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The Uses and Gratifications of Dance Reality Television Shows

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THE USES AND GRATIFICATIONS
OF DANCE REALITY TELEVISION SHOWS

By

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Bachelor of Arts in Dance
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
2005

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the

Master of Arts in Journalism and Media Studies

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Hank Greenspun School of Journalism & Media Studies
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December 2012

ABSTRACT

The Uses and Gratifications of Dance Reality Shows

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Competition based dance reality shows are a sub-category under the reality television show genre. One way to add to the growing body of research about reality television shows is to study each sub-category individually in terms of uses and gratifications theory. Therefore this research looked into the reasons why people watch dance reality shows. Since dance is an art form that has deep historic roots, has experienced highs and lows in terms of public perception and has experienced a strong resurgence recently within the realm of reality television, it proves to be an area worthy of investigation. The researcher took a quantitative approach in the quest to support hypotheses that suggested that frequent, moderate and infrequent viewers would have different reasons for viewing, there would be sub-level audiences within the larger overall audience and there would be a relationship between viewing and attitudes toward dance. Surveys were distributed in various classes at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas in attempt to obtain a sample representative of the general UNLV student population. Collected data were run through SPSS Statistical program. Frequencies and principle component factor analysis were used to describe the audience, determine reasons for viewing among frequent, moderate and infrequent viewers and understand their attitudes toward competition based dance reality shows. The results found that

frequent, moderate and infrequent viewers do watch for different reasons, there are sub-level audiences within the overall dance reality show viewing audience and that watching dance reality shows doesn't seem to signify an increased interest in dance. Since this research is the first of its kind it can be considered exploratory with the goal of providing guidelines for future researchers.

DEDICATION

To my mother and in loving memory of my father, who encouraged and supported
me every step of the way.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Reality television programs such as *Dancing with the Stars*, *So, You Think You Can Dance* and *America's Best Dance Crew* draw millions of viewers who tune in and cast votes to determine which contestant will be sent home each week. For example, Nielsen ratings show that on Tuesday, October 25, 2011, ABC's *Dancing with the Stars* pulled in 13.7 million viewers, making it the third most viewed show that night behind *NCIS* (Nielsen Media Research, 2011). On Monday, October 24, 2011, it was the most viewed program in its time slot for the sixth consecutive week, beating game five of the World Series (Nielsen Media Research, 2011).

The common thread among these popular shows is that they are all based around dance, an important aspect of culture that combines athleticism and aesthetics into a means of expression. Since not every person communicates in the same manner, dance provides a way, other than through language, for people to relate to one another. One example of this function of dance in history is the use of pantomime dance in Ancient Rome. In the Middle Ages dance was woven into liturgical dramas that illustrated the concept of good and evil and became a universal language used to convey messages to the Roman people (Kraus, 1991).

Dance can also function as a creative outlet or hobby. The popularity of dance based reality television shows suggests a large audience identifies with the subject material for particular reasons. Does this interest in dance reality shows signify an interest in dance as an art form?

News outlets and magazine articles have reported this phenomenon. An article on CNN online profiled Christjohn Batters, a ballroom dance teacher in Atlanta, about his observation of increased interest in dance since dance reality shows debuted. “I’ve been at this studio for eight years, and I would definitely say that there has been a steady increase and an influx of people wanting to learn how to dance. People see dance on TV and they see people learning to dance... and they think, ‘OK this is something I could learn to do’” (Respers, 2009). In 2007, *Dance Magazine* rated and ranked nine dance reality shows set to air that year. Whether the programs received a good or bad rating, the publication credited this influx in “making dance an exciting and accessible art for both dance and non-dance audiences” (Macel, 2008).

In contrast, budget deficits have forced cuts to education, often in the form of dissolution of art programs. Although monetary cuts to the arts vary across states, an example of this is seen in Nevada where in 2010 the Nevada Arts Council’s budget was cut by 43%. These two opposing conditions suggest the need to examine why people are watching dance reality shows in such high numbers. It also raises questions that have not been previously researched: What are the uses of dance reality shows? Does watching dance reality shows impact interest in dance?

This is a study of competition based dance reality television shows. Backgrounds in dance and reality television along with previous research into the reality television genre illustrate the necessity for investigation into this understudied genre. An overview of uses and gratifications and social learning theories provides a theoretical basis for the proposed general research questions. Research is then used in relation to its application to

the research questions. Finally, the implications of the research explain why it is relevant and how it can provide a basis for research in the future.

Background

Competition based dance reality shows are composed of two main elements. They are centered on dance and they fall under the umbrella of reality television. In order to study competition based dance reality television shows as a genre, it is important to understand both of these components individually. This section provides historical context on dance as an art form, its place in media and a background on the reality television show genre.

I. Dance

It is almost impossible to trace the beginning of dance because it has been embedded in cultures since ancient times. Cultures used traditional dances to communicate rites, rituals, gender roles, and community events. Rather than using spoken words, dance uses the body as a means of communication creating a universal language that transcends barriers. “The spatial and temporal features of the dancer’s movement can induce aesthetic experience in the observer. Dance choreographers and performers exploit these influences to communicate their intentions to the viewer” (Calvo-Merino, Jola, Glaser, Haggard, 2008, p. 911). Dance performances include the use of music, costumes, set design, props, and narrative structure which help the audience to relate to the performers and their message.

Despite the universal importance of dance within cultures, varied styles of dance have been typically held in different regard. In the past, ballet was considered high art and only available to the elite while styles such as tap, modern, jazz, ballroom, swing,

hip-hop and various ethnic dances were popular among average people. Show formats like that of *So, You Think You Can Dance*, which emphasize the importance of dancers mastering all styles, place these styles on an equal playing field and create an opportunity for exposure to all dance styles. “With the blockbuster status of *SYTYCD*, the ABC smash, *Dancing With the Stars*’ and MTV’s Jennifer Lopez-produced *Dancelife*, it seems that the U.S. is truly jazzed about dance again, though the talent show format is anything but new. For decades, television was the perfect medium for wannabes of all stripes, including tappers, ballet dancers, and ballroom couples hoping to get their shot at fame on shows like *Arthur Godfrey’s Talent Scouts* (1948-1958), *Ted Mack’s Original Amateur Hour* (1948-1970) and *Star Search* (1983-2004)” (Looseleaf, 2007).

The concept of media’s ability to refresh society’s interest in dance has been seen throughout history. Interest in the ballet was waning in the United States during the late 19th century until Russian ballerina Anna Pavlova. Pavlova, best known for her portrayal of Fokine’s *The Dying Swan*, toured the United States and critics praised her emotional performances that brought audiences to tears (Kraus, 1991). The media attention made Pavlova a household name and brought about a renewed interest in ballet.

The feature film, *The Red Shoes* brought a renewed interest in dance again in 1948. The film combined starred world renowned ballet dancers, and combined the themes of dance and love with an innovative use of Technicolor. After the movie’s debut it is reported that America saw an increase of people enrolling children in ballet school. In 1978 Russian ballet dancer Mikhail Baryshnikov, renewed society’s interest in ballet again with his role in the film, *The Turning Point*.

In the 2000's there is a continuing influx of dance based reality television shows. This renewed availability of dance seems to be bringing about a renewed interest in dance and its various styles creating a need to study this phenomenon.

II. Reality Television

Reality television has become a staple on television networks over the past several years and has expanded to include reality shows in almost every subcategory imaginable. "Viewers are now able to select from a range of programs that are likely to offer audiences different gratifications and contribute to different outcomes" (Hall, 2006, p.192). These include but are not limited to crime, dating, talent, prank, docudrama and lifestyle transformation.

