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ABSTRACT

To determine whether watching violence on television instills aggressive behavior in a child, the television viewing of 27 5- and 6-year old black males from a sample of urban poor families was periodically observed and charted over a 1-year period. Data was collected on each child's family unit, home setting and available media. Longitudinal trends were obtained on each child's social and intellectual development and an interpersonal behavior assessment was made. For one week, each family maintained a "dairy of the subject-child's television viewing: programs viewed, duration and intensity of viewing and reason for program selection. The heavy viewing periods on weekdays were naturally concentrated in the after school and evening hours. However, on Saturday and Sunday, the prime viewing period shifted to the morning hours, suggesting that children are selective about their television viewing. The children ranged from casual watchers to nearly addicted television viewers. Study results indicate that the heavy viewer is physically active, but interpersonally passive. The casual viewer is less able to be distracted, less likely to be bashful about playing with others and more likely to initiate interpersonal contact. Numerous instances of spontaneous imitation of televised behavior were observed. Children paid greater attention and exhibited higher reactivity while viewing children's programming. Tables and appendixes comprise half of the document. (Author/NK)

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TELEVISION IN KANSAS-CITY SCHOOLS: VOLUME 1

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The extent of television use and its potential impact on the child viewer has stimulated considerable research (Atkin, Murray, & Nayman, 1971; Weiss, 1971). The major lines of such research have been centered on either the effects of televiewing or the patterns of use associated with this media form.

With regard to the effects of televiewing, Bandura and Walters (1963) have suggested that children can learn novel behaviors from the observation of a televised model. More specifically, several studies (Bandura & Huston, 1961; Bandura, Ross, & Ross 1963 Berkowitz, Gartin, & Heironimus, 1963) have indicated that the observation of televised violence may instigate or facilitate the child's display of aggressive behavior. However, elaboration of the social learning principles underlying these formulations (Bandura, 1969) has generally restricted such studies to a laboratory setting and hence prevented clear demonstration of the applicability of such principles in accounting for spontaneous behavior occurring in naturalistic televiewing settings.

On the other hand, the task of mapping children's television use patterns has been approached in a somewhat different manner. Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961) surveyed the role television plays in the lives of

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children and indicate that the child-viewer is a heavy user of this medium. Indeed, their data indicate a consistent increase in the amount of televiewing from about two hours per day in the first grade, to a peak of three or four hours per day during the pre-teens, with a subsequent decrease during the teenage years. In general, the description of the function and role of television as provided by Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961) is echoed by the findings of Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince (1958) in their study of British school children. Taken together, these studies provide a fairly comprehensive picture of children's televiewing in terms of media use and program preference patterns.

Other research on the relationship between televiewing and children's social behavior has attempted to differentiate the program preference patterns of various "criterion groups" such as aggressive and non-aggressive boys (Eron, 1963; Lovibond, 1967). A recent study along these lines (Halloran, Brown, & Chaney, 1970) suggests that the delinquent boy differs from his non-delinquent counterpart not only in the type of program content most preferred (i.e., exciting programs) but also in terms of his likelihood of using television to rationalize his delinquent acts. Moreover, the results suggest that the observation of aggressive or destructive behavior may provide the child with the conclusion that such behavior is not severely prohibited by society and, by inference, such viewing may facilitate delinquent behavior. With regard to other aspects of children's social behavior, Bailyn's (1959) description of

the relationship between televiewing and intelligence and Siegel's (1958) study of exposure to television and the child's belief in the reality of the message are but a few examples.

Although each of these previously described studies has been concerned with the broad issue of the role of television in childhood, most of the research tends to focus on the way television deals with children rather than ask how the child deals with television. It is this latter issue that provides the focal point of the present study. More specifically, this study is not only concerned with "what" children watch but also "how" they watch television (i.e., behavior while viewing). The present study attempts to map the behavior setting and describe the spontaneous reactions of the child while viewing standard commercial television programming in his own home, and relate these factors to other aspects of the child's total televiewing experience (e.g., program preferences, extent and duration of viewing, and cognitive/socialization variables).¹

Method

Subjects

Twenty-seven five and six year-old black males were selected from a sample of urban poor families in Washington, D.C. These boys had been participants for about four years in a longitudinal study of the impact of early childhood education programs.

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four years.

It should be noted that the initial subject selection in the prior study depended upon some degree of parental cooperation and therefore the sample cannot be considered to be truly random. The details of the sampling procedures are outlined in reports on the Infant Education Research Project (Furfey, 1971).

Sample Characteristics

Family Unit.--Thirteen (48%) of the 27 children live in a family unit containing both mother and father. An additional 13 children live with just their mother, and the remaining child lives with his grandmother. In general the parents represent a broad age range (66% of the mothers and 49% of the fathers are between the ages of 26 to 40) with mothers tending to be somewhat younger than their husbands (26% of the mothers versus 11% of the fathers below age 25). With regard to caretaking and employment, five families indicated both parents work while overall 15(56%) of the mothers are employed on a part-time or full-time basis. The typical family unit consisted of a mother or a mother and father, the subject child, and several older siblings. Of the 27 families 14(52%) have four or more children in addition to the subject child, while only 2(7%) are one child families. In 16(59%) instances the family consists of one to three children who are older than the subject child. With regard to the focal point of this study, the subject child, is of course a six year old male who is typically described by his tutor as being an active, outgoing, youngster

who usually plays well with both siblings and neighborhood playmates.

Home Setting.--The home setting is such that most of the families live in either a residential (14/52%) or primarily residential and mixed commercial (6/22%) neighborhood. The type of housing is either an apartment (59%) or row house (30%) with only three (11%) families living in a detached single dwelling unit. The families are relatively mobile with 23(85%) having moved between two and five times in the past four years. The physical condition of the housing is generally described by the tutors as fair to adequate. The typical home has five to six rooms (12/44%) with an indoor bathroom (25/93%), and adequate plumbing (i.e. 22 families indicated they have hot and cold running water). With specific reference to the child, the home setting is one in which there are regular meal times in 19(70%) homes but supervision or discipline is described as either variable or lax (11/40%) while three families adhere to rather close supervision of the child.

