An Investigation of the Social Identification Process in Reality Television

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

The channels used for social interaction and social influence are increasing and diversifying rapidly. Further, the digital age has spurred a longing for realism, and a sense of contact (Fetveit, 1999). New channels often portray virtual social groups (Bagozzi, Dholakia, & Pearo, 2007), and virtual identities (Altheide, 2000) with which users can identify. As many of these new channels are commercially based, the influence of such channels has important implications for marketing research and understanding of consumer behaviour. There has considerable recent research on how social media creates social groups through social identification. There has also been a comparable amount of research investigating how television facilitates identification. However, the academic focus in the latter has been more on one-to-one identification, and less on how television may facilitate social identification. This is despite theorists' proposals and modelling that have justified social identification as a purpose for television viewing. Such justification is taken from *Uses and Gratifications* theory that affirms audiences use media to satisfy psychological and social needs.

Social Identity Theory posits that group members will adopt attitudes and behaviour through social comparison. The *MasterChef* brand has been credited with changing the attitudes and behaviour of consumers (its audience). Therefore, this thesis investigated if the success of the most popular show on Australian television may be credited, in part, to social identification. Such behaviour has previously been attributed to both their context-specific social identity, and the individual's stable identity attributes. Further, individuals will judge themselves and other group members on common and significant identity attributes. Therefore, this thesis explored which significant attributes in the viewers and contestants of *MasterChef Australia* may facilitate the social identification process leading to changes in consumer attitudes and behaviour. The objectives of this study were investigated using a large-scale quantitative online questionnaire surveying *MasterChef Australia 2010* viewers.

Findings indicate that consumers of the *MasterChef Australia* brand do indeed social identify with contestants, and *Identity*, *Authenticity*, and *Involvement* may contribute to this process. As the first study of consumers of the MasterChef brand, an important conceptual contribution to consumer behaviour is made. Further conceptual contributions are made by the identification and definition of an additional construct in the social identification process,

and by proposing additional theoretical linkages. Empirical contributions are made through measurement of the antecedents and consequences of consequences of viewer-television brand identification. Methodological contributions are made development of Structural Equation Model and testing of The Phantom Model approach.

DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other institution and affirms that to the best of my knowledge this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signed:

ANGELA HIGGINS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Background

Researchers have understood that the dynamics between the areas of media, marketing and society have the potential for better understanding how media consumerism (use) affects society's attitudes towards the mediums, particular shows and personalities, as well as viewing behaviour, and subsequent consumer behaviour including use of marketed products (e.g. Arterburn, 2006; Heere et al., 2011; Shrum, 1999b). For example, a group of friends may watch a cookery-themed Reality Television show as a group (rather than read a cookery book, individually), discuss the dishes prepared, then purchase the consumer products used (and probably advertised in the show) to prepare the dish, further discuss this with friends, become more involved with the show and reinforce this with viewing of subsequent episodes of the show. In the meantime, viewing figures for the show may be released indicating the show to be highly popular with the general population and lead the consumer (viewer) to feel a sense of belonging and membership of a group with common interests. Future research of such motives and effects is relevant to the disciplines of *Communications, Consumer Behaviour, Consumer Psychology* and *Brand Management* as media success often depends heavily on effective marketing strategies (including relationship marketing) to manage their brands. For example, production companies usually deploy PR companies to increase tabloid news coverage (Biressi & Nunn, 2005).

The Theoretical Relationship between Branding Television, Social Identity Theory, and Consumer Behaviour
It is not the marketing of the MasterChef brand that is being investigated in this study but the consumers' behaviour (as viewers) and the consumption of the product/brand that is the MasterChef programme. However, as (Shrum, 1999a) argued in his article "*Television and persuasion: Effects of the programs between the ads*", television consumption should be researched not only from a social psychology perspective but also marketing and consumer behaviour perspectives. Therefore, as this study takes such a multi-disciplinary approach, it is

useful to discuss the study from the perspective of Brand Theory and how Social Identity Theory facilitates Consumer Behaviour.

As Shrum (1999a) pointed out, marketers have spent millions on product placements in films and televisions programmes (Karrh, 1995) because they believe in the ability to change attitudes and behaviours through such marketing strategies. In 1995, Americans consumed an average of four hours per day of television viewing (Nielsen, 1995): making it arguably the most consumed product in the U.S. (Shrum, Wyer, & O'Guinn, 1998). In 2012, Nielsen also found that Australians watch an average three hours of television per day (Nielsen, 2012). Such findings show television viewing to remarkably consistent over time, and globally attractive as a consumer product. Interestingly, the latter report also showed that playback viewing within seven days of broadcast accounted for less than seven per cent of viewing. This may suggest that despite the increased of availability of 'television on demand', there may be some programmes that choose to view live. Despite this, marketing and consumer researchers have historically given scant attention to television programme content itself rather than how it relates to advertising (Shrum, 1999a).

Television can be seen as a branding hierarchy; broadcasting network (corporation level), channel (Strategic Business Unit level), and programme (product/service level) (Reed, 2002b). Brand equity is built and managed at each of these levels. *Fox* broadcasting network (corporation level) has been considered as the first of such television broadcasters to create a brand identity in the mind of the consumer; "Its youthful, risky, irreverent style of program content set the stage for the industry's move to brand marketing" (McDowell & Batten, 2005, p. 34). Similarly, although a programme (product/service level) may have its own brand identity, it may be marketed (or co-marketed) within one or more television channels (Strategic Business Unit level), or be unique to one particular channel. This can be likened to branded products in supermarkets or department stores. For example, Woolworths supermarkets may have marketing strategies to build brand awareness of the Woolworth brand as a supermarket (e.g. an alternative to Coles), the Woolworth own brand products (e.g. Woolworth Select), and other branded products that they stock (e.g. Kraft, Nescafe, Colgate). However, the latter branded products may also be marketed by competitors (e.g. Coles). Similarly, television broadcasting networks (e.g. Network Ten) may market a channel (e.g.

Channel 10), their own programmes (e.g. Ten News), or other branded programmes (e.g. Disney movies, The Simpsons).

Broadcasting networks may also make their own version of branded programmes under a licence agreement (e.g. MasterChef). Todreas (1999) argues that in programme production, 'Any unique identity usually is associated with the stars or theme of the program and not the producer' (1999, p. 175). This success can also be exploited by the owner of the rights to the brand (e.g. MasterChef). However, in *Tele-Branding in TVIII* (2007), Johnson uses the example of a television show '*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*' to demonstrate that the unique brand identity associated with a television programme and resultant brand equity can be exploited by the owner of the rights to the programme across a range of different media. One of the main ways in which television brands are made visible to the viewer and the values of the brand communicated is through the persistent use of logos and idents (Lury, 2004). MasterChef can provide similar brand equity to both the producers and the owners. This is comparable to McDonalds selling Coca-Cola under license.

Although the above discussion demonstrates that television programmes such as MasterChef are branded products of a branded hierarchy, the value that the consumer derives from such branded products can be seen as a different behavioural process from that of more traditional consumer goods. Three aspects considered here are the experience, the nature of the situation and the communal approach.

Lury (2004) argues in "*Brands: the logos of the global economy*", an account of the marketers activities does not sufficiently describe the brand. Lury further argues that brand activity may measure all constituencies that might engage with the brand (marketers, producers, consumers) but still does not acknowledge the complex or indeterminate objects, such as television programmes. Similarly, in *Branding Television*, Johnson (2012) explains that branding within the more traditional consumer goods markets evolved as brand management of the interface between producer, product, and consumer. However, the television channel aggregates the consumer experience of the television programme; enriching the aforementioned interface (Johnson, 2012). Therefore, the value the consumer derives from television viewing is the attitudes created through the experience and

"developing television programmes as brands is concerned with extending and multiplying these experiences' (Johnson, 2012, p. 142).

Understanding how the viewer experience of television content provides a theoretical contribution to consumer behaviour as " its effect provides information on how persuasion may take place in naturally occurring situations." (Shrum, 1999a). The advantage of this 'natural situation' is also explained by the influential role of television characters as referent others (Newton & Buck, 1985). Such an influence makes it important for consumer researchers to measure the extent to which consumers develop relationships with the characters in TV programs and to study how those relationships affect the above mentioned consumers' experiences (Russell, Norman, & Heckler, 2004) . As in traditional consumer-brand relationships, consumer-television program relationships will develop over time with the potential to create emotions of commitment, intimacy, and affective attachments with the program (Fournier, 1998). These behavioural modelling effects (Nord & Paul, 1980) can be particularly powerful because the dramatic nature of TV programming can elicit emotions of feeling and verisimilitude rather than the counter-argumentation attached to advertising (Deighton, Romer, & McQueen, 1989). Therefore, viewers are interested in forms of consumption portrayed in the programme. Such influence particularly worthy of note when real brands are placed in the television programme to enhance the characters' realism (Russell, et al., 2004) or attitudes and behaviours are portrayed that may influence the viewer.

This study posits that the attitudes (towards branded programmes) that are formed through the above experience of television viewing can be also measured from a communal approach, comparable to that of branded communities, as discussed below.

In order to foster brand-consumer relationships, researchers have suggested a communal identity approach to consumption (Cova & Pace, 2006). Such communal identification with brands has been shown in research of brand communities and consumer groups. Heere et al (2011) measured the relationship between different group identities and media consumption, merchandise purchasing and event attendance. Their research confirmed the advantage of the communal perspective; "In those situations where a large portion of the consumers possess a similar membership to another community, managers can take advantage of this associated community and emphasize (or develop) their relationship with the associated community" by

obtaining a more detailed picture on how consumers identify with their brand community (Heere, et al., 2011, p. 408). The notion that brands could serve as a point of reference for a community identity has recently received considerable attention from marketing researchers (McAlexander, Schouten, & Koenig, 2002; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001; Muniz & Schau, 2005; Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). In addition, identification with various social referents (e.g., organizations, universities, sports teams, brands, colleagues, work groups) and its impact on the behaviour of consumers, employees, and even employees of trade partners have been examined , in the marketing literature (e.g. Bhattacharya, Rao, & Glynn, 1995; Bhattacharya & Sen, 2003; Drumwright, 1996; Laverie & Arnett, 2000). Resultant behaviours have been shown as in examples of membership intention, recommendation, and active participation. (Doohwang, Hyuk Soo, & Jung Kyu, 2011). It is the purpose of this study to ascertain if a form of communal identification (SIT) with the brand that is the MasterChef programme can be demonstrated amongst the community that is MasterChef viewers.

One such communal approach is the influence of Social Identity on consumer behaviour and this is further discussed below.

The influential role of social identities in consumer behaviour and response to marketing strategies is increasingly recognized in marketing and consumer research (Deshpande & Stayman, 1994; Forehand & Deshpandé, 2001; Forehand, Deshpandé, & Reed, 2002; Reed, 2002a; Williams, Petrosky, Hernandez, & Page, 2011). A primary function of branding is relationship marketing between the consumer and producer by creating and portraying "a close 'fit' between the consumer's own physical and psychological needs and the brand's functional attributes and symbolic values" (Hankinson & Cowking, 1993, p. 10). Social Identity Theory is a field of search that measures this fit through identification.

Consumers have a natural attraction to brands that are congruent with their self-schema and social identities (Kleine, Kleine, & Kernan, 1993; Meyers-Levy, 1988; Reed A, 2004). Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan (1993) affirm that Social Identity Theory provides an explanation for the social consumption of brands and products (such as television shows) with the importance of an social identity being positively related to the attraction to the associated brand or product. This has also been shown across numerous correlational studies where consumers with higher levels of ethnic identification and lower levels of acculturation have shown higher consumption of culture-specific products/ services (Chattaraman, Lennon, & Rudd, 2010; Donthu & Cherian, 1994; Forney & Rabolt, 1985; Kim & Arthur, 2003; Xu, Shim, Lotz, &

Almeida, 2004). Social identity also provides an opportunity for self-definition, and the portrayal of such definition to significant others (Underwood, Bond, & Baer, 2001). Further, Grewal, Mehta, and Kardes (2000) state that products (or brands) performing a social-identity attitude function mediate the individual and social relationships and enable consumers to fit into their chosen social contexts. As a result, when individuals identify with such brands, they develop a psychological relationship with these brands, show favouritism, and instinctively work to the benefit of these brands (e.g. Kuenzel & Vaux Halliday, 2008; Underwood, et al., 2001).

The above multi-disciplinary discussion of the literature pertaining to branding, television and consumer behaviour demonstrates the relevance of Social Identity Theory in explaining the influence of television programmes on the viewers' behaviour. Therefore, this study investigates the role of social identification as an explanation of how MasterChef viewers behave towards the brand, and change their attitudes and behaviour.

Reality Television: An Overview

During 2009, 13 new Reality Television (RTV) shows were launched on the major Australian Television networks. This was more than any other programme genre and their success is global (Dillon & Goldstein, 1984). Whilst the debate on how this genre should be defined continues, so does the academic research surrounding the popularity of the genre. Sometimes referred to in the U.S. as *water cooler TV* (Biressi & Nunn, 2005) and *fly-on-the wall TV*, their heritage is well established in documentaries, variety shows, light entertainment, game shows, gardening, Do-it-Yourself and cookery shows, but it is only since around 2000 that this type of media has been classified as Reality Television shows and drawn the attention of academics (Murray & Ouellette, 2009). Whilst some analysts have seen this type of media as empowerment (Dauncey, 1996), others see it as a commodification of the consumers (audience) who not only buy the branded products but become the reality show product under surveillance themselves (Andrejevic, 2002; Kilborn, 1994; Wong, 2001). However, measuring the success of lifestyle television, whether critically or commercially has proven unpredictable and elusive (Corner, 2004) and academia has been slow to recognise the phenomenon. Bonner (2003) implies that this may be because its portrayal of *ordinariness* is actually seen as just too ordinary.

What does seem to define this new genre is the extent and potential for audience participation, and subsequent changes in consumer behaviour. *BBC* reports have claimed that more UK 18-34 year olds voted on *Big Brother* than the General Election during 2005 (Mast, 2007). As well as voting, the increase in popularity of other activities may be attributed to reality shows, such as boot camp participation (*Survivor, The Biggest Loser*), online and speed dating (*The Dating Game, The Bachelor, Farmer Wants a Wife)* singing lessons (*Idol* series), dancing lessons (*So You Think You Can Dance, Dancing with the Stars*), cooking schools (*MasterChef, My Kitchen Rules, Ramsay's Nightmares, Hell's Kitchen*) and an expansive range of related consumer products, as well as branded websites, books, magazines, and road shows. *The Biggest Loser* brand has a full range of diet-related products available in supermarkets which was judged as *number 3 best brand* in 2008 (Atkinson, 2008), as well as a website that acts as an online slimming club and *MasterChef* (a cooking-themed reality show) has an online chat-rooms and recipe book to accompany the series. Such participation, reciprocal activity and reinforcement of the consumers' (viewers') attitudes and behaviours can only further develop involvement and identification with the shows through vicarious learning as "reality TV is aimed at a certain kind of recognition of the self" (Turner, 2006, p. 154).

Despite the popularity (or maybe because of it), critics say Reality Television is "a mongrel genre that lets us pass judgement while indulging in some safe, Disneyfied voyeurism" (Oh & Johnson, 2001). In the same year, Germaine Greer sensationally declared that "reality TV is not the end of civilisation as we know it: it is civilisation as we know it. It is popular culture at its most popular, soap opera come to life" (Greer, 2001, p. 47). Such an insight seems to have been predictive as there is little recent criticism of the genre, as the genre increases in popularity and becomes part of consumer culture development.

Branding Reality Television: A Marketing Perspective

Many critics of Reality Television during its early development years predicted its demise (Murray & Ouellette, 2009). Rather than its predicted demise, Reality Television became one of the biggest development of any television genre, consideration needs to be given to what marketing strategies were used to create such a success. As well as viewing figures, high profits are made for the networks. In the U.S., *Forbes* ranked *American Idol* as the most profitable with a three series profit of $260million (Bowrey, 2011) (Jenkins, 2006). Profit

comes from *media convergence, participatory culture* and *collective intelligence* (Jenkins, 2006). Media convergence is collaboration between sponsors and content providers to create a total entertainment package for the consumer by wholesale unbundling. Participatory culture is created by repeated exposure and *touch points* of brand extensions for the consumer. As the main sponsor of *American Idol, Coca-Cola* maximise this marketing strategy by changing the traditional waiting room for contestants from the *green room* to the *red room*, filming the judges consuming *Coca-Cola*, framing the official *American Idol* website with their banners and logos, promoting winning tickets to the grand final of the show, and sending contestants to NASCAR (National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing) events (which they also sponsor), and referred to as *advertainment* by Deery (2004). The *Coca-Cola* president spoke of this move away from broadcasting as an *anchor medium* to an *experience-based, access-driven* marketing strategy to create an emotional appeal to an emerging generation of consumers (Jenkins, 2006). Even with just this one example, the potential for media convergence is evident. Participatory culture and collective intelligence are created by voting systems, websites and online communities, product purchases, and consumer behavioural changes. The CEO Worldwide of *Saatchi and Saatchi* wrote of *Lovemarks* as much more powerful than *traditional brands* as these marketing strategies no longer create just intellectual property but 'emotional capital' (Roberts & Lafley, 2004). Jenkins (2006, p. 62) also explains that "*affective economics* represents an attempt to catch up with work in cultural studies over the last several decades" as an attempt by marketing theorists to catch up with cultural theorist, but where the latter considers the fan's desires, the former now considers how these desires affect consumer purchases. With such a potential for brand diversity and product extension strategies from Reality Television shows, it is apparent that marketers will need evidence of how and why the consumer reacts to Reality Television to continue developing successful marketing and commercial strategies.

Marketing and commercial strategies of Reality Television have been successful because of their ability to also create celebrities through relationship marketing. The purpose of reality shows is not only to gain audiences but to perpetuate and maintain the consumer relationship (Fairchild, 2007) with the brand and product. As product endorsers, past contestants are willing, cheaper and less demanding but can still draw the same media attention to products as *mainstream celebrities* (Atkinson, 2003). They are seen as valuable endorsers because their ordinariness makes them more believable and consumers are able to identify with them,

even after '*losing*' in a reality show (Malefyt, 2001). Apart from product endorsements, they can be used in the high turnover industry of celebrity media, including print and broadcast media. This has been referred to as *human branding* (Parmentier, 2009), *branding of the self* (Baker, 2001), *celebrity-as-commodity* (West, 2008), *personal branding* (Montoya & Vandehey, 2002), *celebrity branding* (Osborne, 2008), and *commodification of the celebrity* (Bell, 2009). Many of these analysts see the celebrity as being created, controlled, and owned by the mass media and spectators - rarely by the celebrity. Reality Television also places a big emphasis on auditions where celebrities are". Further, the whole concept is a *before and after*, revealing layers to keep spectators engaged (Holmes & Jermyn, 2004) and creating material for celebrity media speculation of their public and private lives.

A Reality Television example

One of the best examples of the new trend in Reality Television marketing successes   is the *MasterChef* brand. It is a (cooking) contest where ordinary people are seen to become extraordinary. A British version has been produced for a number of years on the BBC. In 2009, an Australian version was launched (by the producers of *The Biggest Loser*) and the final became the most watched non-sport event in Australian Television history. With an audience over 3.7 million, it is only 3rd behind an Australian Open final featuring Australian tennis player, Lleyton Hewitt, and an Australian World Cup rugby final (Fed, 2009b). A celebrity version quickly followed and in 2010 a second series of the original version was to be broadcast, as well as a *Junior MasterChef* version and a New Zealand version. The *MasterChef* show is now produced in 20 countries, aired in more than 200, and has revenue over $270 million generated from brand merchandising; with plans to produce in China in 2012 (Clarke, 2012).

It is interesting to note that an increasingly obese society (Cameron et al., 2003) may be able to relate to *The Biggest Loser*, but the *MasterChef* brand seems to be in contrast to a decline in food preparation at home (Smith, Ng, & Popkin, 2013), in a society where the family unit is now smaller (Jones, 2007) and meal preparation and consumption increasingly involves individual ready meals (Charles, 2008). Similarly, its marketing success is in contrast to the cessation of *Big Brother* broadcasting and decline in audiences for *Australian Idol (*Bulbeck, 2007). Is *MasterChef* the new sport? Some analysts have indeed suggested that cooking is

now seen as a consumer pastime and entertainment rather than an everyday household task (Lang & Caraher, 2001).

The format has moved away from the voyeuristic approach and toward seeing ordinary people achieve self-development. It has no voice over; therefore, could be perceived as having less producer manipulation and being more realistic. Previous contestants in the show say it is about being honest and *true to yourself*, keeping things simple, and not being strategic. However, the contestants are also aware of the publicity and are perplexed that "everybody is interested in everything I do" (Fed, 2009a, p. 32). Interestingly, the celebrity version was not as successful as the *ordinary* version, suggesting that its success, again, may lie in its portrayal of the ordinary and how the viewer identifies with them. Whatever the reasons, the trend seems set to continue as similar new reality style cooking contests are currently being broadcast and produced.

As well as the profitable ratings, *MasterChef Australia* is also attracting advertisers for the *Channel 10* network and have reportedly doubled the price of sponsoring the show (currently done by Coles) to $3million (Chessell, 2009). There are also other product extensions including a *MasterChef* magazine launched in 2010. Referring to MasterChef, *NewsMags* chief executive Sandra Hook said "The TV show is a phenomenon and it's rare you get a chance to capitalise on such a successful brand" and sees this as a 10 or 20 year proposition (Jackson, 2009a, p. 33). In addition to this, first series' contestants have become endorsers of numerous products and several *failed* contestants now host their own cooking shows. The celebrity media industry also continues to report on the private lives of past contestants, so perpetuating their *celebrity statuses*.

Having launched only two series' with *ordinary contestants*, the marketing and commercial strategies of *MasterChef Australia* have: attracted record-breaking viewing figures (Sinclair, 2011), launched other formats, produced product extensions, and created celebrities.

Television has been considered as a business where customers are given what they want or need, at a price they want, and are able build a relationship of trust and reliability to maintain a profitable business relationship (Murray & Ouellette, 2009). Reality television has been successful at marketing and managing such relationships. Understanding these relationships can further our understanding of consumer behaviour and successful marketing strategies.

Elements of consumer (viewer) involvement in Reality Television shows has been researched and, to some extent, the motives for watching the shows. A limitation of previous research is the lack of focus on how identity of the involved parties (consumer [viewer] and contestant) is related to involvement with the television show brand. A further limitation of this research is that these motives are usually limited to use of the show during the viewing period. There appears to be little research investigating consequential uses. In other words, if the viewer becomes involved with these shows, how does it affect their future behaviour and attitudes? For example, if they watch *MasterChef Australia* because they are involved with cooking, does this then affect their behaviour in their own food buying and preparation? There is a need to look at how the use of media (RTV) may affect subsequent and related attitudes and behaviours in consumers. This thesis considers these concepts.

1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research examines the concept of social interaction within television use (by the consumer). For this purpose, it investigates the role of *Aspects of Identity* attributes, *Authenticity*, and *Involvement* in the *Social Identification Process*, within the context of the viewers and the contestants of Reality Television. The effect that the attributes of the viewers and the contestants has on social identification and how this in turn shapes changes in consumer attitudes and behaviour is empirically tested. Such findings may then be considered in the marketing of *MasterChef Australia* and related products. The research problem addressed in this study is defined by the research objectives and questions. The research objectives for this study are:

- To theoretically advance and conceptualise Social Identity Theory (SIT) as a process within the context of Reality Television (RTV) viewing;

- To ascertain the contribution of Aspects of Identity (AOI) attributes, Authenticity, and Involvement to the Social Identification Process;
- To establish which consumer attitudes and behaviours are affected by the Social Identification Process arising from Reality Television (RTV) viewing, for the purpose of future television marketing strategies.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

These objectives will be addressed through the following research questions, which have been developed through a thorough review of the current literature:

RQ1: Does Reality Television facilitate the Social Identification Process?

RQ2: Which factors facilitate the Social Identification Process in Reality Television?

RQ3: What are the effects of the Social Identification Process in Reality Television viewing on the consumer?

1.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to test these research questions, a conceptual framework has been developed and is shown in Figure 1. This conceptual framework depicts the broader research problem that will be addressed in this study. This conceptual framework is based around the theoretical foundations of Social Identity Theory (SIT), which operates under the premise that consumers (viewers) will socially identify with groups that are emotionally significant to them and with which they perceive similarities. Further, it is through this social interaction and comparison that the process of social identification is facilitated (Tiliopoulos & McVittie, 2010). This study argues that social identification is a process that is present in the context of Reality Television (RTV). This thesis also proposes that the process hypothesised in Social Identity Theory is facilitated between viewers and contestants (of RTV). Specifically, this process is facilitated by the salience of the viewer's social (rather than personal) identity attributes and the comparative importance that viewer places on comparable attributes in the contestants, as defined by the Aspects of Identity (AOI) scale. This scale measures social (and personal) identity attributes, and has been chosen because of its emphasis on social behaviour and social comparison; fundamental processes assumed

within Social Identity Theory. Previous research has placed emphasis on the personality traits of media (particularly television) consumers and individuals who socially identify. However, this research challenges the accepted concept of social identification as being based on personality traits only, and suggests there may be some relevance to the aforementioned social identity attributes.

Comparable social identity attributes may also mediate the social identification process and are considered in the framework proposed. Further, previous theorists of Social Identity Theory (SIT) have asserted the importance of involvement in facilitating the social identification process, and this is likewise considered to mediate the relationship in the conceptual framework proposed. This will be discussed in more detail in the Literature Review in Chapter 2.

Aspects of Identity: Viewer	Aspects of Identity: Contestant	Social Identification
The importance the viewer places on their own identity attributes, i.e. social and personal.	The importance the viewer places on the (perceived) contestant's social identity attributes.	The viewer's perception of being a group member and the significance they place on this.
Authenticity	**Involvement**	**Attitudes and Behaviour**
The viewer's perception of the authentic portrayal of contestants in the Reality Television context.	The viewer's involvement with a Reality Television show, and its contestants.	Changes in the viewer (consumer) based on their identification with contestants.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the Social Identification Process in Reality Television

1.5   THEORETICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

This research makes a number of contributions to the current state of academic discourse surrounding Reality Television. In the social psychology discipline and the context of identity, a number of theoretical contributions are made, as below.

Some previous theorists have defined the identification referred to in Social Identity Theory (SIT) as a process (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, Monden, & de Lima, 2002). However, modelling of this process has often been limited in scope, such as; within an organisation after a merger (van Knippenberg, et al., 2002), social conflict (Althaus & Coe, 2011), or ethno-nationalistic politics (Bastian & Haslam, 2008). This study proposes a conceptual framework of Social Identity Theory that can be measured as a process across different contexts. Furthermore, the research proposed also extends research of Social Identity Theory (SIT) considering consumer attitudes and behaviour as a result of social identification. Specifically, this research considers changes in consumer attitudes promoted by groups portrayed in Reality Television, and the effect on post-viewing consumer behaviour.

This study explores the extent to which an individual may place importance on comparative social identity attributes with members of a group before social identifying with them. The Aspects of Identity (AOI) scale was developed by Cheek and Briggs (1981) to measure the relative importance of social aspects and personal aspects of the self. These aspects are referred to as the salience of social identity attributes (such as, social behaviour) and personal identity attributes (an intrinsic desire for uniqueness). Aspects of Identity have also been referred to as public and private aspects of identity (Davies, 1996). Future research and development of the Aspects of Identity scale has been extensive (Ben-Raphael, Olshtein, & Geist, 1994; Cheek & Briggs, 1982; Matze, 1988; Spero, 1986; Varte & Zokaitluangi, 2006) and has found that each of these aspects were associated with different attitudes and behaviours. For example, salience of personal attributes was associated with individual behaviour, such as self-monitoring (Burusic, 2003) and individual sports activities (Leary, Wheeler, & Jenkins, 1986a). Conversely, salience of social identity attributes was associated with social and group pursuits, such as work-based group goals (Espejo, 2000), ethnic language use (Ben-Raphael, et al., 1994), and team sports activities (Leary, et al., 1986a).

However, no research has been found to ascertain if these attributes are used for comparison in the social identification process. Specifically, consideration is given to how individuals with salient social identity attributes (AOI) might engage in social comparison of such attributes, thus leading to social identification (SIT). This study explicitly measures not only the importance of Aspects of Identity to the respondent in their self, but also in those with whom they socially identify. Consequently, this study makes a clear relationship between SIT and identity.

In the media and communications discipline, and the context of Reality Television (RTV), a number of theoretical contributions are made, as below.

This study considers the relationship between Social Identity Theory and Aspects of Identity detailed above, in media (RTV) use. As such, this research extends the theoretical contribution of Social Identity Theory in the area of Uses and Gratifications research; a paradigm that investigates possible uses of media (including television). Authenticity (Aslama & Pantti, 2006; Kraidy, 2009; Rose & Wood, 2005) and involvement (Russell & Puto, 1999) are two concepts often considered in the television viewing. This study contributes to previous research considering the relationship between the two in Reality Television (Hall, 2009a) and demonstrates the key role of involvement in both Social Identity Theory and media (RTV) effects. The study is also the first research investigating possible causes for the most successful television show in Australia, to date. In doing so, this study brings together the disciplines of media and marketing.

In the marketing discipline and the context of the *MasterChef Australia* brand, a number of theoretical contributions are made, as below.

Some of the most insightful market research has been that which has recognised a social or marketing phenomenon (Montgomery & Weinberg, 1973) and investigated possible reasons for such success. These have included phenomena as diverse as social media (Thoring, 2011), immigrants' consumer behaviour (Hatice, 2011), retro-marketing (Brown, 1999), and readers of the *Harry Potter* children's book series (Patterson & Brown, 2009) and indeed, the success of the *MasterChef* brand has been likened to the Harry Potter marketing phenomenon (Sinclair, 2010c). This study has similarly taken a social and marketing phenomenon as the

initial basis for investigation, and for the purpose of advancing marketing research. In doing so, this study considers *MasterChef* as a brand with which the consumer becomes involved. This study also extends research of consumer behaviour by developing a scale measuring the attitudes and behaviour of consumers of the *MasterChef* brand.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY SUMMARY

1.6.1 Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this research is the viewers of Reality Television. It was recognised that *MasterChef Australia* is the most viewed show on Australian Television networks (Meade, 2010), at the point of data collection. As such, the data collection was targeted to respondents who qualified as regular viewers of *MasterChef Australia 2010.*

1.6.2 Data Collection Method and Sample

This research involved quantitative collection. A market research company was employed to send out invitations to an online consumer panel generated from its database. An online survey was administered to a sample of viewers who favoured, and were familiar with the *MasterChef Australia* 2010 series through regular viewing. 348 responses were completed and deemed appropriate for this research and used in the study.

1.6.3 Operationalisation of the Constructs

Non-comparison scales were employed with the itemised rating of Likert Scales. Existing scales were used where available; however, some modifications were made to ensure relevance for the current study.

1.6.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using SPSS 19.0 and AMOS (version 19). Confirmatory factor analysis, average variance extracted and the square of inter-construct correlations were used to examine the reliability and validity of the measures and are presented in Chapter 4. Following this, Structural Equation Modelling was employed to examine the relationships between the variables. Further analysis of mediation was carried out using phantom models (Macho & Ledermann, 2011). The results of these phases are presented in Chapter 5.

1.6.5 Scope of the Research

The scope of this thesis is limited to one particular Reality Television show within Australia. Existing research on Reality Television has been mainly undertaken in the USA and UK.

With a few notable exceptions (Price, 2010; Punathambekar, 2010; Volcic & Andrejevic, 2009) less attention has been given to other countries. Although the context of the research has been limited to *MasterChef Australia* brand, this show is a phenomenally successful brand.

The *MasterChef* brand was developed in the UK but the Australian version has now proven popular with UK audiences. This indicates its international appeal, and the operationalisation of the measures should be applicable to different countries and Reality Television shows. Further, this research models Social Identity Theory as a process which may be applied to other contexts and situations to measure the existence of the social identification process.

1.6.6   Structure of the Thesis

This thesis consists of five chapters, which are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Structure of Thesis

Chapter 1 Introduction	Background, research justification, presentation of conceptual model, research objectives, and research questions.
Chapter 2 Literature Review	Review of media and marketing, social interaction and media literature, development of conceptual framework, research questions and hypotheses.
Chapter 3 Methodology	Research method and design, participants and materials, coding and procedure
Chapter 4 Results and Discussion	Results and analysis of Confirmatory Factor Analysis, full structural equation model and mediating relationships, and discussion.
Chapter 5 Summary and Conclusion	Summary, conclusion, major findings, implications, and contributions to academic research.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Media and Marketing are the two major disciplines that form the basis of this thesis. Consideration of the relationship between the two, in the context of television, is considered in the first section.

Although this thesis is specifically concerned with the influential role of Social Identity Theory in Reality Television (RTV), it is useful to consider the broader perspective of media and social influence so as to put the thesis into context.

The number of channels through which social interaction and social influence take place are increasing rapidly. Consequently, social analysts have considered the demise of face-to-face social interaction, and the increase of virtual social groups (Bagozzi, et al., 2007) and virtual identities (Altheide, 2000). As many of these channels are commercially based, the influence of such channels has important implications for marketing research and understanding of consumer behaviour. The second section of this literature review considers media research of social interaction and particularly how television channels are able to influence the viewing audience.

Similarly, where previous generations of media analysts focussed on 'broadcast media', many modern day analysts focus on 'social media'. The individuals' use of media for social interaction (rather than reaction) has been researched within media channels such as social network sites, brand forums, blogs, and websites that have been set up by television networks for show-specific viewers to socially interact. Such media research shifts agency from the media (usually television) broadcasters to the media users and considers the motivations for such use (Rubin, 1994). This third section of this literature review considers motivations for media use and the gratification of particular needs (such as social interaction). Leading theorists refer to this as Uses and Gratifications (U & G) theory. Particular relevance to Reality Television is also discussed.

Furthermore, television researchers have considered the use of such popular television shows as dependent on the viewers' identification with particular characters. Such identification has

been found to influence changes in the viewers' attitudes and behaviour, compliant with those of the characters. However, such identification has usually been taken from the perspective of a one-to-one interaction whereby the viewer identifies with an individually well-known fictional character, or celebrity portrayed in the media. There appears to be a lack of media research on how such identification may be related to social interaction at a group level. Specifically, media research rarely ascertains how an individual may socially interact and identify with a particular group portrayed in the media, rather than a particular individual. However, one particular area of social psychology research, referred to as Social Identity Theory (SIT), has considered group level social interaction and social influence from the perspective of social identification. The fourth section of this literature review considers the development of Social Identity Theory in social interaction and the resultant social influences of this process.

Early researchers often limited Social Identity Theory (SIT) to face-to-face social interaction. However, as in media research, there is now an increased acknowledgement in Social Identity Theory research of more (physically) remote social interaction and influence. One such example of a highly successful television show which analysts assert has influenced social changes in consumer attitudes and behaviour is the *MasterChef Australia* brand, and in particular, the group of contestants portrayed in the show. This thesis gives consideration to how such changes may be a result of social identification. The fifth section of this literature review considers the theoretical relevance of Social Identity Theory to media research, particularly in relation to Uses and Gratifications theory and television, and how they inter-relate.

"Social Identity Theory views individuals as engaging in a process of social comparison" (Tiliopoulos & McVittie, 2010, p. 709). This has also been referred to as the social self of symbolic-interactionism and the "looking-glass" self whereby the self develops from images reflected back on the self by other individuals (Davies, 1996). Further, in considering the motivations for such social identification, it has been posited that "The basis of social identity is in the uniformity of perception and action among group members." (Stets & Burke, 2000, p. 226). Moreover, researchers have found that such in-group homogeneity is particularly prominent when there is no motivation to be distinct from others in the group (Brewer, 1993; Simon, Pantaleo, & Memmendey, 1995). Despite such positions, the majority of media and

television research in Social Identity Theory (SIT) has focussed on demographic homogeneity such as race, gender, nationality, and age, rather than social homogeneity. However, the Aspects of Identity (AOI) scale was developed by Cheek and Briggs (1981) to measure the individual's importance of social aspects and personal aspects of the self. This thesis considers how comparisons of such social aspects in others (as well as the self) may create such perceptions of homogeneity that lead to the cohesiveness of social identification within particular groups. The sixth section of this literature review considers Identity Theories, particularly the differences and commonalities between Social Identity Theory and Aspects of Identity, in media and television use.

