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DEVELOPING MULTIMEDIA SOCIAL IMPACT ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMMING ON HEALTHY AGEING FOR HISPANICS IN THE UNITED STATES

Amy Henderson Riley
College of Population Health
Thomas Jefferson University, USA
amy.riley@jefferson.edu

Caty Borum Chattoo
Center for Meida & Social Impact
American University of Communication, USA

Abstract

Social impact entertainment programming has roots in the development communication strategy known as entertainment-education. Social impact entertainment programming has gained traction in recent years in the United States, with media studios and corporations now operating social impact divisions and academic centres studying the effects of mass media projects designed to inspire change. There is a gap in the literature, however, of formative research conducted to describe the development and design of these programmes. This gap contributes to a lack of information not only to replicate this work, but also a weakness in understanding underlying theoretical mechanisms required to foster positive change across emerging social and behaviour change communication strategies. This article analyses qualitative interviews to understand the creation of a social impact entertainment programme on healthy ageing for Hispanics on Univision, the U.S.-based Spanish-language network. Healthy ageing cuts across the sustainable development goals and is a health priority for diverse, global populations as more people are living longer. The study concludes that media professionals were compelled by higher-value inclinations; the process of creating tailored healthy ageing content included strategy and research integration; and materials included television, digital, social media, and community events. Implications for development communication practitioners and scholars are discussed.

Keywords: *hispanic TV, multimedia, social impact, entertainment-education, US market*

Introduction

Social impact entertainment programming has gained traction in recent years in the United States, with media studios and corporations now operating whole social impact divisions (21st Century Fox, 2017; Viacom, 2017; Univision, 2018a) and academic centres studying the effects of mass media projects designed to inspire social change (UCLA School of Theatre, Film and Television, 2017; American University School of Communication, 2018). Although a consensus definition does not yet exist, social impact entertainment programming can be thought of as, "the belief that a story well-told has the power to ignite positive social change," (UCLA School of Theatre, Film and Television, 2017). Social impact

entertainment programming is different from other types of entertainment content in that it is designed with specific and targeted pro-social goals and objectives.

Social impact entertainment programming has roots in the development communication strategy known as entertainment-education (EE), a strategy of leveraging entertainment programming to contribute to "the process of directed social change, which can occur at the level of an individual, community, or society" through influencing attitudes, social norms, and behaviours as audiences experience non-didactic entertainment narratives (Singhal and Rogers, 2004, p. 5). The formal practice of EE began with work in the 1960s and 1970s in Latin America by Miguel Sabido on Televisa, the Mexican television network (Singhal and Rogers, 1988) with social impact work following years later. Both EE and social impact entertainment programming draw from theories including Social Cognitive Theory, Diffusion of Innovation, and theories of narrative persuasion, or theories that seek to explain how stories specifically work to engender positive change in social and health issues (Sood, Riley, & Alarcon, 2017).

Most published research on both EE and social impact entertainment programming in the United States has focused on impact evaluation, i.e., whether or not exposure to such is associated with changes in individual knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours. There is a gap in the literature, however, focused on formative research conducted to describe the development and design of social impact entertainment in the United States. This gap contributes to not only a lack of public information available to replicate this work, but also a weakness in understanding the theoretical mechanisms required to foster positive change across emerging social and behaviour change communication approaches. This article seeks to fill these gaps by describing the results of a study conducted to describe the process of creating a social impact news and entertainment programme regarding healthy ageing by Univision, the most-watched Spanish-language television network in the United States (Forbes, 2017).

Entertainment-education and Social Impact Entertainment Programming in the United States

Storytelling for positive social change has existed across cultures for centuries (Storey and Sood, 2013). Stories reflect culture and explain how we understand ourselves and our place in society. Over the last half a century, the formal strategy known as entertainment-education (or EE) emerged as a global communication sub-discipline to shift a variety of a social and cultural change objectives (Sood, Riley, & Alarcon, 2017; Barker, Jah, & Connolly, 2018). EE is a specific mass media strategy that combines entertainment and education, typically through long-running narratives, such as through radio serials, television soap operas, and integrated mass media campaigns (Storey et al.,1999; Vaughan et al., 2000; Hayes, 2018; Yue, Wang, & Singhal, 2019). International examples such as *The Archers*, *Simplemente Maria*, and *Hum Log* are often listed in historical reviews (Singhal et al.,1993; Singhal et al., 1995; de Fossard and Lande, 2008).

