
TELEVISION VIEWING AND ATTITUDES OF ADOLESCENTS TO PRE-MARITAL SEX, MARRIAGE AND HOMOSEXUAL PARTNERSHIPS

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Abstract

The study deals with the issue of possible impact of television viewing on attitudes of adolescents to pre-marital sex, marriage and homosexual partnerships. The basis of the research was an assumption that due to apparent sexualisation of television content, it is legitimate to query how this may impact adolescents' attitudes. As studying attitudes is rather complex, the author primarily focused on analyzing relationships between attitudes and TV viewing, be it in terms of TV consumption or programme preferences. Secondary goal was to look at other possible predictors of attitudes, such as religiousness of parents, parents' attitudes, adolescents' values and their bondage to Church. The results confirmed the impact of TV viewing on the attitude disapproving of pre-marital sex in such sense that the more TV viewing, the weaker negative attitude to pre-marital sex is. Other important predictors were found, e.g. religiousness of parents and their attitudes, conformity and adolescents' bondage to Church.

Keywords: attitudes, marriage, homosexual partnership, television, genres

1. Introduction

Modern people are surrounded by media that not only are a part of the environment but also do the function of necessary means of communication. Undisputed presence of media in the life of young generation is supported by statistical evidence showing that young people spend most of their time using media. Although there are no data available on media consumption of Slovak young people that would show a total time spend with media, a picture can be made based on partial information. Survey in 2007 showed that 50% of students over 13 spent 1–3 hours, 18% spent 3–4 hours daily using the Internet [N. Vrabec and N. Úroveň, *Mediálnej gramotnosti mladých ľudí na Slovensku*, http://www.vyskummladeze.sk/images/stories/iuventa/DAVM_018/Zver_sprava_DAVM018.pdf]. According to statistics from 2010, individuals aged 15 and above spend 214 minutes watching TV daily [1]. The statistics from 2011 show

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that more than 50% of individuals aged 16-74 use the internet on a daily basis [[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Frequency_of_internet_use,_2011_\(%25_of_individuals_aged_16_to_74\).png&filetimestamp=20121114123114](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php?title=File:Frequency_of_internet_use,_2011_(%25_of_individuals_aged_16_to_74).png&filetimestamp=20121114123114)]. Based on the mentioned numbers, it is obvious that a significant portion of young people's leisure time is spent in front of a television or computer screen.

There are voices saying that television as a medium is coming to its end [J. Edwards, *The Death of Television May Be Just 5 Years Away*, http://articles.businessinsider.com/2011-12-02/news/30466538_1_hulu-number-of-tv-subscribers-phone-service], yet the status quo shows that television is finding a new form of existence. It's the end of television as we knew it – family-shared viewing, low diversity of programme offer. Ways how people access TV content are changing as well. More and more people watch TV on the internet, be it via computer, tablet or mobile devices [S. Carton, *It's the End of TV as We Know It (And We Feel Fine): Understanding TV's New Role in Culture and Marketing*, <http://idfive.com/insight/whitepapers/its-end-tv-we-know-it-and-we-feel-fine-understanding-tvs-new-role-culture-and>]. In the past, television often facilitated gathering family members and their spending time together. Through this shared viewing of TV content, traditional values were often sustained. Nowadays, a trend to individualisation of TV viewing is visible and individuals incline to watch TV alone [S. Livingstone and R. Das, *POLIS media and family report*, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/30156/1/family_and_media_report_%28LSERO_version%29.pdf]. In previous decades, people seldom made their free time arrangements according to the TV programme. However, today one prefers to choose what, where and when they want to watch, which is fostered by above mentioned mobile devices, on-line TV archives and recording devices.

