

Television Viewing Profile and Values: Implications for Moral Education

El perfil de consumo televisivo y los valores:
implicaciones para la educación moral

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Abstract: This study analyzed some aspects of the television viewing profile and personal values of a sample of 1,318 people from the Basque Country (Spain). It also studied the relationship between said values and profile. The instruments used were the Values and Television Questionnaire (Val-TV 0.1) and the Television Habit Questionnaire (CH-TV.01). In relation to values, the results revealed that the highest scores were obtained in benevolence, conformity and self-direction. As regards the viewing profile, leisure and entertainment programs were the most popular. The characters chosen by respondents were mainly older, male, fictional characters with no profession. Furthermore, significant differences were found between values and said aspects of the viewing profile. The results found enable the relationships between values and television preferences to be viewed as an educational resource for moral education.

Key words: values, television characters, television programs, viewing profile, moral education.

Resumen: El trabajo analizó en una muestra de 1318 personas del País Vasco (España) algunos aspectos del perfil de su consumo televisivo y sus valores personales. Igualmente se estudió la relación entre los valores y dicho perfil. Los instrumentos utilizados fueron la Escala de Dominios de Valores Televisivos (Val-TV 0.1) y el Cuestionario de Hábitos Televisivos (CH-TV.01). En los resultados, respecto a los valores, se halló que las puntuaciones más altas se obtuvieron en benevolencia, conformidad y autodirección. En cuanto al perfil de consumo destacaron los programas lúdicos y de diversión. Los personajes elegidos por la muestra fueron mayoritariamente masculinos, correspondieron a la edad madura, fueron personajes de ficción y no tenían ninguna profesión. Asimismo, se encontraron diferencias significativas entre los valores y dichos aspectos del perfil de consumo. Los resultados hallados nos permiten plantear las relaciones entre los valores y las preferencias televisivas como un recurso educativo para la educación moral.

Palabras clave: valores, personajes televisivos, programas de televisión, perfil de consumo, educación moral.

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INTRODUCTION

Our study was based on three theoretical pillars that underlie all our research activities: a) the relationship between television and values; b) the socializing function of television; and c) Schwartz's model for analyzing values.

The relationship between television and values

Today, the question of whether television influences the formation of values or whether the media itself reflects the values of society may prove somewhat paradoxical. Materialistic and pro-social values both exist in society and are transmitted through television. On many occasions, the media transmits values that contradict those pursued by the educational curriculum. However, the immense power and attraction of television should be acknowledged, and its key role in the development and acquisition of values should be recognized (Carr, 2006; Medrano, 2006; Witenberg, 2007). Some authors have stated that television is now our most important narrative reference and, in some cases, the centre of our lives. Nevertheless, a review of existing literature on the impact of television on the formation of values shows that research is scarce and there are several major gaps in our knowledge. In addition to entertaining and amusing, television should also educate. What happens nowadays, however, is that it does so in two different directions. We know that television transmits as many materialistic as pro-social values and we believe that this ambiguity is harmful from the point of view of moral education (Aierbe & Medrano, 2008; Castells, 2009; Madariaga & Goñi, 2009; Medrano & Aierbe, 2008; Medrano & Cortés, 2007; Medrano, Aierbe & Palacios, 2008).

Diverse research projects in the United States (Tan, Nelson, Dong & Tan, 1997) have analyzed this fact, showing that television conveys the conventional values of the American middle class: behaving honorably, striving to ensure a job well done, a sense of duty, etc. Also, Muir (1993) analyzed the content of the values conveyed in a series with very high ratings: «Captain Planet and the Planetegers», finding both positive values and negative ones, or countervalues. In addition to affirming that the mass media reflect society's predominant values, Wakfield, Flay, Nichter and Giovino (2003) also show that it is possible for television to both reinforce and encourage the giving up of harmful habits. In other words, television can also be used in a positive sense to foster healthy habits and stimulate prosocial values (Gunter, 1984).

Similarly, Carr (2006) descriptively analyzes some characters appearing in films and confirms his thesis that the electronic media, such as television and cinema, are relevant factors in the construction of morality. In fact,

the viewing of films is a possible strategy for moral education. In a research project which analyzes the influence of television on the moral development of a specific generation (18-24 year olds), Lee (2007) shows that television contents do indeed influence the development of values.

