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Greek Young Audience Perceptions and Beliefs on Different Aspects of TV Watching

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Abstract: Television plays a significant role in shaping the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of young individuals. Understanding the factors that influence these beliefs is essential for comprehending the impact of television programming on the youth population. This paper aims to investigate the correlations in beliefs regarding television programming among Greek youths aged 15–18 with their demographic characteristics, parental educational levels, school performance, and daily television viewing habits. To study the above, a structured questionnaire was electronically distributed to 204 Greek teenagers after obtaining parental consent. By identifying the factors associated with variations in beliefs, this study contributes to the existing literature on media influence and youth development. The findings indicate youth's moderate levels of reflection regarding different aspects of television shows, including their presentation to the public and their influence on perceptions and attitudes. What is more, the youth audience has low trust in TV news, and they moderately believe that the content of news is greatly influenced by governments and political elite agendas, while they consider TV as a major influential media type in shaping people's political opinions. Notably, youngsters who considered themselves high-achieving students, as well as those who engaged in more frequent television viewing, including documentaries, news, and talk shows, exhibit increased concern and skepticism regarding the information presented in the television programs they watch. This is an important finding, because despite the low trust in TV as a medium, it continues to attract the attention of young people.

Keywords: young audiences; beliefs; media content; reflection; TV watching



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1. Introduction

The shaping of public opinion but also the cultivation of cultural standards and ideologies are highly affected by TV broadcasts (news, content, etc.) and mass media in general, particularly by the increased use of the internet, by advertising, and by wider providers of information (Buckingham 2020).

Moreover, as Hagedoorn et al. (2021) mentioned, adolescents are “moving away from traditional broadcast television, turning instead to other screens and formats” (p. 83). This indicates the need for the recognition of “new viewing cultures” and the differences in content dissemination between the variety of media used by different audiences (Hagedoorn et al. 2021).

Mass media, including television, operate at a multidimensional level (societal, national, and local). At the same time, they are considered important factors of a social nature, the moment in which they influence and are influenced by social groups (Swart 2021).

At this point, it is worth mentioning the fact that Gen Z and Gen Y audiences do not present differences in their behaviors and in the basic components that influence their TV viewing choices (Patch 2018). It is also argued that in modern eras, there has been a shift in the value patterns of post-industrial democracies where citizens, especially the younger ones, tend to show a greater interest in monitoring lifestyle-related issues rather than politically oriented programs and ideologies (Bennett 2008). “Value” is defined as

the importance or worth that an individual places on something, such as, for example, a principle, behavior, or object (Eccles 2005). The process of decision making is usually guided by an individual's values, and they help the determination of what is meaningful and desirable in individuals' lives. Values might be influenced by multiple factors, such as culture and personal experiences (Roccas and Sagiv 2010).

New studies, like the ones of Ku et al. (2019), Dumitru (2020), and Nygren and Guath (2019), identified low levels of critical thinking and reflection among young people regarding the information they receive from mass media. That is why media literacy is an especially important skill in today's digital age (Jolls and Johnsen 2017). This term refers to the understanding of how messages transmitted through mass media are created and why they are disseminated, but also the impact they have on individuals and society. When media literacy is combined with critical public thinking, it enables individuals to critically evaluate media content, as well as question its sources and motives (Silverblatt et al. 2014).

However, after studying the Greek and international literature, no study was found investigating the different beliefs of young people in different aspects of watching programs on television. "Belief" is a conviction or acceptance that something is true or exists, often without proof or evidence (Stevenson 2003). There are many types of beliefs, such as religious, philosophical, or beliefs that are related to someone's personal experiences (Phan et al. 2020). Beliefs can shape how people perceive the world and make sense of the experiences that they have. They can also impact someone's behavior and attitude (Smith 2001).

Though some meritorious studies have been conducted about Greek adolescents, such as the ones of Kourti (2002), Podara et al. (2021), and Podara et al. (2019), there is still a significant gap in this field for Greece. While Podara et al. (2021) aimed to characterize the TV viewing habits of Greek adolescents and Podara et al. (2019) aimed to define Greek adolescents' audiovisual consumption practices, Kourti (2002) mentions that little research has been conducted about adolescents and media use, which is a subject in which a research gap still exists. This study, therefore, aims at examining Greek young audience perceptions, beliefs, and reflections about different aspects of TV watching and not at identifying their TV-watching habits.