It is undisputable that, for the young generation, the Internet is the most favourite medium. On the other hand, television maintains a rather stable popularity among adolescents. The reason is that there is still a demand for programmes traditionally offered by television – sports, movies, sitcoms, reality shows, and documentaries. Another factor is that young people have more options how to access TV content. What once used to be an exemption – having more than one TV-set in a household, today is becoming a common situation. According to author's own findings, 50% of households have two TV-sets and 34% of adolescents have their own TV-set in the bedroom (the survey was conducted on a sample of 486 adolescents aged 14-15 from Orava region in Slovakia in December 2010). Earlier survey showed that 58% of students at primary and secondary school had a TV-set in their bedrooms [http://www.vyskummladeze.sk/images/stories/iuventa/DAVM_018/Zver_sprav_aDAVM018.pdf]. The presence of TV-set in children's bedroom increases the amount of time spent watching TV without parental supervision and, at the same time, TV-viewing habits change. Adolescents tend to watch TV later in the evening or at night, spend less time participating on family activities and shift their attention to peers or spend more time alone [2].

2. Media influence

Taking into consideration how media saturated the environment where people live their daily lives, it is legitimate to pay attention to a possible media influence. This is particularly important in the case of adolescents who are going through a rough period in their life, which includes self-identification, challenging parents and finding one's place in the society. These processes are often accompanied with intra-personal and interpersonal conflicts, ambivalence and questioning acquired values. The latter often takes form of a conflict between the values of peers and the values of parents [3]. Media cannot be excluded when values are discussed, as they are a rich source of models related to attitudes, values, ways of thinking and behaviour.

3. Media, values and attitudes

Human values form a basis for attitudes and motivate people's behaviour in various situations. It can be said that values influence most, if not all, motivated behaviour [S. Schwartz, *A Proposal for Measuring Value Orientations Across Nations. European Social Survey*, http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/methodology/core_ess_questionnaire/ESS_core_questionnaire_human_values.pdf] and decision making [4]. Although values can be relatively stable, they can also undergo changes in the long run, e.g., modern parents prefer their child's autonomy and independence over parental authority, which can be interpreted as a weakening of traditions [5].

Given the fact, that human values construct an imaginary reservoir from which one consciously or unconsciously draw inspiration and motivation for their behaviour, it is legitimate to ask to what extent media (as a part of the environment) affect values.

Extant research on media influence includes numerous studies on relation between attitudes and specific media content. However, George Gerbner, who introduced the theory of cultivation, did not focus on specific programming, yet on television viewing in general. He claims that television as a part of culture cultivates our conceptions of the world. The more people watch television the more their views and beliefs are similar to those present in television [6]. For instance, the well known 'mean world' syndrome refers to distrust heavy viewers have towards world as they consider it dangerous and relatively mean – as a result of world presentation in television. According to the cultivation theory, it seems that people are prone to build such notions about various issues that are similar to those presented in television.

Therefore, the first research question asks the following: RQ1: Is there a correlation between television viewing (the amount of time spent viewing, preferred programmes) and adolescents' attitudes to marriage, homosexual relationships and pre-marital sexual intercourse?

3.1. Sexual attitudes

Media offer plenty of sexual images and researchers analyse what impact it may have on people. Brown and L'Engley studied sexual attitudes of young people aged 13–14 in relation to sexually explicit media. They found that exposure to sexually explicit media was related with more permissive sexual norms and gender role attitudes as well as early sexual behaviour, for both males and females [7]. Other researchers also found, that television watching increases the risk of sexual initiation by adolescents [8, 9]. Watching television is linked to more liberal and more stereotypical sexual attitudes, e.g. sex like a recreational activity [10]. More frequent viewing and stronger identification with popular TV characters were associated with greater levels of sexual experience. At the same time, more frequent viewing of video clips, daily talk shows and some prime-time programmes with sexual content was associated with greater endorsement of sexual stereotypes like 'Women are sexual objects' and 'Men are sex-driven' [11].

Based on the previous research, the first hypothesis can be formed: H1: Higher television consumption will positively correlate with more liberal sexual attitudes in a form of endorsing pre-marital sexual intercourse.

