The portrayal of indigenous people on television programs

Introduction

The definition of indigenous derives from a valuation of ethnic-cultural and self-belonging carried out by people belonging to the national indigenous communities. This strategy has been used to prepare the last population censuses. It can therefore be observed that the characterization of the indigenous is the product of historical processes of identification, where only those who exercise power can impose the definition of themselves and others. The race categories such as “Indian”, “black”, “mestizo” or “white” represent the "birthmark of America and the very basis of current global power”.

Studies on the representation of minorities in the television have shown that minority groups are typically understated and stereotyped on television, with minor roles and low status occupations. Dixon, Azocar & Casas, (2003) points out, it is possible that the indigenous people still represent a problem of backwardness for certain Mexicans. In front of the admired ancestral indigenous, the present or current indigenous is ignored and discriminated against by a society that rarely catalogs it as an active factor (Dixon, Azocar, & Casas, 2003).

Literature Review

Dixon, Azocar, & Casas (2003) point out that these intra-group comparisons can be very useful if they are carried out constantly over time, as this would generate a better understanding of the evolution of the representation of social groups in the media. But, in addition, the comparisons made also make it possible to know the stereotypes that are transmitted in the media, which can generate particular psychological effects in the public. The indigenous person on television is a white person, with black eyes and hair, with standard physical appearance or, in any case, tending to fatness and of low or average height. Regarding the appearance, which involves the part of the set that works the external characterization of the character by designing aspects such as costumes or makeup, a clear general pattern is observed: the indigenous was normally presented in the programs analyzed wearing traditional Mexican clothing, a typical way to characterize the indigenous in the media

Although there is a certain conceptual ambiguity when defining stereotypes (Engstrom, & Semic, 2003), they are usually described as "more or less structured beliefs in the mind of a subject about a social group" (Engstrom, & Semic, 2003). It is observed, therefore, the important cognitive function that stereotypes maintain, which allows to define them also as "cognitive structures that contain the knowledge of subjects and beliefs about different social groups" (Lee, et.al. 2009). It is therefore assumed that the stereotypes come from a process of social categorization about the different groups with which one has contact or, even, with which there are no direct relationships. They are overviews that constitute, in a certain way, a rejection of the individual differences that characterize the members of the outgroups. That is, stereotypes get the variability of the members of the group ignored. In this way, when a person is categorized within a specific ethnic group, they are assigned certain attributes, often of a negative nature, although they can also have a positive value (Tan, Fujioka and Lucht, 1997).

Purpose

The present study examines what traits or stereotypes explain the presence of indigenous characters in different television programs such as (soap operas, series, movies, etc.).

Methodology

For this research, the data from past studies and research will use to examine the role of television in spreading stereotypes. A key concept in the studies about the process of generating media stereotypes and their effects on the public is that of the schemes. These are structures or cognitive categories used to evaluate groups and their members and constitute social stereotypes. These structures are formed from the knowledge, beliefs and expectations perceived by people about a specific social group (Dixon, 2003). Based on this idea, it is suggested that stereotypes contribute to generating mental schemas (schema) that "help people to simplify the social environment in which they live, quickly and efficiently processing incoming stimuli based on the presence of a few relevant characteristics" that are assigned to certain social groups (Lee, et.al. 2009). These schemes not only help to structure knowledge about social groups, but also contribute to generating expectations about the members that belong to these groups due to the characteristics that they must share due to their membership (Pomering, & White, 2011)

Hypothesis

Is there any relationship between television program and stereotypes against indigenous peoples?

research question

Are there differences in the characterization of the indigenous characters, depending on the type of character or role they play in the program?

Theoretical framework

Much of the knowledge that people have of the world around them does not come from their own experience, but rather from the stories they hear. In this sense, television is a medium with extensive experience in the transmission of stories, which makes it a cultural instrument of socialization through the cultivation of assumptions about social reality (Gerbner et al., 1996). From this assumption, from the cultivation theory, a wide research work has been developed in three strategic lines: a) the institutional analysis of the policies that determine the creation of the messages, b) the analysis of the system, that allows "to accurately delineate the selected characteristics and trends that the world of television presents to its viewers" (Gerbner et al., 1996, p.41) and c) the analysis of acculturation, that is, the effects of this representation in the audience that consumes it.