The format of each of these sub categories varies. Some are competition based where contestants compete for a grand prize, similar to a game show format and others follow a sitcom- like style in which cameras follow people through their daily activities and social interactions. Despite the presence of this large amount of sub categories and formats, scholars have frequently studied reality television as a whole. This argument suggests the importance of breaking down the reality TV genre into sub categories and studying each individually. By examining each on an individual level, common threads could be identified throughout the genre and specific viewer attitudes can be studied within each category. Few researchers have taken this approach by examining specific shows and sub categories, but no previous study has examined the sub category of competition based dance reality shows. For example Barton studied uses and gratifications of *The Bachelor/Bachelorette*, *Survivor* and *The Apprentice* (Barton, 2009) and multiple researchers including Cavender & Bond-Maupin, 1993 and Oliver, 1994,

have examined reality crime shows like *COPS* and *America's Most Wanted* (Hall, 2006).

This study will examine the sub category of competition based dance reality shows through the scope of uses and gratifications theory and social learning theory to identify what people are seeking from this sub category and attitudes and behaviors associated with viewership.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review explores past research on reality television and uses and gratifications theory. There is no limit to the amount of topics that could be molded into a reality television show, but dance is a recurring category that keeps attracting audiences and causing networks to generate new programming centered on dance. While it might seem like these shows would appeal to a narrow audience composed of dancers, they draw in millions of viewers each week. This shows that they reach beyond the small and informed dance audience to the general public. The strong presence of dance in the reality television genre indicates something unique about combining dance with reality television that attracts audiences and provides consumers with gratifications that other genres do not. Previous research by Papacharissi and Mendelson and Barton examined motives for watching reality television shows in general, but no studies have looked specifically at the dance reality genre.

In a 2007 interview with *Dance Magazine's* Victoria Looseleaf, Nigel Lythgoe, producer of reality television shows *American Idol* and *So, You Think You Can Dance* stated that his background as a performer drove him to create *So, You Think You Can Dance* as a vehicle to get more people interested in dance. He also stated that he believes in using the show to promote ethical dance teaching. "There doesn't appear to be certification of any kind. If you're a bad singing teacher, you're going to lose somebody's voice, but with dance, you could really injure them" (Looseleaf, 2007). In 2009 Lythgoe and a team of dance professionals and actors began the Dizzy Feet Foundation with the goal to make dance education accessible to young people across the United States. The

foundation is promoted on *So, You Think You Can Dance* which shows that Lythgoe believes that competition based dance reality shows can impact participation in dance.

The goal of this study is to discover the uses and expand the knowledge of dance reality shows. The research will add to the body of research on uses and gratifications theory by applying it to the understudied genre of reality television. The study will also suggest if the intentions of producers like Lythgoe are resonating with viewers.

Uses and Gratifications

Previous researchers have examined motives and satisfactions sought by reality television viewers through uses and gratifications theory. Since dance reality shows are a sub category of reality television, uses and gratifications theory is an appropriate theoretical basis for investigation into the genre. Uses and gratifications theory, “seeks to explain the uses of media and the satisfactions derived from them in terms of the motives and self-perceived needs of audience members” (McQuail, 2005, p. 569). From a uses and gratifications perspective, viewers tune in to specific programs in hopes of deriving a satisfaction from the program. According to Barton, “Although this approach may be applied to a wide range of material, in recent years it has been most frequently applied to genre-specific television programming in attempt to discern what certain shows provide viewers that is not provided through other types of programming” (Barton, 2009, p. 462). She used previous studies on news programming, religious programming, and soap operas to create a uses and gratifications based approach to studying the influx of competition based reality television programs. In order to discover audience motivations for viewing competition based dance reality shows, the genre should be examined from a uses and gratifications perspective.

Barton's research, which focused on the competition reality shows *The Bachelor/Bachelorette*, *Survivor* and *The Apprentice*, found that the gratifications sought and obtained varied across different types of competition based reality shows, reinforcing the idea that sub categories of the reality genre should be studied separately. These findings justify studying competition based dance reality shows as a genre. "The implication is that all reality programs share common features or themes that, regardless of the particular program, will explain why they are watched or the effects such viewing might have on perceptions of society. However, apart from reality which itself is not clearly defined, it is not obvious what unifying theme justifies the massing together of such diverse programs as *Cops*, *American Idol* and *The Real World*" (Nabi, 2007, p. 372).

The popularity and wide range of reality shows based around different styles of dance show that networks are reaching out to different demographics with their content. Based on these discoveries it makes sense that the sub category of dance reality shows will elicit its own set of gratifications sought and obtained.

One aspect of reality shows that often draws criticism lies in the name of the genre itself: reality. Although shows claim to be real, they are filmed in contained environments, scenes are set up to a certain degree, and then the footage is edited. Nevertheless, this illusion that reality shows actually show real people in real-life unaltered situations may be a large part of the genre's appeal. In addition, competition based dance reality shows call for audience participation where they can feel like they are a part of the show by voting and becoming a driving force behind a particular outcome. A study by Papacharissi and Mendelson found that, "those who perceived reality TV content as more realistic and developed greater affinity for reality TV content were more

likely to watch to fulfill entertainment and relaxation needs primarily” (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007, p. 367). Their study focused on the reality genre as a whole, but it also provides groundwork for research into specific sub categories of reality television. Inquiry could show if the same results are achieved when related to a more narrowly focused group of similarly themed shows such as dance reality shows.

Rationale and Hypotheses

I. Uses and gratifications

Competition based dance reality shows combine unique programming elements to create a sub category of reality television. Previous research suggests that uses and gratifications sought and obtained will vary depending on the sub category studied.

H1: Regular viewers of competition based dance reality shows will have different gratifications sought for watching competition based dance reality shows than non regular viewers.

II. Audience

Competition based dance reality shows draw in millions of viewers each week suggesting that the programs appeal to a wide variety of viewers. Within such a vast viewing audience there may be clusters of viewers of similar demographics that watch for similar reasons.

H2: There will be sub-level audiences within the larger overall audience according to uses and gratifications.

IV. Attitudes about Dance

Recent literature has indicated that people within the dance industry are reporting increased interest in dance which is believed to be associated in part with the popularity

of competition based dance reality shows. Producers like Nigel Lythgoe of *So, You Think You Can Dance* strive to impact viewers' knowledge of dance through their programming and the large numbers of weekly viewers indicate that people are enjoying dance.

Examining competition based dance reality shows from a uses and gratifications perspective gives insight to attitudes and behaviors associated with viewing these shows. So far, the literature available on examining reality television from a uses and gratifications approach is limited. Research that more thoroughly examines an undeniably popular sub category of the reality genre could present a base for future studies within the sub category or in others.

H3: There will be a positive relationship between viewing competition based dance reality shows and attitudes toward dance.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

The research involved the quantitative method of surveying a population with questions tied to the four posed research questions. A quantitative survey method was chosen because according to Babbie, “Survey research is probably the best method available to the social researcher who is interested in collecting original data for describing a population too large to observe directly,” and “are also excellent vehicles for measuring attitudes and orientations in a large population” (Babbie, 2008). Since this research strives to collect data from the general population at UNLV, a population too large to observe directly, and measure the attitudes of that population toward competition based dance reality shows, survey research was an appropriate method.

Pilot Study

Before usable data were collected, a pilot study was conducted in an upper-level journalism and media studies class consisting of both undergraduate and graduate students. The goal of the pilot study was to ensure the reliability and validity of the instrument and allow time to restructure questions if needed. This class was chosen because it consisted of a mixture of upper level undergraduate students and graduate students; a group thought to be familiar with research instruments. Their advanced knowledge was believed to be valuable in providing constructive feedback about areas where the instrument may be improved.

The pilot study included an additional open-ended question, not intended for inclusion on the final instrument, in which respondents were asked to give feedback or suggestions as to additional information that may be included in the instrument. The

researcher also asked the class for verbal feedback and suggestions after the surveys were collected. Suggestions were compared with previous research, taken into consideration, and incorporated into the instrument before it was distributed to the sample population.

The changes were as follows:

The original survey included a series of five questions that asked respondents to agree or disagree with statements pertaining to their feelings about dance after watching competition based dance reality shows. During the pilot study it was suggested that questions should be added pertaining to respondents' experiences with dance before watching dance reality shows rather than just after watching dance reality shows.

As a result, the same five questions that asked respondents to choose agree or disagree about their feelings toward dance after watching dance reality shows were added to the survey with the beginning phrase, "before watching competition based dance reality shows..." to allow for comparison of attitudes before and after viewing.