This thesis considers the popularity of a particularly successful show which is generally classified as a Reality Television show. Therefore, consideration is given to the reality of such a show. Specifically, the viewers' perception of authenticity is discussed as this has been found to be antecedent to the viewers' involvement with Reality Television shows. Similarly, such viewers' involvement has been related to both television viewing and social identification. Further, theorists assert that the existence of social identification leads to changes in attitudes and behaviour. Therefore, the seventh section of this literature review considers how the constructs of authenticity, involvement, and changes in attitudes and behaviour may contribute to understanding the process of social identification of viewers with groups portrayed in television, particularly in Reality Television shows.

Because this study is multi-disciplinary, terms from both social psychology and marketing are used throughout. These terms are usually used in the context of this study. For the purpose of definition and clarity, a glossary of terms used are listed below, and the context given, where appropriate.

Glossary of Terms

Media

The means of communication, such   as radio and television, newspapers,   and magazines, which reach or influence people widely

New Media

Refers specifically to the use of relatively new forms of technology that are used to provide media output through convergence. For example, new media uses the internet and mobile phones to provide media output from more traditional sources. However, new media differs from 'old media' in that the sources may not be limited to institutions (Watson, 2006). New media is not a focus of this study.

Social Media

Although the definition of social media is evolving rapidly, academics "define it broadly to include social networks and group-curated reference sites such Wikipedia." (Von Muhlen & Ohno-machado, 2012, p. 777). Social media sites are available through the internet and may be hosted and monitored by an institution or by its users.

Television and Television Broadcasting

The more traditional forms of Television Broadcasting utilises the free-to-air networks to broadcast television programmes/shows through television channels to traditional stand-alone television sets for the purpose of television viewing. New forms of broadcasting include subscribe-only cable-channels, and internet broadcasters. These broadcasts may be received by the traditional stand-alone television sets, or internet-enabled technology. Examples include The 10 Network, BBC, Fox, ABC, and Red Bull TV. In this study, television refers to the broadcasting and viewing of television programmes on free to air networks, unless otherwise stated.

Television Channel

Branded channels are owned by Television Broadcasters and serve the purposes stated in Television and Television Broadcasting. Examples include Channel 10, BBC2, Fox8, and ABCNews24.

Television Programme/Show

For the purpose of this study, a television programme refers to a television broadcast/screening of a titled and formatted programme. This may be a one-off broadcast but is usually a 10-12 week series (MasterChef, for example) or a regular, on-going broadcast (Coronation Street, Home and Away, for example).

Reality Television: sometimes referred to as Reality TV or RTV.

A form of live documentary where participants are real people (as opposed to actors) and their interactions are portrayed as unscripted. However, these real people are placed in a situation that requires a performance. Many of these shows now have a participatory audience and game-show appeal (Watson, 2006). Successful versions are Survivor, Big Brother, and MasterChef.

Reality Television Participants/Contestants

The real people (referred to above) who take part or compete in RTV, as details above.

Viewers

For the purpose of this study, viewers refers to viewers/consumers of a television programme broadcast through the traditional forms of media, such as free-to-air.

Identification

Identification, according to Wollheim (1974), refers to an individual imagining being someone else and imagining behaving like that someone else. Identification is distinguished from imitation: identification has an internal component, whereas imitation is external and behavioural component.

Media Identification

Identification with media is defined as: "Unlike the more distanced mode of reception—that of spectatorship—identification is a mechanism through which audience members experience reception and interpretation of the text from the inside, as if the events were happening to them." (Cohen, 2001, p. 245).

Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory pertains to a social category or group (e.g., nationality, political affiliation, sports team) with which an individual identifies, creating a sense of belonging, and providing a self-definition of who one is in terms of the defining characteristics of the group (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995).

Brand Identification

"The concept of brand identification is built on social identity theory" (Kuenzel & Halliday, 2010, p. 167) whereby a consumer will identify and associate themselves with brands or organisations that portray and reinforce their identity. A consumer may see the brand as an extension of themselves, and brand loyalty results.

Aspects of Identity

For the purpose of this study, Aspects of Identity refers to a psychometric scale developed by Jonathan Cheek to measure the personal and social aspects of an individual's identity. The latter refers to and individual's social roles and relationships, whilst the former is "one's private conception of self and feelings of continuity and uniqueness" (Cheek & Briggs, 1982, p. 401).

2.1 MARKETING AND MEDIA

2.1.1 Introduction

The relationship between marketing and media can be researched from two prominent paradigms: marketing of media, and marketing in media.

In the Media discipline, researchers and theorists often consider the practice of marketing media, such as movies, television and radio station, broadcasts schedules, and particular television shows. However, as the choice of television channels and networks increase, so does the need for advertisers and media planners to understand more about the attitudes and behaviour of their audiences (Gunter, Furnham, & Beeson, 1997). In the Marketing discipline, the focus is often on the use of different media vehicles as part of an integrated marketing communication for promoting branded products. Although they may be separate disciplines with separate agendas, Media and Marketing should not be seen as independent of each other. Whilst movie production companies may choose to promote through various television channels, this is not generally the case for the television channels themselves. Therefore, the integrated marketing communication strategy and branding of television shows are usually limited to their own station, when considering television advertising as a media vehicle. This makes the effectiveness and efficiency of this strategy dependent on integrating all marketing messages available within that station to produce maximum brand equity. Put simply, if a television station must limit their television marketing efforts to their own station, they need to make full use of all promotional opportunities therein. There has been theoretical discussion and analysis of the effectiveness of the branding and marketing of television stations/shows (Jones, 2012; Lustyik, 2010; Pine & Gilmore, 2011; Roman & McAllister, 2012). The importance of branding television stations as well as the programmes broadcast therein was considered in a case study of the BBC and the current affairs series *Panorama.* In the face of new competition, from Channel 4 'a properly branded station', the BBC recognised the need to refresh their staid image and recruited a marketing agency to re-design their logo (McQueen, 2011). Such a strategy is often used in the corporate identity; "a mechanism by which an organization expresses itself to the external world and a means by which stakeholders come to know an organization" (Money, Rose, & Hillenbrand, 2010, p. 200). Despite the recognised importance of such branding, there has been very little empirical

research of this issue. However, on the use of promotional tools within a television station's broadcast schedule, several particular marketing strategies have been investigated by both media and marketing academics alike.

In television advertising research, marketing academics have considered the effectiveness of this promotional tool. Many studies have shown that when the consumer is highly involved with a media vehicle, such as a television show, they are more responsive to advertising within that vehicle. Particularly, marketers need to know more how involved, and how attentive viewers are to those they are watching (Gunter & Furnham, 1992). Soldow and Principe (1981) warn that the number of viewers watching a television advertisement is not equal to the number paying attention to the message. Likewise, such erroneous assumptions should not be made of those watching a television show. Media and market researchers have observed television viewers paying only intermittent attention to broadcasts (Bechtel, Achelpohl, & Akers, 1972; Collett & Lamb, 1986). Attention levels can depend upon what is being viewed (Bechtel, et al., 1972). Further, the viewing context can vary the effect of the television advertisement. Different viewing environments and contexts have included programme-advertisement congruity (Bello, Pitts, & Etzel, 1983; Hansen, Barry, Reed, & McGill, 1976; Horn & McEwan, 1987; Kamins, Marks, & Skinner, 1991; Murphy, Cunningham, & Wilcox, 1979); programme-induced emotional pleasure (Pavelchak, Antil, & Munch, 1988); programme-induced involvement (Bryant & Comisky, 1978; Lloyd & Clancy, 1991; Park & McClung, 1986; Soldow & Principe, 1981; Thorson & Reeves, 1986; Thorson, Reeves, & Schleuder, 1985); attitude or favouring of the programme (Clancy & Kweskin, 1971; Leach, 1981; Priemer, 1983; Schumann, 1986; Thorson & Reeves, 1986); programme context (Barclay, Doub, & McMurtrey, 1965; Schwerin, 1958); programme-induced viewer mood (Axelrod, 1963; Goldberg & Gorn, 1987; Kamins, et al., 1991; Schumann, 1986); and programme-induced viewer excitement (Singh & Churchill, 1987). As well as traditional advertising breaks, other areas of research have included facets of the mediascape (Sigismondi, 2010), branded entertainment (Amand, 2007), embedded advertising (Moorman, Willemsen, Neijens, & Smit, 2012) and product placement.

2.1.2 Embedded Advertising

"Since people cannot pay attention to everything that is communicated, reach does not guarantee mental reach" (Pilotta & Schultz, 2005). However, by inserting commercials in and around involving television programs, one may enhance the likelihood that people will pay attention, and elaborate, on these messages. Involvement in a television program has been shown to result in an attention spill-over effect on successive as well as embedded advertising. "To date, the literature has not clearly identified companies' strategic potential to engender positive effects from program involvement" (Moorman, et al., 2012, p. 34). In this naturalistic field study, the researchers also concluded that programme involvement moderated between personal factors such as topic involvement and social viewing environment. Their results suggest that social viewing reduces the likelihood of channel changing and therefore increases persistent viewing of the embedded and successive advertising. The researchers did cite a limitation of their study as the operationalisation of program involvement as this was a self-reported measure of interest in the programme. The researchers were cautious that as attention to the programme varied during broadcast, so would the viewers' attention to a particular advertisement shown at a particular point in time.

2.1.3 Product Placement

An area that has received particularly wide attention from both media and marketing practitioners and researchers is product placement. Researchers have found that the relevance of a product placement to the plot significantly influences television viewers' attention and attitudes towards those products (d'Astous & Seguin, 1999; Russell, 2002). More recently, studies have measured the degree of parasocial relationships with characters as a source of such influence (Russell, Norman, & Heckler, 2004) because of the perceived attachment between viewer and character. Russell and Stern (2006) offer an explanation of the process based on Heider's balance theory (Heider, 1946; Heider, 1958) whereby the individual strives to maintain consistency between the triad of linked attitudes of themselves, another person, and an object. Balance theory has been applied to celebrity endorsers (McCracken, 1986) but The Model of Product Placement Effects extends this theory to the context of television series'. Russell and Stern (2006) explain that the valence and favourability of product

placements in a television series will be directly affected by their attitude and attachment to the characters in that series. Their findings show an alignment between consumer, product user (in a television setting), and product used that can be effectively utilised by managers of television media and marketing.

Game shows and product placement are inherent in the broad *mediascape* where advertisers and consumers co-exist and is likely to be referential (Gould & Gupta, 2006), reflecting a blurring of perceived differences between television advertisements and entertainment (Balasubramanian, 1994). The meaning consumers draw from this co-existence is endless cross-referencing through the postmodern practice of intertextuality (Jansson, 2002 ; Zettl, 1998). Product placement in entertainment shows exemplifies this intertextuality of advertising and medium (DeLorme & Reid, 1999; Gupta & Gould, 1997). Entertainment shows of a competitive nature naturally have a higher proportion of product placement and brand appearances than other forms of media, such as movies, computer video games, and novels (Avery & Ferraro, 2000). Because game shows and reality television shows are perceived as realistic rather than fictional (Avery & Ferraro, 2000), the narrative of the contestants simulates face to face communication (Allen, 1992). Gould and Gupta (2006, p. 65) describe product placement in such narratives as "the synergistic juncture of two sites of meaning, that is, the products placed in games shows bring their own meanings, but are further constructed in game show contexts". Similarly, because entertainment shows of a competitive nature are expected to have 'prizes' and be less realistic in nature, consumers are more accepting of this form of product placement and the ethics of such, as opposed to, for example, product placements in movies or fictional series' (d'Astous & Seguin, 1999).

2.1.4   Marketing Game Shows and Reality Television

Recognising that there has been significant research of brand management for consumer goods but not entertainment products, Mukherjee & Roy (2006) investigated the aspects of the marketing mix that made the Indian game *Kaun Banega Crorepati* successful. They concluded that the right mix of host popularity, channel popularity and prize money enabled the show to achieve unsurpassed marketing success and operational revenues. The authors

contextualised this in Aaker's oft-taught texts on brand equity (Aaker, 1991, 1996) and the four principal components therein. Specifically, Mukherjee and Roy (2006) assimilated *brand interest* with viewer interest and participation; *brand loyalty* with continued interest throughout the series; *perceived quality* with perceived difficulty (of the competition) and expected prize money; and *brand association* with channel and host popularity. Such articulation of the brand equity of an entertainment show facilitates standardisation of entertainment which also systemises the meaning viewers and consumers draw from this entertainment allowing marketers to more efficiently segment and target their potential customers, and resulting in higher profits for television producers and advertisers alike (Fiske, 1987).

Reality television as a genre has also been considered as experiential consumption, comprising both the viewers' passive participation and a connection to the environment (Pine & Gilmore, 1999). From a brand management perspective, this consumption experience has been defined as a "product/service category particularly suited to the needs of the postmodern consumer" (Carù & Cova, 2003, p. 273). This experience has also been described as the "total lived experience (or 'the challenge') of consumption; the interaction between the subject (the consumer) and the object (the product or service) can have influence on future consumption and also bring into play cognitive, utilitarian and social dimensions" (Benavent & Evrard, 2002, p. 7). In a study of reality show *Star Academy*, the researchers defined viewer participation, attachment and identification, positive values conveyed, and social interaction as key factors of its success which marketing managers need to consider (Ladwein, Kolenc, & Ouvry, 2008). Similarly, Russell and Puto (1999) referred to such *connectedness* as crucial to measuring audiences for the purpose of both buying and selling television time because it can moderate the effect of product placements. As such, marketing managers should consider both the production of the experience (by the television producers) and the viewers' lived experience, and the value generated from this.

Media theorist McLuhan (1964) realised that media mediate culture by articulating, interpreting, and creating it. From creation of a mass human in an all-at-once information environment, he always insisted that the question should not be, "Is this a good or bad thing?" but rather, "What's going on?" In other words, moral judgment should not be substituted for

insight into what is actually happening. Perhaps the most important effect of media is that they affect habits of perception and thinking; they do not simply deliver content (some of which is intended to alter thinking, awareness, knowledge, attitudes, opinions, and behaviour) (Fishman, 2006). Thus, it becomes important to turn from the content to the total effect of messages, because the "'content' of the medium is like the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind" (McLuhan 1964, p. 18). The important effects come from media form, not content (which can be almost irrelevant). McLuhan recognised that the old media were becoming the content of the new, shifting from a broadcast to an interactive mentality, overloading the global village with information, threatening human values, and eliminating the experience of private identity (Fishman, 2006). It is important for media and marketing academics to understand what this interactive mentality and identity is because promotional products are designed to encourage individuals to view consumption of a particular product as an expression of identity (Breazeale, 1994). Breazeale, K. (1994). The next sections consider this.

2.1.5   Summary

This section has demonstrated the importance of both marketing of media and marketing in media. Specifically, brand equity for both television producers and advertisers depends on understanding how the viewer perceives not only the traditional television advertisements but the television media setting in which brands and products are now placed. The next sections consider this.

2.2   SOCIAL INTERACTION AND INFLUENCE

2.2.1   Introduction

Abrams and Hogg (2004b) proposed that social psychology plays a crucial role as a perspective for analyses of phenomena drawn from studies in both social and behavioural sciences. For studies in consumer behaviour, a psycho-social perspective can effectively

connect both micro and macro levels of analyses of social interaction and its influence on social structure. Such influences may be exerted through the different modes of human agency; referred to as personal, proxy and collective by Bandura (2001). Further, within the paradigm of social psychology, the constructs of social interaction and social influence have been considered in terms of their relationship with communication. Individuals construct their social worlds through social interaction, as well as through the more indirect influence of mass media (Hogg & Reid, 2006).

2.2.2   Social Interaction, Influence, and Media

Advertising on television networks, and its influence is well documented in the marketing discipline (Williams, Ylänne, Wadleigh, & Chen, 2010). However, there has also been some emphasis on how influence occurs in forms of television other than the traditional realm of advertising breaks between programmes, such as within the actual programming content (Chalmers, 2009; Deery, 2004; Giles, 2003).

Primarily, television is seen as a source of information dissemination and entertainment. Indeed, some theorists have also considered how entertainment can be used for education purposes and referred to as edutainment (Ganeshasundaram & Henley, 2009). Analysis of the social influence initiated by entertainment education in the context of an Indian radio show was found to be enhanced by social interaction (Papa et al., 2000). Similarly measuring the influence of radio, Levy Paluck (2009) wrote that the mechanism of change was not individual education but emotional engagement and social interaction.

Historically, mass media has been used as one platform for political campaigning (Bennett, 2005a; Blumler, Thoveron, & Cayrol, 1978; Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 1995) but much has been made of how the campaigner is able to relate to specific social groups (Althaus, 2006; Bliuc, McGarty, Reynolds, & Muntele, 2007; Blumler & McQuail, 1968).

There have been many theoretical perspectives on how media (including television) may also influence an audience's attitudes and behaviour. Although no one form of media can be wholly categorised as being for the purpose of good or evil, there are examples that would suggest they have been used for one or the other. Many aspects of political campaigning

(Punathambekar, 2010) and social media theory (Stefanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2010) show examples of how media may be used for positive social influence. Conversely, voyeurism (Rubin & Perse, 1987a), ethnocentrism (Mastro & Behm-Morawitz, 2005), cultivation theory (Segrin & Nabi, 2002), and parasocial interaction (PSI) (Rubin & Rubin, 2001) often consider negative individual and social influence. In brief, voyeurism focuses on the viewer's need to escape from reality, ethnocentrism has judgemental undertones, cultivation theory has parallels with mild forms of brainwashing, and parasocial interaction has similarities to celebrity/hero worship. All such perspectives consider how, where and why the media is able to influence the individual and specified audiences.

On a more specific level, and often as explanation of deviant behaviour, there has been a mass of research into what has been termed cultivation theory (Bradley, 2007; Hetsroni & Tukachinsky, 2006; Rubin, Perse, & Taylor, 1988). Although there tends to be media denial of the legitimacy of such influence, there have been researchers who assert the ability of media (particularly in television) to cultivate behaviours such as violence (Haridakis & Rubin, 2003; Lemal & Van Den Bulck, 2009) particularly in children and adolescents (Krcmar & Cooke, 2001; Wilson, Colvin, & Smith, 2002). In fact, studies based in cultivation theory have often considered the effect on individuals in their formative years, on later sexual activity (Clark, Nabi, & Moyer-Gusé, 2007), illicit drug usage (Minnebo & Eggermont, 2007), alcohol consumption (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005), and suicide (Romer, Jamieson, & Jamieson, 2006).

Similarly, researchers have also considered the third person effect which posits that depictions of particular scenarios such as crime scenes, for example, have the potential to cultivate deviant behaviour in viewers (Duck, et al., 1995; Leone, Peek, & Bissell, 2006; Scharrer, 2002). From a slightly different perspective, researchers have also considered how depictions of violent behaviours are able to influence viewers' perceptions of the prevalence of violence in society (Holbert, Shah, & Kwak, 2004; Prosise & Johnson, 2004; Smith & Moyer-Gusé, 2006) to the extent that combative behaviour (Nabi & Sullivan, 2001; Pitman, 2002), gun ownership (Holbert, et al., 2004), or fear (Cavender & Bondmaupin, 1993; Minnebo, 2000) has resulted.

From another perspective, and often through the technological developments and interactive capacity of social media, audiences are also able to influence media content (including television), providing evidence of social interaction. Propositions have also been made on how society is able to influence the media (Andrejevic, 2002; Bell, 2010; Giles, 2003), including through the now popular use of polling audiences to influence outcomes of competition-based Television shows (Coleman, 2010; Divina, 2006). However, it should be noted that although there are now more media platforms for social interaction and influence, the media content of television programmes still lies ultimately with the television producers.

In summary, there is clear evidence of the use of the media to socially interact and influence the individual's and social groups' attitudes, such as their perceptions of levels of violence, and political viewpoints. Similarly, there has also been a focus on the ability of media content to influence social behaviour, such as prevalence of violence. It appears that much of the previous research has focussed on children (Custers & Van Den Bulck, 2010; Devís-Devís, Peiró-Velert, Beltrán-Carrillo, & Tomás, 2009; Fisch, McCann Brown, & Cohen, 2001) and adolescents (Churchill & Moschis, 1979; Devís-Devís, et al., 2009) as those audience groups being influenced, and has focussed on deviance as the behaviour being influenced (Slater & Hayes, 2010). This leaves a considerable opportunity for research into how adults are socially influenced by media content and specifically, how positive social behaviour is influenced through social interaction with media content. Further, rather than specifying demographical attributes of the sample, such as age groups (as in previous research), using a sample drawn from a group of television viewers who identify socially with a media portrayed group, could provide new insights. Having considered the presence of social influence in media, consideration is now given to how this may be present in Reality Television.

2.2.3 Social Interaction, Influence, and Reality Television

As a relatively new genre of television, Reality Television (RTV) appears to have received less research attention than other more traditional formats of media. Moreover, the marketing opportunities of Reality Television have received little attention from marketing academics, despite the awareness of these opportunities by marketing practitioners (Biressi & Nunn, 2005; Burnett, 2005). However, its mass appeal and unique format has received considerable research focus from several prominent media and psychology academics. Much of the

research on Reality Television's social influence has used singular shows as the unit of analysis, such as *Survivor* (Bell-Jordan, 2008a; Dilks, Thye, & Taylor, 2010), *Big Brother* (Coleman, 2010; Thornborrow & Morris, 2004), *The Bachelor* (Cloud, 2010; Dubrofsky & Hardy, 2008), and *American Idol* (Bell, 2010). This seems a logical stance as they all have unique characteristics despite being classified in the same genre. Moreover, attempts by academics to develop a typology of Reality Television have proven problematic, bearing out the diversity of the genre (Nabi, 2007). However, one of the limitations of Reality Television research is that it often surveys a convenient student sample (including Leone, et al., 2006; Lundy, Ruth, & Park, 2008a; Shouse, 2001; Turner, 2008) rather than attempting to survey a representative sample of the whole audience.

2.2.4   Summary

There is clear evidence in previous studies that social interaction can involve the individual across many areas of media. There has also been substantial research on how the media is able to influence the individual and groups. However, this standpoint rarely considers control as being with the individual or the group. In other words, such a standpoint may not give due consideration to agency of the individual, or how the audience is able to influence the content.

However, other researchers have considered the appeal of television shows from the theoretical standpoint of viewers' motives. For example, they have measured Reality Television's appeal in terms of its uses and gratification for the individual such as via passive viewing, entertainment, escapism, voyeurism, and to relieve boredom (Barton, 2009; Hall, 2006; Nabi, Stitt, Halford, & Finnerty, 2006; Rubin, 1994). As this is such a prominent theory in media and television research, due consideration is given to Uses and Gratifications Theory in the following section, as a key motive for media use.

2.3 MOTIVATIONS FOR MEDIA USE

2.3.1 Introduction

The previous section considered social interaction and influence, between media and its users (the consumer). However, consideration must also be given to the motivation for this social interaction (Blumler & Katz, 1974b; Petty & Cacioppo, 1996). Media effects research has traditionally used the media as its starting point and considered how a particular source or message might influence the general population, for example. Uses and Gratification (U & G) takes a view from the other end; in that it considers the recipient, from a psychological perspective. In other words, it should shift the focus from what media do to people, to what people do with media (Klapper, 1963). Theorists who proposed the paradigm of Uses and Gratifications (Blumler & Katz, 1974a) criticised media effects research for its assumption of a reactive homogeneous audience where the locus of control was assumed to lie with the media source (Rubin & Perse, 1987b). However, Windahl (1981) argues that there are more benefits to recognising the similarities than the differences as both consider the consequences of communication, such as attitude or behavioural change. A review of the literature from the U & G perspective, and particularly in the context of television viewing, is now presented.

2.3.2 Uses and Gratifications of Media

Uses and Gratifications (U & G) theory focuses on what motivates the media user and what needs are gratified (Blumler & Katz, 1974a). As such, the process involved would be one of: stimulus → one's internal state → response to stimulus. The underlying assumption of U & G in the context of choice of television programs is that the television channel cannot influence an individual unless that person has some use for the medium or its particular message. This was described over three decades ago, as "(1) the social and psychological origins of (2) needs, which generate (3) expectations of (4) the mass media or other sources, which lead to (5) differential patterns of media exposure (or engagement in other activities), resulting in (6) need gratifications and (7) other consequences, perhaps mostly unintended ones" (Blumler & Katz, 1974a, p. 20).

This approach has recently been re-used to develop five basic tenets of Uses and Gratifications:

- An individual's behaviour is purposive, goal directed and motivated.
- Audiences select and use media to satisfy biological, psychological, and social needs.
- Media users will be influenced by various social and psychological factors which guide or mediate communication options.
- Different media compete with each other for attention, selection, and use.
- Media users are variably active, and are aware of their needs and whether or not these needs are being satisfied by a particular medium. (Nabi, Biely, Morgan, & Stitt, 2003b; Palmgreen, 1984; Rubin, 2002).

Similarly, Rubin (2002) proposes that the media message reinforces existing attitudes. The message and its effect on the media user's attitude are also mediated by the media user's personal predisposition (Denham, 2004a) as well as the norms of the group with which the media user interacts (Hortaçsu & Ertürk, 2003), the use of interpersonal channels, such as family (Churchill & Moschis, 1979), and opinion leaders to whom the media user looks for information and guidance (Kwak, 1999). As such, the message is important but is only one factor of influence in the media user's social and psychological environment.

Recognising that agency lies with the individual, the above theorists have asserted that media choice is now much more purposive. As such, individuals may be use media for psychological and social purposes but will differentiate between the gratifications of different mediums. Consequently, media sources may be aware of their ability to influence but also of the availability of alternative sources to meet needs, such as social media and social groups. Further, much of this research has been applied to genre-specific television shows, such as religious shows (Hamilton & Rubin, 1992; Keas, 2008; Lindridge, 2005; Maltby, Houran, Lange, Ashe, & McCutcheon, 2002), newscasting (Bennett, 2005b; Busselle, 2003; Chung & Yoo; Curnalia, 2008; Langer, 1997; Perse & Rubin, 1990; Rayburn, Palmgreen, & Acker, 1984; Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985; Ryu, Kline, & Kim, 2007; Sundin, 2005; Wenner, 1982), violent themes (Greene & Krcmar, 2005; Krcmar & Kean, 2005; Nathanson & Yang, 2003; Sheridan, North, Maltby, & Gillett, 2007) and soap operas (Bilandzic & Rassler, 2004;

Holmes, 2008; Lusvarghi, 2007; Perse & Rubin, 1988). That is, none of these have researched the more recent genre of reality shows.

Previous research of Uses and Gratifications has measured television viewing in the context of traditional broadcasting methods. Consequently, the research has focussed on viewing simultaneous with broadcasting, and does not included television viewing through playback or on-demand viewing. Although such activities only account for less than 7% television viewing (Nielsen, 2012), researchers have begun to address changes in behavioural patterns. These have included on-demand alternatives reaching hyper-abundance (Atre, 2007), and avoidance of commercial breaks (Bellman, Schweda, & Varan, 2010) but there appears to be no research to date that considers how uses and gratifications may be met on-demand.

In summary, research of Uses and Gratifications concepts in a media context has generally focussed on particular areas with some shortcomings, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Research Areas of Focus in Uses and Gratifications

RESEARCH AREA	EXAMPLES	SOURCES	SHORTCOMINGS
Development of typologies of motives	Meet cognitive needs, fostering instrumental or ritualized orientations	(Lull, 1980; Perse & Rubin, 1990; Rubin, 1984; Rubin, et al., 1985)	Dated, all in the U.S., student focussed
Comparing motives for selecting different media sources or engaging with new media	Radio, television and the internet	(Kaye & Johnson, 2002; Ko, Cho, & Roberts, 2005; Lichtenstein & Bearden, 1989)	Comparisons were of motives for using alternative media sources. No comparison was made of different media sources covering the same genre, such as use of the various media in relation to Reality Television (RTV), e.g. television viewing and online activity.
Investigating the use of media in various social and psychological situations and their effects	Lifestyle, role, personality, loneliness, family viewing situation	(Turner, 1993)	Focussed on Parasocial Interaction (PSI), did not relate to RTV, and is now dated.
Variation in effect of demographics and psychographics, motives and exposure on outcomes	Perceived relationships, cultivation, level of involvement, Parasocial interaction, satisfaction	(Ashe & McCutcheon, 2001; Derrick, Gabriel, & Hugenberg, 2009; Perse & Rubin, 1989; Rubin, et al., 1985)	Emphasises the characteristics of the spectator from a psychological perspective but does not consider the characteristics of the celebrities involved or the commercial and marketing perspective of the engagement.
How uses and gratification can be related to other communications	The positive feedback loop of viewing to behaviour to viewing, positive reinforcement	(Banning, 2007; Slater, 2007)	No research has been found on how such behaviour may apply in the RTV context.
The methods, reliability, and validity of measures of motivation	Expectancy-value analysis. Stability of constructs.	(Babrow & Swanson, 1988; McDonald & Glynn, 1984)	Dated, focussed on students and soap operas

Having considered the research of *Uses and Gratification* Theory in media, consideration is now focussed below on its relevance to Reality Television.

2.3.3 Uses and Gratifications of Reality Television

Research into the reasons viewers watch Reality Television (RTV) has used the context of Reality Television as a genre (Reiss & Wiltz, 2004), as well as some focussing upon particular shows within the genre (Dillon & Goldstein, 1984). In general, viewers may watch Reality Television shows (as well as other shows) from habit, for instrumental use (informational) because it is realistic, or as part of a daily social ritual which allows them to participate in social discussions (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007a). Further, the digital age has spurred a longing for realism, and a sense of contact (Fetveit, 1999).

A U.S. study of the Reality Television (RTV) genre (Nabi, et al., 2003b) and its Uses and Gratification role, found that viewers watched these shows for enjoyment because they featured unscripted, real people. Respondents indicated they used the shows to satisfy their curiosity about other people's lives. The same authors, more recently found 'taking a peek' at other people's lives motivated viewing and distinguished Reality Television from fictional programmes (Nabi, et al., 2006). Similarly, Hall (2004) and Hill (1984; Hill, 2005) found perceived reality (from the cast's candidness and the producer's level of manipulation) was related to greater feelings of suspense which was associated with greater cognitive involvement. In later research, the unscripted format of reality shows has been proposed as gratifying cognitive needs because they are unpredictable and thus engaging (Hall, 2006). Again, the emphasis has been on the cognition of the viewer and their motives, rather than theirs or the contestants' identity, and how or why the two interact. In other words, the majority of research into reality shows seems to focus on the motives for viewing them, such as enjoyment (Nabi, Finnerty, Stitt, Halford, & Quintero, 2004; Nabi & Krcmar, 2004b; Nabi, et al., 2006; Oliver & Armstrong, 1995), diversion (Greenwood & Long, 2009), escapism (Lundy, Ruth, & Park, 2008b) rather than the identity attributes of the spectator (i.e., viewer) or the spectacle itself (e.g., contestant) that may affect such uses.

While there has been very little research looking at the Uses and Gratifications of the reality genre from a social and psychological perspective, there are a few exceptions that have extended motivation research into this paradigm. Reiss and Wiltz (2004) measured the value system and personality of those viewers who tended to watch reality shows. Their findings indicated that regular viewers tended to place a higher value on status and suggested that this

may be because such formats showed how ordinary people can elevate their status and fantasize about gaining similar celebrity status. Their attraction also lies in their gratification of affective needs where the viewer feels involved in emotional engagement with the show's cast. This can be because of feelings of superiority when viewing the cast behaving badly or inspirational identification when the cast succeed above expectations (Hall, 2006), as well as stereotyping others (Krakowiak, Kleck, & Tsay). Further, viewers have also intimated motives of entertainment and 'escaping from reality' where they could put themselves in the participants' shoes and consider how they would deal with the situation (Lundy, et al., 2008b). This shows similarities with the social and psychological issues of U & G research.

As discussed, there has been some research of Uses and Gratifications that has recently focussed on reality shows but there are still some shortcomings. Many have been conceptual studies (Gomez De Sibandze, 2009; Nabi & Krcmar, 2004b; Rubin, 2002), qualitative in design, surveying a small, convenient sample or student population (Curnutt, 2009; Hall, 2006; Kjus, 2009; Koutsantoni, 2007; Lundy, et al., 2008b; Wang, Fink, & Cai, 2008). Further, although many researchers have noted that it may be inappropriate to generalise about Reality Television (RTV) shows because of their diversity (Hill, 2005; Hill & Ebooks Corporation., 2005; Nabi, et al., 2004; Turner, 2006), very few studies in this particular area have focussed on specific types of Reality Television shows or one particular show. Exceptions have looked at *Canadian Idol* (Baltruschat, 2009a), *Big Brother* (Hill, 2004), and Balkan Reality Television show, *To Sam Ja* (That's Me) (Volcic & Andrejevic, 2009). However, as industry experts have said, it is not about the degree of reality: it is about good television and bad television. As such, discussion needs to move from differentiating Reality Television, factual television, and fictional Television to classifying subgenres of Reality Television. Reality Television shows that are popular now competitive, informative, or interventional subgenres (Stein, 2007). As such, it is now appropriate to identify what is a commercially successful Reality Television show and by definition, why this format is now so popular with viewers.

As with other Uses and Gratifications research, the vast majority of Reality Television (RTV) research has surveyed student populations. This has been justified on the presumption that this is the target audience for such shows. Whilst this may be the case for shows such as *American Idol* (because of the emphasis on 'younger music'), it cannot be assumed for shows

such as *Biggest Loser* or *MasterChef* which clearly attract a wider audience (indicated by the diversity and size of the viewer statistics). Further, no such research has been carried out in Australasia. In addition to these issues, all research in this field has focussed on gratification during the show and not on uses after or between shows, other than that of discussing the show with fellow students. This misses an important opportunity to understand the role of asynchronous participation in developing meaning, and social identities. In other words, what brings the spectator back to the next episode?

There is, of course, also the possibility that viewers are passive (rather than active) who choose to watch television to alleviate boredom and find themselves watching a Reality Television (RTV) show because they feel there is nothing else to do. However, whatever the reasons for viewing, the outcomes may still be changes in consumer attitudes and/or behaviour and so, justifies further research.

2.3.4   Summary

In summary, research into motivations for watching Reality Television (RTV) have been considered from a Uses and Gratifications theoretical perspective but work to date has considerable shortcomings. These include the populations surveyed, and lack of analysis of individuals or groups who may be motivated to use Reality Television. Further, there is support for future research of Reality Television to focus on particularly successful shows within the genre (Stein, 2007).

As well as the viewing motives, some researchers have considered social identification as a television use (Harwood, 1999b; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall, 2010). Rather than considering the viewing motives of the individual in isolation, this perspective considers the individual as part of an audience and the social interaction with others in that audience. For this reason, the following section defines the concept of Social Identity Theory (SIT). The specific relationship between Uses and Gratifications and Social Identity Theory is then considered in a later section.

2.4 SOCIAL INTERACTION AND SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY

2.4.1 Introduction

Social Identity Theory (SIT) derives from a social interaction process of *social identification*. Social identification is a cognitive and behavioural function defined as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [or her] knowledge of his [or her] membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1978a, p. 63). This oft quoted definition infers several concepts for consideration. Firstly, social identity is part of the concept of self and so is central to the individual's sense of who they are. Secondly, the individual must be aware of a sense of group and perceive a belonging to this group to derive social identification from the group. Further, the individual must see this membership as purposive and significant, suggesting a level of involvement. All these aspects are considered in later sections.

Because of the focus on groups, social identification has also been referred to as group identification. The commonality is demonstrated where Social Identity Theory "defines the group cognitively as three or more people who share the same social identity and views and group identification as a feeling of belonging, a definition and evaluation of self in terms of shared ingroup attributes, and a belief that the group is central to one's sense of self" (Cameron, 1999, p. 135). This definition adds a further concept for consideration: that of shared attributes. However, the term social identification (rather than group identification) will be used consistently throughout this thesis.

Although there is little research into the importance of identity attributes which may lead to the process of social identification, there has been a large body of research in four particular areas. These are the process of social identification, the contexts of social identification, the purpose of social identification, and the subsequent group behaviours generated from social identification. These are considered in the following sections.

Essentially, group behaviour is attributed to both individual's stable identity attributes, and their group and context-specific social identity. The latter is a result of a process commonly

referred to in Social Identity Theory (SIT) as social identification. Social identification suggests a level of awareness, involvement and significance to the individual who perceives other group members to have similar attributes. Further, group members will perceive certain attributes as important in themselves, and similarly important in other group members. This creates group normative behaviour. Social identification has been found to have a number of purposes in a number of different groups, as well as contexts.

