Childhood and online audiovisual content in Spain: An approach to consumption and parental mediation on OTT platforms

Infancia y contenidos audiovisuales online en España: Una aproximación al consumo y a la mediación parental en las plataformas OTT

Infância e conteúdos audiovisuais online em Espanha: Uma abordagem ao consumo e mediação parental em plataformas OTT

María Marcos Ramos
Professor
(University of Salamanca)
http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3764-7177
Spain

Marta Cerezo Prieto
Research
(University of Salamanca)
https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4620-8654
Spain

María de la Peña Mónica Pérez Alaejos
Professor
(University of Salamanca)
http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9022-9922
Spain

Marina Hernández Prieto
Professor
(University of Salamanca)
http://orcid.org/0000-0001-9674-6883
Spain

Reception date: 9 February 2020
Review date: 9 February 2020
Accepted date: 23 April 2020
Published: 1 July 2020
Abstract

Multimedia convergence and the arrival of the Internet in the audiovisual market have affected the patterns of consumption and reception of content in the family environment and in the media literacy processes of minors. Despite the fact that the figures for linear television consumption by the youngest children remain unchanged, the progressive penetration of audiovisual platforms in Spanish households is undeniable, and the role played by parents/guardians is fundamental.

The aim of this research is to identify the practices of use in these platforms by children of infant and primary school in Spain, and to analyse the parental mediation systems in the new scenario of media convergence, based on a descriptive study carried out with 431 parents or tutors. To carry it out, the Qualtrics methodological tool has been used, by means of the application of a questionnaire through a snowball sampling.

After the analysis of the results, important changes were observed in parental mediation, in accordance with the progressive increase in the age of the children, although the most frequent regulation in both age groups is linked to the time that the parents or guardians allow the children to pass through the different devices, rather than in the restrictions around the contents. Moreover, there are no significant differences in the type of audiovisual products they consume on linear television and OTT platforms, with children’s series and films predominating at the earliest ages.

Key Words: Parental mediation; Children; Audiovisual consumption; Television; Media literacy

Resumen

La convergencia multimedia y la llegada de Internet al mercado audiovisual ha afectado a las pautas de consumo y recepción de contenidos en el entorno familiar y en los procesos de alfabetización mediática de los menores. A pesar de que las cifras de consumo de televisión lineal por parte de los más pequeños se mantienen, es innegable la penetración progresiva en los hogares españoles de las plataformas audiovisuales, siendo fundamental el papel que realizan los padres/tutores.

El objetivo de esta investigación es identificar las prácticas de uso en dichas
plataformas por parte de niños/as de infantil y primaria en España, y analizar los sistemas de mediación parental en el nuevo escenario de convergencia mediática, a partir de un estudio descriptivo realizado con 431 padres/madres o tutores. Para llevarlo a cabo se ha utilizado la herramienta metodológica Qualtrics, mediante la aplicación de un cuestionario a través de un muestreo en bola de nieve.

Tras el análisis de los resultados se constatan cambios importantes en la mediación parental, acordes con el incremento progresivo en la edad de los niños/as, aunque la regulación más frecuente en ambas franjas de edad está vinculada al tiempo que los progenitores o tutores permiten a los menores pasar frente a los diferentes dispositivos, más que en las restricciones en torno a los contenidos. Además, no se constatan diferencias significativas respecto al tipo de productos audiovisuales que consumen en la televisión lineal y en las plataformas OTT, predominando las series y las películas infantiles en las edades más tempranas.

**Palabras clave:** Mediación parental; Niños; Consumo audiovisual; Televisión; Alfabetización mediática

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**Resumo**

A convergência multimídia e a chegada da Internet ao mercado audiovisual afetaram os padrões de consumo e recepção de conteúdo no ambiente familiar e nos processos de alfabetização midiática de menores. Embora os valores para o consumo linear de televisão sejam menores, a penetração progressiva nos lares espanhóis das plataformas audiovisuais é inegável, sendo fundamental o papel desempenhado pelos pais / responsáveis.

