Emotional and Cognitive Predictors of the Enjoyment of Reality-Based and Fictional Television Programming: An Elaboration of the Uses and Gratifications Perspective

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This article reports the results of two studies designed to compare predictors of enjoyment of reality-based and fictional television programming. In Study 1, 260 adults completed a survey of their cognitive and emotional reactions to either the fictional or reality-based programming that they generally watch. In Study 2, 502 adults completed a similar survey but with a particular reality-based or fictional program in mind. Results suggest first that though voyeurism (i.e., curiosity about others) appears to be a key distinguishing gratification between reality and fictional programming, it is not always a predictor of reality television enjoyment. Indeed, many predictors of enjoyment, like happiness, parasocial relationships, social comparison, self-awareness, negative outcome, and dramatic challenge, varied as much among types of reality programs as between reality and fiction. Of particular interest, three variables—learning, suspense, and transportation—had opposite effects on enjoyment, depending on their programming context. The implications of these findings, as well as the role of perceived realism and our ability to explain more variance in enjoyment of reality versus fictional programming, are addressed. Apart from its insight into the reality television phenomenon, this research helps to more clearly articulate the cognitive and emotional underpinnings of enjoyment and

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further offers a unique theoretical perspective on the connection between the uses and gratifications paradigm and the construct of enjoyment.

"It's not about reality or not reality, but about good TV or bad TV"
    —Mark Burnett, Executive Producer of *Survivor*

With the increasing number of "reality-based" television (TV) (i.e., "reality") programs flooding network and cable station schedules, the extant literature on this burgeoning TV genre is growing to include a range of theoretical perspectives. Early research focused largely on crime programs from cultivation as well as critical perspectives (e.g., Cavender, 1998; Kooistra, Mahoney, & Westervelt, 1998; Oliver, 1994; Oliver & Armstrong, 1998). More recent articles examine a wider range of reality programs, focusing on viewer motivations and gratifications (e.g., Nabi, Biely, Morgan, & Stitt, 2003; Reiss & Wiltz, 2004). Though differences between more and less regular viewers of reality programming have been identified, it is unclear whether the conclusions drawn about such programming are unique to the genre. That is, without comparisons to fictional programming, we cannot be sure that viewers of reality programming are experiencing motivations and effects different from those associated with fictional program viewing. Indeed, Nabi et al. (2003) suggest that reasons for watching reality programming may be based not on the quality of "reality" but, rather, on other characteristics, like suspense or drama, that are associated with good storytelling. Thus, this research seeks to explore the cognitive and emotional predictors of enjoyment of both reality and fictional programming. More broadly, we hope not only to contribute to the understanding of the appeal of reality programming, but also to elaborate the uses and gratification (U&G) perspective by introducing both cognitive and emotional variables that might relate to program enjoyment.

EFFECTS OF REALITY-BASED TELEVISION PROGRAMMING

Extant research offers three approaches to the study of reality TV. The first draws from cultivation theory (e.g., see Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 2002), focusing on what is portrayed as reality and how that differs from the real environment, like over-representations of violent crime, crimes cleared, and non-Whites as offenders and Whites as law enforcement officers (e.g., Kooistra et al., 1998; Oliver, 1994; Potter et al., 1997). A second approach considers the construction of reality-crime programs from a cultural perspective, focusing on the ideological perspectives conveyed about, for example, law and order, societal threats, and audience empowerment (e.g., Cavender, 1998; Fishman, 1999).

The most recent theoretically grounded approach considers the motivations associated with reality TV viewing. Nabi et al. (2003) explored a range of both recently developed (e.g., *Survivor, A Wedding Story)* and more established reality programs (e.g., *Cops, Real World*) finding, first, that "reality TV" does not form a particularly cohesive genre and, second, though viewers receive a wide range of gratifications and report enjoying getting a peek into other people's lives, this enjoyment was more consistent with fascination with the human condition rather than prurient interest. Relatedly, Reiss and Wiltz (2004) examined the association of 16 basic human motives with reality TV viewing, concluding that the motivation to feel self-important is the most strongly associated with reality TV consumption.

Though both studies offer insight into why viewers might tune into reality programming, it is unclear first, whether these motivations differ from those directing viewership of other programming types, and second, given the lack of coherence among reality programs (Nabi et al., 2003), how motivations and gratifications might differ across reality programs themselves. Thus, in this research, we chose to expand on Nabi et al.'s earlier work to consider reactions to several subgenres of reality TV (e.g., game show, romance, crime), as well as to fictional programming. On a broader theoretical plane and unique to this study, this research served as an opportunity to elaborate on the U&G paradigm, as well as the concept of media enjoyment—two threads of media study that have rarely intertwined in the extant literature.

U&G THEORY AND MEDIA ENJOYMENT

It is well-known that the U&G perspective is grounded in the conceptualization of audience members as active and in control of their own media consumption. More specifically, it captures the idea that individuals are aware of their needs, evaluate various channels and content, assess functional alternatives, and select the media or interpersonal channel that they believe will provide the gratifications they seek (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1974; Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rosengren, 1985; Rubin, 2002). Despite criticisms of, for example, an overly individualistic focus, lack of coherent motive typologies, and lack of clarity of its central concepts (e.g., Conway & Rubin, 1991; Finn, 1997; Rubin, 1983; Ruggiero, 2000), the U&G paradigm has enjoyed steady scholarly interest. Still, the need to theoretically elaborate this orientation to communication research is clear. We explore two ways in which this might be done by (a) linking the U&G research to the literature on enjoyment, and (b) augmenting the list of typical gratifications sought or obtained with cognitive assessments of and emotional reactions to media messages that are likely to occur.

In reflecting on ways to enrich the U&G paradigm, one approach would be to explore the relationship between gratifications and related constructs, like media enjoyment. Surprisingly, there is little overlap between the literatures on enjoyment and U&G, despite the various typologies that include entertainment-related constructs (e.g., McQuail, Blumler, & Brown, 1972; Palmgreen, Wenner, & Rayburn, 1980; Rubin, 1983; Rubin & Perse, 1987). Because constructs like entertainment, diversion, and escape imply inherently more pleasurable states than their alternatives, we argue that they are consistent with, if not subsumed by, the notion of enjoyment.

The construct of enjoyment has been studied in a range of TV programming contexts, including sports (e.g., Bryant & Raney, 2000; Sargent, Zillmann, & Weaver, 1998), crime dramas (e.g., Oliver & Armstrong, 1995; Raney & Bryant, 2002), horror (e.g., Hoffner, 1995; Tamborini, 2003), music videos (e.g., Bleich & Zillmann, 1991), and children's entertainment (Valkenburg & Cantor, 2000). Much of this research has focused on individual characteristics that might lead one to enjoy a particular type of media message. For example, Zillmann, Taylor, and Lewis (1998) examined how audiences' affective dispositions toward public persons and groups related to enjoyment of positive or negative news reports of those public figures. Hoffner (1995) studied the impact of coping style on teenagers' enjoyment of horror films, and Bleich and Zillmann (1991) assessed trait rebelliousness as a predictor of enjoyment of defiant versus nondefiant rock music videos.

