

TELEVISION VIEWING IN THE KENYAN EDUCATION SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the concept of knowledge in Television viewing in Kenyan schools. Television viewing in schools has its attributes that are relevant to the education system. The study explores the effects of unmonitored Television viewing in High Schools in Kenya.

KEY WORDS: Television, Excessive, Performance and Effects.

Introduction

The viewing of Television in High schools has a significant influence on the Kenyan Education system in terms of aims of education, content of curriculum, method of instruction and formulation of education policies. Viewing of television occupies a large portion of students time. Almost one in five students spend more than 35 hours of watching the television each week (Gentile & Walsh, 2002). Recent studies outlined by (Anderson, Field, Collins, Lorch, & Nathan, 1985; Huston, Wright, Rice, Kerkman, & St. Peters, 1987) suggest that starting from pre-school, children spend more time watching television than participating in any other activity except sleeping. (Huston, Watkins, & Kunkel, 1989) argue that students also have extensive experience with television before they are exposed to many socializing agents, such as schools, peers, and religious institutions. Given the central function of television as a medium of socialization in most children's lives, it is important to understand its potential effects on a variety of cognitive, academic, social, behavioral, and attitudinal outcomes of the viewers, particularly school going students.

Wright and Hutson (1995) of United States of America found out that those students who watch movies and other more entertaining television programs were less likely to spend times with books and other print media. In addition, (Reinking, 1990) found that those students who are heavy television viewers showed the greatest decline in language performance.

The television, however, may be an ideal medium to foster some of the skills and knowledge needed for later reading acquisition. This is due to the fact that, the television involves minimal print, and the decision to view can be controlled entirely by the teachers and parents.

The content difference accounts for the fact that students who watch television often are better at recalling televised stories than audio taped ones. Early television viewing on the African continent started with the advent of colonialism in the 19th century. However, the television was only a reserve of the wealthy and the educated; it was mainly used for entertainment and had few programs that were educative. (Medrich, 1979).

Mwamwenda and Mwamwenda (1987), carried out a study on the effects of school physical or learning facilities on the performance of children in Kenya. It was established that the availability of television like any other facility had a direct link with the performance in languages of school going students.

Mwamwenda and Mwamwenda (1987) concluded that the availability of suitable programmes on the television influenced student's learning. Swanson (1994) argues that children spend more time watching television than any other activity except sleeping. Television's impact on reading and other academic skills depends not only on the amount of television watched, but also on what is being watched as well as the age of the student. Studies have shown that students who watch carefully constructed educational programs that are aimed at their age level (such as Sesame Street), do better on reading skills (at age 15) than students who watched infrequently or not at all (MacBeth, 1996, Wright, 2001).

These same studies further show that students who watch cartoons or other purely entertainment television shows during their pre-school years, do poorer on pre-reading skills at age 5 (MacBeth, 1996). According to America Academy of Pediatrics television can inform, entertain and teach. However, some of what television teaches may not be the things students should learn. The results of recent research suggest that there is considerable overlap between the comprehension processes that take place during reading and those in pre-reading television viewing (Van den Broek, 1996-1997). Thus, it may very well be the case that children who learn these comprehension skills from television viewing before they can read come equipped, so to speak, with some crucial tools when they later start to understand. If so, this has important implications for education, by opening the door for early childhood education of some of these essential literacy skills.

Anderson, (1996) argues that the television affects how children learn. High-quality non-violent shows can have a positive effect.

Study Objectives

- 1.To analyze effects of Television viewing among Highschool students.
- 2.To show the usefulness of Television viewing on the Kenyan education .

Methodology: Descriptive Survey Design

Kiarie (2017) Notes that descriptive survey design depicts the state of affairs as it exists.

The researcher can only report what has happened or what is happening. Descriptive research is a systematic collection and analysis of data in order to answer questions concerning current status of a program, project or activity. According to Kerlinger (1976) descriptive survey design does not deal with the manipulation of variables.

The researcher therefore found descriptive survey study design suitable for determining the effects of television programmes on performance of English on secondary school students in Imenti Central, Meru County. The design involved collecting data on a sample of the respondents who were selected to represent parents, teachers and students from selected schools in Meru. This study design aimed at investigating the problem by use of observant participation and focus group discussion.

Analysis of Characteristics of Television Programmes

Just a few of Television programs teach students important skills such as reading, writing, science or problem solving. Most shows on Television including cartoons are non-educational (Swanson, 1994). More time spent watching television programmes are linked to poor school performance. Late night watching tires students that they can't pay much attention in schools (Ozmert and Toyran, 2002).