O objetivo desta pesquisa é identificar as práticas de uso nessas plataformas por filhos de filhos primários e secundários da Espanha e analisar os sistemas de mediação parental no novo cenário de convergência da mídia, a partir de um estudo descritivo realizado com 431 pais ou mães ou responsáveis. Para isso, foi utilizada a ferramenta metodológica Qualtrics, através da aplicação de um questionário através de uma amostra de bola de neve.

Após a análise dos resultados, mudanças importantes na mediação dos pais são observadas, em consonância com o aumento progressivo da idade das crianças, embora a regulação mais frequente nas duas faixas etárias esteja ligada ao tempo que os pais ou responsáveis permitem os menores passam na frente dos diferentes dispositivos, mais do que nas restrições em torno do conteúdo. Além disso, não há
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diferenças significativas em relação ao tipo de produtos audiovisuais consumidos nas plataformas de televisão linear e OTT, prevalecendo as séries e os filmes infantis nas idades mais precoces.

Palavras chave: Mediação parental; Filhos; Consumo audiovisual; Televisão; Alfabetização midiática

1. Introduction and literature review

Researching which audiovisual content children consume is just as important as how their closest environment controls access to that content. If parental mediation was an important tool to help children figure out media messages with traditional television (Livingstone, 2007), in today’s panorama, characterised by abundance and diversity, this mediation becomes essential. We must not forget that television, whether by cable or online platforms, is one of the main socialising agents, so family mediation is vital (Torrecillas-Lacave, 2013). Mediation that can be understood as a “cultural instance from which media audiences produce and appropriate the meaning and sense of the communicative process” (Martín-Barbero, 1987) or as a “structuring process that configures and reconfigures both audience interaction with television and how they create the sense of this interaction” (Orozco, 1996, p. 74). Family mediation has been proven to be fundamental (Gabelas and Marta-Lazo, 2008) as the family is “the natural group for watching television” (Orozco, 1996, p. 41) and as it is “one of the most determining factors in the relationship the child establishes with the small screen, both regarding consumption times and diets, and in the media for viewing content and the possible benefits or cognitive and moral damages arising from this relationship (Del Río, Álvarez, Del Río, 2004, p. 286) as “children who come off best from their relationship with television are those whose parents deploy more interaction-triangulation strategies with them and the television screen” (Del Río, Álvarez, Del Río, 2004, p. 286), as proven in recent research papers by Gabelas and Marta-Lazaro (2008).

Different forms of family mediation have been highlighted, such as integration within the home, organising time and space, regulation (Barrios, 1992) or criticism and judgement of content (Aguaded, 1999). According to Aguaded, parents and children must establish a dialogue to contextualise what they are seeing, “the
child not being physically in front of the screen is not enough. They should not
feel they are merely a viewer, it should include the experience, time for dialogue,
confrontation” (Ferrés, 1994, p. 137). Aguaded suggests “the need to establish
mitigation strategies in which information, dialogue and options become basic
facets to counter what he calls the power of the magic box” (Aguaded, 1999, p.
36). Parents can use different strategies when they opt for dialogue, such as posi-
tive, negative, instructive or restrictive mediation patterns (Austin, 2001). In a
pioneering research paper, Abelman and Pettey (1989) noted three types of paren-
tal mediation: restrictive, when they establish rules; evaluative, when contents are
discussed; and, finally, unfocused, when parents have little participation in chil-
dren’s television consumption. Van der Voort, Nikken and Van Lil (1992) indicate
that mediation can be restricted, guiding and unfocused. Pindado (1998) classifies
these three models as TV-danger, TV-“is there” and TV-nanny. Urra (1998) uses
another similar term: “cathodic babysitter”, and Llopis (2004), after conducting a
factor and cluster analysis, indicates that Spanish families can be classified accord-
ing to three mediation strategies: controlling-restrictive, permissive and guiding.
Torrecillas-Lacave (2013) classifies four types of effective mediation: self-control,
hetero-control, control and lack of control. Vilchez-Martín (1999) indicates that
there are four types of qualitative mediation styles: didactic, strict, comfortable
and paternal.