The following sections will consider the leading literature covering the development of Social Identity Theory (SIT), the process of social identification, contexts in which social identification has been found to exist, the purpose of social identification, and subsequent attitudes and behaviour.

2.4.2   The Development of Social Identity Theory

In the development of Social Identity Theory (SIT), social influence set the foundation for theorists to build upon. Social influence has been defined as "any change which a person's relations with other people (individual, group, institution or society) produce on his intellectual activities, emotions or actions" (Dictionary of Personality and Social Psychology, 1986, p 328). The focus of this earlier research was on how such influence occurs within groups.

Early analysts of social influence put forward the notion of 'symbolic interaction'. Accredited to Mead (1938) and Blumer (1969), the development of the concept of symbolic interaction had three tenets: 1. People act towards things on the basis of what they mean to them, 2. Meaning is derived from social interaction with others, 3. Meaning is handled and modified through interpretation and dealings with these things (Altheide, 2000; Wagner et al., 1999). Although now rather dated, these tenets can clearly be seen later in the most commonly cited definition of social identity as referred to in the earlier introduction and extensive development of social identity research. These tenets are considered in more depth, in relation to Reality Television shows, in a later section.

Social identity Theory (SIT) is one approach used to explain social influence (Abrams & Hogg, 1990a). Social identity theorists challenge the concept of attributing group behaviour

to purely individual attributes. Tajfel (1982) argues that a person has a social identity based on group membership, as well as an individual identity. This has been measured as three components: awareness of group membership; group evaluation; and emotional aspects of belonging (Brown, Condor, Mathews, Wade, & Williams, 1986). In essence, Social Identity Theory refers to group processes and intergroup relations (Onorato & Turner, 2002; Turner & Onorato, 1999) which differentiates group phenomena from interpersonal phenomena. However, the interaction of the group and interpersonal phenomena is also acknowledged, as affecting the individual's identity and behaviour (Tajfel, 1982).

Social Identity Theory (SIT) is derived from social influence which has been further explained as self-categorisation (Abrams & Hogg, 1990a; Barrett, Lyons, & Del Valle, 2005) and self enhancement (Freeman, 2001; Hogg, 2006). These are the individual's cognitive underpinnings of the process of social identification. Individuals have a set of personal attributes that they associate with different categories that define their individual and social identities (self-categorisation). *Self-categorisation* describes the process of placing the self in categories (groups) that may be informational (belief) or normative (compliance) to create what has been referred to as a fuzzy set of personal attributes that make up the self (enhancement) (Hogg & Hornsey, 2006); and are dynamic and contextual (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000b; Branscombe & Wann, 1992; Krueger & DiDonato, 2008). Hence, the individual has a set of personal attributes that are reasonably stable, and a set of context-specific (fuzzy) attributes that will vary in salience depending on the relevance to the context.

Social identity researchers have established the presence of leaders within many social identity groups. Moreover, prototypical members have been defined as those members who are typical of the group and are used by other members as a prototype of what other members should believe or how they should behave (Cicero, Pierro, & van Knippenberg, 2007; Hogg, Cooper-Shaw, & Holzworth, 1993; McGarty, Turner, Hogg, David, & et al., 1992; Reinhard, Stahlberg, & Messner, 2009). Agreed behaviour is increased by individuals' perception that they should agree, perceived similarity with other group members, expertise of the group member(s) providing the information, or if the individual is lacking in confidence (Allen, 1965; Grieve & Hogg, 1999; Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Kim & Ng, 2008; Mullin & Hogg, 1998, 1999).

It may be useful to consider the two common bases of influence that run through group influence literature. When considering social influence, leading theorists of Social Identity Theory, Abrams and Hogg (1990a), distinguish between normative influence as the *pressure to comply*, and informational, or 'true' influence, as *reasons to agree*. Pressure to comply is derived from a need for social approval, favour and acceptance by a group. Pressure to comply can be increased or decreased by factors such as power, group numbers, reward, and public accountability (Abrams, Wetherell, Cochrane, Hogg, & et al., 1990; Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 2000; McAuliffe, Jetten, Hornsey, & Hogg, 2003; Turner, 1975). Reasons to agree are derived from a need to reduce uncertainty and to have accurate beliefs about reality.

Informational influence tends to be quite objective and can be technical in nature, such as in a group involved with music appreciation or parenting. Normative influence can be quite subjective and indicates what is normative within the group. For example, the same music group may influence what music the individual should appreciate or how they should dress in order to reflect their musical preference, as in rockabilly, hip hop, or punk rock. Similarly, parenting groups may provide informational influence such as that of breast feeding but may vary from one group to another on what is normative, such as kindergarten patronage or home care. The individual will choose to categorise the self in one or other of these parenting groups.

This wealth of theory development and research gives a clear insight into the existence and dynamics of social influence but does not appear to directly address which individual identity attributes relate to this influence. The research would appear to focus more on the different types of situation that influence the individual rather than the different types of individual who would be influenced. For example, it may be reasonable to measure *pressures to comply* and *reasons to agree* but consideration should also be given to what type of individual is more prone to one pressure than the other or, indeed, to both. Further, there appears to be a lack of research into how social identification relates to the importance the individual's places on their own identity attributes and those of significant others.

2.4.3 The Process of Social Identification

Social identification is a cognitive process that results in an affective social identity, and leads to changes in attitudes and behaviour. Self- categorisation theory was developed to explain the emergence of social phenomena from individual cognitions. Self-categorisation is an extension and development of Social Identity Theory (SIT). More specifically, social identification has been explained through the socio-cognitive process of self-categorisation, creating a fuzzy set of attributes to form the whole identity. As mentioned in the previous section, this process has been explained as the cognitive process of self-selection into social categories for the purpose of self enhancement (Branscombe & Wann, 1992; Ellemers, Kortekaas, & Ouwerkerk, 1999; Platow, Mills, & Morrison, 2000). As such, the individual chooses to place the self in various categories that will define it in terms of the adopted group's attitudes and behaviour, which will then be adopted by the self. The self is depersonalised and becomes a group member with prescribed attitudes and behaviour. The salience of the different identities and categories is dependent on the context and is dynamic in nature. Some categories and attributes are more important than others but all are fluid and context-specific.

Social environments (including remote and virtual) provide the individual with a subjective social frame of reference for comparing their own attitudes and behaviours with others. In this social comparative context, the individual's cognitive function tends to categorise based on that which best explains similarities of those within the group and differences of those outside the group, and so produces stereotypes. As the individual chooses to locate themselves in one or other of these social categories (or groups), the term *self-categorisation* is applied. Abrams and Hogg (1990b) explain this as;

> To the extent that the self falls in one of the social categories and is hence self-categorized, self-perception becomes ingroup-stereotypic, and, since the social comparative dimension can be attitudinal or behavioural, self-conduct becomes ingroup-normative. In this way, self-categorization theory explains how conformity to group norms arises from salient self-inclusive social categorizations.

Put very simply this means that individuals self-select into accessible (Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987) and favoured social categories (as in the social identification process), thereby electing to conform to the attitudes and behaviours of that social group which they perceive as important (adopting the social identity). As Hogg and Turner explain, "ingroup identification is a necessary precondition for conformity" (1987, p. 139). This is the essence of how the social identification process leads to the salience of a social identity. However, as noted earlier, social identities will shift in salience, or prominence in the cognitive foreground, as proximity or social situations shift in the individual's day-to-day socialisation (Abrams & Hogg, 1990b; Sarbin & Scheibe, 1983; Tajfel, 1982). This is expressed as *context-specific* by many Social Identity Theory (SIT) researchers. Some of these or contexts are considered in the following section.

2.4.4   The Contexts of Social Identification

Social identification has some parallels with many other theories focussing on identity in different contexts. Although Social Identity Theory researchers rarely refer to role identities theory, such research is only one of many well-documented areas considering the relative importance individuals place on different roles (Stryker, 2007; Stryker & Serpe, 1982). Stryker and Burke (2000, p. 284) delineate Social Identity Theory as "common identification with a group" and Identity Theory as "meanings that persons attach to the multiple roles they typically play in highly differentiated contemporary societies".

Social identification is context-specific (Hogg, Meehan, & Farquharson, 2010) and therefore, the groups the individual identifies with will vary across time and place. Many researchers of social influence in social contexts focus on interpersonal influence. However, many commentators (see Prislin & Wood, 2005 for a review) have recommended that social context should be further conceptualised and researched in areas such as groups and social behaviour (Eagly & Chaiken, 2005). Such a contribution to research would include different types of social groups that have not been previously identified.

Although the development of Social Identity Theory has its origins in the discipline of social psychology, there has been considerable application of the theory in disciplines such as organisational behaviour (including Hallier & Baralou, 2010; Haslam, Powell, & Turner,

2000; Topa, Morales, & Moriano, 2009; van Knippenberg, 2000), and education (including Abrams, Sparkes, & Hogg, 1985; Kelly, 2009; Lewis & Crisp, 2004; Wharton, 2007; Young, 2010), and media studies (including Coover, 2001; Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 1997; Easter, 1999; Harwood, 1999b; Ramasubramanian, 2010a). Other forms of identity have also been researched extensively in the marketing and management disciplines as brand identity (Bartholomew, 2010; Lee, Klobas, Tezinde, & Murphy, 2010) and corporate identity (Cornelissen, Haslam, & Balmer, 2007; Money, et al., 2010).

While some commentators have proposed that social influence should be considered in a wider context than the inter-personal dimension, others consider that physical presence need not be a requirement of the context. With the exception of media studies, other disciplines have mostly observed easily identifiable and contained contexts, such as work groups or school classes. However, possibly because of the development of mass media and social media (a form of social remoteness), more researchers are now investigating remote contexts such as television viewers and the online environment (Abrams & Giles, 2007; Shen, Yu, & Khalifa, 2010; Slater & Hayes, 2010; Stefanone, Lackaff, & Rosen, 2008; Volcic & Andrejevic, 2009). Further, social identity theorists (Tajfel, 1978b) have referred to personal identity (idiosyncratic attributes) and social identity (the self in groups) but more recently mass media has been seen as creating a *virtual identity* within a media community (Altheide, 2000), using a method of *virtual social interaction*. Further, the impact of media on everyday life has been noted as, "Ultimately, the media's ability to produce people's social identities, in terms of both a sense of unity and difference, may be their powerful and important effect" (Grossberg, Wartella, & Whitney, 1998, p. 146).

As well as groups identifiable by their proximity, other research has focussed on contexts identifiable by the groups' similarities in activities or interests. These are diverse and include demographically-specific television viewers (Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005; Mastro, 2003; Ramasubramanian, 2010a), fans of science fiction series such as *Star Trek*, sports teams, fashion, music and cosmetic surgery (Hasinoff, 2008; Jenkins, 1986; Nabi, 2009; Tekman & Hortacsu, 2002; Theodorakis, Dimmock, Wann, & Barlas, 2010).

In summary, there has been a wealth of research in different contexts but there is an increased recognition that the context of social identification may also be in a more remote or virtual context, such as television audiences.

2.4.5   The Purpose of Social Identification

The previous sections have addressed the process of social identification and the different contexts of social identification. This section addresses the purpose of the social identification process in these different contexts. Specifically, the issue of the functionality of social identification and what purpose it may serve for the individual is considered from the leading theorists in the field. However, previous research "has not established a unified account of why, given a choice, people would want to be a group member in the first place" (Abrams, 2009). Some research of possible purposes is discussed here.

One function of group membership is the "provision of an identity and associated consensual belief system that informs us who we are and how we should view and treat others, and how others will view and treat us" (Hogg, Sherman, Dierselhuis, Maitner, & Moffitt, 2007, p. 135). The concept of identification with a group, assumes that the individual seeks groups with similar behaviour to their own, to justify their own behaviour or to seek groups for guidance on justifiable behaviour. Similarly, social identification with groups has been related to the individual's perception of high and low social status in many studies (including Schwarzwald, Koslowsky, & Allouf, 2005; Terry, 2003; Van Kleef, Steinel, van Knippenberg, Hogg, & Svensson, 2007; Veenstra, Haslam, & Reynolds, 2004). Moreover, individuals may identify with groups to justify their views, to reduce uncertainty, or to enhance their self-esteem (Abrams & Hogg, 1988; De Cremer, 2001; Goldberg, Riordan, & Schaffer, 2010; Hogg & Abrams, 1993; Jetten, Hogg, & Mullin, 2000). As explained in earlier sections, this is done through self-categorisation and affectively through normative or informational influence.

Consequently, researchers have found that social identification (for the purpose of self-enhancement or self-esteem) can be used by the individual to legitimise otherwise socially unacceptable behaviour such as drug use, racism, sexual harassment and extreme religions (Burris & Jackson, 2000; James, Kim, & Armijo, 2000; Maass, Cadinu, Guarnieri, &

Grasselli, 2003; Mastro, Behm-Morawitz, & Kopacz, 2008). Although researching extreme deviant behaviour could be very problematic, it is not difficult to see how contexts such as child pornography groups may use social identification as a means of joining with others for reinforcement of their views or actions.

According to Moreland and Levine's model of group socialization (1994), the group involves different roles that can be desirable because of the power, status or prestige attached to them. These are often prototypical roles such as an opinion leader and members may strive to take on these roles through continued involvement, innovation, and learning, thus leading to a sense of achievement (Blumler & Fox, 1982).

The theory of optimal distinctiveness has also been posited as a reason for social identification with a group. Research has found that ingroup homogeneity and group distinctiveness can allow the individual to feel that, as part of a group, they are distinct from others. This will enhance their self and satisfy their need for uniqueness (Brewer, 1993). Contrary to much of the research showing the individual strivings for self-enhancement, one study of school children in Madrid, found that the striving for self-verification was greater than that for self-enhancement (Gómez, Seyle, Huici, & Swann Jr, 2009).

In summary, the purposes of social identification with groups are varied but usually include information seeking, risk and uncertainty reduction, social legitimacy, and self-enhancement.

2.4.6   The Subsequent Attitudes and Behaviour of Social Identification

The previous sections have considered the purposes and contexts of the social identification process. The following section will consider the effect of that social identification process, namely the attitudes and behaviours of social identification.

It has been suggested that attitudes provide insights into identity and that social identification can influence attitudes through persuasion, dissonance, and vicarious dissonance (Hogg & Smith, 2007a). As Sherif and Cantril suggested "man's socialization is revealed mainly in his attitudes formed in relation to the values or norms of his reference group or groups" (Sherif & Cantril, 1947, p. 525). This insight provided the basis for many future analyses of social

influence, group interaction and resultant attitudes, and thus behaviours. As explained in an earlier section, behaviourists have defined influence in terms of informational influence and normative influence. As such, the individual strives to be similar to significant others by seeking information from them and learning what is normative behaviour for public approval (Ajzen, 2001; Postmes & Spears, 1998). In fact, social identification has been found to hinder creativity in one's effort to conform to group norms (Adarves-Yorno, Postmes, & Haslam, 2007). However, social identity theorists suggest that this influence goes further and is internalised in beliefs, attitudes, and behaviour observed by valued others (Abrams & Hogg, 2004a; Bagozzi, Gurhan-Canli, & Priester, 2002; Hogg & Smith, 2007b). Therefore, group members will judge themselves and other group members by the same criteria, such as acceptable social behaviour. This has been differentiated as "attitudes are 'in here' whereas norms are out there'" (Hogg & Smith, 2007b, p. 89). While individuals strive to avoid contradictions, such effects are accepted as being context-specific and fluid (Ahronson & Cameron, 2007; Altheide, 2000; Windahl, 1981), as in social identification.

Social identification has been found to also enhance political activity in difficult situations such as the Brazilian Amazon (de Souza, Bicalho, & Hoefle, 2010) and Northern Ireland (Irwing & Stringer, 2000). In fact, social identification has been used to explain political action in many situations, countries and cultures (including Abrams & Emler, 1992; Brewer, 2001; Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, & Ethier, 1995; Emmons, 2001), and similarly, in nationalism (Vogler, 2000; Volcic & Andrejevic, 2009), radicalism (Hogg, et al., 2010), perceptions of reunification (Kim & Ng, 2008), and religious fundamentalism (Burris & Jackson, 2000).

Studies of women who socially identified as feminists found they were more likely to acknowledge "the existence of sexism, view the current gender system as unjust, and believe that women should work together in order to enact change" (Liss & Erchull, 2010, p. 85) and similarly, support equality struggles (Burn, Aboud, & Moyles, 2000). From a different perspective, social identification generates group behaviours, such as ethnocentrism and stereotyping (De Cremer, 2001; Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Oldmeadow & Fiske, 2010). This has been further defined as Opposition to Equality (OEQ) and Group-Based Dominance (GBD) as forms of prejudice (Kugler, Cooper, & Nosek, 2010). However, a study of protestant college students found social identification led to perspective-taking, in other

words anticipating or predicting other's attitude or behaviour, as well as empathy (Giesbrecht, 1998).

Researchers have also found that social identification can be a useful tool in the field of education, namely educational engagement whereby the students are more likely to engage if they socially identify with fellow students who are engaged in education (Kelly, 2009; Schmader, 2002; Young, 2010) and similarly for education professionals (Lewis & Crisp, 2004; Wharton, 2007). Social identification has also been studied in online environments. In a study of what was referred to as 'virtual communities', social identity was found to be related to social presence dimensions as well as knowledge contribution (Shen, Yu, & Khalifa, 2007). In another study of the online environment, a balance of similarity and uniqueness was found to enhance social identification amongst computer-mediated groups (Kim, 2010). Sports enthusiasts have been another field of focus for researchers of social identification. Loyalty, involvement, interest and attendance have all been found to enhance social identification (Barber, Eccles, & Stone, 2001; Boyle & Magnusson, 2007; Branscombe & Wann, 1992; Fink, Parker, Brett, & Higgins, 2009; Todd & Kent, 2009). In another area of interest, many researchers have considered the detrimental effects of behaviour of individuals in their formative years, influenced by peer groups, in activities such as smoking (Slater & Hayes, 2010; Stewart-Knox et al., 2005), drug use (James, et al., 2000), and violence (Gordon, 1996; Merrilees et al., 2011). Similarly, social identification has been related to deviant behaviour in adults, such as sexism and sexual harassment (Cameron, 2001; Kaiser, Vick, & Major, 2006; Maass, et al., 2003). A further area of interest has been that of organisational behaviour and the effect of social identity and workplace employees' attitudes and behaviours, including within the military (Gibson & Condor, 2009; Topa, et al., 2009; Voss, 2005). Social identification has been found to have effects on buffering employees from workplace stress (Haslam & van Dick, 2011), worker's turnover intentions (Abrams, Ando, & Hinkle, 1998), resentment (Baldry & Hallier, 2010), unity (van Knippenberg, Haslam, & Platow, 2007), leadership (van Knippenberg, van Knippenberg, De Cremer, & Hogg, 2004), workplace contact (Brown, et al., 1986), motivation to work (van Knippenberg, 2000), and employees' willingness to engage in citizenship behaviour (Haslam, et al., 2000). However, as can be seen from these references, research that has concentrated on consumer attitudes and behaviour has been given scant attention.

2.4.7   Summary

Social Identity Theory (SIT) provides a socio-psychological perspective (Abrams & Hogg, 1999) on social interaction that recognises the significance and (informational or normative) influence of group membership on the individual's sense of self. This theory is explained through self-categorisation by the individual, and influenced by perceptions of similarity, involvement, significant others, belonging and group socialisation (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000a). Such individuals will judge themselves and other group members on common and significant attributes of social identity. These attributes are often epitomised in a prototypical identity of one or more members of the group. Such prototypicality is a subjective representation of the defining attributes of the group, such as beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours. Similarly, social identification provides an identity informed by acceptable social behaviour within the group (Hogg, et al., 2007). However, there appears to be no research that considers the relevance of identity attributes specifically related to socialisation.

As social identification is context-specific, researchers have chosen to study the existence of this psychological process in a wide range of groups, such as interest-focussed groups, organisations and workgroups, virtual communities, and television audiences. Such groups are usually geographically proximate and, with the exception of the last, easily identifiable. There have been many considerations of the purpose of social identification. However the purposes identified have been limited to a relatively small number of common themes, including self-esteem, self enhancement, status, and uncertainty reduction. Further, there seems to be a lack of research to ascertain identity attributes of individuals who socially identify. Such research may provide findings for future research investigating identity attributes related to the purposes cited above. How social identification affects the attitudes of the individual has been extensively researched and has included positive and negative effects. However, the review of the literature has shown a gap in the research of behavioural effects.

Having considered the research on social identity from a broad perspective, a review of the literature is now presented on research pertaining to social identification in the area of media and communications, and specifically Reality Television. As television has been considered as also able to generate social identity in users (Grossberg, et al., 1998), this raises the first research question.

2.5   IDENTIFICATION IN MEDIA USE

2.5.1   Introduction

Many communications media have been shown to influence individuals through identification, including specialist magazines and radio (Armstrong & Rubin, 1989; Baltruschat, 2009b; Taddeo & Dvorak, 2007). As in the social identification process, social and psychological factors mediate between television messages and audience effects (Rubin, 2002). For example, people use media as a guide to behaviour in reference to others portrayed therein (Perry, 2002). Despite this surge in media use for social purposes, and suggestions that media may be used to reinforce positive views of the individual's groups, there is still comparatively little media research that has related social groups to media use (by the consumer) (Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall, 2010). However, there have been some considerable analyses through related areas of social psychology. Some research areas including variations in personality, social affiliation, and motivation have been shown to affect exposure, cultivation, parasocial interaction, and identification (Carveth & Alexander, 1985; Perse, 1990, 1992; Perse & Rubin, 1990; Rubin & McHugh, 1987). Some of these key theories and research are discussed below.

In a qualitative study of adolescents, Philpott found evidence of positive and negative television's effect on identity formation of public and private selves, in young television viewers (2000). New forms of media have also used identification, and patrons of online social networking have been shown to use it for the purpose of identity creation (Young, 2009). Such identification can lead to changes in attitudes and behaviour. The greater the degree of identification, the more important the television viewer will see the attributes of those who portray it and identification will mediate effects (Basil, 1996). Similarly, communication media theorists have specified cultivation theory and parasocial interaction as forms of television influence facilitated through identification. Parasocial interaction has often been shown in the Uses and Gratifications framework (Conway & Rubin, 1991; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005; Rubin, 2002; Rubin & Perse, 1987a) to provide evidence of

identification with television characters (Bernache-Assollant, Laurin, Bouchet, Bodet, & Lacassagne, 2010; Duck, et al., 1995; Krcmar, Grela, & Lin, 2007).

Another area of social influence through television that has received some research focus is education entertainment. Harris (2004) says that entertainment media can be used explicitly and intentionally in society for socially positive purposes (2004). Also, education entertainment as a television use has found identification and similarity with television characters to be influential (Moyer-Gusé & Nabi, 2010).

However, none of the research presented in this section focuses on the issue of the social influence process within specific groups, or how the individual (or group) uses the media; rather they consider how the media uses the individual. Addressing this issue, such differentiation is made in the social identity model of media usage and effects which restores agency to the user, as does the Uses and Gratifications framework (Reid, Giles, & Abrams, 2004) and considers group level interaction. Bringing these two theoretical standpoints together, Harwood (1999b) suggests that individuals may use media portrayals for social identity gratification.

2.5.2   Social Identity Theory in Media Use

Social media is one such communication dimension that has received considerable attention from both communication researchers and social psychology researchers (Gilpin, Palazzolo, & Brody, 2010; Parmentier, 2010; Pornsakulvanich, Haridakis, & Rubin, 2008) but there appears to be none that has considered how this links directly to Social Identity Theory (SIT). This is despite Hogg and Reid's (2006) suggestion that the Social Identity Theory perspective would be capable of providing a truly integrative framework for positioning social influence in the communications discipline.

Communication media has a pivotal role in social influence, how users acquire identities, and establishing group norms (Hogg & Reid, 2006). As these are principles of Social Identity Theory, this provides basic support for the assumption of the social identity process being active in communication media. Furthermore, the same authors suggest that many studies of phenomena researched in social psychology from a Social Identity Theory (SIT) perspective

have not given sufficient consideration to diverse communications dimensions. The increased social interaction and influence of television as one such communication medium has been justified: "rather than functioning simply as channels for conveying information between two or more environments, are themselves social contexts that foster certain forms of interaction and social identities" (Meyrowitz, 1997, p. 59).

More specifically, media has the capacity to unite scattered users into a cohesive group by providing a common set of values and information to form a group social identity rather than through the more traditional forms of religion or family (Chenoweth, 2009; Christin, 2002). Harwood and Roy (2005) affirm that considering Social Identity Theory (SIT) in media research provides potential for further understanding of the social use of media as a basis for investigating the evolution of modern media such as Reality Television. Any research into Social Identity Theory within the medium of Reality Television would go some way to addressing some of these shortcomings and adding to the existing body of knowledge in social identity in the media context.

One area of communications research that has given some acknowledgement of Social Identity Theory in the individual's use of media is studies applying Uses and Gratifications (U & G) theory. Both of these theories were detailed in earlier sections. Further, the research of U & G as a motivation for media use was reviewed. In the following section, the relationship between these two theories is discussed.

The theory of U & G was originally developed by Katz et al (1973) as a typology of the needs met by media usage and included to strengthen the individual's understanding, status and contact with social groups. Since then, the U & G framework has received considerable focus which has been detailed in a previous section. Although the relationship between U & G Theory and Social Identity Theory is a relatively recent development in the disciplines of social psychology and media research, there is some recognition of its existence and this is now considered.

U & G gained from media can be related to personal relationships and personal identity and subsequent effects on attitude and behaviour (Nabi & Krcmar, 2004a), as does Social Identity Theory (SIT). Further, as in Social Identity Theory, Harwood and Roy take the position that

Uses and Gratifications (U & G) can be usefully conceptualised at the level of group analysis (2005). Combining cultivation theory and U & G, this social identity model of media usage and effects was developed to demonstrate how users will gratify their need to reinforce their beliefs and social identity through media choice. Similarly, Slater discusses the relevance of the model to the U & G framework (2007a). Further, the flexibility of this model acknowledges the media environment's ability to adapt to different contexts, developing cultures and groups through reinforcing spirals (Reid, et al., 2004). Slater (2007) also demonstrated how these mutually reinforcing spirals were akin to positive feedback loops and so media and lifestyle groups were able to perpetually influence each other. Such theoretical considerations and modelling have provided justification for research of this relationship and are reviewed below.

As pointed out earlier, despite the theoretical justification for considering Social Identity Theory in the U & G framework, there has been little research to provide evidence of the social identification process in media use. However, there have been some notable exceptions and they are now considered.

The U & G framework posits that individuals purposively use media for specific purposes. Harwood and Roy (2005) support the conceptualization of U & G at the group level in television audiences, providing extensive evidence of social interaction and social influence in television from the perspective of Social Identity Theory. Research of one such conceptualization has provided evidence that television viewers seek out media messages that provide favourable comparisons of in-groups (those which the viewer belongs to) with out-groups (Blumler, 1985; Harwood, 1999b; Katz, et al., 1973) and thus enhance their social identity. Also, drawing on U & G theory and the social identity perspective, Denham (2004b) suggested that social norms are as fundamental to media enjoyment as is the content.

Many researchers have considered the U & G of media for particular group identities. From the perspective of political identity, Duck, Terry and Hogg (1998) also used the social identity framework to measure the use of the media in political campaigns, reflecting the evolving nature of group behaviour. Abrams and Giles (2007) used a U & G framework to survey African Americans' motives for television viewing and found that those with strong ethnic group identity did not predict media selection. However, it did predict that they

avoided shows where their ethnic group were under-represented. A similar study in the U.S., Germany, and the U.K. found evidence of identification with shows with an emphasis on those of the same gender as the viewer, but not necessarily the same national identity (Krcmer & Trepte). Further, Social Identity Theory has also been linked to portrayals of racism in television (Mastro, et al., 2008). Viewers have also been shown to seek out shows that depict characters of a similar age to gratify their need for age identification. This dynamic has been discussed from the perspective of both social identity and U & G theories and was termed social identity gratifications (Harwood, 1999b).

As discussed earlier, much of the early research on social influence took the standpoint of symbolic interactionism and laid the foundations for future research of social psychology. Both the traditional perspective of symbolic interaction and the more recent perspective of social identity consider the self to be a product of social interaction (Hogg, Terry, & White, 1995). As symbolic interaction is also the basis for social identity it is useful to consider this theoretical perspective in the Reality Television context.

As discussed earlier, and credited to Mead (1938) and Blumer (1969), symbolic interaction has three tenets:

1. People act towards things on the basis of what they mean to them,
2. Meaning is derived from social interaction with others,
3. Meaning is handled and modified through interpretation and dealings with these things (Blumler & Katz, 1974b).

As such, the social identity of the Reality Television contestant may be perceived through such exchanges and subsequently used to represent meaning within the culture of a group or society. Reality Television shows are seen as case studies of human interaction within groups and how people construct and manage their identity (Vaughan & Hogg, 2008) so consideration should be given to how this also affects human interaction of the viewers with the viewed. As MacDougall (2005) affirms, an individual's symbolic interaction and sense of self can be gleaned from the media.

Each of the above tenets (Blumler & Katz, 1974b) is considered in relation to Reality Television viewers and contestants:

1. *People act towards things on the basis of what they mean to them.* Continued viewing of Reality Television and created perceptions of contestants would suggest action by spectators and meaning (Baltruschat, 2009b). As such, it is important to research these perceptions and meanings.

2. *Meaning is derived from social interaction with others.* There has been research showing that viewers of Reality Television and contestants use these topics in social interaction with others who have similar interests (Hall, 2009a)

3. *Meaning is handled and modified through interpretation and dealings with these things.* This is quite a broad statement and could be seen as relating to many areas of Reality Television, social interaction, commercial and marketing strategies, and celebrity creation. For example, the Reality Television show producers aim to create *meaning* by emphasising how contestants can be *interpreted* as similar to viewers (Hall, 2009a). This is then *modified* by a *before and after* strategy (Mazzeo, Trace, Mitchell, & Walker Gow, 2007). It is proposed that the viewer *deals* with this by continued viewing and social interaction which *modifies* the status of the contestant from unknown to social identity. Such *dealings* may then be modified and extended through involvement with the contest and on to media coverage, as well as *dealings* (interaction) with social groups. Research of such a proposition may show how viewers derive meaning, and construct the social identity of contestants, as well as provide further evidence of the effect of *water cooler TV* referred to earlier (Biressi & Nunn, 2005).

However, whilst symbolic interaction theory views society as a "relatively undifferentiated, cooperative whole" (Stryker & Serpe, 1982, p. 206), Social Identity Theory (SIT) considers differences in group identity and the individual's propensity to adapt their identity to different contexts. Further, Social Identity Theory "offers a much more social understanding of the creation, nature, and function of identity than other psychological models" (Abdelal, Herrera, Johnston, & McDermott, 2009, p. 349). Social Identity Theory is now considered in the context of Reality Television.

2.5.3 Social Identity Theory and Reality Television

As mentioned earlier, there has been little focus on Social Identity Theory in media research to date. Further, much of this research has used groups that are easily identifiable. These have included identities such as political stance, race, and age. One Reality Television example showed the popularity of a show called *Bondi Rescue* was directly linked to Australian identity (Price, 2010).

The basis of such groupings is synonymous with developing marketing segmentation 'groups' on the basis of consumer attitudes and demographics. However, market segmentation is increasingly recognising the grouping of consumers based on psychographics, i.e. lifestyles. It appears that there is little such recognition in communication research. In other words, there seems to be a gap in media and social psychological research that considers how the social identification process may apply to many lifestyle groups. Further, there has been little recognition of the opportunity to measure such lifestyle groups through Reality Television patronage. These opportunities have arisen because of the increasing focus of such shows on particular lifestyles, such as gardening, property renovation, weight loss, dating, parenting, dog ownership, and cooking. Such shows are able to portray the participants as ordinary people, similar to the viewer. They can also be perceived as prototypical members of a group, to whom others refer. This format shows clear parallels with the social identification construct, that considers similarity and prototypes as key concepts.

2.5.4 Summary

The literature review, thus far has considered the influence of media (including television) on the individual, groups and society from the perspective of social influence and social interaction. Research has been shown to focus on specific groups and behaviours but with little attention given to the identity attributes of the individual. Arguments of the individual's cognitive use of media for their own motives have been given in the Uses and Gratifications (U & G) framework. Further, Social Identity Theory (SIT) has been shown to be evident in media and used as a motive, including within the U & G framework. Few researchers have

considered this in the context of Reality Television despite its obvious significance to both Symbolic Interaction and Social Identity Theory.

A summary of the literature reviewed pertaining to the main themes of Social Identity Theory that researchers have commonly used is presented in Table 3, and suggested gaps in research are also given. Previous research measuring social identification can be grouped into four common themes; the characteristics of the particular groups with which the individual socially identifies, the characteristics of the individuals who are typical of the group with whom the individual socially identifies, the motivations of the individual who socially identifies with groups, and the effects of social identification on the individual.

Table 3: Common Themes of Research in Social Identification

THEMES COMMONLY USED IN SIT ESEARCH	EXAMPLES OF PREVIOUS RESEARCH
CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICULAR GROUPS WITH WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL SOCIALLY IDENTIFIES	• IDEALS/MORALS/BELIEFS: e.g. Political (Abrams & Emler, 1992; Bliuc, McGarty, & Reynolds, 2003), religious (Burris & Jackson, 2000; Chenoweth, 2009), elitism (Flockhart, 2001; French, 2010) • INTERESTS/ASPIRATIONS: e.g. fashion (López-Guimerà, Levine, Sánchez-Carracedo, & Fauquet, 2010), sport (Bruner & Spink, 2006(Burdsey & Chappell, 2004)) • PROXIMITY/SOCIETY: e.g. study groups (Davies, 2001), work groups (Barreto & Ellemers, 2000), professional organisations (van Dick, 2002) • DEVIANCE/HEALTH: e.g. smoking (Stewart-Knox, et al., 2005), drinking (Barber, et al., 2001), drugs (Minnebo & Eggermont, 2007), sexual behaviour (Abrams, Carter, & Hogg, 1989), out-groups (Brewer, 1993)
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE TYPICAL OF THE GROUP WITH WHOM THE INDIVIDUAL SOCIALLY IDENTIFIES	• Prototypical(Hogg, et al., 1993) • Innovative(Adarves-Yorno, et al., 2007) • Similar (Brewer, 1993) • Attractive (Bos & Ellemers, 2006) • Expert (Gokakkar, 2007) • Trustworthy (Foddy & Platow, 2000) • Authentic (Chalmers, 2009)
MOTIVATIONS OF THE INDIVIDUAL WHO SOCIAL IDENTIFIES WITH GROUPS	• Increase self-esteem (Hogg, 1990) • To belong (Hogg, 2006) • Informational-Normative (Hogg & Reid, 2006) • Importance/involvement (Duck, et al., 1997) • To decrease risk/uncertainty (Goldberg, et al., 2010; Hogg, 2010) • To legitimise behaviour and/or beliefs (self-justification (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004)) • Accessibility (Althaus & Coe, 2011) • Group dynamics (Althaus & Coe, 2011; Dietz-Uhler & Murrell, 1998)
EFFECTS OF SOCIAL IDENTIFICATION ON THE INDIVIDUAL	• Self enhancement (Freeman, 2001) • The greater good (Lewis & Crisp, 2004) • Change in attitude (Hogg & Terry, 2000) • Change in behaviour – consistent, contradictory, compliance (Norton, Monin, Cooper, & Hogg, 2003).(Anastasio, Rose, & Chapman, 1999) • Change in belief (Aguiar & de Francisco, 2009) • Level of influence – individual (Barker, 2009), group (Bagozzi, et al., 2007), national (Abrams & Emler, 1992), sustained (Haslam et al., 2006), situational (Forehand, Deshpandé, & Reed Ii, 2002)

From the review of the literature of Social Identity Theory, some of the gaps in research have been identified as below.

2.5.5   Gaps in Research

- The main focus of Social Identity Theory research is on the importance and presence of group identification rather than why one individual is more likely to identify than another.
- Usually considers intra-group and inter-group but not how interpersonal may lead to social identification.
- Often measures social identity group characteristics rather than individual identity attributes.
- Large amount of research on group attitudes but lack of research on behaviours.
- Very little research on how informational influence changes behaviour – usually related to changes in individual attitude or deviance, rather than learning as a group.
- Possibly more significantly, media effects research has not measured social identity influence in lifestyle-specific groups, such as cooking.
- The commonalities between social identity and media influence have not been explored, e.g. similarity, authenticity, norms, informational influence, group attitude change, source characteristics.
- Despite being a mass communication tool, media effects, generally, measure the effect on (individual) attitudes and identity – not at an identifiable group (mass) level.
- Social Identification has been theorised but not found to be measured in the Reality Television context.

