SURVIVOR AND OTHER REALITY T.V. GAMESHOWS:
THE USES AND GRATIFICATIONS PERSPECTIVE ON A REALITY SUB-GENRE
by
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Survivor and Other Reality T.V. Gameshows:
The Uses and Gratifications Perspective on a Reality Sub-Genre

May 3, 2006

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Ever since the 1930s when different forms of media such as film, radio, and print became a main source/influence of how people obtained information and were entertained, media theorists have questioned the effects of the technology. Early research studies determined that an audience member actively selected media content that best served (gratified) his/her personal interests. Extensions of this research led to the development of Uses and Gratifications Theory. The most recent of these studies focused specifically on determining the top viewing motivations of particular television genres (i.e. soap opera and reality). These findings not only indicated that the top motives varied from one genre to another, but also revealed that additional motives exist in television viewing that had not previously been discussed. The current fan-favorite reality genre needs additional attention in terms of viewing motivations because several sub-genres exist from within.

To date, little research has been done linking reality television to uses and gratifications, and none has been found that explore the potential of varying motives between the reality sub-genres. Literature research into the history of television along with the reality genre and its sub-genres (particularly gamedocs) was done in order to create a survey for determining top motivations into specific television viewing. In addition, a qualitative analysis of *Survivor*, one of the most popular gamedoc reality programs on the air, was done to assist in creation of the survey.

Undergraduate students ranging in age from 18-25 years old from three

universities throughout the United States were asked to participate in this survey that intended on answering three research questions pertaining to the motivations into gamedoc reality programs. The first question involved determining the percentage of respondents who actually view at least one hour of gamedoc programming per week. Respondents were asked to indicate whether or not they watch such gamedoc shows as *Survivor, Big Brother,* and *Fear Factor*. The second question attempted to determine the top motives for watching gamedocs. Participants were provided with a list of potential reasons for why one might watch gamedocs, and then asked to rate how likely they would be to watch for each specific reason. The final question sought to determine what differences, if any, exist in the top motives for viewing reality gamedocs with regards to the gender of the respondent.

Results indicated that the 61 percent of the sample do seek out gamedocs for some form of personal fulfillment. Both genders tended to agree on many of the top motives for watching: they found the content somewhat humorous, even laughable at times, they found them generally entertaining, and were intrigued by the week-by-week happenings that occurred within a particular program. Despite the similarities, it was determined that 9 out of the 19 motives were significantly different in the mean scores between males and females. Furthermore, it was found that males watched more television in general, while females watched more reality gamedocs. Females also tended to get more from watching gamedocs, as they consistently ranked the motives higher than males.

Findings of this study add reliability to past research into uses and gratifications, and suggest that motives of television viewing may vary from genre to genre. In order to further determine that hypothesis, similar research will have to be done with other reality sub-genres.

Survivor and Other Reality TV Gameshows:

The Uses and Gratifications Perspective on a Reality Sub-Genre

Chapter One: Introduction

The presence of radio, film, and print by the 1930s turned the United States into a

"media society" (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995, p. 93); mass media audiences began a daily

custom of creating more time in their schedules to absorb all the available information. It

was not long after that media theorists began to question the effects of this media

technology. Early research studies (Herzog, 1940; Schramm, Lyle, & Parker, 1961;

Mendelsohn, 1964) determined that an audience member actively selected media content

that best served (gratified) his/her personal interests. Further studies (Katz, Blumler, &

Gurevitch, 1974; Rubin, 1979, 1983) suggested that basic viewing motives could be

linked to one's social and psychological factors; in other words, a viewer tended to seek

out specific programming that helped fulfill needs influenced by his/her personal traits

and/or lifestyle, such as a need for companionship, a need for escape, and willingness to

learn. The Katz et al. (1974) approach became known as Uses and Gratifications Theory,

and provided readers with basic assumptions to illustrate the relationship between a

medium and its user.

Extensions of uses and gratifications research continued with the focus on

viewing motivations to specific forms (genres) of television programming. Ang (1985)

and Babrow (1987) researched the potential motives an audience had for tuning in to, or

even avoiding soap operas. Mead (2003, 2004) and Frisby (2004) did similar research

with the reality genre. Results from these particular studies not only agreed with findings

from the early theorists who examined audience fulfillment, but further revealed that

additional motives into television viewing exist, such as attraction to the program's

format and development of individual characters. The data also showed a variance of the

top motives within each genre, which suggests that a viewer may select one form of

television programming over another, depending on that viewer's personal need.

Little research has been done linking reality television to uses and gratifications,

and none thus far has been found that explores the potential of varying motives between

the reality sub-genres. Over the past six years, reality programs, defined as those that

place real people in extraordinary situations while recording every moment as these

"stars" react to their surroundings, have become the latest television genre fan-favorite

(Sack, 2003; Frisby, 2004; Howley, 2004), particularly among the 18-25 age group

(Baumgardner, 2003; Brasch, 2003; Hiltbrand, 2004). In the midst of its popularity, all

prime time networks, several cable networks ranging from A&E to ESPN, and even

premium stations Showtime and HBO have jumped on the reality bandwagon with their

own ideas in order to compete for viewers.

The reality genre is different from other forms of programming because several

sub-genres exist from within. To date there are ten reality sub-genres, with gamedocs

(day-in-the-life happenings wrapped in a game show text) arguably the most popular

(Murray, 2004), due to the success of such shows as *Survivor, Big Brother* and *Fear

Factor*. Researching gamedoc motives was selected for this project over the others due

to this popularity; in addition, *Survivor* is credited for introducing the current reality

concept and inspiring a great number of copycat productions (Baumgardner, 2003).

The purpose of this study is to investigate three research questions related to the top motives for watching reality television gamedocs. The first question this thesis will attempt to answer is involves determining the percentage of students in the 18-25 age group who seek out the gamedocs as a form of personal fulfillment.

RQ1:   What percentage of 18-25 year-olds watch gamedoc reality
          programs?

The second question involves determining the most common motives that 18-25 year-olds have for watching reality gamedocs. In conducting a similar genre-focused study, Babrow (1987) found that 16 different motivations existed for why people watch (or avoid watching) soap operas. For this study, a survey will be developed asking participants to indicate how likely they are to watch or avoid watching gamedocs for reasons influenced by the Babrow (1987) motivations.

RQ2:   What are the most common motives 18-25 year-olds have
          for watching gamedoc reality programs?

The third question involves determining whether the gender of a person is in any way significant to the top motives of gamedoc watching. While past studies (Ang, 1985; Mead, 2004) acknowledged gender differences in their findings, there is a lack of research in television viewing habits that has attempted to identify the motivational differences, if any, that exist between males and females.

RQ3:   Are there gender differences in the top motives for watching
          gamedoc reality programs?

A total of 327 undergraduate students were surveyed from three different regions of the United States. They were instructed to indicate their gender among other personal

characteristics, the number of gamedoc television hours watched per week, and also rate how likely they were to watch gamedocs for a specific motive. The results, in addition to providing reliability to the past research studies, may be helpful in further interpreting consumer-television relationships.

Understanding the purpose and findings of this study means having to comprehend the theoretical framework and data involved. Chapter Two is a literature review that first provides a history of uses and gratifications; second it explores the history of television genres from beginning to the present reality genre; third, the lit review introduces the various sub-genres that have been found to exist within the reality genre. Chapter Three presents the findings of the Mead (2003) pilot study where the top motivations of reality television viewing were determined. In addition, the chapter analyzes the hit reality gamedoc *Survivor* and identifies several elements within the show's content that can be linked to these motivations. Not only will this analysis help illustrate reasons why the show is so popular with its audience, but it can also assist in development of the gamedoc survey. As mentioned earlier, Mead (2003, 2004) revealed the top viewing motives of reality television, but the original surveys should be revised to better reflect potential motivations specific to reality gamedocs.

Chapter Four describes the methodology, survey structure, information on the participants, and how the surveys were distributed. Chapter Five reveals the findings, including the number of television hours watched by undergraduate students per week, the number of those hours that are specifically gamedocs programs, the rankings of each motive, and the similarities/differences between genders. Finally, Chapter Six features

reasoning for the findings, along with research limitations and suggestions for future

analysis.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Because the purpose of the study is to examine the motivations related to viewing a specific form of television programming, this chapter will first present Uses and Gratifications Theory and other media consumption research that dates back to the radio serial. The next section will focus on the relationship between television and the viewers by providing a brief history into TV programming, beginning with the earliest eras and ending with the current reality era. The fourth section helps understand the popularity of reality programming and distinguishes it from other genres and shows that contain realistic content like newscasts, documentaries, and sports.

The final section will identify the different sub-genres of reality television. All will be briefly defined, however gamedocs will be discussed in greater detail due to its purpose for this particular study. Researching motives into the gamedoc sub-genre was specifically selected over the others due to the popularity of *Survivor,* including its notoriety for introducing viewers to the current reality concept and inspiring a frenzy of copycat productions (Baumgardner, 2003) over the past six years.

Uses and Gratifications Perspective

Previous research studies (Herzog, 1940; Schramm, Lyle, & Parker, 1961; Mendelsohn, 1964; Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974; Rubin, 1979, 1983; Ang, 1985; Babrow, 1987; Mead, 2003, 2004; Frisby, 2004) have attempted to understand the effects of a mass medium to its consumer. The overall findings have indicated that the consumer will tend to seek out a desired medium because it fulfills (gratifies) that individual's needs or interests. These may include (but are certainly not limited to) for entertainment,

information, or social purposes. The consumer is also identified as an active participant, selecting what he/she feels will best serve a personal need; furthermore, his/her personal social and psychological factors assist in influencing what they seek out.

Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) are credited as the founders of Uses and Gratifications Theory (West & Turner, 2000) following their research into identifying reasons why, when, and how individuals seek out the media to satisfy personal wants and needs. However, before the theory was formally named, audience-media relationship research dated back to the 1940s following America's transition to becoming a "media society" (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995, p. 93) due to diversity of media content available to the public. Additional studies since the 1970s indicate how the theory has developed to where it is today.