The totality of the enjoyment research clearly makes the point that individual characteristics are important to understand viewer enjoyment of particular media messages or genres. Yet, the connection between enjoyment and U&G is only tenuously explored. That is, enjoyment is not of direct interest in U&G research. Conversely, enjoyment research tends not to consider the range of motives that might predict programming enjoyment. This might be a function of an implicit assumption that people only expose themselves to the media or media messages that they enjoy (i.e., from which they derive value), or more likely that enjoyment has been lost among the gratifications associated with the need for diversion. However, while gratifications sought and obtained via media exposure likely relate to enjoyment, we believe it is a mistake to presume that enjoyment merely reflects a gratification obtained without considering the cognitive and emotional assessments of media messages that might also contribute to that gratification. While both cognitive and emotional gratifications have been explored in past U&G literature, cognitive gratifications have focused largely on information gain whereas research on affective states focused on mood management (e.g., Oliver, 2003). But what about cognitive assessments (e.g., moral judgment; Raney & Bryant, 2002) or emotional reactions (e.g., sadness; Oliver, Weaver, & Sargent, 2000) that appear distinct from U&G typologies that have been shown to relate to enjoyment? Our goal in this research is to consider not only typical gratifications

sought (e.g., parasocial relationships, personal identity), but also to elaborate the paradigm by considering more specific cognitive assessments of and emotional reactions to media messages. In doing so, we hope to more fully understand not only the phenomenon of reality programming and its relation to fictional programming, but also the linkages between the U&G paradigm and the concept of enjoyment.

Our research was guided by several questions. First, the popular press has been active in condemning reality programming (e.g., Carter, 2003; Poniewozik, 2000; Sardar, 2000), the implication being that fiction-based programming is somehow superior in both quality and value. Yet, criticism of TV programming quality surely predates the introduction of reality programming. Thus, we first sought to determine whether the critics' views accurately reflect those of the viewing public.

RQ1: Does the viewing public have a negative view of reality versus fictional programming?

Given our interest in expanding the U&G paradigm by linking it to the enjoyment literature, we are directed to consider not only a set of gratifications previously identified as sought and/or obtained from TV programming (e.g., parasocial relationships, learning), but also other factors that might associate with enjoyment of entertaining programming. For example, perceptions of drama, suspense, and just outcomes may contribute to program interest and ultimately enjoyment (Tan, 1996) as might emotional reactions as suggested by mood management theory (e.g., Zillmann, 1988). Because gratifications are linked to psychological needs whereas cognitive perceptions of and emotional reactions to programming, though likely influenced by those needs, are less clearly driven by them, we will consider them at this point to be three separate, though interrelated, groups of variables. However, because gratifications and message perceptions are both more deeply rooted in cognitive than affective reactions, it is inevitable that we will lean toward discussing them together. This having been made clear, we now ask how these sets of variables might differ across reality and fictional programming and how they might further predict enjoyment.

RQ2: How do reality and fictional programming differ in viewers' gratifications obtained, cognitive program assessments, and emotional reactions?

RQ3: What gratifications obtained, cognitive program assessments, and emotional reactions predict enjoyment of reality and fictional programming?

We conducted two studies to address these questions. The first focuses on general reality and fictional program viewing. The second considers more specific "subgenres" of reality TV.

STUDY 1

Method

Participants and Procedures

Our sample included 260 Tuscon city residents (59% female) who had appeared for jury duty.[1] The sample's mean age was 45 years (SD = 13.83) and was 75% White, 15% Hispanic, 3% Black, 3% Native American, and 1% Asian American. Twenty-one percent had education up to and including a high school degree, 34% had some college education, 28% had college degrees, and 18% had advanced degrees. On average, the group watched 4.24 hours (SD = 2.86) of TV daily, which is close to the national average of about 4.4.

The study was introduced as one on people's reactions to TV programming that is currently popular. Two versions of the survey were distributed randomly. One focused on fictional, and the other on reality, programming. Respondents were asked about their overall TV viewing patterns, perceived TV realism, and demographic information. Those in the fiction condition were asked to list the "fictional TV programs (e.g., evening dramas, comedies)" they watch regularly and then to indicate how much they enjoyed viewing fiction-based programming in general. Those in the reality condition were asked to indicate how often they watch each of 16 reality-based programs[2] and to then indicate in general how much they enjoy watching reality TV.[3] Then, instructed to keep either the fictional or reality programming that they generally watch in mind, respondents were asked to indicate the emotions they tend to feel and their cognitive reactions to and appraisals of that programming. We expected the list of reality programs provided to set the parameters for the type of programs we were interested in rather than to serve as a true indicator of the programs kept in mind when completing the survey. Though this procedure may not allow us to know with certainty which programs the reality-TV group was responding to, this should not threaten our interpretation of the data, given our interest in general reality-TV viewing.

Measures

Unless otherwise noted, measures are based on 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

Daily television viewing was measured by asking respondents to indicate how many hours of TV they watch during each of four time periods (6 a.m.–noon, noon–6 p.m., 6 p.m.–midnight, midnight–6 a.m.) during the average weekday and weekend day. These data were combined (weighting the "average week day" questions by a factor of five and the "average weekend day" by a factor of two) to create an "average TV viewing hours/day" measure. Respondents also

indicated on 5-point scales how frequently they watch each of eight types of TV programming, including reality shows, evening dramas, situation comedies, and soap operas.

Perceived television realism was measured with four items from Rubin's (1981) perceived realism of TV content scale. However, only two of these items loaded onto one factor ($r = .58$, $p < .001$) and thus were combined into a single measure of perceived TV realism: "Television shows life as it really is", and "Television presents things as they really are in life."[4]

Enjoyment of fictional or reality TV was assessed with four, 1 (*not at all*) to 7 (*very much*) items: enjoyable, entertaining, pleasurable, captivating ($\alpha = .97$). *Emotional reactions* were assessed with a 38-item modified version of the Mood Adjective checklist designed to capture 10 emotional states: anxiety (4 items, $\alpha = .80$), anger (4 items, $\alpha = .78$), sadness (5 items, $\alpha = .82$), disgust (3 items, $\alpha = .85$), embarrassment (5 items, $\alpha = .82$), happiness (4 items, $\alpha = .85$), relief (4 items, $\alpha = .71$), pity (3 items, $\alpha = .74$), pensiveness (3 items, $\alpha = .71$), and surprise (3 items, $\alpha = .78$).

