

TELE MEDIA INFLUENCE ON PARENTS AND CHILDREN RELATIONSHIP A CASE STUDY OF THE VODDARA CITY

ANJALI PAHAD, JAGRATI VADNERKAR

Abstract: In the arena of globalization, media is playing enormous role in the development and the betterment of society. Media in the present days becomes most popular form of communication, as it plays a vital role in shaping the future of the present generation (especially teenagers). By enlarge it is also responsible for creating communication gap between the family members. Aim of the present study is to seek answers to related questions viz: what is affecting smooth parent children relationship? Does media creating gap amongst the parent and children relationship? And what can be the remedial steps to avoid this gap amongst parents and children. Present survey has been carried on parents and their children of the Vadodara City, regarding usage of media and its influence on parents and children relationship. 50 parents (having children 13-19 years) and their children were included in the study. The convenient sampling procedure was used. A structured questionnaire was prepared and distributed to the selected parents and their children. Data was collected with some oral instructions, given to the parents and their children. Majority of children reported that media creates a boundary between parents and children as it reduce familial conversation. While on the other hand parents reported that children become arrogant after watching Television and they deny to listen to parents etc. It can be concluded that the optimum and positive use of media with having fruitful discussion among parents and children can make a great relationship of parents and their children.

Key Words: Impact of Television, parent – children relationship, Communication gap remedies to strengthen relationship

Introduction: The Media, whether print or electronic, nowadays becomes the most important tool in influencing, political, cultural, social and most importantly familial environment & opinions worldwide. In every part of the world media plays a seminal role in shaping public perceptions & responses, which particularly influences families and their relationships significantly.

Data released on parent reported in 2003 National Survey of Children's Health (NSCH), which was quite large and had nationally representative sample, provide a window into parent-child relationships by children's specific ages. "The parent-child relationship is one of the longest lasting social ties human beings establish," expressed Birditt K, (2009) lead author of the study and a researcher at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research (ISR). "This tie is often highly positive and supportive but it also commonly includes feelings of irritation, tension and ambivalence."

Parents and adult children in the same families had different perceptions of tension intensity, with parents generally reporting more intense tensions than children did particularly regarding issues having to do with the children's lifestyle or behavior (finances, housekeeping). According to Birditt in an online article (2009), tensions may be more upsetting to parents than to children because parents have more invested in the relationship. Parents are also concerned with launching their children into successful adulthood.

Both mothers and fathers reported more tension in their relationships with daughters than with sons. Daughters generally have closer relationships with parents that involve more contact which may provide more opportunities for tensions in the parent-daughter tie.

Despite the variation in parent – child relationships status, peers, genetics, human surroundings and media also has tremendous effect on the overall development of a teenager. These days' media is so far responsible for changing relations of the parents and children.

Over the past few years, media use among children and teens has become more prevalent than ever. With the launch of the iPod, the explosion in instant messaging, the birth of mobile video and YouTube, and the advent of social networking sites like facebook, twitter etc., and young people are rarely out of contact, or out of reach of the media. Meanwhile, policymakers continue to be concerned about the impact of media on teenagers.

According to a study conducted by the **National Institute on Media and Family**, children spend more time sitting in front of electronic screens than doing any other activity besides sleeping. Teenager's excessive screen time comes with all kinds of hazards: lack of physical activity, exposure to adult themes and content, and lack of interaction with family and peers. And then there are the advertisements for almost every product which is most of the time found imaginable, including alcohol and medications intended for adult use only.

Maintaining better relationship with children is not an easy task as their emotions are very much delicate and immature. Children do not interpret what they observe and feel, but just react in the most spontaneous way to what they see. They understand things just the way they feel them; thus dealing with them requires skill and maintaining proper and better relationship with children is a hard to crack nut. The above literature indicate that communication between parents and children is relatively low, even for parents of children at the adolescent stage, when communication can be a greater challenge due to media use.

Objectives of the study

1. What affects smooth relations between parents and children?
2. Does the use of media creating gap among parent's children relationships?
4. What can be the strategies to reduce this gap among parents and children?

Methods: This study surveyed conveniently available parents and their children of Vadodara city regarding use of media and its influence on their relationships.

Sample: A convenient sample of 50 parents (having children with the age group of 13-19 years) and their children have been included in the present survey. The total sample was 100 (50 parents and 50 children). The sample was selected as per the availability of parents, children and feasibility of the surveyor.

Tools for data collection: The present study was self administered, mostly at the respondents' home. For this a structured questionnaire was developed and used. The questionnaire was divided into four parts, viz; (1) Background information of the respondents, (2) Media Usage; (3) parents child relationship and lastly (4) Strategies to overcome related problems.

Data collection: The questionnaires for this study were distributed to 60 parents and children of different areas of Vadodara city. Surveyor gave their oral instructions to the respondents about how to respond to the questionnaire. The parents and children were told to bring the questionnaire to their home, to obtain necessary information required for the present survey, to take sufficient time to respond to the questionnaire over the weekend, and to return it to the surveyor at the beginning of the next week.

Results: Of the 120 questionnaires handed out, 112 questionnaires were retrieved. Of the questionnaires returned, 12 had to be discarded because they were incomplete or failed to pass face-value validity checks. The researcher examined whether there was a response set or whether those who answered gave unusually high responses to communication variables.

