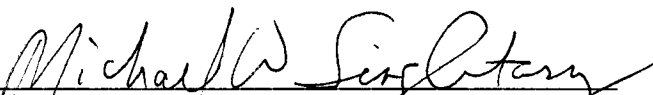
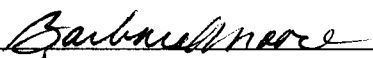


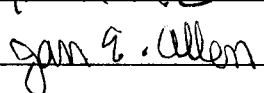
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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by William A. Richter entitled "Locus of Control, Coping Skills and Television Usage Among Middle School-Aged Children." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Ph.D., with a major in communications.

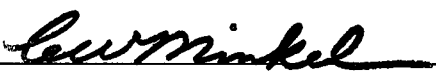

Michael W. Singletary, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
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Accepted for the Council:


Associate Vice Chancellor and
Dean of the Graduate School

LOCUS OF CONTROL, COPING SKILLS AND
TELEVISION USAGE AMONG MIDDLE
SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN.

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

William A. Richter
December, 1996

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to three very special people. It is dedicated to my parents, William and Lu Gene Richter, who gave me the gift of appreciating the value of education, and Dr. Debbie Treise, who never stopped believing in me, even when I did.

Thank You.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation was not my work alone. There are many people who had a hand in its completion. So, to Alix Felsing, who was always there for me when I needed to complain or get out of the office; David Knight and Jean Cauthen; Donnegan and Toni Smith; Marion Love and Keith Woods, (who always made me take time out to enjoy life),...to Stephanie Mowery who took it upon herself to make sure I kept what little sanity I have...to Eliza Dean, my Knoxville connection,...to Dr. C.W. "Bud" Minkel, Dr. Linda "can you copy this for me?" Painter, Frances Hauser, Shana Antrican, Kay Ailor, and all of the people in the Graduate Office, who gave me an assitantship so that I could attend U.T.,...to Ann LaCava (the patron saint of UT grad students)...to my editor, Professor Art Barnes,...to my committee for their assistance,...and to the faculty, staff, and especially all of my students at Lenoir-Rhyne College who suffered through this with me, I'd like to say, "Thank you....thank you very much" (Presley, 1971)*

*This is an offical Elvis "citing." Elvis has now been cited in my dissertation.

Abstract

This study examined what, if any, correlations and relationships exist between television viewing, locus of control and stress coping techniques. The population for this study were middle school-aged children.

The test instrument for this study consisted of the Nowicki-Strickland locus of control scale, the Brodzinsky, et al. coping scale for children and youth, and a uses and gratifications scale based on work by Cramond and Wilde. A group administration technique, using a non-probability sample was utilized.

The data yielded mixed support for the stated hypotheses of the study. A relationship was found to exist between the amount of television a child views and how he/she copes with stressful situations, while limited support was found linking locus of control with television viewing habits.

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CHAPTER 1.

INTRODUCTION

"'Then', asked Socrates in Plato's Republic, 'shall we simply allow our children to listen to any stories that anyone happens to make up, and so receive into their minds ideas often the very opposite of those we shall think they ought to have when they grow up?'" (Gerbner, Gross, Signorielli, Morgan, and Jackson-Beeck, 1979, p. 178).

As this quote illustrates, the question of what message children are exposed to is one that has concerned parents and educators since antiquity. In modern times the focus of much concern has centered on comic books, radio broadcasts, motion pictures, and most recently, television.

Many researchers consider the genesis of television effects research to have occurred in 1955 when Paul Lazarsfeld testified before Congress that little was known about what effects television may have on children.

Since that time, research centering on television and children has been conducted by researchers in many disciplines. Indeed, numerous studies have examined the field of children and television, with most focusing on its effects. More specifically, as Blosser asserts, "Studies of children's patterns of media use have focused primarily on age and gender as predictors of media use..." (1988, p. 453).

This is an area of interest for people from many areas as well. Seigel notes that the audience for such research

has been "educated parents, teachers, physicians, government agencies, and private sources of funding..." (1980, p 222). However, little research has looked at what relationships may exist between television viewing and how children respond under stressful situations. Fewer still have explored any relationships that may exist between the way children cope with stress in their daily lives, whether they feel in control of their lives, and what role (if any) television plays in their personality.

This study undertakes such a task. It attempts to identify the locus of control (whether the child feels in control of his/her life) and coping skills styles (whether the child confronts or avoids sources of stress in his/her life) of children and young adolescents, and what if any relationship exists with their television viewing patterns. Subjects for this study are middle-school-aged, that is, from 11 to 15 years of age. This is a time of great turmoil for children. It is a time of discovery. As Avery stated, it is a time when children are faced with the question of "who am I?" (1979, p. 53).

Lewin (1939, 1936) stated that this is a time that represents movement between two periods of life (childhood and adulthood) that is very confusing for the youth. According to Havighurst (1953), this period of early adolescence is a time characterized by growing independence from adults and the acceptance of one's self worth.

Another theorist, Erickson (1963, 1959), identified this period as being one in which the individual is seeking an identity. Thomas, interpreting Piaget labeled the ages of 11 to 15 as the formal operations period, meaning that this is the stage when children begin to develop a more abstract method of thought (Thomas, 1989, p. 283-284).

Or, as one middle-school principal described it, this is a period in which children go "into the cave" (Burns, C., personal interview, March, 1995). That is, it is a period of metamorphosis. People enter this stage as children, and after a period of great stress in which they often withdraw from parents and peers, emerge as adults.

But what are the causes of stress for children in this age range? Omizo, Omizo and Suzuki (1988) identified five major "stressors" for children in this age group. They are, "general adolescent problems" such as adjusting to changes in the way others view them, not having enough autonomy and the need to belong to a group; "peer pressure" to do things they do not feel comfortable with; "family problems" whether they are rooted in parent-child, sibling, or step-parent relationships; "not feeling in control" related to a lack of money, car, permission to make decisions; and "school-related problems" such as grades, conflict with teachers and adjusting to a new school.

In addition to all of the intellectual and emotional stressors, this is also a period of myriad physical changes.

This is a period when appearance and attractiveness to the opposite sex becomes increasingly important (Avery, 1979, p. 55).

This study will examine two main variables associated with how children cope and adjust to stressful situations in their lives, (coping skills and locus of control) and whether a relationship exists with their usage of television.

DEFINITIONS

In order to conduct this study, literature was drawn from two somewhat different fields, communication and child development. Therefore, several terms used in this study need to be defined. Fink and Kosecoff in their book about conducting surveys state, "...when using a theoretical concept such as self-esteem, it is probably best to adopt a respected point of view..."(Fink, & Kosecoff, 1985, p. 24). Therefore the majority of terms used in this study will coincide with terms used by other researchers.

Adolescent: There are many definitions of adolescence.

Generally it is considered to be the age between 12 and 18 (Avery, 1979). However, due to the availability of subjects for this study, adolescence will be defined as those between the ages of 11 and 15. This is the same age group Piaget labeled as being in the "formal operations period."

Locus of Control: Although the term has been defined variously, locus of control is defined in this study as a measure of whether a person perceives he/she is in control of his/her own fate, or whether he/she believes other external factors, (luck, fate, other people) are in control. Those who feel in control of their lives are said to have an internal locus of control. Those who feel factors outside of their control determine their destiny, are said to have an external locus of control.

Resilience: When reading literature about the areas of locus of control and stress coping techniques one often finds mention of a variable called resilience.

"Resilience...is generally described as the capacity to maintain healthy functioning in an unhealthy setting, or the maintenance of mastery under stress" (Smith, & Prior, 1995, p. 168). For the purpose of this study, the term resilience will be defined as an ability to overcome stress and/or obstacles in order to live a productive life.

Stress: This study also uses stress coping styles as a variable. But what is meant by "stress"? Smith and Prior (1995) acknowledge that while most people understand the term stress, there is a great deal of disagreement as to its meaning in the field of

resiliency. Within the context of this study, stress will be defined as emotional strain or tension.

It should be noted that locus of control, resilience and stress are present in all subjects to a degree. All subjects will have internal and external locus of control beliefs, just as all subjects will have a certain degree of resilience to some amount of stress in their lives. The subjects utilized in this study are at a period in their lives where they are being confronted with new types of stressors. For many, this may be the most stressful time in their lives.

This study attempts to determine whether a relationship exists for television viewing habits, locus of control and/or the way subjects cope with stressful situations. Middle school-aged children were administered a questionnaire that measured locus of control (degree of internal vs. external), television uses and gratifications, coping skills and additional demographic information.

While this study did not find support for all of the hypotheses stated, statistical analysis revealed relationships existing between several of the variables studied.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

CULTIVATION THEORY

This study draws upon literature gleaned from two fields of research, communication and child development. One of the few researchers published in both fields is George Gerbner. While his research has centered on what effects television has on people in general, his work has often been linked to what effects television has on children. His cultivation theory is rooted in Bandura's social cognitive theory, or as it is more commonly known, social learning theory (Bandura, A., 1977). Cultivation theory posits that a viewer's perceptions of the "real world" are greatly shaped by his/her exposure to television. The idea is that the viewer who spends a great deal of time watching television can be expected to have a different view of the world than a counterpart who watches television less.

More specifically, according to Gerbner's studies, those people whom he classified as "heavy" viewers see the world as a more scary place than those classified as "light" viewers. He contends that this difference may be due in part to the abundance of violent acts portrayed on television programs. The "heavy" viewers tend to stay in their homes more than others and experience a higher level of anxiety and fear. It is important to note, however, that cultivation theory does

not claim that the media are consciously attempting to affect the perceptions of their audiences (Singletary, & Stone, 1988, p. 98).

Cultivation theory has met with its share of criticism. Many researchers have suggested it may not be a simple question of identifying heavy and light viewers. One school of thought asserts that several other factors may also serve as variables in this process.

Gunter (1988) found support for the hypothesis that viewers will be more disturbed by those acts of televised violence that they feel are closer to home. Morgan suggested that "television is most likely to cultivate exaggerated perceptions of the likelihood of victimization among those viewers who see their fictional counterparts as least powerful" (Morgan, 1983, p. 155).

In a review of literature, Potter and Chang (1990) noted dependent variables such as a belief in a mean and violent world, assumptions about the elderly, political beliefs, sexism and occupational goals have all been used in cultivation research.