More precisely, the purpose of this study is to investigate the correlations between the beliefs of Greek youths aged 15–18 and their demographic characteristics, the educational level of their parents, their school performance, and the frequency of daily television viewing. Conclusions will therefore be drawn regarding their reflective thinking and the aforementioned correlations.

Thus, the following research question is expected to be covered: What correlations are found in youngsters' beliefs with their demographic characteristics, their school performance, their parents' educational levels, and the frequency of viewing television programs daily?

2. Related Literature

Undeniably, the current era is overwhelmed by a combination of digital and traditional media. Given the flood of information citizens receive daily from different media, they need to learn to evaluate the information transmitted and to handle each medium by applying their abstract and reflective thinking (Moon and Bai 2020). This need is even more imperative in the case of young people, who must know how to interpret every message and piece of information they receive from the mass media, including television (Costera Meijer 2007).

Young people must develop knowledge, skills, abilities, and specific attitudes so that they come into safe contact with the messages transmitted by the mass media and, by extension, with political, social, and cultural events. They must also develop an understanding of how the media and information providers work (Nygren and Guath 2019). At this point, "attitude" is defined as a person's overall outlook or way of thinking and feeling about something or someone. Attitude encompasses a set of beliefs, emotions, and behaviors that

determine how a person approaches and responds to different situations and interactions. It plays a significant role in influencing an individual's decisions and actions, thereby impacting his/her relationships and overall well-being (Breckler and Wiggins 2014).

The research of Dumitru (2020) proved that youngsters, due to the huge implementation of new technology in all aspects of their daily lives, are facing serious problems in distinguishing between fake and authentic news. They often fail to recognize trustworthy news sources from the untrustworthy ones, a situation that makes them vulnerable to fake information.

Ku et al. (2019) also found low levels of critical thinking in young people in terms of their ability to reflect on whether the information they receive from the media is correct and how it might affect their personal beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions toward social, political, and cultural issues. Podara et al. (2021) characterized Greek adolescents' media screen behavior as "mobility-centered" and "algorithmically naïve". However, Nygren and Guath (2019), who conducted a similar study focusing on teenagers found that despite the generally low levels of reflection among young people regarding the information they receive from the mass media, those who showed a greater interest in searches of scientific topics also showed higher levels of reflective thinking.

According to the literature, the public's political beliefs tend to be inextricably intertwined with whether there is reflective thought about the information disseminated by the mass media (Kahan 2013). This is explained by the fact that people's political beliefs influence the way they interpret and interact with mass media content and how they are influenced by it. In any case, reflective thinking helps members of the public be more aware of the purpose behind any information conveyed by the media or whether that purpose is to influence their political beliefs towards specific directions to cover specific interests (Blumler and Gurevitch 2005). The literature focuses more on political beliefs than on social or economic ones, as global policies, whether at a socio-economic or any other level, are predominantly influenced by political parties and competent governments.

Furthermore, there are reports suggesting a potential correlation between the frequency of watching talk shows and the development of reflective thinking among the public. For instance, individuals who regularly engage with talk shows are exposed to a variety of opinions and perspectives, thereby fostering a greater capacity for reflective thought compared to those who infrequently watch such programs and consequently lack exposure to diverse viewpoints on recurring issues (Ho and Chuah 2022; Livingstone and Lunt 2002).

After all, it is considered necessary for young people to search, evaluate, utilize, and create information for the fulfillment of their personal, social, professional, and educational goals. It is also important that they possess basic skills of critical and reflective thinking and utilize them for purposes of promotion of their expression so that they become well-informed citizens and participate in the governance and democratic processes of society with responsibility and prudence (UNESCO 2011).

Finally, though Hobbs et al. (2022) underlined that "self-report measures can be useful, too, but some subjects may not be able to self-assess their media literacy competencies and others may choose a more socially acceptable answer rather than one that reflects their lived experience" it should be mentioned that many researchers (Nelson 2016; Stanley and Lawson 2020) use self-report questionnaires to measure both adolescents' media literacy and critical thinking on media use.

Based on the literature review above, it is evident that due to the limited research conducted on the topic, a comprehensive understanding is currently unattainable. This underscores the significant research gap pertaining to the perceptions and beliefs of young audiences regarding various aspects of television viewing. The present study aims to address this gap by focusing on the perspectives of Greek youths.

