

Have and Show Emotions

Research report



Australia

Scientific project management

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Implementation in Australia

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Analysis and report

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Abstract

To gain a better understanding of their emotional experience and expression during everyday life and while watching television, 5,190 children and preteens from 17 countries were examined in a study. Moreover, it was of interest how the social expectations are assessed. The Australian sample comprised 48 questionnaires and induced the following results:

- In Australia as well as in other countries joy is the emotion most frequently experienced.
- Australian children are rarely sad, angry or envious, but they often experience fear in comparison with children from other countries.
- In comparison, Australian children are really proud.
- Australian girls show their feelings of joy, fear, sadness and anger more often than boys, although boys experience these feelings more often.
- Australian children demand emotional honesty from TV characters.
- Compared with the children's own experience and expression of emotions, TV characters should openly display their emotions.

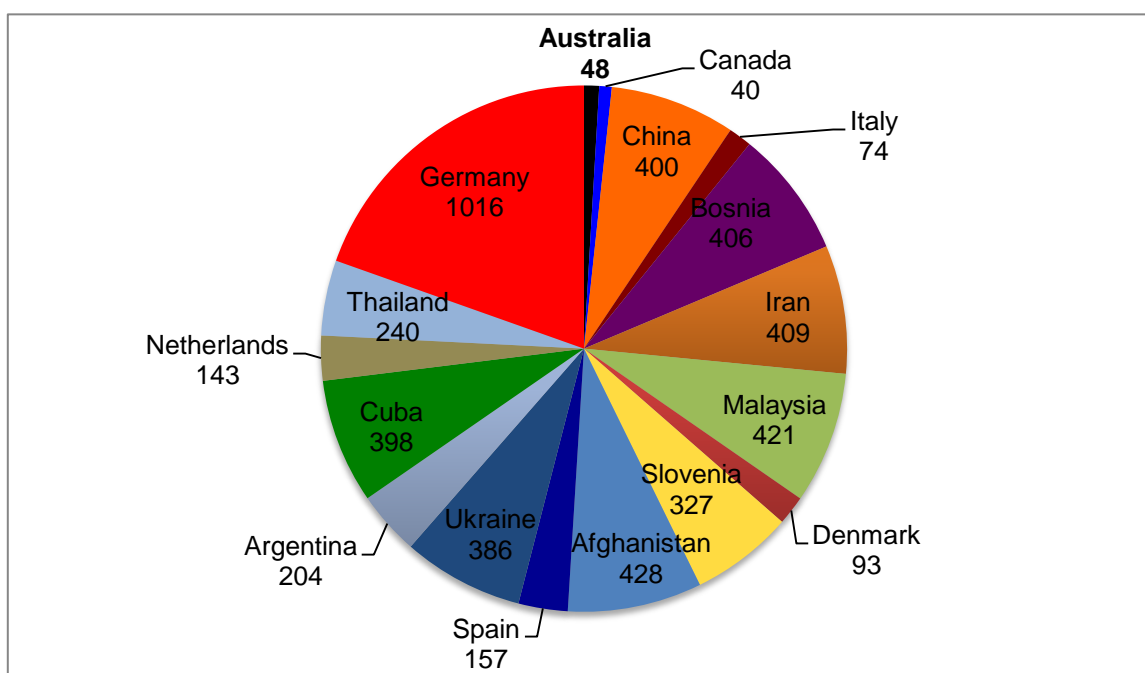
1. Objective and sample

The objective of the international study „Have and Show Emotions“ was to get a better understanding of children´s and preteens´ experience of emotions.

In cooperation with international colleagues, 5,190 children and preteens between 6 and 15 years of age were surveyed using the same questionnaire. The questionnaire centered on the children´s self-evaluation of the emotions they had recently experienced, how often they had felt certain emotions within the past seven days and to what extent they had shown these emotions to others.

In addition, respondents were asked to self-evaluate how their parents react to the demonstration of particular emotions, which emotions they feel while watching television, and to what extent they think TV characters should honestly show how they feel.

The central emotions were joy, fear, anger, sadness, pride and envy. The country-specific sample varied from $n = 40$ in Canada to $n = 1,016$ in Germany. In this regard, it is not possible to formulate representative statements for most of the countries. Only the results of the German sample can be considered as representative for the Federal Republic of Germany. Based on the wider age distribution, however, a greater reliability of the results can be expected in countries with more than 300 respondents.



III. 1: Distribution of the total sample by countries

In Australia, 48 children and preteens, 22 girls and 26 boys, participated in the study.¹

Age category	Boys (n=26)	Girls (n=22)
6 – 9 years (n=13)	19% (n=9)	8% (n=4)
10 – 12 years (n=35)	35% (n=17)	38% (n=18)

III. 2: Sampling distribution – Australia

Because of the sampling distribution age differences will not be taken into account. Instead we will focus on gender differences.

¹ Due to the small number of cases the shown figures are necessarily approximate. This must be taken into account in the interpretation of the results.

2. Results²

2.1 Emotion “joy”

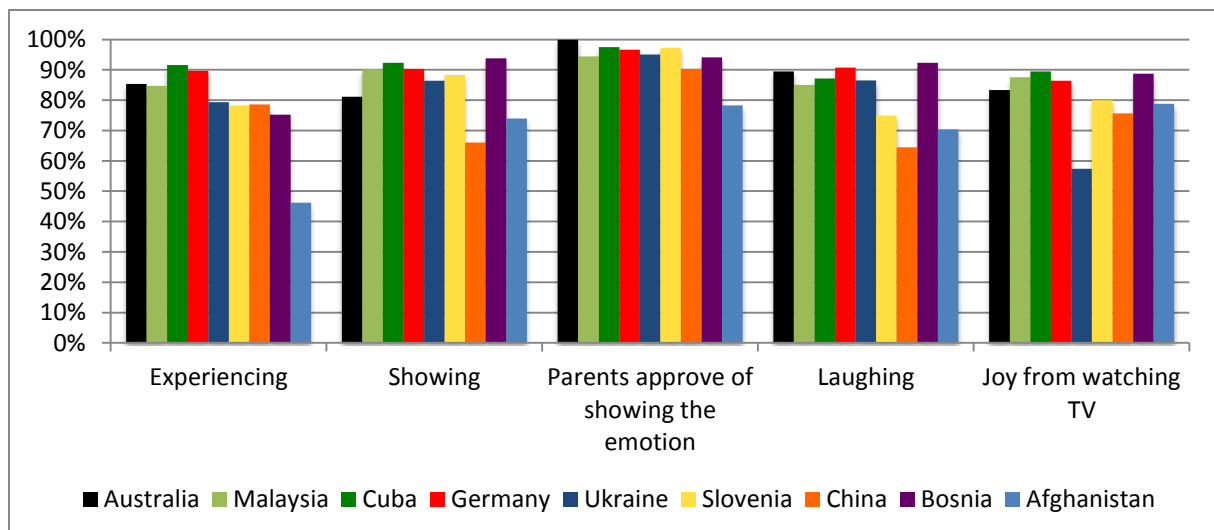
The first emphasis of the questionnaire was put on the emotion joy. All items in the questionnaire were rated on a 4-point Likert scale. Participating children and preteens were asked about their recent experiences of joy: *“How often did you feel really happy in the past 7 days?”* and *“Was there a moment when you really had to laugh out loud?”* We also wanted to know how they deal with their emotions. Thus we asked: *“How much did you show others that you feel really happy?”* As a next step the children were asked to self-evaluate how their parents would assess the expression of this emotion by answering the question *“How do your parents like it when you show them that you feel really happy?”* In line with the research interest of the International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI) the last question was: *“Are you getting really happy from time to time from something you see on TV?”*³

Australian children laugh a lot and are very joyful

With respect to the emotion “joy” the international comparison shows that Australian children and preteens rank in the upper range in terms of nearly all categories. This means that the Australian respondents often answer that they do experience and express joy. On top of that, all the children assume that their parents would approve their showing of joy. About 80% of the Australian children and preteens state that TV has triggered feelings of joy at least once.

