FORMATIVE AND SELF-FORMATIVE PERSPECTIVES IN THE CONNECTION BETWEEN ADOLESCENTS AND MEDIA

Dorin OPRIŞ, Ph.D.,
Teacher Training Department,
"1 Decembrie 1918" University of Alba Iulia, Romania
dorin_monica@yahoo.com

Abstract: Important at any age, but essential for adolescents, the discussions within membership groups represent an important way for personal development and for strengthening the relationships among their members. Research shows that in the family, the main topics of discussion are based on questions that school children and preadolescents have to answer to their parents. If we talk about the group of friends, the range of themes of discussion is much wider and they take into consideration different aspects of high school life: the personal life, the relationship with the family members, the leisure activities, the school events etc. Through the investigative approach presented in this paper we have tried to identify elements regarding the connection between high school students and media, especially films and their preferences for musical auditions, as well as the way they facilitate the communication with the family members and friends. The most important research data show that films and TV shows rank first in the students' preferences related to discussions with other family members. There are significant differences, with a decreasing tendency, between respondents aged 14, respectively 18 and those with good school results. As far as the gender analysis is concerned, there are no significant differences.

Key words: media; high school students; membership groups; self-education

Preliminaries

The discussions within the membership groups are an important way to develop and strengthen the relationships among their members. If in the family, the main topics of discussion are based on questions asked by parents of their school children (a situation encountered in all age groups): "What marks have you got today?", "What do you have to learn for tomorrow?", "Who are you going to walk with?" "Who are you talking to on the phone?", "Did you spend all the money I gave you?" when we talk about the group of friends, their range is much wider and they approach different aspects of their high school life: the personal life, the relationship with family

members, the ways of spending leisure time or weekends (Opriş, 2017, pp. 176-178), the school events, etc.

In many cases, the source of the formative dialogues is represented by the films (Macondo, 2017, pp. 2-3) or the programs watched by friends or other family members. The fact of paying attention to these elements can have a fundamental role in formal education (Şebu, Opriş & Opriş, 2017, pp. 153-155).

This research was conducted in the period 2017-2018 on a sample of 364 high school students from the region of Transylvania, from different specializations, aged 14-18. In our research, we aimed to highlight, with the help of the questionnaire data, the profile of the high school student that is able to overcome the status of the observer of a movie or a TV program. The research aims to highlight both the extent and the ways in which these activities with a strong educational potential, which increasingly occupy the extra-school time of the students, can become formative and self-formative factors, as well as the elements that can favor or prevent them. The investigative approach has started from the hypothesis that there is a correlation between the students' preference for approaching discussion topics based on films or TV shows in their membership groups and their individual peculiarities and their communion with the members of the membership groups.

Discussion topics related to mass media

From the data provided by the high school students, we concluded that, in relation to the mass-media, the viewing of films / shows, the musical auditions and the computer games occupy an important place for them in setting priorities for spending their leisure time. In Table 1 we presented the data that highlight the extent to which the concerns mentioned above are found in the discussions that students have in the main membership groups (family, group of friends).

Table of the percentages of pupils that approach specific *Table 1* discussion themes within the membership groups

Discussion themes	Family	Friends
• about films/ TV shows	51.9	59.5
• about auditioned music	33.5	76.7
• about computer games	8.4	37.1

We notice that in the discussions with the family members, the most debated themes for half of the questioned pupils (51.9%) are the ones taken from the films / TV shows. Then there are talks about the music they listen to for about one-third of the respondents (33.5%) and computer games for less than 10% of them (8.4%). The hierarchy and the percentage change when the discussions are between friends. More than three quarters of the teenagers (76.7%) prefer the talks about the music they listen to, almost 60% prefer the ones about movies / TV shows, and slightly more than a third (37.1%) talk about computer games.

Research data also show that 35.1% of the total sample of subjects usually discuss about the movies they watch both within the family and with their friends. Therefore, about 20% of young high school students watch films whose content is not shared with family members or friends.

The young people's preference for music also results from the fact that more than three quarters of them not only listen to music but also talk with their friends about this fact. As a matter of fact, the percentage of those who talk about the music they listen to is very close to the percentage of those who participated in a festival (69%), according to the data published by IRES (Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy) in the research "Cultural Events in the Urban Environment. Perceptions, behaviors, notoriety "(IRES, 2016, p. 3).

If the discussions triggered by watching films have close percentages for the two types of membership groups, for the other two discussion themes, there are significant differences, over 30% in favor of friends.

The profile of the students who discuss within the family about films

In order to make the profile of the students who discuss about films within the family, we analysed different variables like: gender, age, class, specialization, residence, family extension and level of education.

Data analysis based on gender shows differences in favor of girls which are statistically insignificant: girls (53.69%) and boys (49.90%). The fact of addressing this topic within the family does not necessarily mean talks with parents, but with any of its members: mother, father, brother or sister. Even though our research did not focus on a detailed analysis of these responses, we consider such discussions to be of major importance for the strengthening of the relationships between family members and also a real support in the personal development of the adolescents.

