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Family context, television and perceived values. A cross-cultural study with adolescents

Contexto familiar, televisión y valores percibidos. Un estudio transcultural con adolescentes

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ABSTRACT: In this study, the general aim was to determine the relationship existing between family context, the values perceived by adolescents in their favorite television characters and the number of hours spent in front of the television set. Participants were 1.238 adolescents aged between 14 and 19 (545 boys and 676 girls) from different Latin American, Spanish and Irish cities. The CH-TV02 and Val-TV02 questionnaires were used. The results reveal that, in general, adolescents tend to perceive collectivist values more than individualistic ones, in relation to both parental mediation and family climate, although Latin American adolescents tend to perceive more conservative values and a greater degree of restriction in relation to their parents. The results are interesting since they lay the groundwork for designing media skills programs specially adapted to the adolescent developmental stage and contextual characteristics.

RESUMEN: En este trabajo el objetivo general fue determinar la relación que el contexto familiar tiene con los valores percibidos por los adolescentes en sus personajes favoritos de televisión y con las horas dedicadas a su consumo. Los participantes fueron 1.238 adolescentes de 14 a 19 años, 545 hombres y 676 mujeres, de diferentes ciudades latinoamericanas, españolas, e irlandesas. Se utilizaron los cuestionarios CH-TV02 y Val-TV02. Los resultados muestran que los adolescentes en general perciben valores colectivistas más que individualistas, tanto en relación a la mediación parental como al clima familiar, aunque los adolescentes latinoamericanos perciben valores más conservadores y mayor restricción en sus progenitores. Los datos tienen su interés por sentar las bases para la elaboración de programas de competencia mediática que se ajusten a la etapa evolutiva de la adolescencia y a las características contextuales.

Keywords: adolescents, family, television, values, cross-cultural.

Palabras clave: adolescentes, familia, televisión, valores, transcultural.

1. Introduction

The majority of research on moral and socializing influences during adolescence have focused on specific forces for socialization such as parents or peers, yet access to the media provides adolescents with unique and significant socialization experiences which should not be overlooked. This study therefore approaches the study of adolescents' media consumption from both the ecological perspective¹ and the point of view of reception theory², since it focuses on the decoding and interpretation of messages by adolescent viewers, while at the same time taking into account the receptive framework in which this takes place. In this sense, everyday reception contexts and the social-cultural context of reference in which media messages are located influence the way in

¹ Cfr. BRONFENBRENNER, Urie, "Ecology of the family as a context for human development", *Research Perspectives*, vol. 22, nº 6, 1986, pp. 723-742.

² Cfr. OROZCO, Guillermo, *Televisión, audiencias y educación*, Grupo Editorial Norma. Enciclopedia Latinoamericana de Sociocultura y Comunicación, México D. F., 2002; OROZCO, Guillermo (coord.), *Un mundo de visiones. Interacciones de las audiencias en múltiples escenarios mediáticos y virtuales*, Instituto Latinoamericano de la Comunicación Educativa (ILCE), México D. F., 2007.

which they are interpreted and the way in which the values conveyed are received, with different mediating factors or frameworks of reference helping viewers to re-interpret the messages transmitted³.

When analyzing the influence of the media within the family, ethnographic studies have been of great conceptual and methodological importance⁴. According to these authors, viewers decode the text in accordance with the sociocultural context that frames and envelops it. Factors such as class, culture, ethnic group, sex and age all play a part in the decoding of content, and therefore in the configuration of its meaning. In this sense, ethnographic studies have striven to understand the conceptual frameworks involved, using qualitative techniques. Lull⁵ distinguishes between what he calls the structural and relational uses of television. Structural uses refer to the way in which television intervenes in the family dynamics, through the purpose for which it is viewed and its ability to regulate these dynamics in accordance with its program schedule. Relational uses, on the other hand, refer to, among others, the way in which TV can facilitate communications (with characters, themes and contents in general supplying subject matter for conversations and interactions), or its use as a medium for social learning (complementing school work and providing information, etc.) or role reinforcement.

Silverstone and Hitch⁶ highlight how television has changed domestic habits and the way in which both family time and space is organized. Similarly to Morley and Lull, these authors hold that the relationships established by children with television is mediated not only by the existing relationship between parents and children, but also by the relationship parents themselves establish with this medium, since reception takes place within domestic habits. These habits depend on the family model, which acts as a backdrop for everything else that occurs and a true structuring framework for the complex relationships that exist between households and television.

When studying parental mediation in relation to television, brief mention should at least be made of the domestication of technology theory, which aims to explore the processes of media use and appropriation that take place within the domestic environment and highlight the social context of television viewing, with special attention being paid to the routines, dynamics, conflicts and negotiations generated by its appearance and use in the home⁷. The most distinctive feature of this approach is that it not only focuses on the way in which people use the media, but also explores aspects related to the type of lifestyle and identity users aspire to in accordance with what they say about their television set, how it is exhibited and individual and family control strategies.

³ Cfr. AIERBE, Ana, MARTÍNEZ DE MORENTIN, Juan Ignacio & MEDRANO, Concepción, “Perfil de consumo televisivo y contexto de recepción en adolescentes: diferencias interculturales y de sexo”, in MEDRANO, Concepción and J. Martínez de Morentin (eds.), *Medios de comunicación, valores y educación*, Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco, Bilbao, 2010, pp. 93-115.

⁴ Cfr. SILVERSTONE, Roger, HIRSCH, Eric & MORLEY, David, “Information and communication technologies and the moral economy of the household”, in SILVERSTONE, Roger & HIRSCH, Eric (eds.), *Consuming technologies. Media and information in domestic spaces*, Routledge, London, 1990, pp. 15-31.

⁵ Cfr. LULL, James, *Inside Family, Watching: Domestic Communication*, Routledge, New York, 1990.

⁶ Cfr. SILVERSTONE, Roger, HIRSCH, Eric & MORLEY, David, “Information and communication technologies and the moral economy of the household”, in SILVERSTONE, Roger & HIRSCH, Eric (eds.), *Consuming technologies. Media and information in domestic spaces*, Routledge, London, 1990, pp. 15-31.

⁷ Cfr. SILVERSTONE, Roger & HADDON, Leslie, “Design and Domestication of Information and Communication Technologies: Technical Change and Everyday Life”, in SILVERSTONE, Roger & MANSELL, Robin (eds.), *Communication by Design: The politics of Information and Communication Technologies*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996, pp. 44-74.

The media in general and, particularly television, are one of many factors that play a role in adolescents' development. However, during this developmental stage, their influence (along with that of peer relations) becomes particularly strong due to the degree to which they contribute to the formation of values and identity building⁸. Although there is increasing interest in this field, little research has been carried out and large gaps exist in our body of knowledge regarding both the values perceived by adolescents in television, and the influence of family and cultural context⁹. It is important to remember that adolescence is a critical period in personal development, during which the individual's main task is to build their own identity. It is a period characterized by a conflict between the security provided by the family and the uncertainty of going out into the world and acquiring personal autonomy¹⁰.

