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## Miscellaneous

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# Production values as program quality signals in Spanish linear TV: A comparison of two periods

## Abstract

Technology disruption, digitalization and media convergence have triggered a profound crisis in the television industry. In this context, quality is an essential strategic element for success, especially when consumers have learned through their experience with VOD, becoming more demanding and less loyal customers. Then, has the importance of quality signals changed with the emergence of new online alternatives? And the quality perception among viewers? Our research explores four production values (the host, content, the set, and technical quality) as TV program quality signals and their effect on the quality perception of entertainment programs of Spanish broadcasters. We compare two years: 2012 and 2016, a period during which the Spanish television market changed due to appearance of OTT services. Using t-tests and regression models, we establish that the importance of quality signals varied over this period, with content proving more important and the set less so in 2016 as compared with 2012. Additionally, in 2016, the results show that the quality perception of linear TV entertainment programs depended more on subjective elements such as liking and satisfaction than on objective elements, as it was in 2012. Finally, our findings are discussed, and some managerial implications and future research are suggested.

## Keywords

**Production values, quality perception, new media, entertainment programs, television.**

## 1. Introduction

Mobile disruption in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century has transformed the way people experience television (Funk, 2004; Napoli, 2012; Wong *et al.*, 2016). Today, viewers can watch multiple TV programs whenever and wherever they want, via a variety of mobile devices. Television has evolved from being a domestic medium, which was inside homes and talked to family impersonally, to a self-medium, omnipresent in people's lives, connecting with each person individually (Abercrombie, 1993; Medina, 2017). As a result, people consume more TV and video hours than ever (around 30 hours a week), especially on-demand content (42% of total viewing time) mainly accessed through mobile phones (Ericsson, 2017). In fact, linear TV viewing time has steadily decreased since 2010 and video cord-cutting is becoming a global trend (Ericsson, 2017; Nissen, 2016). According to Zenith (2018), the Internet is close to be the main entertainment media, surpassing TV.

In this context, the game has changed from scheduling and flow to mass personalization (Tseng *et al.*, 2010). Online video platforms, such as Netflix or Amazon, consolidate content from different sources with their own and offer it to users. At the same time, they analyze subscribers' behavior utilizing big data, make content recommendations to users based on their tastes and preferences, and engage viewers with the platform (Evens & Donders, 2018). This situation has increased the competitive pressure on legacy players, who have launched their own online video platforms, and warned about the possibility that their content could not be shared with their competitors in the future (Jarvey, 2019; Katz, 2018).

At the same time, faced with this plethora of online content options, people decide what to watch based on television product quality (Chan-Olmsted & Wolter, 2018; Evens & Donders, 2018; Gunter & Wober, 1992; Killen, 2013; Sánchez-Taberner, 2006). Individuals' evaluation of quality encompasses both objective and subjective elements (Maurer, 2017), such as image, sound, decoration, diversity, identification and creativity, among others. In this sense, quality perception depends on television product attributes, which function as quality signals (Elliot & Simmons, 2007; Gunter, 1993).

Quality has been always a key topic of discussion in the television industry. Nowadays, this situation is even more critical due to the fact that TV networks and cable companies are immersed in a hyper-competitive environment with more content available than ever (Landgraf, 2018). In addition, TV viewers believe that television incumbents offer them lower product quality than newer players such as Netflix and Amazon Prime (Kimber, 2019). Therefore, some questions arise: has the importance of quality signals changed with the emergence of new online alternatives? Has this affected the perception of quality among viewers? Answering these questions may help linear TV companies to evaluate their ability to innovate, a crucial competency according to practitioners (Mooney *et al.*, 2018).

Our research focuses on the situation of Spanish broadcasters, which have experienced rapid environmental change in a few short years. Our study explores how objective elements affect viewer quality perception of television products and compares two different periods in Spain to evaluate the possible impact of new online alternatives on the results. Specifically, we focus on production values as television program quality signals and their effect on the quality evaluation of entertainment programs (quiz/game shows, magazine programs and talk shows, reality TV, music and talent shows, variety, comedy and lifestyle programs), taking into consideration four elements: the host, content, the set, and technical quality. At the same time, in order to assess the possible effect of the emergence of online TV on individuals' TV quality perception, we compare data from two years: 2012 and 2016, a period during which the Spanish television market faced a transition from scarcity and offline domination to abundance and online popularization.

