Using Formative Evaluation Research in the Development of Electronic Media Programmes

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TELEVISION producers have specific demands when asked about the types of insight they would like to gain from media research. In this paper an overview of the literature on "pilot programme testing" is given, and the technique of formative evaluation research on educational television is discussed. The latter technique was adapted for programme research on entertainment programming in South Africa to address the specific needs of television and radio producers. Using three different methodologies, including measuring audience reaction second by second, and "focus group" discussions, valuable insight in audience response have been gained.

The results of this research suggest immediate practical implementation thereof, bringing the media researcher and media practitioner closer together.

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1. Introduction

For many media practitioners the world of the media researcher is shrouded in a cloak of mystery. Media research and evaluation are seen as possible constraints to their creative freedom. In spite of this,

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research on the process and effect of the mass media has a long, albeit chequered history. Media research had its origin in a doctoral thesis by Peucer in 1690 at the University of Leipzig, Germany (Marais et al, 1980). In the Forties research was also conducted by Lasswell, Lazarsfeld and Hovland in the United States on the subject of the radio.

Today, research on the mass media has become an extensive field of study. "It is appropriate to describe the state of mass communication research at the end of the 1970's as resurgent" (Robert, Bachen 1981:307). Roberts and Bachen (1981:309) also state that ". . . almost every dimension of social behavior is at least potentially influenced by mass communication".

Most of the results of research on the mass media are of less use to the media practitioner who has to feed the "television monster" and create programmes under pressure of time and budget. Effective "in-house" research as a body of academic knowledge, with the aim of assisting the practitioner, is not as widely known or published as the knowledge on the broad effects of the media (especially television).

Television producers invariably have specific demands when asked about the types of insight they would like to gain from media research. The feedback from research should tell them whether a programme fulfilled specific intentions. Moreover, if special or particular production techniques were used, they want to know if these techniques were successful. For the producer, it is important to know why a programme failed. Precise information on factors such as the types of performers/presenters to be used, production variables, such as the set, camera angles etc., are important for future programming. In addition, he or she needs to know whether a programme will continue to be successful with repetition. Usually, whenever they seek such information, they need the answers in a hurry! (Baggaley, 1986).

According to Prof. J. Baggaley of Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, one of the world's experts on evaluation research, ". . . the reasons for failure in a TV programme are often quite impossible to predict. On the one hand, the design team may have completely misjudged the capabilities and interest of their audience; on the other hand, a programme designed with the best of theoretical intentions may be jeopardised by a momentary lapse in production skill" (1986:5).

The media researcher, therefore, has an important function in trying to answer these programme content-related questions. Because science is cumulative, previous studies in the area should be used as building blocks. A review of the available literature helped to identify problem areas and important factors in this area.

2. Evidence in scientific publications

The literature on programme evaluation research is notably thin − particularly in the area of entertainment television programming, and more so in commercial television programming. Except for a few books written on television in general, and especially the one written by Beville (1985) no explicit details are to be found on research done by the networks in the United States. Similarly, even the BBC has published very little in this field. European and Third World broadcasting authorities are notorious for their lack of published material on programme research.

Fortunately, in the field of educational television, the publication of research results in scientific publications is much more of an accepted concept, and it is interesting to note that the term "experimental evaluation" was used as early as 1924 (in the United States) to refer to the careful investigation of "specific types of visual materials and techniques as means to the attainment of definable educational objectives" (Zirbes 1924:964, as quoted in Cambre 1981:4). Appraisal checklists, programme analyses, experimental and other techniques were and still are being used in the research process.

In a review of the above-mentioned literature, that is, with regard to educational television, Coldevin (1976) identifies the following elements to be taken into account in assessing television programmes:

(a) Presentation/technical variables;
(b) Content/subject matter organization;
(c) Performer characteristics.

Although many of these studies indicate subtle effects on the audience, little consistency is to be found in the outcome of the various studies since few of them pay adequate attention to the control of the experimental variables. Furthermore, as mentioned before, virtually no published research on "ordinary" or entertainment programming is available in the literature in this regard.