In high-income countries, however, similar work has historically appeared quite unlike the EE model applied to low- and middle-income countries (Klein, 2011). In the U.S., campaigns have often utilised a shorter intervention format seen via strategically embedding pro-social issue content into existing entertainment programming and using different funding streams and nomenclature (Dearing and Larson, 2002; Rogers, 2002; Beck, 2004). While in the U.S. this media work is sometimes referred to as "entertainment-education" by academics, it is much more common to hear media professionals use terms such as "social impact," "social impact entertainment programming," and "social impact news and entertainment programming" to describe these efforts. Often housed in social impact and corporate social responsibility divisions of media companies, social impact entertainment programming is rooted in EE, but is a distinctly separate model of storytelling for social and behaviour change. Indeed, social impact entertainment continues to expand as an idea, a field, and a network of media makers and researchers (UCLA Skoll Center for Social Impact Entertainment, 2019). The terms "social impact" and "social impact entertainment programming" are thus used henceforth to acknowledge this important distinction.

Historical U.S. social impact examples include: a storyline regarding unplanned pregnancy and abortion on the 1970's Norman Lear-created sitcom *Maude* (Crotty, 1995); work by Harvard School of Public Health professor Jay Winsten that incorporated messages about designated drivers across 150 television in the 1990's (DeJong & Winsten, 1999); and efforts by the Kaiser Family Foundation and its *Programmeme for the Study of Entertainment Media and Health* in the 1990's with leading youth-focused TV networks – namely, MTV and BET – to incorporate messages about HIV testing, stigma, and efficacy, among other public health concerns (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2018). A review of U.S. social impact programming would not be complete without also acknowledging the work of the Hollywood, Health & Society programme at the USC Annenberg School of Communication (Hollywood, Health & Society, 2018). This organisation has provided Hollywood writers and producers with health data and tips to help positively shape storylines around social norms, issues, and public health topics across countless entertainment (Hollywood, Health & Society, 2018).

With at least one exception (Glik et al., 1998), the majority of U.S. social impact entertainment programming research falls under impact or outcome evaluation, and the evidence and the emphasis on evaluating messages and story effects is clear and reflected in the scholarly, peer-reviewed literature. Whittier et al. (2005), for example, researched whether two episodes of *ER* containing information about syphilis impacted behavioural intention to be screened. And Hether et al. (2008) investigated the impact of breast cancer storylines on both *ER* and *Grey's Anatomy* on knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour.

Several theories have been used to explain and understand the effects of social impact entertainment programming. Social Cognitive Theory, for instance (Bandura, 2001), has explained how characters model new behaviours and practices for individuals. More recently, research has focused on narrative theoretical foundations, that include the influence of emotion, characters, and transportation into a gripping story. An extended cancer storyline on the TV programme *Desperate Housewives*, for example, found that narrative transportation predicted changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviours (Murphy et al., 2011). Research specifically focused on entertainment interventions for Latinos in the United States has found significant results in terms of both individual indicators and narrative influences (Wilkin et al., 2007; Andrade et al., 2015; Sachdev & Singhal, 2015; Wang & Singhal, 2016). Such theorising in terms of the outcomes experienced by audiences is well published across the academic literature, but it is less clear how short-form social impact programming in the U.S. is developed and implemented and how such understanding might add to the understanding of how and why such engender change around the globe.