Measures of 10 *gratifications and cognitive assessments* were included to capture and expand on the broad psychological and social needs identified by Katz et al. (1974), including those related to personal relationships (i.e., parasocial relationships and voyeurism), personal identity (i.e., self-awareness, judging others, and social comparison), and surveillance (i.e., learning). *Parasocial relationships* were assessed with eight items ($\alpha = .88$) adapted from Rubin, Perse, and Powell (1985). Items included "I think the people on that show could be friends of mine", and "I feel bad when something bad happens to a person on the show who I like." *Voyeurism*, or how much others enjoy getting a peek into others' lives, was measured with five items ($\alpha = .80$) from Nabi et al. (2003; e.g., "I feel like I'm getting a peek into other people's lives" and "I get to see a side of people that I wouldn't normally get to see").

Self- awareness gained through viewing was assessed with five items ($\alpha = .88$; e.g., "I feel like I've learned something about myself by watching the show" and "Because of watching the show, I'm encouraged to try things I haven't tried before"); and *judgment* of others' behavior was assessed with three items ($\alpha = .81$; e.g., "I judge the people for the choices they make" and "I evaluate the choices made by people on the programs"). One s*ocial comparison* item ("I feel better about my own life") did not associate with the judgment items and thus was retained as a separate measure. Three items were used to assess *learning* about the external world ($\alpha = .83$; e.g., "I learn about the world around me").

In place of standard diversion items (e.g., entertaining, relieve boredom, escapism), we chose instead to try to more specifically identify *cognitive assessments* of program features that might explain enjoyment—suspense, dramatic challenge, negative outcomes, fairness of outcomes—each of which has been linked to viewer interest, an antecedent to enjoyment (Tan, 1996). *Suspense* was

assessed with two items ("I try to guess what will happen" and "I'm not sure how it will turn out"; $r = .51$); *dramatic challenge* with five items ($\alpha = .85$; e.g., "people are coping with adversities" and "people are 'facing the music'"); *negative outcomes* with six items ($\alpha = .90$; i.e., people are humiliated, manipulated, engaged in conflict, being taken advantage of, facing rejection, and engaged in moral transgressions); and *fairness of outcomes* with four items ($\alpha = .85$; e.g., "good things happen to people who deserve it" and "justice is done").

Finally, for those who completed the reality programming survey, we asked two questions based on third person effects constructs:[5] how much they agreed or disagreed with the statements "Reality TV has lowered my standards [other people's standards] for quality television programming." These items speak to RQ1, which focuses specifically on perceptions of reality-based TV. We also asked all respondents to indicate whether they preferred reality to traditional programming, traditional to reality programming, or both types of programming equally.

Results

RQ1: *The Reputation of Reality TV*

Starting with their self-reports, 61% of respondents reported preference for more traditional forms of programming compared to 11% who preferred reality programming and 28% with equal preference ($n = 251$). Comparing enjoyment of fiction and reality programming with analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), controlling for demographic information, perceived TV realism, and daily TV viewing hours, respondents again seemed to enjoy fictional ($M = 4.07$, $SD = 1.41$) more than reality programming ($M = 2.42$, $SD = 1.62$), $F(1, 244) = 85.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .26$. Respondents also reported watching fictional/dramatic programming more frequently ($M = 2.74$, $SD = 1.29$) than reality programs, ($M = 2.04$, $SD = 1.25$), $t(492) = 9.15$, $p < .001$. Finally, we found evidence of a third-person effect as respondents indicated that reality programming lowered other people's standards for quality programming ($M = 3.88$, $SD = 1.01$), one sample $t(129) = 7.75$, $p < .001$, $r = .37$, but not their own ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 1.29$). In sum, these data suggest that people have a negative view of the impact of reality TV, preferring and enjoying it less than more traditional forms of programming.

Yet, reality TV consumption belies respondents' disdain for the genre. Seventy-seven percent of the sample indicated that they watched at least one of the reality programs included in the survey sometimes or frequently, and of the 16 reality programs included, respondents, on average, had watched nearly 4 of them ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 3.20$). Thus, the reputation of reality programming does not appear to have substantially interfered with viewing behavior.

RQ2: *Comparing Reality and Fictional Programming Gratifications, Cognitive Assessments, and Emotional Reactions*

ANCOVAs (with age, gender, race, education level, daily TV viewing hours, and perceived TV realism as covariates) revealed that while fictional programming promoted stronger parasocial relationships ($r = .28$, $p < .001$), self-awareness ($r = .16$, $p < .05$), and learning about the world at large ($r = .22$, $p < .001$) compared to reality programming, no significant differences were identified for voyeurism, judging others, or social comparisons (see Table 1).[6] Fictional programming was also rated as more fair ($r = .21$, $p < .001$) and more dramatic ($r = .15$, $p < .05$) than reality programming. Although not statistically significant ($p < .05$), fictional programming also seemed more suspenseful ($r = .13$, $p < .10$) but with fewer negative outcomes ($r = –.11$, $p < .10$). Notably, based on Levene's test for equality of variance, all six gratifications and all program assessments except negative outcomes evidenced a wider range of responses for reality versus fictional programming, indicating viewers reported more extreme reactions to reality programming (see Table 1).

TABLE 1
Comparison of Means (and SDs) of Gratifications from and Cognitive Assessments of Reality versus Fictional Television Programming

| | Reality (n = 109) | | Fiction (n = 116) | | |
	M	SD	M	SD	r
Gratifications					
Parasocial	2.60***	.88***	2.97	.64	.28***
Voyeurism	2.91	.93**	2.80	.72	−.03
Self-awareness	2.79*	.96**	2.99	.76	.16*
Judging others	3.17	1.03*	3.16	.89	.02
Social comparison	2.80	1.19*	2.86	1.02	.06
Information/learning	2.65***	1.06***	2.96	.83	.22***
Cognitive Assessments					
Negative outcomes	3.75†	.79	3.59	.64	−.11†
Facing challenges	3.22†	.85**	3.40	.57	.15*
Fairness	2.70**	.85***	3.00	.65	.21**
Suspense	3.41†	.99***	3.62	.69	.13†

Note. All means are based on 5-point scales. Means and correlations control for age, sex, race, education level, hours of TV viewing per day, and perceived TV realism. For the correlations, data were coded as 0 = reality, 1 = fiction.
†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

As to emotional reactions, reality and fictional programming evoked compa-rable levels of negative emotions, with one exception. Respondents reported experiencing more anxiety while watching fictional programming ($r = .14$, $p < .05$). In contrast, significant differences were identified for all positive emotions, except surprise. More specifically, fictional programming evoked more happiness ($r = .23$, $p < .01$), pensiveness ($r = .29$, $p < .001$), pity ($r = .20$, $p < .01$), and relief ($r = .25$, $p < .001$) than reality programming.

RQ3: *Cognitive and Emotional Predictors of Enjoyment*

Two hierarchical regressions were constructed with enjoyment as the depend-ent measure. In each, age, sex, race, and education level were entered in Block 1, daily TV viewing hr and perceived TV realism were entered into Block 2. Finally, the range of cognitive (gratifications and assessments) and emotional predictors were entered stepwise into Block 3. The first regression included only responses to fictional programming, and the second only responses to reality programming (see Table 2).

