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PERCEPTION AND PREFERENCES OF PEOPLE REGARDING REALITY SHOWS – A STUDY IN NAVSARI CITY OF GUJARAT



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Abs tract: *The rising popularity of the reality shows on Indian television has added a new dimension to the production of TV programs. Most of the television shows which are being telecast nowadays are reality shows specializing in dancing, singing, and acting. Today's reality shows are rewriting our cultural scripts, altering our perception, our social relationships and our relationships to the natural world. In this descriptive study, the researcher has found that people are really fond of watching reality shows which range from cookery to talent hunt and comedy show types. Majority of the respondents, however, felt that these types of shows are often scripted for increasing TRPs and increasing financial and commercial success. Major drivers for watching reality shows are break from routine, controversies, glamour and entertainment. However, most of the people were not still holding any views whether such types of reality shows make any sort of impact on the society.*

Keyw ords: Reality shows, TRP, Television shows, Perception.

1. INTRODUCTION

As the economic flood gates opened in India, a new era of entertainment revolution is witnessed. Most of the television shows which are being telecast nowadays are reality shows specializing in dancing, singing, and acting. Everything now is a competition. The Indian reality shows have also been consistently successful in offering a wide variety. There has been an overall impact of globalization and liberalization which has led to the growth of so many new channels in India. Whether through conducting of reality shows, religious pilgrimage telecast or by telecasting a variety of programmes for kids or women, each of these channels is relying heavily on creativity and out of the box thinking. Reality shows are fast replacing the daily 'Daughter-in-law versus Mother –in-law' soaps in Indian television from talent-hunt shows, to dance dramas, to acting-flicks, talk shows, chat-shows, cookery shows, art and craft show, astrology shows and the list is endless. All such shows have engulfed most of the television space and they have a strong audience following to bail them out. The happiness of watching the transformation of a common man into a celebrity is immense and to an extent it is a virtual realization of our subconscious wishes. Millions of Indians find a part of their dream come true in these reality shows and relate with the characters a lot. This combined with the amount of drama that these shows manage, also makes a strong emotional contact with the audience. Some people have identified with the dreams, aspirations and struggle of the participants, some have identified themselves with the straight-talking judges, and others have found a voice to identify-within the shows with a strong social tag. Talent

shows have perhaps being the biggest hit among the lot with the exception that 'Kaun banega crorepati' hit the jackpot despite of being a quiz show.

Today's reality shows are rewriting our cultural scripts, altering our perception, our social relationships and our relationships to the natural world. The rising popularity of the reality shows on Indian television has added a new dimension to the production of TV programs. Consequently it has become imperative to study the mindset of Indian consumers regarding Reality television shows. This study aims at study the mindset of a common man regarding their perception and preferences for Reality shows aired on television.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The debut of Survivor in 2000 has been credited with beginning the infiltration of reality programming in the current television landscape (Rowen, 2000). The majority of reality television programming is geared towards the individuals under twenty five years old (Frank, 2003). Frank (2003) suggests that younger viewers are drawn to these shows because they depict characters and situations that are relevant to their everyday lives. Nabi et al. (2003) found that regular viewers watched because they found it entertaining, for the enjoyment of watching another's life, and the self awareness they receive from these programs. Casual viewers watched because they were bored, or because they enjoyed watching another's life.

Hall A. (2009) investigated whether viewer perceptions of reality programs' authenticity were associated with involvement, enjoyment, and perceived learning. Four

dimensions of perceived authenticity were identified: cast eccentricity, representativeness, candidness, and producer manipulation. Perceptions that the cast was not eccentric, that they were representative of people the respondents could meet, that they were behaving candidly, and that the producers were manipulating the show were associated with cognitive involvement. Cast representativeness was also positively associated with social involvement. Each form of involvement was associated with enjoyment. Perceptions of the cast members' representativeness, candidness, and lack of eccentricity were associated with perceived learning.

Pontius E. S. in his study sought to find the effects of reality television on the viewers' perception of reality. Thirty subjects were used in the study and three different conditions were tested: a reality scale group; a reality television clips and scale group; and a reality television clips, application for reality show, and scale group. A significant difference was found in the scores between the reality scale group (group 1) and the clips and scale group (group 2). Those who watched the clips of shows before taking the scale rated the events in the scale much higher than those who did not view the clips. There was also a significant finding in the amount of hours of television the subjects view a week and the score of the scales. Those who watch more television scored the scale higher than those who do not watch as much television.

