

HOW DO REALITY TELEVISION GENRES RELATE TO COLLECTIVISTIC VS.
INDIVIDUALISTIC VALUES AMONG LIGHT AND HEAVY REALITY TELEVISION
VIEWERS?

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Abstract

RTV consists of shows that feature non-actors under constant surveillance reacting in spontaneous and unscripted ways to their environment (Barton & Kristen, 2009). Today the RTV formula seems to rely on the equation that sex+ provocative+ edgy+ voyeuristic+ careful casting= a highly rated show (Stepp & Welch, 2002). The review of literature addressed the history and sudden emergence of RTV, followed by the characteristics and discussion of mass media theories and cultural variables: collectivism and individualism. The results revealed significant correlations between individuals who watch RTV show genres and the uses and gratification of entertainment and occupying time needs/ desires. As well as a congruence between perceived cultural variables and RTV genre viewership promoting that specific value. This study is valuable to assist in understanding television viewing patterns, correlations, and reflections of individuals.

Chapter One

Introduction

A new television genre, reality television (RTV), has become a favorite among television consumers (PTC Special Reports, 2011 p.1200). There has been extensive research on the amount of television individuals watch over the years. It has been found that adolescents spend more time consuming television than being in school and spending time with their family combined (Speck, K & Abhijit, 2008). Other research has also been completed regarding the potential effects of violence, sex, and drug use in media.

Harold D. Lasswell identified three charges of media and why people gravitate toward television and other media categories: surveillance of environment (“keeping one abreast of what is taking place in the world”), correlation of events (“the ability to keep us in touch with what others are thinking about, an interpretation of events”) and transmission of social heritage (“the passing of norms and morals to others”) (Lasswell 1948). These three functions of media might be the key to the success of RTV shows. These shows feature non-actors under constant surveillance reacting in spontaneous and unscripted ways to their environment, and they also seek to outperform or outlast their opponents (Barton, & Kristen, 2009 p.4). The popularity of these shows has researchers questioning why they are so popular and successful.

Why should RTV be studied? If a person turns on a TV and proceeds to channel surf, that person is likely to be able to watch a RTV show at anytime during the day. RTV is so popular, that the Emmys have added best RTV show as a winning category (PTC Special Reports, 2011). Most importantly a new generation is growing up where a RTV show lineup is the normal thing to watch on network and cable channels. We have entered into a decade where a RTV star is a

household name and surpasses a movie star in revenue. The fame is a direct result for being themselves in front of a camera. RTV has proven to critics and supporters that it is here to stay and worthy of a primetime slot. Therefore, it now becomes crucial to understand the effects of RTV on individuals and gravitations towards RTV genres and viewing habits.

The purpose of this study focused on researching the effects of RTV and viewership. The study researched what attracts viewers to certain RTV genres. The study explored whether certain personalities specifically watch certain genres on purpose, or are persons who exhibit individualistic characteristics only watching shows that promote individualistic values? Or do collectivistic individuals tune into shows that only promote collectivistic values? Were these viewers watching specific reality shows unconsciously? Or is it possible that a collectivistic person may be more attracted or amused by an individualistic program, thus changing into an individualistic individual. Therefore, the study researched the dimensions that attract certain personalities to watch RTV genres. Meaning the study explored whether viewership of certain RTV genre shows were connected to cultural variable values that viewers possess in the form of traits, and if that connection contains a link to the type of show viewed that airs those specific cultural values. As well as researching if light or heavy viewership of RTV genres can re-program viewer personalities?

The literature review addressed the history and sudden emergence of RTV. Followed by the characteristics and discussion of mass media theories and cultural variables: collectivism and individualism. Immediately after, an explanation about how all of the research was gathered, including how the sample population was obtained. As well as an analysis on the results of the data collected, research findings, limitations and areas for further study.

Chapter Two

History of Reality Television

RTV took off with the debut of “Survivor” on CBS in 2000. The show placed ordinary people in producer-contrived settings for a cash reward. Today the RTV formula seems to rely on the equation that sex+ provocative+ edgy+ voyeuristic+ careful casting= a highly rated show (Stepp & Welch, 2002). Whether it is daytime, afternoon, or prime-time television slots, when a person turns on the TV, a form of a RTV program will be airing. *Reality TV Magazine* has provided their list of the top reality programming viewed to date. The list includes: “*Amazing Race, American Idol, Celebrity Apprentice, Dancing With The Stars, Hell’s Kitchen, Kate Plus 8, Kitchen Nightmares, Live to Dance, Project Runway, Real Housewives of Atlanta, Real Housewives of Beverly Hills, So You Think You Can Dance, Survivor, The Bachelor, The Biggest Loser, The Fashion Show, Top Chef, Worst Cooks in America*” (*reality TV magazine shows*).

Defining RTV, “RTV blends documentary-like modes of production, including non-actors and magazine formats, with fictional narrative devices” (McCracken, 2010). The narrative devices include dramatic tension with a focus on “personality”, and also a game-show contest element that involves direct audience participation (McCracken, 2010). It can be noted that RTV’s roots began during the observational documentary movement of the 1960s and 1970s (McCracken, 2010). Frederick Wiseman produced documentaries in which he would try to convey the “feeling of being there” to audiences by fixing cameras on their subjects for long, unmediated takes (McCracken, 2010). McCracken (2010), credits the success of RTV due to several technological advances: (1) the development of digital cameras made these programs much less expensive to produce, (2) they were ideal for global companies who were trying to find programming to fill their new markets, and (3) surveillance technologies became smaller

and sophisticated, allowing for such truly observational programs. RTV has proven to be so successful that various subgenres have come out of the popular television model. According to Bratich (2006 p.10) the six most popular genres include: reality/dramatic, this style of filming informally may be known as the “fly on the wall”. The story plots are filmed to convince the viewer that what they are watching is happening in real time. Plots are often producer contrived, as well as placing the characters in planned situations with the end result of soap opera like scenes (p.10). Next genre is game-show/ competition; these shows follow the format where participants are filmed to compete in an elimination contest for prizes or cash compensation (p.10). Talent is the next genre, in which a traditional talent search finds the contestants of the show where they will live together and compete for a cash prize and other compensations. However, the talent genre exists with the help of the audience, who decide the fate of contestants by voting who to keep or eliminate (p.10). Next are the dating/romance shows, where contestants choose out of a group of suitors competing for their affection a mate (p.10). The personal transformational genre includes shows that center around improving ones lives. These shows may have different themes but the format stays the same. Subjects are introduced, subjects meet with a team of experts and the series continues with the subject’s journey on their personal transformation (p.10). Property transformational shows usually focus on improvements of ones living space or the actual building of a new home (p.10). Last on the list are crime/ police and informational genres. Shows under these two umbrellas contain the element of documentary style production. Professionals or persons with disorders are followed throughout out their day-to-day business and activities (Bratich, 2006 p.10). Reality shows have proven to be popular across all demographic groups, making them an advertiser’s dream (PTC Special Reports, 2011). Another reason for the emergence of reality TV as compared to scripted television is the low