Available Media.--Each of the 27 families has at least one television set and six (22%) families have two or more while only two families owned color television sets. In 16(59%) families the typical location of the main television set is in the living room followed by the bedroom, in the case of seven of the 28 families. With regard to other broadcast media 19 of the 28 families indicated that they own at least 1 radio and this too, is usually located in either the living room or bedroom. In addition 17 families possess

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a phonograph and it was likely to be located in the living room.

Procedure

In the present study each child was observed and interviewed on several occasions over a one year period from March 1970 through April 1971. The "interviewers" of the present study were the "tutors" of the previous study and had established considerable rapport with both the child and his family. The forms of data obtained from each child can be described as assessing either developmental variables (i.e., measures of cognitive or socialization processes) or televiewing variables (e.g., program preferences, behavior while viewing, media usage patterns).

Developmental Variables.--Longitudinal trends on each child's intellectual and social development were obtained from both prior and concurrent measures. In the prior study, intellectual development was assessed at ages three, four, five, and six (Stanford-Binet Intelligence Scale). The child's interpersonal behavior was assessed, in both the home and classroom setting, at age six by asking the "interviewer-tutors" and teachers complete a behavior rating scale (see Appendix B). This scale had been in the prior longitudinal study at age three; developmental comparisons could therefore assist in describing the child's characteristic behavior patterns.

Televiewing Variables.--Each child was interviewed on several occasions regarding his conception of television. The interviews

covered such factors as the child's knowledge of, and preference for, various types of television programming. Additional questions focused on his daily activities, life style, and future goals. In some instances the tutor presented structured questions to the children while in other instances the child and tutor engaged in free dialogue.

During the week of February 15-21, 1971 each family maintained a "diary" of the subject-child's television viewing. The diary (cf., Appendix C) provided data on such factors as programs viewed, duration and intensity of viewing, and reason for program selection. The diaries were distributed to each home approximately three days prior to the onset of the recording period. The "tutors" instructed the subject child's mother or teenage siblings in the recording procedures. The family was paid a small fee (seven dollars) for their cooperation in this phase of the study.

An additional source of information on the televiewing patterns of these children, was provided by direct observation of each child's behavior while viewing several television programs. The observation form (cf. Appendix D) provided for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data on the behavior exhibited by each child while viewing standard commercial television programming. Each child was observed on two occasions for a period of 45 minutes while he viewed television in his home. The observer for the first observation period was the child's tutor, a familiar black, female. The observer for the second observation session was a black male who was unknown to either

the child or his family. In each instance a standard observational schedule was employed and the directions to the child never varied.

Results

Patterns of Television Use

Television and Daily Activities.--A major portion of the child's day was concerned with school related activities since each child was enrolled in either preschool or first grade. The time between close of school and bedtime which for most children was before 10 p.m., was devoted to activities such as playing or watching television. Most of the children indicated that they spent some time period between school and supper (3 to 6 p.m.) either playing or watching television with 13(48%) children devoting this time period primarily to play. In the evening (6 p.m. to bedtime) the children are more likely to watch television than play outdoors. In this period 17(63%) children either play or watch television as contrasted with 10(37%) children who play or watch television in the afterschool time period. However, during both of these time periods the children indicate that they have free access to the television and engage in extensive viewing (i.e. children routinely view between two and four hours of television programming each day) but they are most likely to watch in the after school and evening time periods. However on holidays and weekends, morning (9 a.m. to noon) is the heavy viewing period for 9(33%) of the children. Most

children have definite program preferences and about 19(70%) children are able to name at least 4 or more favorite programs. With regard to control of television viewing, 19(70%) of the children indicate that there is no supervision and that the choice of TV fare is primarily determined in 13(48%) homes by either the child or his siblings. Indeed, the characteristic television setting in 19(70%) families, is one in which the child, and his brothers and sisters are the primary users and controllers of TV in the late afternoon and early evening hours.

Viewing Times.--A diary of the television programs viewed by each child during the week of February 15-21, provided data on the patterns of television usage for 24 of the 27 children. Table 1 displays the "television-time-budget" of these child-viewers according to four time periods: Morning (sign-on to noon), mid-day (noon to 3:00), after-school (3:00 to 6:00), and evening (6:00 to bedtime). It can be noted that the heavy viewing periods, during the weekdays, are concentrated in the after school and evening hours with the evening being somewhat more popular. However, on Saturday and Sunday, the prime

Insert Table 1 about here

viewing period shifts to the morning hours with a correlative large decrease in after-school and evening viewing. This pattern most readily suggests that the children are selective about their television viewing. They at least choose specific viewing times and, by implication

specific classes of programming. On Sunday, for example, the boys tune-in for the children's programs in the morning but shun the rest of the TV day until Sunday evening which turns out to be "Sunday-Night-at-the-Movies." This inference about the child's selective viewing is further supported by reference to Monday's viewing pattern. Monday was functionally equivalent to the weekend because it was a legal holiday and the boys had access to a full day's programming. In this instance we again see the pattern of viewing early morning children's programs but the pattern also includes normal after school and evening viewing. Thus, the children actively sought, and re-tuned in their favorite after school programs that they watch throughout the week and, in effect, adopted the morning as an opportunity to view additional children's programming.

