A Tale of Two Screens: Why do people tweet about TV programs?

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By Bradley Cannon

Advisor: Dr. Filippo Trevisan

American University

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to understand why people tweet about TV programs. The use of Twitter in relation to TV programs is a method of second screening. Second screening allows audiences to interact with a television program via smartphones, laptops, and other Internet-enabled devices. This study applied parasocial relationships, uses and gratifications, and affective disposition theories, which supported the development of the online survey. The primary method employed in this study was an online survey, which was completed by 440 respondents. The results from the study found that people are likely to tweet if something they like or dislike happens in the story in similar measures, both around 60 percent combined "agree". Additionally, the results also noted that using a specified hashtag while watching a television program is positively associated with the following three variables: feeling engaged with a TV program, sense of community, and having a voice amongst the crowd.

Introduction

After World War II television became a staple for families across the United States. The television sets had small screens and only projected two colors, black and white. Emerging technologies have changed the way viewers watch television today. More than ever, viewers are no longer watching television with just their families. People from all over the world are sharing their television viewing experiences with the help of social media. Nearly 80 percent of those who own a tablet, computer, or mobile device use them while watching television (Cameron & Geidner, 2014). This is critical to network executives because they are continually checking data to gauge the number of people watching. The number of people watching a television program is calculated into ratings, and this determines a show's success. This is important because understanding the behaviors and attitudes of viewers is a constant for network executives. Viewership influences a television program's ratings, which impacts revenue.

A study conducted by Nielsen, a global information metric company, reported that over 200 television programs displayed an increase in ratings 29 percent of the time as a result of Twitter use (Eaton, 2013). This insight is also important to advertisers. Twitter has been found to influence ratings, which impacts advertising revenue for television networks. Advertisers are tasked with creating ways to entice television viewers to purchase their products and services. Additionally, advertisers want their products and services in front of as many would be consumers as possible. If a television program is highly successful, then network executives can charge a premium for their advertising inventory. For example, Super Bowl XLIX had over 114

million viewers tuned in (Patten, 2015). Furthermore, each 30-second commercial had a $4.4 million price tag (O'Reilly and Lutz, 2015).

Second screening allows audiences to interact with a television program via smartphones, laptops, and other Internet-enabled devices. Previous research highlights the history of second screening and analyzes the various forms of social media. Alternatively, the purpose of this study is to investigate Twitter use in relation TV programs. The primary research question will be: Why do people tweet about TV programs? In understanding Twitter behaviors and attitudes, network executives will better understand the impact of second screening, be able to implement engaging promotional strategies, understand their target audience, and gain insight to craft more tailored content. Additionally, advertisers will be able to expand their reach to consumers, deliver measurable results on a campaign's effectiveness, and obtain insight on the activities of their target audience.

The first part of this study reviews literature that defines second screening. Additionally, research data in this section is highlighted to give an overview of the importance of studying second screening. Next, this study reviews and discusses how Kerry Washington, an actress from the popular television series *Scandal*, used Twitter to engage with viewers during her sophomore season. Also, in this section is a brief history of second screening. Subsequently, literature involving second screening behaviors is individually examined to provide an analysis of the ways in which Twitter has been integrated into television.

Understanding the implications of how Twitter impacts behavior is necessary to create strategies with insightful outcomes. Fourthly, literature that describes the

predictive nature of Twitter in relation to personality traits is examined. Traits such as introversion and extroversion are analyzed to find out if there is a correlation between personality and social media use. This is relative to the study because understanding an audience's personality traits, within social media, can lead to more strategic campaigns. Finally, theoretical literature concludes the review. Theoretical literature relating to parasocial relationships, uses and gratifications, and affective disposition operationalize the research question. Additionally, academic literature supported the development of survey questions within the methods section.

After relevant literature is reviewed, the study will seek to answer the research question within the methods section. An online survey was conducted in order to understand why people tweet about television programs. Respondents were asked questions about their relationships with television characters, attitudes regarding the actions of television characters, and motivations for using Twitter while watching a television program. Subsequently, key findings are highlighted and analyzed in the discussion section. Some of the key findings were that respondents are likely to Tweet if something they like or dislike happens in the story in similar measures, both around 60 percent combined "agree". Furthermore, the results also noted that using a specified hashtag while watching a television program is positively associated with feeling engaged with a TV program, sense of community, and having a voice amongst the crowd. The study will be concluded with an overall summary. Lastly, recommendations are made for further study as well as for network executives and advertisers.

Literature Review

Second screening with Twitter

  The practice of linking a Twitter hashtag to a TV program is an attempt to engage viewers called second screening. The first screen represents the television in which a program is viewed. The second screen is a smartphone, tablet, or laptop used while simultaneously engaged with the first screen. Second screening allows audiences to interact with a television program and with others who are also tuned in. Additionally, viewers can engage with showrunners, actors, or producers and give real-time feedback about a television program. These interactions enable internal stakeholders to build a relationship with its audience. Twitter and other forms of social media are often used to create buzz and generate interest in a television program before it airs. A successful social media campaign can impact the overall reception of a television program. Nielsen (2014) reported that 25 percent of television viewers were more aware of TV programs due to social media and 15 percent enjoyed watching television when social media was a part of the experience.

  It is believed that the reduction in the digital divide has contributed to the growth of second screening and the use of Internet-enabled devices. Pew Research Center (2015) reports that close to two-thirds of all Americans own smartphones, which has become a primary means of access to the World Wide Web. This information coupled with the estimated 115 million people who own a television is believed to have led to the increase in second screening (Nielsen, 2013). The behaviors of viewers are not only important to showrunners, but also advertisers who use second screening as a way to engage with viewers of a program. For example, while a show is airing on television,

advertisements appear on both screens to engage with viewers (Smith, 2013). The advertisements on the secondary screen collect data with the use of cookies. Cookies are embedded in online ads and track your online behavior. Product and program recommendations are made based on your tracked online activities (Smith, 2013). The data collected from second screening is changing television for audiences, networks, and advertisers. To understand the impact of Twitter, the television series entitled *Scandal* — a consistent top trending Twitter topic — is examined.

Second screening with *Scandal* and other programs

As the intro begins for ABC's top political drama *Scandal*, many fans grab their smartphones, tablets, and laptops and begin tweeting away. *Scandal* is an hour-long political drama centered on real-life crisis strategist Judy Smith (Clarke, 2016). Kerry Washington stars as Olivia Pope, a no-nonsense fashionista whom politicians in Washington, D.C. call on when they are in trouble (Clarke, 2016). Olivia heads a crisis management firm called "Gladiators in Suits" (Clarke, 2016). Season one of *Scandal* had very dismal ratings and was on the verge of cancellation. ABC decided to give the show another shot after season one and renewed it. During the second season of *Scandal*, Kerry Washington and other members of the cast began using Twitter to engage with fans before, during, and after the program aired. Fans who joined in on tweeting were dubbed "Gladiators". This method of engagement has proved to be very successful for the show.