Family is understood as a practice community, an environment made up by interpersonal relations in which individuals acquire abilities, skills and values¹¹. It is therefore seen as the best interpreter of a person's symbolic relationship with the media¹². It is characterized by a "family climate" or environment, made up of parents' and children's shared perceptions of the specific characteristics of the family in which they live, such as the presence and intensity of family conflicts, the quality of communication or expression of emotions and feelings among family members and the degree of emotional cohesion which binds them¹³.

Studies which relate the quality of parent-child relationships with adolescents' psychosocial development generally conclude that cohesion and expressiveness are two decisive factors¹⁴; while family conflict may exist (to a certain degree) without necessarily having a negative effect¹⁵, or may decline gradually as the stage advances¹⁶.

⁸ Cfr. CASTELLS, Manuel, *Comunicación y poder*, Alianza, Madrid, 2009; HART, Daniel & CARLO, Gustavo, "Moral Development in Adolescence", *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, vol. 15, nº 3, 2005, pp. 223-233; MEDRANO, Concepción, CORTÉS, Alejandra, AIERBE, Ana & OREJUDO, Santos, "Los programas y características de los personajes preferidos en el visionado de televisión: diferencias evolutivas y de sexo", *Cultura y Educación*, vol. 22, nº 1, 2010, pp. 3-20; PINDADO, Julián, "Los medios de comunicación y la construcción de la identidad adolescente", *Zer*, vol. 21, 2006, pp. 11-22.

⁹ Cfr. AIERBE, Ana, MEDRANO, Concepción & OREJUDO, Santos, "Dieta televisiva, valores y percepción de la mediación familiar en adolescentes". *Revista Mexicana de Psicología*, vol. 25, nº 2, 2008, pp. 259-270; DEL RÍO, Pablo, ÁLVAREZ, Amelia & DEL RÍO, Miguel, *Pigmalión. Informe sobre el impacto de la televisión en la infancia*, Fundación Infancia y Aprendizaje, Madrid, 2004.

¹⁰ Cfr. ERICKSON, Erik, *Infancia y Sociedad*, Lumen-Horné, Buenos Aires, 1993.

¹¹ Cfr. GARAIGORDOBIL, Maite & ALIRI, Jone, "Parental Socialization Styles, Parents' Educational Level, and Sexist Attitudes in Adolescence", *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, vol. 15, nº 2, 2012, pp. 592-603; MARTÍNEZ, Isabel & GARCÍA, Fernando, "Impact of Parenting Styles on Adolescents' Self-Esteem and Internalization of Values in Spain", *The Spanish Journal of Psychology*, vol. 10, nº 2, 2007, pp. 338-348.

¹² FROUFE, Sindo, "Los medios de comunicación y la familia (en torno a la televisión)", *Pedagogía Social. Revista interuniversitaria*, vol. 5, nº 2, 2000, pp. 111-125.

¹³ Cfr. MOOS, Rudolf H. & MOOS, Bernice S., *Family environment Scale*, Consulting psychologists Press, Palo Alto, California, 1981.

¹⁴ Cfr. CAPRARA, Gian Vittorio, PASTORELLI, Concetta, REGALIA, Camillo, SCABINI, Eugenia & BANDURA, Albert, "Impact of adolescents' filial self-efficacy on quality of family functioning and satisfaction", *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, vol. 15, nº 1, 2005, pp. 71-97; ESTEVEZ, Estefanía, MUSITU, Gonzalo & HERRERO, Juan, "El rol de la comunicación familiar y del ajuste escolar en la salud mental del adolescente", *Salud Mental*, vol. 28, nº 4, 2005, pp. 81-89.

¹⁵ Cfr. STEINBERG, Laurence, "We know some things: Parent-adolescent relationships in retrospect and prospect", *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, vol. 11, nº 1, 2001, pp. 1-19.

¹⁶ Cfr. WHITEMAN, Shawn D., MCHALE, Susan M. & CROUTER, Ann C., "Family relationships from adolescence to early adulthood: changes in the family system following firstborns' leaving home", *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, vol. 21, nº 2, 2010, pp. 461-474.

However, cohesion and family expressiveness differ in accordance with context¹⁷. Thus, for example, in "collectivist" cultures (such as Spain, for example), in which young people's autonomy is not considered a priority value, a greater degree of family cohesion is valued more highly than in the North American culture, which is more "individualistic" in nature¹⁸.

Parents use (to a greater or lesser extent) different types of strategies, control methods and guidelines to influence their children's relationship with television¹⁹. These strategies in turn constitute different parental mediation styles²⁰ such as: *a)* restrictive mediation, establishing specific rules governing when their children can or cannot watch television, which programs they can see and how long they can spend in front of the set; *b)* shared mediation or co-viewing: watching some programs together; and *c)* instructive or evaluative mediation, explaining some aspects of the programs and the behavior exhibited by the characters. In previous studies we found that the style most commonly perceived by adolescents is co-viewing, followed by instructive and then restrictive mediation²¹.

Although it falls outside the scope of this study, parents' representation, assessment and perception of television, and even the family's social position in their social structure, all influence family mediation styles²².

It has also been found that mediation styles based on communication and joint decision-making regarding television viewing are those which help children get the most out of the medium²³, rendering them more receptive to "prosocial" contents than to "antisocial" ones. Similarly, a classic study which explores television reception from the perspective of communication inside the home²⁴ highlights that families which emphasize above all control and family harmony (socially-oriented families) are linked

¹⁷ Cfr. AIERBE, Ana, MARTÍNEZ DE MORENTIN, Juan Ignacio & MEDRANO, Concepción, "Perfil de consumo televisivo y contexto de recepción en adolescentes: diferencias interculturales y de sexo", in MEDRANO, Concepción & MARTÍNEZ DE MORENTIN, Juan Ignacio (eds.), *Medios de comunicación, valores y educación*, Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco, Bilbao, 2010, pp. 93-115.

¹⁸ Cfr. OLIVA, Alfredo & PARRA, Ágeda, "Autonomía emocional durante la adolescencia", *Infancia y Aprendizaje*, vol. 24, n° 2, 2001, pp. 181-196.

¹⁹ Cfr. OROZCO, Guillermo, *Televisión, audiencias y educación*, Grupo Editorial Norma. Enciclopedia Latinoamericana de Sociocultura y Comunicación, México D. F., 2002.

²⁰ Cfr. AIERBE, Ana, MEDRANO, Concepción & OREJUDO, Santos, "Dieta televisiva, valores y percepción de la mediación familiar en adolescentes", *Revista Mexicana de Psicología*, vol. 25, n° 2, 2008, pp. 259-270.

