

Project report

[Media, Television](#)



PROJECT REPORT Reality shows-An online survey Date: 4th June 2012

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KARUVELIL PO, KOLLAM -6915 INTRODUCTION Reality shows Reality Shows are genre of television shows or programmes which feature common people and or celebrities or both, in real life or scripted situations/environment or a mix of both real and scripted incidents. Reality Shows are also referred as ‘ Reality Television’. Reality shows have become quite a rage of late; these were non-existent until the 1940’s. Reality shows in those times were quite authentic. This was because it was a new concept and as such manipulation was limited to only creating unordinary situations for ordinary citizens.

However, the reality shows of today have blurred the reality. The irony of ‘ Reality Shows’ is that even though they are known as ‘ Reality Based Shows’; most of them are ‘ Unreal’. Real Life is nothing, what popular Reality Shows depict. The idea of placing people in situations, just to see how they react, became imaginable and almost ‘ Passé’. Audiences have seen and known what will happen. As such, previous projections of human behaviour do not hold that much ground as compared to the ones that are being churned out with all the melodrama and unexpected spoofs or stunts. Real Life on day to day basis is not as much Dramatic and entertaining as is depicted in these shows. Life is very much real as we witness it, not what we are made to see. Reality shows edit and manipulate scenes which appear and imitate reality. The situations created or occurred are altered in order to make things interesting. To sustain the interest of the audience, producers of such shows resort to depiction of emotions which incite humans. Thus, conflict, drama,

gleaze and humour are added as per the TRP. These may not be scripted but depending upon the response of these audiences, these maybe added as per the requirement. Such shows will create an exciting footage from various clips mixed with each other. Sometimes, the producers of the show will involve a celebrity to create hype for the show.

Types of Reality Shows

Reality shows cater to different age groups and tastes because of the wide range of themes available. These shows can be classified into:

Reality T. V.

Talent Shows

— A reality based talent show is ‘Made for Television’ program which is televised live or deferred live featuring a number of participants who present their talent or talents in front of a panel of judges. These talents can be in the conventional forms like singing, dancing and or other unique forms of talents. Most of these shows have a format where certain performers are selected and judged. Based on the quality of their performance, these are either eliminated out of the competition by judges or by the public through voting. Each week or each episode one or more contestants are eliminated until a winner emerges. Reality based talent shows are the most popular reality television shows. These are the most popular as these present a much authentic presentation as compared to others which can be easily pointed out as fake. Some of the most popular reality shows of this type are American Idol, America's Got Talent, Dancing with the Stars, Celebrity Duets etc. These maybe licensed to other countries which work on the same format to produce a local show like ‘India’s Got Talent’ is the Indian version of AGT.

Fly on the Wall Shows

— Fly on the Wall Shows are those shows which are styled in a documentary format but maybe scripted partially or wholly to create sensationalism; camera shooting and footage editing gives the viewer

the impression that they are passive observers following people going about their daily personal and professional activities. These are known as ‘Fly on the Wall Shows’ as events are seen candidly, as a fly on a wall might see them. These shows are also known as factual television shows as they do show some actual happenings. Some of these types of shows are:

Environment Confined — These are live or deferred live televised shows, where a number of familiar or unfamiliar participants have to live along with each other and perform tasks in an artificial living environment surrounded by cameras at strategic spots. Every day they are given a task to perform and their behaviour is recorded. Every week or every episode voting is conducted wherein the members nominate each other depending upon their preferences or task performance. These nominated members are further put to vote by public until a winner emerges. The winner is awarded a large sum of amount. Participants are often interviewed, often by an off-camera voice. The ancestor of these types of shows is MTV’s ‘The Real World’. The most popular amongst these shows is ‘Big Brother’ with different versions produced in many countries around the world. Some other shows in this category are ‘Road Rules’, ‘The 1900 House’, ‘Temptation Island’, ‘U8TV: The Lofters’ etc.