² In the following, the results of the Australian sample will be analyzed in terms of an international country comparison as well as separated by gender. In each case the top-two items of the four-point Likert-Scale will be represented. Significant differences will be specified by using asterisks (*).

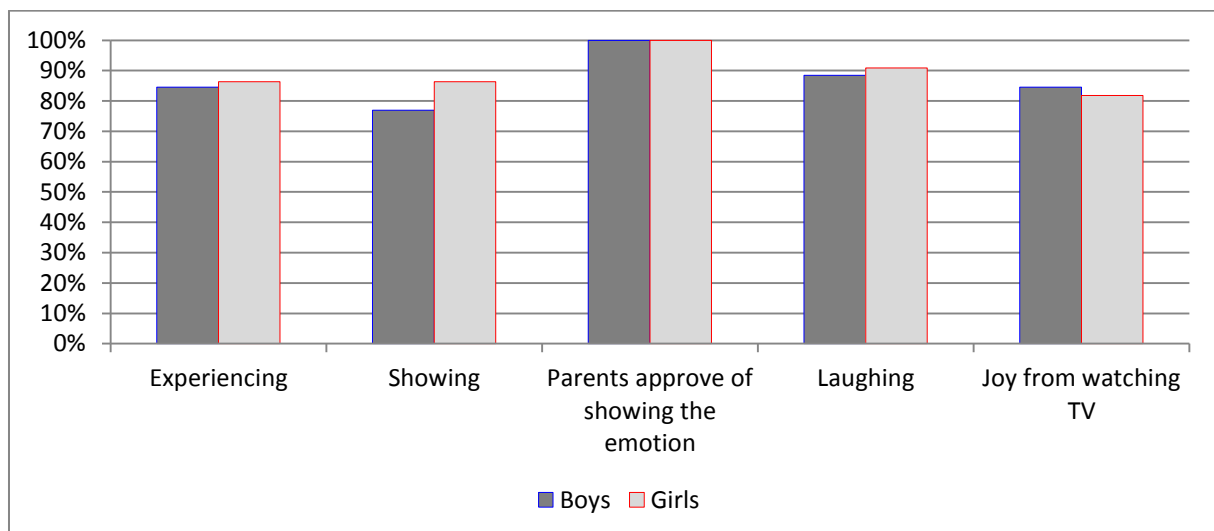
³ The detailed questionnaire can be found in the appendix.



III. 3: Differences in terms of showing and experiencing the emotion “joy” by countries (n > 300) – agreement

Girls show more joy

A gender comparison reveals that by tendency girls experience joy a bit more often than boys. Additionally, they show joy more frequently than boys.



III. 4: Differences in terms of showing and experiencing the emotion “joy” by gender – agreement

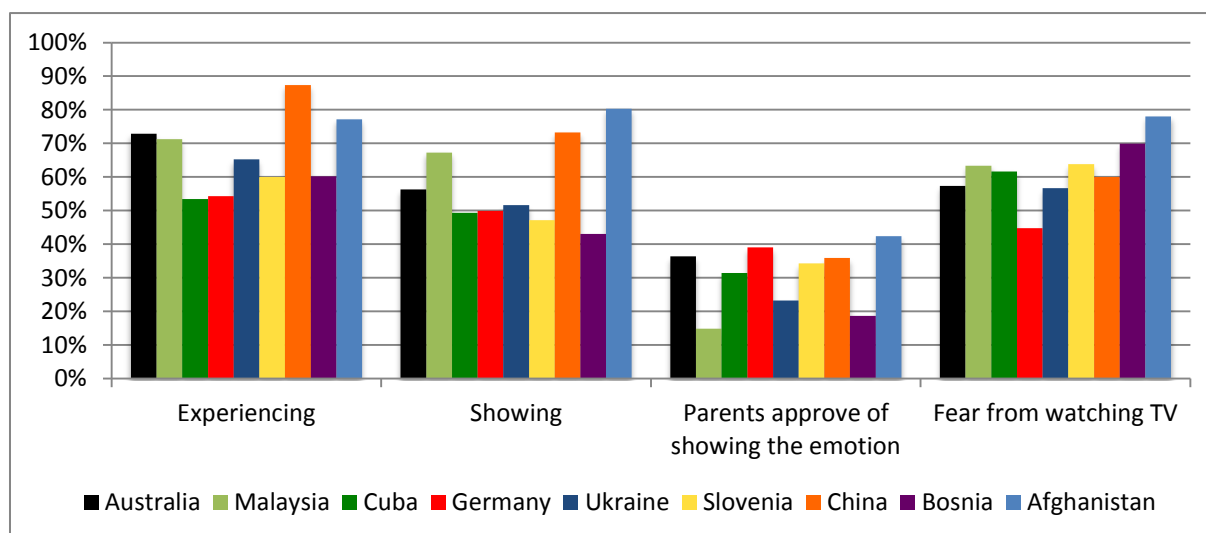
2.2 Emotion “fear”

The next set of questions focused on the emotion fear. All items in the questionnaire were rated on a 4-point Likert scale. Participating children and preteens were asked about their recent experiences of fear: “*How often did you feel anxious in the past 7 days?*” We also wanted to know how they deal with their emotions. Thus we asked “*How much did you show others that you feel anxious?*” As a next step the children were asked self-evaluate how their parents would assess the expression of this

emotion by answering the question “*How do your parents like it when you show them that you feel anxious?*” The last questions were: “*Are you getting anxious from time to time from something you see on TV?*” and “*Do you sometimes get nightmares from something you saw on TV?*”

Australian children often experience fear

The country-comparison reveals that Australian children experience fear more frequently than the respondents of other countries.⁴ Only China and Afghanistan attain higher results in this category. Similar to the emotion “joy”, the Australian respondents show their fear less frequently than they do actually experience it. Beyond that, some of the Australian children think that their parents would approve the expression of this emotion. On top of that, more than half of the Australian respondents have already experienced fear as a consequence of watching TV.