Although hundreds of studies have been conducted under the rubric of cultivation theory, much of the research performed by Gerbner and his colleagues has met with a degree of skepticism. Slater and Elliot (1982) noted work that questioned Gerbner's methodology and conclusions and the overall value of his findings. Other criticisms have ranged

from questioning the measurement tools to a third variable hypothesis that questions the existence of some unmeasured independent variable or variables.

Hirsch (1981) suggested that cultivation theory should take levels of individual stress into account. Wober and Gunter (1982), posited that certain psychological variables within the viewer (as opposed to amount of time spent viewing), could be used as predictors of fear of the real world. Utilizing a locus of control measurement developed by Rotter (1965, 1967), Wober and Gunter found support for their hypothesis. The researchers reported that the test instrument utilized by Rotter was a better measurement of fear of the world than Gerbner's television viewing figures. This led Wober, et al. to conclude "it may not be television which makes viewers wary of the environment, but that people who are not resolute stay in more to watch television and also express cautious attitudes" (Wober, & Gunter, 1982, p. 246).

Perloff and Krevans (1987) found loneliness and locus of control useful in predicting television viewing behavior among older adult subjects. Baran (1974) offered support for the hypothesis that children identified as having a low level of self-esteem will be more likely to model viewed television behavior.

RESILIENCY

Related to self-esteem is a phenomenon known in child development research as "resiliency" (Anthony, 1978, p. 575). Demos defines resiliency as, "...the capacity to bounce back or recover from a disappointment, obstacle, or setback..." (1989, p. 3). According to Werner and Smith, resiliency is the "capacity to cope effectively with the internal stress of vulnerabilities...and external stresses" (1982, p. 4).

Anthony (1978, 1987) borrows an interesting analogy from disease ecologist Jacques May to attempt to explain this concept. In his example there are three dolls, one made of glass, one made of plastic, and one made of steel. Each doll is struck in turn with a hammer. The first doll, being made of fragile glass, shatters when struck. The second doll is left permanently scarred by the incident. The final doll apparently is unaffected. Resiliency research attempts to identify the children comparable to the doll made of steel and tries to understand why they are able to cope while others cannot. This is an overly simplified illustration, and Anthony recognized we are dealing with human children and not with dolls. There are many more variables to consider.

One problem with the literature concerning resiliency lies in the fact that for several years this phenomenon was referred to by many different names. According to O'Grady and Metz (1987), children who demonstrated an ability to

bounce back from their environment have been referred to as invulnerable, stress-resistant, and even "super-kids."

Murphy and Moriarty (1976) labeled the children that they studied as "good copers." Anthony and Cohler (1987) and Kent and Rolf (1979) prefer the term invulnerable. Werner and Smith (1982) used both "vulnerable " and "invincible" to describe the children they studied.

There appears to be some controversy as to where the term resiliency was first used. Anthony (1987) cites Redl's 1969 work as the earliest use of the term "ego resilience." Murphy (1987) claims the first discussion of resiliency took place at the National Institute of Mental Health conference in Palo Alto that same year, 1969. In a 1977 paper, Block and Block refer to "ego resiliency" as did Arend, Gove, and Stroufe in their 1979 article. O'Grady and Metz chose to use the label resiliency in reference to these children:

"We prefer resilient as the term to apply to these children. Resilience refers to an unusual or marked capacity to recover from or cope successfully with significant stresses of both internal and external origins" (O'Grady, & Metz, 1987, p.5).

A review of the literature concerning this field of research indicates that the use of the label resiliency and the beginning of the field's new-found popularity coincide. It may be that resiliency is a more attractive label than invulnerability or adaptability.

For the purpose of this study, the term resiliency will be defined as the ability of certain children to overcome their disadvantaged environment and to go on to function as productive members of society. In other words, the ability to fight the internal and external stresses mentioned by O'Grady and Metz (1987).

Of obvious interest to researchers is the question of what variables are present in the resilient child that the vulnerable or non-resilient child lacks. As Hauser, et al. wrote "...there are many children who manifest competency and autonomy in their behavior, compared to others who, exposed to similar stresses, develop serious coping problems (Hauser, Vieyra, Jacobson, & Wertlieb, 1985, p. 82). Studies dating from the early 1980s until the present have attempted to identify factors that may predict high resiliency.

Garmezy notes that there are "hints in the literature that suggest variables which may be operative in stressful life situations." Among those variables, he lists the modification of stressors (due to having warm, cohesive family units), the child's temperament, and a source of strong external support (1991, p. 421).

Demos offers several characteristics of the resilient child. "At the very least, resiliency requires that the child take an active stance toward an obstacle or difficulty" (1989, p. 4). Among other characteristics the child should show: the ability to persist, the ability to develop a "range

of strategies, and skills," the ability to be flexible (that is, "know when to use what"); also, the child must have the opportunity to see his/her efforts as being successful and gratifying (Demos, p.4).

Murphy and Moriarty believe the resilient child to be:

"...above all an active, humorous, confident, and competent child who is prepared to take risks, although not unrealistically; can alter his approach flexibly; and as a result of repeated successful coping experiences, has reason to feel confident of both inner and outer resources" (Murphy, & Moriarty, 1976, p. ??).

Stephens (1989), in a review of literature, lists several characteristics that correlated with resiliency. Included in her list, resilient children have a close relationship with an adult, have a talent or hobby, are persistent, feel in control of their fate, are cheerful, flexible, and tolerant.

Garmezy (1985) identified three broad categories of variables that act as "'protective factors'...1) personality features such as self-esteem; 2) family cohesion and an absence of discord; and 3) the availability of external support systems that encourage and reinforce a child's coping efforts" (Rutter, 1987, p. 316). Similarly, Hauser, et al. (1985) classified variables into the categories of 1) personality (self-esteem, locus of control), 2) the social milieu (school environment, school quality); 3) the family, direct effects (household composition, family structure,

family attitudes), and 4) the family, indirect effects (family reactions to the child's temperament, as well as IQ, [shown to be related to the IQ of the parents], and internal locus of control, which is correlated with a warm, praising, protective, and supportive family environment).

Some of the attributes Garmezy (1985) identified as being present in resilient children are "flexibility of response, positive mood,...strong interpersonal skills, positive self-esteem, internal locus of control, impulse control, and ego-resiliency" (cited in McClellan & Trupin, 1989, p. 631). Additionally, he found a tendency for females to be more resilient than males.

In a resiliency study undertaken by Fraser (1977), children in Ulster, Northern Ireland, were interviewed. The children of this region are confronted daily by real-life violence. The way the children reacted to such stress differed according to the child. Fraser identified three main factors that appeared to impact upon the child's reactions. One of the factors was the amount of emotional security the child brought into the stressful period. That is, how secure the child was before the stress was induced and also the amount of emotional security the child possessed during the period of acute stress. Fraser states that this emotional security factor relates to the child's family as well as his/her own psychological resources. A second factor identified was the stressful situation itself. He recognized

that all sources of stress are not equal, and that some stress causes more severe reactions than others. The third factor identified was the child's own response: "... (E)ach child's response was idiosyncratic, or unique, depending on his own way of responding to new experiences" (Fraser, 1977, p. 75).

Werner and Smith found among other things that many of the resilient high-risk children were first-born, they had "few serious illnesses in the first two decades of life," recuperated from their illnesses quickly, and were reported to be very active and socially responsive as infants by their mothers. Tests administered to these children at the age of two years found them to have "advanced self-help skills and adequate sensorimotor and language development." In later childhood they were identified as having "advanced problem-solving and communication skills" (1982, p. 154).

Additionally, the same study found that in late adolescence, these subjects possessed an internal locus of control, had a better self-concept, and generally a better outlook on life.

LOCUS OF CONTROL

One of the variables that has often been identified as playing a role in resiliency is the child's perceived control, or locus of control. Linzer-Schwartz defines the locus of control as follows,

"Some people see themselves only in terms of others' perceptions of them; other people see themselves through looking inward. The first group tends to seek direction as well as approval from external sources; the second group tends to be more self-directed. Those in the first group are said to have an external locus of control; those in the second group have an internal locus of control" (Linzer-Schwartz, 1991, p. 167).

According to Coster and Jaffe (1991), this construct has its origins in social learning theory and was identified as "internal versus external control of reinforcement."

Although many refer to this concept as locus of control, Coster and Jaffe contend that it is more accurately known as perceived control.

"Perceived control is an expectancy that an outcome, whether positive or negative, is influenced either by one's own behavior or by factors beyond one's control" (Coster & Jaffe, 1991, p. 19). Lefcourt, et al., offered a similar definition: "In brief, locus of control refers to the beliefs that individuals hold regarding the ways in which given outcomes occur" (Lefcourt, Miller, Ware & Sherk, 1981, p. 358).

Dudley-Marling, Snider and Tarver, (1982) felt locus of control is best thought of as a continuum running from internal locus of control on one end, and external locus of control on the other. Put simply, this construct centers on whether one feels in control of one's own fate.

Other researchers have posited that the ability to escape from one's problems may also be key to the development

of the resilient child. In their study of children from alcoholic families, Berlin and Davis (1989) identified the use of fantasy as an escape method for a 9-year-old girl.

In another study that year, Felsman (1989) studied the street children, or "gamin" of Cali, Cartegena and Bogota, Colombia. Felsman hypothesized that sports and other forms of entertainment are important components of the coping patterns of the highly resilient children who survive on the streets of Colombia. He posited that participation in sporting events offers an opportunity for free entertainment, aids in physical development, aids in bolstering levels of self-esteem, and helps to develop social skills.

Another inexpensive form of entertainment Felsman identified was the viewing of movies. These street children often found means of entering the movie theaters and spent hours escaping reality in the darkened movie houses. If these street children with few resources utilize the movies as a form of escape, can it also be hypothesized that American children use the widely available medium of television in much the same way?

TELEVISION AS AN ESCAPE

Bratter, Cameron and Radda (1984), in their study of troubled adolescents enrolled in a residential college preparatory therapeutic high school, found evidence to support an escapist hypothesis. "When these adolescents

watch television, they prefer cartoons and situation comedies that provide relief from the real life acts they perform daily" (Bratter, Cameron, & Radda, 1984, p. 6).

Rutter stated that when children are exposed to an "anxiety-provoking situation" their anxiety is greatly reduced by the presence of a parent. In younger children, the presence of some inanimate object such as a comfort blanket affords the same benefit to a lesser extent. (Rutter, 1985, p. 602).