The feedback also mentioned a need for clearer instructions after question 1, "Have you ever watched a competition based dance reality show from start to finish?", on where to proceed if the respondent answered that they had never viewed a complete dance reality show in the first question. The following instructions were added below question 1 to give a clearer explanation as to where to proceed if respondents had never viewed a competition based dance reality show:

If no, please indicate why you don't watch on the line below and then proceed to question #38. If yes, Please continue to question #2.

This addition was made to ensure that respondents still included their demographic information even if they don't view the shows to allow for examination of the non viewing audience.

The pilot study also led the researcher to leave the final open ended question, "If there's anything about your experience watching competition based dance reality shows that this survey does not include, please explain below," on the final survey instrument to allow respondents the opportunity to add valuable insight that the survey may have missed. The responses written by the students in the pilot study were insightful and therefore the researcher believed that including the open ended question in the final survey would create the opportunity to obtain more valuable insight from the general student population.

Sample and Distribution

Once the necessary changes were made to the survey instrument, the researcher distributed the surveys to college students of varied majors throughout the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. The sampling procedure was purposive with the intent of targeting the general population at UNLV. Since the UNLV student population ranges from 23,000-25,000, 210 surveys were distributed to students from various departments throughout campus. Out of the 210 surveys that were distributed, 202 yielded usable information included in the study. After the 202 surveys were collected the data were entered into SPSS statistical program and analyses were run to determine significant findings.

The researcher searched the UNLV website for classes taking place during Summer Sessions I, II and III at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas during the summer

of 2012. An attempt was made to identify classes within a wide range of departments across campus. The researcher identified target classes and emailed (Appendix A) each professor to ask for permission to distribute the surveys during their class time. Once permission was granted by the professors, arrangements were made and the surveys were distributed and collected in person by the researcher at the beginning or end of class according to each professor's preference. The surveys were distributed to students in World Literature, History, Education, Hospitality, Journalism and Media Studies, Kinesiology, Criminal Justice, French, Math, Economics and Psychology classes.

The survey (APPENDIX C) asked questions pertaining to the gratifications sought and obtained, and attitudes and behaviors toward dance in association with viewing competition based dance reality shows. Initially, students from the dance, communications and journalism and media studies departments were going to be excluded from the sample population due to their believed predisposition for dance and media and because this research strives to include an equal amount of male and female participants and both the dance and journalism departments are predominantly female. However, after consideration, one 100 level journalism and media studies class was included in the sample population. This class was included because it consisted mostly of first year students who weren't necessarily journalism and media studies majors and not thought of as having an advanced interest in either dance or media. Dance majors were not surveyed because of their predisposition for dance.

This sample is both one of convenience and appropriateness. Previous research shows that, "70% of 18-24 year olds regularly watch reality television programs" (Gardyn, 2001) and "young people and college students are frequently the adopters of

new television formats and shows and therefore present a valid sample for the study of new television genres” (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007, p.359).

Quantitative Instrument

An informed consent (APPENDIX B) was included with every survey distributed to give students a clear explanation of what the survey was about and the risks and benefits involved with participation. It stated that the risks were extremely minimal, participation was strictly voluntary and that their information would be kept confidential. If students agreed with the terms presented in the informed consent they moved on to the survey instrument.

Since the topic of discussion was competition based dance reality shows, the first page of the questionnaire (APPENDIX C) contained the following explanation of competition based dance reality television shows; “competition based dance reality shows are unscripted shows based predominately on some form of dance and feature real people, not actors. They follow a competitive format in which contestants compete for prizes and are critiqued by a panel of judges. They can include an opportunity for audience members to call in and vote for their favorite contestant or decisions can be left to the judges.” The description was included to eliminate any confusion about the term and helps to attain accuracy in responses.

The first portion of the questionnaire asked a series of basic questions about reported viewing habits. Question 1 was a forced choice question that asked respondents if they watch dance reality shows. If the response was no, then there was a space to include an open-ended answer as to why they don’t watch and directions to proceed to the end of the survey which asked for demographic information. Those that responded

yes to watching dance reality shows, were asked to proceed to question 2 which provided a checklist of popular dance reality shows including: *Dancing with the Stars*, *So, You Think You Can Dance* and *America's Best Dance Crew* and asked respondents to circle all of the dance reality shows that they watch. There was also an "other" option for respondents to write in any programs that the list may exclude. The next question asked how often the shows are viewed. This was a forced choice question that asked respondents to choose one response that best describes their frequency of viewing. The choices included; "every week," which represented those who tune in to one or more competition based dance reality shows on a weekly basis; "Only for the results show," which represented those who tune in weekly, but only to watch the show that announces which contestant faces elimination that week; "Whenever I can watch it," which represented those who may not view on a weekly basis, but make a conscious effort to tune in specifically to one or more of these shows when their schedule allows; "If nothing else is on," which represented those who only tune-in as a last resort; and "Only for the finale," which represented those who only tune in to see the usually star studded season finale in which the grand prize winner is announced. There was also an, "other" option which allowed respondents to state their own response if they did not believe that any of the choices best represented their viewing pattern. This enabled relationships between frequency of viewing and gratifications sought and obtained to be examined.

By using previous research by Barton and Papacharissi and Mendelson (2007), the instrument was then broken down into categories of gratifications including, vicarious participation, perceived reality, social interaction, entertainment and voyeurism. The researcher added the categories of education and actual participation to explore areas of

research not previously addressed. Education was included to see if people show an interest in learning from dance reality shows and actual participation seeks to see if the participatory elements play a role in the shows' popularity.

Each category contained 3-5 Likert style questions asking respondents to use a 5-point scale to rate their agreement with a statement beginning with, "I watch competition based dance reality shows because..."

The Vicarious Participation category included statements such as, "I like to imagine myself as a contestant" and "I relate to the contestants on dance reality shows;" the Perceived Reality category included statements such as, "They are real" and "They are unscripted;" the Social Interaction category included statements such as, "I like to gather with others who watch," and "I like to discuss them with others;" the Entertainment category included statements such as, "It entertains me" and "It improves my mood;" the Voyeurism category included the statements, "I find the characters attractive" and "The programs have sex appeal;" the Education category included statements such as, "I'm interested in dance," and "I want to learn more about dance," and the Actual Participation category included statements such as, "I like to vote for my favorite contestant" and "Voting makes me feel like a part of the show."

The latter part of the questionnaire focused on attitudes and behaviors reported before and after viewing competition based dance reality shows as posed in H3, which states: "There will be a positive relationship between viewing competition based dance reality shows and attitudes toward dance." The forced choice questions asked respondents to either agree or disagree with statements about their attitudes and behaviors before and after viewing competition based dance reality shows. Examples of these statements

include: “Before watching competition based dance reality shows I have sought more information about dance” and “After watching competition based dance reality shows I have attended dance class.” The end of the instrument asks for demographic information including age, sex and major.

Statistical Analyses

First frequencies were run on the data to determine the breakdown of the sample population. The frequencies were used to describe the group of respondents in terms of demographics and most frequent responses.

Principle component factor analysis and varimax rotation were employed in relation to **H1**: Regular viewers of competition based dance reality shows will have different gratifications sought for watching competition based dance reality shows than non regular viewers and **H2**: There will be sub-level audiences within the larger overall audience according to uses and gratifications.

This method was determined to be appropriate to determine if respondents clustered around statements that fell under the pre-determined categories set by the researcher. These pre-determined categories included Vicarious Participation, Social Interaction, Perceived Reality, Actual Participation, Entertainment, Voyeurism and Education. As with typical factor analysis, a minimum eigenvalue of 1.0 and at least three loadings were required to maintain a factor. Factor loadings of 0.5 or higher were considered substantial (Buddenbaum & Novak, 2001).