Our paper contributes to TV quality literature by broadening our knowledge about the relationship between quality perception and the subjective evaluation of production values. Moreover, it also addresses in more depth the impact of the new media environment on audience quality perception, as well as its effect on linear TV programs. Finally, we add value to the media management literature by assessing the consequences of trying to engage viewers who are more informed about company processes, and offering some practical recommendations to practitioners.

According to this, the structure of the paper is as follows. First, we briefly describe the Spanish TV market and the perception of quality in the country. Second, the theoretical background, hypotheses and research questions are presented. Third, the methodology is explained. Fourth, the results are outlined and analyzed. Finally, the conclusions and managerial implications are discussed.

## 2. TV market and quality in the Spanish context

In Spain, television started in 1956 as a government monopoly, a status quo which held for 34 years. In 1990, the television market was opened up to competitors (Bayo-Moriones *et al.*, 2018), creating a mixed system with public and private networks. During the nineties, the market comprised RTVE (Spanish radio and television), the government network with a focus on public service, two major private broadcasters (Telecinco and Antena 3), many minor regional networks and local channels, and some pay TV operators (terrestrial, satellite and cable).

Since its liberalization, ownership in the Spanish TV market has been very concentrated. While the digitalization of TV, completed in 2010 with the so-called analogue switch-off, brought more channels into the market, most were owned by the main operators (Mediaset and Atresmedia). In the 2012–2018 period, these two private media conglomerates averaged 86% of advertising revenues and 57% of audience share approximately (Barlovento Comunicación, 2019; CNMC, 2018). In addition, online TV content was dominated by these operators and the public television network, limiting any real change in the market dynamics. In fact, their early motivation to move onto the Internet was defensive (Doyle, 2010), to prevent third parties illegally uploading their contents and thus depriving them of their profits. They just were trying to protect their traditional business model. In 2010, a research established that the increase in content supply did not have an impact on audience quality perception (Artero *et al.*, 2010). However, this situation started to change slowly in the 2014–2015 period.

Until 2014, Pay-TV (cable, IPTV and satellite) evinced a marginal market share. In that year, telecommunications companies such as Movistar, Vodafone and others began to offer product bundles (including telephone, TV, and Internet connection), which were very attractive to consumers, increasing the share of this kind of TV (Guerrero *et al.*, 2017). In addition, since 2015, new OTT services were launched in the country, joining such outlets as Filmin and Rakuten TV. Companies such as Netflix, HBO, Sky and Amazon started to offer their products to Spanish users, broadening the content offer in the country even further (Guerrero *et al.*, 2017). As a consequence, in a few short years, the TV Spanish market shifted from audiovisual scarcity to oversupply, with the number of subscribers increasing all the time. Today, Pay TV platforms hold 25.7% of audience share (Barlovento Comunicación, 2020), with a continuous growing trend, and almost 40% of households, 6.8 million, are subscribed to some kind of pay TV, including online services (CNMC, 2019).

The new abundance of content and access via different devices (tablets, smartphones and SmartTV's) have profoundly affected viewing habits in Spain (Guerrero *et al.*, 2018). According to Kantar Media audience ratings, linear TV consumption decreased from 246 minutes per day in 2012 to 199 minutes in 2021, on a gradual declining trend (Barlovento Comunicación, 2022). At the same time, almost 65% of people declare that due to their online audiovisual consumption, they watch less traditional television (Guerrero *et al.*, 2017). In fact, around 65% of consumers watch TV/video on their smartphones and almost 60% of their viewing time is based on mobile devices (Ericsson, 2015). These results are even more pronounced among younger users (Guerrero, 2018). In 2021, 86.4% of the Spanish population watched online video, mainly fiction series, films, news and music (IAB Spain, 2021).

Regarding TV quality, Spain does not have any government office monitoring or assessing it, as is the case in other countries. As a consequence, TV quality is mainly guaranteed by the TV operators through a self-regulation code agreed with the Spanish Government. Nevertheless, different studies have showed that Spanish viewers do not have a very high opinion of linear TV quality, rating it between 6.0 and 6.8 on a ten-points scale (Medina & Ojer, 2008; Vallejo & Villena, 2012). In addition, since 2014, Spanish people have evaluated online TV as having higher quality and being more satisfying than linear TV (Ericsson, 2015; Flores-Ruiz & Humanes-Humanes, 2014; IAB Spain, 2018).

