The Impact of Co-Viewing on Attachment Between Parents and Children

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ABSTRACT: Watching (screen viewing) has become a common activity carried out in early childhood. Generally, children aged 2-5 years do watching activities for about 3 hours more a day. This study aims to see how watching activities together can increase attachment between parents and children. This study uses a qualitative approach that produces descriptive data in the form of written words or messages from people and observed behavior and uses observation, interview, or document review methods. Observations were made on co-viewing activities carried out by a child and his parents at home because this activity was found to have an impact on the attachment relationship between the two parties. The selected respondent is one of the parents of a 3-year-old child (G) (Mrs. B). Data collection was carried out at the residence of Mrs. B and G for several weeks. The data collection techniques used were interviews and observations. The results show that watching activities together has a positive impact on the attachment between parents and early childhood. This can be seen from the characteristics of the safe attachment that children have after watching the activities together, after previously the attachment they had characterized as an avoidant attachment. It can also be seen how parents have a big role in the formation of this secure attachment.

Keywords: secure attachment, co-viewing watching activities, parent-children interaction

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1 INTRODUCTION

Watching (screen viewing) has become a common activity carried out in the early childhood (Elias & Sulkin, 2017). Generally, children aged 2-5 years do watch activities for about 3 hours more a day (Vaala & Hornik, 2014). Information and communication technology (ICT) and its applications have changed human habits in carrying out any activity, including watching and consuming audio-visual media (Pires de Sá, 2015). Although television is still popular among young children (Elias & Sulkin, 2017), the results of a survey conducted in the United States stated that television is no longer the main choice for young children to watch because it is defeated by various online viewing platforms such as Netflix and YouTube.

Watching videos online (online viewing) is one of the internet activities that children do at an early age (Holloway et al., 2013). In Indonesia itself, survey results state that most children in Indonesia spend time watching YouTube while using devices every day. Several studies conducted in Europe and the United States (Elias & Sulkin, 2017), as well as Indonesia (Iskandar & Nadhifa, 2021), found that YouTube has become the number one popular application among children for watching videos online. Parents' attitudes towards the media have an important role in shaping children's habits of watching videos online (Elias & Sulkin, 2017) and various challenges faced by parents in parenting early childhood (tantrums, etc.) make the use of sailing media (screen media) a problem. The common practice in parenting (Hiniker et al., 2016; Kabali et al., 2015), includes watching videos online.

Most parents watch with their children, whether it's always or often, either television or other video media (Zimmerman et al., 2007). One of the reasons behind watching with children is because co-viewing activities can provide a social context in children's use of sailing media and provide opportunities for scaffolding (helping or encouraging) children in their learning process through media sailing (Sims & Colunga, 2013). The activity of watching together is often identified with television, but technological developments have made a shift in the meaning of co-viewing itself. Initially, the term "co-viewing" was limited to referring to the activities of watching television together carried out by children and their parents or caregivers (Pires de Sá, 2015). Now, "co-viewing" can be interpreted as the activity of watching together with anyone using any media or content (online videos, video games, etc.).

The early years of human life, namely early childhood, are important periods that determine the next stages of growth and development, including in terms of forming attachment patterns, because, during this golden period, humans are still at the stage of having a sense of trust. and distrust of the surrounding environment (Arianda et al., 2022). Attachment is a strong emotional bond that is developed by children through interactions with people who have a special meaning in their lives, in this case usually parents (Dearing et al., 2004). For children, attachment is usually selective, with the mother figure usually being the main figure that targets their attachment, but some children add their father, brother, or other caregivers as attachment figures (Arianda et al., 2022). It is

important for children to have a secure attachment and to be able to trust the responses of parents because this can support self-confidence and the ability to resolve conflicts and interact positively with the child's social environment (Papalia et al., 2007).

Parents who are actively involved with children, such as doing joint activities, will increase the attachment relationship between parents and children (Rachmat, 2019). The activity of watching videos with children at home can have a positive effect on the quantity of interaction between parents and children (Pempek et al., 2011). In fact, with certain shows, these interactions are said to increase in quantity and quality after the joint viewing activities are carried out. There are not many studies that discuss the joint viewing activities carried out by parents and children, so far there has not even been found that highlights its relationship to the attachment between parents and children. This article will look at whether watching activities together can increase the attachment between parents and children.

