

# Values promoted by modern television

Business



During the last decades television has developed significantly and become not only a source of information and entertainment, but also an effective device of manipulation of people's opinions and desires. The purpose of this paper is to examine the values modern television programs and advertisements are promoting and to investigate the harmful effects television may cause to the physical and mental health of its viewers. It is hard to overestimate the influence that television has on our modern society, especially on the minds of young generation who get their notions about the surrounding world and establish their values on the basis of what they have just seen on TV screen. TV viewers should be aware of the negative effects television programs and advertisements may have on their conciseness and physical health. If they know the truth it is easier to protect themselves and their children and prevent possible adverse effects. Nowadays television is not limited as it used to be a few decades ago.

Thanks to the advanced technologies and media convergence an access to the TV channels as well as to the particular TV programs and shows became much easier. It can be reached through Internet web-sites via computers or mobile phones. However, such a massive expansion of television and its availability is not always regarded as a positive tendency as various negative effects may be observed (Renee). TV watching proved itself to be a time-consuming activity. Nowadays people are often confused with a great variety of TV programs and shows that are offered by different TV companies. As a result, they spend hours switching from one channel to another being unable to decide what they want to see.

Time, spent on TV watching, might be used on other different activities that would be more fruitful and useful for health. For example, this time might be used to practice sport activities or spend time outdoors. It was found that people that spend their quality time doing physical exercises instead of watching TV are more healthy and can be proud of keeping fit (Freedman). It was also observed that many students spend most of their time behind a TV or computer screen instead of doing their homework. As a result their learning curve and general performance at school are decreasing. Unfortunately, TV watching became a priority when it comes to deciding how to spend spare time.

That is why it has replaced by now many leisure activities like sport or outdoor games. Live communication between people is one of the issues that suffer the most because of the massive expansion of television. People rather spent time watching TV shows and programs than communicating with friends, neighbors or their children. Spending family time watching TV has become a popular tendency at our time. As a result, relationships between parents and their children are suffering.

Television is forcing out traditional family activities like having barbecue together, playing Frisbee, baseball or simply interaction with each other. Parents and children do not speak much; they do not discuss everyday issues and do not share their feelings. Consequently, they have less in common and links between them become less strong and stable. Besides being time-consuming, television also calls for some money investments as some fees should be paid monthly for cable and satellite television. In

addition, people spend every year thousands of dollars in order to purchase new television equipment that is more up-to-date but also more expensive.

All these fees and payments are extra expenses for family budget. Money spent on television and its accessories could be used on other necessary things. For example, it might be used to pay for a health insurance for children, their education or family trips. TV shops are inseparable part of modern television. Different marketing and advertising techniques are used in order to make people buy different things ranging from ordinary cutlery items, cosmetics, toys to training equipment. Viewers are persuaded that such kind of shopping is more efficient and convenient as they have a unique possibility to save time they would spend strolling around in the shops.

But in reality people buy lots of things and items they do not really need. In addition, many advertisements that are promoting some sort of sweets or toys are oriented on children. In such a way, after viewing such advertisements children demand their parents to buy the products they have previously seen on screen (Cooper). It was found that television has a great impact on our consciousness and mind. They may influence our notions about the conception of the surrounding world, in such a way modifying our traditional spiritual and human values. Viewers, especially the youngest ones, are prone to exurb information and messages they get from advertisements and TV shows and programs.

It can be used for propaganda of healthy lifestyle or some sort of social service announcements. But the problem is that it can also be used for advertising such things as cigarettes or alcohol. Many advertisements

promoting cigarettes and alcohol are made in such a way to cause positive associations in people's minds in order to stimulate and motivate them to buy a particular product. As a result, a viewer gets a message that smoking and drinking are good as they are associated with wealth and luxury shown in the advertisement. Propaganda of particular standards of beauty or lifestyle is one more issue that may have adverse effects.

Images from glamorous life of the movie characters or famous people may cause some viewers feel depressed as they start to compare the images they see on TV with their everyday life. When a viewer realizes he or she does not correspond to these requirements, he may suffer from low self-esteem and lack of self-confidence. Moreover, teenagers at this age are prone to create idols that would be a role model for them. They are trying to look like object of their admiration, wear similar clothes, haircut or make-up, but also to imitate their behavior and habits even if they are bad. Sometimes it can lead to discipline problems, misbehavior and problems at school.