### 3. Theoretical background

Quality is a complex and elusive concept, understood in many different ways (Gunter, 1993; Seawright & Young, 1996), some more technical than others. There are technical approaches based on the views of practitioners, critics, and/or scholars; commercial approaches based on what audience demands; socio-cultural approaches based on what the role of TV is; and perceptual approaches based on viewers' opinions (Artero *et al.*, 2015; Blumler & Hoffman-Riem, 1993; Gunter, 1993; Gutiérrez, 2000; von-Rimscha *et al.*, 2010). In summary, excluding the normative discussion about the role of TV, it is possible to categorize the debate about TV quality in relation to two viewpoints: the objective perspective, focused mainly on professional standards, and the subjective perspective based on viewer's perception (Nieto & Iglesias, 2000; Sánchez-Taberner, 2008; von Rimscha *et al.*, 2010). Commonly, research about quality has been focused more on the former than on the latter (Bayo-Moriones *et al.*, 2018), implying a little comprehension about quality signals from the viewer's perspective than technical one (Gunter, 1997).

Scholars who mainly follow the objective perspective believe that only media professionals have the knowledge to evaluate TV product quality adequately. They argue that the audience is unable to do so, because viewers sometimes watch TV programs, they themselves rate as being low quality (Gunter & Wober, 1992), and they do not have the knowledge required to discern quality in TV programs (Shamir, 2007).

According to the objective perspective, TV product quality is expressed through technical, content, artistic, and/or impact elements (Albers, 1996; Costera, 2012; Dunne, 2007; Leggatt, 1996; Medina, 2006; Verhoeven *et al.*, 2017). TV programs are designed to generate an emotional and/or cognitive effect in the target audience through technical, content and artistic elements that aim to engage viewers (Cardwell, 2007). Based on this, some authors have tried to uncover the objective parameters to measure quality utilized by media professionals. However, scholars have found that, despite some coincidences, practitioners do not share a common, universal framework to determine the quality of a TV program (Albers, 1996; Mir *et al.*, 2008; Richeri & Lasagni, 2006).

Nevertheless, other authors hold that the audience is interested in product quality and has the ability to evaluate objective and/or subjective TV program elements, perceiving quality differences among products (Gunter & Wober, 1992; Sánchez-Taberner, 2006; Shamir, 2007; Urban & Schweiger, 2014). People can recognize certain quality signals, even if they do not like a particular TV program, and are capable of differentiating between liking and quality (Cardwell, 2007; Gunter, 1997; Gunter & Wober, 1992).

#### 3.1. TV entertainment programs and quality

Generally, TV contents defined as "serious" by the audience, such as news, culture, and documentaries, have been defined as synonyms of quality (Artero *et al.*, 2013; Gunter & Wober, 1992). In contrast, entertainment TV programs are normally considered as a pass time or distraction, and therefore not to be regarded as quality TV. However, some authors have stated that genre is not a signal of quality, because there is quality to be found in such predictable formats as talk shows, soap operas, quiz shows and comedies, and it depends on the sum of TV program elements that are valued by the audience (Gunter, 1997; Mulgan, 1990). In this sense, an entertainment TV program may be considered as quality TV to the extent that it fulfills both audience expectations and the function for which it was produced (Costera, 2012; Medina, 2017). Accordingly, entertainment is not just about distracting the audience, it also means giving the audience a product that enriches viewers intellectually, emotionally and/or spiritually (Costera, 2005; Medina, 2006; Schlütz, 2016).

Most scholars agree that it is more difficult to identify quality elements associated with entertainment TV programs than news TV programs (Costera, 2005; von Rimscha *et al.*, 2010). Nonetheless, it is possible to identify many different variables when the genre is analyzed. For

instance, Greenberg and Busselle (1996) identified 44 different variables, including entertainment, interest, creativity, and complexity, among others. Guerrero and Etayo (2015) defined the host, content, the set, and technical quality. Finally, Kimber (2019) identified 20 variables commonly used by scholars analyzing quality in this case: entertainment, involvement, interest, credibility, creativity/innovation, value, emotional impact, verisimilitude, surprise, originality, technical quality, aesthetic elements, anchors/hosts/celebrities, script, acting, empathy, respect, intelligible, clarity, and mundanity. In sum, a mix of production values and subjective elements.