3. Programme evaluation research

Programme development research is however alive and well and is apparently being applied by most large television networks around the globe. In some

countries like the USA it is called programme testing – in other countries it is concealed in the activities of the broadcasting research departments.

Usually, programme productions are tested in the following stages: (1) initial idea or plan; (2) rough cut; and (3) post-production. In the first two stages of testing, an overall indication that something is wrong is compiled: It is, however, not possible to identify the exact causes when a programme is found to be unacceptable to the test audience. In the final stage, however, it is possible. Finished products (programmes) are tested in experimental theatres, in shopping centres and in the USA even in mobile vans (Wimmer, Dominick, 1983:288). One example where research is conducted on entertainment television programming, is that of CBS in the USA (Gitlin, 1986:282): "Testing of series pilot shows in screening rooms before typical audiences, which answer questions about what they saw, is a method the television networks use to decide which programs they will put on the air".

CBS does sampling by trying to net tourists in New York, assuming they would be a more representative sample than everyday Angelenos or New Yorkers. Anyone but bag ladies and drunks are handed out free tickets to view television programmes which have not been broadcast yet. Willing subjects are ushered into a CBS screening room where they are seated around a conference table. A taped introductory lecture tells the audience that they have a chance to "talk back" to the television set. Each seat is equipped with two buttons. When you like what you see, a green button is pressed, and a red button is to be pressed if you don't want to see more. If you are indifferent, you press neither. After the film, questionnaires are distributed containing questions regarding the format, technical features, content and setting as well as some open-ended questions. "CBS recruits groups of willing subjects until they have reached a prearranged quota: 80 to 100 respondents per pilot" (p. 283). Every pilot is tested, as well as shows already on schedule which are displaying a decline in viewer numbers. Sometimes focus group interviews are held to unearth feelings and attitudes about a programme.

The information gained in this way is then forwarded to top programming executives and the heads of the relevant development divisions. Gitlin states that CBS research people are fully cognisant that their samples are too small for inferential statistical analyses, but they plead the press of time. CBS people claim that their pilot testing system is "85 percent accurate", which means that 85% of programmes that were subjected to pilot testing and rated "very good", also attracted large audiences, while 85% that were rated as "poor", also had low viewer numbers. CBS acknowledges the possibility that their pilot testing may be inaccurate, but they feel very strongly that it is still a far better method than to produce television programmes purely on a single producer's judgement.

Another system of testing the quality of individual programme appeal is done by means of a national survey of television viewers in the USA (TVQ), established in 1958 and currently conducted by Marketing Evaluations (Beville, 1985:13). TVQ provides commercial industry decision makers with (1) awareness measures of national commercial programming and (2) viewers' overall programme evaluations for programmes they know, along a five-point scale from "one of my favourites" to "poor". The TVQ service resulted from surveys conducted by George Gallup for the motion picture industry in the early 1950's. TVQ is conducted among a nationally representative US household mail panel of 1 200 households. Although reports are issued seven times per year, this method is relatively slow and does not serve the need for quick decision-making by the formative evaluation researcher.

At Stanford University a much faster electronic evaluation system was developed, namely the "Vox Box" (Beville, 1985:144). The Vox Box system is wired to a household's main television set in 200 homes that agree to provide their evaluations of whatever television programmes they watch. The device consists of two rows of buttons – one for channel selection, the other to record qualitative responses using the following button options: Excellent, Informative, Credible, Funny, Boring, Unbelievable, Dumb, Zap, Person (special button to apply response to programme personality).

Paralleling the Vox Box responses is a second-by-second accounting from video-taped logs of all programmes and commercials aired on the five commercial and one public television station in Seattle-Tacoma. The data from the two sources are time linked in one data base to provide "highly accurate" records of what was on the air, who saw it, how they responded toward it, and what they thought of it. The data are then analysed and published in reports. This system (it is currently being updated) also proves to be too slow for decision-making in television productions.

The Arbitron system, sponsored by the Corpora-

tion for Public Broadcasting (CPB) (Beville, 1985: 146) functioned on a diary-keeping principle and their viewpoint was that "the implementation of a qualitative ratings system would substantially increase the program director's ability to evaluate effectiveness of a station's service by providing detailed audience information not previously available". Although the Arbitron system provided valuable results, the system also proved to be too slow and gradually vanished from the market.