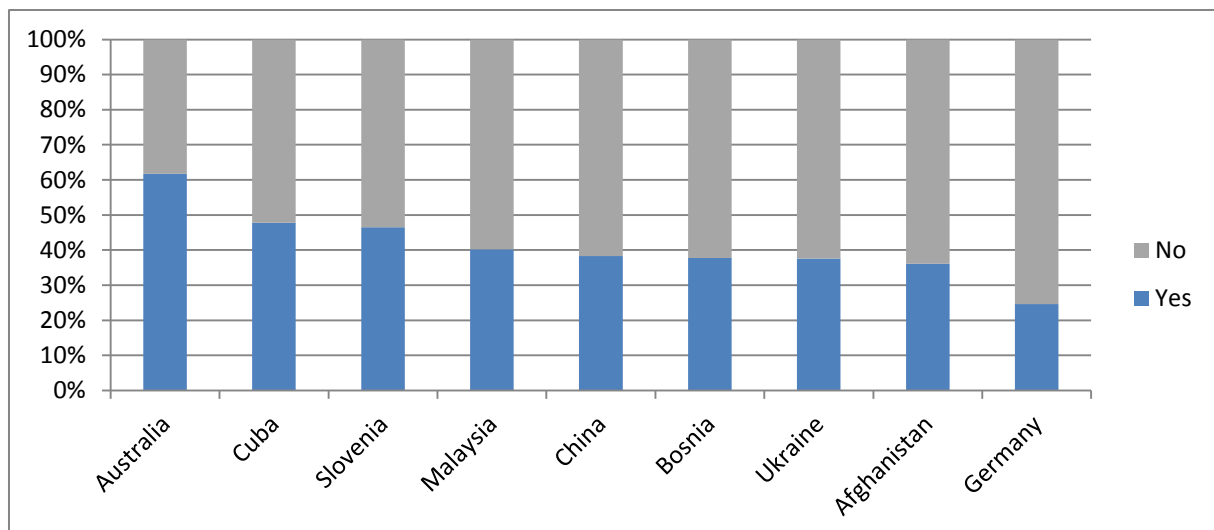


III. 5: Differences in terms of experiencing and showing the emotion “fear” by countries (n > 300) – agreement

Beyond that, six out of 10 children state that they had had a nightmare from watching something on TV at least once. With this result, Australia ranks on first place in the international comparison. 21 children and preteens answered the question which show or movie made them feel anxious. In this context *News* (n=5) were mentioned most often followed by *Poltergeist* (n=3), *CSI* (n=2), and *Mama* (n=2).⁵

⁴ Only the evaluation of fear uses the top-three items of the four-point Likert-Scale.

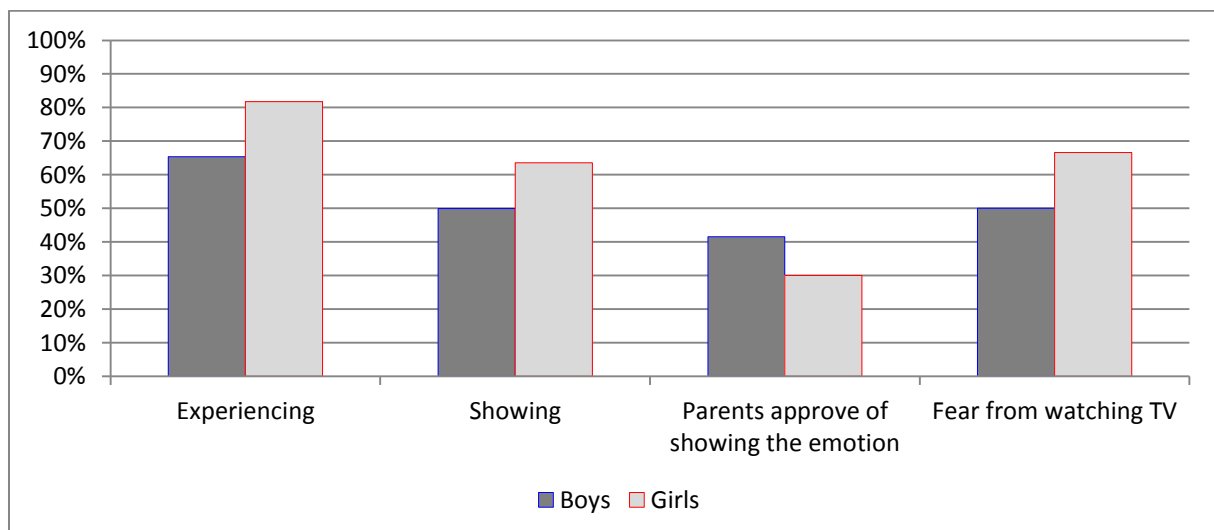
⁵ Some children wrote down more than one show/movie. But for the analysis only the first mention was taken into account.



III. 6: Overview of “Nightmares from watching TV”

Girls show fear more often

Again the gender comparison reveals that girls experience and show fear more often than boys. Additionally, girls experience fear from watching TV marginal more frequently than boys. However, boys assume more often than girls that their parents would approve showing this emotion.



III. 7: Differences in terms of experiencing and showing the emotion “fear” by gender – agreement

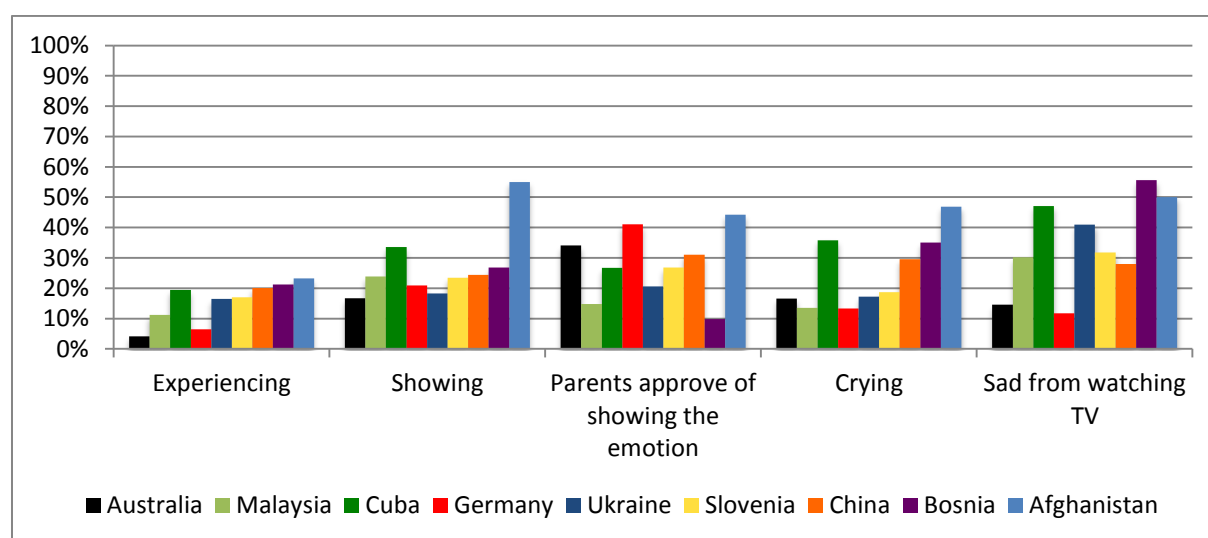
2.3 Emotion “sadness”

This section dealt with recent experiences of sadness: “*How often did you feel really sad in the past 7 days?*” and “*Did you have to cry in the last 7 days?*” Additionally we wanted to know the reasons for crying by offering the categories *pain*, *anger*, *sorrow*, *fun*, and *fear* as answer options. We also wanted to know how they would show their sadness. Thus we asked: “*How much did you show others that you feel really sad?*”

As a next step the children were asked to self-evaluate how their parents would assess the expression of this emotion by answering the question “*How do your parents like it when you show them that you feel really sad?*” In line with the research interest of the International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI) we then asked: “*Are you getting really sad from time to time from something you see on TV?*” Again all items in the questionnaire were rated on a 4-point Likert scale, except the additional question for this section.