Along the same lines, Morgan (2007) suggests that television may affect not only values, but young people's behavior as well, in relation to what they buy, how they dress and act, how they define their identity and how they come to an understanding of their place in the world.

In short, in light of the findings of previous studies, we base our work on the basic hypothesis that television contents constitute a channel of learning through the narratives they present. And it is possible to teach and learn values through said narratives.

The socializing function of television

Television plays a key role in socialization, not only in the acquisition of information, but also through the adoption of behavioral models transmitted through the characters appearing in different programs. In this sense, Steenland (1990) found that primetime programs transmit the idea that image is more important than intelligence, and that female characters are more passive and less individualized than their male counterparts. The author concludes that adolescents identify with the values conveyed by these programs. In a study of adolescents, Hoffner (1996) also found that when both girls and boys were asked to identify with their favorite characters, both tended to do so with characters of their own gender, with the most commonly mentioned attributes being personality traits, intelligence, physical appearance, sense of humor and even way of talking.

When the importance of the physical attractiveness of television models was analyzed in the descriptions and preferences stated by children and adolescents, who were divided into three age groups (8, 14 and 17) and asked to assess 12 pre-selected models of both genders, the results revealed that physical attractiveness was identified as a desirable characteristic for all age groups (Ruiz, Conde & Torres, 2005).

In a study comparing different age groups (children, young people and adults), Harwood (1997) found a greater preference for same-age characters. Young people were happy to watch series or films featuring characters older than themselves, providing they were not immersed in amorous relationships. Similarly, this same study shows that young people prefer to watch young characters on television. As is shown in our study, it is also true that in programs targeted at young people, characters aged between 20 and 59 are overrepresented, while those at the two extreme ends of the lifecycle (children and the elderly) are underrepresented.

Similarly, Persegani, Russo, Carucci, Nicolini, Papeschi and Trimarchi (2002) concluded that children systematically attribute positive behaviors and emotions to those characters they would like to imitate. In relation to advertisements broadcast on television, in a study by Lee, Kim and Han (2006) which analyzed adverts broadcast on primetime television (859 from the United Kingdom and 1,436 from South Korea) in order to identify the differences between these two countries as regards the representation of older people on television, the authors found that in both countries older people were under-represented in relation to the real proportion of said people in the current population. A study by Sudbury and Wilberforce (2006) came to a similar conclusion, with the results revealing that black people are currently under-represented in UK television advertisements.

Saito (2007) also examined the question of whether or not television cultivates relational attitudes based on traditional gender roles and helps maintain the status quo. The study demonstrates that television tends to decelerate social change, because it cultivates traditional outlooks among a high number of viewers, especially women.

From a sociological perspective, television series have been studied in relation to their ability to transmit values. It has been shown that the social values embodied by characters in a fictional television series are occasionally transferred to viewers. In Montero's opinion (2006), some cases do exist in which, by dealing with certain issues, television series have achieved a greater level of social awareness than specific publicity campaigns or real information provided on the issue.

One relevant aspect in the majority of research papers reviewed is the fact that the socialization capacity of media content increases the less direct experience viewers have with the issues they find most attractive.

Schwartz's value analysis model

In order to analyze the implicit and explicit values underlying television contents, the model developed by Schwartz, Sagiv and Boehnke (2000) and Schwartz and Boehnke (2004) is proposed. These authors conceptualize values as cognitive representations rooted in basic biological requirements, the needs of social interaction and the demands made by the various social institutions. However, they are also interpreted as an individual construction of a trans-situational goal (end/instrumental values), in which goals express interests (individual/collective/both) related to a motivational domain (enjoyment, security, achievement, self-direction, conformity, pro-social behavior, social power and maturity), and these interests in turn are assessed within a range of importance/non importance as the individual's principles for action.

Based on this initial approach, the aim is to conduct an intercultural analysis of values, in order to respond to three basic questions: a) how do social experiences affect subjects' value priorities? b) how does the value's priority level affect behavior? c) what trans-cultural differences exist and what are their causes and effects? To this end, aspects such as content, comprehensiveness, equivalence of meaning and value structure must all be taken into consideration.

The structure of Schwartz's values or domains emerges from the trans-cultural application of Schwartz's Value Questionnaire, using the minimum space analysis technique. The structure is divided into two dimensions: openness to change (self-direction, stimulation and hedonism) vs conservatism (tradition, conformity and security); and self-perfectionism (achievement and power) vs self-transcendence (universalism and benevolence).