Mediation in the home, even if not intensive or strict, should at least be com-
mon practice, however, various research papers have proven that “the lack of inter-
est or permissiveness of some parents for indiscriminate consumption of television
by their children” prevails (Aparici, 1994, p. 1) as children mostly watch television
alone (Aguaded and Díaz-Gómez, 2008), as demonstrated by the figures provided
by López Romero and Monedero Morales because “of the 65.8% of students who
consume television with their families, 56.4% do so with the parents. Remaining
television consumption is alone, with friends, with siblings and, a lower percent-
age, with grandparents” (Romero and Monedero, 2008, p. 271).

Other research papers indicate a lack of commands (García-Cortázar et al., 1998)
or lack of coherence between what children should watch and what they watch
(Vilchez-Martín, 1999). This is what Núñez-Ladevéze and Pérez-Ornia call pragmat-
ic discordance: “the idea is to contrast the normative criteria expressed by parents about how they should control what their children watch and what they think children should not watch and the actual behaviour” (Ladevéze and Pérez-Ornia 2002, p. 139).

Torrecillas-Lacave (2013) states that the following television reception contexts should be analysed: consumption scenario, situational scenario, family mediation, effective child behaviour, and characteristics of products consumed by children.

Numerous studies have analysed parental mediation in homes with so-called traditional television (Abelman and Pettey, 1989; Van der Voort, Nikken and Van Lil, 1992; Barrios, 1992; Ferrés, 1994, 2005; Aguaded, 1995, 1997, 1999, 2005; Pindado, 1998; Austin, 2001; Del Río, Álvarez, Del Río, 2004; Fernández, Domínguez, Revilla and Anagnostou, 2004; Gabelas and Marta-Lazo, 2008; Aguaded and Díaz-Gómez, 2008; López Romero and Monedero Morales, 2008; Torrecillas-Lacave, 2013, etc.). By contrast, far fewer studies have analysed this parental mediation with the content we receive over the Internet (Solomon-Moore et al., 2018; Hiniker et al., 2016).

This article presents the results obtained, based on a quantitative study using the Qualtrics methodological tool, and which analysed consumption of audiovisual content on OTT platforms and family mediation. The answers of 431 parents and guardians of children aged 3 to 12 participating in this study were analysed.

2. Methodology

For this paper, an exploratory study was conducted by surveying 431 individuals who had to fill in a questionnaire prepared in Qualtrics. It comprised 145 questions to analyse 637 different variables. The questionnaire could be filled in by parents/guardians of children aged 3 to 12.
2.1. Sample analysis

The sample comprises 431 individuals in two groups: 168 are parents or guardians with children aged between 3 and 6, and 263 with children aged between 7 and 12. In the first range (children aged between 3 and 6), 54.2% are boys while 45.8% are girls; in the second range (7 to 12) the number of boys rises to 55.1% compared to 44.9% of girls. In terms of age, the average age of subjects is 9.73 (SD=2.93), and by ranges, as follows: 4.62 (SD=1.09) in the first, and 7.72 (SD=1.78) in the second.

Looking at parents’ work, 70.8% state they work full-time, 19.7% are part-time workers, 8.6% indicated they were unemployed and, finally, 0.7% were retired. As for marital status, the majority percentage in both ranges said they are married (70.02% and 78.03% respectively). Regarding parents’ level of studies, 62.1% said they have university studies in the first range and 60.1% in the second age range. The average number of children of those surveyed is 1.84 (SD=0.85).

Analysing household Internet connection was also deemed relevant. All stated they have or use some type of Internet connection and just 18, i.e., only 4.17% of those surveyed, have no connection at home. Note that, at the time of conduc-
3.94% of the sample had 5G connection despite this technology not being fully implemented. The average monthly spend on online audiovisual content of those surveyed is between €1 and €15; Table 1 shows the type of consumption.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range 1 (3-6 years)</th>
<th>Paid platforms</th>
<th>Free platforms</th>
<th>Rental or purchase</th>
<th>Downloads</th>
<th>Others</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>56%</td>
<td>79,8%</td>
<td>4,8%</td>
<td>19,6%</td>
<td>7,1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range 2 (7-12)</td>
<td>56,7%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>4,6%</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>4,6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1: Internet connection. Source: compiled by authors.*

Parents with children aged 3 to 6 also mentioned other platforms they used regularly, such as YouTube Kids, Filmin or a school program called Progrentis. Participants for the 7-12 year old range said they also used Google Earth, Orange TV or Spotify.

