

# The Appeal of Reality Television For Teen and Pre-Teen Audiences

## The Power of “Connectedness” And Psycho-Demographics

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With the continued popularity of reality television among young viewers, it is vital to identify pre-teen and teen audiences who not only watch a reality program but have a high level of connectedness to it. Connectedness extends beyond just viewing the program and involves further engagement—posting on social networking sites, for instance, or buying products placed on the show. The authors report on a study that incorporated a national Harris Online survey of 1,098 preteens and teens in the United States to identify psycho-demographic groups that are likely to have high connectedness to reality programming. The findings will help network programmers and advertisers to make more effective decisions related to scheduling, media buying, product placements, and social-networking strategies.

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### INTRODUCTION

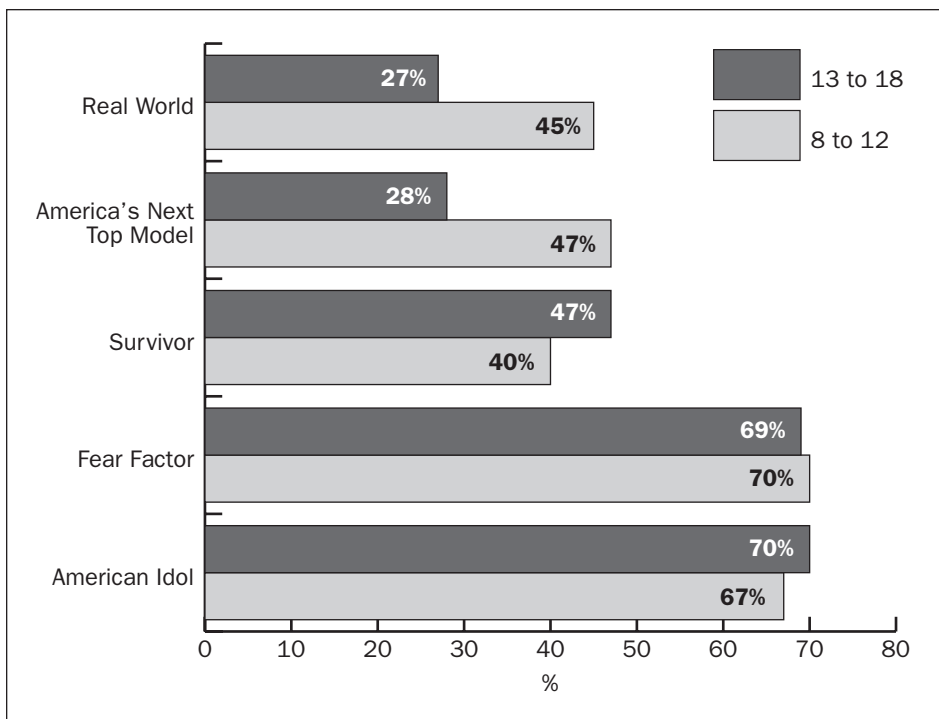
Television programming has changed dramatically over the past few decades. Situation comedies, family dramas, and crime shows have given way to a number of reality programs such as *American Idol*, *The Biggest Loser*, *Jersey Shore*, and *The Real World*. Reality programs accounted for approximately 14 percent of the 2009–2010 broadcast network television prime-time schedule and a significantly higher percentage of the programming schedule on the cable networks. In fact, 27 hours of reality programs were scheduled on broadcast network television in the first quarter of 2008, a 50-percent increase from the prior year (Wyatt, 2007).

In particular, reality programs have enjoyed a high level of popularity among pre-teen and teen-aged viewers<sup>1</sup> (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006a; Nielsen Media Research, 2006, 2007, 2008). Four of the 10 most popular 2005–2006 television programs among viewers younger than 17 were

reality programs (Nielsen Media Research, 2006), ranking as the most-viewed television programming genre among teens in several major local people meter markets (Nielsen Media Research, 2005). A high percentage of young people (preteens and teens) have seen such popular reality programs as *American Idol*, *Survivor*, and *The Real World* (Harris Interactive YouthQuery, 2006). More specifically: 67 percent of preteens and 70 percent of teens have watched *American Idol*; 40 percent and 47 percent of preteens and teens, respectively, have seen *Survivor* (See Figure 1).