Schwartz's model can be seen as an integration of Rokeach's model and the more culturalist perspectives which have focused on categorizing values into motivational and/or content domains with the aim of uncovering the structure underlying value systems. In the opinion of these authors, there are universal aspects of human psychology and interaction systems which are found in all cultures and which, at the same time, constitute the universal articulating axes of human value systems.

The structure of the value system proposed by Schwartz (1994) is shown in the diagram below.

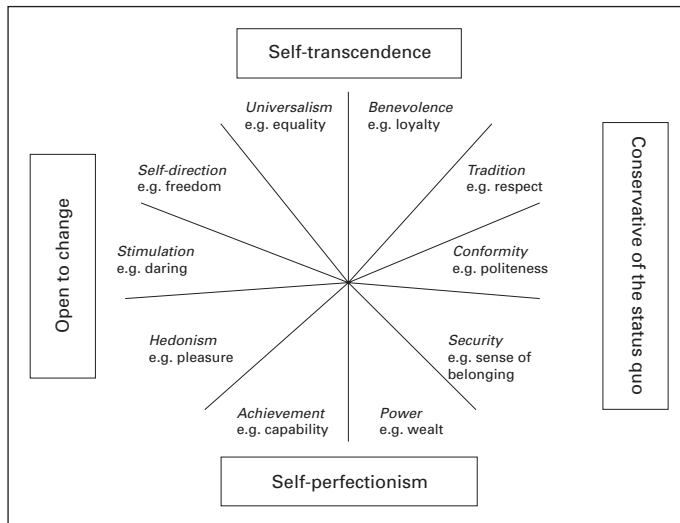


Figure 1. «Circumferential» model of values

In our opinion, this model has the enormous advantage of not only offering a solid classification from the theoretical-conceptual perspective, but also of possessing a firm statistical-experimental base which may be of great help in analyzing values in television narratives from a quantitative point of view.

The value structure proposed by this author offers a means of interpreting the behaviors viewed in television narratives in terms of values. It is not, however, in the strict sense, a theory, but rather a categorical scheme which may facilitate experimental empirical work. In accordance with the above, Schwartz's model also proposes a framework of reference for working with teachers on the values they wish to develop in their students, and the discrepancy which exists between them and the values conveyed in television narratives. Explicit reflection on and valuing of this discrepancy may help foster the construction of those values considered desirable from an educational perspective. In other words, it is not enough to use dialogue only in relation to audiovisual texts; rather, it is necessary for teachers and adults to incorporate it also into other development contexts in order to guarantee a certain degree of coherence in the educational process (Medrano, 2008).

Also, this model enables us to specify the values, both those perceived in television contents and those held personally by the subjects studied. We believe that the explicit specification of values is a very important aspect in their teaching and learning, given that it helps students to translate the implicit messages conveyed, share them with others and develop a critical attitude.

Based on this framework of reference, and in the context of a wider research project, an instrument based on Schwartz's categories has been developed to analyze the values transmitted by those programs most popular among adolescents (chosen by the adolescents themselves), relating them to those values cited by respondents as being important in their lives.

Based on these data, and during a subsequent phase, the aim is to establish a series of general intervention guidelines for working with television texts, targeted parents and teachers acting as mediators in the reconstruction of values.

Objectives

The principal objective of this study was to identify the values and some aspects of the television viewing profiles of a sample of 1318 people. Also, the study aimed to analyze the relationship between the values and said profile. In order to achieve this general objective, the following specific objectives were established:

1. To identify the values held by the study sample.
2. To explore the reasons for their television preferences.
3. To describe the characters of their favorite programs.
4. To identify the motives and/or reasons for their choice of favorite character.
5. To describe the characteristics of the selected characters in accordance with gender, nature, age and profession.
6. To relate the values held (objective 1) with the rest of the variables analyzed (objectives 2 to 5).

METHOD

Design

The research design was quantitative/qualitative, given that it encompassed both paradigms. The approach was established in accordance with the characteristics of a basic correctional design, since the variables were not manipulated. The SPSS statistical package was used for the quantitative analyses and emerging analysis categories were developed for qualitative analyses. The purpose of our study was to describe and relate some indicators of viewing profiles with the values held by respondents.