There is a substantial body of research about subjective elements such as involvement, engagement, and interest in the marketing and communication literature (e.g., Barger *et al.*, 2016; Gunter & Wober, 1992; Ha & Hu, 2013; Hollebeek *et al.*, 2014). Although media professionals assert that production values help to differentiate products from competitors and are visible evidence of TV program quality (Cummins & Chambers, 2011), research about the effect of production values on viewers' quality perception of TV programs is scarce. The belief that consumers do not have the ability to discern degrees of production values because they do not have the technical knowledge and expertise to notice differences among products (Shamir, 2007) is prevalent. However, a number of studies have found that viewers can distinguish quality differences associated with TV program production values in both entertainment and news genres (Cummins & Chambers, 2011; Shamir, 2007; Urban & Schweiger, 2014).

### **3.2. *The effect of the new media environment on viewers' expectations and behaviour (research questions)***

In a media environment characterized by audience fragmentation and competition for attention, media companies not only compete against each other, but also against non-media activities (Chan-Olmsted & Wolter, 2018). This situation is particularly difficult for linear TV players, because they still depend mainly on advertising revenues, in contrast to streaming services, which follow a quality content production strategy (Hill *et al.*, 2017), leading to audience engagement and loyalty (Daniels, 2017; McGovern, 2001; Mooney *et al.*, 2018).

Linear TV players are now dealing with a new kind of audience: more empowered, more demanding and less brand loyal (Labrecque *et al.*, 2013). In their search for quality, consumers move faster from one content to another, looking for satisfying their needs of entertainment and information (Shade *et al.*, 2015), learning about content quality and changing their preferences in the process. Mobile technology and streaming services have enabled customers to experiment quality TV everywhere, learning about it and changing their expectations and behavior about TV products. Nowadays, consumers are more aware of what quality TV is and differences in production values, comparing alternatives continuously (Daniels, 2017; Jenner, 2017; Nielsen, 2019).

Considering previous discussion and the Spanish TV context, it may be supposed that the new media context could have affected quality perception, the evaluation of production values in Spanish linear TV entertainment programs, and the relationship between these two phenomena over the 2012-2016 period. Thus, the following research questions arise:

- RQ1. Did the quality perception of Spanish linear TV entertainment programs change between 2012 and 2016?
- RQ2. Did the importance of production values in Spanish linear TV entertainment programs change between 2012 and 2016?
- RQ3. Did the impact of production values on quality perception of Spanish linear TV entertainment programs change between 2012 and 2016?

## **4. Methodology**

In order to answer our research questions, we analyzed viewers' quality perception and their evaluation of production values in Spanish linear TV entertainment programs. The data was obtained from two telephone surveys applied in 2012 and 2016 respectively, whose results are compared in this research. Both surveys were applied by Netquest, a marketing research company, using the same questionnaire and two separate samples.

### **4.1. Sampling**

The sample comprised Spanish people older than 14 years old, who watched Spanish linear TV. The sample distribution was designed to be representative of this population and proportional quotas were established for the categories of sex, age and region. Participants were sampled from Netquest's consumer panels and all of them signed an informed consent. In the case of people younger than 18 years old, their parents also signed an assent letter.

The sample size was 1,000 cases in 2012 and another 1,000 in 2016. Both studies obtained a response rate around 60%. The total sample consisted of 53.35% female and 46.65% male individuals, ranging in age from 14 up to 85 years old with an average age of 47.58 years old (SD: 18.04).

### **4.2. Variables and measures**

All respondents answered questions about quality perception of Spanish linear TV entertainment programs and the importance of different production values in this kind of programs. Quality perception was evaluated utilizing the question: How do you rate the quality of Spanish linear TV entertainment programs? on a five-point Likert type scale from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good). Quiz shows, talk shows, humor, reality TV and talent shows were defined as entertainment programs; this was explained in advance to the survey respondents.

Based on Guerrero and Etayo (2015), four production values were assessed: the host, content, the set, and technical quality. These were selected based on two conditions: visibility and budgetary significance. These four values are visible and recognizable to the audience without any professional assistance or preparation, and account for around 80% of a TV program budget (Guerrero & Etayo, 2015). We evaluated each production value utilizing the question What importance does (the respective production value) have for you in Spanish linear TV entertainment programs? on a five-point Likert type scale from 1 (irrelevant) to 5 (very important).

