

Influence of Personality Traits on a viewer's TV show Preferences

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Abstract

This review aims to establish if personality traits influence a viewer's choice of television shows. This study focuses on linking personality type as a factor that affects a person's viewing pattern and options, along with which personality trait under the big five model affects this choice/pattern positively and negatively. This mind-boggling growth has been herded by a considerable rise in the number of online Indian viewers. The terms Media/content choice and preferences will be used interchangeably with TV show choice and preferences for this review. The existing literature and material on media choices validate each personality trait's possible positive/negative effect on the viewing pattern. However, this study points out that, to fully understand the magnitude and intensity of this effect, socio-demographic variables have to be considered and analyzed along with psychological variables. This approach to media choice will help us understand the role of media psychology better and establish its significance in the media industry.

Keywords: Television show preferences; Big five personality traits; Viewers; Socio-demographic, Psychological factors.

INTRODUCTION

"Ongoing examination has demonstrated that online video utilization in India has multiplied over the most recent two years to an astounding 3.7 billion recordings each month. This marvelous development has been crowded by an impressive ascent in the quantity of online Indian watchers. In 2016, the level of absolute online video crowds in India had expanded by 74% for example 54 million watchers, with a normal Internet client watching 18% more recordings".[1]

With an increase in consumption of content in the form of movies and TV shows on OTT platforms and television, it is important to comprehend why people consume the content they are interested in and understand the reasons behind this sudden boost. [3]

Since the pattern of binge-watching and content consumption is constantly changing, platforms have now started to take an avid interest in the creation of content to successfully produce brand new and engaging TV shows. The continuous increase in consumption of entertainment by consumers has enabled OTT platforms to gain more data and insights about the kind of TV shows that should be produced rigorously. The psychographic and demographic data thus collected determines the genre of shows to be produced. The audience's choice of a particular show depends on their already existing beliefs, values, and personality type. [4]

Therefore, personality plays a crucial part in determining the selection of content by the audience and also helps in understanding what role content plays in media, society, and industry in general. Media and Psychology are more closely related than we will ever realize. [5]

Personality: "Personality refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving." Notable scholars have stressed the fact that personality is an amalgamation of a person's thoughts, emotions, and motivation. It is a dynamic system that involves physical and psychological structures that yields characteristics to a person's behavior.

To understand the influence of personality on the viewing choice of the audience, the Big Five Personality model has been considered for mapping various personality traits. This model is comprehensive and has been widely accepted/used for many types of research. [6]

The Big Five Personality traits model: Personality can be further divided into attributes/traits under the big five personality model. These attributes/traits are openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. Such traits are known to originate from a person's genetics and not from the effects of his/her environment.

Research and studies have shown that extraversion is the most important trait that impacts the development of emotional intelligence, followed by agreeableness. [7]

The Five-Factor Personality Model, also known as the Big Five personality model, is one of the most well-known models of personality theory.

“Neuroticism alludes to the weakness to passionate precariousness and reluctance. Transparency is described by the intellectual demeanor of innovativeness and feel. Appropriateness and extraversion center around the relational relationship: Extraversion mirrors the inclination to be gregarious, energetic, decisive, and to look for enthusiasm, while suitability alludes to the propensity to be warm, kind, delicate, trusting, and solid. Uprightness is perceived as the inclination toward devotion and capability. These five-character qualities are seen as the most fundamental components of character”. [8]

“Thought of the character qualities of media crowds has for some time been perceived as a vital part to understanding both the employments of and impacts of the broad communications.”

Previous researches have recognized emotional insecurity, social isolation, and intellect as factors that have influenced and affected the choice of media/content and its exposure thereof. Scholars have noted that personality characteristics play a vital role in forming substantial parts of media and communication theory. [9]

“In most character/media use models, media inclinations are viewed as an impression of a singular's convictions about and assumptions, of both the media and their different substance subjects. Considering that the broad communications give a wide scope of upgrades fit for impacting the quality and level of one's physiological state, character attributes are viewed as straightforwardly connected to one's physiological direction towards the broad communications”[10].