Early History of Media Gratification

By the 1930s, the United States had a great deal of communication resources available for active audiences who typically rescheduled their daily activities due to their reliance, specifically on motion pictures and radio serials, as a source for entertainment and information. With the conclusion of the decade, still very little was known about media audiences and their reasoning for why they selected one form of content over another (Lowery & DeFleur, 1995). Herzog (1944) conducted one of the earliest recorded studies into media gratification with the focus on the effects of daytime radio serials on female listeners.

A number of women were interviewed in order to determine if specific character differences existed between listeners and non-listeners of the serials. It was hypothesized

that frequent listeners were more isolated from their community, their intellectual range was not as broad, they were less interested in news/public affairs, and they were typically more frustrated with the current routine in their personal lives.

Interestingly, the results determined little to no difference between the listeners and non-listeners with regards to these character differences, with only intellect being somewhat significant. Instead it was discovered that female listeners tuned to the serials because these programs fulfilled a number of different desires. First, many of them were looking for an emotional release, or "a good chance to cry" (Herzog, 1944, p. 24) over someone else's problems instead of their own; second, the serials filled empty gaps in the lives of those listeners; third, and unexpected to Herzog, was the advice obtained through the programs. These serials were found to be useful because they "explain things to the listener" (Herzog, 1944, p. 25) through character portrayals. It was further mentioned that advice received from radio serials actually rivaled the advice columns featured in the daily newspapers. Further radio research by Mendelsohn (1964) identified the medium had several useful functions for a listener, including fulfilling a need for companionship, the desire to counter boredom, and the desire to obtain useful information.

Research continued as a result of television's amazing popularity during the 1950s. Schramm, Lyle, and Parker (1961) focused on the medium's effects on children. They argued that a television viewer independently selected programs that would best fulfill an anticipated reward; furthermore, children, like any other viewer, actively seek out material that best fits their personal interests and needs. This was contrary to a fear at the time that children would become passive victims to the new medium. Results of

eleven studies conducted in different areas of the United States and Canada indicated that

children watched television for a number of reasons, including for entertainment (the

programs are visually pleasurable), information (something can be learned by watching),

and social utility (the programming is what other siblings and friends are watching).

The overall findings of early theorists indicated that a specific target audience,

regardless of age, had the ability to actively seek and select programming deemed to be

most beneficial, while avoiding that which proved unsatisfying. Further research into

understanding media usage and gratifications continued through the years as the theory

became more defined in terms of individual viewing motivations.

Development of Uses and Gratifications Theory

Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch (1974) extended past research into the medium-

consumer relationship by attempting to determine how a viewer's needs tend to be

influenced by one's "social situations and psychological dispositions" (Katz, Blumler, &

Gurevitch, 1974, p. 33). The development of the theory was based on five assumptions:

1. Media users are active, and their use is goal-oriented.
2. Linkage to gratification and medium choice is done by the user.
3. Mediums compete for user need satisfaction.
4. Users have enough self-awareness of their media use to be able to
   provide researchers with information on that use.
5. The value of media content can be assessed by the user.

Katz et al. (1974) believed a viewer had many different *motivations* for why

he/she watched television, and these motivations were linked to personal traits such as a

need for companionship, need for escape, and willingness to learn.

Rubin (1979) developed six basic viewing motives an audience member has in watching television: for learning, for passing time, for companionship, for escape, for excitement or arousal, and for relaxation. Rubin (1983) extended his research by using these six motives as the template for development of a questionnaire. The study was designed to investigate how television viewing patterns and individual motivations are linked. Previously used data from 626 individuals from two Midwestern communities ranging in age 4 to 89 years was re-introduced. The study focused on adults (those between the ages of 18 to 89) only, so the original tested participants was revised to 464. In addition, several questions were thrown out, as they pertained more to children. The sample was broken down to 50 percent male, 50 percent female, with a mean age of 33.3 years old.

To test viewing motivation, participants ranked on a Likert-type scale from 1 to 5 (1 = highly unlikely; 5 = highly likely) 30 potential reasons for watching television, with each statement based on the original Rubin (1979) motives. Results of this analysis indicated that participants responded the highest to the relaxation and entertainment motives (Rubin, 1983, p. 40).

Extensions into Uses and Gratifications

Further research into uses and gratifications focused on specific genres of programming (Ang, 1985; Babrow, 1987; Mead, 2003, 2004; Frisby, 2004) and argued that additional motivating factors for watching television existed, including voyeuristic pleasure, parasocial interaction, and emotional release. Due to their popularity in the early '80s, especially in prime time, the top viewing motives for television soap operas

were first examined. Ang (1985) obtained surveys from 42 different participants

regarding the top motives people had for watching *Dallas*. The results not only indicated

that viewers had reasons for why they loved the prime time soap, but interestingly,

revealed there were many reasons also for why they disliked the show, such as for the

character adultery and other villainous behavior consistently found in each episode. In

other words, some viewers found themselves regularly tuned to a show that contained

content they actually admitted hating to watch.

Babrow (1987) sought to determine the top motives that audience members had

for viewing daytime soap operas. A survey asked 301 undergraduate students at a

Midwestern university to cite reasons why they watched them. The qualitative

questionnaire yielded a total of 730 responses, which was translated to 16 different

categories (such as escape from boredom, relaxation, and entertainment). Data revealed

the most common response in the study (yielding 16.8 percent participant response) was

"time considerations" (Babrow, 1987, p. 314). This means that students indicated they

watched soap operas because they had nothing better to do during that time of the day,

and watching TV meant watching soap operas, since that form of programming was the

most predominant on at the time.

More recent uses and gratifications research involves reality programming, the

current popular genre in television. Frisby (2004) and Mead (2004) sought to determine

reasons why undergraduate college students are attracted to reality-based shows. Frisby

(2004) found students watch not only for the entertainment value, but the programs are

used for comparing the lives and mannerisms of the reality "stars" to their own. Mead

(2004) determined students found most reality shows humorous and even laughable,

although it is not clear whether the humor comes from watching people much like

themselves act up for TV cameras, or because they find reality TV more *un-real* than

anything else. Regardless, it can be argued that each program genre fulfills specific

viewer needs over others, and like Schramm (1961) hypothesized, the viewer seeks out

those programs that satisfy him/her, while avoiding others that have little to no effect.

Summary of Uses and Gratifications Theory

The accumulated material helps to understand media usage in many ways. First,

it can be determined that an audience can be identified as active in the gathering of media

information, independently choosing what fulfills their needs, while avoiding that which

does not. This realization also disputes a historic belief that people, particularly children,

are passive victims to the media, and can be mentally influenced by what the media

subjects them to. Second, the research shows that a diverse number of motivations do

exist for seeking out specific media, and these motivations can be linked to one's social

and psychological factors. Finally, the research indicates that an audience member is

consistently an active viewer, regardless of age, gender, or type of television

programming. To further illustrate the relationship between viewer popularity and

programming types, a brief history into the different eras will be discussed.

Television Popularity and the Audience

Since television first aired national network programming in the mid-1940s,

viewers have been exposed to a number of different program genres such as variety,

western, action, comedy, and drama. The development or creation of a particular genre is

the result of a three-way relationship between the producer/programmer, star/talent, and viewer/audience (Brooks & Marsh, 1988). The network programmers, in addition to advertising executives and media researchers, have an obvious interest in how the content and performances of a TV show is received by viewers (Frisby, 2004). Since the early 1950s, Nielsen Media researchers have used audience reaction to measure television program popularity (Nielsen Media, 2005). The Nielsen findings not only provide information on a show's current popularity, but also gauge how other shows similar in format could potentially be received. This tends to result in the creation of additional programs with similar structure and styles, thereby establishing a program genre (Ang, 1985). Audience reaction has also been responsible for turning many talented performers, as well as average citizens, into international stars.

A Historical Review of the Television Genre

Just as typical America has adjusted to lifestyle changes over time, the network programmer has had to adjust to the changing tastes of the TV consumer over the years. Brooks (1988, 2003) describes eight different programming eras that have existed during the first fifty-plus years of television. They are vaudeo (1948-57), adult western (1957-early 1960s), idiot sitcom (early to late 1960s), relevance (late 1960s-1975), fantasy (1975-80), soap opera/real people (1980s), the era of choice (1990s), and reality (2000-present). Each era attained its label because of the high number of programs produced within that genre during that time period. The first era, vaudeo, represented a high level of programming by former radio and vaudevillian performers who made the transition to television with comedy/variety shows. Stars like Ed Sullivan, Milton Berle, and Arthur

Godfrey appealed to the viewers, not only because they were talented, but also because the audience could now see images of what they had previously heard for so many years on radio. By the end of the 1950–51 season, seven of the top ten most popular programs fit the vaudeo genre, with the number one show, *Texaco Star Theater*, earning a 61.6 Nielsen rating (Brooks & Marsh, 1988.)

The adult western era was influenced by audience reaction to *Gunsmoke*, another former radio serial that also made the transition to television, and the *Life and Times of Wyatt Earp*. Their popularity can be attributed to the audience desire for dramatic gunslinging showdowns and other conduct synonymous with the wild west. The idiot sitcom era replaced the westerns when people became more interested in shows like *The Beverly Hillbillies, Gilligan's Island,* and *I Dream of Jeannie* where unrealistic premises provided carefree entertainment.

The relevance era introduced viewers to programming that more accurately portrayed issues of the real world. In the midst of the Vietnam War, programs like *I Spy, Julia,* and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show* indicated acceptance of the transition from power of the white man to the contributions of minority groups. The fantasy era drew viewers with characters like The Fonz, Steve Austin, and Jamie Somers, whose individual gifts made them somewhat godlike in stature. The 1980s brought two styles that really contradicted one another: soaps (*Dallas, Dynasty*) and real people programs (*Cosby Show, Family Ties*). Despite their difference in structure, both involved similar storylines with the focus on real-world happenings, from raising children to highlighting personal achievements.