For *fictional programming,* the model explained 33% of the variance in enjoy-ment. Suspense ($\beta = .33$, $\Delta R^2 = .10$) and pensiveness ($\beta = .29$, $\Delta R^2 = .03$) enhanced enjoyment whereas surprise detracted from it ($\beta = -.29$, $\Delta R^2 = .06$). For *reality programming*, voyeurism ($\beta = .33$, $\Delta R^2 = .10$) along with several positive emo-tions, including happiness ($\beta = .22$, $\Delta R^2 = .25$), surprise ($\beta = .25$, $\Delta R^2 = .03$), and

TABLE 2
Predictors of Enjoyment for Reality and Fictional Programming

Fiction	β	ΔR^2	Reality	β	ΔR^2
Age	−.11		Age	−.04	
Sex	.20*		Sex	.04	
Race	−.09		Race	.07	
Education	−.03		Education	.04	
		.09*			.12**
TV hrs/day	.28***		TV hrs/day	.00	
Perceived realism	.09		Perceived realism	.07	
		.05†			.07*
Suspense	.33***	.10***	Voyeurism	.33***	.10***
Pensive	.29*	.03*	Happy	.22*	.25***
Surprise	−.29**	.06**	Anger	−.22**	.02†
			Surprise	.25**	.03**
			Relief	.17*	.02*

Note.   Variables in Block 3 were entered Stepwise. For sex, male = 0, female =1. For race, non-white = 0, white = 1.

†$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. **$p < .01$. ***$p < .001$.

relief (β = .17, ΔR^2 = .02), enhanced enjoyment whereas anger detracted from it (β = –.22, ΔR^2 = .02). The model explained 61% of the variance in enjoyment.

Discussion

Despite negative perceptions of reality-based TV, reality programming did not differ from fictional programming in gratifications associated with voyeurism, judging others, or social comparison. Respondents appeared to find the "real" world less fair, and perhaps related, they liked the people on and learned more about themselves and the world around them from fictional programming. Of note, a trend of differences in response ranges suggests that the "genre" of reality TV evokes more extreme evaluations compared to fictional programming. Furthermore, despite only one difference in negative emotions evoked (i.e., anxiety), differences in positive emotions favoring fictional programming were clear. Thus, we might conclude that reality programming is less appealing not because it evokes negative emotions and cognitive reactions but rather because of its more limited ability to evoke positive ones.

The regression data also suggest different predictors of enjoyment for fictional versus reality programming. For fiction, suspense and pensiveness enhanced, and surprise detracted from, enjoyment. In contrast, for reality-based programming, voyeurism, happiness, surprise, and relief positively associated with, and anger detracted from, enjoyment. These findings are noteworthy for several reasons. First, the emotional and cognitive assessments found to predict enjoyment are not well captured by U&G typologies, which at best speak only generally of diversion. Second, the predictors of fiction enjoyment seem more thoughtful and involving and less emotional compared to reality enjoyment predictors. Third, voyeurism (i.e., curiosity rather than prurient interest) was predictive only of reality TV enjoyment.

Of interest, surprise had opposite reactions in reality versus fictional contexts. One might first think this may have resulted from mulicollinearity between suspense and surprise in the fiction program analyses; however, those variables correlate only moderately (r = .30, p < .001), and partial correlations support the regression findings. If we accept the results as a true reflection of the effect of surprise in the two contexts, then it appears that though surprise is one of the appealing reactions to reality programming, it is less desirable in scripted contexts.

Also of relevance, the variables considered in this research explained nearly twice as much variance in enjoyment of reality versus fictional programming. Even without happiness in the model, 60% of the variance in reality TV enjoyment was explained, with voyeurism picking up the variance previously explained by happiness (β = .37, DR^2 = .42). Thus, it appears that the enjoyment people derive from watching others, that is, our innate curiosity about the human condition in its

various forms, is an important component to the appeal and enjoyment of this type of programming and one that distinguishes reality from fictional programming.

This research, however, is limited in that by asking about the fiction or reality programming they watch generally, participants may have responded to the general *idea* or reputation of fiction-based and reality programming, rather than to the programming itself. Further, by lumping all forms of reality programming together, we are unable to assess the similarities and differences among various types of reality programs and their individual relationships to fictional programming. Study 2 addresses these concerns.

STUDY 2

Method

Participants and Procedures

The sample included 502 city residents who appeared for jury duty, 53% women and 47% men with a mean age of 43 years ($SD = 14.64$). As to race, 75% were White, 17% Hispanic, 3% Black, 2% Native American, and 1% Asian American. Twenty-one percent had up to and including a high school degree, 35% had some college education, 27% had college degrees, and 17% had advanced degrees. Their mean TV viewing was 4.3 hours per day ($SD = 2.43$).

The study was similar to Study 1 with the following differences. First, all respondents were asked to indicate how often they watch each of 12 reality programs[7] and to then indicate in general how much they enjoy watching reality TV. Respondents were then asked to choose one reality program to keep in mind as they completed the rest of the survey. To encourage diversity in program selection, the 12 programs were divided into 3 groups of 4, and each group was associated with a range of letters. Respondents were asked to circle the grouping that corresponded to the first letter of their last name, select from that list one program that they had seen before, name it, indicate how much they enjoy viewing that program, and complete the rest of the survey with that program in mind. If they had never seen any program from their list, they were asked to select a fictional program that they watch, name it, and complete the survey with that program in mind.[8] Seventy-nine percent of the programs named were dramas (e.g., *ER, West Wing*), though a small percentage included comedies (e.g., *Frasier, Friends*).

Measures

The measures mirrored those in Study 1 with the following exceptions. First, Rubin's (1981) complete five-item *perceived realism* of TV content scale was used, though only four of the items formed a reliable measure ($\alpha = .78$). Second,

enjoyment of the specific program they had in mind while completing the survey was assessed ($\alpha = .96$) to serve as the dependent measure in the analyses. We also included two personality trait measures: *emotional intelligence* (EI) and *need for cognition* (NFC). EI is believed to reflect four general constructs: emotional facilitation, perception, understanding, and management (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Fifteen items from Shutte's 33-item emotional intelligence scale were used to assess the latter three dimensions ($\alpha = .83$). Ten items from Cacioppo and Petty's (1982) NFC scale were also included ($\alpha = .83$). Our assumption was that individual tendencies toward emotional perception and complex thinking might associate with the emotional and cognitive predictors of enjoyment. Finally, because research suggesting *transportation*, or absorption into a narrative, may help illuminate a story's impact on its audience (see Green & Brock, 2000), we included a modified, five-item version of Green and Brock's transportation measure ($\alpha = .76$; e.g., "I am mentally involved in the program" and "I am unaware of the activity going on in the room around me").