On average, "Gladiators" account for more than 2,000 tweets per minute during Thursday night episodes with #Scandal and #AskScandal regularly performing as top

trending Twitter topics (Clarke, 2016). Twitter engagement is believed to be one of the reasons for *Scandal's* increase in viewership, which averages over 7 million weekly (Clarke, 2016). Kerry Washington echoed this sentiment at a South by Southwest conference in Austin, Texas during the spring of 2016. (Dorsey, 2016). At the conference Washington was quoted saying, "I know to this day without social media, we wouldn't have had a second season and now be in our fifth" (Dorsey, 2016). As a result of *Scandal's* success with second screening, ABC created a block of programming entitled "#TGIT". "#TGIT" stands for Thank God It's Thursday, and it serves as the Twitter hashtag for second screeners watching Shonda Rhimes led series *Grey's Anatomy, Scandal, and How To Get Away With Murder*. The hashtag influences viewers to engage with all of ABC's Thursday night programming. This phenomenon is not limited to ABC. Other networks such as Bravo have also implemented similar strategies to engage with viewers. Sunday's on Bravo are dubbed "#ShadySundays" and the hashtag appears throughout programing such as *Real Housewives of Atlanta and Real Housewives of Potomac*.

As Warren (2013) noted, second screening in relation to television began in 2011 with the development of *Grey's Anatomy* Sync for iPad. The app, powered by Nielsen's Media-Sync, showcased an array of content that viewers of ABC's medical drama *Grey's Anatomy* could interact with while watching (Warren, 2011). The Media-Sync technology used the Apple iPad's microphone to remain in sync with the television program (Warren, 2011). Furthermore, the app used audio watermarks to determine corresponding content to display on the screens of viewers, which worked in conjunction with live and time-shifted television (Warren, 2011). ABC's success with

second screening has influenced both cable and broadcast networks to implement similar strategies into their television programs.

One way in which network executives are seeking to integrate Twitter into second screening efforts is by displaying tweets onscreen. For example, television shows such as *Real Housewives of Atlanta* have a scrolling bar of tweets on the bottom of the screen. The tweets are from viewers tuned into the hit series who have used the specified hashtag #RHOA or #ShadySundays.

According to Nielsen (2013), over 200 million active Twitter users compose 400 million tweets daily; 60 percent of tweets were sent from mobile devices. Additionally, in 2012 32 million people in the United States tweeted about television, and by March 2013 19 million users composed 263 million TV-related tweets (as cited in Cameron & Geidner, 2014).

As the competition for viewership between television networks increases so does the responsibility to keep viewers tuned into live programming. Web addresses and hashtags showcased during television broadcasts have become a mainstay for networks. It appears Twitter's appeal has grown so much, that viewers are now able to use it to determine the narrative of their favorite television shows. *American Idol*, a popular competition reality series*,* began this tactic in 2015. During the 14th season of *American Idol*, viewers were encouraged to log onto Twitter during the results show and use a predetermined hashtag to save their favorite contestant who was up for elimination. The contestant with the highest number of tweets with the hashtag was saved from elimination. This method of second screening could become the way of the future, as it gives viewers an incentive to not only watch but to tweet as well.

Social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook benefit from second screening as it increases engagement on their platforms and the information gathered is analyzed and sent to television networks for the development of advertising strategies (as cited in Cameron & Geidner, 2014). The online chatter that takes place on social media can influence perspectives and opinions. Understanding the effects of online chatter can lead to the successful integration of social media and television.

Data collected from social media can have just as much of an impact as the messages themselves. Cameron et al. (2014) conducted two studies to see if Twitter would influence individuals to conform their opinions to that of the majority when judging a contestant's talent. The researchers found that the video with a positive leaning Twitter feed gave participants a more favorable view of a contestant and a less favorable view on the negative leaning Twitter feed (Cameron & Geidner, 2014). These findings suggest that comments or tweets posted via social media have the ability to influence the opinions of those who read them. As a consequence, it becomes necessary for network executives to monitor what is posted via social media to gauge reception. If the reception is good, then network executives can develop strategies to continue the positive feedback. Alternatively, if the reception is negative, then network executives can create strategies to help reshape the attitudes of viewers. It is critical for network executives to remain in tune with what happens on Twitter because this can make or break a television program. Furthermore, if the reception of a television program is negative advertisers are not going to want to associate their products and services with it.

Second screening, also known as "Social TV"

Oftentimes social activities impact social media behaviors. Kramer et al. (2015) sought to investigate if behaviors – communicating with others, gathering information, or seeking entertainment – increased one's predictability to participate Social TV, which is defined as any interaction with a TV program on social media. Through an online survey of 101 participants, the researchers found that WhatsApp messaging platform was the most popular social media platform for Social TV. Furthermore, this study found that Twitter, YouTube, and Google+ were less relevant for Social TV and concluded that the use of smartphones and laptops displayed the highest frequency amongst devices used for Social TV. The study also suggests personality traits such as extraversion do not predict one's likelihood to engage in Social TV. Moreover, motives to communicate with others, information gathering, and to be entertained were found to be predictors of Social TV. Alternatively, perceived social gratification of increased enjoyment was found to be the strongest predictor. This study also highlights the relevance of behavior on social media. With the emergence of new technologies and social media platforms, it becomes increasingly important to understand how off screen behaviors influence Social TV activates.

Theories

This study highlights literature relating to parasocial relationships, uses and gratifications, and affective disposition theories to help understand why people tweet about television programs. Furthermore, the theoretical literature provides a historical perspective to aid in the understanding of the attitudes and behaviors of television

viewers. Literature regarding parasocial relationships, uses and gratification, and affective disposition also supported the development of questions in the online survey.

Parasocial Relationships

Communication literature that dates back to the 1950s states audiences form relationships with media characters (as cited by Tal-Or, N. & Hershman-Shitrit, M., 2015) The amount of time viewers spend with these characters creates a level of intimacy (Tal-Or et al., 2015). Therefore, viewers develop one-sided bonds called parasocial relationships (Clarke, 2016). Horton and Wohl found that audiences develop close bonds, which often mirror real life relationships (as cited by Clarke, 2016). Despite the one-sidedness of these relationships, an audience tends to develop genuine feelings for media characters (Clarke, 2016).