Within the second line of study, it has been pointed out that it is very important to know the cultural indicators present on television, which constitute a kind of barometer of importance on cultural issues, in a similar function to that performed by other indicators commonly used, as can be the economic ones.

Ethical Considerations

For this study, all the ethical issues will be considered. The research will be approved by the IRB.

References

Dixon, T. L., Azocar, C. L., & Casas, M. (2003). The portrayal of race and crime on television network news. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 47(4), 498-523.

Engstrom, E., & Semic, B. (2003). Portrayal of religion in reality TV programming: Hegemony and the contemporary American wedding. Journal of Media and Religion, 2(3), 145-163.

Tan, A., Fujioka, Y., & Lucht, N. (1997). Native American stereotypes, TV portrayals, and personal contact. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 74(2), 265-284.

Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M. and Signorielli, N. (1996). "Growing up with television: perspective of acculturation". In: Bryant, J. and Zillmann, D. (eds.). The effects of the media: research and theories (pp. 35-66). Barcelona: Paidós.

Lee, M. J., Bichard, S. L., Irey, M. S., Walt, H. M., & Carlson, A. J. (2009). Television viewing and ethnic stereotypes: Do college students form stereotypical perceptions of ethnic groups as a result of heavy television consumption?. The Howard Journal of Communications, 20(1), 95-110.

Pomering, A., & White, L. (2011). The portrayal of Indigenous identity in Australian tourism brand advertising: Engendering an image of extraordinary reality or staged authenticity?. Place branding and public diplomacy, 7(3), 165-174.

Annotation bibliography

Dixon, T. L., Azocar, C. L., & Casas, M. (2003). The portrayal of race and crime on television network news. Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media, 47(4), 498-523.

The article entitled, “The portrayal of race and crime on television network news” explains the role of the race and crime on television news channels. How they are portraying the news against the minority groups. This article is relevant to my research as it covers all the important concepts related to my topic. This article is reliable as it is selected from scholarly articles.

Engstrom, E., & Semic, B. (2003). Portrayal of religion in reality TV programming: Hegemony and the contemporary American wedding. Journal of Media and Religion, 2(3), 145-163.

Engstrom E., & Semic, in their articles explains the concept of religious differences on the reality television. The purpose to use this article is to examine stereotype in all aspects. This article is relevant to my research as it covers all the important concepts related to my topic.

Tan, A., Fujioka, Y., & Lucht, N. (1997). Native American stereotypes, TV portrayals, and personal contact. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 74(2), 265-284.

In this article, the author explains the meaning of the sterotypes which is necessary to pursue this study. The author explains that, stereotypes get the variability of the members of the group ignored. In this way, when a person is categorized within a specific ethnic group, they are assigned certain attributes, often of a negative nature, although they can also have a positive value. This is an interesting article which important for my research study.

Gerbner, G., Gross, L., Morgan, M. and Signorielli, N. (1996). "Growing up with television: perspective of acculturation". In: Bryant, J. and Zillmann, D. (eds.). The effects of the media: research and theories (pp. 35-66). Barcelona: Paidós.

“Growing up with television: perspective of acculturation” is an important article because it provides theoretical framework for the study. The author explains that the television is a medium with extensive experience in the transmission of stories, which makes it a cultural instrument of socialization through the cultivation of assumptions about social reality. This article is relevant to my research as it covers all the important concepts related to my topic. This article is reliable as it is selected from scholarly articles.

Pomering, A., & White, L. (2011). The portrayal of Indigenous identity in Australian tourism brand advertising: Engendering an image of extraordinary reality or staged authenticity?. Place branding and public diplomacy, 7(3), 165-174.

This study helps to raises many expectations about the effects that its consumption can have on the attitude of the audience, because beyond the traditional hypothesis of negative media effects by simplistically presenting social groups, it can be expected that certain positive representations such as detected in the content analysis generate more favorable attitudes towards the stereotyped collective. This result shows how in the repertoire of traits used to characterize the indigenous mediated coexist those who have a negative charge with those who maintain a more positive value.