By the 1990s, television appeared to be less formal with one precise genre due to network competition from the increase in cable networks and their accompanying original programming (Rose, 2006); the networks, in an attempt to compete for the audience, scheduled "varied formula menus and broader genre mixes" (Rose, 2006). Brooks (2003) labeled this period the Era of Choice because viewers, more than any other period in television history had a significant selection of programming to choose from on any given night. Executives of the major networks, in their attempt to compete against the cable channels for the audience, began providing a wide array of programming that included tabloid news (*Dateline, 48 Hours*), peculiar (*Picket Fences*, *Northern Exposure*), real-life, a combination of the real people and relevance eras (*Murphy Brown, ER*), and progressive shows for the young adult (*Beverly Hills, 90210*, *Seinfeld*, *Friends*).

It is important to recognize that a diversity of programming has always been available to the television viewer, regardless of the era. For example, family comedies like *Father Knows Best* and *The Danny Thomas Show* ran successfully during the adult western era when *Gunsmoke, Wagon Train, and Have Gun Will Travel* were at top of the ratings (Brooks & Marsh, 1988). Likewise, the news program *60 Minutes* and family drama *Little House on the Prairie* ranked in the top ten during the fantasy era of the mid-1970s, when shows like *Happy Days, Charlie's Angels* and *The Bionic Woman* were most popular (Brooks & Marsh, 1988).

Reality TV: The Genre of Today

Current reality programs like *Survivor*, *Fear Factor*, and *The Bachelor* make up

the latest of such historic genres. The concept of the reality program is based on the

simple principle of showcasing ordinary people in real-life situations with an unscripted

and unrehearsed format (a more thorough definition will be discussed later in this paper).

Several publications (Sack, 2003; Frisby, 2004; Howley, 2004) have focused on the rise

of reality television over the past few years, specifically with its target audience of high

school and college students (Baumgardner, 2003; Brasch, 2003), because they find the

content involving relationship issues appealing; reality programs allow young viewers to

identify with the no-name stars that appear in a reality series.

Similar to the creation of past genres, today's network executives have continued

to add more reality programming to their prime time line-ups. For example, by January,

2003, one-seventh of all ABC programming was reality-based (www.usatoday.com,

2004). The following season, the major networks added even more reality programming

(www.abc.go.com, 2004; www.cbs.com, 2004; www.fox.com, 2004). Today, several

cable networks ranging from A&E to ESPN, and premium stations Showtime and HBO

have jumped on the reality bandwagon with their own ideas with the purpose of

competing for reality-crazed viewers. In fact, even if you do not like reality television, it

is actually quite difficult to avoid due to the overwhelming number of programs currently

on the air (Frisby, 2004).

Reality TV: A Brief History

Despite the abundance of reality shows on the air today, the concept is as old as

television itself. The earliest examples included the early quiz shows, which appealed to

people who wanted to see everyday people win large sums of cash and prizes for

answering questions in front of a live audience (Brooks & Marsh, 1988). During this

same time, other shows like the always-good-for-a-cry *Queen for a Day* (Rathjen, 2004)

allowed people to hear the sob stories of four non-celebrity women who tried to persuade

a voting audience why she should be crowned that episode's queen. Finally, in *Candid*

Camera, Allen Funt and his crew set up outrageous acts to record the reactions and

embarrassments of an unsuspecting public (Brasch, 2003).

Further attempts at reality programming came years later, and in different forms.

In 1973, PBS aired *An American Family*, a twelve-hour documentary that followed the

lives of a Santa Barbara, CA family, the Louds, as they struggled through difficult issues

such as divorce and homosexuality (www.pbs.org); FOX-TV has broadcast *Cops*, a

weekly look at real-world police and their street activities, for thirteen years; and in 1992,

MTV launched *The Real World*, which invited cable viewers to witness the daily

activities of seven young strangers who shared a New York apartment for a certain

number of months (Biography, 2003). With reality television able to sustain an audience

following over years of changing eras, it is necessary to understand reasons for the

genre's popularity.

Understanding Reality Television Popularity

The genre has been able to achieve success over the past few years for several

reasons. First, the mixture of viewer popularity and cheap production costs make a

reality show good business for a television network, especially compared to the cost of

other programming formats such as comedies and dramas (Sack, 2003). For instance,

most stars in a reality series are more affordable due to their "no-name status" (Brasch,

2003, p. 3), the sets tend to cost less (Gourley, 2001), and since much of the material is unscripted, staff writer fees are comparably minimal.

A second reason for reality television's popularity is the ability for one to view the second-by-second lives of people. This "visual gossip" (Sack, 2003), allows the viewer to spy on real-life characters involved in more entertaining and interesting situations than what may occur in his/her own daily lives. A good example of this is the FOX series *Temptation Island,* where the viewer is given the role of a "keyhole private detective" (Andrejevic, 2004, p. 173) by prying into bedrooms to see if separated couples fall victim to romantic strangers while their significant other is nowhere in sight. This seems logical since we already live in a world where people are obsessed with the private lives of celebrities; reality TV takes the shortcut by transforming people the viewers can relate to into celebrities because of the willingness to have their private lives exposed (Thomas, 2003).

Two final reasons for reality's appeal apply specifically to teens and young adults. Many of the shows tend to contain a high volume of interactivity (Internet games and chat rooms) that are of interest to an age group absorbed in a multimedia world (Hiltbrand, 2004). Finally, the duration of a typical reality series' season (four to thirteen weeks) is shorter than that of a comedy or drama; a teen's attention span and lack of patience will tend to compliment more with the shorter reality series than any other programming (Hiltbrand, 2004).

Reality programming, with all its benefits, appears to be the lifeboat for television networks over the past few years. Its ability to rescue sagging ratings (Brasch, 2003)

while maintaining lower production costs benefit producers looking for content that will complement a competitive prime time schedule.

Reality programming is different from documentaries, newscasts, and sporting events that use realism to entertain and inform its viewers. Documentary material tends to focus on geographic or culturally remote life and people (Andrejevic, 2003), with a primary purpose to bring informing and educating an audience of such abnormalities. Reality television, while produced in a similar fashion to the documentary, tends to focus more on the conditions and lifestyles of ordinary, or real people. In addition, because the primary goal of a documentary is to provide information, it usually follows more of a scripted structure in order to fit its specific program timeframe.

A typical newscast is also scripted via teleprompter. Its viewed material (footage) consists of real-world people as opposed to actors, but the format of a newscast limits our ability to learn about the personal attributes of the characters it profiles. The focus of newscasts is not the same as other reality programs. While news anchors strive to entertain their viewers, the primary purpose of the newscast, like the documentary, is to inform, not entertain.

Sports programs are their own independent genre, just like comedies, dramas, or westerns. While similar to reality, sports programs are typically unscripted, and the featured stars/athletes are otherwise normal people except for unique talents that earn them celebrity status. However, sports television varies from the present-day concept of the reality genre in many ways. Most obvious is the program format difference between the two. A sporting event like a football or baseball game is simply a competition

between two teams, where a winner is declared. Fans generally watch to be entertained

by their favorite teams or players. Unlike reality TV, these players are not placed in

elements they are unfamiliar with, cameras do not follow each player's second-by second

reactions during the event, and the audience tends to care less about each individual

character/player, and more about what it will take to have the team come out victorious.

A final factor that makes reality different from other programming forms or

genres is the numerous sub-genres that have been found to exist. This awareness not only

shows diversity of the genre, but also forces us to re-consider its definition from past

authors (Kennedy, 2000; Brasch, 2003).

The Sub-Genres of Reality Television

The concept of a typical reality show is basic and simple; the *stars* are placed in

front of the camera without much of a script. The show content is made up of daily

activities and reactions of the stars when they are placed in particular situations and tends

to offer insight into human relationships more than the normal sitcom or drama

(Kennedy, 2000). Reality television has been identified as game shows, talent shows,

talk shows, and "day-in-the-life" programs that showcase the personalities of people not

normally held in the spotlight (Brasch, 2003).

The recent release of programs like *The Simple Life* and *The Surreal Life* have

forced us to reconsider that definition. These shows that follow the reality-based format

focus on how celebrities and other high profile characters function in an element not

normal to their own. Therefore, it seems that the general definition of "real people in

extraordinary situations" (Murray, 2004, p. 2) may be the most accurate to date.

The question of how to best define reality television may be the result of the many sub-genres that exist within. The reality genre, different from others in the past, has needed to be further broken down due to the wide diversity of its programs. To date, ten sub-genres have been found to exist - the first nine were identified by a combination of researched authors (Andrejevic, 2004; Ouellette & Murray, 2004), with the tenth being a creation of this paper's author:

> gamedocs (*Survivor, Big Brother*): following the day-in-the-life happenings of the stars, wrapped in a game show text, where stars are eliminated regularly, until a grand prize is rewarded in the finale
>
> talent shows (*American Idol, Star Search*): stage presentations, profiling the talents of non-celebrities looking to achieve stardom
>
> dating programs (*Blind Date, Elimidate*): following the happenings of a couple's date
>
> makeover/lifestyle programs (*Extreme Makeover, Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*): self-help, step-by-step happenings that reveal the rags to riches change in one's current lifestyle
>
> docusoaps (*An American Family, The Real World*): similar to soap operas, following the day-in-the life happenings of the stars; no prizes awarded, focuses solely on their real-life issues
>
> court TV (*Judge Judy, People's Court*): broadcasting the civil trials of people's actual cases
>
> talk shows (*Oprah, Jerry Springer*): audience participation combined with one-on-one interviews between host and guest
>
> game shows (*Who Wants to Be a Millionaire, The Price is Right*): structured time limit focused on ordinary people attempt challenges in hopes of winning a prize
>
> exceptional moments (*That's Incredible, America's Funniest Home Videos*): profiles of the extraordinary moments within a real person's life

celebrity living (*The Surreal Life, The Simple Life*): celebrities/high profile
people placed in their own unusual environment

Summary of the Television-Viewer Relationship

Much like its mass media predecessors, television had affects on its audience,

although many theorists concluded that it was an active audience that led to its overall

popularity, as well as the popularity of its programs. Over the years, the audience has

played a part into the development of different eras in television. Through gauges like

the Nielsen ratings, network executives have discovered how shows are received and

later determine if additional shows similar in format have could potentially be received.

Reality television, the latest of such eras, has been able to achieve a great deal of

success with the audience. Various authors have hypothesized that the appeal stems from

the ability to see everyday people, much like the viewer, achieve media stardom. The

reality genre has also been found to be different from other past programming forms due

to its variety of sub-genres. While these were briefly defined, the purpose of this paper is

to focus on one sub-genre and determine the top motives an audience has for watching.

