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**GLOBAL TELEVISION FORMAT:  
THE CASE OF *AKADEMI FANTASIA***

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generation is the format adaptation, whether licensed or cloned. This is where a new local version is refashioned from the foreign program (2004: 157-158).

In other words, format acts as a potent categorical tool to differentiate the various television programs as opposed to genre. On this note, Keane suggests that, “television formats have emerged over the past few years as an exemplary mode of flexible production within television systems outside [as well as within] the Western hemisphere” (2004:13). Previously the mode of production relied heavily on revenue from the sale of a finished program.

The term “format” has meaning because of what it “permits” or “facilitates” (Moran, 1998: 18). To Moran, format is important because it serves as an economic commodity and cultural technology of exchange. He furthermore points out that “format is actually a regulatory mechanism in the international television industry” (ibid: 22). Thus, owners of formats register their product for copyright protection. With copyrighted formats, producers are able to sell and buy format libraries through licensing arrangements that provide them with solid legal protection. The global trade in formats is in many ways actually similar “to the business of franchising” (ibid: 21). In the case of the television format, the licensee adapts a program using local production crew and talents to suit local culture. Producers of global TV formats are not confined to the Western hemisphere, because they have become a global phenomenon. Japan, for instance, is actively involved in the global trade in television formats:

The production of a program based on the format that is originally developed elsewhere is not conceived as disgraceful or second-rate any more. Rather, the format business has given audiences a pleasure in sharing the common frameworks and the irreducibly different appearances that manifest in local consumption. Put differently, what is being promoted is not simply ‘global glocalisation’ that aims to adopt the common to the difference but also ‘local globalisation’ that makes audiences feel ‘glocal, that is, a sense of participation in a global society through the reciprocated enjoyable recognition of local

(in most cases, synonymous to 'national') specificities articulated through the shared formats (Iwabuchi 2004: 34).

In this paper, format refers to the franchising of a television program ('licensed format adaptation' or 're-versioning') such as the reality talent show. Today, television stations worldwide are competing to produce reality programs. Some are borrowing or buying formats from overseas and producing reality programs using local talent from the adapted foreign formats. When a television station buys and adapts the format of a reality program from another country, it opens up the possibility of bringing in foreign cultural identity, which may run contrary to local cultural identity.

Reality programs are a popular worldwide television genre, but their early beginning can be traced back to factual programs such as *Cops*, which provided 'on-scene' footage of police on the job. The genre, as J. Smith and F. Wood suggested, "did not begin with *Survivor*, of course, but *Survivor* introduced an element that neither live-television documentaries (such as the 1970's documentary *An American Family*) nor dramas (such as the 1990's *The Real World*) could boast: competition" (1992: 2). However, Smith and Wood were wrong to categorise *The Real World* as a drama genre because it is MTV's reality series about seven strangers living in a single house. By taking on some of the characteristics of the game show and blending them with certain documentary-styled aspects of reality TV, *Survivor* created a highly popular hybrid format. J. Smith and F. Wood also suggest, "in response to this cultural phenomenon, pundits and cynics have decried reality programming as pandering to the lowest common denominator without necessarily analysing what this trend has to teach us about the media or ourselves" (ibid).

The reality program is made possible with the advent of lightweight video equipment. Jones suggests that this new "technology will offer a window onto a totally new world of fact-based television" (2003: 419). As Kilborn puts it:

Reality programs will involve: a) the recording, 'on the wing', and frequently with the help of lightweight video