Univision Rise Up Collaboration with The SCAN Foundation

In 2014, Univision created a cross-platform division – the Rise Up initiative, operated under the Fusion Media Group, owned by Univision – designed to focus on "positive impact" by incorporating positive health and norms messages into its news and entertainment programming (Univision, 2018b). Specifically, the initiative was launched to leverage "the power of media and storytelling to drive positive social change on issues that matter to Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and the increasingly diverse millennial generation" (Univision, 2018b, para. 6). While the Univision network and its family of global media brands broadcast a full array of entertainment and news programming across a range of topics, the company's stated "Impact" initiative is targeted, aimed at opportunities in entertainment and news to help positively structure "education, health/wellness, entrepreneurship, and inspiring stories and events promoting Hispanic culture in the U.S." (Univision, 2018b, para. 3). At the time of this article's writing, external philanthropic foundations typically funded the work.

In 2017, one such collaborative entertainment programme initiative came together through a funded relationship and collaboration with The SCAN Foundation, a private, California-based foundation with the goal of serving older adults by preserving dignity and independence (The SCAN Foundation, n.d.). To

respond to the unique concerns and considerations in an ageing Hispanic population, the Univision Rise Up Team worked with The SCAN Foundation to initiate an entertainment initiative designed to inform Hispanics about how they can prepare to age so they feel more confident about making decisions for themselves and their loved ones (Nussbaum and Ohs, 2009; Fowler et al., 2015). Healthy ageing cuts across the sustainable development goals and is a health priority for diverse, global populations as more people are living longer (WHO, 2019). The goal of this social impact news and entertainment initiative was to educate and empower Hispanic families and older adults about issues of ageing and long-term care.

Research Questions

This qualitative study aimed to unwrap insights about the process by which strategic messages and the creative decision-making process were shaped from this social impact news and entertainment collaboration. An overarching goal of this research is for practitioners, researchers, scholars, and lay audiences to better understand the creative development of social impact work in order to add to what is known about how such content is developed and created and, therefore, connect this work to global theoretical explanations. This article sought to contribute to the on-going conversation of social impact programming in the U.S. by highlighting the content created by internal organisational members, as opposed to the outcomes experienced by members of the public. This study thus sought to answer the following three research questions:

> *RQ1*. Why did Univision engage in social impact entertainment programming regarding healthy ageing?
> *RQ2*. How did the process of creating social impact entertainment programming regarding healthy ageing unfold?
> *RQ3*. What materials were created and implemented as part of this social impact entertainment campaign?

Method

This study received university-level Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and was conducted from January to March 2018. The researchers conducted semi-structured interviews in English with a convenience sample of members of Univision and The SCAN Foundation staff to answer the research questions. An internal Univision email alerted colleagues of the upcoming study. The researchers then invited individuals from the Univision social impact team, production team, news team, digital team, or foundation side to participate if they met the single inclusion criterion of having any role in the healthy ageing social impact project. Eight individuals initially met this requirement and were invited to participate via an email invitation, and two additional individuals were identified and invited to participate via email after further conversations and enrolment began. Of the 10 individuals invited, nine responded, and one did not respond despite two follow-up emails. To enrol participants, the researchers emailed an individual consent form laying out the procedures, risks, benefits, and expectations of confidentiality, as well as their right to withdraw at any time, and set a time and date for their phone interview. Participants provided written consent prior to beginning the interview. Although many of the participants spoke Spanish, the research team did not collect any demographic information from participants, such as ethnicity or race.