As research on identity theories relating to media use was found to have several gaps, a broader review is now given of literature pertaining to identity theories and how they may relate to media use, particularly in Reality Television. Further, consideration is given to how different identity theories may relate to each other. In particular the relationship between Social Identity Theory (SIT) and Aspects of Identity (AOI) theory is considered.

2.6   IDENTITY THEORIES IN MEDIA USE

As shown in the previous section, there is evidence from previous research of a relationship between social identification and media usage. The following sections will further discuss Social Identity Theory with other theories of identity as causes and effects of the consumer's media use.

2.6.1   Identity Theories

Identity and culture of a society are created through similarity of a population's values and attitudes (Byrne, 1971). Although members of a society or group will become similar to other members by adopting the norms of that group, there may already be similarities present that lead to social identification (Hogg, 2009; Hogg & Mullin, 1999; Krcmer & Trepte; Nesdale & Flesser, 2001). This means that individuals may seek out groups based on attributes that they see as significant in themselves, and therefore in others. Motivation for seeking out such individuals has been defined as the need for self-esteem, self-improvement, and justification of one's own attitudes and behaviour (Barlow, Louis, & Terry, 2010; Medrano, Aierbe, & Santos Orejudo, 2009; Schmitt, Branscombe, & Kappen, 2003), or to differentiate themselves from out-groups (Brewer, 1993), for stereotyping (Brown, 2000), for organisation-based self-esteem (Chattopadhyay & George, 2001), persuasion (Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 1998), status enhancement and uncertainty reduction (Goldberg, et al., 2010), and interpersonal evaluation (Kast, 2008). Self-esteem has received considerable research effort in social psychology but "while it clearly does play an important role, self-esteem may be one of a number of motives and effects of different forms of group behaviour. Possibly more fundamental is some form of self-evaluative motive" (Hogg, 1990, p. 36). This also suggests a judgement of the behaviour of others as well as one's own, for the purpose of self-justification.

Studies of source communication have shown similarity as an important component in attracting the spectator to the transmitter (such as a media person) along with familiarity through repeated exposure (Gregg, 2005; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005; Singh & Teoh, 1999), otherwise referred to as involvement. Such analyses parallel social identification models that advocate reinforcing spirals and positive feedback loops to explain how continued media use

leads to social identification (Krcmer & Trepte; Slater & Hayes, 2010; Slater, 2007). Likewise, media research has often looked at the influence of news media and how individuals are more likely to be interested in local stories about people in groups similar to themselves (Kamhawi & Grabe, 2006; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall; Mastro, 2003; Rubin, et al., 1985) or Reality Television shows featuring ethnic minorities (Bell-Jordan, 2008b), for example.

Smith and Wood (2003) refer to Reality Television-induced consumerism as a form of identification and identity creation, whereby the viewer feels they are similar to the contestants, or choose to be similar to them (as in the social identity process). Likewise, "the greater the identification, the more likely the viewer will see important attributes in the celebrity" (Basil, 1996, p. 478). Further, enjoyment of Reality Television leads to involvement in group discussion and identification with the contestants (Reiss & Wiltz, 2004). Harwood researched similarity in television and found "young adults' selection of shows featuring young characters leads to increased age group identification" (Harwood, 1999a, p. 123). However, a study of teen pregnancy and the influence of television characters found perceived similarity alone to be less effective than identification with the characters (Moyer-Gusé, 2010).

Similarity clearly leads to media use, enjoyment, involvement, social change, and identification with media characters. Therefore, if Reality Television is to be shown as a context where the social identity process take place, it follows that the contestants must be perceived to have similarities with the viewer and the viewer's society. However, these similarities may lack some certainty. Much of the research considers similarity alone as a motive for media selection without considering identification, or assumes identification on the basis of similarities defined by the researcher (Coover, 2001; Mastro, et al., 2008). Others consider identification on an individual basis rather than a group, as in social identification (Harwood, 1999b; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005; Kim & Rubin, 1997). Most significantly though, no research has been found that measures identity attributes that may explain why individuals become involved in the social identification process within the media context. As discussed earlier, Abrams (2009) suggested that there has been no systematic approach to identifying the individual's motivation for social identification through media. This is in spite

of Blumler and Katz (1974b) asserting that media effects may be based on personal identity motivation to promote reinforcement effects.

Whilst some media research (from a psychological perspective) has considered cognitive, affective and emotional needs, there has been little focus on the identity attributes of users. Such identity factors establish how the individual processes stimuli (such as Reality TV shows) and whether or not they behave consistently (Brehm & Cohen, 1962). One exception has been the study of parasocial interaction (Kim & Rubin, 1997; Rubin & McHugh, 1987; Rubin & Rubin, 2001) but this is often from the psychiatric perspective of personality disorders, and on an individual basis. In the context of this study, it is proposed that viewers with a propensity to social identification (high identifiers) will possess particular (social) identity attributes. Further, the viewers' perceptions of similarity (in the contestants) can be measured in terms of identity attributes. In other words, viewers will identify with contestants who have similar identity attributes to their own. Drawing from the literature reviewed it is proposed that Aspects of Identity is a measure of such identity attributes and is discussed below.

Theories and research pertinent to this study have been developed around two concepts of identity: a) Aspects of Identity theory (AOI): personal identity and social identity, and b) Social Identity Theory (SIT). These can be delineated by their disciplines; the former being from a psychology focus and the latter being from social psychology. Besides the obvious confusion that may be caused by the common terminology, this may be further complicated by articles that consider that "The basic premise of the social identity perspective is that individuals have a personal identity as well as a range of social identities." (Adarves-Yorno, et al., 2007, p. 411). This may have been drawn from Tajfel and Turner (1986) who posited a distinction between personal and social identity whereby the former influenced interpersonal behaviour and the latter influenced group behaviour. At this stage, it is useful to clarify what exactly each of the theories is, what are their commonalities, their differences and their relationship. The following section will discuss this.

2.6.2   Social Identity Theory (SIT)

Social identity theorists challenge the concept of attributing group behaviour to individual characteristics. Tajfel (1982a) argues there is a social identity based on group membership, as well as an individual identity. Social identity refers to individuals within a group process and intergroup relations (Onorato & Turner, 2002; Turner & Onorato, 1999) which differentiates group phenomena from interpersonal phenomena. Individuals have a set of attributes that they associate with different categories that define the individual and social identities (self-categorisation). As introduced earlier, *Self-categorisation* is the process of placing the self in social categories (groups) that may be informational (belief) or normative (compliance) to create a fuzzy set of attributes that make up the self; and are dynamic and contextual (Bergami & Bagozzi, 2000b; Branscombe & Wann, 1992; Krueger & DiDonato, 2008). Social Identity Theory stresses the salience of the individual's transient characteristics of their self-identity within different groups and different contexts to explain group behaviour. However, it does not exclude the individual's personal identity attributes from also playing a role in social identification. Social Identity Theory merely demonstrates that the individuals' behaviour can be partly explained by the social identification process. In proposing Social Identity Theory, Tajfel described self-identity as a continuum of 'self-images' with the personalised self at one end and the social self at the other (Tajfel, 1981). The personalised self refers to the stable identity attributes, and the social self refers to the social identity pertaining to Social Identity Theory. As high identifiers (and all other individuals) will, of course, possess stable identity attributes, there is considerable theoretical evidence to suggest that these identity attributes can be measured in terms of *Aspects of Identity* theory.

2.6.3   Aspects of Identity Theory (AOI)

Aspects of Identity (AOI) theory proposes that one's (self) identity attributes comprise of two general aspects. Social Identity "involves a person's social roles and relationships" and personal identity is their "private conception of self and feelings of continuity and uniqueness" (Cheek & Briggs, 1982, p. 402). Identity orientations refer to the relative importance that individuals place on social identity attributes or personal identity attributes when constructing their self-definitions (Cheek, Smith, & Tropp, 2002). Aspects of (self)

identity (social and personal identity attributes) are generalised and enduring, and can indicate a tendency to act in a certain way (Hagger, Anderson, Kyriakaki, & Darkings, 2007). The social identity attributes tend to be associated with social roles such as company employee, whilst personal identity attributes are associated with more individual pursuits, such as pursuing a career. In one such study, employees with predominantly social identity attributes were shown to prefer jobs that offer social rewards such as status and friendship whilst those with predominantly personal identity attributes preferred personally-relevant job outcomes, such as personal growth (Leary, Wheeler, & Jenkins, 1986b). In the same study, social identity attributes were associated with team sports for social reasons and personal identity with individual sports. According to the theorists who developed the most frequently used measure of Aspects of Identity (Cheek & Tropp, 2002; Chen & Yao, 2010; Davies, 2005; Hagger, et al., 2007; Leary, et al., 1986b), the importance of one's social identity attributes is believed to be dependent on valuations and reinforcements of one's public conduct by relevant others (Cheek & Briggs, 1982). Items include statements such as the importance placed on how others react to the respondent, and their own social manners. This thesis argues that if social identity attributes are important to an individual's judgement of their identity, it will also be important to their judgement of the identity of those with whom they socially identify.

2.6.4   Differences and Commonalities in SIT and AOI research

Social Identity Theory (SIT) refers to the existence of a social identification process where an individual (socially) identifies with group members (a society). Social Identity Theory researchers have measured the existence of the social identification process and other aspects of the individual that may be related to it (Abrams, 2009; Aguiar, 2009 ; Amaral & Monteiro, 2002; Knobloch-Westerwick & Hastall, 2010; Lam, Ahearne, Hu, & Schillewaert, 2010).

Aspects of Identity (AOI), and specifically social identity orientation, refers to the salient characteristics of the respondents that suggest they consider their social identity attributes as important to their sense of who they are. Aspects of Identity research has focussed on self-evaluation and its relationship with other aspects of the self, such as self-consciousness (Cheek & Briggs, 1982; Davies, 1996) and self-esteem (Bos & Ellemers, 2006; Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). Further, a great deal of Aspects of Identity research has measured social

identity orientation and related behaviour (Cheek & Tropp, 2002; Christopher & Schlenker, 2004; Mousavi & Roshan, 2010; Seta, Schmidt, & Bookhout, 2006; Seta, Seta, & Goodman, 1998). The most commonly cited scale for measuring social identity orientation is the Aspects of Identity scale by Cheek and Tropp (2002).

Both Social Identity Theory and Aspects of Identity (AOI) recognise a continuum of the individual's self-definition and the salience of the social self. Further, both Social Identity Theory and the Aspects of Identity (social identity orientation) refer to how the individual interacts with and judges relevant others. Similarly, both theories have been related to common motivations, such as self-esteem. However, one of the key differentiations is that Social Identity Theory refers to a context-specific characteristic whereby the individual's social identity will vary across different social situations, whilst Aspects of Identity refers to stable identity attributes. Whilst personal and social identities can be measured as two separate constructs existing in each self-identity, the relative salience ascribed to each may differ between individuals (Cheek & Briggs, 1982) but not contexts (such as, social situations). Therefore, it could be assumed that the individual's social identity will vary in salience across, time, social situations, or groups but the (personal and social) identity attributes will remain constant and this explains why the individual is a high identifier (or not) and frequently identifies with various groups.

2.6.5   Summary

As social identity orientation (i.e., AOI) measures the emphasis of their own social identity attributes, it follows that this should relate to the importance they place on the social identity attributes of those they supposedly socially identify with. In other words, if certain social identity attributes are important to an individual's self-identity (AOI), they will also be important to that individual's judgement of other group members' with whom they socially identify. This is because Social Identity Theory (SIT) affirms that individuals seek out those with similar characteristics. To explain the existence of the social identification process in the Reality Television context, items from the Aspects of Identity (AOI) scale should be used to measure the viewer's opinions of both themselves and the contestants. For example, if an individual feels their manners are important attributes of their own social identity (Cheek & Tropp, 2002), they should also feel it is important to their perceptions of others in the

perceived group (for example, contestants). Similarly, viewers who are high identifiers (and so socially identify, for example, with the contestants) will not demonstrate stronger salience of personal identity attributes. However, no research has been found that measures social identification from the perspective of whether the respondent's social identity orientation similarly affects their perception of others within their perceived social group. The proposed research will operationalise the antecedents of the social identification process through measurements from the Aspects of Identity (AOI) scale.

In summary, it is proposed that the social identification process exists if social identity attributes are important to the respondent's sense of who they are, and similarly important to their sense of whom other group members are.

The following section considers other constructs that may facilitate the social identification process summarised above.

This is formulated as a research question.

RQ2: Which factors facilitate the Social Identification Process in Reality TV?

2.7   THE SOCIAL IDENTIFICATION PROCESS IN REALITY TV

The following sections will discuss constructs involved in the social identification process, in the context of Reality Television shows. Specifically, the issues of similarity, authenticity, involvement, and attitudes and behaviours will be addressed as these are key concepts of Social Identity Theory and Reality Television (Aslama & Pantti, 2006; Hall, 2009a; Hogg & Terry, 2000; Tajfel, 1982b). These will then be used to propose the research model and generate the hypotheses.

2.7.1   Authenticity

Consumers' perceptions of authenticity have been found to lead to social identification, involvement, learning, and attitudes and behaviours (Chalmers, 2009; Donsbach & Jandura, 2003; Gilpin, et al., 2010; Haridakis & Rubin, 2003; Rubin, et al., 1985).

Credibility, trustworthiness, realism, and *authenticity* are all terms that have been used in considering how consumers' perceptions relate to the popularity and legitimacy of communicators, advertising, celebrities, public figures, media performers, mediums and reality shows (Biressi & Nunn, 2005; Giles, 2000; Holmes & Redmond, 2006; Marshall, 1997; Patzer, 1983; Tolson, 2001). Although particular terminology may be usual within certain disciplines, commonalities also exist across disciplines.

Credibility and Trustworthiness research refers to the legitimacy of a message being communicated by a source (Bhavna, 2006; Friedman, Santeramo, & Traina, 1978; Lafferty, Goldsmith, & J., 2002; Ohanian, 1990b). These characteristics have been measured as important in selling a message (Birnbaum & Stegner, 1979; Hawkins et al., 2001; Ohanian, 1990a).

Credibility is the perception of the message recipient that the source has the expertise to give an informed opinion. Trustworthiness is perception of the message recipient that the message source is communicating that informed opinion. For example, a politician may be suitably informed about weapons of mass destruction (i.e., credibility) but may deliberately not communicate that informational message (i.e., not trustworthy). Credibility and Trustworthiness are often analysed in marketing to measure how effective a source message is (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983) in persuading the consumer, such as that provided by a product endorser. However, authenticity has also been referred to in politics and advertising research. Gilpin, Palazzolo, & Brody (2010) investigated the ways in which authenticity is constructed in online public affairs communication. "Authenticity is particularly important in the public sphere, and public institutions are increasingly engaging with social media as a means of connecting with constituencies" (Gilpin, et al., 2010, p. 268). Other findings showed that consumers naturally assess advertisements in terms of

authenticity and that these perceptions were entwined with self-referencing and advertisement liking (Chalmers, 2009).

In a media context, the difference between the two terms, may be that credibility and trustworthiness often refer to a particular source message (Buijzen, 2007; Ohanian, 1990b) whilst authenticity or realism frequently refers to what is portrayed by a media personality in a specific context (Aslama & Pantti, 2006; Biressi & Nunn, 2005; Hall, 2009a; Rubin, et al., 1988; Taddeo, 2006). Specifically, research into the viewer's perception of a Reality Television show and its cast is usually theorised in terms of authenticity and realism (Aslama & Pantti, 2006; Rose & Wood, 2005).

It has been argued that "the consumption of reality programming represents a sophisticated quest for authenticity within the traditionally fiction-oriented entertainment paradigm." (Rose & Wood, 2005, p. 284). The authors differentiate this format from other 'real' programming, such as news broadcasting, as representing common people engaging in uncommon tasks, thus affording the viewer the opportunity to compare and contrast their own achievements and ambition with the contestants. From another perspective, the notion in advertising research that the consumer actively negotiates meaning from the text (Tinsley & Tinsley, 1987) has been used to draw parallels with the viewer's search for meaning in Reality Television through authenticity (Rose & Wood, 2005). This quest for authenticity has been termed 'hyper-authenticity' in that Reality Television is used as a simulation of authenticity (Rose & Wood, 2005).

Hall defines Reality Television not as being perceived as 'real' by the viewer but as presenting "real people playing themselves" (Hall, 2009a, p. 516). Viewers' and researchers' general classifications of reality shows has differentiated these shows from fictional shows on the basis that they include *real people* rather than actors (Nabi, et al., 2003b) and is a major attraction of the genre (Deery, 2004). As such, the success of the contestant as voted by the viewers, may depend on *keeping it real* (Hoyt, 2010), being candid and not *tricking* the spectator (Kraidy, 2009). Further, perceived realism or authenticity influences use, and is a common criterion for viewers' judgement of reality shows (Busselle, 2003; Nabi, et al., 2006;

Rubin, et al., 1985; Taddeo, 2006). For example, when viewers perceive the reality show participants as inauthentic, viewing can be used as enjoyment derived by 'waiting for the cracks to show' and is associated with greater involvement (Andrejevic, 2002; Nabi, et al., 2004). However, different dimensions of authenticity are associated with levels of cognitive involvement and social involvement, as well as perceived learning (Hall, 2009b). Hall (2009b) identified different dimensions of authenticity as cast eccentricity, representativeness, candidness, and producer manipulation. One particular study of a pan-Arab reality show, *Star Academy*, in Saudi Arabia examined how controversies over authenticity spawned by popular culture crystallize broader social and political struggles (Kraidy, 2009). Such research clearly identifies authenticity as an antecedent to the social identification process in the context of Reality Television shows.

Source communication has also been referred to in Social Identity Theory whereby prototypical group leaders in organisations effected changes in attitudes and behaviours of group members who perceived them as credible and trustworthy (den Nieuwenboer & Kaptein, 2008; Pierro, Cicero, & Tory Higgins, 2009); two aspects often referred to in source communication research. As the social identification process is based on the individual perceptions of other group member's attributes, it follows that these perceptions will be based on what they perceive as the 'real identity' of other group members. This may be considered particularly important in mediated groups, such as those between viewers and contestants. Judgements may be made about whether the contestant's identity portrayal and behaviour are affected by the camera, for example.

From this research, it is clear that any proposed research into the appeal of new Reality Television shows must consider the consumer's perception of authenticity, credibility or trustworthiness as a construct. Although the proposed research considers the social identification process, the construct measuring the viewer's perception of the show and its contestant (that leads to the social identification process) will be referred to as authenticity because of the common usage of this term in Reality Television research.

2.7.2 Involvement

Social identification is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his [or her] knowledge of his [or her] membership of a social group together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership" (Tajfel, 1978a, p. 63). The value and emotional significance of such membership can be conceptualised as involvement. In the context of Reality Television shows, it follows that viewers must become involved with the show for the social identification to take place and positive identity to be reinforced (Krcmer & Trepte; Slater, 2007). Therefore, in this thesis, this is conceptualised as involvement with the show and the contestants.

The unscripted, unpredictable format of Reality Television shows creates enjoyable humour and suspense, and subsequently greater involvement (Hall, 2004). Specifically, enjoyment of Reality Television leads to involvement in group discussion with other viewers and identification with the contestants as well as the group discussion (Reiss & Wiltz, 2004). However Ho (2004) found that enjoyment of reality shows does not differ between those who watch individually and those who watch in groups, but solo viewers had stronger identification with contestants. Further, Smith and Wood (2003) refer to Reality Television-induced consumerism as a form of identification and identity creation, where the viewer feels they are similar to the contestants, or choose to be similar to them. There is clearly an opportunity to extend the research of the different types of involvement by viewers, as well as the associated attitudinal and behavioural changes that result from involvement and social identification discussed in the next section.

2.7.3 Attitudes and Behaviour

As considered in the previous sections, social identification and source communication affect context-specific attitudes and behaviours. As such, any proposed research of attitudes and behaviours affected by specific Reality Television shows must also be context-specific. There has been much media speculation of how the *MasterChef Australia* brand has affected the viewers (Jackson, 2010; Sinclair, 2010b) and there is evidence of marketing successes from related consumer products used on the show (Lower, 2010; Simon, 2009; Tim, 2010). Some

areas impacted, as suggested in the media, are changes in consumer attitudes to food and food preparation, as well as related food and preparation behaviour. It is proposed that this speculation and anecdotal evidence should be pursued further through surveying viewers to generate empirical evidence of the context-specific effects of social identity and source communication. Consideration of a suitable scale to measure relevant changes in consumer attitudes and behaviour is discussed in a later section.

This is formulated as a research question.

RQ3: What are the effects of the Social Identification Process in Reality Television viewing on the consumer?

2.7.4   Summary

Similarity (of characteristics) and social identity orientation (AOI) may be argued as antecedent to the social identification process. In the context of Reality Television shows, these constructs can be operationalised by measuring the viewer's importance of both their own aspects of social identity (social identity orientation) and similar aspects of the contestant's perceived identity. Involvement has also been shown as a focal mediating construct in the social identification process, and television viewing.

It can be argued that group members will judge others on what they see as the *real person* (authentic). At the same time, viewers make judgements as they become involved with the contestants. As such, authenticity is an important concept in both group members' perceptions (the viewing audience's) of others and in the viewer's involvement with Reality Television shows. Further, the social identification process has been shown to lead to adoption of the normative attitudes and behaviour of the group. As such, it is proposed that the key constructs of the social identification process within the Reality Television contexts are *Identity attributes, Authenticity, Involvement, Identification,* and *Attitudes and Behaviours*. These relationships are modelled and hypothesised in the following section.

2.8   PROPOSED MODEL AND HYPOTHESES

From the literature review, the following constructs have been identified.
1. The importance the viewer places on their own Social Identity attributes.
2. The importance the viewer places on their own Viewer's Personal Identity attributes.
3. Authenticity (of the contestants).
4. Involvement (of the viewer with the contestants and the show).
5. The importance the viewer places on the Contestant's Social Identity attributes.
6. Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant).
7. (Changes in) Attitudes and Behaviour of the viewer.

Homogeneity has been established as indicative of the social identification process. Researchers of Social Identity Theory have shown that individuals will socially identify with groups as a result of social comparison. This evaluation may be based on perceived similarities which are significant to the individual. Such identification establishes the social norms of the group. Such individuals "see themselves as social beings, sharing attitudes and affiliations with others" (Buss, 1980, p. 122). Therefore, it can be expected that if individuals see their own social attitudes and behaviour as significant, they will also see them as significant in those with whom they socialise and socially identify. They will make social comparisons of those social aspects which they perceive as important.

We cannot measure if the viewer thinks the contestant perceives their own social identity attributes as important but we can measure if the viewer sees them as important in themselves and similarly important in the contestant. This establishes that the viewer expects similar social behaviour in the contestants because social comparison involves those aspects which the individual sees as important. For example, a fashion-conscious teenager will see wearing fashionable clothing as important to their own identity. Likewise, they will see wearing of fashionable clothing as important in one of the groups with which they identify. Therefore, if an individual sees social behaviour as important to their identity, they will also see the same social behaviour as important in those with whom they socially identify. They will perceive a shared social norm whereby all members of the group perceive social behaviour as important. Social psychologists believe that "the shaping of one's identity is dependent on the valuations (sanctions, reinforcements) placed on one's public conduct by relevant others" (Fetveit, 1999,

p. 550). Because of the social nature of social identity, it is unlikely that individuals will see social behaviour as important in themselves and not in those with whom they socially identify. Further, the Aspects of Identity (AOI) scale has been established as measuring the social identity attributes of individuals. Therefore, such perceived similarities are conceptualised as the significance the viewer places on both their own social identity attributes and those of the contestants. Similarly, it is conceptualised that the social identification process is facilitated when such viewers become involved with the show.

Further, it is proposed that the *MasterChef Australia* brand facilitates the social identification process between viewers and contestants. Specifically, viewers will socially identify with the contestant group. This process is facilitated by comparison of social norms, perceived similarities, and significance of such norms and similarities. Therefore, social norms that viewers perceive as important (that is, significant) in themselves are the same (or similar) social norms they will perceive as important in groups they socially identify with. These social norms are operationalised as social identity attributes measured in the Aspects of Identity (AOI) scale. This is hypothesised in H1a and H1b, as shown in Table 4.

Conversely, it is proposed that those who place importance on their own personal identity attributes are more likely to participate in individual pursuits and therefore less likely to participate in the social identification process. This means that viewers who place importance on their own personal identity attributes are less likely to consider the social identity attributes of the contestants as important, and become involved with the show. Therefore, there will be a negative relationship between the importance of the viewer's personal identity and contestant's social identity. This is hypothesised in H2a and H2b, as shown in Table 4.

Authenticity is important to the viewer's perception of the contestants and their involvement with Reality Television shows (and contestants). This is hypothesised in H3a and H3b, as shown in Table 4.

It is proposed that viewers who perceive contestants as having similar social identity attributes and become involved with the Reality Television show will socially identify with the contestants. This is hypothesised in H4a and H4b, as shown in Table 4.

Finally, it is proposed that the social identification process in Reality Television shows leads to changes in attitudes and behaviour. This is hypothesised in H5, as shown in Table 4.

Figure 2 demonstrates the proposed model and hypotheses detailed above.

It is also proposed that Contestants' Social Identity and involvement concurrently mediate the relationship between the independent variables and social identification. This is hypothesised in H6a to H8b, as shown in Table 4.

Each of the research questions postulated is addressed by the relevant hypotheses as shown below.

RQ1: Does Reality Television facilitate the Social Identification Process?
Hypotheses 1-5.
RQ2: Which factors facilitate the Social Identification Process in Reality Television?
Hypotheses 1a and 4a.
RQ3: What are the effects of the Social Identification Process in Reality Television viewing on the consumer?

Table 4: Hypotheses and Supporting Literature

Hypothesis No.	Statement	Supporting Literature
H1a	There is a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and the Contestants' Social Identity	(e.g. Buss, 1980; Fetveit, 1999)
H1b	There is a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and involvement.	(e.g. Moorman, Willemsen, Neijens, & Smit, 2012; Russell & Puto, 1999)
H2a	There is a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and the Contestants' Social Identity.	(e.g. Buss, 1980; Fetveit, 1999)
H2b	There is a negative relationship between the importance the Viewer's Personal Identity and involvement.	(e.g. Moorman, et al., 2012; Russell & Puto, 1999)
H3a	There is a positive relationship between authenticity and the Contestants' Social Identity.	(e.g. Hogan & Cheek, 1983; McEvoy, 2009)
H3b	There is a positive relationship between authenticity and involvement.	(e.g. Aslama & Pantti, 2006; Kates, 2004)
H4a	There is a positive relationship between the Contestants' Social Identity and social identification.	(e.g. Krcmer & Trepte, 2006 ; Turner, 1975)
H4b	There is a positive relationship between involvement and social identification.	(e.g. Altheide, 2000; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005)
H5	There is a positive relationship between social identification and attitudes and behaviour.	(e.g. Abrams & Hogg, 1999; Turner, Hogg, Oakes, Reicher, & Wetherell, 1987)
H6a	The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and social identification.	(e.g. Tajfel, Sheikh, & Gardner, 1964; Valentim, 2008)
H6b	Involvement will mediate a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and social identification.	(e.g. Hall, 2006; Rubin, 2002)
H7a	The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and social identification.	(e.g. Brewer, 1993; Diehl, 1988)
H7b	Involvement will mediate a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and social identification.	(e.g. Deaux, Reid, Mizrahi, & Ethier, 1995; Duck, Hogg, & Terry, 1998)
H8a	The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a positive relationship between authenticity and social identification.	(e.g. Gilpin, Palazzolo, & Brody, 2010; Kraidy, 2009
H8b	Involvement will mediate a positive relationship between authenticity and social identification.	(e.g. Hall, 2009; Ke & Zhang, 2007).
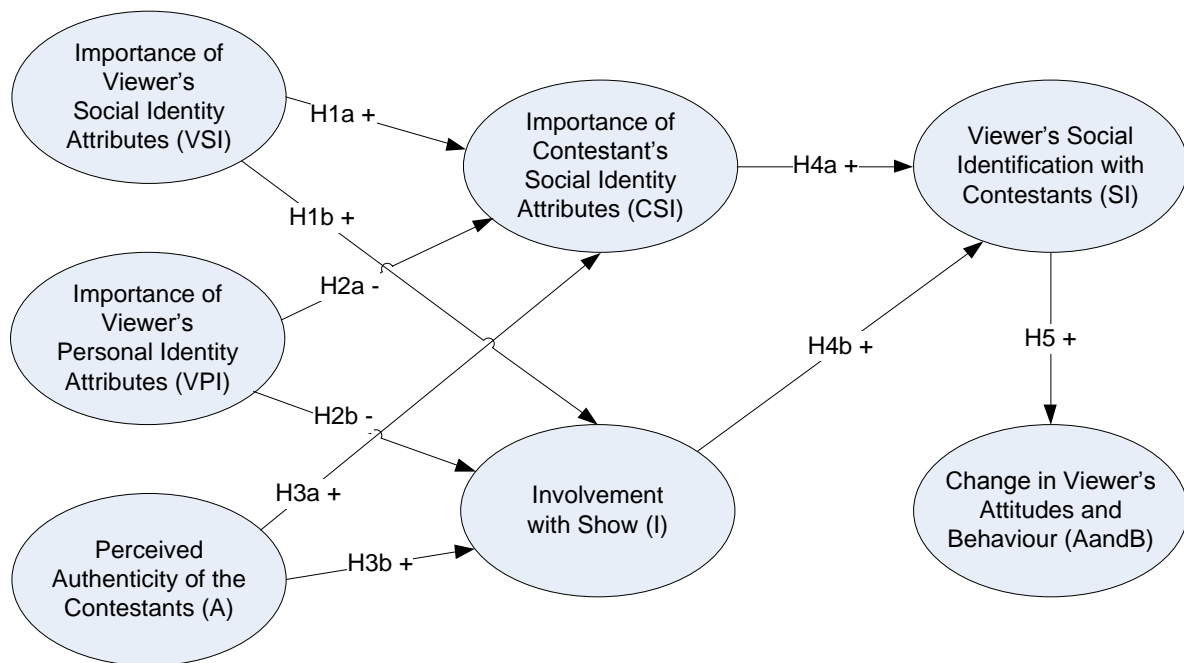
Figure 2: Proposed Model with Hypotheses H1 to H5

Figure 2 demonstrates the proposed model including all constructs measured and direction of hypotheses that will be confirmed using Structural Equation Modelling.

The following chapters will address issues of methodology in answering the research questions, testing the proposed model, and confirming the hypotheses.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The methodology used to test the hypotheses developed in Chapter 2 is detailed in this chapter. The following section gives an overview of the decision process for the research method and design used in this study. Following sections describe the participants used in the sample, the survey materials/instruments used, and issues of validity and reliability. The procedure for soliciting participants and administering the survey tool is explained. Data coding and the method of analysis are then discussed. Before summarising, limitations and delimitations are considered.

The purpose of this thesis was to establish an existence of the social identification process within a Reality Television context by surveying Australian enthusiasts and regular viewers of the *MasterChef Australia* 2010 series.

The *MasterChef* brand has been a phenomenally successfully marketed product, which raises research questions about its worldwide marketing success. To date, not academic research has addressed this. The literature review suggested that such success may be due to (social) aspects of the viewers' identity (AOI), and social identification between the viewers and the contestants. However, there has been only limited research on the relationship between Aspects of Identity (AOI) and Social Identity Theory (SIT). Further, whilst there is extensive research into Social Identity Theory, the literature reviewed for this thesis found no evidence of empirical testing of the constructs of this process within Reality Television viewing. This study aimed to address this theoretical gap in Social Identity Theory research. Additionally, this study was conducted to address a significant theoretical gap within the field of social psychology pertaining to the relationship between Aspects of Identity and Social Identification. By also establishing possible constructs in the success of the *MasterChef* brand, future research on other successful Reality Television brands may also consider these constructs.

An online survey method was utilised to measure the perceptions, attitudes and behaviour of a sample of 348 *MasterChef Australia* viewers from a consumer database of a market research company (Cohen, 1992; Vogt, 2007). The accessible population was members of the Australian public who had volunteered to participate in an online consumer panel hosted by the market research company (Research Now) commissioned by the researcher and Monash University.

3.2 EPISTEMOLOGICAL & ONTOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research method used in this study is a positivist/quantitative one but the philosphical underpinnings must also be considered. Qualitative and quantitative research represents different approaches to research and may use different epistemological and ontological approaches. Theory can be depicted as something that precedes research, as in quantitative research; or as something that emerges out of it, as in qualitative research.

The conceptual framework and findings of any academic research must adhere to established research practice. This is done by examining the philosophical approach of the research paradigm which influences and justifies the research methodology the researcher selects. A research paradigm is a set of beliefs or assumptions that guides decisions made by researchers (Creswell, 1998). Further, Trochim (2006) argues that the choice between quantitative and qualitative method is a philosophical one, not methodological. For example, many researchers make the epistemological assumption that qualitative methods provide the optimal method of understanding phenomena is to view them in context. Qualitative researchers believe quantitative methods to be limited in nature, measuring only one aspect of the reality and thus losing the context of the whole phenomenon. Trochim (2006) writes that qualitative researchers research within the context of the study; allowing the questions to emerge and change with the experience. This is opposed to the quantitative method of constructing a fixed measurement instrument or questions. The more commonly used research paradigms and a research approaches are explained below.

The more commonly used research paradigms are positivism, post-positivism, or realism and critical theory that have different stances on how research should be approached (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). Positivism is dominant in the scientific field, as a researcher in this paradigm

measures the world in terms of quantitative facts. Post-positivists and realists also gather facts about the world, but the data is subjective in nature. Critical theorists argue that social and political influences will change reality over time. These paradigms are classified in terms of their ontological, epistemological, and methodological elements (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

Ontology is a branch of philosophy that is concerned with the nature of what exists. In other words, Ontology is concerned with our assumptions about how the world is made up and the nature of reality. Epistemology refers to the theory of knowledge and is concerned with our beliefs about how one might discover knowledge about the world. That is, epistemology looks at the relationship of the researcher to the research. There are two more commonly used epistemological perspectives: objectivism and subjectivism (Perry, 1998) Using the objectivism perspective, the researcher is independent of the data gathering and the knowledge gained is objective and real. Using the subjectivism perspective, the researcher is part of the observed phenomenon. Much of the theory of knowledge in the marketing literature is objectivist (Hunt, 1993). Ontology "informs the researcher's understanding of ''what is'' and the structure of that reality and links to epistemology, which is the way of understanding reality" (Glynn & Woodside, 2009, p. 39).

Methodology is concerned with the tools and techniques of conducting the research (Bryman, 1989) and the above perspectives influence the methodology chosen. A subjective epistemology usually requires the use of qualitative approaches., and examples of such an approach on branding is given in by Fournier (1998) and Anderson, Hakansson, & Johanson (1994) on the buyer–seller relationship. In the positivist research paradigm, the ontology assumes just one reality, where the researcher is distant from the subject of measurement and uses an objective epistemology. In the realist or post-positivist research paradigm, the reality is imperfect and the researcher uses a subjective epistemological approach. Critical theorists also use a subjective epistemology. The research paradigm of the researcher influences the methodological approach used. Positivists apply quantitative methodologies, and post-positivist or realists can apply include qualitative methodologies. Critical theorists apply qualitative methodologies such as grounded theory. The practicalities of these research paradigms influence the research aim, axiological assumptions, reasoning, research process and design. In positivism and realism the purpose of the research is explanation, whilst critical theorists aim to measure aspects that cause change to occur. Aiming to contribute to

knowledge, positivists will test hypotheses. In contrast, critical theorists and realists investigate research problems by means of research questions. Similarly, critical theorists strive for insights into the nature of a situation whilst positivists strive for empirical generalizations or laws (Crotty, 1998).

The two more common approaches to developing theory are inductive and deductive. In logic, deduction is a process used to derive particular statements from general statements. The logic is used in the social sciences to test theory. The deductive approach uses a positivist research paradigm, while the inductive approach usually pertains to the critical theorists and realists research paradigms (Perry, 1998). The deductive approach uses a "top-down" approach working from the more general to the more specific. The researcher may start by proposing a theory about their topic of interest. Specific and testable hypotheses are then formulated. The researcher then makes observations to address the hypotheses. Hypotheses are then tested with specific data, in an attempt to confirm the theories used. Inductive reasoning works in the other direction, using a "bottom up" approach. Researchers move from specific observations to broader generalizations and theories, or testable propositions. Inductive reasoning begins with specific observations and measures to then detect patterns and regularities, formulate some tentative, and ultimately develop general conclusions or theories. These different approaches also influence the language of the researcher. Positivists write in a formal way whilst other paradigms use a less formal language and use of the first person is more prevalent.

