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Wisconsin Parent/Guardian Descriptions of Children's Behavior Related to the Viewing of Television News

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Abstract

This study concerning children and television violence examines the descriptions and opinions of a sample of Wisconsin parents and/or legal guardians of children ages 3-12. One of the purposes of this research was to attempt to replicate the findings of a national study released by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press (1993) and to compare its findings with those generated from this sample of Wisconsin parents/guardians. This research provides parents, educators, and public policy-makers with a better understanding of which demographics of children (e.g., age and sex) may be affected most by viewing violent content shown on television newscasts, and how often Wisconsin children are watching the news compared to the national sample.

Data were gathered about how often children are viewing the news, parent/guardian opinions concerning the amount of violence in newscasts, and reasons why parents/guardians may or may not switch the channel during a newscast. Results suggest that although a majority of parents/guardians thought that local television news "does not contain too much violence," a majority thought that the national television news "contains too much violence." One third (30%) of the Wisconsin parents/guardians reported their child either "regularly" or "sometimes" watches the news, compared to 54% of the national sample from the Times Mirror respondents. A strong majority (69%) of the Wisconsin parents/guardians stated their child either "rarely" or "never" watches the local or national news, compared to 44% of the Times Mirror respondents. Lastly, a majority (54%) of Wisconsin parents/guardians reported switching the channel or turning off the television because of something on the news that they did not want their child to see. Of the Wisconsin parents/guardians who indicated they had switched the channel or turned off the television, a majority (74%) indicated the main reason was due to "violence."

Reports illustrating the amount of violent content featured in television programming vary, although all are cause for concern. The National Association of Elementary School Principals (1995) reports that "by the end of elementary school, the average American child [will have] watched 8,000 murders and 100,000 acts of violence on television--including children's programs." Berry and Asamen (1993) postulate that "the average child watching an average amount of television will see about 20,000 murders and 80,000 assaults in his or her formative years" (p.14). According to the authors, that's about 100,000 violent acts before a youngster becomes a teenager.

A source of violent programming not usually associated with young viewers is television news. Yet, on a typical day, an analysis of Nielsen ratings shows that an average

minute of network news is seen by 500,000 American children between the ages of 2 and 11 (Wolff, 1997).

One of the purposes of this research was to attempt to replicate the findings of a national study released by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press (1993). The researchers wanted to compare the Times Mirror findings with those generated from a sample of Wisconsin parents/guardians to learn how, if at all, Wisconsin parents would differ from the national sample in regard to children's viewing of the news. Research on this topic provides parents, educators, and public policy-makers with a better understanding of which demographics of children (e.g., age and sex) may be affected most by violent content in newscasts and information about how many Wisconsin children are viewing newscasts compared to the national sample

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The debate and discussion concerning television violence clearly has not ended. The FCC will require manufacturers to install violence-chip blocking technology on half of the television sets sold in the U.S. by July 1, 1999, and all of them by January 1, 2000 (Mifflin, 1998). The v-chip is by no means the final panacea for television violence. Parents and media literacy groups continue to voice their concern regarding the amount and potentially harmful effects of television violence. Organizations concerned with the effects of mass media on youth have been formed dedicated to the promotion of media literacy. Examples of such organizations include The Center for Media Literacy, The Center for Media Education, and Citizens for Media Literacy. (For examples of past concern see: Berry & Asamen, 1993; Brand, 1994; Cantor, 1997; Comstock & Strasburger, 1990; Gerbner, 1993; Huston, Donnerstein, Fairchild, Fishback, Katz, Murray, Rubinstein, Wilcox, & Zuckerman, 1992; Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press (1993); Violence on TV Hearings, 1993; Violence on TV Hearings, 1992).

Such concern has influenced White House officials and was evidenced by President Clinton's decision to address the "v-chip" in his 1996 State of the Union speech and media violence in his 1995 State of the Union speech (*New York Times*, January 24, 1996, p. A9 and *New York Times*, January 26, 1995, p. A11).

This article first provides a review of relevant prior research and literature in two areas: (1) the relationship between television violence and aggressive behavior; and (2) violent content in television newscasts. Following the review of literature, three research questions are posited.