budget costs. RTV requires a much smaller investment. With fictional TV, actors and writers must be hired. Unscripted television has represented the low-cost alternative to heavily unionized, scripted productions (McDuffee, 2008) these shows' success rates are also predictable based on the shows that came before them. "Producers and network executives often talk about how they seek to 'push the envelope' of television standards—reality TV serves this purpose to the extreme" (PTC Special Reports, 2011). Aslama and Pantti (2006) agree that concordance on RTV is an illustration of contemporary confessional culture, in which the key attraction is the revelation of 'true' emotions. They found that RTV is appealing because it "...exploits the self-conscious interplay of television between different genres to appeal to diverse audiences and capitalize on different markets" (p.3). Reality shows "highlight the loss of emotional control and emotional conflict" (p.6); all of which are considered to be inappropriate for society but good for TV.

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation Theory is the theory that mass media 'cultivates' ideas, attitudes, values etc., the values are already present but have not been reinforced or widely disseminated. Media psychologist George Gerbner stated that exposure to cultural imagery can shape viewers' concept of reality (Jaffe, 2005). Assuming the claim reigns true, Gerbner suggests the more television a person consumes the more that person believes in what he or she is watching. Using his cultivation theory, Gerbner showed that heavy news viewers believed they resided in a "meaner" world than lesser viewers (Jaffe, 2005). Gerbner's research also stated that "heavy exposure to media and cultural imagery shapes a viewer's concept of reality (Gerbner et al..2002).

Television has become the number one source available to observe images and messages. The more an individual views images presented on the small screen, the increased likelihood their ideas will collide with the repetitive pattern of TV images, which form the mainstream environment (Baran & Davis, 2009 p.232). According to Gross (2010) if an individual is exposed to less than 2 hours of TV a day, they are considered a 'light viewer'. If a person watches television 2-4 hours a day, they are considered a 'medium viewer'. If an individual views more than 4 hours of television a day, that person would be considered a 'heavy viewer'.

The cultivation theory suggests that frequent viewers of news-media programs are more likely to contain a negative outlook on life than lighter viewers. The information learned from the Cultivation Theory led us to search for studies that have researched what values influence viewers from watching RTV shows. For example, Mary Ellis Bunim, Executive Producer for the soap opera "As the World Turns" and "The Real World", in an interview with *New York Times Magazine*, explained that her idea behind the first reality show was to "craft soap-opera storylines with actual people" (Kakutani, 2010). Viewers who aren't familiar with the formation of RTV may not be savvy enough to process what they are viewing isn't real life or taking place in real time. According to Jaffe (2005), the borders separating onscreen from off-screen blend indistinguishably. "It is this seamless convergence of fiction and reality that psychologists fear could have a severe behavioral impact" (Jaffe, 2005).

Cultivation Theory, suggests that viewers who regularly consume television are more inclined to believe in what they are viewing as society's norm. The Cultivation Theory hence opened the door for a variety of media studies and recently the effects of RTV. Therefore, according to Gerbner's theory, viewers who regularly watch RTV are more inclined to believe what they are seeing is true and occurring in real time. However, the theory does not explain the

dimensions in which a person uses media, specifically RTV. Therefore, we begin to research what attracts a person into watching RTV.

Uses and Gratification Theory

Uses and gratification theory is the approach to media study focusing on the uses to which people put media and the gratifications they seek from those uses (Baran & Davis, 2009 p.233). Uses and Gratification Theory suggests that viewers select forms of media to satisfy their needs. It also attempts to explain the complexities behind media choices made on an everyday basis (Lilleker, 2006). Viewers needs are accompanied by desires which, can be grouped into five categories (“Uses and gratification,” 2010): (a) cognitive needs, in which people use media for acquiring knowledge, (b) affective needs, in which people use media like television to satisfy their emotional needs; (c) personal integrative needs, where a person will use the media as a form of reassurance; (d) social integrative needs, which encompasses the need to socialize with family and friends through the usage of media; (e) tension free needs, where people will use the media as a means of escapism. “Some people may watch RTV partially, because they enjoy feeling superior to the people being portrayed... people with a strong need for vengeance have the potential to enjoy watching people being humiliated” (Jaffe, 2005). Therefore, uses and gratification permits the examination of both instrumental and ritualized uses of media, both of which could drive the appeal of RTV (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007 p.40).

The increasing access to television programming throughout the globe becomes apparent when one takes note of the rising number of television sets in place (Speck, & Abhijit, 2008 p.1199). Palgrave and Macmillian note that the box reaches different kinds of audiences, including those in urban and rural areas. Amongst the wide range of programming being available is that of RTV. RTV allows viewers to imagine themselves as definite participants.

“...The need to interpret, weigh up and learn from it, provides the principal source of audience fascination with these programs” (Piper, 2006). People tune into RTV based on a certain fascination in contrasting what they think they would do in a given situation, to the actions taken by the “real” participants, a group of individuals they perceive as their peers (Connor, 2005). Others may gravitate towards RTV because they are familiar with the situation and understand the characters. “Television is a medium of the socialization of most people into standardized roles and behaviors” (Speck, & Abhijit, 2008 p.1199). Twitchell (2002) suggests that humans proactively seek out media messages, that reinforce our desire to live and create ourselves through things. Papacharissi and Mendelson’s research proved that RTV format permits the production of programming that satisfies both subliminal voyeuristic tendencies, which range from direct involvement of audiences participating in TV content, meaning “game shows” (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007 p.47). Papacharissi and Mendelson’s study revealed that the two most salient desires for watching RTV were the motive of habitual pass time and affinity with RTV (p.47). Meaning in their research findings viewers were most likely to gravitate towards watching RTV for the need of entertainment and habitual pass time (p.47).

