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Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik  
Universitas Diponegoro  
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Nama : Dra. Sri Widowati H, M.S,  
Judul : Parental Mediation of TV Viewing Behavior (C4)

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Saya mengusulkan nilai :

Semarang,

Dra. Sri Widowati H, M.S  
NIP.195603141981032001

**DIISI OLEH TPTJ/TPTB**

Berdasarkan pra penelitian TPTJ/TPTB  
maka TPTJ/TPTB sepakat memberikan nilai :

**DIISI OLEH TPTF**

TPTF sepakat memberikan nilai :

Tim Penilai Tingkat Jurusan/Bagian  
Semarang,

DRA. TAUFIK SUPRIHATINI, M.SI  
NIP.195303021980032001

Tim Penilai Tingkat Fakultas  
Semarang,

DR. Hedi Pudjo Santoso, M.Si  
NIP.196105101989021002

Mengetahui :  
Ketua Jurusan/Bagian

Dr.Hapsari Dwiningtyas, S.Sos,M.A  
NIP 197507231998022001

Mengetahui :  
Dekan Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik



Dr.Drs. Sunarto, M.Si  
NIP 196607271992031001

**DIISI OLEH TPTU**

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**HASIL PENILAIAN SEJAWAT SEBIDANG ATAU PEER REVIEW**  
**KARYA ILMIAH : PROSIDING**

Judul Makalah : Parental Mediation Of TV Viewing In Indonesia : What Findings Indicate Between Mothers' And Children's Confession (B4)

Penulis Makalah : **Sri Widowati**, Nurist Surayya and Tandiyo Pradekso

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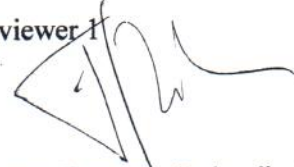
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Dr.Drs. Turnomo Rahardjo, M.Si

NIP 196010301987031001

Unit kerja : FISIP UNDIP

**LEMBAR  
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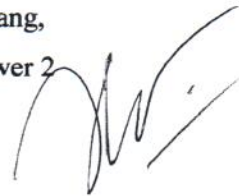
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<b>Total = (100%)</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Penulis ke 1 ( 60 %x15 = 9)</b>	<b>9</b>		

- Perhatikan ekspresi dan cara penulisan

Semarang, 2014

Reviewer 2



Dr. Hapsari Dwiningtyas, S.Sos, M.Si

NIP 197507231998022001

Unit kerja : FISIP UNDIP

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c. Kecukupan dan kemutakhiran data/informasi dan metodologi (30%)	4,2	4,3	4,25
d. Kelengkapan unsur dan kualitas penerbit (30%)	4,3	4,3	4,3
<b>Total = (100%)</b>	<b>13,8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>13,9</b>

Reviewer 2



Dr. Hapsari Dwiningtyas, S.Sos,M.Si  
 NIP 197507231998022001  
 Unit kerja : FISIP UNDIP

Semarang, 2015

Reviewer 1



Dr. Drs. Turnomo Rahardjo, M.Si  
 NIP 1960103011987031001  
 Unit kerja : FISIP UNDIP



# PROCEEDINGS

## **NEGOTIATING PRACTICES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

THE 2014 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE  
OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Editor: **Vina Adriany**



PROGRAM STUDI PGPAUD DEPARTMENT PEDAGOGIK  
FAKULTAS ILMU PENDIDIKAN  
UNIVERSITAS PENDIDIKAN INDONESIA

# PROCEEDINGS

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FAKULTAS ILMU PENDIDIKAN  
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## PARENTAL MEDIATION ON TELEVISION'S VIEWING BEHAVIOR

Sri Widowati Herieningsih.

Department of Communication, Diponegoro University, Semarang

### PREFACE

In spite to the fact that children have recently exposed and experienced to various updated media, television remains a dominant medium to children. Watching television is attracting to children, as to other segments of audience due to its practical simplicity and affordability. Studies indicated that children watch a lot of television program, as a sole activity as well as a companion to other activities such as eating or playing with their toys (Gunter, 2007:18). Parents, in many cases, also consider television sets as baby sitters to their children. They believe that television is an effective tool to keep their children occupied while they are doing their things. Research also pointed out that many parents prefer to see their children watching television at home than wandering around the neighborhood. In many occasions when children moans, loosing appetites, or reluctant to do their homework's, parents put their children in front of the television sets to cope with it, nonetheless a bigger ~~one~~ should emerge because television is not a good baby sitter.

