




Uses and Gratifications of the Reality Show 'La Casa de los Famosos Mexico' in the Millennial Audience

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Abstract. 'La Casa de los Famosos México' reached great audience records by being trending on social networks during its transmission. This research seeks to identify the uses and gratifications of the mentioned reality in the millennial audience. The method is qualitative. The design is phenomenological. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 13 people who watched the reality show and interacted with its content on social networks. It was found that the preferred media for reality TV consumption are television, streaming and social networks. The preferred genres are coexistence and competition. The main gratification expectations are entertainment and identification with a character or team. The gratifications found are enjoyment and empathy linked to the participant Wendy Guevara and the 'team inferno'. We conclude the prevalence of entertainment as a motivation for the consumption of reality shows and the preference for participants who stand out for their personality.

Keywords: Uses and Gratifications, Needs, Motivations, Reality Show, Millennial Audience.

1 Introduction

Certain theories, such as the hypodermic needle hypothesis, the mathematical theory of communication or the agenda-setting theory, support the influence of mass media on audience behavior. In contrast, the uses and gratifications theory considers the audience as active in their media consumption decisions, which are guided by specific motivations [1]. Reality shows are presented as an alternative to satisfy the audience's need for amusement [2], which is mostly made up of millennials [3,4]. Such programs combine reality and fiction by depicting real-life scenarios with narrative elements of soap operas: intrigue, betrayal, romance, and so on [5].

George Orwell's "1984" established the idea of Big Brother as the representation of an all-watching, all-controlling entity. The concept was captured on television through the program "Big Brother", which shows the life and daily conflicts of real individuals

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[6]. It has been pointed out that the popularity of this format lies in the fact that viewers may choose their favorite contestant as the winner, who usually embody values such as truthfulness, effort and discipline [7].

The general aim of this research is to identify the uses and gratifications of the reality show 'La Casa de los Famosos México' in the millennial audience. Two specific objectives are outlined. First, we define which are the uses of the reality show 'La Casa de los Famosos México' in the millennial audience, related to psychological, sociological, cultural needs and media consumption habits. Secondly, it is pointed out which are the gratifications of the reality show 'La Casa de los Famosos Mexico' in the millennial audience, which refer to the satisfaction of entertainment needs, escapism, exhilaration, interpersonal activity/social purpose, learning, leisure, exploration of the reality of personal identity, habit and a way to spend one's time [8].

2 Theoretical Framework

2.1 Uses and Gratifications

Katz et al. [9] put forward the theory of uses and gratifications to elucidate on how people use media to satisfy their needs and achieve their goals. Such needs were identified and categorized into five groups: cognitive, to enhance information, knowledge, and entertainment; affective, strengthening aesthetic, pleasurable, and emotional experiences; integrative at the individual level, linked to boosting credibility, confidence, stability, and status; integrative of social relationships with family, friends, and other groups; and escape or release of pressures [10].

Regarding reality television, Conteh [11] found that of all the motives for reality show viewing in Sierra Leone, the most important was entertainment. Similarly, Walker [12] suggests that the audience watches the reality show 'Survivor' for the sole purpose of entertainment. Rather, engaging in conversations about social issues prevents them from satisfying their need for escapism from reality. Furthermore, the audience considers such behavior to be offensive and to demonstrate the existence of a political agenda.

2.2 Reality show

The reality show genre stands out for the presence of strong aesthetic and dramatic features, the absence of actors and scripts, voyeurism, audience involvement, reality constructed for television and the prime purpose of entertainment [13]. 'Gran Hermano' or 'Big Brother', created by the Dutch company 'Endemol', is presented as the supreme reality television program [7]. It is a television competition in which a group of strangers live together in a house isolated from the outside. While competing for a cash prize they are constantly monitored by live cameras. Weekly, the participants nominate each other to be eliminated by the viewers [14].

