The Importance of Altruistic Versus Egoistic Motivations: A Content Analysis of Conflicted Motivations in Children’s Television Programming

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The Importance of Altruistic Versus Egoistic Motivations: A Content Analysis of Conflicted Motivations in Children’s Television Programming

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A content analysis examined the frequency with which altruistic versus egoistic motivations were acted upon in television content where these motivations were in conflict with each other. The sample was drawn from children’s television programs popular among different age groups (ages 2–5, 6–11, and 12–17 years). It also examined whether the motivations acted upon were performed by affable (likable, heroic) or surly (unlikable, villainous) characters and whether they were rewarded or punished. Extending previous research (Lewis & Mitchell, 2014), we found that portrayal patterns stressed the importance of altruistic motivations (particularly the care motivation) for content popular among the youngest age group and egoistic motivations (particularly the growth-related motivations of competence, autonomy, and relatedness) for content popular among older children. Findings are interpreted in terms of the model of intuitive morality and exemplars (Tamborini, 2011, 2013), which suggests media representations can influence audience motivations. Implications for scholars, parents, and content producers are explored.

Keywords: Age Differences; Children’s Television; Children and Media; Media Influence; Motivation
Scholars since Plato (380 BC/1992) have shown great concern and interest in the message content of stories we tell our children. The foundation upon which individuals make moral judgments develops during childhood, which positions such message content as a central issue not only for parents who are concerned about the effect of such content on their children, but also for narrative media scholars. Most media psychologists working in this area have used rationalist perspectives, such as those of Piaget (1964) and Kohlberg (1984), to explain how media content can influence moral reasoning; however, research in this area has generally ignored the influence of media on preconscious instincts which can implicitly guide subsequent judgment and behavior.

The model of intuitive motivation and exemplars (MIME; Tamborini, 2011, 2013) tries to overcome this limitation by examining how intuitive mechanisms shape media appraisal and other exposure outcomes. The MIME builds on developments in cognitive psychology that identify intuitive motivations, thought to drive behavior, which are both altruistic (i.e., moral, or other-oriented) and egoistic (i.e., self-oriented) in nature. The present paper examines representations of altruistic and egoistic motivations in television programming popular among children of different age groups. This study extends Lewis and Mitchell’s (2014) analysis of scenes containing motivational incongruities (or conflicted motivations) in children’s television content to determine in each instance of conflict: (1) which types of motivations were acted upon most frequently; (2) the type of characters choosing different motivations; and (3) the outcomes associated with different choices.

The MIME

The MIME describes dynamic mechanisms that can govern innate drives to determine media influence. The model outlines a reciprocal relationship between individuals and their media environments to explicate how media content can activate specific motivational forces in audiences. These motivations, once activated, not only influence judgment and behavior, but also influence future media selection, such that audiences tend to choose media content that highlights activated motivations.

Intuitive Motivations

The intuitive motivations described by the MIME are derived from moral foundation theory (MFT; Haidt & Joseph, 2007), which describes intuitive mechanisms that automatically drive thoughts and actions. MFT describes these intuitive motivations as being evolutionarily advantageous and an integral part of humans’ mental architecture. The intuitive motivations identified by MFT help regulate social behavior and moral judgment, and are accordingly classified by the MIME as altruistic intuitive motivations. These motivations include (1) care (i.e., sensitivity to pain and suffering of others), (2) fairness (i.e., justice and reciprocity), (3) in-group loyalty (i.e., allegiance towards in-group and against out-group members), (4) authority (i.e., respecting
benevolent leaders and hierarchies), and (5) purity (i.e., living a noble lifestyle and avoiding animalistic behaviors).

In addition to altruistic motivations, recent MIME research has begun to focus on egoistic motivations (Tamborini et al., 2016). Whereas altruistic motivations regulate social behavior directed towards others, egoistic motivations focus on meeting the needs of the self. Unlike MFT’s potential to organize altruistic motivations, no single theoretical framework classifies the entire universe of egoistic motivations; therefore, this study adopts a classification scheme utilized in recent research (Tamborini et al., 2016) in which egoistic motivations are derived from two bodies of literature focusing on human motivations.