Who defines the edge of RTV is it the networks or the viewers? According to Stepp & Welch, RTV justifies poor choices; the bar must constantly be lowered to satisfy the viewer, and the media willingly comply for the sake of revenue (Stepp & Welch, 2002). If RTV accounts for poor decisions being made by viewers, then why the plethora of like programming on network and cable channels? Stepp & Welch explain “The term “ringside seats” harks back to a much earlier time. The evolution of entertainment in Western society is similar to that of the Coliseum at Rome”. Is it possible that human nature gears towards a taste of the worst? “Lets not deceive ourselves into believing that the gruesome events that occurred in ancient Rome can’t return and

become the new “reality” (p.1). However, Stepp & Welch provide a solution to the provocative, sensual and edgy images presented in a RTV program, “if viewers weren’t watching, these shows would quickly be gone and NBC would focus on “quality” TV (Stepp & Welch, 2002).

The Uses and Gratifications Theory explains insights as to why viewers seek certain media content. Whichever need is individually sought out, a form of gratification commences.

It is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 1: There is a difference in uses and gratification in heavy and low viewers of RTV.

Hypothesis 2: Television viewers who watch less television are more likely to watch RTV for educational purposes.

Hypothesis 3: Individuals who watch television frequently are more likely to watch RTV as a form of entertainment.

The theory provides insightful analyses of how people experience media content, (Baran & Davis, 2009 p.235) but it does not explain whether the ideas from RTV shows are influential and why. Therefore, we begin to research what are the most potent values being broadcasted from RTV. To successfully assess what cultural variables are broadcasted throughout the RTV world, as well as the influential effect RTV has on society, Individualism and Collectivism will be explained. These specific cultural variables have been chosen to research based on Hofstede’s claim that individuals usually fall in either two categories for cultural values and interactions within society (Hofstede, 1984). Based on Hofstede’s claim if individuals exhibit traits for only two cultural values, the next two sections will give insight into RTV’s relationship with individualism and collectivism.

RQ1: Will people who are self-described individualistic have different Uses and Gratifications for viewing RTV as those who are self-described as collectivistic?

Individualism

Hofstede defined the terms Individualism and Collectivism based on the strength and breadth of ties between the individual and society (Hofstede, 1984). Through his findings, he described individualism as the assumption that individuals should take care of themselves and question ethical standards established by their societies. (Hofstede, 1984). “An individualist will tend to be ego-focused (Yuan, 2009 p.5). Hofstede also explained that in an individualistic culture people would try to gain attention for themselves and get credit for their achievements. Individualism generally refers to self-centered orientation, emphasis on self-sufficiency and control, and an emphasis on individual accomplishment (Hofstede, 1984, p.225).

In RTV, individuals are often pushed to their limits emotionally, mentally and physically, whether it is to win a competition or for personal satisfaction (Bratich, 2006 p.8). While caught up, it's easy for participants to lose their sense of individualism. Participants of *Faking It* changed their clothing, hairstyles, attitudes, behaviors and other qualities to the extent that there was no distinction between their identity and image, teaching that personal fulfillment comes from becoming a commodity and being perceived as “better” (Morreale, 2006). Banet-Wiser and Portwood-Stacer (2006) argued that both Miss America and RTV made cosmetic surgery look like a “normal” thing to do in order to achieve ideal looks.

Many reality shows give the message to millions of viewers that they, too, can have a new identity in a matter of days or weeks. As long as they have the time, money and determination to undergo such a drastic reconstruction (Dixon, 2008 p.52). A study conducted by

the *American Society For Plastic Surgeons* examined 42 patients and reported that 79 percent said that television/media influenced their decision to pursue a cosmetic-surgery procedure (Harris, 2008 p.20). Four out of five patients said they were directly influenced by shows including, *Extreme Makeover*, E!'s *Dr. 90210*, MTV's *I Want a Famous Face* and Bravo's *Miami Slice*, and more than half of the patients said they watched at least one of these programs regularly. These patients also stated that the shows played a significant role in their decision to undergo cosmetic surgery. It is presumably a factor in the 59 percent increase of cosmetic surgery since 2000, as well as the 9 million non-invasive procedures, such as Botox injections and laser hair removal performed in 2006 (p.20). According to Banet-Wiser and Portwood-Stacer (2006) "The message of reality makeover programming is that nothing, and certainly not your own body, should stand between you and what you want to become." In the *New Individualism*, Elliot and Lemert (2006 p.218), explore the culture of the new Individualism, in which they believe to have been generated by global capitalism. An excerpt from the book states "...compulsive consumerism, plastic surgery, therapeutic tribulations, instant identity makeovers and reality TV: welcome to the life in our increasingly individualized world".

Markey and Markey (2009 p.158) surveyed 101 women, and found that those who internalize media messages more than their peers would be more likely to have a greater interest in pursuing cosmetic surgery. Dubrofsky (2007) interviewed participants of reality-based shows *The Bachelor* and *The Bachelorette* and asked the following questions: "How is it that the therapeutic comes to rely on surveillance in RTV?" and "How are conventional notions of the therapeutic transformed through the use of surveillance?" Participants of both shows claimed that they have been therapeutically transformed by not changing who they are. Elliot and Lemert describe that participants of RTV shows are individuals who place themselves first before

anyone else and constantly question societal standards if these get in the way of what they want (Elliot & Lemert, 2006). “Individualism serves as one of the main values amongst RTV genres” (p.217). Not only are the shows broadcasting an individualist value, but also most of the characters seen on a RTV shows possess individualistic personalities (p.218).

It is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 4: The more individualistic the person is the more likely they are to watch a RTV individualistic genre show.

Collectivism

Hofstede (1984) refers to Collectivism as society-centered orientation, an emphasis on sharing, cooperation, group harmony and the concern for group welfare. Unlike individualists, collectivists tend to be ‘other focused’. “Collectivists view the self as part of larger social groups and endeavors” (Yuan, 2009 p.6). Hofstede found that collectivist persons are more willing than an individualistic person to sacrifice their personal goals for group goals (Hofstede, 1984). A collectivist society will consist of individuals who define themselves as aspects of a collective, interdependent with some group, such as one’s family, tribe, co-workers and etc. (“Values and Culture,” 2004). A collectivistic persons behavior is determined more often by the norms, roles, and goals of their collective than by their personal attitudes, perceived rights, or likes and dislikes.

Depending on the type of family one belongs to, his or her television viewing habits differ. Lull (1980) researched two different types of families: socio-orientated and concept-oriented families. Socio-oriented families are mainly concerned with maintaining harmonious

social relations. The children are strongly encouraged to get along with siblings and friends. In general, anger is repressed to avoid trouble. In contrast, concept-oriented families give more value to independence and self-expression. In the latter type of family, parents encourage their children to challenge others' beliefs.