The next chapter will analyze the gamedoc program *Survivor* and identify elements of the

show that better explain its popularity.

Chapter Three: Identifying *Survivor* as a Reality Icon

For this study, analysis of the reality gamedoc is necessary in order to identify any potential motives specific to the sub-genre that have not been discovered or used in the previous and more generalized reality research. A pilot study by Mead (2003) sought to find the most common motives for why a target audience watched reality programming by instructing them to rate how accurately a number of statements related to their personal viewing patterns. The findings revealed the most common motives the participants had for viewing reality programs involved the show's serial format (unpredictable happenings on a weekly basis), quality (humorous, laughable content), entertainment value, arousal (elements of drama, excitement or suspense) and sexual interaction.

In order to identify motives specific to reality gamedocs, a qualitative analysis of *Survivor*, a current favorite of the sub-genre was done. This included identifying several key elements within the show's content that could be linked to the top five motivations of the pilot study. The analysis presents reasons why the show is so popular, but can also help in revising the original reality survey since the focus of this study is determining motives linked specifically to reality gamedocs, not necessarily reality programs in general. *Survivor* was selected for the analysis over other gamedocs first, because it is a consistent ratings favorite among reality gamedocs (Nielsen Media, 2005), and second, for introducing the current reality concept and inspiring a great number of copycat productions (Baumgardner, 2003).

The Survivor Gameplan

Information on the *Survivor* analysis was gathered by referring to www.CBS.com

(2005) for installments 1 – 5, and by viewing installments 6 – 9 on television (2003 –

2005). The CBS.com web site was also used as a reference for specific information

pertaining to the latter installments as well. CBS.com (2005) explains what it took to be

among the sixteen castaways for *Survivor 1: Borneo*, which premiered in May, 2000:

> Over 6,000 applicants flooded CBS with videotapes explaining why they
> should be selected. That number was whittled to 800, then 48, then the
> final 16 (with two alternates). After medical and psychological testing, the
> survivors were flown to the city of Kota Kinabalu. Then the fun began.

The premise of the show was simple. Maroon eight men and eight women, all

chosen from many different walks of life, on an island miles away from family, friends,

and the luxuries one is normally accustomed to in everyday life. Every three days, one of

the castaways, which we will also call contestants in this paper, would have to vote off

the island one of their own. The easiest way to remain strong and stay in the game is to

win the reward or immunity challenge. Challenges involved the use of strength, speed,

knowledge, and most importantly, desire/endurance through different forms of

competition in order to determine a winner. Each week's episode usually provided the

contestants with a reward challenge, where the winner(s) was(were) given an opportunity

to be compensated for their victory, usually with elegant dinners, catered trips to exotic

places, or rare visits from family. Winning immunity meant that contestant or tribe

(team) was safe from being voted off the island. The first seven shows featured two or

three teams fighting each other for reward or immunity, with the last six to seven (each

installment ranged from 13 to 14 episodes) actually pitting individuals against each other

following a tribal merger. Week after week, viewers are invited to follow the progression

of the remaining contestants as they fight for the title of the ultimate *Survivor*, and win

the one million dollar grand prize. The audience is exposed to a great deal of content

within each one hour program: this includes castaway interviews, daily communication

between the castaways themselves, and exposure to a variety of activities other than the

challenges, such as fishing for food or building shelters.

As noted earlier, the findings of the Mead (2003) study into determining reality

programming motives with the undergraduate college audience indicated that the top five

could be related to the show's serial format, quality, entertainment, arousal and sexual

interaction. The next part of this paper will now identify key elements from the *Survivor*

program related to these top motivations.

Motive One: Serial Format

The mixture of adventure and drama within the game text provides "a weekly

dose of genuine unpredictability in its outcomes," (Haralovich & Trosset, 2004, p. 76)

and therefore keeps the viewer glued to the screen for every next episode in order to see

the next suspenseful turn of events and who will eventually emerge victorious and claim

the prize. Following *Survivor 5: Thailand*, show host Jeff Probst expressed wonder at

this unpredictability, citing that all five winners were different in personality,

background, and strategy (CBS.com, 2005).

The genius of the *Survivor* competitions is that the viewer and the contestants

never know what type of challenge to expect in claiming rewards and immunity from

week to week. For example, one particular episode may feature a race through a rugged

obstacle course, where the winner is rewarded with a steak and shrimp buffet. A more

athletic contestant may have an edge and claim the reward. However, just as the athlete

gains strength and confidence as a result of the recent reward victory, the following

immunity challenge may involve relying on contestant memory, such as a trivia contest

about fellow tribemates. This is won by someone who tends to be more motherly and

took the time earlier to know each contestant better. Therefore, in retaliation for claiming

the earlier reward challenge, the now vulnerable athlete finds himself voted off the island

and eliminated from the competition. This is exactly what happened to a number of

contestants over the eight different installments, including Gervase (*Survivor 1: Borneo*)

in episode ten.

The constant shuffling of contestants from tribe to tribe make it difficult to

assume a safe game plan for contestants. For example in *Survivor 3: Africa*, where the

first ever shuffle took place, not only provided a new twist for viewers, but it destroyed

previous plans of the contestants to form alliances (the technique of select castaways

teaming up to save each other while targeting their biggest threat for expulsion), making

otherwise safe players vulnerable.

What is also very difficult to predict is how each contestant will react when

placed in a particular situation. For example, when faced with the possibility of being

eliminated, the normally sweet Kathy (*Survivor 8: All-Stars*) double-crossed one of her

alliance members in order to assure her own survival. There are the natural elements of

the game that take their toll on many of the players as well. Continuous jungle rainfalls

were a problem for the contestants (*Survivor 2: Australian Outback*, *Survivor 7: Pearl Islands*) and frustrated even the most comical of contestants like Maralyn (*Survivor 2*) and Rupert (*Survivor 7*). The lack of food was another frustration for all contestants who played the game at any time, and some arguments ensued when the constant menu of rice and boiled water was the only thing available to eat.

Finally, the beauty of diversity means that not every contestant will see the same island activities the same way. Therefore, the difference of opinions led to tension between people. Jealousy is also a common attribute by a selection of players, mostly by females over such topics as work ethic and the amount of male attention received while on the island. Diversity in characters of *Survivor* provides viewers with the ability to easily find at least one character similar to their own personality and behaviorisms.

Motive Two: Quality

The show has been able to maintain a level of success over the years because the *Survivor* contestants are not professional actors, and therefore react differently when placed out of their comfort elements of home and into an unfamiliar, secluded area with a group of strangers with a multitude of cameras following them around. The unfamiliarity with performing in front of cameras can cause awkwardness and embarrassment, which viewers may find amusing to criticize.

Haralovich and Trosset (2004) add that many contestants actually "play" to the cameras, meaning their behavior on the show is very different from what they are like to others they know in real life. For example, "Johnny Fairplay" (*Survivor 7: Pearl Islands*) lied to tribemates and told them his grandmother died while he was on the island in order

to play on the tribe's sympathy. As a castaway, he played the part of a villain for the audience, which may be quite different from the man he is in real life.

A final factor that viewers may find humorous in the *Survivor* series is the stereotypes that some of the characters tend to fall into. One example is Amber, a petite young woman whose best strategy is presenting herself as a helpless woman dependent on male construction worker Rob (*Survivor 8: All-Stars*). This strategy was previously practiced by other women (Colleen, *Survivor 1: Borneo*; Elisabeth, *Survivor 2: Australian Outback*). Young independent women who watch the program may find these characters insulting or ridiculous compared to how they believe young women normally behave. But as Ang (1985) pointed out in the *Dallas* study, viewers somehow accepted the roles of women like Sue Ellen and Ellie, who were typically overshadowed or dominated by their much stronger male counterpart.

Another unfair stereotype involves the negative labeling of minorities. For example, Clarence (*Survivor 3: Africa*), a black male, was branded a thief by tribemates after he was accused of stealing beans from the team's supplies. However, Rupert (*Survivor 7: Pearl Islands*), a white male with a hearty sense of humor, was seen as a hero when he stole one team's provisions and sold them to nearby villagers in order to benefit his own team. Furthermore, advancing in *Survivor* seems to be linked to the ability of anyone, regardless of race or gender, to backstab, lie, and fight with other tribemates on a regular basis.

Motive Three: Entertainment

Each season of *Survivor* typically begins with the presentation of a very diverse

group of individuals in terms of demographic, race, age, sexuality, personality, and

values (see Probst's earlier comments about the diversity of the winners). Richard

(*Survivor 1: Borneo*) was seen as an evil, conniving person, who also happened to be

gay; Tina (*Survivor 2: Australian Outback*) was the sweet, motherly type; Ethan

(*Survivor 3: Africa*) was the decent and moral young athletic male. When we break down

installments 1-3, it appears that producers, whether intentional or not, seemed to fill each

of the major personality traits with their casting. In studying the characters, the average

viewer can personally pin label to each castaway certain people on the show, just as Ang

(1985) demonstrated with her character breakdown of *Dallas*. Below is an example of

the classification of some of the major identified personalities, followed by the character

that could arguably best fill that show's trait.

Character Trait	*Survivor 1*	*Survivor 2*	*Survivor 3*
the athlete	Gervase	Alicia	Ethan
the beauty	Jenna	Jerri	Jesse
the comedian	Sean	Maralyn	Tom
the follower	Colleen	Elisabeth	Lindsey
the leader	Joel	Michael	Frank
the loudmouth	Susan	Kel	Linda
the mother-figure	Gretchen	Tina	Kim J.
the multi-tasker	Rudy	Colby	Lex
the oddball	Greg	Mitchell	Brandon
the villain	Richard	Kimmi	Clarence

Another attribute concerning entertainment Ang (1985) recognizes is the

production quality of the program. Effective camera positioning and shot selection can

reveal a more dramatic presentation in television. This is true in the production of

Survivor. Much of the show is shot with hand-held cameras, with quick pans and tilts

used to follow the action, in an effort to present the program's activities as a live happening. This includes the competitions that lead to reward and immunity, and the interactions of the contestants as strategies and alliances are discussed. However, when the show presents material with little potential action, such as personal interviews and the tribal council, the cameras are locked down on level tripods. This better illustrates the passive, relaxed activity of normal conversation. Additional production elements such as the combination of music and cut-away shots of island life help ease transitions from one activity to another within the show. These are necessary, especially since the show is presented with no announcer commentary, and the primary sounds of the show are supplied by contestant interviews and host Jeff's Probst commentaries.