The first is self-determination theory (SDT; Deci & Ryan, 1985), which outlines three universal, intrinsic drives present in all human beings. These are: (1) competence (i.e., the need to master skills and feel capable), (2) autonomy (i.e., the desire to be independent and self-determined), and (3) relatedness (i.e., the need to feel connected to others). These motivations broadly focus on concerns related to personal well-being and growth. The second body of literature builds on Schwartz’s (1994) universal human values. Schwartz describes 10 human values, seven of which are either subsumed under the altruistic motivations identified by MFT, or the egoistic motivations identified by SDT. The remaining three are: (1) security (i.e., the desire to feel safe), (2) hedonism (i.e., the urge to gratify oneself by experiencing physical pleasures), and (3) power (desire to control individuals or resources), which clearly fall within our conception of egoistic motivations. Altogether, these five altruistic motivations (care, fairness, in-group loyalty, authority and purity) and six egoistic motivations (competence, autonomy, relatedness, security, hedonism and power) constitute the MIME’s scheme of intuitive motivations.

The MIME and Children’s Media

The MIME suggests that exemplars of intuitive motivations in media content can activate those motivations in the minds of audiences, which in turn influence a broad range of cognitive and behavioral outcomes. This effect is likely to be particularly strong for young audiences, whose foundational psyche and belief structures are in the process of being formed (cf Belsky & Pluess, 2009). Hence, they are more likely to be vulnerable to external influences, including media influence. The MIME further holds that repeated exposure to media content highlighting specific motivations can increase the chronic accessibility of those motivations in young audiences and potentially shape children’s long-term, real-world behavior. Thus, surveying children’s media to identify the motivations that are highlighted repeatedly may help us identify media’s potential influence on children’s future behavior.

Conflicted Motivations in Media Content

The MIME gives special importance to narrative scenarios in which two motivations occur simultaneously but the character can choose to act on only one. While ordinary
representations of an intuitive motivation in media content can activate that motivation in audiences, a representation in which one motivation is shown to be upheld at the cost of another signals the elevated importance of that motivation. In the context of children’s television, scenes involving conflict typically comprise the crux of a narrative, and signal its takeaway message. Thus, while many scenes may activate several distinct motivations in young audiences, a climactic scene in which a character chooses to uphold one motivation at the cost of the other may have a much stronger and enduring impact on the young viewer. Most television episodes contain only one or two of these crucial motivational conflict scenes, but their enormous influence warrants that they be studied by themselves, independent from other scenes.

Recent research by Lewis and Mitchell (2014) examined the portrayal of motivational conflicts in children’s television narratives by examining how often altruistic and egoistic motivations were in conflict. Their content analysis coded television programming popular among children aged 2–5, 6–11, and 12–17, which broadly correspond to age groups associated with Kohlberg’s (1984) and Piaget’s (1964) developmental stages. Their analyses revealed that content made for older children featured more motivational conflicts than content made for younger children and that, rather than pitting two altruistic or two egoistic intuitions against each other, most of these conflicts pitted an altruistic motivation against an egoistic one.

Although their study served as a preliminary step in providing insight regarding the motivational conflicts in children’s television, Lewis and Mitchell (2014) did not examine which motivations were more frequently chosen (or acted upon) by characters when two motivations were in conflict. Given that a representation highlighting the choosing of one motivation over another is most crucial in determining the chosen motivation’s enduring influence on young viewers, research should examine which motivations were acted upon over others in conflict situations. Accordingly, we pose our first research question:

RQ1: In cases of motivational conflict in children’s television, which motivations are more likely to be acted upon by characters?

While viewing motivations being chosen in conflicted situations may be important, it is also important to consider the type of character that is making each choice. Children are more likely to attend to the actions of attractive characters with pleasant dispositions (Bandura, 2002). As such, it is important to differentiate motivations chosen by affable characters as compared to motivations chosen by surly ones, because children are more likely to be influenced by the kind of choices that affable characters make and avoid the choices made by surly characters.

RQ2: In cases of motivational conflict in children’s television, what types of motivations are more often acted upon by affable characters compared to surly characters?

Another factor that may modify the effect of a motivation being chosen is the type of outcome (i.e., reward or punishment) that follows the choice. Past theorizing
Bandura, 2002) has proposed that children are more likely to consider behavior which has positive outcomes and will be discouraged from modeling behavior which has negative outcomes. Along the same lines, we seek to examine which motivations are rewarded or punished when acted upon with the following research question:

RQ3: In cases of motivational conflict in children’s television, which motivations are more often rewarded, as opposed to punished, when acted upon?

