



A Study on Need of Media Literacy among adolescents in Kanyakumari District

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Abstract

Media is an integral part of children's lives in the 21st century. They are constantly bombarded by media messages. Students currently grow up with the habit of television viewing every day. It is important that they should have knowledge about what, why, to when, and how to watch to become a better citizen. The present study focuses on the awareness of media literacy among adolescents. For this study TV viewing pattern, content of the TV programme and understanding ability of the adolescents was analyzed. The study is also conducted to find out whether TV programmes enhances or decreases school achievement its influence on the behaviour changes and explore the need of Media Literacy for adolescents. For this study eighty students both boys and girls of grade 9th to 12th from two schools in Kanyakumari District were chosen. both qualitative and quantitative methods are to be used in this study. For qualitative study ten parents of the respondents and ten teachers are to be interviewed besides the survey among the adolescents. The findings suggest that media literacy is needed for the betterment of adolescents.

Keywords: adolescents, media literacy, behavior changes, Television, School students.

Introduction

Communication is usually between human beings with face-to-face messages by using verbal and nonverbal symbols. The Industrial Revolution began in the 1900's and the methods of communication between changed and made communication more advanced with the incorporation of newspapers, magazines and radio.

When the media literacy movement began in 1970, it was widely considered a waste of time. Why focus on advertisements, television and movies. His thinking went, when, what students really need is to learn the fundamental subjects at school? It is very important to explain the meaning of mass media and literacy and how mass media functions in the industry and our society.

The students have currently grown up with habit of television viewing. It is important that they have knowledge about what, why to when and how to watch television programmes to become better citizen. The present study focus on whether media literacy in needed for the adolescents. The National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy (Aufderheidd, 1993, P.XX): "The ability to access, analyzes, evaluate and communicate messages in a variety of forms". Media literacy is a way to foster critical viewing skills in young viewers.

The purpose of media literacy is to help people to protect themselves from the potentially negative effects. The purpose of becoming more media literate is to gain greater control over influences in one's life, particularly constant influence from the mass media. This study focus on need of media literacy among the adolescents.

Cantor (2002) summarizes the volumes of studies conducted on fear reactions to media exposure. The research suggests that children who watch increased amounts of television are more likely to carry on into adulthood as most adults have clear memories of having been frightened by a television show or a movie.

Charles. J.O. Kane. Jr. (2010) "setting the standard; Media Literacy Education in Virginia's public schools. This study examines the State of media Literacy in the middle school curriculum of Virginia's public schools. From the finding media literacy education is better understood in academic literature, in higher education in K-12 curriculum.

Social Co-viewing

Social co-viewing is a technique in which parents and children simply watch television together. Surveys found this intervention to be relatively rare. For example, Lawrence and Wozniak (1989) found that most television viewing is solitary and that when children view with a family member, it is usually a sibling. Also, when co-viewing with parents and children occurs, it is usually with younger children who are likely to watch shows the adults also like (Dorr, Kovaric, & Double day, 1989). Among children 7 and older, 95% never watch TV with their parents and even among children 2 to 7, 81% never watch with their parents (Rideout, Foehr, Roberts, & Brodie, 1999).

Co-Viewing, like restrictive intervention, has mixed research results. Co-viewing was found to be associated with negative out comes such as believing that television characters are like real-world people (Messaris & Kerr, 1984), and learning aggression from violent television (Nathanson, 1999). However, co-viewing was shown to have positive outcomes such as increased learning of educational content (Salomon, 1977)

Fear including content

Several studies found that media literacy type intervention were successful in helping children process images in scary programs and thus reduce their fear reactions (Bar-on et al., 2001; Canton & Wilson, 1984; Slonae & Shoshani, 2006). Also, some observed that while viewers of news programs sometimes experience anxiety and fear, the use of media literacy skills may help reduce the negative emotions (Comer, Furr, Beldas, Weiner, & Kendall, 2008; Olson & pollard, 2004; Slone & Shoshani, 2006; Thoman & Jolls, 2004), as well as help viewers get more positive experiences with the news such as fostering political efficacy and discussion of politics (Chaffee, Morduchowicz, & Galperin, 1997)

Research Design and Method

The study was taken up to find out the need of media literacy among the adolescents.

Objective of this study

1. To determine the TV viewing pattern of the adolescents.
2. To explore the content of TV programmes watched by the adolescents.
3. To examine the understanding ability about the content of the programmes.
4. To assess whether the TV viewing enhances or decreases the school achievement of the adolescents.
5. To find out the behavior changes of the adolescents.
6. To study whether media literacy is needed for the adolescents.