Survivor, perhaps better than any other reality program, combines interview material with b-roll footage (footage that shows an activity happening simultaneously as one is talking about it) to provide entertainment to the viewer. Rarely does an interview take place where the shot of the contestant is shown from beginning to end of the interview. In almost every incident with an interview, b-roll footage is edited over various parts of the interview that coincide with what the interviewer is talking about. In order to add to this effect, the b-roll audio is also often included with each cutaway shot, but is lowered enough so it does not distract the primary audio of the interview. In addition, interviews tend to be very brief, typically no longer than a minute, which keeps the pace of the island activity moving. These techniques do not seem to be old or repetitive yet, perhaps due to the fact that the combinations of these elements lead to the fast pace and keeps the attention of the viewer without the worry of boredom setting in.

Motive Four: Arousal

The drama of *Survivor* seems more gripping than the average gamedoc, as contestants are often placed in land areas deemed quite dangerous under normal conditions (*Survivor 3: Africa*). Perhaps unknown to viewers, they are actually quite protected, since the producers do not wish to see their stars eaten by the lions or bitten by deadly snakes. Health camps are also provided nearby to assist health-fatigued castaways so they do not appear too sickly in front of the cameras. For example, Rodger (*Survivor 2: Australian Outback*) admitted to receiving shots from the nearby hospital to battle dehydration while he continued to stay and compete on the show. In fact, the lone tragedy up to this point in the series was Michael (*Survivor 2: Outback*), who lost consciousness and was severely burned when he fell into a fire. Immediately following this accident, however, an emergency helicopter was flown in and Michael was lifted to hospital care. A more realistic survival setting would have resulted in Michael having to care for himself and endure long-term pain and suffering during a slow healing process.

We should also not forget that the multitude of production staff members who film, record sound, interview, and generally assist in the completion of each installment. When not working they typically sleep in warm beds and eat nutritious food just yards away from where the actual contestants are slaving away at their camps.

Motive Five: Sexual Interaction

Survivor producer Mark Burnett has thought about a future installment in a winter climate, but admits the need for hotter destinations when shooting each season of episodes (David, 2004). Burnett guesses that there would be a viewership decline if a

minimal amount of skin is not shown, especially with women.

Survivor provides the same scenario at the first show to start each season: sixteen players, eight males, and eight females. This presents a variety of potential sexual encounters. First, some women like Kathy (*Survivor 8: All-Stars*) worked extra hard to prove she was every bit up to the rough challenges as any man. This can cause tension between some fellow male tribemates, as the assumed male domination factor is now in question. The show appears to like those characters that provide higher potential for conflict, simply because of the extra airtime that is dedicated to it. The logic behind this idea is simple. Much like it was with *Dallas*, viewers like to curiously pry into relationships, specifically sexual, of television characters. It can be argued that *Survivor*, since it employs real-life people as opposed to professional actors, is more apt to gain its audience with the same sexual drama or tensions put on the screen because the performers, as well as the plots are what normal viewers are used to experiencing in their social norms everyday.

Specifically in *Survivor 1: Borneo* with Colleen and Greg, and most recently in *Survivor 8: All-Stars*, with Rob and Amber, the show focused on the romances that blossomed between players. Watching the growing relationship between Amber and Rob as they sleep together in the tent tends to have great appeal to those audience members who appreciate the need for sex on TV. Another great example of reality television producers supplying the anticipated pleasure to its audience occurred in a 2003 installment of the MTV wrestling reality show *WWE Tough Enough 2*. This program's initial intent is to show the training programs that young, inexperienced wrestlers, both

male and female, go through in order to be named winner of the challenge and be given

an opportunity to wrestle with the likes of all-stars like The Rock and "Stone Cold" Steve

Austin. Like *Survivor*, a number of contestants are chosen, but week after week one

student is let go, until eventually a champion is declared. However, when a romance

blossomed between one of the males and one of the females competing, the show seemed

to concentrate less on the training, and more on the activities of the couple. To make

matters even more interesting for the viewer, the female in this relationship already had a

boyfriend back home, and felt it necessary to confess her sins. As expected, the cameras

followed her right to the phone, and exposed her crying plea for forgiveness. Bottom

line, what the audience is now exposed to is a dramatic twist involving heartbreak and

tears instead of the typical behind-the-scenes wrestling footage

It is important to note that in *Survivor 8: All-Stars*, the viewer obviously never

sees Rob and Amber actually having intercourse, but instead it is the possibility that they

actually could that keeps people interested each week, in hopes of having any guilty

voyeuristic pleasures fulfilled.

Like Amber, pretty young females (Jenna, *Survivor 1: Borneo* and Jenna,

Survivor 6: Amazon) make television viewing males very happy with their appearance,

but they also attract other women who gain interest in the latest fashions. With *Survivor*,

this pertains to the popularity of the official buffs that each contestant receives. It is

tradition for most young female castaways to use the buffs, normally worn on the head,

as tank tops. This stylistic gesture has the potential to interest and influence women

viewers to become consumers, as they strive to look similar to the "*Survivor* babes" in

order to gain male affection. Currently, anyone can purchase the official buffs on-line at

the CBS.com/Survivor web site. In addition, the sale of these buffs gets promoted

regularly on each episode of the show.

Summary of Survivor's Popularity

The Mead (2003) pilot study determined the top motives of reality television

could be related to the show's serial format, quality, entertainment value, arousal and

sexual interaction. A qualitative analysis of *Survivor* identified key elements that could

be linked to these motivations. The analysis provided reasons for the show's popularity

and assisted in revising the original reality survey to determine potential motives linked

specifically to reality gamedocs.

Restatement of Research Questions

With all of the information documented about Uses and Gratifications Theory,

gamedoc reality television programs, and the analysis on *Survivor*, a survey was

developed to test the relationship between a specific target audience and the immense

popularity of the sub-genre. The data were intended to answer three research questions.

The first involves testing the reliability of the previous research into the popularity of

reality programming with the 18-25 age group by determining if a surveyed group of

undergraduate college students actively seeks out a reality gamedocs as a form of

personal fulfillment.

RQ1:   What percentage of 18-25 year-olds watch gamedoc reality
programs?

The second question involves determining the most common motives that people 18-25 years old have for watching reality gamedocs. The survey used in this study will have participants indicate how likely they are to watch or avoid watching gamedocs and rank the likelihood they watch them based on 19 different reasons.

      RQ2:   What are the most common motives 18-25 year-olds have
             for watching gamedoc reality programs?

The third question involves determining whether the *gender* of a person is in any way significant to the top motives of gamedoc watching.

      RQ3:   Are there gender differences in the top motives for watching
             gamedoc reality programs?

Past studies (Ang, 1985; Mead, 2004) revealed gender breakdown in their findings, but failed to define any significance in motivational differences between males and females. This study will determine any significant differences in gamedoc watching in terms of gender, specifically with the number of television gamedocs hours watched per week and the motives for watching the programming.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Sample

 To answer the research questions, students enrolled in undergraduate communication classes were surveyed from three different regions of the United States: one state university in New York (east), one state university in Wisconsin (Midwest), and one state university in California (west). Participants were instructed not to provide their name, but to indicate their gender (male or female), age, race (Caucasian, African-American, Asian, etc.), and class standing (freshman, sophomore, etc.). They were then instructed to both list and rate reasons why they watched or avoided reality gamedocs.

Procedures

 Survey Structure

 The participants were provided 19 different motives for watching reality gamedocs and instructed to rate his/her likelihood of watching for each of those motives. Most were taken from Babrow (1987), but additional motives were added based on research examining reality programming. First, a category related to voyeuristic pleasure was added as a potential motive since research suggests the target audience will be more likely to find pleasure in what is going on in the lives of the stars in the program(s) (Thomas, 2003; Andrejevic, 2004).

 Second, a category involving interactivity was added to the survey, since programs today, specifically reality shows, allow viewers to view deleted scenes, visit chat rooms, and even publicly vote for their favorite characters via the computer (Hiltbrand, 2004). Finally, a category that focused on competitiveness in reality

gamedocs was added. Following the qualitative analysis of *Survivor* as mentioned in the

previous chapter, it was determined that the participants should be offered the

opportunity to rate a motive that related to the various challenges/contests typically found

in a gamedoc. Babrow (1987) made no reference to voyeurism, interactivity, or

competitiveness in the original survey.

It was further determined that one of the 16 categories in the soap opera survey,

social interaction, needed to be broken into two sub-categories. According to Babrow

(1987), social interaction referred to participants who: (1) watched what

friends/roommates have on when he/she got home and (2) watched so he/she kept up with

the conversations of friends, since all appear to watch. Since (2) seems more logical to

be labeled social interaction, the revision to the reality survey involved re-titling (1) as

social convenience. In addition, the soap opera study featured separate categories for

learning and surveillance, which were merged into one for this survey. According to

Babrow (1987), learning referred to viewing for the purpose of finding out how to behave

or deal with real-life problems. Surveillance referred to viewing for the intent on finding

out the latest fashions/hairstyles. Since these categories both involve watching for

personal improvement purposes, they were found to be too similar to warrant separation

for this study. In addition, Babrow (1987) revealed that less than 1 percent of those

participants indicated surveillance as a motive for watching soap operas, which further

suggests that one general motive on learning should be sufficient. The result of these

revisions was the 19 categories presented that the participants were instructed to rate.

A final revision includes adding open-ended questions to the current survey. The Babrow (1987) data, like Ang (1985), appear to have assumed that anyone who filled out the survey watched enough soap operas to know they liked them or hated them. It is possible, then, that some collected data could have come from people who did not watch any soap operas, thereby tainting the final rankings. To limit this problem with the current survey, any participant who indicated they do not watch any gamedoc programming was unable to rate motives for watching them. Therefore, it can be better assumed that all scores tabulated for the 19 motives were done by people who actively seek and watch reality gamedocs.