Bryman (2001, p. 20) summarises the differences as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Differences between Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches

	Quantitative Approaches	**Qualitative Approaches**
Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to research	Deductive reason; theory testing	Inductive reasoning; theory generating
Epistemological approach	Natural science model, usually positivist	Interpretivist
Ontological approach	Objectivist/Critical Theorist	Constructionist

As the purpose of this study is theory testing, a deductive approach using quantitative methods is used.

3.3 RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN

This study selected the descriptive, positivist methodology for the following reasons:

- The ability to measure consumer attitudes objectively that could be generalised to the population;
- To limit costs of obtaining data;
- The ability to describe the sample and examine relationships among variables in statistical terms;
- The ability to gain a sufficiently large sample to draw meaningful conclusions from statistical analyses.

According to the principle of positivism, the emphasis is on a highly structured methodology that can be replicated in future studies, and on observations that can be quantified in statistical analysis (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2009). One of the other primary objectives of this study is to make quantifiable observations that lend themselves to statistical analysis. This allows the sample to be described in numerical terms, test proposed hypotheses, and examine relationships among variables. This research can be defined as a case study research design as it is "an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context" (Yin, 2003, p. 63), such as the popularity of the *MasterChef* brand and can include analysis of small or large populations (Tharenou, Donohue, & Cooper, 2007). However, unlike most case studies which are qualitative, this study has applied quantitative techniques.

After consideration of numerous alternatives, a cross sectional design using a survey method was considered the most practical and appropriate for this quantitative study because many variables from a random sample of a single population were involved (Black, 1999; Vogt, 2007). A cross-sectional study method uses observations at a single point (or over a short period) in time without follow-ups. Such a method measures the prevalence of an outcome in a chosen population and the characteristics that may be associated with that outcome (Neuman, 2007). Therefore, assumptions of relationships between characteristics and outcomes may be inferred. However, as multiple observations or repeated measures are not used, a limitation of this method is that causality cannot be inferred (Hair, 2011). The advantages of this method include the ability to support statistical analysis, infer the strength

of relationships between variables, and to predictively project results for a population from which a sample is drawn (Black, 1999; Vogt, 2007). Disadvantages of this method can include lack of control over the independent variables and the inability to establish causality due internal validity issues with using a single sample (Black, 1999). A qualitative method would not have facilitated statistical analysis and subsequent evaluation of relationships between variables. Likewise, an experimental design may be able to prove causality in other disciplines but is not generally considered appropriate in the social and behavioural sciences where there are no criteria to conclude that X causes Y with sufficient certainty (Vogt, 2007). As such, causality cannot usually be proven in this method but merely inferred. Further, an experimental method can be inadequate, problematic or impractical because of implementation issues, such as access to participants and costs (Saunders, et al., 2009).

The purpose of the quantitative method used was to test a proposed model of the social identification process in Reality Television using Structural Equation Modelling analysis between Aspects of Identity and social identification resulting in changes in attitude and behaviour. The use of Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) of the relevant latent variables provided new insights that have the potential to contribute to a better understanding of social identification through the media in general, and related future research. In addition, a purpose of this study was to partially confirm reliability of other research and provide further insight into these studies. Absence of such research would have left unanswered questions about the potential modelling (and fit of the data) of social identification in media, i.e. Reality Television.

A Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) analysis included confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and evaluating hypothesised relationships through modelling AMOS 19. Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is used to test complex models using a combination of multiple regression and factor analysis (Tharenou, Donohue, & Cooper, 2007). This analysis was based on modelling the social identification process through three independent variables, two mediating variables, and resultant changes in attitudes and behaviour. Analysis of these paths included the use of the Phantom Model Approach (Macho & Ledermann, 2011). All of these variables were latent variables with items measured using 10-point interval scales. The statements and questions developed for the survey instrument pertained to participants' viewing of the *MasterChef Australia* 2010 series shortly after broadcast of the final episode.

Bias, associated with recall has been identified as an issue with cross-sectional methods. Surveying shortly after an event of interest or behaviour can reduce this (Vogt, 2007). The method used to locate these participants and sampling is detailed below.

3.4   PARTICIPANTS

In designing a research project and questionnaire, consideration must be given to the appropriate unit of analysis (Sekaran, 2003). In this research, the unit of analysis was *Australian residents who were regular and enthusiastic viewers of MasterChef Australia in 2010.* The producers of the show also host a website chat forum for such viewers. The web hosts were contacted on several occasions for permission to solicit the forum users. However, no response was ever received from the web hosts. Therefore, as the show is estimated to have been watched by up to 75% of the Australian population, a quota sample of the Australian population was also considered appropriate. However, from this sample, only regular and enthusiastic viewers were drawn. This was done through screening questions. The justification for regular viewing was based on the assumption of Social Identification Theory that the identification is related to a higher level of attachment or favouritism (toward a group) than those who do not identify (Altheide, 2000; Paxton & Moody, 2003). Similarly, individuals are unlikely to identify if they are not familiar or do not have a reasonable level of exposure to such groups (Easter, 1999; Parmentier, 2010). The sampling frame was all subscribers to a database held by Research Now (a market research company). Such companies are specifically referred to as Web survey hosts (Sue & Ritter, 2007). This was to achieve a large quota sample because of convenience, and time and cost efficiency. This nonprobability sample method solicited participants drawn from a database known as a Volunteer Opt-In Panel. Volunteer Opt-In Panels depend on individuals who have volunteered to participate in future surveys to which a web survey host invites them. Panel members are invited to participate in surveys based on convenience, quota, or random sampling (Sue & Ritter, 2012). This is possible because geographic and demographic information is collected at registration of panel members. Such panels should not be confused with pre-recruited panels whereby groups of survey respondents are recruited by a variety of methods including advertising, email, and postal invitations from on and offline populations for a particular survey. It is because of this differentiation that Volunteer Opt-In Panels are

classified as non-probability sampling whilst Pre-Recruited Panels are classified as a form of probability sampling (Fielding, Lee, & Blank, 2008).

Whilst there have been substantial improvements recently in the methodology of online panels (Couper, 2000; McDevitt & Small, 2002). These include low response in comparison to postal surveys (Dommeyer & Moriarty, 2000), a reliable quantification of the online population, and possible demographic differences between off and online panels (Lohmann & Schmücker, 2009).

Although there is little consensus on the necessary sample size when using Structural Equation Modelling (Sivo, Fan, Witta, & Willse, 2006), Hoelter (1983) proposed a 'critical sample size' of 200. Likewise, as a general rule of thumb, 200 responses is considered a goal for Structural Equation Modelling analysis (Kenny, 2011). Another existing approach is that 5-10 responses are collected per question/item. However, as the sample size increases, "random errors of measurement tend to cancel each other, the item and test parameters begin to stabilize, and it becomes less important to add to the sample" (Tinsley & Tinsley, 1987 p. 415). Such implications have led some researchers to endorse the 5-10 responses per item approach up to a total of 300 respondents (Tinsley & Kass, 1979). Other researchers suggest 300 respondents is a good sample size whilst 500 is very good for any data collection using factor analysis (Comrey, 1973). For this study, the ratio was 10 responses per item. A meta-analysis of comparable research published on social identification and structural equation modelling (e.g. Arslan, Yilmaz, & Aksoy, 2012; Bagozzi, et al., 2007; O'Sullivan, 2008; Ullman, 2006) found samples varied from n=181 (Yip, Kiang, & Fuligni, 2008) to n=1042 (Andreassen, Lorentzen, & Olsson, 2006). The method used in this study validates tests defined in *Estimating, Testing, and Comparing Specific Effects in Structural Equation Models: The Phantom Model Approach* (Macho & Ledermann, 2011); where samples of 306 and 136 were measured. In consideration of these sample sizes, 350 responses were considered reasonable. This also took into account the considerable costs imposed by market research companies for obtaining responses from participants who met all the criteria imposed in the quota sampling procedure used.

Ethics and Confidentiality

Approval was obtained from the *Monash University Research Human Ethics Committee (MUHREC)* prior to launching the survey. Ethics was approved upon submission of research outline, draft questionnaire, proposed data collection method, voluntary participation, and cover letter for examination. Further, *Monash University* standards of retaining and storing data securely for five years will be maintained (see Appendix A for a copy of the relevant documentation).

3.5   MEASUREMENT ITEMS

The survey tool used in this study was an online questionnaire developed through a process advocated in *A Paradigm for Developing Better Measures of Marketing Constructs* (Churchill, 1979). This was administered to a quota sample of the population to measure participants relevant to predictions made in relation to a range of key variables. The questionnaire was developed to ensure that the data collected would be relevant and accurate (Hair, 2003). The questions developed were based on existing scales, a literature review, and content analysis of the show and associated media commentary (see Appendix B for Microsoft Word version of questionnaire).

The Social Identification Process is operationalised in this research with the following constructs;

1. The importance the viewer places on their own Social Identity attributes.
2. The importance the viewer places on their own Viewer's Personal Identity attributes.
3. Perceived Authenticity (of the contestants).
4. Involvement (of the viewer with the contestants and the show).
5. The importance the viewer places on the Contestant's Social Identity attributes.
6. Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant).
7. (Changes in) Attitudes and Behaviour of the viewer.

These are hypothesised as below.

H1a: There is a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and the Contestants' Social Identity

H1b: There is a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and involvement.

H2a: There is a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and the Contestants' Social Identity.

H2b: There is a negative relationship between the importance the Viewer's Personal Identity and involvement.

H3a: There is a positive relationship between authenticity and the Contestants' Social Identity.

H3b: There is a positive relationship between authenticity and involvement.

H4a: There is a positive relationship between the Contestants' Social Identity and social identification.

H4b: There is a positive relationship between involvement and social identification.

H5: There is a positive relationship between social identification and attitudes and behaviour.

H6a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and social identification.

H6b: Involvement will mediate a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and social identification.

H7a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and social identification.

H7b: Involvement will mediate a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and social identification.

H8a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a positive relationship between authenticity and social identification.

H8b: Involvement will mediate a positive relationship between authenticity and social identification.

The questionnaire was developed to measure respondents' (as viewers') opinions of the *MasterChef Australia 2010* show, the contestants in *MasterChef Australia 2010* , and the *MasterChef Australia 2010* viewer's own identity attributes. The flow of the questionnaire was developed to first ask general questions about the show, *MasterChef Australia 2010*. This was then followed by more specific questions about the *MasterChef Australia 2010* contestants. Questions about the viewer's own attributes were left until the final section. This

was to ensure that any inference about a correlation between the viewer's opinions of the show and the viewer's identity attributes was not prompted until the viewer had completed all questions about the show and contestants.

The questionnaire had three general themes throughout its content.

Theme 1: Questions about the show.

These included questions about viewing of the show. This ensured the participants were regular and enthusiastic viewers of the show.

Theme 2: Questions about the contestants in the show.

These included questions about the viewer's perceptions of how the contestants were portrayed in the show. This ensured that the constructs of authenticity and the Contestants' Social Identity attributes were measured.

Theme 3: Questions about the viewer of the show.

These included specific questions about the viewer's (social and personal) identity attributes. Other questions asked about the viewer's involvement with the show (contestants), perceived similarity with the contestants, and how the show affected them. This ensured the questionnaire measured the constructs of the Viewer's Personal and Social Identity attributes, Social Identification, and the Viewer's Attitudes and Behaviour.

Questions measuring all constructs used non-comparison scales with the itemised rating of Likert scales (Malhotra, 2002). All questions were compulsory and the scales used a predetermined set of responses. All construct scales were on a 10-point scale anchored by 'strongly disagree' and 'strongly agree' or 'not important' and 'very important'. This questionnaire used a 10-point scale because of its increased reliability and increasing use in recently published studies. Scales are also most suitable for self-completed questionnaires because of their ease of use (Malhotra, 2002) and 10-point scales are suitable because respondents are familiar with the concept of 'out of 10' (Dawes, 2008). Further, the questions were specifically designed to enable easy understanding of what was specifically being asked, for example, the word *contestants* was capitalised to differentiate it from questions about the show or the viewer. All questions and scale development is discussed in a later chapter.

The questionnaire was pre-tested on seven marketing and sociology academics, and 23 viewers of *MasterChef Australia 2010* known to the researcher. This was done to identify any confusing questions, to reduce bias, and ensure that the questions could be understood by *MasterChef Australia 2010* viewers, as well as consideration of suggestions of any additional questions (Malhotra & Birks, 2007). The questionnaire was then refined.

Measurement Items

Scales used in this study were developed from a thorough review of the relevant literature. Existing scales were employed, and modified where appropriate for the context of this study. From the literature review, no existing scales were found to be appropriate for measuring consumer attitudes and behaviours in the context of the *MasterChef Australia* brand. As such, a scale was developed based on content analysis of the show and media commentary of the supposed effects of the show on consumer behaviour. These were pre-tested on academics and a convenience sample of current viewers of the show before inclusion in the launched survey.

The following sections explain how scales were developed for each of the constructs and discuss how the items were used in the questionnaire.

Viewer's Social Identity

Identity orientations consist of the level of importance individuals place on different aspects of their identity. This includes both the personal and Social Identity attributes (Cheek & Tropp, 2002; Hogg & Smith, 2007a). In this study, the viewer's social identification was measured from the importance the viewer placed on their own Social Identity attributes and the importance they placed on the Social Identity attributes of the contestants. It is proposed that this is part of the social identification process. The items used in this study were taken from the Social Identity attributes scale developed by Cheek and Tropp in their *Aspects of Identity Questionnaire* (Cheek & Tropp, 2002). While this scale has not been published in any academic journal, it has been measured and referred to in many other studies (Dollinger, Clancy Dollinger, & Centeno, 2005; Hagger, et al., 2007; Wiekens & Stapel, 2010), and further developed for an unpublished conference paper (Cheek, et al., 2002). One item from the Aspects of Identity scale was adapted as it was considered a double-barrelled question. 'The ways in which other people react to what I say and do' was divided into two questions,

as shown in items 8.3 and 8.4. All items are shown in Appendix B. *Viewer's Personal Identity*

As the majority of research using the *Aspects of Identity Questionnaire* referred to above has previously measured both social and Personal Identity attributes for comparison (Berg, 2004; Seta, et al., 2006; Seta, et al., 1998), this thesis has also done so. For example, such research has found that public self-consciousness correlated with Social Identity orientated respondents whilst private self-consciousness correlated with Personal Identity orientated respondents (Britt, 1993). Therefore, the same scale used to measure the social and Personal Identity attributes in the *Aspects of Identity Questionnaire* is used in this thesis. As such, it is proposed that the respondents who place importance on the following Personal Identity attributes (Personal Identity orientated) will not place importance on such attributes in the contestants, and therefore will not socially identify with them. All items are shown in Appendix B.

Authenticity

Reality Television involvement has been shown to be associated with authenticity, and (perceived learning) of attitudes and behaviours (Hall, 2009a), as well as social identification (Harwood, 1999b; Tajfel, 1974; Turner, 1991). It is proposed that social identification will be associated with portrayals of authenticity of the contestants in Reality Television shows. The items used in this study were taken from Hall's (2009a) study. This scale was used because, as mentioned above, it has been related to other constructs used in the model proposed in this thesis. Furthermore, the scale used here measures aspects of authenticity that may be considered specific to Reality Television shows, such as editing and production. One aspect of *MasterChef Australia* that arguably differs slightly from other Reality Television show formats is the prominence of the hosts and their interaction with the contestants. To reflect this format, an additional item is shown in 4.4. All items are shown in Appendix B.

Involvement

Reality Television involvement has been found to be associated with social identification (Harwood, 1999b; Tajfel, 1974; Turner, 1991), authenticity (Hall, 2009a) and changes in attitudes and behaviours (Ganeshasundaram & Henley, 2009). Using factor analysis, Hall

(2009a) found that audience involvement had three different dimensions in the Reality Television context. Those were social, online and cognitive involvement. Online involvement had only two items, so would have been unsuitable for measurement as a latent variable in the proposed SEM structural model, as three items is the accepted minimum (Hair, 2010a). Further, as shown in the results section, this study found that social and cognitive involvement loaded as one latent construct. The implications of this are considered in the later conclusion chapter but the items are shown as measuring one involvement construct, as below. The only amendment made to the items used was that the word 'show' was used instead of 'program' to maintain consistency with other scales in the study. All items are shown in Appendix B.

Contestants' Social Identity

Social Identification is "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to the membership" (Tajfel, 1982b, p. 276). The items used to operationalise this construct were adapted from the same scale to measure the Viewer's Social Identity attributes as developed by Cheek and Tropp in their *Aspects of Identity Questionnaire* (Cheek & Tropp, 2002). As the original scale asked Social Identity attributes from the perspective of the viewer's own Social Identity attributes, the items were adapted to measure the importance viewers' placed on the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (as perceived by the viewer). These were adapted to be relevant to the Reality Television context. Items 5.8 to 5.11 were also added to survey aspects of the Contestants' Social Identity attributes that may be relevant to this particular show. This scale (and its counterpart in question 8) resulted in the largest number of items. However, it was felt that is was important to use as many items from the *Aspects of Identity* scale as possible because previous research had also done so. All items are shown in Appendix B.

Social Identification

The social identification scale used in this study was taken from the *Audience-Persona Interaction Scale* (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000), developed to measure para-social interaction. As the authors point out, the interaction between the audience members and the television characters is similar to interpersonal social interaction but is mediated (further justifying

measurement of authenticity). The scale was developed through qualitative research and use of previously developed and tested scales (Rubin, et al., 1985). Items generated were then refined through principal component analysis, as the authors did not hypothesise the factors. Retention of items with a minimum loading of .50 on the primary factor and less than .35, and scree plot analysis resulted in 22 items. Their four-factor solution explained 49.4% of the total variance. As Auter and Palmgreen's scale measured one-to-one identification with characters in a situation comedy, not all four factors were considered appropriate to social identification (with non-fictional characters). As such, *Identification with Favourite character* (25.6% variance explained) and *Group Identification/Interaction* were decided to be most appropriate to the proposed study. As the context used in the cited study was sitcom characters, items were adapted to cite the Reality Television contestants for the purpose of this study. All items in the *Identification with Favourite character* factor were pre-tested and lead to one item being eliminated from the launched questionnaire. 'I can imagine myself as one of the contestants' was considered to be confusing as respondents may not be sure if this referred to being one of the current contestants or the respondent being a contestant in their own right. All items in the *Group Identification/Interaction* factor were also pre-tested but items that referred to interactions were considered out of context, for the purpose of this study. For example, 'the characters interactions are similar to mine with my family' were not considered appropriate to a show where there was limited personal interaction between the contestants. This resulted in seven items. All the items are shown in Appendix B.

Attitudes and Behaviours

The Social Identification Process has been measured by changes in attitudes and behaviour to those normative of the social group (Hogg & Smith, 2007a), and can also be influenced by Reality Television shows (Nabi & Riddle, 2008; Nabi, 2007). Previous measurement of such attitudes and behaviour has been context-specific (Abrams, 2009; Abrams, Hinkle, & Tomlins, 1999; Chatzisarantis, Hagger, Wang, & Thogersen-Ntoumani, 2009; Copeland, Reynolds, & Burton, 2008), and is thus considered appropriate in the proposed study. Therefore, based on Social Identity Theory (SIT), as well as media and (*MasterChef Australia*) show content analysis, the following scale was formed. These items were worded to measure both consumer attitudes and behaviour relevant to topics focussed on by *MasterChef Australia*, i.e. food, cooking, and eating. All the items are shown in Appendix B.

A tabulation of the hypotheses tested, constructs measuring them, and the items used in the questionnaire to measure them is shown in Table 5. A summary of all question items used is given in Appendix B.

Table 6: Hypotheses, Constructs, and Items.

Hypothesis	Construct	Questionnaire Item
H1a: There is a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and the Contestants' Social Identity	1. The importance the viewer places on their own Social Identity attributes. 5. The importance the viewer places on the Contestant's Social Identity attributes.	Q8. 1,8.3, 8.4, 8.6, 8.8, 8.14, 8.16 Q5
H1b: There is a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and involvement.	1. The importance the viewer places on their own Social Identity attributes. 4. Involvement (of the viewer with the contestants and the show).	Q8.1, 8.3, 8.4, 8.6, 8.8, 8.14, 8.16 Q3
H2a: There is a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and the Contestants' Social Identity.	2. The importance the viewer places on their own Viewer's Personal Identity attributes. 5. The importance the viewer places on the Contestant's Social Identity attributes.	Q8.2, 8.5, 8.7, 8.9, 8.10, 8.11, 8.12, 8.13, 8.15, 8.17 Q5
H2b: There is a negative relationship between the importance the Viewer's Personal Identity and involvement.	2. The importance the viewer places on their own Viewer's Personal Identity attributes. 4. Involvement (of the viewer with the contestants and the show).	Q8.2, 8.5, 8.7, 8.9, 8.10, 8.11, 8.12, 8.13, 8.15, 8.17 Q3
H3a: There is a positive relationship between authenticity and the Contestants' Social Identity.	3. Authenticity (of the contestants). 5. The importance the viewer places on the Contestant's Social Identity attributes.	Q4 Q5
H3b: There is a positive relationship between authenticity and involvement.	3. Authenticity (of the contestants). 4. Involvement (of the viewer with the contestants and the show).	Q4 Q3
H4a: There is a positive relationship between the Contestants' Social Identity and social identification.	5. The importance the viewer places on the Contestant's Social Identity attributes. 6. Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant).	Q5 Q6
H4b: There is a positive relationship between involvement and social identification.	4. Involvement (of the viewer with the contestants and the show). 6. Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant).	Q3 Q6
H5: There is a positive relationship between social identification and attitudes and behaviour.	6. Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant). 7. (Changes in) Attitudes and Behaviour of the viewer.	Q6 Q7

(Table 6 continues)

(Table 6 continued)

Hypothesis	Construct	Questionnaire Item
H6a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and social identification.	5. The importance the viewer places on the Contestant's Social Identity attributes. 1. The importance the viewer places on their own Social Identity attributes. 6. Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant).	Q5 Q8.1, 8.3, 8.4, 8.6, 8.8, 8.14, 8.16 Q6
H6b: Involvement will mediate a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and social identification.	4. Involvement (of the viewer with the contestants and the show). 1. The importance the viewer places on their own Social Identity attributes. 6. Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant).	Q3 Q8.1, 8.3, 8.4, 8.6, 8.8, 8.14, 8.16 Q6
H7b: Involvement will mediate a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and social identification.	4. Involvement (of the viewer with the contestants and the show). 2. The importance the viewer places on their own Viewer's Personal Identity attributes. 6. Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant).	Q3 Q8.2, 8.5, 8.7, 8.9, 8.10, 8.11, 8.12, 8.13, 8.15, 8.17 Q6

3.6   DATA CODING, EDITING AND CLEANING

All survey questions were numerically coded before launch using the *Qualtrics* online survey tool. This tool was used as it is hosted and supported on the internal website of *Monash University's Faculty of Business and Economics*. All questions were developed to ensure that responses were within the set scale range using radio buttons, and each response had to be entered before enabling respondents to progress to the next question. This ensured that no responses were incorrectly coded by respondents, and there were no missing data. However, data were screened for any consistent outliers due to respondent error, for example, where one viewer may have responded as '10' to all questions. Negatively scaled items were re-coded after data collection to ensure consistency and reliability. The data were then imported into SPSS17.

Skewness and Kurtosis were analysed for normality of distribution. Large samples (>200) can be too sensitive to skewness and kurtosis values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007) and several items were found to be negatively skewed. This was also because the mean scores were above the mid-point of the scale. High mean scores were expected and theoretically justified but suggested non-normality so further analysis was carried out. Trimmed 5% means were

analysed to ascertain if outliers were causing an issue. However, this was found to make little difference to the mean scores. Histograms were analysed and confirmed that there was a trend to higher mean scores. Normal Q-Q plots were analysed and observed values were clustered around the expected values in a straight line, suggesting a normal distribution. Further, the Detrended Normal Q-Q Plots showed no clustering and most points collecting around the zero line. Such results suggest that there may be normality. However, as Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in AMOS19 assumes normality but bootstrapping can be performed if data may not be normally distributed. Therefore, as some items were negatively skewed, bootstrapping was performed in the analysis of the Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) stage.

3.7   INSTRUMENT VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Even if a measure has been shown to satisfy the measurement criteria in previous studies, it is important that the researcher of further studies independently evaluates the measurement properties to enhance their quality (Venkatraman & Grant, 1986). Prior to analysis of the data, validity and reliability of all scales needs to be established. Validity is established in the content and construct validity, whilst the internal consistency indicates construct reliability. Because of its rigorous testing and extensive use in research using AMOS Structural Equation Modelling, the following procedure is based predominantly on Hair's (2010a) latest edition of *Multivariate Data Analysis* text book. The appropriateness of the procedure for this particular study laid out below was also discussed with the author in a personal one-to-one consultation, following a workshop, for further guidance and refinement J. Hair (personal communication, April 5, 2010).

The scale or construct validity is the degree to which the questions (items) in a survey instrument capture the appropriate concepts and if the researcher is measuring this concept rather than something else (Sekaran, 2003). Three types of construct validity are recommended: 1. *Face or content validity*; 2. *Convergent validity*; 3. *Discriminant validity*, (Loewenthal, 1996; Malhotra, 2010; Murphy & Davidshofer, 2005; Sekaran, 2003) and are considered below. In Structural Equation Modelling, the nomological validity is also considered as this indicates whether the correlations between constructs in the measurement model make sense.

A scale or construct has face or content validity through the extent to which the chosen items and scales or constructs represent a subset of all appropriate items (DeVellis, 2003; Sekaran, 2003). This was attained in this study through an extensive review of the academic literature, content analysis of the Reality Television show context, media commentary, and pre-testing of the survey instrument.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is the extent to which the measures of the same construct correlate positively (Malhotra, 2010), that is, the extent to which they converge or share a high proportion of common variance. There are three measures of convergent validity recommended for use in Structural Equation Modelling (Hair, 2010a) These are:

1. Factor loadings.

2. Average Variance Extracted.

3. Construct Reliability.

Factor Loadings

Factor loadings are reported in AMOS19 as standardised regression weights, and should be greater than 0.5 (ideally >0.7), positive, and statistically significant. The factor loadings for the measurement model in this study were all >0.5, with the majority being >0.7. Details of the CFA procedure used in AMOS to produce these results, and subsequent analysis are given in the results analysis chapter.

Average Variance Extracted

Average Variance Extracted was proposed by Fornell and Larcker (1981) as a measure of the shared or common variance in a latent variable. Specifically, this is the amount of variance that is captured by the latent variable (construct) in relation to the amount of variance due to measurement error. The average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct should be greater than 0.5, as this indicates that the construct explains most of the variance that is greater than 50% (Hair, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2011). The AVE and construct reliability cannot

be computed using Structural Equation Modelling. The AVE is computed as the sum of the standardised regression weights divided by the number of items, for each construct. These were all shown to be greater than 0.5, ranging from 52.04% to 75.98%. Average variances extracted (AVE) and construct reliability are shown in Table 6.

Construct Reliability

It is necessary to ascertain whether the multi-item scales measure the concept for which they were developed, prior to usage (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Haws, 2011). There are several methods to assess the reliability of scales but not all are available to the researcher. For instance, test-retest reliability requires testing and retesting the same scale with the same respondents at a different time (Churchill, 1979). As well as increased cost, it may not have been possible to gain permission of the respondents to retest in this study. Repeated exposure may also have created response bias and the time lag may have created environmental or personal changes. Another form of reliability considered unsuitable for this particular study was equivalent form reliability. This would have involved sourcing or developing another highly similar structural model but was not considered possible for this study (Murphy & Davidshofer, 2005). Hair (2010a) proposes that this can be computed using standardised regression weights in AMOS. Construct reliability (CR) should be greater than 0.7 (but between 0.6 and 0.7 is acceptable) to indicate internal consistency, and thus convergent validity. This means that all items are consistently measuring some effect. This is computed from the sum of the standardised regression weights (in AMOS) squared for each construct plus the sum of error variance terms for that construct. Computations in this study found construct reliability ranged from 0.80 to 0.93 indicating very high construct reliability.

Discriminant Validity

Psychometric assessment was completed through discriminant validity, representing the extent to which the scale for each construct does not correlate with those from which they should differentiate (Malhotra, 2010) and not simply reflecting method variance. The sample size of 348 for this study exceeds the minimum 100-200 recommended for testing and refinement of structural models by use of maximum likelihood covariance estimation techniques recommended by Bagozzi and Yi (1989).

To ascertain discriminant validity, the average variance extracted (AVE) should also be greater than the square of the inter-correlation (SIC) between that construct and any other construct (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This indicates that the items within a construct correlate with each other more than they do with other constructs (Netemeyer, Bearden, & Sharma, 2003). The SIC for each construct is computed by squaring the inter-correlation (correlation estimates in AMOS19) between each construct and each other construct (bivariate correlations). These were shown to range between 0.02 and 0.42. As the lowest AVE (0.52) was greater than the highest SIC (0.42), this computation indicated good discriminant validity. This is also shown in Table 6.

Nomological Validity

In AMOS19, nomological validity is indicated in the covariances and inter-construct correlations. As all were shown to be positive and statistically significant (except for Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Authenticity (A); p >0.5), nomological validity is established.

Table 7: AVE, Construct Reliability, and Discriminant Validity

CONSTRUCT	Construct Reliability (Cronbach Alpha)	Discriminant Validity: Square Of Inter-Correlations (SIC) Between Constructs and Average Variance Extracted (AVE)						
		VSI	VPI	A	I	CSI	ID	A&B
VSI	0.84	**0.58**						
VPI	0.86	0.30	**0.52**					
A	0.80	0.07	0.00	**0.76**				
I	0.84	0.12	0.11	0.13	**0.50**			
CSI	0.92	0.20	0.18	0.11	0.33	**0.60**		
ID	0.90	0.13	0.02	0.27	0.42	0.22	**0.66**	
AandB	0.93	0.16	0.18	0.06	0.33	0.32	0.18	**0.76**
Mean		6.93	7.73	5.47	6.23	7.08	4.93	7.01
SD		1.69	1.48	1.95	1.80	1.64	2.05	1.88

Note. VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes; A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes; ID= Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant); AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour. AVE is shown in boldface. n = 348

3.8   PROCEDURE FOR DATA COLLECTION

Unrestricted self-selected online surveys are accessed by participants who know a survey website or HTML link. This can be known by information sent to them or by use of an online search engine. A contact copy serves to gain the respondent's co-operation, establish informed consent and enhance response rates (Gosling & Johnson, 2010). Contact copy includes pre-notification, invitation, reminders and follow ups. As this survey was carried out, and the quota reached within 48 hours, only the invitation component of the contact copy was deemed necessary. Invitations to participate in the online survey used in this study via a URL link were emailed to subscribers to the Volunteer Opt-In Panel. Development and administration of the questionnaire was through an online survey software tool (*Qualtrics*). Participants were paid a nominal $1 for completing surveys by the Web survey host. The invitations were compiled by the researcher and provided to the Web survey host. Waves of 400 invitations were sent out until the quota was obtained. Details of the quota sampling method used are given in Table 7.

In compiling the invitation to participate, the following guidelines were used.

❚ address the invitation to the prospective respondent;

❚ identify the organization(s) conducting the study to establish credibility;

❚ state the purpose of the study and its importance;

❚ give assurances of confidentiality or anonymity;

❚ explain how the prospective respondent was chosen;

❚ emphasize the importance of the response to the study's success;

❚ if an incentive will be offered, explain the terms of the offer;

❚ explain the study's time frame, including details on the closing
date of the survey and incentive awards;

❚ note the approximate time commitment required to complete the survey;

❚ acknowledge likely reasons for nonparticipation to defuse them;

❚ embed a link to the survey URL;

❚ provide contact information for respondents who wish to inquire about the study, the researcher's qualifications, Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval, or any other issues related to the study; and

❚ include an advance 'thank you' statement that assumes participant cooperation.
(Gosling & Johnson, 2010 p. 286)

From the sampling frame, the Web survey hosts were given instructions on the sampling method required. A quota sample was obtained by using a non-probability method. Quota and stratified sampling both aim to include a specified number of respondents in each specified category. In the stratified method, the required number for each demographic and geographic characteristic (representative of the Australian population) is randomly selected. A stratified sample allows all those who qualify an equal chance of participating. However, in a quota sample, the required numbers may be sought out by the interviewer, e.g. for a gender category in a shopping mall intercept survey. Such sampling is assimilated in the sampling method used for this study as the web survey host seeks out the required quotas. This is also referred to as multi stage sampling as the Web survey host is required to meet quotas for various characteristics (McNeill & Chapman, 2005), as shown in Table 7.

The Web survey hosts emailed out 8425 invitations to their Volunteer Opt-In Panel, inviting them to participate in a survey of Reality Television viewing. Of these, 1478 volunteers clicked on the survey link to take the survey, resulting in a response rate of 17.54%. The response rate may be because invitations referred to a survey on the subject of Reality Television. As such, many of those invited may not have had any interest in completing a survey on Reality Television. 348 out of these 1478 completed the survey, resulting in an incidence rate of 23.54%. The incidence rate may appear rather low but was affected by two particular factors. Web survey hosts were instructed to email out invites until required quotas for each criteria (representing the geographic and demographics of the Australian population) were reached. As quotas for each criteria were reached (detailed in Table 8) participants surplus to those criteria were not permitted to complete the survey. For example, when a quota representative of the Australian female population was reached, no more females were allowed to complete the survey. Secondly, if the participants did not consider *MasterChef Australia 2010* as one of their top three favourite shows and/or had watched less than half of the shows, the participant was not allowed to complete the survey. This ensured that participants were regular and enthusiastic viewers of the show.

Table 8: Sampling Procedure

POPULATION	Regular and enthusiastic viewers of MasterChef Australia 2010 series.
SAMPLING FRAME	The Volunteer Opt-In Panel of a Web survey host (Research Now) commissioned by the researcher and Monash University.
QUOTA SAMPLING	4. Waves of 400 invitations to participate in an online survey via on HTML link invitations emailed out until the quota for each criteria was obtained. The criteria were based on (geographic and demographic characteristics) representative of the Australian population. When any quota was reached, no further volunteers (who met the criteria) were permitted to participate.
MULTI STAGE SAMPLING	2. The next stage was based on a qualifying question measuring regular viewing. 3. The final stage was based on a qualifying question measuring the viewer's favouritism for MasterChef Australia 2010.

Quota sampling was used to ensure the non-probability sample accurately represented the, gender, federal state, and age of the Australian population. These characteristics (criteria) are detailed in Table 8. This table gives details of both those invited from the Volunteer Opt-In Panel based on ABS statistics available to the Web survey hosts, as well as those participants who chose and were permitted to complete the survey. Slight variations resulted from participants completing the survey simultaneously.

Table 9: Demographic Representation of Invited and Completed

	INVITED	COMPLETED
GENDER		
Male	50%	45%
Female	50%	55%
STATE		
NSW	33%	35%
VIC	25%	23.50%
QLD	20%	18%
WA	10%	9.50%
SA	8%	9%
TAS	2%	3%
NT	1%	0.50%
ACT	1%	1.50%
AGE GROUP		
18-24	13%	10%
25-34	17%	23%
35-55	21%	19%
45-54	18%	16%
55-99	31%	32%

As discussed earlier, the first two questions were screening questions and were used to ensure that participants were enthusiastic and regular viewers of the *MasterChef Australia* 2010 series. The first screening question ensured that all participants rated *MasterChef Australia 2010* as one of their top three favourite shows or were screened out. Further, those who had watched less than half of the episodes of the 2010 series were then also screened out. More than half (53%) of those who were allowed to complete the survey had watched most episodes, ensuring a reasonable level of familiarity (operationalised as regular viewing) and enthusiasm for *MasterChef Australia* 2010.

Table 10: Familiarity with Reality Television show surveyed

Please estimate how many episodes of MASTERCHEF AUSTRALIA (adult version) you watched in 2010	
About half of them	27
Most of them	20
All of them	53
Total	100.0%

3.9   DATA ANALYSIS METHOD

Structural Equation Modelling

The hypotheses put forward in this thesis were tested using Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) in AMOS 19. The validity and reliability of this procedure has been shown in a large number of journal articles pertaining to the discipline of this thesis. Hair et al. (2010a) recommend its use in data analysis of complete statistical models because of its advantages over other statistical analysis techniques.