The age of the students is another variable for which we analyzed the research data. In Figure 1, we have achieved a distribution curve of the results on five age ranges from 14 to 18 years.
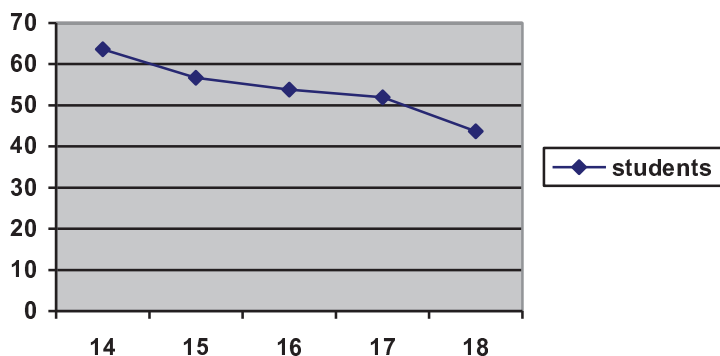
Fig.1. The distribution curve of the percentages of the students discussing within the family about films/ TV shows, depending on their age

The curve decreases almost linearly, from the first age range, 14 years (63.63%) to the last, namely 18 years (41.72%). This fact shows a decrease in the interest in such issues within the family, towards the end of adolescence. The same tendency is manifested in terms of preference for such topics in the conversations with friends, although in higher percentages (indeed, for the whole sample, the percentage is almost 8 points higher for friends, as could be seen and in Table 1). In this case, the data drop from 67.27% for 14-year-olds to 56.76% for 18-year-olds.

If we analyse the data according to the grade of the students, the tendency is the same as in the case of their age, only in this case the results are distributed on four levels.

The analysis according to the specialisation studied by students highlights significant differences. The data show a greater need for communication with parents on such topics of the high school students in vocational studies, sports program (63.33%). Very close proportions of the choices are found at the students in vocational studies, pedagogical program (56,24%), theoretical studies in sciences, (55,31%) and technological studies (53,30%). At a difference of approximately 15%, we have the students in theoretical studies, humanities (46.86%), regardless of the specialization. These data show that the specificity of the study program followed in high school not only leaves its mark on internalization, as a way of deepening the studied specific notions and as a fact of personal development, but it also manifests itself in the relationships within the family.

The students' place of residence proves to be an important factor in choosing the topics of discussion within the family. Research data show differences of approximately 7% in favor of the students from the rural areas

(55.10% in urban areas, respectively 48.41% in rural areas). Even though these data are not surprising, as they follow the general line of the investigations that process comparative rural-urban data, we cannot overlook the tendencies to equalize the differences between the adolescents' places of residence.

The analysis of the data based on the family extension is one of the key aspects of this research. As shown in Figure 2, the highest values are recorded in the students that have no siblings, the percentages decreasing almost linearly according to the increase of the family extension. The recorded differences represent more than 10 percentage points, so we can talk about the more acute need to communicate of the children with no siblings.
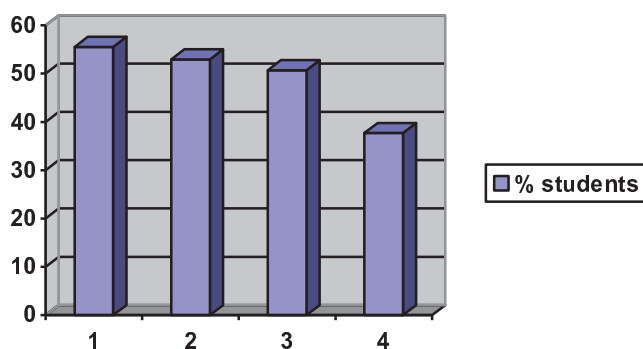

Fig.2. Comparison diagrams of the percentages of the students discussing within the family about movies / TV shows, according to the family extension (number of children in the family)

The level of education was established according to the average grade per school year that the students had at the end of the latest school year, on three intervals: 5-6.99; 7 to 8.99; 9 to10. The data were presented by us in Table 2, where the aspects related to the group of friends are also detailed, on the basis of which we have produced the distribution curves of the results (Figure 3).

Table of the percentages of the students who discuss   *Table 2*
about films within their membership groups,
according to their school results

School results	Family	Friends

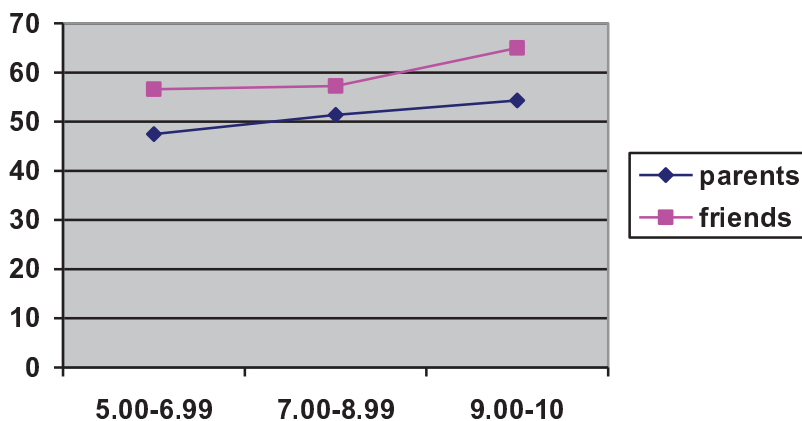|		
• low (5.00-6.99)	47.47	56.56
• medium (7.00-8.99)	51.35	57.23
• high (9.00-10)	57.70	67.36
Amplitude	10.23	10.8