Concerns on the children's high exposure to television programs leads to its poor impact onto children. Leaving alone children to grow along with television is putting danger into their development. Researches on the negative effect of television on children that have long been conducted since 1960s stated that television had influence children's cognition, affection, and behavior. The information-processing approach of research tradition explained that young children are prone to television content because of their limited cognitive ability to process television contents and narratives. Children are also lack of comprehension in discerning facts from fantasies, that make them get the wrong idea about realities that come from television, and could lead to imitating improper behaviors. Bandura (Littlejohn, 2009: 298) in his social learning theory assumed that a person learn by observing her/his environment. A child understand certain behavior by imitates attracting models in her/his surroundings. Bandura further argued that people collect information from their environment and use it as guidance to behave and do things. Among those of the environment is surely the mass media.

In spite of the abundant critics to television content, particularly those related to children program and children audience, nothing much had been done to change the Indonesian television system. There are powerful political forces and huge economical interests at play. The existing regulation (Broadcasting Regulation article 32 of year 2002) is not sufficiently regulate the television content, especially regarding its relation to the protection of children audience. The Indonesia Broadcasting Commission (KPI) also enforces a content rating system based on proper age classification. Still, it is not adhered by all television content.

Dan Blake (Porter, 2001:35) explained the significance of media literacy in 5 points. First, we need media literacy because we are living in a media environment. Second, media literacy stress on critical perspective. Third, being media literate is part of the citizenship. Fourth, media literacy encourage an active participation of audience. And fifth, media literacy helps us understand communication technology better. One of the many activities of media literacy that focuses on children is Parental Mediation. Parental mediation is considered as the most effective method of eliminating the negative effect on children (Buijzen et al, 2007). In parental mediation, parents accompanying their children to watch television, implementing

rules of watching television, or helping their children to interpret and discuss the television content. Parental attitudes to television were important. Children who were heavy users, or who watched proportionately more of commercial stations, had parents who were less likely to express concern over the negative side effects of watching television. Such children also tended to have parents who perceived less need to control their child's use of the medium (Gunter, 1990: 184).

The ideal parental mediation requires parents to always be critical to television content, and they should be able to discern the proper content from television. Parents understanding of television content's rating is also the significant aspect to parental mediation. Yet, not all parents conducting parental mediation, and it leads to questions of parents' consumption of television programs, parents' understanding of television ratings, and the parental mediation that they conducted. This study used a survey method for a total number of 205 sampling units, drawn purposively in Jakarta and Semarang area.

## FINDINGS

### 1. TELEVISION CONSUMPTION.

Children's television viewing behavior are somehow related to their family's pattern of television viewing. In such case, mothers usually have the most significant role in shaping their children's viewing habit.

The number of television sets owned in a household varies from 1 to 6 sets. More than half of the respondents had only one television set (58%), fewer had 2 units (26%), and the least had 3-6 television sets (16%). This figure implies advantages as well as threat to parental mediation. Having only one television set in the house will make children to share it with the other family members. This leads to the second benefit, that is control over children viewing behavior by other members of the family. On the other hand, there are potential risks for children when they are exposed to adult television contents when they were watched by the older family members.

Related to the number of television sets owned, was how the family placed it in the house. Families that had only one television set, almost all placed it in the living room (92,7%). But families with two or more television sets faced a crucial placement point of their television sets. Installing a television set in a children's room was a direct threat to the children that exposed them to improper television contents, unlimited duration of television viewing, and without any supervision from their parents. Placing a television set in the child's room is a risky decision because of its huge impact on children, psychologically, socially, physically, and spiritually.

Who watches the most television programs at home? Actually children are the main audience of television (86,6 percent), then followed by their mothers (55,6%). For most cases in the family, their television sets were turned on for an average of 9 hours each and everyday (52,2%), some between 5-8 hours (30,7%), and only a few (17,1%) between 1-4 hours. The conditions will certainly provide unintended exposure to children around the television sets whatever the programs are. So, a mixture of the quantity of television sets, careless placement of television sets, a limited choice of pro-child television contents, and boundless access to the 'always-on-television-sets', is indeed a 'minefield' to our children on the subject of negative television effects. Moreover, children are undeniably the main audience of television at home.

The average amount of time spent to watch television programs was quite enormous. About half of the sample (50,7%) stated that their children spent 4-7 hours daily to watch television programs, few even more than 7 hours (8,3%). Only 41 percent of the children

spent 1-3 hours daily watching television. The figure shows how excessive children spent their times to watch television, compare to any other activities children of 12 and under supposed to do, including school. It is worrisome indeed.

Then again, mothers' television viewing habit is another significant factor to be scrutinized. The amount of time spent by mothers on television in week days usually correspond to their children's school and homework routines. The majority of mothers (52,7%), watch television for 3 hours or less daily, 33,7 percent spent 4-7 hours, and the rest spent more than 7 hours on television. On week ends, they spent more hours than week days.

