

The Impact of Reality TV

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The Impression That It Leaves On People

Introduction

Reality Television is a new and growing genre of television shows that does not employ actors or follow a script but captures real events of real people in situations created by them, which can be either a singing competition, a hunting campaign on a far island, a bridal dressing show, or living in a house constantly being watched by the general public with your every move recorded on camera (Brown).

Reality TV shows do not require actors, writers, directors, or any form of extra expenses that other television shows require, which makes it very affordable because of all that is required: a bunch of people who may be real from the general public, a producer, and a good editor. Therefore, the genre has become very popular, and hundreds of shows have been created on different topics. The genre has also gained the attention of its audience due to its relatability with real people in real-life situations (Kearney, Melissa S., and Phillip B. Levine 3597-3632).

Kim Kardashian calls her “glam squad” to prepare for her delivery and make sure her hair and makeup look perfect when she gives birth to a new life, instead of arranging for a room and appointing the best healthcare services. This behavior is tagged as “typical Kim” by her family, showing her priorities. On the other hand, “real” housewives show the socialites of Beverly Hills in their designer clothes, drunk and using inappropriate language to bring down each other.

Reality TV, celebrity scandals, and updates have become a part of our lives. We know more about Kylie Jenner’s new selfie and the likes it got than we know about the way climate change and [global warming are affecting](#) different parts of the world. There is nothing real about reality TV shows; instead, it is a façade that has captivated our generation and created unrealistic expectations of life.

Problems

Objectifying Women

Most reality TV programs portray women as sex objects and create unrealistic beauty standards, idealizing skinniness. The audience and young teenage girls who watch these shows with great interest are taught that a woman’s value lies in her looks and beauty rather than her personality and

achievements.

Reality TV shows that encourage competition for the best body and looks among young women, such as America's Next Top Model, depict women's beauty and looks as the sole purpose of their existence. This forces young girls to follow unhealthy diets that damage their growing process and put them at risk of serious diseases (Tsay-Vogel, Mina, and K. Maja Krakowiak 348).

Moreover, the rise of plastic surgeries is a result of new trends in looks, such as enhanced lips, smaller waists, and high cheekbones, etc. This is encouraged by reality TV shows such as Botched and The Swan, where people artificially alter their natural features to become more satisfied with the way they look. The surgeries can lead to permanent injuries or even prove to be fatal, while individuals waste thousands of dollars on them (Shin, Dong-Hee 140-159).

Keeping with the Kardashians and Real Housewives, the celebrities talk openly about their plastic surgeries and the thousands of dollars they gave up to put their lives at risk when altering their natural appearances. Such campaigns highlight the insecurities of women who find themselves not meeting the beauty standards set by these reality celebrities.

Additionally, these shows sexualize the women and their bodies with overly revealing clothes and inappropriate behavior that impact the minds of young women who follow their stars on social media and see them as idols (Brown).

Reality TV stars often lack proper talents, which can identify them as celebrities and women who can set a good example for young girls to follow their dreams. It makes them think that their success in life lies in their appearance and not in their hard work to make the world around them a better place.

Women are seen as negative people who gossip about each other and bring down another woman for her looks or cultural background in order to feel better about themselves. When children, young teenage girls, and even adults who see such a depiction of women are convinced to follow the same pattern of behavior to be acceptable in the modern world and the new trends.

Materialism

Reality Television programs have perpetuated materialism, excessive partying, and idolizing celebrity lifestyle as one of the main values. Shows like Rich Kids of Beverly Hills highlight the extravagant lives of the privileged children of rich parents. These young adults are shown partying excessively, wearing designer clothes, spending a lot of their parents' money on expensive trips, parties, and materialistic investments (Scarborough, Roscoe C., and Charles Allan McCoy 164-191).

These children aren't relatable to the general public, but they strike a sense of fantasy among them, create unrealistic expectations from life, and make huge demands from their parents. This also causes depression among teenagers when their lives do not meet the standards they see on reality

television and the social media of these celebrities (Brown).

Additionally, reality TV stars of shows like Jersey Shore, who spend their summers in luxurious hotels and exotic locations, spending thousands of dollars, are also involved in inappropriate sexual behavior, abuse, and being arrested for their aggressive behaviors. All this is considered normal and shown as something acceptable to the younger generation and rich people.

Unrealistic expectations from life and the demand for an extravagant celebrity lifestyle can lead children to commit huge crimes to fulfil their unlimited wants that aren't fulfilled by their parents and current financial situations. The movie Bling Ring, released in 2013, was based on true events where young adults are involved in the robbery of famous and rich celebrities so that they can experience similar luxuries and meet their high standards of living.

Children, teenagers, and young adults idolize the celebrity lifestyle of expensive materials and excessive partying, spending thousands of dollars without worrying about a job or other responsibilities.

