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Intimacy in Television Programs: Adolescents' Perception

La privacidad en programas televisivos: percepción de los adolescentes

ABSTRACT

Despite the negative criticism leveled at them, certain television genres which treat intimate problems and issues as a kind of spectacle may also help adolescents learn how to cope with interpersonal situations and gain awareness of key social problems. This study focuses on examining the arguments that adolescents use to explain their possible participation (or lack of participation), either as guests or members of the audience, in Celebrity Gossip Shows (Salsa Rosa) and Talk Shows (Diario de Patricia), within the interpretative framework of Turiel's theory (2002). To this end, interviews were conducted with adolescents from the Basque Autonomous Region and the answers given were grouped into three domains: conventional, moral or private. The results found show that the vast majority would not consider attending these programs for private reasons, and when asked to think in what hypothetical case they would consider participating, any change of opinion was always «Diario de Patricia» or almost always «Salsa Rosa» prompted by moral motives. All of those who said they would participate in the two programs justified their answer using conventional arguments. We can conclude that the adolescents participating in the study continue to value personal privacy, even in association with certain television programs in which the limits between private and public are transgressed.

RESUMEN

Determinados géneros televisivos que mediatizan la intimidad en forma de espectáculo, a pesar de las críticas negativas que reciben, también pueden servir a los adolescentes para aprender cómo afrontar situaciones interpersonales y tomar conciencia de problemas sociales relevantes. El presente trabajo tiene por objetivo conocer los argumentos que los adolescentes exponen para explicar su posible presencia o no como público o protagonista en los programas de crónica rosa (Salsa Rosa) y «talk show» (Diario de Patricia), en el marco interpretativo de la teoría de Turiel (2002). Para ello, se han llevado a cabo entrevistas con adolescentes de la Comunidad Autónoma Vasca cuyas respuestas se han categorizado en los dominios convencional, moral o privado y, posteriormente, han sido analizadas mediante el programa Nudist. Los resultados hallados muestran que la gran mayoría no acudirían a estos programas por argumentos privados y, cuando se les pide que piensen en qué caso hipotético acudirían, el cambio de opinión, siempre «Diario de Patricia» (DP) o casi siempre «Salsa Rosa» (SR), va acompañado de motivos morales. Por otra parte, la totalidad de los que acudirían a ambos programas lo justifican con argumentos convencionales. Se concluye que los adolescentes participantes en este estudio continúan concediendo valor a la privacidad, aun cuando se asocia a determinados programas televisivos en los que se transgreden los límites entre lo privado y lo público.

KEYWORDS / PALABRAS CLAVE

Television viewing, talk show, celebrity gossip show, privacy, adolescents.
Hábitos televisivos, talk show, crónica rosa, privacidad, adolescentes.

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1. Introduction

Television and the context in which it is viewed may, among other factors, constitute a source of social and moral learning and development during adolescence, as well as being a source of symbolic resources with which adolescents interact during the construction of their identity (Harwood, 1999; Montero, 2006; Pindado, 2006).

The theoretical framework of reference upon which we based our research was the Theory of Reception (Orozco, 2002), the interest of which lies not so much in analyzing the influence of the media on different audiences, but rather in examining what subjects do with the media, how they perceive the different contents and values transmitted through «their own individual lenses». From this perspective, this study aims to analyze and examine adolescents' perception of the way in which certain television programs make private matters the subject of public debate. The study takes as its reference the interpretational framework of Turiel's theory (2002), according to which these perceptions can be grouped into the following domains: a) Moral. This alludes to the moral sense adopted by an individual as a behavioral criterion, which prompts them to be guided by universal moral principles over and above conventional norms or individual interests. b) Conventional. This is related to expected behavioral guidelines which facilitate and ease peaceful coexistence between human groups. c) Private or personal. This refers to those behaviors, matters or decisions which are free from both a moral and a conventional sense of obligation, and are based on each person's individual preferences or tastes (e.g. in the Western world, the choice of friends or aspects related to one's own body).

Today, the limits between the public and the private are easily blurred, since we live in a constantly changing world characterized by a lack of fixed ideologies and an ongoing reevaluation of daily culture. The public exhibition of the private world, generally in the form of television shows (Bauer, Dotro, Mojana & Paez, 2000; Kehl, 2002), contributes a great deal to this blurring, especially as regards talk shows and celebrity gossip shows, genres characterized by their constant transgression of the delicate limits which exist between the private, conventional and moral spheres. It has even been said that the religion of today's society is the conversion of privacy into a media product (Cocimano, 2007). In fact, privacy has become so much a marketable good, that certain celebrities have earned their fame merely by selling the intimate details of their lives.