It is clear therefore, that although scattered information on programme research concerning entertainment programmes is available, detailed, empirical papers are few and far between.

In educational television research the evaluation of programmes is well-documented, and terms like "formative" evaluation, "summative" evaluation are well-known. Formative evaluation (Scriven, 1967) aims to monitor and to recommend modifications to the impact of a production during its formative process. The approach contrasts with the more traditional "summative" styles of evaluation, which are conducted when production is completed and modifications are no longer possible. According to Baggaley (1986:7): "the objectives of formative evaluation are usually more pragmatic than those of sum-

mative studies, although they are also more limited than the objectives associated with full-blown research studies". Scriven (1967) points out that research studies usually aim to prove something, while formative evaluation is content to improve something.

Although the above-mentioned distinction between formative evaluation and summative evaluation is made very clearly, it is sometimes difficult to differentiate between these methodologies in practice. For example both require explicit criteria of merit.

By using different methodologies, the results of formative evaluation research has developed into a rather comprehensive tool for the media producer. Because of developments in the micro-computer technology, it is now possible to gain responses from an audience second-by-second. Baggaley's work indicate that "... it is now possible to record, and make speedy comparison of, the effects of a television program upon different individuals; simultaneously one may inspect second-by-second variations in these effects due to presentation technique" (1986:23). In addition, the formative evaluation approach to programme development can proceed as follows:

TABLE 1
STAGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND FORMATIVE EVALUATION OF MEDIA MATERIALS

1. Needs assessment	(Quasi-formative evaluation: existing product)
(a) Pre-test subject matter	
(b) Pre-test production techniques	
2. Product development	(Formative evaluation: new product)
(a) Production	
(b) Pilot-test production	
(c) Modify production	
3. Utilization	(Summative evaluation: new product)
(a) Draft support materials	
(b) Post-test production	
(c) Pilot-test support materials	
(d) Modify support materials	
(e) Trained uses	
4. Process development	
(a) Trained producers	
(b) Trained educators	
(c) Trained audience	

(Baggaley, 1986:25).

As used in educational television, the above-mentioned stages include aspects such as needs assessment and others more applicable to pure educational television research. Perhaps a more useful division is that by Sanders and Cunningham (1973):

"(1) Pre-developmental activities – audience needs assessment and other evaluation procedures occurring prior to actual product development.

(2) evaluation of objectives – assessment of the formal goals and objectives defined by the product developer.

(3) formative interim evaluation activities – assessment of the product as its early stages of development.

(4) formative product evaluation activities – assessment of the product at its final draft stage" (Baggaley 1986:15).

From this the very distinctive borders between formative and summative evaluation as defined by Scriven begins to blur. The possibilities of this approach of research to entertainment television programmes should, however, be clear. Evaluation research aims to generate recommendations in such a way that it can be used both before, during and after the production of the programme.

4. Evaluation research in South Africa

Following on the tradition of both American and European researchers, the broadcast of the first educational television programmes made in South Africa early in 1984 stimulated an evaluation research effort by social scientists. Several research papers on educational programmes were published by researchers and academics of the University of Pretoria (Pretorius, 1985; Sonnekus and Ras, 1985), the University of Fort Hare (Swart, 1985), the University of Potchefstroom for CHE (De Wet, 1985), the department of adult education of the KwaZulu government (Khanyile, 1985) and the Institute for Communication Research of the HSRC (Groenewald, 1985; Van Vuuren, 1985a, 1985b, 1985c). It was therefore also educational television that stimulated the development of the technique of formative evaluation in South Africa. The full design, methodology and practical implementation of formative evaluation in South Africa is already documented elsewhere (Van Vuuren, Herselman, 1985; Van Vuuren et al, 1986; Van Vuuren, Herselman, 1986). Formative evaluation research on entertainment

television programmes, however, has not been done in South Africa thus far and the applicability of this approach to entertainment programmes is the subject of this paper.