Television Diet.--Table 2 describes the television content viewed by the children for each day of the one-week recording period. All programs recorded in the diary were classified according to seven basic content areas: situation comedy, cartoons, child adventure, action drama, quiz and variety, general drama, and educational programming. Several of these categories such as situation comedy (e.g., Eddie's Father and Here's Lucy), cartoon (e.g., Superman, Eightman, Batman,

Insert Table 2 about here

Speed Racer), quiz and variety (e.g. Truth or Consequences and Ed

Sullivan), and educational programs (e.g. Sesame Street, Romper Room etc.) are relatively distinct categories. On the other hand the "child adventure" category can be described as a melange of non-animated, (i.e. non-cartoon) adventure programs which seem to be designed specifically for children such as Ultraman, the Little Rascals, and Lassie. The definition of the "action drama" category consists of more adult fare such as Mod Squad, Wild Wild West, Mission Impossible, FBI, and similar prime-time programming. The "General drama" defined by social-dramatic content was, in this instance, composed of such shows as Dark Shadows, "Soap Operas" and Marcus Welby, M.D. The other category included movies, Sports and News or generic-unknown programs (e.g. Cinderella, Spacemen).

It is apparent that the frequency of viewing a specific type of program content varied according to the day of the week. This finding can most probably be accounted for by differences in the availability of various kinds of programming throughout the week, i.e., there are more situation comedy programs on television during the weekday (at a viewing time available to the school-age child) than on weekends. Hence, the data in Table 2 indicate that, in terms of the total week viewing, situation comedy is the front runner, followed by cartoons, with action drama in "hot pursuit" for third place. However, on the weekends cartoons supplant situation comedy as the most frequently viewed programming; a fact primarily due to the Saturday morning "cartoon festival."

Another intriguing finding was the very low incidence of viewing educational programming which includes Captain Kangaroo, Romper Room, and Sesame Street. Indeed, if Sesame Street is taken as a case in point, it can be noted that only one child out of 24 watched any episodes of Sesame Street. However, this finding may be due to the fact that Sesame Street is available only on UHF in the Washington area and most older television sets are not equipped for UHF reception. On the other hand it should be noted that the Captain Kangaroo's of standard (VHF) commercial channels were also seldom viewed. Other programming that had a low viewing index was general drama, and in the "other" category, news and sports. The sharp increase in the "other" category for Sunday reflects the fact that many children viewed movies during the day (e.g., for the week recorded, the children viewed Shirley Temple and Blondie and Dagwood films in the morning, and "Whatever Happened to Baby Jane" and "The Blue Max" in the evening). However, the overall most frequently viewed programs for the total week were situation comedies and cartoons.

Extent and Duration of Viewing.--In general, the children in this study spent approximately 21 hours viewing about 30 programs during the week. Their televiewing, in terms of number of programs, is lighter on weekends than on weekdays. However, in terms of the duration of viewing the actual amount of televiewing appears to be heavier on weekends. Table 3 describes the average numbers of hours devoted to television for each day derived from the one-week "diary" record. It can be noted

Insert Table 3 about here

that weekday viewing averaged around two and one-half hours. The record for Saturday viewing indicated only a small increment, but Sunday viewing was distinctly atypical with approximately five hours devoted to television. One plausible explanation of this finding is the fact that the content of Sunday television programming contains a considerable number of movies and indeed 14 (58%) of the children viewed at least one movie during the day. This factor simultaneously inflated the duration and decreased the frequency of televiewing for Sunday.

One finding that is not evident in Table 3 is that the viewing, in terms of both daily and weekly averages, is highly variable across children. This result holds for either the extent (i.e. number of programs) or duration of viewing. With regard to extent of viewing, there were, among the 24 boys, some children who could be considered "addicted" to television. Thus, there were five boys (21%) who watched 48 or more programs throughout the week and there were nine children (38%) who watched 25-30 programs during weekdays. On the other hand there were some children who watched as few as five programs during the weekdays and as few as one program on the weekend. In terms of the duration of viewing, some children watch as little as 30 minutes per day while one child watched 12-1/2 hours on the recorded Sunday. The

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weekly total viewing, for each child ranged from five to 42 hours.

Program Preferences.--When children were asked to name their favorite television programs, in contrast to a diary record of actual viewing, the description of their viewing patterns is only slightly altered. Table 4 describes the televiewing in terms of the proportion of "favorite programs" occurring in eight content categories. On two separate occasions, the children were asked to name their four favorite

 Insert Table 4 about here

television programs. In reporting the results of the first interview (Time 1) all four programs mentioned by each of 25 boys were combined in a summary preference index. The results of the second interview (Time 2) are presented in terms of the favorite program first mentioned by each child. It can be noted that the summary index of Time 1 is strongly related to the preference pattern displayed by the child's first-choice favorite programs of Time 2 ($r_s = .76$) and provided an index of good temporal stability of the child's preference structure.

In general, the program content most favored by the children in this study were cartoons with the next favored being situation comedies. It can be noted that these two categories alone accounted for about 70% of all program's endorsed. Furthermore, when the categories of "child adventure" and "action drama" are taken into consideration, approximately 90% of favored television content is described. This

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preference pattern is clearly related to actual viewing patterns as described by the televiewing diary (i.e., situation comedies and cartoons were the most frequently viewed programs). In addition, the diary results indicate a low incidence of viewing educational programming and this program content holds a similarly low status (1% of all favored programs) in the child's preference structure.

As an additional input, it is instructive to note that these children both prefer and watch a considerable amount of television, in addition to that available during the "children's hours". Table 5 presents the ten most frequently viewed, prime-time television programs. These results were obtained by presenting 16 children with a menu of all locally available prime-time programming (81 programs), and asking each child to indicate the programs he frequently (i.e., very often, or always) viewed. The product of this cafeteria selection was a television

 Insert Table 5 about here

diet consisting of situation comedies and action drama.

Do brighter children like to watch the same type of programs other children prefer? The data in Table 6 suggest that

 Insert Table 6 about here

when the first-choice nomination of each child's four favorite TV programs is inspected, it is apparent that the brighter children (median-split,

Stanford-Binet) are more likely to prefer programs other than cartoons or situation comedies. Thus, while the average child's favorite program is almost always a cartoon or situation comedy, the brighter child manifests a more varied preference structure (Fisher Exact Probability Test, $p < .05$).