The young generation is the most vulnerable category of population as they do not have their own strong beliefs and notions about good and bad, so that they are unable to analyze and sort out information they get from mass media. That's why they are regarded by some advertisement producers as a target audience for many advertisements and TV programs. They easily succumb to the influence of advertisements promoting fast-food and different sweets that contain high level of fat and sugar. For instance, if a child sees a well-done advertisement promoting some kind of energy drink that promises to make him or her powerful and strong, there is a great

probability a child will be eager to buy it. As a result, many children addicted to the television suffer from obesity and diabetes.

The problem is exacerbated with a fact that children spend most of their free time watching TV and are not engaged in any physical activities needed for their normal physical development. Apart from negative effects that television may have on the mental health of children, there is also a high risk of development of physical conditions such as Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) and Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) (Limi). It can be explained by the fact that rapid change of scenes and the abundance of different visual techniques may influence badly the balance of child's catecholamine system, which is in charge of providing communications between nerve cells. Moreover, background noise produced by television may break a child's ability to concentrate on a particular issue and contributes to the dispersion of attention. That means that children may have attention and hyperactivity problems. School-aged children having ADHD are prone to act impulsively and have lack of focus which influences badly their ability to learn.

It was found that up to 10% of children in the U. S. suffer from ADHD. Such children may be much disorganized that is why parents should work with them a lot. Also they are highly recommended to practice some kinds of sport activities in order to improve their social skills and self-confidence, establish discipline.

Parents are often blamed for using television as a supervisor or a babysitter for their children (Khan). Being too busy and occupied with their work and

everyday problems, parents have no spare time to spend with their children. They believe there are a great number of TV programs produced for different ages of children that can easily replace live communication and interaction with other children. It is believed to be a great mistake as children are supposed to learn using their hands and bodies by touching and smelling things that are surrounding them. Replacing live communication with the surrounding world with television programs disturb child's ability of cognitive perception.

It also reduces their adaptability skills making them less flexible and more vulnerable to any changes in the surrounding environment. Adults are not always able or willing to control programs their children are watching. It is a common knowledge that a great variety of films, TV shows and programs transmitted nowadays on television channels contain violence, sex scenes, drugs abuse. All these shocking techniques are used in order to strike attention of the audience. But the problem is that overloading with such type of information may influence young minds in a bad way. For example, if they watch all the time different displays of violence on TV screen they become more familiar with it and perceive it as a regular social phenomenon.

Later a child may show its strength and worth by using violence. Children are prone to use information that get from television as a background for establishing their own values and notions of good and bad. To prevent any harmful or adverse effects modern television and advertising may have on the children's conciseness, different measures should be taken into action. First of all, parents are advised to minimize time spent on TV viewing by

their children. It would be also useful to eliminate TV watching for children during their first two years of life.

For elder children time spent on television, computer and video games should be strictly limited and controlled by parents. It is also advisable to control TV programs and shows that children are watching in order to prevent them from watching any unfavorable and inappropriate information that may be displayed there. Parents are also encouraged to spend more quality time with their infants; to talk and listen to them as such type of interaction is paramount in development of interpersonal communication skills. Thanks to the advanced technologies and media convergence a great television expansion can be observed nowadays. But besides entertaining and educative functions performed by television, it may also have some adverse effects.

It was found that television and advertising may influence badly our mental as well as our physical health. Addiction to television may lead to low self-esteem, lack of self-confidence, poor communication skills or attention and hyperactivity problems. Children are the most vulnerable category of population as they are unable to analyze and sort out information they get from mass media that is why they are often used as a target audience for different kinds of advertisements. Children are also prone to use information they get from television as a background to establish their values and notions of good and bad. Parents are often blamed for using television as a babysitter for their children and not controlling TV programs and shows they are watching. The last ones may contain scenes of violence, sex, drug abuse

which may also influence a lot a child's conciseness and lead to misbehavior and distorted cognitive perception.