With the number of hours spent in front of the television set increasing 6 percent annually (Nielsen Media Research, 2009) and the reality programming genre steadily growing, preteens and teens are more likely to be viewing reality programs. More important, there is evidence that young people emulate the behavior of reality stars (Watson, 2008) and that reality programs influence their buying behavior, which accounts for more than \$20 billion of spending per year (Lindsay, 2004).

<sup>1</sup> Preteens are individuals between the ages of 8 and 12; adolescents or teens are in the 13- to 18-age range (Wilson, Strasburger, and Jordan, 2009).



**Figure 1** Percent of Youth Who Have Watched These Reality Television Shows

Because of the popularity of reality television among young people, it is important not only to reaffirm that preteens and teens watch reality programs but to determine the level of how connected they are with those programs. The construct of “connectedness” was developed to measure the level of audience involvement with television programming (Russell, Norman, and Heckler, 2004). The connectedness phenomenon is rooted in the para-social relationships that viewers may establish with television program characters—“the seeming face-to-face relationship between spectator and performer” (Horton and Wuhl, 1956).

Connectedness is defined as the “level of intensity of the relationship(s) that a viewer develops with the characters and contextual settings of a program in the para-social television environment;” the higher the connectedness, the more

involved the viewer is with the program and characters (Russell et al., 2004). Prior research studying connectedness has been limited to more traditional television genres such as situation comedies and prime-time dramas; connectedness, to date, has not been studied with respect to reality programming.

The objective and contribution of this research is to examine the influence of psychographic and demographic variables on reality-television connectedness among preteens and teens. In other words, the authors aim to identify psycho-demographic groups among preteens and teens that are most likely to have a high level of connectedness to reality programming.

The availability of connectedness as a metric—instead of simply whether young people view a program—would enable network programmers and advertisers to make more-efficient decisions with

respect to scheduling, media buying, product placements, and social-networking strategies (Cowley and Barron, 2008). For example, viewers who are more connected to a program may be more likely to watch the program in real time rather than using their DVR, thus strengthening the impact of advertising commercial placement. Additionally, connectedness extends beyond just viewing the program to frequenting related Web sites, posting on message boards and Facebook, buying products featured in the show, and the like. Young people often multi-task as they watch television: 28 percent of these viewers go online while viewing a program to engage in discussions about it (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2006b). For instance, from December 2007 to January 2008, Web traffic on Fox network’s *American Idol* Web site rose by 101 percent (Sachoff, 2008).

In the next section, the authors discuss the selection of the psychographic and demographic variables included in this research and advance hypotheses about the impact of those variables on reality-television connectedness among preteens and teens. The authors then describe a survey that tested the hypotheses. This article concludes with a discussion of the results of the study, its limitations, directions for future research, and managerially relevant implications.

#### SELECTION OF THE RESEARCH VARIABLES

The authors selected psychographic and demographic variables that were likely to influence connectedness to reality programming.

Personal values were a likely psychographic antecedent of connectedness to reality programming because values are central drivers of preferences and behavior in both adults and children (Rokeach, 1973; Van Evra, 2004; see also Carver and Scheier, 1990; Mischel, Cantor, and

Feldman, 1996; Powers, 1973). A value is defined as “an enduring belief that a specific mode of conduct or end-state of existence is personally or socially preferable to an opposite or converse mode of conduct or end-state of existence” (Rokeach, 1968). “Values guide actions, attitudes, judgments, and comparisons across specific objects” (Rokeach, 1973; see also Richins and Dawson, 1992). For example, viewers choose television programs, in part, for the moral support of their values (Lin, Atkin, and Abelman, 2002). It therefore is important to examine values when studying such viewer attitudes as connectedness to reality television programs.

From an early age, children hold values learned through consumer socialization (Roedder-John, 1999). The major socialization agents for children include family, peers, culture, and mass media such as television (Roedder-John; Ward, 1974). Based on a factor analysis of values, Kennedy (1995) identified three value groups relevant to preteens and teens:

- Popularity (belonging), defined as the desire to feel secure and to be respected
- Achievement (accomplishment), aspiring for accomplishments, self-fulfillment, and self-respect
- Excitement, striving for enjoyment of life.