Television Violence and Aggressive Behavior

Over 4,000 books, articles, reports, and papers have been published on the topic of televised violence since the mid-1950s (Huston, et al., 1992; Murray, 1980). Much of the controversy has centered on the effect of television on adolescent's attitudes and behavior; in particular, scholars have focused on the area of aggressive and antisocial behavior. Comstock (1990, 1982, 1975) and Atkin (1983) state that extensive empirical evidence now exists that points to a consistent and causal relationship between viewing TV violence and increased levels of aggressive behavior in children and adolescents.

No doubt, there are social and biological factors other than the viewing of violent television that can stimulate aggressive behavior in children. Still, much discussion has centered on the influence of television violence (see for example: Berry & Asamen, 1993; Comstock & Palik, 1991; Freedman, 1986, 1984; Friedrich-Cofer & Huston, 1986; Gerbner & Signorielli, 1990; Huesmann & Eron, 1986; Huston, et al., 1992; Kunkel, Wilson, Linz, Potter, Donnerstein, Smith, Blumenthal, & Gray, 1994-1995).

Violent Content in Television Newscasts

Little research has been conducted to examine the link between aggressive behavior in children and their viewing of television newscasts, yet content analysis studies have demonstrated considerable amounts of violence depicted on television news (Atkin, 1983). According to Dominick, Wurtzel, and Lometti (1975), the "eyewitness"¹ local news format features many more violent stories than the traditional format of the past.

Addressing the "mirror of society concept," Graber (1979) points out that violent crimes should be depicted [on television] in proportion to their frequency in the context of all criminal activity including non-violent crime" (p. 87). According to Graber's (1979) research, judged by this criterion, "the news about violent crime is quite excessive" (p. 87). Graber further claims that crime news "presents a distorted image of the relative incidence of various types of street crimes by exaggerating murder, rape, and assault" (p. 91).

More recently, a study conducted by the Consortium For Local Television Surveys found that prime-time newscasts in eight selected cities devoted almost 30 percent of their news time to crime and criminal justice stories—twice as much as politics, the next highest category (Stateman, 1997). A study conducted in Atlanta found that violent crime dominated the top stories covered on its four local evening and late-night newscasts, and that 47% of the stories on WSB-TV, the Atlanta ratings leader, were about violent crime (Pomerantz & Prodigio-Herrmann, 1996). Finally, according to the research of Singer (1970-71), national network news in the U.S. portrays far more aggression items than the Canadian network.

The results of a recent study released by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press, make clear a majority (52%) of Americans feel that "TV news is too full of violence," and

"by a margin of 55% to 37%, TV news [was] judged as not exaggerating the amount of violence in the country" but accurately reflecting social reality (p. 2). The Times Mirror respondents also voiced criticism of television news for the amount of attention it pays to crime stories; according to the results, "fifty-seven percent believe that TV news gives too much attention to stories about violent crimes" (p. 2).

Another study, which was conducted by Atkin (1983), compared the impact of real news violence and fictional entertainment violence on aggressive responses of pre-adolescents. According to his results, "a violent incident presented as realistic news has greater impact on aggressiveness than the same scene portrayed as fantasy entertainment" (p. 619). Atkin claims more attention should be devoted to violent depictions in news programming to determine the scope and strength of impact on aggression. Finally, according to Cantor and Nathanson's (1996) research concerning children's reactions to televised news, "[children] are affected by many of the vividly frightening images and the stories that highlight individuals' vulnerability to horrifying outcomes" (p. 151).

Research Questions

Based on the review of literature and previous research, the following research questions were posited:

- I. Television News
 - A. What are Wisconsin parents/guardians' opinions concerning the amount of violence in local and national television news?
 - B. Do Wisconsin parents and guardians think that television news reporting exaggerates the amount of violence in the United States?
- II. Children's Viewing of Television News
 - A. According to Wisconsin parent/guardian reports, how often are their children watching either the local or national news?
 - B. Are Wisconsin parents and guardians encouraging or discouraging their children from watching the news?
- III. Switch the Channel or Turn Off the Television News

Are Wisconsin parents and guardians switching the channel or turning off the television because of something on the news they do not want their child to see? If so, what type of news content stimulates their actions?

Method

A survey questionnaire was completed by 351 parents or legal guardians (females and males) of children ages 3-12 years in the cities of Eau Claire and Altoona, Wisconsin.² The survey, featuring a combination of closed and open-ended questions, asked parents/guardians to describe their child's television viewing behavior related to local and national newscasts.³ Only one parent or guardian per family was asked to complete the survey. In an attempt to replicate the Times Mirror (1993) study, eight of the questions featured on the survey instrument were identical to the questions that appeared on the Times Mirror study questionnaire. Parents/guardians were asked to respond to the questions based on only one of their children aged 3-12. According to the data gathered, a majority (57%) of the children described were male; 43% of the children described were female.