Major Findings of the study

Profile of the Parents: Amongst all the respondents 64% of the respondents were above 35 years and 26% of them were 26-35 years of age. Less than half of the respondents (46%) were graduates, whereas more than one fourth (28%) were passed higher secondary examination and only 4 percent of them were illiterate. More than half of the parents i.e. 54% were male and remaining 46% were female. 44% of the respondents were belonged to the non earning category while rest of them was earning money with various professions. 68% of the respondents were living in a joint family. More than Half of the respondents were having two children where as 20% of the respondents were having only one child. 54% of the respondents were father of a child and remaining 46% respondents were mothers of their children.

Profile of Children: Fifty six percent respondents were of the age group of 16-19 years; followed by 44 percent respondents were of 13-15 years age group. Out of all the selected respondents (teenagers) 58 percent respondents were male and 42 percent were females. Only 10 percent respondents were studying in 9th standard and fourteen percent respondents were found as graduate students or they were doing graduation. Almost similar numbers of respondents i.e. 28 percent, 26 percent and 22 percent were studying in 12th standard, 11th standard and 10th standard respectively.

Television Usage of Children: Fifty eight percent respondents used to watch television continuously for 2 - 3 hour in a day; where as 28 percent respondents reported that they watch television for more than three hour / day. Rests of them were reported about watching television for just one hour in a day. Majority of the respondents (76%) were found to be watching music channels. Similarly fifty six percent were watching adventurous channels, like "National Geographic Chanel, Discovery and Fox History. Rests of them were watching various television channels like "Movies and Regional Channels etc. very few of them were found as watching NEWS Channels. It was also revealed from the study that more than half (60%) of them were avoiding watching Television till late night. Study also revealed that 38 percent were watching sports channel on television. Regarding fashion 26 percent respondents reported that they used to watch these on daily while lifestyle channel attracted only 14 percent respondents. Sixty four percent respondents also reported that Television is the only medium of providing information on latest trends among the youth.

Television Usage of Parents: Sixty two parents were having frequency of one hour for watching television at home which is ideal. Less than half of the respondents were like to watch entertainment channel most of the time, however 44%

respondents were watched news channel most of the time. While majority of the respondents (62%) do not watch television till late night. Regarding pattern of watching television, more than half of the respondents said that movies attracts them on TV however 38% of respondent attracted by the sports channel on Television.

Parents also reported that 42% of the respondents revealed that they found television as most interesting media then newspaper followed by radio.

Parents – Children Relationship: (Children’s perspectives)

More than half of the children (56%) like their mother more from the family, followed by 34 percent, they like their father most. Various reasons were quoted for the above findings were, their mother support them as in need and also take care of them. Similarly some of them (32%) accounted that their father accommodate them with various resources. Children respondents also reported that their father used to take decision related to their behavior traits. On the same hand it was also reported that father gives less punishment than the mother.

In contrary children respondents (44%) also reported that family members sometimes doesn’t understand their feelings hence they don’t like them, whereas 38% respondents said that other family members are always gives instructions to them hence not like them. Rests of them reported that they do not like their parents because they don’t allow them to go with their friends, never allow them to use cell phones, their late night parties. Maximum respondents (88%) stated that they wish to spent time with their parents regularly, where as only few respondents (12%) said that they don’t like to spend with their parents. More than half of the respondents (54%) informed that they like to spend their maximum time with their mother, followed by 34% respondents who wish to spend their time with their father effectively. Only 12 percent respondents wanted to spend their time with other family members and friends.

Majority of the respondents (66%) reported that. Amongst all the children respondents’ maximum respondents (94%) percent said that their relationships with their parents are good. The respondents have good relations with their parents due to various reasons viz; parents are caring (64%), children (respondents) enjoy shopping with them (46%), parents have faith and trust on their children (38%) and parents are friendly in all manner (34%). In line with that some respondent (22%) stated that every problem can be very easily discussed with parents. Parents do not restrict me to do any work also reported.

(Parent’s Perspectives)

There is lot of variations found regarding the reason of affected parents-children relationship due to use of Television. maximum parents 96% and 94% reported that media creates indiscipline among children hence sometime they deny to behave disciplined, followed by some parents, who told that excessive use of different media deviates attention from their children’s studies. Again more number of respondents (80%) reported that maximum use of media, affects the parent-children relationship to a great extent. In line of this more than half of the children i.e. sixty percent and fifty eight percent told that media diverts the hobbies of children so they try to switch over to other activities hence it also affects the relationships with their parents and also said that media always gives information about current trends and they use to follow it even if their parents deny (respectively). Out of all the parents, just half (50%) stated that due to excess use of media children always disobey, disrespect and distorted with the parents to a great extent.

Strategies to strengthen Parents – Children Relationships

(Children’s Perspectives)

- Parents should have trust on their children and children should be a little free from restrictions regarding use of media.
- Limited usage for limited time of watching Television will help them to make better understanding between parents and children.
- Mutual understanding should be established by limiting use of media.
- Quality Time spent altogether may be the solution instead using media for longer time.
- Exposure to good educational media programme should be encouraged.

(Parent’s Perspectives)

- Always try more conversations with children so that the gap created among them can be reduces.
- Have more interaction with children hence creates understandings between parents and children.
- Parent respondents told that always be friendly with children and try to understand their feelings.
- Keep talking with children on certain issues can strengthen their relationships to a great extent.
- Do not force children for their studies, but insist them regarding advantages of studies & about their future prospects and also said that keep updated them (parents) with newer knowledge and have pace with children progress.

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Prof. (Dr.) Anjali Pahad, Head , Jagrati Vadnerkar, Ph. D. Research Scholar
Department of Extension and Communication, Faculty of Family and Community Sciences,
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara, 390002, Gujarat, India.