Addicted and Casual Viewers.--The diary records for 24 boys indicate that the amount of time spent viewing television is highly variable for these children. The figures on typical weekly viewing range from five to approximately 42 hours. Indeed, there were five children who watched more than 33 hours per week and five who viewed less than 13 hours. Thus, the children could be clearly differentiated into addicted and casual viewers on the basis of a median split on total weekly viewing time (addicted: $\bar{X} = 1821.82$, S.D. = 531.9/casual: $\bar{X} = 810.0$, S.D. = 229.7). Table 7 presents a description of the program preference patterns of light and heavy television users and it can be noted that both the addicted and casual child-viewer overwhelmingly preferred

Insert Table 7 about here

cartoons and situation comedy over other forms of programming.

With regard to other viewer characteristics, the data in Table 8 suggests that the child's intellectual ability was not related to "amount" of televiewing ($r_s = .06$). Thus, both bright and average children were

equally represented in the heavy user category.

Insert Table 8 about here

On the other hand, a more elaborated picture of the addicted child-viewer emerges when comparisons are made between the child's television usage patterns and social behavior ratings. Table 9 displays the mean behavior ratings of addicted and casual viewers on three behavior dimensions: extraversion-introversion, hostility-considerateness, distractibility-task-oriented. The "current" ratings (age 6) were provided by the "tutor-interviewers" who have been involved with the children for the past four years. Ratings obtained on each child at age 3 are provided for longitudinal comparison. Focusing on the

Insert Table 9 about here

current (age 6) behavior ratings, the heavy television user can be generally described as a physically active, but interpersonally passive child. He is more likely to forget instructions and drift from one activity to another with only passing interest, less likely to initiate interpersonal contact (e.g., talk to visitors), while preferring to engage in solitary play. On the other hand, the casual viewer can be described as less distractible, less likely to be bashful about playing with others, and more likely to initiate interpersonal contact. This suggested relationship between television usage and the social behavior patterns of these six-year-old boys, invites speculation about the causal

influence of heavy television usage (addicted children) in the facilitation of passivity. However, Table 9 also presents data on the social behavior patterns of these children when they were three-year-olds and it can be noted that the addicted viewer at age 6 manifested similar behavior pattern at age 3. Thus, it may be suggested that the child who is interpersonally passive becomes a heavy television user rather than the reverse line of influence. However, it should be noted that despite the trend of these findings the conclusions remain tentative due to the restricted sample size. When the current (age 6) social behavior ratings were dichotomized and re-cast in Table 10,

Insert Table 10 about here

Fisher Exact Probability tests failed to yield a reliable differentiation between the addicted and casual viewer.

Televiewing Behavior

Behavior Setting.--Each child was observed on two separate occasions (daytime and evening) while he viewed standard, commercial television programming in his own home. The daytime observers were the two "tutor-interviewers," who were black females, familiar to both the child and his family. The evening observer was a black, male who was not previously known by either the child or his family. The duration of the observation period was 45 min. and was divided into a five minute "orientation" and eight alternating five minute, "structured" (eye

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contact) and "free response" recording periods (cf. Appendix D).

The 25 daytime observations took place in either the morning (13/52%) or afternoon 12(48%) on Monday through Saturday, with most observations (16/64%) occurring on Friday and Saturday. The television set was usually (15/60%) located in the living room and the observations were conducted in the room in which the child regularly viewed TV. This naturalistic setting necessitated the free inclusion of additional adults and children in the televiewing environment. The total number of participants including the observer and child ranged from three to seven with 15(60%) of the settings including five or more participants. In 21(84%) of the observations there was, at most only one adult in the room. However, in 18(72%) observations there were one to seven additional children in the behavior setting with the instance of "one additional child" being the most likely (6/24%) of the possible combinations.

The 22 evening observations took place in the afternoon (50%) or evening (50%) on weekdays (Monday-Friday 86%) with Monday or Tuesday being the most likely observation day (12/54%). The observations were usually conducted in the living room (16/73%) typically with three to five people in the room (12/54%) including the child and observer. The bulk of the additional viewers were usually children and in 9(41%) instances there were between two and four other children present. However, in 13 (59%) instances, the observer was the only adult in the setting.

Insert Table 11 about here

Correlates of Viewing.-- The observation records indicate that the behaviors exhibited by these children while viewing television range from passive staring to contemporaneous imitation of behavior displayed on the TV. Table.11 presents the mean frequency of occurrences of four broad classes of behavior (staring, commentary, imitation and reproduction) and a weighted index of reactivity based on these four scores (staring, 1 pt; commentary, 2 pts; imitation, 3 pts; reproduction, 5 pts) for the 20 minute "free-response" observation period. It can be noted that the most likely event was passive staring with a relatively low frequency of more active forms of participation such as imitation. The behavioral content of each of these four categories is functionally discrete: Staring consists of merely passive gazing at the TV set; commentary is described by verbalizations about the program such as "I saw this yesterday," "I like Lucy,"; imitation consists of nonverbal imitation of televised behavior, answering questions, talking back to the TV character, and singing along with and repeating songs or dialogue. The fourth category, reproduction, had a very low incidence of occurrence but it was sufficiently unique to warrant separate description. Behavior in this category is typified by the response of a child who was watching Spiderman, a cartoon serial: "No more monsters coming, no more Pete (a character in the film)." "I'm Spiderman!" (stretches out hands, arms, and fingers--sings along with the music). In addition to these four categories, other behavior

manifested while viewing included eating, interacting with others, and solitary play.