### 2.2. Research objectives and questions

This paper aims to analyse whether the arrival of online audiovisual content distribution platforms has changed uses and habits in consuming that content by children, and whether parental mediation has varied compared to previous studies based on conventional television.

Furthermore, it aims to identify practices of how children in Spain use audiovisual content distribution platforms, as well as identify the contexts of how children receive television on OTT platforms, focusing on aspects such as:

a. Consumption scenarios.

b. Situational scenario.
c. Effective behaviour.


Likewise, the aim is to identify differences in the most relevant variables between the two age groups established in the sample (pre-school and primary school) in an attempt to describe essential changes with progressive increase in age, if any.

3. Results

In order to identify the practices of use with which children consume most audiovisual content, we analysed which OTT platforms those surveyed are subscribed to, as well as the most viewed and highest rated in terms of specific content for a younger audience.

Movistar is the dominant telephone and Internet provider in the sample as 149 of the 431 households surveyed use that company, accounting for 34.57%. It is followed by Vodafone with 21.57% and Orange with 12.06%. On the other end of the scale, Amena is the least-represented company, only used in 2 households surveyed.

The study also aimed to find out which audiovisual platforms are viewed most frequently, asking the sample to rate each platform or app according to how suitable they are for child consumption, as represented in Table 2. In the first age range, the most viewed is Clan TV, which is also deemed most appropriate for consumption by parents and guardians. On the other hand, the least appropriate for the 3-6 age range would be YouTube which, nevertheless, is viewed by 49.4% of children in the sample; this figure increases in the second age range and is the most-viewed, with 69.2%. Despite this, no parent considered it to be the most appropriate, which is Clan TV, deemed the most appropriate by parents of children aged 7 to 12; it is viewed in 37.6% of cases in this age range. The least appropriate is deemed to be Amazon Video.
### Table 2: Consumption and assessment of audiovisual content platforms.

*Source: compiled by authors.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Range 1 (3-6 years)</th>
<th>Intervalo 2 (7-12)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mostviewed</td>
<td>Very appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Netflix</strong></td>
<td>(7-12)</td>
<td>3,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movistar</strong></td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>1,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Movistar junior</strong></td>
<td>11,9%</td>
<td>8,9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>HBO</strong></td>
<td>10,7%</td>
<td>0,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amazon Video</strong></td>
<td>17,3%</td>
<td>1,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Filmin</strong></td>
<td>1,8%</td>
<td>0,6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youtube</strong></td>
<td>49,4%</td>
<td>1,8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Youtube Kids</strong></td>
<td>45,2%</td>
<td>8,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clan TV</strong></td>
<td>56,5%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No consume contenidos audiovisuales de ninguna plataforma online o app</strong></td>
<td>3,6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Otros</strong></td>
<td>6,5%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>168</td>
<td>168</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Range 1** (3-6 years) and **Intervalo 2** (7-12)
A Student’s T-test for independent samples was also used to measure if the parents’ level of studies was related to the platforms consumed by their children. Results showed when parents have higher level of studies, the most consumed platforms are HBO \((\chi^2 [429, N = 431] = .934, p < .05)\) and Filmin \((\chi^2 [429, N = 431] = .206, p < .005)\). Significant differences were found in the case of Amazon Prime \((\chi^2 [429, N = 431] = .137, p = .08)\). There was no significant statistical relationship with the following platforms: Movistar, Netflix, YouTube, Movistar Junior, YouTube Kids, Clan TV.