2.3 Millennial audience

Generation Y or millennials are those who were born between the early 1980s and the late 1990s. They are characterized by having grown up with access to new technologies, mainly the Internet [15]. In terms of media consumption, millennials still consider traditional media to be relevant, valuing informative content [16].

Millennials' television consumption has several characteristics. This segment consumes less television than the average viewer, since the audiovisual content of their preference is found online [17]. In addition, Millennials tend to use their cell phones simultaneously during viewing [18]. Furthermore, millennials consider that television is used to watch entertainment programs, leaning towards reality, talent and quiz shows [19].

3 Methodology

The focal point of this research is to identify the uses and gratifications of the reality show 'La Casa de los Famosos Mexico' in the millennial audience. The research is positioned within the social constructivist paradigm, focusing on understanding how individuals develop subjective meanings from their daily experiences and social interactions with others. The method is qualitative, since the event is explored in the environment and through the vision of the participants. The design is phenomenological, since it seeks to deeply understand the meaning of a particular aspect of the lived experience of a particular group of people [20].

Table 1 shows the selection criteria. This was based on identifying profiles of Latin American people belonging to the millennial generation who have watched the reality show 'La Casa de los Famosos México' during its broadcast and have interacted with the content on the X (Twitter), Instagram and TikTok platforms. Then, through the interviewees, snowball sampling was performed, as this strategy allowed locating other individuals with the same attributes [21].

Table 1. Selection criteria for interviewees

Amount	Gender	Age	Platform
13	Male	24- 37	X (Twitter)
	Female		Instagram
	Other		TikTok

A semi-structured interview technique was used, as it enables the researcher to direct the content of the interview and, conversely, allows the participants to take the conversation in new directions related to the topic [22]. The instrument was a semi-structured interview guide, which was validated through expert judgment. The guide contains 20 questions and is divided into two sections. First, within the category "uses", questions were asked about the media chosen for reality consumption; the preference of content in reality; the needs for belonging and love, the needs for self-esteem, and the needs for self-realization linked to reality consumption; the pre-exposure to the program 'La Casa de los Famosos México'; the gratifications expected before the consumption of the

program; and the media and devices used for the consumption of the program. Secondly, regarding the category "gratifications", a series of queries were asked about the thoughts about the reality show at the beginning of the viewing; the reasons for continuing the viewing; the preferred part of the reality show; the element or situation of the reality show that generated rejection; the activities carried out during the viewing; with whom the viewing was shared; the interaction with the content of the program in social networks; and the sensations experienced after the end of the program.

As part of the operational strategy, after transcribing the interviews, the technique of thematic analysis was used, as it allows identifying, analyzing and communicating patterns among the data collected. Initially, a table was prepared where the participants' responses were grouped according to each category and subcategory. This step facilitated the identification of keywords in each subcategory. Afterwards, similarities and differences in the participants' responses were detected. Subsequently, responses were grouped into themes: preferences for reality show content, characteristics of reality show uses, expectations of gratifications, gratifications encountered, and additional findings. Finally, the gratifications found in this research were compared with those identified in previous research [11,12].

4 Results

4.1 Preferences for reality show

Most preferred genres. The 13 interviewees leaned towards coexistence (9 mentions) and competition (5 mentions) reality shows. On the one hand, as regards the coexistence genre, the programs 'Big Brother' or 'Gran Hermano' (4 mentions) and 'La Casa de los Famosos México' (4 mentions) were mentioned. On the other hand, regarding the competition genre, the most watched program is 'Exatlón' (4 mentions). This program is known for hosting sports competitions that require physical dexterity. A number of interviewees also pointed to the reality shows 'Survivor' (3 mentions) and 'La Isla' (3 mentions), which are positioned in a hybrid genre of competition and survival. Likewise, the reality show 'RuPaul's Drag Race' (3 mentions) was noted, which three interviewees positioned into the competition genre.