5. Locally produced programmes by the SABC

By definition, formative evaluation research can best be done on locally produced programmes. The SABC is by far the most important producer of local television programmes.

To provide a quality broadcasting service with due regard to the distinctive language and cultural requirements of the diverse South African electronic media markets, well-researched programmes imply several advantages for both the viewers and the SABC. By using formative evaluation research it will be possible to get closer to the ideal of programmes:

that are of

" – high quality, both technically and with regard to content;

– respect ethical and community norms;

– keep pace with demands and changes in the internal and external environment;

– maintain a balanced variety with respect to content;

– in respect of information and comment be sober, factual, authoritative and timeous." (SABC, p. 2).

Therefore, the SABC's Department of Broadcasting Research initiated a series of research projects in conjunction with the Institute for Communication Research of the HSRC and Markinor, using formative evaluation methodology on locally produced programmes.

6. Aim of research

In this paper, the technique of formative evaluation research, as developed by Baggaley (1979, 1980 and 1986) was used as a model for the development of similar research in the evaluation of entertainment programmes in South Africa. The applicability of this approach to programme testing will be discussed. Moreover, the use of research methodology via micro-computer measuring audiences' reaction second-by-second in conjunction with questionnaire and qualitative techniques will be reported. Results on a number of entertainment television and radio programmes using this methodology will be discussed. Finally, the paper will conclude with some prac-

tical implications and implementation of these results by media practitioners.

7. Methodology

Background

Various methods are applied in formative evaluation, particularly in the case of educational programmes. In the USA, Baggaley (1986) *inter alia* used the PEAC system to study the US Presidential Debates on television and was able to do an interesting *post mortem* analysis on a sample of voters' responses to the question "who is winning the most votes?" while the debate was on television.

Barbara Flagg (1982) did very creative studies on children's eye movement while they were watching educational television programmes. Recording of the viewers' eye movements provides unique information about the actual distribution of the viewers' visual attention while he or she is watching a television programme.

Another important study which was done during political campaigns is that of Kepplinger & Donsbach (1982) where experiments were done with the aim to analyze the influence of camera angles and political consistency on the perception of a party speaker. It was established that candidates from the opposition were filmed significantly more often from a clear bottom or clear top view, than were candidates of the ruling party. The main finding that resulted from the study is that camera shots from a distinct bottom or top view, potentially influenced voters' voting behaviour negatively.

The Institute for Communication Research (ICOMM) of the Human Sciences Research Council in conjunction with the SABC started doing formative evaluation research in the RSA by means of a micro-computer system (Programme Evaluation Analysis Computer – PEAC) on educational programmes in 1983. In 1986 this research method was also extended to the evaluation of radio and television entertainment programmes, and for the first time in the RSA, research on a sound scientific and empirical basis was conducted on viewers' experiences of entertainment programmes. Great emphasis is placed by the SABC on fast feedback as well as guidelines for producers with regard to practical implementation of research findings.

The basic principles underlying the concept of formative evaluation are:

(1) to let a sample of the pre-defined target audience evaluate a TV production from their individual and collective cognitive, affective and conative perspectives.

(2) to start the research as early as possible in the production phase, even as early as the script-writing stage.

(3) to generate guidelines for production personnel based on accumulated research expertise.

Formative evaluation research as conducted by ICOMM and the SABC

With the theoretical and empirical frameworks gained from research done abroad and in local formative evaluation research on educational programmes, a research paradigm for the formative evaluation of entertainment programmes was developed and adapted for local conditions.

The rationale for our research paradigm has its roots in the theory and practice of mass communications as well as numerous pilot studies. The method employed consists of three main phases:

– one (or more) planning meetings are held during which the aim of a particular study is clearly identified. The target audience is also established by identifying various demographics which it should contain. Stratification variables of the samples are also established.

– The recruiting is done by Markinor (a local market research company) on a quota basis, representative of the area in which the target audience resides. Although some doubts are expressed about quota sampling (we would also prefer more expensive national random sampling); we claim that Markinor's recruiting is very extensive, and instead of "grabbing" visitors from the street as CBS in New York does, recruiting is done by telephoning random numbers until each "quota" is reached. In one sample of about 60 pupils, children from 16 different schools were recruited from the PWV area.