For each option provided in the survey, we measured if there was a relationship between the level of studies of the parents surveyed and how children consume audiovisual content (paid platforms, free platforms, rental or purchase, and download). No significant differences were found when they were considered individually, however, these significant differences did appear when the form of consumption was measured as a whole, creating an aggregate index including all forms of consumption. Significant differences were detected between level of studies and forms of consumption such that, higher levels of studies used more forms of consumption \((N = 431) = .093, p < .05)\).

To identify child television reception contexts on audiovisual platforms, first we identified consumption scenarios, i.e., material characteristics of the space where children relate with audiovisual content. Given that today audiovisual content is not only consumed on television, this identification was extended to any device that could be used to consume audiovisual content, such as computers, tablets, mobiles, etc.

The graph below shows distribution by age range and devices available to children in the family household. In both age ranges, the mobile is the most commonly used device in Spanish households, followed by laptops in children aged 3 to 6, and tablets or iPads among 7 to 12 year olds.
Analysing the devices children use for their own consumption shows significant differences between the two age groups. In the first range, the majority response is that the child has no device for their own use; this is considerably lower in the second range. The tablet is the device most used by children aged 3 to 6; it is also used by the majority in the second age group. Significant differences can also be found in the case of mobile for personal use. Just 1.1% of smaller children have one, while 19.2% of the older age range state they are used personally for audio-visual consumption.
Analysing if children consume audiovisual content on platforms alone or accompanied was essential to describe the different situations in which audiovisual content is consumed by children, and also to identify any parent mediation and of which type. Thus, by analysing data as a whole, 61.9% of those surveyed said children were left alone sometimes, followed by 31.6% who answered no and, finally, the answer yes was selected by 6.5%. Analysing this data in more depth according to the two age ranges, in both cases the majority option is sometimes, which is more frequent in the older group. The answer no is significant in the first range, a much higher percentage than in the second group, in which children are left alone to watch audiovisual content more frequently than in the previous range, where children are younger, as shown in Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3 to 6 years</th>
<th>7 to 12 years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>21.7%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>48.8%</td>
<td>70.3%</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total (N)</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>263</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 3: Do children consume audiovisual content alone? Source: compiled by authors.*
Parents were also asked if they regulated their children’s audiovisual content consumption and how this was regulated; in both cases the most common answer was by using time limits.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>3 to 6 years</th>
<th>7 to 12 years</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time limits</strong></td>
<td>59.5%</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
<td>6.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content limits</strong></td>
<td>25.6%</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
<td>31.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>As a reward</strong></td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
<td>61.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Not regulated. The child can watch is as long as they want</strong></td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Others</strong></td>
<td>10.7%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total (N)</strong></td>
<td>168</td>
<td>263</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 4: Types of audiovisual content regulation. Source: compiled by authors.*

In the first range, parents/guardians also indicated other, more sporadic and open response forms of regulation, such as “while eating dinner” or due to “bad behaviour”. Interesting answers include “if they misbehave they do not watch television”, “talking to them and explaining the limits” or “YouTube and YouTube Kids is not installed on their personal device, they can only use this app on our telephone and outside the home as entertainment”. In the second age range, the answers to this question were as follows: “with mum supervising”, “at the moment no regulation is needed as she only asks for it very occasionally and puts it down straight away”, “if they do not behave well, they do not watch the telly, mobile, etc.”, “we only watch films on telly on Fridays”, or “audiovisuals are not an entertainment option for my daughter”, “she usually paints or goes out to entertain herself”, or “as best I can”.

Whether parental control mechanisms were installed on devices regularly used was also analysed and, if so, which were the most commonly used. Parents of younger children in the first age range answered no in 53% of cases, followed by yes in 43.5%. 3.6% of those surveyed said they did not know. Regarding which were used, those surveyed answered as follows: time limit and password, disabling downloads, Google family, monitoring program, parent PIN, the television itself blocks +7 content, Kaspersky antivirus, Netflix filter, disable the use of certain apps, etc. The most common response among parents of primary children was that parental controls were installed in 52.9% of cases, followed by no in 44.5%,
and do not know was chosen in 2.7% of cases. In this range, open responses were more numerous and included: Qstodio, Family link, Google family, Control Parental Guidance, Parental click or Sophos programs, app filters and blocks, closing certain channels, content or age restrictions, or using the Find my kids app to control consumption time.