Celebrity Shows — Reality based Celebrity Shows are the ones which show daily routine of celebrities or show celebrities in a certain environment with other celebrities performing task or tasks. These show some scripted, unscripted, kinky or unknown aspect of celebrities. Some routine based shows are Keeping Up With the Kardashians, Kathy Griffin: Life on the D List, The Anna Nicole Show, The Osbournes, Newlyweds: Nick and Jessica and Hogan Knows Best etc. Some of the Environment Confined shows

are Celebrity Big Brother, The Simple Life, Tommy Lee Goes to College, The Surreal Life, and I'm a Celebrity... Get Me out of Here! Based on Professional Lives - Professional Lives is type of a reality based show which shows professionals either going about day-to-day business or performing an entire project over the course of a series. These shows unseen footage of a professional on day to day basis, thereby providing an insight into the life of professionals engaged in different occupations. The first of its kind series is COPS which premiered in 1989. Other examples of this type of reality show include the American shows Miami Ink, The First 48, Dog the Bounty Hunter, American Chopper, Deadliest Catch etc. Game Shows — Reality based Game Shows are televised events which involve members of the public and or celebrities competing as a team or as individual against each other in a series competitive games which can be physical challenging and or mentally challenging usually for money and/or a variety of prizes. The prize can be cash, a spouse, a date, a contract, trips, goods and services etc. Game shows are also referred as 'Competition Shows'. Games shows can be categorised as: Mentally Challenging Games — These are quiz or information based game shows where the host of the show or panel of judges asks the contestant general knowledge questions divided into various levels. The contestants have to answer these in a certain period of time and gather points and or cash for every correct answer. In the process they may get evicted or gain certain advantages which are useful in the later stage of the game. Some of this type of games are Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?, American Gladiators, Dog Eat Dog, Deal or No Deal, Weakest Link etc. These are usually shot in an enclosed environment or TV studio over a short period

of time. Physically Challenging Games - These are mostly stunt based or adventure based game shows which involves members of the public and or celebrities performing weird, dangerous or tricky physical tasks better and/or quicker than all the other contestants or simply completing the task given. The game is divided into several zones and stages with each round getting tougher and tougher. These usually take place outdoors with specially created structures and or equipments. Some of these are Minute to Win It, Who Dares Wins, Fear Factor, Total Wipeout, Takeshi's Castle etc. Self-improvement / Makeover Shows — Reality based Self-improvement / Makeover Shows cover the attempts and success of a person or group of people (afflicted celebrities or common people) improving their lives with the help of an expert along with a celebrity as a host. The improvements in life can be related to problems like obesity, lack of fashion sense, bad behaviour, psychological issues etc. Thus we have Charm School and From G's to Gents focussing on self-improvement and manners, Biggest Loser and Fat March which focus on weight loss, How Do I Look? focusing on fashion makeover, 'Queer Eye' and 'What Not to Wear' which focus on style and grooming, 'Made' focusing on attaining difficult goals, 'Supernanny' focussing on child-rearing and so on. At the end of a season, contestants' efforts are applauded publically or within the 'Peer Circle' and awarded as per the show's policy. Such shows maybe real or mixture of scripted and real occurrences. Dating Shows — Dating Shows, as the name goes are based on the theme of Dating. Dating shows have a basic concept — pairing a man and woman amongst various contestants towards a relationship and possibly marriage. These shows are also known as 'Dating Game Shows' as there are number of tasks

which the individuals have to complete and based on their performance are eliminated till the final suitor remains. There is varying amount of scripted situations depending upon the viewer interest, thus it may show reality imitating situations intended to garner or sustain the interest of the audiences. It may involve a celebrity offering himself or herself available for dating or possible marriage amongst various suitors in a series of competitive levels. Rock of Love is one such example, where Bret Michaels, the lead singer from the band Poison offers himself available as a boyfriend amongst various competing girls. Similarly, Rakhi Ka Swayamwar (India) featured Rakhi Sawant (Indian celeb) who married her choice of groom amongst various suitors in a series of televised episodes. Other dating shows with different format are Average Joe, For Love or Money, Paradise Hotel, The Bachelor, The Bachelorette, Temptation Island amongst various others. Job Based Shows — Reality based Job Shows are the ones where the prize and the challenges are all based around a particular career. The prize could be a career in a world renowned firm or learning a new job skill or creating a firm etc. Some of these shows are totally celebrity based, like - Celebracadabra, Deadline, The Celebrity Apprentice etc. Other job base shows feature pre-screened skilled contestants where they perform a variety of tasks based on that skill. A judge or a panel of judges ranks them according to their best performance and retained or removed in a series of episodes and until a worthy competitor emerges as a winner. Examples of such shows include Face Off for make-up artists, Hell's Kitchen and Top Chef - for culinary skills, Project Runway for clothing design, Shear Genius for hair styling, So You Think You Can Dance for dancing skills, The Apprentice for business skills,