– After all the "ground work" has been done, the research sessions start and usually comprise of three sessions per programme.

  – Firstly the respondents are welcomed and introduced to the research team (HSRC personnel).
  – The procedure is then explained to the groups and time is allowed for questions and/or commentary.
  – Just before the television (VCR) is started, the operation of the micro-computer hand

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units are also explained and demonstrated. (For a detailed description, Van Vuuren, 1986 can be consulted).

- After the viewing of the video film, the hand units are collected and the data collection can start immediately.
- Questionnaires are then handed out to the respondents. They cover as much of the various aspects of the programme that is being researched (each respondent has the opportunity to answer the questions in his/her home language, or alternatively, English).

  Before or during this phase no discussion is allowed, in order to ensure that respondents don't influence each other.

- The questionnaires are then collected and the group asked to divide into two smaller subgroups in accordance to language preference for the focus group interviews.
- The focus group leaders, (HSRC personnel who have been thoroughly trained in small group dynamics) then conduct the group sessions by means of pre-compiled agenda lists. Probing is recommended and although the group is given room for extensive discussion, the pre-set agenda also has to be followed.
- The data collected from the hand units are analysed, profiles drawn by computer and further analyses completed.
- In the final phase a research report is compiled and discussed with the client within a week after the surveys have been completed.

8. Results

The results presented in this paper are examples of work that was done during 1987. Nine different programmes are reported on, comprising 29 data collection sessions involving 483 individual respondents. Due to space considerations, no detailed data on the questionnaires, as well as data from the PEAC apparatus, are included in the paper. The results reflect only the highlights of the findings, as well as some information on guidelines given to the producers. The results are summarized in Table 2.

9. Discussion

Each of the above-mentioned programmes researched had particular problem areas which had to be looked into. Specific results pertaining to these areas were used in the formative process. In the programme for senior citizens, for example, it was

found that the respondents did not like bright flashing lights, and preferred soft, pastel colours to be used. Similarly, it was found in "Graffiti" that the top 10 hit parade was very popular. In addition, respondents felt that presenters should be in "control" of their presentation in "Sundowner".

These examples could be divided in terms of Coldevin's (1976) classification: The background variables the senior citizens had problems with – flashing lights etc., could be presentation variables; the top 10 hit parade in "Graffiti" could be content/subject matter organization; and the "in controlness" of the presenters can be classified under performer characteristics.

Some of the results obtained resulted in very small changes made by the producer, whilst other results lead to a complete renewal of the format of the programme. In Sport Spectrum, the format of presenting the full game of, for example, soccer matches, was changed to more shorter and more presentations of different types of sports.

In an effort to systematize the data, Coldevin's classification was used with all the programmes reported on in this paper. This classification is reported in Table 3.

Without going into detail, it is interesting to note that programmes like Fast Forward, Sundowner, and the religious television programmes; as well as the radio programme Monitor, elicited more responses on presentation variables. These responses were, of course, not only negative but also of a positive nature. On the other hand, the programme Sundowner had the most mentions of performer characteristics, whilst the religious programmes drew more comment on mentions of content/subject-matter organization. The type of programme could therefore in a way be related to the response gained from the audience. This would seem to suggest that criticism and suggestions from the audiences had less to do with performer characteristics and more with presentation variables and content/subject-matter organization.

Further general evidence observed across the results (of the particular series of programmes) indicated the following areas to be investigated:

1. The needs of particular target groups are very important and should be taken into account in the scheduling and design of television programmes.
2. It is noticeable that the younger respondents were more critical than older respondents to par-

TABLE 2
FINDINGS (HIGHLIGHTS)