Aggression And Bullying

Immoral activities such as showing aggression, abusing each other verbally and sometimes physically, gossiping about each other, and bullying are a part of the lives of reality TV stars. Most of these reality TV shows promote interpersonal drama, aggressive behavior, and bullying each other to feel better about themselves. The show Real Housewives portrays women back-stabbing each other, plotting to destroy their competitors, gossiping, and bullying with hurtful remarks.

Young girls and boys who see reality TV celebrities portraying this kind of aggressive and immoral behavior find it trendy and normal to bully other kids and be negative about females, as they are considered two-faced and hypocritical. Most girls adopt this attitude and show similar traits in their daily lives.

Once reality TV shows and the social media profiles of reality TV celebrities depict such aggression, bullying, abusive language, and unethical behavior as a normal human trait, young adults accept this as a rational form of attitude and implement it in their social circle, causing further negativity, anxiety, depression, and provoking crime.

Crimes such as using drugs, shoplifting, robbery, stealing from rich friends and celebrities, bullying, and physical abuse are not reported to the crime branch because of their acceptance as common behavior found among young individuals.

Lack Of Focus On The Importance Of Intelligence

Moreover, reality celebrities have set terrible examples for children. They are famous for all the wrong

reasons, such as nudity, drunk driving, stripping, other crimes, and just being rich without any personal talents. This makes young girls and boys believe that they don't have to work hard, perform better in academics, and focus on education and personal development in order to achieve success, wealth, and fame.

Intelligence and personal talents and qualities are the least of the concerns of reality TV shows; instead, they focus on immoral and unethical attitudes, which include constant gossiping and wasting the money of their parents or the fortune they have earned through their celebrity status and publicity stunts.

Working Thesis

Reality television has become a significant part of the media, and similarly, the importance of reality TV celebrities who have little to no talent and are famous for all the wrong reasons. Some of us can differentiate between "real" and fake; however, a majority of the viewers, specifically the younger generation, believe in the unrealistic standards set by these shows that have impacted their lifestyle and high expectations from their parents and led to depression, as well as encouraged violent behavior and abusive language.

Body

Reality TV And The Transformation Of Television Culture

Television programs showing ordinary people in real-life situations that are unscripted are a medium that has been adopted since the invention of TV shows. Candid Camera and Queen of the Day are the earliest examples of television shows based on real people in real-life situations. Moreover, 'This is Your Life' aired on television in the 1950s, was based on a person's real life, and involved real people instead of actors with a script. The concept is very similar to modern-day reality TV shows such as 'Keeping Up with the Kardashians.'

In 1948, "The Original Amateur Hour" was first introduced to the general public on their television screens, which promoted competition among talented individuals to show their skills on the stage and be judged, scored, and rewarded for them. This is today adopted by many shows such as America's Got Talent, American Idol, So You Think You Can Dance, and many others of the same genre.

Another example of earlier reality television shows includes the ones from the 1950s, such as "Queen for a Day". The concept of the show was to encourage females who struggled with household responsibilities and other difficulties to feel better about themselves and be treated better for a day, so that there is a positive energy in their lives, and the people who watched these shows hoped for a similar encounter.

Recently, this genre of reality TV has been adapted by shows like 10 Years Younger, A Makeover Story, and a few others that involve transforming the lives of struggling females who forget about caring for themselves when providing for their families and raising their children.

Other types of reality television programs included practical jokes performed on real people to record their candid reactions. These types of shows became popular among people who preferred a funny show that was relatable.

On the other hand, a new culture of reality TV shows was introduced with gaming shows that provided great fortunes to real people as rewards; it became an exciting journey for both the contestants and the audience. At the same time, during the 70s, the dating game show was created by reality TV producers. This was appreciated and loved by a large number of the audience because of the unscripted and thrilling adventure of the contestants.

After the groundbreaking release of An American Family, the 1970s changed the concept of reality TV by showing the lives of real families and being open about their personal marital issues and the homosexuality of their children. Some people consider it the first reality television show because of the raw content shown in the program.

The Popularity Of Reality TV

Reality Television became one of the most popular genres of television programs among audiences of all ages. This is because of the relatable content of these shows. Even though scripted shows also highlight real-life issues that are not very different from our everyday struggles, personal problems, and feelings. However, the fact that these shows were scripted and revolved around fantasy and idol situations, people believed that those shows weren't relatable and unrealistic (Ouellette, Laurie n.p)

The introduction of reality television that depicted real-life situations of real people gained immense popularity rapidly due to the raw and relatable content. The audience of reality TV shows believed that they built a connection with the stars shown in these shows; it gave them hope that they had a good chance of ending up on a game show and earning good fortune or gaining a chance of finding their dream life partner, or living a lifestyle similar to the people shown in these shows.

Moreover, the problems of real people shown in reality TV shows were similar to those of individuals from the audience, which made them more interested in the lives of these contestants as they were able to relate to them and their issues, personal behaviors, flaws, and mistakes.