H1 predicted that regular viewers of competition based dance reality shows would have different gratifications obtained than those of infrequent viewers. Frequent viewers were considered those who reported that they watch “Weekly;” moderate

viewers were considered those who watch “Whenever they can” and “Only for the results shows;” infrequent viewers were considered those who reported watching “Only if nothing else is on” and “Only for the finale.” Respondents who chose “Other” were not counted in the analysis, since their responses were qualitative.

Five separate principle component factor analyses with varimax rotation were run; each representing one of the five determined levels of viewing and the responses to the series of Likert questions, Q5-Q27.

Descriptive statistics were used to examine the relationship between the number of respondents who agree with each statement before watching competition based dance reality television shows versus after watching competition based dance reality television shows set forth in H3. Descriptive statistics provide the ability to easily see increases and decreases. For example if descriptive statistics show that 15 percent of respondents disagree with the statement, “I had respect for dancers” before watching competition based dance reality shows and 30 percent agree with the statement after watching competition based dance reality shows it would suggest that watching competition based dance reality shows has a positive affect on respondents’ level of respect for dancers. Since the statements were presented in a forced choice format with only two possible options exploratory descriptive statistics were the best methods to determine relationships among the data.

The final open ended question 41 asked, “If there’s anything about your experience watching competition based dance reality shows that this survey does not include, please explain below.”

The researcher read each response to open ended question 41 and identified key

words and themes in each response. (APPENDIX E) The responses were separated into two groups that represented those who had viewed competition based dance reality shows (Viewers) and those who had not (Non-Viewers). The responses were then broken down further into groups who mentioned the dance element of these programs and those who mentioned the reality elements of the shows. Key themes were identified in the responses signaling whether each respondent reported that their viewing pattern was affected by either the dance or reality show elements in a positive or negative way.

For example phrases like “Watching these shows inspired my own choreography” were considered to show that the dance elements of the shows contributed to a positive impression of the show. The word inspired and the fact that the respondent then incorporated dance techniques into their own work shows that they responded positively to the shows dance elements. Responses such as, “I’m not interested in dancing” were considered to signify that the shows’ dance element was the reason why the respondent chose not to view dance reality shows. These respondents may still tune in to other competition based dance reality shows that aren’t centered around dance so such responses were not considered to signal a negative view of dance reality shows in general.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Multiple Statistical analyses resulted in findings relevant to future research about competition based dance reality shows. The research suggests that frequent viewers do watch dance reality shows for different reasons than infrequent viewers, there are sub audiences within the general viewing population, entertainment is the main reason people watch dance reality shows and watching these shows does not seem to signify an increased interest in dance.

The results of Principle Component Factor Analysis (Tables 1-3) suggest that both frequent and moderate viewers watch for the shows' actual participation while infrequent viewers watch for the shows' vicarious participation elements. This finding supports H1 which predicted that frequent and infrequent viewers will have different reasons for viewing.

Sub audiences that were identified include Actual Participation, Vicarious Participation, Voyeurism, Education, Relate-ability and Entertainment. This accounted for people who enjoy the participatory elements of the show like voting for their favorite contestant, (Actual Participation), those who would like to be one of the contestants (Vicarious Participation), those who watch because they like to watch people that they find attractive on television (Voyeurism), those who watch to learn more about dance (Education), those who watch because they identify with the people on the show (Relatability) and those who watch because they find the shows exciting or entertaining (Entertainment). These sub-audiences were determined by analyzing eigenvalues and factor loadings in the results of a Principle Component Factor Analysis.

Descriptive statistics showed that respondents answered similarly when asked about their attitudes toward dance both before and after viewing. This suggests that watching dance reality shows does not impact beliefs about dance or impact the likelihood that viewers will attend a live dance performance or take a dance class. However, in the responses to open-ended questions 1 and 41 some reported watching the shows due to their subject matter and incorporating dance into their lives as a result.

Frequencies

Frequencies showed that the *America's Best Dance Crew* was the most frequently viewed competition based dance reality show and hip hop was the most enjoyed style of dance. The largest amount of respondents reported viewing the shows, "Whenever I can," which is considered to be moderate viewers. This shows that the majority of the sample population was not loyal viewers who watch these shows on a weekly basis, but will make an effort to tune in whenever they have the chance.

The statements, "It entertains me" and "It is exciting" received the largest number of "strongly agree" responses. Both statements were considered to fall under the entertainment category which suggests that entertainment is the reason why most respondents watch dance reality shows. This finding suggests that while the sample population does tune in because they find the shows entertaining, they are not necessarily interested in an advanced knowledge of dance or reality television shows.

Respondents reported that the statements, "I like to vote for my favorite contestant," "I like to play a role in the outcome of these shows" and "Voting makes me feel like a part of the show," which were categorized as actual participation variables, had the least impact on their decision to watch. Respondents strongly disagreed with the

statements, “I like to gather with others when I watch,” “I like to discuss them with others,” and “Everyone else watches them” which were categorized as social interaction variables, suggesting that viewing these shows are not largely seen as social events. Viewers are not pressured into viewing to fit in to conversations and do not think it is important to surround themselves with others that watch. Viewing is more of a solo act, done strictly for the entertainment value. A complete breakdown of the frequencies follows:

The sample population consisted of 122 female respondents and 74 male respondents. Their ages ranged from 18-50 with the majority lying in their 20s. Sixty-two percent, 126 people responded that they have watched a competition based dance reality show from beginning to end, while 37% responded that they had not. *America’s Best Dance Crew* was the most frequently watched competition based dance reality show with 39% of respondents stating that they’ve watched the show, while 28% have watched *Dancing with the Stars* and 26% have watched *So, You Think You Can Dance*. Only 3.5% (7 respondents) stated watching a dance reality show other than the choices listed and their responses were varied. Ten percent (20 people) reported that they watch competition based dance reality shows “every week” and one respondent reported tuning in “only for the results shows.” The highest amount, 23% (47 people) reported watching “whenever they can”, 19% (38 people) watch “only if nothing else is on” and 3% (six people) tune in “only for the finale show.”

Hip hop was the most popular genre of dance with 48% (98 respondents) reporting that they enjoy watching that style. Twenty-seven percent (54 respondents) stated that they enjoy watching contemporary, 24% (48 respondents) enjoy ballroom,

22% (44 respondents) enjoyed ballet, 12% (25 respondents) enjoy tap, 16% (32 respondents) enjoy jazz and 8% (17 respondents) stated that they enjoyed watching a different type of dance not included in the list.

Participants showed strong feelings against the questions grouped together in the vicarious participation category. Sixty-one participants responded that they strongly disagree or disagree with the statement, “I like to imagine myself as a contestant,” 87 participants responded that they strongly disagree or disagree with the statement, “I relate to contestants on dance reality shows,” 89 participants strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, “I’d like to be on a dance reality show,” and 60 participants strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement, “I’d like to be a dancer.”

The perceived reality grouping of questions showed mixed responses from the survey population. The first statement, “They are real,” yielded very close responses with forty-two reporting that they either strongly disagree or disagree with the statement, forty-seven percent stating that they strongly agree or strongly disagree with the statement and thirty-seven respondents reporting neutral feelings about the statement. The majority, fifty-four respondents, reported that they strongly disagree or disagree with the statement, “They are unscripted,” while the majority, fifty-seven respondents reported that they strongly agree or agree with the statement, “I enjoy watching real people.”

The questions in the category termed, Social Interaction which included the statements, “I like to gather with others when I watch,” “I like to discuss them with others” and “Everyone else watches them” all yielded similar results with a large majority reporting that they strongly disagree or disagree with each of the statements:

“Everyone else watched them” (72 respondents), “I like to gather with others while I watch” (72 respondents) and “I like to discuss them with others” (91 respondents). The next series of statements determined to fall under the category, Entertainment, showed mixed results. A large number of respondents reported strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with statements that suggested that competition based dance reality shows are more enjoyable to watch than fiction programming. Sixty-eight respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, “They are more enjoyable than fiction programming” while sixty-five respondents reported strongly disagreeing or disagreeing with the statement, “The characters are more interesting than those in fiction programming,” thus suggesting that competition based dance reality shows are not considered more interesting than fictional scripted television shows. However, the majority of respondents did report finding competition based dance reality shows entertaining and exciting. Sixty-five respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, “It is exciting” and seventy-nine respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, “It entertains me.” These findings suggest that while people do find these shows to be entertaining, they are not considered more entertaining than fictional programming.