Covariance is the primary statistical analysis of Structural Equation Modelling. This means that Structural Equation Modelling analysis exploits the covariances rather than means (Mazzocchi, 2008). The relationships hypothesised in this thesis can be measured in series of regression equations but Structural Equation Modelling is a more comprehensive approach to measurement error and multivariate dependent variables that are difficult to measure or cannot be measured with multiple regression analysis (Mackinnon, Coxe, & Baraldi, 2012). Similarly, Hair (2010b) explains that Structural Equation Modelling is able to apply multiple regression and factor analysis simultaneously whilst also considering unobserved variables and measurement error. This thesis also proposes to measure mediating variables, whereby such variables are hypothesised and measured simultaneously as an independent and dependent variable. It is not possible to measure such an effect with multiple regression where the effect on just a single dependent variable can be measured (Hair, 2006). Likewise, Yilmaz (2004) views Structural Equation Modelling as more suitable than multiple regression, path analysis, and factor analysis because these statistical methods do not take

into account the interaction effects between all the independent and dependent variables simultaneously.

Structural Equation Modelling has also been discussed in respect of causality as this is the strongest conclusion a researcher can draw. Although Structural Equation Modelling alone is unable to prove causality (Kline, 2005) unless longitudinal data is used (Hair, 2006), it may provide supportive evidence of a causal inference. Cooksey (2007) states that Structural Equation Modelling is the statistically justified procedure that can make causal statements. Furthermore, AMOS 19 was the most current version of software for Structural Equation Modelling and was supported by the host institution.

Structural Equation Modelling Analysis

The variables and relationships used in this thesis were based on previous research, empirically tested scales, and theories in the relevant disciplines, as discussed previously. Through use of the Structural Equation Modelling technique, covariances of independent (exogenous), dependent (endogenous) and mediating variables are represented as constructs and can be measured through their attached (scale) items. Further, the independent variables in all Structural Equation Modelling models are assumed to have covariance and this relationship is shown by a double headed arrow. The constructs and results of each of the hypothesised direct relationships are reproduced in Chapter 4.

Model fit is determined through statistical testing of the overall fit and the comparative fit with the data (Hair, 2010a). In this thesis, the criteria used for this assessment were chi-square (χ^2) relative to degrees of freedom, goodness-of-fit (GFI), comparative fit index (CFI), the Tucker-Lewis coefficient (TLI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Hair, et al., 2006; Malhotra, et al., 2002).

Mediation Analysis

Amos19 was used to analyse the effects of Contestant Social Identity (CSI) and Involvement (I) as mediators, in the structural models. This has been referred to as serial multiple mediation (Hayes, 2012). This is done by measuring the indirect effects of the independent

variables (Viewer's Social Identity, Viewer's Personal Identity, and Authenticity) on Social Identification (ID). Whilst some researchers affirm that only the indirect effects are needed to establish mediation (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010), others draw attention to the fact that full mediation is not common in psychology-related areas of research, and advocate the importance of considering any direct effect too (Mackinnon, et al., 2012). Therefore, the first stage was to ascertain if the proposed model measured full or partial mediation. In the second stage, a number of relationships were then calculated separately for the purpose of analysing the individual mediators. This was to ascertain if both Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) and Involvement (I) mediate (or not) the indirect effect on Social Identification (ID), or only one of them.

In the first stage, to ascertain full or partial mediation, a comparison was made of the measurement (SEM1) model and alternative models (SEM2 to SEM5). SEM1 measured only the indirect paths of the mediated relationships. The alternative models included all the paths shown in SEM1 but also each direct path was measured. These additional paths measure any direct effect between the independent variables (Viewer's Social Identity, Viewer's Personal Identity, and Authenticity) and Social Identification (ID). If the chi-square difference between SEM1 and any of these alternative models is not significant, the conceptual model should be judged the best model fit as it is parsimonious (Bollen, 1989). The simpler the final model, the more generalisable it is (Blunch, 2012). However, if there is a significant difference, and an alternative model adds to the explanatory power of the model, there is evidence of partial mediation (rather than full mediation). SEM1 measured full mediation but the four alternative SEM models were required to ascertain partial mediation and identify which relationships this would refer to. These models are detailed in Chapter 4.

In AMOS19, the indirect effects are reported under the Matrices Output. These results show the total of indirect effects on Social Identification (ID) for each of the independent variables. However, this output shows the total indirect effect resulting from both of the mediating variables (Contestants' Social Identity and Involvement). Further analysis was needed to consider the individual effect of each of the mediating variables. In other words, this result does not ascertain if both Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) and Involvement (I) mediate (or not) this indirect effect or only one of them. This is referred to as the specific effect (Macho & Ledermann, 2011) of a mediating relationship. This can be done by manually multiplying the specific effects of each of the relevant mediating paths reported in AMOS. However, as

AMOS does not report this (manual) calculation, the statistical significance is not reported either. For the purpose of analysing the statistical significance of manually calculated specific mediated effects, bootstrap resampling with other statistical tools was considered.

Statistical analysis tools such as R can be used for bootstrap resampling. From this test, specific effect sizes for each individual mediating path (e.g. VSI to I) can be generated for a simulated sample using the regression weights reported in AMOS. These can be then averaged to give a specific effect size for each individual mediating path. From these simulated samples for each of the specific mediating relationships, it is then possible to calculate the statistical significance (p values) for the specific effect sizes in each of the mediating relationships, using the NORMSDIST function in Microsoft Excel. However, there is a limitation to this method also. Such analysis can only be used where each exogenous variable does not share a mediating path with another exogenous variable. This is because AMOS reports the mediating effect (regression weight) of each path but does not report the specific contribution of each individual exogenous variable to this effect. As such, the effect reported (in AMOS) for each of the paths between the mediating variables (Contestants' Social Identity [CSI] and Involvement [I]) and Social Identification (ID) includes the sum total effect of all exogenous variables (labelled as VSI, VPI, and A). For example, the effect shown between Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) and Social Identification (ID) includes the effect of all of the exogenous variables. As such, it is not possible to manually calculate the specific mediating path of each exogenous variable on Social Identification (ID), for the purpose of generating statistical significances in R. Therefore, this method was discounted.

Consideration was also given to excluding paths from all but one of the exogenous variables to the mediating variables for the purpose of analysing the specific effect of the included exogenous variable. However, exclusion of any paths in a model generates invalid regression weights within a Structural Equation Model. This is because a Structural Equation Model is the sum of its parts. Removing any 'parts' invalidates this. Therefore, this method was also discounted.

In 2011, Macho and Ledermann considered the above limitation of AMOS and other Structural Equation Modelling tools, and the theoretical importance of being able to report such specific effects (Macho & Ledermann, 2011). From their research and development of

AMOS modelling, it was possible to generate specific effects of each exogenous variable on each shared mediating path, and the statistical significances using a method referred to as The Phantom Model Approach. This approach has been used previously but the results are as formulas (polynomial equations) and matrix formulas (Bollen, 1989; Cheung, 2007) which are beyond the scope of this thesis. Further, Cheung's approach requires a Structural Equation Modelling programme that permits the specification of nonlinear constraints on specified parameters. This is not possible in AMOS. Below is a summary of The Phantom Model Approach which is within the limitations of AMOS and used in this thesis.

The Phantom Model Approach

This approach involves building a structural model in AMOS as per usual. This main model is then used to build a phantom model for each specific effect of interest. Such phantom models replicate the relevant paths, and "each path co-efficient is restricted to the value of the respective coefficient in the main model" (Macho & Ledermann, 2011, p. 36). For example, in the main model, the path between Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) and Involvement (I) is labelled as B34. Therefore, replicated paths in the phantom models are similarly labelled as B34. Restrictions are also specified on the variance of the exogenous variables within each of the phantom models. Further, covariances, error terms, and direct paths should not be depicted. In essence, such a method instructs AMOS to report the specific effect of the various mediating paths proposed by the phantom model(s).

3.10   LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

Limitations

For online research, the potential for coverage error pertains to internet coverage. Professional survey respondents are a concern in online surveying. Such individuals are known to become proficient in completing questionnaires and familiar with specific questions because of frequent participation (Sue & Ritter, 2007). However, this can be expected more in frequently used scales and questionnaires such as personality tests, and less likely in unique questionnaires, such as the one used in this survey.

Although technically sampling error in online surveying is not different than for other methods, minimisation of sampling error is arguably more limited. This is because there is no obtainable list of web users and therefore no version of random-digit dialling (RDD). However, Couper (2000) demonstrated that probability samples can be achieved through the use of samples from online lists.

Delimitations

The decision was made to limit the study to sample of viewers of one particular series of *MasterChef Australia* because of issues concerning validity and reliability. Participants were asked questions regarding enthusiasm and regular viewing of the show. These questions may have solicited different responses for different series and called in question the accuracy of recalling series' from previous years.

The sampling frame was taken from the Volunteer Opt-In Panel of a Web survey host. Therefore, this study was limited to participants of this panel, as well as individuals who had regular internet access. This decision was taken because of costs and ease in gaining large numbers of responses in a short time period.

3.11 SUMMARY

This chapter detailed the research method and design used in this study. Following sections explained how the sample was drawn from a Volunteer Opt-in Panel, the survey tool that was developed and used, and issues of validity and reliability. The procedure, data coding, and method of analysis were then reported.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

This study used structural equation modelling (SEM) to analyse the proposed model, its constructs and items, and paths within the model. Structural Equation Modelling examines the structure of the interrelationships combining both factor analysis and multiple regression analysis. Further, Structural Equation Modelling has the ability to explain all the relationships simultaneously, including the representation of the unobserved concepts and the measurement error. Applying Structural Equation Modelling is a two-step process involving confirming the measurement model (CFA) and then evaluating the hypothesised relationships in a structural equation model. The former is considered below and the latter in the following sections.

4.1   RESULTS

4.1.2   Confirmatory Factor Analysis

Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) infers unidimensionality, as well as discriminant and convergent validity (Malhotra, 2010). Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) explores the underlying factors whilst CFA is appropriate for testing a theory of the structure of a particular domain or context (Swinbourne, 1997). CFA can be used to test a single measurement model which indicates whether or not the hypothesised model fits the data. AMOS19 was used to test the model hypothesised in this study and is detailed further below.

Measurement Model

This stage of the process is used to confirm the validity and reliability of the constructs used in the model and evaluates the fit between the observed and the estimated covariance matrices. As this is a confirmatory analysis (rather than exploratory analysis), all constructs are specified by the researcher so must be based on a sound theoretical justification. Use of existing scales and modifications (where appropriate), were justified in Chapter 3.

The single measurement model that was used in AMOS19 for this study is reproduced in Figure 3 and defines the relationships between the measured items and the latent variables covariance structure. Measured items (observed) are depicted as boxes and the latent variables (unobserved constructs) are depicted as ellipses. Measured items are connected by arrows to the constructs theoretically attributed to them, as per AMOS19. The model considers the unidimensionality of the scale for each construct. Unobserved response errors were applied (not depicted) to each construct of the model.
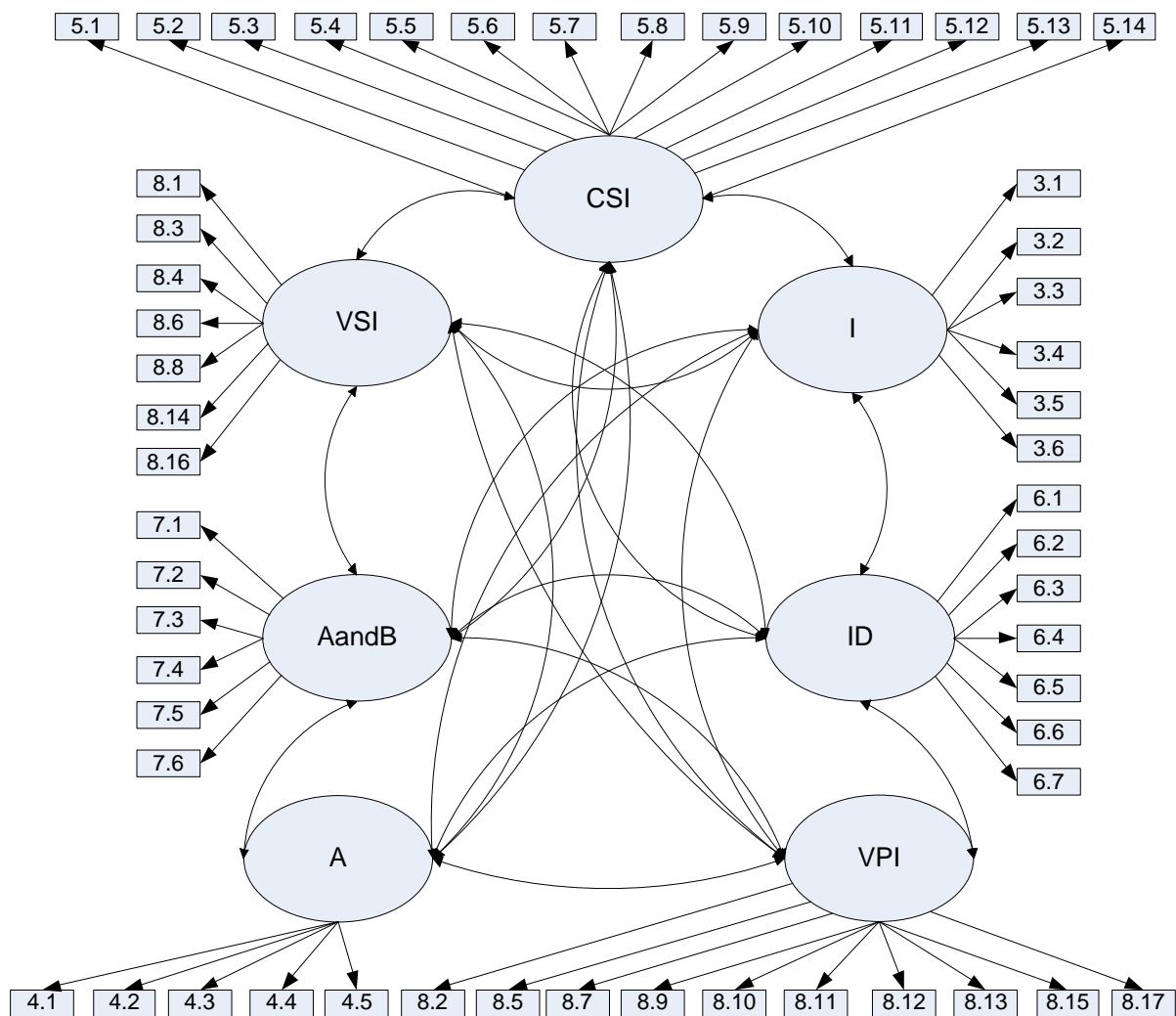
Note. All items had error terms attached (not shown).

χ^2/df = 3.809, GFI=.591, CFI=.726, TLI=.711, RMSEA=.090.

VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes; A= Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as perceived by the viewer); ID= Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant); AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour.

Figure 3: SEM Model 1 (CFA)

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) tests the fit of the model to the data whilst simultaneously modelling measurement error of the observed variables (Tharenou, et al., 2007). In this study, the model fit was assessed using chi-square (χ^2) relative to degrees of freedom (*df*), (χ^2/df =3.809), goodness-of-fit (GFI=.591), comparative fit index (CFI=.726), the Tucker-Lewis coefficient (TLI=.711), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA=0.090).

In preliminary testing of the model, acceptable fit could not be confirmed, as detailed above and shown in Figure 3. Often this is modified by removing items from each of the constructs as indicated by the modification indices generated in AMOS19 (Malhotra, 2010). A high modification index for an item indicates high improvement to the model fit by its removal. Therefore, items were removed from the model on this basis. Where modification indices were similar, similarity of wording for the original items was considered. For example, the items 'my personal goals and hopes for the future' and 'my dreams and imagination' have similar wording (and modification indices), so one item was removed to improve the model fit. The items removed are indicated in Appendix C. The modification indices generated also showed there was a significant relationship between the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) and Involvement (I) constructs and a direct path was added to the model to show this relationship (β = .452, p < .001). This was not hypothesised or originally modelled as it was proposed that these two constructs operated concurrently rather than one affecting the other. However, it may be considered a reasonable assumption. If the viewer places importance on the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI), then they are more likely to become involved with the contestants. Therefore, consideration was given to the mediating effect of the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) through Involvement (I), in modelling and subsequent data analysis. The model fit shown in Figure 4 was then found as theoretically and statistically acceptable: chi-square (χ^2) relative to degrees of freedom (*df*), (χ^2/df =2.343), goodness-of-fit (GFI=.827), comparative fit index (CFI=.910), the Tucker-Lewis coefficient (TLI=.910), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA=0.062).

Note. All items had error terms attached (not shown).
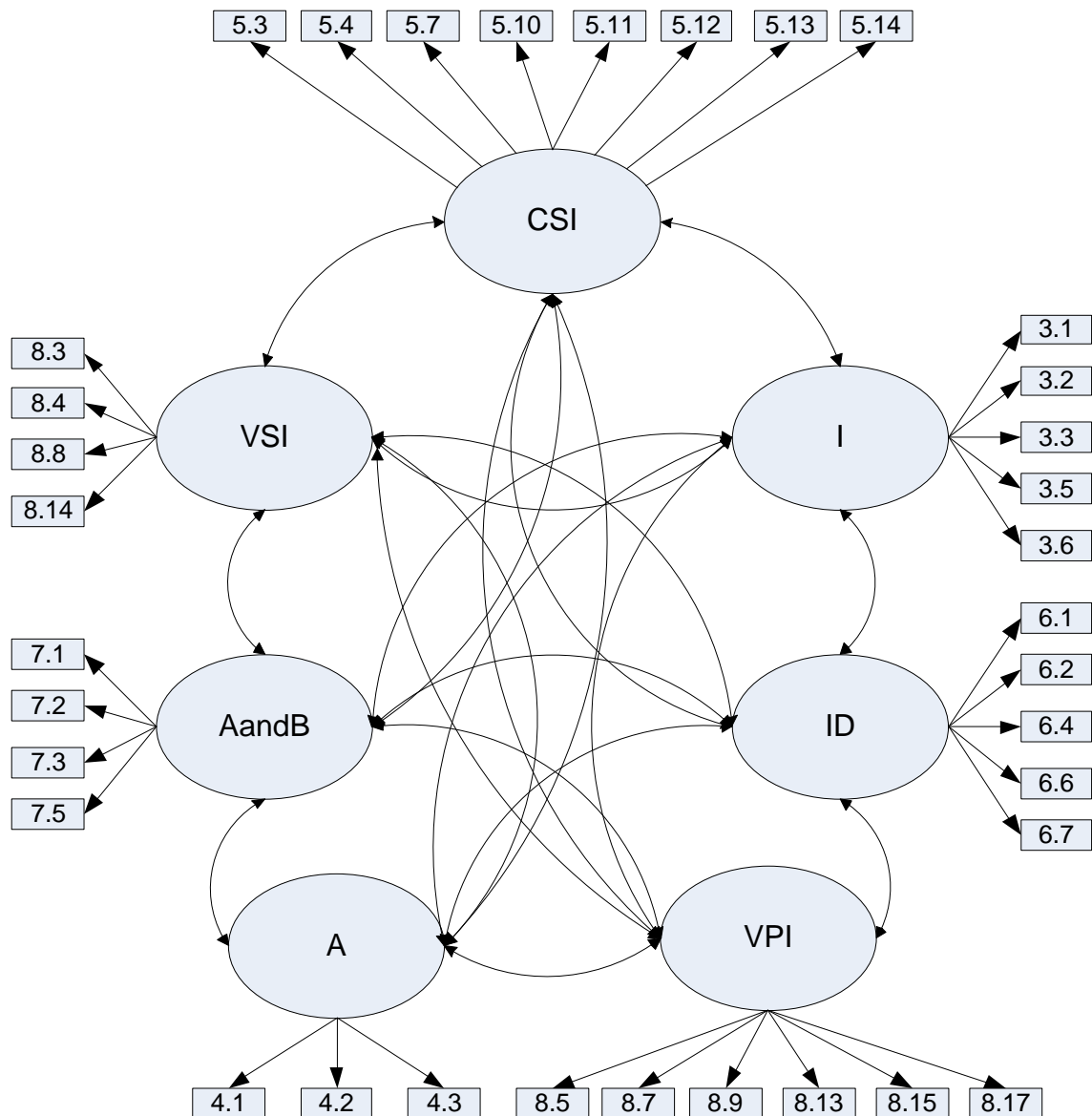χ^2/df =2.343, GFI=.827, CFI=.910, TLI=.910, RMSEA=0.062.
VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes;
A= Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as
perceived by the viewer); ID= Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant);
AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour.

Figure 4: SEM Model 2 (CFA)

Appendix C also shows standardised factor loading and t-values. It is a requirement of
Structural Equation Modelling in AMOS19 that one item in each construct is given a

regression weight of 1 to set the scale of the construct, so no t-values are given for these items.

4.1.3 Structural Model Fit Analysis

The model fit was found as acceptable and is reported below.

Note. Figures shown on arrows depict standardised regression weights for each hypothesised relationship. **p < .01; ***p < .001. Figures shown in bold face represent the percentage for each construct explained by the model. VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes; A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as perceived by the viewer); ID = Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant); AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour. ξ = exogenous constructs; η = endogenous constructs; Φ = covariances; γ = parameter estimates linking exogenous constructs to endogenous constructs; β = parameter estimates linking endogenous constructs to endogenous constructs (Hair, 2010).

Figure 5: SEM1 Structural Model

Based on the χ^2/df, GFI, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA reported, all the values for the *SEM1 Structural Model* (shown in Figure 5) meet the acceptable criteria for goodness of fit. For the χ^2/df, a result of between 1 and 5 is considered an acceptable fit (Malhotra, et al., 2002). GFI, CFI and TLI results close to 1 indicate a very good fit (Bentler, 1990; Bollen, 1989; Tanaka & Huba, 1985). An RMSEA of around 0.5 is considered a good fit, although any result below 0.8 indicates an acceptable fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993). The model fit results for the *SEM1 Structural Model* are presented in Table 10. Overall, it can be concluded that the model fits the sample data reasonably well.

Table 11: SEM1 Model Fit Indices

	χ²	*df*	χ²/ *df*	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
SEM1	1412.498	545	2.592	0.807	0.891	0.881	0.068

As mentioned earlier, in Structural Equation Modelling, a variable can be referred to as both an outcome variable (dependent) and an explanatory variable (independent) at the same time. This is further discussed below in relation to the model used in this thesis.

4.1.4   Mediation Analysis

In hypotheses H1 to H5, the constructs of the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) and Involvement (I) were hypothesised as being independent variables in some of the hypotheses and dependent variable in other hypotheses, depending on the direct relationship referred to, as shown below.

The Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) as a dependent construct:

H1a: There is a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and the Contestants' Social Identity

H2a: There is a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and the Contestants' Social Identity.

The Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) as an independent construct:

H4a: There is a positive relationship between the Contestants' Social Identity and social identification.

Involvement (I) as a dependent construct:

H1b: There is a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and involvement.

H2b: There is a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and involvement.

Involvement (I) as an independent construct:

H4b: There is a positive relationship between involvement and social identification.

However mediating variables are simultaneously independent and dependent constructs. Further analysis of the model was needed to ascertain the (indirect) effect of these mediating relationships as hypothesised in H6-H8 below.

H6a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and social identification.

H6b: Involvement will mediate a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and social identification.

H7a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and social identification.

H7b: Involvement will mediate a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and social identification.

H8a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a positive relationship between authenticity and social identification.

H8b: Involvement will mediate a positive relationship between authenticity and social identification.

SEM2 measured the effect of Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) on Social Identification (ID). This was done by the addition of a direct path between these two variables, as shown in Figure 6.
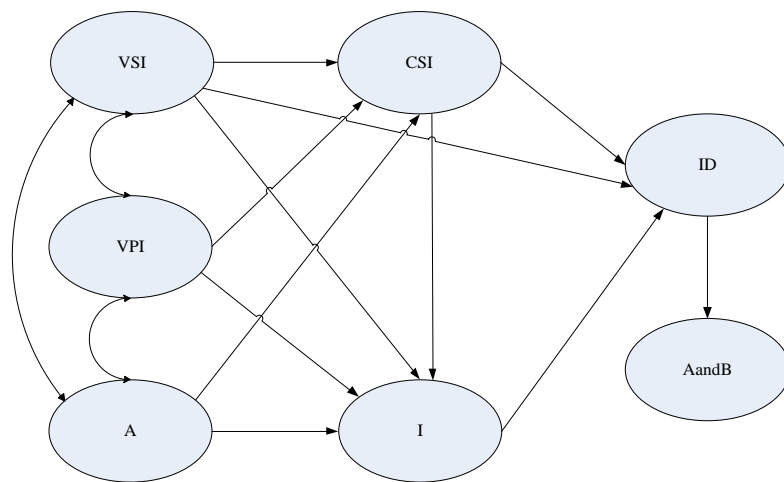
Note. VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes;
A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as
perceived by the viewer); ID = Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant);
AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour.

Figure 6: SEM2

Such a model proposes that the relationship between Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) is partially mediated. In contrast, it proposes the relationships between Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID), and Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) are fully mediated.

SEM3 measured the effect of Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) on Social Identification (ID). This was done by the addition of a direct path between these two variables, as shown in Figure 7.

Note. VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes; A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as perceived by the viewer); ID = Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant); AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour.

Figure 7: SEM3

Such a model proposes that the relationship between Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) is partially mediated. In contrast, it proposes the relationships between Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) and Social Identification (ID), and Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) are fully mediated.

SEM4 measured the effect of Authenticity (A) on Social Identification (ID). This was done by the addition of a direct path between these two variables, as shown in Figure 8.

Note. VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes; A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as perceived by the viewer); ID = Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant); AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour.
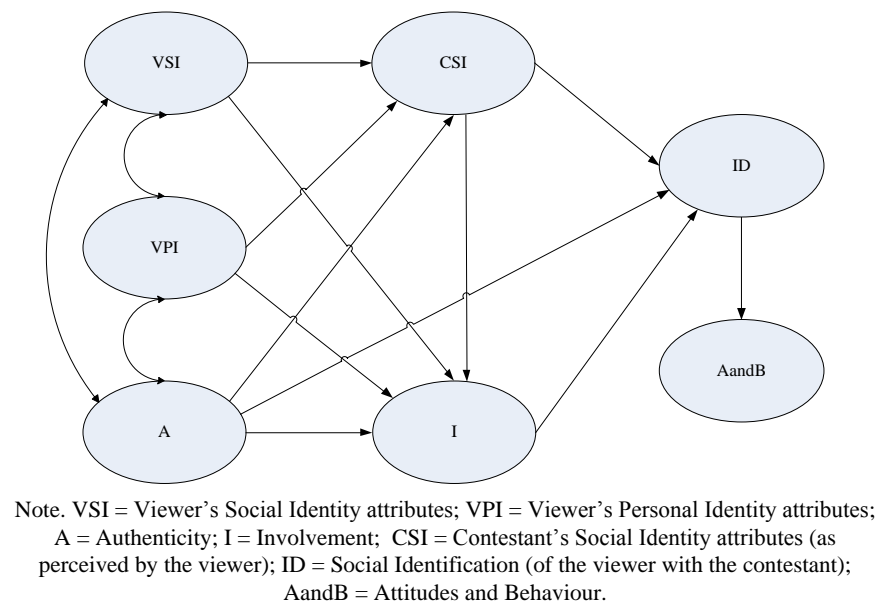
Figure 8: SEM4

Such a model proposes that the relationship between Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) is partially mediated. In contrast, it proposes the relationships between Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) and Social Identification (ID), and Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) are fully mediated.

SEM5 measured the total effect of all of the independent variables (Viewer's Social Identity, Viewer's Personal Identity, and Authenticity) on Social Identification (ID). This was done by the addition of direct paths, as shown in Figure 9.
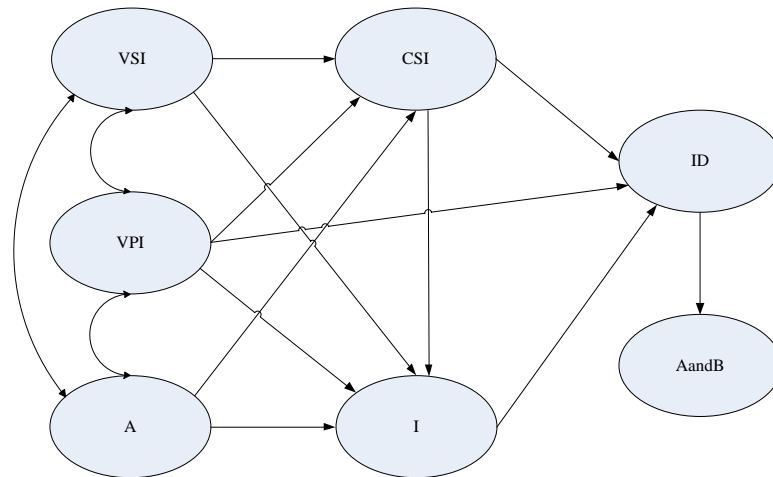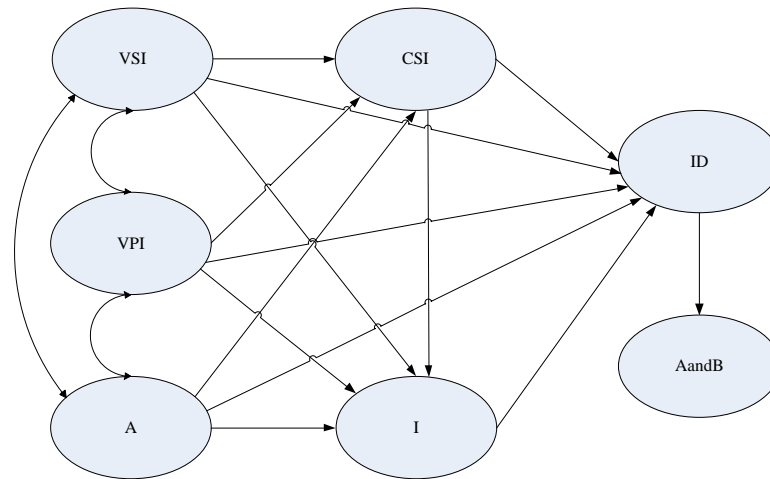

Note. VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes;
A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as
perceived by the viewer); ID = Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant);
AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour.

Figure 9: SEM5

Such a model proposes that all of the relationships between the independent variables and Social Identification (ID) are partially mediated. In contrast, it proposes that none of the relationships between the independent variables and Social Identification (ID) are fully mediated.

Table 11 shows a summary of the model fit for SEM1 to SEM5. From this summary it can be seen that SEM5 had the best model fit.

Table 12: Model Fits SEM1 to SEM5

	χ^2	df	χ^2/df	GFI	CFI	TLI	RMSEA
SEM1	1412.498	545	2.592	0.807	0.891	0.881	0.068
SEM2	1409.696	544	2.586	0.808	0.892	0.882	0.068
SEM3	1406.825	544	2.586	0.809	0.892	0.882	0.068
SEM4	1375.518	544	2.529	0.813	0.896	0.886	0.066
SEM5	1367.064	542	2.522	0.814	0.897	0.886	0.066

However, as discussed earlier, an alternative model should only been considered if the chi-squared for the alternative model is not only a better model fit but also statistically significantly different from that of the proposed model. To an expert practitioner, the alternative model fits (in Table 11) may be recognised as significantly different from the outset. However, for the purpose of academic rigour, the existence and actual value of a statistically significant difference was ascertained using the CHIDIST function in Microsoft Excel. From this test, it was found that there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between the chi-squares for SEM1 and SEM3, SEM4, and SEM5. (*Structural Models*). Such findings suggest that inclusion of the singular direct relationships proposed in SEM3 and SEM4 better explain the social identification process (than SEM1) but SEM5 better explains the social identification process (than SEM1) by inclusion of all direct relationships between the exogenous variables and the Social Identification variable (i.e. partial mediation). Moreover, there was a statistically significant difference ($p < 0.001$) between the chi-squares for all alternate models (SEM2, SEM3, SEM4) and SEM5. Therefore, SEM5 better explained the social identification process than any other model, and confirmed that all of the relationships between the independent variables and Social Identification (ID) are partially mediated. Consequently, the regression weights from SEM5 must be used in subsequent data analysis and results, as shown in Figure 10.

As can be seen in Figure 10, unstandardised regression weights have been reported, rather than the standardised regression weights reported in SEM1. This is because the method used to analyse specific mediating relationships (in a later section) employs unstandardised weights (Macho & Ledermann, 2011).

Note. Figures shown on arrows depict unstandardised regression weights for each hypothesised relationship. **p < .01; ***p < .001. Figures shown in bold face represent the percentage for each construct explained by the model. VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes; A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as perceived by the viewer); ID = Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant); AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour. ξ = exogenous constructs; η = endogenous constructs; Φ = covariances; γ = parameter estimates linking exogenous constructs to endogenous constructs; B = parameter estimates linking endogenous constructs to endogenous constructs (Hair, 2010).

Figure 10: SEM5 Effect Sizes

Previous theorists have asserted that both the direct effects to and from the mediator need to be statistically significant (Baron & Kenny, 1986b; Hair, 1998). However, as Zhao, Lynch and Chen (2010) report, both the direct effects to and from the mediator need not be statistically significant. It is the total effect, which is the multiplication of both direct effects, and the significance of this summed indirect effect that establish mediation. Therefore, direct paths (direct effects) to Involvement (I) were not removed solely on the basis of not being statistically significant and were thus retained in the model.

The results from analysis of the direct paths (relationships) in SEM5 are discussed first. The support for the proposed hypotheses H1 to H5 are shown in Table 12. The mediating paths (relationships) and support for the proposed hypotheses H6 to H8 are then discussed.

Table 13: Summary of (Direct) Hypotheses and Results

	Direction (Hypothesised)	Unstandardised beta	t-values	p	Supported
H1a: Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) → Contestants' Social Identity (CSI)					
	+	.218	2.801	.027	YES
H1b: Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) → Involvement (I)					
	+	.048	0.568	.647	NO
H2a: Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) → Contestants' Social Identity (CSI)					
	-	.315	4.822	< .001	NO
H2b: Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) → Involvement (I)					
	-	.125	1.709	.140	NO
H3a: Authenticity (A) → Contestants' Social Identity (CSI)					
	+	.241	4.883	< .001	YES
H3b: Authenticity (A) → Involvement (I)					
	+	.177	3.143	.005	YES
H4a: Contestants' Social Identity CSI → Social Identification (ID)					
	+	.121	1.672	.173	YES
H4b: Involvement (I) →Social Identification (ID)					
	+	.556	6.817	< .001	YES
H5: Social Identification (ID) → Attitudes and Behaviour (AandB)					
	+	.406	7.443	< .001	YES

Furthermore, from the results generated for SEM5, (not shown), the model accounted for 32% of the variance in the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI); 37% of the variance in Involvement (I); 56% of the variance in Social Identification (ID), and 20% of the variance in Attitudes and Behaviour (AandB). These variance results are those referred to as R squared in other statistical methods and packages. These results are not shown in Figure 10 as AMOS only shows these for standardised results, and this figure shows unstandardised results.

Mediation Analysis

In AMOS19, the indirect effects are reported under the Matrices Output. In this output for SEM5, Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) and Involvement (I) were shown to mediate the

relationship between Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .187, p < .05), and Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .188, p < .00), but not Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .108, p > .05). However, as explained in Chapter 3, this output does not report the effect of every mediation path. This was overcome by building phantom models.

In considering the paths (relationships) between each of the three independent (exogenous) variables and Social Identification (ID), there are three specific mediating (indirect) effects to be measured and analysed, in phantom models. These are as follows.

Path A: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) only (H6a, H7a, H8a)

Path B: Mediating effect of Involvement (I) only (H6a, H7a, H8a)

Path C: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) through Involvement (I) (not hypothesised).

The main model (see Appendix D) was tested simultaneously with phantom models (see Appendix E) built for each of these paths. In these appendices only the path labels are shown. From this test, AMOS generates specific effect sizes and (through bootstrapping 5000 samples), statistical significance is also reported (see Appendix F). As this test is reliable only for unstandardised regression weights (effect sizes) (Macho & Ledermann, 2011), these are reported and compared.