Results

Analyses

First, the 12 reality programs were combined into 6 subgenres based on an exploratory factor analysis of program viewership: reality-dramatic programming (*The Osbournes, Real World*), romance (*The Bachelor, The Bachelorette*), game show/competition (*Survivor, Amazing Race, Fear Factor*), talent (*American Idol*), crime/police (*Cops, America's Most Wanted*), and informational (*Trading Spaces, A Baby Story*). All significant differences ($p < .05$) across genres are noted in Tables 3 and 4 and reflect the Bonferroni adjustment. Analyses within subgenres are based on one-sample comparisons to the scale mean of 3. Given the generally low levels of emotions reported, levels over 1 (rather than over the scale midpoint) are considered notable. For the regressions, age, sex, race, education level, and daily hours of TV viewing were included in Block 1. All other variables were entered stepwise in Block 2, with program enjoyment as the dependent measure (see Table 7). This represents a small change from Study 1 in that perceived realism and daily TV viewing hours were not entered in a separate block. We made this change because, like the demographics, TV viewing hours was sometimes a significant predictor and sometimes not. Thus, we grouped TV viewing hours with the other demographic variables. Perceived realism, however, was not significant in Study 1; thus, we chose to allow it be removed from the model to conserve degrees of freedom given the small sample sizes in some analyses. For this reason we also chose an inclusion criteria of $p = .07$ to allow "borderline" significant effects to be evidenced. Correlations among the cognitive predictors and among the emotion predictors are reported in Tables 5 and 6.

Enjoyment of Subgenres of Reality and Fictional Programming

Fiction programs. Though none of the gratifications measured significantly exceeded the scale midpoint, fiction (predominantly dramatic) programs were rated as dramatic and suspenseful and evoked notable levels of all positive emotions (*M*s range = 1.22–1.87). Relative to the reality subgenres, fiction held less voyeuristic appeal, and relative to five of the reality subgenres, scored lower on negative outcomes. Fiction also induced more pensiveness than all but the crime programs. Yet, when it came to enjoyment, only happiness (β = .42, ΔR^2 = .25), transportation (β = .26, ΔR^2 = .05), and negative outcomes (β = −.24, ΔR^2 = .04) were significant predictors. When broken out by genre, the results for fictional dramas (*n* = 65) were comparable with happiness (β = .41, ΔR^2 = .28) and transportation (β = .27, ΔR^2 = .05) proving to be the strongest predictors, but embarrassment (β = −.23, ΔR^2 = .04) replacing negative outcomes as a distraction from enjoyment. Similar analyses with comedies were not possible given the small sample size (*n* = 16).

Reality-dramas. Reality-dramas offered gratifications of voyeurism and judging others, as well as appeal due to perceptions of negative outcomes, dramatic challenge, and suspense. They evoked a range of emotions, including surprise, happiness, pity, relief, and disgust (*M*s range = 1.05 – 1.85). These programs did not distinguish themselves on any particular variable relative to other subgenres. Indeed, there were no significant differences at all between reality-dramas and romance programs. Enjoyment of reality-dramas was enhanced by happiness (β = .62, ΔR^2 = .40) and voyeurism (β = .22, ΔR^2 = .03), and reduced by perception of negative outcomes (β = −.29, ΔR^2 = .05).

Both *reality romance programs* and *game/competition shows* offered the gratification of judging others and were rated high in dramatic challenge, negative outcomes, and suspense. Both program types evoked notable levels of all positive emotions except pensiveness (*M*s range = 1.16 – 2.01) but also evoked notable levels of disgust (*M*s = 1.12 – 1.46). As with reality-dramas, romance programs and game shows did not distinguish themselves from other subgenres in their cognitive and emotional assessments.

Enjoyment of romance programs was enhanced by voyeurism (β = .40, ΔR^2 = .15) and reduced by anger (β = −.28, ΔR^2 = .07). In contrast, variables enhancing enjoyment of game/competition shows included happiness (β = .57, ΔR^2 = .46), voyeurism (β = .29, ΔR^2 = .09), parasocial relationships (β = .22, ΔR^2 = .02), and social comparison (β = .14, ΔR^2 = .01). Anger (β = −.21, ΔR^2 = .03) and learning (β = −.22, ΔR^2 = .01), however, detracted from enjoyment.

Talent programs promoted judgment of others and parasocial relationships and were rated as suspenseful and dramatic. Respondents reported feeling more

TABLE 3
Means (SDs) of Gratifications from and Cognitive Assessments of Fiction and
Subgenres of Reality Television Programming

	F-Dramatic (n = 79)		R-Dramatic (n = 57)		R-Romance (n = 41)		R-Game (n = 87)		R-Talent (n = 50)		R-Crime (n = 98)		R-Inform (n = 47)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Gratifications														
Parasocial	$3.12_{a,c}$	.82	$2.96_{b,c}$	.91	$2.88_{b,c}$	.82	$3.05_{a,c}$	.83	$3.27_{a,c}$	.75	$2.61_{b,d}$	.85	**3.45_a**	.74
Voyeurism	2.69_a	.95	**3.46_b**	.81	3.19_b	.74	3.11_b	.78	3.12_b	.72	3.36_b	.70	3.19_b	.68
Self-awareness	2.98_a	.90	2.96_a	.89	2.87_a	.75	3.11_a	.82	2.90_a	.91	2.90_a	.81	3.71_b	.65
Judging others	3.20_a	.93	3.27_a	.75	3.45_a	.71	**3.39_a**	.73	**3.36_a**	.99	3.46_a	.85	3.51_a	.71
Social comparison	2.63_a	1.13	3.07_b	.88	3.02_b	.91	2.79_a	.97	2.70_a	.91	3.46_b	.92	2.87_a	.71
Learning	3.02_b	1.02	$3.12_{a,b}$	.99	2.67_b	.91	2.87_b	.93	2.73_b	.93	3.54_a	.86	$3.13_{a,b}$	.66
Cognitive assessments														
Negative outcomes	3.19_b	.85	3.75_c	.59	3.93_c	.48	**3.70_c**	.61	3.07_b	.76	**3.68_c**	.65	2.32_a	.78
Dramatic challenge	**3.47_b**	.85	**$3.66_{a,b}$**	.54	**3.43_b**	.59	**3.56_a**	.60	**3.42_b**	.65	**3.84_a**	.47	2.95_c	.89
Fairness	$3.07_{a,c}$	.74	$3.06_{a,b}$	.60	$2.81_{b,c}$	.78	$2.93_{b,c}$	.62	$3.07_{a,b,c}$	.70	3.38_a	.76	2.66_b	.65
Suspense	**$3.64_{a,b}$**	.87	3.48_b	.79	**$3.78_{a,b}$**	.85	**$3.70_{a,b}$**	.83	**3.97_a**	.82	3.43_b	.76	**$3.77_{a,b}$**	.71

Note. Means within rows that do not share at least one subscript are significantly different at $p < .05$ with Bonferroni adjustment. Means in bold indicate means significantly greater that the scale mid-point.