YouTube as a digital mass media is like television because both are broadcast media for video content and have viewers with almost the same viewing motives, to seek entertainment and information, in other words, interact socially, and watch together (in the case of this is understood as sharing viewing activities by watching and discussing content together) (Haridakis & Hanson, 2009). There is not as much research on watching online videos together by parents and children as there are studies on watching television together. Due to the similarity between YouTube and television as broadcast media for video content, this paper will refer a lot to studies related to television co-viewing conducted by parents and children. To fill this problem gap, this study aims to see how joint viewing activities can increase attachment between parents and children.

2 THEORETICAL STUDY

2.1 *Secure Attachment*

Attachment or attachment is interpreted as the behavior of someone who tends to want to seek closeness with other individuals and seek satisfaction in a relationship with that individual. Attachment is a relationship that is supported by warm and responsive attachment behavior. One aspect of parent-child interaction is the responsiveness of parents to children's needs (Kirkorian et al., 2009). Attachment refers to aspects of the relationship between parents and children, in which parents give children a feeling of safety, security, and protection, and provide confidence to explore their world.

Based on experiments conducted by Ainsworth, it was found that there are four variations of attachment, namely securely attached, insecurely attached avoidant, insecurely attached resistant, and disorganized/disoriented attached. (Toth & Cicchetti, 2013). Based on these findings, these four attachment variations are further classified into two groups, secure attachments and insecure attachments. Secure attachment is the ideal type of attachment because secure attachment is formed from interactions between parents and children, where children have a sense of trust in parents as figures who are

ready to accompany children and are sensitive and responsive (Bowlby, 1969). Ainsworth also argues that children who have secure attachments have very good quality relationship patterns with their parents (Belsky & Nezworski, 1988).

A child can be said to be attached to someone if he has a physical attachment to that person, becomes anxious when parting with the attached figure, becomes happy and relieved when the attached figure returns, and remains oriented to the attached figure even though he does not interact (child pays attention to movements, listens to sounds, and as much as possible trying to get the attention of the attached figure). The factors that determine the secure attachment between parents and children involve the existence of trust between parents and children, communication between parents and children, and the presence of parental figures in the child's daily life, in the context of parents playing a role in educating and nurturing and spend quality time for children. Sense of security includes the frequency of children's participation in the family, the quality of care, and the involvement of children (Tamis-LeMonda & Rodriguez, 2015). Active participation of children in the family will make children often interact with other family members, including of course parents.

Secure attachment is also closely related to parenting because attachment is also formed from how parents care for children at home. Parents who provide habituation or learning that have a positive impact have unknowingly formed a secure attachment relationship with their children. In other words, parents who are successful in forming secure attachments are those who apply parenting styles that have a positive impact on children's behavior. Parenting consists of several types, namely authoritarian (limiting and punishing), permissive (lacking care, not paying attention, and letting children do whatever), and democratic (cooperative and encouraging independence, but still setting limits). The democratic type is considered the ideal parenting style because even though it still provides boundaries, parents are still open and warm to create comfort for children, which is in line with the characteristics of secure attachment.

2.2 Parents - Children Interaction when Watching Together

The interaction between parents and children in the presence of television can be classified as co-viewing (watching together) or mediation (parents provide input to confirm the message conveyed by the content/show so that children can understand it) (Pempek et al., 2011). Not much research has discussed the essence of the interaction between parents and children while watching together, but it is indicated that parents often take advantage of watching activities together so they can be involved in activities that can develop children's cognitive abilities (Barr et al., 2008; Lemish & Rice, 1986). Therefore, watching activities together is said to affect children's ability to process information and messages from the shows they watch (Keene et al., 2019). From research conducted by (Lemish & Rice, 1986), it was found that in viewing activities together, both parents and children actively participated through labeling, asking questions, and discussing content. In essence, existing research related to the interaction of parents and children indicates that parental involvement and positive attitudes (responsive,

stimulating, etc.) in watching activities together can support children's development (Pempek et al., 2011).

From a few previous studies summarized by Skaug et al., (2018), watching, in this case, television, is considered an active and passive activity for children. Watching activities are seen as passive activities for children because when watching, children's attention is only focused on these shows, so children tend to be passive, including when done with parents because it is believed to reduce the quality of interaction between parents and children (Pempek et al., 2011). On the other hand, watching activities can also make children active if the content or shows being watched are engaging and easy to understand for children. Children's active involvement in watching can also be seen when children watch with their parents, especially when parents are actively involved and help children understand the content being watched with comments and explanations. This kind of active involvement can improve the quality of the interaction (Lemish & Rice, 1986). It can be concluded that watching activities together can be positive if active involvement comes from both parents and children.