Australian children are seldom sad and rarely cry

The international comparison demonstrates that Australian children and preteens experience sadness less often than the respondents from other countries. Also the willingness to show this emotion to others ranks at the bottom end. One third of the Australian children assume that the expression of sadness is approved by their parents. However, only a small percentage of the Australian children and preteens state that they had cried in the past seven days. In this context, Australian respondents name mostly joy as reason for this emotional outburst, followed by anger.

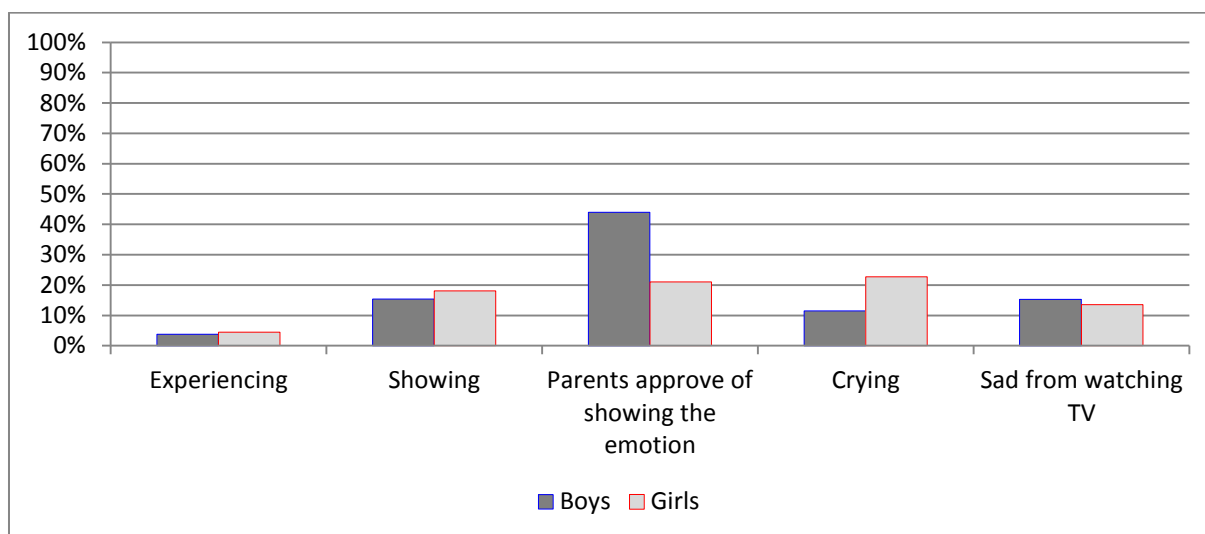


III. 8: Differences in terms of experiencing and showing the emotion “sadness” by countries (n > 300) – agreement

Girls cry and show grief more often

The gender comparison reveals that girls show their feelings of sadness more often and cry more often than boys. Interestingly, there is no gender difference with respect

to the frequency of experiencing sadness. Yet, boys assume more often than girls that their parents approve showing this emotion.



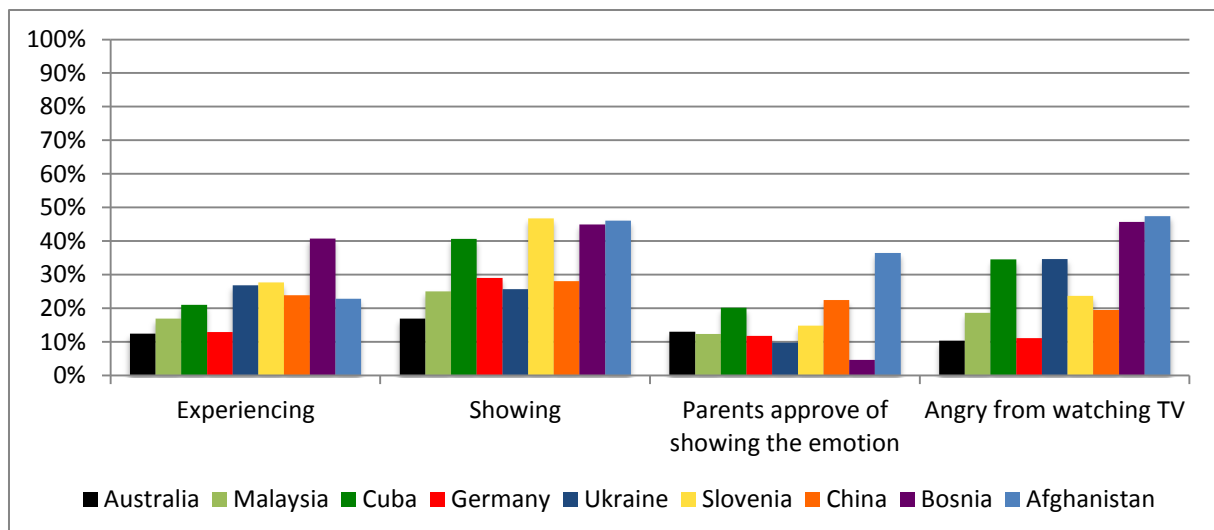
III. 9: Differences in terms of experiencing and showing the emotion “sadness” by gender – agreement

2.4 Emotion “anger”

The next set of questions dealt with anger. We wanted to know more about the recent experiences of the participants: “*How often did you feel really angry in the past 7 days?*” We also wanted to know to what extent they showed their anger. Thus we asked: “*How much did you show others that you feel really angry?*” As a next step the children were asked to self-evaluate how their parents would assess the expression of this emotion by answering the question “*How do your parents like it when you show them that you feel really angry?*” In line with the research interest of the International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI) we asked: “*Are you getting really angry from time to time from something you see on TV?*”

