

UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

**UNCOVERING CHILDREN
RECEPTION TOWARDS CHILDREN
TELEVISION PROGRAMME IN
MALAYSIA**

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Thesis submitted in fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of Universiti Teknologi MARA. It is original and is the results of my own work, unless otherwise indicated or acknowledged as referenced work. This thesis has not been submitted to any other academic institution or non-academic institution for any degree or qualification.

I, hereby, acknowledge that I have been supplied with the Academic Rules and Regulations for Post Graduate, Universiti Teknologi MARA, regulating the conduct of my study and research.


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ABSTRACT

This study is endeavoring to uncover the children reception towards children television programme in Malaysia. The study concentrated on five research objectives: (i) to identify how children express their preferences towards the television programmes (ii) to unravel how the children respond towards the television programmes they watched (iii) to reveal how children interpret the social reality and fantasies of the scenes in the television programmes they watched (iv) to determine how children identify themselves with the characters in the television programmes they watched and (v) to uncover how children being influenced in term of cognitive, affective and behavior by the television programmes they watch. This study does not attempt to observe if television has effects on children. 30 children aged between four to six years old were interviewed and observed in the study. Interviews were conducted in both English and Malay depending on the language in which the children were best able to express themselves: some were bi-lingual and some spoke only Malay. During the course of observations, the researchers watched and recorded everything the children said and did while they were viewing. Firstly, irrespective of their ages (four, five or six years old), the children managed to identify and determine what program that they like to watch. The children express their preferences based on these characteristics (i) for fun (ii) for relaxation and comfort (iii) to avoid boredom and (iv) to bond with parents and siblings. The elements that raised these pleasures include comical acts; programs suitable for their age and produced in a simple style that are comprehensible, straightforward and precise; repetition of dialogues, images and music; attractive characters and host. Secondly, the children respond towards the programs they watched through these elements (i) recapping dialogues (ii) playing with character's figure (toy) (iii) mood changes and (iv) Digital Video Disc (DVD) and YouTube. Thirdly, children interpret the social reality and fantasies of the scenes in the television programs they watched by (i) use imagination to express thoughts and (ii) evaluate and think before uttering their thoughts. Fourth, in relation to how children identify themselves with the characters in the television programs they watch; (i) able to identify race and citizenship (ii) able to distinguished cultural diversity. They could only visually distinguish different races or ethnicities based on body parts, skin, color and attire characteristics. Fifth, cognitively this study indicates that children experience optimistically specific basic literacy skills. Affectively the children are able to demonstrate their feelings with adequate or appropriate emotional reactions and slightly able to identify with the character's customs, manners as well as cultural heritage. Behaviorally, children unconsciously understand the sex-roles stereotyping. Data from the final analysis revealed that television did not play a major role in presenting Malaysian culture and identity to children; their cultural understanding was more influenced by everyday experience and observation.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Of The Study

“Young people are in a condition like permanent intoxication, because youth is sweet and they are growing.”

Aristotle, Greek critic, philosopher, physicist & zoologist (384 BC – 322 BC)

In this exponential era, most information, entertainment and education now can be accessed quite conveniently through webs, blogs and social media. However, television still plays a significant role among the majority of people. The audiences, young and old, can now watch their favourite programmes through cables or satellites. Television is the most available and easy to reach as compared to other types of media. Thus it is important for everyone especially parents to be media literate so that they can assist their children to understand the image, audio and digital implications as well as to having the proficiency to understand and relate with the media rationally, vitally and effectively (Burton, 2005).

Abdullah Malim Baginda (2011) emphasized that children are naturally curious and this quality should be fostered at all times, under any circumstances. He stressed that as children grow up and move into institutional schooling, this trait should be further nurtured (ibid, 2011). It is believed that television is a means for children to acquire knowledge on their own which includes education, entertainment, culture, leisure and social interaction. Razel and Broek (2001) stressed that children who are able to grasp information offered through television are also able to grasp information offered auditory. They also observed that among younger children with better grades watching television positively appears to be in agreement with improving reading and comprehension competency (ibid, 2001).

Liesbeth de Block and David Buckingham (2007), claim that the media allows children to experience a mixture of the national, regional and global culture. It can serve to maintain national allegiances as well as offer a view of the world that connects children with history or opens a window to a new world. Media forms the