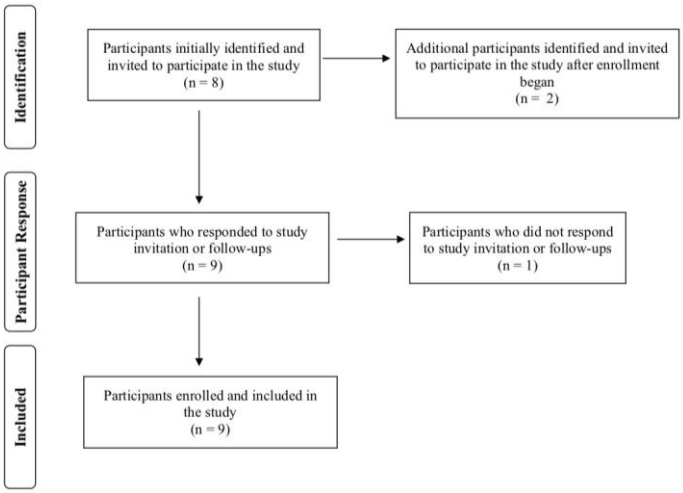

Figure 1

The interviews took place on the phone with participants in their offices or, at least in one case, at home while working remotely. The interview began with introductions and confirmation of receipt of written consent. Study personnel then explained the study and provided an opportunity to answer any questions before beginning the interview. A three-page interview protocol, developed to address the study questions, framed the conversations. Questions and probes covered the study questions, with questions added and removed as appropriate. For example, if the individual responded they were not involved in obtaining funds for the project, follow up questions about the grant process were not asked. The interviews ranged between 38 minutes and 62 minutes, with an average interview length of 45 minutes and 39 seconds. Study personnel took notes during the conversations, which were taped via call recording software. At the end of the interview, participants were once again given an opportunity to ask questions before they were thanked for their time. No incentive, financial or otherwise, was provided to participants. The authors conducted interviews with all of the invited participants, representing all but one individual who had any role on the healthy ageing project.

Following data collection, the interviews were transcribed in a three-step process. First, one of the co-authors and a research assistant transcribed each interview by listening to the taped recording and logging the conversation verbatim. Second, the co-authors listened to each interview a second time and edited the transcripts for any errors. And, third, the co-authors redacted any personally identifiable information shared in each interview, such as name and job title, by removing it from the final transcripts prepared for analysis. The final data set included 148 pages of transcripts from 408 minutes and 45 seconds of interviews.

The final transcripts were imported into the software programme NVivo, v. 11.4.3. An iterative process led by grounded theory directed the analysis (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). The transcripts were read through multiple times each and open coded as preliminary responses to the research questions. The transcripts were read through again until the initial codes were refined and combined under the a priori RQs. As a final step, a process of member checking was employed, whereby the findings were sent to each of the participants to ensure their perspectives were understood and to confirm our interpretations and conclusions.

Results

RQ1. Why did Univision Engage in Social Impact Entertainment Programming Regarding Healthy Ageing?

Service journalism: Overwhelming in the interviews, participants described that Univision decided to engage in this social impact work because of a built-in responsibility to the audience. All of the participants responded in some way that the network cares about its audience and that the social impact work on healthy ageing relates to the network's mission to serve the Hispanic community. Three of the participants specifically used the term work "service journalism" to describe this work. For example, one participant said, "What I mean by the term service journalism is that a lot of the content is meant to serve our audience. Our audience has a very deep trust and we have a very deep commitment to our audience."

Culture: In a similar vein, nearly all of the participants explained that Univision decided to embark on this project with The SCAN Foundation because there are aspects of Hispanic culture that prevent healthy ageing from being talked about at home. "[It] is not common to have those types of conversations in the Latin household. Not until it's too late," one participant explained. A different participant said, "There are certain aspects of long-term care and ageing that are particular to Hispanic culture in terms of stigmas associated with asking for help." By presenting this information on Univision platforms, the participants explained, these topics could become normalised and, in turn, cultural barriers could potentially be overcome.

Spanish-language content: The importance of presenting this information to the Univision audience in Spanish was also a commonly cited reason that participants gave for engaging in this work, given the need for a culturally-sensitive approach to storytelling that resonates. "Remember our elderly, most of the time, they don't speak English, so they get everything from us," was how one participant described the Univision audience. One of the participants described that that the need for Spanish language content was going to increase in the future. As this participant stated, "In 20 years, the percentage of older Americans that are of Hispanic descent and Spanish speaking is going to increase rapidly."