Watching together is said to affect the quality of the relationship and interaction between parents and children if you look at the duration or frequency of viewing (Skaug et al., 2018). From the research conducted, it was found that watching television too often makes children tend to be less involved in play activities or interactions outside of watching activities with their parents. This is because too much duration or frequency of viewing can replace the time that could be spent fully interacting (without interruption or the presence of other things) or other activities (Pempek et al., 2011, 2014; Vandewater et al., 2006) with other people. old. However, it is suspected that mediation, active involvement, or scaffolding by parents when watching together can prevent these activities from having negative impacts (Skaug et al., 2018).

There are several types of interaction in viewing activities together, including (1) not interacting or paying less attention and failing to respond to children, (2) watching or only watching for a few seconds without interacting, (3) passively involved or disinterested or sharing attention with children and other activities, and (4) actively involved or focused on children and doing activities with children or following/continuing what children are doing (Kirkorian et al., 2009). Although research discusses how television viewing activities affect parent-child interactions, very little has looked at how these activities affect children's interactions and behavior toward parents.

3 METHOD

The author uses a qualitative approach that produces descriptive data in the form of written words or messages from people and observed behavior and uses observation, interview, or document review methods (Moleong & Surjaman, 1989). The data collected is in the form of words and actions obtained from interviews, field notes, and personal documentation. Observations were made on co-viewing activities carried out by a child and his parents at home because this activity was found to have an impact on the

attachment relationship between the two parties. Therefore, the writer wants to see how watching activities together can increase the attachment between parents and children.

The selected respondent is one of the parents of a 3-year-old child (G) (Mrs. B). Data collection was carried out at the residence of Mrs. B and G for several weeks. The data collection techniques used were interviews and observations. The interview was conducted in a structured manner, namely according to the scenario that had been made by providing several questions that underlined several important aspects related to secure attachment, namely trust, communication, and alienation. Observation/observation is carried out directly on the phenomenon, process, or thing to be studied and non-participants, namely only observing and not being directly involved.

4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 *Parents' Perceptions of Secure Attachment*

Attachment is a relationship between parents, especially mothers, and children who are nurtured, are reciprocal, durable, and create a sense of security even though the attached figure is not visible in the child's view. From several studies, it was found that all children have an attachment to their mothers in the first year of life. However, the quality of attachment differs, depending on the mother's response to the child's needs. The development of this attachment is greatly influenced by the sensitivity of the mother or primary caregiver in responding to the signals given by the baby: whether as soon as possible or delaying, whether the response given is appropriate or not. Safe attachment has a positive impact on children which not only impacts independence but also on children's emotional development, the formation of empathy, conscience, prosocial behavior, children's self-confidence, cognitive development, and children's creative development.

In the interview, Mrs. B stated that she had never heard of the term secure attachment or even the attachment itself, but she understood the meaning of attachment between parents and children. Mrs. B agrees that attachment between parents and children is important, especially for children's development and the formation of children's character, therefore she and her husband continue to strive for a good attachment relationship between them and G. Especially since Mrs. B and her husband each work as civil servants and private employees from Monday to Friday, leaving early in the morning and returning late at night. For this reason, as parents, Mrs. B and her husband always make sure that even though they don't spend much time a day physically close to G, communication must remain close and good. Parents' Perceptions of secure attachment.

4.2 *Attachment of parents and children*

According to Belsky and Nezworski (1988), the attachment relationship develops through the baby's experience with caregivers in the early years of life. The point is the sensitivity of the mother in responding to the signals given by the baby, namely whether

as soon as possible or delaying and whether the response given is appropriate or not. Three things become aspects of secure attachment, namely trust (parents give trust, understand needs, respect choices and decisions, and involve children in resolving conflicts), communication (creating good communication between parents and children, children are open and honest about the problems experienced), and isolation (children are always accepted, loved, valued, and do not feel rejected by their parents) (Santrock, 2009).

Mrs. B said that all this time she felt that G's needs had been sufficiently met by her and her husband. Mother B and her husband often respond to G's various requests, including asking for certain toys or entertainment (smartphones or watching children's videos on YouTube). In terms of communication, even when they are not together or working in the office, Mrs. B and her husband get used to communicating every day with G via video call (operated by grandmother) taking turns during lunchtime or on breaks from work from their respective offices. Every time he comes home from work, G is always asked to talk about his activities and feelings that day. In terms of the trust, apart from being responsive to understanding G's needs, Mrs. B and her husband also always try to give trust G to build independence and self-confidence. G is always allowed to choose his clothes, toys, or shows, try new things, meet new people, and find solutions to problems he is facing (for example difficulty operating toys/smartphones, etc.). From Mrs. B's explanation, what was done by the parents was enough to fulfill the aspects of secure attachment.