²¹ Cfr. AIERBE, Ana, MARTÍNEZ DE MORENTIN, Juan Ignacio & MEDRANO, Concepción, "Perfil de consumo televisivo y contexto de recepción en adolescentes: diferencias interculturales y de sexo", in MEDRANO, Concepción & MARTÍNEZ DE MORENTIN, Juan Ignacio (eds.), *Medios de comunicación, valores y educación*, Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco, Bilbao, 2010, pp. 93-115; AIERBE, Ana & MEDRANO, Concepción, "Adolescents' television viewing habits and their relation with values", *Comunicar. Revista Iberoamericana de Comunicación y Educación*, vol. 31, 2008, pp. 109-114.

²² Cfr. TORRECILLAS-LACAVE, Teresa, "Los padres ante el consumo televisivo de los hijos: Estilos de mediación", *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social*, vol. 68, 2013, pp. 27-54, La Laguna (Tenerife), retrieve from http://www.revistalinas.org/068/paper/968_CEU/02_Torrecillas.html

²³ Cfr. CABERO, Julio (coord.), "Los padres como mediadores en la formación en medios de comunicación", in LOSCERTALES, Felicidad (ed.), *Las escuelas de padres y los problemas sociales de la educación*, Grupo de Investigación Comunicación y Rol Docente, Sevilla, 2002, pp. 77-84; DEL RÍO, Pablo, ÁLVAREZ, Amelia & DEL RÍO, Miguel, *Pigmalión. Informe sobre el impacto de la televisión en la infancia*, Fundación Infancia y Aprendizaje, Madrid, 2004.

²⁴ Cfr. CHAFFÉE, Steven H., MCLEOD, Jack M. & WALKMAN, Daniel B., "Family communications patterns and adolescents political participation", in DENIS, Jack (ed.), *Socialization to Politics*, Wiley, New York, 1973.

to restrictive mediation, while families which prioritize the independence, autonomy and personal fulfillment of their children (conceptually-oriented families) are linked more to instructive mediation and co-viewing.

However, the mediating role played by parents or significant adults in adolescents' television viewing is different from during earlier childhood stages. During adolescence, the restrictive style appears to be less common²⁵. However, research into this field has failed to provide conclusive results regarding co-viewing during adolescence, since while according to some authors it decreases²⁶, according to others it increases during this developmental stage²⁷.

Although the restrictive style tends to be less common during adolescence, when parents do seek to limit their children's consumption, what specific type of restrictions do they impose? A study by Bringué and Sádaba²⁸, carried out in Latin America, found that for over half of the adolescent sample, television viewing was not a source of conflict with parents, although time restrictions tended to take priority over content-related ones. According to our review of studies from the Spanish²⁹, Anglo-Saxon³⁰ and

²⁵ Cfr. AIERBE, Ana, MARTINEZ DE MORENTIN, Juan Ignacio & MEDRANO, Concepción, "Perfil de consumo televisivo y contexto de recepción en adolescentes: diferencias interculturales y de sexo", in MEDRANO, Concepción & MARTÍNEZ DE MORENTIN, Juan Ignacio (eds.), *Medios de comunicación, valores y educación*, Servicio Editorial de la Universidad del País Vasco, Bilbao, 2010, pp. 93-115; CATALÁN, Carlos, "Consumo televisivo y uso del tiempo", in PARDO, Juan (ed.), *La función política de la televisión. Tendencias, contenidos, desafíos en el Chile de hoy*, Secretaría de Comunicaciones, Ministerio Secretaría General del Gobierno, Santiago, Chile, 2007, pp. 97-110; CONSEJO NACIONAL DE TELEVISIÓN (CNTV), *Televisión y jóvenes*, Santiago, Chile, 2009, retrieve from http://www.cntv.cl/prontus_cntv/site/artic/20110317/asocfile/20110317140840/estudio_television_y_jovenes.pdf;

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²⁶Cfr. NATHASON, Amy I., "The unintended effects of parental mediation of television on adolescents", *Media Psychology*, vol. 4, 2002, pp. 207-230; PADILLA-WALKER, Laura M., "Peers I can monitor, It's media that really worries me! Parental cognitions as predictors of proactive parental strategy choice", *Journal of Adolescent Research*, vol. 21, n° 1, 2006, pp. 56-82; WARD, L. Monique, "Children, adolescents, and the media: The molding of minds, bodies, and deeds", *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, vol. 109, 2005, pp. 63-71.

²⁷ Cfr. HARDY, Louise L., BAUR, Louise A., GARNETT, Sarah P., CRAWFORD, David, CAMPBELL, Karen J., SHRENSBURY, Vanesa A., COWELL, Christopher T. & SALMON, Jo, "Family and home correlates of television viewing in 12-13 years old adolescents. The Nepean Study", *International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity* vol. 3, n° 24, 2006.

²⁸ Cfr. BRINGUÉ, Xabier & SÁDABA, Charo (coord.), *La generación interactiva iberoamericana. Niños y adolescentes ante las pantallas*, Ariel and Fundación Telefónica, Barcelona, 2008.

²⁹ Cfr. GABELAS, José Antonio, "Televisión y adolescentes, una mítica y controvertida relación", *Comunicar. Revista Iberoamericana de Comunicación y Educación*, vol. 25, 2005, pp. 137-146; MEDRANO, Concepción, CORTÉS, Alejandra, AIERBE, Ana & OREJUDO, Santos, "Los programas y características de los personajes preferidos en el visionado de televisión: diferencias evolutivas y de sexo", *Cultura y Educación*, vol. 22, n° 1, 2010, pp. 3-20.

³⁰ Cfr. HARDY, Louise L., BAUR, Louise A., GARNETT, Sarah P., CRAWFORD, David, CAMPBELL, Karen J., SHRENSBURY, Vanesa A., COWELL, Christopher T. & SALMON, Jo, "Family and home correlates of television viewing in 12-13 years old adolescents. The Nepean Study", *International Journal of Behavioural Nutrition and Physical Activity*, vol. 3, n° 24, 2006; KUNTSCHE, Emmanuel, PICKETT, William, OVERPECK, Mary, CRAIG, Wendy, BOYCE, William & DE MATOS, Margarida, "Television Viewing and Forms of Bullying among Adolescents from Eight Countries", *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol. 39, 2006, pp.908-915.

Latin American contexts³¹, the amount of time spent by adolescents in front of the television set varies between two and a half and three and a half hours a day; there are some exceptions to this, such as, for example, the Dominican Republic, in which adolescents may spend as much as five hours a day watching television³².

In addition to analyzing family climate, parental mediation and the amount of time spent by adolescents in front of the television set, this study also aims to explore the relationship between these indicators and the values perceived by adolescents in the programs they watch.