Australian children experience anger rather rarely

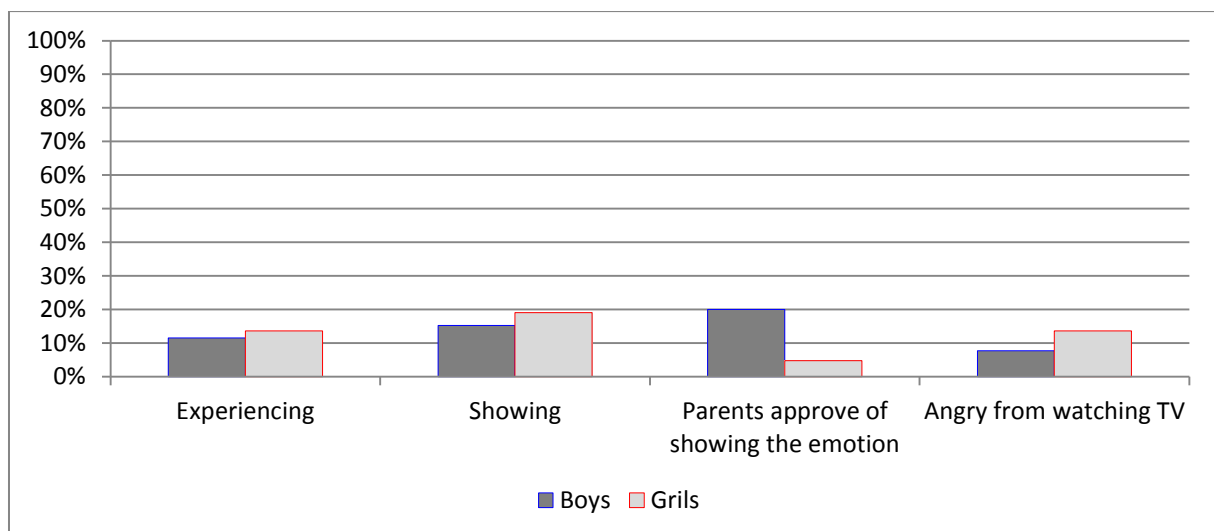
Similar to the emotion “sadness”, Australian children and preteens experience anger less often than the respondents from other countries. This applies also to the expression of the emotion where the Australian participants rank again at the bottom end. The parents’ approval of showing this emotion is considered very low.



III. 10: Differences in terms of experiencing and showing the emotion “anger” by countries (n > 300) – agreement

Girls show anger more often

By tendency the gender comparison shows again that girls experience and show feelings of anger more frequently, whereas boys more often assume that their parents would approve showing anger. Moreover, girls refer to emotionally charged TV events more frequently than boys.



III. 11: Differences in terms of experiencing and showing the emotion “anger” by gender– agreement

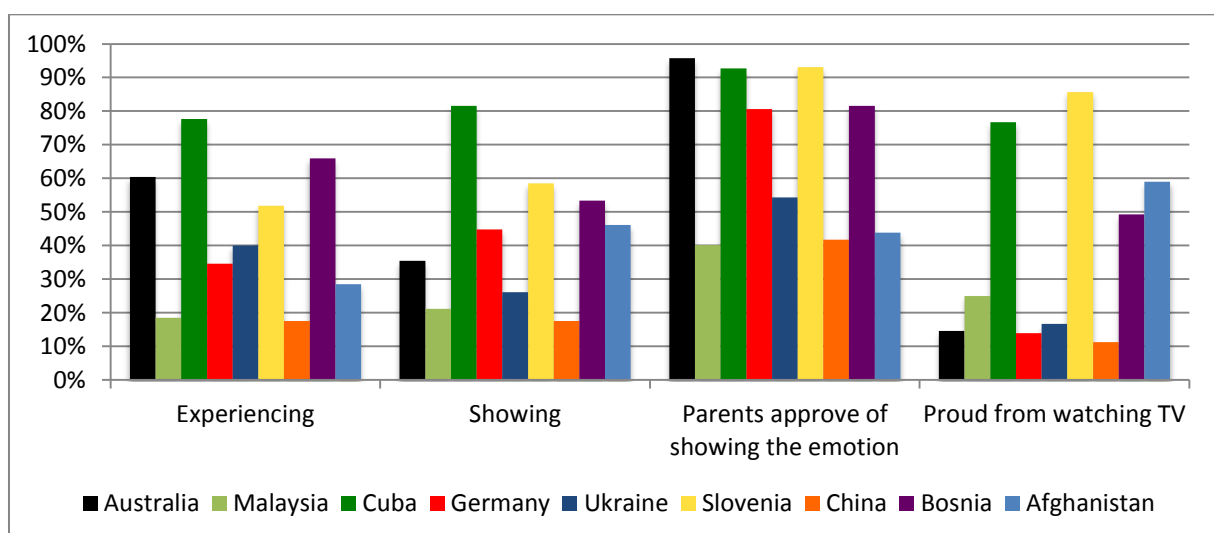
2.5 Emotion “pride”

The next set of questions focused on the emotion pride. All items in the questionnaire were rated on a 4-point Likert scale. Participating children and preteens were asked about their recent experiences of pride: “*How often did you feel really proud in the past 7 days?*”. We also wanted to know how they deal with their emotions. Thus we

asked: *“How much did you show others that you feel really proud?”* As a next step the children were asked to self-evaluate how their parents would assess the expression of this emotion by answering the question *“How do your parents like it when you show them that you feel really proud?”* In line with the research interest of the International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI) we asked *“Are you getting really proud of yourself from time to time from something you see on TV?”* *“What were you proud of?”* was the last question in this section. With this open question we wanted to learn more about the children’s reasons for feeling pride.

Australian children are proud

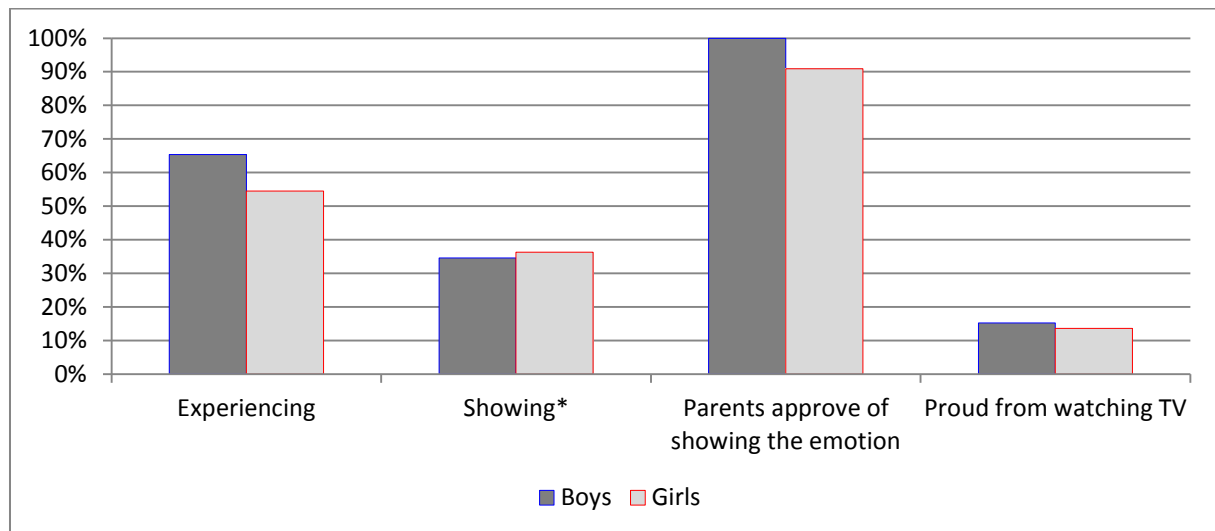
Regarding the frequency of experiencing pride, Australian children and preteens rank higher than the international average. While only about 20% of the Malaysian respondents experience pride often or permanently, 60% of the Australian respondents report about having experienced this emotion. If the Australian participants, however, experience pride, the emotion is related to their abilities or their talents. The country comparison also reveals that Australian children and preteens show their pride less often than they experience it. However, more than 90% of the Australian participants state that their parents would approve or very much approve showing this emotion.



