

The Relation between Mass-Media and Youth: Influences and Effects

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Abstract

This paper aims to point out how and in what manner is the young generation influenced by the television nowadays – one that changed its complexity in a spectacular way throughout the years. The methodology we used, was based on an opinion survey, in which teenagers aged 15 to 18 participated. The main topics we addressed, regarding the young generation were: the access to mass-media, ways of spending leisure time, T.V. viewing preferences, motivations and personal satisfactions, associated with certain television programs and exposure to shows with negative potential. The objective of this article and its research was to set the preferences of the younger generation for certain television programs, and also to establish the level in which they change their behavior. Along with the central purpose, we also analyzed a series of secondary objectives, with a lower importance, but whose achievement sustains the basic ideas of the survey. The followed targets were the following: a) the frequency with which teenagers watch T.V. shows, the number of hours spent daily in front of the television and the days in which they watch it for longer periods of time; b) knowing their leisure time activities and establish the place mass-media occupied in this hierarchy.

Keywords: Television, T.V. shows, young generation, leisure time

JEL: Y80, Z10

1. Introduction

Television transformed itself from a way of mass communication in one that addresses only to a narrow part of the public, similar in many ways to the radio or the press. The information flow, gradually became a huge phenomenon with a tendency of aggression towards the individual and the society. With its content, television manages to create a wide set of standards and values in domains such as: sciences, ethics, teaching, education etc. These spiritual values have a strong bond with society, but also they have some defects like the fact that an information gained from media is easily forgotten and the public is always fragmented, fact that heads to a different evolution, perceived in different ways by the variety of public categories.

For some viewers, television is like a follower, for others it represents an entertainment method or just a valid sources of information.

The present paper approaches a current subject: the influence that television has on the young generation.

One hundred high school students participated on our survey, mainly answering on how different television shows stimulate them or, on the other hand affect them.

2. The specifics of television communication

Television is a way of communicating and technologies, including a T.V., are symbolic objects, but they are also real. As Roger Silverstone mentioned in his work, *Television in daily life*, mass-media represents much more than a way spending free time or publicity, it become a part of cultural and social lives.

Even though, television had its debut more than 50 years ago, the real revolution that marked an unprecedented diversification of T.V. programs have begun in the '90 and still continues in the present, along with the improvement of communicating information. As a synthetic method of communicating information, television is first of ale based on a kinetic image, graphics and sound elements.

In his book, "Fenomenul televiziune" ("Television phenomenon"), Ion Bucheru states the fact that a live broadcast or an event described shortly after it look place, is seen, felt, lived by the viewer, that becomes with or without his will, an active participant in this conduct. In the field of this type of communication, every information needs to have a good source to offer it high credibility, because otherwise there will be a risk of not been taken seriously, resulting in a loss of audience. The message that is sent also has to consider the values and expectations of the followers, it must be built using a non formal

language, because it is possible for this message to fail. Through the information it offers, television can have a high influence on the society, it can create panic, but in the same way it can offer comfort, entertainment and information.

3. Influence of television on youth behavior

Lately, television has known such a great significance ascension, mainly in the last two decades, becoming one of the most mentioned option of spending free time. Under this circumstances, it is natural to ask ourselves in what way does television affect teenagers and how fond are they of this communication system? How much of what they think is determined by a T.V. and how much is the result of lecture?

Television consumption is a frequent habit among children with ages between 15 and 18 years old, more than 90% percent of the respondents state that they watch television every day, and more than 20% grant this activity more than four hours per day.

One of the main objectives of this paper has been revealing the influence of violent behavior in T.V. shows, because of all the variety of movies, news, commercials we see, the survey has revealed that excessive violence tends to affect more than 60% of teenagers of both genders. Also the majority of the population questioned, (55%) declared that news present too much violent content, that has a negative impact on their state of mind. Only 3% believe that there is not enough violence and not enough uncensored images. Television can gather up to 20 more people than all the readers of all the news papers all in one place, becoming by for the greatest violence provider.

Even, though a cause-effect relation is very hard to prove, messages with a high violent content have some unwanted reactions on teenagers. 20% of them answered that they felt a increased social anxiety, 10% said that, in general they are insensitive to harsh images or situations seen on T.V., because they are not directly affected by those circumstances, and 3% percent noticed a certain change in their personal attitude, change that made them on the short term, more aggressive both physical and verbal, immediately after suing sequences.

Another serious consequence is setting role models as seen in this kind of television. Romanian press offered some examples, especially in the non adult age, a teenager bay that stabs his sister to death, after watching a horror movie, an 18 years old that raped a girl, declaring after that he only wanted to act as he many times saw on T.V. (Adevarul, July, 17th, 2015).

In other words, sitting in front of the T.V. for countless hours does not always degenerate in such dose of violence in one's social life, but it does have an influence on the brain capacity to gather information and to maintain a good work performance, encouraging a sloppy lifestyle, this being a passive activity.

Here the numbers are very concerning, 70% of the young ones saying that after spending time in front of the television makes them grow weak, tired and they develop an attention deficit which makes them unable to concentrate on their homework or on reading.

Summing up all the other questions and the answers we received, the following aspects are brought to light:

a) T.V. replaces other activities that one wishes to practice, or should do so, like socializing, sports, house duties etc.;

b) Teens that spend their time watching T.V. interact less with their family members;

c) Excessive use of the television is bound to bad grades, lack of sleep, compartment issues, obesity;

d) The majority of T.V. programs tend to teach children to apply violent methods in solving problems and so they might develop an antisocial behavior

e) Children are exposed to alcohol commercials, leading to an unhealthy way of living;

f) Another danger is represented in seeing their idols smoking, drinking and engaging in many risky activities.

4. Conclusions

As a general conclusion of this paper, we can say that the media and, especially television, has become a "family member" that takes over the communication with the outside world and in most cases it is a substitute for all the other means of information. Therefore, after being permanently exposed to mass-media messages, people tend depend on them and to assimilate without discernment a certain way of understanding reality.

Teenagers that spend many hours in front of the T.V. do not have their own scale of values, so they have a tendency of copying on many occasions, characters that aren't even real. This type of viewers received the name of heavy viewers, name given by Gerbner and Gross (1976). It is known that the typical teenager is angry, frustrated and always in conflict with himself and the society, making them more prone to be influenced by what they watch on television shows. When they were asked how important television is to you, 61% said that it is important or very important, more accurate 50% said that it is

important to them and 11% said that it is very important, while 38% declared that it is not that important.

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