3. Materials and Methods

To cover the research purpose and research questions mentioned above, a primary quantitative survey was conducted, in which 204 Greek youths aged 15–18 participated. The research sample was collected through a nonrandom convenience sampling method, like Rosenbaum's (2007) research. Rosenbaum's methodology was adopted, and items from her research tool were also incorporated. However, it is important to note that the sample used in this study may not be fully representative of the typical 15–18-year-old Greek media users, and, therefore, the findings may not be generalizable to the broader research population. Echoing Rosenbaum's observation that *"the fact that a convenience sample is different from a random sample could have had various effects on the findings of this study"* (p. 93), this consideration extends to the current research. Nevertheless, this specific sampling approach facilitated the accumulation of a broader research sample. In securing participation from young individuals in this study, parental consent was sought. It was made clear to participants that obtaining parental approval was a prerequisite for inclusion in the research sample. This consent was indicated by the parents answering "Yes" to the relevant question preceding the main questionnaire.

This research utilized a structured questionnaire comprising closed questions, divided into eight parts: (1) Firstly, participants rated five statements regarding their beliefs about documentaries using a 5-point Likert scale. (2) Secondly, they rated six statements concerning their political beliefs on the same scale. (3) Thirdly, participants evaluated six statements about their beliefs regarding young people, again using the 5-point Likert scale. (4) In the fourth part, they assessed six statements pertaining to television presentations, employing the same 5-point Likert scale. (5) The fifth section prompted participants to assess four statements concerning their general beliefs about television, utilizing a 5-point Likert scale. (6) Moving on to the sixth part, participants were asked to evaluate four statements regarding their attitudes towards watching TV, using the same 5-point Likert scale. (7) In the seventh section, participants were presented with five closed-ended questions pertaining to their daily TV viewing habits. (8) Finally, in the eighth segment, participants responded to five closed-ended questions concerning their demographics, their parents' educational background, and their self-reported school performance. At this juncture, it is important to clarify that any questions regarding TV programs or channels did not pertain to subscription-based channels, but rather to Greek channels freely accessible to the general public.

The questionnaire was distributed online, through e-mails and the researchers' social media accounts, using Google Forms. Therefore, quantitative research data were collected electronically. The statistical analysis was conducted through SPSS (v23), and in this context, descriptive and inductive statistics were used. Research results were presented through frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, and correlations were tested through the Pearson correlation test. Confidence levels were set at 95% for statistically significant results when the p -value < 0.05 .

4. Results and Discussion

The demographic results show that 51.5% of the participants are girls, while 48.5% are boys; 27.9% of participants are 16-year-olds, 25% are 17-year-olds, 25% are 18-year-olds, and finally, 22.1% are 15-year-olds. In addition, 52.5% of participants stated that their father attended university, and 55.9% stated that their mother attended university. Finally, 54.9% of the participants do not consider themselves good students.

The results about the participants' TV personal viewing show that 35.8% of them watch less than half an hour of TV daily, while 33.8% said they watch more than 3 h of TV every day. Similarly, 35.8% of participants stated that their parents do not watch TV with them; 34.8% said they never watch the news, while 33.8% declared that they watch the news every day. In addition, 35.3% of participants said they watch documentaries daily, and 34.3% of them do not watch documentaries at all. Finally, 34.3% of the participants stated that they do not watch talk shows at all, while 32.8% watch them every day.

As seen in Table 1, participants somewhat agree with the following statements. The highest mean, however, is shown for the sentence “Documentaries present facts and pictures in such a way that together they make up a believable story” ($M = 3.39/5.00$). Since these questions suggest the existence of adolescents’ reflective attitude towards media, this result shows moderate reflective thinking.

Table 1. Beliefs about documentaries.

Std. Deviation	Mean	
0.48	2.63	Sometimes documentaries use actors
0.88	3.04	TV news and documentaries can make people take an event more seriously
0.84	2.97	Boys and girls have the same opinion about documentaries
0.84	3.39	Documentaries present facts and pictures in such a way that together they make up a believable story
0.88	2.90	Occasionally, the producers of documentaries tell the people in their documentaries what to say

As shown in Table 2, statistically significant correlations were found if the displayed p -values are less than 0.05. In the cases where statistically significant correlations were found, it is pointed out that the highest levels of agreement with the statements concerning documentaries were found in participants who watch TV more often, whose parents watch TV with them more often, and who watch news, documentaries, and talk shows more often.

