

**THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN HOURS OF
TELEVISION VIEWING, PARENTING STYLES
AND CHILDREN AGGRESSION IN SABAH**

AMINUDDIN IBRAHIM LASTAR



UMS

UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH

**SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH**

2011

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**THIS IS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

**SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGY AND SOCIAL WORK
UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA SABAH
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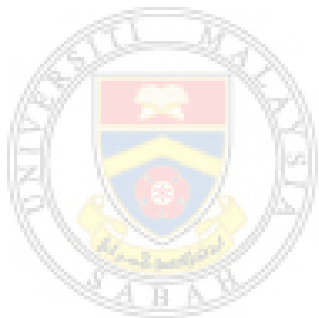
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the materials in my thesis is my own except for quotations, excerpts, equations, summaries, and references, which have been duly acknowledged.

13th MAY 2011

Aminuddin Ibrahim Lastar

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CERTIFICATION

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ABSTRAK

Objektif kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan di antara berlebihan masa menonton rancangan ganas di televisyen dan tingkah laku kecelaruan perlakuan ganas di kalangan kanak-kanak di Sabah. Perbezaan peranan keibubapaan yang diguna pakai oleh ibu bapa yang mungkin menyumbang kearah tingkah laku kecelaruan perlakuan ganas di kalangan anak-anak mereka, turut dikaji untuk tindak balas moderator dalam kajian ini. Kajian ini telah dijalankan di beberapa lokasi luar bandar dan bandar dalam negeri Sabah. Ianya telah melibatkan seramai 626 sampel; lelaki (N=367) dan perempuan (N=259). Satu set soal selidik berdasarkan adaptasi dari Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL) oleh Achenbach (1991), Childhood TV Violence Measures (CTVVM) oleh Huesmann dan Eron (1986), dan Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ), oleh Buri (1991) telah diguna pakai. Data yang dikumpulkan melalui kaedah tinjauan telah dianalisa dengan menggunakan korelasi Pearson, ujian-t, dan regresi pelbagai. Dapatan kajian mendapati kanak-kanak di Sabah menonton 3.3 jam sehari rancangan televisyen ganas mempunyai korelasi positif yang signifikan ($r=.12, p < 0.05$) dengan tingkah laku pelanggaran peraturan. Hasil kajian juga mendapati bahawa perlakuan pelanggaran peraturan ini lebih ketara dan signifikan di kawasan luar bandar ($M = 14.16, SD = 2.82$) berbanding kawasan bandar [$M = 15.24, SD = 3.17; t(624) = -4.46, p < 0.05$]. Gaya keibubapaan autoritatif didapati mempunyai tindak balas moderator yang signifikan [$F(3,620) = 4.09, P < 0.05$] terhadap hubungan langsung antara pemboleh ubah bebas dan terikat. Ianya telah berjaya merendahkan tahap keganasan di kalangan kanak-kanak. Maka oleh itu, gaya keibubapaan autoritatif adalah merupakan gaya yang utama dalam mendidik anak-anak untuk menjauhi perilaku keganasan akibat daripada pengaruh rancangan televisyen yang berunsur ganas.

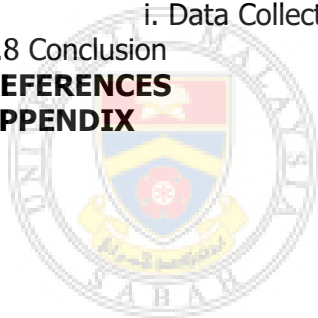
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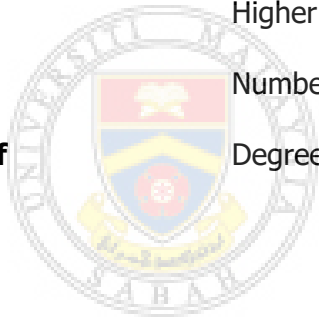
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LIST OF SYMBOLS

M	Mean
SD	Standard Deviation
r	Reliability
p	Significant Value
F	F-Ratio
R²	R-Square
β	Beta Coefficient
t	T-Value
≤	Lower Than or/and Same As
≥	Higher Than or/and Same As
n	Number of Sample / Participant
df	Degree of Freedom



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGB	Aggressive Behaviors
BPAQ	Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire
CBCL	Child Behavioral Check List
CTVVM	Childhood TV Violent Measure
DV	Dependent Variable
IV	Independent Variable
PAIC	Parental Acceptance, Involvement, and Control
PAQ	Parental Authority Questionnaire