435

TABLE 4
Means (SDs) of Emotions Evoked by Fiction and Subgenres of Reality Television Programming

	F-Dramatic (n = 79)		R-Dramatic (n = 57)		R-Romance (n = 41)		R-Game (n = 87)		R-Talent (n = 50)		R-Crime (n = 98)		R-Inform (n = 47)	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Negative emotions														
Anger	$.48_{b,c}$	.76	$.67_{b,c}$	.90	$.79_{a,b,c}$	.91	$.71_b$	.82	$.46_{b,c}$	.70	1.21_a	1.14	$.26_c$	.47
Anxious	$.63_{b,d}$	.92	$.52_b$	.66	$.82_{a,b}$	.84	$.99_{a,c,d}$	1.0	$.86_{a,b}$	.92	1.10_a	1.13	$.63_{b,c}$	.93
Disgust	$.46_{b,d}$	.86	$1.05_{b,c}$	1.32	$1.12_{a,b}$	1.47	$1.46_{a,c}$	1.40	$.43_{b,d}$	.88	1.64_a	1.22	$.27_d$	.65
Embarrassed	$.24_a$	.52	$.51_{a,b}$	.74	$.57_{a,b}$	.79	$.61_b$	.86	$.26_{a,b}$	.51	$.59_b$	.71	$.11_{a,b}$	.25
Sad	$.62_{b,c}$	.76	$.73_b$	.85	$.82_b$	.67	$.79_b$	.85	$.73_b$	.70	1.29_a	1.10	$.20_c$	.33
Positive emotions														
Happy	$1.87_{a,b}$	1.37	$1.66_{a,c}$	1.40	$2.01_{a,b}$	1.29	$1.74_{a,b}$	1.32	2.34_b	1.45	1.49_a	1.30	$2.21_{b,c}$	1.42
Pensive	1.71_a	1.31	$.76_b$	.89	$.76_{b,c}$	.85	$.77_b$	.96	$.59_b$	.77	$1.27_{a,c}$	1.03	$1.06_{b,c}$	1.04
Pity	1.41_a	1.31	1.19_a	1.09	1.46_a	1.02	1.16_a	.94	1.38_a	1.18	1.46_a	1.34	$.92_a$	1.21
Relief	1.48_a	1.18	1.30_a	1.19	1.58_a	1.16	1.34_a	.94	1.40_a	.95	1.27_a	1.10	1.71_a	1.26
Surprise	$1.22_{b,c}$	1.05	$1.85_{a,c,d}$	1.23	$1.53_{a,c,d}$	1.22	$1.91_{b,c}$	1.22	$1.53_{a,b}$	1.29	$1.80_{b,d}$	1.31	$1.48_{a,c,d}$	1.30

Note. Means within rows that do not share at least one subscript are significantly different at $p < .05$ with Bonferroni adjustment.

TABLE 5
Correlations Among Gratification and Cognitive Assessment Predictors of Enjoyment

	PS	SA	L	V	J	SC	NO	F	C	S
Parasocial	—	**.76**	**.49**	**.50**	**.47**	**.19**	-.10	.17	**.23**	**.49**
Self-Awareness		—	**.64**	**.55**	**.53**	**.35**	-.06	**.19**	**.21**	**.41**
Learning			—	**.65**	**.40**	**.48**	.14	**.29**	**.38**	**.30**
Voyeurism				—	**.53**	**.49**	**.29**	**.30**	**.43**	**.43**
Judging					—	**.45**	**.20**	**.31**	**.39**	**.53**
Social comparison						—	**.19**	**.26**	**.29**	**.28**
Negative outcome							—	**.26**	**.47**	.12
Fairness								—	**.58**	**.26**
Challenge									—	**.38**
Suspense										—

Note. PS = parasocial; SA = self-awareness; L = learning; V = voyeurism; J = judging; SC = social comparison; NO = negative outcome; F = fairness; C = challenge; S = suspense. Correlations in bold are significant at $p \leq .05$.

TABLE 6
Correlations among Emotional Predictors of Enjoyment

	ANG	ANX	DIS	E	SAD	H	PEN	PIT	R	SUR
Anger	—	.50	.65	.58	.71	.13	.27	.38	.09	.38
Anxious		—	.34	.40	.62	.42	.37	.48	.31	.50
Disgust			—	.65	.59	-.06	.17	.27	-.03	.40
Embarassed				—	.57	.01	.19	.34	-.01	.38
Sad					—	.20	.38	.51	.17	.45
Happy						—	.34	.40	.64	.53
Pensive							—	.47	.36	.28
Pity								—	.40	.46
Relief									—	.44
Surprise										—

Note. ANG = anger; ANX = anxious; DIS = disgust; E = embarassed; SAD = sad; H = happy; PEN = pensive; PIT = pity; R = relief; SUR = surprise. Correlations in bold are significant at $p \leq .05$.

TABLE 7
Predictors of Enjoyment for Reality Subgenres and Fictional Programming

	Predictors	β	ΔR^2	
Fiction	demographics		.05	
	happy	.41***	.25	
	transportation	.26*	.05	
	negative outcome	−.24*	.04	
Total R^2				.39
Reality-Drama	demographics		.27	
	happy	.62***	.40	
	negative outcome	−.29***	.05	
	voyeurism	.22*	.03	
Total R^2				.75
Game	demographics		.11	
	happy	.57***	.46	
	voyeurism	.29**	.09	
	anger	−.21**	.03	
	parasocial	.22*	.02	
	learning	−.22*	.01	
	social comparison	.14†	.01	
Total R^2				.73
Romance	demographics		.30	
	voyeurism	.40***	.15	
	anger	−.28*	.07	
Total R^2				.52
Talent	demographics		.03	
	happy	.68***	.70	
	suspense	.28**	.05	
Total R^2				.78
Crime	demographics		.15	
	happy	.42***	.26	
	relief	.25**	.06	
	learn	.44***	.04	
	self-awareness	−.34***	.08	
	suspense	−.21*	.03	
Total R^2				.62
Informational	demographics		.44	
	happy	.25*	.16	
	surprise	.60***	.04	
	anger	−.40***	.09	
	transportation	−.23***	.06	
	TV realism	−.21*	.03	
Total R^2				.82

Note. Demographics include age, sex, race, education, and daily TV hours. Entry criterion = .07. †$p < .10$. *$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

happy, pity, relief and surprise relative to other emotions while watching such programs (Ms range = 1.38 – 2.34). Though rated highest in suspense, talent programs were not significantly more suspenseful that other subgenres. They were, however, rated lower in negative outcomes than five other subgenres. Enjoyment of talent programs was enhanced by happiness (β = .68, ΔR^2 = .70) and suspense (β = .28, ΔR^2 = .05).

