

Audience Perceptions and Attitudes Towards the Representation of Tribal South African Culture in Drama Series

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Abstract : Commercial media entertainment offerings especially mainstream soap operas, in South Africa, are progressively infusing dominant social values and ideas which are alien to South African tribal societies. In most of the commodified television drama series, people who hold tight to traditional beliefs and values are often characterised as traditionalists, while those who have imbibed the western defined dicta and ideology of modernity are seen as progressives. This study, therefore, sought to ascertain how South African tribal language, traditional institutions, values, social norms and ancestral beliefs are portrayed through the television drama, *Generations: The Legacy*, and what the viewers think about those constructions and the implication for cultural identity. The mixed methods approach was employed involving the administration of questionnaire to 350 participants selected through random sampling and a content analysis of 20 episodes of *Generations: The Legacy*. The findings further showed that the values and traditions represented in generation do not significantly reflect the South African tribal tradition and values (p-value > 0.05). In most instances where traditional values are represented they tend to be portrayed as old fashioned (p-value > 0.05), and inferior and backward (p-value > 0.05). In addition, the findings indicate that *Generations: The legacy* is a vehicle for promoting dominant culture.

Keywords : identity, soap opera, South Africa, television

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