The researcher explored the ways the two different types of families use television as a resource for the accomplishment of interpersonal objectives at home. This study shows that television is changing the way people communicate within the family. As well as the impact collectivistic values have on a family and their media usage.

Fallis, Fitzpatrick and Friestad (1985 p.59) support the idea that television content is shifting the way family members interact with one another. The study shows that married couples that are emotionally distant are more likely to discuss relational and family issues as a consequence of television viewing. The findings show that television viewing allows couples to talk about relationships relevant topics rather than career and politics. Television's contents serve as an avenue to bring up family and intimate relationship issues.

Vandello and Cohen (1999) established that ethnic minorities in the United States tend to be more collectivistic than whites with European ancestry. Also, Paik and Comstock (1994) recognized a pattern of positive association between exposure to television violence and antisocial behavior. All human behavior is influenced by the culture in which a person develops, and there can be no complete account of psychological phenomena without taking the cultural context into account ("Cross-Cultural Psychology, Overview," 2004). Kakutani (2010) believes that the new collectivist ethos is embodied by everything from *American Idol* to *Google*. He goes on to state that this ethos diminishes the importance and uniqueness of the individual voice. His research continues to proclaim that shedding the individual voice, "enables anonymity which

enables the dark side of human nature, leads to mob rule, and... the idea that the collective is closer to the truth” (p.1).

Hofstede defined the term Collectivist as a person who puts the group, meaning family, tribe, or co-workers before himself or herself. A collectivistic person views the self as part of a larger social group and is more inclined to sacrifice their own wants and needs for the better of the group. Some RTV content also exposes collectivist behaviors and values within its realm of genres.

It is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 5: The more collectivist the person is the more likely they are to watch a RTV collectivistic genre show.

Chapter Three

Method

In order to address the research questions and hypothesis, a 38-question survey was distributed for a span of one week during the month of February, from February 18 till February 23, 2012.

Participants

Data was collected from 94 participants and 92 respondents completed the survey. Surveys were initially pretested with a small sample of respondents on February 17, 2012. The pretest allowed corrections to be made before data was fully collected. These surveys were distributed online via Qualtrics and in-person at Florida International University’s Biscayne Bay Campus. The method in which the participants were selected was through purposive snowball sampling; it proved to be the most convenient way in which to gain access to a variety of

respondents to meet the goal of obtaining a satisfactory amount of responses. The online participants were recruited on social networking sites Facebook and Twitter. Social media was utilized as a convenience function and a way to receive a wide range of respondents. The age range of the participants was between 18 to 51+ years old. Surveys were selected as the most effective means of conducting the research. An advantage of using surveys was that respondents were able to answer the survey on their own accord within the given time frame.

Design and Procedure/ Measures

The respondents' answers were measured using five-point Likert-Type scales and five-point semantic differential scales. The Likert-Type scale was used to measure perceptions, using words such as strongly agree; agree; neutral; disagree; and strongly disagree to create equal distance between opposite attitudes. Semantic differential scales were used to measure extreme concepts, such as safe and unsafe. Five different levels of intensity were created using words such as very safe, somewhat safe, safe, somewhat unsafe, and very unsafe. The survey also included two open-ended questions for respondents to list/approximate how many hours of television viewed during the week and weekend. The survey consisted of three sections (1) RTV genre preferences (2) Uses and Gratifications (3) Individualism and Collectivism and demographic information.

Reality TV Genre Preferences

To closely articulate what is defined as RTV in this study, six categories of RTV genres were chosen to be examined: reality/dramatic, game-show/competition, talent, crime, personal transformational, and property transformational (Bratich, 2006 p.10). Examples of these shows include: *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* (reality/dramatic), *The Bachelor* (dating/romance), *Dancing with the Stars* (game show/competition), *American Idol* (talent), *Cops* (crime/police),

True Life (informational), *Celebrity Rehab* (personal transformational), *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* (property transformational). For example, (I watch shows included in the Reality-Dramatic category that encompass real life heightened by unusual circumstances such as *Keeping up with the Kardashians*, *Bridezilla*, *The Jersey Shore*, and *Basketball Wives*.) From the six categories of RTV genres the shows were broken down into two categories, individualistic and collectivistic. This step was conducted in order to test the hypotheses and research question. The shows were divided up by which genres promote the most like-minded cultural values. Such as shows that feature non-actors under surveillance questioning ethical societal standards and being themselves were shows that fell under the individualistic bracket. These shows were questions 2 (Reality-Dramatic For example: *Keeping up with the Kardashians*, *Bridezilla*, *The Jersey Shore*, *Basketball Wives*.) 3 (Dating/ Romance For example: *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette*, *Flava of Love*, *Ocho Cinco: The Ultimate Catch*.) 4 (Game show/ Competition For example: *Survivor*, *The Amazing Race*, *Fear Factor*, *Dancing with the Stars*.) 8 (Personal Transformational For example: *I want a Famous Face*, *What Not to Wear*, *The Biggest Loser*, *Celebrity Rehab*, *Super Nanny*). The shows that fell under the collectivistic bracket were shows that featured non-actors under surveillance acting in a harmonious group setting with the purpose of achieving some sort of resolution. These shows were questions 6 (Crime/ Police For example: *Cops*, *America's Most Wanted*, *The First 48*, *Bounty Hunter*.) 5 (Talent For example: *American Idol*, *So You Think You Can Dance*, *America's Got Talent*, *X-Factor*.) 9 (Property Transformational For example: *Extreme Makeover Homes Edition*, *Pimp My Ride*, *While You Were Out*, *Clean House*). After the shows were grouped under the cultural variable values individualistic and collectivistic the grouping provided an easier way to measure if participants responded similarly. Running the running the reliability of the RTV genres that promote the most

individualistic and collectivistic values provided for two separate Alpha values. The genres grouping were as follows, questions 2, 3, 4, and 8 for the individualistic Alpha value. As well as questions 6, 5, and 9 for the collectivistic Alpha value. Finding the Alpha allowed the answers to be combined into one overall score for the variables individualistic and collectivistic, therefore allowing correlations to be tested with the various dependents. Alpha value for individualistic = .530 and the Alpha value for collectivistic = .432.