III. 12: Differences in terms of experiencing and showing the emotion “pride” by countries (n > 300) – agreement

Boys experience pride more often

Comparing the gender differences we can see that boys experience feelings of pride more often than girls. Moreover, boys believe more often than girls that their parents would approve that they show their feelings of pride. Nevertheless, there is no gender difference in showing pride.



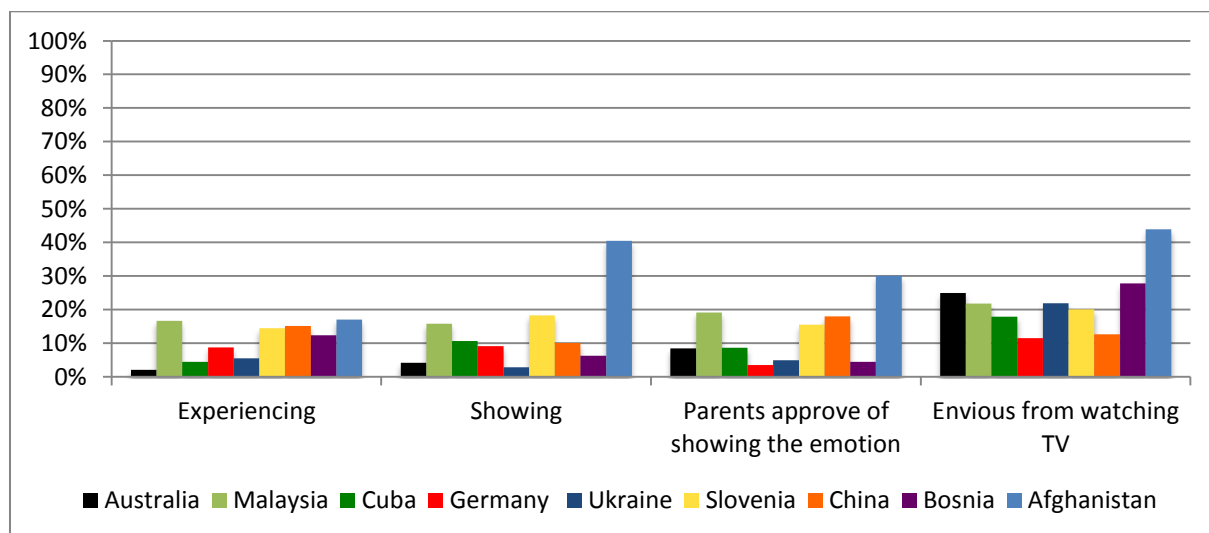
III. 13: Differences in terms of experiencing and showing the emotion “pride” by gender – agreement

2.6 Emotion “envy”

The last set of questions focused on the children’s emotion envy. All items in the questionnaire were rated on a 4-point Likert scale. Participating children and preteens were asked about their recent experiences of envy: *“How often did you feel really envious of others in the past 7 days?”* We also wanted to know how they deal with their emotions. Thus we asked *“How much did you show others that you feel really envious of others?”* As a next step the children were asked to self-evaluate how their parents would assess the expression of this emotion by answering the question *“How do your parents like it when you show them that you feel really envious of others?”* In line with the research interest of the International Central Institute for Youth and Educational Television (IZI) we asked: *“Are you getting really envious of others from time to time from something you see on TV?”* *“What did you envy?”* was the last question in this section. With this open ended question we wanted to get answers about the children’s reasons for feeling envious.

Australian children are scarcely envious

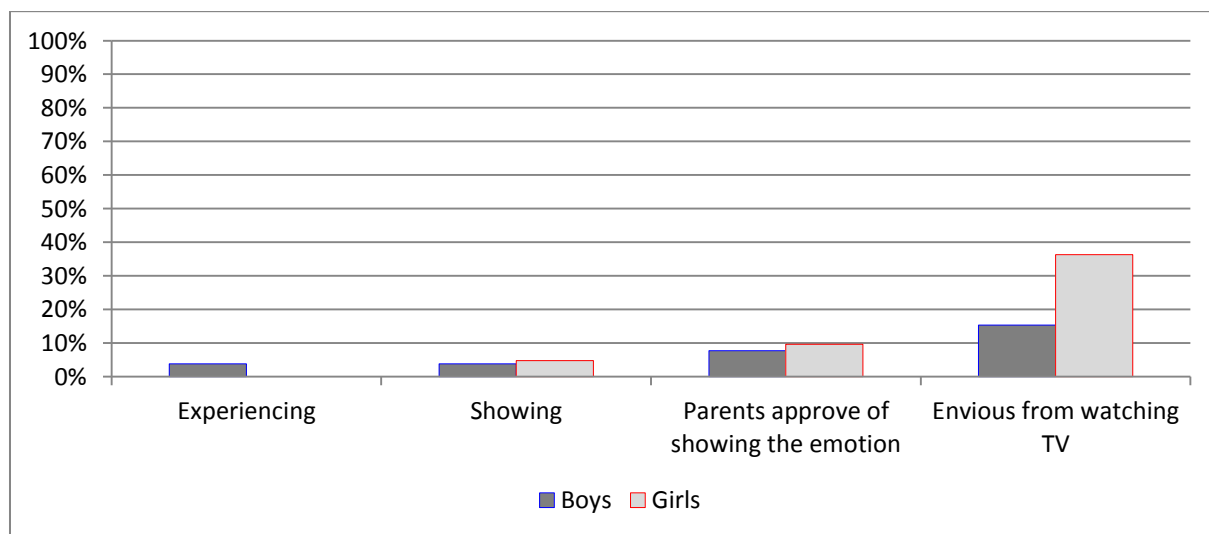
The international country comparison reveals that the Australian children and preteens experience and show envy less often than the respondents of other countries. However, if the Australian participants experience envy, this emotion is related to other people's material possessions.