Data Collection

In order to obtain the most accurate information from the participants, the survey first defined a gamedoc reality program so they were clear what type of programs were deemed reality, versus those that were not, such as news shows and sporting events. Examples of gamedocs (*Survivor, Big Brother, The Apprentice*, and *Fear Factor*) were provided to assist with this definition. Examples of other reality sub-genres were also provided to help distinguish between gamedocs and others not relevant to the study.

Participants were provided with a copy of the same survey (see Appendix) during the same spring, 2005 school semester. Surveys were sent, distributed, and received within the two-week period of April 25 – May 5, 2005. In order to limit school distractions with the students, no final exams or other testing was done during the distribution of the surveys and semester break for all schools was at least another two weeks away for everyone.

The students were enrolled in an undergraduate communication class at their respective university. The surveys were personally handed out and collected by this paper's author at the Midwest university, while they were mailed to professors at the east and west universities. Those professors were given direction by the author on survey distribution and collection, and postage to return the surveys was paid for by the author.

Measures

The survey began by asking participants to estimate the number of television hours he/she watched during the average week. Next, each participant was asked to estimate the number of television hours watched during the average week that were considered gamedoc reality programs.

If zero or none was indicated when estimating number of gamedoc reality hours watched per week, the participant was instructed to refer to the third part of the survey, an open-ended question that asked to briefly indicate why he/she avoids watching gamedoc reality programs. If a number other than zero or none was indicated, the participant was asked to refer to the fourth part of the survey and list three reasons why he/she watches. The final part had the participant rate (through the use of a Likert-type scale system) from 1-7 (7 = strongly agree, 1 = strongly disagree) how strongly he/she agreed with specific viewing motives. As mentioned earlier, a total of 19 statements were presented and based on motives inspired by Babrow (1987), additional research into reality popularity (Thomas, 2003; Andrejevic, 2004; Hiltbrand, 2004), and the qualitative analysis of the *Survivor* program.

Respondent Profiles

A total of 327 surveys were distributed and returned from the three regions.

Gender, age, race, and class standing were coded categorically during data interpretation.

These categories included: gender (1 = male; 2 = female); age (1 = 18-25 years old;

2 = other); race (1 = white; 2 = black; 3 = Asian; 4 = Native American; 5 = Hispanic;

6 = other); class standing (1 = freshman; 2 = sophomore; 3 = junior; 4 = senior;

5 = other).

Television hours viewed per week and reality television hours viewed per week

were coded numerically. An SPSS data set was created to analyze the findings and

separate t-tests were done to show significant differences within the categories.

Twenty-two surveys were thrown out because they were completed by students

who either did not fall in the required age group of 18-25 or did not indicate an age when

filling out the survey. With the remaining 305 surveys, the gender breakdown (see Table

1) was 136 males (44.6 percent) and 169 females (55.4 percent).

Table 1: Gender Breakdown of Sample Used (Total and Percentage)

Gender	Total	Percent
Males	136	44.6
Females	169	55.4
Combined	305	100.0

Of the total sample, the racial breakdown revealed 208 participants (68.2 percent) were white/Caucasian, with the remaining 97 (31.8 percent) indicating otherwise (see Table 2). A further racial breakdown indicates the Hispanic population was second to Caucasian with 38 participants (12.4 percent), followed by Asian (n = 24; 7.9 percent), blacks (n = 17; 5.6 percent), other (n = 17; 5.6 percent), and Native American (n = 1; 0.3 percent). High response for "other" was the result of not only participants who did not fit the other five categories, but also those participants who did not indicate a race.

Table 2: Racial Breakdown of Sample Used (Total and Percentage)

Race	Total	Percent
White	208	68.2
Black	17	5.6
Asian	24	7.9
Native American	1	0.3
Hispanic	38	12.4
Other	17	5.6
Combined	305	100.0

In terms of total class standing (see Table 3), there were 48 freshmen (15.7 percent), 75 sophomores (24.6 percent), 107 juniors (35.1 percent), and 72 seniors (23.6 percent). Three surveys (1 percent) failed to indicate class standing, but were still accepted because they fell in the 18-25 age group.

Table 3: Class Standing Breakdown of Sample Used (Total and Percentage)

Class Standing	Total	Percent
Freshman	48	15.7
Sophomore	75	24.6
Junior	107	35.1
Senior	72	23.6
Other	3	1.0
Combined	305	100.0

Finally, a t-test was done using the total sample in order to determine the gender breakdown of television hours watched per week. As shown in Table 4, no significant difference was found between the genders (males: M = 13.18, sd = 12.61; females: M = 11.13, sd = 10.47; p = .123) in television hours viewed.

Table 4: Gender Breakdown of Television Hours Viewed Per Week

	Males		Females		
	M	sd	M	sd	p
TV Hrs./Week	13.18	12.61	11.13	10.47	.123

Note: Based on the sample of 305 participants (Males: n = 136; Females: n = 169)

Summary of Methodology

A total of 327 students enrolled in undergraduate communication classes during the spring, 2005 school semester were surveyed to determine the top motives for

watching reality gamedocs. Information gathered on the participants was limited to gender, age, race, and class standing. They were instructed to both indicate and rate reasons why they watched or avoided reality gamedocs programs. The survey was patterned off the Babrow (1987) study in determining motives for viewing daytime soap operas. Key differences in the genres used between the two studies required the survey to undergo several revisions, including the adding of categories such as voyeurism, interactivity, and competitiveness that related specifically to gamedocs.

Participants provided estimates to both the number of television hours and number of gamedoc hours watched per week. Those who indicated they watch at least an hour per week then rated the likelihood of watching based on 19 different motives/categories presented. 22 surveys were thrown out, leaving 305 to be interpreted. The sample consisted of 136 males and 169 females, 67 percent of the total sample was white/Caucasian, and juniors made up the largest class at 35 percent. A further breakdown of gender in terms of the number of television hours viewed per week revealed no significant difference.

Chapter Five: Results

RQ1:   What percentage of 18-25 year-olds watch gamedoc reality
            programs?

In response to RQ1, 185 of the 305 participants (60.7 percent) indicated they

watch some form of gamedoc reality programming (see Table 5).

Table 5: Frequency of Gamedoc Program Hours Viewed Per Week
            (Total and Percentage)

Hours Viewed/Week	Total	Percent
None/Zero	120	39.3
At least one	185	60.7
Combined	305	100.0

Answers to the other research questions will be based on information provided by

the 185 participants who indicated they view at least one hour of gamedoc programming

per week. Before answering the remaining questions, the tables below provide

demographic breakdowns of those participants. First, in terms of gender (see Table 6),

the sample was comprised of 70 males (37.8 percent) and 115 females (62.2 percent).

Table 6: Gender Breakdown of Gamedoc Program Viewers
          (Total and Percentage)

Gender	Total	Percent
Males	70	37.8
Females	115	62.2
Combined	185	100.0

The majority of the participants were white (63.2 percent), with the complete

racial breakdown shown in Table 7. Their breakdown in terms of class standing is shown

in Table 8.

Table 7: Racial Breakdown of Gamedoc Program Viewers
          (Total and Percentage)

Race	Total	Percent
White	117	63.2
Black	13	7.0
Asian	18	9.7
Native American	1	0.6
Hispanic	24	13.0
Other	12	6.5
Combined	185	100.0

Table 8: Class Standing Breakdown of Gamedoc Program Viewers
           (Total and Percentage)

Class Standing	Total	Percent
Freshman	23	12.4
Sophomore	41	22.2
Junior	69	37.3
Senior	49	26.5
Other	3	1.6
Combined	185	100.0

A t-test was done in order to determine if there were differences between males and females in the number of gamedoc hours watched per week. As shown in Table 9, no significant difference was found between the genders (males: $M = 2.48$, sd = 2.22; females: $M = 3.05$, sd = 2.87; $p = .154$) in gamedoc hours viewed.

Table 9: Gender Breakdown of Gamedoc Hours Viewed Per Week

	Males		Females		
	M	sd	M	sd	p
Gamedoc Hrs./Week	2.48	2.22	3.05	2.87	.154

Note: Based on the sample of 185 participants (Males: n = 70; Females: n = 115)

In addition, one-way ANOVAs were conducted to determine if there were differences with the number of gamedoc hours watched per week between other demographics.

None were found in terms of race ($p = .623$), class standing ($p = .237$), and school

location ($p = .672$).

RQ2:   What are the most common motives 18-25 year-olds have
for watching gamedoc reality programs?

In answering RQ2, it was found that based on a 7-point scale ($7 =$ strongly agree,

$1 =$ strongly disagree), the top motive the 185 participants had for watching a reality

gamedoc was for its quality, or humorous content ($M = 5.24$, sd $= 1.38$).   As seen in

Table 10, the remainder of the top five include: watching for entertainment purposes

($M = 5.13$, sd $= 1.57$), for its serial format ($M = 4.79$, sd $= 1.70$), for drama and

excitement arousal ($M = 4.62$, sd $= 1.69$), and for the competitiveness found within the

content ($M = 4.52$, sd $= 1.76$).

The least popular motives for watching gamedocs included for parasocial

interaction ($M = 2.17$, sd $= 1.59$), for the interactivity ($M = 2.36$, sd $= 1.69$), and for

learning purposes ($M = 2.53$, sd $= 1.73$).

Table 10: Motives for Watching Reality Gamedoc Programming

Motive	*M*	sd	Rank
Quality/Humor	5.24	1.38	1
Entertainment	5.13	1.57	2
Serial format	4.79	1.70	3
Arousal (drama, excitement)	4.62	1.69	4
Competitiveness	4.52	1.76	5
Social convenience	4.28	1.55	6
Character progression	4.12	1.67	7
Distracts from own reality	3.93	1.66	8
Addiction to content	3.79	2.12	9
Relaxation	3.70	1.59	10
Social interaction	3.65	1.74	11
Voyeurism	3.52	1.88	12
Sexual interaction	3.46	1.75	13
Interest in character	3.41	1.89	14
Relate to character	3.27	1.72	15
Best thing on TV	2.91	1.48	16
Learning	2.53	1.73	17
Interactivity	2.36	1.69	18
Parasocial interaction	2.17	1.59	19

Note: 7 = strongly agree with motive; 1 = strongly disagree with motive

RQ3:   Are there gender differences in the top motives for watching
gamedoc reality programs?