Topics of interest. First, for 6 interviewees, group dynamics were highlighted as an important theme. They find it interesting to belong to a group, to support each other and to elaborate strategies. The issue of playing individually or having a team is expressed. Trusting and supporting each other is more beneficial than being alone.

Secondly, emotional aspects were interesting for 7 respondents. Both the reality show's content and the audience's experience are expressed in these aspects. Regarding the content, they consider that love and romance give "spice" to the program. Two interviewees mentioned that the discussions and romantic situations of the couples captivate the audience. Concerning the audience experience, the interviewees highlight the ability to see themselves represented and feel empathy towards some of the participants

of the reality shows. Two interviewees evidence it when seeking to connect with stories of members of the LGBTQ+ community.

On a final note, a total of 4 interviewees expressed that reality shows allow learning through the observation of attitudes and personalities of the participants. Based on this knowledge, they are able to better understand the behavior of others and learn about other experiences.

4.2 Characteristics of ‘La Casa de los Famosos Mexico’ uses

Means of consumption. The preferred media of the interviewees for reality TV consumption are television (10 references), streaming (8 references) and social networks (7 references). The majority watched the reality show ‘La Casa de los Famosos Mexico’ on the streaming platform Vix (8 mentions) (Figure 1). Others watched it through TikTok (4 mentions) and some through free-to-air TV (3 mentions) and Telegram (3 mentions). It is indicated that the reason for the usage of television is due to its immediate accessibility. The ones who use streaming platforms and social networks do so on account of the ease of use and availability, correspondingly.

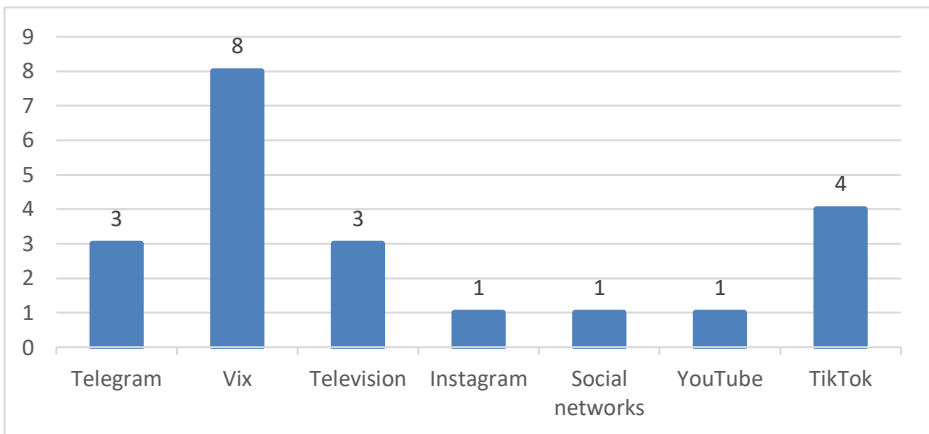


Fig. 1. Media used to watch ‘La Casa de los Famosos Mexico’.

Consuming devices. In general, the preferred devices for the consumption of reality shows are the cell phone (11 citations) and the television (9 citations). Likewise, for the ‘La Casa de los Famosos México’ reality show, the most used devices were the cell phone (10 mentions) and the television (9 mentions) (Figure 2). It is stated that the reasons for the use of the cell phone are that it is readily available and portable. The preference for the television is motivated by habit and the size of the screen.