The three value groups affect advertising preferences in preteens and teens (Kennedy, 1995). In addition to popularity, academic achievement, and excitement, this research also evaluated the impact of young people’s desire for physical attractiveness. The authors included the value of physical attractiveness in their research because this value is strongly held among young people, especially teens (Martin and Gentry, 1997; Winham and Hampl, 2008). Moreover, the value of physical attractiveness influences the buying

behavior of preteens and teens (Goldberg and Gorn, 1978). As Goldberg and Gorn wrote in 1978, “The attractive child models that are used probably encourage the child viewer to identify with them, and through observational learning, to develop preferences for the advertised products.”

Because there are significant age-related differences in social and cognitive development (Roedder-John, 1999), the authors also examined the effect of age in addition to the influence of values. More important, the influence of values on preferences and behavior is likely to vary with age: “Value system development is linked to cognitive development, because as the individual ages and progresses through the various phases of cognitive development, information acquisition and manipulation changes” (Kennedy, 1995). Thus, the authors studied age because they expected that there may be an interaction between age and the influence of values on connectedness.

Gender differences also were observed in cognitive processing and behavior (Gilligan, 1982); therefore, the authors included this variable for exploratory purposes.

#### HYPOTHESES

Reality-television programming often involves exciting situations full of drama and tension. The majority of reality fare depicts common people engaging in uncommon (wilderness survival, international travel) and common (dating, home decorating) tasks, giving viewers the chance to compare and contrast their own lives with those of the show’s ‘protagonist’ and encouraging them to engage in the “active consumption” of the program (Rose and Wood, 2005). For example, participants in *The Real World* on MTV rock-climb in South America, sail in the Pacific, and share a house in Austin, Texas, where the mundane becomes entertainment. The

authors expected that those who espoused the value of excitement would be more likely to be connected to reality programming. In other words, the authors propose

- H1a: Compared to those who are low on the value of excitement, preteens and teens who value excitement are more connected to reality programming.

Preteens generally are able to memorize basic values as distinct concepts, but it is not until adolescence that memory systems are fully developed and able to store and retrieve more complex associations. And it is not until adolescence that young people are able to combine information into more complex value representations (Kennedy, 1995; Selman, 1980). Thus, “although values are relevant at all ages... their salience may differ at different cognitive development levels” (Kennedy).

Cognitively simpler values, such as excitement, are likely to be more salient in the preteen years; more complex values, such as popularity (which involves the capacity to understand another’s perspective), are likely to be more salient in adolescence (Kennedy, 1995). Consistent with this rationale, the importance of excitement as a driver of advertising preferences decreases from the preteen to the teen years (Kennedy, 1995). Accordingly, the authors expect

- H1b: The positive relationship between excitement and connectedness to reality programming is stronger for preteens than for teens.

The high percentage of young people who have seen reality-television shows (Harris Interactive YouthQuery 2006; See Figure 1) implies that many young viewers are, at least to some extent, familiar

with the events and participants in those shows. The shows are likely to become a subject of conversation among young people in person and on social-networking sites such as Facebook, suggesting that those preteens and teens who wish to be popular among their peers may feel more motivated to watch the shows regularly (Ritson and Elliott, 1999). Thus, the authors propose

H2a: Compared to those who are low on the popularity value, preteens and teens who value popularity are more connected to reality programming.

The authors expected that the relationship between the popularity value and connectedness to reality programming would differ for preteens and teens. Adolescents experiment with different identities and form cohesive peer support systems outside the family (Nathanson, 2001). Peer approval is very important, and there is pressure to conform to group expectations (Nathanson). Moreover, popularity involves the capacity to take and understand another's perspective—especially as it relates to the social system in which the other is operating—and those cognitive abilities are not fully developed until adolescence (Selman, 1980; for a review see Roedder-John, 1999). Thus, we can expect that the value of popularity is likely to be more salient for teens than for preteens. For example, the importance of the popularity value as a determinant of ad preferences is higher for teens than for preteens (Kennedy, 1995). Similarly, the authors anticipate

H2b: The positive relationship between popularity and connectedness to reality programming is stronger for teens than for preteens.