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

It is generally believed that every household in Malaysia possesses at least one television set or at the very least, every child has access to one whether at a friend's place, restaurants, food courts, shops, or even by the road side. Television watching has become a center of everyday life for most Malaysians, especially children regardless for their race, age, or sex. Some how, television has become a large part of children's activities (Johnson, 1996; Strasburger and Wilson, 2002) besides sleeping. For some reasons, parents think that having a television set at home, unquestionably would keep their children at home in safe and sound. Nevertheless, having too much television viewing may initiate other problems among their children. Especially if they are excessively exposed to violent contents of the television programs in their early age. Unfortunately, the effects of television are long lasting especially if children are exposed to it from early age. This is because the amount of television violence and aggressive observed at age eight can be predicted aggression at age 18 (Haugaard, 2001) so do many studies on televised violence have supported the belief that watching much programs result in an increase in aggressive behavior (Berns, 1994).

A part from that, watching too much television does not promote healthy socialization among children (Rosenkoetter, Rosenkoetter, and Acock, 2009). Children Socialization is a give-and-take process. Therefore, having an excessive hours of television viewing does not encourage the development of healthy socialization which in the other hand may lead to the development of anti social problem due to less interaction and communication accordingly in the family and society. There is evidence for the contribution of both early child characteristics and factors in the care giving environment to the development of antisocial behavior (Haugaard, 2001; Lahey, Moffit, and Caspi, 2003; Nelson and Israel, 2003). Such problem can be easily detected in children who project certain patterns of

behaviors that differ from the norm of children behaviors acceptance within the society. When children's behavior predominately response to an event which brings out aggression or deceive (Lahey *et.al.*, 2003), such development of trajectory should be considered disquieting. A proper parental guidance should take place from the beginning to avoid such occurrences from escalating into misbehaviors that may hinder the fully development of children's potentials.

A part from being at home, children spend most of their times in school. Their progress is greatly affected by their experience in schools and provides the opportunity to master new skills (Butterworth and Harris, 1994). It is also where common and shared behaviors should take in place as school is in a powerful position to wield influences on the children's personality and academic accomplishment (Herbert and Wookey, 2004). Nevertheless, in some cases there are children who unable to respond to the stimuli provided by this environment will retort in many ways. The retardation may interfere with or disrupt the endeavors of other children as well. They may involve in many aggressive behaviors such as bullying and fighting, lying and hurting animals, (Lahey, *et.al.*, 2003), in which to a general population is quite common. Whatsoever, the consequences from such aggressive acts are large and should not be taken lightly by parents, teachers and society.

In spite of the situation, these children will be left behind in their academic achievement and social interaction. According to Herbert and Wookey (2004), between 10 - 20 percent of all school-age children manifest these difficulties. As it is shown in many findings, patterns of aggression often start early in life (Herbert and Wookey, 2004; Huesmann, Moise-Titus, Podolski, and Eron, 2003; Kauffman, 2005). 55 percent of boys and 41 percent of girls show signs of aggression by the age of two while 25 percent of boys and 34 percent of girls reveal the patterns of aggression by the age of five (Haugaard, 2001). Although the proportion of aggression diminish as the children grow, which mean the declining of minor aggression patterns, but severe and vicious form of aggression raise dramatically for some children (Haugaard, 2001). These on going trajectories, may be considered as the developmental pathways to much bigger behavioral problems. As

Nelson and Israel (2003), cited behavioral development takings in consistent pattern, so for each individual, current functioning is associated to past functioning as well as to future execution. This is because, according to Bloomquist and Schnell (2002), children who display aggression at a young age are at risk for developing violent behavior, mental health problems, school dropout, chemical dependency, occupational difficulties, marital and family problems, and criminal offending outcomes as adolescents and adults.

