Factors that Influence One's Choice for Viewing Public Television in South Africa

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Abstract

Public Television Broadcasters (PTB) also known as non-commercial televisions are established to perform specific obligations to the public such as: to inform, educate and entertain with a variety of popular programmes. These programmes are available and accessible to all or the majority of the citizens. Public Television Broadcasters have moved towards incorporating commercial breaks into their programmes. This paper examines factors which influence viewer rating of public television in South African which ought to be informative and educational while providing suitable entertainment. Hence, this study analyses viewers' intentions for watching public television within the City of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. This study employs a descriptive survey technique to quantify data. A sample of 384 respondents participated in the research. Self-administered questionnaires, which contained mostly close-ended questions, were used to extrapolate information from potential respondents. The outcomes of this study highlight various reasons why respondents choose to watch different channels of South African Broadcasting Corporation Television (SABCTV). Analysis of the responses indicated a strong correlation between race and choice of viewing material. Black respondents mostly prefer to watch SABC1[1], Whites prefer SABC2[2], Indians prefer SABC3[3] and Coloureds prefer either SABC2 or SABC3. The

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[1] SABC1 = South African Broadcasting Corporation Television Channel 1.

[2] SABC2 = South African Broadcasting Corporation Television Channel 2.

[3] SABC3 = South African Broadcasting Corporation Television Channel 3.

study also reveals that the language, type of programmes, television heritage/ history as well as family and friends have an influence on viewers' choice. The study further exposes short-comings of the public broadcaster's mandate to society.

Keywords: Uses and gratifications, television, programme preference, viewers, and SABC

Introduction

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) provides an understanding of what motivates people to proactively and dynamically select certain media to fulfil their particular needs. The Uses and Gratifications Theory outlines how people deal with different media rather than the traditional stance of how the media manages people. Nwabueze *et al.* (2012:2) argue that the Uses and Gratifications Theory is an appropriate way to explain mass media exposure and patterns of media adoption by the audience. Rizkallah and Rizzouk (2006:67) note that the Uses and Gratifications Theory allows researchers to analyse the way in which people use mass media to satisfy their needs and to understand the reasons associated for precise media-related behaviours. Nwabueze *et al.* (2012:2) are of the view that the Uses and Gratifications Theory explains why people watch, read, and listen to certain media and media contents. The Uses and Gratifications Theory proposes that media audience have preference to choose numerous media which suit them but argue that reasons for choosing a specific medium differ from user to user (Karimi *et al.* 2014:45). In 1970, Katz (Singh 2011:13) propounds the uses and gratification theory, which states that people have the choice to select what they prefer to see, listen or read and their needs are gratified by different media. Agyekwena (2007:269) posits that the Uses and Gratifications Theory is one of the audience theories that explain the roles of media from the angle of the audience. the Uses and Gratifications Theory suggests that individuals are motivated by basic needs to select and use particular media content in ways they find personally pleasing (Steinberg 2007:269).

The Uses and Gratifications Theory appropriately explains how traditional and new media is used in society (Bondad-Brown, Rice & Katy 2012:488). Blumler (1992) in West and Turner (2004:123) outline four basic

reasons for using traditional media such as the television, radio, newspaper and magazine. These reasons are:

1. The need for diversion avoidance (relief from personal and emotional tension);
2. The need for human relationships/ affection (the feeling for friendship and help in societal intercommunication);
3. Personality/ status (the need for self-concept and confidence for one's impact in the society); and
4. Surveillance (the need to be knowledgeable about things that might affect or assist some-one).

A study conducted by Karimi *et al.* (2014:466) indicates that the motives of students at higher institutions of learning for engaging in social networking are to connect with old and current friends as well as to make new friends. McQuail (2005:423) states that socio-cultural factors, such as types of media, availability of media outlets, content and message as well as social pressure on media policy, also affect difference in media uses and gratification.

Lull (2000:103) argues that certain variables such as culture, gender, religion and social class modify needs, therefore, the manner in which we gratify these needs differ across various junctures. Stafford, Stafford and Schkade (2004:259) provide three ways in which consumers can acquire gratification factors. These are:

1. Content gratification (when the message of a particular medium is being used by consumers for information or entertainment);
2. Process gratification (when consumers prefer to use a particular medium because of enjoyment they find in using the medium); and
3. Social gratification (when consumers use a particular medium to satisfy their social interaction needs such as companionship, friendship, interpersonal communication and belonging).