But what is the reason for the current vulnerability of the value of privacy? Among other factors, this vulnerability is due to the fact that we live in an audiovisual environment which can easily penetrate our lives. Also, we often tend to have recourse to our right to information in order to keep abreast of absolutely everything, frequently at the expense of invading other people's privacy. In the opinion of Camps (2005; 2007), violations of privacy generally tend to be aesthetic in nature, or in bad taste, such as, for example, when someone sells the intimate details of their life for either money or fame. However, above all, and from an ethical point of view, privacy is frequently threatened when it is assailed by a poorly understood form of «public interest», a concept which actually refers to what should interest the public, but which is often erroneously used to define what audiences actually see. In the author's opinion, what should really concern us is the loss of a value which has only recently been conquered, after much effort and hard work.

Television cannot be blamed for all the evils of youth, but it does seem worthwhile to analyze and explore adolescents' perceptions of the way in which people's privacy is exploited and made public in some television shows. Specifically, within the context of public television in Spain, our research has focused on the reality show macro-genre, which includes the talk show entitled «Diario de Patricia». In this show, the dominant trait is the development of a conversation-spectacle between guest participants (generally from the popular classes) and the presenter, regarding everyday issues (Ardila, 2006; Cáceres, 2000; Mercado, 1999; Vilches, 1995). Similarly, we also focused on celebrity gossip shows, analyzing specifically a program entitled «Salsa Rosa». Unlike in talk shows, in this type of programs the guests generally tend to be celebrities or figures from the media world who are paid to reveal the details of their lives, whether they be real or made up (Cocimano, 2007). They are sensationalist programs which are extremely aggressive in their treatment of the private life of the individuals involved (OCTA Report, 2005).

Criticism leveled at talk shows and celebrity gossip shows has mainly focused on the topics or themes dealt with, and the sensationalist way in which they are treated. Some examples include themes related to sexual identity, conflicts between partners and family members (infidelity, family violence, filial identity, etc.) and social problems (job-related problems, relationships between friends, teenage motherhood, drug abuse, etc.) (Bauer, & al., 2000; Greenberg & Smith, 1995). However, although some criticism refers to the

fact that these programs have a negative effect on viewers (rendering them less sensitive to human pain, distorting reality, magnifying insignificance and failing to discern between what is trivial and what is important), especially adolescents (Cáceres, 2002; Kiesewetter, 1995), hardly any empirical evidence exists of these effects and no explanations have been offered as to how they are generated. Furthermore, not all effects are adverse or go beyond the boundaries of entertainment, since these programs can also help viewers learn how to cope with certain aspects of life in society and to gain a greater awareness of certain key social problems (Bauer & al., 2000; Baumeister, Zhang & Vohs, 2004; Davis & Mares, 1999; Gamboa, 2001; Greenberg & Smith, 1995; Trepte, 2005).

In a sample of 282 students aged between 13 and 18, Davis & Mares (1998) analyzed the effect of viewing talk shows on adolescents' attitudes and beliefs regarding the society in which they lived. The authors found that watching talk shows made viewers overestimate the frequency of deviant behavior, although it did not make them less sensitive to other people's suffering. Similarly, watching talk shows is positively related, in some age groups, with an awareness of the importance bestowed on social issues. In conclusion, the general opinion regarding these programs is overly pessimistic and simplistic.

Baumesiter & al. (2004) carried out a study with 58 first-year psychology undergraduate students, who were asked to tell a piece of gossip and then describe what they had learned from it. Contradicting the traditional stereotype regarding the adverse effects of gossip, the authors found that for participants, gossip constitutes an important means of social communication which serves to convey, in a narrative manner, roles, rules and other guidelines for living in a specific culture.

For his part, Trepte (2005) interviewed 66 daily talk show viewers with a mean age of 26, in order to determine whether or not they would consider appearing on this type of program and what they would hope to gain from the experience. The conclusion the author drew was that those who would consider participating in this type of television program tend to

make a concerted effort in the field of self-realization.