Buttlefield (1990) asserts that today's students are exposed to more information than any other generation in history, the more time spent watching television, the poorer their performance. Television watching during childhood has adverse effects associated with later educational achievements. It has long lasting adverse consequences for educational achievement and subsequent social economic status and wellbeing (Buttlefield, 1990)

Excessive television has adverse effects on school performance and the more television a student watches the greater the negative impact on his/her learning Hancox, (2004) concludes that students obsessed by television watching habits are less creative and more passive.

More than half of U.S. students attend more than three hours of television per day on weekdays, and 60% of parents rarely or never limit their child's television viewing habits (Levine & Levine, 1996). The average Television viewing in a week time is approximately 27 hours per week, while the average reading time is 8.1; a 3 to 1 ratio (Angle, 1981). Studies (Levine & Levine, 1996; Wells & Blendinger, 1997) support the finding that students watch too much Television and read too little. It has been argued that an adverse side effect of high levels of viewing might include the promotion of "unintelligent consumerism" and a physically and intellectually passive dependency among our youth (Levine & Levine, 1996).

Viewing habits typically increases throughout elementary school years, and decreases during high school years. The years right before and after adolescence are the most opportune times to

shape Television viewing habits (Clark, et al., 1978) Individuals in lower income brackets and with lower educational levels watch more Television (Housden, 1991).

Students who view Television during late night hours have on average more Television viewing than do other adolescents (Potter, 1987). African American youth tends to watch more Television than their white counterparts (Caldas & Bankston, 1999). Teens who are in the lowest per week viewing category are more likely to continue their education by enrolling in college (Corporation for Public Broadcast, 1993).

Some of the studies reviewed found no significant relationship between the number of hours students spend watching television and its impact on English language academic achievement at all (Gortmaker, Salter, Walker & Dietz, 1990b; Hagborg, 1995; Shastri & Mohite, 1997). A few studies (Felter, 1984) uncovered a large and significant negative relationship, while most others (Angle, 1981; Clark, et al., 1978; Cooper & Valentine, 1999; Dornsbusch, 1986; Gorman & Yu, 1990; Patrick, 1991; Tymms, 1997) found smaller, yet significant negative relationships. Naturally, parents' failure to provide guidelines for TV viewing has a lot to do with the attitudes and values of today's children (Clark, 1978; Levine & Levine, 1996; Sharman, 1979).

Patrick (1991) discovered that higher school social studies achievement is associated with "limited TV viewing". Felter (1984) reported that achievement scores in reading, English, and written expression were "sharply lower" among students who viewed more than six hours of TV per day. Researchers (Dornsbusch, 1986; Potter, 1987) have stated that a negative relationship does not begin to manifest itself until a child exceeds a 10 or more hour per week threshold, with the strongest negative relationship observed for 30 or more hours of viewing. Razel (2001) reported a curvilinear relationship for each age group up to 20 years. Each category had an optimal range of viewing times that allowed for a positive impact up to a certain amount and an adverse impact on a point of saturation. The fact that pre-second grade children possessed a larger positive relationship than older children might be a reflection of the quality of programming targeted at the younger group. According to the analysis, optimal viewing time decreased with age, which provided for an overall negative relationship when age group was not disaggregated (Razel, 2001).

A Critique of Television Viewing in Schools

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achievements. It has long lasting adverse consequences for educational achievement and subsequent social economic status and wellbeing (Buttlefield, 1990)

Excessive television has adverse effects on school performance and the more television a student watches the greater the negative impact on his/her learning Hancox,(2004) concludes that students obsessed by television watching habits do not perform well.

Conclusion

A descriptive survey design shows that there exist positive impact of watching Television among high school students in terms of content, aim and nature of the new curriculum. It influences the manner in which teaching and learning is carried out more especially in teaching languages. It should be incorporated in the teaching learning process. However this needs to be done under supervision of the curriculum implementors since if left unchecked students can become passive hence performing dismally. The Kenya institute of curriculum development (KICD) through its media service should develop and broadcast more High school content which can be transmitted through National television such as the Edu tv, Citizen tv, Nation tv and Kenya Television Networks. The broadcasted content should usually be about formal school curriculum. It should cover crucial issues in the society such as drug prevention, Hiv and Aids, life skills and conservation of environment. The programmes are developed through a system of panels made up of teachers and other specialized individuals in various fields. Television lessons are key options for improving educational quality on schools in developing countries around the world. It can lead to improvement in school achievement and can help to fill equity gaps among learners.

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