The responses to these statements in the voyeurism category yielded neutral results. Forty-four respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed, forty-three were neutral and thirty-nine either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement, “I find the characters attractive.” The exact same breakdown of respondents was found in response to the statement, “The programs have sex appeal.” This suggests that the researcher was correct

in predicting that respondents would answer similarly to these two statements and they in fact do belong in the same grouping.

The education category created by the researcher yielded mixed results. Forty-three respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, “I’m interested in dance,” sixty-two respondents either strongly agreed or agreed and twenty-one were neutral. Fifty-six respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, “I want to learn more about dance” while forty-two either strongly agreed or agreed and twenty-eight were neutral. Forty-four strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, “I don’t normally get to see a lot of dance,” while forty-three either strongly agreed or agreed and thirty-nine remained neutral.

The actual participation category added by the researcher yielded a strong negative response, with most reporting that they do not enjoy the interactive voting aspects of the shows. Eighty-eight respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, “I like to vote for my favorite contestant,” ninety-six respondents strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, “I like to play a role in the outcome of these shows” and ninety-one respondents either strongly disagreed or disagreed with the statement, “Voting makes me feel like a part of the show.”

Principle Component Factor Analysis

Principle component factor analysis was run on the data to test H1 and H2. The results supported both hypotheses. Differing reasons for viewing were found among frequent, moderate and infrequent viewers. The results showed that both frequent and moderate viewers watch for the shows’ actual participation elements while infrequent viewers watch for the shows’ vicarious participation elements.

The first factor analysis was run on the weekly viewers (Table 1); the group considered frequent viewers. Factor 1, actual participation (eigenvalue = 8.7), accounted for 38% of the variance. This item consisted of three items, “I like to vote for my favorite contestant,” “I like to play a role in the outcome of these shows” and “Voting makes me feel like a part of the show.” Since this factor had the highest eigenvalue and factor loadings it shows that the majority of frequent viewers watch dance reality shows for their participatory elements.

Table 1

Primary Factor Loadings of Gratifications Sought for Frequent Viewers

	AP	VP	SOC	VP	ENT
I like to imagine myself as a contestant	-	.706	-	.503	-
I relate to the contestants on dance reality shows	-	-	-	.693	-
I'd like to be on a dance reality show	-	.876	-	-	-
I'd like to be a dancer	-	.930	-	-	-
They are real	-	-	-	-	-
I enjoy watching real people	-	-	-	-	-
Everyone else watches them	.624	-	-	-	-
I like to gather with others when I watch	-	-	.807	-	-
I like to discuss them with others	.647	-	.628	-	-
It is exciting	-	-	-	-	.791
It entertains me	-	-	-	-	.903
It improves my mood	-	-	-	-	-
Characters are more interesting than those in fiction programming	-	-	.577	-	-
I find the characters attractive	-	-	.803	-	-
The programs have sex appeal	-	-	.700	-	-
I'm interested in dance	-	.827	-	-	-
I want to learn more about dance	-	.740	-	-	-
I don't normally get to see a lot of dance	-	-	-	-	-
I like to vote for my favorite contestant	.892	-	-	-	-
I like to play a role in the outcome of these shows	.924	-	-	-	-
Voting makes me feel like a part of the show	.897	-	-	-	-

AP= Actual Participation; VP= Vicarious Participation; SOC=Sociability; ENT= Entertainment

The second factor analysis was run on the viewers who watch whenever they can watch it (Table 2); the group considered to be moderate viewers. Factor 1, actual participation (eigenvalue = 8.5) accounted for 37% of the variance. This factor contained the same three items as it did for the weekly viewers. The fact that frequent and moderate viewers both yielded high factor loadings on actual participation items, suggests that frequent and moderate viewers watch for similar reasons.

Table 2

Primary Factor Loadings of Gratifications Sought for Semi-Frequent Viewers

	AP	ENT	VP	VOY
I like to imagine myself as a contestant	-	-	.703	-
I relate to the contestants on dance reality shows	-	-	-	-
I'd like to be on a dance reality show	-	-	.613	-
I'd like to be a dancer	-	-	.614	-
They are real	-	-	-	-
Everyone else watches them	-	-	-	-
I like to gather with others when I watch	-	-	.704	-
I like to discuss them with others	-	-	.732	-
They are more enjoyable than fiction programming	-	-	-	-
It is exciting	-	.717	-	-
It entertains me	-	.690	-	-
It improves my mood	-	.701	-	-
Characters are more interesting than those in fiction programming	-	-	-	-
I find the characters attractive	-	-	-	.766
The programs have sex appeal	-	-	-	.780
I'm interested in dance	-	.753	-	-
I want to learn more about dance	-	.605	-	-
I don't normally get to see a lot of dance	-	-	-	-
I like to vote for my favorite contestant	.793	-	-	-
I like to play a role in the outcome of these shows	.716	-	-	-
Voting makes me feel like a part of the show	.881	-	-	-

AP= Actual Participation; ENT= Entertainment; VP= Vicarious Participation; VOY= Voyeurism;

The third factor analysis was run on the viewers who watch only when nothing else is on (Table 3); the group considered infrequent viewers. Factor 1, vicarious participation (eigenvalue = 7.8) accounted for 34% of the variance. This factor included four items, “I like to imagine myself as a contestant,” “I relate to the contestants on dance reality shows,” “I’d like to be on a dance reality show” and “I’d like to be a dancer.” The eigenvalue and high factor loadings on the vicarious participation elements suggests that infrequent viewers watch mainly because they enjoy imagining that they are a part of the show.

Table 3

Primary Factor Loadings of Gratifications Sought for Infrequent Viewers

	VP	REAL	AP	REL	EDU	ENT
I like to imagine myself as a contestant	.747	-	-	-	-	-
I relate to the contestants on dance reality shows	.820	-	-	-	-	-
I'd like to be on a dance reality show	.685	.876	-	-	-	-
I'd like to be a dancer	.624	-	-	-	-	-
They are real	-	-	-	.626	-	-
They are unscripted	-	.779	-	-	-	-
I enjoy watching real people	-	.781	-	-	-	-
Everyone else watches them	-	-	-	.843	-	-
I like to gather with others when I watch	.741	-	-	-	-	-
I like to discuss them with others	.747	-	-	-	-	-
It is exciting	-	-	-	-	-	.501
It entertains me	-	-	-	-	-	.547
It improves my mood	.557	-	-	-	-	-
Characters are more interesting than those in fiction programming	-	.734	-	-	-	-
I find the characters attractive	.535	-	-	.528	-	-
I'm interested in dance	-	-	-	-	.886	-
I want to learn more about dance	-	-	-	-	.829	-
I don't normally get to see a lot of dance	-	-	-	-	-	.826
I like to vote for my favorite contestant	-	-	.901	-	-	-
I like to play a role in the outcome of these shows	-	-	.925	-	-	-
Voting makes me feel like a part of the show	-	-	.942	-	-	-

VP= Vicarious Participation; REAL= Reality; AP= Actual Participation; REL= Relatability; EDU= Education; ENT= Entertainment

The differing reasons for viewing between frequent and moderate viewers and infrequent supports H1 and suggests that people who view dance reality shows with differing frequencies watch for different reasons. There were not enough cases to run factor analyses on the frequency of viewing options, “Only for the results show” and “Only for the finale.”