Stories not otherwise reported: Nearly half of participants responded that it is important to engage in this work as stories on healthy ageing may not be reported by the Univision news division otherwise. Participants explained breaking news and having stories bumped for political headlines, but how The SCAN Foundation funding helped to keep these stories at the forefront of priorities, "I mean, it allows us to keep doing this work that it's not… it's not maybe the one that are like the top editors are most interested in. Not because they're not important, because some other things happen, and they'd prioritize them," one participant explained. Still another participant said, "Because you're more inclined to do this topic if you have the funding for it, because if you don't have the funding, other things are going to get done." Participants explained this limitation in terms of television content, where time constraints exist, but how this was not necessarily the case for digital content.

Audience not receiving information elsewhere: At the same time, participants were of the opinion that the audience was not receiving this information elsewhere. One participant said, "I think we're filling a real gap in information and education." This point was reiterated when another participant described how audience members from across the country called the Univision news desk for more information after a specific story supported by The SCAN Foundation grant aired about benefits for older adults in the United States and eligibility related to citizenship requirements. Approximately 40 people called the station for more information after the story aired to determine if they were eligible for benefits. Although the assignment desk responded to the best of their ability, the participant explained, there was a clear need for more information from the audience on this topic and limitations in the information the network could provide.

Personal connections: Finally, participants explained that both Univision, and they themselves, had engaged in this work because of personal connections and fulfilment in the work. One participant talked about her mother, who is 66 years old, and how she was getting information from these stories. Still another said of the stories regarding healthy ageing, "I think it's one of those things, even the producers that we work with are like, 'Oh, we love our viejitos,' our old folks, because I think everyone involved somehow either has the situation with their parents or with another family member also is planning on their future, so I think from that standpoint it's got a very tender perspective and information that needs to be relayed."

RQ2. How did The Process of Creating Social Impact Entertainment Programming Regarding Healthy Ageing Unfold?

In nearly every interview, the participants described the process of creating and implementing this work as iterative, but that it unfolded within a series of specific, planned steps.

Step one: Funding - The participants described that this was, in fact, the third time The SCAN Foundation had provided grant funding to Univision. While this specific grant began in April of 2017, the process of applying for the grant, as one participant recalled, "begun around October of 2016." The process included brainstorming sessions over the course of several months between the funder and the network regarding different Univision platforms and possibilities. These ideas were then put onto paper in a formal proposal with an accompanying budget in preparation for board presentation and potential approval. A participant explained this in terms of how this works across Univision's portfolio of projects with different foundations, "Once we are finally both at a point where we feel OK about the proposal, then we start working either making that proposal into a contract or applying formally for a grant with the foundation."

Step two: Formative research - Once the grant was formally approved, Univision began a process of formative research to guide the creative work. This started with internally conducting interviews with national experts on the topic of healthy ageing. The team conducted interviews with representatives from organisations including Us Against Alzheimer's/Latinos Against Alzheimer's, the National Hispanic Council on Ageing, and the U.S. Office of Minority Health.

The information from the expert interviews led directly into a second planned formative research activity overseen and designed by their university partner (and led by one of the co-authors of this study) – focus groups. The focus groups were described as critical to the process of creating specific cultural content. "So, it's based on things that we know people want to know and it's produced in ways that we know are easily understandable and digestible to them," was how one participant described this. The social impact team conducted two focus groups, stratified by age, with members of the campaign's primary audience. The first group was held with retired, or nearly retired, adults age 55 above and the second with adults age 35-54 whose parents were nearing retirement age. The focus groups were held in Miami (where most of the members of Univision's social impact team are based) and participants were recruited to ensure a range of country of origin, income, and other demographic details. Content producers watched the focus groups to generate story ideas and messages directly from members of the audience. A market research agency analysed the results and compiled the findings into a report. In collaboration with this study's co-authors, the research report concluded with six strategic recommendations for story ideas and social impact news and entertainment programming, which was presented to a wider group of Univision colleagues in a group briefing. A final formative research activity was the creation of what the participants called a "content map." This document, drafted directly from the findings from the interviews and focus groups, created a framework for the creative work.

