

Television plug-in drug



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“ The TV Plug-In Drug” The topic that interests me the most is television addiction in the society, particularly amongst the youth. The presence of the television has maintained such a stronghold in the society over the years that many people cannot even imagine spending their time without watching the television. The first time I actually thought about this situation was when I read Marie Winn’s essay on “ Television, The Plug-In Drug," Children and Family (1977, revised 2002, 257 - 266). Marie Winn threw light on a topic as important as this, which has become so common and a way of life for us that we seldom think about its real repercussions on us. Ms. Winn emphasized the points in her essay through emotional appeal on some of the aspects such as deteriorating family relationships since even during meal times the television is switched on. Ms. Winn stated that parents have settled for the convenient lifestyle provided by the television, it gives the children company throughout and therefore also acts as a babysitter. What I found lacking in Ms. Winn’s work was significant empirical evidence that would substantiate her work. Mostly she has used an emotional appeal to sway the readers off the importance of evidence that would justify her stance. Therefore, in order to get a clearer picture of the issue I looked for some empirical evidence on the topic which I researched the topic “ Research on Television Addiction” on EBSCO host and found in the article “ Measuring Television Addiction” by Cary W. Horvath. The article was published in the Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, which I believe is a very authentic source of information, moreover the author Ms. Horvath is Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication and Theater at Youngstown State University, which for me adds a lot more value to the credibility of the research. Ms. Horvath focused her study towards finding the correlation between heavy viewing, problem

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viewing, craving for viewing and withdrawal. She used very reliable and consistent research instruments for her research, the results of which indicated that heavy television was strongly correlated with television addiction in the same way that people get addicted to alcohol. Moreover, it was found that television addiction was highly correlated with the level of television exposure and that there existed no significant relationship between a particular age or education and television addiction; however men rated significantly higher than women on the addiction index (Horvath 2004, 378-398). To get another perspective on the topic I searched for the terms Television Addiction and looked for the PDF files, because usually the published work is easy to spot that way. In that search I found the article “Television Addiction is no Mere Metaphor” by Robert Kubey and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi. To check for the credibility of the document I searched the profiles of the authors and both of them turned out to be media studies professors at highly reputable universities. To add to this was the fact that this article was cited as a primary source of reference in many of the works on this topic that I read through. The article reported that on an average a person watched 3 hours of television per day, which is a lot by many standards. In my personal opinion, I feel that this article was published in 2002 and the per day television viewing today would be more than it was in 2002. This article revealed some very interesting psychological findings about television addicts. For example television addicts feel that television is very relaxing, and that they are able to forget the day’s stress when they sit in front of the television and so forth (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi 2002, 1-5). This makes one wonder about the impact and social presence of the machine. The links between the feelings of television addicts and non-

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addicts have been made very clear and to quite an extent the reader would agree with the content of the article. Consequently, I felt that I diversified my sources of information after analyzing the data that I had, this way I have cited one source that highlights the central issue by using emotional appeal, the other article that uses empirical evidence to substantiate the hypothesis and a third source that delivers a psychological perspective of the topic.

Works Cited Horvath, Cary W. " Measuring Television Addiction." *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* (2004): 378-398. Kubey, Robert: Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. " Television Addiction Is No Mere Metaphor." *Scientific American, Inc.* (2002): 1-5. Winn, Marie. " Television: The Plug-In Drug." *The Blaire Reader*. Eds. Laurie G. Kirsznner and Stephen R. Mandell. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2002. 257- 266.