According to Hawkins et. al. (2001) Active" television viewing has meant (among other things) selective exposure to types of content, attention to that content, and several different kinds of other activities during viewing itself. This study argues that such meanings are differently predicted by three types of predictors (individuals' gratifications sought from different television genres, their expertise with these genres, and their need for cognition), and also vary by genre. Two different instrumental reasons for viewing (mood and content preference) both predicted selective viewing and thinking while viewing, but only content preference predicted attentive viewing. Casual reasons for viewing were related to less viewing and more channel surfing behavior. Need for cognition was unrelated to variation in genre viewing, but it was related in differing but sensible ways to attention to different genres.

Hill, A. (2002) in his article focuses on Big Brother in relation to audience attraction. The author's research, which uses quantitative and qualitative audience studies, indicates that attraction to Big Brother is based on the social and performative aspects of the program. The focus on the degree of actuality, on real people's improvised performances in the program, leads to a particular viewing practice: audiences look for the moment of authenticity when real people are "really" themselves in an unreal environment.

Lundy et. al. (2008) conducted a research study to explore college students' consumption patterns in regard to reality television, their rationale for watching reality shows, their perceptions of the situations portrayed on these shows, and the role of social affiliation in the students' consumption of reality television. The results of focus groups indicated that while participants perceive a social stigma associated with watching reality television, they continue to watch because of the perceived escapism and social affiliation

provided.

Reiss, S., & Wiltz, J. (2004) assessed the appeal of reality TV by asking 239 adults to rate themselves on each of 16 basic motives using the Reiss Profile standardized instrument and to rate how much they watched and enjoyed various reality television shows. The results suggested that the people who watched reality television had above-average trait motivation to feel self-important and, to a lesser extent, vindicated, friendly, free of morality, secure, and romantic, as compared with large normative samples. The results, which were dose-dependent, showed a new method for studying media. This method is based on evidence that people have the potential to experience 16 different joys. People prefer television shows that stimulate the feelings they intrinsically value the most, which depends on individuality.

Meti V. & Jange S. (2012) made attempt to explore opinion of the students, research scholars, house maker and teaching faculty's consumption patterns in regard to reality television, their rationale for watching reality shows, their perceptions of the situations portrayed on these shows, and its impact on the society based on the sample of 100 respondents in Gulbarga city of Karnataka state. The results discussed are on types of television programmes viewed, rating of most watched reality shows and its impact on society.

3. METHODOLOGY

Objective: The primary objective of this study is:

1. To know the preferences of the respondents regarding reality shows.
2. To study the perception of respondents regarding reality of reality shows
3. To study the impact of reality shows on the society

Sampling Plan:

Sample Unit: Literate Customers of Navsari City

Sample Size: 200 Respondents – Gender: Males (100); Females (100)

Age Group: 13-19 (72); 20-30 (79); 31-40 (37); 41+ (12)

Occupation: Student (92) Service (32) Professional (20)

Business (16) Housewives (40)

Sampling Method: Non- probability sampling – Judgmental and Convenience methods

Field area: Navsari City

Research Instrument: The study is of descriptive type and the instrument used to measure the objectives is questionnaire.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Following charts and tables summarises the analysed data with respect to information sought in the study;

Fig 1: Time of the day when television is watched the most:

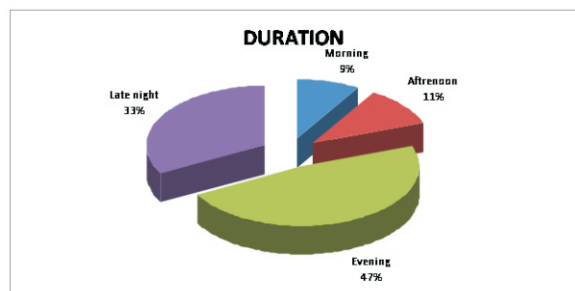


Fig 2: Number of reality shows watched in a week:

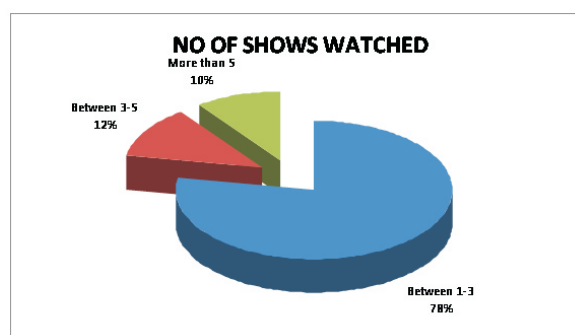


Table 1: Preferences for the type of reality shows:

TYPE OF SHOW	PERECNTAGE
Adventure Shows	19%
Talent Shows	26%
Dating Shows	7%
Celeb Shows	14%
Game Shows	14%
Prank Shows	1%
Comedy Shows	12%
Social cause Shows	6%
Other shows	1%