Youth who value academic achievement will be less likely to watch television (Acevedo-Polakovich, Lorch, and Milich, 2007; Koshal, Koshal, and Gupta, 1996). In a longitudinal study, preteens and teens who valued academic achievement spent more time on their homework and read more than those who did not value academic achievement as highly (Hancox, Milne, and Poulton, 2005). Conversely, preteens and teens who did not value academic achievement had more time to watch television (Hancox et al.), which likely will result in a higher level of connectedness to reality programs. The authors, therefore, propose

H3a: Compared to those who are low on the academic achievement value, preteens and teens who value academic achievement are less connected to reality programming.

The authors did not expect age differences in the hypothesized negative relationship between the academic achievement value and reality-television connectedness. The influence of the academic-achievement value on advertising preferences does not vary across preteens and teens (Kennedy, 1995). Similarly, the authors predicted that young people at any age who strive to achieve high performance in school would be equally unlikely to spend long hours watching programming and, therefore, would be less likely to have high connectedness to television shows in general and reality programs in particular.

H3b: There is no age difference in the negative relationship between academic achievement and connectedness to reality programming.

## **Youth often view celebrities and other participants in reality television shows as opinion leaders and role models.**

Youth often view celebrities and other participants in reality television shows as opinion leaders and role models (Pringle and Binet, 2005). Consumers who value physical attractiveness are more inclined to watch television because programs often showcase physically attractive people (Eisend and Moller, 2007). Reality show stars also can be a source of new styles and fashions (Pringle and Binet). For example, Amber Mariano of *Survivor* and *The Amazing Race* published a book, *Amber's Guide for Girls: Advice of Fame, Family, Fashion, and More*. Ancillary revenues, including those from fashion purchases, from programs targeting teens and preteens such as *Hannah Montana* and *High School Musical*, reached \$2 billion in 2008 (Businesswire, June 10, 2008). Therefore, the authors expect

H4: Compared to those who are low on the physical attractiveness value, preteens and teens who value physical attractiveness are more connected to reality programming.

The value of physical attractiveness was not examined in Kennedy's study (1995). Thus, the authors did not advance a formal hypothesis about age differences in the relationship between this value and

connectedness to reality programming. In the study described next, however, they tested an interaction between age and physical attractiveness for exploratory purposes.

## EMPIRICAL STUDY

### Respondents

A national sample of 1,098 preteens and teens in the United States completed online surveys. The sample was obtained from the Harris Poll Online opt-in panel. Data were collected from five preteen years (8 through 12) and five teen years (14 through 18). Respondents in the pre-teen age group were recruited through an initial e-mail contact with their parents. Respondents in the teen age group were recruited directly or through an initial e-mail contact with their parents. Parents who received an invitation e-mail were asked to forward the survey to their children after giving consent for their children's participation. A stratified random sample was used. Respondents recruited directly were stratified based on age, gender, and race. Respondents recruited through their parents were stratified based on the respondent's age and the parents' race.

### Measures

Connectedness to reality programming was evaluated on a nine-item four-point "strongly-disagree"/"strongly-agree" scale (Russell et al., 2004).

The scales used to measure respondents' values with respect to popularity, excitement, academic achievement, and physical attractiveness were developed based on the literature and were validated by experts at Harris Interactive. On a five-point scale—anchored between "very unimportant" and "very important"—respondents rated the importance of "I am popular" (popularity); "I have a high physical energy level" (excitement);

**TABLE 1**  
Psychometric Properties of the Scales

|                         | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | $\alpha$ | Range     |        |
|-------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------|
|                         |          |          |           |          | Potential | Actual |
| Popularity              | 1098     | 3.19     | 1.17      | —        | 1–5       | 1–5    |
| Excitement              | 1098     | 3.87     | 1.02      | —        | 1–5       | 1–5    |
| Academic Achievement    | 1098     | 4.45     | 0.86      | —        | 1–5       | 1–5    |
| Physical Attractiveness | 1098     | 3.74     | 0.77      | 0.67     | 1–5       | 1–5    |
| Connectedness           | 1098     | 1.98     | 0.65      | 0.87     | 1–4       | 1–4    |

and "I do well in school" (academic achievement). Respondents' value orientation with respect to physical attractiveness was evaluated with three items: "I look attractive"; "I look healthy"; and "I am thin" on the same five-point "very unimportant"/"very important" scale. The complete scales are listed in Appendix A. The uni-dimensionality of the two multi-item scales (connectedness and physical attractiveness) was confirmed through factor analysis. The psychometric properties of the scales (See Table 1) were deemed acceptable (Netemeyer, 2001).