Table 12 presents the relationship among the various televiewing

Insert Table 12 about here

behaviors manifested by these six-year-old boys during the daytime observations. As anticipated, the amount of passive "staring" at the television set was clearly inversely related to all other behavior with the obvious exception of "attention" (calculated in terms of frequency of eye contact with the TV during the 20 minute structured-response recording period). The commentary and imitative behaviors of these children were positively related to all other reactions with the exception of "solitary play" which was antithetical to the more active responses. All of these active responses were, by definition, positively related to the reactivity index. However, both reactivity and attention were inversely related to the competing influence of interpersonal contact and solitary play.

Viewer Involvement.--In general, children's overall activity in front of the television set, measured in terms of either frequency of "eye contact" with the TV screen or total reactivity (i.e. reactivity index) tended to decline over the 40 minute observation period.

Table 13 presents the mean number of eye contacts (possible range 0-20)

Insert Table 13 about here

for each of the four "structured" five-minute observation periods and the mean reactivity index for the four "free response" observation periods for both daytime and evening observations. It can be seen that the children were responding at a reliably lower rate during the last ten minutes of the home observation than during the first ten minutes (Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: $T = 33.5$, $p < .01$ eye contact, and $T = 17.5$, $p < .01$ reactivity--daytime; $T = 16.0$, $p < .01$ eye contact and $T = 32.0$, $p < .02$ reactivity--evening). However, despite this overall decrease, the children maintained televiewing related behavior, i.e., continued to look at and respond to the television set throughout the duration of the observation period.

The attentiveness of the child-viewer was assessed by both the observer's rating of overall interest or attention and by recording the child's eye contact (every 15 seconds) during alternating five-minute periods, throughout the 40 minute observation. There was a strong relationship between the tutor's global ratings of the child's overall attentiveness to the TV screen and the behavioral record of "eye contact" ($r_{bis} = .73$) thus providing internal consistency for both measures.

Attention (eye contact) to the television set was generally unrelated to either cognitive or socialization variables including such factors as "task orientation." Moreover, Table 14 describes the relationship

between the attentiveness of the child's televiewing (observer rating)

 Insert Table 14 about here

and his behavior while viewing. While the patterns in Table 14 suggest that increased attentiveness is related to greater reactivity ($r_{\cos-\pi} = .59$, attentiveness vs. reactivity index), Fisher Exact Probability tests on each contingency table failed to yield a reliable differentiation of the televiewing activity of attentive and non-attentive children..

Daytime and Evening Televiewing.---Inter-observer reliability was difficult to assess in this study since the procedure of sending three observers into a home to simultaneously record a child's behavior would be extremely disruptive of the behavior to be observed. However, two indices were devised as estimates of observer performance. Each of three observers (two daytime, one evening) observed four five-minute, video-tape recordings of an unfamiliar child viewing television in his own home.² The completed observation records were coded and the reactivity index for each of the four, five-minute periods was ranked for each observer. A Kendall Coefficient of Concordance (Kendall, 1948) computed on these rankings indicated fair agreement ($\underline{W} = .55, \underline{p} > .05$) between the three observers. However, Appendix E presents an alternative method for evaluating the "ecological validity" of the observer's reports by demonstrating close correspondence between the observers record and a transcript of the first ten minutes of the video taped behavior specimen.

Despite the validity of the observer's recording, there were some clear differences between the daytime and evening observation periods.

In terms of the child's behavior while viewing, reference to Table 11

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indicates that the overall reactivity of the child (reactivity index) was clearly depressed during the evening observations ($t = 3.88$, $d.f. = 21$, $p. < .001$). While there was no reliable difference in the amount of passive "staring" it is evident that imitation and commentary are virtually non-existent in the evening observation period.

There are two potential explanations of the source of this discrepancy between daytime and evening observations: Differential behavior settings for the child (e.g., watching TV with parents/siblings; unfamiliar observer and modification of the stimulus materials (e.g., viewing different forms of program content in the evening).

Most of the significant aspects of the behavior setting, such as the number of children and adults in the room, remained unchanged in the evening observations. On the other hand one factor which may have altered the evening behavior setting was the presence of an unfamiliar male observer. Despite the fact that the observer was carefully "introduced" to the family, this strangeness factor may have contributed to an generalized inhibition of overt reactions to the television program. However, a plausible alternative explanation of the reactivity differences between day and evening viewing rests on demonstrable differences in the stimulus material. In this regard, Table 15 describes the proportion of children viewing various types of television content during the two observation periods. Inspection of

 Insert Table 15 about here

these data indicates that the differences are indeed like "night and day," with cartoons and child adventure accounting for 57% of all programs viewed during the daytime observation periods while these same two

program categories accounted for only 15% of the programs viewed in the evening. In the evening the TV content most frequently viewed (66%) shifted to the situation comedy and action drama categories. Since it has been demonstrated that cartoons are overwhelmingly the favorite programs of these children, it is plausible that the children would manifest greater reactivity while viewing cartoons (daytime observations) than while watching the less favored situation comedy and action drama programming. It is also conceivable that programs which are specifically designed for children, such as cartoons, are more likely to elicit spontaneous imitation and commentary than the more adult fare (action drama and situation comedy) broadcast during prime-time.

Patterns of Use and Viewing

Addicted Televiewing.--Do children who view extensive amounts of television (addicts) react to programs in a unique manner? The data in Table 16, although speculative suggest a possible pattern of televiewing. In general, the addicted viewer is less responsive

Insert Table 16 about here

to the television, less attentive, and more likely to engage in solitary play while viewing. This pattern of televiewing behavior is quite similar to the previous description of the addicted child-viewer's social behavior i.e., the heavy television user is less likely to initiate interpersonal contact, more likely to prefer playing alone,

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and more distractible. Although attenuation of both sample size and range of observed behaviors prevent a clear differentiation of addicted and casual viewers, these parallel patterns of social and televieing behavior provide some validity for the construct of television-addiction.