Uses and Gratifications

To closely measure what need and desire is associated with viewing RTV, questions were formed based from the Uses and Gratification Theory. Questions ranged from asking if RTV was viewed for cognitive to enjoyment needs. For example, (I watch Reality TV so I can escape from reality) and (I watch Reality TV because it brings me new ideas).

Individualism and Collectivism

To measure what the type of cultural values the respondents identified closely too survey questions were formed based off of the two potent cultural variables viewed on RTV, Individualism and Collectivism. For example, (I'd rather depend on myself than others.) and (It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want.) To measure if the respondents answered similarly a reliability test was done to provide Alpha values for the individualistic and collectivistic cultural value questions. The individualistic cultural value questions were 24 through 29 and the collectivistic questions were 30 through 36. The values for each questions were added up and divided by the six questions, the closer to 5 the higher they scored on the cultural value scale. The more similar the respondents answered to the cultural variable questions the higher the Alpha. Finding the Alpha allowed the answers to be combined into one overall score for the variables individualistic and collectivistic, therefore allowing

correlations to be tested with the various dependents. Alpha value for individualistic = .651 and the Alpha value for collectivistic = .632.

Chapter Four

Results

The majority of respondents to the survey were Black/ African-Americans, with a listed total of 61 percent. Hispanics followed this percentage at 13 percent and White/ Caucasian (Non-Hispanics) at a total of thirteen percent as well. Two percent identified themselves as Asian/ Pacific Islander, while one percent identified themselves as Native American. Followed by another 1 percent, which identified themselves as Other. Respondents were allowed to select more than one option.

(Refer to Appendix A- Race/ Ethnicity Bar Graph)

The majority of respondents to the survey were in the age group of 18-25, with a listed total of 41 percent. Fifty-one and plus followed this percentage at 21 percent and 31-35 at 11 percent. The age bracket of 36-40 had a listed total at 9 percent. While age ranges 26-30 and 46-50 both followed at 8 percent. Followed by 41-45 at a listed total of 3 percent.

(Refer to Appendix B- Table A1: Age Pie Chart)

The majority of respondents were females, with a listed total of 66 percent. While the listed total of males who completed the survey were 34 percent.

(Refer to Appendix C- Table A2: Gender Bar Graph)

The first hypothesis stated that there is a difference in uses and gratification in heavy and low viewers of RTV. The first step in testing the construct was to re-code the fill in the blank

answer option of question 38. (Appendix L- Survey). That specific question was chosen to re-code because it contained the highest number of answers. The answers were re-coded to make sure no non-numerical responses were present. Answers were re-coded by deleting the non-numerical answers as well as responses that were given 2 numbers, in which the respondent answers were added and divided for the average value. Therefore, low television viewers had a value of less than 5 and heavy viewers responded to a value of 5 and higher. The relationship between TV watching frequency (measured in number of hours) and uses and gratification questions answers (measured by the means) (Refer to Appendix D for Uses and Gratification Mean and Standard Deviation table) was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. There was no correlation between any of the variables (Refer to Appendix E for Correlation table). Next step was conducting a t-test to compare the uses and gratifications in low and heavy viewers of RTV. There was no significant difference between low and heavy viewers scores for any of the uses and gratifications. Specifically: escape from reality score for low (M= 1.85, SD = 1.30 and high (M= 2.12, SD = 1.22). However, a negative relationship was found between hours watched and usage/need of question 11. (I watch Reality TV because it stirs me up.) $t(88) = -.10, p = .32$ (two-tailed). Not supporting the hypothesis (Refer to Appendix F for t-test table).

The second hypothesis, which stated that television viewers who watch less television will watch RTV for educational purposes, was not supported. The third hypothesis, which predicted Individuals who watch television frequently will watch television as a form of entertainment, was supported. To test both hypotheses the number of hours watched were correlated with the 2 variables in question 22. (It advances my knowledge.) (M= 2.06, SD =1.111) And question 17. (It's entertaining.) (M= 4.02, SD= 1.132) The relationship between

low TV frequency (measured in number of hours) and knowledge desire was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. A negative correlation was found with the p-value of $-.007$ not supporting hypothesis 2. However, the relationship between heavy TV frequency (measured in number of hours) and an entertainment desire was investigated with the same correlation and had a positive relationship, a p-value of $.025$ supporting hypothesis 3 (Refer to Appendix G for Correlation table).

Research question one explained whether people who are self-described individualistic have different Uses and Gratifications for viewing RTV as those who are self-described as collectivistic. To answer the research question the first step conducted was running the reliability of the six individualistic questions (refer to Appendix H for individualistic Mean and Standard Deviation table) and the six collectivistic questions (refer to Appendix I for collectivistic Mean and Standard Deviation table). Alpha value for individualistic = $.651$ and the Alpha value for collectivistic = $.632$. Using the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient a significant positive relationship was found between an individualistic cultural values and the uses and gratification question 17. (It's entertaining.) Pearson correlation value of $.282$ and the significance p-value of $.007$. A positive and significant relationship was also found between an individualistic cultural value and the need to watch RTV for occupying purposes, question 18. (It keeps me occupied). Pearson correlation value of $.248$ and the significance p-value of $.019$. Interestingly the two desirers that were found to have positive significant relationships with individualistic cultural values contained negative relationships for persons with collectivistic cultural values. Question 17 on the collectivistic scale had a Pearson correlation value at $-.041$, as well as question 18 with a Pearson correlation value of $-.128$ neither were found to be significant (Refer to Appendix J for Correlation table).

The fourth hypothesis stated that a person who is an individualist will be more likely to watch a RTV genre that promotes self-emphasis values, than a show that promotes collectivist values. Hypothesis five stated that a person who is a collectivist will be more likely to watch a RTV genre that promotes group-first values, than a show that promotes individualist self-values. In order to test the hypotheses the first step conducted was running the reliability of the RTV genres that promote the most individualistic values, as well as the genres that promote the most collectivistic values Alpha value for individualistic = .530 and the Alpha value for collectivistic = .432. The relationship between cultural variable trait and genre preference was investigated using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient. A positive relationship was found between the individualistic overall score and the genre overall score at a value of = .031 and a negative collectivism value of = -.086. Although the relationship was found to be positive it was not of significance consequently not supporting hypothesis 4. Yet, there was a correlation between collectivism and the overall genre score value = .346 making it significant with a p-value of .001 supporting hypothesis 5. Therefore, there is some congruence with perceived values and viewership of RTV genres (Refer to Appendix K for Correlation table).