Methodology of the Study

The study used both qualitative and quantitative methods for the collection of primary data. In quantitative method descriptive survey method was adopted in qualitative method in depth interviews were conducted. The field study was conducted in two schools in K.K. District. The population of the study constitutes 80 school students of K.K. District from grade 9th through 12th who are in the habit of watching television programmes. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select samples for the study. Two schools were selected one is from rural (government school) and other is from urban (matriculation school). From each school 40 respondents were selected from grade 9th through 12th (20 boys and 20 girls) from each class 5 boys and 5 girls were selected at random.

In the qualitative research the researcher has adopted in-depth interview schedule with a sample of 10 parents and 10 teachers of the respondents from face to face interview.

For this survey the researcher has used structured closed ended questions with 5 points Likerts Scale tool and multiple choice questions for the measurements of the need of media literacy. The first part of the survey was developed to elicit demographic data of the independent variables like age, education, place of living. The second part of the survey was developed to get details regarding the dependent variables such as TV viewing pattern of the adolescents, content of the programme, school achievement, behaviour changes and media literacy.

Hypothesis

The proposed hypothesis is H_0 : Television is a dynamic medium and that too with the advent of satellite channels. TV viewing is related to ones cultural identity especially children are to be the most vulnerable and targeted group for their commodity may. They have to be guided, safeguarded, and motivated for their better future. Media literacy may be the tool to mould them.

Findings

Respondents profile

Demographic Characteristics of the respondents. The respondents included about 50% male and 50% females. 24% of the students of age 14, 26% of age 15, 27% of age 16 and 23% of age 17. Age has no influence on watching television programmes.

TV Viewing pattern of the adolescents

The study shows that 98.0% of the adolescents mother tongue in Tamil, majority 65.0% of the respondents watch TV programmes (1-2hrs) during week days, and 72.5% of the respondents watch TV programmes (2-3 hrs) during weekends. From this it is clear that adolescents spend more time on television during weekends. Majority 42.5% of adolescents prefer to watch TV alone 25% like to view TV with their friends. 15% with their parents and 7.5% prefer to view with their siblings. 55.0% view TV programme for entertainment. 32.5% view for time pass and only 12.5% of the respondents view TV for gaining knowledge. To improve student's knowledge they must know what to watch on television. 67.5% of the respondents view TV programme while eating. This has lead to disorders among family causing aloofness with in a single roof and also it causes over eating and obesity among adolescents as they indulge in front of the television. From the findings media literacy is needed on the TV viewing pattern for the adolescents.

Content of the TV programme

From findings of the study based on the channel, a majority 32.5% of the respondents are interested in Vijay TV shows 22.5% sports and 17.5% view cartoon channels. Majority 52.5% of the respondents like to see the programmes in English other the mother tongue. 90% of the parents do not encourage and allow their children to view television programmes with contents like violence, and scenes with filthy words. 65.2% of the respondents like to buy food items (biscuits) soaps and toothpaste advertised on television. Majority 80.5% of the adolescents like to simply watch songs and reality dance and song shows.

To examine the understanding the content of the programme

The study found that majority 37.0% of the respondents perceive TV programme in a positive and negative way. 27.5% of the respondents in positive way and 32.5% of the respondents in a negative way. This shows that they need some kind of guidance to perceive the TV programmes. Majority 60% of the respondents do not know the intention of the TV programme 20% of them do not understand the meaning. 7.5% of the respondents do not understand language 12.5% of the respondents do not understand the meaning and intention of the TV programme. Majority 40.5% of the respondents have a personal performance to cine stars and anchor from their favourite show. They try to imitate and get the inspiration from them 27.5% aspire to become and imitate sportsman. 11.5% of them get their inspiration from famous politicians all over the world. 8.5% of the adolescent live in a illusionary world filled with fantasy and fairy talks.

A majority of 52.5% of the respondents improvises their lifestyle and keeps up with the current trends from TV programmes. 80% of the adolescence likes to discuss about the TV programmes with their friends. From this they need media literacy as they should be educated now, what why of the content of television programme.

TV viewing enhances or decreases the school achievement

Majority 80% of the respondents agree that TV viewing has improved their knowledge and language. 60% of the respondents agree that TV viewing has influence on doing homework. 60% of the respondents agree that TV viewing has increased their extra curricular activities. 67.5% of the respondents disagree that TV viewing improved this study habits. 52.5% of the respondents agree that lot of TV viewing affects their health and eye sight. The overall view is that TV viewing decreases school achievement.