It has been found that the values conveyed through television have gradually changed over the years, at both an international and local level, as shown by various different studies³³. In general, a review of previous research reveals a tendency to find more materialistic than prosocial values in television content³⁴, although some studies highlight that television also conveys altruistic behavior³⁵. For their part, Medrano, Aierbe and Martínez de Morentín³⁶ found that adolescents perceive both individualistic values (i.e. being independent and active, capable of creating and exploring) and collectivist values (i.e. being helpful and honest, trying to protect others' wellbeing) in their favorite characters.

In order to explore adolescents' perception of values in television characters, we used the model developed by Schwartz and Boehnke³⁷ based on 10 basic values grouped into four dimensions. The consistency of this model has been demonstrated by means of a multidimensional analysis. In relation to the theoretical applicability of the model to different cultures, the authors highlight the existence of values which prevail not just in Spanish society, but in different cultures and countries also, such as Germany,

³¹ Cfr. BRINGUÉ, Xabier & SÁDABA, Charo (coord.), *La generación interactiva iberoamericana. Niños y adolescentes ante las pantallas*, Ariel and Fundación Telefónica, Barcelona, 2008; CATALÁN, Carlos, "Consumo televisivo y uso del tiempo", in PARDO, Juan (ed.), *La función política de la televisión. Tendencias, contenidos, desafíos en el Chile de hoy*, Secretaría de Comunicaciones, Ministerio Secretaría General del Gobierno. Santiago, Chile, 2007, pp. 97-110; CONSEJO NACIONAL DE TELEVISIÓN (CNTV), *Televisión y jóvenes*, Santiago, Chile, 2009, retrieve from http://www.cntv.cl/prontus_cntv/site/artic/20110317/asocfile/20110317140840/estudio_television_y_jovenes.pdf

³² Cfr. SANTOS, Paulina, *Un estudio sobre estilos de mediación parental de televisión* (Degree thesis), Facultad de Ciencias Sociales. University of Chile, 2007.

³³ Cfr. ASAMEN, Joy H., ELLIS, Meshia L. & BERRY, Gordon L., *Child Development. Multiculturalism and Media*, Sage, London, 2008; BRYANT, Jennings & VORDERER, Peter (eds.), *Psychology of entertainment*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ, 2006; DEL MORAL, María Esther & VILLAUSTRE, Lourdes, "Valores televisivos versus valores educativos: modelos cuestionables para el aprendizaje social", *Comunicación y pedagogía*, vol. 214, 2006, pp. 35-40; DEL RÍO, Pablo, ÁLVAREZ, Amelia & DEL RÍO, Miguel, *Pigmalión. Informe sobre el impacto de la televisión en la infancia*, Fundación Infancia y Aprendizaje, Madrid, 2004; MURRAY, Paul & MURRAY, Douglas, "Television: Uses and Effects", in HAITH, M. M. and BENSON, J. C., *Encyclopedia of Infant and Early Childhood Development*, Academic Press, London, 2008, pp. 309-318.

³⁴ Cfr. DATES, Jannette L., FEARS, Lillie M. & STEDMAN, Josephine, "An evaluation of Effects of Movies on Adolescent Viewers", in ASAMEN, Joy H., ELLIS, Meshia L. & BERRY, Gordon L. (eds.), *Child Development, Multiculturalism and Media*, Sage, London, 2008; MÉNDIZ, Alfonso, "La juventud en la publicidad", *Revista de estudios de juventud*, vol. 68, 2005, pp. 104-115.

³⁵ Cfr. SMITH, Sandy W., SMITH, Stacy L., PIEPER, Katherine M., YOO, Jina H., FERRIS, Amber L., DOWNS, Edward & BOWDEN, Becka (2006), "Altruism on American Television: Examining the Amount of, and Context Surrounding, Acts of Helping and Sharing", *Journal of Communication*, vol. 56, n° 4, 2006, pp.707.

³⁶ Cfr. MEDRANO, Concepción, AIERBE, Ana & MARTÍNEZ DE MORENTÍN, Juan Ignacio, "Values perceived in television by adolescents in different cross-cultural contexts", *Comunicar. Revista Iberoamericana de Comunicación y Educación*, n° 37, vol. XIX, 2011, pp.117-124.

³⁷ Cfr. SCHWARTZ, Shalom H. & BOEHNKE, Klaus, "Evaluating the structure of human values with confirmatory factor analysis", *Journal of Research in Personality*, vol. 38, 2003, pp. 230-255.

Australia, the United States, Finland, Hong Kong and Israel. The differences between different cultures lie in the fact that some attach more importance to individualism, while others tend to prioritize collectivism. Thus, Schwartz's values provide an empirical conceptual framework for working in and comparing different cultures³⁸.

In addition to cultural variability, this study also takes into account the variability of parental mediation styles, since these influence the values perceived by adolescents. Thus, in accordance with the work of Moschis and Moore³⁹, which focuses on media advertising, the less parents discuss television content with their children, the more the medium influences the development of materialistic values and traditional gender roles. Similarly, previous research carried out by our team found that adolescents associate instructive mediation with prosocial values such as friendship, while restrictive mediation is related to the values of tradition and security⁴⁰.

In accordance with the review of the literature outlined above, and working on the assumption that television is a force for socialization that is particularly relevant during the adolescent developmental stage, the question that this study seeks to answer is as follows: is the viewer's social context in any way related to the values perceived by adolescents in their favorite television characters? More specifically, the aim was to explore the relationship between family context (parental mediation and family climate), hours spent watching television and the values perceived by adolescents from different cultures in their favorite television characters.

The specific aims of this study were: 1) To describe the parental mediation styles perceived by adolescents and the differences found in relation to cultural context; 2) To analyze the relationship between parental mediation and perceived family climate in the different cultures studied; 3) To explore the relationship between parental mediation and time spent watching television in the different cultural contexts studied; 4) To analyze the relationship between family climate and time spent watching television in the different cultures studied; 5) To explore cultural similarities and differences in the relationship between parental mediation and perceived values; and 6) To explore cultural similarities and differences in the relationship between family climate and perceived values.

2. Method

2.1. Design

In order to fulfill the established aims, an ex post-facto, descriptive-correlational and cross-cultural research design was used. Different family context indicators (parental mediation and family climate) were studied, along with time spent in front of the

³⁸ Cfr. SCHWARTZ, Shalom H., *A proposal for Measuring Value Orientations across Nations* [Chapter 7 in the Questionnaire Development Report of the European Social Survey], 2003, retrieve from http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=126&itemid=80; SCHWARTZ, Shalom H., SAGIV, Lilach & BOEHNKE, Klaus, "Worries and Values", *Journal of Personality*, vol. 68, 2000, pp. 309-346.

³⁹ Cfr. MOSCHIS, George P. & MOORE, Roy L., "A longitudinal study of television advertising effects", *Journal of Consumer Research*, vol. 9, n° 3, 1982, pp. 279-286.