As regards celebrity gossip programs, in a sample of 191 adolescents aged between 11 and 16, Giles & Maltby (2004) analyzed the relationship between adolescents' emotional autonomy and their relationships with celebrities. The results revealed that media personalities provide adolescents with a secondary group of pseudo-friends, at the same time as increasing their emotional autonomy in relation to their parents, although an excessive attraction to one celebrity in particular may interfere with this transition.

Having reviewed the existing studies in this field, we can conclude that the data are inconclusive. It is important to bear in mind that certain complex and conflictive social issues (such as homosexuality, pornography and abortion, for example) involve (frequently ambiguous) assumptions or beliefs which subjects de-

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velop gradually in relation to specific situations (Wainryb & Turiel, 1993), and which influence their moral assessment of the event in question. For example, in the case of homosexuality (private sphere), the beliefs associated with the biological or psychological determining factors of sexuality emerge as a key theme in moral assessments of this issue. Since these issues are often the focus of talk shows and celebrity gossip shows, it is important to bear this in mind when assessing the opinions held by adolescents regarding these programs. It is also worth highlighting that the perceived realism should mediate the effects of viewing talk shows, more so indeed than in other genres such as news programs or fiction (Davis & Mares, 1998).

In previous studies carried out by our group in the Basque Autonomous Region, the results found were not particularly alarming (Aierbe & Medrano, 2008;

Aierbe, Medrano & Orejudo, 2008; Medrano, Palacios & Aierbe, 2007), since so-called «junk TV» (talk shows, celebrity gossip shows, etc.) were not found to be particular favorites among adolescents, who said they spent little time viewing them. Nevertheless, it is important to dedicate some attention to this theme, due to the possible influence which this type of content may have on younger generations.

In this study, which forms part of a broader research project on television viewing and perceived values, the objective was to analyze how some television shows intervene in adolescents' perception of intimacy, within the interpretative framework proposed by Turiel's theory. In specific terms, we were interested in analyzing the conventional, moral or private arguments used by adolescents to explain their possible presence (or absence) as either members of the audience or guests on celebrity gossip (Salsa Rosa) and talk shows (Diario de Patricia). The specific objectives were: 1) To determine the (moral, conventional, private) arguments put forward by those adolescents who said they would attend the shows as either members of the audience or guests. 2) To determine the (moral, conventional, private) arguments put forward by those adolescents who said they would not attend the shows as either members of the audience or guests. 3) To determine whether those subjects who initially used private arguments to explain why they would not attend the shows would change their mind (i.e. would attend) in certain cases, and what arguments (moral, conventional or private) they would use to justify this. 4) To determine whether interviewee responses were concentrated especially in one or more of the profiles upon which their selection as participants in the study was based.

2. Material and methods

2.1. Participants

Based on the data gathered from a sample of 594 adolescents from the Basque Autonomous Region (BAR, Spain) regarding television viewing habits and the values perceived in their favorite programs, a sub-sample of 31 subjects was selected for this study. All were adolescents aged between 13 and 15, from three schools in the province of Guipúzcoa.

The sub-sample of adolescents who participated in this study was selected on the basis of a combination of the television viewing habit and perceived value indexes obtained previously by means of the Television Viewing Habits Questionnaire (CH-TV 0.1.) and the Values and Television Questionnaire (Val-TV 0.1.). After a long and arduous process, the following varia-

bles were chosen for the selection process: 1) specific preference for «Salsa Rosa» and appearance as either a member of the audience or guest (high and low); 2) appearance on either «Salsa Rosa» or «Diario de Patricia» as either a member of the audience or guest and appearance in general on a television show as either a member of the audience or guest (high and low); 3) co-viewing (high and low) and 4) power value (high and low). Based on the combination of these four variables, 12 profiles were obtained, on the basis of which the 31 adolescents interviewed were selected.

2.2. Measurement instruments

A semi-structured interview, created ad hoc for this study, was used. Interviews lasted on average approximately 45 minutes. The interview is divided into two parts. The first part includes 17 questions designed to elicit the interviewee's opinion of the talk show and celebrity gossip show genres. The second part consists of four questions aimed at determining interviewees' opinion regarding the establishment of a rule for television viewing based on age, time of day and content, and regarding who should be responsible for establishing such a rule (the government, parents, producers of television programs?). In this paper, we present the results corresponding to the first part of the interview, specifically that part referring to a total of 8 general items, namely: Would you go on «Salsa Rosa»? Explain why.; Would you go on «Diario de Patricia»? Explain why.; Under what circumstances would you go on «Salsa Rosa»? Under what circumstances would you go on «Diario de Patricia»? If you were to go on «Salsa Rosa», what would you hope to achieve? If you were to go on «Diario de Patricia», what would you hope to achieve?