Sub-audiences of viewers were discovered within each group of viewers that included Actual Participation, Vicarious Participation, Voyeurism, Education, Relate-ability and Entertainment groups. Results showed that within the group of respondents who viewed competition based dance reality shows weekly, three relevant sub-audiences were found within the group of frequent viewers. (Table 1) Factor 1, actual participation was described in relation to H1. Factor 2, vicarious participation (eigenvalue = 4.3) explained 18.8% of the variance. This factor included the items, “I like to imagine myself as a contestant,” “I’d like to be on a dance reality show” and “I’d like to be a dancer.” Factor 3, voyeurism (eigenvalue = 2.2) explained 9.8% of the variance. It consisted of the items, “I find the characters attractive” and “The programs have sex appeal.” Typically in order for a factor to be considered relevant it would have to see high factor loadings on at least three items. Since the voyeurism category only contained two items on the survey instrument, high factor loadings on these two items were considered to form a relevant factor.

Four relevant sub-audiences were found within the group of moderate viewers. Factor 1, actual participation was described in relation to H1. Factor 2, entertainment (eigenvalue = 3.2) explained 13.9% of the variance. This factor consisted of three items, “It is exciting,” “It entertains me,” and “It improves my mood.” Factor 3, vicarious

participation (eigenvalue = 1.9) explained 8.5% of the variance. It included three items, “I like to imagine myself as a contestant,” “I’d like to be on a dance reality show” and “I’d like to be a dancer.” Factor 4, voyeurism (eigenvalue = 1.3) explained 5.7% of the variance. It consisted of two items, “I find the characters attractive” and “The programs have sex appeal.”

Two relevant sub-audiences were discovered within the group of infrequent viewers. Factor 1, vicarious participation was described in relation to H1. Factor 2, actual participation (eigenvalue = 3.2) explained 14% of the variance.

The discovery of various sub-level viewing audiences within the general competition based dance reality show viewing audience supports H2 which predicted that sub-level audiences would be found.

Attitudinal Frequencies

Frequencies were used to test H3. Questions 28-36 asked if respondents agreed or disagreed with statements about their feelings toward dance before and after watching competition based dance reality television shows. These statements included, “I believed dance to be an important means of expression,” “I had respect for dancers,” “I sought information about dance,” “I attended live dance performances,” and “I had attended a dance class.”

Frequencies showed very little variance in feelings before and after. There was a decrease in respondents who agreed with every statement after watching competition based dance reality shows except for the statement, “I have attended live dance performances.” The number of respondents that agreed with this statement after watching competition based dance reality shows increased by one respondent. According to this

data, watching competition based dance reality shows seems to have little to no effect on feelings towards dance and dancers and does encourage people to seek out more information about dance or attend live dance performances or dance classes. Therefore H3 was not supported which signifies that there does not seem to be a relationship between viewing competition based dance reality shows and attitudes toward dance.

Open-Ended Question 1

Participants who reported never viewing a competition based dance reality show from start to finish were asked to give a brief reason why they haven't watched before proceeding to the demographic segment of the questionnaire. The responses to this open ended question and brief demographic descriptions of each respondent are included in APPENDIX D. The researcher found two prominent recurring themes within these responses; lack of interest and lack of time. Most respondents reported that they are either, "not interested in dance," "not interested in reality shows" or "have extracurricular activities, work and school" that prevent them from being able to watch. It can be inferred that these responses relate to each other because if these shows were of great interest to the group of respondents they would make time in their schedules to watch. Citing lack of time may also signal lack of interest.

The most popular responses related to the idea that this specific genre of television show was not interesting to the respondent. Responses included, "I don't watch much television and dance shows don't interest me," "It's boring to me. Better programming" and "I do not find it entertaining. I do not own a television."

These examples illustrate that within this umbrella of respondents that did not find these shows interesting, some were more specific and stated that reality shows in general

do not interest them while others reported not being interested in dance.

The second most popular theme that the researcher found was lack of time for television viewing. Responses included, “I had sports related activities along with school and I don’t have time to really watch TV” and “Work and school take most of my time, therefore I don’t have time to watch.”

This can be attributed to the fact that the population that was surveyed consisted of college students who often must try to balance school, work, extra curricular activities and social lives. This balance can be hard to find and since episodes of competition based dance reality shows usually last between 1-2 hours and sometimes span over two evenings, regular viewing can be a substantial time commitment.

One surprising finding in this open ended question was the number of respondents that reported not owning a television or not watching television at all. This was a theme that the researcher didn’t take into consideration before conducting the research. Upon examination this finding may suggest an increase in the number of people within this demographic who are using their computers and Internet to get their news and watch television shows. This could also relate to those who reported not having enough time to watch. When television shows are viewed on websites such as Hulu or YouTube they are often shown commercial-free, thus decreasing the amount of time required to watch an entire show from beginning to end. In future research of this nature, researchers may want to include a question asking respondents how they watch programs.

Open Ended Question 41

The last open ended question asked respondents to list anything that the survey neglected to mention about their experiences watching competition based dance reality

television shows. Most respondents answered this question in relation to the dance aspect of the shows rather than the reality aspects of the shows. For example responses such as, “I also watch them because I used to dance and watching these shows brings back memories” and “Dance reality shows inspired me to be more attentive about dance” illustrate that for these viewers dance is the main reason that they tune into these types of shows. These examples represent two types of viewers, those who were or are still dancers and those who have been introduced to dance through viewing these shows.

A few stated that they watch for the choreography and have used these shows as a source of inspiration for their own work. These responses suggest that in future research, investigators may want to include questions pertaining to choreography and the use of the shows as a source of inspiration. One respondent stated following the career of the hip hop crew, Jabbawoockeez on *America's Best Dance Crew* and that made her attend their live dance show Mus.i.c on The Strip. Jabbawoockeez, Terry Fator and Taylor Hicks are acts whose appearances on reality television shows resulted in them obtaining permanent shows on The Strip. In addition, after each season of *Dancing with the Stars* and *So, You Think You Can Dance*, the top contestants embark on a national tour of live performances. Due to this, future researchers may want to consider adding questions about whether participants would purchase tickets to the live touring shows after watching a season of a dance reality show.

Others reported enjoying dance, but not the format of the shows. For example, one respondent stated, “the judging panel is the worst part” of the shows. Other responses included not being interested in these types of shows and mentioned other genres of reality television shows that would pique their interest. Interests are an area that may

warrant further investigation. Future researchers may consider asking general interest questions to see if there are similar interests people hold who enjoy watching dance reality shows.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS

This study adds to the growing body of research on reality television shows as well as on the role of dance as a form of communication. Since the reality genre is a relatively new area of study and encompasses such a vast array of topics, this research was the first to explore the incorporation of dance within this new genre. The fact that there are a number of reality shows focused on dance, an art form rich in history and cultural symbols, signifies that it is an art form that is still relevant in today's society. While dance has seen highs and lows in popularity both as an art form and in popular culture the current resurgence of dance and the ability to bring it to a mainstream audience is an area deserving of additional investigation. This research provided an overview of the possibilities that could be explored within the topic.

The research discovered that the viewing audience for competition based dance reality shows are comprised mainly of those seeking shows with a high entertainment value. The majority of people stated that they find these shows exciting and entertaining. This could signify that people are seeking an escape or release in which they don't have to think too hard and can merely be entertained. Follow-up research would delve further into who these entertainment seekers are in attempt to describe this audience. Additional study could reveal if this group consists of mainly men or women, which age group they represent and if they have similar reasons for wanting to be entertained. For example they could all have high stress jobs that facilitate the need to unwind causing them to seek programming with high entertainment value. More statements could be added to the

entertainment group of Likert questions to determine what audiences find entertaining about these shows in particular.

The majority of respondents enjoyed the entertainment value of dance reality shows but the number of respondents who stated that they have attended live dance performances was low. This is an interesting contradiction that may warrant further investigation. Future research could seek to determine why respondents find television shows entertaining, but not live performances. Some reasons for this discrepancy could be the current state of the economy and the demographic of college age students. While watching television is quite inexpensive, purchasing tickets to a performance can be pricey and many people, especially college students, don't have a large disposable income which could mean that cost may be a main reason for not attending live shows.

The fact that differing reasons for viewing were determined according to frequency of viewing, suggests that frequent viewers do share similarities. As more studies add to this body of research this frequent viewing audience could be further described. While this research determined that they enjoy the participatory elements of the show, like voting for their favorite contestant, future research could see if these frequent viewers share similar views about dance and dancers.