Looking at how the motives ranked according to gender breakdown (see Table

11), there is a general agreement on the top three motives between the genders.

Spearman's rho was used in order to determine the accuracy with the overall ranking of

the motives as they pertain to the genders; it was found that the motive rankings did have

a strong correlation (.868). Both males and females indicate they are most likely to

watch reality gamedocs because they find the content on the show humorous (males: M

$= 5.14$; females: $M = 5.30$; $p = .466$), entertaining (males: $M = 4.79$; females: $M = 5.34$;

$p = .019$), and they enjoy the serial format (males: $M = 4.41$; females: $M = 5.03$;

$p = .017$). Much like the top motives, males and females agree on the bottom three

motive categories. They ranked parasocial interaction (males: $M = 2.00$; females: $M =$

2.28; $p = .250$), interactivity (males: $M = 2.26$; females: $M = 2.43$; $p = .511$), and

learning (males: $M = 2.53$; females: $M = 2.54$; p = .980) the lowest.

Despite those similarities, there appear inconsistencies between males and

females with the middle motive categories, defined as those ranked fourth through

sixteen, such as addiction to content and sexual interaction. T-tests found significant

differences in 9 of the 19 motives between the genders. Mean scores show that females

typically rate the motives higher (the exceptions being voyeurism and sexual interaction)

than males. As indicated in Table 11, (seen in the same order as they appear in Table

10), the nine motives found to be significantly different included entertainment

(males: $M = 4.79$, sd = 1.47; females: $M = 5.34$, sd = 1.59, $p = .019$), serial format

(males: $M = 4.41$, sd = 1.76; females: $M = 5.03$, sd = 1.63, $p = .017$), arousal (males:

$M = 4.20$, sd = 1.77; females: $M = 4.88$, sd = 1.59, $p = .008$), distracts from own reality

(males: $M = 3.50$, sd = 1.64; females: $M = 4.19$, sd = 1.63, p = .006), addiction to

content (males: $M = 2.94$, sd = 1.93; females: $M = 4.32$, sd = 2.07, p = .000), relaxation

(males: $M = 3.40$, sd = 1.57; females: $M = 3.88$, sd = 1.58, p = .047), sexual interaction

(males: $M = 3.86$, sd = 1.62; females: $M = 3.22$, sd = 1.80, p = .016), interest in

character (males: $M = 2.90$, sd = 1.71; females: $M = 3.71$, sd = 1.94, p = .004), and best

thing on television (males: $M = 2.53$, sd = 1.58; females: $M = 3.15$, sd = 1.37, p = .005).

Table 11: Gender Breakdown of Motives for Watching Reality Programming

Motive Category	Males			Females			
	M	sd	Rank	*M*	sd	Rank	*p*
Quality/Humor	5.14	1.37	1	5.30	1.39	2	.466
Entertainment	4.79	1.47	2	5.34	1.59	1	.019
Serial format	4.41	1.76	3	5.03	1.63	3	.017
Arousal (drama)	4.20	1.77	6	4.88	1.59	4	.008
Competitiveness	4.24	1.91	4	4.70	1.65	5	.090
Social convenience	4.23	1.63	5	4.30	1.51	7	.748
Character progression	4.10	1.57	7	4.13	1.74	9	.905
Distracts from own reality	3.50	1.64	9	4.19	1.63	8	.006
Addiction to content	2.94	1.93	14	4.32	2.07	6	.000
Relaxation	3.40	1.57	11	3.88	1.58	10	.047
Social interaction	3.39	1.83	12	3.82	1.68	11	.103
Voyeurism	3.59	1.77	10	3.49	1.95	13	.726
Sexual interaction	3.86	1.62	8	3.22	1.80	15	.016
Interest in character	2.90	1.71	15	3.71	1.94	12	.004
Relate to character	3.20	1.62	13	3.31	1.79	14	.670
Best thing on TV	2.53	1.58	16	3.15	1.37	16	.005
Learning	2.53	1.72	16	2.54	1.75	17	.980
Interactivity	2.26	1.63	18	2.43	1.73	18	.511
Parasocial interaction	2.00	1.54	19	2.28	1.62	19	.250

Note: 7 = strongly agree with motive; 1 = strongly disagree with motive
          Spearman's rho = .868

Summary of Results

Data from the different parts of the surveys was interpreted to answer the three

research questions involved in this study. In answering RQ1, which asked what

percentage of 18-25 year-olds watch gamedoc reality programs, it was determined that

185 of the 305 participants (61 percent) watch at least one hour of gamedoc programming

per week. Similar in numbers to the total sample described in Chapter Four, females

made up a higher percentage of gamedoc viewers (62 percent), while racial breakdown

again showed a larger number of white/Caucasian participants (63 percent) and class

breakdown showed more juniors than any other (37 percent). No significant difference

was found in terms of gender, race, and class standing with respect to gamedoc hours

viewed per week.

In answering RQ2, the most common motives the respondents indicated for why

they watch gamedocs include for the humorous content, the entertainment value, the

serial format, the drama/excitement, and competitiveness. In answering RQ3 regarding

finding gender differences in the motives for watching gamedocs, 9 of the 19 motives

were found to be significantly different. They were entertainment, serial format, arousal,

distracts from reality, addiction to content, relaxation, sexual interaction, interest in

character, and best thing on television. Finally, females typically rated each of the

motives higher than males on the 7-point scale.

Chapter Six: Discussion

Analysis of Research Data Collected

In order to obtain a more accurate representation of undergraduate students in the United States, three different regions were used to obtain the data for answering the research questions. Using a sample from different regions would also reveal if any differences existed in responses from one region to another (although as mentioned before, none was found). Previous reality television studies (Mead, 2003, 2004; Frisby, 2004) used samples from one specific location, (east, Midwest, etc.). The sample in this study was large enough to provide good representation with race and class standing to both the entire sample and to those who watch gamedocs. Using the different regions was helpful in obtaining a better percentage of minority representation (other than the Native American population) than past studies have done. In terms of race, the minority percentage obtained was the result of a higher turnout from the west region. While the number of non-whites from the east and Midwest regions was similar, each consisting of 20 percent their responses, the number of non-whites from the west was quite different, fielding 51 percent of their responses.

It is unclear how many different communication classes were provided the survey in the east and west regions, since they were distributed and collected by a professor at that school. Since the authors conducted the survey on the Midwest students personally, it is known that only one class was used there. In terms of class standing, the east region supplied the most diverse population among the four grades. Respondent profiles indicated the class(es) used in the east consisted of students from all four grades, while

the Midwest participants were made up of a freshman-sophomore class and the west

participants were mostly junior and senior students. The west region is also where 20 of

the 22 surveys had to be thrown out, again due mostly because those students were older

than 18-25 years of age.

When Mead (2004) surveyed 162 undergraduate students from the Midwest only,

74 percent of them indicated they watched some form reality programming. Originally

the percentage of non-viewers (26 percent) was viewed as high based on the past research

into reality popularity with the 18-25 age group, but that could also be a "glass is half

empty" argument, since 74 percent is a respectable total. In response to RQ1, the 185

gamedoc viewers (61 percent) found in this research is also a respectable total, especially

when considering the larger sample over a broader area and the focus on the single sub-

genre, rather than the genre as a whole.

The results in Table 5 answer RQ2 regarding the top motives the 185 participants

had for watching gamedocs. These results were found to be very similar to the findings

of previous reality television studies (Mead 2003, 2004) with regards to the top five

motives. These results were much different when compared to the Babrow (1987)

daytime soap opera study, as only quality/humor made the top five with each of the

studies.

Table 9 reveals a number of significant differences in the top motives for

watching gamedocs in terms of gender, and this answers RQ3. The mean scores for the

likelihood of each motive (on a scale of 1 – 7) vary between males and females, with

males scoring consistently lower with all of the categories except for sexual interaction

and voyeurism. This is similar to the findings of Mead (2004), where females again had

consistently rated most of their motives higher than the males, therefore making the

argument that women in the 18-25 age group typically get more out of watching reality

programming than men. One could theorize with this study that some of the motives

could have been more similar with the genders than they actually were. For example, due

to the amount of competitiveness found in the particular gamedoc and the general

assumption of the males' love for sports programming, men should have scored higher

with the competition category, although this was not the case. The findings show that

men were more motivated by sexual interaction and the ability to peep into private

happenings than women. However, the mean scores do not indicate that men rated them

high (e.g., the males' mean score for sexual interaction was 3.86 on a 7-point scale) as

much as that women rated these motives very low. Despite the number of significant

differences with the level of agreement between the genders, the table does shows a

general agreement on their top motives. Males and females both indicated they are most

likely to watch because they find the content on the show entertaining, while humorous,

even laughable at times. With regards to the humor, several indicated on the qualitative

portion of the survey that they see many of the reality situations as ridiculous and silly

behavior. Most did not specify what they found the most laughable, but antics such as

racing through large obstacles, having to eat disgusting food quickly, and fighting among

competitors could be examples of what many of them are referring to. Other gamedoc

watchers may also see themselves in a particular star, which may lead to laughter as a

form of embarrassment. One participant admitted to laughing at the obnoxious behavior

of a "reality star" because that performer reminded him of how he tends to behave in real

life.

Respondents said the program content is entertaining to watch due to the mixture

of comedy, the diversity of characters, and the living-on-the-edge excitement. Most

reality gamedocs provide a mixture of competition, interviews, humor, and tears to keep

the average young adult tuned in for the hour it is on.

Many participants indicated they like gamedocs because they enjoy the

"cliffhanger" format of the program. Although many participants watch no more than

two hours of reality gamedocs per week, they do pick a program that appeals to them, and

they tend to concentrate on the same one week after week, just to see what will happen

next. *Survivor* was analyzed in this paper because it was seen as the premiere example of

gamedoc's popularity, but participants who indicated a favorite show mentioned *Fear*

Factor over all others.