However, Mrs. B said that there had been a change in the quality of attachment between her and her husband and G. Since turning 3 years old during the last pandemic, G was given a smartphone to use independently to play games, watch children's videos on YouTube, and make video calls with family. The smartphone that was given was the smartphone of Mrs. B's ex-husband which was previously always lent to G (after being given to G, Mrs. V's husband used another smartphone). So far, its use has been under the supervision of parents, grandmothers, biological aunts, and caregivers, but G.

After being given a smartphone, G's attention is said to be more focused on the smartphone. G becomes indifferent to anyone or anything, especially when he's engrossed in his smartphone. Even when his parents call or video call him, G tends to show an attitude of wanting to end the conversation quickly and is not cheerful when talking. When asked to speak directly, G was found to often avoid it and seemed lazy to answer. G was also said to be a person who was not as friendly and warm as before, even to his parents. Apart from that, G often had tantrums and denied or refused orders or requests from his parents and those who cared for him. There are similarities between G's behavior and the characteristics of individuals who have this type of avoidant attachment, which is always less interested, wanting to avoid, and rejecting the presence of parents (Crain, 2011; Santrock, 2009). Children with avoidant attachment also usually show hostility and are unable to express negative emotions (Crain, 2011). According to Mrs. B, before she was given a smartphone to use independently, G did not act negatively like that but was

always cheerful, warm, and close to her parents and other people she knew. G also previously wasn't a difficult child to manage or tell. It can be said that G, who previously had a secure attachment to his parents, became an avoidant.

Several factors can influence the occurrence of attachment between parents and children, namely (a) the child's satisfaction with the attached figure (because the attached figure is always able to meet the child's needs), (b) there is a reaction or response to the child's behavior in seeking the figure's attention attached (the attached figure responds to the child's efforts to seek attention), and (c) often meets the child (the attached figure spends a lot of time with the child to communicate with each other). According to Mrs. B, since G was given her smartphone, both G, Mrs. B, and her husband seem more individualistic, especially since each of them already has their device. Even when they are together, the three of them are often busy with their respective smartphones.

When G still depended on his father to play games and access YouTube, G often ended up spending time with his father, Mother B, or even both because the smartphone was still operated by his parents. This makes parents inevitably become involved in choosing games or videos, then they also play/watch the games being played or watch the videos that G witnessed. However, because they already have their smartphone, this interaction no longer occurs, and Mrs. B admits that she and her husband seemed to be more indifferent to G. This was seen on several occasions, such as when G asked for something, sought attention, or told his parents about what he was playing, found, or watched on his smartphone, his parents only responded with makeshift or cursory because they are busy with their respective smartphones. This shows that there is dissatisfaction with children because parents are less responsive and less sensitive. Plus, the three don't have much time to meet and be physically close because of both parents' work. It can be concluded that attachment is not established in this situation.

4.3 *Parenting style*

Both Ibu B and her husband are connoisseurs of online content, including video content on YouTube, which is accessed almost every day for information or entertainment. Some of the content that Ibu B and her husband usually look for (for private viewing) include news, sports, as well as tutorials and reviews on health, beauty, and cooking/food. According to Elias and Sulkin (2017) parents who often watch online content tend to have a more positive attitude and think about the contribution of media to children's development. Parents who enjoy online content are also said to have a tendency not to limit their children's consumption of online content, especially in terms of frequency or duration of viewing and selection of content.

In addition to practical thoughts, namely, so that G doesn't go back and forth to borrow and whine asking for a smartphone to play games and watch children's videos on YouTube, G gave a smartphone to use independently because Mother B and her husband wanted G to be able to learn many things with a smartphone. and the online content he consumes under their watch. Mrs. B said that all this time what G accessed from the

smartphone was always monitored. However, from the author's point of view, if G is not near parents or other caregivers, G has the freedom to choose any content that is visually appealing to his eyes so that G is also not so restricted in terms of choosing content and prone to being exposed to inappropriate content. his age. Apart from that, Mrs. B also feels that the presence of a smartphone is very helpful in calming and keeping G busy in certain situations (when parents are working from home, having to take care of themselves without help, etc.). This is also in line with the findings of Elias and Sulkin (2017) namely parents who often watch online content tend to use similar content for their childcare needs (digital pacifier).

Based on the explanation from Mrs. B, it can be concluded that the parenting style of G's parents is classified as democratic because, in addition to still giving children the freedom to choose content or time to watch, they are still trying to supervise and provide certain restrictions related to smartphone use by G. However, because of the condition of Mrs. B and her husband working together, they were rarely together with G and therefore could not strictly supervise and restrict, the supervision and restrictions that were attempted by Mrs. B and her husband were not very effective.