Programme	Sessions	Target audience	Questionnaire	PEAC	Focus group	Guidelines for implementing	
						General	Specific
Graffiti	3	16 – 34 Afr 40% Eng 60% N = 58	Bilingualism very popular (new concept), humouristic approach, prefer Eng. music videos, national sport	Music videos popular, long interviews not positively evaluated	Humouristic and bilingual presentation chosen. Like colours and music videos (English)	Choice of format, bilingualism	Choice of specific presenters
Fast Forward	3	16 – 34 Eng 50% Afr 50% N = 58	Prefer English. More acceptable by students than schoolchildren. Variation in music acceptable. Set – dull. Interviews not popular. Local Afrikaans/other languages music not popular. Prefer overseas music videos. Technical variables: Duration OK. Title and logo; theme music popular	Top 10 hit parade very popular. Interviews low points	Pilot programme in general very acceptable. Dubious music videos with low ethics definitely not acceptable. Interviews should be short	More colour in set. General appearance of presenters very important	Choice of specific presenters

Programme	Sessions	Target audience	Questionnaire	PEAC	Guidelines for Implementing		
					Focus group	General	Specific
Middagvertoning	5	Senior Citizens 65+ N = 139 Afrikaans-speaking 96% Eng./other 4% Male 23% Female 77%	Title not descriptive enough. Very strong preference for nature shots (98,5%). Would like to see different places in country. Prefer light Afrikaans music		Prefer natural background to abstract sets (decor). Do not like bright flashing lights, rather soft pastel colours. Religious items should be included	Would like to see "golden oldie" artists and music. Stories about the old days	Give more personal details of artists. Rank order items: 1. Self-defence 2. Fitness 3. Affordable tours 4. Physical deterioration
Sport Spectrum	2	24–50 WCA N = 32 Male 47% Female 53% 75% Eng. 25% Afr.	Prefer bilingual programme. Prefer international and national sporting events to locals. Slow motion replay of exciting moments very popular.		Short and few interviews. Preference for great variation of sport types and items	Prefer shorter items to complete matches. Controversial discussions not suitable for this programme	Broadcasts of full-length matches should be at a later time slot. Presenters should be knowledgeable and competent
Sundowner	3	24–60 Afr. 40% Eng. 60% N = 56 Male 40% Female 60%	Like presentation style and light-heartedness of programme. Guests should be experts in their field. Items should be varied.	Profiles very positive. Disapproval of commercial breaks.	Personal and professional detail of guests important – want more. Interviews should not embarass	Decor can be more informal and colourful. Personal space of presenters should be taken into account	Specific presenters indicated. Positioning of furniture. Presenters should be in total control of their presentations

| | | | | | Guidelines for implementing | | |
Programme	Sessions	Target audience	Questionnaire	PEAC	Focus group	General	Specific
Monitor (Radio)	3	16 – 50 + Afr. 100% Male 50% Female 50% N = 59	Style of presentation highly acceptable. Music provides a welcome break between news items. Broadcast time acceptable – can be extended. Disapproval of commercial breaks		Strong feeling for purity of language. Use of humour welcomed. In-depth investigations should be varied	Balance between formal and informal presentation. News items should be short and credible. The following items could be considered: – consumer items – the arts – nature conservation – socio-economic news – medical news	Specific presenters mentioned as possible alternatives. Prefer variation between local and international news. Interviewing style should be professional.
6 Religious programmes – *Met Woord en Lied* – *Thy Kingdom Come* – *Kompas* – *By Still Waters* – *Evening Prayer* – *Epilogue*	4	16 – 50 + Afr. 50% Eng. 50% Male 50% Female 50% N = 81	Religious programmes regarded as essential. Would like to see specific other religious programmes, e.g. discussions, documentaries, music programmes. Religious programmes should be more informal. Presenter should be relaxed	Profiles generally positive except for unknown choir music	Majority satisfied with quantity of religious programmes. Variation in programme format welcome. Studio services. Less involvement. Need for crisis clinic	Background on specific congregation preferred. Interviews with committees. Christians positively received. Choir music acceptable – should not be too long	Criteria for selection of religious programmes: 1. Spiritually enriching 2. Variation on denominations 3. Brief and to the point. Focus on individual members of congregation should be avoided