Additionally, reality TV shows are more thrilling and exciting for the audience and, at the same for the contestants and producers because the shows are unscripted and highly depend on the cliffhangers that exist in their daily routines. Shows like The Survivor create competition among contestants performing different tasks that are thrilling to watch for the audience when supporting their favorite participants. This also gives them control over who wins since they make a contribution to the show

through voting.

Furthermore, according to a survey by the team of Psychology Today (Steve) most people watched reality due to the discussion with friends about the show. Television programs that gain popularity are also followed by others so that they don't feel ostracized ("Why America Loves Reality TV").

On the other hand, a study by CBS News suggested that reality TV creates a combination of reality and fantasy. This becomes an exciting experience for the audience since they can imagine similar things happening to them (*Why Do We Tune In To Reality TV? - CBS News*).

The increasing popularity of these shows and the high demand for new episodes and more seasons are causing more people to be involved in this medium of television programs. One of the best things about reality TV shows is that there is never-ending content. Producers keep on introducing new seasons because there is no end to the stories of these people, and more people are involved; unlike scripted shows, there is no ending in reality TV, which keeps the audience hooked.

Reality TV Celebrities

Contestants who take part in reality TV shows and celebrities who gain immense popularity due to their shows, such as the Kardashians, the Shahs of Sunset, and many others, have achieved unimaginable wealth due to their fame for almost no talent. They have scored big contracts and are the ambassadors to big brands, which earn them millions of dollars. At the same time, their social media following has gained them wealth.

The Effects Of Reality TV On Children

For the past few years, reality TV has gained popularity among younger individuals, including children. Reality TV has given the impression that whatever occurs on the screen is 'real' and normal in our daily routines. Even though mature individuals can differentiate between real life and the so-called reality of these shows, the younger generation lacks this ability and believes what they see on their television screens (Scharrer, Erica, and Greg Blackburn n.p).

The values and behavior shown in reality TV shows are negative and have a bad influence on the morale of society. It is corrupting the minds of young children who look up to these celebrities and believe that their aggressive and immoral behavior is normal and acceptable.

It is crucial to acknowledge that the media has a significant influence on a majority of the population, specifically young adults and children who are too naïve to differentiate between right and wrong.

On the other side, there are reality TV shows that promote young talent, such as America's Got Talent, and other singing, dancing, and intelligence gaming shows that are not entirely negative. They encourage children to focus on their personal skills and talents in order to achieve similar success as

the contestants of these shows. These shows bring out the best in young adults and provide a platform for them to showcase their intelligence, talents, and skills.

Nevertheless, the majority of the shows are the complete opposite of these encouraging shows. Most reality TV shows depict aggressive behavior, bullying, abusive language, and all kinds of immoral behaviors as acceptable ways of treating each other. This brings down children and hurts their self-esteem, which can cause depression and anxiety. At the same time, reality TV celebrities create unrealistic standards of beauty and wealth that are too difficult for young adults and teenagers to match, which again leads to depression, violent attitudes, and crimes (Greenfield, Patricia M).

The Story Behind The Scenes

Most reality television programs are not entirely true or 'real.' Most scenes are scripted, and the producers know exactly what they want and what kind of situation they want to create in order to gain more ratings. The wealth shown on these shows is sponsored by big firms that want to promote their products in the show.

Children and young adults who see this celebrity lifestyle as their ultimate goal and a realistic demand aren't aware that the shows are funded by various companies that want to show this kind of extravagant trips, designer clothes, and brands in order to attract fans of these shows (Grindstaff, Laura, and Susan Murray 109-135).

Emotional stunts, fights, and everything these contestants do have a purpose to attract the audience towards them and be favorable. Producers know exactly what increases ratings and which stunt will trigger them.

Conclusion

It is concluded that most reality television shows have a negative impact on the people who watch them and, most alarmingly, believe in them. Young adults who idealize celebrity lifestyles are influenced by the immoral behavior shown in these shows.

Most reality shows portray that a woman's value lies in her appearance and set beauty standards that are unrealistic, bringing down other body types and highlighting their insecurities. There is too much materialism shown on reality TV, combined with excessive partying and demonstrating a "celebrity lifestyle" that gives unrealistic impressions to young girls and boys. The TV shows tagged as "reality" reveal negative and aggressive behavior that is not considered immoral. Additionally, bullying and aggression are a part of the lives of these reality celebrities. It has encouraged bullying, gossiping, and aggressive behavior among the younger generation.

Hence, it is crucial to recognize the major influence of media on people, young adults, and children.

The number of these shows can't be limited, but one can limit what their children see or avoid such content of negativity themselves.

Although television has improved with time, humanity has achieved great success with technology, and the platforms reality television provides for struggling actors, singers, dancers, and many other talents are unbeatable, the issue of immorality portrayed in these shows is still a matter of concern for the majority of the population.

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