## 2. PARENT UNDERSTANDING OF TV RATING

A strategy of choice to relieve the negative exposure of television content on children is to improve the responsible parties' understanding and capability for the need of children's development, especially on how to choose the proper television content for their children (Collins in Carvert, 2008: 496). Thus, parents should have critical perspectives onto the media (Potter, 1988), and the capacity to distinguish the proper television contents for their children. Potter explained that understanding media is a multidimensional concept consisting of cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, and moral aspects. The cognitive dimension is the ability to understand how media contents were produced and how social structures affect the production processes. The emotional dimension is the ability to understand how people interested, understood, and attached to media contents. The aesthetical dimension is the ability to perceive how people enjoy media contents. And the moral dimension stresses on the ability to understand values and moral themes from media messages. All of those dimensions require a comprehension of the formal features of the media (Calvert, 2008: 556), one of which is television ratings.

To help the audience understand the designation of television content, the Indonesia Broadcasting Commission developed a rating system based on age categories. They are A for *anak*/children, R for *remaja*/adolescence, D for *dewasa*/adult, SU for *semua umur*/all ages, and BO for *bimbingan orang tua*/parental guidance (PG). Most of the respondent (71%) paid attention to the rating label on the television screen. Some of the respondent who pay no attention to the label believe that watching television is unlike watching movie in the theater and since television programs were intended to family audience members, they did not see any reason to consider the rating labels.

Most of the respondent (81%) correctly understood the meaning of PG. It was a pretty good gesture despite the fact that it was not automatically led those mothers to do the assign meaning of PG. Mothers were not easily understand a combination of rating label. For instance, only 50,2 percent understood well the meaning of A-BO (Children-Parental Guidance).

## 3. PARENTAL MEDIATION

Literally, mediation has not been consistently defined. Therefore, there are various definitions of the term. The most excepted definition is that of Schement (2002: 701). According to Schement the researchers agree that mediation leads to television related interactions between parents and children. Parental Mediation Theory explains how parents use various interpersonal communication strategies in order to mediate and limit the negative effects of mass media, particularly the effects of television on their children. According to Nathanson (in Schement, 2002: 701) there are three types of parental mediation: 1) restrictive mediation, the parents make certain rules in relation to the types of programs their children allowed to watch, how long they should watch, and when they watch, 2) active mediation,

includes talking about and discussing the television programs and its messages, 3) co-viewing, parents accompany their children watching television.

### 3.1. Restrictive Mediation.

Restrictive mediation often understood as the presence or absence of rules or restrictions relates to the children's consumption of television. Mediation is measured by whether the parents set certain rules that consist of: watching duration, timing or when children watch TV, as well as the rules associated with certain television programs which are children prohibited to watch (Calvert & Wilson, 2008: 554). Each family has different norms related to television. Some families have strict rules about television consumption, while other families may have little concern about children's viewing rules.

Duration or amount time spent daily on watching TV has grasp attention of many scholars who are concerned with the negative effects of television. The research finding indicates that the majority of respondents (67%) always/often limit the times their children spent on watching TV (duration). Such finding suggests that many mothers have alert the importance of giving restrictions on watching TV with an expectation of reducing the negative effects of television. However, not all mothers limit their children's duration on watching TV, about a third of the respondents rarely or even never limit their children's duration on watching TV. Various reasons put forward by the mother for not having duration limitation including; their children do not like watching TV, the children already set their own schedule so they know when to study and when to watch TV, and there are some mothers who said that they never thought about the restriction.

The restriction related to the duration of children watching TV which is set by mothers for their children is varied. The research finding is quite alarming, the majority of women (about 60%) set very loose rules on the duration of watching TV: between 3-4 hours per day (35.5%), 5-6 hours (18.5%), even 2 percent of respondents allow their children to watch TV for more than 6 hours. Children who watch TV more than 3 hours a day is categorized as heavy viewer. Two hours a day is recommended hours spent by children on watching TV. The research finding indicates that the majority of mothers are aware of the importance setting time limit for their children on watching TV, but they set the rule for more than two hours time limit.