Table 2. Pearson results between demographics/TV viewing and beliefs about documentaries.

Occasionally, the Producers of Documentaries Tell the People in Their Documentaries What to Say	Documentaries Present Facts and Pictures in Such a Way That Together They Make up a Believable Story	Boys and Girls Have the Same Opinion about Documentaries	TV News and Documentaries Can Make People Take an Event More Seriously	Sometimes Documentaries Use Actors	
0.90 *	0.81 *	0.97 *	0.96 *	0.85 *	How much TV do you watch every day?
0.89 *	0.81 *	0.97 *	0.96 *	0.84 *	Do your parents ever watch TV with you?
0.89 *	0.81 *	0.97 *	0.96 *	0.84 *	How often do you watch the news?
0.88 *	0.81 *	0.96 *	0.95 *	0.84 *	How often do you watch documentaries?
0.89 *	0.81 *	0.97 *	0.96 *	0.84 *	How often do you watch talk shows?
−0.02	0.02	0.08	0.16	0.03	Gender
−0.05	−0.09	−0.01	0.04	−0.05	Age
−0.03	−0.04	0.05	0.13	0.01	Did your father attend a university?
−0.07	−0.07	0.01	0.08	0.02	Did your mother attend a university?
0.68 *	0.70 *	0.81 *	0.86 *	0.69 *	Do you consider yourself as a good student?

* Statistically significant correlations when p -value < 0.05.

Also, it was found that higher levels of agreement with the statements regarding the documentaries occur in the participants who consider themselves to be good students.

The results of Table 3 indicate that the participants moderately agree with the following statements. The highest mean, however, was found for the sentence “*News stations can be different in how they present a story because of differences in their political preference*” ($M = 3.21/5.00$). As these questions show the existence of adolescents’ reflective attitudes towards media, this result shows moderate reflective thinking.

Table 3. Beliefs about politics.

Std. Deviation	Mean	
1.51	3.21	News stations can be different in how they present a story because of differences in their political preference
1.37	2.98	TV influences which presidential candidate wins the US elections
0.84	2.97	The government determines the content of a news program
1.40	3.05	If something such as crime is often discussed on TV, the government will try to do something about it
1.62	2.97	People’s ideas about politics can be influenced by TV programs
1.40	3.05	A reporter’s political beliefs can influence how he/she presents a news story

As shown in Table 4, statistically significant correlations were found if the displayed p -values are less than 0.05. In the cases where statistically significant correlations were found, it is pointed out that the highest levels of agreement with the statements concerning politics were found in participants who watch TV more often, whose parents watch TV with them more often, and who watch news, documentaries, and talk shows more often. Also, it was found that higher levels of agreement with the statements regarding the documentaries occur in the participants who consider themselves to be good students.

Table 4. Pearson results between demographics/TV viewing and beliefs.

A Reporter’s Political Beliefs Can Influence How He/She Presents a News Story	People’s Ideas about Politics Can Be Influenced by TV Programs	If Something Such as Crime Is Often Discussed on TV, the Government Will Try to Do Something about It	The Government Determines the Content of a News Program	TV Influences Which Presidential Candidate Wins the US Elections	News Stations Can Be Different in How They Present a Story Because of Differences in Their Political Preference	
0.91 *	0.93 *	0.89 *	0.97 *	0.93 *	0.97 *	How much TV do you watch every day?
0.91 *	0.92 *	0.89 *	0.97 *	0.93 *	0.95 *	Do your parents ever watch TV with you?
0.91 *	0.92 *	0.89 *	0.97 *	0.93 *	0.95 *	How often do you watch the news?
0.90 *	0.92 *	0.88 *	0.96 *	0.91 *	0.95 *	How often do you watch documentaries?
0.90 *	0.92 *	0.88 *	0.97 *	0.92 *	0.96 *	How often do you watch talk shows?
0.13	−0.02	0.13	0.08	0.09	0.13	Gender
−0.09	0.05	−0.04	−0.04	−0.01	0.08	Age
−0.01	−0.06	−0.01	0.05	0.06	0.09	Did your father attend a university?

Table 4. Cont.