Some control variables were included to isolate effects distinct from those related to our research questions about quality perception. First, satisfaction with Spanish linear TV was measured using a five-point Likert type scale from 1 (nothing) to 5 (very satisfied). Second, a contract with a pay TV or OTT service was measured using a dummy variable, 1 (yes), 0 (no). Third, entertainment program liking was evaluated using a five-point Likert type scale from 1 (nothing) to 5 (very much). Finally, three demographic variables were considered: gender (1 male / 0 female); age (in years); and educational level, coded from 1 (less than primary) to 5 (higher education).

## **5. Results**

First, we compared quality perception of Spanish linear TV entertainment programs in 2012 to the data for 2016. Table 1 shows a negative significance difference between those years ( $t [1,896] = -3.57, p < 0.001$ ). Our results support that the quality perception of Spanish linear TV entertainment programs changed between 2012 and 2016, answering RQ1 in the affirmative.

**Table 1:** Comparison of quality perception and production values importance between 2012 and 2016.

Variable	2012	2016	Diff	t-test	p-value
Quality perception of Spanish linear TV entertainment programs	3.42	3.24	-0.18	t (1,896) = -3.57	p < 0.001
Importance of the host	3.70	3.94	0.24	t (1,895) = 5.16	p < 0.001
Importance of content	3.33	4.21	0.87	t (1,906) = 19.62	p < 0.001
Importance of the set	3.81	3.09	-0.73	t (1,785) = -14.31	p < 0.001
Importance of technical quality	3.66	4.00	0.33	t (1,824) = 7.36	p < 0.001

Note: 2012 and 2016 show average evaluation

Source: Own elaboration.

Second, we compared the importance of production values in Spanish linear TV entertainment programs in 2012 to the data for 2016. Table 1 shows our results. Three production values show positive significance differences between those years, the host ( $t [1,895] = 5.16, p < 0.001$ ), content ( $t [1,906] = 19.62, p < 0.001$ ), and technical quality ( $t [1,824] = 7.36, p < 0.001$ ). In case of the set as a value, our results show a negative significance difference between those years ( $t [1,785] = -14.31, p < 0.001$ ). Consequently, our results support that the importance of production values changed between 2012 and 2016, answering RQ2, likewise in the affirmative.

In order to answer RQ3, we performed a regression analysis for each year, 2012 and 2016, considering quality perception as dependent variable, production values as independent ones, and all the control variables described above.

Table 2 shows the regression model results for both years. In 2012, all production values were significant positive predictors of quality perception. However, in 2016, just the host and the set remained as significant positive predictors, but with a lower impact than in 2012. In addition, we performed a Chow test to compare estimated parameters between both regression models. Our results show that there was a structural change between 2012 and 2016 ( $F [11; 1,628] = 24.68, p < 0.001$ ), confirming that the impact of production values on quality perception of Spanish linear TV entertainment programs changed during this period.

Despite not all production values have an impact on quality perception in 2016, it is relevant to notice that almost all have grown in importance to evaluate entertainment programs. In fact, in the period 2012-2016, the importance of the host has increased by 6%, in the case of content by 26%, and technical quality by 9%, confirming the prevalence of these production values in audience opinion.

Finally, it is interesting to notice that, in 2016, liking for genre and satisfaction with Spanish linear TV appear as stronger predictors of quality perception than in 2012.

**Table 2:** Multiple regression estimates (standard errors in parentheses). Dependent variable: Quality perception of Spanish linear TV entertainment programs.

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2016</b>
Importance of the host	0.218*** (0.04)	0.083* (0.03)
Importance of content	0.364*** (0.03)	-0.056 (0.04)
Importance of the set	0.072* (0.04)	0.088** (0.03)
Importance of technical quality	0.077* (0.04)	0.014 (0.04)
Pay-TV or OTT	-0.033 (0.06)	-0.13 (0.07)
Satisfaction with Spanish linear TV	0.097*** (0.02)	0.221*** (0.03)
Liking for genre	0.125*** (0.04)	0.370*** (0.05)
Gender	0.048 (0.05)	0.065 (0.07)
Age	-0.061*** (0.01)	0.007 (0.02)
Educational level	-0.059* (0.03)	-0.098** (0.03)
Constant	0.662** (0.2)	1.434*** (0.27)

\* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

Sample size	790	860
R-Square	50.3%	23.4%
Adj. R-Square	49.6%	22.5%

Source: own elaboration.

## 6. Discussion

The aim of this research was to analyze the impact of production values on TV quality perception, and to evaluate whether there was any change in this relationship in a period during which Spanish TV migrated from scarcity and offline domination to abundance and online popularization. Our results suggest that audience evaluation of production values effectively affects TV program quality perception. Furthermore, it seems that the new media context faced by Spanish linear TV operators has affected viewer's assessment of production values and its impact on quality perception.