Program Preference and Televieing.--In general, the child's reactivity and attentiveness to the television set was highly variable. It was previously demonstrated that children's viewing activity during the home observations, tended to decline throughout the duration of the 40-minutes of observation. It was also demonstrated above, that the child's activity during the evening observation period was much more restricted and passive than the behavior of the child - viewer manifested during the daytime observations. One potential explanation of this daytime/evening contrast was the difference in the television content viewed during the evening (e.g. more adult programs were viewed at night than during the daytime). In this regard, Table 17 describes the attentiveness and reactivity of the

 Insert Table 17 about here

child viewer while watching either children's or adult programming, during the daytime observation period. The general trend, despite the fluctuation during the last ten minutes of observation, was one of greater attention and higher reactivity while viewing children's

programming. The trend reversal during the final ten minutes of the observation period may be related to the fact that the observation period usually began with the start of a program and the programs generally terminated after 30 minutes, possibly producing a minor disruption of the flow of televiewing activity.

Discussion

The results of this study provide a description of the role television plays in the daily lives of several young children, in terms of both the child's "use" of television (e.g., program preferences; extent of televiewing) and his "reactivity" to the medium (i.e., televiewing behavior). However, the findings should be considered primarily descriptive of the children in this study, and generalizations to other ages and other groups should reference the particular characteristics of this sample. Despite this cautionary note, some intriguing and stable televiewing patterns did emerge.

In general, the viewing behavior displayed by these children suggests highly differentiated patterns of television utilization. By the time these boys were six years old, they had developed a fairly univocal approach to television in terms of the type of program content most preferred and viewed, but were highly variable in the extent and duration of their actual viewing.

With regard to preference structure, these boys overwhelmingly choose cartoons as their most preferred form of television entertainment and regularly avoided all "educational" programming. This indifference to programs such as Romper Room and Sesame Street was manifested in both

the nominations of favorite programs and in diary records of one week's viewing. On the few occasions when educational programs were mentioned as most preferred, they were usually nominated by the brighter children. Indeed, there was a reliable differentiation of the preferences of bright and average children, with the brighter child manifesting a more diversified preference pattern. Moreover, it should be noted that the boys did frequently view and, by implication, endorse programming other than that specifically designed for children: The second most preferred television content was situation comedy and, when each child was asked to indicate the evening programs he most frequently viewed, both situation comedy and action drama were the front runners. This latter finding, that young children are extensively exposed to adult programming, stands in contrast to the results of Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961) who found that preschoolers rarely viewed other than children's programming. Moreover, their findings suggested a developmental progression (during the preschool to teenage years) in the child's "taste" in television programming from cartoons and child adventure; to Westerns and situation comedy; and finally to pop music and public affairs. In the present study, inspection of the diary records of a total week's viewing indicated that although children's programming (cartoon and child adventure) was heavily viewed, more adult fare such as situation comedy and action drama accounted for almost 40% of all programs viewed by these six year old boys. However, it is conceivable that the differential amount of adult programming viewed by the young children in the present study, as contrasted with that reported by Schramm, Lyle and Parker (1961), may be merely reflective of variations in the type of programs available a decade

er. In this regard, some measure of the fluidity of television

programming is provided by Shelby's (1964) history of the continuous modification in children's programming from "live" broadcasts in the 1948-52 period; to the Disneyland era in the mid-50's; and finally, to the cartoon festivals of Saturday morning in the 60's.

The magnitude of television's involvement in the daily life of the child can be calculated in terms of the extent and duration of the child's viewing. On the average, these young boys spent half of an adult's work-week (21 hours) watching approximately 30 programs. They were most likely to watch in the morning on weekends and in the afternoon and early evening hours, during the week. The pattern of viewing on a weekday that coincided with a non-school holiday, (Washington's Birthday) closely corresponded to the weekend viewing pattern. Thus, the child seems to structure his viewing in terms of both content preferences and available time. In other words, when given the opportunity to select from an entire day's programming, the child will focus on both early morning children's programming as well as his next-favored, adult evening programs. There were however, clear individual differences in the total amount of time devoted to television. Indeed, the "mainliners" of television viewed extensively enough to be considered truly addicted e.g., as much as 42 hours per week. This differential utilization of television did not appear to be related to either the child's intellectual ability or program preference patterns. On the other hand, the conclusions of the Himmelweit, Oppenheim, and Vince (1958) study, which suggest that the

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"addicted" child-viewer may be differentiated from his less involved counterpart in terms of his interpersonal behavior, received some support in the present study of six year old boys. Ratings of each child's social behavior, on three broad dimensions (extraversion-introversion; task oriented-distractible; considerateness-hostility), tended to describe the addicted televiewer as more interpersonally passive or shy; preferring solitary play to peer interaction. Moreover, the casual child-viewer was described as more likely to initiate interpersonal contact and more task-oriented. In addition, the finding that similarly differentiated social behavior patterns were manifested by the addicted and casual viewers when they were three-year-olds, led to the speculation that it is not heavy television usage per se which produces the interpersonal passivity, but rather, such children turn to television as a means of maintaining a more solitary environment. Indeed, it is conceivable that an "electronic peer" is a more accessible playmate for a passive child.

The patterns of behavior exhibited by these young boys while viewing television in their own homes, varied from passive staring to more active participation in the process of televiewing such as imitation. The frequency of these reactions to televised programming was not uniform across all behavior categories. Thus, passive staring was the most likely reaction but commentary and imitation were also evident in that order. It is of particular import that the observers were able to record

numerous instances of spontaneous imitation of televised behavior. Thus, the child who claimed to be Spiderman, the children who sang along with commercials, and the child who copied the behavior of Romper Room's "Miss Nancy" were manifesting, in a naturalistic setting, behavior more typically observed in experimental investigations of social learning phenomena (Bandura & Walters, 1963). Moreover, the frequency or "reality" of this spontaneous imitation, despite the presence of an observer in the home setting, suggests that the actual occurrence of this behavior in the course of daily interaction with the television set

Conversely, the fact that the child's reactivity to the television set was affected both by the type of program content viewed and/or by "observer effects" demonstrates that the child's performance of behavior acquired while watching television is highly susceptible to environmental influences. General reactivity to television appears to vary in relation to the amount of "attention" the child pays to the television program, and this attention seems to be related to previously developed patterns of social behavior. It seems reasonable to conclude that what the child brings to the television set will determine in some measure, the potential impact of television on him.