2.3. Procedure

This research project was divided into the following phases:

1) Planning. This phase included: establishment of objectives, drafting of the interview, selection of the variables and profiles for the sub-sample, decision about who would do the interviewing, establishment of contact with the schools and timetable for holding the interviews.

2) The interviews. The semi-structured interview was administered by three interviewers trained in the technique of clinical interviewing and with experience in qualitative research.

3) Selection and categorization of contents. The interviews were transcribed, the contents and themes categorized in relation to the hypothesis and the proto-

cols were read and analyzed collectively. The contents were categorized by three judges based on the interpretative framework of Turiel's theory (moral, conventional and private domains), which is explained in the introduction to this paper.

4) Presentation of the categories using the Nudist program. The data are presented in an orderly manner, in a subject-based node matrix. This matrix enables us to observe and carry out an exploratory comparison between the different text units corresponding to each individual, which are coded in accordance with each assigned category. The system also helps provide a global overview of the data, in order to enable conclusions to be drawn more easily. The steps followed were: a) To enter the whole texts of the interviews with the 31 adolescents in the Nudist program; b) To define the categories and sub-categories. The three main categories, defined in accordance with Turiel's theory, were: Moral, Conventional, Private. Each of these categories are further sub-divided into different sub-categories; c) To construct an initial Tree Nodes; d) To code the nodes on the basis of the texts; e) To obtain the final report from the Nudist program which indicates the degree of global response given by the subjects in each

NODES	Definitions	% paragraphs x node	Num. paragraphs	% paragraphs
6	Go on TV			
6.1.	Go on TV / Salsa Rosa			
6.1.1.	Go on TV / Salsa Rosa/Yes	0.02%	2	6.45%
6.1.2.	Go on TV / Salsa Rosa/No	0.33%	29	93.55%
20.6.1.	Moral/Go on/Reasons	0.00%	0	0.00%
20.6.2.	Moral/Go on/In what case	0.10%	9	29%
30.6.1.	Conventional/Go on/Reasons	0.02%	2	100%
30.6.1.	Conventional/Not go on/Reasons	0.12%	9	31.03%
30.6.2.	Conventional/Go on/In what case	0.02%	2	6.5%
40.6.1.	Private/Go on/Reasons	0.11%	10	32%
40.6.1.	Private/Not go on/Reasons	0.11%	10	34.48%
40.6.2.	Private/Go on/In what case	0.00%	0	0.00%
6.1.2.1/2.	Go on TV / Salsa Rosa/No/Others (boredom-embarrassment)	0.04%	4	13.79%

Table 1. «Salsa Rosa»: percentages according to node and text unit.

summarized in accordance with the objectives which explain the categories extracted and the theoretical framework upon which the whole study is based.

3. Results

As regards «Salsa Rosa» (SR), of all the adolescents interviewed, 93.55% said they would not attend, while only 6.45% said that they would. None of the adolescents used moral arguments to justify either their possible appearance or their possible non-appearance on SR, and none of them defended their willingness to go on the show using private arguments. The students who said they would go on SR (6.45%) all gave conventional reasons. Of the adolescents who said they would not go on SR (93.55%), 34.48% gave personal or private reasons for their decision, 31.03% conventional reasons and 13.79% other reasons (for example, boredom or embarrassment). In other words, the most common arguments used to justify their unwillingness to appear on the program were private and conventional ones, in a similar proportion, followed quite a way behind by arguments related to certain feelings generated.

However, of those who initially said they would not go on SR, 35.48% would change their mind in certain circumstances. Of these, 81.81% said they would go on the program for moral reasons, for example, in order to help or achieve something good for someone. 9.09%, on the other hand, used conventional arguments to justify this change of mind, citing, for

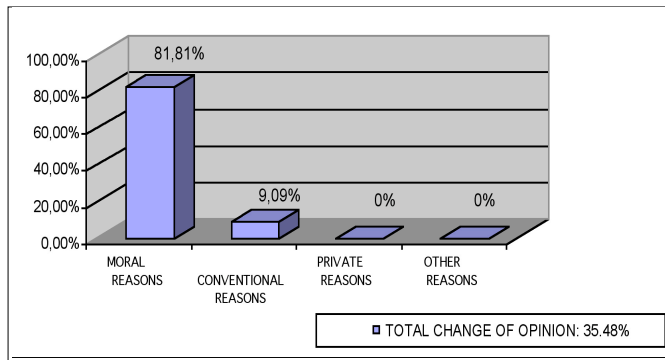


Figure 1: Percentage of those who would change their mind about going on «Salsa Rosa».

category; f) To construct a matrix from each subject's report.