A Reporter's Political Beliefs Can Influence How He/She Presents a News Story	People's Ideas about Politics Can Be Influenced by TV Programs	If Something Such as Crime Is Often Discussed on TV, the Government Will Try to Do Something about It	The Government Determines the Content of a News Program	TV Influences Which Presidential Candidate Wins the US Elections	News Stations Can Be Different in How They Present a Story Because of Differences in Their Political Preference	
0.04	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.11	0.44	Did your mother attend a university?
0.71 *	0.73 *	0.70 *	0.81 *	0.76 *	0.84 *	Do you consider yourself as a good student?

* Statistically significant correlations when p -value < 0.05.

The results in Table 5 indicate that participants agree with the following statements a little to moderately. The highest mean, however, was found for the sentence “TV influences how younger children treat their parents” ($M = 3.21/5.00$), and the lowest mean was found for the sentence “TV has nothing to do with how young people think about drugs” ($M = 2.30/5.00$). As these questions indicate the existence of adolescents’ reflective attitudes towards media, this result shows moderate reflective thinking.

Table 5. Beliefs about young people.

Std. Deviation	Mean	
0.87	2.30	TV has nothing to do with how young people think about drugs
1.41	3.21	TV influences how younger children treat their parents
1.43	3.15	TV influences how children our age treat their parents
0.97	2.41	TV has nothing to do with what young people wear to parties
1.53	3.19	Children who watch the news know more about politics than children who do not watch the news
0.47	2.87	Parents have the same opinions about TV programs, such as the news, as their children do

As shown in Table 6, statistically significant correlations were found if the displayed p -values are less than 0.05. In the cases where statistically significant correlations were found, it is pointed out that the highest levels of agreement with the statements “TV influences how younger children treat their parents”, “TV influences how children our age treat their parents”, “Children who watch the news know more about politics than children who do not watch the news”, and “Parents have the same opinions about TV programs, such as the news, as their children do” concerning politics were found in participants who watch TV more often, whose parents watch TV with them more often, and who watch news, documentaries, and talk shows more often. Also, it was found that higher levels of agreement with these four statements regarding the documentaries occur in the participants who consider themselves to be good students.

The highest levels of agreement with the statements “TV has nothing to do with how young people think about drugs” and “TV has nothing to do with what young people wear to parties” concerning politics were found in participants who watch TV rarely, whose parents watch TV with them less often, and who watch news, documentaries and talk shows less often. It was found that higher levels of agreement with these two statements regarding the documentaries occur in the cases of participants who consider themselves to be bad students.

Table 6. Pearson results between demographics/TV viewing and beliefs about young people.

Parents Have the Same Opinions about TV Programs, Such as the News, as Their Children Do	Children Who Watch the News Know More about Politics than Children Who Do Not Watch the News	TV Has Nothing to Do with What Young People Wear to Parties	TV Influences How Children Our Age Treat Their Parents	TV Influences How Younger Children Treat Their Parents	TV Has Nothing to Do with How Young People Think about Drugs	
0.49 *	0.96 *	−0.88 *	0.95 *	0.95 *	−0.81 *	How much TV do you watch every day?
0.49 *	0.96 *	−0.87 *	0.94 *	0.95 *	−0.81 *	Do your parents ever watch TV with you?
0.48 *	0.96 *	−0.88 *	0.94 *	0.95 *	−0.81 *	How often do you watch the news?
0.51 *	0.95 *	−0.87 *	0.93 *	0.93 *	−0.80 *	How often do you watch documentaries?
0.49 *	0.96 *	−0.88 *	0.94 *	0.95 *	−0.81 *	How often do you watch talk shows?
0.10	0.10	−0.11	0.08	0.16	−0.11	Gender
0.09	−0.07	−0.11	0.11	−0.08	−0.01	Age
−0.07	0.11	−0.10	0.10	0.13	−0.06	Did your father attend a university?
−0.10	−0.07	−0.11	0.11	−0.06	−0.15	Did your mother attend a university?
0.48 *	0.84 *	−0.79 *	0.82 *	0.79 *	−0.61 *	Do you consider yourself as a good student?

* Statistically significant correlations when p -value < 0.05.

As seen in Table 7, participants somewhat agree with the following statements. The highest mean, however, was found for the sentence “When an event is presented on the news, it looks the same as when you were there and saw it yourself” ($M = 3.13/5.00$). As these questions show the existence of adolescents’ reflective attitudes towards media, this result shows moderate reflective thinking.

