

Comparative analysis of "the great british bake off" and "love island" programs



The Great British Bake Off (GBBO) and Love Island are both categorized under the genre of ' Reality Television'. However, despite their categorization, each shows, ideologies, content and audience appeal are enormously dissimilar. Reality Television is a broad variable term that categorises a widespread and hybrid collection of Popular TV programming. This labelling of genre was first coined in the late 1980s and originated in the US with the development of the early ' A&E' formats. Killborn encapsulated this feeling of variability within the genre, saying that " one moment the term ' reality television is being used to refer to slice-of-life observational modes of documentary film making, the next it is being used to describe types of fictional drama tooted in real life programming".

Both GBBO and Love Island would classically be categorized as being part of ' Game-doc' (also referred to as reality game shows) genre, in which shows are founded on a contrived or manufactured situation. When creating shows of this genre " Producers carefully... analyze the structuring features of earlier shows... to create a hybrid format which skilfully amalgamated features of the action-centred reality formats." Moreover, both shows take elements from the game show genre and have a strong emphasis on the notion of real life performance.

Love islands format resembles a number of characteristics that appear within Channel 4's Big Brother as contestants are taken from all over the United Kingdom and placed into a fake reality, as they have to gain the publics backing to stay within and ultimately win the show. Though, Love Island conforms to its hybrid genre as it builds on the previous ' Big Brother' format, by incorporating additional elements from similarly successful shows, <https://assignbuster.com/comparative-analysis-of-the-great-british-bake-off-and-love-island-programs/>

such as MTV's *Georgie Shore*, as contestants must find a partner and the BBC's 'Golden Balls' game show, because winners must choose whether to split or keep prize money.

GBBO's hybridization derives from its combination of documentary, cookery and competitive reality programmes but it mainly conforms to the codes and conventions of a cookery show such as that of *MasterChef*, with its incorporation of professional judges and goal of winning the programme. Jelle Mast states that "cross-generic television programmes (re)combine both factual and fictional, such as the game and dating show, lifestyle television, the soap opera, and particularly the documentary. Through its popular appeal and hybrid nature, reality programming plays a most significant part in a broad tendency of the popularization of factual television, which profoundly redefines documentary practice." Both GBBO and *Love Island* incorporates many traits which lie within the 'Docu-soap' hybrid genre, combining narrative characteristics and the contrived structure of a soap-opera with classical components of observational documentary.

Hybridized formats such as these have found widespread attention through their hybrid nature and reality programming now plays a significant part in prime-time scheduling. GBBO's final in October 2016 had viewership of 15.9 million, being the BBC's most viewed programming since the 2012 Olympics ceremony, whereas *Love Island* had a record high viewership for the channel of 4.1 million during the month of June. Each show ran during prime-time slots and GBBO occupied the 8-9pm slot on a Wednesday whilst *Love Island* ran from 9-10pm every single day for eight weeks. Although sharing similar scheduling times, both programmes audience demographic is vastly

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different. Love Island resides on ITV's second channel 'ITV 2' which aims to appeal to "younger audiences that can often prove hard to reach specifically the 16-34 year old audience that is gender neutral."

"Reality television programmes are constructed in such a way as to ensure that the situations create conflict and drama among the participants" and Love Island attracts its described audience through their casting of both contestants and presenters, with age of all competitors varying from 20 to 29 years old. The Journal of Consumer Affairs found that young adults were 65% more likely to be targeted by advertisements containing provocatively dressed models and as such Love Island incorporates themes of sex and promiscuity to target this younger audience. Its competitors are all attractive, allowing the audience to idolise contestants and some seem more relatable in appearance, allowing audiences to connect and become attached to them. This allows audiences to "gauge the authenticity or truthfulness of reality TV on a scale of emotional realism and personal revelation... and the reality TV Subject is enjoined to share their pain". The tone of the show connects with these younger audiences as it tackles basic emotional matters that all young people deal with, such as finding love, conflict and dating. Love Island attracts its young audience by taking place in popular holiday destination Majorca. Key themes from the show are included within the set design in the form of quotes.