## RESULTS

Of the 1,098 respondents, 485 (44 percent) were male, and 613 (56 percent) were female. The independent variables and their interactions were included as predictors in a regression model. Gender was coded as 1 (male) and -1 (female). Respondents' ages were coded as -1 (8–12) and 1 (14–18). First, the authors checked for multi-collinearity among the independent variables (excitement, popularity, academic achievement, and physical attractiveness). Bivariate correlations higher than 0.70 suggest a multi-collinearity problem (Hair, Bush, and Ortinau, 2005). The highest observed correlation was between popularity and physical attractiveness ( $r = 0.43$ ). Thus, the authors

found no evidence of a multi-collinearity problem (See Appendix B).

Gender had no significant main or interaction effects on connectedness (all  $p$  values  $> 0.10$ ; See Table 2).

Hypothesis 1 proposed that excitement would have a positive effect on connectedness (Hypothesis 1a) and that this effect would decrease with age (Hypothesis 1b). Hypothesis 1a was not supported: there was no overall main effect of excitement on connectedness ( $\beta = -0.01$ ,  $t(1078) = -0.17$ ,  $p > 0.10$ ). Hypothesis 1b did not receive support either. The authors found a significant negative interaction between age and excitement ( $\beta = -0.37$ ,  $t(1078) = -2.72$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ). To further examine this interaction, the authors estimated the regression model separately for the two age groups. Although excitement had no effect on connectedness for preteens ( $\beta = 0.08$ ,  $t(502) = 1.81$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), it had a significant negative impact in adolescence ( $\beta = -0.11$ ,  $t(576) = -2.04$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Thus, contrary to Hypothesis 1b, excitement was unrelated to reality-television connectedness in the preteen years and decreased connectedness for teens.

Popularity had a significant positive influence on connectedness ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $t(1078) = 6.61$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ). Thus, hypothesis 2a received full support. Hypothesis 2b also was supported. As predicted, the authors found a significant positive

**TABLE 2**  
Summary of Simultaneous Regression Analysis for Age, Gender, and Personal Values as Predictors of Reality Television Connectedness for Preteens and Teens

|                               | Parameter Estimate | Standard Error | 95 percent Confidence Interval | Standardized Parameter Estimate |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Constant                      | 1.35               | 0.13           | (1.11, 1.60)                   | 0.00                            |
| Gender                        | 0.09               | 0.13           | (-0.16, 0.33)                  | 0.13                            |
| Age                           | 0.01               | 0.13           | (-0.24, 0.25)                  | 0.01                            |
| Excitement                    | 0.00               | 0.02           | (-0.05, 0.04)                  | -0.01                           |
| Popularity                    | 0.12***            | 0.02           | (0.09, 0.16)                   | 0.22***                         |
| Academic Achievement          | -0.05              | 0.02           | (-0.10, 0.00)                  | -0.06                           |
| Physical Attractiveness       | 0.12***            | 0.03           | (0.06, 0.19)                   | 0.15***                         |
| Gender * Age                  | -0.01              | 0.13           | (-0.26, 0.23)                  | -0.02                           |
| Gender * Excitement           | -0.01              | 0.02           | (-0.05, 0.03)                  | -0.06                           |
| Gender * Popularity           | 0.00               | 0.02           | (-0.04, 0.04)                  | 0.00                            |
| Gender * Achievement          | 0.01               | 0.02           | (-0.04, 0.06)                  | 0.08                            |
| Gender * Attractiveness       | -0.04              | 0.03           | (-0.10, 0.02)                  | -0.24                           |
| Age * Excitement              | -0.06**            | 0.02           | (-0.10, -0.02)                 | -0.37**                         |
| Age * Popularity              | 0.04*              | 0.02           | (0.01, 0.08)                   | 0.22*                           |
| Age * Achievement             | 0.03               | 0.02           | (-0.02, 0.07)                  | 0.18                            |
| Age * Attractiveness          | -0.04              | 0.03           | (-0.10, 0.02)                  | -0.22                           |
| Gender * Age * Excitement     | -0.03              | 0.02           | (-0.07, 0.01)                  | -0.17                           |
| Gender * Age * Popularity     | -0.02              | 0.02           | (-0.05, 0.02)                  | -0.08                           |
| Gender * Age * Achievement    | 0.01               | 0.02           | (-0.04, 0.06)                  | 0.05                            |
| Gender * Age * Attractiveness | 0.03               | 0.03           | (-0.03, 0.10)                  | 0.19                            |