The choice and selection of media by people can also depend on ethnicity, which is based on the language they speak, their cultural experience, the race and group to which they belong. Giles (2012:359) observes that audiences' choice of media is likely to be based on their belief that the message will support their group's vitality. Harwood and Vincze (2011:204) contend that some media choices are driven by unique group-level gratifications

sought. They further point out that individuals seek out particular messages which support their social identity and avoid or reinterpret messages which threaten group identity. Williamson and DeSouza (2006:20) note that media which are directed to specific ethnic groups (ethnic media) assists in strengthening community cohesion, minimize social isolation and promote or maintain culture and language. Feng and Nzai (2014:28) view that ethnic media provide the participants with opportunities to make a connection and communicate with their ethnic culture and society. In other words, the motive for selecting particular media by audience has made some of the media become ethnocentric. Matsaganis, Katz and Ball-Rokeach (2011:3) define ethnic media as media, which is produced by and for:

1. Immigrants;
2. Racial, ethnic, and linguistic minorities; as well as
3. Indigenous populations living across different countries.

Matsaganis, Katz and Ball-Rokeach (2011:3) further observe that in Canada, there are 250 ethnic newspapers that represent about 40 ethnic communities and over 40 television stations that present programmes in different kind of ethnic groups. They further indicate that Europe and the United Kingdom are the countries that have witnessed the emergence of the largest number of ethnic media because both British citizens and residents read over 100 ethnics daily and weekly newspapers and periodicals which are also exposed to over 15 ethnic radio stations and more than 30 ethnic television stations. Most countries have exposure to ethnic media in the form of television, radio or print media.

Problem Statement

Public television stations (PSTV) are established by the government of each nation to serve the publics by providing educational, informative and entertaining programmes that its citizens will enjoy without any interruption. Wilson (1992:267) supports this view by indicating that public television is a non-commercial form of broadcasting primarily for providing public services. Folkerts, Lacy & Larabee (2009:170) describe public television stations as educational television stations which are not operated for profit. Bignell (2004:18) gives four aims of the Public Service Television:

1. To provide programmes which are educational;
2. To help communities create inventive and effective new uses of technology for education;
3. To offer a range of different kinds of programmes at different levels of accessibility; and
4. To engage audience in the significant events and issues occurring in the present.

Soroka *et al.* (2012:2) posit that public television stations are meant to help citizens get more of the information they need, especially information that commercial media cannot or will not provide. For instance, the section 33 (3) of South African Broadcasting Act (1999) states that 'The South African Broadcasting Station (SABC) must offer, in all South Africa's official languages, a range of informative, educational and entertaining programmes that showcase South African attitudes, opinions, ideas, values, talent and artistic creativity'.

However, due to financial constrain almost all public broadcasting stations have commercialised their news and programmes by welcoming commercials into most of their programmes for financial suitability. Biagi (2013:170) argues that public donations to public television have been declining and this decline in funding has led the public broadcaster to seek underwriting from companies accustomed to advertising. Juneau (2000:7) notes that for the past few years many public television broadcasters have opened up to advertising or resorted to it more increasingly and have created new subscriber services or completely launched commercial activities to finance their main service. The chief executive officer of the South African Broadcasting Corporation argues that the South African Broadcasting Corporation has to rely largely on advertising and not only on the public purse for revenue or else the funding will remain an on-going challenge. He further stressed that the over-reliance of the South African Broadcasting Corporation is on commercial funding in relation to other sources and currently the funding mix is 77% commercial funding, 18% licence fee, 2% government and 3% other funding (SABC Annual Report & Financial Statement, 2007). Poniewozik, (2011) reports that the chief Programming Executive of Public Broadcasting Station in New York, John Wilson recently told 'The New York Times on May 31, 2011 that their famously uninterrupted programmes would

soon be interrupted with commercials just like other television stations. Akingbule (2010:108) points out that the Nigerian Director-General of public broadcasting service announced that a funding arrangement for public broadcasters, which would entail provision of 50 per cent of revenue from a statutory parliament-appropriated budget and 50 per cent from commercial advertising, may be available soon.

On the other hand, the report provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) in June 2012 states that some public broadcasting stations are no longer focusing on their mission to present educational programmes because some advertisers influence the type of programmes which must be aired. Jjuuko (2002) agrees that the sponsors influence the content and design of programmes on public television. Fashomi (2013:141) agrees that very often the information function of public television can be wavered by advertisers and management is coerced into conforming. Sawers (1989) believes that market pressure can ruin many features of public service programming such as programmes of diversity, since advertising provides streamlined or less varied programmes.

Nevertheless, television viewing is still a matter of choice, since the viewers are not compelled to watch a particular station; they have the right to decide on which television station to watch and which not to watch. Moreover, cable, digital and satellite television such as Digital Satellite Television4 (DStv) also manages and offers various foreign television stations and this provides the opportunity to have freedom of choice of television viewing. Therefore, there is a need to examine whether public television stations in South Africa still gratify the need of their viewers. This study investigates what motivates South Africans to watch public television.