Chapter Five

Discussion

Media theorists in the past have postulated the relationship between the media and its various mediums and the audience. Theorists have labored to develop models giving insights as to how viewers interact with television and its content. This study investigated how two cultural

variable trait values interacted with RTV show genres, as well as their use and gratification received from viewing RTV and specific genres.

After review of the literature these areas come up to further investigate. No significant differences in low and heavy viewers were found. A negative relationship was found between the hours watched and the usage/ need of viewing RTV because it stirs me up. The usage/ need of viewing RTV because it stirs me up would mean that the respondents would view and RTV genre for the excitement, entertainment, enjoyment and the raddling of the nerves. Therefore, hypothesis one was not supported. A negative correlation was found between number of hours watched and the usage/ need for educational purposes. Consequently, not supporting hypothesis two. A positive relationship was found between the hours watched and the need for entertainment, supporting hypothesis three.

In response to research questions one, persons who are self-described individualist had a positive and significant relationship with the uses and gratifications of tension free needs. Meaning, respondents were most likely found to watch a RTV show program to escape from their current surroundings. A positive and significant relationship was also found between persons who were more individualist and the use and gratification in watching RTV with the need for entertainment. However, the respondents that were closely linked to collectivism cultural values had a negative relationship with the use and gratification of escapism to view a RTV show. These findings aligned with previous research on RTV. Such as Stepp & Welch who claimed that RTV was a mere form of entertainment for viewers who cringed at the gory and marveled at the provocative (Stepp & Welch, 2002). Consistent with Papacharissi and Mendelson's research findings in which, "viewers valued the entertainment and habitual pass time motives over that of voyeurism, which was fairly surprising, considering that popular

folklore frequently describes vicarious living through reality characters as one of the top appeals of RTV ” (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007 p.46).

The study hypothesized that; a person who is an individualist will be more likely to watch a RTV genre that promotes self-emphasis values, than a show that promotes collectivist values. A positive relationship was found amongst the individualistic overall score and the RTV genre shows that promote a high level of individualistic values. Although the relationship was found to be positive it was not of significance consequently not supporting hypothesis four. The study also hypothesized that; a person who is a collectivist will be more likely to watch a RTV genre that promotes group-first values, than a show that promotes individualist self-values. The correlation between collectivism and the overall RTV genre shows that promote a high level of collectivist values, proved to be of significance. Therefore, supporting hypothesis five.

In response to hypotheses 4 and 5 it can be suggested that there may be some consistency with perceived cultural variable trait values and viewership of RTV genres that promote the same cultural variable values. Suggesting that persons perceived, as individualists are more in tune to viewing specific RTV show genres closely linked to their own belief systems. As well as persons perceived, as collectivist who were found to view RTV show genres closely related to their own perceived values. Therefore, the study has shed light between the viewer and RTV. From the findings, the correlations highlight the relationship between the audience of RTV and their use and gratification from watching certain genres. It also should be noted that the results yield answers into the relationship between cultural variable values and the gravitation to specific RTV genre shows.

This is the beginning insight of noticing the relationships between those who are identified as collectivistic and those who are identified as individualistic. Information from the

study could potentially assist television rating companies and media corporations when marketing various television shows, as well as devising television lineups.

Limitations

Although the survey was successful in gauging cultural values and RTV genre preferences it was not without its flaws. Perhaps if the study had focused solely in obtaining RTV genre preference and cultural variable trait preferences, a stronger case for the results may have been made about the overall selections collected. Also the study might have produced more positive results if the sample was larger. However, due to limited time for gathering data a smaller sample was surveyed. The study could have included better constructs designed specifically for gauging and measuring hours watched for RTV programs. Fill in the blank questions created confusion among the survey takers, causing some respondents to include two answers and variables instead of numerical answers. Better questions to truly measure the cultural variables values could have been used to weed out the respondents who lingered in the middle of individualism and collectivism. Due to the low amount of questions being asked to measure the respondents relation to individualism and collectivism, the harder it was to achieve a high Alpha value, thus signifying why all of the Alpha values were low. Basically, better questions would have provided an easier way to measure and test the true individualist and the true collectivist. The study also might have done well to focus on a finding a sample that really views RTV, instead of sampling persons who barely view RTV shows.

Recommendations

The constructs measuring the uses and gratifications were useful for the purposes of this study but a recommendation for further research on just, RTV genres viewership and cultural

variables will give better insight on the effects of RTV and society. Other areas to further research would be the relationship between RTV genre shows and the cultural values broadcasted between the viewer's own cultural values. Through the research in this study we found a link between cultural values and its appeal to viewers with similar cultural traits. Results from the study suggest further research as to why persons who inhibit individualistic cultural values have a need/ desire to watch RTV shows for entertainment and the need to occupy time. As well as persons who possess a collectivistic cultural value had a negative relationship for watching a RTV show for the need/ desire of entertainment and occupying time. Further research should investigate whether a person who is a collectivist can be drawn to a show that promotes individualist values, thus being reprogrammed as an individualist and vice versa. This study revealed that RTV shows are not limited to reality/ dramatic genres that promote participants to question societies ethical standards. Yet, RTV genres also include property transformational shows that try to help the contestants shave off their protective layers by helping uncover truths. Further research should investigate the various dimensions of RTV programming, research which shows truly contain individualistic values as well as collectivistic values. This studies research provides groundwork towards new research needed to gain the insights of RTV and viewers. The relationships and connections viewers have with specific RTV genres. As well as the genre shows contents and values being broadcasted, and propaganda that comes with this media phenomenon. Further research is definitely recommended due to the high volume and popularity of RTV.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to identify relationships, between people who have collectivistic and individualistic cultural values, uses and gratifications and viewership of RTV genres. It is important to note that the study revealed significant correlations between individuals who watch RTV have a desire to watch specific genres for entertainment and occupying time needs/ desires. Also it is important to note that a congruence was found between perceived cultural variable values and RTV genre viewership promoting that specific value. This study is valuable to assist in understanding television viewing patterns, correlations, and reflections of individuals.