Finding out whether content consumed by children was revised by parents prior to viewing was also an interesting point for the analysis. Looking at data for pre-school children, the majority answer was “always” with 50%, followed by “not always” with 35.7% and “no” with 14.3%. In the group of parents with primary children, the majority answer was “not always” chosen by 49.4% of those surveyed, followed by “yes” with 36.5% and “no” with 14.1%.

Parents were also asked where they obtained information on the content viewed by their children, and they were asked to indicate all the options used. The following table shows the answers, with group of friends being the most common.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendations from friends</th>
<th>3 to 6 years</th>
<th>7 to 12 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations from friends</td>
<td>48,2%</td>
<td>49,4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networks</td>
<td>14,9%</td>
<td>24,7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialised webs</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>31,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not informed</td>
<td>17,3%</td>
<td>16,3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>20,8%</td>
<td>23,2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N total answers</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5:** Where do you get information on audiovisual content?

*Source: compiled by authors.*

Significant open responses in the first range include: “content they see in class, series they have seen or I saw when I was young”, “I take into account the target age and if it is not for their age, I don’t let them watch it and explain it to them”, or “the school proposes it”. Answers in the second range were quantitatively more numerous: “I revise their mobile/computer and view what I deem new”, “when
they want to see something, they ask me first if they can see that specific content, I look for information and if it seems correct, I let them watch it”, “magazines or press articles” or “recommendations from teachers or apps such as Google classroom”.

We also measured if there were significant differences between the level of studies of parents/guardians and some relevant questions related to child consumption. Thus, significant differences were found with parental control ([N = 431] = 4.125, p < .05) and with parents regulating or revising content prior to watching ([N = 431] = -.095, p < .05). It is worth noting that the higher the parents’ level of studies, the more audiovisual content consumption is regulated in the following ways: as a reward, with time limits or with content limits. The relationship between level of studies and how parents obtain information on content is also significant, with only “social networks” showing a significant relationships ([N = 431] = .182, p < .001), given that, people with a lower level of studies get more information from social networks.

For the question addressing changes in how audiovisual content is consumed according to media (traditional TV vs. OTT), it was essential to know the number of hours children dedicate to audiovisual content, both conventional and online platforms. One of the first premises was to identify whether children continue to consume traditional television, and the data show that the answer is yes. In the first range, 64.3% of those surveyed consume conventional television and, in the second, the percentage increased to 76%.

Table 6 shows data provided by those surveyed on the number of hours their children consume audiovisual content on conventional television and platforms, also distinguishing if they do so during the week, at the weekend or during holidays.

By analysing the maximum hours children consume during the week, at the weekend or during holidays, the quantity stands out. In the 3 to 6 range, the sample indicated that maximum consumption during the week is 10 hours, this rises to 12 at the weekend, and over 20 hours a week during the holidays. This means
they watch almost three hours of television per day. In the 7 to 12 range, the figures change to 10, 15 and over 20.

In terms of content consumption on platforms, the maximum hours stand out in some cases, such as 15 hours consumed during the week for pre-school children, a figure that shoots up to 25 among children from 7 to 12. At the weekend, the maximum hours of consumption are 10 hours in children from 3 to 6, and 15 hours in primary children. Figures during the holidays are more significant as they consume over 20 hours in both age ranges. However, the number of answers in the higher figures among children from 7 to 12 is more revealing as 6.25% of the sample watch over 20 hours per week during the holidays.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CONVENTIONAL</th>
<th>PLATFORMS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>During the week</td>
<td>Weekend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-6 years</td>
<td>4 (2.39)</td>
<td>3.93 (2.06)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-12 years</td>
<td>3.95 (2.62)</td>
<td>4.41 (2.12)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6: Average viewing. Source: compiled by author. Average value and Standard deviation in brackets.*

We measured if there was a correlation between the number of hours consuming traditional television during the week and at the weekend, and verified that there is a positive correlation with Pearson’s r contrast statistic ([$N = 308$] = .605, $p < .001$), such that, those who watch more during the week also watch more hours at the weekend. The same correlation is also true when analysing OTT consumption during the week and at the weekend ([$N = 408$] = .451, $p < .001$).