Comic Standing for comedians etc. Hidden Camera Shows — Hidden camera shows are the ones in which hidden cameras are used to record people's behaviour who are exposed to a variety of staged situations. Such shows use various props and tricks to incite various emotions. Sometimes a celebrity or cast member guises in various characters and indulge in obnoxious behaviour with the public or acquaintances in public or other places and when the victim has been fooled, he is revealed that he is on camera. Such pranks maybe pulled on celebrities themselves. 'MTV Bakra', India is one such show in which Cyrus Barocha performs these acts and later on does reveal that they are on television. Some of these shows are Candid Camera (1948 onwards), Totally Hidden Video (1991), Punk'd (2003), Scare Tactics (2003), Just For Laughs Gags etc. Talk Shows — Reality based Talk Shows are the ones where a Host (mostly a celebrity) interviews a Featured Guest (famous people) or Discuss a Chosen Topic with a Guest or Panel of Guests either in front of the public or just the Guest and Host, mostly in studios or outdoors. The Topics discussed are frequently outrageous, taboo, provocative and are especially chosen to create public awareness, on-screen drama, tension, outrageous behaviour etc. These may indulge in charity or provide coverage to the efforts of unknown humanitarians, hidden emotional issues, unique individuals or a local hero . These also involve some gags and pranks to bring some humour in the show. These are also referred as ' Tabloid Talk Shows' when they indulge in Sensationalist Journalism and ' Trash TV', especially when they indulge in controversy or confrontation of two opposing groups. Some of the major Talk Shows are Larry King Live, The Phil Donahue, Oprah Winfrey Show, Ricki Lake, The Jerry Springer Show and

many others. Original Life Event Shows — Original Life Event Shows are the ones which show authentic real life events captured on tape by amateurs or professionals who happened to witness the events. The events shown are accidents, bad behaviour, disasters, daring rescues, escapes, stunts, police chases and other extraordinary events. Some of these shows specialise in only one category, like National Geographic's ' Caught in the Act' show which showcases incidents involving animals. Some of the popular such shows are Caught on Camera, Maximum Exposure, World's Most Amazing Videos etc.

Hoax Based Shows — Hoax based shows are real in the sense that they are actually making a fool of an individual or a group of individuals. In such shows the targeted person or group is manipulated to believe in a false premise and are convinced to believe in what is being projected. The rest of the cast are actors who are in on the joke. These shows often served to parody the conventions of the reality TV genre. The first such show was ' The Joe Schmo Show' during the 2003's. Other examples are Hell Date - based on Blind Date, Invasion Iowa — the town was convinced that William Shatner was filming a movie, My Big Fat Obnoxious Boss based on - The Apprentice, My Big Fat Obnoxious Fiance, Superstar USA — based on American Idol, Space Cadets — contestants are convinced that they were being flown into space, Reality Hell - different target and premise every episode. Other shows offer misleading information to some cast members in order to add a wrinkle to the competition. For example - Boy Meets Boy and Joe Millionaire.

Supernatural and Paranormal Shows — Supernatural and Paranormal Reality Shows are the ones where the participants are placed in frightening situations which seemingly involve the paranormal. In general, the shows