⁴⁰ Cfr. AIERBE, Ana & MEDRANO, Concepción, "Adolescents' television viewing habits and their relation with values", *Comunicar. Revista Iberoamericana de Comunicación y Educación*, vol. 31, 2008, pp. 109-114; AIERBE, Ana, MEDRANO, Concepción & OREJUDO, Santos, "Dieta televisiva, valores y percepción de la mediación familiar en adolescentes", *Revista Mexicana de Psicología*, vol. 25, n° 2, 2008, pp. 259-270.

television set and the values perceived by participants in their favorite television characters.

2.2. *Participants*

The total sample group comprised 1238 adolescents aged between 14 and 19 from the following 8 cities: three in Spain (Zaragoza, $n = 183$; Málaga, $n = 125$; and San Sebastián, $n = 184$); four in Latin America (San Francisco de Macorís in the Dominican Republic, $n = 148$; Guadalajara in Mexico, $n = 150$; Rancagua in Chile $n = 145$; and Oruro in Bolivia, $n = 197$); and one in the Dublin region of Ireland (Dublin, $n = 106$). Both extreme cases and those subjects who responded inconsistently were eliminated from the analysis. In total, the sample group comprised 545 boys and 676 girls (43.8% and 55.4%, respectively). The gender percentage was balanced for all cities. Nevertheless, in San Francisco de Macorís and Rancagua, the percentage of male subjects was 28.1% and 35% respectively.

Due to budgetary restrictions common to projects of this kind, the representativeness of the sample cannot rely on random selection systems, and the 8 cities selected were chosen due to the fact that researchers from those cities were participating in the project. The sample group was selected on the basis of convenience, in accordance with the following criteria: age, academic year and type of school. The students were in 4th grade of secondary school and 2nd year of the Spanish Baccalaureate (higher education) system; in Latin America, this is equivalent to PREPA and/or Baccalaureate years 1 and 3; and in Ireland it corresponds to 3rd year of Junior Cycle and the Senior Cycle of Second Level and Further Education. In total, students from 23 different schools participated in the study. As regards type of school or college, the sample group was taken from two or more schools for each sub-sample (city), both public and/or private, or with similar socioeconomic levels. The parents of all students participating in the study gave their informed consent.

2.3. *Measurement instruments*

The instrument used for measuring participants' television profile and/or consumption was the *CH-TV.02. Television Viewing Habits Questionnaire*⁴¹ [in Spanish, Cuestionario de Hábitos Televisivos], modified and simplified following a pilot test. The final questionnaire comprises seven initial questions which collect data relating to the educational level, profession and current situation of the respondent's mother and father, as well as information on family structure: person/people with whom the respondent lives, gender and age of siblings and respondent's place in the order of siblings. Next, the questionnaire presents 24 closed response items. These items have been grouped together to obtain fourteen indicators. In this study, we have used only the results obtained for time spent watching television, parental mediation and family climate.

The time spent watching television indicator refers to the average number of hours respondents spend watching TV, both on weekdays and at weekends. The parental mediation indicator (item 10, made up of 14 sub-items) was developed on the basis of

⁴¹ Cfr. MEDRANO, Concepción & AIERBE, Ana, "Valores y contextos de desarrollo", *Revista de Psicodidáctica*, vol. 13, nº 1, 2008, pp. 53-68.

the *Scale to assess three styles of television mediation*⁴² which has been adapted for adolescents with the suitability of the items being verified by means of statistical analyses. One example of a reaction indicative of shared or co-viewing is “my parents and I share an interest in a program”; a response indicative of instructive mediation is: “my parents try to help me understand what I see on TV”; and a response indicating restrictive mediation is: “my parents forbid me to watch certain programs”. The alpha coefficients for the three mediation styles are: co-viewing $\alpha = .80$, instructive $\alpha = .80$ and restrictive $\alpha = .82$.

The family climate indicator (item 20, made up by 11 sub-items), which is related to communication and relationship patterns in the family, as perceived by adolescents, was based on the “Relationships” dimension of the *FES. Family Environment Scale*⁴³ [in Spanish, Escala de Clima Familiar], which seeks to assess the degree of cohesion or union perceived in the family (CO), communication or free expression of opinions and emotions (EX) and the level of conflictive interaction which characterizes it (CT). Example responses are as follows: family cohesion: “we really help and support each other”; expressiveness: “we talk openly about what we think”; and conflict “we often criticize each other”. The alpha coefficients for the three family climate dimensions assessed are: CO $\alpha = .84$, EX $\alpha = .79$ and CT $\alpha = .60$.

The instrument used to assess the values perceived by respondents in their favorite television character is a Spanish adaptation of the PVQ-21 scale by Schwartz⁴⁴ (2003). It is called Val.TV 0.2 and consists of 21 items whose responses are scored on a Likert-type scale, which in the original scale offered values of between 1 and 6. The scale measures the values perceived by adolescents in their favorite television character (ten basic values), grouped into four dimensions as shown in Table 1.

The internal consistency analysis of each dimension, using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, gave the following indexes: Openness to change $\alpha = .79$, Self-promotion $\alpha = .69$, Conservatism $\alpha = .78$, Self-transcendence $\alpha = .86$.

Table 1. Grouping of the values into Schwartz's four dimensions

| Dimensions | Values | Val.Tv 0.2 items |
|---------------------------|----------------|------------------|
| Openness to Change | Self-direction | 1, 11 |
| | Stimulation | 6, 15 |
| | Hedonism | 10, 21 |
| Self-promotion | Achievement | 4, 13 |
| | Power | 2, 17 |
| Conservatism | Security | 5, 14 |
| | Conformity | 7, 16 |
| | Tradition | 9, 20 |
| Self-transcendence | Benevolence | 12, 18 |
| | Universalism | 3, 8, 19 |

⁴² Cfr. VALKENBURG, Patti, KRUMHOLTZ, Marina, PEETERS, Allerd & MARSEILLE, Nies, “A scale to assess three styles of television mediation”, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, vol. 66, 1999, pp. 61-74.

⁴³ Cfr. MOOS, Rudolf H. & MOOS, Bernice S., *Family environment Scale*, Consulting psychologists Press, Palo Alto, California, 1981.

⁴⁴ Cfr. SCHWARTZ, Shalom H., *A proposal for Measuring Value Orientations across Nations* [Chapter 7 in the Questionnaire Development Report of the European Social Survey], 2003, retrieve from http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/index.php?option=com_docman&task=doc_view&gid=126&itemid=80

Both the CH-TV.02 and the Val.Tv 0.2 were adapted and revised by eight experts from different cultures prior to their definitive drafting. In addition to other methodological aspects, the experts were asked to assess whether or not both the questions related to television viewing habits and the definitions of the values were applicable to and comprehensible within each individual culture.