3.2. Homosexuality

In line with the cultivation theory, it is reasonable to assume that exposure to media representations of homosexuality may help cultivate viewers' own attitudes about homosexuality [12]. As some studies show that the number of news in media about homosexual couples is increasing [13], and homosexuality is presented in more positive light than in the past, it is legitimate to assume that it might lead to forming attitudes of greater acceptance of homosexuality [12]. Presentation of homosexual couples in TV news in the USA was found to be largely normalized and mainstreamed in typically heteronomous ways [13]. Nowadays, it is not rare to see a homosexual character in a movie or TV series. In 2011, Steve Levitan a director of *Modern Family* television series was awarded EMMY and this series portrays a homosexual couple with an adopted daughter living as a family. Harrington claims that penetration of homosexual issues into TV programmes differs depending on a genre. Sit-coms and prime-time series are more open to include homosexual characters, yet soap-operas are usually based on a heterosexual paradigm of romantic love [14]. Although there is missing academic research on media presentation of homosexuality in Slovakia, television programmes throughout different genres offer protagonists of homosexual orientation more often than in the past. The portrayal of these characters is positive and their homosexuality is presented as a normal sexual conduct. It is also interesting that in one television series a homosexual protagonist's mother changes her attitude to son's sexual orientation from rejection to acceptance.

The second hypothesis thus posits: H2: Higher television consumption will positively correlate with higher acceptance of homosexual relationships ('same sex marriage') in the sense of them being equal to marriage between man and woman and also as a sign of an anti-discriminatory attitude.

3.3. Marriage and family

Society is in constant change and this impacts its constitutional parts, among which the family is no exception. In so called post-modern Europe, there is a lively public discussion on what a marriage is and there are obvious efforts for re-definition of a marriage. These efforts inevitably include re-definition of the family itself, e.g. the issue of foster care for homosexual couples. One of the changes that have influenced the family is the growing number and acceptance of other types of spousal relations, e.g. cohabitation [15]. Some countries have already legalized same-sex marriages (Netherlands, Belgium, Spain) and made them equal to man-and-woman marriages. In Switzerland and the Great Britain, homosexual couples may adopt children. High divorce rate is a problem in nations across Europe, and in 2011 there were 43 divorces per 100 marriages. In addition, since 1989 the fertility rate has been decreasing in Slovakia. Even though marriage is still preferred to cohabitation, ¼ of children born in 2004 were born out of wedlock. However, the percentage of cohabitating couples in Slovakia is rather low when compared with Europe – 2,6% [16]. On the other hand, the number of families in which only one parent takes care of children has been rising [17].

Family, family relations, marriage and spousal relations are frequently portrayed in films, series and they have become common topics for talkshows. It is obvious that media presentation of these issues to some extent reflects the status quo in society, which means that socio-cultural changes in views on marriage and family have impact on their media presentation. Due to the fact that there is a lack of relevant research on this type of media presentation in Slovakia and the Czech Republic, foreign findings may illustrate a current situation when media presentation of family and related phenomena are considered. William Douglas in his paper on subversion of American TV family, states there is little doubt that television promotes a traditional family model. However, he relies on studies from the 90's. With some time having passed, one can notice that alternative family models are offered, e.g. incomplete family and same-sex partnerships. Inter-spousal relations are emotionally richer, in terms of expression of attraction, yet the family on television appears to have become generally more conflictual. In contrast, parent-child relations are not only more hostile in modern families but, in some cases, are defined by lower level of mutual trust, supportiveness and stability. Children are those who initiate conversation in the family [18]. From 1950 to 1990, the number of television series with the family in the centre of a plot has doubled, but 85% had a form of comedy [19]. Another research of television series showed that the number of married couples has been declining, while the number of divorced parents has

been rising [20]. Currently, television series *Happily Divorced* (aired in many countries including Poland) offers a story of a divorced couple living in the same household (husband comes out as a gay), they remain friends and their form of a relationships is often referred to as love, although they both have other romantic relationships. What modern television series have in common is, they present a divorce as something common and as an effective way of solving marital problems. Among such television series aired by Slovak commercial television stations belong television series like: *Two and Half Men* (USA, 2003-), *Priateľky* (SK, *Girlfriends*, 2008), *Profesionáli* (SK, *Professionals*, 2008-2012), *Pod povrchom* (SK, *Under the Surface*, 2012-2013), *Panelák* (SK, *Appartment Block*, 2008 -).