These relationships are especially important to broadcasters and advertisers because they can influence viewership and revenue. Viewers tend to show loyalty to media characters, much like their real life relationships. For example, *Scandal* is consistently a top trending topic during Thursday night primetime television. Fans of *Scandal* seem to be highly obsessed with Olivia Pope's fashion. For instance, during the 2013 season of *Scandal*, Olivia Pope wore a white Burberry trench coat. After the episode aired, the trench coat sold out everywhere. Parasocial relationships are beneficial to broadcasters and advertisers alike. When viewers have loyalty to media characters, they will be more inclined to watch a television program and likely purchase products associated with it. Broadcasters need to be aware of the influence that actors and media characters have during casting for television programs. The product

placement of the Burberry trench coat in *Scandal* underscores the importance to advertisers. Product placement is an advertising strategy, which highlights a product within a television program. When products are featured in popular programing, sales can be positively impacted. Consequently, demand for advertisers to be featured in TV programs increases, which have a direct impact on revenue for television networks.

Uses & Gratifications

Viewers select television programs for a number of reasons. According to Kurylo (2013), theorists might argue that the uses and gratifications of television would be a point of consideration for study. Uses and gratifications theory seeks to understand why people seek out particular media to satisfy needs (Kurylo, 2013). For example, someone who loves learning about marine wildlife might aim to watch the Discovery Channel during *Shark Week*. Alternatively, a television series such as *Keeping Up with the Kardashians*, an E! Network reality show, would likely serve as entertainment. Understanding the reasons behind Twitter use paired with television consumption is relative to the goal of this study.

For example, one might seek to use Twitter while watching television for social interaction. Using Twitter while watching television creates a co-viewing experience, where viewers can share thoughts about television programs. The sharing of thoughts and ideas about a television program on Twitter allows viewers to interact each other in new ways. These interactions can also add a new element of entertainment. People post jokes and comments on Twitter while watching a television, which can provide additional entertainment. This form of entertainment can influence Twitter use in relation

to a television program. Another possible reason could be due to viewers' relationships with characters. Uses and gratification theory focuses on the active selection of media (Kurylo, 2013). Television viewers often select programs based on their feelings and relationships with characters. This can be attributed to the needs they seek to have satisfied. Parasocial relationships explain the one-sided bonds individuals have with media characters, but uses and gratifications theory would explain viewers' active selections of media.

These ideas conjointly explain why viewers use Twitter while watching television. As previously stated, television shows like *Scandal* use hashtags throughout to engage with audiences. Uses and gratifications theory might also seek to understand why viewers use hashtags while watching television. Viewers may feel inclined to use a hashtag while watching television to engage with actors and or others associated with the program. These arguments are relative to this study because they supported the development of questions in the online survey, which is explained in the methods section. Twitter engagement and consumption are extending the reach of television networks. The extension of old media has created new avenues for new media. Therefore, new opportunities for revenue and audience development have been established.

Affective Disposition Theory

Affective disposition theory says when the actions of media characters are met with moral judgments this can impact their overall enjoyment of the program (Ji and Raney, 2015). For example, Olivia Pope of *Scandal* often finds herself in sticky

situations while protecting the who's who of the political arena. She averts crises in her profession and delves into them within her personal life. Olivia has an ongoing affair with the President, who is married. In the winter finale of 2015, Olivia finds out she is pregnant with the President's baby, but decides to terminate the pregnancy. Twitter was set ablaze with tweets condemning Olivia.

Affective disposition theory also argues that enjoyment occurs when good things happen to the protagonist and bad things happen to the antagonist. This is prevalent throughout Twitter and other social media platforms. In 140 characters or less, viewers voice their judgments via Twitter about media characters. This is of particular importance to network executives as they are tasked with creating compelling stories for television. Although moral judgments can aid in the enjoyment of media, it can also cause dissonance. Too much dissonance can lead to cancellation. Network executives have to gauge audience perspectives to have profitable television programs. Because of the emergence of social media, Twitter provides real-time insight that can help with programming strategies.

Methods

This study uncovers the motivations of why people use Twitter while watching television. To gauge the influences of Twitter use in relation to a television program, this study conducted an online survey to understand what triggers viewers to tweet about a television program. Parasocial Relationships, uses and gratifications, and affective disposition theories supported the development of questions in the online survey. This is significant because this study provides unique insight on how feelings about characters,

what happens in the story, and the specific uses for Twitter impacts the television viewing experience.

Do feelings about a character's actions influence one's likelihood to second screen with Twitter in relation to a television program? Does Twitter help viewers follow along with the story? Are viewers aware of those associated with the television program who tweet? How important do viewers think Twitter is to a television program? In order to investigate these questions, an online survey was developed and distributed via email, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn. My ideal targets were current and previous students who were enrolled in a School of Communication course at American University in Washington, D.C. Additionally, survey invitations were distributed via LinkedIn to groups relating to strategic communication, media, and entertainment. Furthermore, survey invitations were distributed on the social networking site Reddit. Reddit pages for the following television programs were targeted in particular: *Supergirl (CBS), Scandal (ABC), How To Get Away With Murder (ABC), The Haves and The Have Nots (OWN Network), The Walking Dead (AMC) and American Horror Story (FX).*

A complete copy of the survey questionnaire can be found in Appendix A. The survey began with general questions that inquired about respondents' overall television viewing habits along with their Twitter account status. All respondents were asked demographic questions relating to age and gender. Additionally, questions relating to the amount time respondents spent watching live and online television were also posed. A screening question was also asked in order to capture respondents relevant to the study. The screening question asked respondents if they had ever tweeted about a

television program. The survey was ended for those who replied "No". Those who replied "Yes" were asked the questions relating to the following three central areas:

1. **Relationship with characters:** In order to understand if the relationship with characters influenced respondents' likelihood to tweet in relation to a television program, the following questions were asked – after respondents selected their favorite program from a list – they were asked to state whether they agreed with or disagreed with the following statements: *I relate to my favorite character, I am physically attracted to one or more of the main characters, I aspire to be more like my favorite character, I follow the actors from my favorite television program on Twitter, I tweet the actors from my favorite television program*.

2. **Judgments of the story:** To test affective disposition theory, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the statements: *When something happens in the story that I like, I tweet about it; When something happens in the story that I dislike, I tweet about it.*

3. **Twitter uses:** To understand the specific uses and gratifications of Twitter usage while watching a television respondents were asked to agree or disagree with the following statements: *Reading tweets from others who watch the television program makes the viewing experience more enjoyable, I like to use Twitter while watching a television program when it can be associated with a particular hashtag, Using Twitter while watching a television show makes me feel*

like I am apart of a community, Using Twitter while watching television helps me

feel like I have a voice amongst the crowd, Using Twitter while watching

television makes me feel engaged in the program.