Specifically, over the period analyzed, almost all the evaluated production values have grown in importance as elements of entertainment programming. In contrast, the quality perception of Spanish linear TV entertainment programs has fallen. These results show that the consumption of streaming services has led to viewers who are more aware, informed and demanding with regard to TV quality than was the case in previous years, dominated by

broadcast TV. This awareness is reflected in the fact that, in 2012, the set was the most important production value, but in 2016, it was the least important aspect. In a period where people have experienced TV quality, they have changed their valuation scale, rating content, the host and technical quality as more important. The fact that content stands out from the other production values implies that the audience attributes greater significance to this cornerstone of the creative business, and less importance to production values with a lower impact on content quality. In this sense, we found that the concept of production value associated with content has evolved, focusing more on cultural and creative issues (Christian, 2019) and less on technical aspects (Cummins & Chambers, 2011).

Additionally, between 2012 and 2016, production values lost importance as predictors of the quality perception of Spanish linear TV entertainment programs. In 2012, all evaluated production values were important, with content having the highest impact on quality perception. However, in 2016, just the host and the set proved significant, although only to a slight extent. The relevance of factors affecting quality perception shifted from more objective elements, as production values, to audience feelings as liking and satisfaction. Given more options of higher quality, people who really appreciate linear TV entertainment programs are those who like this kind of TV and genre, motivated by an implicit subjective decision rather than a real objective comparison. If companies do nothing, linear TV will become a medium more closely associated to gratifications such as relaxation and escapism, as some studies based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory have showed (Kuyucu, 2015). Audiences will look for emotional gratifications in entertainment experiences through linear TV (Bartsch, 2012).

### **6.1. Managerial implications**

The work of a Spanish linear TV operator in this context is not easy. People look for quality, but they do not find it on linear TV, as their perception of its quality has fallen. At the same time, they are more demanding and less loyal, pressing for more innovation on screen, which is to be found on pay TV and OTT services.

Linear TV companies need to innovate to generate customer engagement, and innovation is a key factor in TV quality (McCabe & Akass, 2007). Audiences appreciate production values, because they correlate them with quality. In this sense, innovation means investing in distinctive production, where content is the most important value for the audience. Those who work in the television industry know that today, more than ever, they must captivate spectators in order to win their loyalty. Knowing what they value and its effect on quality perception is key to generate a competitive advantage (Frank & Greenberg, 2000).

In this new context, quality and catalogue exclusivity are essential competitive factors, driving companies to invest in distinctive production. Such investment involves time and resources, a team of professionals capable of meeting new challenges, and the implementation of a specific talent management policy (Pérez-Latre & Sánchez-Tabernero, 2015). Product success no longer depends just on celebrities who star in content, but also on those behind the cameras.

As a consequence, linear TV operators have begun a strategic and thorough process of restructuring that will reshape their own identity. They have expanded the core of their business to embrace all kinds of products and services related to audiovisual entertainment (Guerrero, 2018), launching their own subscription video on-demand platforms. In this way, while their TV broadcasting division depends almost exclusively on advertising revenues, their online services are based mainly on audience subscriptions, without excluding advertising as a possible complementary revenue stream. From the media management perspective, this digital transformation involves “flatter management structures, more flexibility, fewer intermediaries, easier operations and the end of some physical distribution networks” (Pérez-Latre & Sánchez-Tabernero, 2015, p. 62).

## 6.2. Limitations and future research

All research projects have some limitations. Firstly, this study focuses mainly on linear TV and entertainment programs in general. It is necessary to expand on it to encompass Pay-TV and streaming services, analyzing any differences that emerge. Moreover, future research could also analyze other genres. Secondly, it is necessary to understand in greater depth why the importance of the set as a value has declined. Perhaps this production value is considered a hygiene factor (Herzberg *et al.*, 1967) by the audience nowadays. Thirdly, while we analyzed only four production values, it is possible to consider others such as celebrity guests, costume design and visual effects, among others. Fourthly, our research focuses on Spanish TV, so other countries ought to be included so as to be able to generalize conclusions. Finally, our research utilized self-report measures, which could show some biases. At the same time, however, perception data is difficult to obtain in any other way. A possible complement could be big data about consumption of TV programs as in Fudurić *et al.* (2019).

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