As shown in Table 8, statistically significant correlations occurred if the displayed p -values are less than 0.05. In the cases where statistically significant correlations were found, it is pointed out that the highest levels of agreement with the statements “News programs are too short to show all the important stories of that day”, “Whether a TV station has to make money off its programs or not will influence the kind of news programs it makes”, “Every TV station will present news on the Islam the same way”, “When an event is presented on the news, it looks the same as when you were there and saw it yourself” and “News about gay marriages is presented in the same way in different countries” concerning presentations were found in participants who watch TV more often, whose parents watch TV with them more often, and who watch news, documentaries, and talk shows more often. Also, higher levels of

agreement with these four statements regarding the documentaries were found in the cases of participants who consider themselves to be good students.

Table 7. Beliefs about presentation.

Std. Deviation	Mean	
1.52	3.07	News programs are too short to show all the important stories of that day
0.62	2.76	The description of an event on the news is complete
1.37	2.98	Whether a TV station has to make money off its programs or not will never influence the kind of news programs it makes
1.26	2.93	Every TV station will present news on the Islam the same way
1.62	3.13	When an event is presented on the news, it looks the same as when you were there and saw it yourself
0.50	2.89	News about gay marriages is presented in the same way in different countries

Table 8. Pearson results between demographics/TV viewing and beliefs about presentation.

News about Gay Marriages is Presented in the Same Way in Different Countries	When an Event Is Presented on the News, It Looks the Same as When You Were There and Saw It Yourself	Every TV Station Will Present News on the Islam the Same Way	Whether a TV Station Has to Make Money off Its Programs or Not Will Never Influence the Kind of News Programs It Makes	The Description of an Event on the News Is Complete	News Programs Are Too Short to Show All the Important Stories of That Day	
0.37 *	0.93 *	0.92 *	0.93 *	−0.84 *	0.92 *	How much TV do you watch every day?
0.37 *	0.92 *	0.92 *	0.93 *	−0.83 *	0.91 *	Do your parents ever watch TV with you?
0.36 *	0.92 *	0.91 *	0.93 *	−0.84 *	0.92 *	How often do you watch the news?
0.38 *	0.92 *	0.91 *	0.91 *	−0.82 *	0.90 *	How often do you watch documentaries?
0.36 *	0.932 *	0.92 *	0.93 *	−0.84 *	0.92 *	How often do you watch talk shows?
−0.16 *	−0.03	0.22 *	0.32 *	−0.25 *	0.06	Gender
−0.08	−0.01	−0.08	−0.07	0.17	−0.05	Age
−0.51 *	−0.06	0.16 *	0.06	−0.23 *	0.13	Did your father attend a university?
−0.12	0.11	−0.15 *	−0.02	0.13	0.04	Did your mother attend a university?
0.21 *	0.73 *	0.81 *	0.76 *	−0.71 *	0.74 *	Do you consider yourself as a good student?

* Statistically significant correlations when p -value < 0.05.

What is more, the highest levels of agreement with the statements “*The description of an event on the news is complete*” concerning presentations were found in participants who watch TV rarely, whose parents watch TV with them less often, and who watch news, documentaries and talk shows less often. Higher levels of agreement with these two

statements regarding the documentaries were also found in the cases of participants who consider themselves to be bad students.

The results of Table 9 indicate that the participants moderately agree with the following statements. The highest mean, however, was found in the sentence “*All TV stations have to make money off their programs*” ($M = 3.09/5.00$). As these questions show the existence of adolescents’ reflective attitudes towards media, this result shows moderate reflective thinking.

Table 9. Beliefs about TV in general.

Std. Deviation	Mean	
0.76	2.91	TV news present a complete picture of what’s going on in the world
1.57	3.05	The stories you see on the news are about the only important events that took place that day
1.63	3.09	All TV stations have to make money off their programs
0.88	3.04	Fans of a TV program can influence what happens on that show

As shown in Table 10, statistically significant correlations occurred if the displayed p -values are less than 0.05. In the cases where statistically significant correlations were found, it is pointed out that the highest levels of agreement with the statements “*The stories you see on the news are about the only important events that took place that day*”, “*All TV stations have to make money off their programs*”, “*Every TV station will present news on the Islam the same way*”, and “*Fans of a TV program can influence what happens on that show*” concerning TV in general were found in participants who watch TV more often, whose parents watch TV with them more often, and who watch news, documentaries, and talk shows more often. Also, higher levels of agreement with these four statements regarding the documentaries are shown in the participants who consider themselves to be good students.