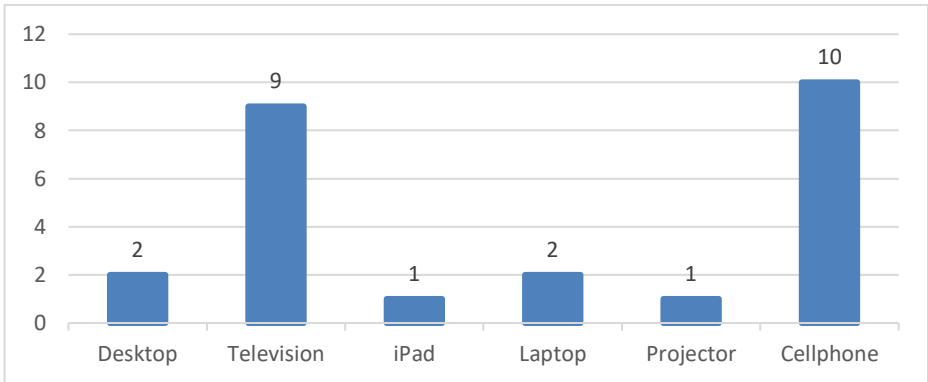


Fig. 2. Devices used to watch ‘La Casa de los Famosos Mexico’.

Reality show pre-exposure. It is noticeable that all the interviewees found out about the reality show via social networks: through the content about the participant Wendy Guevara (8 mentions) and by the content about the program itself (7 mentions). There were six respondents who became aware of the program through content about the participation of Nicola Porcella, a well-known figure in Peru. It should be noted that the interviewees who mentioned him are from the above-mentioned country.

Usage context. The activity most frequently performed by respondents while watching the reality show was working (8 mentions), eating (6 references), cooking (3 mentions), spending time with family (3 mentions) and being on social networks (3 mentions). Several indicated having the computer screen divided with the program or the cell phone transmitting the program, while working. There were 4 interviewees who shared the reality TV viewing with their family and on their own. Four respondents stated that they watched the reality show only with their family. Five interviewees mentioned that they watched it completely alone. It is worth noting that the people who watched with their family live in Mexico, where the program was broadcasted on free-to-air television or had access to the Vix platform.

Social network interaction. There were several ways of interacting with the program's content. Most interviewees (7 people) watched short videos, gave likes, shared tiktoks with friends and watched lives on TikTok. Others (4 people) shared opinions, memes and clips on X (Twitter). Two people shared content in support of Wendy Guevara on different social networks.

4.3 Gratification expectations vs. Gratifications obtained from the reality show ‘La Casa de los Famosos Mexico’

The gratification expectations and the actual gratifications obtained by the interviewees were identified. The results are shown in Table 2. Firstly, in the gratification

expectations, an inclination towards the search for entertainment is observed. This is originated by the presence of a specific character (Wendy Guevara), the presence of other characters and because the content of the program is amusing. The morbid curiosity or initial curiosity for the program is also observed.

Secondly, in the gratifications obtained, the search for entertainment is fulfilled. This need is covered by the interaction of the program participants and by the participant Wendy Guevara. Furthermore, the gratification of identification and support to a team (“team inferno”) and the identification and support to a specific character (Wendy) originates. The interviewees emphasize the hilarious personality of such participant.

Table 2. Gratification expectations vs. Gratification obtained

Gratification expectations	Gratification obtained
Entertainment generated by a specific character	Entertainment generated by a specific character
Character-generated entertainment	Character-generated entertainment
Personal entertainment	Personal entertainment
Morbid or initial curiosity	Morbid curiosity or curiosity about the future plot of the program
Social integration	Emotional connection with a specific character
Knowledge and information	Interest in a specific character
Identification with a specific character	Identification and support for a specific team
Disconnection	Identification and support for a specific character
Behavior observation	Anxiety release
Interest in a team strategy	Knowledge and information
Team identification and support	Companionship
Entertainment by competition	Involvement in a cultural trend
Attraction to program format	Interest in a team strategy
Involvement in program events	Interest in coexistence
	Belonging to a community
	Validation of one's own theory
	Social interaction

4.4 Additional findings

Millennial audience suggestions for reality TV success. The interviewees focus on choosing diverse participants who stand out for their personality and who show themselves in an authentic way. A special reference is made to the performance of Wendy Guevara, who is described as a real person, genuine, funny as well as representative of a whole community. Regarding the last characteristic, several interviewees would like to see more and better representation of LGBTQ+ people in television programs.