In this example, children use attachment objects to ease their anxiety and cope with the situation at hand. The question therefore arises, can television be an attachment object that children use when coping with anxiety? According to Baran (1974), it is widely accepted that television viewing is used for more than "escape" by children. Citing uses and gratification research performed as early as 1952, he offered evidence that children use television as compensation for poor social relationships, among other things. The role of television in reducing stress levels in children was also identified by Bjorklund and Bjorklund (1989).

In the United States, children spend a great deal of time viewing television. "By the time the average child finishes 12 years of school, he has watched 22,000 hours of television as contrasted to having been in school 11,000 hours" (Slavenas, 1984, p. 378). Charren and Sandler (1983)

suggest children spend more time engaged in watching television than in other important activities such as play or school.

With such an attachment existing between the child and the television set, it appears television could act as a security blanket for the child in time of anxiety.

USES AND GRATIFICATIONS

The idea that children may use the media for reasons other than entertainment has been explored for several years. While early research centered on what the media does to its audience, (known as the hypodermic or bullet theory of powerful effects) another approach to mass media research has concerned itself with the question of what the audience members do with the media (Katz, 1977). Anderson states, "People do things with television; television does not do things to people" (1981, p. 22).

McLeod and Becker cite the development of the uses and gratification approach as a "reaction to the simplicity of the hypodermic model and to its overstatement of media effects" (McLeod & Becker, 1974, p. 138). Lull (1982) believed the uses and gratifications paradigm to be an extension of the constructivist view. That is, audience members choose media to meet certain psychological needs. These needs may be those mid-level needs identified by Maslow's hierarchy (1954), as "belongingness and love" and

"esteem." Yet, despite its lengthy history, many researchers feel this approach has yet to produce a uses and gratifications theory. Blumler (1979) argued that there isn't one uses and gratifications theory, but in fact, many different *theories*. Palmgren and Rayburn agreed with Blumler, stating that the uses and gratifications research still lacks "coherent theoretical structure" (1982, p. 561).

Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch reviewed several uses and gratification studies and developed the following conclusions about the research:

"They are concerned with (1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications, and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones" (Katz,

Blumler & Gurevitch, 1974, p. 20).

Lichtenstein and Rosenfeld explained uses and gratifications in terms of other more basic needs:

"...(W)hen a person gets hungry or thirsty, or lonely or bored, he or she looks for ways to gratify those needs..." (1983, p. 100). In the same way, that a person seeks food and drink to satisfy thirst or hunger, it is believed that people turn to the media to satisfy other needs.

However they point out that while base needs such as hunger and thirst are easy to identify and understand, the needs people ask television and other media to fulfill are strictly within their own minds.

The media have been found to fill "psychosocial" needs of the individual (Adoni, 1979). But as Johnstone suggests, "the media can have little or no impact on persons who have no use for them" (Johnstone, 1974, p. 35).

In a review of literature, Lometi, Reeves and Bybee (1977) found that the following needs were among many identified as being met by the media: surveillance, correlation, entertainment, socialization, diversion, personal relationships, personal identity, excitement, reinforcement, guidance, anticipated communication, relaxation, learning, companionship, forgetting, relaxation, and passing time. Rubin (1979) added habit, escape, and arousal to the list of viewing motivations. According to Howe (1977), children have many reasons for watching television, including viewing out of boredom, or loneliness or just as an escape from their problems.

Of particular interest to this study is the question of what needs children and young adolescents (especially those who are not well adjusted or integrated in society), bring to television. Several studies undertaken over the years seem to support the hypothesis that children who are not well integrated into society may turn to television as a surrogate friend. This "parasocial interaction" was first postulated in 1956 by Horton and Wohl who claimed that some people might actually perceive a friendship with a television personality. Johnstone (1961, 1974) found that television may serve an

"escapist function" for adolescents who are not well integrated. Macoby (1954) argued that children may become heavy viewers of television if they are unsatisfied with the real world. One of the earliest of these studies was undertaken by the Rileys (1951) who found that those children who were not part of a peer group used the media differently than those who were well integrated. It was suggested that those children who were not integrated tended to use fantasy more, and therefore sought out such fare in the media.

Howe (1977) suggested that children who do not have proper relationships with their families or other children tend to be heavier viewers of television. He hypothesized that television may serve as an escape from boredom, loneliness, and the problems of everyday life. Schramm (1961) also held the belief that television is used as an escape by some children. Hodge and Tripp (1986) related a tragic tale of a 13-year-old boy who committed suicide after his father banned him from watching television. To this child who did not fit in with other children, television was his only "friend." They reported that his suicide note ended with "in my heart I will take my television set with me. I love you."

Indeed, it is likely that children and adolescents who are shunned by society or their peers will turn to television as an escape (Himmelweit, Oppenheimer & Vince, 1958; Schramm, Lyle & Parker, 1961; Johnstone, 1961, 1974; Brown,

Cramond & Wilde, 1974; Howe, 1977; Zoohri, 1988; McGuire, 1974; Rubin, Perse & Powell, 1985). Shulman (1973) likened the way some children use television as stepping into a soothing bath; they allow themselves to be totally immersed in its warmth. With these viewers watching more television than normal, and placing such importance on their televisions, it is important to take a closer look at the amount of viewing and the types of programs they prefer. Greenberg (1974) felt that studying the young viewer would help us better understand adult viewing patterns.

A study conducted by Csikszentmihali, Larson and Prescott (1977) found that one of the activities associated with a poor overall mood was television viewing. Adolescents in their study reported time spent viewing television as being when they felt most weak, and generally unactive, unhappy, unfriendly and unsociable.

THIS STUDY

At present, few studies exist that link the study of resiliency, coping with stress, or locus of control with the field of mass communication research. However, there do appear to be existing theoretical links between the two fields.

Bolick and Nowicki (1984) forged such a link when they studied the locus of control of television cartoon

characters. Perloff and Krevans (1987) used locus of control as a predictor of television viewing among the elderly.

In a 1987 study, Wiggins (1987) found no relationship between self-esteem (including locus of control measured by the Rotter scale) and television viewing for students in grades 4-12. However, Baran (1974) found support for his hypothesis that children with lower levels of self-esteem will model more of the prosocial behavior and less of the violent behavior they observe on television.

Studies dealing with older respondents suggest that loneliness, locus of control, and a dissatisfaction with intimate relationships all influence the amount of television watched (Perloff & Krevans, 1987; Perloff, Quarles & Drutz, 1983).

HYPOTHESES

Under the rubric of cultivation theory, Perloff and Krevans (1987) and Baran (1974) found loneliness, locus of control, and a low level of self-esteem are useful in predicting television viewing behavior. Combined with the work of Bjorklund and Bjorklund (1989), Berlin and Davis (1989), Felsman (1989), Bratter, Cameron and Radda (1984), and others, it is posited by this study that children who have an external locus of control, and/or tend to avoid confronting their problems may spend more time with television than their peers with an internal locus of

control. In order to test this idea, the following two hypotheses are offered.

H1: Children who are categorized by the Nowicki-Strickland instrument as having an external locus of control will spend a significantly greater amount of time viewing television.

H2: Children who are categorized by the Brodzinsky-Steiger-Hitt coping scale as avoiding their problems will spend a significantly greater amount of time viewing television.

Bratter, Cameron and Radda (1984) found that adolescents who use television as an escape tend to favor situation comedies. Therefore, this study will examine whether children who are identified as having an external locus of control and/or have a tendency to avoid their problems will also report their favorite television programs as situation-comedies.

These questions are stated by hypotheses three and four:

H3: Children who are categorized by the Nowicki-Strickland test as having an external locus of control will report situation-comedy television programs as their favorite.

H4: Children who are categorized by the Brodzinsky-Steiger-Hitt instrument as avoiding their problems will report situation-comedy television programs as their favorite.

Rubin (1979), Howe (1977), and Johnstone (1961, 1974) found support for the hypothesis that children (especially those not well adjusted), use television as an escape. If this is true, support should be found for the following hypotheses:

H5: Children who are categorized by the Nowicki-Strickland test as having an external locus of control will report using television as an escape or attachment object.

H6: Children who are categorized by the Brodzinsky-Steiger-Hitt instrument as avoiding their problems will report using television as an escape or attachment object.

CHAPTER 3.

METHODOLOGY

RATIONALE

A review of literature suggested a survey instrument would be an appropriate measurement tool for this study. Wimmer and Dominick (1994) advise that a survey offers several advantages over other research designs. Among them, surveys are relatively inexpensive and allow administration in a natural, or quasi-natural, setting. Questionnaire surveys also allow the opportunity for a large amount of data collection in a somewhat short time period.

Other authors offer yet more benefits of the survey.

"Surveys can be used to...conduct research when the information you need should come directly from people. The data they provide are descriptions of attitudes, values, habits, and background characteristics..." (Fink, A. & Kosecoff, J., 1985, p. 15).

They further recognize that the questionnaire affords a level of anonymity not realized with other research techniques. Anonymity was important for this study because the respondents were children entering into a period of their lives when privacy becomes more highly valued.

The data needed for this study relate to attitudes (locus of control, stress coping), habits (television viewing) and other personal feelings (uses and gratifications). Therefore, a questionnaire was selected as the best test instrument to utilize.

The survey research technique is not without its drawbacks, however. One disadvantage the survey has in comparison to the experiment is that variables cannot be controlled and manipulated outside of the laboratory.

Wording of questionnaire items is crucial in the questionnaire design. A misplaced or mis-worded item can bias results. It is for this reason many researchers suggest using a previously developed test instrument (Fink, A. & Kosecoff, J., 1985, p. 24).

Fink and Kosecoff (1985) state that test instruments designed to measure variables such as beliefs, attitudes and feelings are very difficult to develop. Because these variables are psychological, it is necessary to produce a "large-scale and truly scientific...study" in order to properly develop such an instrument. They suggest using a survey that has been proven to be reliable and valid in past studies, in order to safeguard against potential problems. Therefore, questions in the survey instrument used for this study were selected from earlier, respected studies.

TEST INSTRUMENT

A questionnaire was administered which consisted of 96 items. Included in the test instrument were three measures: the Nowicki-Strickland "locus of control scale" (1973); (Appendix B1), a modified version of a uses and gratifications scale originally developed by Brown, Cramond

and Wilde (1974) (Appendix B2); and the Brodzinsky Coping Scale for Children and Youth (1992), (Appendix B3). Other items included demographics.