5) Data reduction. Finally, the information was

example, entertainment or money as reasons for going on the show.

In short, moral arguments were not used initially to justify the decision not to go on this show. However, a high percentage of those who initially said they would not go on the show and then changed their minds, used moral arguments to justify this decision. For example, one adolescent (code num. 5049) who initially said, for private reasons, «I would not go because I would never talk about my private life», later used moral arguments to justify a change of opinion, stating «Yes, I would if it was for a good cause, like helping

someone». Only a minority said they would change their mind and go on the show for conventional reasons and the same percentage said they would not change their initial arguments. For example, one adolescent (code num. 225) who initially said they would not go on the show for private reasons, such as «no, it is my life and I would never accept money for talking about it», later said they would change their mind and go on the show for conventional arguments such as «Yes, if the program was entertaining and fun, without being insulting». Similarly, we wanted to determine how many of those who initially said they would not go on SR for personal or private reasons (34.48%)

would change their mind (and go on the show), and what arguments they use to justify this change of opinion. Thus, we found that: 50% said they would change their mind in order to help someone or to deny or clarify something (moral domain); 10% said they

NODES	Definitions	% paragraphs x node	Num. paragraphs	% paragraphs
6	Go on TV			
6.1.	Go on TV/Diario de Patricia			
6.1.1.	Go on TV/Diario de Patricia/Yes	0.06%	5	16%
6.1.2.	Go on TV/Diario de Patricia/No	0.30%	26	84%
20.6.1.	Moral/Go on/Reasons	0.00%	0	0%
20.6.1.	Moral/Not go on/Reasons	0.03%	3	11.54%
20.6.2.	Moral/Go on/In what case	0.14%	10	32%
30.6.1.	Conventional/Go on/Reasons	0.05%	3	60%
30.6.1.	Conventional/Not go on/Reasons	0.03%	2	7.69%
30.6.2.	Conventional/Go on/In what case	0.05%	3	9.7%
40.6.1.	Private/Go on/Reasons	0.00%	0	0%
40.6.1.	Private/Not go on/Reasons	0.07%	6	23.07%
40.6.2.	Private/Go on/In what case	0.00%	0	0%

Table 2. «Diario de Patricia»: percentages according to node and text unit.

would go on the show in order to have fun (conventional domain); and finally, 40% said they would not change their mind.

As regards the celebrity gossip show «Diario de Patricia» (DP), of all the adolescents interviewed, 84% said they would not go on the program, while 16% said they would. All those who said they would go on the show (16.45%) justified this decision using conventional arguments. However, of those who said they would not go on DP (84%), 23.07% gave private reasons, 11.54% moral reasons and 7.69% conventional reasons. The rest of those who said they would not go on the show (57.69%) offered no justification.

Nevertheless, of those who said they would not go on DP, 35.71% said they would change their minds; and of these, all (100%) said that if they did, it would be for moral reasons.

Next, we analyzed whether or not those who initially said they would not go on DP for personal or private reasons (34.48%) would change their minds, and what arguments they would use to justify this. 33.33% said they would change their mind and go on the show if it were to help someone (moral domain). None of the interviewees said they would change their

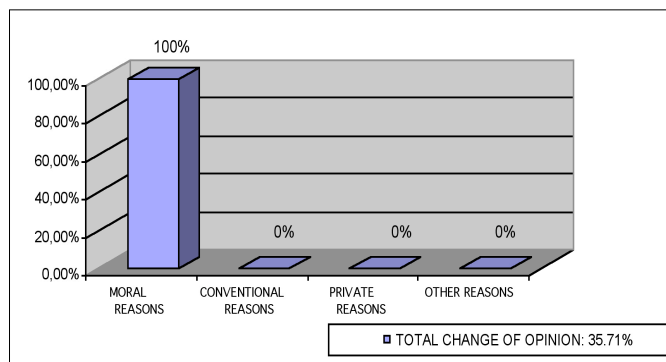


Figure 2: Percentage of those who would change their mind about going on «Diario de Patricia».

minds and go on the show for conventional reasons and 50% said they would not change their minds, reiterating their decision not to go on DP. 16.67% said they would go on the show if it meant they would be reunited with a friend or relation. In this case, then, a new category was added in relation to the reasons stated for interviewees changing their mind. This category, which we called «meeting», was not observed in relation to SR. Similarly, it was also found that all those subjects who said they would change their mind in relation to DP had also done so previously in relation to SR.