Results

Respondents were asked a series of questions relating to their television viewing

habits and uses of Twitter. The results are presented beginning with demographics,

relationships with characters, judgments of characters, Twitter uses, and other notable

findings.

The online survey garnered a total of 440 respondents. Of the 440 respondents,

78 percent of respondents were female (n = 331) and 21 percent were male (n = 88).

Sixty-one percent of respondents fell within the study's targeted age group of 18 to 42

while the remaining 39 percent were 43 and older.

Concerning the amount of live television watched, 61 percent (n = 259) of

respondents watch between 0 to 3 hours of television each week. Twenty percent (n =

83) watched 4 to 6 hours of television each week, and 8 percent (n = 33) watched 7 to 9

hours per week. Twelve percent (n = 49) of respondents said they watched 10 or more

hours of television each week. *See Figure 1*.

Respondents were also asked about the amount of television they consumed via

online streaming (i.e. Netflix, Hulu, etc.). Thirty-four percent (n = 143) of the

respondents stream between 0 to 3 hours of television each week. Twenty-seven

percent (n = 115) stream 4 to 6 hours of television each week, and 16 percent (n = 67)

stream 7 to 9 hours per week. Twenty-three percent (n = 98) of respondents said they stream 10 or more hours of television each week. *See Figure 2.*
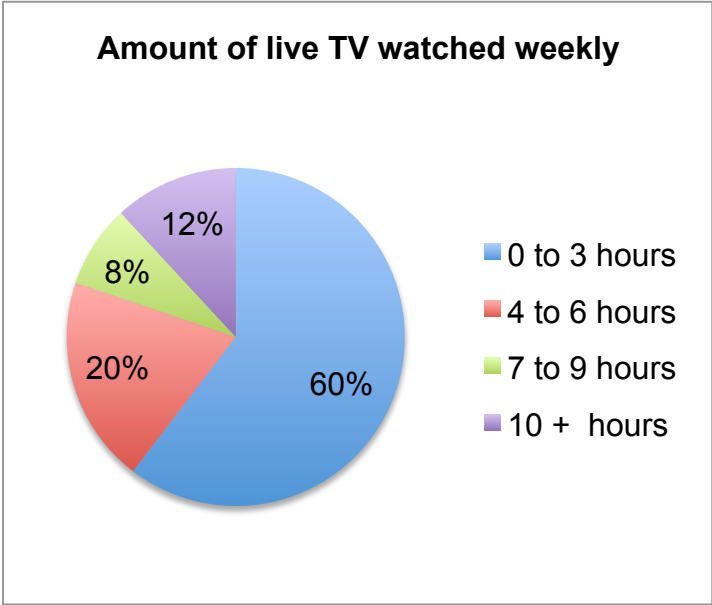
Figure 1

Amount of live TV watched weekly

- 0 to 3 hours: 60%
- 4 to 6 hours: 20%
- 7 to 9 hours: 8%
- 10 + hours: 12%

Figure 2

Amount of TV streamed online weekly

- 0 to 3 hours: 34%
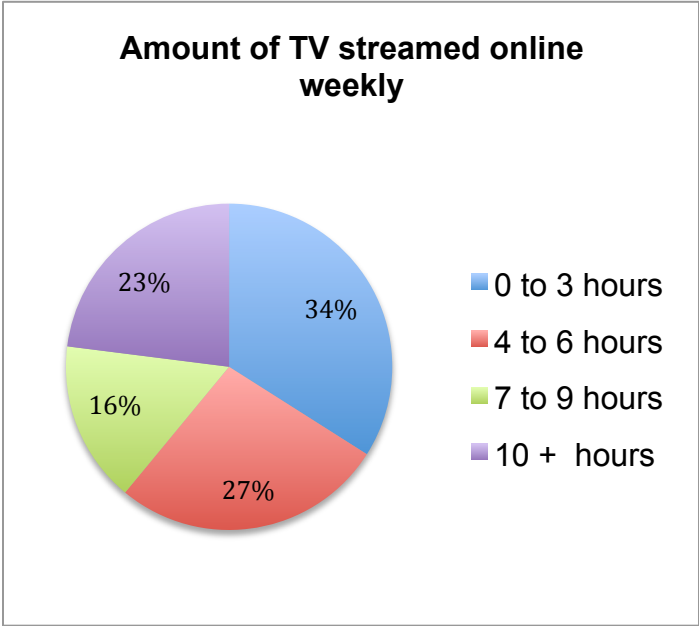- 4 to 6 hours: 27%
- 7 to 9 hours: 16%
- 10 + hours: 23%

To segment respondents, they were asked if they had ever tweeted about a television program. Fifty-four percent of respondents said they have used Twitter in relation to a television program (n = 227), while 46 percent said they had not (n =197). Those who answered "No" were screened out of the remainder of the survey and are not included in the subsequent results. *See Figure 3.*

Figure 3

Twitter while watching television

■ Use Twitter

■ Do not use Twitter
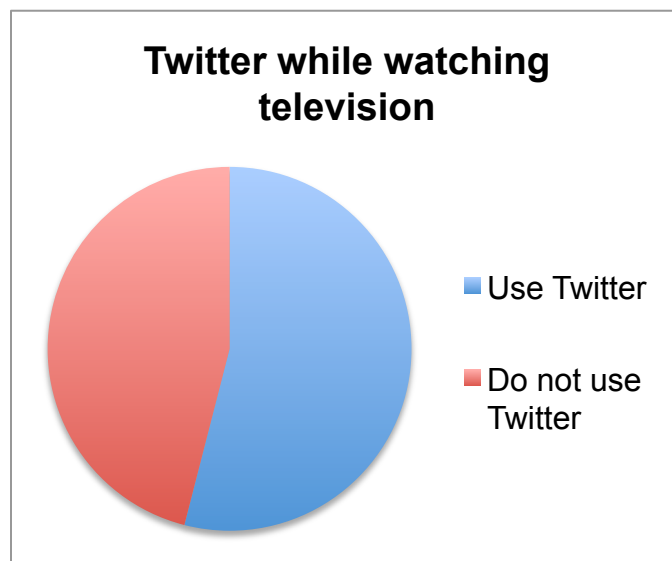
Relationship with characters

A series of questions were posed to understand respondents' relationships with their favorite media characters. Participants were asked whether they relate to their favorite television character and responded Strongly Agree 10 percent (n = 21), Agree 29 percent (n = 59), Somewhat Agree 19 percent (n = 40), Neither agree nor disagree