The questionnaire was distributed in October and November 1994 to the principals of nine elementary schools (six parochial and three public.) The principals arranged for the questionnaires to be sent home with the students via a "folder system."⁴ The sample thus can be described as non-random, purposive, and convenient. Researchers distributed 877 surveys; 351 were returned, approximating a 40% response rate.

Results

Hours of Television Viewing

As indicated in Table 1, slightly more than one third of the parents/guardians (33%) reported that their child watches one to one and a half hours of television on an average weekday. Another 19% indicated that their child watches two hours of television on an average weekday.

Table 1 also shows the results regarding how many hours parents/guardians reported their child spends watching television on an average weekend. Approximately one third (31%) stated

that their child watches four hours or more, 18% indicated their child watches television for three hours, and 16% indicated their child watches two hours of television.

Television News

Table 2 reports that a majority of parents/guardians (60%) indicated they thought that local television news "does not contain too much violence." On the other hand, 27% of the parents/guardians thought local news "does contain too much violence." The data did not reveal a significant relationship between the sex of the parent/guardian and their opinion regarding the amount of violence in local news. Parent/guardian evaluations of the national news appeared almost opposite of parental/guardian evaluations of the local news. Table 2 also shows that a majority of parents/guardians (58%) reported that they thought the national television news "contains too much violence" and that one-third (31%) thought that the national news "does not contain too much violence." Results suggest that significantly more female than male parents/guardians described the national news as "containing too much violence" ($p=.01605$; $\alpha=.05$). That is, 92% of the parents/guardians who described the national news as "containing too much violence" were women; 8% were men ($n=139$). A majority of the parents/guardians (54%) revealed they think television news reporting "does not exaggerate the amount of violence in the United States." A little over one quarter of the parents/guardians (26%) stated that television news reporting "exaggerates the amount of violence in the United States," and 20% indicated they "did not know."

Children's Viewing of News

As indicated in Table 3, a plurality of parents/guardians (48%) stated their child "rarely" watches the local or national news, 25% reported "sometimes," 21% indicated "never," and 5% related that their child "regularly" watches the local or national news. The data revealed a significant relationship between how the parent/guardian described their child's viewing of the news and the age of their child. According to the results, 71% of the parents/guardians who said their child watches the news "regularly" or "sometimes" were parents/guardians of a child aged 8-12 years. Twenty-nine percent of the parents/guardians who said their child watches the news "regularly"

or "sometimes" were parents of a child aged 3-7 years.

Of the parents/guardians who said their child "rarely" or "never" watches the news, 60% were parents/guardians of a child aged 3-7 years; 40% were parents/guardians of a child aged 8-12 years ($p=.00000$; $\alpha=.05$; $n=107$). The data did not reveal a significant relationship between how the parent/guardian described their child's viewing of the news and the sex of their child.

Table 4 shows that a majority of parents/guardians (75%) indicated they "neither" encouraged nor discouraged their children to watch the news, whereas 15% of the parents/guardians indicated they "encouraged," and 9% stated they "discouraged" their child from watching the news.

Switch the Channel or Turn Off the TV News

A majority of parents/guardians (54%) indicated they had switched the channel or turned off the television because there was something on the news that they did not want their child to see. The remaining 46% of the parents/guardians stated they had not ever switched the channel or turned off the television in such a situation. Table 5 reveals that of the parents/guardians who indicated they had switched the channel or turned off the television because there was something on the news that they did not want their child to see, a majority of parents/guardians (74%) indicated the main reason was due to "violence." Other reasons included "sex" (11%), "other" (10%), and "language" (1%). "Other" responses, as listed in Table 5, included, for example, "human suffering (especially children)," "mutilated bodies," and "discussions of murder."

Discussion

As stated in the introduction, one of the purposes of this study was to attempt to replicate the findings of a national study released by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press (1993). The researchers wanted to compare its findings with those generated from a sample of Wisconsin parents/guardians to learn how, if at all, Wisconsin parents would differ from the national sample. Thus, much of the following discussion is addressed in terms of how the results compare to the Times Mirror study.