In addition, given that developmental differences occur throughout childhood, we should consider differences in content produced for children of different age groups. Content data aggregated across all age groups, though informative, overlooks finer details of motivation portrayals in each age group. These details may help us distinguish the different types of influence we would expect from media content produced for each age group. Because this study is a preliminary attempt to examine this sphere of influence, we have no specific expectations of how motivational representations will vary across content produced for different ages.

RQ4: In children’s television containing conflicted situations, how do motivational representations differ across content produced for different age groups?

METHOD

Sample

Lewis and Mitchell (2014) identified the types of motivations that were shown to be in conflict in children’s television. The present study went a step further to identify which of these conflicted motivations characters chose to act upon most frequently. We chose to analyze the same sample that was coded by Lewis and Mitchell for two reasons. First, their coders were asked to identify both motivations in conflict in every scene. If our coders (who were not aware of the previous study or its results) identified the same conflicted motivations in the content as Lewis and Mitchell did, it would bolster the coding scheme’s credibility. Second, Lewis and Mitchell’s sampling methods were rigorous and ensured that the resulting sample had good external validity. They first obtained a list from Nielsen Company’s 40 most popular television shows for each of the three age demographics (2–5, 6–11, and 12–17 years old) in 2012. Nielsen reported these shows as most watched in terms of live television and digital recording playback. They randomly sampled 10 episodes from the top programs of each age group. A few episodes of their sample were inaccessible, which left us with 27 of the original 30 episodes analyzed by Lewis and Mitchell (n = 9 per age category).

After obtaining the original time stamps for the scenes composing each episode from Lewis and Mitchell (2014), each individual scene served as our unit of coding. A scene was marked any time there was a change in character focus, setting, or time frame within the story. This method resulted in N = 497 scenes (n_young = 133, n_middle = 138, n_older = 226). Commercials as well as opening and closing credits were excluded from analysis. Although there were an equal number of episodes in the sample, the older age group shows contained more scenes due to the facts
that programming in this age group contained more 1-hour shows and that the episodes in this age group contained shorter scenes.

Lewis and Mitchell (2014) identified conflict in a scene by the overt presence of a character’s dilemma in choosing an action. For instance, if a character was required to choose between saving a baby from a burning building or getting his/her own self to safety, the scene was coded as featuring conflict between choosing care (altruistic) over safety (egoistic). Two separate coders in the present study repeated this procedure using Lewis and Mitchell’s definition of a motivational conflict. The final sample consisted of 40 conflict scenes ($n_{young} = 5$, $n_{middle} = 16$, $n_{older} = 19$). A list of all programs sampled can be found in Table 1. While the number of scenes included in the final sample may appear small, it is important to remember that these are pivotal and often climactic scenes, which are likely to leave a strong impression on young viewers. Most episodes featured just one such scene, which often depicted the central dilemma of the episode. These scenes, though small in number, were often corner-stones of the episodes in which they were featured, and hence were largely representative of the entire episode’s proceedings, rather than just the scenes themselves.

**Operationalizing the Intuitive Motivations**

In order to operationalize the intuitive motivations, the authors first tried to understand the inherent mechanisms of altruistic motivations as described in MFT (Haidt & Joseph, 2007), and egoistic motivations as described in Deci and Ryan’s SDT (1985) and Schwartz’s universal human values (1994). Upon review of these motivations’ conceptual definitions, the authors determined that each intuitive motivation typically occurred in a scenario featuring a central entity who acted (or felt) an emotion towards a target entity. Every intuitive motivation could be recognized by identifying specific features of the central and target entity and the relationship between the two. For example, the care motivation was described as pertinent in any situation that