As the issue of the divorce is frequently presented in television, and depicted as an effective way of solving marital problems, the third hypothesis is as follows: H3: Higher television consumption will positively correlate with higher acceptance of the divorce as a way of ending an unhappy marriage.

3.4. Values and religiousness

For a long time, religiousness has been considered by Slovaks one of the most important values, and according to the 2011 census almost 75% of population declared some kind of affiliation with predominantly Christian churches [21]. With such a high number of religious people it is legitimate to raise a question how religion affects one's life.

It is a generally accepted fact that values stand at the centre of any religion, and some studies have shown that religion can determine these values in parents [22, 23]. However, an affiliation with a religion does not necessarily mean that one adheres to the religion's value system. Values are only one sub-part of a religion, and to study the extent of a person's affiliation with a religion, a different category is required, i.e., religiousness, than can be approached from different perspectives. In this research, it was measured with a scale consisting of items related to participation, ethical and moral beliefs [M. Tížik, *Náboženské predstavy a spôsoby merania religiozity*, http://www.sociologia.sav.sk/cms/uploaded/1193_attach_tizik_religiozita.pdf].

Parents play crucial role in passing down values to their children and research shows that parental religious activities affects adolescents' attitudes to a marriage and cohabitation [24]. In addition, adolescents' own religiousness affects their attitudes and behaviour [A. Adamczyk, *Personal and School Religiosity for Understanding Young Women's Abortion Decisions*, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Sociological Association, TBA, New York, http://citation.allacademic.com/meta/p182442_index.html], while young people without religious belief declare the most liberal attitude to pre-marital sex [25]. Given that religiousness affects attitudes, it is likely to assume that religiousness of parents will be a significant predictor of adolescents' attitudes. Thus, the next research question is as follows: RQ2: What is the

relation between religiousness and attitudes of parents and attitudes of their children?

3.5. Parental mediation

Parents as primary caregivers should not only act responsibly in terms of developing children's media literacy (preventive approach), but in some cases they should act as mediators – those standing between a medium and a child. For instance, this happens when parents comment on media content or restrict child's access to media content. This type of mediating activities falls under the term parental mediation which refers to situations when parents engage in children's media consumption [26].

Foreign research of parental mediation indicates that parents regulate children's media consumption in various ways [S. Livingstone, *Young People and New Media*, Project report, London, http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/21172/1/Young_people_New_media.pdf] and parental mediation has been almost exclusively studied with focus on television. In the last years, there has been conducted some research on parental mediation of the Internet, too [P. Nikken and J. Jansz, *Parental mediation of young children's internet use*, <http://www2.lse.ac.uk/media@lse/research/EUKidsOnline/Conference%202011/Nikken.pdf>; 27, 28].

The review of extant research shows that there are three most frequent strategies for parental mediation of television. Active or instructive mediation refers to parents commenting on or explaining media content; restrictive mediation is based on setting restrictions on media consumption, e.g. restricting the media time or preventing children from watching a certain programme. Coviewing, as the third strategy, refers to situations when parents use media together with children, e.g. they watch a television programme together. However, coviewing, as defined, excludes any conversation or comments related to media content [29]. Empirical research has proven that active mediation successfully reduces the relations between news exposure and fear, worry among younger children [30] and leads to less favourable evaluation of stereotyped television female characters [31]. Restrictive mediation is a significant factor in moderating potential media influence of sexually suggestive programming on adolescents [32].

With value conservativeness in Slovakia taken in consideration and drawing from the extant research of parental mediation effectiveness in eliminating potential negative media influences, the fourth hypothesis posits: H4: Instructive and restrictive mediation will negatively correlate with adolescent attitudes favouring pre-marital sex, homosexual partnership and divorce.