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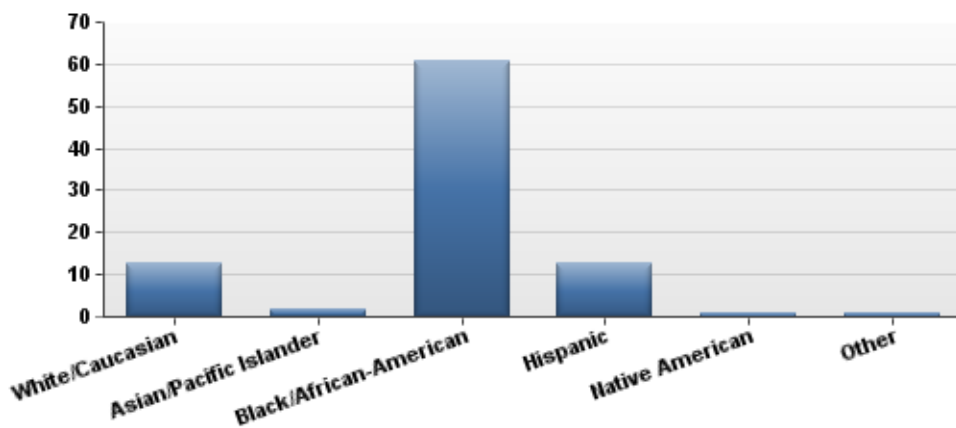
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Appendix

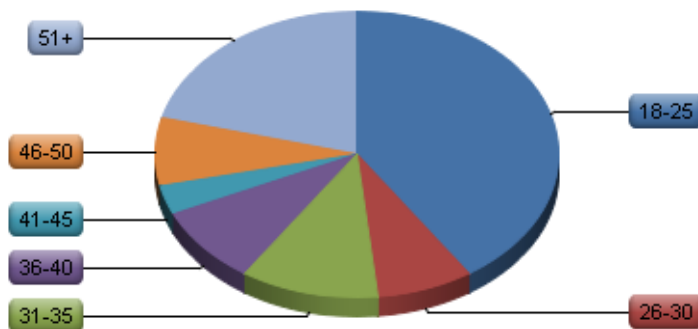
Appendix A

Race/ Ethnicity Bar Graph



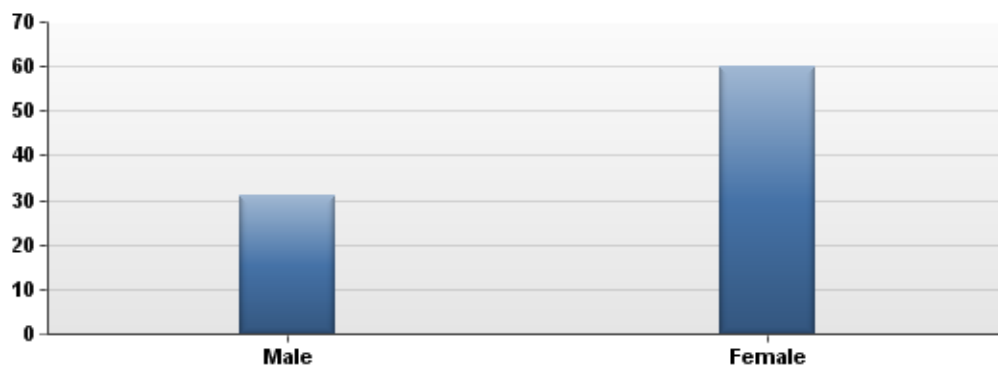
Appendix B

Table A1: Age Pie Chart



Appendix C

Table A2: Gender Bar Graph



Appendix D

Table A3: Uses and Gratification Mean and Standard Deviation Table

Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation
10. I watch Reality TV so I can escape from reality.	1.96	1.250
11. I watch Reality TV because it stirs me up.	2.18	1.170
12. I watch Reality TV because it arouses my emotions and feelings.	2.30	1.140
13. I watch Reality TV because it makes me feel less lonely.	1.64	.944
14. To get away from what I am doing.	2.52	1.410
15. So I can forget about work.	2.36	1.384
16. Reality TV shows me how to get along with others.	1.63	.870
17. It's entertaining.	4.02	1.132
18. It keeps me occupied.	3.08	1.269
19. It makes me forget my problems for a while.	2.31	1.260
20. It brings me new ideas.	2.43	1.225
21. It reflects my beliefs.	1.81	.947
22. It advances my knowledge.	2.06	1.111
23. It's a habit.	2.63	1.325

Appendix E

Table A4: Hypothesis 1 Correlation Table

Correlations

		RecHours Recorded hours spent watching tv (weekend)
Use12 21. It reflects my beliefs.	Sig. (2-tailed) N	.584 90
Use13_Knowledge 22. It advances my knowledge.	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	-.007 .944 90
Use14 23. It's a habit.	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	.171 .106

Appendix F

Table A5: Hypothesis 1 t-test Table

Independent Samples Test

		t-test for Equality of Means		
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Use1 The Following are statements about your Reality TV viewing habits. Please rate each item on a scale...	Equal variances assumed	-.995	88	.322
	Equal variances not assumed	-.998	87.948	.321
Use2 11. I watch Reality / because it stirs me up.	Equal variances assumed	.730	88	.467
	Equal variances not assumed	.731	87.702	.467
Use3 12. I watch Reality / because it arouses my notions and feelings.	Equal variances assumed	-.673	86	.503
	Equal variances not assumed	-.671	84.018	.504

Appendix G

Table A6: Hypotheses 2 and 3 Correlation Table

Correlations		
		RecHours Recorded hours spent watching tv (weekend)
Use13_Knowledge 22. It advances my knowledge.	Pearson Correlation	-.007
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.944
	N	90
Use8_Entertain 17. Its entertaining.	Pearson Correlation	.025
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.812
	N	90

Appendix H

Table A7: Individualistic Mean and Standard Deviation Table

Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation
24. I'd rather depend on myself than others.	3.19	.947
25. I often do "my own thing".	2.98	.948
26. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.	3.17	1.041
27. It is important to me that I perform better than others on a task.	2.53	1.062
28. I think competition is the law of nature.	2.04	.959
29. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and irritated.	1.38	.712

Appendix I

Table A8: Collectivistic Mean and Standard Deviation Table

Questions	Mean	Standard Deviation
30. If a coworker or classmate gets a prize, I would feel proud.	3.11	.823
31. The well being of coworkers/classmate is important to me.	3.16	.847
32. To me, pleasure is spending time with others.	3.01	.863
33. It is my duty to take care of my family even when I have to sacrifice what I want.	3.37	.865
34. I have respect for authority figures with whom I interact.	3.42	.684
35. I think family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required.	3.38	.771
36. It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my groups.	2.92	.833

Appendix J

Table A9: RQ1 Correlation Table

	N	89	90
Use6 15. So I can forget about work.	Pearson Correlation	.172	-.175
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.114	.104
	N	86	88
Use7 16. Reality TV shows me how to get along with others.	Pearson Correlation	-.053	-.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.618	.543
	N	90	91
Use8_Entertain 17. Its entertaining.	Pearson Correlation	.282	-.041
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.007	.703
	N	90	91
Use9 18. It keeps me occupied.	Pearson Correlation	.248	-.128
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.019	.231
	N	89	90
Use10 19. It makes me forget my problems for a	Pearson Correlation	.106	-.064

Appendix K

Table A10: Hypotheses 4 and 5 Correlation Table

		Correlations	
		Indiv Individualistic overall score	Col Collectivistic overall score
IndTV Individualistic TV genre overall score	Pearson Correlation	.031	-.086
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.770	.416
	N	90	91
CoITV Collectivistic TV genre overall score	Pearson Correlation	.119	.346**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.265	.001
	N	90	91

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

DATASET ACTIVATE DataSet3.

