5 W'S and 1 H: the Furtive of Interactive Reality Television Programme

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Abstract: Reality television programme (RTVP) in India has been a success phenomenon in entertainment programming and also in captivating the audience interest. Involving the television audience in shaping the outcome of the RTVP makes them more proactive and it has emerged as an essential part of the programme format itself. Interactive RTVP gives the audience the power to become content influencers. This has been a point of discussion among media researchers but has been rarely tested. So at this milieu, this paper identifies the television audience who participates in the interactive RTVP and further investigates the different interactive participatory feature of RTVP. 1040 respondents were selected for the study and it is a descriptive quantitative statistics conducted with the help of questionnaire in Chennai district during 2014. The data analysis was done using IBM SPSS 20.0 with percentage analysis, average ranking method, Karl Pearson's co-efficient of correlation and t test. The finding shows that the majority of housewives have been a key audience of RTVP and the most preferred interactive feature is short messaging service (SMS) voting. Other demographical concerns like age, gender, occupation and education qualification doesn't influence a person to be an active RTVP audience and they create a "quasi-friendship" and becomes a loyal spectator. Further, the study has theoretical and managerial implications.

Key words: Reality Television Programme · Audience · Interactivity · Participatory features · India

INTRODUCTION

'In these days and age television has become as basic nature like eating and sleeping'. Some may argue television is an idiot box, some say that is an intellectual box, but it proves itself to be an inevitable box [1]. It serves as a home media for entertainment and for relaxation. Entertainment on television has undergone great changes during the past and at present more multifaceted than earlier, today being part of everyday television and including more genres and media platforms than ever. Individuals now have more viewing choices than ever before in deciding how to spend their time with television. Currently reality television programme (RTVP) is gaining enormous popularity among the television audience. Most television channels have some type of RTVP to quench audience's thirst for reality television programming. RTVP is a more recent genre in India that has been growing steadily over the past few years [2]. The key sub genre of RTVP is talent hunt programme, the producers work on this format in many ways. They trip major cities of the country to hunt talents, then select a certain number of people, train them, put them into a particular on-air competition and televise the events to the viewers. The response for these types of programme in country like India is tremendous, where many talented people are left unknown beyond the expectation. Many Indian RTVP, portrays the day-to-day life of the contestant that includes preparation and learning for the programme, it features the emotional as well as the lighter moments of the contestant. More specifically, they show the fear and reactions of the contestant about the competition and their views and opinion about the other contestant, contestant meetings with people and celebrities, the show's preparations and other backstage activities, celebrities, as judges, also make these shows more glamorous. More interestingly, judges are to give their opinions; the final decision about the contestant is in the hands of viewers, participation of viewers through phone voting is another aspect that helps these kinds of programme earn a lot of money, popularity, as well as viewership [3]. Traditionally most RTVP viewing experiences are both quite and non-interactive. But now it has become more dynamic in terms of interactive and proactive. Interactive RTVP has changed the face of entertainment in India since it had the objective results;

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competitions based talent hunt programmes have a subjective element in the choice of winners by using the audience participation in announcing the results. In such competitions, judges decide which contestant is technically a better performer [3].

Interactivity for the Current Study: The concept of interactivity has been approached from four perspectives: technology perception, users' perceptive, communication process perspective and multi-dimension perspectives. Each approach has been tailored and customized from various academic and industrial arenas. Even though the technology-oriented approach has been widely accepted, in entertainment media research [4, 5], technology is time based phenomena. It keeps on changing from one to another and it is device based.

The perception-oriented approaches have been most popularly used [6], the perspective is problematic because even a (technologically) simple medium can be perceived more interactive by a user. For example, as Sundar [7] argues, one may perceive surfing television channels to be more interactive than chatting through a webcam because he or she is not confident with using the webcam technology. Similarly, one may feel less comfortable using a Play Station controller than a television remote controller. Skill level may cause different ranges of enjoyment or gratification [4]; however, this should not be confused with interactivity [7]. The multi-dimensional perspective is a summary of various definitions rather than a suggestion of research studies. As evidences, scholars extract some concepts and combine them with new concept to measure or define interactivity.

The communication process perspective, which stressed responsive communication, is the crucial area to be studied. Most of all, since the communication model inherited mediated interpersonal communication; the scope is wide enough to fully cover human-machine interaction [6]. In addition, the perspective assumes that a medium may be more interactive when there is a definite process of communication with a sender and a receiver with feedback. However, it is important to study and measure the gratification got by the human – machine interaction.

For the current study, thus, the definition of interactivity will be adapted from the communication process perspective view of interactivity that is ¯the extent to which the users are capable of influencing his or her media use [4]. For the same reason, RTVP will be employed as an interactive medium tool to be studied now.