Crime programs offered gratifications associated with voyeurism, judging others, social comparison, and learning, and were rated highly on all program assessments (i.e., suspense, dramatic challenge, fairness, and negative outcomes). Respondents reported elevated reactions for all positive and negative emotions (Ms range = 1.10–1.80), except embarrassment. Among the subgenres, crime programs scored highest on social comparison, learning, dramatic challenge, negative outcomes, and fairness, and lowest on parasocial relationships. As to emotions, crime programs evoked significantly more sadness than all subgenres and scored highest on disgust, anger, and anxiety. Though crime programs evoked the least happiness of the subgenres, the differences were not significant.

Despite the rich assortment of cognitive and emotional assessments, happiness was ultimately the strongest predictor of enjoyment (β = .42, ΔR^2 = .26), followed by relief (β = .25, ΔR^2 = .06) and learning (β = .44, ΔR^2 = .04). Self-awareness (β = –.34, ΔR^2 = .08) and suspense (β = –.21, ΔR^2 = .03), however, reduced enjoyment.

Finally, *informational programs* offered several gratifications, including parasocial relationships, voyeurism, self-awareness, judging others, and learning. They were also highly rated on suspense, and all positive emotions (Ms range = 1.06 – 2.21), except pity. The informational programs evoked significantly more self-awareness than all other subgenres, significantly stronger parasocial relationships than half of the other subgenres, significantly lower ratings on negative outcomes and dramatic challenge than all other subgenres, and comparatively weaker evocation of negative emotions, including anger, disgust, and sadness. Enjoyment of informational programs was enhanced by happiness (β = .25, ΔR^2 = .16) and surprise (β = .60, ΔR^2 = .04) and reduced by anger (β = –.40, ΔR^2 = .09), transportation (β = –.23, ΔR^2 = .06), and perceived TV realism (β = –.21, ΔR^2 = .03).

Discussion

In sum, each subgenre, to varying degrees, evinced different patterns of gratifications, cognitive assessments, and emotional arousal, as well as predictors of enjoyment. Within reality programs, informational and crime programs appeared most different from one another, with 10 differences across the 20 possible assessments, whereas romance and reality-drama programs were most similar, with no significant differences between them. Fictional programming appeared

most similar to talent programs with only two significant differences between them (voyeurism and pensiveness), whereas fiction appeared most different from the crime programs with 12 significant differences. The only variables for which there were no differences across any of the programming types were judging others, pity, and relief.

The findings suggest that reality programs may differ as much from one another as they do from fiction, which implies that "reality" is not the key element in differentiating fiction from reality programming. Indeed, the fact that informational and crime programs evoked such different pattern of assessments and yet are arguably the least contrived of the various reality programs suggests that the program content, not the format or genre, is more essential to determining gratifications sought and/or obtained. So what might the key distinguishing feature be? Because voyeurism was the one assessment that distinguished fiction programs from every subgenre of reality programming, perhaps the attraction of watching real *people,* whatever the circumstance, is what appeals to reality TV viewers. Given its potential role in attracting viewers, understanding message structural features (e.g., use of confessionals, capturing genuine emotional reactions) and viewer characteristics (e.g., empathy, sociability) that might foster this curiosity would be a useful direction for future research. Indeed, though these studies found no evidence that NFC or EI contributed directly to reality or fictional TV enjoyment, consideration of other individual characteristics, or indirect effects of such traits, may still prove fruitful (see Reiss & Wiltz, 2004, for possibilities). Furthermore, the effects of such viewership on beliefs and behaviors may be paramount and a worthy direction for future discovery.

Similar to the gratification and assessment patterns, there were few commonalties in the patterns of enjoyment predictors across subgenres. For all but romance programs, happiness was, unremarkably, the strongest predictor of enjoyment.[9] Furthermore, voyeurism was a significant predictor of enjoyment for 3 of the 6 reality programs (reality-drama, romance, and game/competition), whereas anger was negatively associated with enjoyment for 3 programs (romance, game/competition, and informational). Thus, though a key *feature* of reality programs, voyeurism is not necessarily a key *predictor* of enjoyment of all such fare which offers, further evidence that reality subgenres may differ as much from one another as they do from fictional programs.

However, there is an important caveat to these findings. As Tables 5 and 6 indicate, the strong correlations among the gratifications and among some of the emotion measures suggests the beta weights may be somewhat unstable. Thus, it is possible that replication of these analyses with different samples might result in slightly different patterns of enjoyment predictors. However, despite this uncertainty, we can say with confidence that gratifications, cognitive assessments, and emotional reactions, in various combinations, are all important to understanding enjoyment of a range of fictional and reality-based programming.

We can further conclude that, in general, happiness, relief, parasocial relationships, voyeurism, surprise, and social comparison positively related to enjoyment whereas negative outcomes, anger, and self-awareness negatively related to enjoyment. Of interest, three variables had opposite effects in different contexts. Learning was a positive outcome for crime programs but a negative outcome of reality-game shows. Suspense positively related to enjoyment of talent programs but negatively associated with enjoyment of crime programs, and transportation enhanced enjoyment for fiction and talent programs but detracted from informational program enjoyment. Why might this be?

We suggest that for crime programs, learning about criminal behavior and the justice system may be a strong motivation for viewing such programs (see Table 3), whereas perhaps learning in the context of reality-game programs may distract from the gratifications of judging others and suspense. Similarly, whereas transportation into fiction and talent programs increases enjoyment, such absorption into informational programs may detract from the dominant gratification of learning about oneself—a process that may require more self-reflective capacity than transportation permits. Finally, suspense of finding out the winner of a talent contest may be pleasurable whereas suspense in crime programs, especially *America's Most Wanted* in which the criminals highlighted are still on the loose, is likely upsetting. These findings in isolation may be interesting, but in totality they have important implications for the concept of gratifications. That is, "gratifications" do not appear to be inherently positive as tacitly assumed. Rather, perhaps when sought, they impart positive outcomes, but when unintentionally aroused in pursuit of other desires, they may interfere with enjoyment.

Finally, as in Study 1, the variables included in this research explained more variance in enjoyment of reality programs (range 52–82%) than fictional ones (39%). This result largely held true when the variance explained by the demographic variables (which were higher for reality programs) were removed from consideration (range 22–62% vs. 34%). We elaborate on this point in the General Discussion.