The television "addict" seems to be somewhat different from the casual viewer. Moreover, the child's previously acquired program preferences exert an influence on his attentiveness and reaction to particular programming. Consequently, the results of the present study suggest that prediction of the potential impact of television requires a relatively precise specification of the characteristics of

the child as well as a description of the content of the program viewed. However, it must be remembered that observers who watched children viewing television in their own homes, were able to record numerous instances of spontaneous imitation of televised behavior. Thus, these children demonstrate, in a naturalistic setting, imitative behavior which usually has been observed only in an experimental setting.

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Footnotes

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²The video taped behavior specimen of television viewing was provided by Robert B. Bechtel, Epidemiological Field Station, Greater Kansas City Mental Health Foundation.

Table 1

Mean Number of Television Programs Viewed According to Time and Day of Week
During the Week of February 15-21¹

Time Period	Monday ²	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total all week
Morning ³	1.46	0.21	0.42	0.17	0.17	2.29	1.54	6.26
Mid-day	0.08	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.54	0.46	1.08
After - School	1.38	2.17	2.12	1.75	1.58	0.50	0.50	10.00
Evening	1.33	1.88	1.38	2.08	2.42	0.88	1.33	11.30
Total All Day	4.25	4.26	3.92	4.00	4.17	4.21	3.83	

1 $\bar{N} = 24$

2 Monday was a legal holiday (Washington's Birthday) hence heavy morning viewing more typical of Saturday and Sunday.

3 Morning (sign-on to noon); Mid-day (noon to 3); Afterschool (3 to 6); Evening (6 to sign-off).

Table 2

Mean Number of Television Programs Viewed According to Content
(Program Category) and Day of Week for the Week of February 5-21¹

Program Category	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Total All Week
Situation Comedy	1.62	1.42	1.08	1.33	2.08	0.88	0.29	8.70
Cartoon	0.88	0.88	1.04	0.50	0.71	1.88	0.33	6.22
Child Adventure	0.38	0.62	0.58	0.33	0.46	0.38	0.50	3.25
Action Drama	0.54	0.79	0.62	0.88	0.54	0.54	0.96	4.83
Quiz or Variety	0.29	0.08	0.12	0.46	0.00	0.17	0.33	1.45
General Drama	0.04	0.08	0.12	0.21	0.12	0.00	0.00	0.57
Educational	0.46	0.08	0.21	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.21	1.20
Other	0.04	0.38	0.12	0.08	0.21	0.29	1.17	2.29
Total All Day	4.25	4.33	3.89	3.87	4.20	4.22	3.79	

$1_N = 24$

Table 3

Mean Number of Daily Television Hours (Duration) for the Week of February 15-21¹

	Duration of Daily Viewing							Total
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	All Week
	2:39	3:00	2:38	2:41	2:38	2:50	5:04	21:29

¹N = 24



Table 4

Children's Favorite Television Content

Program Category	Percent - Favored Content	
	Time 1 ^a Index	Time 2 ^b 1st Choice
Situation Comedy	19%	26%
Cartoon	50%	44%
Child Adventure	14%	4%
Action Drama	5%	12%
Quiz and Variety	1%	7%
General Drama	1%	-
Educational	1%	-
Other	9%	7%

aN = 25bN = 27

Table 5

Most Frequently Viewed Prime-Time Television Programming

Program Name	Program Content Category	Percent of Children Viewing
Mod Squad	Action Drama	94%
Here's Lucy	Situation Comedy	81%
Julia	Situation Comedy	75%
Gunsmoke	Action Drama	69%
Beverly Hillbillies	Situation Comedy	69%
Lassie	Child Adventure	62%
FBI	Action Drama	62%
Mayberry RFD	Situation Comedy	62%
Bewitched	Situation Comedy	62%
Land of the Giants	Action Drama	62%

¹
N = 16

a Based on number of children indicating that they "Frequently" (i.e., very often or always) watch these programs. The child selected each program from a list of all currently available, network, prime-time, programming (81 programs).

Table 6

Program Preference Patterns of Bright and Average Children

		First-Choice Favorite Program	
		Cartoons / Comedy	Other Programs
Intelligence	Bright	8	7
	Average	11	1

N=27

Table 7

Program Preference Patterns of Addicted and Casual Viewers

Television Usage	First-Choice	
	Cartoon/Comedy	Other
Addicted	9	2
Casual	9	4

N=24

Table 8

Extent of Televiewing Among Bright and Average Boys

		Televiewing	
		Addicted	Casual
Intelligence	Bright	6	7
	Average	5	6

N = 25

Table 9

Mean Social Behavior Ratings of Addicted and Casual Televiewers

	Age 3 ^b		Age 6 ^c	
	Addicted	Casual	Addicted	Casual
Extraversion-Introversion ^a	32.27	35.30	32.80	37.18
Task Oriented-Distractibility	31.18	31.30	33.30	35.82
Considerateness-Hostility	36.54	35.60	37.10	36.27

^aDirection of scores from first to second dimension (high-extroversion, low-introversion).