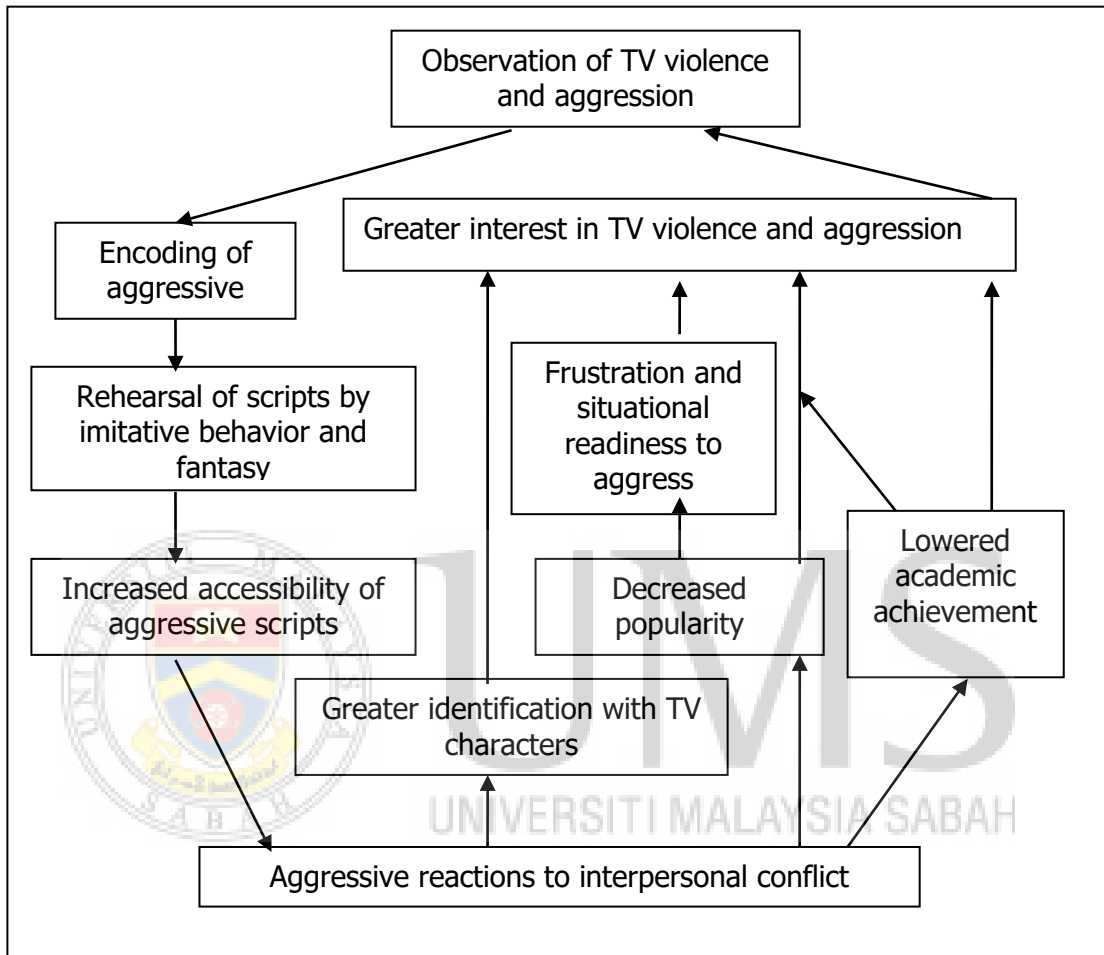
In conjunction with the National Education Philosophy, that is to produce a holistic human being from the system, this phenomena must be taken seriously not just by teachers, but parents and caregivers respectively.

Questions about why people behave differently on the same occasion are fascinating, and the answers are important for the interpretation of complex children behavior (Donahoe and Palmer, 1994). Possibly, the answer could be found by studying the patterns of behaviors and their influences in television watching as describe in the Huesmann reciprocal model of television influences. The model explains that, watching violent and aggression television programs may lead to encoding the scripts and actions through observation process, which are store in the children memory block. Observation takes place when the children found that the characters seen on the programs are attractive enough for them to engage later in the imitation processes by rehearsing and reproduce the acts seen earlier.

The model further explains that, without a proper and constant parental guidance, these strengthening schemata were than be materialized into the interpersonal interactions which later increase the children's desires to watch more of such programs on television. At the same time, their popularity among other children who do not share the same values is decrease while their acceptance in the shared-values peer increased. The phenomenon may cause them to have poor academic performance and therefore created a level of frustration, which soon ready to react aggressively. These children will soon may involve in more encoding

processes and imitation by having more accessibility of aggressive scripts and the circle starts again as explain in the figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1: Huesmann reciprocal model of the influences of television.



Source: Donahoe and Palmer (1994).

Another interpretation of a complex children behaviors may also be seen in the model of path to chronic delinquency by Berk, (2009). As well as Lahey, *et.al.* (2003) and Sigelman and Rider (2006), she also has confirmed that, poor parental discipline and monitoring during the early childhood may cause the child to have conduct problems such as bullying and small fighting, lying and hurting animals due to anger and frustration. These phenomenons not just due to the poor parental practice but also derived from observation, imitation and reproduction of the behaviors seen by the children through their daily activities with the family