Before we continue, we must address one potentially lingering concern. Because, in the interest of diversity, respondents in the reality TV groups were not allowed to freely choose the program they watched and/or enjoyed most, the critical reader may be concerned that the data are not well-matched to the fiction condition, in which respondents could choose their favorite program. However, we note that this scenario would be more amenable to explaining more variance in fiction enjoyment, versus reality enjoyment, which was not the case. Also, given the comparability of fiction and reality-drama results, the data collection strategy is unlikely a serious threat to the integrity of the reality data.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

This research sought to gain deeper understanding of the U&G paradigm by exploring both cognitive and emotional predictors of enjoyment of reality programs relative to fictional ones and simultaneously shed light on a compelling trend in TV programming. Results suggest that, consistent with Nabi et al. (2003), voyeurism or curiosity about others may be an important gratification fulfilled by viewing some reality versus fiction programs. This does not, however, translate into voyeurism being the most important predictor of enjoyment as some critics have implied. Furthermore, the fact that curiosity about others' lives may engage viewers does not support the popular view that reality programming is a poor substitute for other forms of entertainment programming. Indeed, voyeurism ratings of general reality and fiction programming did not differ in Study 1, and the fact that negative outcomes detracted from enjoyment in the one instance in which it was a significant predictor for a reality subgenre suggests that watching other people's failures is not a draw of reality programming.

Furthermore, as general perceived realism rarely explained variance in enjoyment, and indeed negatively associated with enjoyment of information programs, it appears that realism is unlikely a key direct factor in the enjoyment of reality TV, though we do not rule out the possibility that various dimensions of perceived realism (e.g., accuracy, plausibility, possibility, social utility) may be influential. It is also possible that underlying dimensions of realism may make some gratifications, especially voyeurism, more likely. Future research examining the role of perceived realism in the experience of gratifications, cognitive assessments, and emotional arousal and their collective relationships to enjoyment may prove fruitful.

As fictional programming appeared to encourage viewers to be more contemplative (i.e., pensive), we might be tempted to conclude that such programs are more valuable. However, we note first, that this result could be a function of the particular fictional programs considered. Dramas such as *ER*, *West Wing*, and *Law & Order*, all of which were strongly represented in the fiction condition of Study 2, may encourage greater contemplation than other forms of dramatic programming (e.g., soap operas). Also, given that pensiveness predicted enjoyment of fiction in general (Study 1), but not specific programs (Study 2), it may be too soon to draw any clear conclusions regarding the role of this variable in the appeal of fiction versus reality programming. Understanding the role of voyeurism and pensiveness in the context of each form of programming could be a useful direction for future research, though we would caution scholars from making value judgments about either of these gratifications being "better" than the other. Furthermore, as our fiction condition was comprised largely of dramatic programs, it would be useful for future research to consider how subgenres of reality programming relate to subgenres of fiction.

Across both studies, more variance was explained for enjoyment of reality versus fictional programming. At first blush, one might think the measures were simply better suited to predicting enjoyment of reality-based versus fictional programming, though the logic underlying such a claim is hard to defend as the wide range of measures have been geared more toward the study of traditional programming. The cognitive assessments in particular were well-suited to fictional dramas, the dominant programming type in the fiction group. Assuming the difference in variance was not a methodological artifact, we might argue that it is a function of viewers, knowing the events are to some extent real, investing more cognitive and emotional effort into their viewing and thus allowing them to more clearly articulate the gratifications they receive. Or perhaps viewers of such programs, in light of their compromised reputation, are more conscious of the reasons why they watch them, thus allowing those variables to serve as more accurate predictors of enjoyment. Either way, the fact that we can better explain why people enjoy reality versus fictional programming not only speaks to the value of studying reality programs, but also supports the benefit of including the types of assessments introduced in this research, especially emotional arousal and transportation, into the U&G perspective, so that we may ultimately develop a deeper understanding of the gratifications sought and obtained from entertainment media.

Finally, in exploring the connections between the U&G paradigm and enjoyment, we found that in both studies, depending on the context, gratifications obtained may not necessarily be rewarding as measured by program enjoyment. This is contrary to the implicit assumption in U&G literature that gratifications are, by their definition, outcomes that we enjoy, regardless of context. Furthermore, if we consider that those "negative" gratifications were unintentionally obtained, we must then call into question how active, or in control, viewers are in the process of trying to fulfill various social and psychological needs if they are unable to filter out unintended effects of the programming. By linking the U&G perspective with enjoyment, we not only see the need to reassess the process through which so-called gratifications are obtained, but also the effects those gratifications may have on other outcomes. Future research would benefit from considering the role of transportation in gratifications obtained, both intentional and unintentional, and continued research into the link between gratifications (both sought and unsought) and enjoyment could help to illuminate how media viewing experiences might influence behaviors with interpersonal and social impact.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTES

[1]Jurors are selected randomly from the master jury list of the county, created by merging name lists provided by the Motor Vehicle Department and the Pima County Voter Registration Department.

[2]The programs included *Survivor, The Bachelor, The Bachelorette, Joe Millionaire, Cops, A Baby Story, A Wedding Story, The Osbournes, Real World, American Idol, Fear Factor, The Amazing Race, The Family, Trading Spaces, The Anna Nicole Show,* and *Profiles from the Frontline.* These programs were selected for their popularity, their representation of a range of different subgenres, and whether they were to be aired during the time of data collection.

[3]Respondents were asked to respond to a list of reality-based programs, but not a list of fictional ones, as there is less clarity around the domain of reality-based programming, and we believed the list would help to provide an idea of what type of programs the term "reality-based" referred to for the purposes of the study.

[4]Though TV realism appears to be a multidimensional construct (see Busselle & Greenberg, 2000; Hall, 2003; Potter, 1988; Shapiro & Chock, 2003), and it is possible that fictional and reality-based programming might differ along some dimensions but not others, our interest here is in controlling for general perceptions of realism rather than to offer insight into perceived realism of the two general types of programming.

[5]We included these items in only the reality survey because in completing that version of the questionnaire, the respondents had a sense of what we meant by reality TV, which could not necessarily be assumed for those who completed the fiction-based survey and thus had no reference to reality programming.

[6]We report *r*s rather than *F* values to conserve space while still offering evidence of the magnitude and direction of effect. Information regarding *F* values are available from the first author.

[7]The programs included *Survivor*, *The Bachelor*, *The Bachelorette*, *Cops*, A Baby Story, *The Osbournes*, *Real World*, *American Idol*, *Fear Factor*, *The Amazing Race*, *Trading Spaces*, and *America's Most Wanted*. The list differs from Study 1 because that data suggested few people had ever seen *Profiles from the Frontline*, *The Family*, *The Anna Nicole Smith Show*, and *A Wedding Story*. Furthermore, since *Joe Millionaire* was no longer airing, we dropped it in favor of *America's Most* Wanted to provide another program in the crime subgenre.

[8]The composition of the programs lists was altered in the course of data collection to encourage responses to a greater range of reality program.

[9]Because program enjoyment and happiness correlated strongly, $r(490) = .66$, $p < .001$, each regression in which happiness was a significant predictor of enjoyment was rerun without happiness to consider potential differences in results. In doing so, we found transportation (i.e., absorption) explained the most variance in enjoyment of fiction and talent programs, reality-drama and game show enjoyment was best predicted by parasocial relationships, crime program enjoyment was best predicted by relief, and informational program enjoyment was best predicted by surprise.

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