III. 14: Differences in terms of experiencing and showing the emotion “envy” by country (n > 300) – agreement

Girls do not experience envy

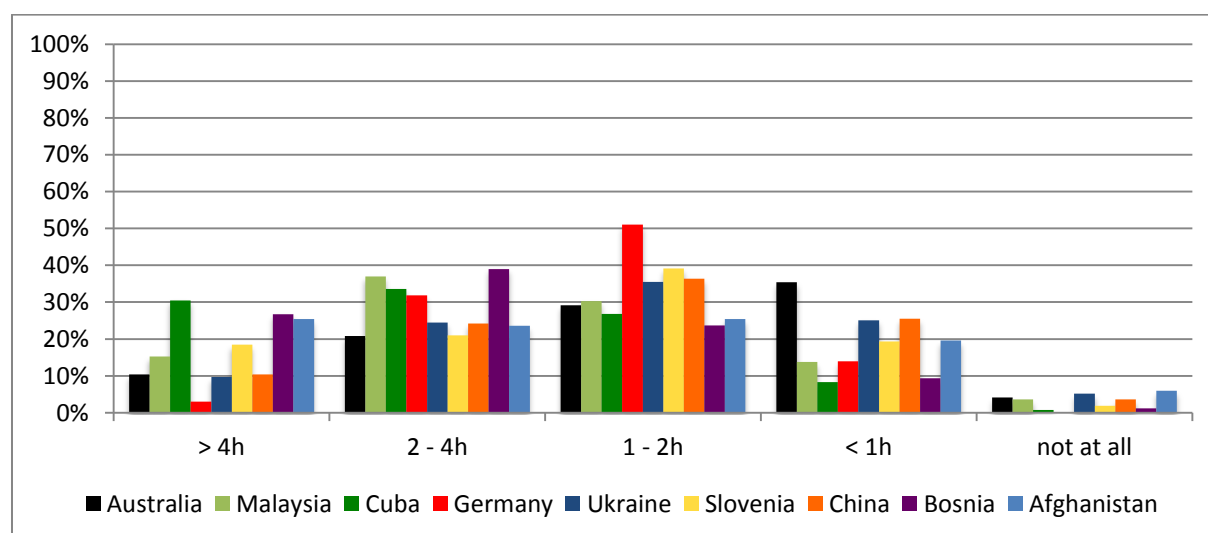
The gender comparison reveals that none of the responding girls experienced feelings of envy. However, girls refer to emotionally charged TV events more often than boys.



III. 15: Differences in terms of experiencing and showing the emotion “envy” by gender – agreement

2.7 TV viewing behavior and emotions on TV

The last part of the questionnaire focused on TV viewing behavior. First we wanted to know how often children and preteens of different countries watch TV. Thus we asked: *“How often do you watch TV?”*; and offered the following answer options: *daily, several times a week, once a week, rarely, or not at all*. About half of the Australian children and preteens state that they watch TV every day. In the next step we wanted to know more concretely *“How many hours per day do you watch TV?”* The children and preteens were offered the following categories: *more than 4 hours, 2 to 4 hours, 1 to 2 hours, less than 1 hour, and not at all*. The major part of the respondents spends less than an hour per day in front of the TV. Therewith, Australian ranks in the lower range.

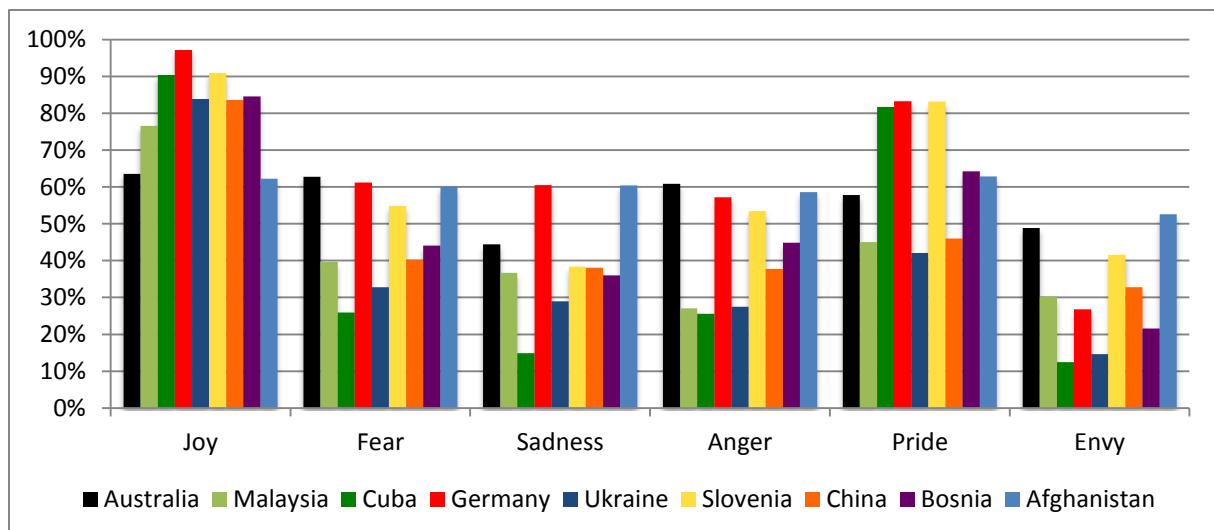


III. 16: Daily viewing time by country (n > 300) – agreement

TV characters should show their emotions

The last part of the questionnaire dealt with TV characters showing emotions. The children were asked: *“How do you like it when the characters show honestly that they feel really happy?”* The same question was asked with respect to the other emotions: fear, sadness, anger, pride and envy. Again all items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale.

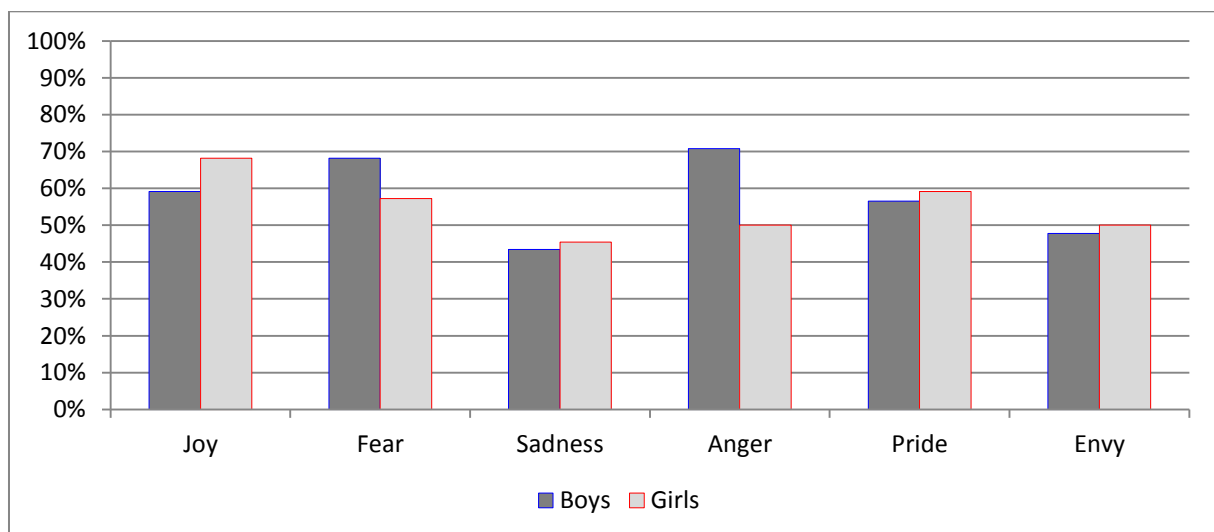
Joy is the emotion which the respondents in Australia and in other countries of the international comparison wish to experience through TV characters. Second ranks the wish to experience fear, followed by the emotions anger and pride.



III. 17: TV characters and emotions by country (n > 300) – agreement

Boys want to see fear and anger

The gender comparison reveals that girls prefer the depiction of joy by the characters in their favorite TV shows whereas boys like to see anger and fear.