19 percent (n = 39), Somewhat disagree 7 percent (n = 15), Disagree 12 percent (n = 25), and Strongly Disagree 3 percent (n = 7). *See Figure 4.*

When asked if they aspire to be like their favorite characters, respondents answered Strongly Agree 11 percent (n = 22), Agree 18 percent (n = 38), Somewhat Agree 18 percent (n = 37), Neither agree nor disagree 23 percent (n = 48), Somewhat disagree 6 percent (n = 12), Disagree 17 percent (n = 34), and Strongly Disagree 7 percent (n = 15). *See Figure 4.*

Figure 4
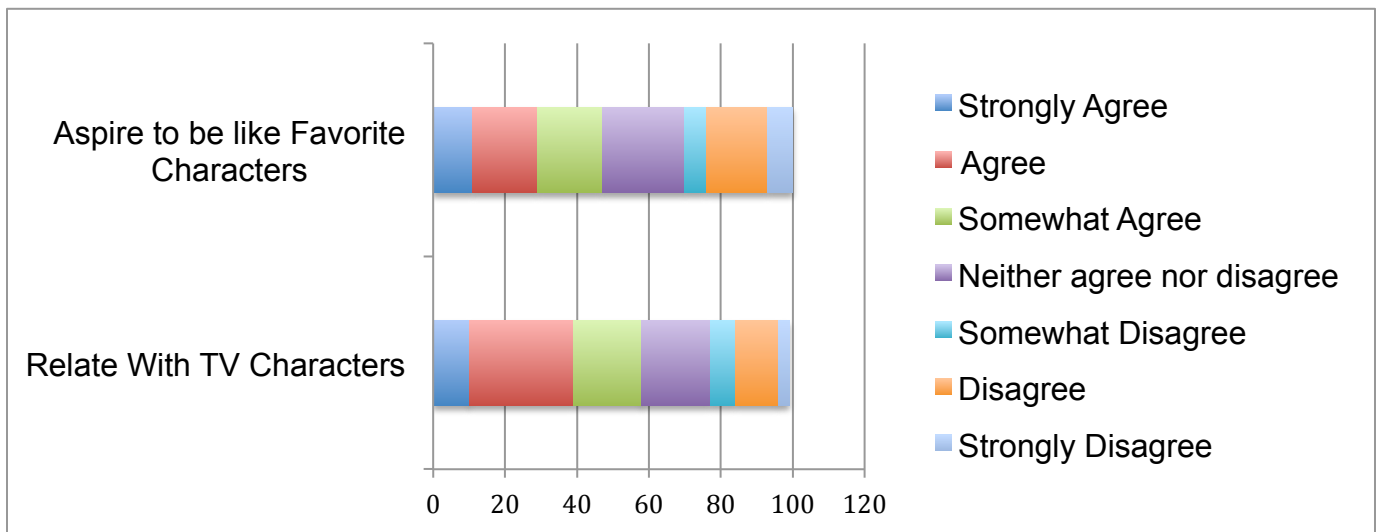
When asked if they followed actors from their favorite television program on Twitter respondents replied Strongly Agree 19 percent (n = 40), Agree 21 percent (n = 43), Somewhat Agree 17 percent (n = 34), Neither agree nor disagree 5 percent (n = 11), Somewhat disagree 5 percent (n = 10), Disagree 21 percent (n = 43), and Strongly Disagree 12 percent (n = 25). Comparatively, 92 percent (n =107) of respondents were aware that actors, producers, and network representatives tweeted while their favorite

program as airing. Participants were asked if they were physically attracted to one or more of the main characters of their favorite TV program and they responded Strongly Agree 18 percent (n = 37), Agree 27 percent (n = 55), Somewhat Agree 19 percent (n = 39), Neither agree nor disagree 10 percent (n = 20), Somewhat disagree 5 percent (n = 11), Disagree 15 percent (n = 31), and Strongly Disagree 6 percent (n = 13).

Judgment of story

Participants were asked if something they dislike happens in the story of their favorite TV program if they tweet and they responded Strongly Agree 14 percent (n = 28), Agree 25 percent (n = 48), Somewhat Agree 21 percent (n = 41), Neither agree nor disagree 11 percent (n = 21), Somewhat disagree 8 percent (n = 15), Disagree 13 percent (n = 25), and Strongly Disagree 9 percent (n = 17). Similarly, when respondents were asked if they tweeted when something they like happens in the story of their favorite TV program they replied Strongly Agree 9 percent (n = 17), Agree 24 percent (n = 47), Somewhat Agree 25 percent (n = 48), Neither agree nor disagree 14 percent (n = 27), Somewhat disagree 6 percent (n = 11), Disagree 15 percent (n = 30), and Strongly Disagree 8 percent (n = 15).

Twitter uses

Participants were asked if Twitter helped them keep up with the story in their favorite TV program and responded Strongly Agree 3 percent (n = 7), Agree 7 percent (n = 14), Somewhat Agree 19 percent (n = 38), Neither agree nor disagree 20 percent (n = 40), Somewhat disagree 13 percent (n = 26), Disagree 22 percent (n = 46), and