Table 10. Pearson results between demographics/TV viewing and beliefs about television in general.

Fans of A TV Program Can Influence What Happens on That Show	All TV Stations Have to Make Money off Their Programs	The Stories You See on the News Are about the Only Important Events That Took Place That Day	TV News Present a Complete Picture of What’s Going on in the World	
0.96 *	0.94 *	0.91 *	−0.75 *	How much TV do you watch every day?
0.96 *	0.93 *	0.91 *	−0.74 *	Do your parents ever watch TV with you?
0.96 *	0.93 *	0.91 *	−0.74 *	How often do you watch the news?
0.95 *	0.92 *	0.90 *	−0.74 *	How often do you watch documentaries?
0.96 *	0.93 *	0.90 *	−0.74 *	How often do you watch talk shows?
0.11	0.09	0.13	0.09	Gender
0.04	−0.09	−0.09	−0.07	Age
0.12	−0.05	−0.01	0.06	Did your father attend a university?
0.08	−0.09	0.04	−0.11	Did your mother attend a university?
0.86 *	0.75 *	0.71 *	−0.55 *	Do you consider yourself as a good student?

* Statistically significant correlations when p -value < 0.05.

The highest levels of agreement with the statement “TV news presents a complete picture of what’s going on in the world” concerning TV in general were found in participants who watch TV rarely, whose parents watch TV with them less often, and who watch news, documentaries, and talk shows less often. Also, it was found that higher levels of agreement with these two statements regarding the documentaries were found in the cases of participants who consider themselves to be bad students.

Table 11 indicates that the participants moderately agree with the following statements. The highest mean, however, was found for the sentence “When you watch a news program because you have to for school, you’ll have a different opinion of that program than when you watch it because you want to” ($M = 3.29/5.00$). As these questions show the existence of adolescents’ reflective attitudes towards media, this result shows moderate reflective thinking.

Table 11. Beliefs about watching TV.

Std. Deviation	Mean	
0.67	2.81	People with a lower education will understand the news just as well as people with a higher education
1.21	2.59	People who live in the city react the same to news about diseases as people who live in the countryside
0.88	3.04	Differences in TV content is one of the reasons why people in different countries think differently about issues such as gay marriages
1.40	3.29	When you watch a news program because you have to for school, you’ll have a different opinion of that program than when you watch it because you want to

As shown in Table 12, statistically significant correlations occurred if the displayed p -values are less than 0.05. In the cases where statistically significant correlations were found, it is pointed out that the highest levels of agreement with the statements “Differences in TV content is one of the reasons why people in different countries think differently about issues such as gay marriages” and “When you watch a news program because you have to for school, you’ll have a different opinion of that program than when you watch it because you want to” concerning watching TV were found in participants who watch TV more often, whose parents watch TV with them more often, and who watch news, documentaries, and talk shows more often. Also, higher levels of agreement with these four statements regarding the documentaries were found in the participants who consider themselves to be good students.

Table 12. Pearson results between demographics/TV viewing and beliefs about watching TV.

When You Watch a News Program Because You Have to for School, You’ll Have a Different Opinion of That Program than When You Watch It Because You Want to	Differences in TV Content Is One of the Reasons Why People in Different Countries Think Differently about Issues Such as Gay Marriages	People Who Live in the City React the Same to News about Diseases as People Who Live in the Countryside	People with a Lower Education Will Understand the News Just as Well as People with a Higher Education	
0.96 *	0.96 *	−0.86 *	−0.73 *	How much TV do you watch every day?
0.95 *	0.96 *	−0.86 *	−0.73 *	Do your parents ever watch TV with you?
0.95 *	0.96 *	−0.86 *	−0.73 *	How often do you watch the news?
0.95 *	0.95 *	−0.86 *	−0.72 *	How often do you watch documentaries?

Table 12. Cont.

When You Watch a News Program Because You Have to for School, You'll Have a Different Opinion of That Program than When You Watch It Because You Want to	Differences in TV Content Is One of the Reasons Why People in Different Countries Think Differently about Issues Such as Gay Marriages	People Who Live in the City React the Same to News about Diseases as People Who Live in the Countryside	People with a Lower Education Will Understand the News Just as Well as People with a Higher Education	
0.95 *	0.96 *	−0.86 *	−0.73 *	How often do you watch talk shows?
0.07	0.10	−0.02	0.12	Gender
0.11	0.04	−0.11	0.12	Age
0.10	0.12	−0.12	0.11	Did your father attend a university?
0.02	0.08	−0.07	0.04	Did your mother attend a university?
0.83 *	0.86 *	−0.77 *	−0.55 *	Do you consider yourself as a good student?