Note.  $R^2 = 0.15$ ;  $N = 1098$ ; \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.0001$ .

interaction between age and popularity ( $\beta = 0.22$ ,  $t(1078) = 2.29$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). The positive effect of popularity on connectedness was more significant for teens ( $\beta = 0.31$ ,  $t(576) = 6.71$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ) than for preteens ( $\beta = 0.14$ ,  $t(502) = 2.86$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Hypothesis 3a—proposing that young people who value academic achievement would be less likely to feel connected to reality television—did not receive support;

academic achievement had no significant main effect on connectedness ( $\beta = -0.06$ ,  $t(1078) = -1.93$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ). Consistent with Hypothesis 3b, there was no interaction between age and academic achievement ( $\beta = 0.18$ ,  $t(1078) = 1.05$ ,  $p > 0.20$ ).

Compared to the respondents low on the physical attractiveness value, those who valued physical attractiveness reported higher connectedness to reality television

( $\beta = 0.15$ ,  $t(1078) = 3.94$ ,  $p < 0.0001$ ), thereby supporting Hypothesis 4. There were no other significant main or interaction effects in the regression model ( $|t(1078)| \leq 1.29$ ,  $p > 0.10$ ).

## DISCUSSION

### Results and Managerial Implications

In this research, the authors identified psycho-demographic variables related to connectedness with reality television among preteens and teens. The results showed that young people who strove for popularity and physical attractiveness were more likely to feel connected to reality-television programs. Popularity as a driver of reality programming connectedness was especially pronounced in adolescence: the difference in connectedness between those who valued popularity and those who did not was greater for teens than among preteens. Conversely, teens who craved excitement were less likely to be connected to reality programming. The value of excitement was unrelated to connectedness among preteens. The value of academic achievement also was unrelated to connectedness both among preteens and for teens.

The results of the current study would be especially helpful to network programmers and advertisers for two reasons:

- First, the authors examined the influence of psycho-demographic variables on connectedness to reality programming. Viewers with a high level of connectedness to a program were more likely not only to view the program but to watch it in real time (rather than using their DVR) and to visit related social-networking sites (Maran, 2009).
- Second, identifying a psychographic variable related to connectedness (viewer values)—not just the influence of demographic variables—would allow the development and implementation

**By linking the commercial spot with programming that caters to similar values, viewers may be more likely to watch the ads when viewing in real time and less likely to “zip” through the ads when viewing on DVR.**

of more effective targeting strategies. More specifically, the incorporation of connectedness and viewer values into targeting strategies would enable programmers and advertisers to make more effective decisions in three areas: scheduling, media buying, and product placements.

Industry strategists believe that television networks (in particular, schedulers) need to understand their viewers better in order to maintain and expand their core audience (Eastman and Ferguson, 2008; Hampp, 2010). By incorporating connectedness and values into the scheduling research, the authors are enabling “media planners [and network programmers] to know the composition of each segment, and its particular decision processes” (Kim, 2002).

Rather than focusing strictly on demographic variables when employing a television scheduling strategy, network programmers can augment it with psychographics. The inclusion of psychographic variables in scheduling will benefit both the national networks and local stations by achieving consistent audience ratings from one program to another. For example, on the national level, if the “popularity” value is a central driver among *American Idol* viewers, it would be beneficial for the network to schedule another program catering to those who crave popularity after *American Idol*. Locally, affiliates and

independent stations, which have limited resources, can adopt the psycho-demographic drivers of connectedness when licensing syndicated programming to schedule daytime hours.

With the growing number of cable stations and programming choices, media buyers are having a more difficult time preparing an efficient media schedule (Lin et al., 2002). The key to media buying is in targeting a demographic to more efficiently utilize resources (Assael and Poltrack, 1994). With the use of television connectedness and viewer values, media buyers can prepare a more targeted schedule with quality rationale (Gal-Or, Gal-Or, May, and Spangler, 2006). The rationale can benefit buyers and sellers because both groups will have more complete information: for example, when networks—in an attempt to maximize profits and sell open inventory—package top-rated programs with lower-rated programs (Steinberg, 2009).