Tables 13, 14, and 15 report the effect sizes and statistical significance (p value) for each of these specific mediating (indirect) effects between each of the independent variables and Social Identification (ID). Effect sizes that are statistically significant are starred. These results are also summarised in Appendix G.

H6a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and social identification.

H6b: Involvement will mediate a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and social identification.

Table 14: Mediating (indirect) and Total (indirect and direct) effects of Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) on Social Identification (ID)

	Effect	Sig.
Path A: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity only (H6a)	.026	.194
Path B: Mediating effect of Involvement only (H6b)	.026	.647
Path C: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity through Involvement	.055	.027*
The total mediating (indirect) effect of Viewer's Social Identity on Social Identification	.108	.151
The total (indirect and direct) effect of Viewer's Social Identity on Social Identification	.325	.001*

*p < .05

In SEM5 and Table 13 (total mediating effect), Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) and Involvement (I) were shown to NOT have a statistically significant mediating relationship between Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .108, p = .151). Similarly, in Mediating Path A, Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) only was shown to NOT have a statistically significant mediating relationship between Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .026, p = .194). Therefore, H6a is not supported. Further, in Mediating Path B, Involvement (I) only was also shown to NOT have a statistically significant mediating relationship between Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .026, p = .647). Therefore, H6b is not supported. However, in Mediating Path C, Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) through Involvement (I) was shown to have a statistically significant mediating relationship between Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .055, p = .027).

H7a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and social identification.

H7b: Involvement will mediate a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and social identification.

Table 15: Mediating (indirect) and Total (indirect and direct) effects of Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) on Social Identification (ID)

	Effect	Sig.
Path A: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity only (H7a)	.038	.173
Path B: Mediating effect of Involvement only (H7b)	.070	.140
Path C: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity through Involvement	.117	< .001*
The total mediating (indirect) effect of Viewer's Personal Identity on Social Identification	.187	.001*
The total (indirect and direct) effect of Viewer's Personal Identity on Social Identification	.030	.798

*p < .05

In SEM5 and Table 14 (total mediating effect), Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) and Involvement (I) were shown to mediate a positive relationship between Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .187, p = .001). However, in Mediating Path A, Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) only was shown to NOT have a statistically significant positive mediating relationship between Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .038, p = .173). Therefore, as no negative relationships were found, H7a is not supported. Similarly, in Mediating Path B, Involvement (I) only was shown to NOT have a statistically significant mediating relationship between Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .070, p = .140). Therefore, as no negative relationships were found, H7b is not supported. However, in Mediating Path C, Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) through Involvement (I) was shown to have a statistically significant positive mediating relationship between Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .187, p < .001).

H8a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a positive relationship between authenticity and social identification.

H8b: Involvement will mediate a positive relationship between authenticity and social identification.

Table 16: Mediating (indirect) and Total (indirect and direct) effects of Authenticity (A) on Social Identification (ID)

	Effect	Sig.
Path A: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity only (H8a)	.029	.173
Path B: Mediating effect of Involvement only (H8b)	.098	.005*
Path C: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity through Involvement	.090	< .001*
The total mediating (indirect) effect of Authenticity on Social Identification	.188	< .001*
The total (indirect and direct) effect of Authenticity on Social Identification	.454	< .001*

*p < .05

In SEM5 and Table 15 (total mediating effect), Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) and Involvement (I) were shown to mediate the relationship between Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .188, p < .001). However, in Mediating Path A, Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) only was shown to NOT have a statistically significant positive mediating relationship between Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .029, p = .173).Therefore, H8a is not supported. In Mediating Path B, Involvement (I) only was shown to have a statistically significant mediating relationship between Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .098, p = .005). Therefore, H8b is supported. Similarly, in Mediating

Path C, Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) through Involvement (I) was also shown to have a statistically significant positive mediating relationship between Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .090, p < .001).

4.1.5 Summary of Results

Structural Equation Model 5 (*Structural Model)* provided evidence of an acceptable fit as shown in Table 15. Analysis of the direct relationships provided support for six of the nine hypothesised direct relationships, as shown below.

Support for each hypothesis is summarised below.

H1a: There is a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and the Contestants' Social Identity. Supported.

H1b: There is a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and involvement. Not supported

H2a: There is a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and the Contestants' Social Identity. Not supported.

H2b: There is a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and involvement. Not supported.

H3a: There is a positive relationship between authenticity and the Contestants' Social Identity. Supported.

H3b: There is a positive relationship between authenticity and involvement. Supported.

H4a: There is a positive relationship between the Contestants' Social Identity and social identification. Supported.

H4b: There is a positive relationship between involvement and social identification. Supported

H5: There is a positive relationship between social identification and attitudes and behaviour. Supported.

H6a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and social identification. Not supported.

H6b: Involvement will mediate a positive relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity and social identification. Not supported.

H7a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and social identification. Not supported.

H7b: Involvement will mediate a negative relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity and social identification. Not supported.

H8a: The Contestants' Social Identity will mediate a positive relationship between authenticity and social identification. Not supported.

H8b: Involvement will mediate a positive relationship between authenticity and social identification. Supported.

4.2　DISCUSSION OF RESULTS FOR PATHS IN MODEL.

The implications of the results in relation to each of the constructs are now discussed in more detail. The results are discussed in relation to each of the paths generated in the structural model, and specifically the relationships between each of the constructs and Social Identification (ID). The relationship between Social Identification (ID) and Attitudes and Behaviours (AandB) is then discussed.

The primary objective of this thesis was to enhance academic understanding of *Social Identity Theory* (SIT) by modelling it as a process, and determining the mediating constructs that enable this process. This was done by establishing its existence in the context of a Reality Television show. Specifically, research was carried out to ascertain if the success of the *MasterChef Australia* brand may be accredited to viewer's Social Identification (ID) with the *MasterChef Australia* contestants. This was addressed in all hypotheses 1-6 detailed in the previous section.

From the model fit in SEM5 using AMOS19, shown in Figure 10 and Table 16, it could be seen that the proposed conceptual model and structural models demonstrate the existence of the social identification process between viewers and contestants in the context of the *MasterChef Australia* brand. Further, evidence has been provided of the constructs involved in the social identification process and the relationships that lead to Social Identification (ID), thus affecting consumer changes in Attitudes and Behaviour (AandB).

Each of these relationships in the structural model is discussed below.

4.2.1   Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) and Social Identification (ID)

Hypothesised in H1a, H1b, H4a, H4b, H5, H6a, H6b and shown in Figure 11 (highlighted in red).

Note. Figures shown on arrows depict unstandardised regression weights for each hypothesised relationship. **$p < .01$; ***$p < .001$. Figures shown in bold face represent the percentage for each construct explained by the model. VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes; A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as perceived by the viewer); ID = Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant); AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour. ξ = exogenous constructs; η = endogenous constructs; Φ = covariances; γ = parameter estimates linking exogenous constructs to endogenous constructs; B = parameter estimates linking endogenous constructs to endogenous constructs (Hair, 2010).

Figure 11: Viewer's Social Identity and Social Identification Modelling

From the literature review it was shown that previous research have used either *Social Identity Theory* (SIT) and *Aspects of Identity* (AOI) to explain how the individual is defined in terms of relationships with relevant others; as a social self. *Aspects of Identity* considers the importance the individual places generally on all social roles and relationships (Aspects of Social Identity), referred to as social identity orientated, and the importance the individual places on feelings of individual pursuits and uniqueness (Aspects of Personal Identity), referred to as personal identity orientated. *Social Identity Theory* (SIT), on the other hand, considers how group membership defines the self and how the group influences the behaviour of group members. Although both theories consider social aspects of the individual in social interaction, there has been little research considering the relationship between the two. Further, much of the research on *Aspects of Identity* (AOI) has focussed on the reasons these aspects are important to the individual, such as self-esteem rather than how it may

affect the individual's attitudes or behaviour. However, there have been some notable exceptions that have measured personal and social identity attributes in relation to their impact on behaviour, such as health norms (Hagger, et al., 2007). These authors posited that "those oriented towards social aspects of identity will be more likely to rate significant other's beliefs highly when forming intentions" and are therefore likely to adopt subjective norms (Hagger, et al., 2007, p. 357). Such influence of significant others and adoption of group norms is also key aspects of the social identification process, and group behaviour (Abrams & Hogg, 2008). Therefore, this thesis considered a relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) whereby Reality Television viewers who were social identity orientated (rather than personal identity orientated) were more likely to socially identify with groups (such as Reality Television contestants).

Based on the above findings, all indirect paths analysed between the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) (measured as the importance the viewer places on their own social identity attributes) and Social Identification (ID) were hypothesised as being positive and statistically significant. However, as reported in Table 13 and shown in Figure 11, the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) were found to have a positive but not statistically significant total mediating effect on Social Identification (ID) (B = .108, p = .151), in the social identification process. The Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) were found to have a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) (B = .218, p = .005). However, the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) were found to have a positive but not statistically significant direct relationship with Involvement (I) (B = .048, p = .570). Further, it can be seen that the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) had a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with Social Identification (ID) (B = .218, p = .007) in the social identification process.

It was hypothesised that the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) would also have a positive and statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) in the social identification process, and this mediating relationship is discussed next.

Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) mediating Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) and Social Identification (ID)

Hypothesised in H6a. Not supported.

Altheide (2000) articulates *Aspects of Identity* (AOI) as being made of *personal identity* "how one thinks of oneself" and *social identity* "how one is thought of by others" (p. 17). This suggests that social identity attributes are judged by others. Therefore, aspects of one's social identity attributes are important to those with whom one socially interacts (including remotely in a media setting), and socially identifies. As such, viewers may also judge social identity attributes of others (the contestants') and therefore consider them important. Further, individuals socially identify with others who have similar attributes (Brewer, 1993; Brown, 2000; Senay & Keysar, 2009). Both of these points suggest there is a relationship between aspects of social identity of the self and aspects of the social identity of others.

Therefore, this thesis hypothesised that the importance viewers placed on their own Social Identity attributes (VSI) would have a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with the importance the viewer places on the same social identity attributes as they perceive them in the contestants (CSI). As discussed earlier and shown in Figure 11, the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) were found to have a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) (B = .218, p = .005).

It was also hypothesised that the importance the viewer placed on the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) would have a positive and statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity Attributes (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) in the social identification process.

As reported in Table 13 (path A), the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) were found to have a positive but not statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity Attributes (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .026, p = .194) in the social identification process. Therefore, consideration is also given to how this relationship may be strengthened with Involvement (I) also as a mediator, and is discussed next.

Involvement (I) mediating Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) and Social Identification (ID)

Hypothesised in H6b. Not supported.

Social Identity Theory posits that any group with which the individual socially identifies must be significant to (in other words, involved with) them (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Establishing Involvement (I), as a construct in the social identification process supports this theory.

Therefore, this thesis hypothesised that the importance viewers placed on their own Social Identity attributes (VSI) would have a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with the viewer's involvement with (the contestants in) the show (I). As discussed earlier, and shown in Figure 11, the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) were found to have a positive but not statistically significant direct relationship with Involvement (I) (B = .048, p = .647).

It was also hypothesised that Involvement (I) would have a positive and statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) in the social identification process.

As reported in Table 13 (path B), Involvement (I) was found to have a positive but not statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .026, p = .647) in the social identification process. This result was produced when Involvement (I) was measured as the specific mediating effect; without taking into account the mediating effect of the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI).

As reported in Table 13, (path C), the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) was found to have a positive and statistically significant specific mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) and Social Identification (ID) through Involvement (I) (B = .055, p = .027) in the social identification process (not hypothesised). Further, the strongest relationship between any two constructs measured in the model was

that between Involvement (I) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .556, p < .001) thus justifying the inclusion of Involvement (I) as a mediating construct in the social identification process. As suggested earlier, such findings support the theory that individuals will socially identify with those they consider as significant, that is through Involvement (I), but also demonstrates that television viewers are more likely to become involved in shows formatted similar to the *MasterChef Australia* brand, if they consider the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) as important.

4.2.2   Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID)

Hypothesised in H2a, H2b, H4a, H4b, H5, H7a, H7b and shown in the model below (highlighted in red).

Note. Figures shown on arrows depict unstandardised regression weights for each hypothesised relationship. **p < .01; ***p < .001. Figures shown in bold face represent the percentage for each construct explained by the model. VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes; A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as perceived by the viewer); ID = Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant); AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour. ξ = exogenous constructs; η = endogenous constructs; Φ = covariances; γ = parameter estimates linking exogenous constructs to endogenous constructs; B = parameter estimates linking endogenous constructs to endogenous constructs (Hair, 2010).

Figure 12: Viewer's Personal Identity and Social Identification Modelling

Aspects of (Personal) Identity refer to the importance of individual pursuits and uniqueness (Hagger, et al., 2007; Leary, et al., 1986a). Further, this thesis suggested that the success of the *MasterChef Australia* brand was because of its ability to facilitate the social identification

process whereby viewers who were social identity orientated were more likely to become involved with the show and socially identify with the contestants. Further, as discussed earlier, individuals socially identify with others who have similar attributes (Brewer, 1993; Brown, 2000; Senay & Keysar, 2009). As such, this thesis considered a relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) whereby Reality Television viewers who were personal identity orientated (rather than social identity orientated) were less likely to socially identify with groups (such as Reality Television contestants).

Therefore, all paths analysed between the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) (measured as the importance the viewer places on their own personal identity attributes) and Social Identification (ID) were hypothesised as being negative and statistically significant. As reported in Table 14 and shown in Figure 12, in spite of this, the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) were found to have a positive and statistically significant total mediating effect on Social Identification (ID) (B = .187, p = .001), in the social identification process. Further, like the Viewer's Social Identity Attributes (VSI), the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) were found to have a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) (B = .315, p < .001). However, as with the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI), the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) were found to have a positive but not statistically significant direct relationship with Involvement (I) (B = .125, p = .140).

It was also hypothesised that the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) would have a negative and statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) in the social identification process and this is discussed next.
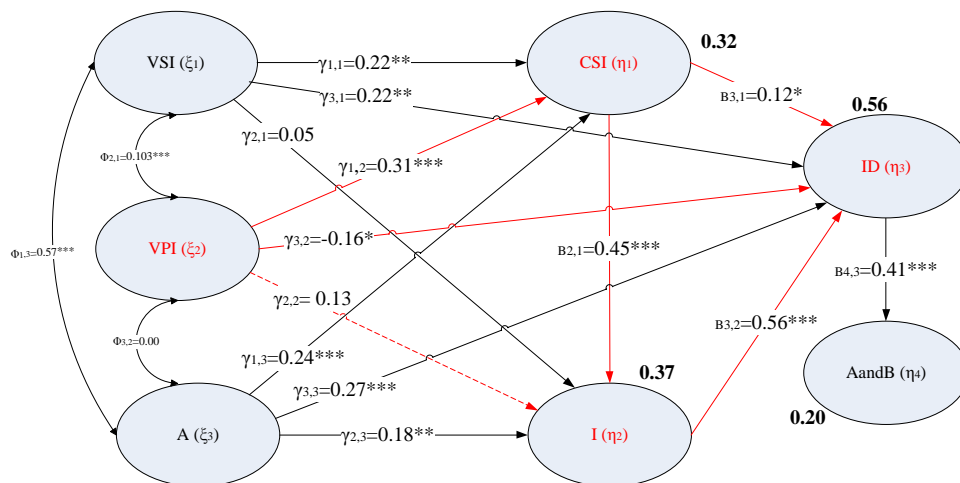
Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) mediating Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID)

Hypothesis H7a. Not supported.

This thesis hypothesised that the importance viewers placed on their own Personal Identity attributes (VPI) would have a negative and statistically significant direct relationship with the importance the viewer places on the social identity attributes as they perceive them in the contestants (CSI). As discussed earlier, and shown in Figure 12, the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) were found to have a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) (B = .315, p < .001).

It was also hypothesised that the importance the viewer placed on the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) would have a negative and statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) in the social identification process.

As reported in Table 14 (path A) however, the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) were found to have a positive but not statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .038, p = .173) in the social identification process.

It was also hypothesised that Involvement (I) would have a negative and statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) in the social identification process and this is discussed next.

Involvement (I) mediating Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID)

Hypothesis H7b. Not supported.

As discussed earlier, this thesis suggested that the success of the *MasterChef Australia* brand was because of its ability to facilitate the social identification process whereby viewers who were only social identity orientated would become involved with the show and socially identify with the contestants.

Therefore, this thesis hypothesised that the importance the viewer placed on their own Personal Identity attributes (VPI) would have a negative and statistically significant direct

relationship with the viewer's involvement with the contestants (through the show) (I). As discussed earlier, and shown in Figure 12, the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) were found to have a positive but not statistically significant direct relationship with Involvement (I) (B = .125, p = .140).

It was also hypothesised that Involvement (I) would have a negative and statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) in the social identification process.

As reported in Table 14 (path B) however, Involvement (I) was found to have a positive but not statistically significant specific mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .070, p = .014) in the social identification process. Further, as reported in Table 14 (path C). Involvement (I) was found to have a positive and statistically significant specific mediating effect on the relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) through the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) (B = .117, p < .001) in the social identification process (not hypothesised). Therefore, Involvement (I) was found to be a mediator of the relationship between the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) in the social identification process only through the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) .

Such findings suggest that, contrary to expectations, viewers who are Personal Identity orientated are also likely to consider the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) as important which can thus lead to Involvement (I) and Social Identification (ID). However, analysis of the direct relationship between Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) offers another possible conclusion. This is discussed later in the post-hoc analysis section.

4.2.3   Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID)

Hypothesised in H3a, H3b, H4a, H4b, H8a, H8b and shown in the model below (highlighted in red).

Note. Figures shown on arrows depict unstandardised regression weights for each hypothesised relationship. **p < .01; ***p < .001. Figures shown in bold face represent the percentage for each construct explained by the model. VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes; A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as perceived by the viewer); ID = Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant); AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour. ξ = exogenous constructs; η = endogenous constructs; Φ = covariances; γ = parameter estimates linking exogenous constructs to endogenous constructs; B = parameter estimates linking endogenous constructs to endogenous constructs (Hair, 2010).

Figure 13: Authenticity and Social Identification Modelling

Social Identity Theory (SIT) asserts that if individuals are to socially identify with groups, they must be accessible (Abrams, 2001; Schneider & Northcraft, 1999). Further, Authenticity (A) has been found to be a key attribute of Reality Television shows (Aslama & Pantti, 2006), and in Social Identification (ID) through advertising (Chalmers, 2009). This thesis proposed that if viewer's were to consider the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) as important and thus socially identify with them they must firstly find the 'authentic contestant' accessible. In other words, the true self of the contestants should be revealed to the viewer (Deery, 2004; Hall, 2009a; Kraidy, 2009).

Therefore, all paths analysed between Authenticity (A) (measured as the viewer's perceived Authenticity of the contestants in the show) and Social Identification (ID) were hypothesised as being positive. As reported in Table 15, and shown in Figure 13, Authenticity (A) was

found to have a positive and statistically significant total mediating effect on Social Identification (ID) (B = .188, p < .001), in the social identification process. Likewise, Authenticity (A) was found to have a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) (B = .241, p < .001). Further, unlike the Viewer's Social Identity attributes (VSI) and the Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI), Authenticity (A) was found to have a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with Involvement (I) (B = .177, p = .005).

The model measured in this thesis has shown that Authenticity (A) can also lead to Social Identification (ID) and has an important role to play in the social identification process in the context of Reality Television. The indirect paths are discussed in more detail in the following sections.

It was also hypothesised that the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) would have a positive and statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) in the social identification process, and this is discussed next.

Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) mediating Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID)

Hypothesised in H8a. Not supported.

This thesis hypothesised that viewer's perceptions of contestants' authenticity (A) would be positive related to the importance the viewer places on the social identity attributes (as they perceive them in the contestants) (CSI). As discussed earlier, and shown in Figure 13, Authenticity (A) was found to have a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) (B = .241, p < .001).

It was also hypothesised that the importance the viewer placed on the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) would have a positive and statistically significant mediating effect on

the relationship between Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) in the social identification process.

As reported in Table 15 (path A), the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) were found to have a positive but not statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) (B= .029, p = .173) in the social identification process.

It was also hypothesised that the viewer's Involvement (I) with the contestants in the show would have a positive and statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) in the social identification process, and this is discussed next.

Involvement (I) mediating Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID)

Hypothesised in H8b. Supported.

Authenticity (of the show and/or the contestants) has been shown to be important in the viewer's involvement with Reality Television (Aslama & Pantti, 2006; Kraidy, 2009; Rose & Wood, 2005). Therefore, this thesis hypothesised that Authenticity (A) would have a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with the viewer's involvement with the contestants in the show (I). As discussed earlier and shown in Figure 13, Authenticity (A) was found to have a positive and statistically significant direct relationship with Involvement (I) (B = .177, p = .005).

It was also hypothesised that Involvement (I) would have a positive and statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) in the social identification process. As reported in Table 15 (path B), Involvement (I) was found to have a positive and statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) (B = .098, p = .005) in the social identification process.

Further, in Table 15 (path C), the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) was found to have a positive and statistically significant mediating effect on the relationship between Authenticity (A) and Social Identification (ID) through Involvement (I) (B = .090, p < .001) in the social identification process.

Such findings suggest that viewers who perceive the contestants as authentically portrayed in the show are also likely to consider the Contestants' Social Identity attributes (CSI) as important which can thus lead to Involvement (I) and Social Identification (ID).

4.2.4   Social Identification (ID) and Attitudes and Behaviour (AandB)

Hypothesised in H5. Supported.

Hogg and Smith (2007a) assert that to ascertain the existence of Social Identification, resultant changes in attitudes and behaviour must be measured and confirmed. SEM5 showed a positive and statistically significant direct relationship between Social Identification (ID) and changes in Attitudes and Behaviour (AandB), (B = .406, p < .001). The model was also able to conceptualise and measure changes in Attitudes and Behaviour (AandB), related to the *MasterChef Australia* brand resulting from the social identification process; with 20% of the variance in this construct accounted for.

4.3   POST HOC ANALYSIS

Direct paths were added to SEM5 for methodological reasons detailed in section 4.1.4 earlier. Specifically, these direct paths were from the exogenous variables (VSI, VPI, and A) to Social Identification (ID). As these paths were not based on theoretical reasons generated from the literature review, these direct paths were not hypothesised. The implications of these additional paths are discussed below.

Figure 14 shows the model (SEM1) proposed based on theoretical reasoning and the model (SEM5) proposed based on methodological reasoning.
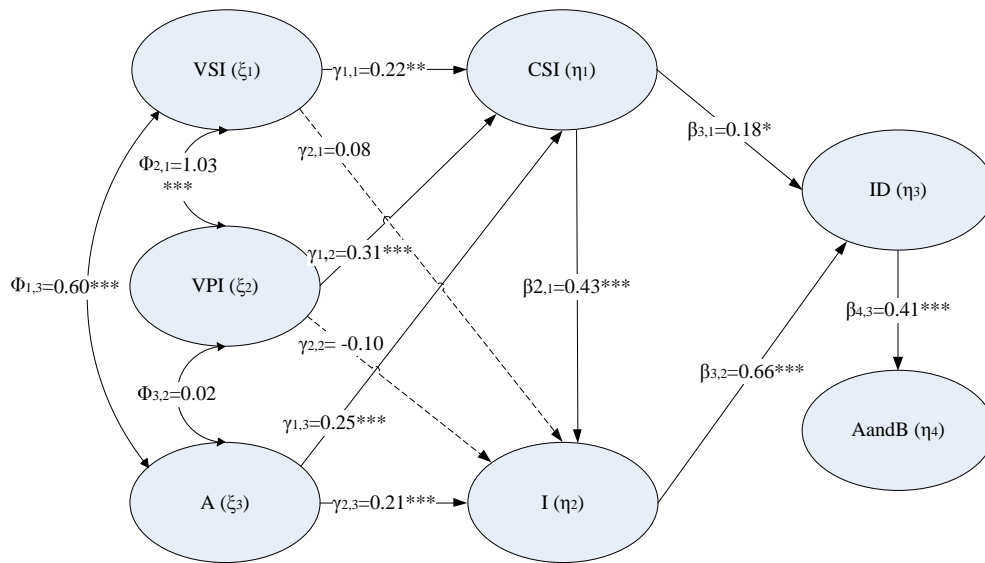
Note. Figures shown on arrows depict standardised regression weights for each hypothesised relationship. **p < .01; ***p < .001. Non-significant paths are represented as a dotted-line arrow. Figures shown in bold face represent the percentage for each construct explained by the model. VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes; A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as perceived by the viewer); ID = Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant); AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour. ξ = exogenous constructs; η = endogenous constructs; Φ = covariances; γ = parameter estimates linking exogenous constructs to endogenous constructs; β = parameter estimates linking endogenous constructs to endogenous constructs (Hair, 2010).

Note. Figures shown on arrows depict unstandardised regression weights for each hypothesised relationship. **p < .01; ***p < .001. Figures shown in bold face represent the percentage for each construct explained by the model. VSI = Viewer's Social Identity attributes; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity attributes; A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity attributes (as perceived by the viewer); ID = Social Identification (of the viewer with the contestant); AandB = Attitudes and Behaviour. ξ = exogenous constructs; η = endogenous constructs; Φ = covariances; γ = parameter estimates linking exogenous constructs to endogenous constructs; B = parameter estimates linking endogenous constructs to endogenous constructs (Hair, 2010).

Figure 14: SEM1 and SEM5

By comparing these two structural models, two particular observations are made. First, the effect size of most relationships varies little, and the statistical significance (or not) does not

change. Second however, there is an interesting variation in the relationship between Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID).

The direct path between Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) shows a negative relationship whilst the specific mediating effects (paths A, B, and C) and the total mediating effect are positive. Further analysis of the AMOS matrices confirmed that all direct paths included in the specific mediating effects between Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (e.g. CSI to ID) were also positive. Therefore, the model shows that the relationship between Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) is a negative one (as inferred by the literature review) but not when the proposed mediators are included. Such a result suggests that the mediating variables used in this thesis have produced a confounding effect on the relationship between Viewer's Personal Identity attributes (VPI) and Social Identification (ID). Confounding variables are those that may be an intermediate (rather than mediating) variable related to the independent and dependent variable but falsely obscures the true relationship between these two variables (Goldstein, Edelberg, Meier, & Davis, 1991; MacKinnon, Krull, & Lockwood, 2000; Paulhus, Robins, Trzesniewski, & Tracy, 2004). This may include obscuring a negative relationship and reporting it as positive relationship.

Further considerations and implications of these results and discussion are now given in the conclusion.

CHAPTER 5: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

5.1   INTRODUCTION

This research examined the concept of social interaction within the context of Reality Television viewing. It has explored the relevance of social identity theory as process, as well as attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. In addition, this work builds on and confirms the relevance of Authenticity, Identity, and Involvement through which to view this process.

Specifically, the objectives of this research were to: (1) theoretically advance and conceptualise Social Identity Theory (SIT) as a process within the context of Reality Television viewing; (2) ascertain the contribution of Aspects of Identity (AOI) attributes, Authenticity, and Involvement to the Social Identification Process; and (3) establish which consumer attitudes and behaviours are affected by the Social Identification Process from the perspective of the Reality Television viewing. There were three research questions and 12 hypotheses that were investigated in this study using multivariate analytical techniques, which were discussed in Chapter 3. The major findings of this research are highlighted in the following sections.

5.2   SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In the exploration of social interaction within the context of Reality Television viewing, an integrated model was developed to test the effects of authenticity, involvement and identity on social identification, and then to assess how these directly or indirectly affected attitudinal and behavioural outcomes. The hypotheses tested are shown below. Table 16 outlines a summary of the hypotheses and their results that were tested in this research and discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

Table 17: Hypotheses and Effect Sizes

Hypothesis	B	p	+/-	Support
H1a: Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) → Contestants' Social Identity (CSI)	.218	.027	+	Y
H1b: Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) → Involvement (I)	.048	.647	+	N
H2a: Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) → Contestants' Social Identity (CSI)	.315	< .001	-	N
H2b: Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) → Involvement (I)	.125	.140	-	N
H3a: Authenticity (A) → Contestants' Social Identity (CSI)	.241	< .001	+	Y
H3b: Authenticity (A) → Involvement (I)	.177	.005	+	Y
H4a: Contestants' Social Identity CSI → Social Identification (ID)	.121	.173	+	Y
H4b: Involvement (I) → Social Identification (ID)	.556	< .001	+	Y
H5: Social Identification (ID) → Attitudes and Behaviour (AandB)	.406	< .001	+	Y
H6a: Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) → Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) → Social Identification (ID)	.026	.194	+	N
H6b: Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) → Involvement (I) → Social Identification (ID)	.026	.647	+	N
H7a: Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) → Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) → Social Identification (ID)	.038	.173	+	N
H7b: Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) → Involvement (I) → Social Identification (ID)	.070	.140	+	N
H8a: Authenticity (A) → Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) → Social Identification (ID)	.029	.173	+	N
H8b: Authenticity (A) → Involvement (I) → Social Identification (ID)	.098	.005	+	Y

In using the data collected from Reality Television viewers, all constructs made a significant contribution to a model fit of the Social Identification Process. This demonstrates that the Social Identification Process exists in Reality Television, and *Aspects of Identity* (social (VSI) and personal (VPI)) and Authenticity (A) facilitate the Social Identification Process. Further, in Reality Television, the Social Identification Process is mediated by the importance the viewer places on the Contestant's Social Identity attributes (CSI) and their Involvement (I) with the contestants in *MasterChef Australia*. Although the direct effect of the Viewer's

Social Identity attributes (VSI) and the Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) attributes were found to have a positive but not statistically significant direct effect on Involvement (I), they were retained in the model. Previous theorists have asserted that both the direct effects to and from the mediator need to be statistically significant (Baron & Kenny, 1986a; Hair, 1998). However, as Zhao, Lynch and Chen (2010) report, both the direct effects to and from the mediator need not be statistically significant. It is the indirect effect, which is the multiplication of both direct effects, and the significance of this summed indirect effect that establish mediation. Therefore, direct paths (direct effects) to Involvement (I) were not removed solely on the basis of not being statistically significant and were thus retained in the model.

Furthermore, it can be seen from the results generated that the importance the viewer places on the Contestant's Social Identity attributes (CSI) and the viewer's Involvement (I) with the show mediate the Social Identification Process, accounting for 33% and 39% of the variance in the model, respectively.

This thesis shows that social identification may also be based on Aspects of (self) identity. However, it is not conclusive which aspects of identity may lead to social identification. What is more compelling is that authenticity leads to social identification, and that Contestant's Social Identity attributes (CSI) and Involvement (I) are both mediators in this process.

5.3   MAJOR FINDINGS

Major findings are summarised below in relation to the research questions that were posed.

RQ1: *Does Reality Television Facilitate The Social Identification Process?*

The primary objective of this thesis was to enhance academic understanding of *Social Identity Theory* (SIT) by demonstrating that it was a process, and determining the constructs that enable this process. This was done by establishing its existence in the context of Reality Television shows. Specifically, research was carried out to ascertain if the success of the *MasterChef Australia* brand may be accredited to viewer's Social Identification (ID) with the

MasterChef Australia contestants. This was addressed in all hypotheses 1-6 detailed in the previous section. There has been little previous research that has modelled Social Identification in the television context and none has been found proposing the constructs hypothesised here.

From the (measurement) model fit in Structural Equation Modelling using AMOS19, it could be seen that the proposed conceptual and SEM structural model demonstrates the existence of the Social Identification Process between viewers and contestants in the context of the *MasterChef Australia* brand. Further, evidence has been provided of the constructs involved in the Social Identification Process and the relationships that facilitate this process, thus affecting changes in attitudes and behaviour. Specifically, the Social Identification Process does exist in this context and can be modelled, with the model accounting for 48% of the variance in Social Identification (ID).

Previous studies in the disciplines of media and communication have often focussed on one of two particular themes that can be related to the present study.

In the first theme, as discussed in the literature review, many studies have considered media exposure from the perspective of Uses and Gratifications theory (Papacharissi & Mendelson, 2007b; Rubin, 1994). This theme focuses on the use of television for the purpose of gratifying the viewer's needs for entertainment, relief of boredom or loneliness, or escapism, for example. However, there has been some expansion of this theme into identification with specific groups, such as age identification or ethnic identification (Gong & Cheng, 2010; Hoffner & Buchanan, 2005; Ramasubramanian, 2010b). This thesis enhances academic understanding of the field by demonstrating that the use of television may also be for the purpose of gratifying social identification needs. Moreover, it demonstrates that social identification can be measured not only in groups that share similar demographics but more involved psychological or social similarities, such as interests or identity attributes. This thesis has shown that one of the uses of television may be for the purpose of gratifying social identification needs, in viewers with both social and personal identity attributes. Further, results show that the viewer feels social identity attributes are important in the contestants and that this will lead to Social Identification.

In the second theme, many studies have considered identification with well-known personalities from the perspective of *Parasocial Interaction* (Auter & Palmgreen, 2000; Rubin, et al., 1985; Weaver, 2011). Such research is usually limited to how the individual relates to another specific (and remote) individual, such as a television soap opera character or well-known celebrity. Although such research demonstrates the ability of viewers to identify with other individuals through television channels, such studies do not demonstrate identification at a group level, and are often taken from the perspective of psychiatric disorders, such as stalking. This thesis demonstrates that such interaction and identification can be measured in specific groups rather than specific individuals. Groups have been shown to exist based on common interests in a particular media channel such as fans of the science-fiction television and film series, *Star Trek* (Jenkins, 1986). However, such groups have not been researched from a Social Identification perspective. Further, as discussed in the literature review, social commentators have suggested that social identification may exist in contexts other than that of inter-personal. As such, Social Identification with groups in a television setting may exist based not on proximity but on similar interests. The findings reported here support such research and demonstrate the existence of the Social Identification Process in the context of Reality Television.

RQ2: *Which Factors Facilitate The Social Identification Process In Reality Television?*

Each of the factors (constructs) is considered in turn.

Authenticity

Authenticity was found to have the largest total effect size (of the three independent variables) on social identification (ID) within the model measured in this study (B = .454, p < .001). Further, four of the five paths between authenticity and social identification were statistically significant. This differentiates it from the other independent variables hypothesised which had two significant paths. This demonstrates that Authenticity is evidently antecedent to the Social Identification Process and that Contestant's Social Identity (CSI) and Involvement (I) are indeed mediating variables.

Where other researchers have found that a lack of authenticity can be entertaining when the viewer watches for 'the cracks to show', such lack of authenticity is clearly not conducive to the Social Identification Process in other forms of Reality Television, such as *MasterChef Australia*. This also has important implications for measuring the Social Identification Process in other contexts. There has been a great deal of research measuring social identification in organisations, for example (Irmer, 2004; Luzuka & Gwandure, 2008; van Dick, 2003). However, there appears to be a lack of consideration of the role authenticity may play in this effect.

Although the structural model did confirm the effects of authenticity, this varied from previous measures of authenticity in Reality Television. The scale for authenticity was developed for the purpose of measuring both authenticity of the contestants and the show in this study. However, the items that fitted the model were for authenticity of the contestants only and this is discussed below.

Hall (2009a). found that authenticity loaded on four different factors and defined them as 'eccentricity', 'representativeness', 'candidness', and 'manipulation'. However, this thesis found that all factors loaded on one construct in the model after the deletion of several items in Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA). All of the deleted items were related to authenticity of the show leaving only items that measured authenticity of the contestants. However, only three items were measured. The items retained in the measured model in this thesis were items that Hall (2009a, p. 515) factored as *candidness*. Specifically, the items retained were *"You get to see people as they really are in this show"*, *"The behaviour of the contestants is not affected by the cameras"*, and *"The contestants are not self-conscious about the presence of cameras"* Such statements encapsulate the *candidness* referred to by Hall. Further, the findings contradict the proposition that viewers disagree with the notion that contestants are unaffected by the cameras (Nabi, Biely, Morgan, & Stitt, 2003a). This also differs from Hill's (1984) explanation for the viewer's involvement with reality shows. Hill's research led to the conclusion that the viewers did not believe the authenticity of the contestants existed, and one of the motives for viewing was the entertainment value of waiting for the *real person* to be exposed. Such findings show that the viewers of *MasterChef Australia* are more likely to become involved with the show if they perceive the contestants as being authentic. *MasterChef Australia* may be seen as an authentic show whereby the contestants are not

performing for the cameras to gain favour, as a strategy for winning the competition. In fact, as *MasterChef Australia* is one of the few reality shows where no audience voting is used, the viewer may consider the contestants as being more candid and concentrating on the competition through their skills rather than image. This is not to say that the items that measured authenticity of the show would not have worked in another model and future research may consider this.