When they were asked what they would hope to gain if they were to go on the shows, in the case of SR they said they would be looking, above all, for fame and/or money (other reasons included: just to have a good time, to see the show live, to have people in favor or against, forgiveness and understanding). In the case of DP, in general they said they would be looking for personal help, someone to listen to them or to be reunited with a friend or relation. Only on one occasion did an interviewee mention fame or money.

Finally, we analyzed whether interviewees' responses were concentrated specifically on any of the basic profiles used for their selection as participants in the study. The results failed to reveal any clearly differentiated profile for those who said they would go on the shows. However, it was found that the responses

power) do not seem to discriminate any response trend.

4. Discussion

A general overview of the data indicates that the vast majority of adolescents would not be willing to go on the shows «Salsa Rosa» (SR, celebrity gossip show) and «Diario de Patricia» (DP, talk show), mainly for private reasons. Also, they are less likely to go on SR. The only case in which one of the interviewees initially gave a moral argument for not going on the show was in relation to DP. Moreover, all of those who said they would be willing to go on both shows justified their decision using conventional arguments and, when the interviewer prompted them to think about in what case they would change their mind, almost always (SR) or always (DP) their response was accompanied by moral reasoning.

In accordance with the data obtained, related to objectives 1 and 2 of this study, the adolescents who participated in this piece of research were found to distinguish very clearly between the two selected shows, being more disposed to go on DP than on SR. One key aspect to highlight is that, upon analyzing interviewees' assumptions or beliefs regarding what they might obtain or achieve by going on the shows, in the case of SR, the main incentives were fame and money (materialistic vision), while in the case of DP,

the reasons were more altruistic and included helping someone, listening or being reunited with family members or important people in their lives. This may be because talk shows are more similar to adolescents' everyday lives, and the people and stories they focus on are more

familiar to them. It may also be due to the greater realism perceived in this type of show (Davis & Mares, 1998). Both these aspects need to be researched in greater depth in the future.

One particularly striking result was the high percentage (57.69%) of interviewees who offered no arguments whatsoever for not being willing to go on DP. It may be that the beliefs underlying the issues dealt with are ambiguous, as Wainryb & Turiel 1993 point

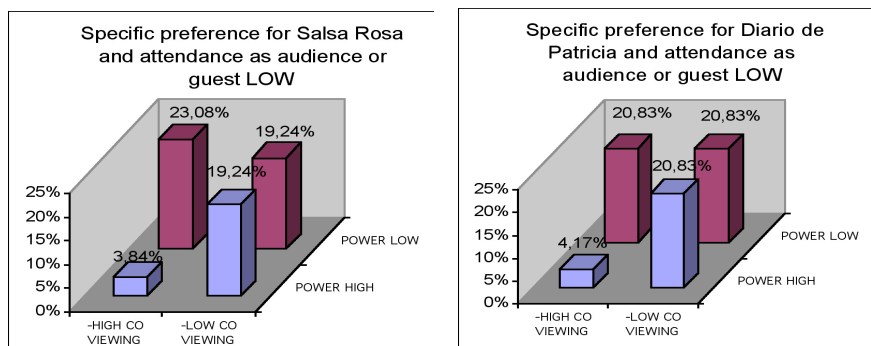


Figure 3: Specific preference for «Salsa Rosa» and «Diario de Patricia» and attendance as a member of the audience or a guest LOW.

of those who said they would not go on SR were concentrated (65.40%) in general on the «Specific preference for SR and DP and attendance as audience/guest low» profile, particularly in relation to co-viewing high and power low (23.08% of those who said they would not go on the shows). Similarly, the responses of those who said they would not go on DP are concentrated (66.66%) on the same profile, although in this case, the other two variables (co-viewing and

out, thus making it difficult for adolescents to state their reasons for not going on the shows. It is possible that the roots of this difficulty in saying why they would not go lie in the fact that they are unsure as to whether the stories recounted are real or «fabricated», whether the guests are paid to talk about the intimate details of their lives and to what extent the right to be informed should take precedence over the right to privacy. However, despite the negative criticism leveled at these genres, the turning of everyday life into media entertainment, with the focus on situations similar to those which adolescents might experience, may serve to help them learn how to cope with social interactions and raise their awareness of important social problems (Greenberg & Smith, 1995; Davis & Mares, 1998; Bauer & al., 2000).