Television News

This study was interested in exploring Wisconsin parent/guardian opinions concerning news programming, a potential source of violent content. Based on the data gathered in this study, parents/guardians differentiated between local and national news. A majority of Wisconsin parents/guardians indicated they thought that local television news “does not contain too much violence.” This finding differs from research that shows the content on local TV news to be more violent than the content on national newscasts (Fletcher, 1998; Graber, 1979). In the year this Wisconsin study was conducted, U.S. crime statistics show Wisconsin’s violent crime index rate (incidence of violent crime per 100,000 inhabitants) to be less than half of the violent crime index rate for the U.S. (United States Crime Statistics 1960-1997).⁵ One might assume from these statistics that Wisconsin parents/guardians viewed local TV news as less violent than national newscasts because there was less violent news to report locally.

Reports differed in the area of national news. A majority (58%) of Wisconsin parents/guardians reported that they thought the national television news “contains too much violence.” These results support the previous findings of the Times Mirror study (1993), which found that a majority of Americans (52%) think “TV news is too full of violence” (p. 2).

Results from the present study also suggest that significantly more females than male parents/guardians described the national news as containing too much violence.

While a greater percentage of the public think television news contains more violent content than in the past, more people also believe that such content accurately reflects social reality. Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorielli’s (1986) “cultivation theory,” attempts to explain this way of thinking; they suggest that viewers’ beliefs about social reality are based on the mass-mediated images to which they are exposed. Gerbner (1993) also proposed the “mean world syndrome,” which argues that the more one views violent messages, the more one thinks and perceives the world to be a dangerous and violent place. Specifically addressing television news content, Budiansky, Gregory, Schmidt, and Bierk (1996) report that “the sheer overload of crime and disaster stories on television, and especially local television newscasts, is giving the public a warped view of reality” (pp. 63-64).

The results from this study indirectly support both “cultivation theory” and the thinking behind the “mean world syndrome.”

More people believe that the violent news content accurately reflects social reality. A majority of the Wisconsin parents/guardians (54%) revealed they think television news reporting does not exaggerate the amount of violence in the United States. These findings also replicate the Times Mirror (1993) findings; 55% of the respondents judged TV news “as not exaggerating the amount of violence in the country but accurately reflecting social reality” (p. 2)

Children’s Viewing of News

According to Atkin (1978) and Drew and Reeves (1980), although news interest and exposure are lower for young viewers than for adults, most grade school children view news broadcasts periodically and show moderate interest in TV news (Hoffner & Haefner, 1994, p. 194). One third (30%) of the Wisconsin parents/guardians reported their child either “regularly” or “sometimes” watches the news, compared to 54% of the Times Mirror respondents. A strong majority (69%) of the Wisconsin parents/guardians stated their child either “rarely” or “never” watches the local or national news, compared to 44% of the Times Mirror respondents. These results can be both assuring and alarming for Wisconsin parents/guardians. On the one hand, if, in fact, a majority of Wisconsin children either “rarely” or “never” watch the news, this means they are less likely to be exposed to the violent content contained within it.

If, on the other hand, only about one third (30%) of Wisconsin children are viewing the news either “regularly” or “sometimes,” one could consider this statistic to be of concern. That is, if one were to compare the Wisconsin sample to the national sample, one could see that Wisconsin children might not be viewing the news as much as other children in the United States (54%). These results suggest a considerable difference in news consumption.

One explanation for this difference may be the group of parents from which the sample was drawn. Six of the nine schools that agreed to participate in the Wisconsin study were parochial schools. Self-selection may be a factor in the lower news viewing habits reported by the Wisconsin parents/guardians than for the parents/guardians in the national sample. Perhaps, parents who are more concerned about sheltering their children from violent behavior are more likely to have their children attend parochial schools. Although not confirmed by research, one might assume that the opportunity

for exposure to violent and/or disruptive behavior would be less in parochial schools than in public schools.