Objectives of the Study: The study is guided by the following objectives:
- To identify the potential audience for RTVP.
- To explore and analyze the interactive participatory feature of RTVP.

Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this research is to investigate the interactive features of RTVP; it has enhanced the viewing experience by offering the audience the option of being an active and passive participation in consuming television programme, this study will be helpful in understanding the need for such interactivity.

Need for the Study: The history of media audience research has seen many transformations in media theory and research perspectives. The main shift in focus showed a move from traditional research of the impact of the media on its audience to researching what audiences do with the media. Earlier people interacted in groups having face-to- face associations. But today, they are continuously exposed to audio visual content through television and they are associated with it. The need for communicating with the masses and influencing them was felt in order to have the impact of autonomy. In order to understand the audience interaction better and provide better feasibility in the interactive features to the audience. This study endeavors to learn the gamut of participatory features of RTVP and the kind of interactivity it creates.

Scope of the Study: With advanced technology allowing audience to interact with the text itself, the viewing experience is no longer limited to the television set. Extending the viewing experience to interactive participation has become an essential component of all RTVP. However, combining the interactive component with the genre of RTVP creates a dynamic relationship between the text and the audience, as viewer participation influences the outcomes of the programme. RTVP and interactive media opened the doors to audience to partake actively and influence the result of these simulated real-life events, in that way giving the audience a super position.

Review of Literature: RTVP has become immensely popular in the years prior, it was first recognized as an official genre of television in 2004 [8]. Annette Hill [9], states that the increased popularity of the genre is reflected in the ratings of these programmes and has resulted in great advertising revenues for the networks.

According to Mark Andrejevic [10], the genre promotes the idea that audiences can go beyond the role of the spectator to become participants and in some occasions the main character.

As it is generally understood though, reality television has the following attributes. 1. The recording of event in the lives of individual or group, 2. An attempt to stimulate these real-life events by means of dramatized reconstruction and 3. Packaging the material into an attractive programme with entertainment value that can be marketed on the strengths of its 'reality' credentials [11].

Wei and Tootle [12] define RTVP as "Television programme shows that simulate real-world, real-life psychologically, mentally or emotionally challenging situations, involving reward-motivated, self-selected contestants from the audience. The contestants act spontaneously, improvise and showcase their real emotions in meeting the challenges they encounter in real settings". In western countries the RTVP is as old has the medium. Reality television was made possible by the development of lightweight video recording equipment [13].

Tracing the history and evolution of RTVP can draw its roots through radio. The popular radio programme *Candid Microphone*, originated by Allen Funt during his time in the military, made its television debut in August 1948 on American broadcasting company as *Candid Camera* [14]. The idea behind the show was that, ordinary people would be set up in ridiculous situations and their reactions would be captured for the television audience. Further, it does not meet the criteria for categorization as a RTVP; it certainly established many of the conventions to the genre. The component that *Candid Camera* lacked in terms of being included as a full-fledged RTVP as we know them today was the inclusion of comprehensive surveillance of the participants. Once a participant had become involved in the situation and after it was revealed that they were being filmed for *Candid Camera*, the cameras were turned off and the viewers only saw a small portion of how the artificial scenario affected their lives. What happened when the cameras were off? Or when they told their friends and family? One of the key elements involved with contemporary RTVP is the availability of 'backstage' behaviors and emotions. How do contestants react afterward? These are some of the key questions that contemporary RTVP highlight.

For better understanding, a clearer picture of what characteristics should be required of a RTVP to be considered as reality programme is required. Many scholars and researches like Kilborn [11], Dovey [15], Syvertsen [16], Wells[17], Wei[12] andrejevic[10], Delisle [18], Nabi [19], Hill [20] have defined reality television programme in their works. But RTVP can best be defined as the programme which features 1. Non-actors, 2. Filmed in unscripted situations, 3. Where the contestants are behaving spontaneously, 4. With some level of producer/directors creative involvement in the programme and 5. The documentation of the contestant's experience is not limited to particular moment.

In India, Zee TV started involving the audience in the elimination of contestants through its programme, *Cine Stars Ki Khoj* meaning 'Search for a film star'. Since then, many RTVP and celebrity based programmes have maintained an audience poll option. There was also a campaign called *'one mobile-one vote'* to avoid duplication of audience votes. Then came the 'missed call voting' phenomenon that helps the audience to vote for free of cost.