Besides setting the rules, another important factor that mothers should aware of is supervising their children when they are watching TV. The findings show that the majority of women are always/often supervise their children when they are watching TV (69.7%). They ask their children to stop watching TV, to take a break from watching TV, to go to sleep, or to perform other activities. There are some mothers (30.3%) who are rarely or never conduct supervision, their children have freedom to watch TV all the times. The reasons for giving such freedom are the assumption that the children are better watching TV than playing out of the house, TV is presumed as an entertainment to calm down the children, to increase eating appetites, and TV as a companion in doing school works. Some mothers say that they cannot supervise the children due to the number of TVs (more than one) and one of the TV is in children's bedrooms. The other reasons for the mother not supervising the children's habit of watching TV are they are busy working, tired, or the mothers themselves love to watch TV. This condition indicates that some mothers are lack of control on their children television habit.

Rules that are made for the children in watching TV is not just limited to the duration, but also the rules that are applied while they are time watching TV. The majority of mothers are claimed that they always set a limitation in watching TV such as remind their children to

stop watching TV for doing homework, studying, praying, or going to bed. However, not all mother set such limitations, about 26 percent of respondents state that they rarely or never do so. It is also related to watching TV supervision conducted by the mothers, about 30 percent of mothers said that they rarely or even never supervise when their children watch TV. These findings suggest the lack of control, restriction and supervision, the mothers tend to allow their children to study or do homework while watching TV. They said that their children prefer to study while watching TV.

TV shows are not entirely safe for children to watch. The rules set by the mothers and mothers' supervision on watching TV are indicators of restrictive mediation. In relations to TV shows watched by children, 76 percent said they provide restrictions, and about 24 percent of do not set any restriction at all. This condition needs a serious attention due to many inappropriate TV shows that potentially have negative effects on children. Moreover, the research indicates that 21 percent of mothers rarely or even never conduct watching TV supervision to their children.

Sinetron (drama TV Series) is the most restricted TV show to watch, about half of the respondents say that sinetron is prohibited to their children. Sinetron is considered by some mothers contain both verbal and non-verbal violence, bullying, fighting, gangster, insulting poor people or people with physical disability, and consumptive behaviors. In other words, the contents of sinetron are not appropriate for the children. One example given by the respondents is a TV series titled "Ayah Mengapa Aku Berbeda"(Dad, Why Am I Different), one of the characters is a girl with speech disability is subjected to mockery and abuse. TV show for mature audiences is prohibited for children by many respondents. The respondents do not mention the name of the TV shows which considered for mature audiences.

Variety show is a TV program that is watched by most of the respondents. Almost all mothers do not prohibit their children to watch variety show. YKS, a very popular variety show which is now banned for airing, contain a lot of violence, either verbal or non-verbal. Most of respondents do not consider reality show as dangerous for children to watch. Animated (cartoon) film is a TV program that is closest to the children. Animated film is a program that almost all respondents not forbid their children to watch it. Most mothers assume that cartoons is a TV show for children, without further consideration of violence contained in the film. In many animated films extreme violence are dominated its scenes including; the use of sharp weapons, blood spilled, and scary expressions. Sexually reference scenes are commodity that are often used for developing story lines, for example; opposite sex attractions, and a story of love triangle. Some of animated film also contains a very strong mystical content. Some of films show spirits, demons, and the devils that are scary for young viewers.

### **3.2 Active Mediation.**

Active mediation or could be categorized as evaluative guidance is established by developing interaction between mother and children during watching TV. In other words, parents watch TV with the children and actively convey a conversation. According Chakroff & Nathanson (in Calvert & Wilson, 2008: 554), the form of mediation is often measured by how often parents encourage children to think critically about the show, and some research only measured communication between adults and children about TV. Mediation, particularly active mediation is effective in reducing the TV's consumption and the impact of TV on children. Parents are comments or providing feedbacks on the content of television programs. According to Nathanson active mediation is categorize into three types; active-positive, active-negative and neutral-active. Positive active mediation refers to how parents encourage

and give positive comments about television programs watched by their children. Negative active mediation refers to parents who tend to be negative toward television programs. Active-neutral Mediation is a type of active mediation that involves additional information or instructions about TV for the children.

Discussion of TV programs' contents between mother and children aims to help children evaluate the meaning developed in the program including the notion of morality (explain the bad behaviors conducted by the characters). In assisting children to watch TV, there are three things that can be done by the mother. First, an explanation of "why" (motive underlying action), some TV programs need an adequate explanation due to different cultural and social values. Second, mothers provide confirmation in the notion of value judgments (good vs. bad, right vs. wrong, appropriate vs. inappropriate). Third, mother give reinforcement for the children to implement the "right" values, for example, by complimenting characters who perform the right actions, and emphasizing that certain acts are wrong/bad so that the children do not imitate such actions.

Discussions between mother and children in relation to scenes, stories and characters in the TV shows are important due to various TV's contents that are not suitable for children. Moreover, the rapid changes of digital technology as well as the improvement in the cinematography techniques saturate the computerize scenes that look like real. Children who do not understand such technologies will regard those kind of scenes as real. Therefore, mothers need to talk to their children about TV's contents so that their children will be able to understand the notion of computer generalize scenes.