It is also true, though, that the minority of adolescents who said they would go on these shows (16.45% for DP and 6.45% for SR) gave exclusively conventional reasons for their decision. Thus, for example, they said they would go on the shows to find out more about the lives of celebrities, because they thought it would be fun or for money. Fortunately, this coincides with the results we found in previous studies in which adolescents said they preferred other types of programs. The data are not alarming but, in our opinion, it is important to pay attention to the underlying beliefs since they may be related to either more or less prosocial values.

In relation to objective 3, in both cases (SR and DP) a similar percentage (almost one third) of those who initially said they would not go on the shows later changed their minds. The difference is that all of those who changed their mind in relation DP did so for moral reasons, i.e. to help someone, to be listened to or to be reunited, etc. However, while the majority of those who changed their minds in relation to SR did so for moral reasons, some said they would go on the show for conventional reasons, and an equal percentage said they would not change their mind under any circumstances. One interesting result is that the initial private arguments used to support interviewees' decision not to go on these shows are all (in the case of DP) or almost all (in the case of SR) replaced by moral arguments when the interviewees change their mind, probably because the moral reasons which emerge over the private ones are more solid and have a greater influence over the decisions to be made, as Wainryb & Turiel (1993) point out. Also, in the case of talk shows, the moral aspects perhaps emerge more clearly, since even some of the initial responses given in the case of DP contained moral arguments. It was also

observed that all interviewees who initially said they would not go on the shows for private reasons and then changed their mind in relation to DP for moral reasons had already changed their mind previously in relation to SR. One might wonder here whether the order of the items may have influenced the responses obtained. Whatever the case, the data obtained indicate the relevance of reception contexts and the role of mediators when exploring responses and linking them to their underlying values and beliefs.

In accordance with objective 4, we found that the previous selection of the profiles of the adolescents to be interviewed bore no relation to interviewees' positive response regarding their willingness to go on the shows, although it was related to their negative response. It is necessary to explore this aspect in more detail with a larger sample group, in order to determine the relevance of contextual factors such as parental mediation and the values perceived when selecting these programs.

In short, our data reveal that the adolescents participating in the study continue to place a value on personal privacy, even in association with certain television programs in which the limits between private and public are transgressed. This does not mean, however, that they are against people going on these shows and revealing the details of their private affairs. In other words, although they believe it is correct and appropriate for private, intimate matters to remain private, during the course of the interviews they qualify this somewhat by stating that «everyone is free to decide what to do with their privacy».

As regards the limitations of our study, first of all the sample group was very small. Consequently, any future research should strive to include a greater number of participants. Secondly, although we have explored the underlying beliefs at a general level, we believe that it is necessary to analyze them in greater depth, based on assumptions regarding the benefits and harm to be obtained by going on these shows, such as, for example, the fact of lying about your private life in front of the cameras (moral domain), conventions related to the family (conventional domain) or homosexuality (private domain). Also, we believe that the degree of reality perceived in the stories told on these shows, as well as the instability of the values which characterize the adolescent stage, might both have influenced the results and should be studied using other complementary methodologies.

It is worth remembering the wide range of possibilities offered by television for educating young people in values, the social norms and conventions that

govern peaceful coexistence and those aspects which depend more on person choices, and which are located within the private sphere. In order to take advantage of these possibilities, it is necessary to examine current television contents in order to ensure minimum levels of educational and cultural content which take into account the experience of the «TV generations» (Pindado, 2005). In this sense, it is important for there to be a greater number of initiatives which focus, in both formal and informal contexts, on the television skills of adolescents, or in other words, on their ability to interact with the medium in a balanced way from a perspective of both rationality and entertainment (Aguaded, 2008).

Based on the acknowledgement of the educational potential of television, we defend the idea that the decoding of the messages conveyed through perhaps less «constructive» television contents, such as those that turn intimacy into media entertainment, may also contribute to achieving this goal (Ardila, 2006; Bauer & al., 2000), providing we accompany adolescents in this process.

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