Respondents

The sample group comprised a total of 1318 people, of which 73.5% (969) were adolescents, 12.0% (158) young people and 14.5% (191) adults/parents. The adolescents were Secondary School students from nine centers in the Basque Country (Spain), aged between 13 and 15. The adolescents were selected by means of a random two-stage cluster sampling process, with a confidence level of 0.95 and a sampling error of 0.02. Initially, the schools were taken as the only cluster unit, in order to randomly select the schools to be studied (bearing in mind their state/private nature and language model). Subsequently, within the selected schools, the classrooms to be surveyed were randomly selected from all those from years 2 and 3 of the compulsory secondary education cycle. The young people were university students aged between 19 and 30; in this case, the sample group was selected on the basis of convenience. Finally, the parents (adult) group was aged between 30 and 55, and was selected using the snowball technique, i.e. the subjects were contacted through their adolescent children.

Measures

The study used two measures which were presented in a single booklet. The first part contained items related to television viewing profiles and the reasons given for choosing certain programs and favorite characters, identified using the Television Habit Questionnaire (CH-TV.01), created and validated by the authors (Medrano, Cortés & Palacios, 2007), with a high internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.93). The questionnaire contains 30 items, 24 of which are closed yes/no answer questions while the remaining 6 are more open-ended. The six open-ended items cover aspects related to: programs that respondents like best and their reasons for this, the programs they watch the most and the extent to which they identify with the characters in the program they like best/least. For the purposes of this study, the responses to item 20 (why do you like these programs?), item 24a (which character do you like best?) and 24b (why did you choose this character?) were categorized.

In the second part of the booklet respondents were administered the Values and Television Questionnaire (Val-TV 0.1) in order to identify their values. This instrument is an adaptation of the original Value Scale created by Schwartz (SVS). The scores for values are obtained from the responses to the ten items in each subscale related to the values of self-direction, stimulation, hedonism, achievement, power, security, conformity, tradition, benevolence and universalism. Said scores are obtained on a five point Lickert scale on which respondents indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with each item. This scale has been statistically validated by means of a multidimensional analysis and enables us to state that structurally, it is an almost exact replica of the original model. Although the index obtained is not very high (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.615), the correlation between value domains is moderate. In other words, we have items that measure different things.

Procedure

The administration of the questionnaire and value scale lasted approximately 60 minutes. In the case of the adolescent group, data was collected by the researchers in collaboration with a teacher from the school. During the course of the application, which was carried out in the presence of the researchers and teacher, each adolescent was given a closed envelope containing two questionnaires, one for their father and another for their mother, and a letter explaining the objectives of the research project. The data from the young people's group (university students) were collected over the Internet by means of on-line forms.

The SPSS program was used for the quantitative analyses and diverse statistical analyses were also conducted. As regards the qualitative analyses of the open-ended questions, three phases were used to categorize the corresponding responses. In the *first phase* the responses were transcribed. In the *second phase* the analysis categories emerging from the text were established. The categories were then refined in accordance with two criteria: the experimentation criterion and the theoretical criterion. The categories were then defined *a posteriori* in a qualitative manner. During the initial selection for item 20: *Why do you like these programs?*, 13 categories were established and defined. Said categories were: action, entertainment, amusement-humor, information-current affairs, education, actors/presenters/characters, contents, time shown, topic of conversation, family consensus, no choice, real (identification) and others. Similarly, for item 24a: *Which character do you like best in the programs you watch most?* and item 24b: *Why?*, 14 categories were established and defined *a posteriori*, thus enabling us to establish the television genre to which each chosen character belongs: series (detective, historical, comedies, trade, professions), sport, cartoons, soap operas, news programs, films, celebrity gossip, talk shows, night shows, reality shows, game shows, cultural programs, humor and others. Furthermore, the responses were also grouped according to the following aspects: the gender of the chosen characters (men, women); their evolutionary stage (i.e. childhood, adolescence, adulthood and/or old age); their fictional or real nature and, finally, whether or not they have a profession. In other words, in addition to the television genre to which they belong, four other characteristics of the chosen character were also established, which provide relevant qualitative information about the characteristics of said choice. In order to systematize and categorize the responses to item 24b, i.e. the reason for the respondent's choice, given the wide variety of responses given, 21 categories were defined and established: amusement, boredom, positive physical qualities, negative physical qualities, social skills, clumsiness, being conventional, being unconventional, professionalism, lack of professionalism, intelligence, lack of intelligence, positive personality, negative personality, undefined personality, prestige, lack of prestige, personal identification, lack of personal identification, cultural identity and lack of cultural identity. All categories were checked by means of a collective reading by three judges. The agreement level obtained in accordance with Cohen's Kappa index was 0.7.