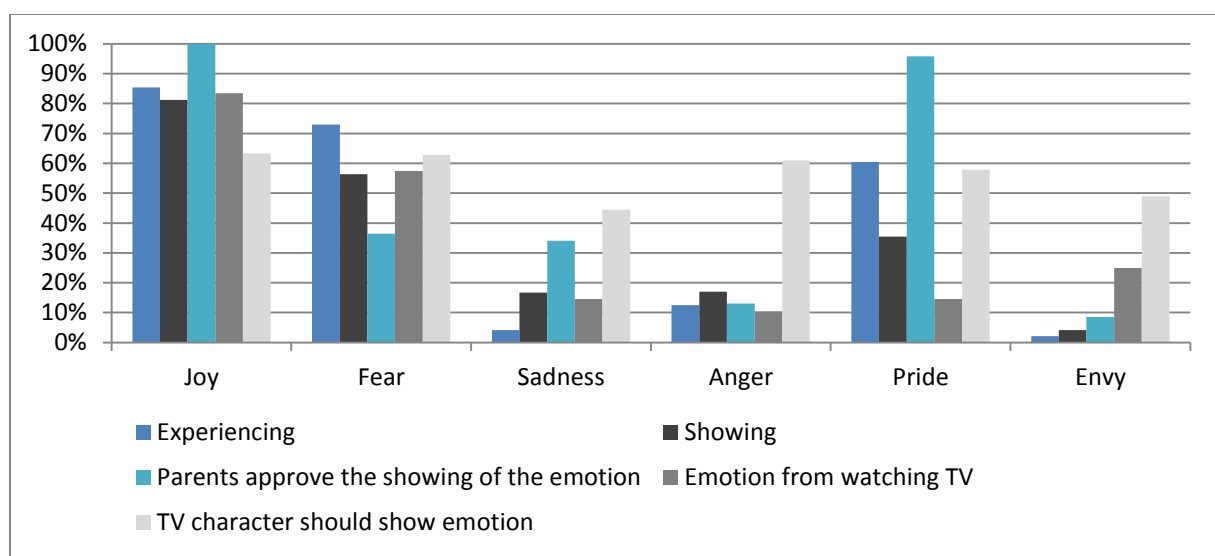
III. 18: TV characters and emotions by gender – agreement

3. Summary

5,190 children and preteens from 17 countries were surveyed with the aim of getting a better understanding of how emotions are experienced and shown in everyday life and while watching TV. The focus was on the emotions joy, fear, anger, sadness, pride and envy. The Australian sample comprised 48 questionnaires filled in by 22 girls and 26 boys. Again it shall be pointed out that due to the small number of cases the shown figures are necessarily approximate.

The results showed that joy is the emotion most frequently experienced by Australian children and preteens. This emotion is also among the emotions most frequently experienced by the respondents from the other countries. Fear is the second most frequent emotion felt by children in Australia. In comparison, children from Australia often experience fear. The country comparison also revealed that Australian children experience problematic emotions like sadness or anger less often than the participants from other countries. Beyond that, they were really proud of themselves. With respect to the expression of emotions, the Australian sample demonstrated that girls have a higher willingness than boys to show joy, fear, sadness and anger although boys experience these feelings more often.

For Australian children and preteens, TV is related to a feeling of joy. Yet they also experience that TV can cause fear. Six out of 10 children from Australia can refer to a nightmare caused by a TV event. In addition, Australian participants by tendency wish that their TV characters would show more emotions than they themselves experience or express.



III. 19: Overview of „Having and Showing Emotions“ – Australia

Questionnaire on the experience with and showing of emotions

On the following pages we will ask you questions about certain feelings and about TV. Please consider carefully how often you experience certain feelings. No matter if at home, at school or in dealing with parents and friends – the important thing is that you are honest!

Let's talk about you first: I am a girl ☐ a boy ☐ and I am _____ years old.

Happiness

How often did you feel really happy in the past 7 days?

Never	rather rarely	fairly often	permanently
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much did you show others that you feel really happy?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do your parents like it that you show them when you feel really happy?

Don't like it at all	rather don't like it	rather like it	like it very
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please think of the past 7 days: Was there a moment when you really had to laugh out loud?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you getting really happy from time to time from something you see on TV?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Fear

How often did you feel anxious in the past 7 days?

Never	rather rarely	fairly often	permanently
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much did you show others that you feel anxious?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do your parents like it that you show them when you feel anxious?

Don't like it at all	rather don't like it	rather like it	like it very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you getting anxious from time to time from something you see on TV?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Which show or movie made you feel anxious?

Title: _____

Do you sometimes get nightmares from something you saw on TV?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Sadness

How often did you feel really sad in the past 7 days?

Never	rather rarely	fairly often	permanently
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much did you show others that you feel really sad?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do your parents like it that you show them when you feel really sad?

Don't like it at all	rather don't like it	rather like it	like it very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Did you have to cry in the last 7 days?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Why did you have to cry? Because of ... pain ☐ anger ☐ sorrow ☐ fun ☐ fear ☐

Are you getting really sad from time to time from something you see on TV?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Anger

How often did you feel really angry in the past 7 days?

Never	rather rarely	fairly often	permanently
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much did you show others that you feel really angry?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do your parents like it that you show them when you feel really angry?

Don't like it at all	rather don't like it	rather like it	like it very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you getting really angry from time to time from something you see on TV?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Pride

How often did you feel really proud in the past 7 days?

Never	rather rarely	fairly often	permanently
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much did you show others that you feel really proud?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do your parents like it that you show them when you feel really proud?

Don't like it at all	rather don't like it	rather like it	like it very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you getting really proud of yourself from time to time from something you see on TV?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What were you proud of?

I was proud of _____

Envy

How often did you feel really envious of others in the past 7 days?

Never	rather rarely	fairly often	permanently
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How much did you show others that you feel really envious of others?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do your parents like it that you show them when you feel really envious of others?

Don't like it at all	rather don't like it	rather like it	like it very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Are you getting really envious of others from time to time from something you see on TV?

Not at all	scarcely	a little bit	very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

What did you envy?

I envied _____

Now we want to find out some things about your TV consumption.

How often do you watch TV?

Daily	several times a week	once a week	rarely	not at all
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How many hours per day do you watch TV?

More than 4 hours	2 to 4 hours	1 to 2 hours	less than 1 hour	not at all
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Please think of your favorite TV show and all other shows you watch.

How do you like it when the characters show honestly that they feel really happy?

Don't like it at all	rather don't like it	rather like it	like it very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do you like it when the characters show honestly that they feel really anxious?

Don't like it at all	rather don't like it	rather like it	like it very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do you like it when the characters show honestly that they feel really sad?

Don't like it at all	rather don't like it	rather like it	like it very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do you like it when the characters show honestly that they feel really angry?

Don't like it at all	rather don't like it	rather like it	like it very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do you like it when the characters show honestly that they feel really proud of themselves?

Don't like it at all	rather don't like it	rather like it	like it very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How do you like it when the characters show honestly that they feel really envious of others?

Don't like it at all	rather don't like it	rather like it	like it very much
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Thank you for your participation!!! ☺