4.4 *Parent-Child Attachment When Watching Together*

The change in behavior and attitude that occurred with G prompted Mrs. B and her husband to take the initiative to change their smartphone usage habits by including activities that could be carried out together in their use. Before G was entrusted with using and operating a smartphone independently, smartphone use was always carried out with parents, under parental supervision, and operated by parents because the smartphone used still belonged to and was always held by the father. Usually, smartphones are used as they are today, to play games and watch children's videos on YouTube. Therefore, Mrs. B and her husband took the initiative to routinely watch children's videos together on YouTube, as was often done before G was given her smartphone. The activity of watching videos with children at home is indeed considered to have a positive influence on the quantity of interaction between parents and children (Pempek et al., 2011).

Watching activities are carried out regularly, carried out every day of the month with a frequency of watching at least three children's videos a day and a maximum total duration of 20 minutes a day. The viewing activity was carried out using a smartphone that was given to G, with the intention that in the future G would be more willing to interact when using the smartphone. G is given the freedom to determine the time to watch (as long as it's not while eating or going to bed) and the content to watch. According to Mrs. B, the interaction that usually occurs when watching is mediation, in which Mrs. B and/or her husband verbally comment and provides scaffolding in the form of inducements or questions to support G's understanding and involvement in watching activities, as well as active involvement such as singing or dancing together. In between shows, G is always invited to discuss the content being watched.

At the beginning of implementing this group viewing activity, G showed an expression of disinterest and disinterest, but after about a week, G began to show interest and openness. If previously G only answered soberly when asked or invited to discuss, over time G became more willing to be spoken to and answered in longer sentences (more willing to elaborate). G also tended to only last about five minutes (at least one video) at first sitting and watching with his parents, before then leaving or even taking his smartphone and leaving his parents. But the more time G spent with his parents watching videos together, the more G showed a willingness to spend time together. Even after almost a month of watching together, G often asks his parents to watch videos of their children with him (previously G was always invited to watch together, or his parents took the initiative to approach G when he was busy watching alone). When asked if G likes watching movies with his parents, he answered briefly, "likes," while nodding and smiling. While watching, G, who is usually invited by his parents to be actively involved, took the longest to take the initiative to invite his parents to sing along, clap their hands, or move together.

From the observations made, changes in G's attitude and behavior after routinely watching together are not only seen in his attitude and behavior towards his parents but. A few weeks after the routine viewing activities were held, G became warm and cheerful again when he met people he knew. This can be seen from his attitude which becomes more willing to greet and answer in a friendly manner when asked by other people. Even though sometimes he is still indifferent when he is playing with a smartphone, G tends to be more willing to respond if his activities with his smartphone are interrupted. G also becomes more informable and obeys orders. Then, because he is used to watching videos on YouTube with his parents, G often approaches other family members or caregivers to watch with him when his parents are not around. Even when watching with other people, G seems willing to actively interact, such as inviting him to sing or moving along, or retelling and commenting on what he saw in the video. This shows that after regularly watching together, G has the characteristics of a secure attachment.

5 CONCLUSION

From the observations that have been made, it can be concluded that watching activities together has a positive impact on the attachment between parents and early childhood. This can be seen from the characteristics of the safe attachment that children have after watching the activities together, after previously the attachment they had characterized as an avoidant attachment. Based on observations, it was also found that the activity of watching together, or co-viewing will indeed have a positive impact on the attachment of parents and children if it is carried out through interaction or mediation so that the activity is not passive because it is just watching something together. This is because, in the formation of secure attachment, the interaction between parents and children is very important.

In addition, parents also need to pay attention to the duration and frequency of watching children because children who watch too often will get used to being passive, considering

that the time spent watching can be used for other activities that are more interactive or hone their social skills. Parents are a vital influence in the use of children's devices, especially in terms of duration of use (screen time). Parents should avoid using sailing media as a reward, punishment, or tool to make children calm/good. Allowing the use of sailing media as a reward or limiting the use of sailing media as a punishment for children was found to make the duration of using the media exceed what is recommended for children, which is a maximum of two hours per day.

In terms of content selection, content that has a real story plot is said to be more able to support interaction between parents and children when watching together. In watching activities together, parents were found to be more active in explaining or translating information or messages from shows if shows had story plots and were interesting, rather than when shows were considered boring (Keene, et al., 2019). This is because parents and children are more able to discuss or discuss story plots from the content they watch. Therefore, in choosing content to watch with children, video content with story plots is recommended to be an option so that interaction can be more active.

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