2.4. Procedure

For the data collection process, the first phase consisted of adapting both instruments from the Spanish version to a Bolivian, Chilean and Mexican version. Also, the original version was translated and adapted to an English version. These adaptations were all carried out without changing the meaning of the values. Both the CH-TV.02 and the Val.Tv 0.2 were revised by eight experts prior to their definitive drafting. In addition to other aspects, the experts were asked to assess whether or not both the questions related to television viewing habits and the definitions of the values were applicable to each culture. The majority of participants responded to the questionnaires on-line, with the exception of the Bolivian and Dominican sample groups who, due a lack of adequate computer facilities, responded on paper. Subsequently, the data gathered on paper were entered into an on-line version for statistical processing. Both scales take between 50 and 60 minutes to complete.

In relation to the data analysis, the SPSS program was used and a number of different descriptive and inferential analyses were carried out, mainly the means comparison test and parametric tests such as ANOVAs and Pearson's correlation tests. These not only enabled us to identify differences between adolescents from different cities, but also verified the significance of these results and the effect size, or in other words, the magnitude of said differences.

3. Results

3.1. Cross-cultural differences in parental mediation

Firstly, the distribution of each of the parental mediation items between the different cities was analyzed, with the results indicating that the distribution of these variables is normal. According to the ANOVA carried out, all cross-cultural differences were significant, although some were particularly relevant, such as those relating to the restrictive mediation items: "My parents forbid me to watch certain programs" ($F=(7,1220) = 47.33; p = .000$) ($\eta^2 = .222$) and "My parents tell me to turn the TV off when I am watching a program that is unsuitable" ($F=(7,1217) = 49.22; p = .000$) ($\eta^2 = .215$). The effect sizes for both items are appreciable.

Next, this set of items was reduced to a series of dimensions or underlying factors, using an exploratory factorial analysis. These three factors, which explained 50% of the variance, can be considered dimensions or subscales of parental mediation, corresponding to the parental mediation styles explained in the theoretical framework: restrictive, instructive and co-viewing. In order to compare the different groups in accordance with these new variables, the mean of the items which make up each factor or dimension was calculated, along with the Cronbach's alpha coefficients as indicators of internal consistency. The results revealed that, according to adolescents' perception,

the most common parental mediation style is co-viewing ($M = 3.09$; $\alpha = .80$), followed by instructive mediation ($M = 2.66$; $\alpha = .80$) and finally restrictive mediation ($M = 2.29$; $\alpha = .82$).

The differences between cities were statistically significant in all three dimensions, although they were greatest in the restrictive mediation dimension ($F=(7,1225) = 52.13$; $p = .000$) ($\eta^2 = .231$), followed by the instructive dimension ($F=(7,1227) = 25.84$; $p = .000$) ($\eta^2 = .129$) and then finally, with the smallest differences, co-viewing ($F=(7,1228) = 2.54$; $p = .000$) ($\eta^2 = .014$). Table 2 shows the mean differences for parental mediation between the different cities.

A detailed analysis of the mean differences reveals interesting differences between the various contexts studied. For example, in the restrictive dimension, Dublin had the lowest mean ($M = 1.59$) and Oruro the highest ($M = 3.20$), and in the instructive dimension, Dublin again had the lowest mean ($M = 1.94$) and Oruro the highest ($M = 3.21$). The means for co-viewing, on the other hand, were fairly similar in all cities.

Table 2. Mean differences for parental mediation between the different cities

| City | Restrictive | Co-viewing | Instructive |
|---------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| San Sebastián | 2.08 | 3.02 | 2.47 |
| Zaragoza | 2.04 | 3.20 | 2.51 |
| Málaga | 1.76 | 3.18 | 2.44 |
| Dublin | 1.59 | 2.99 | 1.94 |
| Guadalajara | 1.98 | 2.89 | 2.53 |
| S. F. Macorís | 2.63 | 3.15 | 3.02 |
| Oruro | 3.20 | 3.16 | 3.21 |
| Rancagua | 2.53 | 3.12 | 2.83 |
| Total sample | 2.29 | 3.09 | 2.66 |

As shown in the table, the highest levels of restrictive mediation are found in San Francisco de Macorís, Oruro and Rancagua (Dominican Republic, Bolivia and Chile), the lowest in Dublin and Málaga (with some extreme cases, mainly in Dublin) and the mid-to-lower levels in San Sebastián, Zaragoza and Guadalajara, although this last city has a qualitatively different distribution. As regards instructive parental mediation, the most striking result is the low level found in Dublin and the high levels found in Oruro and San Francisco de Macorís. However, in this case, Rancagua did not score as highly as these latter two cities, but rather had a level similar to that of the Spanish cities and Guadalajara. It is striking that Latin American cities, with the exception of Guadalajara, scored higher in all parental mediation styles, while both Dublin and Guadalajara had much lower levels in this respect.

3.2. Relationship between parental mediation styles and family climate

Bearing in mind that our sample was very broad, we will consider only the highest correlations here, ignoring those that were very low since, despite reaching statistical significance, we believe their relevance to be limited.

Table 3. Correlations between parental mediation styles and family climate

| Mediation | Restrictive | | | Co-viewing | | | Instructive | | |
|----------------|-------------|-------|-------|------------|-------|--------|-------------|-------|-------|
| | CO | EX | CT | CO | EX | CT | CO | EX | CT |
| Family Climate | | | | | | | | | |
| San Sebastián | .04 | .05 | .12 | .40** | .38** | -.18* | .29** | .34** | -.07 |
| Zaragoza | .23** | .12 | .03 | .46** | .42** | -.12 | .41** | .38** | -.08 |
| Málaga | .16 | .22* | .05 | .40** | .42** | .15 | .22* | .36** | .03 |
| Dublin | .21* | .27** | .11 | .48** | .46** | .16 | .26** | .22* | .24* |
| Guadalajara | .31** | .25** | .02 | .53** | .49** | -.22** | .39** | .35** | .14 |
| S.F. Macorís | .06 | .12 | .04 | .36** | .35** | -.03 | .29** | .22** | .01 |
| Oruro | .25** | .20** | -.06 | .48** | .47** | -.18* | .52** | .52** | -.14* |
| Rancagua | .09 | .12 | .26** | .44** | .49** | .03 | .30** | .37** | .23** |
| Total sample | .14** | .15** | .07* | .44** | .43** | -.07** | .31** | .33** | .01 |

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

From a cross-cultural perspective, Table 3 shows the Pearson correlations found between mediation styles and the dimensions of family climate. It should be highlighted that both co-viewing and instructive mediation correlated with cohesion and expressiveness in all eight cities studied. Thus, for the sample as a whole, correlations were observed between Cohesion (CO) and co-viewing ($r=.444$) and instructive mediation ($r=.318$). Correlations were also found between Expressiveness (EX) and co-viewing ($r=.438$) and instructive mediation ($r=.337$).

