistical differences between the academic achievement of school ongoing children of lower and upper socio-economic level who view TV more than 3 hours a day. There were no significant differences in scores of lower socioeconomic level (*M*=62.2, *SD*=7.97) and upper socioeconomic level (*M*= 64.64, *SD*= 7.11; *t* (238) =-1.65, *p*= 0.101, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean differences= -2.43, 95% *CI*: -5.34 to0.47). The eta squared statistic (0.011) indicated a small effect size.

Table 6: Academic Achievement less than 3 hours socio-economic differences

	Socio-economic	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T test
Academic achievement less than 3 hours	lower	80	79.17	12.28	2.16
	upper	43	74.43	10.08	

An independent sample t-test was conducted to compare the statistical differences between the academic achievement of school ongoing children of lower and upper social economic those who view less than 3 hours. There was a significant difference in scores of the lower socioeconomic level (*M*= 79.17, *SD*=12.28) and upper socioeconomic level (*M*=74.4, *SD*=10.08; *t* (238) =2.16, *p*=0.032, two-tailed). The magnitude of the difference in the means (mean differences= 4.73, 95% *CI*: 0.4 to9.06). The eta squared statistics (0.019) indicated a small effect size.

5. Conclusion

The first aim of this study was to find the relationship between watching Television and academic achievement. The results of this study show that there is a strong relation between watching TV and academic achievement. According to the results of this study, the mean of students who watch less than 3 hours a day is (*M*= 78.01). This is higher than the mean of those students who spend more than three hours watching Television a day. This number is scored as (*M*=64.03). It is clear from the results that those students who spend fewer hours watching Television score higher grades in schools. Furthermore, (*t*=12.28) which is higher than t table, indicates that there is a significant statistical difference between students who watch more or less than three hours of Television a day, *p*=0.27. Moreover, the results of this study show that watching Television (.38) can have an impact on academic achievement in that the more time students spend watching Television every day, the more likely they are to get lower grades in school. Also, the findings of this study are supported by other researchers like Caldas and Bankston (1999), Khan (2012), and Kureishi and Yoshida (2012). One could argue, as mentioned before, that in Kurdistan there are few educational programs for 9th-grade students. As a consequence, many students spend time watching Television translated from Turkish, Arabic and Chinese series. Some students, especially boys, spend many hours watching games or playing video games. Sometimes students are addicted to these movies or video games and they spend hours discussing these movies and games rather than school-related topics.

On the other hand, other researchers like Hoffreth (2010) found the opposite result. He found that television can be a positive force in student's lives and that with the proper parental supervision television can improve student's academic achievements. Moreover, Shin (2004) shows that television is one of the most powerful factors which effects child development both environmentally and academically. Finally, according to the research 72% of parents believe that using a computer or watching television helps their students learn (Rideout, Vandewater, & Wartella, 2003). The second aim of this research was to discover whether there is any statistical difference between academic achievements in school between male and female students who view TV more than 3 hours a day. The results show that there is no statistical difference between these two categories. However, Khan (2012) maintains that females involved in the study showed higher academic achievements as a result of access to television in contrast to their male counterparts. The Third aim of this research was to find if there is any statistical difference between academic achievement between male and female students who view less than 3 hours a day. The results of the current study show that there is no statistical difference between these two categories.

The fourth aim of this research was to find if there is any statistical difference between the academic achievement of lower and upper social economic level students who view TV more than 3 hours a day. We found that there is no statistical difference between these students. The last aim of this research was to find if there is any statistical difference between the academic achievement of lower and upper social economic students who view less than 3 hours a day. The results show that there is a minor statistical difference between these groups. The results show that lower socioeconomic class students who watch less than three hours of TV a day achieve higher scores in their schools than the upper economic class students who watch less than three hours a day. One explanation for this finding might be because many upper economically situated students have access to our own such devices as Play Station, Wii, or X box. These students might be "addicted" to these games and instead of talking about their classes, they talk about games and movies.

Recommendations: The results of this study suggest that some work should be undertaken by different investors to continue investigating the effects of Television viewing on students in Kurdistan and work to answer the question whether or not Television viewing is beneficial to our country and society and our students. There are also some recommendations for families and educators. These recommendations include; parental supervision or "co-viewing" strategies should be adopted by parents and they need to be careful to watch and understand the programming that is available to their children as they grow older. Parents can help their children transition through this very difficult age by talking with them and being familiar with the life pressures they are experiencing. Together, families can work to make television both an educational resource and a family bonding experience. Parents must monitor their children's television viewing routines. They should keep a watchful eye on their children, while they sit before the TV and watch all kinds of programs. Parents should not let their children watch all kind of TV shows and programs without supervision

because many of them are not appropriate for their age. There are certain types of programming, such as news, culture, and documentaries about such diverse topics as nature, biology, and music that can have a wonderful impact on children. However, parents should not allow their children to watch more than 2 hours of this type of programming per day without strict parental co-viewing. This will help them keep a balance between their leisure time and study time. Teachers in school should introduce some types of programs and TV channels to families which are appropriate for students. Although there are 4 children's channels which primarily focus on singing there really are no special educational programs or TV channels for our students in Kurdistan. This study suggests that TV channels should develop educational programs for early adolescence. The government and broadcast companies must also think about teenagers and improving educational programming for this group.

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