Literature Review
Application of Uses and Gratifications Theory in Television
Television (TV) is the broadcast medium that plays different roles in the lives of individuals because of the attributes it acquires, like offering varieties of shows, such as drama, soap operas, detective and news stories, as well as educational and entertainment programmes. Tager and Chasi (2015:1) suggest

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[4] DStv (Digital Satellite Television) is MultiChoice's digital satellite TV service in Africa, launched in 1995, providing various bouquets.

that television is a ubiquitous part of our everyday lives. Shamsher and Abdullah (2012:46) concur that regardless of age, sex, income or educational level, television is a powerful medium that reaches large audiences. Brown and Keller (2000) argue that people watch television for a significant purpose and a number of hours per day. Akingulu (2010:29) states that a number of survey reports note that the average daily television viewing time is as high as five to six hours. Viewer's select (use) television channels which gratify their needs. Agyekwena (2007:265) indicates that television is an important aspect of millions of people and the *Uses and Gratification Theory* aptly describes how television fulfils certain needs of viewers.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory has been applied by various scholars and researchers who use it to explain the reasons for television viewing. Chandler (1994) applies the Uses and Gratifications Theory to explain how television programmes gratify different needs in different individuals. Obono and Madu (2010:75) are of the view that most of the television viewers use television as a major information provider. An empirical study undertaken by McQuail (2005:426) and West and Turner (2004:156) explain why people watch television programmes. Their study revealed the following: People watch television:

1. To source information about important events and conditions in society;
2. To become aware of and to participate in social interaction; and
3. For entertainment.

Sonko (2010:2) points out that parents use television to interact with and to keep company with their children. Rubin (1981) in Rizkallah and Rizzouk (2006:72) mentions five most important television viewing motives by old people:

1. Relief from boredom;
2. Information;
3. Entertainment;
4. Social interaction; and
5. Companionship.

The study conducted by Anjum and Michele (2014:830) discover that the major gratifications derived from watching transnational television among Pakistani Diaspora in Canada were for information, entertainment, and

awareness of current, political, social, strategic and economic issues. Rizkallah and Rizzouk (2006:720) discovered in their study that Arab American adult immigrants watch television for entertainment, social interaction, habit and information. Anjum and Michele (2014:830) also revealed in their study that the Pakistani Diaspora in Canada was not watching television for personal and tension release needs. A study by Nwabueze *et al.* (2012:1) show that the need for information, quality of programmes and entertainment are major gratifications that motivate exposure to satellite television viewing among viewers with satellite households in the Southeast zone of Nigeria. Bhat (2015:8) discovers in his study that most inhabitants of Kashmir Valley in India watch television to get information and education, not for entertainment. Jamal and Mekote (2008:10) examine Kuwaitis' motives for viewing and avoidance of Al-Jazeera television channel; the finding reveals that Kuwaitis watched Al-Jazeera because it provides information without any restriction, freedom of expression to discuss sensitive issues on politics, and it also exposes the bad behaviour of Arab leaders.

On the other hand, ethnicity and language can also be viewed as strong factors that determine television viewing motives. Rizkallah and Razzouk (2006:65) argue that ethnicity has proven to be an important motivating factor for television viewing. Zohhori (1988) in Rizkallah and Razzouk (2006:65) conducted a study on television viewing motives between immigrant children of different ethnic groups and American children. The study revealed that both immigrant children and American children were motivated to use television for learning and social interaction, companionship and escape. Feng and Nzail's (2014:29) study reveals that Chinese participants expected to see their own ethnic, language, racial, and cultural identities, events, and/or news through the Internet and television. Ikeda (1992) in Rizkallah and Razzouk (2006:65) discovers that language learning, entertainment and information are the major television motives for Chinese immigrant children in the United States. Ankit (2014:7) investigates the motives of Arabic speaking viewers for watching English or dubbed television programmes; the study shows that learning English is among the most important motives for the respondents to watch foreign-language programmes. Harwood and Vincze (2011:383) discover in their study that the second language can be a barrier to the viewers in bilingual contexts. Munyoki and Kirigo (2011:8) indicate that motivation for viewing television programmes depends on the language of the programmes. Rizkallah and Razzouk (2006:72) reveal in their study that Arab Americans rely on Arab

television for information on what is taking place around the world and in their countries of origin.