In the *third phase* and with the aim of rendering the high number of thematic nuclei extracted statistically manageable, the nuclei were re-categorized. This was done by grouping together those categories with the lowest response percentage in accordance with a theoretical criterion linked to the category content. Thus, in the case of *item 20*, responses in the action (0.4% of responses), consensus (0.1%), no choice (0.3%), real (1.7%), educational (2.1%),

actors/presenters/characters (1.0%), time shown (0.3%) and topic of conversation (0.2%) categories were all grouped together under the *others* category.

In the specific case of characters from television series (*item 24a*), various categories were merged to form two new ones. In specific terms, the subcategories of unspecified series (1.7%), films (1.4%) and historical series (0.3%) were grouped together under the heading *general series and films*; and celebrity gossip shows (0.3%), talk shows (0.1%), night shows (2.1%) and reality shows (0.4%) were grouped together under the heading *celebrity gossip and shows*. In relation to the reasons for liking certain characters, *item 24b*, the categories with the lowest response frequency were regrouped into three new categories, namely: *other negative characteristics* [lack of intelligence (4.1%), negative personality (0.8%), undefined personality (3.3%), clumsiness or lack of social skills (0.7%)], *other positive characteristics* [intelligence (2.9%), prestige (2.3%), social skills (0.3%) being conventional (0.3%)], and *personal identification* [personal identification (2.6%), cultural identity (0.2%) and lack of cultural identity (0.2%)].

RESULTS

In relation to our first objective, i.e. to identify the values held by our study sample, as shown in table 1, the highest scoring values were benevolence, conformity and self-direction, all of which scored over 4 on a scale with a maximum of 5. The lowest scoring value was power, which failed to reach the mean theoretical score on the three point scale. The other values scored between 3 and 4.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics: Value Scale

	N	Mean	SD
Self-direction	1197	4.01	1.053
Stimulation	1194	3.59	1.086
Hedonism	1191	3.93	1.080
Achievement	1193	3.88	1.084
Power	1190	2.76	1.214
Security	1192	3.90	1.065
Conformity	1191	4.04	1.046
Tradition	1192	3.60	1.630
Benevolence	1189	4.14	1.043
Universalism	1191	3.92	1.057

Table 2
Respondents' choices regarding types of programs, chosen characters and reasons for choosing said characters

Type of programs Question 20	Type of programs Question 20		Chosen characters Question 24a		Reasons for choosing a specific television character Question 24b			
	Count	Percentage	Count	Percentage	Reason	Percentage		
Entertainment	228	18.9%	Detective series	43	4.6%	Amusement	391	43.0%
Amusement-humor	268	22.2%	Comedies	276	29.2%	Personal identification	28	3.1%
Information-current affairs	54	4.5%	Series focusing on trades and professions	31	3.3%	Unconventional	26	2.9%
Contents	97	8.0%	Sport	22	2.3%	Professionalism	131	14.4%
Other positive contents	487	40.3%	Cartoons	225	23.8%	Positive personality	89	9.8%
Others	74	6.1%	Soap operas	97	10.3%	Other negative characteristics	84	9.2%
			Game shows	30	3.2%	Other positive characteristics	53	5.8%
			Humor	107	11.3%	Other physical qualities considered to be positive by society	107	11.8%
			Others	25	2.6%			
			General series and films	32	3.4%			
			Celebrity gossip and shows	28	3.0%			
			Cultural and news programs	28	3.0%			
TOTAL	1.208		TOTAL	944		TOTAL	909	

Upon analyzing the results obtained in relation to the second, third and fourth objectives, respondents revealed different approaches and attitudes to television. As shown in Table 2, the most frequent reason or motive for choosing programs (item 20: *Why do you like these programs?*) was because they had *positive contents* (40.3%). In other words, contents related to social and/or cultural issues. Following this reason, although trailing far behind, were reasons of *amusement-humor* (22.2%) and *entertainment* (18.9%). Still further behind came *content* (8.0%), indicating the content of the program itself, and finally, *information-current affairs* (4.5%) and the other programs not included in the aforementioned categories (6.1%).