* Statistically significant correlations when p -value < 0.05.

The highest levels of agreement with the statements “People with a lower education will understand the news just as well as people with a higher education” and “People who live in the city react the same to news about diseases as people who live in the countryside” concerning watching TV were found in participants who watch TV rarely, whose parents watch TV with them less often, and who watch news, documentaries, and talk shows less often. Also, higher levels of agreement with these two statements regarding the documentaries were found in the cases of participants who consider themselves to be bad students.

5. Conclusions

This study's major finding is the proven moderate level of young individuals' reflective thinking concerning various aspects of television shows and programs, the way these shows and programs are presented to the general public, and, finally, how they influence the individual beliefs, attitudes, and perceptions. At this point, there is no agreement between the current research and that of [Ku et al. \(2019\)](#), [Dumitru \(2020\)](#), [Podara et al. \(2021\)](#), and [Nygren and Guath \(2019\)](#), which identified low levels of reflection among young people regarding the information they receive from the mass media. This difference in findings could be attributed to the fact that the current research solely examined television and did not encompass the entirety of modern mass media. Furthermore, no statistically significant correlations were found between the young participants' beliefs and their demographic characteristics (e.g., gender and age) nor between their beliefs and their parents' educational level. However, the moderate levels of reflection of the young people who participated in this research is a result that does not negate the urgency to increase their critical abilities and abstract thinking, which was also highlighted by the studies of [Costera Meijer \(2007\)](#) and [Moon and Bai \(2020\)](#).

The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on similar topics by revealing statistically significant correlations uncovered through the multiple Pearson correlation tests. In particular, statistically significant correlations were identified based on young participants' school performance and their daily TV viewing habits. Those who considered themselves good students, along with those who watched more television, documentaries, news, and talk shows, ended up showing greater concern and being more

skeptical and reflective about the information they receive from the television shows they watch.

The basic limitations of this research are the following: (a) The sample consists of 204 participants, and it cannot be representative of the overall research population. This means that the research conclusions cannot be generalized. (b) The use of a self-report questionnaire, in which participants' beliefs are declared, might have affected the evaluation of the participants' reflective thinking.

At this point, some suggestions are made for adolescents to enhance their reflective thinking concerning TV watching and being informed by mass media in general:

- (a). It is recommended that they explore a range of sources. Adolescents should be encouraged to seek out and gather information from a diverse array of sources, including both mainstream and alternative ones, in order to gain multiple perspectives. This will assist them in cultivating a more critical and comprehensive understanding of any topic that piques their interest and is covered or approached by the mass media and television.
- (b). Moreover, it is suggested that they question the content they receive from the aforementioned media. Young people should be taught to foster their reflective thinking by assessing the credibility of each source, as well as potential biases and underlying motives, before accepting the final information provided.
- (c). Additionally, they need to learn how to factcheck information encountered in mass media and television. It is crucial for them to understand the significance of verifying the accuracy of any claims presented in TV news, stories, social media posts, and throughout television shows and mass media in general.
- (d). In this context, media literacy education is advantageous for adolescents in order to cultivate their reflective thinking and avoid them passively accepting the plethora of information provided. To achieve this, it is recommended to introduce media literacy education into schools, particularly considering that it is not currently part of the curriculum in Greek reality. These educational programs would equip adolescents with reflective thinking skills, aid in identifying misinformation, and foster an understanding of the media's societal role.
- (e). It is also beneficial for young people to engage in meaningful conversations about media consumption, as this fosters the development of their reflective thinking. Proposing discussions on current events, TV shows, and movies can encourage them to express their own opinions and perspectives, ultimately prompting them to think reflectively and enhance their analytical skills.
- (f). Finally, an analysis of the storytelling techniques is suggested. TV shows and movies often employ persuasive storytelling techniques. Given that adolescents will learn to analyze them through multiple techniques, such as emotional appeal or the use of statistics or framing strategies, they might be able in the future to better understand the media's influence on public opinions.

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