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2–5 Years Old</th>
<th>6–11 Years Old</th>
<th>12–17 Years Old</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yo Gabba Gabba!</td>
<td>iCarly</td>
<td>Terra Nova</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas &amp; Friends</td>
<td>Hannah Montana Forever</td>
<td>Family Guy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bubble Guppies</td>
<td>Good Luck Charlie</td>
<td>The Walking Dead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doc McStuffins</td>
<td>Phineas &amp; Ferb (3 episodes)</td>
<td>Teen Wolf</td>
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<tr>
<td>Go, Diego, Go!</td>
<td>Spongebob Squarepants (2 episodes)</td>
<td>New Girl</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ni Hao, Kai-Lan</td>
<td>The Suite Life of Zack &amp; Cody</td>
<td>Bob’s Burgers</td>
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<td>Jake and the Neverland Pirates (2 episodes)</td>
<td>Allen Gregory</td>
<td>Glee</td>
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<td>Dora the Explorer</td>
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<td>The Simpsons</td>
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featured the target entity in need of something, and a central entity that could either help or ignore the target. Similarly, the authority motivation was deemed present if the target entity was in a superior position to a central subordinate entity who could either respect (or follow the orders of) or disrespect the superior target entity. A coding manual containing a typology of features related to the central and target entity corresponding to each motivation was created. The target could be a person, goal, group, or institution depending on the motivation. Coders were trained to identify the relevant features corresponding to each motivation over a 3-month period. The coding manual is available upon request of the corresponding author.

Coding Procedure

Three coders completed a 3-month long training process before coding the study’s sample of content. After the coders agreed on the coding protocol, coding of the sample content ensued. Two independent raters each coded all of the conflict scenes in the sample content based on a coding scheme developed to identify MIME motivations in media content. The procedure involved four steps, including identifying: (1) the character type (affable/surly), (2) the conflicted motivations, (3) which of the two conflicted motivations was acted upon, and (4) the outcome associated with the choice. We used Krippendorff’s (2012) alpha to assess the intercoder reliability of the coders’ ratings. The third independent coder refereed any disagreements.

Coding for Character Type

Both coders first identified the scene’s principal character (i.e., the one who had to choose to act upon one of two motivations). The coders first marked whether the character appeared as affable or surly. An affable character was defined as a pleasant character with which a young viewer would typically identify and who displayed a cheerful disposition (e.g., smiling, greeting others, etc.). This contrasted with a surly character, which was coded when a character seemed to have a menacing appearance or disposition (e.g., grimacing). When a character appeared to exhibit characteristics that corresponded to neither character type, they were coded as neutral. Although character type of each character was coded separately for each scene, coders were asked to consider the character’s general disposition in all instances leading up to the scene to make their judgment of affableness. In cases where a character experienced a dramatic change in affableness (e.g., a school bully who repents his mistakes and transforms into a more pleasant person), coders rated the character differently for the latter scenes.

Coding for Motivations

After coding for character type, coders identified the two motivations in conflict in the scene. The procedure entailed coders first verbalizing the character’s dilemma in terms
of the two competing actions or behaviors that the character had to choose from. For example, “The boy riding a bike during a race has to choose between winning the race and helping his friend.” After this, coders identified a central character who could choose to act towards one of two target entities. For example, in the above scene, the biker had to choose to act either toward his goal or toward his friend in need. Coders were asked to identify features of the central character and target that were made salient by the scene. After identifying features that corresponded to the motivations in conflict (in the above case, care and competence) in a scene, the coder observed the character’s subsequent behavior and determined which of the two conflicted motivations it represented. For example, if the character chose to win the race rather than help the friend, the coder noted that the character acted upon the competence motivation.

**Coding for Outcome**

After selecting which of the two conflicted motivations was acted upon by the character, coders identified whether the election of that motivation was rewarded or punished. Coders deemed that a motivation was rewarded or punished if the behavior corresponding to the chosen motivation was encouraged or discouraged overtly. They were asked to look for overt indicators of reward/punishment, such as a pat on the back or being loudly scolded, as well as more subtle forms of reward/punishment, such as a smile or a scowl.

The intercoder agreement parameters for all relevant variables are presented in Table 2. Krippendorff (2012) was reluctant to present a binding threshold which applies in all cases. He instead claims that the level of intercoder agreement depends on the need for precision in the specific case. For example, work that is exploratory in nature and does not have immediate, concrete implications (such as this study), but may incrementally contribute to theoretical understanding in the long term, can afford to have lower reliability. Krippendorff suggests a broad rule of thumb of .667 alpha for work that is exploratory or speculative in nature. Barring a few exceptions, the intercoder agreement for all of our study indicators was above .667; however, the few indicators whose reliability fell slightly below this threshold were nevertheless retained because: (1) they are integral components of a theoretical scheme of intuitive motivations in the MIME which have been used in the past and will likely continue to be used in the future; (2) this study was undertaken as a preliminary attempt to understand the representations of these motivations in children’s content, and these levels of intercoder agreement can be considered acceptable for such exploratory research; and (3) most of the reported analyses use the collapsed altruistic and egoistic motivations, whose intercoder agreement exceeded this threshold with or without the inclusion of these indicators.
RESULTS