4. Methodology

The data were drawn from a survey conducted at the ninth-grade level of primary school and the fifth-grade level of secondary grammar school that targeted adolescents in the 14- to 15-year-old age bracket and their parents. The survey was conducted in December 2010 and January 2011 and the schools were chosen so that they would geographically represent the entire Orava region in Slovakia. According to statistical data, there is the highest number of Catholics in this region when compared to other regions in Slovakia. Altogether 486 children (N = 486) completed a child questionnaire at school. The response rate from the parents was 52%, resulting in 254 completed and returned questionnaires (N = 254).

4.1. Pretest

The questionnaire used for data gathering was pretested on a sample of 18 adolescents and their parents from one secondary school in the town of Ružomberok. One of the questionnaire scales did not reach necessary reliability, yet, when checked after gathering the data in the survey main wave it showed the required internal consistency ($\alpha \geq 0.7$).

4.2. Television consumption

Data on these factors has been collected asking adolescents how much time on average they spend watching television on working days and how often they watch certain programmes. Respondents who chose a 'do not know' answer were excluded from the analysis.

4.3. Parental mediation

Parental television mediation was measured with a typology developed by Valkenburg et al. [29] that consists of 15 items – 5 for each mediation strategy. For instructive mediation, the questions were designed to assess whether the parents communicate media messages to their children, e.g., *How often do you explain the motives of TV characters?*; for restrictive mediation, the questions targeted the existence of restrictions regarding TV viewing, e.g., *How often do you set specific viewing hours for your child?*; and items in the coviewing scale assessed to what extent the parents watched TV with their children, e.g., *How often do you laugh with your child about the things that you see on TV?* For each item, the parents indicated their degree of concern on a 4-point scale (coded 1–4; never, rarely, sometimes, often).

4.4. Human values and religiousness

Religiousness was measured with the Religious Commitment Inventory developed by Worthington et al. [33]. It includes statements such as *My religious beliefs lie behind my whole approach to life* or *Religious beliefs influence all my dealings in life*, which makes the inventory suitable for studying how religiousness might influence parental mediation strategies. In addition, the ten items in the inventory address dimensions of the religion concepts offered by Billiet in his proposal for questions on religious identity in the European Social Survey, e.g., *Religion is especially important to me because it answers many questions about the meaning of life* [J. Billiet, *Proposal for questions on religious identity. European Social Survey*, 339–383, http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/methodology/core_ess_questionnaire/ESS_core_questionnaire_religious_identity.pdf]. For each item in the ten-item inventory, the parents indicated their response on a 5-point scale from ‘not at all true of me’ to ‘totally true of me’. The ten items constituted a reliable scale (range 10–50, $M = 33.79$, $SD = 9.45$, $\alpha \geq 0.74$) on which higher scores indicate a higher degree of religious commitment. In order to increase the scope of variables that might be related to attitudes, values of conformity and tradition – as proposed by Schwartz [http://www.europeansocialsurvey.org/docs/methodology/core_ess_questionnaire/ESS_core_questionnaire_human_values.pdf] – were included. Each value was assessed by two items (each item consisted of two statements), e.g., for tradition: *It is important to him/her to be humble and modest. He/she tries not to draw attention to themselves.*; *Tradition is important to him/her. He/she tries to follow the customs handed down by his/her religion or his/her family.* Parents indicated how well the description fits them on a five-point scale with the following options: ‘not like me at all’, ‘not like me’, ‘somewhat like me’, ‘like me’, ‘very much like me’.

4.5. Attitudes to marriage, homosexual partnerships and pre-marital sex

Attitudes were measured with an inventory consisting of statements and adolescents were to indicate the extent to which he/she agrees with the statement from the scale: strongly disagree, inclined to disagree, neither, inclined to agree, strongly agree. For marriage, the issue of ‘inseparability’ was chosen and there were these two statements used: *It is better to divorce than to stay in an unhappy marriage*; *There is always a way how to save a marriage*. For measuring an attitude to the same-sex ‘marriage’ the aspect of equality with so called traditional concept of a marriage was used. The questionnaire included these statements: *Not to allow gays and lesbians to marry a partner with the same sex is discrimination*; *Same-sex marriage is equal to man-woman marriage*. For the sake of conducting analysis, this attitude was labelled as ‘prohomo’.