Television is all about fame; and the audiences are the critics. Many RTVP makers believed that public voting is very essential. Broadly, despite the fact that nowadays it's common place to have the two components weighted together (judges' points and audience polls), no one ever contended the older way when only judges decisions were final. Judges have their own point of view and have the requisite knowledge about it. Most of such programme has a 50:50 weights to judges' valuation and audiences' votes. So the opinion of the potential audience is taken into consideration to announce a winner through their votes. Judges talk about the technical aspects of the performance that helps the audience to choose the better contestant. But audience poll, as a form of interactivity feature has its own share of pros and cons. It does build engagement and loyalty but it also entertains a lot of foul play; in the sense that talent loses significance and fame decides the winner. For this kind of interactive RTVP a telecom partner becomes an essential associate; who is eager to partner with a programme for polling. There has been a lot of innovation in the way of audience interactivity to the programme. People can use interactivity in three ways as to control content, buying products/ services and for voting on a programme [21]. RTVP places the audience member on the opposite side of the entertainment arena, providing all viewers with the possibility of becoming potential entertainers. The RTVP could potentially empower audiences, by allowing them to participate, directly or from home and influence the creation of media content [22, 23].
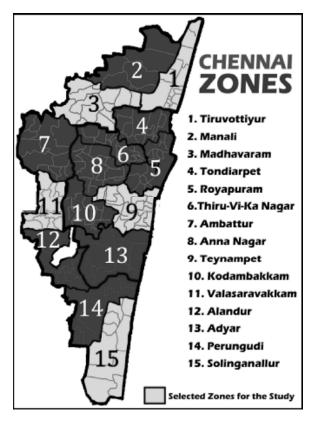
Fig. 1: Selection of Samples from Various Zones of Chennai Metropolis.

Limitations of the Study: Limitations of the study center around particular factors that the investigator has less control over which may have an influence on the results. The following have been identified as limitations for the current study. 1. To make the study more précised interactive RTVP which deals with competition on singing and dancing are considered for the current study. 2. As per the canon and philosophical assumptions underlying on research, the data collected may be interpreted differently by different researchers. The constructivist tradition is highly interpretive; with the researcher as the primary instrument of analysis, proclivity is accepted as part of the research process.

Materials and Methodology
Research Instrument and Sampling: This study used questionnaire as a tool and it was divided into 4 major parts with 45 questions. The survey was conducted in Chennai city during 2014. Chennai is the capital of Tamil Nadu and it is one of the largest metropolitan in India. The Chennai city consists of 15 zones. Out of the 15

zones, 5 zones namely Tiruvottiyur, Madhavaram, Teynampet, Valasaravakkam and Solinganallur and have been selected for the present study (Shown in Fig 1). The sample size of the study is 1040 respondents. From each selected zone, 208 respondents have been selected purposively. This covers the major class of population across the city. After the data collection, the data have been put into tabulation, consolidation and data analysis. Percentage analysis, average ranking method, Karl Pearson's co-efficient of correlation and t test was done with statistics applied program IBM SPSS 20.0.

Validity and Reliability: Validity is the measure of degree of an instrument to measure what it is supposed to measure [24]. To access the validity of the scale content validity was used. It is to subjectively assess the appropriateness by expert of the field [25]. The questionnaire was well structured with the help of three academic experts and the same was examined by a professor from communication studies and a statistician. Further pilot study was conducted with a sample of 50 respondents who watch interactive RTVP. On the basis of the outcome of the pilot study, appropriate modifications have been made and then refined for the purpose of the final study.

Reliability is the measure of an instrument to be developed consistently yield same results over time. Different methods are used to measure it [24]. In this study, to check the reliability of the instrument, it is pretested using Cronbach alpha and Hotellings t-square methods. The result of alpha and t-square are statistically significant with 0.917 and 245.17 respectively. Further, the findings of the pilot study enabled to frame hypotheses and design of the final study.

RESULTS

Demographic Analysis: The demographic data shows that the female in the study is 60.29% and male is 39.71% respectively. Majority of the respondents (i.e.40.67%) are under the age group of 21 to 30 years and minimum number of respondents (i.e.2.50%) is in the age group of above 60 years. The majority of the respondents (i.e. 50.67%) are educated upto school level and minimum numbers of respondents (i.e. 5.68%) are professionals. The majority of the respondents (i.e. 43.46%) are housewives and least numbers of respondents (i.e.15.77%) are doing business.