Prior to testing the research questions, we first examined the extent to which our findings replicated Lewis and Mitchell’s content analysis. Lewis and Mitchell (2014) reported, “Most motivational incongruities involve both egoistic motives versus altruistic ones, rather than just egoistic or altruistic motives alone” (p. 597). A one-sample chi-square analysis was conducted with the scene as the unit of analysis, and conflict type (i.e., altruistic vs. egoistic, altruistic vs. altruistic, or egoistic vs. egoistic) as the dependent variable to guarantee replication. Consistent with their findings, our analysis was significant, $\chi^2(2, N = 40) = 21.95, p < .01$, Cramer’s $V = .74$. Among all conflict scenes, those featuring a conflict between one altruistic and one egoistic motivation (altruistic vs. egoistic) were overrepresented (adjusted standardized residual = 3.74), indicating no differences in the frequency with which either altruistic or egoistic motivations appeared in conflict situations alone (i.e., egoistic vs. egoistic or altruistic vs. altruistic). Because neither altruistic nor egoistic motivations were more dominantly represented over the other, this suggests that when a character experiences a motivational conflict, it is usually the case that he/she must choose either to satisfy the self (an egoistic motivation) or to satisfy others (an altruistic motivation).
Our observations are also consistent with Lewis and Mitchell’s (2014) findings on individual motivations. A 2 (present/absent) × 11 (individual motivations) chi-square was conducted where the unit of analysis was every instance in which an individual motivation was coded as present/absent. The result was significant, $\chi^2(10, N = 440) = 21.47, p < .05$, Cramer’s $V = .22$. Adjusted standardized residuals show that representations of care (adjusted residual = 2.5) and competence, which was our equivalent of Lewis and Mitchell’s status (adjusted residual = 2.5), exceeded expected frequencies. By comparison, representations of purity (adjusted residual = −2.7) fell below the expected frequency, indicating that conflict scenes in content for children across all ages may highlight the importance of care and competence by featuring them often, whereas purity-related concerns are sparsely represented in such conflicts.

Going beyond Lewis and Mitchell, RQ1 inquired which motivations were more likely to be acted upon by characters in cases of motivational conflict in children’s television. We also examined the concern in RQ4 about age differences in content representations. A 2 (acted upon/not acted upon) × 2 (altruism/egoism) chi-square was conducted where the unit of analysis was every instance in which an individual motivation was coded as present. The result was not significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 96) = .05, p = .82$, indicating that neither altruistic nor egoistic motivations were acted upon more frequently. When the same analysis was conducted for the three age groups (relevant to RQ4), no differences emerged, 2–5 years: $\chi^2(1, N = 12) = .34, p = .56$, 6–11 years: $\chi^2(1, N = 39) = .01, p = .95$, 12–17 years: $\chi^2(1, N = 45) = .02, p = .89$. Findings associated with RQ1 and RQ4 suggest that all characters were likely to act upon an altruistic motivation just as often as they were likely to act upon an egoistic motivation in conflicted situations. This was the case for conflict scenes in all three age groups. However, this analysis did not take into account contextual factors such as character type and outcomes that can make a motivation appear more or less desirable.

RQ2 asked which motivations are more often acted upon by affable characters as compared to those acted upon by surly characters in cases of motivational conflict in children’s television. A 2 (character type: affable/surly) × 2 (motivation choice: act upon/not act upon) chi-square for altruistic motivations produced a significant result, $\chi^2(1, N = 40) = 8.92, p < .01$, Cramer’s $V = .47$. Results showed that affable characters acted upon altruistic motivations far more frequently than surly characters. Affable characters acted upon altruistic motivations 68% of the time (adjusted residual = 3.0) when they were in conflict as compared to surly characters who acted upon altruistic motivations just 17% of the time. A breakdown by age (relevant to RQ4) showed that the altruistic motivation of care was frequently acted upon by affable characters in content for the youngest age group. Care alone accounted for 75% of all altruistic intuitions that were upheld by affable characters in the youngest age group. These results clearly showed the centrality of care representations in children’s television for younger children. No significant differences were found in the extent to which affable or surly characters chose to act upon egoistic motivations.