Statements as *It is normal to have sexual experience before marriage* and *You need to try ‘it’ (sex) when you want to merry someone* were used to measure a positive attitude to pre-marital sex (labelled as ‘prosex’). Negative attitude to

pre-marital sex (labelled as 'antisex') was measured using the following statements: *Sexual intercourse is intended for husband and wife only, Having sex before marriage is a sin.*

4.6. Procedure

In order to answer the first research question and to test four hypotheses, only data from children (N = 486) were used. However, to answer the second research question - *What is the relation between religiousness and attitudes of parents on the one side, and attitudes of their children on the other side?* – merging data from children and parents was required as it was necessary to combine each child with their parent. This led to reduction of the sample (N = 219) as fewer parents than children responded to the survey and, in addition, a mistake during administration of questionnaires was made so that some ID numbers of parents and children did not match.

5. Results

Answering the first research question - *Is there is a correlation between television viewing (the amount of time spent viewing, preferred programmes) and adolescents' attitudes to marriage, homosexual relationships and pre-marital sexual intercourse?*- brought the finding that there is no significant correlation between these variables. When differences between groups of adolescents were studied using crosstabulation and chi-analysis, the analysis showed that 53.8% of adolescents watching TV less than 2 hours a day (light viewers) agree with the statement that *it is normal to have sexual experience before marriage*. However, in case of adolescents viewing TV more than 2 hours a day (heavy viewers) the number went up to 71.2% of those who agree with statement. Chi-analysis confirmed significant differences between these groups chi-square = 18.04, (8), $p < 0.05$. When control variables (sex and attachment to Church) were used, boys (58.1%) and individuals with weak attachment to Church (85.3%) were more likely to agree with the given statement than girls (49%) and individuals with strong attachment to Church (34.2%). It must be noted that it was a group of adolescents who spend less than 2 hours watching TV a day. When heavy viewers were considered (more than 2 hours a day), both sexes and groups with weak and also strong attachment to Church showed increase in agreement with the statement (boys 76.6%; girls 66%; individuals with weak attachment 100%, individuals with strong attachment 53%). Thus, it may be concluded that hypothesis H1 was confirmed which means that higher television consumption positively correlates with more liberal sexual attitudes in a form of endorsing pre-marital sexual intercourse.

When issues of approving of same-sex 'marriage' as equal to man-and-woman marriage (H2) and approval with divorce as a solution of unhappy marriage (H3) were considered, the analysis did not show any significant

differences between heavy and light viewers. Hypotheses H2 and H3 were thus not confirmed.

In addition to the amount of time spent viewing, first research question also asked whether viewing specific programmes correlate with adolescent attitudes. There is a moderate positive correlation between approval of pre-marital sex (as a trial needed before marriage) and TV series $r = 0.12$, $p < 0.05$ ($N = 403$), sitcoms $r = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 403$), films $r = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 403$) and reality shows $r = 0.19$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 403$). Positive attitude to pre-marital sex as something normal positively correlates with watching sitcoms $r = 0.16$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 421$), films $r = 0.15$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 421$) and reality shows $r = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$ ($N = 421$). The belief that sexual intercourse is designed only for married couples negatively correlates with watching TV series $r = -0.12$, $p < 0.05$ ($N = 421$), sitcoms $r = -0.18$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 421$), films $r = -0.14$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 421$) and reality shows $r = -0.12$, $p < 0.05$ ($N = 421$). Also, considering pre-marital sex as a sin negatively correlates with watching TV series $r = -0.13$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 417$), films $r = -0.14$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 417$) and documentaries $r = -0.13$, $p < 0.05$ ($N = 417$). Negative correlation was also found between the belief that there is always a way how to save a marriage and watching TV news $r = -0.13$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 424$). There is a negative correlation between the belief that not to allow homosexuals to marry a partner of identical sex is discrimination and watching other shows except reality shows $r = -0.11$, $p < 0.05$ ($N = 386$).