Table 1: Demographic Analysis (N = 1040)

Particulars	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Gender:		
Male	413	39.71
Female	627	60.29
Total	1040	100
Age:		
Upto 20	198	19.04
21-30	423	40.67
31-40	196	18.85
41-50	126	12.11
51-60	71	6.83
Above 60	26	2.5
Total	1040	100
Educational Qualification:		
Uneducated	57	5.48
School level	527	50.67
U.G.level	272	26.15
P.G.level	125	12.02
Professional	59	5.68
Total	1040	100
Occupation:		
Student	233	22.40
Salaried	191	18.37
Business	164	15.77
Housewife	452	43.46
Total	1040	100

Table 2: Ranking Analysis of the Interactive Features of RTVP (N = 1040)

Features	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Mean	Rank
SMS voting	440	168	92	56	58	54	138	34	1040		
Score	3520	1176	552	280	232	162	276	34	6232	5.99	I
Voting through poll vans	220	152	108	112	118	106	98	126	1040		
Score	1760	1064	648	560	590	318	196	126	5262	5.06	II
Conventional review writing	144	128	136	128	130	122	110	142	1040		
Score	1152	896	816	640	520	366	392	142	4924	4.73	III
On-line voting	140	108	156	120	174	102	170	70	1040		
Score	1120	756	936	600	696	306	340	70	4824	4.64	IV
Blogging	80	160	124	112	158	118	142	146	1040		
Score	640	1120	744	560	632	354	284	146	4480	4.31	VI
Missed call voting	80	100	138	128	162	168	118	146	1040		
Score	640	700	828	640	648	504	236	146	4342	4.18	VIII
Attending the official performance of the contestant	80	120	160	144	128	148	140	120	1040		
Score	640	840	960	720	512	444	280	120	4516	4.34	V
Social media participation	96	80	72	160	280	156	88	108	1040		
Score	768	560	432	800	1120	468	176	108	4432	4.26	VII

Interactive Feature of RTVP: Table 2 shows the response of various factors of interactive feature of RTVP. Average raking technique has been applied and ranks were given according to the weights and total scores have been calculated. SMS voting interactive feature is ranked first with highest total of 6232 and mean of 5.99, voting through poll vans are ranked second with the total of 5262 and mean of 5.06, third rank goes for conventional review writing as its total score is 4924 and mean is 4.73, On-line voting is ranked fourth with a total of 4824 and with mean value of 4.64.

Respondent's Age and Interactive Feature of RTVP: The relationship between age and interactive feature of RTVP is established using Karl Pearson's Co-efficient of Correlation. As the age of respondents is different,

Table 3: Correlation between Age and Interactive Features of RTVP (N = 1040)

Variables	N	Sig. (2-tailed)	Age
SMS voting	1040	.279	.019
Voting through poll vans	1040	.013	-.120(*)
Conventional review writing	1040	.004	.138(**)
On-line voting	1040	.009	.127(**)
Blogging	1040	.007	.118(**)
Missed call voting	1040	.008	.113(**)
Attending the official performance of the contestant	1040	.108	.018
Social media participation	1040	.360	.011
Age	1040		1

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 4: Karl Pearson's Co-efficient of Correlation between Educational Qualification and Interactive Feature of RTVP (N = 1040)

Variables	N	Sig. (2-tailed)	Educational Qualification
SMS voting	1040	.284	.029
Voting through poll vans	1040	.013	-.120(*)
Conventional review writing	1040	.004	.138(**)
On-line voting	1040	.009	.127(**)
Blogging	1040	.012	.132(**)
Missed call voting	1040	.027	.157(**)
Attending the official performance of the contestant	1040	.226	.084
Social media participation	1040	.340	.016
Educational Qualification	1040		1

Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

interactive feature of RTVP may vary considerably. It is found that the correlation between interactive features of RTVP and the age of the respondents are significant at 5% level with the result of -0.52 which is between -0.50 and -1.00. Therefore, there is high degree of negative correlation between age and the interactive feature of RTVP. The difference in age and its relationship with the interactive feature of RTVP is launched in the following Table 3.

Interactive Feature of RTVP and Educational Qualification of the Respondents: The relationship between educational qualification and interactive feature of RTVP is established in the following Table 4. It is found that the correlation between the interactive features such as SMS voting, voting through poll vans, conventional review writing, on-line voting, blogging, missed call voting, attending the official performance of the contestant and social media participation of RTVP and educational qualification of the respondents are significant at 5% level with the results of +0.29 which is <+0.50 and >0.00. Therefore, there is low degree of positive correlation.

Analysis of Gender Vs Occupation Vs Interactive Feature of RTVP: F test have been applied to analyze the relationship between gender and the type of interactive participation, occupation and the type of participation of the respondents respectively. The null hypotheses framed for analyzing the data under this f test are given below.

NH 1 - There is no relationship between gender and the type of participation in RTVP

NH 2 - There is no relationship between occupation and the type of participation in RTVP.