Locus Of Control Scale

The first portion of the questionnaire used for this study consisted of 40 "yes" or "no" questions, such as, "Do you believe that most problems will solve themselves if you just don't fool with them?" and "Are some people just born lucky?" This paper-and-pencil test instrument was developed by Nowicki and Strickland as a measurement of children's locus of control. The original instrument was tested by the authors and reported to be internally consistent. Using the split-half method, they reported reliability levels ranging from .63 to .74. The instrument also was found to be reliable using a test-retest method, with reliability levels in the same range. Further, the researchers reported construct validity (their instrument was logically related to theory), by showing moderate relationships between their instrument and other previously developed scales. (Nowicki & Strickland, 1972). In addition, this scale has been used in hundreds of studies since its inception.

The Nowicki-Strickland test is keyed to externality. That is, those children who feel that external factors control their lives (external locus of control) will score higher on the test (give more "yes" answers) than those who

feel that they are in control of their lives (internal locus of control). This variable was coded as Locus Of Control. Possible scores for this test ranged from 0 (all internal locus responses) to 40 (all external responses). Actual scores ranged from a low of 7 to a high of 23. These locus of control scores were used in examination of hypotheses 1, 3, and 5 (see page 24-26).

Uses and Gratifications Scale

Hypotheses 5 and 6 required a measurement of television uses and gratifications. To this end, a 10-question uses and gratifications instrument was modified from a similar questionnaire used by Brown, Cramond and Wilde (1974) and was included in the instrument. Questions such as: "I watch television when I am bored" were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree (Appendix B2). Correlations were run between the answers given to the uses and gratification questions and locus of control scores.

Coping Scale

Hypotheses 2, 4, and 6 were concerned with how children cope with daily stress. While locus of control is concerned with whether children feel in control of their lives, coping deals with what actions they take to withstand stress. Locus of control is an internal feeling or belief, which is

passive; that is, the child has feelings but does not act upon them to bring about change. Coping, on the other hand, is more active in that the child must make an active decision about how to confront stressful situations. To measure this, the Brodzinsky Coping Scale for Children and Youth (1992), which consists of 29 questions utilizing a four-point Likert scale, was included in the questionnaire. This instrument was tested by its original authors, using 498 middle school-aged children. Utilizing coefficient alphas, the test was shown to be internally reliable. A test-retest method resulted in scores of .70 and above, therefore it was deemed a reliable instrument. The Coping Scale asks subjects to think about how they have deal with problems that bother them, and to answer questions about how they react to the problem, (e.g., "I tried to pretend that the problem wasn't real"). Responses for each question were "NEVER," "SOMETIMES," "OFTEN," and "VERY OFTEN." While a five or seven-point scale is more common, the authors of this instrument opted for only four choices. They did not give a rationale for this decision. For consistency, the present study used the scale exactly as originally published. (Appendix B3). Subjects were also asked to answer some demographic information. (Appendix B4).

DATA COLLECTION

Data for this study was collected during the month of

March, 1995. Due to the nature of the question asking about the previous night's television viewing, tests were not administered on Mondays.

Questionnaires for this study were administered using the group administration technique. This method allows for a test instrument that may take longer to complete than other methods, (mail, telephone) and results in a higher response rate (Wimmer & Dominick, 1994). Test items were administered during the subjects' homeroom periods in their own classrooms. It was felt that the familiar setting would place the students at ease.

Due to the many restrictions placed on the selection of subjects for this study (school permission, parent permission, child consent, limited number of schools to choose from, limited population), an available subject non-probability sample was used. While this sampling technique was mandated by conditions, it is not without its critics. Many detractors of the available sample posit that no matter what results this sample may bring, it is not representative of the general population so therefore cannot have external validity. Others argue, however, "that if a phenomenon, characteristic, or trait does in fact exist, it should exist in any sample" (Wimmer, & Dominick, p 66). With this in mind, findings of this study may not be generalizable to the entire population of middle school-aged children.

Subjects were chosen from three middle schools in the Hickory, North Carolina, area. Each school was located in a different county. In an effort to achieve a cross-section of the population of this region, one school was within the city (population 30,000), one was in a smaller, neighboring town (population 3,553), and the third was in a mostly rural area (county population of 78,449). The city school had an enrollment of 508 students, the small town school had an enrollment of 586, and the rural school had an enrollment of 750 students. In these counties, participation was subject to approval by each school's principal. Schools from other counties were approached, but they required Board of Education approval before participation. Therefore those schools were not included, because such approval might subject the study to unwanted publicity that could distort findings.

INFORMED CONSENT

Subjects were in the age range of 11-15 years. Letters of consent were sent to parents (Appendix A1, A2). Additionally, subjects were also asked to sign a letter of consent as per University of Tennessee Human Subjects Committee's requirements for obtaining informed consent from children (Appendix A3).

VARIABLES

Based on the literature, the primary independent variable in this study was the child's time spent viewing television. Each subject was asked to choose,

"How much television do you watch on a typical weeknight? (TV Watched)

- a) Less than one hour
- b) 1 hour or more, but less than 2 hours
- c) 2 hours or more, but less than 3 hours
- d) 3 hours or more, but less than 4 hours
- e) 4 hours or more

A second question was asked,

"How much television did you watch yesterday? (TV Night)

- a) Less than one hour
- b) 1 hour or more, but less than 2 hours
- c) 2 hours or more, but less than 3 hours
- d) 3 hours or more, but less than 4 hours
- e) 4 hours or more.

This is in accordance with questions asked in studies by Rubin (1979), Hodge and Tripp (1986), and Lyle and Hoffman (1972). It is generally thought that most people may over- or under-report their "typical" viewing habits, and that the second question gives a more accurate picture of time spent viewing television.

The amount of television reported for the previous evening (TV Night) and the amount reported as average viewing (TV Watch) were found to be correlated ($r = .4997$, $p = <.000$, $n = 319$), but perhaps less than would have been expected. The moderate correlation may be due to any of several factors. It may be that subjects do tend to over or under

report typical viewing patterns, or perhaps the children surveyed actually did view an atypical amount of television the previous evening. Additionally, when dealing with children and adolescents, there is also the possibility of error due to the respondents' reading skill and comprehension.

Subjects were asked to list their three favorite television programs. The first program listed, TV Program Choice, was coded by the researcher as to the genre of the show. Eight categories were found:

- 1 Situation Comedy
- 2 Drama
- 3 Soap Opera
- 4 Cartoons
- 5 Video
- 6 Science Fiction
- 7 Sports
- 8 Other

Intercoder reliability for these classifications, figured as a simple percentage among two coders was 99%. In the rare instance when a program fit into more than one category, the coders placed it in the category that seemed to be predominate.

Respondents were asked several demographic questions, (indicated below). Demographics were used as independent variables in this study, along with TV Program Choice (respondents preference for program type).

The demographic variables were coded as:

a) Age,

b) Race,

c) Parents, the number of parents living in the home.

Choices for this variables were both parents, one parent, or guardian.

d) Gender,

e) TV Number, which measured access to television (by asking how many television sets were in the home).

TV In Room, another measure of television emphasis (whether the child has his own television set in his bedroom).

f) TV Program Choice, genre of the favorite type of television program.

g) TV With, who they watched television with (if anyone) the previous day,

The variable TV With was included to measure the amount of co-viewing the subjects participated in.

The dependent variables in this study were "locus of control" and "stress coping" techniques.

Total test time was less than one hour. Questions were administered in a homeroom setting. Administration was subject to the wishes of each school principal.

Upon completion of the questionnaires, the researcher and an assistant coded the responses, entering them into a computer. Questionnaires with large amounts of missing data were discarded. This process resulted in 320 usable questionnaires of 343 that were distributed.

STATISTICAL TESTS

The computer statistics package SPSS PC+ was used to analyze this data. Although a range of several tests was used in the analysis of the data, this study was essentially correlational. While correlations show apparent relationships among variables, they do not imply causation.

Correlations

The main focus of this study was to determine whether there were statistically significant relationships existing between locus of control, stress coping styles and television viewing habits. It was a further goal to offer explanations of any relationships found to exist. Two-tailed tests were used for all correlations due to the exploratory nature of the hypotheses. Significance was accepted at the default level of .05.

Crosstabulations

Several of the variables used in this study were nominal (Race, Gender, etc.). For those variables correlational analysis could not be used effectively. In cases such as this, nonparametric statistics were used. A chi-square "goodness of fit" test was used as an estimate of whether the observed frequencies of the variables were greater than those expected by chance. The crosstabulations command allows for the chi-square statistic in SPSS PC+.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis was conducted with the data gathered from the stress coping technique scale and with the uses and gratifications scale. This analysis was conducted to identify underlying dimensions (whether certain items could be grouped together due to their intercorrelation), and to confirm reliability. Underlying variables were used as explanatory variables in subsequent analysis.

CHAPTER 4.

RESULTS

Data from 320 usable questionnaires were analyzed. Statistical tests used were factor analysis, correlations, cross tabulations, t-tests, analysis of variance and simple descriptive statistics.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Initially, descriptive statistics were run on the data to better identify the population of this study. Subjects ranged in age from 11 to 15, with a median age of 12.4 (Table 1). Roughly sixty percent of subjects were female (Table 2). Eighty-eight percent of the sample reported being white (Table 3). These numbers were close to the demographic breakdown of the region studied.

The majority of children in this study (71.8%), live in a two-parent home (Table 4). Fewer than 10 percent of the children reported having only one television in their home, and more than 62 percent had a television set in their bedroom. Fifty percent reported having only one sibling, and 12 percent reported being an only child (Table 5).

Before analysis of the data relevant to the hypotheses could be undertaken, other statistical tests were needed. Data gathered from the coping skills questions and uses and gratifications questions were subjected to factor analysis in an effort to identify possible variable item groupings.

Table 1. Age Distribution.

AGE	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT	CUM. PERCENT
11	53	16.7	16.7
12	122	38.5	55.2
13	100	31.5	86.7
14	40	12.6	99.3
15	2	.6	99.9
MISSING	3		

Table 2. Gender.

GENDER	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT	CUM. PERCENT
MALE	126	39.6	39.6
FEMALE	192	60.4	100.0
MISSING	2		

Table 3. Race.