Similarly, the choice or preference of television stations can also determine the motivation for television viewing. Munyoki and Kirigo (2011:1) describe preference as a 'choice between alternatives and the possibility of rank ordering of alternatives based on the degree of happiness, satisfaction, gratification, enjoyment or utility they provide'. The study conducted by Alhassan and Kwakwa (2013:203) identify the following: image of the station, clear reception, station heritage, news coverage and kinds of programme as five major factors that influence the choice of television station watched by inhabitants of in the eastern part of Ghana. The study conducted by Munyoki and Kirigo (2013:3) also discovered that community television was preferred by the majority of primary school teachers in Langata (Nairobi) and the significant factors that influenced teachers' choice for selecting a television station were: the quality of news coverage and presenters that appear on the television station, and the variety of programmes that are broadcast through a clear television reception signal. The study carried out by Bhat (2015:8) reveals that television viewers in Kashmir Valley preferred to watch Indian Urdu television channels as compared to other television channels. On the other hand, Munyoki and Kirigo (2011:8) believe that channel loyalty also influence the choice of television channels selected. Goodhardt *et al.* (1987) in Munyoki and Kirigo (2011:8) define channel loyalty as 'the extent to which viewers tend to view programmes from one channel rather than distributing their viewing time equally among different channels'. Munyoki and Kirigo (2011:8) observe that if the viewer's based their loyalty on a specific television channel, there will be decreased watching of other available television stations.

SABC as a Public Broadcaster

South African public television stations have a fascinating story. In 1976, public television was introduced to South Africans and only 300,000 television sets were sold nationally. According to Tager and Chasi (2015:5) in 1976, television consisted of a single channel named South African Broadcasting Television (SABCTV) or SATV and later introduced a second and a third television station. Before the introduction of the second and third television, the broadcasting in SABC television was only in Afrikaans and English and none of the country's Black languages were included. Tager and Chasi

(2015:5) indicate that SABCTV's programmes were broadcast between 18.00 and 23.00 in the evening, from Sunday to Friday, and seven hours on Saturday. They further stress that equal time was given to English and Afrikaans programmes, for instance; on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays broadcasting opened with a short English language news bulletins, followed by entertainment programming for a total of two hours. The Afrikaans broadcasting took over with the main news bulletin at 20:00, followed by prime-time viewing, including hour-long drama programming or dubbed films, until the close at 23:00. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays the programmes would be in Afrikaans.

Tager and Chasi (2015:5) state that in the 1970s most programmes were bought from America, Frances or Germany but in 1976, the British Actors' Union imposed a ban on exporting any drama television to South Africa and this ban remained in place for 17 years until 1993, the year after the release of Nelson Mandela from prison. Tager and Chasi (2015:5) further mention that the roles allocated to black actors prior to 1994 were those which reinforced the status quo in the country at the time, which was that Blacks were seen as subordinate to Whites.

SABC Language Issues

When the South African Broadcasting Television was introduced, there was no television programming in any African language. According to Tager and Chasi (2015:5) the introduction of the African languages service was approved by the government in 1979. Tager & Chasi (2015:5) further comment on the South African Broadcasting Corporation Annual Report (1982) that African languages services were inaugurated on New Year's Eve of 1982 in South Africa. The African languages programmes which were broadcast for 27 hours per week and in five languages were divided into two groups: Nguni languages, specifically IsiZulu and IsiXhosa were to be broadcast on SABC2 and the Sotho family of languages, especially SeTswana, SeSotho and SePedi, found a home in SABC3. The two channels, SABC2 and SABC3 are in the same frequency band but transmitted to diverse geographical parts of the country. The first part of the 1980s was a period of expansion. The Advisory Board for Services in Bantu languages was set up to regulate the correct use of African languages in their purest forms. Tager and Chasi (2015:5) explain that this advisory board had memberships both from within and outside the South

African Broadcasting Corporation and endured a continuous supply of neologisms in Africa language. In 1980 the first black member of the advisory board was appointed in the person of Professor Abraham Nkabinde from the University of Zululand.

The South African Broadcasting Corporation re-launched of all its channels in February 1996. According to Tager and Chasi (2015:5) the aim of this re-launch was to become truer to the ideals of public broadcasting. There are three South African broadcasting stations, namely SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 and they are broadcast freely on air. SABC1 disseminates its programmes in the form of Nguni group of languages such as isiZulu, isiXhosa, and some isiNdebele as well as some in English. SABC2 transmits its programmes in Afrikaans, TshiVenda, TshiTswana and English while SABC3 presents its programmes in English only. SABC1 and SABC2 have the responsibility of being public service broadcasters (African Media Barometer, 2013:30). SABC Africa is one of the South African Broadcasting Corporation channels, which was transmitted through Digital Satellite Television but was later discontinued in 2008. Moreover, SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 channels are also broadcast via the Digital Satellite Television bouquet.

Objectives

Today, there are 12 million licensed television households in the South Africa; citizens and non-citizens can tune-in to any South African Broadcasting Corporation station they feel like watching. One cannot watch three stations at a time; one will prefer watching one station to another or have reasons for watching a particular station. In other words, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine television viewing motives among inhabitants of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa;
2. To determine the preferred or favourite South African Broadcasting Corporation channel by inhabitants of Durban; and
3. To evaluate the factors that influences the viewers' choice of particular South African Broadcasting Corporation channels in Durban.