There appears a great deal of inconsistency between males and females with the

middle motive categories, defined as those ranked sixth through sixteen, such as

addiction to content and sexual interaction. Babrow (1987) found that women who

watched daytime soap operas found themselves addicted to the program format or a

specific soap on television. With gamedocs, it was found that females also find

themselves much more addicted to the content than males (females: $M = 4.32$; males:

$M = 2.94$; $p = .000$). As mentioned earlier, males seem to enjoy the sexual interaction

between competitors more than females (males: $M = 3.86$; females: $M = 3.22$; $p = .016$),

such as the Rob-Amber affair in *Survivor*, or perhaps they are attracted to the abundance of females competing in bathing suits and sports bras.

Much like the top motives, the males and females agreed on the bottom three motive categories. Both genders indicated to care very little about learning, the interactivity, or the parasocial interaction related to the shows. Although interactivity was seen as a benefit with reality television (Hiltbrand, 2004), it does not seem to appeal much to the 18-25 age group. Presenting a copy of this survey to a younger group of teens may yield more favorable results for the motive.

One thing that has been consistent with all the current findings into reality television is the surprising low ranking voyeurism receives. Ranked number twelve overall in this study, it is unclear why voyeurism continually receives low scores, despite a common sense notion that people watching footage of someone else's intimate moments (another specialty of reality shows) would naturally be appealing.

Like the past research, the reasoning could be because they really do not care about viewing the private lives of other people; it could also be because the question was not phrased well: "reality TV allows me to view the private lives of other people."   This may be received negatively, and students may see this question as comparing themselves to a "peeping tom." If this was the case, we must consider re-phrasing that question, and perhaps take a look at the others to see if the wording could have influenced the way it was actually answered.

Finally, it is important to note the most common reasons provided in the open-ended questions by those who indicated they avoid gamedoc reality programming. Many

participants indicated that the content was too ridiculous and silly, the shows were

boring, or overkill of so many reality shows on the air today actually turned some off

from television all together. In addition, several indicated they seek out other forms of

programming to be entertained, while others do watch some reality television, but seek

out other sub-genres like dating shows or talk shows, while avoiding gamedocs.

Limitations of the Research

At present, this is the only study that has researched motives of a programming

sub-genre. The findings for gamedoc motives cannot be compared to the findings of any

other sub-genre, since that research has not yet been done. Therefore, the total impact of

this study may be seen as limited or incomplete, since the results can only be compared to

past studies of general reality programming research.

The survey may have to be re-worded so that all categories are described in a way

so they do not affect the truthful answers needed from participants. Using the example of

voyeurism, the term "viewing the private lives of other people" may have been deemed

as negative by students, thereby affecting their response. In this case, like others findings

in the past, voyeurism ranked lower than it probably should have.

Finally, the current study does not factor in how other young adults who fit in the

18-25 year old age bracket would respond to the survey, since it was geared specifically

at undergraduate communication college students. It must be assumed that those who do

not attend classes beyond high school still watch TV. Likewise, it should be assumed

that college students who major in something than communications also watch TV, but it

is unclear what these people watch at this point. Therefore, it must be taken into account

that the sample used for this study is not reflective of the general population of the 18-25 age group.

Future Research

This study represents the third installment (Mead, 2003, 2004) where the top motives of reality television programming were sought. The findings of all three investigations were found to be very consistent, with each study revealing the same top five motives, although the rankings were slightly different. This suggests there is consistency with reality television's appeal to the 18-25 age group. The obvious future for a study like this is to continue researching other sub-genres of reality programming to see if the motives vary. At this point, it is unclear whether or not the results of other sub-genres will actually vary if given a similar survey like the one used for the gamedocs.

There is evidence that this could be a possibility. Even though the survey structure used in this research mirrored Babrow (1987), the results between the two were very different. As mentioned earlier, the top motives for this study were humor, entertainment, and serial format. The soap opera survey ranked time consideration and diversion the highest. The differences found within these forms of programming suggest that gamedoc motives may vary from those of docusoaps. It seems the next logical step would be to create a survey focused more on a determining the motives for why undergraduate students watch docusoaps, and see if the results relate more to gamedocs or soap operas.

As beneficial as this data is, it should be compared to a new study where the sample better reflects the real world 18-25 year old age group, since this was restricted to

those who attend college. A follow-up to this study would be to distribute the survey in a way or at a location so others in the 18-25 age group can participate. In order to be the most consistent, the next study needs to really focus on the age category, therefore eliminating all those surveys filled out that do not fall into the target age group. Unfortunately, the possibility that many people who fill out the survey and indicate they are in that age group would most likely lie, just so their surveys would be counted, unaware to the researcher.

Another form of testing beyond these findings would include a future study revolving around the psychological behaviors or intelligence of reality TV viewers. An interesting analysis may include accompanying a survey with an IQ test. The purpose would be to find any patterns of behavior or brain activity that could be related to higher or lower viewing habits. Bottom line, any additional research of the relationship between television programming and the viewers is beneficial. People will continue to have a general relationship with television; with the changing eras of programming throughout history, it seems logical to continue research into this relationship and determine potential viewing motives with different programming eras.

Final Thoughts on the Findings

The relationship between forms of the mass media and their audience have been researched since the 1940s. Over the years, uses and gratifications theory has introduced basic audience motivations (Herzog, 1940; Schramm, Lyle, & Parker, 1961) and has also indicated that a variety of factors help determine audience motivations, including psychological disposition of the viewer, (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974) the program

genre (Babrow, 1987; Mead, 2003, 2004), sub-genres, and gender (this study). What is found in the research history of Uses and Gratifications Theory is that the number of motivations in mass media consumption is not exhausted. This argument seems logical due to the numerous genres of programming that have come and gone in the history of television, and the current lack of research done specifically on each genre. It can be further assumed that even more motivations may be detected with the invention of future genres, therefore indicating the unlikelihood of exhausting media motivations.

The study involved in this paper could be considered one of the most specific involving uses and gratifications to date due to its focus on a programming sub-genre along with gender breakdown of the participants. Previous studies into the theory seemed to be more generalized with the program genre, respondents, as well as content within the tools (e.g., surveys, questionnaires) used to measure viewer motivation. The findings in this study reveal that the more specific the research into the theory, the more one learns more research needs to be done. In attempting to compare this study with recent uses and gratifications studies involving genre specificity, this study indicates the genre/sub-genre of programming affects the top motivations found in a target audience. As mentioned earlier, further research into other genres and sub-genres needs to be explored in order to validate this hypothesis.

Finally, the data from this study confirm the popularity of reality television with the 18-25 year-old target audience. In addition, the content found in reality gamedocs warrants a diverse number of potential motives for watching, and each gender has their own motives for watching them.

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Appendix 1: Reality Television Programming Survey (2 pages)

The following survey will be tabulated to help study human behavior as related to mass communication. **Please be honest when filling it out, as your name will not be needed as identification.** Read each question carefully, and provide the answer that best describes you or your behavior.

The survey involves understanding viewing patterns and behaviors by individuals who regularly view a specific type of **reality program** known as **GAMEDOCS. For the purposes of this study, a GAMEDOC REALITY PROGRAM will be defined as an unscripted program that shows real people, not actors or athletes, active in an environment, competing with peers for the specific goal of winning or claiming a prize.** Examples of **GAMEDOC REALITY PROGRAMS** include *Survivor, Big Brother, The Apprentice, and Fear Factor.*

FINAL NOTE: Because the purpose of this study is focusing strictly on viewing behaviors with **GAMEDOC REALITY PROGRAMS**, it should be understood that opinions of **OTHER FORMS OF REALITY PROGRAMMING ARE NOT TO BE INCLUDED IN THIS SURVEY**. These include **docusoaps** (The Real World), **court shows** (*Judge Judy, The People's Court*), **talk shows** (*Jerry Springer, Oprah*), **makeover shows** (*Extreme Makeover, Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*), **talent shows** (*American Idol, Star Search*), and **dating shows** (*Blind Date, Elimidate*).

INFORMATION ON THE PARTICIPANT

1. Male_____Female_____   2. Age (Yrs.)_____

3. Race_____   4. Class Standing (Freshman, Sophomore…)_____

SURVEY

1. Estimate the number or hours of television you watch during an average week.

_____

2. Estimate the number of television hours watched per week that are considered **GAMEDOC REALITY PROGRAMS.**

_____

IF YOU INDICATED "ZERO" OR "NONE" FOR NUMBER TWO, MOVE ON TO NUMBER THREE. IF YOU INDICATED SOMETHING OTHER THAN "ZERO" OR "NONE" MOVE ON TO NUMBER FOUR.

3. Briefly indicate reasons why you do not watch **GAMEDOC REALITY PROGRAMS.**

_____

_____

_____

IF YOU INDICATED THAT YOU DO NOT WATCH ANY REALITY PROGRAMMING, THEN PLEASE STOP HERE. THANK YOU FOR YOUR ASSISTANCE.

4. List briefly reasons why you watch a particular **GAMEDOC REALITY PROGRAM**.

_____

_____

_____

5. Rate how accurately each of the following statements relates to your reasons for viewing **GAMEDOC REALITY PROGRAMS.**

I watch GAMEDOC REALITY PROGRAMS because….

	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree

they are the best thing on TV today.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

they help me relax or unwind from normal day activities.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

they distract me, even for a short time, from my own life's reality.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

I find the situations on them humorous.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

that is what is on when I turn on TV.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

by watching, they give me something to talk about with my friends.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

I am interested in a specific character on a show.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

I enjoy the drama, excitement, or suspense.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

they help me to learn how to act in certain situations.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

I have found myself addicted to a particular one.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

I like the competitiveness between the characters.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

they provide me the ability to participate in their outcomes through activities such as voting online for contestant winners and eliminations.

1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

they provide a sense of companionship for me.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

I want to see what will happen next.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

they are entertaining.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

I enjoy the sexual relationship issues.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

I can relate to the character(s) on a particular show.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

they allow me to view the private lives of other people.   1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7

I find the diverse personalities and characteristics of the cast members interesting.

1…..2…..3…..4…..5…..6…..7