Respondents mainly liked characters from comedy series (29.2%) and cartoons (23.8%), followed a fair way behind by those from humorous programs (11.3%) and soap operas (10.9%). Being funny was the main reason for choosing a television character (43.0%), with other reasons such as professionalism (14.4%), other physical qualities considered positive by society (11.8%), positive personality (9.8%) and other negative characteristics (9.2%) trailing far behind. Other categories such as having positive characteristics, being easy to identify with or being unconventional had a much lower response frequency (Table 2).

As regards our fifth objective, i.e. to describe the characteristics of the chosen characters in accordance with gender, nature, age and profession, as shown in Table 3, the results were as follows: the characters chosen by respondents were mainly male (82.2%), adult (74.4%), fictional characters (84.4%) who do not have a profession (73.2%).

Table 3

Distribution of respondents' choices according to television character categories

Gender of the character			Nature of the character		
Woman	164	17.8%	Fictional	764	84.4%
Man	757	82.2%	Real	141	15.6%
Total	921			905	
Age of the character			Character's occupation		
Child	56	6.3%	Has a profession	236	26.8%
Adolescent	141	15.9%	Does not have a profession	643	73.2%
Adult	658	74.4%			
Elderly	30	3.4%			

In relation to our final objective, i.e. to identify the relationship between respondents' values and certain aspects of their television viewing profile, Table 4 shows the contrast statistics of the variance analyses carried out between the different television preference categories. Given that age may influence the type of choice of television programs, age group was included as a co-variable.

In principal, no differences were observed in the values held by respondents in accordance with the type of television programs they chose (question 20). However, some differences were found in the achievement ($F = 1,828$, $p = .046$) and benevolence ($F = 1,995$, $p = .026$) values in accordance with the type of character chosen (question 21). Nevertheless, the variance percentages explained were low (partial eta-squared 0.024 in the first case and 0.026 in the second). Pair comparisons (Sidak) revealed, in the first case ($p = .049$), only higher levels of achievement among those who chose game show characters in comparison with those who chose characters from detective series [4,40 (0,764) vs. 3,47 (1,298)]. In the second case ($p = .023$), those who chose soap opera characters showed higher levels of benevolence than those who chose cartoon characters [4,40 (0,764) vs. 3,47 (1,298)].

Furthermore, some statistically significant differences were found in the values of self-direction ($F = 2,351$, $p = .022$) and tradition ($F = 2,4470$, $p = .016$) in relation to the reasons for choosing said characters (ques-

Table 4

Variance analysis according to respondents' choices of television programs

	Type of programs Question 20	Program character Question 24a	Reasons for choosing a television character (Q. 24b)	Gender of the character	Age of the character	Nature of the character	Occupation of the character
	F	F	F	F	F	F	F
Self-direction	0.934	1.440	2.351*	0.096	1.213	0.015	0.111
Stimulation	0.131	1.509	0.725	1.052	2.051	2.251	0.933
Hedonism	1.676	1.249	0.871	3.320	0.310	2.961	0.002
Achievement	1.012	1.828*	1.994	2.983	1.387	4.008*	0.001
Power	1.555	1.533	0.786	4.696*	1.007	2.596	0.453
Security	1.033	1.125	1.418	0.832	0.243	0.584	0.221
Conformity	1.967	1.659	0.988	0.124	1.857	0.022	0.383
Tradition	1.950	0.939	2.470*	0.079	0.272	1.408	1.480
Benevolence	0.275	1.995*	1.912	0.424	0.657	0.316	1.029
Universalism	1.002	1.301	1.464	2.261	1.391	0.153	0.463

* $P < .05$.

tion 24b). As in the previous case, the percentages of variance explained were low, partial eta-squared 0.020 in the first case and 0.021 in the second. Here, the pair comparisons (Sidak) revealed that those who chose characters because of personal identification scored lower on tradition than those who did so because of the character's professionalism [2,85 (0.229) vs. 3,772 (0.105), $p = .008$] or their positive personality [2,85 (0.229) vs. 3,658 (0.124), $p = .048$]. In the case of self-direction, despite the fact that the contrast itself was significant, none of differences found between pairs reached levels of statistical significance.