Fig.3. Distribution curve of the percentages of the students discussing within the family and the group of friends about movies / TV shows, according to their level of education

The differences recorded in both situations between the highest and the lowest value, corresponding to the high level of education or the low level of education, are higher than 10 percentage points. The percentage of the students with medium school results is very close in both cases to the values recorded for the whole sample of subjects in the present research (see Table 1). The research data show that the students with good school results consider the action of watching a particular film an important self-training method, which justifies the higher percentage of those who go beyond simply watching a movie - as a way of spending their free time - moving towards the significant personal valorisation of its formative features.

Discussions about watching a film and different aspects of student personality
One of the items of our suggested questionnaire asked the students to give grades from 1 to 10 (with the following meaning: 1 - the smallest grade, 10 - the highest grade) to some values, according to the importance they have in their lives. One of the items we suggested concerns collecting data to determine the level of self-esteem of the respondents.

The research data show that 65.56% of the students for whom self-control is not an important value, being evaluated by them with grades of less than 5, choose to discuss within the family about the films they watch. This high percentage value in relation to the average for the whole sample shows that high school students who generally communicate more easily with those around them feel the need to discuss about the topics related to the films they watch within membership groups.

At the same time, the data of this research show that high or low self-esteem does not influence the choice of discussing about the films or the programs viewed within the family, the differences are not statistically significant, the percentages of the pupils belonging to the two categories being very close to the average for the entire sample of subjects.

Relationships within the family and discussions about the viewed movies / shows

Another point of our research is represented by the highlighting of the relationship between the harmony within the family and the discussions about films / TV shows of its members. Table 3 includes the results of the valid data of the respondents who stated that they are talking in the family about movies / TV shows, relative to a series of values or relationships of the family members.

In addition, we calculated the differences between the percentage of the students who chose the statements about family as true in their case (P), in relation to the percentage obtained for the whole sample (Pe = 51.9%).

Table of the choice percentages for some values or relationships of   *Table 3*
the family members made by the students who discuss within the
family about films / TV shows

Statements about their own family	P	P-Pe
I often feel alone in my own family.	42.66	− 9.24
I don't trust my parents completely, nor do they.	45.67	− 6.23
I always feel I am treated as a child by my parents.	49.46	− 2.44
My parents work a lot and that's why we do not spend much time together, but I know they love me.	51.53	− 0.37
I always feel safe in the family.	54.52	2.62
I am encouraged by my parents to give my own opinions.	54.84	2.94
I feel that, together with my family, I could go "to the end of the world" / I could overcome any obstacle.	56.93	5.03
My parents are my best friends.	59.30	8.4

The data in Table 3 show differences greater than 5% for four statements, two with negative connotations: "I often feel alone in my own family" and "I don't trust my parents completely, nor do they." two with positive connotations: "I feel that, together with my family, I could go "to the end of the world" / I could overcome any obstacle." and "My parents are my best friends." The loneliness felt by the high school students in their own family and the lack of confidence represent two barriers to the dialogue on the topics that address the issues that go beyond the primary needs at this age. On the other hand, there are the results connected to the perfect trust and proximity to their parents. In the opinion of high school students, being friends with parents means having them as confidants.

Research data also show a correlation between the type of family relationships and the topic of discussions within the family. For all four statements with negative connotations on family relationships, negative differences were recorded, and for all four statements with positive connotations, the differences were positive.

Conclusions

The connection between high school students and media is an important part of their preferences, watching films, listening to music, or playing computer games often determine the priorities for spending leisure time. More than one-third of the respondents say that they usually talk about the films they watch with their family and friends. The discussions within the family on topics taken from the media are more present at the beginning of the high school, with the tendency to decrease significantly towards the end of this period of study. At the same time, the research data show that there is a strong correlation between the confidence that the teenagers have in their parents and the frequency of identifying common points of discussion, starting from different materials viewed in the media.

One of the factors that significantly influence the type of relationship between family members is the specificity of the profile followed by the high school students. Students at the sports profile feel the greatest need to communicate with their parents about the films / programs they watch on TV, in opposition to the students of the theoretical studies. Also, the children without any siblings often communicate with their parents on topics related to films and media shows. Concerning the communication with friends, the research data indicate high percentages for the students with very good school results. This shows that, at least for this category of adolescents, mass media represents an important support for overcoming age-related rivalries or pride.

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