By using the categories of viewers; vicarious participation, perceived reality, social interaction, entertainment and voyeurism, previously determined by other researchers as a guideline and adding the new categories; education and actual participation the researcher was able to determine that there are in fact sub-level audiences within the general competition based dance reality show viewing audience. There are groups of people who watch because they enjoy imagining that they are a

contestant, watching and discussing the shows with their friends and/or families, enjoy watching because they feel the shows have sex appeal and enjoy watching because they believe the shows are real. These sub-level audiences are represented by similar responses to questions categorized together to represent a particular types of viewers. Since the use of these categories was furthered by this research and showed statistical significance when compared with frequency of viewing, it is suggested that future research examine another factor such as gender or which shows were watched to identify if these comparisons can also yield statistical significance.

Responses in the last open ended question that mentioned interest in choreography and past experience in dance suggest that future researchers should include questions pertaining to these topics in future surveys. These responses also present the possibility that dance reality television show research may also be approached through qualitative methods. In order to get a true sense of beliefs and attitudes about dance within the viewing population a method such as conducting focus groups may prove to be an effective place to start. Researchers could take responses from focus group discussions, code them and incorporate information learned through the focus groups into the survey instrument.

While the study did yield relevant and useful findings in support of two of three of the hypotheses, it does have some limitations in regards to the sample population. The sample population consisted of college level students within a somewhat limited age range. Therefore participants were faced with similar obstacles in regard to watching including trying to juggle work and school. Future research may attempt to survey a

different demographic or a more varied demographic to allow for comparison of people representing different age groups with different time limitations.

Surveying a more varied demographic may also allow for a more diverse opinions. This survey did not seem to hit on the core demographic of viewers. Since college students between 18-25 years old are typically the first adapters of new technologies this may suggest that this age range may already be adopting the newest form of media and technology which may include watching online.

The researcher realizes that surveying UNLV students may have resulted in an over sampling of a highly educated public. Future research could seek to include individuals of varied levels of education. It is suggested that researchers extend their studies beyond the UNLV population and seek to include the general population.

Although this research did not yield support for H3 which suggested that there would be a relationship between viewing dance reality shows and attitudes about dance, previous research and new developments suggest that dance reality shows are making an impact on the interest in dance. For example, the producers of the dance reality show, *So, You Think You Can Dance* created a national holiday called, National Dance Day in which choreographers from the show choreograph a dance routine and post it online. It is simple enough that anyone can go online and learn the routine. Then on National Dance Day everyone who has learned the routine performs it. The individuals or groups may record videos of themselves performing the routine and post it online to share with fellow Dance Day participants. This holiday began in 2010 and has included people from all over the world. This call to action and the response of participants suggests that either these shows can generate an interest in dance or those who are interested in dance will

find these shows more enjoyable. More research should be done to discover what makes certain people make the leap from viewer to active participant.

This thesis contributes to scholarship on both the roles of media and dance in culture in a significant way because it can suggest if media play a role in increasing knowledge and respect for dance. In a time when the state of the economy is causing a decrease of funding for the arts and access to dance curriculum, it is important to see if media reflect a need for more available dance resources. While media is not the only factor in determining people's interest in the arts, looking at people attitudes toward dance who admit to watching dance reality shows in comparison to those who do not could prompt an area worthy of more in depth research. It could also give insight into the benefits of keeping dance prevalent in media in order to stimulate interest and awareness of its benefits. If a positive correlation is shown between watching reality dance programs and a society that values participation in dance then reality dance shows could be seen as more than idle entertainment, but a way to educate and bring art to a diverse range of people.

APPENDIX A

Dear (Professor's name),

My name is Heather Yuille and I'm a graduate student pursuing my degree in Journalism and Media studies. My thesis research examines the uses and gratifications of competition based dance reality television shows. This quantitative research involves the distribution of surveys to students representing various majors throughout UNLV with the intent of targeting the general student population.

I am reaching out to ask permission to distribute this survey at the beginning of your (Name of Course) class. The survey consists of 34 questions and will take an estimated 15 minutes to complete. I will be sure to let the students know that participation is strictly voluntary and am not requesting that any extra credit be awarded for participation. I have attached the instrument for your consideration. I would greatly appreciate your help in completing my thesis research. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Heather Yuille

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

Department of Journalism and Media Studies

TITLE OF STUDY: The Uses and Gratifications of Competition Based Dance Reality Shows

INVESTIGATOR(S): Daniel Stout Ph.D. and Heather Yuille

For questions or concerns about the study, you may contact Daniel Stout Ph.D. at (702) 895-5957 or Heather Yuille at (201) 681-1708.

For questions regarding the rights of research subjects, any complaints or comments regarding the manner in which the study is being conducted, contact **the UNLV Office of Research Integrity – Human Subjects at 702-895-2794, toll free at 877-895-2794 or via email at IRB@unlv.edu.**

Purpose of the Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to examine the reasons why people watch competition based dance reality shows.

Participants

You are being asked to participate in the study because you fit this criteria: You are a student within the general population at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. This study includes UNLV students from varied departments across campus in attempt to gain information from UNLV's general student population.

Procedures

If you volunteer to participate in this study, you will be asked to do the following: Complete an anonymous survey about your viewing habits and thoughts about competition based dance reality shows.

Benefits of Participation

There may not be direct benefits to you as a participant in this study. However, we hope to add to the small but growing body of research on reality television. It could also suggest if reality television is an effective arena in which to raise awareness of the arts.

Risks of Participation

There are risks involved in all research studies. This research poses minimal risk to the participants involved. It asks for reported television viewing habits. The only potential risk would be discomfort if the respondent is not familiar with or has a negative opinion of dance reality shows.

Cost /Compensation

There will not be financial cost to you to participate in this study. The study will take 15-20 minutes of your time. You will not be compensated for your time.

Confidentiality

All information gathered in this study will be kept as confidential as possible. No reference will be made in written or oral materials that could link you to this study. All records will be stored in a locked facility at UNLV for 3 years after completion of the study. After the storage time all files containing data will be deleted and all hard copies will be shredded.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate in this study or in any part of this study. You may withdraw at any time without prejudice to your relations with UNLV. You are encouraged to ask questions about this study at the beginning or any time during the research study.

Participant Consent:

I have read the above information and agree to participate in this study. I have been able to ask questions about the research study. I am at least 18 years of age. A copy of this form has been given to me.

APPENDIX C

Hello, my name is Heather Yuille and I am a graduate student at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I am conducting this survey as a part of my thesis research. This survey is for academic purposes only and your information will be kept confidential. The completion of this survey is strictly voluntary, but I would appreciate your input.

This survey focuses on competition based dance reality shows. For the purpose of this research, competition based dance reality shows are unscripted shows based predominately on some form of dance and feature real people, not actors. They follow a competitive format in which contestants compete for prizes and are critiqued by a panel of judges. They can include an opportunity for audience members to call in and vote for their favorite contestant or decisions can be left to the judges.

1.) Have you ever watched a competition based dance reality show from start to finish (i.e. So, You Think You Can Dance, Dancing with the Stars, America's Best Dance Crew)?

_____ Yes _____ No

If no, please indicate why you don't watch on the line below and then proceed to question #38. If yes, Please continue to question #2.

2.) If yes, which dance reality shows do you watch? Circle all that apply.

- a.) Dancing with the Stars
- b.) So You Think You Can Dance
- c.) America's Best Dance Crew
- d.) Other _____

3.) How often do you watch dance reality shows? Circle **one** that best fits your response.

- a.) Every week
- b.) Only the results show
- c.) Whenever I can catch it
- d.) If nothing else is on
- e.) Only for the finale
- f.) Other _____

4.) What style of dance do you enjoy watching the most? Circle all that apply.

- a.) Hip hop
- b.) Ballroom
- c.) Contemporary
- d.) Ballet
- e.) Tap
- f.) Jazz
- g.) Other

On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree please circle the number that best corresponds with your opinion about each of the following statements.

“I watch competition based dance reality shows because...”