Methodology

This study applies the Uses and Gratifications Theory to examine television viewing motives and preferences for public television stations among inhabitants of the city of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The research employed a descriptive survey research design. Odia and Oamen (2013:49) note that survey design is the research method that is used to assess thoughts, opinions and feelings. The University of Zululand's ethical policy was strictly applied and adhered to in order to safeguard the respondents' privacy and confidentiality.

Target Audience

The target population of this study was residents of the city of Durban, KwaZulu-Natal. Odia and Oamen (2013:49) state that it is not always possible to make an observation on every individual in whom a researcher is interested in due to time constraints and financial costs, however, Durban was considered as an appropriate research field due to its racial diversity. Wimmer and Dominick (2006:88) argue that there is need for a subset from the target population that will be representing the entire target population. A representative sample of the population was used in the study.

Sample Size and Sampling Method

This study adopted the method of sampling as outlined by Du Plooy (2009:119), which estimates that for a population of over 100,000 (one hundred thousand at 95 percent confidence level and ± 5% error margin) the sample size is 384. About 600 questionnaires were randomly distributed. The first 384 correct questionnaires that were received were analysed. The sample size for this study, therefore, comprised 384 viewers of the South African Broadcasting Corporation SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 in Durban. Moreover, 384 respondents from the City of Durban were selected by using the random sampling technique.

Data Collection Instrument

This study used self-administered questionnaires. close-ended questions were included in the questionnaires because they permit easier interpretation and tabulation.

Data Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

	Frequency	**Percentage** (%)
Gender		
Male	168	43.8
Female	216	56.2
Age		
20-29	48	12.5
30-39	161	41.9
40-49	134	34.9
Above 50	41	10.7
Ethnicity		
Black	210	54.7
Coloured	30	7.8
Indian	80	20.8
White	64	16.7
Marital Status		
Married (not living with spouse)	49	12.8
	11	2.7
Widow	31	8.1
Widower	7	1.8
Divorced	99	25.8
Separated	0	0
Single	187	48.7
Other	0	0
Educational Qualification		
No formal education	0	0
Grade 11 or lower	13	3.4

Grade 12 (standard 10/matric	68	17.7
Post matric diploma or certificate	72	18.8
University or Technikon degree	141	36.7
Post graduate degree	90	23.4

Table 1 provides the demographic profile of respondents who participated in this research. The following variables (Gender, Ethnicity, Marital status and Educational Qualifications) formed a part of the respondent's profile:

1. A total of 56.2% of the respondents were female and the remaining 43.8% were male.

2. The age distribution also shows that 41.9% were within the ages of 30-39 years, 34.9% were aged between 40-49 years while 12.5% respondents were between the ages of 20-29 years and only 10.7% of the respondents were older than 50 years.

3. The distribution of respondents according to their ethnic groups indicates that 54.7% of respondents were Blacks, 20.8% of respondents were Indians while 16.7% of respondents were White and only 7.8% of respondents were Coloured.

4. As far as the marital status of the respondents was concerned, about 48.7% respondents were single, about 25.8% were divorced, 12.8% were married and living with the spouse, 8.1% of the respondents were widowed, 2.6% were married and not living with the spouse and 1.8% of the respondents were widowers.

5. The distribution of respondents according to their level of education shows that 34.7% of respondents held university or Technikon degrees, 23.4% held a post-graduate degree, 17.7% of respondents obtained grade 12 (standard 10/matric) certificates while 3.4% of the total sample obtained grade 11 certificates.

Table 2 Frequency of Watching Television

Time spent on watching TV		
	Number	Percentage
Less than an hour	48	12.5
Between one to two hours	90	23.4
Between two to five hours	132	34.4
More than four hours	114	29.7
Total	**384**	**100**

Table 2 reveals the average time spent watching TV per day by respondents:

1. Respondents who spent 2 to 5 hours watching television totalled to 34.4%,
2. Those who watched television for more than 4 hours made up 29.7% of the respondents.
3. A further 23.4% of respondents indicated that they spent 1 to 2 hours watching television.
4. However, 12.5% of the respondents mentioned that they watched television for less than 1 hour.
5. Respondents who watch television between 2 to 5 hours and those who watch more than 4 hours totals 64.1 %. This provides a great platform for marketers to advertise their products.