RACE	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT	CUM. PERCENT
WHITE	280	88.3	88.3
AFRICAN AMER.	19	6.0	94.3
ASIAN	12	3.8	98.1
HISPANIC	3	.9	99.0
OTHER	3	.9	99.9
MISSING	3		

Table 4. Number of Parents.

# OF PARENTS	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT	CUM. PERCENT
2 PARENTS	227	71.8	71.8
1 PARENT	85	26.9	98.7
GUARDIAN	4	1.3	100.0

Table 5. Number of Siblings.

# OF SIBS	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT	CUM. PERCENT
0	38	12.0	12.0
1	157	49.5	61.5
2	76	24.0	85.5
3	22	6.9	92.4
4	13	4.1	96.5
5	2	.6	97.1
6	9	2.8	99.9
MISSING	3		

FACTORS

Factor analyses were first used to identify groupings of coping variables. Baseline data were available through the work of Brodzinsky, et al., (1992) who identified four factors: Assistance Seeking, Cognitive Behavioral Problem Solving, Cognitive Avoidance, and Behavior Avoidance. Each of these factors is related to how a subject copes with stress.

Assistance seekers will actively search for help with their problems. Problem solvers will also confront their stress, but by trying to take action. Those subjects who have an internal locus of control should also tend to be problem solvers. The two presumably less desirable stress coping techniques are cognitive avoidance and behavioral avoidance.

It should be noted that Brodzinsky, et al., used a loading criterion of .40 or higher. Using a more stringent .65 as the criterion, a factor analysis with varimax rotation for this study also resulted in four factors (eigenvalues of 1.4 or better) that each accounted for 5 percent of the variance or better. These factors paralleled those identified by Brodzinsky and accounted for 42.8 percent of the cumulative variance.

The questions for each factor with its loadings are:

Cognitive Avoidance, consisting of the questions,

I tried not thinking about the problem,	(.69023)
I went about my usual activities as if nothing was wrong,	(.72759)
I pretended the problem wasn't very important to me.	(.65512)

Cognitive-Behavioral Problem Solving, which were,

I made a plan to solve the problem and then I followed the plan,	(.71998)
I learned a new way of dealing with the problem,	(.72798)
I figured out what had to be done and then I did it.	(.67721)

Behavioral Avoidance was identified as,

I tried not to feel anything inside
me. I wanted to feel numb inside. (.65982)

I went to sleep so that I wouldn't
have to think about it. (.66433)

Assistance Seeking consisted of,

I got advice from someone about what
I should do. (.75487)

I shared my feelings about the problem
with another person. (.82687)

All of these factors fell under two broad categories, Avoidance of Problems and Problem Solving. Those in the first categories are seen to ignore their problems while the second group takes action and confronts them. The problem solvers demonstrate a healthy behavior that one would expect from children with an internal locus of control. Due to their similarity, the variables Assistance Seeking and Cognitive-Behavioral Problem Solving were combined for additional analysis. This new variable, identified as "Confrontation" (confrontation of stress), represents healthy problem solving or coping techniques. Similarly, the two less desirable variables, Cognitive Avoidance and Behavioral Avoidance, were also combined to offer the variable "Avoidance" (avoidance of stress) for further analysis. These were the primary coping factors used in this study.

It was also decided that the original factors identified by Brodzinsky, et al. (1992) using the data from this study might be useful in the analysis of the data. With few exceptions, the items with the factors for this study paralleled those of Brodzinsky, et al. (1992). The limited exceptions can be attributed to the more stringent factor loading criteria of this study.

The Brodzinsky factors were:

Assistance Seeking

I asked someone in my family for help with the problem.

I got advice from someone about what I should do.

I shared my feelings about the problem another person.

I kept my feelings to myself.

Cognitive-Behavioral Problem Solving

I thought about the problem and tried to figure out what I could do about it.

I took a chance and tried a new way to solve the problem.

I made a plan to solve the problem and then I followed the plan.

I went over in my head some of the things I could do about the problem.

I thought about the problem in a new way so that it didn't upset me as much.

I learned a new way of dealing with the problem.

I tried to figure out how I felt about the problem.

I figured out what had to be done and then I did it.

Cognitive Avoidance

- I tried not thinking about the problem.
- I went on with things as if nothing was wrong.
- I pretended the problem wasn't very important to me.
- I knew I had lots of feelings about the problem, but I just didn't pay any attention to them.
- I tried to get away from the problem for a while by doing other things.
- I pretended the problem had nothing to do with me.
- I tried to pretend that the problem didn't happen.
- I hoped that things would somehow work out so I didn't do anything.
- I tried to pretend that my problem wasn't real.
- I realized there was nothing I could do. I just waited for it to be over with.
- I put the problem out of my mind.

Behavioral Avoidance

- I stayed away from things that reminded me about the problem.
- I tried not to feel anything inside me. I wanted to feel numb.
- I went to sleep so I wouldn't have to think about it.
- When I was upset about the problem, I was mean to someone even though they didn't deserve it.
- I tried not to be with anyone who reminded me of the problem.
- I decided to stay away from people and be by myself.

The uses and gratifications scale was also subjected to factor analysis with varimax rotation. Four factors were

identified by this procedure (eigenvalues of 1.0 or better), However, the fourth item yielded uninterpretable results (a single item) and was therefore discarded, leaving three variables accounting for 56.8 percent of the cumulative variance

Escape From Boredom: Factor one was identified as consisting of those items related to using television as an escape from boredom. It consisted of the variables,

I watch television when I am bored,	(.73972)
I watch television if there is no one to talk to,	(.78646)
I watch television because it is exciting,	(.58039)
I watch television because it helps pass the time,	(.57941)

Escape From Problems: was a factor that consisted of questions dealing with whether the child reported using television as an escape from problems.

I watch television when I am sad and want to be cheered up,	(.84888)
I watch television to forget about my troubles,	(.83710)

Socialization: The final factor was Socialization and consisted of those uses that aided in the child's socialization with others.

I watch television to have something to
talk to my friends about, (.89354)

I watch television to have something to
talk about. (.88281)

FINDINGS RELATED TO HYPOTHESES

H1: Children who are categorized by the Nowicki-Strickland instrument as having an external locus of control will spend a significantly greater amount of time viewing television.

The hypothesis was not supported by the data. A correlation was run with the variables Locus Of Control (externality measured by the Nowicki-Strickland test) and TV Night (hours spent viewing television the previous evening) but no significant relationship was found to exist. This test resulted in an r score of .0247, and a p -value of .660 ($n = 319$). However, significant relationships did exist for sub-groups within the population. For heavy viewers, (those who reported watching 3 hours or more) there was a positive relationship ($r = .2529$, $p = .028$, $n = 76$). This implies that for those subjects deemed as heavy viewers of television, a correlation exists between heavier viewing and external locus of control.

However, for subjects who were light viewers of television (less than 2 hours), the opposite relationship

existed ($r = -.2106$, $p = .009$, $n = 155$). This would imply that for this group, subjects who view the least amount of television tend to have an external locus of control. This finding contradicted the first hypothesis and suggested a curvilinear distribution (See Table 6.1).

A series of t-tests comparing the means of Locus of Control score with each level of TV Night viewing, showed significant differences between the means. A preliminary analysis of the means suggested a curvilinear relationship (Table 6.1).

Table 6.1. Hours Viewing with Locus of Control Means.

< 1 Hour	1-2 Hours	2-3 Hours	3-4 Hours	> 4 Hours
16.04	14.79	15.33	14.72	16.13
n = 49	n = 106	n = 88	n = 36	n = 40

T-tests among the means showed that the differences between the first two groups (those who watched less than one hour of television and those who watched between 1 and 2 hours) were significant (Table 6.2). Additionally, significance was found to exist between the groups who viewed 3-4 hours and those watching more than 4 hours. The group who viewed less than one hour was shown to be significantly different from those who viewed between 3 and 4 hours. A difference was also found between those who watched more than 4 hours and those viewing between 1 and 2 hours.

Table 6.2. T-Test of Locus of Control by TV Viewing.

< 1 hour	1-2 hours	2-3 hours	3-4 hours	> 4 hours
	t = 2.66 p = .009**	t = 1.57 p = .118	t = 2.10 p = .039*	t = -.15 p = .880
1-2 hours		t = -1.45 p = .149	t = .13 p = .896	t = -2.74 p = .007**
2-3 hours			t = 1.18 p = .239	t = -1.73 p = .086
3-4 hours				t = -2.25 p = .028*

* < .05, ** < .001.

Those children who have an external locus of control seem to be either heavy viewers of television or light viewers of television. A correlation could not be run for the group who reported watching "2 hours or more, but less than 3 hours", because it was analyzed as a single item.

A negative correlation was found for those subjects who scored below 13 on the locus of control test (This represented the 15% of subjects with the strongest internal locus of control, as reported on the questionnaires) and the amount of television they viewed the previous evening ($r = -.3126$ $p = .031$, $n = 48$). This would indicate that for these subjects, television viewing declines as their degree of externality increases. But it must again be cautioned that this is for those subjects already coded as demonstrating an internal locus of control. This relationship

also holds true for subjects at the other end of the locus scale. For those scoring over 16, (highly external) a significantly negative relationship was also present ($r = -.2261$, $p = .024$, $n = 99$). Again, this may be a curvilinear relationship.

For the subset of females from single parent homes, significance was found between locus of control and television viewing ($r = .2941$, $p = .040$, $n = 49$).

Additionally, a positive relationship was found to exist between locus of control and race.

When a t-test was used to compare the locus of control of white children and non-white children, a t-score of -3.30 and a $p = .001$ ($n = 299$) was found. Means for these two groups were:

White children	15.13
Non White children	16.65

This finding, that white children tend to have a more internal locus of control is supported by the literature in this field.

H2: Children who are categorized by the Brodzinsky-Steiger-Hitt coping scale as avoiding their problems will spend a significantly greater amount of time viewing television.

Support was found for this hypothesis. A positive correlation was found to exist between the reported amount of television viewing and the variables Cognitive Avoidance ($r = .1854$, $p = .001$, $n = 313$), and Avoidance ($r = .1379$, $p = .015$, $n = 309$). This suggests that for those subjects who avoid their problems, television viewing is higher. This relationship doesn't hold true for both cognitive and behavioral avoidance techniques. It only seems to exist for the children identified as using cognitive avoidance. The relationship for the behavioral avoidance variables (using either the Behavioral Avoidance or Avoidance factor from this study or Brodzinsky's), was not significant (Table 7).