It should also be noted that the data revealed a significant relationship between how the parent/guardian described their child's viewing of the news and the age of their child. Of the Wisconsin parents/guardians who said their child "rarely" or "never" watches the news, 60% were parents/guardians of a child aged 3-7 years; 40% were parents/guardians of a child aged 8-12 years. These data match closely with the Times Mirror results; 44% of the respondents in their study who said their child "rarely" or "never" watches the news based their comment on a child aged 8-13 years. These data thus suggest that, of those Wisconsin children who may not be watching the news, a majority of them may be the younger children, aged 3-7 years. And, if, in fact, younger children are the most susceptible to being taught to behave more violently by television (see for example, Huesmann & Eron, 1986), then these results can be viewed as positive. Wisconsin parents/guardians also may note that research indicates that younger children do tend to be frightened by the news. According to Cantor and Nathanson (1996), who gathered data from parents of kindergarten, second-, fourth-, and sixth-grade children, 37% of the children were reported to have been frightened or upset by a news story on television.

A majority (71%) of the Wisconsin parents/guardians who said their child watches the news "regularly" or "sometimes" were parents/guardians of a child aged 8-12 years. These data thus suggest that a majority of these children are older and are not as susceptible to the influence of violent television content. A majority (54%) of the respondents in the Times Mirror study who reported their child watches the news "regularly" or "sometimes" based their response on a child aged 8-13 years.

The data also indicate that a larger percentage (57%) of parents in the nationwide Times Mirror sample "encourage" their child to watch the news, compared to a smaller percentage (15%) of the Wisconsin parents/guardians. The data also suggest that a strong majority of Wisconsin parents/guardians (75%) instead "neither" encourage nor discourage their children from watching the news. These results differ from Times Mirror study; according to the respondents in that study, only one third (33%) chose the "neither" category. That such a small percentage (15%) of Wisconsin parents/guardians "encourage" their

child to watch the news relative to 57% of the national sample may again be explained by the fact that a majority of the parents/guardians in the Wisconsin sample were drawn from parochial schools.

The two studies are similar, however, concerning results related to the "discourage" response. Nine percent of the Wisconsin parents/guardians stated they "discourage" their child from watching the news compared to 7% of the Times Mirror respondents.

Switch the Channel or Turn Off the TV News

Results from this study suggest that a majority (54%) of Wisconsin parents/guardians are switching the channel or turning off the television because of something on the "news" that they did not want their child to see. These results closely match the Times Mirror study, which found 53% of the subjects reported having switched the channel or turned off the television because of news content (p. 6).

Of the Wisconsin parents and guardians who switched the channel or turned off the television because there was something on the "news" that they did not want their child to see, a majority (74%) indicated the main reason was due to "violence." These results replicate almost precisely the findings of the Times Mirror study, which found 75% of the respondents reported "violence" as the main reason (p. 50).

As mentioned earlier, the v-chip will allow parents to block out violent programming. Yet, because the TV networks do not rate newscasts, the v-chip, in the form originally envisioned by the FCC, would be of little use to parents who wish to block out the news. Television set manufacturers, however, are considering strengthening the v-chip so parents will be able to block out unrated programming as well (Johnson, 1998).

Also, some news organizations have chosen to monitor themselves. One station in Austin, Texas (KVUE-TV) has, for example, reduced the amount of violence it depicts in its newscast by following five guidelines. For a crime story to be covered in its newscast, the station's staff must answer "yes" to one or more of five questions: (1) Is there an immediate threat to public safety? (2) Is there a threat to children? (3) Do viewers need to take action?, (4) Is there a significant community impact?, and (5) Is the story part of a crime-prevention effort? Believing the emphasis on violent crime in news is ratings driven, competing newscasts predicted

KVUE's ratings would decline. Yet ten months after the guidelines were put in place, the station still remained the city's top-rated newscast (Weiss, 1996).

Limitations

Since a convenience and purposive sample served as the basis for this study, it is necessary to consider measures other than the type of sample (non-random) to argue the study is externally valid and the sample representative. Thus, it is important to note, as evidenced from the results, that the findings of this Wisconsin study support many of the findings from the national survey administered by the Times Mirror Center for the People and the Press. As mentioned previously, eight of the questions featured on the survey instrument were identical to the questions that appeared on the Times Mirror (1993) study questionnaire. Results of five of the eight questions on the Wisconsin survey replicated the Times Mirror responses within one to six percent. It should also be noted that the Times Mirror study questioned adults about children aged 8-13; parents/guardians in this Wisconsin study were questioned about children aged 3-12. Still, it is necessary to make clear that the results from this Wisconsin study are based on data gathered from parents about their child's behavior. It is important to recognize the deficiencies inherent in considering data reported by parents about their children; that is, some parents may not have accurately reported their child's behavior.