Hypothesis H4 tested whether there is a link between mediation strategies and adolescent attitudes. It was partially confirmed as there is only positive correlation between restrictive mediation and the belief disapproving of pre-marital sex $r = 0.19$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 219$).

The second research question addressed a relation between religiousness and attitudes of parents, and adolescent attitudes. Parental approval of pre-marital sex correlates positively with the same attitudes of adolescents $r = 0.25$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 215$) and negatively with disapproval with pre-marital sex on the side of adolescents $r = -0.24$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 215$). In the case of negative attitude of parents to pre-marital sex, there is positive correlation with the same attitude of adolescents $r = 0.37$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 215$) and negative correlation with adolescents' approving of pre-marital sex $r = -0.28$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 215$).

Religiousness of parents correlates positively with adolescents' disapproving of pre-marital sex $r = 0.34$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 219$). There is a negative correlation between religiousness and adolescents' approving of: pre-marital sex $r = -0.31$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 219$), homosexual 'marriages' $r = -0.19$, $p < 0.01$ ($N = 219$) and divorce as a solution of marital problems $r = -0.29$, $p < 0.01$. ($N = 219$). Regression analysis (Table 1) was conducted in order to identify predictors of adolescents' attitudes. Variables were inserted into two blocks, when the second block consisted of one variable only – amount of time spent viewing television.

Table 1. Predictors of attitudes of adolescents.

	'pro-divorce' adolescent	'pro-marriage' adolescent	'pro-sex' adolescent	'anti-sex' adolescent	'pro-homo' adolescent
Predictor	Beta	Beta	Beta	Beta	Beta
Sex (female) - adolescent	0.184**	-0.184*			
Religiousness (parent)	-0.169*		-0.193**		-0.180*
Attachment to Church (adolescent)		0.104**		0.268**	
Value conformity (adolescent)			-0.193**	0.181**	
Amount of TV-time					-0.123*
'Pro-sex' attitude of parent			0.140*		
'Anti-sex' attitude of parent				0.234**	

Note: The table includes only statistically significant predictors. ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

5.1. Approval of divorce as a solution of marital problems

The first block of predictors (value of tradition, value of conformity, sex, religiousness of a parent, attachment of adolescent to Church, and 'pro-divorce' attitude of a parent) accounted for 13% of the variance for the attitude $F(6, 208) = (5.328)$, $p < 0.01$. The addition of the second block resulted in an increase and the variable added 1% to the variance $F(1, 207) = (1.005)$, $p < 0.01$.

5.2. Belief that there is always a way how to solve a marriage

The first block of predictors (value of tradition, value of conformity, sex, religiousness of a parent, attachment of adolescent to Church, and 'pro-marriage' attitude of a parent) accounted for 9% of the variance for the attitude $F(6, 210) = (3.603)$, $p < 0.01$. The addition of the second block resulted in no change in variance $F(1, 209) = (0.428)$, $p < 0.01$.

5.3. Approval of pre-marital sex

The first block of predictors (value of tradition, value of conformity, sex, religiousness of a parent, attachment of adolescent to Church, and 'pro-sex' attitude of a parent) accounted for 19% of the variance for the attitude $F(6, 210) = (3.603)$, $p < 0.01$. The addition of the second block resulted in no change in variance $F(1, 209) = (0.428)$, $p < 0.01$.

5.4. Disapproval of pre-marital sex

The first block of predictors (value of tradition, value of conformity, sex, religiousness of a parent, attachment of adolescent to Church, and 'anti-sex'

attitude of a parent accounted for 30% of the variance for the attitude $F(6, 207) = (14.493)$, $p < 0.01$. The addition of the second block resulted in an increase and the variable added 1% to the variance $F(1, 206) = (4.358)$, $p < 0.01$.