Table 3: Viewing Period for Watching TV

Television Viewing Time		
	Number	**Percentage**
Morning	22	5.7
Afternoon	35	9.1
Evening	181	47.1
Night	94	24.5
Mid-night	21	5.5
Any time	31	8.1
Total	**384**	**100**

Table 3 provides information on respondents' peak viewing periods. The following responses were received:

1. Respondents who preferred to watch television in the evening amounted to 47.1%
2. Night viewing totalled to 24.5%.
3. Those who preferred watching television in the afternoon were 9.1%.
4. A further 8.1% of the respondents preferred to watch television at midnight.
5. Morning viewing was only 5.7% of the respondents.

Many respondents are working, and therefore prefer to watch television in the evening, which is their leisure time. This finding is similar to results of the studies conducted by Odia and Omen, 2013; Shamsher and Abdullah, 2012, Rizkallah and Razzouk, 2006 which revealed that people preferred to watch television in the evening.

Viewers' Motives for Watching SABC Television

Table 4 provides a breakdown of the motives for why respondents watch SABCTV channels. The respondents were allowed to circle more than one motive for watching SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3.

Table 3: Viewing Period for Watching TV

Motives	SABC1	Rank	SABC2	Rank	SABC3	Rank
Entertainment	221	2	153	1	137	2
Information	235	1	76	4	174	1
Relaxation	112	7	82	3	120	3
Instruction	182	5	87	2	111	5
Education	218	3	72	5	118	4

Companionship	167	6	55	7	87	7
Social interaction	213	4	61	6	101	6
Total	**1348**		**586**		**848**	

1. Table 4 indicates that respondents watch SABC1 for information, entertainment, education, social interaction, instruction, and companionship and for relaxation.
2. The table shows that respondents watch SABC2 for entertainment, instruction, relaxation, information, education, social interaction and companionship.
3. The table reveals that respondents watch SABC3 for information, entertainment, relaxation, education, instruction, social interaction and companionship.

This demonstrates that respondents show diverse inspirations for viewing SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 yet respondents' primary purpose for viewing is for information gathering. Decisively, respondents get their information needs for the most part on SABC1 and SABC3. Moreover, Kamiri *et al.*, 2014; Nwabueze *et al.*, 2012; Beverly *et al.*, 2012; Gurleen and Sukhmani, 2011; Jamal and Melkote, 2008; McQuil, 2005, LaRose and Eastin, 2004 additionally discovered comparable inspiration for viewing television in their studies. The table further portrays that entertainment is another solid rationale for viewing SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3. In the same vein, numerous studies (Bhat 2015; Anjum & Michele 2014; Alhassan & Kwakwa 2013; Shamsher & Abdullah 2012, LaRose & Eastin 2004) found in their studies that entertainment is a strong motive for televisin viewing. It affirms that social connection and companionship are the weakest motives of respondents for choosing to watch SABC2 and SABC3 while companionship and relaxation are the weakest intentions in respondents who watch SABC1.

Viewers' Preference of SABCTV Stations
Table 5: shows viewers' choice of SABCTV and in this section, respondents were asked to circle their choice of SABCTV.

Table 5: Viewers' Preference of SABCTV Stations

Ethnicity	I prefer watching the following channels:	SABC1	SABC2	SABC3
South African Blacks (210)	Yes	210	28	110
	No	0	172	19
	Occasionally	0	10	81
South African Coloureds (30)	Yes	11	30	30
	No	0	0	0
	Occasionally	19	0	0
South African Indians (80)	Yes	0	0	80
	No	72	56	0
	Occasionally	8	24	0
South African White (64)	Yes	0	64	64
	No	64	0	0
	Occasionally	0	0	0
Total=384				

Table 5 indicates that most Black South Africa respondents preferred to watch SABC1; a few Black respondents tuned into SABC3 while the majority do not like SABC2 television. The table also shows that Coloured respondents preferred to watch both SABC2 and SABC3, while a smaller group of them watched SABC1 occasionally. Indian respondents preferred to watch SABC3 while a few of them watch SABC2. White respondents preferred SABC2 and SABC3, and none of the White respondents like SABC1.

This study endorses that the preference for viewing South African Broadcasting stations also depends on what specific ethnic group find gratifying. Gratification in this instance is possibly derived from feeling comfortable with a particular language usage. Language use would also have

strong ties to cultural themes which a certain channel depicts. For instance, they the data reveals that black South Africa respondents preferred SABC1; this may be due to one of the common African languages used in SABC1, which is IsiZulu and moreover, the province is KwaZulu-Natal, which is dominated by Zulus. The study also reveals that Whites preferred SABC2; this may also be due to one of the languages used in SABC2, which is Afrikaans, a language with which they are familiar. Indians preferred to watch SABC3. This result is largely due to the fact that most Indians speak the English Language only, and SABC3 broadcasts its programmes, including the news, in English. The study also indicates that Coloured respondents in Durban either preferred SABC2 or SABC3. It can be stated that SABC1 and SABC 2 are focused on ethnic public media since the programmes and languages used accommodate specific ethnic audiences while SABC3 is seen as the mainstream media outlet. Feng and Nzai (2014:20) state that ethnic media are tied to a particular minority group and have the capacity to deliver information to that specific targeted audience.