^b $\bar{N} = 21$

^c $\bar{N} = 21$

Table 10

Televisioning and Social Behavior Patterns of Six-Year-Old Boys

	Social Behavior Ratings					
	Extraversion/Introversion		Task Oriented/Distractible		Considerateness/Hostility	
	H1	Lo	H1	Lo	H1	Lo
Televisioning						
Addicted	4	6	4	6	5	5
Casual	8	3	7	4	7	4
	<u>N=21</u>		<u>N=21</u>		<u>N=21</u>	

Table 11

Reactivity of Young Boys While Viewing Television

	Mean Number of Televiewing Reactions			Reactivity Index
	Staring	Commentary	Imitation	Reproduction
Daytime ^a	8.28	2.40	.64	.20
Evening ^b	8.04	.54	.04	.00
				16.04
				9.95

^a $\bar{N} = .25$ ^b $\bar{N} = 22$

Table 13

Televiewing Activity Rates During 40 Minute Daytime and Evening
Observation Periods

	Duration (in 5 minute periods)							
	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40
	Daytime ^a							
Structured (Eye Contact)		15.36	15.08	13.60	8.56			
Free Response (Reactivity Index)	5.00	3.76	4.48	2.90				
	Evening ^b							
Structured (Eye Contact)		14.23	14.86	11.27	5.95			
Free Response (Reactivity Index)	2.73	2.14	2.64	1.54				

^aN = 25^bN = 22

Attentive Viewing and Children's Televiewing Activity

	Staring		Commentary		Imitation		Reactivity Index		
	Lo	H1	Lo	H1	None	Some	Lo	H1	
Attentiveness	6	11	7	10	10	7	6	11	
	Lo	5	3	Lo	5	3	Lo	6	2

$\bar{N} = 25$

Table 15

Percent of Programs Viewed During Daytime and Evening;
Home Observations

Program Content	Observation Periods	
	Daytime ^a	Evening ^b
Situation Comedy	.20	.45
Cartoon	.34	.08
Child Adventure	.23	.07
Action Drama	.00	.20
Quiz Variety	.03	.08
General Drama	.02	.00
Educational	.16	.00
Other	.01	.05
No Answer	.01	.07

^aN = 25

^bN = 22

Table 16

Televiewing Behavior of Addicted and Casual Viewers

Television Usage	Televiewing Behavior		
	Reactivity Index	Solitary Play	Eye Contact
Addicted	14.50	3.08	52.25
Casual	18.40	2.30	54.80

 $\bar{N} = 25$

Table 17

Attention and Reactivity to Varying Program Content During
Daytime Observations of Televiewing Behavior

Program Content	Observation Period			
	0-10 minutes	11-20 minutes	21-30 minutes	31-40 minutes
	Eye Contact	Reactivity Index	Eye Contact	Reactivity Index
Children's Programming	16.31	5.46	15.31	4.38
Adult Programming	14.11	4.00	14.89	2.78
			13.22	6.00
			10.08	3.54
			6.67	2.11
			3.62	6.62
			14.46	3.62

N = 25

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APPENDIX A

FIRST-GRADERS WATCHING TELEVISION

Paul Hanly Furfey

FIRST-GRADERS WATCHING TELEVISION

Paul Hanly Furfey

Catholic University of America

Staff members of the Infant Education Research Project visited the homes of 25 of the 28 subject children and observed for approximately one hour while these boys watched television. The observers described their general impressions of the child's television viewing by drawing on both their observation period and their general knowledge of these children and their families. The 25 reports varied in length from about half a typed page to a full page. The present memo is based on these reports.

It must be admitted at the outset that this anecdotal information does not permit clear generalizations about the part that TV played in the lives of the subject children. However, it was interesting to note that in a number of cases television was chosen for a lack of something more interesting. One child watched television "when there is nothing better to do." Another chose it for lack of "something better or more exciting." In the case of four boys it was explicitly stated that they preferred outdoor play but fell back on TV only when the weather was bad. The homes where these boys live are often crowded, dark, and unpleasant. Therefore, when outdoor play is impossible, television

Furfey

looms large. There are probably far fewer alternatives than in middle-class homes. Of one boy it was said, "In inclement weather, this is his main entertainment."

Many published studies give quantitative data on the total amount of time children spend watching television or the amount of time they watch specific programs; but they do not distinguish qualitatively between different kinds of watching. One point brought out clearly by the present series of observations is that there are many different ways in which a child may react to television. There are many varieties of "watching."

Staff members observed that in several cases a child's reaction to television was "passive." Of one boy it was said that "his television observation was quite passive." One child was allowed to choose his program; but even though the program was his own choice, he sat passively. Then the staff member allowed him to choose another program, but his reaction "was basically the same." Another boy was reported by his mother to "love" television; yet he impressed the visiting staff member as "a passive television viewer." Of one child, the staff member remarked that throughout the contact of the staff with him he has been "observed as a passive, introverted, non-verbal child." She was therefore not surprised that he should also be "a passive viewer" of television.

On the other hand, more than half the subject children gave some proof of a genuinely active interest in the programs they watched. It was reported of one child that "each time the commercial came on he sang

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along and appeared to know the entire commercial. He also hummed or sang along with the music that accompanied the cartoons he watched." Another "appeared to enjoy particularly the programs in which he could actively participate. As he watched 'Sesame Street,' he said his alphabet, counted and sang along with the TV."

It was reported of six of the subject children that they knew by name the characters appearing on certain programs and could discuss them and what they did. For example, it is reported of one boy that "he is familiar with some characters who appear in the programs and can describe verbally various aspects of the programs, particularly those he is most fond of He tries to imitate some of the people he watches."

One subject child gets up early regularly every morning to watch a favorite program before he goes to school. In a couple of instances, observers remarked that a child would be so interested in a program that he could not be distracted by noisy siblings and would dislike being interrupted to answer questions. One child sat very close to the TV screen so that the observer was afraid this might injure his eyes; probably this, too, should be interpreted as an evidence of interest.

In the case of one little boy, television seemed to have a good deal of psychological importance. "Being an only child, he relies on the television for companionship. He spends a good deal of time watching television It appears that without television he might be a very lonely child."