Table 2: Perception whether people enjoy guessing what will happen in reality shows:

PERCEPTION	PERCENTAGE
Yes	84%
No	16%

Table 3: Perception whether reality shows are real:

PERCEPTION	PERCENTAGE
Real	24%
Scripted	41%
Can't say	35%

Table 4: Perception whether reality shows are better means of Entertainment:

ENTERTAINMENT FACTOR	PERCENTAGE
Yes	78%
No	15%
Can't say	7%

Table 5: Perception whether participants are treated as means for achieving financial & commercial success:

SUCCESS FACTOR	PERCENTAGE
Yes	71%
No	12%
Can't say	17%

Table 6: Reasons driving to watch reality shows:

PREFERENCE	PERCENTAGE
Participants	35%
Glamour	15%
Controversies	18%
Break from routine	31%
Others (ENTERTAINMENT)	1%

Table 7: Perception regarding fairness of SMS Voting:

VOTING SYSTEM	PERCENTAGE
Yes	35%
No	45%
Can't say	20%

Table 8: Perception regarding impact of reality shows on society:

IMPACT	PERCENTAGE
Positive	25%
Negative	23%
Can't say	43%
None	9%

Table 9: Perception whether Reality shows are meant to increase TRP:

TRP	PERCENTAGE
Yes	86%
No	5%
Can't say	9%

5. FINDINGS

Some of the major findings of this research study are;

- Majority of the respondents (48%) preferred watching television during evening.
- Majority of the respondents (78%) on an average watches reality shows at least 1-3 times a week, 12% of them watch 3-5 shows per week and rest 10% watches more than 5 shows per week.
- The most preferred type of reality shows are talent hunt, adventure, games, comedy, dating, social cause and prank types in order of merit.
- Majority (41%) of the respondents found that reality shows are scripted, 35% were unable to judge, and rest 24% found they were Real.
- 78% of respondents find reality shows to be entertaining, 15% of them don't find it entertaining and rest 7% were unable to judge.
- 71% of the respondents found participants were treated as means of achieving financial & commercial success.
- Major drivers for watching reality shows are break from routine, controversies, glamour and entertainment.
- Respondents had a divided approach for sms being used fairly or unfairly.
- 43% of them were unable to judge about the impact of reality shows on society; 25% of them found positive impact, 23% of them found negative impact on society and rest 9% found no impact on society.
- Reality shows are used as a means for increasing TRP. This was felt by 86% of the respondents.

6. CONCLUSION

Indians are high on the emotional quotient and anything that strikes the emotional chord is an instant hit in India. The success of reality shows in India can be attributed to a great extent to this weakness. The rising popularity of the reality shows on Indian television channels has added a new dimension to the production of TV programs. These shows give opportunities to the prodigies residing in the interiors of the country to showcase their talent. The craze for reality television hit India when channel V came up with Viva, a band of five young singers. When auditions were announced, young dreamers gathered in huge numbers to give their luck a try. They cried when they failed and celebrated when they triumphed. The audience lapped up this overdose of emotions thrown with open hands. The show was a big success and an inspiration for both the shrews' business minds and also for the young dreamers waiting for their share of fame. Since then there has been no looking back as reality television proliferated with each passing day. With the registration for each show surpassing the last one and the audience votes pouring in billions, all doubts over the acceptability of these shows by the Indian audience subsided. Reality shows not only changed the destinies of many television channels but also of many ordinary people. People like Kunal Ganjawala, Sunidhi Chauhan, Shreya Ghosal and Debojit are some of the successful finds of reality television. It was only because of these shows that a teashop owner, Sunil Pal, became a laughter champion and Prashant, a sepoy from Darjeeling, became the third Indian Idol. Celebrity reality shows are another aspect of reality

television that has become extremely popular with the audience. Apart from the overwhelming Television Rating Points (TRPs) that these shows command, they also have to their credit revamping images of some celebrities and bringing back to limelight some of the lost stars. Item queen Rakhi Sawant witnessed a change in image after appearing on the reality show Big Boss. Lost names like Rahul Roy and Baba Sehgal rose to limelight again because of shows like these. This study aimed at unplugging the mindset of Indian consumers regarding reality shows. It was found that people are really fond of watching such shows which range from cookery to talent hunt and comedy show types. Majority of the respondents, however, felt that these types of shows are often scripted for increasing TRPs and increasing financial and commercial success. Major drivers for watching reality shows are break from routine, controversies, glamour and entertainment. However, most of the people were not still holding any views whether such types of reality shows make any sort of impact on the society.

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