RQ3 asked which motivations were more often rewarded as opposed to punished when acted upon in conflict situations in children’s television. A 2 (motivation choice: act upon/not act upon) × 2 (outcome: reward/punishment) chi-square for egoistic
motivations produced a significant result, $\chi^2(1, N = 10) = 4.0, p < .05$, Cramer’s $V = .50$. Results showed that egoistic motivations were more likely to be rewarded when acted upon and more likely to be punished when suppressed. Egoistic motivations were rewarded when acted upon (as compared to suppressed) 75% of the time (adjusted residual = 2.0). A closer look showed that most of this effect was accounted for by the egoistic intuitions of competence, autonomy, and relatedness being rewarded in content for the two older age groups (relevant to RQ4). These three intuitions accounted for every single instance of an egoistic intuition being rewarded in content for the two older age groups. Additional analyses and all data are available from the corresponding author.

**DISCUSSION**

Our study began by reanalyzing the sample of programs used by Lewis and Mitchell (2014). We not only replicated the findings of Lewis and Mitchell but further examined which motivations were chosen in conflict situations, along with examining the outcomes and character type associated with these choices. These findings can be interpreted from various perspectives related to the MIME, which predicts a reciprocal relationship between audiences and media content.

The MIME’s perspective of media effects claims that motivations featured in content are subsequently activated in audiences. Content for younger children seems to highlight the importance of altruistic motivations (especially care), given our finding that affable characters consistently uphold these motivations in content popular among this age group. This would imply that televised content can instill the values of nurturing, sharing, and caring in younger children; however, such influence may not extend to older children whose content highlights the importance of acting upon growth-related egoistic motivations (e.g., competence, autonomy, relatedness) by rewarding them more often than not. This would suggest that television content for older children is more likely to activate self-serving motivations, but only those related to personal growth, such as competency, autonomy, and relatedness.

These results might have implications for the MIME’s agentive perspective of media choice, which focuses on how media content reflects the needs/priorities of the agent choosing that content. Media content for preschoolers is likely to be largely chosen by parents rather than the preschoolers themselves. Thus, the increased focus on altruistic content in the youngest age group may be a reflection of parental concerns (and more broadly, societal concerns) to inculcate moral values (over egoistic ones) in their children. On the other hand, older children may be more likely to choose the media content they watch themselves.

Because adolescence is a period in which children explore their selves and transition to making their own decisions, the MIME would suggest that the content adolescents choose to watch would likely feature egoistic motivations that are salient in their everyday life at that stage, such as competence, autonomy, and relatedness. That being said, we must note that MIME logic predicts that the content will influence the motivations of its young audiences, regardless of the children’s reasons for
watching media (i.e., parental- or self-selection). Accordingly, we could expect television shows to broadly inculcate altruistic motivations in young children, and reinforce the salience of egoistic motivations in older children. Notably, this prospect has implications for content producers who could try to present motivations in a more balanced manner, given that both types of motivations are required for healthy development in children.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the current study adds to existing literature in this area, several limitations should be considered. The first pertains to the content sample. As our study attempted to replicate and extend previous research, we restricted our study to the sample provided by Lewis and Mitchell (2014). Although their sample was sufficiently large for both their and our purposes, a bigger sample would increase confidence in the reliability of these findings. As stated earlier, the number of conflict scenes analyzed was also limited; however, as each conflict scene is quite often the culmination of the episode’s entire story arc, it should not be dismissed as an individual scene with limited influence.

The lack of a unifying theoretical framework for egoistic motivations remains a limitation for research in this area. Although the altruistic motivations included in the study represent a coherent set of motivations from a consistent theoretical framework, there is no single overriding framework used to identify the egoistic motivations. As such, other egoistic motivations not represented in our coding scheme may have been present but not coded. Expanding the framework of egoistic motivations in future research would help to overcome this.

Finally, future research should examine the influence of the exposure to this content on children. The observations in our study indicate that programming for older children provides a diminished focus on altruistic motivations. This is consistent with a recent study showing the predominance of egoistic motivations in U.S. primetime programs (Prabhu, Tamborini, Grall, Klebig, & Hahn, 2015). If adolescent programming minimizes the importance of altruistic motivations, there is a need for research addressing the implications of diminished altruism. Such effects are likely to be important to those concerned with adolescent behavior, and this line of research provides an interesting foundation and opportunity to compare the motivations salient in content and audiences.

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