have similar stylized patterns of hand held camera footage with odd angles; subtitles informing place and time, desaturated imagery, night vision, surveillance, rapid fire, non-melodic soundtracks and other objects. The format of these shows may vary, for example — in ‘Celebrity Paranormal Project’, it is investigation of supernatural activities. Series like ‘Scariest Places on Earth’ challenge participants to survive the investigation, ‘Paranormal State’ and ‘Ghost Hunters’ use a recurring crew of paranormal researchers. Series like ‘Scare Tactics’ are filled with supernatural overtones purposely to incite fear or aversion in the cast. Sports Shows — Sports based reality shows are involved in organising a sporting competition among sports person who attempt to establish their name in a chosen sport. Sports maybe the common factor but the prize can vary. For example, Knight School (2006 US series) focused on students at Texas Tech. University vying for a walk-on (non-scholarship) roster position on the school's men's basketball team under legendary coach Bob Knight. These shows are sometimes used as launching pads for certain participants who may not win the competition but their skills impress sports firms the they offer a contract to them. For example - The Ultimate Fighter a. k. a. UTF (U. S. series) has offered good deals to certain individuals in spite of loosing. One of the First Reality based sports shows was ‘The Club’ (2002) where a fabricated club competes against real clubs in the sport of Australian rules football; the audience helped select which players played each week by voting for their favourites. Other such shows are ‘The Big Break’ - golfer’s competition, The Contender - boxing show competition, RTÃ‰ One's ‘Celebrity Bainisteoir’ (Irish series) involves eight non-sporting Irish celebrities becoming bainisteoiri (managers)

of mid-level Gaelic football teams, leading their teams in an officially sanctioned tournament.

Renovation Shows — Reality based Renovation Shows are those which involve restoration or transforming wholly or partially, a person's house, work space, vehicle etc. to improve the functioning and or utility. Some of the Renovation Shows are Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, Debbie Travis' Facelift, Designed to Sell, While You Were Out and Holmes on Homes. 'Pimp My Ride' and 'Overhulin' shows vehicles being rebuilt. 'Restaurant Makeover' and 'Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares', show both the décor and the menu of a failing restaurant being remade. Renovation was taken to its social extreme with the 'Life Laundry' (U. K. Series), in which people who had become hoarders, even living in squalor, were given professional assistance.

Social Experiment Shows — Social experiment shows are the ones where contestants have to undergo different types of social experimentation which produces drama, conflict and occasionally - Transformation. Famous amongst is the 'Wife Swap' (2003) which began on Channel 4. In the show, people with different values agreed to live by each other's social rules for a brief period of time and sometimes learn from the experience. Then there have been shows like 'Faking It' where a member of the public trains with an expert and then takes part in a contest against experienced participants in certain activities they have learned. The judges had to find amongst the contestants, the 'Faker'. The prize here is coverage the fakers receive over the course of the month's filming. 'Shattered' (U. K.) a 2004 series showcased contestants who could remain without sleeping, the most. Other such shows are Holiday Showdown (ITV), Secret Millionaire (Channel 4) and The Bad Girls Club (lifestyles and actions).

LITERATURE

REVIEW While research relating to reality television is relatively new, several studies have been conducted in relation to viewer characteristics, media effects, realism and gratifications. - Reiss & Wiltz's study utilized a questionnaire format and chose human service workers and college students as participants. Five specific reality shows were noted on the questionnaire and included Survivor, Big Brother, Temptation Island, The Mole, and The Real World. Researchers chose these five shows based on the " low level of morals found on the shows and the exploitation of the participants as well as their appeal to a viewer's basic human quest for truth and need for genuineness. " (370) - In the study conducted by Nabi, Biely, Morgan and Stitt, only Arizona residents who were awaiting jury duty participated in the study. And most recently, a study conducted in 2006 by Alice Hall addressed the audience's understanding of the " nature, realism and gratifications" of reality show programs. (191) The study participants included college students at an urban Midwestern university, with an average age of twenty three. Here again, the participants chosen were limited. While the results of these studies are useful to further understand the nature of audiences, more diversity among participants could have produced results that may be applied more universally in the field. - Some research, including work conducted by Katz, Blumer & Gurevitch, takes a psychological perspective and utilizes the uses and gratification theory. According to this theory, the audience is active and media is goal-directed. The audience has specific expectations and these expectations motivate their choice of media. Media is in competition with other sources for satisfaction and individuals are aware of these needs and audience media selections and subsequent gratifications

