

## Abstract

With television media continuing to be an essential component of modern communication in today's society, this project aims to discover the links between such media and the way in which we communicate with others, and thus, our relationships with such individuals.

This study takes into account television viewing as the mechanism through which the individual consumes and relates it to communication done via mobile and in-person contact with other individuals, specifically friends and family.

It is hypothesized that the more one spends watching television, the weaker the interpersonal relationships with friends and family will be. Furthermore, the more one spends watching television, the more likely respondents will report that such interpersonal relationships are less important to them than participants who spend less time watching television.

## Introduction

Several researchers have attempted to find the link between mass media technology and communication skills; a 2021 study at the University of California, Santa Barbara (Ruben, Stosic, Correale, Blanch-Hartigan 2021) assessed the impact of passive screen time on nonverbal decoding skills, where it was found that passive screen time use was positively correlated to self-reported nonverbal decoding skills. This kind of media may in fact aid our communication with others, leading to stronger interpersonal relationships. However, many questions are left unanswered, including how the frequency and quantity of television viewing may impact such findings, and if television is still a relevant medium as to which individuals consume information.

More specifically, this study aims to examine the role television media plays on our interpersonal relationships. The question posed is: How does television media consumption impact communication in interpersonal relationships?



Figure 1. TV viewing



Figure 2. Nonverbal communication.

## Methods and Materials

The data were taken from a convenience sample of adult UCF undergraduates. Participants were given a URL to an anonymous 5-minute survey containing questions about television consumption use and interpersonal communication as well as background information on their age, race, gender, employment status, and income.

Interpersonal communication, the dependent variable in this study, was operationalized as six questions, allowing participants to express the frequency of communication and the intensity of their relationships with friends and family. Questions related to the dependent variable are designed to collect necessary information while also not overwhelming participants with lengthy answers.

The independent variable in the study was television consumption, measured by frequency, time of day, number of programs viewed, and the level of attention participants give to television viewing. Questions were prepared so that they provide a consistent summary of television viewing habits, respecting both qualitative and quantitative measures, allowing data to represent a more holistic overview of such habits.

## Results

Results indicate that most participants spent between 0-4 hours viewing television at 72%, and very few spent more than 9 hours viewing television, with the mean tv time in hours being 2.25 hours. A significant negative correlation was found between hours spent watching television and interpersonal communication with family (see Table 1) - as participants spend more time watching television, it suggests that interpersonal communication with family decreases.

Conversely, as more tv programs are consumed, participants tended to meet more frequently with friends (see Table 2). Additionally, tv attentiveness was predicted to influence interpersonal relationships. Respondents who paid more attention to the television they watched is seen to increase participants' belief on the importance of friend relationships.

Table 1. Spearman correlation test

	1	2
1. Hours spent watching TV	-	-
2. Interpersonal communication with family	-.492*	.03319

Table 2. Spearman correlation test

	1	2
1. Attention to TV	-	-
2. Importance of friend relationships	.526*	.01720

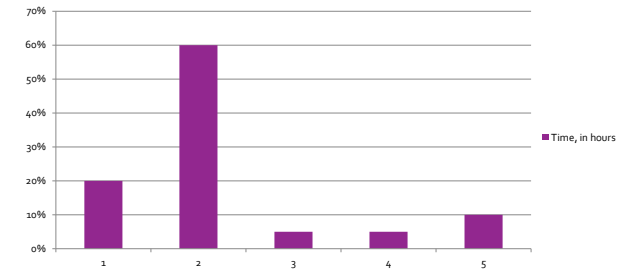


Chart 1. Frequency of television viewing

## Discussion

Respondents who reported paying more attention to the television generally viewed the importance of friend relationships as more important than those that did not. Ruben's study (2021) elaborates on this, as the more frequent use of media communication led to increased nonverbal decoding skills in communication, relating to the strength of communicating with other individuals.

It was expected that the more television shows were consumed, leading to more hours spent watching television, would indicate less time spent meeting with family. Tadrapitkar's (2021) analysis on media consumption and family suggests that this style of communication has been found to strengthen family relations by encouraging bonding through alternative communication means. Participants may feel that viewing a multitude of programs helps mirror a sense of community and unity within the family unit.

These findings may also illustrate media effects (Neuendorf and Jeffres 2017), and aspects of social cognitive theory. As we consume television, we engage in a series of behaviors such as modeling and mirroring. Results indicating a positive correlation between the number of programs consumed and meeting with family can be explained by this theory, as we engage in behaviors "learned" from the tv we consume (Neuendorf and Jeffres 2017).

## Conclusions

Given such disparities between both friend and family interpersonal relationships, in both contact and meeting, this study proves important in assessing such differences. There are several notable differences between the frequency and quantity of television consumed, which still proves significant. It should also be mentioned that communication can differ greatly between friend relationships and family relationships, especially concerning nonverbal cues. There may be certain and specific communication patterns that these entities adopt, and participants may view such relationships as very important but still feel as if maintaining such relationships does not require contacting or communication with friends and family as often, and vice versa.

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