- 5.) I like to imagine myself as a contestant
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 6.) I relate to the contestants on dance reality shows
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 7.) I'd like to be on a dance reality show
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 8.) I'd like to be a dancer
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 9.) They are real
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 10.) They are unscripted
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 11.) I enjoy watching real people
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 12.) Everyone else watches them
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 13.) I like to gather with others who watch
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 14.) I like to discuss them with others
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 15.) They are more enjoyable than fiction programming
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 16.) It is exciting
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 17.) It entertains me
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)

- 18.) It improves my mood
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 19.) Characters are more interesting than those in fiction programming
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 20.) I find the characters attractive
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 21.) The programs have sex appeal
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 22.) I'm interested in dance
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 23.) I want to learn more about dance
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 24.) I don't normally get to see a lot of dance
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 25.) I like to vote for my favorite contestant
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 26.) I like playing a role in the outcome of these shows
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)
- 27.) Voting makes me feel like a part of the show
(Strongly Disagree) 1 2 3 4 5 (Strongly Agree)

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements by placing a check mark on the line before the answer that best fits your response.

28.) Before watching competition based dance reality shows I believed dance to be an important means of expression.

_____ agree _____ disagree

29.) Before watching competition based dance reality shows I had respect for dancers.

_____ agree _____ disagree

30.) Before watching competition based dance reality shows I sought information about dance.

_____ agree _____ disagree

31.) Before watching competition based dance reality shows I attended live dance performances.

_____ agree _____ disagree

32.) Before watching competition based dance reality shows I had attended a dance class.

_____ agree _____ disagree

33.) After watching competition based dance reality shows I believe dance is an important means of expression.

_____ agree _____ disagree

34.) After watching competition based dance reality shows I have an increased respect for dancers.

_____ agree _____ disagree

35.) After watching competition based dance reality shows I have sought more information about dance.

_____ agree _____ disagree

36.) After watching competition based dance reality shows I have attended live dance performances.

_____ agree _____ disagree

37.) After watching competition based dance reality shows I have attended dance class.

_____ agree _____ disagree

38.) What is your age? _____

39.) _____Female _____Male

40.) What is your major? _____year_____

41.) If there's anything about your experience watching competition based dance reality shows that this survey does not include, please explain below.

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Your information is valuable to me and I appreciate your time.

APPENDIX D

Open Ended Responses

Responses to Question #1:

If no, please indicate why you don't watch on the line below and then proceed to question #38. If yes, Please continue to question #2.

- 19M – I watch Sports
- 21M – Cus I work
- 19M – Because I broke up with my girlfriend
- 19M – Because I'm not interested.
- F – no interest
- 26F – They have never kept my interest
- 20F – I don't watch much television and dance shows don't interest me
- 27M – It's boring to me. Better programming.
- 21M – I do not find it entertaining. I do not own a television.
- 25F – Watch more shows with a plot
- 25F – Not always available to watch the show
- 22F – Lost interest of the same competition over and over.
- 23F - No time.
- 26M – They are not my preference
- 23M – Not my kind of TV
- 23F – Not really interested in these type of shows.
- 23F – No time to watch TV
- 26M – Not interested. Don't watch TV that much

- 27F – I don't think dancing is interesting
- 19F – I had sports related activities along with school and I don't have time to really watch TV.
- 25F – The shows do not interest me.
- 21F – Work and school take most of my time, therefore I don't have time to watch
- 20F – Usually forget to watch; watch a few episodes when I can remember
- 29M – Dancing doesn't interest me let alone watching someone else
- 26M – Seems unentertaining and to be a waste of time. None of them stand out and I can't distinguish one from the other.
- 26F – I watch one or two shows but I lose interest.
- 19M – I don't watch television
- 26F – I don't enjoy reality TV and don't watch non-scripted shows in general.
- 24F – It's not my cup of tea and no time to watch the shows.
- 27F – They don't interest me.
- 50+F – Not my type of reality show. I am more a food, sewing or housewife reality person.
- 26F – I get bored with them easily
- 23M – I don't watch TV really besides ESPN.
- 27M – Doesn't seem like they are good shows to watch. Don't like reality TV.
- 26F – Got a little bored.
- 26M – They require too much time and I don't like dancing.
- 50M – It does not interest me.

- 35M – I think they are rigged and to be honest a waste of time.
- 27M – They don't interest me.
- 22F – I just start but not finish to watch
- 21F – No interest
- 22F – I don't watch TV often
- 23M – I don't watch much television
- 30M – I did not know about the show.
- 20F – I only watch the best parts
- 21M – I don't care for reality TV. I enjoy sitcoms more.
- 25M – Never really watched any shows from start to finish besides Entourage.
- 26M – not interested
- 22F – It is not of interest to me. I do not like any reality shows.
- 22F – I've watched a few episodes of ABDC but, I don't have every night free/open to watch all.
- Never held my interest to sit through start to finish
- Don't watch television
- My parents and grandparents watch it. I prefer cartoons and movies.
- Not interested and have no TV.
- 24F – No time – no cable – Don't have these shows
- 32F – I prefer to watch other things
- 22M – There are too many competitive reality TV shows and I'd prefer to watch more fulfilling TV.
- 26M – Loss of interest after awhile

APPENDIX E

Responses to Question #41:

If there's anything about your experience watching competition based dance reality shows that this survey does not include, please explain below.

Viewers

Dance Elements

- 21F – I only watch for the dancing. The rest of the show is just a waste of my time to me
- 20F – Sparks a new idea of workout and activity.
- 27M – I used to be a semi-professional dancer, performer, competitor, back up dance
- 22F - How people got involved with dancing and the competition.
- 19F – They have been a good source of inspiration for my own choreography.
Dance reality shows like SYTYCD has very good choreographers working on the show in the later rounds.
- 30F – I love salsa dancing so that is the reason why I enjoy dance show.
- 24F – It's exciting to watch what choreography people can make up & how creative they can be.
- 21F – I also watch them because I used to dance and watching these shows brings back memories.
- 23F – Dance reality shows inspired me to be more attentive about dance. Since then, I wasn't type for dance but when I start watching the competition it led me to keep my desire for dance.
- 25F – I used to teach dance & watched the shows of which my fellow dance

friends were participating.

- 20M – YouTube and the Internet has a stronger influence rather than the competition based dance reality shows.
- 21M – I like to observe dance because I believe it can be a beautiful art form if treated with respect by the participants/performers.
- 25F – It is the stage spectacle that draws me in. Group dancing is more entertaining than solo dance.
- 20F – It doesn't ask if you have previously performed in competitions and if so how long
- 26F – I took dance classes and went to dance shows long before I watched Dancing with the Stars
- 22F – I followed the career of Jabbawoockeez. Attended their live performance.

Reality Elements

- 19F – On some shows when contestants leave they just thank them, but on ABDC I like how they get to keep their flag and have a slide show.
- 23M – The women are hot!
- 22M - Judges (panel) are the worst part of the show
- 22M – Consider if such dancing competitions or any reality TV competitions for that matter are over saturating TV time slots.

Non-Viewers

Dance Elements

- 26M - I never really watched them on a regular basis and felt indifferent the few times I saw them.

- 21M – I'm not really interested in dance shows.
- 23F – There are some similar shows in China, mainly there is only one that I can name of. I've never watch them for the entire show, but my grandparents have. They like it a lot. I've never watched any in the U.S.
- 32M – I really can't get into these types of shows. If somehow I do find a reality type of show that interest me it's usually history themed.
- 20F – I have watched other reality shows, but I don't get the chance of watching dance shows. They are appealing to me. They look interesting to me.
- 21M – I enjoy dancing myself but to the extent on TV. It is entertaining and exciting and it isn't something I watch very often at all. It's just another show with talented people.
- 26F – I enjoy dance watching and participant but don't enjoy the shows.

Reality Elements

- 29M – The parts I watched were mainly because the girls were hot and if there was a celebrity I liked, but not really because of the dancing.

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CURRICULUM VITAE

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Thesis Title: The Uses and Gratifications of Dance Reality Shows

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