Conversely, a negative relationship was found to exist with television viewing for the problem-solving variables of Confrontation ($r = -.1839$, $p = .001$, $n = 302$), Cognitive Behavioral Problem Solving ($r = -.1417$, $p = .013$, $n = 305$), and Assistance Seeking ($r = -.1736$, $p = .002$, $n = 307$). As these variables increase, television viewing decreases. This implies that children who actively confront their problems are less likely to be heavy viewers of television than those who avoid their problems.

Looking at the Brodzinsky factors, similar findings were evident (Table 8).

Table 7. TV Viewing Correlated with Coping Variables

VARIABLE	r Score	r-squared	N	p VALUE
COGNITIVE				
AVOIDANCE	.1854	.0343	313	.001
BEHAV.				
AVOIDANCE	.0180	.0003	309	.753
AVOIDANCE	.1379	.0190	309	.015
PROBLEM				
SOLVING	-.1417	.0200	305	.013
ASSIST.				
SEEKING	-.1736	.0301	307	.002
CONFRONT	-.1839	.0338	302	.001

Table 8. TV Viewing with Brodzinsky's Coping Variables.

VARIABLE	r SCORE	r-squared	N	p VALUE
COGNITIVE				
AVOIDANCE	.1351	.0182	304	.018
BEHAV.				
AVOIDANCE	.0114	.0001	302	.844
PROBLEM				
SOLVING	-.1115	.0012	296	.055
ASSIST.				
SEEKING	-.1821	.0033	302	.001

Significant relationships exist between Television Viewing and Cognitive Avoidance ($r = .1351$, $p = .018$, $n = 304$) but not for Behavioral Avoidance ($r = .0114$, $p = .844$, $n = 302$). Again, this would imply that children who use internal avoidance techniques when dealing with stress watch more television. However, this relationship isn't present for those who use more physical avoidance methods.

Other variables were also significantly associated with television viewing. Negative relationships were found for TV Night and the variables Escape From Boredom ($r = -.2857$, $p = .000$, $n = 313$) and Socialization ($r = -.2445$, $p = .000$, $n = 318$).

This indicates that children who use television when they feel bored and children who use television for conversation are heavier users of the medium.

H3: Children who are categorized by the Nowicki-Strickland test as having an external locus of control will report situation-comedy television programs as their favorite.

No support was found for the third hypothesis. Crosstabulations for the variables TV Program Choice and Locus Of Control resulted in a chi-square of 76.19169 and a significance level of .9846 ($n = 306$, $df = 105$).

However, a significant relationship was found to exist between TV Program Choice and Gender. A crosstabulation of Gender and TV Program Choice resulted in a chi-square of 68.28077. and a significance of .000 ($n = 304$, $df = 7$). It appears that for these subjects, females watch significantly more situation comedies.

A t-test of TV Program Choice by Gender resulted in an t score of 6.68, with a significance $p = .000$ ($n = 304$, $df = 302$). These findings indicate that one of the strongest variables that explains television program choice is gender.

Looking at the data, 56% of females report a situation comedy as their favorite program, while only 42% of males did. Females also overwhelmingly chose dramas more than males (32% to 8%) (Table 9). This is evident in the large number of "Melrose Place" and "90210" answers among females. Males appeared to watch more sports (ESPN) cartoons and science fiction (Star Trek, Babylon 5) than females, but had no clear favorite outside of situation comedies. The prevalence of situation comedies as favorite television program choice is consistent with findings by Wartella, Alexander and Lemish (1979) who found that preference for situation comedies remains into adolescence. In fact, the sit-com has been found to be a favorite of adolescents as early as 1961 (Hendry & Patrick, 1977). Several researchers have also found that children's television preferences shift

from cartoons to situation comedies as they mature (Bantz, 1982; Staford, 1984).

H4: Children who are categorized by the Brodzinsky-Steiger-Hitt instrument as avoiding their problems will report situation-comedy television programs as their favorite.

No support was found for hypothesis 4 by this study. T-tests were run for the avoidance variables and Television Program Choice. For the Cognitive Avoidance variable, a t score of .62 and a probability of .538 was found when the means of those who chose a situation comedy was compared to those who chose another genre. Means for these two groups

Table 9. Genre by Gender.

GENRE	MALES	FEMALES	TOTALS
SIT. COMEDY	50	103	153
DRAMA	10	59	69
SOAP OPERA	0	3	3
CARTOON	19	6	25
MUSIC VIDEO	5	4	9
SCI. FICTION	10	1	11
SPORTS	15	3	18
OTHER	10	6	16
COLUMN TOTALS	119	185	304

were 6.48 for sit-com, 6.34 for others. Similarly, when the variable measuring Behavioral Avoidance was used, a t-score of 1.22 and a probability of .225 resulted (sit-com mean = 3.71, non sit-com = 3.50). When the two avoidance variables were combined, the t-score was 1.14, probability was .256 and the means were 10.21 and 9.84.

H5: Children who are categorized by the Nowicki-Strickland test as having an external locus of control will report using television as a mechanism of escape.

There was limited support found for this hypothesis. When the Locus Of Control score was analyzed with the Escape variables escape from boredom ($r = -.0671$, $p = .236$, $n = 313$) and escape from problems ($r = .0589$, $p = .297$, $n = 315$), no significance was found.

When examining the data from only those children who were reported to have an external locus of control (Locus Of Control greater than 17) some support for the hypothesis was found. A correlation of Locus Of Control and Escape From Boredom ($r = .2236$, $p = .0500$, $n = 71$) found significance.

While hypothesis 5 does not appear to hold true for all subjects, it may be that for children who have an external locus of control, a positive correlation exists between Locus

Of Control and their use of television to escape from boredom.

H6: Children who are categorized by the Brodzinsky-Steiger-Hitt instrument as avoiding their problems will report using television as an escape or attachment object.

The opposite of what was posited in hypothesis H6 was found to be true. A negative relationship was found to exist between the television use variable Escape From Boredom and the avoidance variables Cognitive Avoidance ($r = -.1407$, $p = .014$, $n = 307$), Behavioral Avoidance ($r = -.1692$, $p = .003$, $n = 303$), and Avoidance ($r = -.1914$, $p = .001$, $n = 303$). For the Escape From Problems variable, significant negative correlations were found for Cognitive Avoidance ($r = -.1350$, $p = .017$, $n = 310$), Behavioral Avoidance ($r = -.2746$, $p = .000$, $n = 307$), and Avoidance ($r = -.2428$, $p = .000$, $n = 307$).

Using the Brodzinsky factors, negative relationships were also significant for the television use variable, Escape From Boredom with Behavioral Avoidance ($r = -.1859$, $p = .001$, $n = 297$) and Cognitive Avoidance ($r = -.1984$, $p = .001$, $n = 298$). The same is true for Escape From Problems and Behavioral Avoidance ($r = -.2242$, $p = .000$, $n = 300$) and

Cognitive Avoidance ($r = -.1665$, $p = .004$, $n = 301$). This would suggest that for those subjects who avoid their problems, television is not used as an escape as much as it is for those scoring lower on the scale.

A positive relationship was found for Escape From Boredom and the variables Assistance Seeking and Cognitive-Behavioral Problem Solving and Confrontation, as well as for Brodzinsky's Assistance Seeking and Cognitive-Behavioral Problem Solving, however these correlations were not significant.

For the variable Escape From Problems, all of the aforementioned variables offered a negative relationship. None was significant with the exception of Assistance Seeking ($r = -.1204$, $p = .036$, $n = 305$).

ADDITIONAL FINDINGS

Many significant relationships were found between variables not explicitly mentioned in the hypotheses. The importance a family places on television, measured by the variables TV In Room (whether the child has his/her own television set) and TV Number (number of television sets in the home), were found to be related to several other variables.

Significant relationships with having a TV in the respondent's room were found with 10 variables, TV Viewing, Avoidance, Cognitive Avoidance, Socialization, Escape From

Boredom, Assistance Seeking, TV Talk, Gender and Brodzinsky's factors of Assistance Seeking and Cognitive Avoidance (TABLE 10).

Children who have a television in their bedroom tend to score highest on the Avoidance and the Cognitive Avoidance variables. These children also spend a significantly greater amount of time viewing television. Those without television in their rooms are more likely to use television to

Table 10. T-test of TV in Room with Selected Variables.

VARIABLE	"YES" MEAN	"NO" MEAN	t SCORE	p VALUE
TV NIGHT	2.91	2.44	3.37	.001
COG. AVOID.	6.71	5.89	3.60	.000
AVOIDANCE	10.39	9.44	2.90	.004
SOCIALIZE	6.24	6.72	-2.20	.028
ESCAPE FROM BOREDOM	9.43	10.38	-2.92	.004
ASSISTANCE SEEKING	4.70	5.11	-2.22	.027
TV TALK	3.09	3.34	-2.12	.035
BRODZINSKY- ASSIST SEEK	9.97	10.53	-2.01	.045
BRODZINSKY- COG. AVOID.	22.42	21.07	2.00	.047

socialize, to talk to friends about what they have seen, escape from boredom, or seek the assistance of others.

A crosstabulation showed the variables Gender and TV In Room to be significantly related. The largest portion of respondents who had a television in their room were males (69%) while 58% of females had their own set.

The amount of television the subject watched was related to whom they watched with. A crosstabulation of who they watched television with by the amount of TV viewed the previous night resulted in a Chi-square of 24.51 and a significance level of .0173, ($n = 303$). The greatest percentage of subjects who watched alone (40.4 %) reported viewing between 1 and 2 hours, while a near equal percentage of those watching with a parent viewed from 1 to 2 hours (33.8%) or 2-3 hours (35.1%).

Whom the subject watched television with seemed to be related to age. For the population as a whole, 27.72% reported viewing television alone, 22.44% with a sibling, 33.66% with a parent, and 16.17% with a friend or other person. As one may have predicted, older children spent less time viewing with parents and siblings and more time viewing alone or with friends. This fits the pattern of withdrawal for this age group. These children are the ones "going into the cave" (Burns, C., personal interview, March 1995). While over 36% of 13 year olds reported viewing television with a parent, only 29.72% of 14 year olds reported doing the same. Solitary viewing habits rose from 21.56% for 11 year olds to a high of 37.83% for 14 year olds. However, the greatest

changes occurred for those children who reported watching television with siblings or friends. Almost 32% of 11 year olds reported watching with a brother or sister, this percentage dropped to 10.81% by the time they had reached 14 years of age. An opposite relationship was found for respondents who reported viewing television with friends. While only 13% of 11 year olds fell into this category, over 21% of 14 year olds did. Unfortunately, this relationship was not significant. A crosstabulation resulted in a chi-square of 18.61269 and a significance level of .2893.