The same contrast statistic was also used to verify the relationship between level of studies and traditional television consumption. There is a significant negative relationship at the weekend ([$N = 308$] = -.209, $p < .001$) and during holidays ([$N = 308$] = -.149, $p < .05$), as the higher the level of studies, the fewer hours of television consumed. However, there is no statistically significant relationship between level of studies and hours of audiovisual content consumed on audiovisual platforms.
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By focusing on the type of content most consumed and which form part of the “audiovisual diet” of children, it was important to find out what children aged between 3 and 6 and between 7 and 12 consume, both on conventional television and OTT platforms, following the comparative analysis marked by the research objectives.

Younger children mostly view children’s series and films on both media, with fiction series the least common. Parents of children in the second range also state that the most-viewed contents are children’s series. Older children watch more fiction series on platforms that conventional television.

![Graph 4: Content consumed. Source: compiled by authors.](image)

At the time of the survey, we also wanted to identify which other contents children aged 3 to 6 and 7 to 12 watched on audiovisual platforms so an open response option was given. Interesting answers in the first range include videos on YouTube - songs, toys and video games-, as well as programmes and competitions, learning videos and sports. The second range yielded another type of content such as Unboxing, Youtubers, video games, videos on science and experiments, on drawing and ideas for design and creating, funny content and, finally, offline games.

A Student’s t test for independent samples was used to analyse if there was any relationship between parents’ level of studies and content consumed on traditional television. No statistically significant relationship was found, except in the films variable where children of parents with a lower level of studies consume more films on traditional television (\([N = 431] = .066, p < .05\)).
The content that children consumed on traditional television and audiovisual platforms were correlated for the entire sample. Statistically significant results were found in the following cases: those who consume documentaries on traditional television also consume children’s series ($\chi^2 1[N = 431] = 8.818, p < .005$), films ($\chi^2 1[N = 431] = 30.139, p < .001$), fiction series ($\chi^2 1[N = 431] = 4.594, p < .05$), children’s films ($\chi^2 1[N = 431] = 6.589, p < .05$) and documentaries ($\chi^2 1[N = 431] = 124.493, p < .001$) on audiovisual platforms. Likewise, those who consume films on traditional television also consume series ($\chi^2 1[N = 431] = 23.678, p < .001$), films ($\chi^2 1[N = 431] = 71.872, p < .001$) and documentaries ($\chi^2 1[N = 431] = 13.511, p < .001$) on audiovisual platforms.


Analysing the total number of types of content consumed on traditional television and on OTT platforms also yields a significant relationship. Thus, the greater the variety of content consumed on television, the greater the variety also consumed on OTT platforms ($[N = 431] = .293, p < .001$).

4. Discussion and conclusion

This research demonstrates the ever increasing use of audiovisual platforms by children, however, it highlights that they have not yet been able to replace traditional television in terms of the number of hours Spanish children aged between 3 and 12 consume. As for the scenarios for consumption, the possibilities children have to access online platforms are increased with the number of devices connected to the Internet found in most Spanish households. Television is no longer watching only on the television, and the mobile is the star for distributing audiovisual content, even in younger age ranges. The fact that 70% of those
surveyed state that their children aged 7 to 12 have their own device for online consumption is interesting, as 19% of them use their own mobile. How children access these content platforms is diverse, although we can see that a higher level of studies among parents means more diversified forms of consumption in households, accessing content by subscription, rental or purchase, download or free access. Thus, we understand that parents/guardians use the same means of accessing audiovisual content as their children. According to data from this study, audiovisual content is consumed alone more often as the child gets older: children aged 3 to 6 consume content alone 4.2% of the time, compared to 8% among 7 to 12 year olds. The most common answer was “sometimes”, which is significant (with 70.3% of answers) in the older aged range. Therefore, as a child gets older, their freedom increases so they can watch audiovisual content alone and, therefore, without any parental mediation to help these children understand what they are viewing. These data corroborate that the pattern indicated by other researchers such as Aguaded and Díaz-Gómez (2008) and Romero and Monedero (2008), among others, is still valid; they indicated that in most cases children watch television with no adult intervention.