Strongly Disagree 17 percent (n = 34). Participants were asked if using Twitter while watching television made them feel like they had a voice amongst the crowd to which they responded Strongly Agree 5 percent (n = 10), Agree 23 percent (n = 45), Somewhat Agree 27 percent (n = 52), Neither agree nor disagree 17 percent (n = 34), Somewhat disagree 5 percent (n = 10), Disagree 12 percent (n = 24), and Strongly Disagree 10 percent (n = 20). Comparatively, when asked if using Twitter made them feel like a part of a community respondents replied Strongly Agree 10 percent (n = 20), Agree 35 percent (n = 69), Somewhat Agree 22 percent (n = 42), Neither agree nor disagree 11 percent (n = 22). Somewhat disagree 2 percent (n = 4), Disagree 12 percent (n = 24), and Strongly Disagree 7 percent (n = 14). *See Figure 5.*
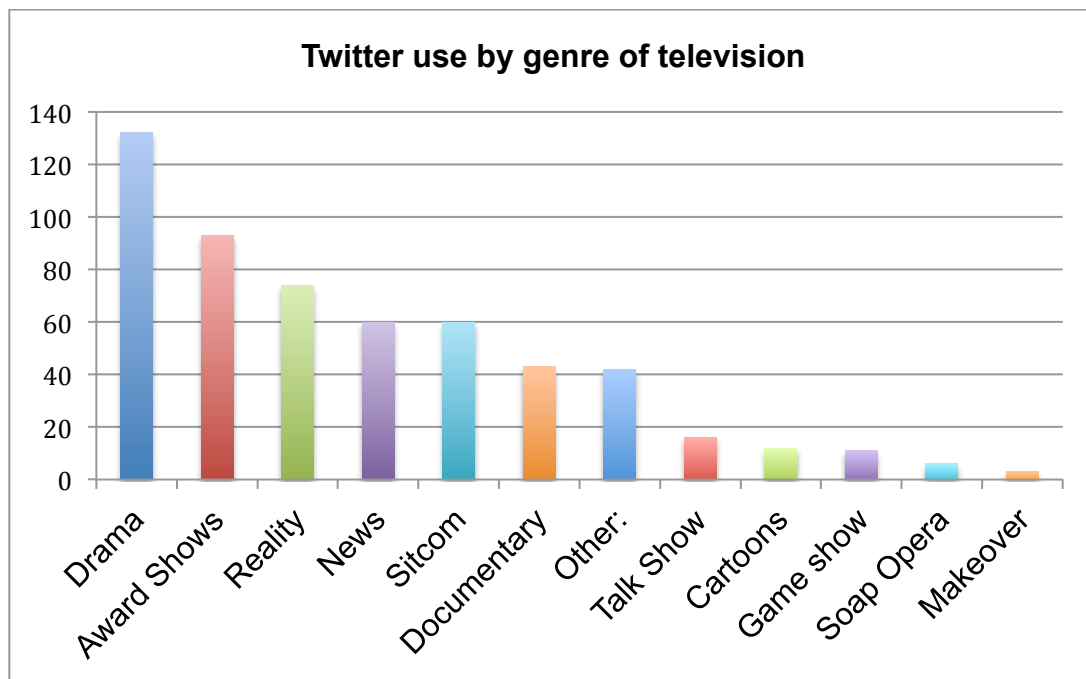
Figure 5
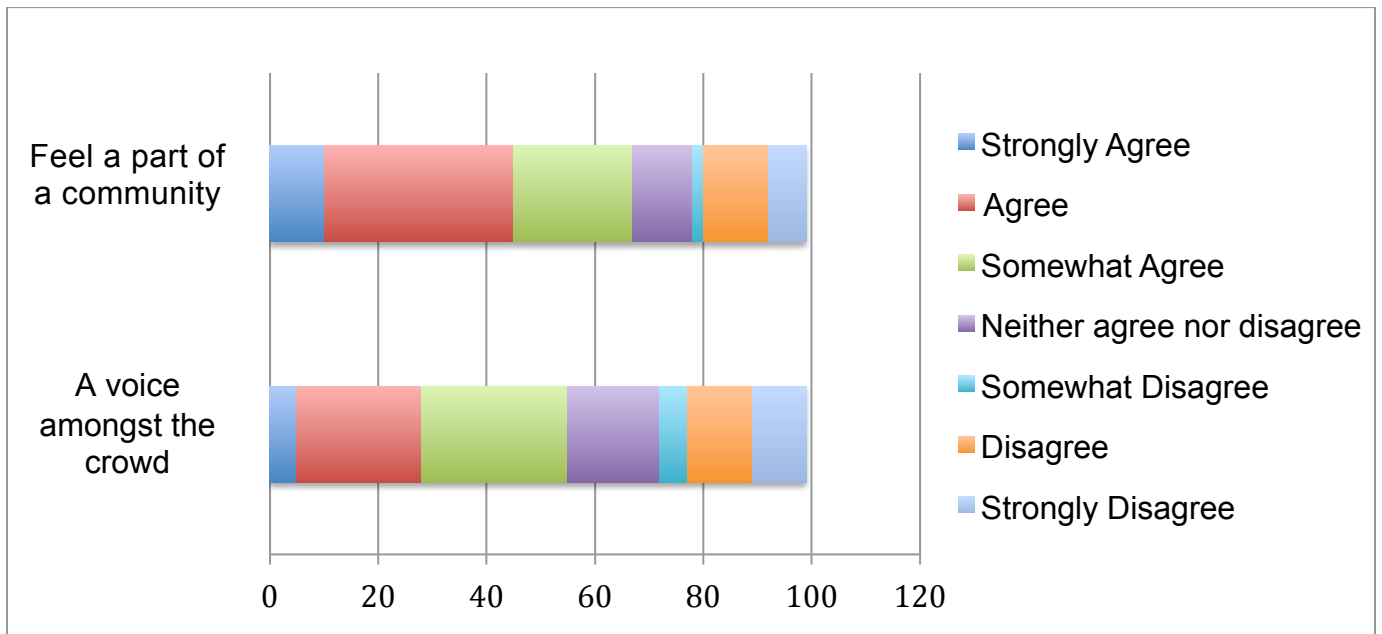
Other findings

When asked specifically about which programs they tweeted during, respondents noted the following genres: Drama (n= 132), Award Shows (n = 93), Reality (n = 74), News (n = 60), Sitcom (n = 60) and Documentaries (n = 43). *See Figure 6.*

Figure 6

When asked about how important having a Twitter presence was for a television program 48 percent of respondents (n = 36) ranked its importance between 0 – 4. Alternatively, 58 percent (n = 98) ranked Twitter presence within the range of 5 – 10. The median ranking of Twitter's importance by respondents is 7; while the mean was 6.42. *See Table 1.*

Participants were also asked if reading tweets from others watching the same television program made the viewing experience more enjoyable and replied Strongly Agree 15 percent (n = 29), Agree 31 percent (n = 61), Somewhat Agree 30 percent (n = 59), Neither agree nor disagree 20 percent (n = 10), Somewhat disagree 4 percent (n = 7), Disagree 7 percent (n = 14), and Strongly Disagree 3 percent (n = 5).

Table 1

How important do you think it is for a TV program to have a presence on Twitter?

(Mean, Media, Mode, and Variance)

N	Valid	440	440	170
	Missing	0	0	270
Mean				6.42
Median				7
Mode				10
Variance				8.221

Upon conducting a correlation analysis, there appears to be a significant relationship between liking hashtags promoted during TV programs and three other variables, including: feelings of community, feeling engaged in a TV program, and having a voice amongst the crowd. In relation to liking hashtags, feelings of community displayed a positive correlation of .733 (n= 195), feeling engaged in a TV program revealed a positive correlation of .616 (n = 193), and having a voice amongst the crowd displayed a positive correlation of .637 (n = 195).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to understand why people tweet about TV programs. The study also aimed to provide insight into the Twitter habits of television viewers. Additionally, the insight from this study can be used to create social media strategies for TV programs. Furthermore, the study provides a framework on how to use Twitter to influence a TV program's reception and increase advertising revenue. Also, the knowledge obtained from his study can educate advertisers on the importance of second screening. As discussed, second screening with Twitter can create interest in the products featured throughout a television program. The interest garnered from featuring an advertiser's product during a television program impact sales.