Conclusion and Suggestions for Future Research

Sources of violent content are abundant in society. Children hear messages condoning violence in music lyrics; they see violence in films; on the Internet, on television dramas and television news. During 1998, children potentially were exposed to countless television news stories containing violent images; journalists have shown or covered stories

featuring bloody bodies from the bombings in Northern Ireland and the U.S. Embassies in Africa, fatal shootings in the U.S. Capitol building, schoolyard killings, children murdering their parents, and children raping and killing other children.

As stated previously, research suggests a consistent and causal relationship between viewing TV violence and increased levels of aggressive behavior in children and adolescents. It may be that the violent media environment to which children are exposed today is negatively affecting their behavior. One could look to recent reports indicating that juvenile homicide is twice as common today as it was in the mid 1980s (Cowley, 1998). In fact, since 1987, boys as young as 11 have killed classmates or teachers in Paducah, Kentucky; Pearl, Mississippi; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Springfield, Oregon; and Bethel, Alaska. Since the Pearl, Mississippi killings in October of 1997, 22 teachers and students have died and 43 others have been injured by gunfire from children (Cossack, 1998).

No doubt, both social and biological factors must be considered as reasons why children engage in aggressive and/or violent behavior. But, as University of Michigan psychologist, Leonard Eron, states, "when violent action is all [children] see, the lesson they learn is that everybody does it and this is the way to behave" (Cowley, 1998, p. 25).

Parents should be concerned about the kinds of behaviors their children are imitating, as well as the content featured in the news and entertainment programs their children may be watching. It is imperative that parents understand the pervasiveness and potential influence of violent content in their child's culture. As incidences of children engaging in violent behavior continue to occur, researchers need to further examine media portrayals of violence. Researchers also need to investigate alternative ways (e.g., "family sensitive newscasts") in which news broadcasters can responsibly inform, without negatively influencing children.

Notes

¹According to Dominick, Wertz, and Lometti (1975), finding a suitable name for this style of news broadcasting is difficult. It has been variously referred to as "happy talk news," "human news," and news with "friendly teamness." The authors recognize the problem, and make clear that they use "the term Eyewitness format to refer to the general style of this reporting technique and 'Eyewitness News' to refer to the WABC 6p.m. news in the metro New York area" (p. 213).

²Located in west central Wisconsin, the cities of Eau Claire and Altoona have a population of 60,400 and 6,600 respectively.

³The survey questionnaire generated both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data were computed with the software assistance of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Frequency counts were generated for the quantitative data and inferential statistics such as t-tests and chi-squares were used to explore relationships, differences, and tests for statistical significance. Qualitative data were coded by means of content analysis by the two primary researchers and two undergraduate research assistants, Kim Beno and Jessica Witte Retzlaff.

⁴The "folder system" requires the students to keep a folder in which one side is used to keep homework and the other side is used to deliver information and materials to the parents.

⁵United States crime index rates for violent crime per 100,000 inhabitants for the year 1994 were 713.6 in the U.S. and 270.5 in Wisconsin.

Tables

TABLE 1
Average Number of Hours of Television Viewing: Weekday (N=343) and Weekend (N=335)

Amount of Time	Weekday	Weekend
	%	%
less than one hour	18.5	7.1
1-1.5 hours	33.2	8.3
2 hours	19.2	16.4
2.5 hours	8.4	7.1
3 hours	8.7	18.2
3.5 hours	3.7	9.2
4 hours or more	6.1	31.3
don't know/can't estimate	.6	.1
my child doesn't watch TV	.8	.08

TABLE 2
Amount of Violence in Local and National News

Amount of Violence	Local	National
	%	%
does not contain too much violence	60	31
does contain too much violence	27	58
did not know	13	11

TABLE 3
Children's Viewing of Local and National News

Amount of Viewing	%
rarely watches	48
sometimes	25
never	21
regularly	5

TABLE 4
Encourage or Discourage Child to Watch the News

Level of Encouragement	%
neither encourage nor discourage	75
encourage	15
discourage	9

TABLE 5
Reason for Switching the Channel or Turning Off the TV

Main Reason	%
violence	74
sex	11
other	10
human suffering (especially children)	
mutilated bodies	
discussions of murder	
suicides in detail	
irresponsible journalism	
sensationalism	
mother killing her children	
war (Bosnia, Gulf War, etc.)	
parental abuse clips	
language	1
did not know	4

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