Step three: Content creation - The third step of the process of creating this social impact news and entertainment programme on healthy ageing was creating the content. In terms of the makeup of the

Univision social impact team, while certain individuals interviewed were involved in the grant making and research aspects of the project (i.e., steps one and two), different participants were involved in the execution. One participant explained this as being a time point where job responsibilities shifted from one side of the team to the other, "Because then the execution side picks up on it and then they're the ones who are involved very closely with the production team." Another, who was involved in the grant writing and research but was not involved in later aspects of the project said, "I know that once we agreed to a specific set of topics that we were going to follow for the rest of the year, that's kind of where I left it at." And still another said of the stories, "Once they're green lit by [name withdrawn] and the project team, the producers would move forward with the actual production of the stories, whether it was a two-minute television news package or digital content." In addition to specific stories produced (described below), this step also involved creation of branding for the project. This included the open, the music, the lower third graphic, and the billboard. A different participant described the billboard that appeared at the end of these stories with the following, "It's normally about three to five seconds and it will feature the logo or sometimes just the name of the funder and it will say, 'this segment was produced with support from The SCAN Foundation.'" More than one participant explained how this disclosure not only was required by Federal Communications Commission (or FCC) regulations, but also provided an opportunity to provide audience members with a resource for more information on the story.

Step four: Tracking - The final step of the process included tracking and monitoring. One member of the team appeared to be tasked with keeping these metrics, while a second analysed these for reporting purposes, "We have a running document with all the links to the television and the digital content, to all the social media posts, etcetera, etcetera. And then [first member] goes in there and provides metrics, then I [second member] go and put it in one big report for The SCAN Foundation." This step ensured requirements set forth by the grant and seemed to keep the project organised.

Role of social impact team - Throughout each of these steps, the participants described how the social impact team played a unique and critical role at the network. The social impact team, embedded within Univision, acted as a bridge between the external funder and the internal production teams. This was critical to ensuring what five participants described as "editorial independence." While members of the production team were encouraged to reach out directly to the Foundation if needed without a member of the social impact team, for example, with locating a Spanish-speaking expert for a story, the members of the production team that we interviewed made it clear, "at no point did they [the Foundation] authorise, do they input," or dictate what the network reported. "We're an independent news operation. You don't have final control over scripts. And you don't have final control of the exactly the way the story is told," was how one participant described this. This theme was a common one throughout the interviews. While this work was described as professional and collegial, the production team members interviewed were staunch in their replies that this work was in no way propaganda. "It's not that we're pushing any agenda," was how one participant summarized this idea.

Rq3. What Materials were Created and Implemented as Part of This Social Impact Entertainment Campaign?

The specific materials created as of this writing for this campaign included television content, digital content, social media content, and community events in strategic cities to engage the target audience.

Television content: All of the television content for this social impact news and entertainment programme has been embedded in the Univision Spanish-language morning news and entertainment programme *¡Despierta America!* This programme, which airs on weekday mornings from 7:00 – 10:00 a.m. and is broadcast from Miami, was chosen for this campaign because, "We noticed that *¡Despierta America!* skews a little bit older, and our target audience was an older population, so that was the best strategy." In addition, this programme allowed more time for the embedded stories than the evening network news format. As one participant explained, "We're putting them into *¡Despierta America!* because, on average, a network news story is about a minute, 45 [seconds]. In *¡Despierta America!* we have the option of making them longer, make it 2:15, 2:30. And it's a place where a lot of the audience

that you're targeting is watching." Several stories have been produced to date including an entire month on caregiving that included four television stories that were focused on giving insight to the life of a caregiver. Subsequent months have included at least one television story per month alongside other content produced for the campaign.