As for what they consume, another very important aspect to be analysed as knowing how much they consume is just as important as knowing what they consume, those who watch films on traditional television also watch them on OTT platforms, although on these platform, which offer more content, the content consumed is diversified to include series and documentaries in viewing habits. The same is true of those who consume children’s series on traditional television as they add children’s series and films to their television diet on platforms. Therefore, we find the paradox that a greater offer of content leads to greater diversity in terms of products selected for viewing.

An interesting discordance was detected among the most viewed platforms and those deemed most appropriate. YouTube is the most viewed, however it is considered the least appropriate by parents/guardians who deem Clan TV to be the most suitable despite not being the most viewed. This confirms the point of Vilchez-Martín (1999), who indicates that there is no connection between what children watch and what they should watch.
This result is relevant if connected with how most children consume content: alone. This enables them to watch a series with content that parents/guardians deem unsuitable. Furthermore, children not only consume content with no parental mediation or with comfortable parental mediation (Vilchez-Martín, 1999), but regulations on how much and what they consume are also scarce. In most cases, regulations regarding time or content are established (Barrios, 1992, Aguaded, 1999) and no type of parental control is installed especially among younger children, perhaps as they do not usually view audiovisual content alone so the families in this study could be viewed as conducting restrictive and, to a lesser extent, delocalised control, but not evaluative (Abelman and Pettet, 1989) as 50% of parents/guardians of children aged 3 to 6 always view content beforehand compared to 49% of parents/guardians of children aged 7 to 12 who do so sometimes. We must highlight that a higher level of parent/guardian studies leads to greater regulation of consumption as they are more informed about what their children are going to watch from social networks, school or peer groups. A higher level of studies also leads to more diverse formats and themes consumed. Nevertheless, we also detected that regardless of the parents’ level of studies, as the child gets older the content is reviewed less than before by parents before viewing.

There is little difference between the hours children aged 3 to 6 consume during the week on conventional television and platforms. Thus, these children watch almost two hours per day of audiovisual content on both media, the same average as at the weekend (although this means doubling their daily consumption) and rising exponentially during holidays. Figures are higher (except during the week on conventional television) among children from 7 to 12, who consume an average of nine hours per week during holidays. A perverse relationship is also highlighted as children who watch more television during the week, regardless of the means used for viewing, also consume more at the weekend. We must also consider that children whose parents have a lower level of studies spend more hours in front of the television.

Data collected in this study are convergent with previous studies (López Romero and Monedero Morales, 2008; Torrecillas-Lacave, 2013; Hiniker et al., 2016; Solomon-Moore et al., 2018; among others) in terms of content, uses and hours
consumed. No changes in parent/guardian behaviour have been detected from traditional television to audiovisual platforms, except in the greater quantity of diverse content consumed. Parents/guardians mostly continue with restricted and unfocused mediation (Van der Voort, Nikken and Van Lil, 1992) or controlling-restrictive, permissive mediation (Llopis, 2004). Effective and/or didactic mediation (Vilchez-Martín, 1999) is scarce. Effective mediation is mostly self-control (Torrecillas-Laclave, 2013), more typical of middle-upper classes who let children decide what to watch and when, and hetero-control (Torrecillas-Laclave, 2013), the predominant mediation nowadays which merely involves parents/guardians establishing a series of rules on use and consumption. The study also shows that how content is used could also fall under what Pintado (1998) calls TV-“is there” and in some cases even “cathodic babysitter” (Urra, 1998).

In this scenario, it is essential that schools and/or educational institutions stress the importance of media literacy, which provides children with the tools and strategies needed to know how to “read” audiovisual content, in addition to training critical and mature consumers in an increasingly mediated society.

**Referencias**


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