The choice of male or female characters was associated with differences in the power value ($F = 4,696$, $p = .031$), although once again, the percentage of variance explained was very low, only 0.6%. Respondents who chose male characters scored higher in power than those who chose female ones [2,82 (1,244) vs. 2,58 (1,192)]. The choice of fictional or real characters was associated with differences in the achievement value ($F = 4,008$, $p = .046$), with respondents who chose real characters scoring higher in achievement than those who chose fictional ones [4,11 (0,995) vs. 3,92 (1,086)].

However, the characteristic of the selected character which showed most differences in relation to participants' values was age. Thus, depending on the age group of the favorite television character we found differences in the values of security ($F_{3,788} = 2,780$, $p = .040$, $\eta_p^2 = .010$), conformity ($F_{3,788} = 5,063$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .019$), benevolence ($F_{3,788} = 5,091$, $p = .002$, $\eta_p^2 = .019$) and universalism ($F_{1,823} = 4,269$, $p = .005$, $\eta_p^2 = .016$). The percentages of variance explained by this variable, as in previous cases, were not high, but were nevertheless significant, with partial eta squared values of 0.010 to 0.019. Peer comparisons showed that the greatest differences between groups was found between those who chose adolescent characters, who scored higher in conformity than the other three groups [4,28 (0,89) vs. infancy, 3,85 (1,12), maturity, 3,97 (1,077) and old age 3,93 (0,874)], with differences with maturity being significant ($p < .001$). As regards benevolence, again those who chose adolescent characters scored higher [4,38 (0,948)] than those who chose infant ones [3,92 (1,007), $p = 0.035$] and those who chose more mature ones [4,07 (1,073), $p < 0.001$]. The pattern found for universalism was exactly the same; those who chose adolescent characters scored higher on this scale [4,17 (0,852)] than those who chose infant ones [3,73 (1,122), $p = 0.042$] or those who chose older characters [3,90 (1,052), $p = 0.005$]. Peer comparisons failed to find any statistically significant differences in the case of security.

Finally, no differences were found in the value scores for the last of the variables considered: the nature of the character in relation to whether or not they had a profession.

DISCUSSION

The main objective of this study was to explore some aspects of the television viewing profile and values of a sample of adolescents, young people and adults. Furthermore, the aim also was to analyze the relationship between said value profiles. Taken as a whole, one initial conclusion that can be drawn from the results is the enormous variety which exists in both television preferences and stated values. One possible explanation for this coincides with that mentioned in the introduction of this paper regarding the ambiguity of today's society, in which prosocial and materialist values coexist side by side, and are both transmitted by television (Carr, 2006; Castells, 2009; Morgan, 2007). Nevertheless, within this variety of preferences, certain differences were found in the values manifested by the members of the study group. Thus, in relation to values, a heterogeneous trend was found, and it was discovered that values are not included only in a single domain, in accordance with Schwartz's perspective.

If we look at the dimensions proposed by this author, this result seems to indicate that the sample group studied tends to perceive openness to change through the value of self-direction (independent, active person looking for freedom) and tendency towards conservatism through the value of conformity (moderation, politeness). For its part, benevolence (friendship, ability to forgive, keeping your word) can also be found as a preferred value in the self-transcendence dimension, while self-perfectionism is mainly linked to the achievement or personal success value as opposed to the power value. For those participating in the study, this latter value was positioned last on the scale of values and was linked to a socially-recognized person with authority, wealth and social influence. One question which comes up and which future research may wish to explore in greater detail is: to what extent can a combination of the prominent values be found in a single subject? If the study were to be conducted in another cultural context, would the results be similar? If instead of television we used other media (e.g. reading of written material and subsequent debate), would the results be the same?

In relation to respondents' choices regarding types of programs, chosen characters and the reasons for choosing these characters, participants opted more for those offering entertainment and amusement. It is worth highlighting that the most popular television character profile was one which was fun or amusing. However, other studies have found that preference is given to physical attractiveness (Ruiz, Conde & Torres, 2005). In any case, in our opinion, the data found confirm that the purpose of television is almost always entertainment and amusement, and rarely education. We believe it is important to point out that, as the other previously reviewed studies have also found, in our results characters from television series were the most

popular. This may be because television series constitute the genre that best represents the everyday life and situation of viewers and, in general, viewers feel that their lives and concerns are reflected in said programs.