As Horton and Wohl study's suggested, audiences develop close bonds called parasocial relationships, which are formed with media characters (as cited by Clarke, 2016). Parasocial relationships theory helped to create a series of variables that were tested in this study. Participants in this study largely agreed that they were physically attracted to characters from their favorite programs. Also, participants responded that they aspired to be like these characters and related to them. The participants who related to and aspired to be like their favorite media characters said that they followed them on Twitter. Furthermore, they were aware that actors, producers, and network representatives tweeted while their favorite program was airing. The findings of this study highlight the importance of physical attraction, accessibility, and the aspirational nature of media characters, which supports the significance of parasocial relationships to television. More people agreed with the statements of relating to and aspiring to be

like their favorite characters. This characterizes the bonds developed through parasocial relationships. These bonds can have an enormous impact on a television network's revenue. If an increased number of people have attraction, aspirational, and accessible feelings towards media characters this could impact ratings. If ratings are increased then, television networks can charge a premium for advertising inventory. Also, advertisers will want to have their products featured within programming. These relationships showcase how media characters influence the actions and the behaviors of television audiences. Furthermore, these relationships establish Twitter's importance to television.

Affective disposition takes place when the actions of media characters are met with moral judgments and this can impact their overall enjoyment of the program (Ji and Raney, 2015). Affective disposition supported the development of variables that were tested in this study. Over 60 percent of participants noted that they were equally likely to tweet when something they liked or disliked happened in the story of their favorite program. Although the findings don't reference the enjoyment, they seek to answer the research question, which is to understand why individuals tweet about television programs. The findings suggest that agreements and disagreements about the actions of media characters have a direct impact on whether someone tweets about a television program. Because individuals tweet about programs they like and dislike, it is of particular importance for television networks to have a Twitter presence and gauge a program's reception. Too many disagreements about what is occurring in a television program could create dissonance, which could impact whether someone watches the

television program. If ratings decline, then advertisers will not be pleased. Unhappy advertisers could negatively impact revenue for television networks.

Lastly, the variables that involved uses and gratifications theory sought to provide additional reasons why individuals tweet about TV programs. The uses and gratifications framework seeks to understand why people seek out particular media to satisfy needs. Participants were asked if Twitter helped them keep up with the story, feel like they had a voice amongst the crowd, and if it made them feel a part of a community. Among the factors explored here, the primary motivators for Twitter use while watching television were the desire to feel a part of a community and having a voice amongst the crowd. Comparatively, participants did not feel that Twitter helped them keep up with the story of their favorite TV program. These findings suggest that feelings of community support Twitter usage while watching television. Resultantly, this is critical for television networks because they can create a sense of community among viewers with the help of Twitter.

Concerning the type of television program, the results concluded that drama, award shows, and reality television were the top genres for Twitter use among respondents. For additional insight, participants were asked about their feelings regarding how important Twitter is to a TV program, and if reading tweets from others watching made the viewing experience more enjoyable. Overall, participants said that having a Twitter presence was important and reading tweets helped enjoy the program. These findings underscore how important it is for network executives to maintain a Twitter presence for their television programs. Viewers like to read tweets and feel that Twitter is important to the television viewing experience.

It appears that people who feel positive about tweeting about a show also like hashtags. More specifically, results of the correlational analysis found that the more respondents liked hashtags associated with television programs, the more likely they are to tweet because they feel part of a community, feel engaged in a television program and feel like they have a voice amongst the crowd. Although the correlations do not show causality, it highlights the significant relationship that audiences have with hashtags. These relationships should be a point of consideration when developing promotional strategies and analyzing the effectiveness of a Twitter campaign associated with a television program. Based on the results of this study, developing a community could influence the success of a TV program. *Scandal* built a large community with the help of Twitter and is currently rounding out its Season 5. The community remains very active, and the show maintains strong ratings. These findings coupled with the results of this study showcases how important it is for network executives and advertisers to understand the relationship between Twitter and television viewers. The utilization of Twitter could have a positive impact on the success of TV programs, so it should be a point of consideration for network executives and advertisers.

One of the limitations of the study is the convenience sample. The convenience sample consists of students, Twitter followers, and people from LinkedIn Groups. Recruiting through social media could likely have created biases in the responses. Additionally, this method could have influenced people outside of the targeted group to respond. Almost 40 percent of survey respondents were 43 or older. The age of respondents could be addressed in a future study by using a method of recruiting more in line with the targeted age range of 18 to 42. Also, the survey doesn't provide in-depth

responses that could have been captured via interviews. Furthermore, the study doesn't specify a major difference between live and time-shifted television. As streaming and DVR usage has become a mainstay, it is important to understand how the method of viewing television shows relates to social media behavior. For example, if a television show is generating higher tweets three days after it aired on live television that could be a point of consideration. This study provides motivations of Twitter use with the help of the survey. Unfortunately, the study does not contain data from Twitter, which makes it difficult to understand when people tweeted. Data from Twitter paired with a survey could have provided additional insight. In a day and age where people don't watch a lot of live television, knowing when respondents tweeted about a program would have provided useful information that could have been further analyzed in conjunction with the survey.

Conclusion

The convergence of new media and old media has changed the way viewers engage with television. Social Media has become so engrained into the day-to-day activities of individuals, that it's vital for network executives and advertisers to understand its impact on television. This study focused on Twitter use in relation to television programs. Twitter has become virtually synonymous with television. As a result, network executives and advertisers have taken note and integrated strategies to engage viewers via Twitter. This form of engagement seeks to shape the behaviors and attitudes of viewers. Also, this form of engagement aims to build partnerships with advertisers who promote their products during television programs.

The goals of this study were to investigate reasons why viewers use Twitter in relation to TV programs and outline the impact it has made on television. Parasocial relationships, affective disposition, and uses and gratification theories provided insight to develop testable variables within the online survey. The results of the survey found that relationships with characters, desire to connect with a community, and judgments of the story can influences viewers to tweet while watching television. This provides insight to network executives seeking to promote television programs. Comparatively, advertisers can use this information when determining which programs to feature products in and link their efforts appropriately. These findings can influence profits for both network executives and advertisers.