Matters that generate rejection in the millennial audience. The people interviewed disapprove of negative behaviors that harm others. The participant Sergio Mayer (8 mentions), who is remembered as a mean individual generally, is highlighted as an example. Rejection is voiced for transphobic, sexist attitudes and those that involve humiliating someone. Moreover, some interviewees (3 people) mentioned an episode of aggression by Sergio Mayer towards another participant of the program and the lack of a drastic response from the program's production.

The presence of values in reality shows. Six people supported incorporating values like respect and fairness in TV shows, believing they can positively influence viewer behavior. Two participants opposed this, arguing that promoting education isn't the purpose of television and reality shows. Five respondents were neutral, suggesting that forcefully displaying values is unnecessary as viewers can judge the natural behavior displayed in shows. One person highlighted the appeal of messiness and drama in reality shows.

5 Discussion and conclusions

Among the preferences for reality TV content, the millennial audience has a greater inclination towards the genres of coexistence and competition, giving as an illustration the programs 'Big Brother' and 'Exatlón'. López Vidales et al. [7] found that this generational segment is particularly fond of game-type reality shows, which include coexistence and competition. In this study, the programs 'Big Brother' and 'Supervivientes' stand out. This indicates that there is a coincidence of interests in the samples of both studies.

Regarding the topics of interest in reality TV content, millennials prefer topics that involve group dynamics, emotional aspects and learning through observation. These elements also coincide with the findings of López Vidales et al. [7], as the audience is interested in observing the behaviors of the participants. In addition, the predominant narrative in these reality shows has as its core events charged with emotiveness and competitiveness.

As for the characteristics of the uses of 'La Casa de los Famosos México', the research highlights the preference for television, streaming and social networks as a means of consuming reality television. This shows that television remains as one of the favorite media of the millennial generation [16]. Streaming platforms equally enjoy great popularity among members of such group [19].

The ongoing presence of social networks in the context of reality TV viewing is evident. The interviewees learned about the existence of the reality show through various social networks such as TikTok, X (Twitter) and Instagram. The findings are consistent with those found by López Vidales & Gómez Rubio [16]. According to that research, millennials report their fondness for the Twitter platform.

Among the activities during reality TV broadcasting, most of the interviewees were working on the computer or laptop, while the program was transmitted in another window or on an external device such as a cell phone. Reaffirming the millennials' ability

to use multiple devices simultaneously [18]. The majority of interviewees watched the reality show while accompanied by family members and on their own. There were five people, residents of Peru and Colombia, who watched it completely alone. This indicates that millennials not only consume television content individually [19], but also involve their family in the viewership.

In terms of gratifications, the viewing of the reality show 'La Casa de los Famosos México' was triggered by the search for entertainment, related to Wendy Guevara's role, the involvement of the other participants and the hilarious content of the reality show. The need for entertainment is fulfilled in the millennial audience, due to the interactions of the program's participants and the actions of participant Wendy Guevara. The prevalence of entertainment as the main motive for the consumption of reality shows is highlighted. Additionally, the gratifications of identification and support for a team, identification and support for a character, release of anxiety, emotional connection with a character, interest in a character, companionship, social participation, social interaction, belonging to a community, knowledge and information, and curiosity and morbid curiosity are revealed. These gratifications coincide with and add to previous research on reality television [11,12].

This research enriches the knowledge about the millennial audience and their preferences in reality TV content. It offers a detailed perspective of the uses and gratifications associated with this television genre, contributing to studies that employ the theory of uses and gratifications in television. It also provides valuable data for professionals and audiovisual creators in the creation of content that meets the expectations of this generation.

However, the limitations of the study should be considered, particularly its non-representative sample that restricts the generalization of the results. The results may also vary according to demographic and sociocultural factors, given that participants from Mexico, Colombia and Peru were included. It is suggested that future research expand the sample and employ additional methods such as content analysis in order to have a more complete understanding of the uses and gratifications of reality TV.

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