5.5. Approval of the same-sex 'marriages'

The first block of predictors (value of tradition, value of conformity, sex, religiousness of a parent, attachment of adolescent to Church, and 'pro-homo' attitude of a parent) accounted for 8% of the variance for the attitude $F(6, 206) = (2.996)$, $p < 0.01$. The addition of the second block resulted in no change in variance $F(1, 205) = (0.428)$, $p < 0.05$.

6. Discussion

Because of no correlation between the amount of time spent viewing television and attitudes of adolescents, an analysis of differences between groups of adolescents was conducted. The analysis confirmed that the adolescents who watch television more than 2 hours a day are more likely to agree with pre-marital sex than those who watch less television. This trend has been consistent when two control variables were analysed (sex and attachment to Church). Boys and individuals with weak attachment to Church are more likely to agree with pre-marital sex. These findings may infer that the amount of time spent watching television affects adolescents' attitudes to pre-marital sex. However, they do not confirm a causal relation. Regression analysis showed that the amount of time spent watching television predicts only attitude of disapproval of pre-marital sex in the following sense: the more television watching, the weaker a negative attitude to pre-marital sex is.

Interesting relations were found between watching specific programmes and attitudes. Watching television series, sitcoms, films and reality shows correlates positively with approving of pre-marital sex and negatively with the belief that sexual intercourse is designed only for married couples. It is necessary to state that correlation is only moderate. One possible interpretation is that adolescents who agree with pre-marital sex tend to watch that type of programming. Or vice-versa, that type of programming somehow strengthens or weakens the relevant attitude. There is no doubt that there are more factors affecting one's attitudes, yet because of current media presentation of pre-marital sexual relationships as common and natural, one can assume that the programmes analysed might have an influence on adolescents' attitudes to pre-marital sex in a way, that they weaken a negative attitude and strengthen the positive one.

Before formulation of hypotheses, it was assumed that instructive and restrictive mediation might correlate with adolescents' attitude to pre-marital sex as parents tend to mediate television messages in order to prevent children from viewing potentially harmful content which could lead to risky sexual behaviour [32]. Correlation found between restrictive mediation and an attitude

disapproving pre-marital sex may be interpreted in a way that because of restrictions on watching TV adolescents are less likely to adopt televised views on sexuality and thus develop an attitude approving of pre-marital sex.

Relations between adolescents' attitudes and other factors (religiousness of parents, attitudes of parents, values of adolescents and their attachment to Church) were also analysed. It was found that there is positive correlation between parents and adolescents' attitude to pre-marital sex, either one of approving of or one of disapproving of it. This relation was confirmed by regression analysis in which attitudes of parents functioned as significant predictors of adolescents' attitudes, which means adolescents are likely to share their parents' views on pre-marital sex. Religiousness of parents was identified as an important predictor of adolescents' attitude to pre-marital sex, divorce and same-sex 'marriages'. Higher religiousness of parents results in smaller extent of adolescents' approval of the given issues. This finding corresponds with previous research proving that religious upbringing may produce reported attitudes that accord with the transmitted values [34].

Value of conformity, conceptualised as keeping rules and proper behaviour, was found to be an important predictor of the attitude to pre-marital sex. The more the adolescents value tradition, the less they are inclined to approve of pre-marital sex and are more likely to disapprove it. It may infer that some adolescents consider pre-marital sexual experience as something against rules and something that can be seen as improper. In addition to the value of conformity, adolescents' attachment to Church is a significant predictor of two attitudes. The more that adolescents declare they are attached to their Church, the more inclined they are to disapprove of pre-marital sex and they are more inclined to believe there always exists a way how to save a marriage.

6.1. Limitations

This research does not aspire to offer simple and undisputable answers to such a complex issue as formation of attitudes and possible impact of television viewing on attitudes. Correlations and regression analysis will need to be verified by further research which will include a content analysis of selected programming. In this research, we relied on foreign findings media content, yet Slovakia-specific data will be needed in order to conduct research reflecting the situation in Slovakia.

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