In contrast, the BBC aims to entice a much broader audience, which can be seen through their casting, as the contestants age range from 20-year-old student Michael to 67-year-old Lee. The focus of the show lies in domesticity and nurturing within the home which appeals to all people regardless of age

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or status. The mise en scène within GBBO often celebrates qualities of British tradition to attract senior viewers, by featuring themes such as Coronation, Weddings and Jubilee within the weekly challenges contestants have to compete in. Rather than using modern storage solutions and equipment, GBBO opts to feature glass jars and artisan mixers. Further connotations to nostalgic Britishness are included within the interior design in the form of iconography, such as the Union Jack, seen on bunting surrounding the set and is specifically used to illicit emotional response within the viewers and create a sentimental atmosphere. Moreover, the producers aim to interpret a safe and blissful environment through the setting of the show, as the marquees where the competition takes place is situated within rural England.

Scheduled at 8pm, GBBO has the channel's highest audience during this peak time slot according to the BBC's audience figures according to the BBC's "Network news and current affairs" investigation, which further allows for the broadest audience to view the programme.

GBBO also incorporates aspects of lifestyle television into its format through its use of presenters. Mel and Sue are used to add a light-hearted feel to the programme and give audiences likable characters that are consistent throughout the programme, mimicking presenters from programmes such as INSERT PROGRAMME. They are often typecast of as the protagonists when the judges are deemed to be villains, allowing the show to bounce back from serious discussions eloquently so that the overall feeling of the show is not lost. The presenters are also used as narrative tool for the programme, allowing the show to transition from a competitive show, comedy and to a documentary style format, as they interview contestants and inform the <https://assignbuster.com/comparative-analysis-of-the-great-british-bake-off-and-love-island-programs/>

audience of what is going on. In contrast, Love Island uses a narrator to advance plot and to add humorous commentary. However, a narration in this form is common place within the fictional drama genre and Love Island has received backlash from the public, stating that the programme is contrived.

Dovey argues that due to the ultimate aim of mass appeal in combination with the focus on emotion and trivial celebrity life, reality television often is dumbed down as it succumbs to the 'lowest common denominator' and programmes of the reality television genre often become 'Trash TV'.

Moreover, the Griersonian understanding of documentary is often marginalised as the genre employs classical documentary techniques, yet the 'serious intent' of documentary proper is doubtful as authenticity of portrayed events is questionable. However, GGBO remains proper to Reithian values as their mantra states the BBC aims to "enrich people's lives with programmes and services that inform, educate and entertain." GGBO conforms to its institutions standards by not only entertaining but integrating educational segments within the show, such as on-screen graphics displaying the recipe used for each cake. Likewise, on the BBC website, details of cake recipes and home tips are given to viewers.

Love island takes utilises contemporary social media platforms to engage with their young audience and Killborn affirms that within the game-doc genre "Clever exploitation of the new technologies has made it possible to have an interactive involvement, thus creating a strong sense of viewer participation" ITV invested in producing a Love Island application for smartphones which is advertised throughout the programme, the app is the way in which viewers participate with the text, as users can vote to keep in <https://assignbuster.com/comparative-analysis-of-the-great-british-bake-off-and-love-island-programs/>

their favourite contestants. Furthermore, Internet culture is a prominent theme throughout the show as whenever islanders are instructed to do something it is through their provided smartphones. When reading instructions from producers each contestant is required to recite 'hashtags' which viewers can implement within social media websites such as twitter in order to generate discussion about the programme. Whilst the programme takes place, producers of the show take control of contestant's social media accounts to drive interest through avenues other than conventional advertising that appeal to their target audience.

GBBO and Love Island are both categorized within the confines of the Reality TV Genre and each programmes mass appeal is due to its highly constructed reality. However due to their hybrid nature and transmission on separate broadcast networks to please separate audiences, either individual programme is wholly unlike the other whilst still conforming the codes and conventions its genre.