Another interesting result was that one of the most frequently stated reasons for choosing a program was that it offered positive contents, i.e. contents related to social and/or cultural issues. Similarly, we should also highlight the fact that, in our sample, characters from so-called «Trash TV» programs were rarely chosen.

We also found that the characters chosen by respondents were mainly male, adult, fictional characters with no profession. In this sense, the fact that respondents identified mainly with male characters, despite there being more women than men in the sample group, is interesting. These data contradict those found in other studies (Hoffner, 1996; Steenland, 1990), and here we would like to underline the possible influence of the greater presence of male characters on television as an aspect to be worked on in moral education (equality), given that television tends to transmit traditional gender roles (Saito, 2007).

It is curious to note that respondents also tended to choose older characters, especially since the majority of participants were teenagers. These results also contradict those found by other authors (Harwood 1997; Montero, 2006), who point out that adolescents' favorite characters generally tend to be in their own age group.

In our opinion, in addition to its methodological relevance, the study of the relationship between values and certain aspects of the television viewing profile enables us to examine some of the implications for moral education. Thus, in the analyses carried out, significant differences were observed between values and some aspects of the viewing profile. It is interesting to note, for example, that the achievement value is more relevant amongst those who chose game shows than amongst those who chose detective series, and amongst those who prefer real characters as opposed to fictional ones. Also very telling is the fact that the power value scored very highly when male characters were chosen; while tradition scored more highly when characters were chosen for their professionalism. Benevolence, however, was related to characters from soap operas. As you can see, television can also serve to convey prosocial values (Gunter, 1984), making it a means of learning positive values (e.g. loyalty, friendship, ability to forgive or the importance of keeping one's word) through the contents conveyed, even in those contents considered «less ideal» from the perspective of value development and moral education, such as, for example, soap operas.

These data, interpreted on the basis of Schwartz's model, provide us with a number of ideas for future study and work on moral education and television viewing. Thus, for this sample group, specific television programs or

characters could be chosen in order to work on different values, with the aim of explaining these values through discussion groups or working on stereotypes since, for example, it has been found that the power value is associated with masculine characters. Also in this case, aspects related to self-perfectionism could be tackled using real figures rather than fictional characters, since this may help any possible changes to become more permanent.

One novel aspect of this study is that it highlights the underlying motivation, mainly enjoyment and entertainment, for the selection of programs and characters, which are linked to the values stressed by respondents. It is worth wondering whether, if the main motivation had been different, we would have found such a wide diversity of values. Also, would some of those values identified here as tendential have maintained that status? In other words, if the study were to be repeated with another sample group, would the underlying motivation be different, above and beyond the differences relative to diversity (either cultural or that resulting from different development states), age or gender?

Before concluding, we would like to point out certain limitations to our study, not only as regards the difficulty, in general terms, of measuring values but also, in more specific terms, in relation to the instrument used. It is important to take into consideration the social desirability effect. Despite the fact that the data found regarding the validity of the scale employed confirm that, in essence, it maintains the structure of the original model proposed by Schwartz, we believe that it is necessary to use other data collection techniques which will enable us to compare our findings. Qualitative techniques such as discussion groups, in-depth interviews, case studies and the ethnographic method may help us identify the values held by viewers in a more precise and accurate manner, as well as enabling us to explore, in smaller samples, the relationship between respondents' own values and the values they perceive in their favorite programs and/or characters.

Despite these limitations, however, and with a view to future research, in our opinion, the aim is not so much to create new educational programs as to work on the basis of existing favorite ones, focusing on two specific areas: on the one hand, it is important to intervene in order to decode the messages transmitted, and on the other, we should strive to foster certain strategies which help develop values, such as, for example, the clarification of values, debates regarding the dilemmas presented in television narratives, incomplete sentences, conceptual reconstructions of narrative texts, etc.

Similarly, it is important to remember that in order for television viewing to be truly educational, one has to know how to «read» television, just like written texts. In this sense, it is important to use more qualitative methodologies to foster a greater awareness of the values transmitted by favorite programs and to compare them with those values we seek to instill. The acquisi-

tion of skills for teaching and learning how to watch television fosters closer ties between schools, the media and moral education. In short, we believe that television is a good resource for moral education. Professionals working in the field of education should make the most of the opportunity offered by education through television, since in our society, no other technology reaches so many homes and is consumed by such a high percentage of the population, as the different studies presented in this paper continue demonstrating.

Nota

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