Gender was also related to several other variables. Statistically significant relationships were found to exist between gender and having a television in the bedroom (mentioned above), using television as a socialization tool, to escape from problems, and as a discussion topic. Additionally, there were gender differences for respondents who scored higher on the variables of Assistance Seeking, Behavioral Avoidance, Confrontation and Brodzinsky's Behavioral Assistance Seeking.

Crosstabulations suggest that males use television to escape their problems (as indicated by the two items identified by factor analysis of the uses and gratifications instrument) more often than females do (chi-square = 17.44, $p = .0258$, $n = 313$). Further, a t-test of these variables showed a t-score of 2.28 and a p value of .028, with means of 6.8049 for males and 6.3158 for females.

Males were also found to use behavioral avoidance techniques (sleeping, avoiding people, etc.) more often than females did. For the variables Gender and Behavioral Avoidance, means of 3.8871 for males and 3.4239 for females was found, with a t-score of 2.66 and a p value of .008 (n = 308).

Females used television more to socialize (use television to have something to talk about) and to talk to their friends about what they had seen. Females also tended to confront their problems more often, and seek the assistance of others with their problems. As mentioned earlier, they were also more apt to have a television set in their bedroom (Table 11).

Table 11. T-tests of Gender with Assorted Variables.

VARIABLE	MALE MEAN	FEMALE MEAN	T SCORE	P VALUE
SOCIALIZE	6.17	6.61	-2.07	.039
CONFRONT	11.21	12.04	-2.34	.020
TV TALK	3.02	3.30	-2.36	.019
TV IN ROOM	1.31	1.42	-2.02	.044
ESCAPE PROB	6.80	6.32	2.28	.024
BEH. AVOID.	3.88	3.42	2.66	.008
ASSIST.SEEK	4.38	5.16	-4.40	.000
BRODZINSKY- ASSIST.SEEK	9.38	10.73	-5.11	.000

CHAPTER 5.

CONCLUSIONS

DISCUSSION

Overall, there was mixed support for the hypotheses of this study. The strongest findings were those related to the way in which children coped with stressful situations. Support was found for hypothesis 2, which stated that children who avoid their problems would spend a significantly greater amount of time watching television. Significant relationships were found for five of the variables associated with avoidance, Cognitive Avoidance, Avoidance, Confrontation, and two of Brodzinsky's factors, Cognitive Avoidance and Behavioral Avoidance. An opposite relationship was found for children who were identified as those who confront their problems, or as problem solvers. Three of the variables associated with problem solving, Confrontation, Cognitive-Behavioral Problem Solving, and Assistance Seeking were significantly associated with TV Night, (the actual number of hours spent with television the previous night).

Given these findings, it can be argued that children who are good "copers" spend significantly less time with television than their poorer coping counterparts. While it cannot be suggested that watching an extra amount of television will cause a child to avoid his/her problems, perhaps this is just another tool used by the avoiders.

For hypothesis 4, which posited that children who avoid

their problems will be heavy viewers of situation comedies, no support was found. The only relationship which approached statistical significance appeared as a result of a crosstabulation between variables TV Program Choice and the combination factor Avoidance. While this lends some credit to the hypothesis, it is not enough to permit generalization. It may be that the children who use television as an escape use genres other than the situation comedy. Further research may be needed in this area. Utilizing different test instruments and different subjects might offer better insight into this relationship.

For the final hypothesis dealing with the Brodzinsky coping scale, H6, the opposite of what was suggested was found to be true. While the researcher believed that those children who avoid their problems would report using television to escape (more so than their problem solving peers, significant correlations in the other direction were observed. Those children who scored higher on all of the avoidance variables were much less likely to use television as an escape from boredom and escape from their problems.

One possible explanation for this discrepancy may be that those children who avoid their problems are so adept at ignoring them that they don't realize they are using television as an escape. Another explanation may be that children are not cognizant of their uses of television. Further analysis of this area is suggested. While this study

relied heavily on self-reported data, perhaps using a qualitative approach might offer additional insight. By observing the children watching television, more accurate measurement of escape may be obtained.

Turning to the hypotheses dealing with locus of control, limited support was found for two hypotheses, while one resulted in no support at all.

The first hypothesis found support for the idea that for some children there is a relationship between television viewing and locus of control. For subjects identified as being heavy users of the medium, a positive relationship was seen to exist. An opposite relationship was present for those who are light viewers. It appears that those children who watch between 1 and 4 hours of television are more likely to have an internal locus of control. While it would be enticing to say that regulating the amount of television a child watches (1-4 hours per day) would result in an internal locus of control, such an assumption would not be prudent. This study is only investigating correlations, not causation.

However, one possible explanation for the curvilinear nature of the data is that children who have an external locus of control, or who are otherwise not well adjusted, may react in one of two ways. They may escape into the fantasy world of television (as hypothesized) or they may react in the opposite manner. That is, some children with an external locus of control may withdraw within themselves. Perhaps

these children are not using television, or any other medium. Future researchers may wish to focus exclusively on those children who have been identified as having an external locus of control. Incorporating some measure of whether a child is withdrawn, may assist in this research.

Race was also seen to be positively related to locus of control. White children were significantly more likely to have an internal locus of control than children of color. When combined with the fact that non-white children spend a larger amount of time with television (Blosser, B., 1988; Comstock, et al., 1978; Pearl, Bouthilet, & Lazar, 1982), this becomes an important finding. Indeed, for this study, race was seen as a predictor of amount of television viewing. Of the 11.61% of the population classified as a member of a minority group, the largest percentage (35.13%) reported watching 4 or more hours of television, above the national average of 2 hours and 52 minutes for children in this age group reported by Nielson Media Research. (Dove, 1995). For the white children, the largest percentage (35.12%) reported watching only 1 to 2 hours, below the average.

This study has shown that non-white children in this sample are watching more television and are more likely to have an external locus of control. Therefore it may be that these children can be best reached through quality television programming.

Hypothesis five (children with an external locus of control will use television as an escape) had only limited support. For those subjects who were identified as having a strong external locus of control, a statistically significant relationship was found to exist between Locus Of Control and the escape variables. This implies that children who have an external locus of control use television as an escape. This is consistent with the findings of the first hypothesis.

The third hypothesis (children with an external locus of control will favor situation comedies more than other genres) had no support from the data gathered in this study. Gender and the amount of television viewed appeared to be a better predictor of television choices. While males and females both reported situation comedies as their favorite programs more often than other types of programs, a significantly larger proportion of females opted for situation comedies than did males. Children who spent more time with television did so with sit-coms.

It was also found that significant relationships between the emphasis a family placed on television, (measured by whether the child had his or her own television set), and several other variables exist. Females tended to have their own television sets more than males did. Those with television in their bedrooms reported using avoidance techniques when dealing with stress more than those without their own television set. They also were less likely to use

television to find out about the world or to use it to learn those skills to aid in the child's socialization with others. Children with their own sets also tended to talk less to friends about what they have viewed, and sought the assistance of others in solving their problems less. As might be expected, they also reported watching significantly more television. It appears as if children with their own television sets retreat to the isolation of their rooms more than other children.

Related to this finding, children who watch television alone, tend to watch more. Those children who reported watching television with their parents also reported spending significantly less time viewing. This is supported by literature, urging parents to co-view television with their children.

As mentioned earlier, Gender seemed to be related to several variables. Males were shown to use television as an escape more often than females and to use behavioral avoidance techniques more often. Females, on the other hand, were seen as problem solvers who used television for socialization purposes.

While this study does have weaknesses, (limited sample size, somewhat homogenous sample) the findings presented here have relevance to people in the fields of communications as well as education. With new, stricter broadcast regulations, television stations must air programs designated as

educational for children. Using this study as a starting point, broadcasters and producers may use their medium to help children cope with everyday life. The data from this study suggests that situation comedies are a good genre to use to reach this group.

Further, educators may take this study and develop curricula that would assist those children identified as being poor copers. If students are using television to escape their problems, it may be utilized to assist in changing their coping skills. Situation comedies which stress problem solving and confrontation of problems may be used in the classroom.

Very few studies have been undertaken that attempt to look at the relationships between children's television usage and personality. This study generally has shown that such relationships do exist.

Future studies may wish to take reading skill levels into account. This study did not control for variations in the levels of achievement of the children studied. Some of the peculiar results found in this study may be the result of such variations.

The somewhat homogenous population may have also attributed to the findings. Future studies may be undertaken in more urbanized areas. The demographics of the subjects in such area may differ greatly from those of this study.

While this study used the number of parents in the home as a variable, participants with two parents were not asked if both parents were biological or if one was a step-parent. It would be interesting to see if differences exist for these subjects.

Future reseachers may wish to develop a method of differentiating within television genres. While this study classified favorite television genres, it did not identify the target audience for these programs. A situation comedy may be produced for children or for adults. Whether subjects were viewing programs with adult themes may have an effect on the findings.

It is hoped that this study may guide other researchers exploring this area.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTERS OF CONSENT

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A1.	Letter to Parents.....	89
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Dear parent:

Your child's class has been selected to participate in a research project to be conducted by a doctoral student from the University of Tennessee.

A great deal of research has shown that children who feel in control of their lives are better able to cope with stress. The purpose of this study is to examine the perceived sense of control held by children, and what, if any relationship this has to television viewing. It is hoped that this research will help us to better understand how television affects children's abilities to cope with the stressful situations they are confronted with in their daily lives.

Your child will be asked to answer a few simple questions about the way in which he/she perceives the world and his/her television viewing habits.. There are no "wrong" or "right" answers and your child will be told this several times. Also, he/she will be advised that he/she does not have to participate, and if at any time he/she does not wish to continue, he/she may stop and no one will be angry. If your child does choose not to participate in the study, his/her choice will in no way affect participation in regular classroom activities.

Your child will be given this exam in the classroom he/she normally attends, and will receive supervision during this time.