Factors which Influence Respondents' Preference or Choice
Table 6 examines the factors that influence viewers' choice for selecting a particular channel (SABC). In this section, the respondents were requested to circle more than one answer.

Table 6: Factors which Influence Respondents' Preference or Choice

Factors of influence	Frequency	Rank
Language of programmes	372	1
TV station History/Heritage	283	3
Types of programmes	345	2
Family/friends influence	257	4
Religious beliefs	40	6

TV stations marketing programmes, e.g. advertisements	78	5
Total	**1375**	

Table 6 provides the various factors that influenced respondents when it comes to choosing a particular SABCTV station:

1. A total of 372 respondents were influenced by language of a programme that influenced respondents' viewing preferences.
2. Types of programmes were selected 345 times.
3. A television station's history/heritage also influenced respondents and this variable was selected 283 times.
4. Respondents who are influenced by family/friends were selected 257 times.
5. Respondents also indicated that a television station's marketing programmes also influenced them and was selected 78 times.
6. It is interesting to note that only 40 selections were made by respondents for religion. This indicates that religion is not regarded to be a strong influencer.

The study confirms that the language in which programmes are broadcast is a very significant factor that determines the viewers' choice for selecting a certain channel from the SABC bouquet. It also means that if the viewers understand and can speak the language used in a particular television programme, they would stay tuned in to such a television station, but if they do not understand the language they would quickly switch to other stations.

Discussion of Analysed Data

This study has examined the television viewing motivations and preferences for public television stations among inhabitants in the City of Durban in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. Durban is an appropriate city to conduct such a study due to its racial diversity. This ensured that all ethnic groups in South Africa participated in the study and thus aided in improving the accuracy of the results. The following conclusions are drawn from the findings of the study:

1. Respondents are in keeping with revelations of the Uses and Gratifications Theory. Most respondents watch television in the evenings, during their leisure time to source information about important events and conditions in society. They watch news discussions on public television in order to become aware of and to participate in social interaction.

2. Contrary to the Uses and Gratifications Theory SABC television was scarcely used for entertainment or relaxation. Many respondents who viewed public television do so because it is free (subject to payment of a licence fee). Social interaction and companionship are the least important motives for respondents watching SABC2 and SABC3. Companionship and relaxation are least important motives for respondents watching SABC1. Pay-TV (such as DSTV) is probably used for relaxation or companionship. SA's pay-TV market is dominated by a single, entrenched player, MultiChoice, with its DSTV offering. According Moyo (2015), DSTV has 5.4 million subscribers in SA.

3. Respondents exhibited different motivations for viewing SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3. However, respondents' primary motive for watching SABC1 is information gathering (by watching the news), which was also the same with respondents' first motives for viewing SABC3. Respondents get their information needs mostly from SABC1 and SABC3.

4. Social interaction and companionship are the least important motives for respondents watching SABC2 and SABC3. Companionship and relaxation are least important motives for respondents watching SABC1.

5. This study endorses that the preference for viewing South African Broadcasting stations also depends on what specific ethnic group find gratifying. Gratification in this instance is possibly derived from feeling comfortable with a particular language usage. The study established that each ethnic group has its own preferred choice of SABCTV stations. For instance, it was discovered that almost all Black respondents preferred SABC1; this may be due to one of the common African languages used in SABC1, which is IsiZulu and moreover, the province is KwaZulu-Natal which is dominated by Zulu speaking South Africans.

6. It was also revealed in the study that Whites preferred SABC2. This may also be due to one of languages used in SABC2, which is Afrikaans, a language preferred by Afrikaans speaking Whites.

7. Indians preferred to watch SABC3. Indians predominantly speak the English Language, and only SABC3 broadcasts its programmes, including the news, in English.

8. The study indicated the Coloureds in Durban either preferred SABC2, or SABC3. SABC1 and SABC2 are ethnic public media platforms due to the diversity of the languages they use for their programmes. SABC3 represents the mainstream media. Feng and Nzai (2014:20) state that ethnic media are meant for a specific minority group and they have ability to disseminate information to that particular target audience.

9. The language of programmes is the most significant factor that determines the viewers' choice of SABCTV stations. It means that if the viewers understand and can fluently speak the language used in a particular television programme, they would stay tuned in to such a television station, but if they do not understand the language they would quickly switch to other stations.