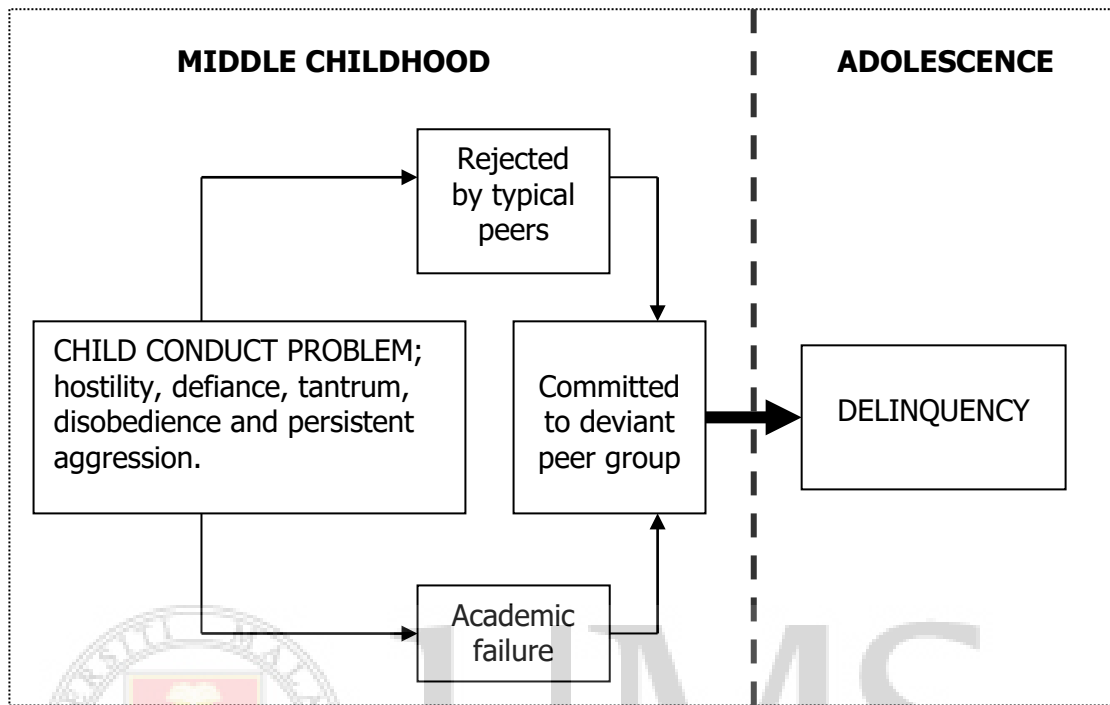
members, peers at school or nursery, and society. Those behaviors are also reproduced from scenes that they have seen in the television since television has played a huge role in their daily life. As Brooks (2001), claims that;

“The impact of television depends on the viewing time, the general family and social circumstances, and, most important, the content of the programs”.
(Brooks, 2001:194).

Consequently, the escalating of such persistent and continuous aggression will force the children to be rejected by their normal peers at school or even in their neighborhood. Academic failure is also another result from the behavioral problems facing by these children. The circumstances were related as these children started to hang around with the shared-values peers who accept them. The new state of affairs that the children experiencing will make them feel belonging and is important to them in their new development; in which towards anti-social and delinquency in the later years.

These complexity as aforementioned were described as Path to Chronic Delinquency by Berk (2009), which explains the escalating behavioral problems during middle childhood may lead to levels of delinquency in adulthood as shown in figure 1.2 below.

Figure 1.2: Model of path to chronic delinquency with childhood onset with conduct problems.



Source: Adopted from Berk (2009).

Hence, the understanding of these two models is crucial for the researcher to develop a complete and comprehensive framework for this study. Besides that, it is also to enable the researcher to formulate the study objectives and hypotheses to be carried out.

1.2 DIMENSION OF BEHAVIORAL PROBLEMS

The pattern of behavioral problem is a repetitive and persistent pattern of behaviors in children that violates the social norms and rights. It is a serious problem violating the basic age-appropriate for children. It is also viewed as a complicated group of behavioral and emotional problems in children. They manifest immense difficulty in following rules and regulations or behaving in a socially tolerable ways.

Studies show that, boys suffer more than girls do (Mash and Wolfe, 2002; Bloomquist and Schnell, 2002) and according to Mash and Wolfe (2002), in many cases, the occurrence of aggression is 9-10 percent in boys and two-five percent in girls under the age of 18. Whatsoever, conduct problems is rarely begins after the age of 16. Meaning, for children to develop aggression, early-age on set (before age 10-12) is much higher compare to late-age on set which, the symptoms started to emerge around the age of nine years old (Mash and Wolfe, 2002). Whatsoever, earlier studies done by Stanger, Achenbach and Verhulst (1997), indicated that, early onset symptoms emerge at age of four to ten and the aggressiveness may decline but score on delinquency increased. Children who develop aggression on an early on-set, manifesting more aggressive and exhibit more functional impairment (Bloomquist and Schnell, 2002). However, many youths with conduct problem begin their misbehaviors in childhood and this could lead to long-term effects in adolescents and adulthood (Kearney, 2003).