For calculating F test value, the mean of two given observations and their variances have been calculated. F test value is expressed as the ratio of variances of two observations. The comparison between the variances of two sets of data can lead to many calculations.

F value is calculated by the following formula

$$F\ value = \frac{variance\ 1}{variance\ 2} = \frac{\sigma_1^2}{\sigma_2^2} \quad \text{and}$$

The variance is calculated by the following formula:

$$\sigma^2 = \frac{\sum(x - \bar{x})^2}{n-1}$$

where,

σ^2 = Variance

x = Values given in a set of data

$\bar{x}$ = Mean of the data

n = Total number of values.

There are two sets of variables considered for the analyzing the above mentioned hypothesis. The first set of variables is gender of the respondents, which goes like male as 413 (39.71%) and female with 627 (60.29%) and second set of variables is a varied participation of the respondents i.e. SMS voting is 389 (37.40%), online voting is 203 (19.52%), missed call voting is 33 (3.17%), voting through poll vans is 34 (3.27%), conventional review writing is 56 (5.38), blogging is 84 (8.08%), social media participation is 76 (7.31%) and attending the official performance of the contestants with 165 (15.97%).

The calculated mean for first set of variables (gender) is 520, the calculated mean for second set of variables (participation) is 130, the calculated variance for first set of variables (gender) is 11449 and the calculated variance for second set of variables (participation) is 12846. The calculated f value using the variances of variables is 0.891 [26, 27].

df₁ = (r-1) (c-1)

(2-1)(8-1)

1*7

7 Degrees of freedom

df₂ = n-no of observations

= (1040-8)

= 1032

P = 5.13

Table value @ 5% level of significance is 3.367.

As the calculated value is less than the table value, the framed null hypothesis is accepted. Hence, it can be interpreted as that there is no relationship between gender and the type of participation.

Another two sets of variables have been considered for the analysis of aforementioned hypothesis. The first set of variables is occupation i.e. student with 233 (22.40%), salaried with 191 (18.37%), business person with 164 (15.77%), housewife with 452 (43.46%) of the respondents. The second set of variables is a type of participation of the respondents. The calculated mean for first set of variables (occupation) is 260, the calculated

mean for second set of variables (participation) is 130, the calculated variance for first set of variables (gender) is 12892.5 and the calculated variance for second set of variables (participation) is 12846. The calculated f value using the variances of variables is 1.004.

df₁ = (r-1) (c-1)

(4-1)(8-1)

3*7

21 Degrees of freedom

df₂ = n-no of observations

= (1040-8)

= 1032

P = 0.4551

Table value @ 5% level of significance is 4.5581.

As the calculated value is less than the table value, the framed null hypothesis is accepted. So there is no relationship between occupation and kind of participation.

DISCUSSION

Finding of the study are consistent by is results. First, the demographics of population shows housewives with basic education have turned out to be the major audience for RTVP. The reason behind this is television is a home medium and it is apparent the major consumers are home makers. Second, the major class of audience is young adults ranging from 21 - 30 years. It is obvious that during their teen age the RTVP migrated from west; typically from UK and USA to India. [2]. Third, SMS voting is the major type of interactive participation rendered by the RTVP audience. Since the housewives have access to mobile phone it becomes hassle free for them to cast their votes which was posited by Punathambekar [26] as 'mobile publics'. The crucial point need to be discussed here is the easier and convenient way of participation would be missed call voting, but majority of the respondents preferred money chargeable SMS voting because, in SMS voting a instant reply will confirm the vote and the interactive participation of an individual. The revert SMS from the RTVP makers gives a sense of satisfaction and a gratification to the audience. Fourth, there is high degree of negative correlation between age and the interactive feature of RTVP, because in India it has been a buzz around recent times in entertainment programming irrespective of age the participatory quotient of audience is growing more. Fifth, RTVP interactive features and the educational qualification of the potential audience have a low degree of positive correlation and it is obvious the housewives

use more of conventional way of participation rather than the newly incorporated interactive means like blogging, online voting, social media participation and attending the official performance of the contestants. Finally, there is no relationship between gender, occupation and the type of audience interactivity in RTVP because, the audiences get gratified by participating is such activity and they create a "quasi-friendship" which in turn creates the para-social relationship that attaches them to the programme [27]. According to Andrejevic [10], RTVP moves a spectator to a participant and later as central character of the programme.

CONCLUSION

RTVP is playing a vital role in entertainment programming and same is the case in viewing and becoming a loyal audience by participating in the interactive activity conducted by the programme producers/makers. House wives have been identified as a major audience who use SMS voting feature to cast their votes. Gender, age, occupation and education qualification is not a matter of concern when it comes to be an active RTVP spectator turned off screen interactive participant.

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