The current writing on selecting media/content traditionally focuses on various full of feeling or potentially intellectual conditions of being as significant components of conduct. “Channel and program decisions have been inserted in the schedules of the everyday existence of the watchers. Numerous socio-segment and mental variables might impact crowd conduct and TV inclinations. Watchers age, sexual orientation needs, states of mind, inspirations, character, sensation looking for characteristic can be significant determinants of media decision and distinctive kind of projects”[2].

Television is one such medium of entertainment that has varied roles. It is considered as the disseminator of information regarding current affairs via news channels and programs. However, it also delivers practical news such as weather forecasts, traffic news, etc., to stay updated on local happenings/events broadcasted/shown on regional channels. Television imparts general knowledge and information and works as a source of entertainment for most people. It has both practical/rational and emotional uses. [11]

Influence of gender on viewing choice: Inspection of previous studies have directed this review towards two major findings; first, the choice of media/content by a person depends/relates to his/her identity, and second, what a person wishes or chooses to watch eventually can have some substantial effect on how he/she behaves in general.

The dissimilarity among different genders' choice of content is consistent with the gender stereotypes attached to them, being as vital a contributor to this choice as personality characteristics. [12]

“Men are bound to favor programs that are activity arranged like energized sitcoms, sports, suggestive shows, and ladies bound to incline toward unscripted television programs, evening time cleansers, and circumstance comedies, sentiment, and family films. Nabi et al. revealed that men are more engaged by reality-based programming when contrasted with ladies. Greene and Krcmar's investigation of openness to media brutality shows that respondents' sexual orientation predicts openness to explicit shows and projects, like fierce projects. By and large, females react significantly less well to media viciousness than guys do. Tracked down that female watchers scored higher on the voyeurism scale and revealed less survey of energized parody, however more review of unscripted television programs, evening time cleansers, and circumstance comedies” [13]

Types of viewers: Another factor weighs in heavily while deciding the extent of influence of personality on the choice of media/content, which is the type of viewers. Different people can be categorized as different types of viewers. One such category is addictive viewers.

“They leave the TV turned on forever. Regularly, these watchers are housewives who are resigned or work low maintenance and the individuals who live alone having a place with a lower level of schooling. In some cases, young individuals likewise fall into this classification. Particular watchers clarify decisions for explicit projects. This gathering of watchers may likewise choose explicit channels or kinds of channels. They likewise habitually limit the general measure of time they spend sitting in front of the TV. People remembered for the particular watcher bunches will in general watch quality TV slots with more learned substance” [14]

Viewers who change channels frequently and are not loyal as such are known as channel-hoppers. They don't have a fixed/pre-meditated routine concerning the shows they like to watch as they are not loyal or attached to a specific show/channel. They tend to change channels way too often, are less loyal to the regular programs/shows broadcasted, and like to enjoy the diversity of programs/shows offered depending on their mood at any particular day or time. [15]

Relationship between personality traits and choice/preference of media/content: Before diving deeper to understand the link between personality traits and media/content choices, it is important to know what these personality traits mean.

Conscientiousness is a trait that corresponds to people who are high on punctuality, persistent, dutiful, responsible, and are sincere in their general approach towards life.

Highly Conscientious people find joy in watching sports programs/shows, while people on the other end of the spectrum would want to watch more animated films. [16]

For **Conscientious** people who are responsible, organized, and sincere, it was particularly difficult to stipulate, without any doubt, the relationship between this trait and their media use/choice. However, some facts and assumptions have led us to believe that conscientious individuals choose predictable and more structured TV shows. It can be concluded that conscientiousness positively affects popular TV viewing while preferring to watch popular TV shows, reality shows, and dramas. Therefore, negatively affecting complex and unconventional formats of TV shows.

Extraversion is a trait that decides how outgoing and friendly a person is. Somebody who likes going out, spending time with friends, is outspoken, and is not afraid of being vocal about their opinions is highly extroverted.

Extraversion encourages types of viewing that are not expected to approach the audience with content that is rather unpleasant and disturbing. Thus, extraversion is bound to negatively affect watching television. Friendly/extroverted people are more inclined to build their own experiences by actually participating rather than choosing to form experiences by way of watching TV programs.