Figure 2: Television Content

Digital content: In addition to one television story per month, this social impact news and entertainment programme has included at least one digital story per month, housed on a special website with a Univision URL. These stories were described as different from the television stories and were produced to provide additional information:

> *We don't like to think about it as a mirror because we're using a lot of stuff that [the audience wants] to read. And, we have different styles. For example, when we do video, we don't do the usual package with their reporter on camera speaking. It's like "mini talks" style and we just get really immersed in the story and we let the people just tell the story. You don't see the reporters or journalist on the video. So, it's like really a different style.*

Figure 3: Digital Content

Social media content: Facebook and Facebook Live were utilised to disseminate social media content for this social impact news and entertainment programme. One participant explained, "We're doing a lot of Facebook Live interviews where people can comment and give us instant feedback." Another participant explained that some of the social media pieces were in process at the time the interviews were being conducted, "I did have a conversation with [name withheld] last week because we are looking to do some social media polls on the content, on the campaign in general… awareness and attitudes and actions that take place because of information, but we have… we are just in the process of talking about it."

Figure 4: Social Media Content

Community events: And, finally, community events appeared to be a part of this social impact news and entertainment programme although none had taken place at the time of the interviews. One participant said, "I wanted to include a series of events, so we would be able to showcase our content. I started to research different organisations that were obviously already very involved in this process and that speak directly to Hispanics and they [name of organisation withheld] were one of the organisations that came up. So, I reached out to them so that we could talk about the different events that were going to be taking place throughout the year, but then also get more information about all the expertise and everything else that they had that they could provide toward this project." Another said they were currently planning these events, but the details were not yet in place.

Discussion

This study endeavoured to understand the role of creative, strategic formative research – and the collaborative process between multi-sector organisations and individuals – in creating entertainment storytelling designed to foster positive social influence and value to an underserved audience: U.S. Hispanics. In the current moment, while more media organisations in the U.S. are seeking to leverage entertainment in pro-social ways, to positively impact social norms on public health and other topics (21st Century Fox, 2017; Viacom, 2017), little is known and published about this creative, research-based, collaborative process that shapes pro-social mediated storytelling. In particular, this study illuminates the use of focus group data and factual subject-matter information to create entertainment TV programming designed for a specific cultural audience – U.S. Hispanics – as well as the motivations of the entertainment-industry professionals to create pro-social entertainment work within the for-profit entertainment marketplace. While research in entertainment persuasion focuses on audience evaluation of

such programming – that is, what audience members may learn, feel, or do as a result of experiencing a mediated entertainment TV programme dealing with a health or social issue – much less is understood about the formative process that shapes such work, particularly for work designed for a targeted, often marginalised audience of U.S. Hispanics.

The research questions focused on illuminating and understanding: (1) the motivations of the collaborating Univision professionals who create pro-social entertainment for a U.S. Hispanic audience, (2) the process by which these media professionals shaped pro-social storytelling for a particular entertainment-based campaign, and (3) the final development of a multi-platform media campaign designed to entertain and engage U.S. Hispanic families and older adults on topics that may be difficult. First, with regard to creative and strategic motivations, these media professionals were more compelled by higher-value inclinations, such as contributions to the cultural Hispanic/Latino community, as well as a sense of public service, than they were by usual commercial motivations inside a profit-centred commercial entertainment network. They spoke in terms of a kind of public-interest-oriented "service journalism" and also revealed a fluency between reflecting on their lived-experience cultural appreciation for older people in their communities, and how that personal level of commitment worked its way into professional output – that is, the entertainment-based campaign to engage Hispanic families and older people around topics of healthy ageing. This suggests that, while the entertainment programming itself may be experienced by audiences in ways that are persuasive and engaging (Slater & Rouner, 2002; Moyer-Gusé & Nabi, 2010) central to a market-based experience with high-quality entertainment, the content is shaped by entertainment professionals who feel a higher level of motivation about the value of their work.

Additionally, the fact that the campaign and mediated storytelling was shaped by members of the U.S. Hispanic community also is notable, not only due to the authentic output that draws from a specific and cultural background and identity (Piñón & Rojas, 2011; Shumow 2012), but also because this cultural connection may have increased the level of public service motivation expressed by the media professionals. This finding builds on the literature that suggests serious, thoughtful attention should be paid to who is telling the stories, not only how stories are depicted on screen in terms of ethnic and cultural representation (Amaya, 2010). In a moment in which gender, racial, and ethnic diversity among U.S.-marketplace TV and film writers and decision-makers continues to show problematic trends, this is a point worth emphasizing (Hunt, 2016).