Aspects of Identity (AOI)

This turned out to be a very interesting finding in the model and the study. From the literature review, it was concluded that one of the motivations for social identification was one of social comparison, based on similarities important to group members. Therefore, because of the prevalence of social aspects in social identification, it was hypothesised that these similarities would be social based (and mediate the social identification process). Likewise, as social identification is based on significance to the group members, the Social Identification Process would also be mediated by involvement. The Aspects of Identity (AOI) scale measured the importance viewers placed on social aspects (attributes) of their own identity (Viewer's Social Identity [VSI]), and similarly, those of the contestants with whom they socially identify (Contestants' Social Identity [CSI]). In contrast, if personal attributes of their own identity (Viewer's Personal Identity [VPI]) were important, social attributes of the contestants' identity (CSI) would not be important to the viewer (as part of the social identification process). Correspondingly, it was hypothesised that the relationship between Viewers' Personal Identity (VPI) and the Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) would be negative. It was also hypothesised that if the Viewers' Personal Identity (VPI) was important, viewers would not become involved (I) with the show (as part of the social identification process). Therefore, this relationship would also be negative.

As hypothesised, the Viewers' Social Identity (VSI) did have a positive relationship with the Contestants' Social Identity (CSI), as did Authenticity (A). However, despite the theoretical justification, the Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) also had a positive relationship with the Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) and Involvement (I). Further, the Viewers' Social Identity (VSI) also had a smaller effect on the Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) and Involvement (I) than both the Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Authenticity (A). Likewise, both

Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Involvement (I) appeared to have an effect on social identification (ID) through the mediators. However, measurement of the direct relationship between Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID) shows a negative relationship. This supports the relationship proposed based on the literature review. However, it would appear that Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) and Involvement (I) do not mediate this relationship but actually disguise the negative relationship.

Concisely, the social identification process may be based on one of social comparison (similarities) and the Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) is a mediator (accounting for 33% in the model). However, this relationship may not be mediated by similarities in social attributes of identity (VSI and CSI) and differences in personal attributes of identity (VPI), as measured in this study. Possible reasons for this and implications are discussed further, below.

1. There appears to be unidentified variables, extraneous factors, mediators, or moderators that will explain the significance of personal aspects of identity (VPI) in future research.

2. The relationship between the importance viewers placed on personal attributes of their own identity (VPI) and the importance viewers placed on social attributes of the contestants' identity (CSI) does not have theoretical justification on the basis of social comparison. However, similarities may be based on the personal attributes of identity between viewers (VPI) and contestants. This cannot be assessed from this study as respondents (viewers) were not asked about contestants' personal attributes of identity. Had this been measured, it may have shown an even stronger relationship than that between the Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and the Contestants' Social Identity (CSI). This would have some justification based on the individuality of tasks pertaining to *MasterChef Australia*. This particular Reality Television show may be more appealing to VPI because cooking is seen as an individual pursuit rather than a social pursuit. As such, results may be different for television shows that have a more social or team-based theme.

3. The scale used to measure the Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) was based on scales previously used for social attributes of identity of the self. This is a limitation and may not have been an accurate method of measuring the social attributes of identity in

others (such as contestants). Therefore, the scale may need to be refined or tested with a different sample. Alternatively, another scale may be developed for both respondent and contestant. Future research may consider developing a more reliable scale from exploratory methods.

4. The Contestants' Social Identity (CSI) scale was used to measure *MasterChef Australia* contestants as a group. More insight may have been gained from assessing individual contestants such as the most popular or unpopular.

Involvement

Involvement was shown to be an important mediator of the social identification process and to have a strong relationship with the Contestants' Social Identity (CSI). This supports the theory that social identification takes place when the individual sees the group (in this study, as portrayed in the show) as significant (Abrams & Hogg, 2008). However, there has been a lack of research using scales to measure this involvement and how it may mediate the social identification process. The scale used in this study may be a valuable measurement tool in future research of involvement in the Social Identification Process.

Hall (2009a) found three different factors for involvement with Reality Television; online, social, and cognitive. Yet, the items used in this study measured only social and cognitive which loaded on one factor. However, the items measured supported previous research that involvement with Reality Television leads to group discussion with other viewers and identification (Reiss & Wiltz, 2004). Future research may consider this variance in findings.

Likewise, involvement has been shown to be important in media involvement and television viewing (Haridakis & Rubin, 2003; Kim & Rubin, 1997), communication effectiveness (Hunter & Davidsson, 2007), and product purchasing (Cho, 2010). Involvement has often been shown to be also important in the success of brands including human brands (Parmentier, 2010). The significance of involvement (with contestants in the show) found in this study has important implications for the effectiveness of television for building brands and brand management. The findings of this study suggest that by involving the viewer in a television show, the producers are creating a channel for the Social Identification Process.

RQ3: What are the effects of the Social Identification Process in Reality Television viewing on the consumer?

Attitudes and Behaviour

Hogg and Smith (2007a) assert that to ascertain the existence of Social Identification, resultant changes in attitudes and behaviour must be measured and confirmed. There is also clear evidence of the buying behaviour of *MasterChef Australia* related products (Lower, 2010; Tim, 2010). Previously, it may have been assumed that such product sales were because of familiarity, convenience or price, for example. However, no evidence has been provided for why or how such consumer behaviour may be a result of Social Identification. Further, there has been minimal research measuring the effect of Reality Television on changes in consumer attitudes, and learned behaviour (Ganeshasundaram & Henley, 2009), although many media commentators have suggested it (Jackson, 2009b; Sinclair, 2010a). As theorists suggest, Social Identification is context-specific and thus is any change in attitudes or behaviour (Hogg & Smith, 2007a). Therefore, to model the Social Identification Process in the context of Reality Television it was necessary to develop a scale for changes in consumer attitudes and behaviour resulting specifically from the context of viewing *MasterChef Australia.* This was an exploratory scale developed from content analysis of the *MasterChef Australia* show, and content analysis of media commentary of the *MasterChef Australia* brand. The structural model (SEM5) showed a positive and statistically significant direct relationship between Social Identification (ID) and changes in Attitudes and Behaviour (AandB). The model was also able to conceptualise and measure changes in Attitudes and Behaviour (AandB), related to the *MasterChef Australia* brand resulting from the Social Identification Process; with 21% of the variance in this construct accounted for.

The scale used here to measure Attitudes and Behaviour (AandB) was an exploratory scale and several items were found to not fit the model. Although the model showed a strong relationship between Social Identification (ID) and Attitudes and Behaviour (AandB), and explained 21% of the variance in the structural model, there are clearly other items that may be explored.

5.4   CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

As Shrum (1999b, p. 119) points out "television consumption should be a topic of interest for marketing and consumer researchers as well as psychologists". This study has made a number of contributions to academic disciplines of social psychology and marketing. Overall, this current study has attempted to give a new dimension to the construct of identification by demonstrating its determinants. Furthermore, the results of the current study empirically explicated how viewers' identification with contestants of a television brand influences their attitudes and behaviour. Consequently, the results confirmed the causal linkage between authenticity, involvement, aspects of identity, social identification, and changes in attitudes and behaviour.

The key contributions are outlined below, in terms of conceptual, empirical, and methodological contributions as recommended by Summers (2011). Implications for practitioners are then put forth.

Conceptual Contribution

The conceptual contribution of any study should consider if the conceptual definition of the constructs measured has been improved (Summers, 2011). Therefore, by examining television viewers' identification with a group portrayed by a television brand, this study makes a theoretical contribution to the extant brand literature on identification constructs. Consequently, this study addresses concerns of previous researcher on this topic: "Although identification is now acknowledged as an important psychological mechanism in the relationship marketing literature, studies on brand identification are sparse" (Badrinarayanan & Laverie, 2011, p. 134).

The concept of social interaction has traditionally been defined as a face to face interaction. Recent research has acknowledged its place in remote contexts, such as social media (e.g. Agarwal, Liu, Murthy, Sen, & Wang, 2009; Anastasio, Rose, & Chapman, 1999). This study extends this concept to the context of Reality Television, and demonstrates the existence of a form of social interaction in television viewing.

This was the first time, to the researcher's knowledge that attitudes and behaviour had been measured for the consumers of the *MasterChef* brand and is itself, an important contribution to the understanding of consumer behaviour as a consequence of brand identification. There has been minimal research measuring the effect of reality shows on consumer behaviour, although many media commentators have suggested it. However, no evidence has been provided of why the consumer buys these products. This study extends theory on consumer behaviour and proposes that the effects of social identification can be measured in terms of attitudes and behaviour.

This study has also made a conceptual contribution by identifying an providing a conceptual definition of an additional construct (Summers, 2011) in the social identification process. Specifically, the conceptual framework has been shown that, in addition to the importance of the individuals own social identity, the importance of other groups members social identity is also important.

Previous research of Uses and Gratifications of media use has generally considered more general entertainment purposes, such as enjoyment, suspense, and relief of boredom. This study extends previous research by measuring Social Identity Theory as a use of media by television viewers, and consumers. Accordingly, this study proposes an additional theoretical linkage between uses and gratification and social identification, thus providing a further conceptual contribution (Summers, 2011).

Empirical Contribution

In light of qualitative findings measuring audience connectedness by Russell and Pluto, the researchers urged future marketing researchers to develop instruments measuring the effects of viewer's identity and involvement on television viewing (Russell & Puto, 1999). This empirical study of the antecedents and consequences of viewer-brand identification has shown that viewers identify with groups portrayed in television brands. Specifically, the findings of this study proved support for a model that includes authenticity and involvement to illustrate the process of social identification. Greater levels of involvement and perceptions of authenticity lead to greater levels of social identification. To the researcher's knowledge, these theoretical linkages had not been tested previously and are therefore, empirical

contributions of the study (Summers, 2011).

Methodological Contribution

Social identity Theory has been described as a social comparison of characteristics which are important to group members. This study presents a new conceptual and structural model for Social identity Theory which explored the importance of group members' identity aspects. This model also extends research on Social identity Theory which has generally measured only the existence of social identification rather than its effects on consumer attitudes and behaviour, despite its theoretical justification. Further, this study explored Identity Theory by developing a scale for measuring self-identity but identity of relevant others. By the use of refined multiple-item measures for each of these constructs, construct validity was enhanced; constituting a methodological contribution (Summers, 2011).

The Phantom Model Approach has only recently been developed, and this study contributes to the reliability of this technique for measuring mediating relationships in AMOS.

Although there are a significant number of large-scale empirical studies outlined in the media literature, in the area of Reality Television they usually survey student populations. This can be seen as a shortcoming which has been addressed by this study. Despite a number of case studies, qualitative approaches and some empirical work, there have been very few large-scale studies of an audience in this discipline and certainly none which have addressed the issues in this particular study. Therefore, this current research contributes to the discipline by providing generalisable findings on how Identity Theory can affect Social Identity Theory and in turn how these can then affect consumer attitudes and behaviour.

5.5   IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTITIONERS

Along with contributions to the academic discipline, this study offers a number of implications for managers working within Reality Television, and related products including licencing. Brands are valid targets for identification (Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). Consequently, identification has been found to significantly and positively affect consumer behaviour towards service organisations, for example (Homburg, Wieseke, & Hoyer, 2009).

To contribute to the findings of previous brand identification studies, this study has determined a new form of social identification in that of television audiences. Further, this study demonstrates that social identification can lead to changes in attitudes and behaviour. This has implications for practitioners as "In those situations where a large portion of the consumers possess a similar membership to another community, managers can take advantage of this associated community and emphasize (or develop) their relationship with the associated community." (Heere et al.). Further, since marketing to particular segments is more profitable, targeting groups that identify with each other and a brand is an attractive proposition (Kuenzel & Vaux Halliday, 2008). The results of the current study highlighted practical implications for marketers who should be strategically aware of how to execute groups portraying television brands (contestants, for example) as a marketing tool.

The findings highlight the importance of authenticity (i.e., authentically portraying the contestants) in the success of such shows. They also highlight that involvement facilitates the process. This indicates that brand managers should carefully consider how these aspects are going to affect the viewers, and resulting consumer attitudes and behaviour.

Another major contribution for managers is the identification of involvement, and the way this contributes to social identification. Managers need to be aware that viewers' involvement with the show facilitates social identification. This indicates that it can be important for television producers to maintain a sense of involvement to be successful.

An important consideration for marketers is the type of appeal used in advertising the show and related products. Some advertisements are designed to appeal to the rational side of a consumer's decision-making process, and others are designed to appeal to a consumer's emotional side (Belch & Belch, 2004). In this study, social identification was shown as a motivation for consuming products related to the brand. In seeking to promote the *MasterChef Australia* brand, marketers may be advised to consider incorporating emotional appeals that focus on consumer's social identification with the contestants. Also, authenticity should be a consideration when marketing products of the *MasterChef Australia* brand, including the show itself.

5.6   LIMITATIONS

This research makes a number of contributions to the extension of knowledge relating Social Identity Theory and Reality Television. There are however, several limitations to the research which should be considered when interpreting the results.

Generalisability of the results of this study is clearly a concern. Although, *MasterChef Australia* is commonly considered to be a Reality Television show, its phenomenal success would indicate it may be rather unique. Further, respondents to the survey were all viewers of *MasterChef Australia* 2010 only.

Some concern also exists in respect of the measurement of Aspects of Identity, utilising the scale developed by Cheek and Tropp (2002). The present study did not replicate the constructs obtained in previous studies. Instead, the scale was adapted to be relevant to viewers and contestants of *MasterChef Australia.* This suggests that different (but similar) constructs are being measured. Therefore, this makes comparison with other studies utilising this measure difficult. If different items are used to measure a construct, the construct is not identical between the studies, and comparison between studies may not be valid.

The mediating variables were found to confound the relationship between Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) and Social Identification (ID). However, it was not logistically possible to offer alternative mediators in this study.

Many of the relationships measured in the model of this study were found to have very small effects. Future studies may consider how this can be improved.

The scale used here to measure consumer attitudes and behaviour was an exploratory scale and several items were found not to fit the model. Although the model showed a strong relationship between social identification and attitudes and behaviour, and explained 21% of the variance in the latter, there are clearly consumer attitudes and behaviours not captured by this self-reporting scale. Further, the scale used here was not limited to measurement of attitudes and behaviours related specifically to *MasterChef* branded products. Rather, it measured attitudes and behaviours more generally related to viewing of the show.

5.7   FUTURE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

This thesis focussed on viewers of the *MasterChef* show and subsequent attitudes and behaviours. This could be taken from another perspective by focussing on consumers of other *MasterChef* branded products. Future research may consider surveying consumers of *MasterChef* branded products and reasons for purchasing. Further, as MasterChef is a worldwide marketing success, opportunities for research from a cross-national perspective may be considered.

Although this study showed that social identity attributes were important in the contestant, future research may consider also measuring personal identity attributes in the contestants, for comparative effects. Further, future research may further consider and measure the confounding relationship found in the model measured in this study. Similarly, there is an opportunity to explore what other aspects of the contestants lead to social identification and changes in consumer attitudes and behaviours. Previous researchers have investigated the characteristics of the successful celebrity endorser (Ohanian, 1990a). Future studies may extend such research by considering if one type of contestant is more likely to be successful to the brand than another.

Finally, other Reality Television researchers have carried out a longitudinal study to measure viewers' perceptions before and after the airing of a series. Future research may consider measuring changes in consumer attitudes and behaviours at each of these two points in time.

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Appendix A: Explanatory Statement and Ethics Approval

MONASH University

Explanatory Statement

Title: *Consumers' Perception of Reality TV*

My name is Angela Higgins and I am a PhD student conducting a research project with Prof Valerie Clulow and Dr Yelena Tsarenko in the Department of Marketing at Monash University.

Your contact details were provided by a market research database and you have been chosen as a possible viewer of MasterChef Australia.

The aim/purpose of the research
I am conducting this research to find out your opinion of different aspects of the show MasterChef Australia, to better understand its high level of popularity.

Possible benefits
It is hoped that the findings will give academics a better understanding of the potential uses and benefits of reality TV media, to our society.

What does the research involve?
The study involves you completing an online questionnaire.

How much time will the research take?
It is estimated that it will take you 10mins to complete the questionnaire.

Payment
The reward will be as agreed with Research Now.

Can I withdraw from the research?
Being in this study is voluntary and you are under no obligation to consent to participation. However, if you do consent to participate, you may only withdraw prior to the questionnaire being submitted.

Confidentiality

You will be assigned a unique identifier code when you complete the questionnaire. Monash will have access to the answers you give in this questionnaire but will not have any other personal information.

Storage of data

Storage of the data collected will adhere to the University regulations and kept on University premises in a locked cupboard/filing cabinet for 5 years. A report of the study may be submitted for publication, but individual participants will not be identifiable in such a report.

Use of data for other purposes

Anonymous data may be used for other purposes, such as press releases but because it is anonymous data, nobody will be named and they will not be identified in any way.

Results

If you would like to be informed of the aggregate research findings, please contact **Angela Higgins at** ██████████████████████████████████ The findings are accessible for **6 months.**

If you would like to contact the researchers about any aspect of this study, please contact the Chief Investigator:	If you have a complaint concerning the manner in which this research **<insert your project number here>** is being conducted, please contact:
Dr.Yelena Tsarenko Department of Marketing Monash University S 6.13, Chisholm Tower 26 Sir John Monash Drive P.O. Box 197 Caulfield East, VIC 3145 Australia Phone: +██████████████ Fax: ███████████████	Executive Officer Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Building 3e Room 111 Research Office Monash University VIC 3800 Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Fax: +61 3 9905 3831 Email: muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au

Thank you.

Angela Higgins

ETHICS APPROVAL

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) Research Office Postal – Monash University, Vic 3800, Australia Building 3E, Room 111, Clayton Campus, Wellington Road, Clayton Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 3831 Email muhrec@adm.monash.edu.au www.monash.edu/research/ethics/human/index/html ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C
 Human Ethics Certificate of Approval
Date: 16 September 2010
Project Number: CF10/2252 - 2010001284
Project Title: Consumers' perceptions of Reality TV
Chief Investigator: Dr Yelena Tsarenko
Approved: From: 16 September 2010 To: 16 September 2015
Terms of approval
1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, and a copy forwarded to MUHREC before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation. **Failure to provide permission letters to MUHREC before data collection commences is in breach of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research**.

2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.

3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.

4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.

5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must contain your project number.

6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Requires the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.

7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.

8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.

9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.

10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.

11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

Professor Ben Canny Chair, MUHREC
cc: Prof Val Clulow, Ms Angela Higgins

Appendix B: Word Version of Questionnaire

MONASH University

Q1. Which is your favourite reality TV show from the list below?
1 Survivor
2 Australian Idol
3 So You Think You Can Dance
4 The Biggest Loser
5 MasterChef Australia
6 The Farmer Wants a Wife
7 Undercover Boss
8 None of these

Q2. Please estimate how many episodes of MASTERCHEF AUSTRALIA you watched in 2010.

Less than half of them	About half of them	Most of them	All of them

Q3. Now, please think about MASTERCHEF AUSTRALIA ONLY, and indicate to what extent you disagree/agree with the following statements.

		Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
3.1	I often think hard about something I've seen in this show.		
3.2	I often think about what I would do if I were in the situation portrayed in the show.		
3.3	When I'm watching, I try to imagine how a person in the show is feeling.		
3.4	When I'm watching, I sometimes talk back to the show.		
3.5	I try to predict what will happen in the show.		
3.6	I discuss the show with other people.		

Q4. Please think about the CONTESTANTS in MasterChef Australia. Please indicate to what extent you disagree/agree with the following statements.

		Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
4.1	You get to see people as they really are in this show.		
4.2	The behaviour of the contestants is not affected by the cameras.		
4.3	The contestants are not self-conscious about the presence of cameras.		
4.4	The hosts in the show influence the way the contestants behave.		
4.5	The editing of this show influences the audiences' impressions of the contestants.		

Q5. Please consider the different characteristics of the CONTESTANTS' in MasterChef Australia. How important are the following aspects to YOUR sense of who THEY are?

		Not important to my sense of who they are.	Extremely important to my sense of who they are.
5.1	Their team spirit.		
5.2	How other contestants react to what they say.		
5.3	Their physical appearance.		
5.4	Their personal background.		
5.5	Their social behaviour, such as the way they interact with other contestants.		
5.6	Their popularity with other contestants.		
5.7	How other contestants react to what they do.		
5.8	Their food knowledge.		
5.9	Their ambitions.		
5.10	Their reaction to their own performance in the competition.		
5.11	Their attitude to the competition.		
5.12	Their gestures and mannerisms.		

Q6. Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements about MasterChef Australia.

		Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
6.1	My friends are similar to the contestants.		
6.2	While watching the show I feel included in a group.		
6.3	I can relate to the contestants' attitudes.		
6.4	The contestants remind me of myself.		
6.5	I seem to have the same attitudes as some of the contestants.		
6.6	I have the same problems as some of the contestants.		
6.7	I can identify with some of the contestants.		

Q7. Consider how MasterChef Australia may have had a POSITIVE influence on you. Please indicate to what extent you agree/disagree with the following statements.
MasterChef Australia .

		Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree
7.1	Influences my attitude towards good quality food.		
7.2	Influences my attitude towards cooking.		
7.3	Influences my attitude towards eating.		
7.4	Influences my general cooking behaviour.		
7.5	Teaches me new recipes.		
7.6	Has made me a more conscientious food shopper.		

Q8. And finally, how important are the following aspects to your sense of who YOU are?

	Not important to my sense of who I am.	Extremely important to my sense of who I am.
8.1 My popularity with other people.		
8.2 My thoughts and ideas.		
8.3 The ways in which other people react to what I say.		
8.4 The ways in which other people react to what I do.		
8.5 My self-knowledge of what kind of person I really am.		
8.6 My physical appearance.		
8.7 My personal values and moral standards		
8.8 My reputation, what others think of me.		
8.9 My dreams and imagination.		
8.10 My personal goals and hopes for the future.		
8.11 My emotions and feelings.		
8.12 The way I deal with my fears and anxieties.		
8.13 My feeling of being a unique person, being distinct from others.		
8.14 My gestures and mannerisms, the impression I make on others.		
8.15 Knowing that I continue to be essentially the same inside even though life involves many external changes.		
8.16 My social behaviour, such as the way they act when meeting people.		
8.17 My personal self-evaluation, the private opinion I have of myself.		

And now a few questions about yourself.

Q9. With whom do you mostly watch MasterChef Australia?

Alone	Partner/spouse	My/our children	Other family members	Friends/housemates

Q10. For whom do you mostly prepare/cook meals?

Myself	Partner/spouse	My/our children	Other family members	Friends/housemates

Q11. How many hours per day do you usually spend watching ALL TV?

Less than 1 hour	Between 1 and 2 hours	Between 2 and 3 hours	Over 3 hours

Q12. How many hours per day do you usually spend watching Reality TV shows?

Less than 1 hour	Between 1 and 2 hours	Between 2 and 3 hours	Over 3 hours

Q13.   What year were you born?

Q14.   What is your gender?

male	female

Q15. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

Less than High School	High School / VCE	College Degree	University Degree	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree	Professional Degree (JD, MD)

Q16. How many children (under the age of 18) are currently living in your house?

| 0	1	2	3	4	5+

Q17. What is your annual income range?

Below $20000	$20000 - $45,000	$45,001 - $60,000	$60,001 - $95,000	Over $95,000

Appendix C: Scale Items and Factor Loadings in the Measurement Model

Item	Construct	CFA Model 1		CFA Model 2	
		Standardised Factor Loading	t-values	Standardised Factor Loading	t-values
	VIEWER'S SOCIAL IDENTITY ATTRIBUTES				
8.1	My popularity with other people.	.702	10.224	Deleted	
8.3	The ways in which other people react to what I say.	.870	11.641	.895	Fixed
8.4	The ways in which other people react to what I do.	.863	11.593	.918	22.413
8.6	My physical appearance.	.574	8.858	Deleted	
8.8	My reputation, what others think of me.	.614	9.316	.559	11.256
8.14	My gestures and mannerisms, the impression I make on others.	.660	9.805	.618	12.834
8.16	My social behaviour, such as the way I act when meeting people.	.582	Fixed	Deleted	
	VIEWER'S PERSONAL IDENTITY ATTRIBUTES				
8.2	My thoughts and ideas.	.632	Fixed	Deleted	
8.5	My self-knowledge of what kind of person I really am.	.772	12.144	.791	Fixed
8.7	My personal values and moral standards	.811	12.601	.820	16.200
8.9	My dreams and imagination.	.709	11.365	.617	11.602
8.10	My personal goals and hopes for the future.	.792	12.385	Deleted	
8.11	My emotions and feelings.	.856	13.099	Deleted	
8.12	The way I deal with my fears and anxieties.	.810	12.587	Deleted	
8.13	My feeling of being a unique person, being distinct from others.	.560	9.361	.535	9.896
8.15	Knowing that I continue to be essentially the same inside even though life involves many external changes.	.673	10.911	.712	13.717
8.17	My personal self-evaluation, the private opinion I have of myself.	.770	12.124	.806	15.878
	AUTHENTICITY				
4.1	You get to see people as they really are in this show.	.661	Fixed	.668	Fixed
4.2	The behaviour of the contestants is not affected by the cameras.	.882	11.853	.877	11.903
4.3	The contestants are not self-conscious about the presence of cameras.	.728	11.288	.726	11.319
4.4	The hosts in the show influence the way the contestants behave (reverse coded).	.141	2.424	Deleted	
4.5	The editing of this show influences the audiences' impressions of the contestants (reverse coded).	.078	1.341	Deleted	
	INVOLVEMENT				
3.1	I often think hard about something I've seen in this show.	.643	10.900	.658	10.001
3.2	I often think about what I would do if I were in the situation portrayed in the show.	.769	12.822	.789	11.355

3.3	When I'm watching, I try to imagine how a person in the show is feeling.	.741	12.397	.766	11.150
3.4	When I'm watching, I sometimes talk back to the show.	.647	10.951	Deleted	
3.5	I try to predict what will happen in the show.	.763	12.735	.707	13.100
3.6	I discuss the show with other people.	.693	Fixed	.629	Fixed
	CONTESTANT'S SOCIAL IDENTITY ATTRIBUTES				
5.1	Their popularity with other contestants.	.552	Fixed	Deleted	
5.2	How other contestants react to what they say and do.	.664	9.553	Deleted	
5.3	What the hosts say about them.	.738	10.189	.771	Fixed
5.4	Their team spirit.	.749	10.276	.732	14.361
5.5	How they react to what other contestants say and do.	.489	7.711	Deleted	
5.6	Their physical appearance.	.498	7.815	Deleted	
5.7	Their personal background.	.782	10.528	.776	15.394
5.8	Their social behaviour, such as the way they interact with other contestants.	.332	5.603	Deleted	
5.9	Their gender.	.312	5.297	Deleted	
5.10	Their age.	.672	9.626	.637	12.194
5.11	Their food knowledge.	.797	10.640	.782	15.524
5.12	Their reaction to their own performance in the competition.	.834	10.896	.862	17.500
5.13	Their attitude to the competition.	.829	10.861	.886	18.120
5.14	Their gestures and mannerisms.	.725	10.077	.714	13.935
	IDENTIFICATION				
6.1	My friends are similar to the contestants.	15.954	.751	.748	15.571
6.2	While watching the show I feel included in a group.	17.002	.786	.819	17.661
6.3	I can relate to the contestants' attitudes.	16.351	.764	Deleted	
6.4	The contestants remind me of myself.	20.661	.894	.891	19.870
6.5	I seem to have the same attitudes as some of the contestants.	19.094	.850	Deleted	
6.6	I have the same problems as some of the contestants.	17.326	.796	.764	16.007
6.7	I can identify with some of the contestants.		Fixed	.819	Fixed
	ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOUR				
7.1	Influences my attitude towards good quality food.	14.765	.878	.886	16.903
7.2	Influences my attitude towards cooking.	15.290	.915	.925	17.699
7.3	Influences my attitude towards eating.	15.481	.930	.929	17.772
7.4	Influences my general cooking behaviour.	14.142	.835	Deleted	
7.5	Teaches me new recipes.	12.862	.749	.734	Fixed
7.6	Has made me a more conscientious food shopper.	Fixed	.673	Deleted	

Appendix D: Phantom Modelling SEM5
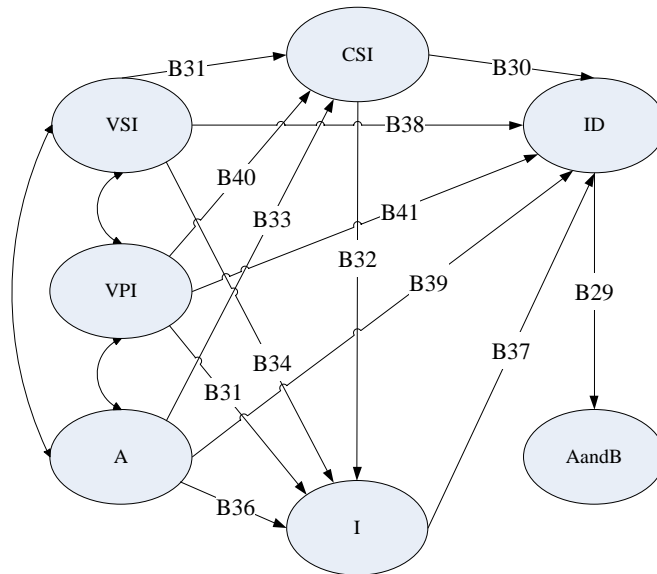
Note.
VSI = Viewer's Social Identity; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity; A = Authenticity; I = Involvement;
CSI = Contestant's Social Identity; ID = Social Identification. Figures next to paths and variables depict
specified regression weights and variance parameters (i.e. 1). B = specified equality restraints equal to
those in the main model.

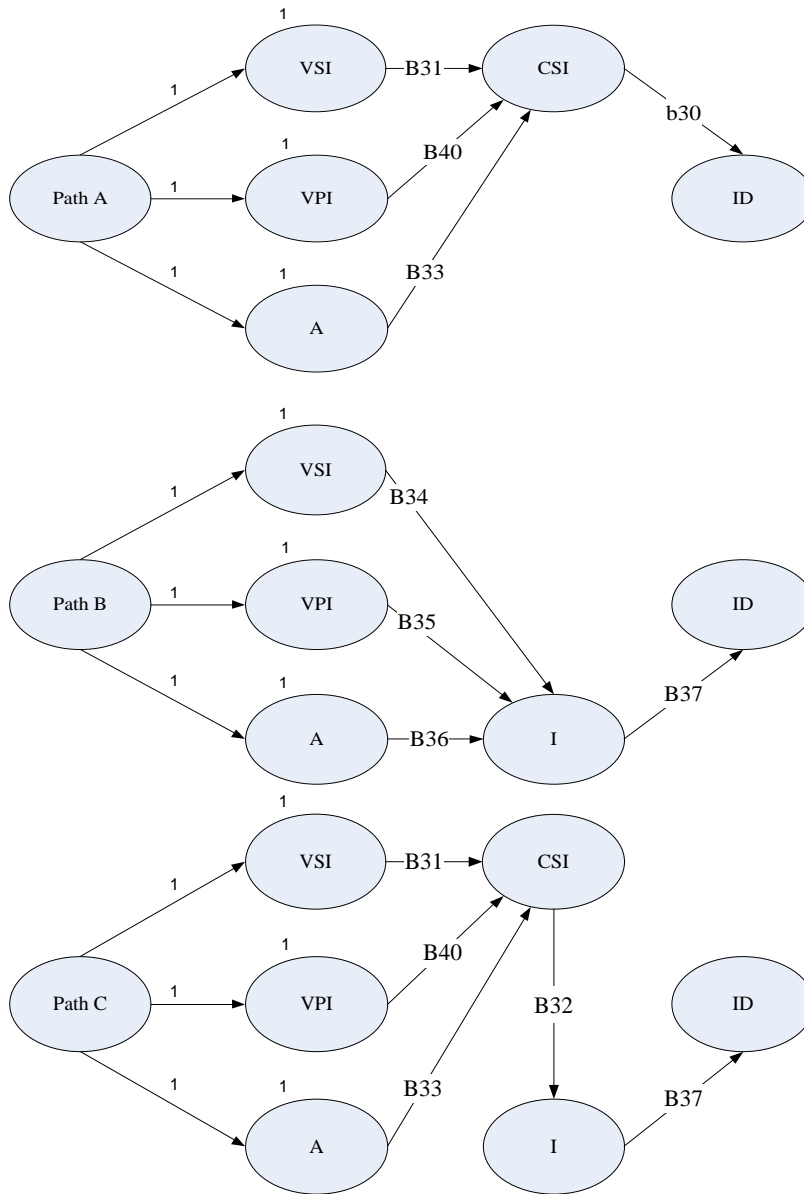# Appendix E: Phantom Modelling. Paths A, B, and C.

Note.

VSI = Viewer's Social Identity; VPI = Viewer's Personal Identity; A = Authenticity; I = Involvement; CSI = Contestant's Social Identity; ID = Social Identification. Figures next to paths and variables depict specified regression weights and variance parameters (i.e. 1). B = specified equality restraints equal to those in the main model.

Appendix F: Phantom Model Estimates

Regression Weights: (Group number 1 - Default model)

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
CSI	<---	VSI	.218	.078	2.801	.005	b31
CSI	<---	VPI	.315	.065	4.822	***	b40
CSI	<---	A	.241	.049	4.883	***	b33
I	<---	VPI	.125	.073	1.709	.087	b35
I	<---	A	.177	.056	3.143	.002	b36
I	<---	CSI	.452	.077	5.909	***	b32
I	<---	VSI	.048	.084	.568	.570	b34
ID	<---	CSI	.121	.072	1.672	.095	b30
ID	<---	I	.556	.082	6.817	***	b37
ID	<---	VSI	.218	.081	2.697	.007	b38
ID	<---	A	.267	.056	4.759	***	b39
CSI_C	<---	A_C	.241	.049	4.883	***	b33
CSI_C	<---	VSI_C	.218	.078	2.801	.005	b31
CSI_C	<---	VPI_C	.315	.065	4.822	***	b40
ID	<---	VPI	-.157	.070	-2.249	.024	b41
AandB	<---	ID	.406	.055	7.433	***	b29
I_B	<---	VSI_B	.048	.084	.568	.570	b34
CSI_A	<---	VSI_A	.218	.078	2.801	.005	b31
CSI_A	<---	VPI_A	.315	.065	4.822	***	b40
CSI_A	<---	A_A	.241	.049	4.883	***	b33
I_B	<---	A_B	.177	.056	3.143	.002	b36
I_B	<---	VPI_B	.125	.073	1.709	.087	b35
I_C	<---	CSI_C	.452	.077	5.909	***	b32
ID_A	<---	CSI_A	.121	.072	1.672	.095	b30
ID_C	<---	I_C	.556	.082	6.817	***	b37
ID_B	<---	I_B	.556	.082	6.817	***	b37
pathB	<---	VSI_B	1.000				
pathB	<---	VPI_B	1.000				
pathB	<---	A_B	1.000				
pathC	<---	VSI_C	1.000				
pathC	<---	VPI_C	1.000				
pathC	<---	A_C	1.000				
pathA	<---	VSI_A	1.000				
pathA	<---	VPI_A	1.000				
pathA	<---	A_A	1.000				

Appendix G: Summary of Mediated and Total Effects

	Effect	Sig.
Viewer's Social Identity (VSI) on Social Identification (ID)		
Path A: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity only	.026	0.194
Path B: Mediating effect of Involvement only	.026	.647
Path C: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity through Involvement	.055	.027*
The total mediated (indirect) effect of Viewer's Social Identity on Social Identification	.108	.151
The total (indirect and direct) effect of Viewer's Social Identity on Social Identification	.325	.001*
Viewer's Personal Identity (VPI) on Social Identification (ID)		
Path A: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity only	.038	.173
Path B: Mediating effect of Involvement only	.070	.140
Path C: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity through Involvement	.079	.000*
The total mediated (indirect) effect of Viewer's Personal Identity on Social Identification	.187	.001*
The total (indirect and direct) effect of Viewer's Personal Identity on Social Identification	.030	.798
Authenticity (A) on Social Identification (ID)		
Path A: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity only	.029	.173
Path B: Mediating effect of Involvement only	.098	.005*
Path C: Mediating effect of Contestants' Social Identity through Involvement	.061	.000*
The total mediated (indirect) effect of Authenticity on Social Identification	.188	.000*
The total (indirect and direct) effect of Authenticity on Social Identification	.454	.000*