However, if they were to be enthusiastically involved in the process of media and content consumption in the form of TV shows/programs, they would prefer comedy/light-hearted shows or romantic comedies, which reflects their fun, joyful and extroverted attitude towards life.

Agreeable people are kind, generous, polite to others, and to an extent naive and gullible. They can be easily influenced.

Agreeable people prefer to watch talk shows, reality shows, and daily soaps while avoiding high stimulation programs. They prefer programs that are conventional/predictable and not volatile.

Neuroticism is a trait that controls anxiety, emotions, and notions of self-esteem and self-respect. People with a high neuroticism quotient are more anxious, critical, and emotional than those who score low on the neuroticism quotient.

People with **neuroticism** as a dominant trait would generally prefer watching more cartoons, music videos, and daily soaps. At the same time, people with low neuroticism would enjoy watching sports events and survival shows. Emotionally stable people do not prefer to watch daily soaps or shows that are erotic.

People who score higher on **neuroticism** are not emotionally stable and are usually more anxious and nervous than others. They experience loneliness and depression more frequently. Watching TV shows or any source of entertainment is a way for them to escape the tension, stress, and the sad reality in general.

Openness to experience relates to people who are curious about new experiences, seek novelty, have high intellectual needs, possess a high culture of thought process, and have a good sense of comedy/humor. Hence, people who score higher on the openness to experience trait are humorous, intellectual, curious, and adventurous than someone who scores low on this particular trait.

The media choices related to all these personality traits/characteristics are quite diverse and different. For example, **openness to experience** is a trait that corresponds to a choice of content leaning more towards comedy, romantic-comedy, and fantasy/sci-fiTV shows. **Openness to experience** correlates with the choice of news shows/channels with a lesser inclination towards programs like daily soap operas.

“**Openness to experience** trait has a more positive effect on all serious, exciting, or unconventional types of media use and a negative effect on the use of popular, predictable books or television programs. It will also have a positive effect on all types of outdoor cultural participation. It may also be presumed that people with low emotional stability are most likely to turn on their TV for popular programs offering little complexity or excitement. According to individuals scoring high on Eysenck's neuroticism dimension are likely to watch TV just to pass the time or for companionship and relaxation". Therefore, emotional stability shall, at all times, negatively affect the viewing of popular television.

CONCLUSION AND LIMITATIONS

In conclusion, personality has a considerable influence and impact on media/ the choice/preference of media/content. The results obtained from the scrutiny of various research/studies were congruent with the hypotheses mentioned and directly points towards a riveting existence of psychological dimension underlying media preference and choice. Every personality trait under the selected Big Five Personality Model has a relevant and substantial effect on the viewer's choice of content/media and their viewing pattern. And any person corresponding to one or more of these traits will have a different preference of content than a person relating to a different personality trait(s). Yet, people with similar personality traits or combinations of traits will exhibit similar viewing choices/patterns. This has been explicitly demonstrated using this review.

This review has been successful in providing abundant and relevant information and insight to support the evidence of a relationship between personality and choice of media/content. However, many questions are yet to be answered.

Having established the presence of a strong cause and effect relationship between personality and media/content choice, there lingers an important concern in the background. There is a limited and restricted understanding of how psychological and cognitive processes embedded deep in personality characteristics lead to the formation and maintenance of such choices made by the audience.

“For instance, to what extent do personality characteristics mediate physiological responses to actual TV show stimuli, and to what degree does this media-induced autonomic arousal influence subsequent cognitive evaluations?”.

In addition, a comprehensible and crystal-clear indication of how positive/negative of a relationship all the traits show concerning the media choice is still unknown and ambiguous. This magnitude and intensity of the type of relationship shared are critical to understanding the subject matter at hand.

Another drawback encountered in previous research and while reviewing the existing literature is broad, ambiguous, and non-exclusive categories of media/content choice. This may have led to results being fairly inconsistent and unreliable to an extent. This particular drawback calls for a more accurate and thorough means of testing and analysis so that the results obtained are more valid and closely resemble the reality concerning viewers and their media preferences, thus helping form a stronger understanding of media psychology and its relevance in the industry.

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