Next, when it comes to the process by which pro-social mediated entertainment campaign materials are developed, a multi-stage, complex, highly collaborative machination was found. Diverse streams of research were thoughtfully integrated along the way, including cu ration of materials from subject-matter experts, as well as focus groups with the target audience of older Hispanic adults and the family members who care for them. Notably, from a collaborative perspective, the media producers – that is, those who eventually produced and shaped the final entertainment-based campaign – attended and observed the focus group sessions in order to hear and understand the perspectives of individuals in their community. Entertainment messages, then, were created directly from this research experience – that is, not only the final research reports generated from the research partners, but also the experience of being in the room while Hispanic families and older adults shared their intimate feelings about ageing. From a theoretical perspective, based on peer-reviewed research in the area of entertainment-based persuasion and its emphasis on the persuasive role of characters, emotion, and the importance of a compelling story (Sood & Rogers, 2000; Cohen, 2001; Bae, 2008; Nabi & Green, 2015), these pro-social media producers understand that shaping a high-quality entertainment story focuses centrally on highly compelling, engaging characters and emphasising the role of emotion. In this regard, while entertainment persuasion scholars and media producers very rarely engage across their respective sectors – academia and media production – they do, in fact, speak the same language. Similar to the British media professionals interviewed by Klein (2011), these U.S. media professionals respected and incorporated subject-matter factual information about the social issue into this creative, mediated entertainment campaign, but their

focus on creating compelling characters and an emotionally engaging experience was, by far, the primary objective.

Finally, the eventual campaign that was developed from a multi-step process of research, strategy and creative collaboration was shaped to live in a transmedia, multi-platform scenario. This follows other successful experiments to engage U.S. Hispanic audiences in public health and social issue topics (Wilkin et al., 2007; Andrade et al., 2015; Wang & Singhal, 2016). The producers understood, based on formative research, that this topic and audience would value an opportunity for the kind of two-way communication made possible from a social media and digital environment. While the core of the final mediated campaign was based on a series of stories and messages in Univision's most-watched news and entertainment programme, the digital integration was designed explicitly to allow audiences to talk back, to share, and to ask questions. Finally, the live events offered a community-based opportunity for engagement with Univision audiences, unusual for for-profit entertainment enterprises, but perhaps singularly unique and valuable for a company that is deeply integrated into a cultural community and that is generally underserved by other entertainment companies (Smith et al., 2014).

Value notwithstanding, this study is focused on one particular mediated entertainment storytelling campaign, and thus, is limited in its ability to claim a broader, comprehensive understanding about the ways in which pro-social entertainment storytelling is shaped, as well as the role of formative research and multi-sector collaboration. Further, the present work focuses even more narrowly on a precise cultural audience of U.S. Hispanics. Understanding the creative and strategic process involved in shaping pro-social entertainment programming in the U.S. will require further research and an expansive look across additional cases and audiences. Still, given the gap in the literature about the process of formative research and creative iteration involved in a pro-social entertainment transmedia campaign distributed in the entertainment marketplace for millions of audience members – relative to the comparatively vast amount of evaluation research of such work (Whittier et al., 2005; Hether et al., 2008; Stevens Aubrey et al., 2014) – the present work makes a worthwhile contribution.

Conclusion

Global media trends are changing, and audiences are increasingly interested in diverse storytelling platforms that blend entertainment and information. For both global development communication practitioners and scholars, the valuable role of strategic collaboration across sectors, from research to creative production, as evident in this example, is emphasized. Making a compelling entertainment narrative, a highly creative process, takes on a different level of collaboration, thought, and strategy when the objective for that entertainment is also to foster positive change about issues that matter to families and communities. It is thus critical to make meaning from the creation of these in order to propel this work forward for new and diverse audiences. Future social impact entertainment work should continue to identify and integrate best practices for shaping projects to meet individual and social change objectives using evidence, theory, and deep cultural understanding.

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