Programme	Sessions	Target audience	Questionnaire	PEAC	Focus group	Guidelines for implementing	
						General	Specific
Cul de Sac	3	16 – 50 + Male 50% Female 50% Afr. 75% Eng. 25% N = 60	Format of programme very acceptable. Older respondents had objections to certain "immoral" scenes. Younger respondents had certain doubts	Scenes of interpersonal interaction between characters positively rated	Certain occupational roles were negatively perceived – e.g. police, medical doctors and clergymen	Series should be continued	Specific preferences for characters identified
Orkney Snork Nie	3	16 – 50 + N = 60 Whites: Afr. 80% Eng. 20% Male 45% Female 55% Coloureds: Afr. 92% Eng. 8% Male 47% Female 53%	General acceptability of programme very positively rated. Whites more critical than coloureds. Coloureds liked "slapstick" scenes. Younger respondents had more reservations about programme	Profiles varied from average to good	Language: comments made on purity – and possible effects on children (older respondents)	Humour acceptable – more so to older respondents	Preferences for specific characters identified

TABLE 3
RESULTS PRESENTED ACCORDING TO COLDEVIN'S ELEMENTS

Programme	Mentions of presentation variables	Mentions of content/ subject-matter organization	Mentions of performer characteristics
Middagvertoning	2	3	1
Sport Spectrum	2	3	1
Graffiti	3	4	1
Fast Forward	6	3	1
Sundowner	6	1	4
Monitor (radio)	9	2	1
6 Religious programmes	5	8	0
Cul de Sac	2	2	1
Orkney Snork nie	1	2	1

ticular presentation variables as well as performer characteristics.

3. Specific content variables as well as presentation variables (e.g. purity of language) seem to be very important to most audiences.

Although at this stage of the research programme it is not possible to identify formal guides for entertainment television as discussed by Anderson and Field (1983) in the USA, and Van Vuuren and Herselman (1986) in South Africa, it seems to be a worthwhile area to pursue. In educational television, the literature indicates a whole series of formal features which can be used as guidelines for the production of educational programmes. The entertainment field seems to be much wider and diverse and therefore empirical data in this area is as yet not nearly as well-documented as in educational television.

It is well known that demographic factors such as age, sex and socio-economic status have quite an important impact on the enjoyment of the audience to particular programmes. This was also found in this study.

In conclusion, two further factors have been identified from the general evidence across our results. They relate to the performer variables and have a lot in common with Baggaley's findings on the assessment of a presenter or performer. According to Baggaley et al (1980:168) "The general imagery of television is used by viewers in support of their assessments of a performer's Integrity, his Mastery over the information he presents, his personal warmth and Empathy, and his relaxitness or Poise".

Our results indicate that the credibility and knowledgeability of a presenter is of prime importance. The focus group discussions pointed to very much the same conclusion of Baggaley, namely, "When the performer's prime function is to entertain, it is likely that viewers will attach a high priority to his personal Empathy and Poise. However, when it is to inform, viewers exhibit a consistent tendency to mistrust a friendly or polished performance and to downgrade the performer's perceived Integrity and/or Mastery as an apparent reaction against it. Similarly, a tense or even stern performance can earn their high respect. The outward attributes of a TV performer are evidently regarded as capable of misrepresenting his inner qualities; and attempts to personalise the reading of TV news, for instance, may well detract from the image of authority and expertise that it would otherwise deserve" (1980:169).

Although much of the above-mentioned discussion should be seen as tentative because of limited empirical evidence, it is however interesting to note the similarities between results of educational television research and research on entertainment programmes.

10. Conclusion

Belson (1967) points out that the under-utilization of television research by the television industry is largely a result of the attitudes of both the researchers and the industry production personnel, as well as the constraints (mainly lack of time) built into the television production process. Formative evaluation

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research, especially in entertainment television and radio, has created a bridge which closes up this gap. The close co-operation between researchers of the department of Broadcasting Research of the SABC, the Institute for Communication Research of the Human Sciences Research Council and Markinor on the one hand, and the managers, writers and production personnel on the other hand, is proof thereof. The substantial need for this type of approach to mass media research has been proven in South Africa by numerous requests for this research. It is hoped that sustained research in this area will lead to better guidelines for producers based on empirical facts.

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