On the same token, Kauffman (2005), defines aggressive behaviors as developing children who are occasionally exhibit antisocial behavior of various temper tantrums, fight with their siblings or peers, cheat, lie, be physically cruel to animals or other people, refuse to obey their parents, or destroy their own or other's possessions. While Mash and Wolfe (2002), describe aggressive children as child who displays aggressive and antisocial acts involving inflicting pain on others or interfering with others' rights through physical and verbal aggression, stealing or committing acts of vandalism. A comprehensive definition of aggressive behavior is suggests by Comer (2007), as a more severe problem; repeatedly violate the basic rights of others. They often violent and may be physically cruel to people or animals, deliberately destroy other people's property, skip school, or run away from home. Many steal from, threaten, or harm their victims, committing such crimes as shoplifting, forgery, breaking into buildings or cars, muggings, and armed robbery. As they get older, their acts of physical violence may include rape or, in rare cases, homicide.

From the above definitions, aggressive behavior is a serious phenomenon and the effect of such occurrences would bring masses of damages to the person

and society. Based on that, it is obvious, aggressive behaviors amongst children encompasses a great deal of perception in multiple facet. Not just, it emerges in some form of development amongst children in various descriptions, which can be classified as mild, moderate or severe; it also would hinder the potential growth of the children.

Mild aggression is categorized as resulting in only minor harm to others while severe aggression when causing considerable harm to others (Kauffman, 2005). As the result, this complicated group of behaviors and emotional problems among children often regard by other children, adult and society as bad and delinquency or troublesome.

By given any circumstances, there are five major patterns of aggressive behaviors that children usually reveal (Comer, 2007). Frequently, these children express their anger out loud and or physically with other children, adults or even animals. These actions could also be manifested by the conduct of bullying, threatening or intimidating others for certain reasons. When ever an object is used, the possibility of harming others or animals is at large. These violent and aggressive acts might involve stealing from a victim while confronting and force someone into sexual activity without consent (Mash and Wolfe, 2002).

Another familiar patterns of aggressive behavior is destruction of property. aggressive children could deliberately engage in property destruction with or without any reasonable clues. Some may go even further by engaging in fire setting of a property with the intention of demolition.

Deceitfulness, lying or stealing can be considered as quite common amongst aggressive children (Kaufmann, 2005). Some of the activities may include broken and entering into some else's home, building or car. They would steal other's belonging without intention of confrontations. One example of such act is shoplifting.

Another pattern of aggressive behaviors is serious violation of rules or policies. The simple pattern could vary from stay out late at night with parental objections to run away from home for many days. Some might involve in truancy from school and hanging out with peers doing unhealthy or antisocial activities.

The functional impairment indicates by aggressive children cause significant plunder in their socialization, academic or occupational functioning in the future. The unrepressed escalation of aggressive behaviors over the life span, which was adapted from the veil weed and Patterson Model of life span model could somehow explain the phenomenon. The unrepressed escalation of aggressive behaviors over the life span model describes the existence of aggression over the lifetime obviously indicates that the background inconsistency is the risk variables for individual to develop aggressive behaviors which later will turn to be delinquent and eventually antisocial personality. Many children with aggression will go on as adolescent with antisocial and delinquent behaviors and in due course displays criminal behavior, psychiatric problems, social maladjustment, health problems, lost of productivity, unreliable work history perhaps due to lower employment skills and difficulties to get along with co-workers and supervisors and poor parenting of their own children (Mash and Wolfe, 2002).

The developmental pathway of aggression starts from the early stage where parents are antisocial, grandparents are unskilled, stressors such as low socioeconomic-status and family incompatibility, use of substance by parents that later lead to poor discipline and monitoring by parents and grandparents may result a child with antisocial behavior and low self-esteem (Mash and Wolfe, 2002). As the child grown on in such environment, the child would experience school and academic failure; consequently, the child will be rejected by peers and perhaps parents as well. As a result, the child will be depressed which will bring in and intensify the tendency towards antisocial behavior. Once the child passing through the middle childhood and move on as an adolescent with rejections and depressed mood, the child would be at an angle leaning towards antisocial and clinging to deviant peer group (Kauffman, 2005). When it happens, the child will have capacity for delinquency and substance abuse. Pro-antisocial behaviors and aggression that