The findings of this research indicate that the 55 percent of the respondents are always/frequently discuss the TV's contents with their children. On the other hands, almost similar percentage around 45 percent of mothers rarely engage conversation about TV's contents with their children. The fact that some mother rarely talk about TV's content is quite alarming due to negative impacts of television to children behaviors.

Story lines in various TV's programs are sometimes do not make any senses, and many of them are too complex. The role of the mother is important to explain the story to the children, so that the mother can explain how to differentiate reality and fantasy. The research shows that 52.5 percent of the respondents always/often discuss their children. The percentage of the respondents who rarely or never talk about story lines is 47.5 percent. Discussion of the character in TV's programs is important for children to understand good and bad behaviors. The research indicates that the percentage of respondents who are always/often conduct discussions with their children about TV's character is 52 percent and those who rarely/do not engage in discussions is 48 percent.

Some respondent realize the negative effects of TV ads including initiating children's consumptive behaviors. However, the majority of mothers admit that they are rarely or do not engage in discussions with the child about content of TV's commercial (about 70 percent). The main reason why mothers do not engage in such discussion is the fact that TV's ads only appear briefly, placed in between TV's programs, so that no one deliberately watch commercials. Advertising is considered not a real TV show, only a brief distraction. Mothers are expected to help children "reading" and criticizing the ads.

According to Nathanson (in Mendoza, 2009: 31), active mediation is the most promising mediation among other forms of mediation. Active mediation has a great influence on encouraging children's pro-social behaviors, children ideal news consumption, as well as reducing aggressive behavior in children. A study conducted by Austin indicates that active mediation is a type of mediation that suitable for creating: better understanding of TV's

contents, more skeptical toward the contents of television news, and suspicious in what is seen on television (Mendoza, 2009: 35).

### 3.3. Coviewing.

Coviewing refers to "the simple act of watching TV with the children" without any discussion of the contents. This activity is only limited to accompany children in watching television without conducting discussion or conversation. While Mother and children watching television together, they usually conduct other activities; mother (cooking, sewing, embroidery) and children (doing homework, playing games).

Watching TV together has two sides, on one side watching together is good especially if they watch children's programs, but on the other hand, if they watch TV together sometimes children are exposed to a variety of programs choose by mother that are not suitable for children under 12 years old. Programs that may not suitable for children that are coviewing by mother and children including: variety shows (44%), reality shows, (about 35%), soap opera (about 33%), and infotainment (23%). As for the animated film, the majority of respondents claimed that they always/often watch together with their children (about 58.5%). This condition is quite encouraging, because even though most cartoons are aimed to children but many of them are not safe for children to watch

## CONCLUSIONS

1. The research shows that the pattern of TV's consumption in the family is not in ideal condition. That condition is triggered by the placement of TV set in the children bedroom so that the parents cannot set limitation and give an adequate supervision. The majority of mothers and children is a "heavy viewer". They watch TV more than 3 hours per day, both on weekdays and holidays.
2. One of the guides that can be used by parents to choose the program for children that is TV programs' categorization labels/TV's rating (BO, A-BO, R-BO, SU, D). Those labels are shown in the top left or bottom right of TV's screen. There are many respondents who do not pay attention to the label. Half of the respondents did not understand the meaning of the A-BO (Children-Parental Guidance).
3. The finding shows that some mothers do not applied restrictive mediation which are measured through the following indicators: the rules that limit the duration of watching TV, the kinds of TV's program watched by children, and mothers' supervision. Almost similar condition shows in active mediation or usually interpreted as evaluative guidance which has not been done by all respondents. Coviewing is another form of mediation, which refers to the simple act of watching television with the children. The research indicates that not many respondents conduct coviewing regularly.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In relation to family's pattern of watching TV, it is important not to place a TV set in the children's bedroom and to turn the TV off when no one is watching.
2. The research finding indicates that a lot of mothers do not have a sufficient understanding related to the categorization of television program. Many of TV's programs do not put the categorization label throughout the show. Such conditions need an attention from TV stations, Indonesian Broadcasting Commission (KPI), NGOs and academicians so that they will conduct education and socialization in order to increase understanding about the importance of TV's program categorization labels.

3. Mothers are expected to conduct restrictive mediation, active mediation and co-viewing. They should make watching TV together and discussing TV's content with their children as a part of daily routine. Mothers should explain the rules of watching TV and conducting active discussions related the story lines, scenes and characters in the television programs.

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