Influence of TV on the behavioural changes of the adolescents

The study reveals that 87.5% of the respondents believe that reality shows helped them to improved their talents and creativity. Majority 80% of the respondents improved their physical appearances. Majority 70% of the respondents agreed that TV viewing has changed their food habits, 72% of the respondents agreed that TV viewing has increased their buying intention. Majority 80.2% of the respondents seared about certain programmes telecast on television. 56.5% of the respondents have become aggressive in due course of time watching certain TV shows. 22.5% of the respondents have developed risk taking behaviour. 21.0% of the respondents have adductive behaviour this shows TV viewing has influence on the behaviour changes. To highlight the positive changes media literacy is needed for the adolescents.

Need for media literacy among adolescent

The study reveals that 92.5% of the respondents felt that media literacy will help them how to watch TV programmes majority 82.5% of the respondents think that media literacy will help them to understand TV programme deeply. 80.5% of the respondent thinks that media literacy will help them to suppress negative influence of TV and enhance positive effect. 77.5% of the respondents thought that media literacy will increase reasoning skill of the adolescents. Majority 78.0% of the respondents think that media literacy will be useful for their daily life. The above study shows media literacy is needed for the adolescents to become a better citizen.

In-depth interview with parents

Most of the parents stated that they do not accompany their children while watching TV. Only few of them accompany their children and explain about the reality in the programme. Some of the parents complained that their children are not interested in hearing their advice. Few parents said that the children enjoy programmes like wrestling, violent acts and crime scenes when they were not at home. The children's behavior was more aggressively and sensitively because of the influence violent contents on TV. When they watch programmes like super heroes they try to imitate and take risk. Most of the parents believe that the buying intention of their children has increased because of advertisements and this mainly causes misunderstanding between parents and children. The children wish for a very Porsche life and ask for new dresses and accessories worn by their favourite reality show stars.

Parents think that media literacy may create awareness among adolescents regarding the programmes they watch. It will make them understand the advantages and disadvantages of various programmes they watch. Most of the parents said that their children are always singing cine songs and dance for songs. They show less interest in studies. So they should be made aware about their addiction towards music and movies which are a waste of time. They started getting irritated when they are restricted from viewing such programmes. They should also be told about usefulness of watching channel and programmes which give knowledge like news about climate and business etc. Some parents complained that their children are not interested in watching news in Television stating that they are boring. Parents have recommended to have media studies in schools for their children.

In-depth interview with Teachers

Majority of the teachers complained that their students slept during class time and the reason for their inactiveness was due to late night watching television at late night. This behaviour drastically affected the academic side.

Some teachers stated that few students outshined others in general knowledge and information that other students who were ignorant of them. When enquired about their source of informations they said that it is through watching informative channels like discovery channel, national geographic, animal planet, news, etc. In this case teachers encourage adolescents (students) to watch selective programmes in television. Few teachers stated that the students did not perform their homework correctly, especially mathematics. When interrogating the students, their reply was that they did their homework while watching television. This has led to calculation mistakes and has affected students studying pattern.

Many of the teachers said that their students become addictive to certain serials on youth and try to imitate them. This has made them aggressive. Teaching manners and discipline also have changed their characters. These teachers feel that some kind of education should be given to adolescents in order to become a well-rounded personality and it can be in the form of media literacy. Some staff fear students as they are unpredictable. A recent incident that shook whole India is the reason for their fear. Murder of a Hindi school teacher by a fifteen year old boy after watching the movie Agneepath. This has made teachers to insist media literacy in the curriculum for the betterment of human life. Majority of the teachers suggested that majority of the students stay at home for more than 14 hours. Therefore it is necessary that the parents spare time to view on TV programmes with their children. This would bring more integration with in the family and also awareness about media.

Conclusion

Television plays an important role in the life of adolescents. The study shows positive influences like language, knowledge, cognitive skill, extra curricular activities, talents and the like and negative influences on food habits, study habits, aggressive behaviour, buying intension, health and the like. Unfortunately adolescent tends to observe negative messages than positive messages. Their perceiving nature is timid due to the lack of maturity.

From the study it is clear that media literacy is required for TV viewing pattern of adolescents, understanding the content of TV programme, to enhance the school achievements of the adolescent and their behaviour changes. Teachers and parents also understand the importance of media literacy and insist to have media studies in academic education. Media literacy is key to the adolescents to know about the world and modern trends in all fields.

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