10. Another important factor that determines the viewers' choice of SABCTV station is type of the programme; this means that if a programme broadcasted by one station is interesting, viewers would like to keep watching that station, but if it is not, they would turn to another television station. In addition, the television history or heritage is also considered a factor that determines the viewers' choice of SABCTV station. It was revealed that family and friends also have the power to influence the viewers' choice of SABCTV station.

11. Television marketing programmes like advertisements also determine the viewers' choice of SABCTV station; this can be viewed in two ways: If advertisements are created with likeable factors, it would be watched by the audience. Also information seekers have favourable attitudes towards television advertisements.

12. Religion is the least likely factor that determines the influence of viewers' choice of SABCTV station.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. The management and board of directors of SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 must take cognisance of the Uses and Gratifications Theory to understand the reasons for television viewing. It, to a large extent, explains how television programmes gratify various needs in different individuals. The theory clarifies factors that determine the viewers' choice of TV stations, such as the language of the programme, type of programme, TV heritage and history, the influence of family and friends as well as number of advertisements placed on TV.

2. It is also recommended that the editorial teams of SABC1, SABC2 and SABC3 take note of their strengths and weakness to produce programmes which gratify the needs of the current views so that viewership is sustained or improved. It is no wonder that SABC's productions and general management is coming under severe scrutiny. Primary issues such as placement unqualified personnel in key positions need serious review because unqualified managers and decision makers will not be able to fully understand the thrust and purpose of research such as this and important theories which guide production. Mediocrity will only breed Mediocrity.

3. South Africans have been gently lured into accepting commercial disruptions during their viewing time. On 28 September 2015 at 8H30, SAFM announced that SABC relied heavily on revenue from advertisers. SABC now has a balance of over R1 billion in their account – although they showed a loss of R400 million last year. The revenue could be channeled into providing a predominantly English language channel which would cater for the general economic and educational needs of the country. Comparatively, the pay TV platform MultiChoice

has grown by 684 000 subscribers in the last year and the total number of MultiChoice subscribers now stands at 5.6 million households. Revenue of the pay TV business is up 15% to R24.1bn, while trading profits grew 11% to R6.3bn Ferreira (2012). SABC urgently needs to consider other options of fulfilling their mandate to society. This could include introducing more television channels and increasing local content.

4. The advertisers and advertising agents must undertake research based on motivations for viewing television and preference of audiences, especially on ethnic audiences, before placing advertisements on television. In other words, advertisers should also care about viewer segments and viewing choices to ensure that their advertising campaigns are well-spent. If advertisements are created with likeable factors, it would be watched by the audience, and it will engage and influence them towards purchasing the goods. On the other hand, audiences may also dislike advertisements not related to their needs. In addition, advertisers and advertising agencies should try to have their advertisements aired during the evening periods, since the viewership peaks at such times.

Conclusion

In a digital era where broadcasting has become less challenging, SABC sadly only offers three channels with which they assume will gratify the needs of the rainbow nation. The country also has numerous community television stations, such as 1KZNTV which is very popular. The community television stations make a very pertinent contribution towards specific community development initiatives and also provide relevant entertainment.

Each SABC channel has become complacent and believes that it is gratifying the needs of the people by becoming specialist in the most desirable languages of the country. It is debatable whether this situation can really contribute to overall sustainable growth of the country. SABC has the funds and the expertise to extend their viewership by introducing more channels to cater for the needs of such a diverse country. One becomes curious to discern the results of a comparative study between SABC to DSTV (which, again, is an added cost to viewers). One wonders how far South African public television is from achieving its mandate to society. Viewers may simply be

watching SABC programmes aired in their respective languages because that is what is available to non-pay TV viewers. Further research in this arena needs to take place as soon as possible.

Wilson (1992:267) supports this view by indicating that public television is a non-commercial form of broadcasting primarily for providing public services. Folkerts, Lacy & Larabee (2009:170) describe public television stations as educational television stations which are not operated for profit.

However, the outcomes of this study has not been able to establish any positive correlation between commercial breaks on public television and viewer motives for watching public television. Commercial breaks are least significant factor that influenced viewing of respondents who watched SABCTV. The language of programmes is the most significant factor that determined the viewers' choice of SABCTV.

Thus far commercial breaks used by SABCTV, as a source of funding, has not been a deterrent or hindrance. In fact, it ought to be a positive factor in fulfilling their mandate with ease by presenting the best educative, informative and entertainment programmes. However, especially in view of the Gupta-gate scandal, caution must be exercised when dealing with sponsors who attempt to control or influence their programme content. South Africa is in a promising situation to produce the most feasible public television programmes. However, further research is required to investigate other viruses that attack the progress of SABCTV such as corruption in financial management as well as employment of unqualified personnel in high profile positions. Much of these issues form regular news headlines in current newspapers.

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