DATASET CLOSE DataSet2.

Appendix L

Survey**Participant Agreement:**

You are being asked to be in a research study. The purpose of this study is to understand how young adults who watch reality TV shows feel about other topics. If you decide to be in this study, you will be one of 100 people in this research study. It will take about 5 minutes to complete this survey, which consists of questions about your reality TV viewing habits and other questions related to how you see the world and things that are important to you. There are no risks and no benefits to you for participating in this study. Your participation is completely confidential and your responses will never be identified as coming from you. Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to participate in the study or withdraw your consent at anytime during the study.

I have read the information in this consent form and agree to participate in this study. I have had a chance to ask any questions I have about this study and they have been answered for me. By clicking or circling the “consent to participate” button below I am providing my informed consent.

1. Do you agree to participate in this study?

Yes, I agree to participate in this study. No, I do not agree to participate in this study.

The Following are questions about your Reality TV genre preferences. Please rate each item on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 (Never) and 5 (Very Frequently) as it best applies to you.

2. Reality-Dramatic

For example: Keeping up with the Kardashians, Bridezilla, The Jersey Shore, Basketball Wives.

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Very Frequently

3. Dating/Romance

For example: The Bachelor, The Bachelorette, Flava of Love, Ocho Cinco: The Ultimate Catch.

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Very Frequently

4. Game show/Competition

For example: Survivor, The Amazing Race, Fear Factor, Dancing with the Stars.

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Very Frequently

5. Talent

For example: American Idol, So You Think You Can Dance, America's Got Talent, X-Factor.

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Very Frequently

6. Crime/Police

For example: Cops, America's Most Wanted, The First 48, Bounty Hunter.

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Very Frequently

7. Informational

For example: Trading Places, Intervention, The OCD Project, True Life.

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Very Frequently

8. Personal Transformational

For example: I Want a Famous Face, What Not to Wear, The Biggest Loser, Celebrity Rehab, Super Nanny.

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Very Frequently

9. Property Transformational

For example: Extreme Makeover Homes Edition, Pimp My Ride, While You Were Out, Clean House.

Never Rarely Occasionally Frequently Very Frequently

The Following are statements about your Reality TV viewing habits. Please rate each item on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Agree) as it best applies to you.

10. I watch Reality TV so I can escape from reality.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

11. I watch Reality TV because it stirs me up.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

12. I watch Reality TV because it arouses my emotions and feelings.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

13. I watch Reality TV because it makes me feel less lonely.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

14. To get away from what I am doing.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

15. So I can forget about work.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

16. Reality TV shows me how to get along with others.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

17. Its entertaining.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

18. It keeps me occupied.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

19. It makes me forget my problems for a while.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

20. It brings me new ideas.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

21. It reflects my beliefs.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

22. It advances my knowledge.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

23. It's a habit.

Strongly Disagree Disagree Neither Agree Nor Disagree Agree Strongly Agree

The Following are statements about your personality. Please rate each item on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 (Does not describe me at all) and 5 (Describes me very well) as it best applies to you.

24. I'd rather depend on myself than others.

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

Describes me somewhat

Describes me well

Describes me very well

25. I often do "my own thing"

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

Describes me somewhat

Describes me well

Describes me very well

26. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

Describes me somewhat

Describes me well

Describes me very well

27. It is important to me that I perform better than others on a task.

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

Describes me somewhat

Describes me well

Describes me very well

28. I think competition is the law of nature.

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

Describes me somewhat

Describes me well

Describes me very well

29. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and irritated.

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

Describes me somewhat

Describes me well

Describes me very well

30. If a coworker or classmate gets a prize, I would feel proud.

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

Describes me somewhat

Describes me well

Describes me very well

31. The well being of coworkers/classmate is important to me.

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

Describes me somewhat

Describes me well

Describes me very well

32. To me, pleasure is spending time with others.

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

Describes me somewhat

Describes me well

Describes me very well

33. It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want.

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

Describes me somewhat

Describes me well

Describes me very well

34. I have respect for authority figures with whom I interact.

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

Describes me somewhat

Describes me well

Describes me very well

35. I think family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required.

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

Describes me somewhat

Describes me well

Describes me very well

36. It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my groups.

Does not describe me at all

Does not describe me very well

__Describes me somewhat

__Describes me well

__Describes me very well

37. About how many hours of TV do you watch on a typical weekday?

38. About how many hours of TV do you watch on a typical weekend day?

Please answer these questions about yourself:

Circle which age range applies to you.

18-25

26-30

31-35

36-40

41-45

46-50

51+

Circle/Indicate Race below.

White/Caucasian

Asian/Pacific Islander

Black/African-American

Hispanic

Native American

Other

Circle your Gender:

Male

Female

THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!!!!!

The time you spent filling out this survey is deeply appreciated.

Student Bio

My name is Crystal Nicole Handfield and I was born and raised in Miami, Florida. I hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree from Bethune-Cookman University in Mass Communication with a concentration in Broadcast Journalism. I chose to attend Bethune-Cookman University to follow in the footsteps of my family, who have all attended B-CU throughout various generations. During my time at B-CU I was awarded the pleasure of interning at WTVJ NBC 6 Miami and WOFL/FOX 35 Orlando. I am a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. Academically; I made the honor roll every semester, graduating with the highest award of Suma Cum Lade.

Currently, I am completing my Master of Science from Florida International University in Global Strategic Communication. While going to school full time at FIU, I also work as a Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) Reading teacher at North Miami Senior High School in the Miami-Dade County Public School system. After graduating FIU I would like to pursue a career as a government agency communications director.