Special mention should be made of the data obtained in the Conflict dimension and its relationship with the co-viewing and instructive mediation styles. Thus, for example, in Rancagua, conflict correlated with both instructive mediation and restrictive mediation. In Guadalajara, on the other hand, conflict correlated only with co-viewing and moreover, the relationship is inverted, with a negative correlation being observed. In other words, in this city, the more television is shared (co-viewing), the lower the perceived family conflict level.

3.3. Parental mediation and time spent watching television

In relation to cross-cultural differences, correlations were found between mediation and time spent watching television in four of the eight cities studied, specifically in San Sebastián, Zaragoza, Málaga and Rancagua. However, in Dublin, Guadalajara, San Francisco de Macorís and Oruro, no relationship was found between these two indicators. In some cities (such as Rancagua), time spent watching television is related to co-viewing, both on weekdays ($r=.236$, $p<.001$) and at weekends ($r=.217$, $p<.005$). This is true also for San Sebastián, although in this case, time spent watching television is only related to co-viewing at weekends ($r=.208$, $p<.001$). The relationship between time spent watching television and mediation in Málaga is inverted, since a negative association was found between time spent watching television on weekdays ($r=-.232$, $p<.005$) and restrictive mediation, i.e. the more time spent watching television on weekdays, the lower the level of restrictive parental mediation perceived by adolescents from that city.

3.4. Family climate and time spent watching television

The analyses carried out found almost no significant cross-cultural differences between time spent watching television and perceived family climate; only in San Francisco de Macorís was a correlation found between the cohesion dimension and time spent watching television both on weekdays ($r = .29, p < .001$) and at weekends ($r = .18, p < .005$). These results indicate that in this city, the more time spent by adolescents watching television, the greater the level of perceived family cohesion.

3.5. Parental mediation and values perceived in favorite television characters

Table 4 presents the relationship between mediation styles and value dimensions for each city. It is worth highlighting that it is in Latin American cities (with the exception of Rancagua) that most correlations were observed between mediation styles and the Self-transcendence dimension, followed by the Conservatism dimension. In Oruro, all three mediation styles correlate with this last dimension (restrictive $r=.325$, co-viewing $r=.272$ and instructive $r=.365$), as well as with the Self-transcendence dimension (restrictive $r=.202$, co-viewing $r=.210$, instructive $r=.210$). In Guadalajara, the Self-transcendence dimension is related only to co-viewing ($r=.216$) and instructive mediation ($r=.229$), while in San Francisco de Macorís, this dimension is related only to co-viewing ($r=.226$). In this last city also, Openness to change is linked to restrictive mediation ($r=.247$). In Zaragoza, Málaga and Dublin, no significant correlations were found between mediation styles and any of the four dimensions. The case of San Sebastián is worth highlighting, since the values corresponding to Openness to change are related in this city to Co-viewing ($r=.325$), while in San Francisco de Macorís, this dimension is related to restrictive mediation ($r=.247$).

Table 4. Parental mediation styles and value dimensions

| Values | Open. to change | | | Self-prom. | | | Conservatism | | | Self-trans. | | |
|---------------|-----------------|-------|-------|------------|------|------|--------------|-------|-------|-------------|-------|-------|
| | Res | Co | Inst | Res | Co | Inst | Res | Co | Inst | Res | Co | Inst |
| San Sebastián | -.08 | .32** | .17* | -.14 | .04 | -.08 | .07 | -.08 | .04 | .03 | .16* | .19* |
| Zaragoza | .01 | -.03 | -.00 | -.01 | -.11 | -.03 | .10 | -.12 | .16* | .03 | .01 | .18* |
| Málaga | -.13 | -.02 | -.11 | -.12 | -.09 | -.06 | -.11 | -.08 | -.05 | -.04 | -.00 | -.00 |
| Dublin | -.09 | .05 | -.01 | -.10 | .71 | -.07 | -.01 | -.15 | .04 | .04 | -.01 | .09 |
| Guadalajara | .10 | .13 | .16* | -.03 | -.04 | .08 | -.00 | .09 | .13 | .10 | .21** | .22** |
| S.F. Macorís | .24** | .12 | .08 | .04 | -.09 | -.01 | .12 | .09 | .06 | .13 | .22** | .11 |
| Oruro | -.07 | .00 | -.15* | .02 | -.02 | -.03 | .32** | .27** | .36** | .20** | .21** | .31** |
| Rancagua | -.06 | -.08 | -.01 | -.01 | -.07 | .07 | .12 | -.07 | -.00 | .06 | -.10 | .00 |
| | .02 | .06* | .04 | -.01 | -.04 | -.00 | .15** | .00 | .16** | .16** | .10** | .21** |
| All cities | | | | | | | | | | | | |

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

3.6. Family climate and perceived values

As shown in Table 5, differences were mainly found in relation to the Expressiveness dimension. In San Sebastián, Openness to change correlates with Cohesion and Expressiveness, while Self-transcendence correlates only with Expressiveness.

Similarly, in Oruro both Self-transcendence and Conservatism correlate with Expressiveness. In Rancagua, only Conservatism was found to correlate with Expressiveness. Although correlations do exist in Guadalajara and San Francisco de Macorís, they are not particularly significant. And finally, in Zaragoza, Málaga and Dublin, no correlations at all were observed between the variables studied.

Table 5. Correlations between family climate and value dimensions

| Values | Op. to change | | | Self-prom. | | | Conservatism | | | Self-trans. | | |
|---------------|---------------|-------|------|------------|------|------|--------------|-------|------|-------------|-------|------|
| | CO | EX | CT | CO | EX | CT | CO | EX | CT | CO | EX | CT |
| San Sebastián | .25** | .29** | -.14 | .02 | .01 | .06 | .14 | .19* | -.01 | .13 | .26** | -.04 |
| Zaragoza | .00 | -.05 | -.05 | -.11 | -.10 | .03 | -.11 | -.13 | .00 | .02 | .03 | -.09 |
| Málaga | .00 | .05 | -.10 | -.06 | .00 | -.04 | -.06 | -.04 | -.08 | -.02 | .00 | -.12 |
| Dublin | .18 | .03 | .11 | .04 | -.03 | .11 | -.14 | -.04 | .00 | .09 | .04 | -.01 |
| Guadalajara | .17* | .17* | -.12 | .02 | .01 | -.02 | .11 | .16* | .02 | .16* | .16* | .01 |
| Macorís | .08 | .19* | .12 | -.02 | -.02 | .14 | .08 | .05 | .14 | .14 | .17* | .08 |
| Oruro | .75 | .31 | .75 | -.01 | .03 | .10 | .19** | .22** | .09 | .19** | .24** | .04 |
| Rancagua | .05 | .09 | .04 | .10 | .19* | .07 | .11 | .22* | .00 | .05 | .08 | .05 |
| All cities | .09** | .11** | -.03 | -.01 | .00 | .05 | .04 | .09** | .01 | .10** | .14** | -.02 |

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

In short, in relation to the correlations between family climate and perceived values, it was in the Latin American cities of Oruro and Rancagua, as well as in San Sebastián, that the greatest number of relationships were found between the variables studied.