Additionally, the study found that drama, award shows, and reality television were the top genres for Twitter use according to participants. This is relative to the study and may be a consideration for future research. Future research on genres of television could provide additional insight on which programming is best suited for Twitter use. This is especially important because broadcasters are seeking to draw viewers to live programming. Also, a future study could provide a qualitative method such as interviews to gain in-depth insight into understating why people tweet about television programs, and how second screening impacts viewership. The review of literature paired with the survey provided context and prospective reasons why people use Twitter in relation to a television program. Furthermore, the study supported the development of the following recommendations:

- Cross-promote television programming during the following genres of television: drama, award shows, and reality television, which provided the highest recollections of Twitter use.
- Have focus groups weigh in on how attractive, relatable, and aspirational characters are as this could influence the relationship viewers have with them.
- Conduct a mixed methods study featuring a survey and Twitter data, to gain a more comprehensive perspective on why and when people Tweet about TV programs.
- Use Twitter hashtags to influence television viewers to engage with television programs.

Despite the limitations, this study provided a thorough analysis of second screening. The review provided a framework for the application of the online survey. The results of the online survey provided insight into why people tweet about TV programs. Overall, second screening has changed the television viewing experience. As shown throughout this study, networks have expanded the reach of television programs and their characters. It is up to network executives to develop new ways to keep viewers engaged into programming, and Twitter may just be the tipping point.

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Appendix A

Survey
You are being asked to participate in a research study conducted by American University. The purpose of this study is to understand the influence television has on social media behavior, more specifically Twitter.

Research Procedures:

Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign your consent by checking the box below. This study consists of a *survey* that will be administered to participants online. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to your opinion and behavior.

Time Required:

Participation in this study will require approximately 10-15 minutes of your time.

Confidentiality:

The results of this research will be used to prepare a report on what influences someone to use Twitter in relation to a television program. The data captured from this survey will remain anonymous and respondents' names or personal identifiable information will not appear in the report. The researcher retains the right to use and publish non-identifiable data. All data will be stored securely and will not be shared with any third parties outside of the researcher.

Participation & Withdrawal:

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any individual question without consequences.

Questions About the Study:

If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study or after its completion, please contact: Bradley Cannon (bradley.cannon@student.american.edu)

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Giving of Consent

By checking the box below, I agree I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of me as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. I certify that I am at least 18 years of age.

- ○ Please click here to agree

S1 How old were you at your last birthday?

S2 What is your gender?
○ Male
○ Female
○ Prefer not to say
○ Other:

S3 How many hours a week do you watch live broadcast television? (Do not include online streaming or DVR use in this answer)
○ 0 - 3
○ 4 - 6
○ 7 - 9
○ 10 +

S4 How many hours a week do you spending streaming television shows? (Include Netflix, Hulu, and other online streaming platforms)
○ 0 - 3
○ 4 - 6
○ 7 - 9
○ 10 +

S5 Do you have an active Twitter account? [active - logged in and posted tweets within the last month]

❍ Yes
❍ No

S6 Have you ever Tweeted about a television show?

❍ Yes
❍ No

If No Is Selected, Then Skip To End of Survey

Q1 If you Tweet about TV shows, when do you tend to do it?

❍ Before shows
❍ During shows
❍ After Shows
❍ All of the above

Q2 Which device do you use most frequently?

❍ Smartphone
❍ Tablet
❍ Laptop
❍ Desktop
❍ Other: _____

Q3 Think about the last program you watched. Which network were you watching when you last tweeted about a television program?

❍ ABC
❍ CBS
❍ The CW
❍ NBC
❍ FOX
❍ I can't remember
❍ Other: _____

Q4 Which type of programs have you tweeted during? (Check all that apply)
- ❑ Drama
- ❑ Sitcom
- ❑ Award Shows
- ❑ Documentary
- ❑ Soap Opera
- ❑ Cartoons
- ❑ Makeover
- ❑ Reality
- ❑ Talk Show
- ❑ News
- ❑ Game show
- ❑ Other: _____

Q5 Which of the below television program is your favorite?
- ○ Real Housewives of Beverly Hills (Bravo)
- ○ Real Housewives of Atlanta (Bravo)
- ○ Real Housewives of Potomac (Bravo)
- ○ Mom (CBS)
- ○ Scandal (ABC)
- ○ WWE Smackdown (USA)
- ○ Quantico (ABC)
- ○ How To Get Away With Murder (ABC)
- ○ How I Met Your Mother (CBS)
- ○ Pretty Little Liars (Freeform formerly ABC Family)
- ○ Big Bang Theory (CBS)
- ○ Grey's Anatomy (ABC)
- ○ American Crime (ABC)
- ○ The Voice (NBC)
- ○ American Idol (Fox)
- ○ The Haves and The Have Nots (OWN)
- ○ Other _____

To answer the following questions, think about your favorite television show and whether you agree or disagree with the following statements:

P4 While I watch my favorite television show, I tweet about it.
- ○ Always
- ○ Most of the time
- ○ About half the time
- ○ Sometimes
- ○ Never

P1 I relate to my favorite character.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Somewhat disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

P2 I am physically attracted to one of more of the main characters.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Somewhat disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

P3 I aspire to be more like my favorite character.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Somewhat disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

P5 I follow the actors from my favorite television program on Twitter.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Somewhat disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

P6 I tweet the actors from my favorite television program while watching television.
- ○ Always
- ○ Most of the time
- ○ About half the time
- ○ Sometimes
- ○ Never

U1 Actors, producers, and network representatives live tweet while the program is airing.
- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I don't know

U2 Using Twitter while watching television helps me keep up with the story.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Somewhat disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

D1 When something happens in the story that I like, I tweet about it.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Somewhat disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

D2 When something happens in the story that I dislike, I tweet about it.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Somewhat disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

U3 Reading tweets from others who watch the television program makes the viewing experience more enjoyable.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Somewhat disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

Q6 I like to use Twitter while watching a television program when it can be associated with a specific hashtag. (For example: #Gladiators)
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Somewhat disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

U4 Using Twitter while watching the television show makes me feel like I'm a part of a community.
- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Somewhat agree
- ○ Neither agree nor disagree
- ○ Somewhat disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly disagree

U5 Using Twitter while watching television helps me feel like I have a voice amongst the crowd.
○ Strongly Agree
○ Agree
○ Somewhat agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Somewhat disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

U6 Using Twitter while watching the television show makes me feel engaged in the program.
○ Strongly Agree
○ Agree
○ Somewhat agree
○ Neither agree nor disagree
○ Somewhat disagree
○ Disagree
○ Strongly disagree

Q7 How important do you think it is for a television show to have a presence on Twitter?
(1 Not Important – 10 Very Important)
○ 0
○ 1
○ 2
○ 3
○ 4
○ 5
○ 6
○ 7
○ 8
○ 9
○ 10