are known and able to be effectively communicated. (Grossberg, Wartella & Whitney 266-267) - Nabi, Biely, Morgan and Stitt in the study of reality television -“ what it is, how it differs from other types of programs and who watches it and why. ” (324) Specifically, the study focused on the following gratifications identified by Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch: “ diversion, “ “ personal relationships, “ “ personal identity” and “ surveillance. ” (312) Results indicated that the gratification for regular viewers exceeded those of casual viewers and regular viewers needed to be entertained versus casual viewers who watched in hopes of Sipple 11“ alleviating boredom. ” (325). - According to a article in the Journal of Consumer Research, “ Reality TV allows viewers to imagine themselves as actual participants. ” (Rose & Wood) The authors continue their discussion by assessing that viewers blend fact with fantasy, a term they have coined “ hyperauthenticity. ” In these cases, viewers compare and contrast their lives to the participant's lives depicted onscreen. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY By identifying participants who consistently watched these programs, it was believed that various themes would arise out of this study for analysis and comparison. This study sought to identify and further explore these common themes. In order to locate these possible underlying themes among reality show viewers, a qualitative approach was taken utilizing in-depth personal interviews and questionnaire. Participants were asked questions broken down into three basic categories: (1) personal background information (including such demographics as age, employment status, etc), (2) reality show viewing habits, including a definition of reality programs and naming specific programs by title and (3) specific reasons for watching particular shows. By

asking questions of this nature, respondents were able to describe in detail why they watched the programs. The purpose of the above mentioned questions was to determine any potential themes found among participants. This method was chosen to gain further insight into what viewers think or feel when determining their program selections from the participant's perspective. RESULTS SEX: Inference Male 49 68% Female 23 32%

OCCUPATION Inference Student 54 75% Working 18 25% Housewife 0 0% On an average day how many hours you spend watching TV? Inference 1 hr or Less 38 53% 2 to 3 hrs 26 36% 4 to 5 hrs 6 8% 6 to 7 hrs 1 1% More than 7 hrs 0 0% At what time during the day do you spend the most time watching TV ? Inference Morning 3 4% Afternoon 6 8% Evening 46 64% Late night 16 22% What type of program do you watch most often ? Inference Sports 13 18% Serials 4 6% News 6 8% Entertainments 46 64% Others 2 3% Have you ever watched Reality shows ? Inference YES 66 92% NO 4 6% Reality shows of which channel do you prefer/like to watch in Malayalam ? Inference Asianet 36 51% Surya 3 4% Kairali 2 3% Amrita 10 14% Others 35 49%

People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%. Please click all the reality shows that you are watching ? Inference Idea star singer 8 11% Ningalkum aakam kodishvaran 15 21% Vodafone comedy stars 31 44% Super dancer junior 2 10 14% Others 32 45% People may select more than one checkbox, so percentages may add up to more than 100%. In a typical week approximately how many reality TV shows do you watch ? Inference 1-2 shows 58 81% 3-4 shows 9 13% 4-5 shows 1 1% more than 5 0 0% I enjoy watching reality shows Inference Agree 17 24% Disagree 4 6% Sometimes 50 69% When i watch reality

shows, I get so involved and i don't want to change the channel Inference Agree 5 7% Disagree 36 50% Sometimes 30 42% I like reality shows because it puts me in a good mood Inference Agree 13 18% Disagree 20 28% Sometimes 38 53% Do you vote for the contestants ? Inference Yes 11 15% No 59 82% I vote for the contestant who perform well Inference 1 - Strongly agree 12 17% 2 7 10% 3 15 21% 4 8 11% 5 - Strongly disagree 25 35% I vote for the contestant according to their gender, style of dressing, appearance etc... Inference 1 - Strongly agree 3 4% 2 1 1% 3 14 19% 4 8 11% 5 - Strongly disagree 45 63% Do you think that there is ethics in reality shows? Inference 1 - Strongly agree 6 8% 2 7 10% 3 29 40% 4 9 13% 5 - Strongly disagree 15 21% Number of daily responses Number of responses without dates: 1 FINDINGS * From this survey we found that more of the males are watching reality shows rather than the females. * Most of the viewers are students. * Here 53% of them are watching the TV 1hr or less than 1hr. * Around 64% of them are watching the TV in the evening. * Most of them are watching the entertainment programmes. * 92% of them are watched the reality shows. * Asianet is the dominant channel in Malayalam. * Vodafone comedy start is the most watching programme. * Here most of them are watching the reality shows for their mental relief or for pleasure most of them are preferred to watch the comedy programmes.