4. Discussion

Taking the sample group as a whole, the results indicate that, in general, the mediation style most commonly perceived by adolescents is co-viewing, followed by instructive mediation and finally restrictive mediation, although cross-cultural differences were also found, particularly in relation to this last mediation style. Also when the sample group is analyzed as a whole, a relationship is revealed between the time spent watching television and mediation styles. This is particularly true in Spanish cities. However, almost no relationship was found between time spent watching television and family climate, with the exception of family cohesion. In all the cities studied (although with slight differences), adolescents perceive collectivist values more than individualistic ones, both in relation to parental mediation and family climate.

As regards the study's first aim, the fact that the mediation style least often perceived by adolescents in all cultural contexts was restrictive mediation confirms the findings of previous cross-cultural studies. Moreover, cross-cultural differences in the restrictive style also include content restrictions, which calls into question that stated by Bringué and Sádaba regarding time constraints being the only restrictions imposed by parents on their adolescent children. One possible hypothesis for explaining this reduction in the perception of the restrictive style may be the gradual distancing of adolescents from their parents, something which is inherent to this development stage. Another possible explanation lies in the greater technological capacity of today's youngsters to handle and manipulate screens. This raises their status in parents' eyes, and indeed many

parents go to their children for advice and help in using these appliances, including new television sets with digital devices.

It is striking that high, medium and low scores are found for different mediation styles in different cities. This suggests that parents from different contexts mediate to differing degrees. For example, the results suggest that parents in the Latin American context are more involved, while parents in Ireland are less so.

The analysis of the relationships between parental mediation and family climate (the study's second aim) revealed correlations between all three mediation styles (restrictive, co-viewing and instructive) and family Cohesion and Expressiveness, while family Conflict was found to correlate only with co-viewing and moreover, was negative in nature. In other words, in general, the more co-viewing the less family conflict perceived by adolescents, and it is in Guadalajara that this relationship is most marked. Nevertheless, the exception to this was the Latin American city of Rancagua, in which a greater level of co-viewing and instructive mediation are associated with more conflict. One possible explanation for these findings is that conflict is not only related to restriction, but also to the formative or informative work (instructive mediation) carried out by parents in relation to television.

Relationships were also observed between mediation styles and time spent watching television (the study's third aim). These relationships are particularly striking in the Spanish cities (San Sebastián, Zaragoza and Málaga) and in Rancagua (Chile) and indicate that the more time adolescents spend watching television, the more they perceive some type of parental mediation (mainly co-viewing). The one exception to this is Málaga, where the relationship between time spent watching television and restrictive mediation is inverted, i.e. the more time adolescents from this city spend watching television on weekdays, the less restriction they perceive from their parents.

However, in the relationship between family climate and time spent watching television (fourth aim), no notable differences were found between the different cities, with the single exception of San Francisco de Macorís (Dominican Republic), where adolescents who spend more time watching television perceive a greater degree of family cohesion. This may be related to the fact that in this context, sitting down together in front of the TV set is an element which brings the family together during a stage in which parents and children tend to engage in fewer joint activities, and/or that families with a greater degree of cohesion tend to watch more television together.

In relation to perceived values and their association with mediation styles and perceived family climate (aims five and six), all mediation styles, as well as expressiveness and family cohesion, are linked to the Self-transcendence dimension (values of benevolence and universalism). In other words, this value dimension may perhaps serve as a kind of constant during adolescence, although certain different aspects were also observed: co-viewing was also related to Openness to change, while restrictive and instructive mediation were related to Conservatism. The significant relationships found between restrictive and instructive mediation and Conservatism and Self-transcendence are fairly consistent and point towards parenting styles in which tradition and conformity, etc., are important values to be preserved. The fact that Self-promotion (achievement and power) failed to correlate with any mediation style or family climate dimension may indicate that during adolescence, which is characterized by large doses of self-affirmation in relation to parents, these values are independent from family indicators.

In general, the data for the whole sample group reveal a prevalence of collectivist values over individualistic ones. This is similar to the findings reported previously. As regards the different cultural contexts, Latin American adolescents tend to score higher in conservative values (Self-transcendence and Conservatism), with Oruro (Bolivia)

standing out in comparison with Dublin (Ireland), in which, in general, no relationship at all was found between the different parental mediation styles and perceived values. The values of the Openness to change dimension (hedonism, stimulation, self-direction) perceived by adolescents in San Sebastián are related to co-viewing. However, in San Francisco de Macorís, these values are linked to restrictive mediation. This may be interpreted as indicating that adolescents in San Sebastián believe they can watch television with their parents, leaving more room for perceiving these values, while in Macorís the opposite is true, i.e. adolescents in that city perceive in their parents a greater tendency to restrict these values. The results suggest that Latin American adolescents perceive a priority focus on control and family harmony through restrictive mediation. In other words, they live in “socially-oriented families” that are more closely linked to conservative values, and, according to our data, even the instructive style might also be interpreted in this same way.

The fact that conflict is the only dimension of family climate that does not correlate with any of the four value dimensions may indicate that it is independent from perceived values. It also confirms the absence of significant differences in this dimension between the different cultures studied, although it might possibly be related in some way to the decreased perception of the restrictive mediation style. It may also be that adolescents perceive a certain degree of cohesion and expressiveness, regardless of the individuation process they are currently going through in relation to their parents, and may perceive, in general, less conflict than might reasonably be expected during this developmental stage.

Finally, it is worth highlighting that although in all the indicators studied (parental mediation, family climate, hours spent watching television and values perceived in subjects' favorite characters) the differences observed were fairly minor, they nevertheless indicate certain cultural characteristics or traits, both as regards parental mediation styles, associated family dynamics and the values prioritized. In this sense, the study aims to go a step beyond research focusing on television viewing and take into account also the contexts in which said viewing takes place.

Nevertheless, due to the limitations of the data gathering instrument used in relation to the social desirability bias, we believe it is important to complement this study with other research based on more qualitative techniques. These techniques may include in-depth interviews and/or group discussions, which may help overcome this limitation and explore in more detail the relationships established between television viewing habits and values perceived in relation to contextual factors (different cultures and family dynamics), as well as socioeconomic status. In this sense, future studies may wish to relate the data found with respondents' reasons for choosing their favorite character, and the degree to which they identify with them. They may also wish to compare them with parents' own perception of mediation, family climate and the television viewing habits of their adolescent children.

The relevance of the results obtained in this piece of cross-cultural research with adolescents lies in the fact that it may lead to the development of pedagogic intervention techniques or strategies which, based on media contents and characters with whom adolescents identify, may be used and adapted by parents and educators to modify or complement adolescents' value perceptions.

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