The identity of you and your child will be kept confidential. All results will be tabulated and reported as group data rather than as individual results. Only the investigator will have access to the original list of participants and this list will be destroyed with a witness present at the completion of this project.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me:

Professor Bill Richter
Lenoir-Rhyne College
(704) 328-7164

Please take a moment and sign the attached permission form. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bill Richter
Project Director

CONSENT FORM

Project Title: Locus of Control, Coping Skills and Television
Usage Among Middle School-Aged Children.

I give my consent to have my child participate in the
study to be conducted by Bill Richter. I have read the
information and agree to the conditions stated.

Child's Name

Signature of Parent or
Guardian

Date

CONSENT FORM

I am trying to find out what people your age think about certain things. I want you to answer the following questions any way you feel. There are no right or wrong answers. Don't take too much time answering any one question, but do try to answer them all. If at any time you feel uncomfortable about answering these questions you may stop and you will not be penalized. Your answers will be kept secret and you teachers and parents will never know your answers. Thank you for your time and cooperation.

I agree to participate in this study.

Signature

Date

APPENDIX B
TEST INSTRUMENT

PARCHMENT DEED
SOUTH FORTH CO. U.S.A.
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CONTENTS--APPENDIX B

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PLEASE CIRCLE ONE ANSWER FOR EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS.
THERE ARE NO WRONG ANSWERS AND NO RIGHT ANSWERS.
YOU WILL NOT BE GRADED AND NO ONE WILL KNOW WHICH ANSWERS ARE YOURS.

1. Do you believe that most problems will solve themselves if you just don't fool with them?
YES NO
2. Do you believe that you can stop yourself from catching a cold?
YES NO
3. Are some people just born lucky?
YES NO
4. Most of the time, do you feel that getting good grades means a great deal to you?
YES NO
5. Are you often blamed for things that just aren't your fault?
YES NO
6. Do you believe that if somebody studies hard enough he or she can pass any subject?
YES NO
7. Do you feel that most of the time it doesn't pay to try hard because things never turn out anyway?
YES NO
8. Do you feel that if things start out well in the morning that it's going to be a good day no matter what you do?
YES NO
9. Do you feel that most of the time parents listen to what their children have to say?
YES NO
10. Do you believe that wishing can make good things happen?
YES NO
11. When you get punished, does it usually seem it's for no good reason?
YES NO
12. Most of the time do you find it's hard to change a friends (mind) opinion?
YES NO
13. Do you think that cheering, more than luck, helps a team to win?
YES NO
14. Do you feel that it's nearly impossible to change your parent's mind about anything?
YES NO

15. Do you believe that your parents should allow you to make most of your own decisions?
YES NO
16. Do you feel that when you do something wrong there's very little you can do to make it right?
YES NO
17. Do you believe that most kids are just born good at sports?
YES NO
18. Are most of the other kids your age stronger than you are?
YES NO
19. Do you feel that one of the best ways to handle most problems is just not to think about them?
YES NO
20. Do you feel that you have a lot of choice in deciding who your friends are?
YES NO
21. If you find a four-leaf clover do you believe that it might bring you good luck?
YES NO
22. Do you often feel that whether you do your homework has much to do with what kind of grades you get?
YES NO
23. Do you often feel that when a kid your age decides to hit you, there's little you can do to stop him or her?
YES NO
24. Have you ever had a good luck charm?
YES NO
25. Do you believe that whether or not people like you depends on how you act?
YES NO
26. Would your parents usually help you if you ask them?
YES NO
27. Have you felt that when people were mean to you it was usually for no reason at all?
YES NO
28. Most of the time, do you feel that you can change what might happen tomorrow by what you do today?
YES NO
29. Do you believe that when bad things are going to happen they are going to happen no matter what you try to do to stop them?
YES NO

30. Do you think that kids can get their own way if they just keep trying?
YES NO
31. Most of the time do you find it useless to try to get your own way at home?
YES NO
32. Do you feel that when good things happen they happen because of hard work?
YES NO
33. Do you feel that when somebody your age wants to be your enemy there's little you can do to change matters?
YES NO
34. Do you feel that it's easy to get friends to do what you want them to?
YES NO
35. Do you usually feel that you have little to say about what you get to eat at home?
YES NO
36. Do you feel that when someone doesn't like you there's little you can do about it?
YES NO
37. Do you usually feel that it's almost useless to try in school because most other children are just plain smarter than you are?
YES NO
38. Are you the kind of person who believes that planning ahead makes things turn out better?
YES NO
39. Most of the time, do you feel you have little to say about what your family decides to do?
YES NO
40. Do you think that it's better to be smart than to be lucky?
YES NO

People use television for many different reasons. Perhaps you have never even thought about all of the reasons that you have for using television. Please take a few minutes to tell us about your television viewing habits.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Agree
1. I watch television when I am bored.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. I watch television to learn about things in the world.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. I watch television to have something to talk to my friends about.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. I watch television if there is no one to talk to.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. I watch television because it is exciting.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. I watch television to learn about being an adult.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. I watch television when I am sad and want to be cheered up.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. I watch television to forget about my troubles.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. I watch television to have something to talk about.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. I watch television because it helps pass the time.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

11. How much television did you watch yesterday?

- a) Less than 1 hour
- b) 1 hour or more, but less than 2 hours
- c) 2 hours or more, but less than 3 hours
- d) 3 hours or more, but less than 4 hours
- e) 4 hours or more.

12. When (if) you watched television yesterday, were you:

- a) By yourself
- b) with a brother or sister
- c) with a parent or guardian
- d) other _____

13. How much television do you watch on a typical weeknight?

- a) Less than 1 hour
- b) 1 hour or more, but less than 2 hours
- c) 2 hours or more, but less than 3 hours
- d) 3 hours or more, but less than 4 hours
- e) 4 hours or more

14) When (if) you watch television, are you typically:

- a) By yourself
- b) with a brother or sister
- c) with a parent or guardian
- d) other _____

Please tell us what your favorite television programs are:

15. _____

16. _____

All children and teenagers have some problems they find hard to deal with and that upset them or worry them. We are interested in finding out what you do when you try and deal with a hard problem. Think about some problem that has bothered you or upset you in the past few months. It could be a problem with homework, teachers, parents, other kids, or anything else. Briefly describe what the problem is in the space below.

How much has this problem bothered you? Circle one of the answers.

1	2	3
a little bit	a medium amount	a great deal

Listed below are some ways that children and teenagers try to deal with their problems. Please tell us how often you have used these behaviors when you tried to deal with the problem you described above.

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Very Often</u>
1. I asked someone in my family for help.	1	2	3	4
2. I tried not thinking about the problem.	1	2	3	4
3. I went on with my usual activities as if nothing was wrong.	1	2	3	4
4. I thought about the problem and tried to figure out what I could do about it.	1	2	3	4
5. I stayed away from things that reminded me about the problem.	1	2	3	4
6. I tried not to feel anything inside me. I wanted to feel numb.	1	2	3	4
7. I pretended the problem wasn't very important to me.	1	2	3	4
8. I knew I had lots of feelings about the problem, but I just didn't pay any attention to them.	1	2	3	4
9. I took a chance and tried a new way to solve the problem.	1	2	3	4

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Very Often</u>
10. I tried to get away from the problem for a while by doing other things	1	2	3	4
11. I made a plan to solve the problem and then I followed the plan.	1	2	3	
12. I pretended the problem had nothing to do with me.	1	2	3	4
13. I went over in my head some of the things I could do about the problem.	1	2	3	4
14. I thought about the problem in a new way so that it didn't upset me as much.	1	2	3	4
15. I went to sleep so that I wouldn't have to think about it.	1	2	3	4
16. When I was upset about the problem, I was mean to someone even though they	1	2	3	4
17. I learned a new way of dealing with the problem	1	2	3	4
18. I tried to pretend that the problem didn't happen	1	2	3	4
19. I got advice from someone about what I should do.	1	2	3	4
20. I hoped that things would somehow work out so I didn't do anything.	1	2	3	4
21. I tried to pretend that the problem wasn't real.	1	2	3	4
22. I tried not to be with anyone who reminded me of the problem.	1	2	3	4

	<u>Never</u>	<u>Sometimes</u>	<u>Often</u>	<u>Very Often</u>
23. I shared my feelings about the problem with another person.	1	2	3	4
24. I tried to figure out how I felt about the problem.	1	2	3	4
25. I figured out what had to be done and then I did it.	1	2	3	4
26. I kept my feelings to myself.	1	2	3	4
27. I realized there was nothing I could do. I just waited for it to be over with.	1	2	3	4
28. I decided to stay away from people and be by myself.	1	2	3	4
29. I put the problem out of my mind.	1	2	3	4

In order for us to complete this study, we need to know a little about you. We don't need your name, and will not be able to identify you. All of your answers will be kept confidential. Your teachers and parents will not see these or any answers you give today.

1. Age

2. Are you:

Male Female

3. Number of televisions in your home?

NONE 1 2 3 4 5 More than 5

4. Do you have a television in your bedroom?

Yes No

5. Do you live with:

Both parents One parent Guardian

6. Number of brothers and sisters living with you:

None 1 2 3 4 5 More than 5

7. Ages of your brothers and sisters (if any)?

8. Do you ever talk to your friends about television shows you have seen?

Never Sometimes Often Very Often

9. Do you ever talk to your parents about television shows you have seen?

Never Sometimes Often Very Often

10. Are you:

White African American Asian Hispanic Other

VITA

William A. Richter was born in Oak Park, Illinois on December 15, 1960. He attended schools in Cicero, Illinois where he graduated from J. S. Morton East High School in 1979. He attended the University of Illinois, Chicago as a Business Major, transferring to Columbia College, Chicago during January, 1983. He graduated with honors from Columbia College with a Bachelor of Arts in Communications. After working as a freelance voice over talent, he moved to Natchez, Mississippi to work as a Disc Jockey and Program Director of KAIN radio. In January 1985 he entered the Graduate school at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Arkansas. He received his M.S.M.C. in 1986. Upon completion of this degree, he worked as Media Director of a project of the U. S. Government. He was then employed as an adjunct instructor at Triton Community College. In 1989 he entered the Ph.D. program at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. While at Tennessee, he was awarded the Graduate Student Research Award, 1991 and was inducted into the honorary society, Kappa Tau Alpha. The doctoral degree was received December, 1996.

He is presently an assistant professor at Lenoir-Rhyne College in Hickory, North Carolina, and has been honored in Who's Who Among America's Teachers.