By linking the commercial spot with programming that caters to similar values, viewers may be more likely to watch the ads when viewing in real time and less likely to “zip” through the ads when viewing on DVR (Wilbur, 2008). Connectedness and the use of psycho-demographics also can be employed by emerging companies such as BlackArrow, which inserts new commercial ads into DVR playback based on audience characteristics (Steinberg, 2007).

Television marketers are reaping benefits from the increased ratings of reality programs among preteens and teens by using them as vehicles for product placements (Edwards, 2006). Reality programs are well suited for product placements because of the possibility for a natural integration of the product within the context of a program (Hudson and Hudson, 2006; Russell, 2002). For example, the contestants participating in *America’s Next Top Model* used CoverGirl cosmetics on the program. Moreover, viewers who are highly connected to a program are likely to recall a higher percentage of brand placements in the program (Scott and Craig-Lees, 2010).

The authors’ research allows advertisers to bolster the effectiveness of product placements and brand integration. By knowing the values of the preteen and teen viewers who are most likely to watch a certain program, advertisers will be able to target products that appeal to those values. Television networks also can employ both the shows and the reality celebrities as forms of branded entertainment. For example, *The Apprentice* is not only a reality show on NBC but a board game. By identifying the psycho-demographics of the viewers who are connected to *The Apprentice*, marketers can use the information to target the board game to consumers more effectively.

**LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS**

One limitation of their research is that the authors focused only on reality programming. It would be useful to network programmers to know how psychographic and demographic variables may influence the level of connectedness of preteens and teens with other television genres (i.e., situation comedies, dramas, and the like).

A related limitation of this research is that there are many genres of reality

programming (i.e., adventure shows, talent shows, contests, and so on). The authors studied the relationship of the selected psychographic and demographic variables with connectedness to reality programming as a whole, but it is conceivable that this relationship may vary across the different reality programming genres and even across the various programs within a genre.

A direction for future investigation would be to examine the influence of other psychographic and demographic variables on television connectedness. For example, geographic segmentation variables (i.e., rural versus urban) could have important implications for advertising and targeting.

Finally, the authors predicted a positive relationship between the value of excitement and connectedness to reality television. However, a negative relationship between these two variables was found for teens. The causes of this negative effect need to be explored. For example, teens who value excitement may seek it in activities (i.e., sports and outdoor activities) other than reality television. **JAR**

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## APPENDIX A Measurement Scales



### CONNECTEDNESS

How much do you agree with the following statements?

1. I wish I could be like people on reality television programs.
2. People on reality television programs are *more* like me than people on regular television programs.
3. I wish I could dress like people on reality television programs.
4. I would like to talk or act like people I've seen on reality television programs.
5. I want my body to look like the people on reality television programs.
6. Reality television is just like real life.
7. I like to watch reality television so I can talk to my friends about it.

8. I wish I could be on a reality television show.
9. There is a chance I could be on a reality television show.

*Note:* The nine items were administered to respondents in a random order, which was different for every respondent.

### PERSONAL VALUES

How important is each of the following to you?

1. Very unimportant
2. Somewhat unimportant
3. Neither important nor unimportant
4. Somewhat important
5. Very important

### Physical Attractiveness

1. I look attractive.
2. I look healthy.
3. I am thin.

### Popularity

1. I am popular.

### Academic Achievement

1. I do well in school.

### Excitement

1. I have a high physical energy level.

*Note:* The six items were administered to respondents in a random order, which was different for every respondent.

## APPENDIX B

### Correlations Between the Independent Variables

|                         | Excitement | Popularity | Academic Achievement | Physical Attractiveness | Connectedness |
|-------------------------|------------|------------|----------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Excitement              | 1.000      |            |                      |                         |               |
| Popularity              | 0.247***   | 1.000      |                      |                         |               |
| Academic Achievement    | 0.289***   | 0.069*     | 1.000                |                         |               |
| Physical Attractiveness | 0.418***   | 0.425***   | 0.351***             | 1.000                   |               |
| Connectedness           | 0.098***   | 0.309***   | 0.010                | 0.203***                | 1.000         |

*Note:* \* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.0001$ .

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